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

Issue 46

September 2023

Acting Superintendent Minister's Letter

Dear Beloved Church Family,

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in abundance as we enter the month of September, a special time in our ecclesiastical and Connexional calendar. It is with great joy and anticipation that I write this pastoral letter to encourage and uplift each one of you in our faith journey together. September marks a significant period in which we reflect upon the blessings of God's faithfulness and seek His guidance for the days ahead.

As we gather in worship and fellowship, let us open our hearts to the abundant love and grace of our Heavenly Father. May this month be filled with spiritual growth, deepening relationships, and a renewed sense of purpose as we seek to live out our calling as the body of Christ. Let us come expectantly, ready to encounter the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. May our worship be an overflow of grateful hearts, expressing our adoration and praise to the One who deserves all glory and honour. Let us draw near to God with sincerity and devotion, allowing Him to shape and mould us into vessels of His love and grace.

In the midst of our busy lives and the challenges we face, it is essential that we take time to rest in the presence of God. Let this month be a time of refreshing and refocusing our hearts on the One who sustains us. In the quiet moments of solitude, may we find solace and strength, knowing that God is with us every step of the way.

Let us be intentional in reaching out to one another, extending a hand of friendship and support. Together, we can build a community that is marked by compassion, unity, and genuine care for one another. May our conversations be filled with encouragement, our actions with kindness, and our prayers with fervent intercession.

As we embrace this month, let us not forget the world around us. There are many who are hurting, broken, and in need of the hope that only Jesus can bring. Let us

be ambassadors of Christ's love, extending a helping hand, a listening ear, and a message of hope to those around us. In our words and deeds, may we reflect the love and compassion of our Saviour.

Beloved, let us hand in hand press on in our journey of faith, knowing that God has a purpose and a plan for each one of us. As we seek His will, let us be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, ready to step out in faith and obedience. Remember, we are not alone in this journey. We have the support and encouragement of our church family, and above all, the unfailing presence of our Heavenly Father who is always ready to hear our prayer. He says pray without ceasing, in other words 'speak to me all the time.' 1Thessalonians 5:16-18. Each one of us needs your prayers. The Circuit Leadership Team need your prayers and, as you are all aware, Richard, our superintendent, is on Sabbatical up to the end of September. He and his wife need our prayers.

May this month of September be one of spiritual growth, renewed passion, and deepened relationships. Let us rejoice in the goodness of God and remain steadfast in our commitment to following Him. I am excited to see how God will move and work in our midst during this Connexional year about to start.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Yours in Christ's love,

Charles

UPPER NORWOOD METHODIST CHURCH PART TIME PREMISES MANAGER/CARETAKER

£15 per hour:16 hours per week to be worked flexibly including some evenings and weekends.

Do you have experience ideally within the Church setting where time management, facilities management organisation and communication are key? If yes, we have the ideal opportunity for you. The UNMC Premises Manager/Caretaker will play an important role in the day-to-day upkeep of UNMC particularly concerning security and maintenance.

The Premises Manager/Caretaker will support the Church Property Stewards, Finance/Resources Committee and Minister in ensuring that the Church building is kept to a high standard of repair and order, and to facilitate the effective use of the building for both Church activities and wider community use.

For a full job description and person specification forms contact the Minister on <u>unmcpremises@gmail.com</u>.

Rev Craig Gaffney's Ordination Service at Coventry Cathedral on Sunday 25th June 2023



It has been over 5 years since I responded to the call to offer for ordained ministry in the Methodist Church in Britain. A year of candidating was followed by 2 years of full time training and 2 years of ministry in the Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit as a probationary presbyter. It has both felt an incredibly long journey and also, in some ways, that no time has passed at all.

The ordination day for Methodist presbyters happens at the annual conference, our church's national decision making body which meets annually. The day comprises of two services, the morning worship which includes our reception into full connexion (the moment we enter a new covenent relationship with the Methodist Church) and the ordination service in the afternoon which took place in Coventry Cathedral. It is the day which we are told to look forward to as the moment the Church affirms the calling of me and my colleagues, supports the discernment conclusion that we are to minister in God's church in this role, acknowledges our academic and on-the-job probationary training and declares 'they are worthy!' and commits to uphold us in our ministry.

Ordination marks the end of many things. There will be no more probationers committees, worship development groups and a lot less paperwork. However, it is not an just an end but a beginning of my ministry, and our journey together, in a new way with me as an ordained minister. At the very least it will make offering Holy Communion across the circuit a whole lot easier!

