



The **Methodist Church**

Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit
Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 50

September 2024

Superintendent Minister's Letter:

Dear friends,

I trust you have all enjoyed a pleasant summer. I hope that you managed to enjoy times of rest and relaxation, whether at home or perhaps on travelling on holiday. May you return this autumn rejuvenated in body, mind, and spirit.

September is the time of the year that children and teachers return to schools, offices and businesses and even churches begin to plan for the year that lies ahead. For our circuit, this month promises to be quite busy as we take some important decisions about our future. On Saturday September 14th from 10am we will be holding an open meeting entitled 'Our circuit, our future' at Burnt Ash Methodist Church. At this meeting, we will be looking at the various options that lie ahead for us as we seek to re-organise ourselves from September 2025 onwards. Then, on September 25th, at our circuit meeting at Anerley, the decision will be taken.

As the article on circuit restructuring later on in this newsletter shows, the Circuit Leadership Team and the 'Way Forward group' have been working hard to draw together as many points of view as possible and we hope that this will lead to well informed and positive engagement with the issues involved.

My hope is that our discussions will be grounded in prayer, informed by scripture, and led by the presence of the Holy Spirit. I pray that we may openly share our thoughts, our dreams, and also our fears and concerns with love and respect for each other, and in ways that build up Christ's presence in our churches.

Yours sincerely,

Richard

Anerley Burnt Ash Eltham Park Forest Hill Hither Green
Lewisham Sunfields Upper Norwood Wesley Hall

YOUTH/YOUNG ADULT CONFIRMATION EXPLORATION

Through the month of November Rev. Craig Gaffney will be running baptism/confirmation classes for young adults and young people.

These are open to anyone up to the age of 30 from across the circuit

**These 4 sessions will be run at Sunfields Methodist Church on
Sunday afternoons from 4pm-5:30pm**

3rd November – Exploring Our Faith

10th November – Exploring Baptism/Confirmation

17th November – Exploring Methodism: The Methodist Movement

24th November - Exploring Methodism: Membership and Our Calling

Contact Rev. Craig to sign up: craig.gaffney@methodist.org.uk

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>

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Mandatory Unconscious Bias and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training

Many of you have now completed the Unconscious Bias training either in your own church, or at the recent Circuit face-to face training. This is to let you know that, having completed this initial training, you now need to complete the second section. This can either be done on-line, or at a face-to-face session being organized by the Circuit.

Further details of who is required to undertake this training can be found :

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/the-inclusive-methodist-church/training-for-justice-dignity-and-solidarity/mandatory-edi-training-equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>

If you wish to take the EDI training on-line, please go to

<https://mcb.theologyx.com/courses/>. You can either log on and do this in your own time, or you could get together as a group to complete the training, with one person logging on.

Or

**Saturday 26th October 2024
Forest Hill Methodist Church, 10.30am**

The Circuit will be running a face-to-face EDI training session on Saturday 26th October, led by Stuart Watkin. This is open to anyone, whether you have completed the Unconscious Bias Training or not.

There is no need to register for the event, just turn up on the day.

IF YOU HAVE DONE ANY ONLINE TRAINING DON'T FORGET TO SEND A COPY OF YOUR CERTIFICATE TO THE CIRCUIT OFFICE SO THAT YOUR RECORD CAN BE UPDATED: office.bcp@btinternet.com THANK YOU.



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Lewisham Sunfields Upper Norwood Wesley Hall**

Circuit Easter Offering

I am pleased to report that the following amounts were banked in respect of the Easter Offering from our Circuit:

Anerley	£228.62
Burnt Ash	£170.53
Eltham Park	£229.70
Forest Hill	£220.58
Hither Green	£275.84
Lewisham	£277.60
Sunfields	£1,452.55
Upper Norwood	£260.00
Wesley Hall	£127.75
Loose cash	£10.85
Total	£3,254.02

Linda Ryan, Connexional Funds

CIRCUIT YOUTH EVENT

- SUNDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER
- 5PM – 6:30PM
- HITHER GREEN
METHODIST CHURCH
- 7 – 23 YEAR OLDS
(UNDER 12 ACCOMPANIED)
- FAITH – FUN - FOOD



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

Women Emulating Susanna Wesley (WESUW)

Meetings on the fourth Saturday of the month
at Upper Norwood Methodist Church,
11am-1pm; 28th September; 26th October; 23rd November 2024

All are Welcome

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Lewisham Sunfields Upper Norwood Wesley Hall**

Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit Envisioning

Update on progress from the Way Forward Group

Property & Resources Group

The Property and Resources Group held their annual gathering on Wednesday 5th June 2024, 7.30pm, Burnt Ash Methodist Church. 14 members from 7 churches were present. The following is a summary of discussions:

1. Sharing good practice:

- Energy deals: Better to go to Companies direct; but check that you are comparing like with like.
- PAT testing can be costly but is a legal requirement.
- Annual Gas safety, and Fire extinguisher checks are a legal requirement
- Insurance inspection: All the above checks/testing are taken into account when the insurance inspection is carried out

2. Items for discussion:

- Solar panels: There are questions of the soundness of the roof; and planning permission is necessary. However, if churches did wish to pursue this, there may, later this year, be funds available via the Connexion.
- Hall lettings charges should be reflective of other lets in the area and utility costs. They should be reviewed/increased every year. Rates would normally be for the hire of a room, with an additional charge for a kitchen, outside space, or additional storage. Some churches offer limited ‘one off’ lets but these can be problematic.
- **Hither Green** currently has an issue with a stair lift that is out of action. DAF funding might be available as accessibility is a legal requirement.
Anerley: Following flooding from a burst water main, Thames Water have dried out the affected areas and employed contractors to relay floors and redecorate.
Upper Norwood: The Quinquennial report highlighted RAAC concrete is ceiling panels in the hall. Following an inspection by a structural engineer, temporary propping of all slabs is to be carried out. Further action may be needed in the future. The hall also needs rewiring.
Eltham Park: Masonry over the front entrance (which is currently closed) is crumbling and needs replacing. Scaffolding will be required.
District Support: Richard advised that Tom Winter, the new District property person lives in Eltham and is very happy to assist on any property issue.

3. ‘Way Forward’ proposals/Mission planning

Mission plans are to be with the Circuit Administrator by the end of June. One of the issues concerning property/lettings is access for all.

Date and venue of next Property and Resources Group meeting:

Wednesday 4th June 2025, 7.30pm Burnt Ash

**Anerley Burnt Ash Eltham Park Forest Hill Hither Green
Lewisham Sunfields Upper Norwood Wesley Hall**

Mission Planning: July 2024

Churches in the Circuit have been asked by the Circuit Leadership team to consider where they are currently, and where they might move forward to in the future.

Listed below are the issues that consistently recurred:

1. Worship and Spiritual Growth

Our churches are recognised as welcoming, friendly and inclusive, although there is a need to regularly review access needs.

A desire for our churches to be grounded in prayer, with more opportunities to enter churches outside Sunday worship for individual/group prayer.

Preachers are to be encouraged to be more open to exploring new ways of worshipping God, not only in Sunday services which could be more 'cheerful' and 'vibrant', but through prayer groups, Bible study, and other opportunities for worship other than on a Sunday. Worship bands and/or choirs could enhance worship. Preachers should be encouraged to link their sermons and prayers more closely to big global issues. They should include more Bible stories, and could make sermons shorter.

The use of people's gifts and talents through involvement in LAs is generally welcomed.

More zoom services requested.

2. Communication

It was almost universally acknowledged that our churches are not 'visible' enough in their local communities. There is a need for improved communication and publicity with and to the local community through on-line, physical and verbal means. More communication with support groups and other community groups (both those that use our premises and beyond) is to be fostered and encouraged.

3. Community Outreach

It was almost universally acknowledged that our churches are not doing enough to understand the needs of their local community. Simple initiatives might include inviting more groups to use existing facilities (including the church as well as halls) and making other areas of the premises more widely available. Lettings to support groups for mental health/disability groups to be encouraged. Alongside this, a closer involvement with those already renting the premises would be beneficial to both parties.

