



The **Methodist Church**  
**Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit**  
**Quarterly Newsletter**

Issue 45

June 2023

**Superintendent Minister's Letter: 'Going on Sabbatical'**

*'If you refrain from Sabbath journeys and from doing business on my Holy day, if you call the Sabbath a day of joy, worthy of honour by desisting from work and not pursuing your own affairs..., then you will find joy in the Lord' (Isaiah 58: 13–14 Ed)*

Dear Friends,

Every seven years, all Methodist Ministers, both Presbyteral or Diaconal, are required to take a Sabbatical. The Sabbatical normally last for three months, it is well planned in advance both in terms of what the Minister will do (a Sabbatical prospectus) and how the circuit and minister's family will cope in that period. Standing Order 744 defines a Sabbatical as a 'period of release from the ordinary duties of (the Minister's) appointment for the purpose of pursuing an approved programme of study, research, work or experience'.

Sabbaticals can be extremely beneficial both for the individual minister, for the health of the wider church and can significantly enhance the ministry of the whole people of God. I know for sure that a number of ministers have taken Sabbaticals before in this circuit, and I feel deeply privileged to have reached the point of my Ministry where I can enjoy my third Sabbatical. My previous Sabbaticals were in 2007 (Rome and Jerusalem) and 2014 (Ghana). I really should have taken this Sabbatical two years ago but I asked the District for it to be deferred until this summer, after Craig's ordination.

So, I will be on Sabbatical from 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September. Garry has convened a 'Sabbatical support group' which has taken steps to ensure that our circuit ministry will continue without too much difficulty. My colleague Charles ILunga will be the acting Superintendent Minister and with the help of the Local Preachers, Circuit officers and local church stewards, my Presbyteral colleagues and Linda, our circuit administrator, I am confident that ministry will continue to thrive despite (or maybe even because) of my absence!

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So what will I be doing? I will be travelling for part of the time, two visits to Italy are planned, one to our Lakeside flat in Trentino the other to the Waldensian Valleys in Piedmont. I am also planning to meet up with an old University friend, now living in Germany and travel with him to Berlin.

I am, however, also planning a period of serious Biblical study, something that I rarely get the chance to do whilst caught up in the busyness of circuit life. I have long been interested in the 'Minor Prophets' of the Old Testament and have decided to engage in a study of the Prophet Amos. This will include a period of study at Queens College, Birmingham under the guidance of Rachael Starr, the Old Testament tutor. If all this goes well, I aim to write a Lent Bible study on Amos to be used in 2024 which explores issues of social justice.

I ask for your prayerful support during the months of my Sabbatical and will look forward to seeing you all again on my return in October.

Kind regards,

Richard

### Testimony Service: Rev Craig Gaffney 14<sup>th</sup> May 2023

10 years ago, on a hot summer's day, I was led, semi-willingly, into the sanctuary of Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London. The capital felt like foreign ground and the home of Wesley and unfamiliar place. It was a special occasion though, the ordination of my mum. Little did I know but one of her fellow ordinands noticed me on that day, the way I engaged with this moment, and said to mum, God's doing something in Craig there.

On May 14<sup>th</sup>, joined by members from this circuit, my wife, Louise, and others from around the district, this time it was my mum's turn to make the trip to Wesley's Chapel for my testimony service ahead of ordination and reception into full connexion of June 25<sup>th</sup> in Birmingham/Coventry.



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It was lovely occasion where I, alongside Tessa and Sarah Jane (two 2<sup>nd</sup> year probationer Deacons in the District) shared a little of our journey, how God has brought us to where we are now and how God is continuing to work in our lives in the present. We shared both the challenges and fulfilment that comes with a calling to ordained ministry and committed ourselves to listen to God and the community of faith, in whatever situations we may be called to.

On June 25<sup>th</sup> I will stand with my peers, first to be received into full connexion with the Methodist Church in Britain and later to be ordained as a presbyter in God's holy church (both of these should be available to view via live stream if desired).

Before the next chapter of my story, our story, begins, I wanted to take the opportunity to say thank you. Thank you to all in the Blackheath and Crystal Palace circuit for welcoming me so kindly. Thank you to the staff and leadership team for guiding me and sharing their wisdom as I took my first steps into circuit ministry, and thank you to the wonderful people of Burnt Ash, Hither Green and Sunfields, whose love, generosity and care has sustained me and my family in this new adventure.

