



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

Issue 38

September 2021

**Superintendent Minister's Letter**

Dear Friends,

As we return home from our summer holidays and return to church life at the start of the new connexional year, we do so with a real mixture of emotions this autumn. As I write, the Covid 19 pandemic appears to be abating. Consequently, we have begun to relax so many of the restrictions that have limited what we have been able to do as a church, such as hymn singing or sharing refreshments after worship. This has brought us great joy. However, the future is still very uncertain, and many people are still anxious to travel or return to worship. Many fear that there could be another wave of infections that would scupper all of our plans to restart our church activities like Junior Church or midweek fellowship groups this autumn.

With this in mind, how do we move forward? First of all, we need to believe and trust that God is in this situation. He grieves with us as we struggle and he will remain with us in all that we do. Secondly, we need to work together as churches with love and compassion, determined to do God's will. Thirdly, we let us be confident that God's Holy Spirit will surely give us the guidance we need in the weeks and months that lie ahead.

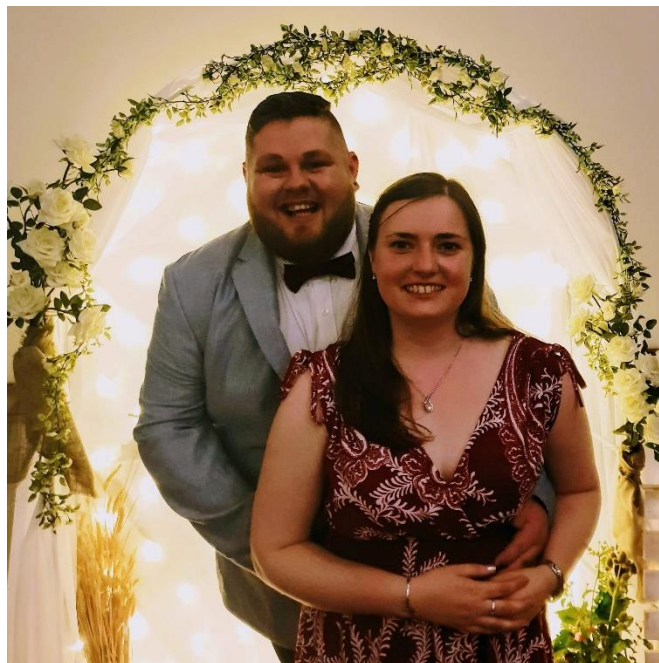
The future may still appear uncertain, but do not lose faith or confidence in the living God we have found in Jesus Christ. The Ministry of the churches of our circuit still have an important to play in the lives of so many people. Let us try to look to this uncertain future with the assurance that God will never leave us alone and that in his hands we are safe and cared for.

May God bless you all,

*Richard*

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

*We wish Craig Gaffney and his wife Louise a very warm welcome to our Circuit. Craig will have pastoral responsibility for Burnt Ash, Hither Green and Sunfields Methodist churches, but will be preaching around the Circuit.*



*A message from Craig:*

It has felt both like a long time and like no time at all since we found out we were stationed to the Blackheath and Crystal Palace circuit. The last few months have been a bit of a whirlwind for Lou and I. Louise has passed her PhD viva and is currently working on the minor corrections she has been set and I have been finishing up my full-time studies at the Queen's Foundation in Birmingham.

The last few weeks have been devoted, however, predominantly to packing for the move and wedding planning. Hopefully by the time this newsletter is distributed both will have gone smoothly! It's not been an ideal, or restful time, prior to moving to the circuit. We had hoped to be married almost a year ago and 21<sup>st</sup> August 2021 is our third wedding date. It should also make a fun honeymoon to arrive to the Winn Road manse on 23<sup>rd</sup> August to a raft of unpacked boxes and deconstructed furniture.

The truth is that the last year and a half has not been ideal for anyone, and we have all had to live differently to ever before. Many of us have found ourselves evaluating and reflecting on our lives, considering what the things we cherish are and perhaps realising the areas of life that were draining us.

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The same is true for our spiritual lives and the life of the community of the people of God. Many of us have been asking ‘what is Church really?’, ‘where is God and what is God doing?’ and ‘where is it that I am able to connect with God?’ as we have been stripped away from our traditional sense of corporate worship. The reality is that we don’t know what ‘church’ will look like in a post-pandemic world, indeed, we don’t even know if we are entering into a post pandemic world. We don’t know who will come back to worship, how comfortable people will feel in corporate gatherings, and whether those who come back will have the same understanding of God or the purpose of the Church as they did before. We are, and for sometime will be, in a time of uncertainty, change, and re-evaluation.

