

Hampton Methodist Church News

October 2017



A letter from Vicci, our minister

I have recently returned from doing jury service and it has been interesting and rewarding to be a part of the justice system in this way. Shortly before I started, there was an article on the BBC news website about a jury in Scotland who had been involved in a case that had lasted over two years. It had been a very complex fraud case and had gone on far longer than expected, but a time had come when, although it was really difficult for the jury members to spend so long away from their daily lives, had any of them pulled out the trial would have collapsed. They had persevered and the article was about the problems they were experiencing returning to normal. Many of them had to undergo re-training before starting work again and they spoke of the difficulties of relating to people as they had spent so long listening very intently but not really speaking to anyone.

It is an interesting reflection on modern life that this intent, careful listening without the right or indeed the permission to speak back, to question or share one's own story is so difficult to do that this particular jury, held to that behaviour for such an extreme length of time, experienced emotional turmoil and difficulty readjusting.

Pastoral work carries some of the same requirements. We are called to listen attentively and with care but not often to share our own stories back. It can be hard, and yet when we truly engage with hearing other people without spending the time considering our own response and being careful, as one must in jury service, to hear all the evidence before coming to a conclusion, we are engaging in a truly loving activity. In court, the fear of condemning someone unjustly, knowing it will affect the rest of their lives is balanced with the fear of allowing damaging behaviour to go unchallenged. It makes what we hear and how we listen particularly important but it is perhaps a lesson to take into all of our lives as we give people the gift of truly being heard. As Our Lord said, "They that have ears to hear; let them hear."

Vicci



A Worshipful Welcome

Hospitality in the ancient Near East is an important backdrop to the narratives and parables in the Bible. It was tightly bound in customs and practice which everyone was expected to observe. You ignored these customs at your peril. Today, in modern western culture, hospitality is highly informal, but we do have echoes of that formality and custom in our Worship. If you thumb through the pages of the Methodist Worship book, you will find on page 335, an order of service for a welcome. A welcome that is for Ministers, Deacons and Probationers.

It was this service that our Circuit Churches used on Tuesday 6th September at Teddington Methodist Church to welcome Rev. David Innes to the Circuit and Vicci as our new Superintendent. Now, we could ask why on earth we are welcoming folk we know, and in Vicci's case, know really well? The answer lies in the fact that the service functions at several levels. It brings the Circuit members into a formal setting before God to welcome David and Vicci at the start of their new roles. It is also a special piece of thanksgiving, as we are offered them both to undertake God's work in our Churches. The Chair of the London District, Rev. Michaela Youngson, presented David and Vicci to us, asking them to hold before us: God's love, the Gospels, preaching the Word, administering baptisms and presiding over the Lord's Supper. It is very telling that both Vicci and David requested God's help. Denise Tomlinson, the Senior Circuit Steward, formally welcomed them to their tasks and offered them our friendship, support and prayers. Representatives from other local Churches joined in on the welcome.

In addition to welcome and thanksgiving, the service was also a rite of passage for David and Vicci, and a watershed for the Circuit. It is so fitting that the service takes place in early September (at the start of the Methodist year), because this time is often a rite of passage for many of us- the first day at school, the first day at big school, the first time at college or university, the first time away from home. There is something deep in us that needs to mark these watersheds, for they become powerful memories, that sustain us and motivate us.

So, this excellent service meant all these things. Its component parts fitted together with ease, assisted by a lively music group. Local Preachers and Worship Leaders had been asked by Vicci to sit at the front of the Church, to give a visual message to the Circuit of the team that was available to lead service in the Circuit. Each of us played our small part in the formality of the Worship, and enjoyed an extended time to share the peace.

And David and Vicci, what was for them? A fine warm welcome, a generous sense of thanksgiving and a rite of passage, to be sure; but it was also a signal, a sign that we are entering a new era. Vicci has a new role and new responsibilities, as does David, and that means the opportunity for renewal and fresh thinking. It also means that we, the ordinary members of the Circuit, are part of this new era. We are responsible for support, prayer and action for our new Ministerial team. And best of all, we do this in the Lord's name. So welcome David, welcome Superintendent Vicci - bring it on!