We thank God for you, and cannot wait to see where the Holy Spirit may guide us next.

*Rev. Craig Gaffney*

## **Circuit Evening Services/Gatherings on Zoom**

### **Important notice**

It is with some regret that the Circuit has made the decision to suspend the Circuit evening services on the second Sunday of each month with immediate effect. This has arisen as a result of recent clarification of licensing/copyright issues.

There may be a possibility, should there be sufficient demand, for the services to recommence at a future date in a different format. If you are interested in having an input into discussions about zoom services, please contact Margaret on: mboreham5@gmail.com

In the meantime, the Circuit would like to extend its grateful thanks to Margaret for all the work and effort she has put in to all these services, which have been well received, and a valuable contribution to the spiritual growth and outreach of our Circuit.#

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## **Bible Month – June 2023**

Bible Month is a program that many circuits throughout the Methodist Connexion, and other denominations, join in each year – usually in the month of June.

It sets aside 4 weeks to focus on a particular book of our scriptures in Sunday worship and possibly small group studies. You may remember last year the Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit joined in journeying through Isaiah at this time. With a new year comes a new book, this time the final book in our Biblical cannon, that of Revelation.

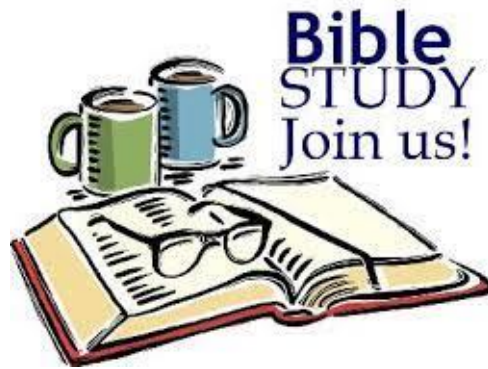
Even mentioning the book of Revelation in a room of several Christians usually gets a mixed response. We don't really know what to do with the book. It is a letter to 7 churches, but also a vision given to John by Christ; it is apocalyptic and prophetic. It's wild imagery of heaven's throne room, of angels, dragons, and beasts are often what puts people off, it's perplexing, confusing, disturbing(?), but what is the message behind these metaphors?

Michael Gorman said Revelation is “a theopoetic, theopolitical, pastoral-prophetic writing. It is above all a community-forming document, intended to shape communities of believers in Jesus as the Lamb of God into more faithful and missional communities of worship and witness. The primary agenda of John... is to increase covenant faithfulness in the church universal – then and now”

So it is my hope and prayer that this June we might open the book of Revelation with a new open heart and mind, to let it was over us and challenge us, as it did the churches it was originally written for, to grow in faithfulness becoming more like the Church God is calling us to be.

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# Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit



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

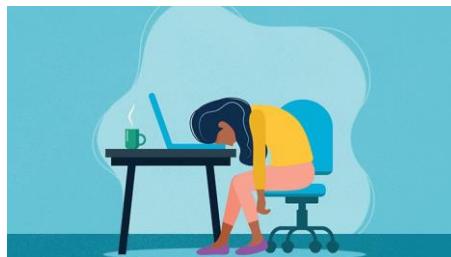
An exciting new opportunity: 'Working together' weekly Bible Study on Zoom: Thursday mornings 10.00am to 11.00am beginning on Thursday 18th May and weekly thereafter: facilitated by Margaret Boreham

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

It would be helpful if you could please register your interest by emailing Margaret on [mboreham5@gmail.com](mailto:mboreham5@gmail.com), 07483 86 86 12

Recurring zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/98461065032?pwd=NTJFUmJlWHVubjZwaWVCNzd0MlEvdz09>



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

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# Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit Envisioning

## Update on progress from the Circuit Envisioning Group

### Spiritual Growth:

- Training day for Worship Leaders and Stewards on 13<sup>th</sup> May at Forest Hill.
- A small supply of prayer handbooks will be available from the start of the Connexional year for each church to use individually or in fellowship groups.
- Zoom Bible study on Thursday mornings on a weekly basis.
- Engagement with young people: Challenge remains to get Junior Church back up and running at those churches where it has not resumed after covid.

### Resources:

- The Property and Resources Group will meet on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June.