The day itself was incredibly special to me and I want to thank the 50 (or so) people who travelled on the coach from London to support me in this moment as well as all of you across the circuit who have supported me in my two years of probationary ministry. I owe so much to your gentleness and generosity during this period. I have felt very welcomed, valued and loved. I look forward to seeing where this unpredictable and wonderful journey that is the Christian faith takes us together.

People have asked me since my ordination whether I feel any different and my answer, which may surprise, is no. Although the day was significant and the affirmation of the church I love precious, I still feel the same Craig as before. That's okay, I think, because God has called me as I am and in the moment of ordination I am no more changed and transformed than I should be on any other day of my faith journey through encounters with God. I'm still called in the same way, loved in the same way, equipped by the same God. Although I have been set aside for specific tasks within the life of the church I am no less called than any other member of our churches, than you, dear reader, to the ministry and mission of God.

For now, it's back to work – to the day to day ministry of loving God, loving people and trying to connect faith with the reality of the contexts that we live in. I was reminded recently of the beautiful words of Ephesians 4 which I think, in verse 12, summarises the minister I want to be – "equipper of the saints for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ".

I will close with this wonderful extract from the ordination service in the Methodist Church in Singapore which profoundly describes ordination as being called to something smaller:

"We are not ordaining you to be a caring person; you are already called to that. We are not ordaining you to serve the Church in committees, activities, organisation; that is already implied in your membership. We are not ordaining you to become involved in social issues, ecology, race, politics, revolution, for that is laid upon every Christian. We are ordaining you to something smaller and less spectacular: to read and interpret those sacred stories of our community, so that they speak a word to people today; to remember and practice those rituals and rites of meaning that in their poetry address human beings at the level where change operates; to foster in community through word and sacrament that encounter with truth which will set all people free to minister as the body of Christ."

Rev. Craig Gaffney

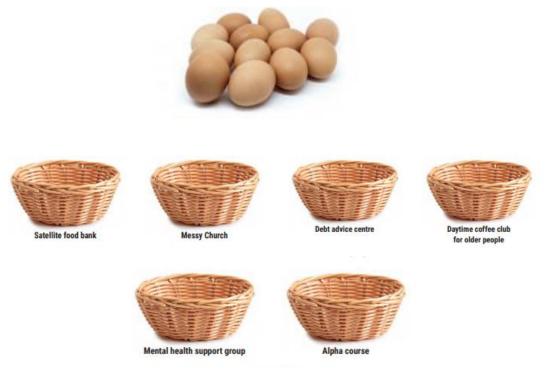
Ordained Minister

The Methodist Church

'Your Church's Future Story'

Saturday 14th October 2023 at Forest Hill Methodist Church 10am-12noon

Are you interested in the future of your church and what we need to do to encourage its growth? Then come along to this fun workshop. It will help us to discern what God wants us to do in this place, plan for the future, and decide where to put our limited resources.



No need to register – just turn up

World Mission Sunday Sunday 22nd October 2023

The Blackheath & Crystal Palace Mission Committee are encouraging churches in our Circuit to raise money for the World Mission Fund through offertory, a retiring collection, or donations on the day, or through coffee mornings during October. Looking and listening for God in Scripture, and the world: One of the 'A Methodist Way of Life' <u>commitments</u> for our worship life is that; "...We will look and listen for God in Scripture, and the world...".

THE WORLD MISSION FUND



Through our global relationships in the Methodist Church, the World Mission Fund is able to support 107 Partner Churches and organisations – in Africa, Europe,the Americas, 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. This is through evangelism, mission work, schools, hospitals, environmental projects, responding to emergency situations, administration, training and much more.

The World Mission Fund supports projects and individuals around the world. This work is only made possible by kind donations.

DID YOU KNOW?

Last year, donations to the World Mission Fund were used to support the Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia in helping some of their most vulnerable communities who had been affected by the health and economic consequences of Covid-19. This support enabled the church to distribute medicine, school uniforms, school equipment and smartphones to communities such as the one here in Alto Beni.

HOW CAN WE CARE FOR THOSE Around US Globally?



Pray. We can pray for our global Methodist community by using the Methodist Prayer Handbook and these worship resources



Serve. We can serve overseas through the Methodist Church or be enriched in our twinning relationships.



Give. We can also donate to the World Mission Fund.

The World Mission Fund currently invests £250,000 in emergency grants of solidarity for our partners each year. It costs on average £48,000 per year to support a mission partner. Between now and August 2024, we are offering one-off capacity-building grants to our partners to help their mission thrive thereafter, and we need your ongoing help to support this work.