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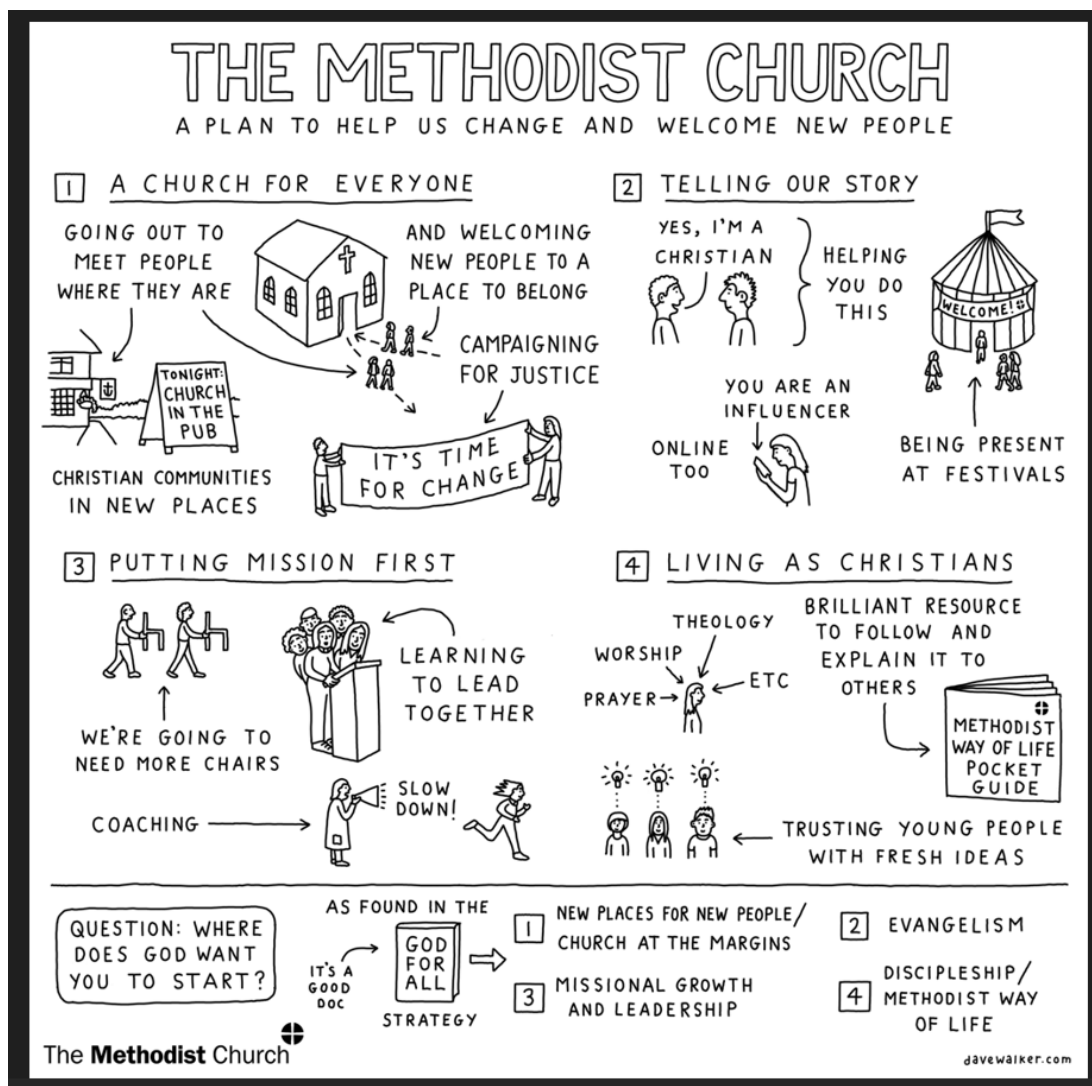
4. Growing Our Churches

There was encouraging news that one or two Junior Church groups are restarting. However, only a small number of young people are interested in, or becoming involved in the life of the church. More youth activities/groups and youth-led services are to be encouraged.

There is a desire for more fellowship outside Sunday services with church community activities, lunch clubs, coffee mornings. Opportunities for learning and development.

Increased emphasis should be put on caring for, supporting, and actively visiting elderly and sick members of our churches.

More engaging social events both internally, and involving the wider community should be considered and facilitated to extend the churches visibility in its community, strengthen fellowship, build relationships and reach out to ALL sections of the local community as we witness to Gods presence here in the Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit.



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Notes from the 'Way Forward' group meeting on 18th July 2024

Circuit Restructuring:

Having taken on board the comments and concerns regarding the proposed Circuit Restructuring, the Way Forward Group approved the circulation of a document produced by the Circuit Leadership Team setting out various options for further discussion. This document will be available to everyone, and is to be circulated widely, by both electronic and physical means, to ensure it is available to all. There will be a facility to submit comments about this document via an online google form, or by paper copy of the same questionnaire which will be made widely available. All replies must be submitted by **6th September 2024**. Responses will then be collated and will be available by 14th September.

To facilitate further group discussion, the Way Forward Group is organising a Circuit-wide gathering called 'Our Circuit, Our Future' on Saturday 14th September at Burnt Ash, 10am to 1pm.

