

Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 47 December 2023

Superintendent Minister's Letter

Dear friends,

Advent a time to wake up!

'Always remember that this is the hour of crisis: it is high time for you to wake out of sleep, for deliverance is nearer now than it was when first we believed. It is far on in the night; the day is near. Let us therefore throw off the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.' (Romans 13:11 & 12)

Do you have difficulty waking up in the mornings? Especially on cold, dark mornings when the bed seems so warm and comfortable! Do you set an alarm clock before you go to bed? Perhaps it's an App on your phone that wakes you with a cheerful tune, or maybe it's a good old fashioned wind up clock with a shrill bell that wakes you up with a shock! Perhaps you press the snooze button when the bell rings and then drift back over to sleep again, only for it to ring again 5 minutes later!

Yet sometimes, we do need to get up early in the morning, we might have important things to do that day. I had an early morning flight to catch whilst I was on sabbatical which meant I had to set my alarm for 4am. That was an early start! There are other times when people rely on us getting up on time and being at our place of work. We can't just keep on ignoring those alarm clocks for ever!

We are about to enter the season of Advent, that season of waiting and preparation for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ which we will celebrate at Christmas. During Advent, we are called to hear the voices calling us to literally wake up and be aware of the urgent message of scripture to be ready for our Lord's coming. Paul words in Romans chapter 13, above, reminds us that day is near. 'Now is the time to put darkness behind us and be ready to embrace the light of the coming of God's son to our world.'

Our world can indeed, at times, appear a very dark and disturbing place in which to live. The horrific images of death and destruction we daily see on our news feeds from Israel/Palestine and the Ukraine can leave us feeling quite helpless. Advent reminds us that those who live in Christ live with the hope of a better world in which God will free his world from sin and sorrow.

How do we prepare for our Lord's coming? We do so by remaining close to him in prayer and devotion. We make ourselves ready as we reflect on words of scripture, maybe even in Advent study groups and as we share worship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. I wish you all a most profitable and rewarding season of Advent.

Kind regards,

Richard

BLACKHEATH & CRYSTAL PALACE CIRCUIT ARE LOOKING TO RECRUIT A NEW CIRCUIT STEWARD

Is this a role that might interest you?

What is a Circuit Steward?

The role of circuit steward is an important one in the life of the Methodist Church. It is also a personal vocation and part of an individual's discipleship: how we respond to God's love in Christ. Discipleship is – or should be – at the root of all that we find ourselves doing in the service of the Church and the world. This includes serving as a circuit steward.

The circuit is a key structure in Methodism. It is to circuits, not churches, that presbyters and deacons are stationed. And Methodism acknowledges that it is the circuit that is "the primary unit in which Local Churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help" (SO 500(1)).

The role of a circuit steward can be demanding. But those who have taken on this responsibility point to how rewarding and stimulating it can be as they seek to support and shape the circuit in response to the needs and challenges of its local area.

Circuit stewards play a vital role in the teams which lead local churches within Methodist Circuits. They work in partnership with presbyters, deacons, church workers and other circuit stewards to enable individuals and communities to find fulfilment and belonging within the Church.

Read about the Methodist Church's priorities in <u>Our Calling</u>: https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/our-calling/

As the role is voluntary circuit stewards carry out their responsibilities alongside full-time jobs, family commitments and other responsibilities. So, patience and a sense of humour are essential criteria for the job!

Circuit stewards have a range of duties and these are set out in The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church, which is known as CPD. To find out more about this follow this <u>link</u>:

 $\underline{https://www.methodist.org.uk/for\text{-}churches/governance/cpd/}$

If you would be interested in joining our team of circuit stewards and so our Circuit Leadership team.... Please contact Richard who will be delighted to discuss this further with you!:

richard.grocott@methodist.org.uk, 0208 857 1281



Four-week Advent Courses are being held in person, led by Rev. Craig Gaffney:

Burnt Ash Methodist Church: Wednesday mornings at 11am Starting from Wed. 29th November 'Out of the Ordinary' *All are Welcome from 10am for coffee and fellowship*