Mark Gilks

A Word from the Stewards

The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 10:25-37) is one of the most popular stories in the Bible. It has a cousin parable, found only in Matthew (21:23-32), called the Parable of the Two Sons. This brief tale tells of two sons, who are both asked by their Father to work in the family vineyard. One says "yes" but does not go to work, while the other son tells his Father he won't work but changes his mind and goes to work in the vineyard.

Jesus tells this parable to face down the Chief Priests and Elders who challenged his authority to do things like the triumphal parade into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the Temple of traders and money changers.

Now we know that parables have teeth, and that they often bite. This one certainly did, with the Temple leaders being on the receiving end! However, this parable has a challenge today, a challenge to us. We are called to work in the vineyard. Our faith is not just about fine words and worship; it is about action and performance. This is not about the old chestnut of "faith verses works". The theology in Matthew's Gospel clearly demonstrates that to receive Jesus, to believe in him, requires doing the Sermon on the Mount. We are called to do our share of peace-making, mercy-granting and justice seeking.

Our Church provides real opportunities to work in God's vineyard. We offer a lot more than a weekly Sunday morning service. We look outwards to the community with Messy Church, the Extra Mile, the CTAH Foodbank, Baby Basics, our Memory Café, Ladies Guild and Friday Focus. At the same time, we provide the chance to deepen our faith through Discovery Club, Insights Bible Study and Breakfast Church.

There is a real need for you to offer to help, even if it is for an odd hour or two. Please let one of the Stewards know if you have a bit of extra time. Come and join the work in God's vineyard, even if, like one of the sons in the parables, you have said "No" in the past. Many thanks.

Mark Gilks



Project Linus UK

Project Linus UK is a volunteer organization that aims to provide a sense of security and comfort to sick and traumatised babies, children and teenagers through the provision of new, homemade patchwork quilts and knitted/crocheted blankets. Run entirely by volunteers across the UK, we co-ordinate delivery of the quilts and blankets to organizations and to individuals. As the Project Linus coordinator for West London & North Surrey I deliver to The Shooting Star Hospice, Hounslow Social Services, Your Sanctuary (women's refuges in Surrey), Ealing & Hillingdon women's refuges, Surrey Children's Services, and more. I also liaise with quilting and knitting groups across the area, as well as with individuals sewing and knitting for Project Linus.

I first became aware of Baby Basics in the spring of 2015 when there was an article in The Informer, and I wasted no time in getting in touch since it seemed an ideal match for Project Linus. I was contacted quite quickly and made the first delivery of quilts which were well received. Since then 374 quilts and blankets have been supplied to Baby Basics in Sunbury, with a few of those going to The Extra Mile. Once the Moses baskets have been made up with the baby necessities, the little quilts are placed on top as the finishing touch.

Project Linus is a lovely charity to be associated with because there is so much goodwill in the donation of the quilts. Across the UK we deliver hundreds of quilts each month - so far this year 19,870 have made their way out into the world. Quilters just love sewing, and if their work can bring some comfort and cheer to children who are suffering they are more than happy to give their quilts away.

We cannot reach out to every distressed child but we can help to provide them with tangible evidence that someone cares, along with the physical reassurance that comes with being snuggled up in a quilt. We always try to deliver quilts and blankets to children who are local to the makers.

If you would like to find out more about Project Linus UK and read some stories about the children who have benefitted from receiving the quilts, then do visit our website: www.projectlinusuk.org.uk. We also have a thriving Facebook page – just search for Project Linus UK. As the local coordinator, I rely completely on donations, and so I am always happy to hear from local quilters, and to receive donations of quilts, quilt tops and cotton quilting fabric.

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Circuit Development Plan

By now you may well have picked up that there is a Circuit Development Plan and that it is all about making changes to improve our resilience and our ability to do ministry and mission. It involves potentially joining with three churches from the Staines and Feltham Circuit (Ashford, Ashford Common and Southville), exploring planting a Fresh Expressions Church in a shop or the Community Hall on the Field Common Estate in West Molesey in partnership with Walton Methodist Church, and looking at planting a Fresh Expressions Church in Laleham Methodist Church which will otherwise close at the end of August. We also plan to build stronger relationships with Walton and Hounslow Methodist Churches through some joint work, and with Kingston Circuit through shared training, and to employ a Deacon and further part-time lay-worker and part time administrator. In doing all of this, we also hope to become a centre of excellence such that other high calibre student ministers like Naomi Oates will be attracted to train with us.