The programme for this event will be as follows:

10-10.30am	Opening Worship
10.30-11am	PowerPoint presentation
11am-12noon	Discussion groups
12.10-12.50pm	Plenary
12.50pm	Closing devotions

There will then follow a 'Bring and Share' meal.

The aim of the gathering is to come together with a draft proposal to be put to the Circuit Meeting at Anerley on Wednesday 25th September at 7.30pm (or via zoom).

All are welcome to this gathering.



**Anerley Burnt Ash Eltham Park Forest Hill Hither Green
Lewisham Sunfields Upper Norwood Wesley Hall**

Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit



‘Our Circuit, Our Future’

on

Saturday 14th September 2024

at

Burnt Ash Methodist Church

Refreshments available

Bring and Share Lunch

10am-1pm

All Are Welcome



**Anerley Burnt Ash Eltham Park Forest Hill Hither Green
Lewisham Sunfields Upper Norwood Wesley Hall**

Way Forward Group: Looking ahead

Mission Planning:

A summary of the Mission Plans produced by eight churches in the Circuit was presented at the Circuit Meeting on 11th July at Sunfields; the report included earlier in this newsletter additionally includes responses from the ninth church. While some churches have been limited in their response and submitted what is effectively a 'Mission Statement' rather than a forward plan, many others have obviously spent a considerable amount of time reviewing, questioning, reaching out, and finally drawing together a cohesive plan for their future.

It is recognised that some churches have very complex issues looming in the next few years and are to be commended for dealing constructively with the various options they may need to consider.

Our Circuit churches have very individual needs, and in many areas are prepared to work towards their goals themselves, having good ideas and plans in place to do so. In other areas it is apparent that external help, either from the Circuit, or more widely, is needed.

However, the Circuit should feel encouraged that initiatives have been well thought through and there is a feeling of genuine commitment that comes through from the Mission planning documents.

It is, however, recognised that while many people within our churches already feel 'overworked', there is a desire to offer more opportunities for new people to help. The current exercise of drawing up job descriptions might more effectively use the skills and talents within our churches, and develop a better awareness of the effective use of resources within each role.

The Way Forward Group meets via zoom and is open to anyone who wishes to contribute to discussions regarding the future of the Circuit in terms of Spiritual Growth and Restructuring. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Garry Young youngall@btinternet.com or Linda Ryan office.bcpc@btinternet.com for further details.

Date of next meeting of the Way Forward Group:

Thursday 12th September 2024, 2.30pm via zoom

July 2024

**Anerley Burnt Ash Eltham Park Forest Hill Hither Green
Lewisham Sunfields Upper Norwood Wesley Hall**



3Generate 2024
Methodist Children and Youth Assembly
4th – 6th October 2024
NEC in Birmingham (coach provided)
Ages 8 - 23

For more information, and to book, contact Rev. Craig Gaffney
craig.gaffney@methodist.org.uk

Please remember in your prayers all the leaders and young people taking part in 3Gen this year; may they grow in the knowledge and love of God through fellowship and fun.



Rev. Dr. Jonathan Dean
New London District Chair

Circuit website: bhcpmethodist.org.uk

Deadline for information for next newsletter: 20th November 2024

Articles, posters for forthcoming events etc always welcome

Please email details to: office.bcpc@btinternet.com

Anerley Burnt Ash Eltham Park Forest Hill Hither Green
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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**

**29th September, 27th October &
24th November 2024 at 3.00pm**

ELTHAM PARK METHODIST CHURCH
Westmount Road SE9 1XX

🎵 **LIGHT CLASSICS** **SHOW SELECTIONS**

🎵 **FAVOURITE HYMNS** **POPULAR STANDARDS**

ADMISSION FREE

Refreshments available

SERVICE OF PRAYER & THANKSGIVING

Thursday 12 September 2024 at 7 pm

An open invitation for supporters of Lewisham Foodbank to gather to **worship, hear stories, give thanks** for what God has done and **pray** for current needs & challenges.

St Laurence Church
37 Bromley Road
SE6 2TS

Parking available on site
Buses 47, 54, 75, 124, 136,
160, 171, 181, 185, 199,
202, 208, 284 and 336



*light
refreshments
provided*



For more information contact Carol:
faithinaction.lewisham.foodbank.org.uk

www.lewisham.foodbank.org.uk

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SAVE the DATE

You are invited to



60th

ANNIVERSARY

& HARVEST

CELEBRATIONS

29TH SEPTEMBER 2024

11 AM - 3 PM

Join us for a significant milestone
& our Harvest Sunday Service, followed
by a delightful celebratory lunch.