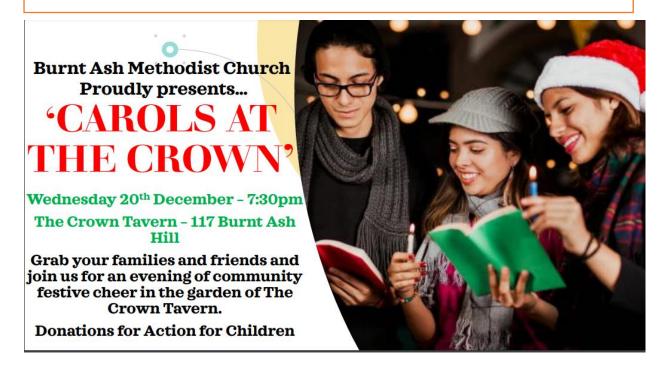
Sunfields Methodist Church: Thursday evenings at 7.30pm Starting from Thurs. 30th November 'Out of the Ordinary'

Feel free to come along for any or all of the sessions

'One-off' Advent Bible Study Evening held in person, led by Rev. Richard Grocott

Lewisham Methodist Church: Wednesday 13th December at 7.30pm 'Advent, a time of joy and challenge'

Eltham Park Methodist Church: Thursday 14th December at 7.30pm 'Advent, a time of joy and challenge' *Feel free to come along to one or the other of these sessions*





3Generate 6-8 October 2023



Hello All,

So, we embarked on our second year at the 3Generate Methodist Youth Conference at the NEC Birmingham. This year 17 young people aged 8 to 17 and 6 other Youth Leaders travelled from the Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit.

Fashioned in our glam hoodies we set off from Lewisham Church at around 6pm on Friday. There was a group from Gravesend already onboard the coach and we picked up another group from South Mimms. A packed coach and a few laughs on the way we arrived at the NEC at 9.30pm and was met off the coach by Reverend Craig Gaffney. We followed the crowds to check in, downed our bags by our tents and headed for dinner; a large portion of mac'n'cheese with either tofu or beef in black bean sauce!

After dinner the kids went off to explore and take part in some late evening activities such as drumming, worship karaoke, digital treasure hunt, Just Dance competition, basketball and for those who wanted something a little quieter there were board games and a late-night movie to watch. The tiredness soon overcame the excitement so sleeping bags out and pjs on, lights dimmed, and silence fell in the camp site we settled down for the night.

Saturday morning arrived quick, lights brightened in the camp, lots of excited chatter and there it was...queues for the bathrooms and showers! Breakfast was a basic full English and cereal, but it was not in short supply.

The 3Gen village opened prompt at 9.00am and this is when the weekend of full fun really began!

Here's a snippet of what our young people got up to:

In the Arena: Big Worship to tune in, hear God, give praise and restore faith; Open mic sessions and beatboxing.

In the Arts Centre: Creative writing, pinhole camera workshop, tie-dye tshirts, crochet, needle felting, clay models and exploring the gospel in modern art.

In The Globe: Conversations about what the bible says about climate change, injustice, conflict and all that's going on around the world today and even an energy packed Cuban salsa dance class.

In the Health & Wellbeing Centre: Mindful movement, therapy dogs and relaxation with a face and hand mask.

In 'The Park': bean bags scattered for casual chatter and meeting new friends, a talent show and late-night communion. Numerous sporting activities.

In The Rec: basketball, football, table tennis, wall climbing, rope balancing, boxing and exercise bikes.

In The Tech Hub: a Silent Disco.

I could go on, but you get the gist there was no time to be bored!!

We had some group time to reflect on everything we took part in over the weekend and what made us feel closer to God and why.

After a final Big Worship with picnic in The Park, we headed back home on Sunday afternoon. Although exhausted there was so much, we gave thanks for and can truly say we had another memorable weekend.

Altogether there was approximately 1300 young people in attendance in total.