The background to this is that the Staines and Feltham Circuit is closing four of their churches and breaking up as a Circuit with three churches going to Thames Valley and three needing a home in the London District and asking us to share with them. Those three churches will bring with them a presbyter, a manse and some money. By additionally employing a Deacon (a minister who focuses on outreach) and opening fresh expressions churches on Field Common and Laleham we will increase our resilience and hopefully also our attractiveness as a circuit for ministers in stationing. The Deacon will have particular responsibility for Hanworth, Field Common and Laleham but will work across the Circuit as will the presbyters. Staines and Feltham also have some excellent local preachers, some of whom will come to share in our Circuit work as well.

There will be many questions to ask over the coming year and it is important that they are asked as we hope to be in the new formation by next September and September 2019 at the very latest. Do remember that all of us are able to attend Circuit Meeting as observers (only reps can vote) and take the chance to see what is going on. Reports will also be made at Church Council, another place where all are welcome to attend and hear what is going on.

This is a potentially exciting time for the Circuit and although there are hurdles still to be jumped, I hope and pray that we will be putting into place a robust group of churches that can focus on ministry and mission without fear of loss of ministry every time we go into stationing or lack of resilience to absorb the work load when a minister is on leave or unwell.

Vicci



Family Summer Memories

"It was the best of times - it was the week of wisdom" (with apologies to Charles Dickens)

The first two weeks of August were very intense and hectic in the Sandberg household. This was due to the visit of my daughters Ruth and Rhona and their families who (apart from the parents) comprise Grace (9), Amy (8), Ethan (6), Reuben (6) and Joseph (3). Joseph and Reuben belong to Ruth and Adam, and the others to Rhona and Mark.

Rhona lives in Hausen-im-Wiesenthal in Germany and Ruth in Parkhurst (a suburb of Johannesburg and not the institution on the Isle of Wight!).

It was lovely to see them all and to spend time with them all together. However, it did involve a total rearrangement of the accommodation at my house. The children all slept together in the same room downstairs on a sofa bed, single mattress and futon, shared as was practical. The shopping also increased dramatically to almost daily in order to maintain food supplies, as compared to my usual weekly shop! Additionally, there were several trips to Heathrow to pick up and drop off as people arrived and left, because they didn't all arrive or leave at the same time!

Ruth, Reuben and Joseph came to Breakfast Church on the 6th August, which they loved - they couldn't believe the amount and variety of breakfast fare and also enjoyed the activities on offer, presented enthusiastically by Naomi Oates.

We spent the following week visiting various playgrounds in Bushy Park, Carlisle Park etc. as well as Woodland Gardens in Bushy Park. When spending time at home all the children spent hours making Lego and K'Nex constructions - fortunately I have plenty of these at home! The highlight of the week was a visit to Legoland on the Thursday followed by a Fish & Chip supper.

On the following Sunday (13th), we all attended the morning service at Hampton which allowed Ruth and Rhona to renew old friendships.

The following week was slightly less hectic as Rhona and family returned to Germany at the beginning of the week, and Ruth and family left on the Friday to spend time with Adam's side of the family. It then took me some time to disassemble all the Lego and K'Nex creations and the next few days to clear the washing pile!

Ruth and Adam are due to return to the U.K. next April, as Adam works for Arup in the U.K. and was posted to Johannesburg for 4 years and this contract expires in April. He may have his contract extended but if this happens they will be required to return to the UK in order to renew their visas. It will be difficult when they do permanently return to these shores as Reuben has now started school and he is very well settled.

Mark's job in Germany is permanent and not because of a placement by a U.K. Company, so he will continue working there (subject to Brexit) until they as a family decide to come back. Also, all the children are now at school and involved in various out of school activities - football, tennis, gymnastics etc.

Of course, because my family is now distributed across the world, this means I am often away visiting them - I have just returned from a long weekend in Germany and will be going to South Africa in November.

Willem Sandberg

Levi's football journey so far

I first kicked a ball at the age of 4. I knew since that moment that I would want to do that as a sport. I first started taking football seriously at the age of 6, when I joined Hampton and Richmond (my local team.) I started off as a right winger where I would do dribbling skills getting past defenders then would cross the ball to the striker. As the years progressed I began to become a taller and bigger boy and I was placed into the position of centre back (who is usually one of the tallest players on the pitch.) By the age of 7 or 8 I was getting recognised by many teams like Chelsea, Fulham, Brentford and Norwich but my parents would never let me trial for these academies as they wanted me to 'enjoy my football and not go competitive as yet.' I enjoyed a further three good years at Hampton and Richmond where I enjoyed playing with my team mates.