This speaks true for Louise and I personally, moving to a new area and away from our support networks. Louise, or ‘Dr Gaffney’ as I will insist on calling her, begins her working life outside of academia as a structural engineer with AECOM in central London after spending 8 years studying at the University of Newcastle. I begin probationary ministry with much to learn. I bring 8 years of experience working with and alongside religious organisations. I recently spent 3 years working as part of a chaplaincy team on behalf of the Methodist Church with the Armed Forces, prior to that I served as Methodist youth president – a connexional post elected by the children and young people of the Methodist Church, a Methodist Church youth worker, a teaching assistant and volunteering with Christian organisations overseas in Sierra Leone and India. All of these experiences have added skills and passions to my ministry that will influence the minister I am and will become, however, I have never been a presbyter before and have much to learn about the role; I pray for your patience and we navigate this time, and learn together.

In all this change and uncertainty we, personally and corporately, hold on to the promise that God goes before us and with us, that God has a plan for us. I’m excited to see what God’s plan has in store for us and hope you are too. As followers of Christ, my prayer is that we are attentive to what God is calling us to, observant to where God is working and courageous enough to step out in faith to serve for the kingdom of God together.

Blessings,



Craig Gaffney

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

## Circuit Forthcoming Events

Sat. 4 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	Welcome Service for Rev. Craig Gaffney	3pm	Burnt Ash
Wed. 15 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	Circuit Leadership Team meeting	7.30pm	Burnt Ash
Sat. 18 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	London District Representative Synod	10am-4pm	Westminster Central Hall
Tue. 12 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	Circuit Meeting	7.30pm	Lewisham
Sun. 17 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	Celebration of Faith and Worship for newly recognised local preachers	4pm	Westminster Central Hall
Wed. 27 <sup>th</sup> Oct	LP & WL meeting	7.30 pm	Lewisham



## Harvest Services around the Circuit

Sun 19 <sup>th</sup> Sept:	Lewisham at 10.30am led by Rev. Richard Grocott Wesley Hall at 11am led by Mary Sparkes
Sun 26 <sup>th</sup> Sept:	Anerley at 11am led by Rev, Abe Konadu-Yiadom Forest Hill at 11am led by Rev. Charles ILunga Sunfields at 10.30am led by Stuart Watkin
Sun 3 <sup>rd</sup> Oct:	Burnt Ash at 10.30am led by Mary Sparkes Hither Green at 10.30am led by Craig Gaffney Upper Norwood at 11am led by Rev. Abe Konadu-Yiadom
Sun 17 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	Eltham Park at 10.30am led by Rev. Richard Grocott

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Lewisham Sunfields Upper Norwood Wesley Hall**



## **Thank God for life - for all that is essential**

Words: Andrew Brown © December 2016

Thank God for life - for all that is essential:  
for food and drink, for everything we need.  
Thank God for families, for all who help us,  
for human love both offered and received.

Thank God for life - for wonders that surround us:  
the miracle of this renewing earth;  
complexities that science is unfolding;  
the mystery of individual worth.

Thank God for life - for all we have created;  
for every art, designs of hand and mind.  
Give thanks for skills that lead to new inventions,  
all the technologies we've yet to find.

Thank God for life - for restlessness of spirit:  
for liveliness that challenges, explores;  
for those who look at life and strive for better,  
rejecting easy answers, wanting more.