We are all already looking forward to 3Gen2024 (4th-6th October 2024), I sincerely hope I will be taking a few more young people (aged 8-23) with us and if you would like to join us as a Youth Leader, we would be happy to have you on board.

Peace and Blessings to you All.

Maxine



Joe Koroma: My experience of God's call to preach

Thus says the LORD: "And afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions." (Joel 2:28)

Friends, this is Joe Koroma from Sunfields Methodist Church and as the LORD promised, I dream dreams because I am over 60 years of age. I am training to become a Local Preacher within the Circuit and currently preaching On Trial. I have shared about three or four of my dreams with you during the time that I was On Note and since I have been On Trial. It is through these dreams that I first sense that God is calling me to preach. But also, that God was about to do something better in my life.

This short article, which is part of my project, is to share with you how I have been experiencing God's calls to me to preach as well as keeping and doing his Word. In my dreams, I heard a voice from above saying to me: "Do not let My Word part from your heart! Do not let My Word part from your mouth! Depend on the Bible! Let the congregation know about your dreams! On another occasion, I saw a figure from above calling and saying: "All of you come to Heaven!". Friends, with the Holy Bible in my raised right hand, I received these instructions in three of my dreams and to those that I shared these dreams with before now, I apologise for repeating myself. But as I pray fervently to God and study the Bible earnestly with constant meditations, and with your congregational feedback and encouragement, my conviction that God is calling me to preach keeps growing stronger. My faith tells me that those messages are from God and by following his call to preach, I will experience a turning point in my life. I trust in God to continue to grant me the strength, determination and support to complete my training, in spite of all the challenges so that I will continue to serve him.

Let us pause for thoughts and imagine Joseph dismissing the message given to him in a dream by God's angel to not be afraid to take Mary home as his wife because what is conceived in her was from the Holy Spirit (*Matt 1:20*); and to arise and flee to Egypt with the child, Jesus and his mother, Mary lest Jesus not be destroyed by Herod (*Matt 2:13*).

Over the period that I have been preaching On Trial, I have experienced the most amazing turn around in my life and this is owing to my new relationship with God and my relationship with all his people in our circuit, the Connexion and beyond. Indeed, as reflected in some of your written and oral feedback after our Sunday worship, I firmly believe that by his grace, God is impacting our hearts with his word and so I pray that we do not let his word depart from our hearts and mouths but instead continue to build up our relationship with God and one another so that we would have a caring church community.

On the other hand, I note some of your feedback showing the areas in which my preaching needs to improve. I am very grateful for your candidness and would like to thank and assure you that I firmly believe God is taking care of those perceived weaknesses. I thank Local Preachers within our circuit have been very helpful in sharing their calling with me. To my tutors and mentors, I am always thankful for your patience and support. I am having all the support that I need across the circuit and I am very grateful.

"... Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! (1 Cor. 9:16)

BLACKHEATH & CRYSTAL PALACE CIRCUIT

Intergenerational Worship Training

Forest Hill Methodist Church – Sat 11th November 2023

One of the great challenges of leading worship is asking oneself how you might be able to plan and lead something that connects with everyone in the room in some way. We are all so very different and we all engage with things indifferent ways, we have different life experiences, different cultural backgrounds, different hopes and expectations.

On Saturday 11th November Stuart Watkin led a training session at Forest Hill Methodist Church thinking about how we can offer worship that connects across one significant category of diversity in the life of our church: age.

This was not just a training session for asking how we might communicate with children and get them to take part (or perform) in the service, which can be the mistake of intergenerational worship, but it was about how we enable the whole body of Christ, young and old and everyone in between to encounter the divine through the same act of worship, in the same space. How we appreciate the gifts, skills and wisdom of every single worshipper and how we are able to relate to one another as the big intergenerational family that is God's church.

We began by watching a clip from the opening of the Disney film 'UP', an emotive tale of love and loss in animated for that connects with all age groups and asked what it was about this film that manages to do that. Each person at the session could relate to at least one of the themes or scenes in some way, despite many generations being represented. It was able to communicate beyond the generational divide, much like our worship should.

