



The Methodist Church

Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit Newsletter

Issue 35

September 2020

Superintendent Minister's Letter:

Dear Friends,

This month marks the start of the Methodist Connexional New Year. We would normally be very busy preparing to go to Synod, circuit meetings, harvest festivals and church council meetings. What a very different autumn now lies ahead of us full of Zoom meetings and socially distanced worship services.

In my summer article, I likened plans to return to worship to the ministry post exilic prophet Haggai as the people of Israel returned to their promised land. In his Pastoral message for the Methodist New Year, the President of Conference, Revd. Richard Teal draws parallels with another post exilic Prophet, Nehemiah. He says that 'We tend to think of Nehemiah as a man full of activity and action. Remember how he amazingly rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. When he arrived in the city, he didn't start work immediately because he did not know where to begin. He didn't organise people straight away to start work on this huge building project. He stopped, observed and listened and only then did he know what to do and the rebuilding restarted.'

Is this where we are as a circuit at the moment as we return to worship in our churches? Many of us feel very unsure and uncertain as we take this next tentative step of faith. There is a temptation for us to feel we have to be immediately hyper actively full of life and action. Do we, like Nehemiah need to spend time listening, thinking and praying before we take on any new and bold projects? Listening to the Spirit of God is not about being lazy, passive or inactive. It is learning to think with the mind of Christ.

Inevitably, the Covid 19 pandemic will continue to influence what we can and can't do this autumn. But it need not all be fear, doom and gloom. The pandemic has forced us all to reconsider the ways in which we are church. Our on-line services, for example, have been a great success and brought us in contact with many new people.

So may we all use these next few weeks carefully as an opportunity to discern the mind of Christ and move forward in our ministry with confidence and with purpose.

May the Good Lord, bless us all,

Richard

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

Circuit and District Information

Preaching Plans: Included in this newsletter are the preaching plans for October and November 2020. As you will appreciate, with churches only just opening, we have not been able to prepare preaching plans in the usual way, but hope to do so from December 2020. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Circuit Meetings: Those of you who are on the Circuit Meeting membership may be wondering about our meeting scheduled for 8th October 2020 at Sunfields. This will not take place. However, the Circuit Leadership team will be meeting on that evening to decide how and when to bring the Circuit Meeting members together.

Rev. Denise Yeadon

After a time as Spiritual Care Coordinator at St Christopher's Hospice the Rev. Dee Yeadon is now looking for further healthcare chaplaincy work. Dee continues to be stationed and reside in the circuit and will occasionally appear on our preaching plan. We continue to uphold Dee and Andy in our prayers.

District Synod 19th September 2020

District Synod will take place on Saturday 19th Sept. It will be broadcast from the Chapel at Central Hall with just the District Chairs present.

If you would like to follow along, you can do so at the following link.

<https://mchw.live/live-stream/synod-2020>

It will start at 11am and finish at 12.30.



Now available: Watching and Waiting – An All Ages Advent Course

The District's 2020 Advent course: *Watching and Waiting* is now available to order. The season of Advent is a period of watching and waiting in anticipation of the arrival of Christ. The course encourages us to walk through the season of Advent to enable us to engage in mission and discipleship as a way of life.

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Message from Rev. Rohama Asif

Dear Friends,

This year has felt like chaos. The pandemic, the economy, political unrest, sad news about our loved ones, friends, church people suffering and dying with Covid-19, but here we are, starting over again. We know that time only moves forward, we cannot take it back or reverse it. Now that it is September, a new season of the year, a new church academic year, a new connexional year, a new harvest, a commitment renewal with covenant services. This new Church year brings new gifts and graces in our circuit through welcoming Reverend Charles Ilunga within August. A new beginning feels more important. It is time to return to our normal routine after summer break. However, this September we have a new normal. Now is not the time for us to give into discouragement, however it is the time to trust in the sure promises of God, through them we have hope and a future.

We are and need to continue shining the hope of Christ in these uncertain times. We are reminded that nothing lasts except our Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, over the last six months. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. His word and His promises are true and steadfast in crisis, and in all situations. In these challenging times, it will be interesting to see how our mission and ministry will develop in the following months and years ahead.

Currently, we need to remind ourselves we are still living within a pandemic. This week (7th September) more than 2900 confirmed cases of Covid19 were reported, the highest daily figure since May. Watching the news during the past week, it appears the struggle against the virus is nation wide. This is truly worrying. We all need to be more watchful and alert. I am immensely proud of how our churches have responded to the guidelines set in place about gathering for worship - keeping us all as safe as we possibly can be.

In August I suddenly had to go to Pakistan with Asif, as my mother was seriously ill. The weather was dreadful there because of the monsoon season. It was very hot and humid there. The journey both ways was unpleasant because of all the Covid-19 related requirements and restrictions. I thank you for the support I got from the circuit and staff team and my churches. Thank you for all of your prayers and by God's grace her health is improving.