LET'S TALK ABOUT SRI LANKA

The economic crisis in Sri Lanka is having devastating effects on the daily lives of the people as rising prices and shortages make essential goods, such as food, cooking gas and medicine, harder and harder to obtain.

The Methodist Church, Sri Lanka has launched a Samaritan Journey Project which aims to provide relief for the people who are suffering most seriously. This includes providing severely affected families with relief packages of essential food and other items; giving grants for medical expenses of children who have recurring illnesses; and giving start-up kits to enable people to grow their own vegetables. The World Mission Fund is being used to support this work.

BLACKHEATH & CRYSTAL PALACE CIRCUIT



Intergenerational Worship Training

Saturday 11th November 2023,

10am-12noon

FOREST HILL METHODIST CHURCH Normanton Street, Forest Hill, London, SE23 2DS

led by Stuart Watkin

Following on from the successful training event in May 2023, the Circuit are running another workshop. As previously, this is intended for anyone who is interested in learning more about worship, whether you currently help lead worship or Local Arrangements, or you would be willing to, so that we can provide the quality of worship our congregation's deserve every single week. Make a note in you dairy! Further details to follow nearer the time.



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

The 'Way Forward Group' met via zoom on Tuesday 11th July 2023

The following points will be taken forward:

Spiritual Growth:

- Churches should be encouraged to establish 'cell groups'.
- Training day on 13th May was very well attended and received. A further session on multi-generational worship is to be organised for a Saturday in November, possibly at Forest Hill.

It was recognised that reaching out, particularly to younger people, who are not currently attending church might mean doing things differently, and this may not be Sunday mornings in church.

There was a recognition of the current age profile of LPs, and the ongoing need for people trained and willing to lead LAs.

- Weekly zoom Bible study on Thursday mornings: The sessions last an hour, and those present are getting a lot out of them.
- Engagement with young people: Craig is continuing with quarterly Circuit Sunday evening events, and will be taking young people to 3Generate in October.
- Methodist Prayer Handbooks will be ordered for each of the churches in September.

Resources:

• The Property and Resources Group met on Wed 7th June. Good practices were shared, help offered, and constructive and useful discussions took place. The group will meet again in June 2024.

Future Shape of the Circuit:

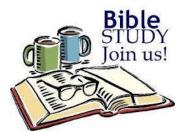
- Discussions re amended service times, or joint services, will continue. Some options are being trialled across the Circuit.
- 'Our Church's Future Story' training day with Sally Rush of the Learning Network, 14th October: venue to be confirmed and advertising to be issued.
- Timeline for churches to create 'Way Forward' plans: Once church representatives have received the training on 14th October, they would be asked to produce 'Future Story' outlines for their church council meetings in February 2024. These would then be gathered together and would form part of the Circuit profile in May 2024.

- 'Our Church's Future Story' training cards to be provided for each church to aid their discussions.
- Engagement: it is recognised that churches may need help and encouragement to consider how best to engage more fully with their congregations and community.
- It was noted that some of the work (ie engagement with young people) might best be achieved Circuit-wide rather than church by church. The possibility of employing a lay worker was discussed.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 19th October, 7.30pm via zoom

July 2023

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.

BLACKHEATH & CRYSTAL PALACE CIRCUIT

Easter Offering Service 2023: 'No Borders to God's Love'



Sunday 21st May, 4pm at Lewisham Methodist Church

This was a lovely sunny Sunday afternoon and it was held in Lewisham Methodist Church. The windows were wide open and you felt the lovely fresh breeze.

The theme for this service focused on welcoming, hospitality especially for those people who have been forced to move, displaced or migrated to different Countries. They have to adapt to other cultures, learning and sharing with different Communities. This enables the Methodist Church in their skills with different Communities for their journey to a new life. Wars from different Countries have forced people to move away from their Country of origin as we see in Ukraine, and other Countries who also have been moved not only by wars but by famine disaster across the World.

This service is gifted to the British Methodist Church by Methodist Women in Britain and shared by Church Communities across the Country. It raises funds safely for the World Mission Fund Communities in many parts of the World through the work of mission partners. This enables the Methodist Church in Britain to support our global partner Churches and organizations as they respond to areas of need where crises occur.

Rev. Craig Gaffney opened the service. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your Native-born. Love them as yourself. Leviticus 19:34 (NIV) He also provided us with an order of service in a folder on the Lectern which included all the words needed for each reader to use throughout the service.

Each Church in the Circuit was represented by a Minister and reader. Rev. Charles ILunga led us in prayers of Praise, Confession and the Lord's Prayer. Then each

Church introduced Bible readings and stories. The reflection was presented by Rev. William Davis as Guest Preacher.