After discussing our best and worst experiences of intergenerational worship, and what made them so, Stuart talked us through the characteristics of different generations (from the Silent Generation (1926-1945 through to Generation Z (1996-2009)) and we discussed how each generation had different relationships with things like authority, rules, technology, and identity; later discussing how this might impact how different groups approach elements and styles of worship.

To end the session we looked, in groups, at a passage of scripture together and attempted to plan an act of worship for an intergenerational context. Most of our acts of worship contain four consistent elements (Gathering into an awareness of

God's presence, Hearing God's word, Responding to it in reflection, and Sending out to live as faithful disciples in God's world). We discussed how we might use Hymns, music (Christian of secular), video clips, Bible readings, discussion times, prayer responses, silence, and sermons in order to create a dynamic and balanced piece of worship in which every generation might be encouraged and enabled to meet God in both familiar and new ways.

Stuart's training was a helpful session for getting leaders of worship to think creatively and intentionally about all generations (as well as other differences) in our congregations and to remember, even as we do so, that we can never prejudge the expectations and experiences of any member of our church family and often the best thing we can do to plan worship that really connects with the diversity of our contexts is spending time building relationships and truly getting to know one another.

Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit Envisioning Update on progress from the Way Forward Group

Progress report, Spiritual Growth:

Craig took a group of young people to 3Gen in October 2023. They had worn attractive BHCP hoodies. 3Gen is an exciting and growing event and the attendance of a group from our Circuit is encouraging.

The Circuit might consider running a Worship Leader Accreditation course as this has not been done for some time.

Progress report, Future Shape of the Circuit:

a. 'Our Church's Future Story' training day with Sally Rush of the Learning Network, 14th October had been well attended, with several members joining via zoom. A copy of the sound recording of the training has been circulated. Sally's presentation was excellent and engaged the audience in thinking about Mission planning through asking the question 'if money was no object, what would you like to see happen in your church?' From post-it notes collected on the day it is apparent that there is a lot of interest in youth work and community engagement. It was good to hear positive ideas put forward.

Concern was expressed about the quality of AV across the Circuit, including communication on-line.

Action: The possibility of improved internet through a Circuit fibre optic internet contract to be considered.

Action: Churches to draw up a mission plan to identify where resources should be concentrated. The cards that accompanied the training are a very useful aid. Once Mission plans have been approved by church councils they would then be presented at the summer Circuit Meeting.

b. Future Shape of the Circuit

Discussions are in the early stages but ongoing concerning the future shape of the Circuit in terms of staffing etc once Richard moves on in August 2025.

From September 2025 the Circuit could potentially reduce to three ministers. Questions for consideration will include what to do about a surplus manse, and how the reallocation of churches across the staff team could be sensitively achieved. It is recognised that reducing to three ministers will mean additional administrative support is required.

With rebuilding work on the horizon at Forest Hill discussions are ongoing about caring for their congregation/community in the period until the rebuild is complete. It was recognised that should they amalgamate with another church for this period they would wish to maintain their own identity. It was acknowledged that this will not be easy and will require sensitivity.

The possibility of employing a lay worker was discussed. The Mission plans would give an indication of the sort of initiatives a lay worker might take on, although 'facilitating' rather than running events would be the objective.

Date of next meeting: 31st January and 8th February 2024, 7.30pm via zoom

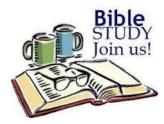
October 2023

Envision!

Circuit website: bhcpmethodist.org.uk

Deadline for information for next newsletter: 20th February 2024 Articles, posters for forthcoming events etc always welcome Please email details to: office.bcpc@btinternet.com

Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit



Weekly Thursday Morning zoom Bible Study Finding 'The Way' together

Thursday mornings 10.00am to 11.00am facilitated by Margaret Boreham

The zoom opens at 9.45am with the study beginning at 10am. Conversations are based on a Bible passage and there will be questions to make us think and rethink. There is an opportunity and time to share thoughts and questions. Closing remarks are at 11am for those who want just an hour, but stay open after 11am for anyone keen to chat or continue the conversations sparked by the Bible Study.