When I reached the age of 10, Brentford approached me formally to join their academy, and my parents (in conjunction with close family members) allowed me to undertake a trial. Within two weeks they wanted to sign me to join their academy and give me a contract. It was a hard decision for me and my family and we had finally come to a decision that I would sign for Brentford. It was hard leaving Hampton but I felt that this was a perfect opportunity for me and would offer me a new challenge.

My first season was quite shaky as I was very nervous and I didn't really know anyone. As another two seasons passed I grew as a central midfielder and I played very well in that position. I got on very well with my teammates and I enjoyed playing. During my time at Brentford I had the opportunity to go away on football tours and play in Spain and Greece. Then, as I excelled in my third year, I started playing two years up (which means I played with players two to three years older than me.) Unfortunately, heading into my fourth season, the academy announced that they may be closing down due to a change in the club's business plan. Many coaches and players were released from their contracts. However, a big moment in my time at Brentford was the Greece tour which was amazing, where we met new people and new cultures and where we experienced racism for the first time from an opposing team. This Greece tour was one of my best moments at Brentford as we won the tournament.

As Brentford was coming to an end, Azeez, who had been my coach for the past few seasons, spoke to my parents and asked if he could be a mentor to me. He was a very encouraging and friendly person, who always wanted the best for me and held strong principles and was committed to his faith as a Christian. So, then Brentford closed and Azeez and I formed quite a close bond. As my mentor, he would guide me on the media, social, psychological and athletic sides of football. In addition, he conducts small one to one training sessions to improve my technique. He has also watched some of my matches to see how I can improve from a psychological perspective and not get frustrated at mistakes that are made during the game.

When Brentford finally closed down a bigger opportunity came, which was Arsenal. I was approached by many teams like Man City, Man United, QPR, Tottenham and Chelsea. I decided to go with Arsenal as they are my boyhood club. I started off as a centre-back due to my height, then I went to centre-midfield. That was a breakthrough season for me, as I won the National Cup with my Arsenal teammates, which was a very good experience and a memorable one for me.

As the season went on it seemed that I had impressed England and they invited me to their Summer Camp this year to train with them for four days. At England, there were many workshops which included team building, activities and football development and how

England plays. Also, we did one to one sessions, which included finding out what my school and family life entails. Our first day consisted of getting to know your teammates; the second day was two training sessions, which was a game and recovery (ice bath and foam rolling); the third day was six vs six and position specific training. Finally, the fourth day, was a match against Notts County and we won 5-3 which was good. England was a good experience overall. I think I played well and I made a lot of new friends. The final cut will be in October, which I will hopefully get into.

Thanks to the Hampton Methodist family for their continued prayers and support.

Levi Laing

On 28 September Levi heard that he made the cut for the GB football team! Congratulations!



If you are passionate about anything that you would like to share in our magazine, please let Liz or Willem know!

The Lancasters in South Africa

When we first arrived in Johannesburg, we were convinced that we would have to get used to a life that revolved around our car, and that we would be living in a gated development miles from the centre of the city, with Adam having a horrific commute to work. We assumed that we would also be travelling to a church that suited us. Nothing could be more different from that initial, rather naïve assumption.

Within two weeks of arriving, we had already found the house that we would rent in Parkhurst, an old residential suburb, close to the city centre. It is mainly leafy and quiet, apart from 4th Avenue, which runs through the suburb and has a collection of restaurants, cafes, and small boutique-style shops. It is an area that we can walk or cycle around happily, and it is bordered on one side by the Braamfontein Spruit (a small river that runs through the city) and Delta Park, which has 108 hectares of woodland, grassland, and a bird sanctuary. This is the perfect place to walk or take the boys on their bikes. We do approach our activities with an element of caution (as we do with everything in this amazing city), such as exercising when there are others doing the same (early mornings and weekends being the most popular) and not walking or running in the dark. However, we feel safe and comfortable in this environment. Another plus is that it only takes Adam 20 minutes to drive to work, and it is also close enough for him to run there or back when he feels like it.