### Future Shape of the Circuit:

- Discussions continue on the possibility of churches changing service times, and/or having some joint services.
- 'Way forward' planning at every church by involving the whole church community, promoting/encouraging ideas at church meetings, not just at church council. Churches to look at using the talent that they may be under-utilizing currently. In order to assist them in doing this, a training meeting is planned for a Saturday morning in October (open to all), details to follow.

**Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 7.30pm via zoom

Richard



April 2023



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## Planning and Leading Worship Training

On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May, a group of 22 of us from across the circuit came together at Forest Hill Methodist Church for a training session on planning and leading worship. There was a mix of experience, with some people having a lot of experience leading worship, but most people had not had any training before.

We discussed the elements that make up a worship service, the different ways of doing them, and how to involve everyone within the worship. There was time for conversations and questions, silliness and seriousness, and we had a great time in one another's company, exploring together what it means to worship our God and learning from one another's perspectives and experiences. Everyone got the chance to have a go at planning a service and we shared some online resources that are really helpful for putting together worship.

As we adjust to having fewer local preachers and more local arrangement services, leading worship cannot remain a skill for the accredited few, but is something we all need to share and understand as we worship God together. Hopefully this session will be a blessing to our churches and one more step for us, as we continue to grow together in discipleship.

A massive thanks to Forest Hill Methodist Church for hosting us and looking after us so well.

*Stuart Watkin,*  
Circuit Tutor



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## **Methodist Connexion: training schedule for all those involved in Youth and Children's work**

Devised by the Methodist Youth and Children's Coordinator, Brian Smith, the Webinar training sessions below are varied and offer a little something for everyone:

- Detached youth work - engaging with young people on the fringes: 12 June 2023  
Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/detached-youth-ministry-a-webinar-tickets-411290530047>
- Working with children and young people with additional needs: 10 July 2023  
Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/working-with-children-and-young-people-with-additional-needs-a-webinar-tickets-411294852977>

All these courses are shown as currently bookable via the link to an eventbrite page. Please consider registering for courses relevant to the roles you hold at your church, and encourage those for whom these sessions might be useful to register as soon as possible as places are likely to be limited.

*For those reading this newsletter in hard copy, please also see the Circuit website [bcpcmethodist.org.uk/category/newsletters/](http://bcpcmethodist.org.uk/category/newsletters/) to use hyperlinks for registration.*



### **The Methodist Church**

#### **Circuit Mission in Britain Coffee Morning**

The Circuit Mission Coffee Morning earlier this year raised £358.69 (incl. gift-aid).

You may be interested to know a little about the Mission in Britain Fund:

Aim: 'Helping people in our communities and beyond'.

The Methodist Way of Life commitments for Learning and Caring and Service include that: 'We will practice hospitality and generosity' and 'We will help people in our communities and beyond'.

As Methodists, we believe in learning and caring and service as part of our discipleship and there are plenty of opportunities for us to support the Church whether that's in prayer, the giving of our time or the giving of our money.

The Mission in Britain Fund (MiBF) supports, largely, 'New Places for New People' projects through allocation of funding to Districts and Circuits.

The Mission in Britain Fund also still supports Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice projects, via Districts.

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This year's **Easter Offering** is being donated to World Mission Fund. For more information about this fund <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/support-the-church/give/about-our-funds/world-mission-fund/>



### **Caring for people around us, globally**

As Methodists, we believe in learning and caring as part of our discipleship and there are plenty of opportunities for us to support the Church whether that's in prayer, the giving of our time or the giving of our money.

Through our global relationships in the Methodist Church, the World Mission Fund is able to support 107 partner churches and organisations in Africa, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific in their mission and ministry to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission; through evangelism, mission work, schools, hospitals, environmental projects, emergency situations, administration, training and much more.

The World Mission Fund (WMF) supports projects and individuals around the world and this work is only made possible by kind donations. WMF supports the following programmes which are currently administered through Global Relationships:

**Mission Partners:** are initially trained in this country and invited to serve for periods of at least one year by partner churches in the Caribbean, South & Central America, Africa, The Pacific, Asia and Europe.

**Essential Assistance Grants** are given to partner churches enabling them to decide their own priorities for the work of the Kingdom. **General or Solidarity Grants** are given to a partner who is facing particularly difficult circumstances or an emergency situation. Although the grants may seem quite small in the global scale of things, they are a rapid response that express solidarity in partnership and can often open the door for our partners to receive other funding from around the world.