Margaret on mboreham5@gmail.com, 07483 86 86 12

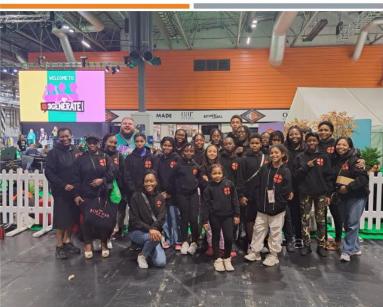
Recurring zoom link:

https://zoom.us/j/98461065032?pwd=NTJFUmJ1WHVubjZwaWVCNzd0MlEvdz09



Don't panic!: If you are not sure about Zoom, email or phone Margaret for a <u>private</u> session for you to learn how to download/operate it.





For more information contact Rev. Craig Gaffney: craig.gaffney@methodist.org.uk



Christmas at Wesley Hall



Come and join us for our Christmas Market after the services on each Sunday of Advent Treat yourself to refreshments and browse the stalls









Cards Cakes

Christmas Decorations/Gifts

Toys Jewellery Raffle

Sunday 26th November ~ Refreshments & Sale

Sunday 3rd December ~ Refreshments and Sale

Sunday 10th December ~ Refreshments and Sale

Sunday 17th December ~ Lunch and Sale

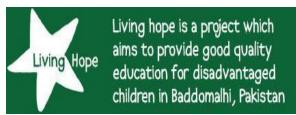
After our Carol Service on 17th December, we invite you to stay and buy lunch, and share some fellowship time with our church family.

Orders for lunch will be taken from the beginning of December.

After the services, please look at the stalls in the SFC room, and then take a seat Your orders will be taken, and your refreshments will be brought to you.

Thank you







Dear Friends,

I hope you are keeping well. It is so good to bring you the updates on Living Hope School. The children have settled in after their summer holiday. They are all doing well. This summer we had lots of strong storms in Baddomalhi and most of our solar panels were blown away and the rest were badly damaged. We were able to restore and replace them before the start of the school. We are so grateful to have them in place. Otherwise, electricity would have been very costly since the prices of electricity and fuel have risen recently. This is unfortunately due to an economic and political crisis happening in Pakistan.

This year has been tough for Christians in Pakistan after the incident in Jariwala and surrounding villages where 19 churches and hundreds of houses of very poor families were burnt down. They lost everything over the night and spent the night hiding in the open fields. Thankfully no one lost their lives. This is something that always worries us as churches and Christian buildings get targeted regularly.

This year responding to the flood-affected families at Living Hope School, the Rotary Club Beckenham raised £2150.64 to donate essential food supplies. The Rotary Club of Beckenham has supported the school in so many ways over many years our students and their families were very grateful to the Rotary Club of Beckenham for their efforts and support. Please pray for god's protection over Living Hope School and the Christians in Pakistan.

Everyone is greatly concerned about the recent events, but it has strengthened the faith of Christian communities across the countries.

Please also remember to pray for our teachers, students and their families. Thank you for your support.

God bless,

Rev Imran Malik

Women Emulating Susanna Wesley (WESUW)

Meetings taking place on the last Saturday of the month
at Upper Norwood Methodist Church, 11am-1pm;
23rd December 2023 End of year Bring and Share
Then 27th January, 24th February and 23rd March 2023

All are Welcome





DO YOU LIKE A GOOD TUNE? THEN WHY NOT COME ALONG TO A CONCERT BY THE

ELTHAM PARK PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTENOON ORCHESTRA