One of the most incredible things about where we live is our church. Before we moved, we looked on the internet for suitable churches in the area. We saw one just a few blocks away, which we decided to try, although we were sceptical that it would be right for us within such close proximity. We should not have been so doubtful! We discovered Parkhurst Community Church, which is a vibrant Christian community, where we have made many good friends and been welcomed. We meet in Parkhurst Primary School every Sunday morning at 9am (or earlier if you are serving). There is a thriving Kids Church and, up until last month, the church employed a youth worker (unfortunately, she is moving on, so we are looking for someone to fill her space). Coffee is served in the courtyard before and after the service (as you can imagine, the sunny Johannesburg weather is conducive to this). There is a mums' feeding room for small babies with a live feed to the service (a place where I got my first taste of the church, as Joseph was only 8 weeks old when we moved out here), and groups for children up to teenagers. We don't yet have any teenage groups, but this is something in the planning. Part of the reason for this is that the church was planted about five years ago from the bigger Rosebank Union Baptist church; a very large church in the northern suburbs that people travel from all over Johannesburg to get to. They decided to settle in with the younger age groups before tackling the older ones.

On an average Sunday morning, we have a congregation of about 200 people. The church is led by a pastor and a group of elders, who rotate the preaching (which is fantastic, by the way). We have a good worship team. The congregation is mainly white (Parkhurst is still a largely white community), but we do have black members, particularly from the University of Johannesburg, where the church supports an outreach mission. We sing in several languages, from Tswana and Zulu, to Afrikaans and English. We are trying to embrace the wide range of cultures and languages that make up this Rainbow nation.

For us, although we love the Sunday morning gatherings (and particularly the quiet walk or cycle to church), the key focus has been the weekly community group that we attend. The community groups are along the lines of a bible study or cell group, but the focus is much more on living and serving each other as a community. For example, although we consider the sermon and bible passages of the previous Sunday, the emphasis is much more on application of the biblical truths (and our struggles and challenges), and how we can support

each other through this, rather than a close scrutiny of the text. We meet at the home of another family with two boys, of a similar age to Reuben and Joseph, who have become very close friends. We have an arrangement where I take the boys over on Wednesday afternoon, and we stay for dinner (each family takes it in turns to provide the meal). Adam joins us after work, and then the boys go to sleep there while we are joined by the other group members and meet. We are strict about starting at 7.30 and finishing on time at 9, so that we can all get home to bed at a decent time. People generally go to bed so much earlier here (9.30 is quite normal for us), because the days start that much earlier. Reuben starts school at 7.30am, so we have to be out of the house early, and the boys are usually awake before 6. When we first arrived in SA, this came as a terrible shock! However, we have now adapted, and it makes good sense to get going and do as much as possible before the heat of the day sets in.

At the moment, we are experimenting with the timing and format of our community group. We are trying a communal dinner (and social time!) for everyone every other week; getting the kids back home ready for bedtime. On the alternate weeks, we are going to try and meet during the evening to discuss the week's passage. The idea is to be realistic about committing definitely to two weeks out of four, so that we all meet each time, rather than having slightly different groups over the four weeks (people in Jo'burg seem very busy and we all have our kids' routines to juggle). We are trying a more flexible approach, in any case, and we will see how it goes!

Our good friends from CG share our love of camping (which is heaven for four young boys!), and we have just come back from a weekend with them in the bush. We are hoping to arrange a camping trip for the whole CG at some point, as it is always fun, as well as a perfect way to get to know each other better.

Sometimes, we feel that we need to pinch ourselves to check that the life we are living here is real, because we feel so settled and content. We could not have planned this, even if we had tried. It is testament to our real and living God who has made provision for us in ways we could not have expected. Stepping out to somewhere new can be extremely daunting, but it can also open doors that are hard to believe in hindsight. We certainly feel that we have been led here. There are many challenges of life in SA (which I have not had time to go into here). But we are convinced that Parkhurst, Johannesburg, is where we are currently meant to be.

Ruth Lancaster



A week in the life of Vicci

It's Sunday morning – the day I suspect that most people think is the only day I do any real work.