Held at **Upper Norwood Methodist Church,**
Westow Hill, London, SE19 1TQ

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The CTSL Forum takes place once every three years and is a fantastic opportunity to connect with others who are working and part of churches and Christian organisations in South London.

The key-note speaker is Rev Steve Chalke MBE, author, speaker, former UN Special Advisor on Human Trafficking and Baptist minister of Oasis Waterloo. In 1985, he founded the Oasis Trust with a vision to build inclusive local communities providing housing, education, healthcare and other community-building initiatives.

PLUS: Bishop Mike Royal, General Secretary, Churches Together in England
Shermara Fletcher, Principal Officer, Churches Together in England
Richard Reddie, Director of Justice & Inclusion, Churches Together in Britain & Ireland

Chair: Archbishop Moses Owusu-Sekyere, President,
Apostolic Pastoral Congress

All served with lunch by Kinship Kitchen!

We will run four streams for you to choose from:

- Social Justice
- Youth Work
- Chaplaincy
- Communications

The event is free but places must be reserved via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/churches-together-in-south-london-forum-2024-tickets-919429497377>

**Anerley Burnt Ash Eltham Park Forest Hill Hither Green
Lewisham Sunfields Upper Norwood Wesley Hall**



HARVEST FESTIVALS AROUND THE CIRCUIT

15th September

10.30am Lewisham led by Rev. Richard Grocott

22nd September

11am Wesley Hall led by Chris Watkins

29th September

10.30am Hither Green led by Rev Craig Gaffney

11am Anerley led by Valerie Tredinnick

11am Upper Norwood led by Rev. William Davis

6th October

10.30am Burnt Ash led by Mary Sparkes

11am Forest Hill led by Local Arrangement

13th October

10.30am Eltham Park led by Rev. Richard Grocott

27th October

10.30am Sunfields led by Rev. Craig Gaffney

Lord and Bountiful Creator, giver of grains and seeds, of fruits and berries and all that grows from the earth, we thank You and we bless You for this year's harvest. We lift up our hearts in gratitude to the Sun, which, together with rain, wind and earth, worked in harmony to produce this bountiful harvest.



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Lewisham Sunfields Upper Norwood Wesley Hall**

	Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit Forthcoming Events	
Weekly	Thursday morning zoom Bible Study led by Mrs Margaret Boreham: All are welcome	10-11am
Sunday 8 th Sept.	Circuit Youth Event led by Rev. Craig Gaffney at Hither Green Methodist Church	5pm-6.30pm Age 7-23
Wed. 11 th Sept.	LP & WL meeting at Burnt Ash Methodist Church including 'Remembering Our Call' communion	7.30pm
Thurs. 12 th Sept.	Way Forward Group meeting	2.30pm via zoom
Thurs. 19 th Sept.	CLT meeting at Burnt Ash Methodist Church	7.30pm
Wed. 25 th Sept.	Circuit Meeting at Anerley Methodist Church	7.30pm
Fri 4 th –Sun 6 th Oct.	3 Generate 2024 at NEC Birmingham	
Wed. 9 th Oct.	Circuit Missions Committee meeting at Burnt Ash Methodist Church	2pm
Thurs. 10 th Oct.	CLT to meet with new District Chair: Rev. Dr Jonathan Dean, Burnt Ash Methodist Church	7.30pm
Wed. 16 th Oct.	Churches Together in South London Forum 2024: St. John's Church London SE1 8TY	10am – 3pm
Sat. 26 th Oct.	Equality, Diversity and inclusion (EDI) in-person training for church trustees at Forest Hill Methodist Church	10.30am
Sunday 3 rd Nov.	Youth/Young Adult Confirmation Exploration led by Rev. Craig Gaffney: 'Exploring Our Faith' at Sunfields Methodist Church	4pm-5.30pm Open to anyone up to age 30
Sunday 10 th Nov.	Youth/Young Adult Confirmation Exploration led by Rev. Craig Gaffney: 'Exploring Baptism/Confirmation' at Sunfields Methodist Church	4pm-5.30pm Open to anyone up to age 30
Sunday 17 th Nov.	Youth/Young Adult Confirmation Exploration led by Rev. Craig Gaffney: 'Exploring Methodism' at Sunfields Methodist Church	4pm-5.30pm Open to anyone up to age 30
Sunday 24 th Nov.	Youth/Young Adult Confirmation Exploration led by Rev. Craig Gaffney: 'Exploring Membership and Our Calling' at Sunfields Methodist Church	4pm-5.30pm Open to anyone up to age 30

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