Re. Richard Grocott gave awards to Mary Sparkes, Paddy Boothe and Garry Young in recognition of their 25 years of service each as Local Preachers in our Circuit.



Rev. Grocott held the Prayers of Intercession with each prayer relevant to various items on display. Rev. William Davis then accepted the Easter Offering with a prayer everyone said together.

Singing the Faith hymns throughout the service were Come all you people, When I needed a neighbour, Lord of all hopefulness, Would you walk by on the other side and Show me how to stand for justice. After the blessing by Rev. Craig Gaffney we sang the final hymn - The Spirit lives to set us free.

A huge thank you to all the people who took part in organizing, putting everything together and came along to make such a successful Easter Offering service. Also thank you to Lewisham Methodist Church for hosting us with refreshments, this was very much appreciated.

The final amount collected from Lent drawstring bags and envelopes is included below. Many thanks

Sibongile Mnguni Circuit Mission Rep.

£ £ £	1,114.81 400.00 150.00
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£	1,114.81
£	324.40
£	354.70
£	286.40
£	207.12
£	307.55
£	190.38
	£ £ £ £





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

ELTHAM PARK PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTENOON ORCHESTRA 24th September, 29th October and 26th November 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 23rd September, 28th October and 26th November, at Upper Norwood Methodist Church, 11am-1pm; *All are Welcome*

	Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit Forthcoming Events	
Weekly	Thursday morning zoom Bible Study	10-11am
	All are welcome	
Thur. 7 th September	LP & WL meeting including 'Remembering Our	7.30pm
	Call' at Burnt Ash Methodist Church	
Thur. 28 th September	Circuit Meeting at	7.30pm
	Forest Hill Methodist Church	
Tues. 3 rd October	CLT meeting at Burnt Ash Methodist Church	7.30pm
Sat. 14 th October	Training Session on how to discuss and prepare	10am-12noon
	'Our Church's Future Story' at	
	Forest Hill Methodist Church	
Thur. 19 th October	'Way Forward' Group meeting via zoom	7.30pm
Sun. 22 nd October	World Mission Sunday across the Circuit	
Sat. 11 th November	Training morning 'Intergenerational Worship' at	10am-12noon
	Forest Hill Methodist Church	

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: 6th 8th 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

Deadline for booking with Craig is SUNDAY 25th JUNE

www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youthfamily-ministry/events-including-3generate/3generate/



Circuit website: bhcpmethodist.org.uk Deadline for information for next newsletter: 20th November 2023 Articles, posters for forthcoming events etc always welcome Please email details to: office.bcpc@btinternet.com

LEWISHAM FOODBANK

Churches Newsletter - June 2023

Thank you

Hello - I am pleased to be sending out my first prayer newsletter on behalf of our wonderful Lewisham Foodbank team. Ten years ago, we were set up by local churches and we continue to be run and supported by churches in Lewisham and beyond. With the costof-living crisis, we all know many people who are struggling at the moment and we hear



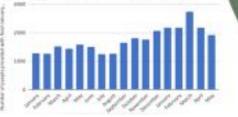
people's stories on a daily basis. We are passionate about bringing God's love and hope to those who are facing difficult times in our borough and as the beautiful mosaic in our warehouse reminds us, 'Any light we bring is not our own but God's goodness reflected off us' (inspired by John 8:12).

This year I really want to strengthen our relationship with local churches, and partner with you to serve our community. I would love to visit your church or meet with your teams to speak about Lewisham Foodbank and how we can support each other. Please do get in contact if you would be interested in meeting up.

The current picture

We were expecting an increase in demand over the winter, but the need far exceeded our expectations. Number of people with feed lansary 2022 - May 2023

In January we saw an increase in demand of 73.5% on January 2022, and in March we provided food for a record 2736 people. Although we wish our services were not required, we are pleased that we are able to be here to support people and we are grateful to God for his provision over these busy months.



New warehouse

This summer we will face our biggest adventure to date - moving warehouse! Our central hub (warehouse and offices) has been based in The Hope Centre on Malham Road since the Foodbank was set up ten years ago. We understand that the owners are in serious talks about selling Hope Centre so we have been in negotiations to move to another church hall. We are excited to have the opportunity to design a new welcoming and efficient space for staff and volunteers. Details of our new premises will be confirmed soon but as there have been some delays along the way, we would appreciate your prayers that this can move quickly and we can hopefully relocate at some point in late summer.

10th anniversary meal



In November 2022, we marked 10 years of Lewisham Foodbank by holding a thank you dinner for our volunteers. It was a wonderful event attended by around 75 people.