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Capacity Building Grants enable partner churches to strategically build their capacity and resources to become self-sustaining. Most grants are given to partner churches to develop their own mission priorities. Money is applied for through, and in full consultation with, the relevant Partnership Coordinator in the Global Relationships Office (GR) of the British Methodist Church. In all cases, grant requests are scrutinised by a committee before being approved.

We encourage you to pray for the work of the World Mission Fund and to use the Methodist Prayer Handbook, which contains daily suggestions for prayer including our partner churches and Mission Partners.

Organise a World Mission Sunday worship service or a world mission event in your church. The Global Relationships worship resources can be used throughout the year.

Your local Easter Offering Service is prepared by Methodist Women in Britain on behalf of the World Mission Fund. Your donation enables the Methodist Church in Britain to support the work of our global Church Partners by:

- mission partners
- nationals in mission appointments
- scholarship and leadership training
- other grant giving.

Junior Mission for All (JMA) is a fun way of encouraging children and young people to engage with God's mission in Britain and throughout the world. You can read *Rainbow* magazine with your children, grandchildren, god-children and youth groups. *Rainbow* magazine tells stories of our global Methodist community and how children and young people have helped to raise money for good causes around the world as we live out Our Calling to 'Care for those around us, globally'.

And if you are looking for worship resources for children and young people that explores global mission, why not try the JMA Commissioning Service resources. This worship material can be used throughout the year. With a selection of prayers, hymn/worship song suggestions you can just 'pick n mix' and use what is useful for you as you lead worship.

A growing number of churches and circuits are building twinning links with Methodist partner churches around the world. Their aim is to share and learn in mission, understanding, culture and worship across Methodist communities – together. To request a speaker, please email: [gr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:gr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk)

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

**ELTHAM PARK PLEASANT  
SUNDAY AFTENOON ORCHESTRA**

***25<sup>th</sup> June and 30<sup>th</sup> July 2023  
at 3.00pm***

**ELTHAM PARK METHODIST CHURCH  
Westmount Road SE9 1XX**

♪ **LIGHT CLASSICS**      **SHOW SELECTIONS**  
♪ **FAVOURITE HYMNS**      **POPULAR STANDARDS**

**ADMISSION FREE  
Refreshments available**

**Women Emulating Susanna Wesley (WESUW)**  
Meetings taking place on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June, 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 26<sup>th</sup> August,  
at Upper Norwood Methodist Church, 11am-1pm;  
*All are Welcome*

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	<b>Blackheath &amp; Crystal Palace Circuit Forthcoming Events</b>	
Weekly	Thursday morning zoom Bible Study	10-11am
Wed. 7 <sup>th</sup> June	Property & Resources Group meeting at Burnt Ash Methodist Church	7.30pm
Tues. 20 <sup>th</sup> June	Circuit Meeting at Hither Green Methodist Church	7.30pm
Sun. 25 <sup>th</sup> June	Craig Gaffney's Ordination Service at Coventry Cathedral, CV1 5AB	4pm
Tues. 4 <sup>th</sup> July	Gathering Session for Advanced Safeguarding via zoom	By invitation
Tues. 11 <sup>th</sup> July	Circuit Envisioning Group meeting via zoom	7.30pm

## 3Generate 2023

An opportunity for young people from our circuit to share in fun, faith and fellowship with other young people from across the Methodist Church in Britain.

- **What:** Methodist Children and Youth Assembly
- **When:** 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- **Where:** NEC in Birmingham (coach provided)
- **Who:** For ages 8-23
- **How much?** FREE (Usually £120+)

For more info, and to book, contact Craig Gaffney:  
[craig.gaffney@methodist.org.uk](mailto:craig.gaffney@methodist.org.uk)

**Deadline for booking with Craig is SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup> JUNE**

[www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/events-including-3generate/3generate/](http://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/events-including-3generate/3generate/)



**Circuit website:** [bhcpmethodist.org.uk](http://bhcpmethodist.org.uk)

Deadline for information for next newsletter: 20<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Articles, posters for forthcoming events etc always welcome

Please email details to: [office.bcpc@btinternet.com](mailto:office.bcpc@btinternet.com)

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