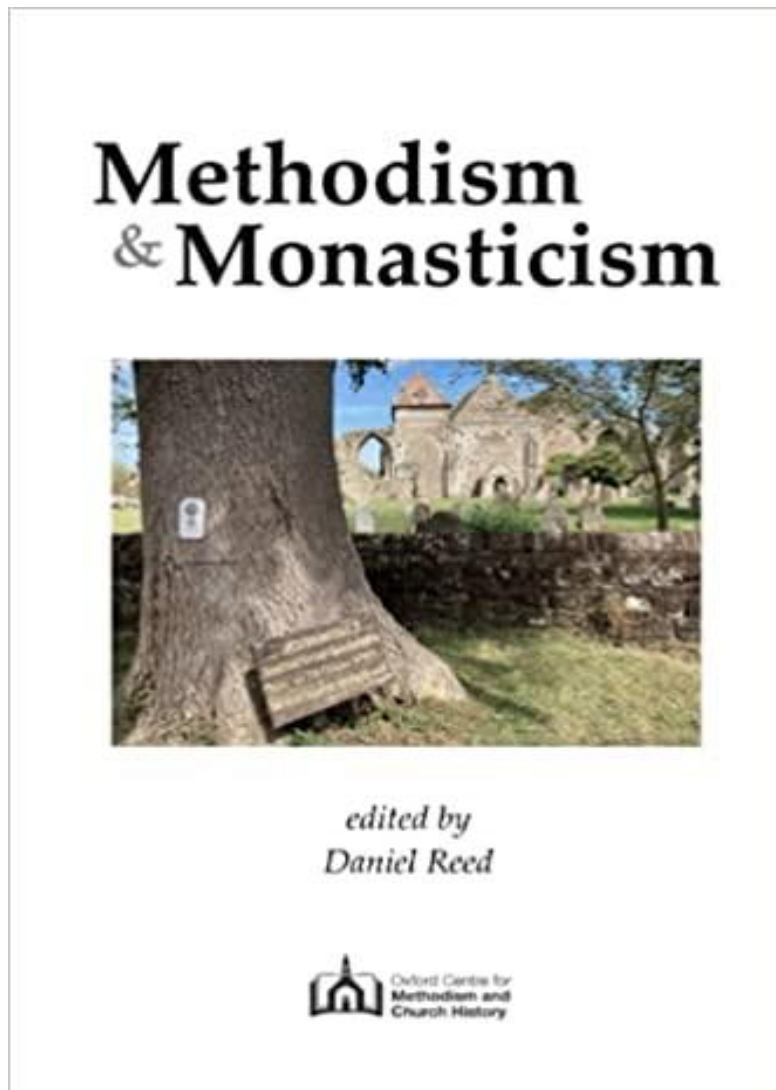
Thank God for life – in times of doubt and sorrow  
thanks is so hard; it's easy to complain.  
Yet life's an interweaving: sun and shadow.  
It is God's gift and God shares joy and pain.

Thank God for life - for all that we've been given;  
for all we are, for all that we can be.  
For this rich tapestry, thank God, the giver;  
give thanks for God's great generosity.

Andrew Brown has been a Methodist Local Preacher for forty years and is now based in Yorkshire. He says: "I became interested in writing hymn poems in 2003 and am keen to provide words that question and challenge, while remaining true to the good news of God's love for each individual."

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Methodism & Monasticism presents papers delivered at the Methodist Studies Seminar on 5 December 2020. They reflect on points of intersection between the seemingly divergent Christian traditions of Methodism and Monasticism. Despite the passage of two hundred years between the Dissolution of the Monasteries in England and Ireland and the origins of Methodism in the eighteenth century, the influence of medieval eremitic orders on the later movement is discernible in its writings and approaches to spiritual life.

Contributors: Jenny Carpenter, Kenneth Carveley, William Gibson, Colin Haydon, Nick Mayhew-Smith, and Linda A. Ryan

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<https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B099179HLJ> £8.99 (plus P&P)

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**ELTHAM PARK PLEASANT SUNDAY  
AFTERNOON ORCHESTRA**

***Is set to return!***

**[www.pleasant.org.uk](http://www.pleasant.org.uk)**

***As soon as dates have been confirmed with the venue,  
the PSA will once more be entertaining us with their  
ever-popular afternoon concerts.***

***These are hopefully to take place on the  
last Sunday of each month, at 3.00pm***

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

***Look out for further information!***

**or contact Martin Cleave: 020 8658 3319**

**[martincleave66@gmail.com](mailto:martincleave66@gmail.com)**

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

Deadline for information for next newsletter: **20<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

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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## *Forest Hill Methodist Church and Centre mini Yarn Storm Project*



**FHMCC** are working towards yarn storming the church and grounds when the time is right. We are knitting, crocheting, weaving, making pom-poms and tassels, working together and being creative in many different ways!

Then, hopefully the summer after we are back in our building (subject to Church Council re-approval), we will tie bunting to our fences, wrap our trees and benches with knitting and crochet, and hang yarn dolls, daisy chains and heart strings. We will deck the halls with our woolly craft and invite everyone in to celebrate the joy of knowing God's love and life in our church and community!

We thank everyone for their generosity in giving their time, skills, yarns, ideas and other craft materials, crafting as we can, working together towards a common celebration. New crafters are most welcome!

Blessings

Sue Rhodes ([suerhodespersonal@gmail.com](mailto:suerhodespersonal@gmail.com))



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