Damien Egan, Mayor of Lewisham, spoke at the event, referring to us being a faith-inspired charity and read Acts 4:35, a passage that inspires our

work daily and is the name of the charity with whom we partner to help clients acquire white goods and other essential items.

The Mayor also presented us with an award for Recognition of Outstanding Service which was quite the honour (apparently only awarded twice before). It is quite incredible to think that in those 10 years we have been able to provide food for over 100,000 Lewisham residents. The whole congregation of believers was united as one one heart, one mind! They didn't even claim ownership of their own possessions. No one said, "That's mine; you can't have it." They shared everything. (Acts 4:35)

foodbank

lewisham.foodbank.org.uk

Fuel Bank

We continue to partner with The Fuelbank Foundation, offering gas and electricity vouchers for our clients who are on pre-payment meters. Since 1 January we have had over 700 referrals for this support. As energy costs increase, the need for this support rises and we are sadly seeing more and more clients being cut off from their gas and electric supply.



Volunteers





WE WAL HED HEW VOLUNTISKS TO HED - Sart food derugtens - Park food percent - Drive Januag ma your percentist - were percentisted We have been astounded to realise that the weekly running of our Foodbank is dependent on approximately 450 hours of volunteering! We currently need strong volunteers to help drive, load/unload our van delivering to centres. We also always need volunteers to sort donations and pack parcels in our warehouse. If you or anyone in your church would be interested please do fill out the form on our website or contact Caro, our volunteer manager: volunteers@lewisham.foodbank.org.uk.

"When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaran and Hur held his hands up - one an one side, one an the other - so that his hands remained steady till sunset" (Exodus 17:12).

We can't do what we do without the support of local churches. Many of you already regularly give food and finance. Some of your congregation may already volunteer with us. We are so grateful. Some of you have asked for ideas of how best you can support Lewisham Foodbank. Here are some ideas:

Key Prayer Points

In all of our Foodbank centres, we offer prayer to those who visit. We know the power of prayer and want to see more of God's transformative work in our community. We would love you to join with us in praying for these key areas:

For the visitors to our foodbank – that they will experience God's peace and hope when they visit our Foodbank and that we will see more incredible stories of transformation in people's tives.

For the family and friends of our advice worker, Mariana, who passed away in February. Please pray for her two grown up daughters.

Our warehouse move – that we can secure our new premises in time to move ideally over the summer.

Our staff team, centre managers and volunteer teams – that their strength will be renewed, and they will be sustained and encouraged during these challenging times.

That we will be able to get enough van driving volunteers and slock to sustain the demand.

Become part of a prayer WhatsApp group Come and join the pastoral team praying for visitors at our sessions Give a monthly donation to help people on a journey to transformation Have a collection point for donations at your church and deliver to our warehouse Get involved with our seasonal campaigns: Harvest/Christmas/Lent Promote volunteering by displaying our posters Become a referral agency so you can signpost people in your community who need food Come and visit us Follow us on social media. Searching #ThisWeekWeNeed will indicate what items we need

Please drop us an email if you'd like to get involved.

Blessings

Sarah Vitty Project Manager pm@lewisham.foodbank.org.uk 07828 410225 In April I needed a food parcel for the first time in my life I was distranght and, embarrassed I was ashamed in front of my nife, and decyly depressed. In amongst the pasta & apples there were some CHOCOLATE BISCULTS, his sat with a impon, shared them & talked, for the first hime in months.

Lewisham Foodbank | Hope Centre | 118 Malham Road | SE23 1AN





COLLEGE PARK PLAYERS INVITE YOU TO THEIR QUIZ AND SUPPER NIGHT



IN AID OF CHURCH FUNDS

SATURDAY 9th SEPTEMBER 2023

At BURNT ASH METHODIST CHURCH HALL Burnt Ash Hill, Lee, SE12 0QD

7:00 pm for a prompt 7:15 pm start

SO BRUSH UP YOUR GENERAL KNOWLEDGE AND JOIN IN THE FUN!

PRIZES FOR WINNING TEAM BINGO (included in ticket), Plus RAFFLE

COME ALONE, A SMALL GROUP OR UP TO A TEAM OF UP TO EIGHT

COST £10 PER HEAD

TO INCLUDE QUICHE SUPPER & SALAD, SOFT DRINKS, NIBBLES, TEA & COFFEE

(Please note that no alcohol is allowed on the premises)

Entries to: Quiz bookings, 18 Crown Woods Way, Eltham SE9 2NN debbiewhitewood@gmail.com

CPP

www.collegeparkplayers.com