It's a quiet Sunday which means the afternoon is free. I tend to take communion to anyone who is ill on Communion Sundays, but today is not a Communion Sunday and Mark and I get to spend some time together before I go back down to Sunbury for 6 o'clock for Geese. We have four regular attenders to this Circuit Teen project at the moment and we spend an enjoyable couple of hours eating pizza and trying to develop an interesting service for the young people to lead at the various churches over the coming year. We get home about 8:30 which leaves me enough time to plan for the coming week.

Monday is always a full day as we run several projects at Hanworth weekly on Mondays. This particular Monday, there is also a funeral service and a burial. I meet the funeral family at Sunbury at 8:30, run some errands and get home with just enough time to change, pick up my notes and get back to the church.

The service concludes and we all get into the cars to go to the cemetery. The burial is set for noon and it is the hottest part of the year so far, so I think we are all glad that this is a short part of the service and most of the words have been said at the church.

We return to the church, where I spend an hour with the congregation before leaving to go to the "Listening Ear Café" at Hanworth. Then I have a supervision with Bron and drive home for a quick bite to eat before heading out again to a School Governors' meeting at six.

At 8:15 I pop my head in at the boxing project, hoping it is one of the days when I can just show my face and then disappear, but my role within the project is Chaplain and co-Chair so I have to stay for a conversation with one of our teenagers who is struggling a bit and then catch up on emails.

Tuesday is a late start – my first meeting is not until 12 so I use the time to prepare for a number of meetings coming up and for a memorial service at Teddington on Friday. I am meeting a member of the Discipleship and Training Network at Hampton with a view to explaining what we do in the three churches I serve, and discussing how they can help us do it better, and if our experiences can help them. We spend a great couple of hours driving round the Circuit and talking about what we are doing and why and she leaves me saying that she feels really enthused and positive about the state of Methodism in this Circuit. Go us!

I have not had much time to answer the emails that need longer than five minutes spent on them and go home to catch up on the ones that have attachments that need opening, forms that need filling in and carefully thought out answers.

Mark and I actually manage to co-ordinate dinner with each other and one of the children and then it's off again for the combined stewards and WAG meeting at Hampton. Mark chairs a briskly brilliant meeting and I am home at 9:30 which is a rare occurrence.

I still haven't done all the preparation I want to on the two services coming up this week, plus there is a Bible study to prepare for tomorrow, so I stay in my office until about 11 before crashing out in front of late night NCIS repeats.

Wednesday morning, I have arranged to do a walk around Crane Park School with some of the children. This is a part of my role as Chair of Governors, but also a great opportunity to chat with some of the children who live on the estate. I get to Hanworth church for Bible

Study at 11 and we have a coffee, chat and explore the Gospel of Matthew together before a couple from the Gideons arrive at 12:30 to talk to me about their plans for re-energising the Hounslow end of the Hillingdon section. I get home about 2:30 for a late lunch and some longer term planning for a CLPD training day I am running for the District in July.

At five I am off out again to meet with Geoff at Sunbury who has written a radio play about the life and death of Edith Cavell. This will be recorded in front of a live audience at Sunbury on the 11th of November and we are starting to plan music, casting and advertising. Then it's off again to Hanworth for the newly formed Community Choir. This is something that the community asked us to do and although it is currently quite small (8 members) we are only in week three so I have high hopes. I get home to find that two of the Circuit Safeguarders have got there before me for our semi-annual meeting.

Thursday is my day off but there is a big Methodist Women in Britain meeting to relaunch Sector B (our sector) and Thursday is when it is. I have been asked to take on a student who is candidating for ministry so I arrange to meet her around the corner from the Methodist Women in Britain event at 4:30.

At half past four, I pop round the corner to Costa to meet my student who is an utter delight. We spend two hours exploring her calling and what she wants to get out of the placement. We part feeling very blessed and looking forward to the time together.

I drive home playing loud music and feeling good about the day, send out a few emails to try to get things moving and finally get to spend a bit of down time with the family at about nine o'clock.

Friday morning I continue to work on the administrative side of the job, wondering if I will ever see an empty in-box again. I go out to a lunch meeting with Jenny Snashall, the URC minister.

There is a thanksgiving service for the life of Gwen Spear at Teddington at 2:30 and Nigel is unable to take it, so I go across to top and tail the service and also to preach the sermon. Gwen was a great favourite of Elanor, to whom she used to tell scurrilous stories, even at the age of 101, and I feel privileged to lead the service.