28th January, 25th February and 31st March 2024 at 3.00pm

ELTHAM PARK METHODIST CHURCH

Westmount Road SE9 1XX

□ LIGHT CLASSICS SHOW SELECTIONS

□ FAVOURITE HYMNS POPULAR STANDARDS

ADMISSION FREE Refreshments available

	Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit Forthcoming Events	
Weekly	Thursday morning zoom Bible Study	10-11am
	All are welcome	
Thur. 11 th Jan.	Treasurers meeting at Burnt Ash Methodist Church	7.30pm
Thur. 18 th Jan.	CLT meeting at Burnt Ash Methodist Church	7.30pm
Wed. 31st Jan.	Way Forward group meeting via zoom	7.30pm
Wed. 7 th Feb.	Missions Committee meeting at	2pm
	Forest Hill Methodist Church	
Thurs. 8 th Feb.	Way Forward group meeting via zoom	7.30pm
Thur. 15 th Feb.	LP & WL meeting at	7.30pm
	Forest Hill Methodist Church	
Sat. 24 th Feb.	Circuit Mission in Britain 'Tea and Toast'	2pm-4pm
	Burnt Ash Methodist Church	
Thur. 29 th Feb.	Circuit Meeting at Lewisham Methodist Church	7.30pm
Sat. 16 th March	Safeguarding Officers Gathering	10am-12noon
	Venue tbc (Please note change of date)	

Covenant Services around the Circuit



31st December 2023

11am Forest Hill led by Rev. Charles ILunga **7**th **January 2023**

10.30am Burnt Ash led by Rev. Craig Gaffney

10.30am Lewisham led by Rev. Richard Grocott

11am Anerley led by Rev. William Davis

11am Wesley Hall led by Rev. Charles ILunga

14th January 2024

10.30am Eltham Park led by Rev. Richard Grocott

10.30am Hither Green led by Rev. Craig Gaffney

11am Upper Norwood led by Rev. William Davis

NEW PUBLICATION





The Routledge Companion to John Wesley 1st Edition

Edited By Clive Murray Norris, Joseph W. Cunningham Hardback £205.00; eBook £38.69 ISBN 9780367471675

The Routledge Companion to John Wesley provides an overview of the work and ideas of one of the principal founders of Methodism, John Wesley (1703-91). Wesley remains highly influential, especially within the worldwide Methodist movement of some eighty million people. As a preacher and religious reformer his efforts led to the rise of a global Protestant movement, but the wideranging topics addressed in his writings also suggest a mind steeped in the intellectual developments of the North Atlantic, early modern world. His numerous publications cover not only theology but ethics, history, aesthetics, politics, human rights, health and wellbeing, cosmology and ecology. This volume places Wesley within his eighteenth-century context, analyses his contribution to thought across his multiple interests, and assesses his continuing relevance today. It contains essays by an international team of scholars, drawn from within the Methodist tradition and beyond. This is a valuable reference particularly for scholars of Methodist Studies, theology, church history and religious history.

BLACKHEATH & CRYSTAL PALACE CIRCUIT

Making Money for Methodist Missions

TEM & TOMST

At 2pm - 4pm On Sat. 24th Feb. With Martin & the Trio to entertain us

at

BURNT ASH METHODIST CHURCH HALL SE12 OQD

DONATIONS PLEASE FOR MISSION IN BRITAIN

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AROUND THE CIRCUIT All are welcome







Carol Services

10th December 2023

7pm Joint service Anerley/Upper Norwood at

Upper Norwood led by Rev. William Davis

17th December 2023

10.30am Hither Green led by Rev. Craig Gaffney

10.30am Burnt Ash led by Dr Linda Ryan

10.30am Lewisham led by Rev. Richard Grocott

11am Wesley Hall by Ms Sandra Clifton

5pm Forest Hill led by Rev Charles ILunga

6.30pm Eltham Park led by Rev. Richard Grocott

24th December 2023

10.30am Sunfields led by Rev. Craig Gaffney





Christingle Services

Sunday 10th December 2023

10.30am Eltham Park led by Rev. Richard Grocott





Watchnight Service

Saturday 31st December 2023

11.15pm-midnight Lewisham led by Rev. Charles ILunga