Let's hope next year we'll have a vaccine and we can move forward without all the current limitations.

After all we have been through this year but as God's people and His Church, we have faith in God. We can count on Him and on His promises that He will never abandon us and will not forsake us. God bless you,

Rohama Asif

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The Methodist Church

Update 10 September

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government last night provided us with further clarification on the Government announcement this week of changes to permitted social interaction which come into place on **Monday 14 September in England**. We understand that the full regulations will be published later this week and we will update our guidance accordingly.

In summary:

Places of Worship can **remain open** for services and prayer. As before, the limit on the number of people is determined by the risk assessment with attendees divided into multiple groups of no more than 6 people.

Weddings and funerals are **still allowed** and maximum numbers remain at 30 with people divided into multiple groups of no more than 6.

Community Halls remain open and activities are allowed as before but within each activity, participants can be in groups that consist of no more than 6 people.

The government has emphasised that venues must be Covid-19 secure and contact details must be left for Test and Trace. More information can be read

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>



Women Emulating Susanna Wesley (WESUW)



The Blackheath and Crystal Palace branch of WESUW are celebrating our one year anniversary on Saturday 26th September. Please join our meeting of fellowship and celebration from 11am-1pm via the following link: <https://meet.jit.si/wesuwbcp>

What is WESUW?

WESUW was started in our circuit as a women's fellowship group reflecting the ideals of Susanna Wesley which include growing in faith through Bible study, nurturing children and doing charitable works.

We meet monthly, usually the last Saturday of each month, and cover a variety of topics such as How to pray, Faith over fear and The affects of social media on wellbeing. As restrictions are reduced we hope to organise visits to places of importance to Methodism and actively fundraise for our chosen charities.

Interested in joining future meetings?

We are currently meeting virtually using the link above. All meetings start at 11am and will be on the following dates:

24th October, 28th November, 19th December, 23rd January 2021

If you have any questions please contact us via wesuw.bcp@gmail.com

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| 2020 | | October | | | |
|---|---------|---|---|---|---|
| | | 4th | 11th | 18th | 25th |
| Lectionary | | Isaiah 5:1-7 Psalm 80:7-15 Philipp. 3:4b-14 Matthew 21:33-46 | Isaiah 25:1-9 Psalm 23 Philippians 4:1-9 Matthew 22:1-14 | Isaiah 45:1-7 Ps. 96:1-9(10-13) 1 Thess. 1:1-10 Matthew 22:15-22 | Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 Psalm 1 1 Thess. 2:1-8 Matthew 22:34-46 |
| | | 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time | 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time | 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time | 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time |
| AKY ANERLEY Oakfield Road SE20 8QA | 11am | H. Waterhouse | A. Konadu-Yiadom | P. Clews HC | A. Konadu-Yiadom |
| | 6.30pm | | | | |
| RA BURNT ASH Burnt Ash Hill SE12 0QD | 10.30am | Worship Team Harvest reflection | M. Sparkes | LA/JA | R. Asif Church Council |
| | 6.30pm | | | | |
| RG ELTHAMPARK Westmount Rd SE9 1XX | 10.30am | R. Grocott HC | G. Young | D. Yeadon | A. Mokgohloa |
| | 6.30pm | | | | |
| PH FOREST HILL Normanton St. SE23 2DS | 11.00am | P. Clews | C. Ilunga HC | C. Ilunga | LA |
| | | | | | |
| RA HITHER GREEN Torridon Rd SE6 1RQ | 10.30am | J. Warren | R. Asif HC Church Council | LA | E. Buck Harvest reflection |
| | 6.30pm | | | | |
| RG LEWISHAM Albion Way SE13 6BT | 10.30am | D. Yeadon | R. Grocott HC | E. Demehin | R. Grocott |
| | 6.30pm | | | | |
| RA SUNFIELDS Old Dover Rd SE3 8SJ | 10.30am | R. Asif HC Church Council | M. Boothe/ J. Koroma | R. Asif Harvest reflection | S. Watkin/ L. Murray |
| | 6.30pm | | | | |
| AKY UPPER NORWOOD Westow Hill SE19 1TQ | 11.00am | A. Konadu-Yiadom | C. Brown | A. Konadu-Yiadom | C. Ilunga |
| | 6.30pm | | | | |
| CI WESLEY HALL Sydenham Rd SE26 5HF | 11.00am | C. Ilunga HC | P. Hulme CA | C. Watkins | S. Clifton |
| | | | | | |

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Bible reading, from 1 Corinthians 13

Lesley Murray included this in her recent service at Sunfields. It is well worth a second publication! This version is taken from the 're-written for times of a pandemic' Bible (not quite as well known a version as the King James translation but apt for to day):

We can have all the best technology, fantastic preachers and music that doesn't lag or jump but if we don't love we're nothing but electronic feedback or an un-muted attempt at singing on Zoom. We can talk all the good sense in the world, know all the risks and have faith enough that God will help us cope with this virus, but if we don't love, we've got nothing. We can spend our days shopping for others, and our nights on the phone to the lonely and isolated until we're run ragged and exhausted. But if we don't love, we've got nowhere.

Love waits patiently two metres away in the supermarket, love is kind to those who feel forgotten, it does not envy the furloughed or take pride in its status as a 'key worker', it doesn't blame others for the virus's spread or seek to make money from other people's misfortune. It doesn't get angry at its rights being taken away nor does it keep records of its neighbours breaking lockdown. Love does not delight in our leaders failings though it rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. This virus may mutate, this virus or die. Church will change – as it has before and will do again. Scientific knowledge will move on, leaving what we have now in the dust. For now we may only see in part but that doesn't mean we have a partial gospel and one day we shall see the full picture. Before this pandemic, most of us knew nothing of R-rates, social distancing and lockdown, now we know better and have put our past understandings behind us. For now we see but through a screen darkly, then we will see face-to-face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love.



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| 2020 | | November | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|--|---|--|---|--|
| | | 1st | 8th | 15th | 22nd | 29th |
| Lectionary | | Micah 3:5-12 Psalm 43 1 Thess. 2:9-13 Matthew 23:1-12 | Amos 5:18-24 Psalm 70 1 Thess. 4:13-18 Matthew 25:1-13 | Isaiah 25:1-9 Psalm 9:9-20 Rom. 8:31-5, 37-9 Matthew 5:1-12 | Ezek. 34:11-6, 20-4 Ps. 95:1-7a, or 100 Ephesians 1:15-23 Matthew 25:31-46 | Isaiah 64:1-9 Ps 80:1-7, 17-19 1 Corin. 1:3-9 Mark 13:24-37 |
| | | 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time | Remembrance Sunday | 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time | Sunday before Advent | 1st Sunday of Advent |
| AKY ANERLEY | 11am | H. Waterhouse | D. Yeadon | A. Konadu-Yiadom HC | LA | A. Konadu-Yiadom |
| | 6.30pm | | | | | |
| RA BURNT ASH | 10.30am | LA/JA | R. Asif HC | M. Sparkes | J. Warren | LA/JA |
| | 6.30pm | | | | | |
| RG ELTHAM PARK | 10.30am | R. Grocott HC | A. Mokgohloa | R. Grocott | G. Young | R. Grocott |
| | 6.30pm | | | | | |
| CI FOREST HILL | 11.00am | LA | C. Ilunga HC | LA | C. Ilunga | P. Clews |
| | | | | | | |
| RA HITHER GREEN | 10.30am | R. Asif HC | E. Buck | R. Asif | R. Asif | D. Yeadon |
| | 6.30pm | | | | | |
| RG LEWISHAM | 10.30am | P. Clews | R. Grocott HC | S. Johnny | R. Grocott | E. Demehin |
| | 6.30pm | | | | | |
| RA SUNFIELDS | 10.30am | D. Yeadon HC | M. Boothe/ J. Koroma | J. Smith Church Anniversary | S. Watkin/ L. Murray | R. Asif |
| | 6.30pm | | | | | |
| AKY UPPER NORWOOD | 11.00am | A. Konadu-Yiadom | A. Konadu-Yiadom | C. Brown | A. Konadu-Yiadom | LA |
| | 6.30pm | | | | | |
| CI WESLEY HALL | 11.00am | C. Ilunga HC | C. Watkins Remembrance | C. Ilunga | LA | C. Ilunga |
| | | | | | | |

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Although churches in our Circuit are now open for worship on most Sundays, we are still continuing on-line services. With the help and support of a team of preachers and worship leaders we can now offer two different styles of worship. These are; a recorded service following Sunday worship at one of our churches; and an 'Alternative Worship Experience' (AWE). To access either, use the YouTube link below.

For the AWE, rather than using the link below, you can instead go to 'YouTube Blackheath & Crystal Palace', click on the banner heading and then 'playlist', then click on the service you require. Either way, then click 'play all': go to 'full screen'; and 'Skip Ads' as soon as possible. (unfortunately, it is not possible to cut out the Ads unless you have YouTube Premium).

AWE for Sunday 20th September 2020:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYb0xVe5TuDalcpIDPIGCjdN5aq7g6Jz5>

AWE for Sunday 13th September 2020:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYb0xVe5TuDboXvjRUsGhlsdqolh6v_WM

Recorded service for 13th September 2020:

<https://youtu.be/XlauP1smMiM>

AWE for Sunday 6th September 2020:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYb0xVe5TuDYT38-BfZY5Qim_EaZSZCbN

Recorded service for 6th September 2020:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bM5-nMfkQY>

Rev. Charles Ilunga Welcome service: Saturday 29th August 2020:

<https://youtu.be/XFTt4Lsk76I>

Service for Sunday 23rd August 2020:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0C0CZg6T3E>

Service for Sunday 16th August 2020: <https://youtu.be/DCuNQ6kTt2M>

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