I have three useful pastoral conversations afterwards while enjoying the Teddington cake and sandwiches and am hugely grateful to Gill Jackson who understands my coffee habits (two cups are usually better than one) and then dash off to change out of my suit for youth club at Hanworth.

I stay to take a meeting with Paul from Bike Hub who is going to be doing some work with us in our extended youth club offering over the summer holidays. We also discuss the assembly he is going to be taking at Crane Park School and how best to advertise the summer course.

At the end of the meeting, I drive down to Sunbury where I have promised to give my God-daughter a piano lesson before running ALOUD!! our ukulele and singing group. We have really grown over the last year with fifteen girls attending. ALOUD!! finishes at 8 and I close up and drive home to pick up Sophie and back to Hanworth to see the end of the boxing session

I wake up on Saturday at 7 to a raft of emails that need answering and then take Mark to a men's prayer breakfast that he has been invited to by one of the boxing coaches, drop Sophie to Halfords at Sunbury Cross and catch the 8:50 train from Hampton by the skin of my teeth as I have to be at Westminster Central Hall for 10 a.m. I attend a very well-

resourced conference on Brexit: Impact and Consequences (already different to what the contributors had imagined when they accepted the invitation last September) and am, as always in Methodism, able to catch up with a few friends “across a crowded room”. I get home by six and sit down to put the finishing touches to my sermon in light of some of the thinking I have done today and to write a thought for the day for Friday Focus and the services for next week as I am on retreat Monday to Wednesday and don't want to have to work two days off on the trot.

Tomorrow is the start of another week. As always in ministry, I am left wondering if I should have prayed more, studied more and visited more but also aware that this is a job that can never be completed.

I hope that you found this snapshot of ministry here interesting. Please don't take it as a plea not to ask me to do anything else – that is not its intention. However, I hope that you will now have a better understanding when I am later than you would hope with a reply to an email or a letter!

God bless

Vicci

Christmas Angels

This year angels from the realms of glory will once more wing their flight over all the earth, but across the Teddington Circuit they will also be found sitting on park benches, resting on window-sills and dropped onto railings, waiting to be found and taken home by passing strangers who might care to adopt them.

The Christmas Angel project is a national undertaking whereby volunteers knit angels which are tagged with a note with the local church website or details of Christmas services and they are then left in places where they can be found and taken home. If you love to knit or crochet, do have a go at this fun way of getting our message out there this Christmas. More information and knitting and crochet patterns can be found at www.christmasangel.net or pick up the knitting pattern in the narthex.

Vicci

Operation Christmas Child

The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to show God's love in a tangible way to needy children around the world, and together with the local church worldwide, to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Since 1990, more than 146 million children in over 150 countries have experienced God's love through the power of simple shoebox gifts from Operation Christmas Child.

To create your shoebox gift, pick up a flat-pack pre-printed box from the narthex together with a leaflet to give you ideas about what to include for girls and boys of various ages. Look at the website for stories of children who have received boxes and for ideas of things you can make to put in the box. <https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child>

Bring your filled box to church on Sunday 12 November.

Liz Windaybank

News from Sarah

Since my last piece for the church magazine back in spring 2016 I have been pretty busy and my life has/is undergoing quite a lot of change!

I completed my fourth year at university, the highlights of which included my group design project where we created an array of loudspeakers that would fit above the windscreen in a car so that the driver and front passenger could listen to separate surround sound audio at the same time. I also continued to get involved with societies and was even the leader of the clarinet section in the university concert band and got to travel to Brussels and Barcelona through my music.

I am pleased to say that I graduated with a 2:1 as a Master of Acoustical Engineering. I loved my university experience so much and although I'm sad to have left I do feel ready for the next stage of my life. I completed 2 summer placements as an acoustic consultant at Arup in their London office over my time at uni and was very fortunate to be offered a graduate job there before I had even started my final year at uni! This meant that I could focus on my studies more during that year because I didn't have to worry about applying for jobs.

As you are reading this, I am working as a Graduate Acoustic Consultant in Arup's Winchester office and I am renting a 1 bed flat in the city, meaning my commute is just a 20 minute walk which I am very happy about! However, as I am writing this, I am yet to start so I'm praying that it will go well and I will settle into life there quickly.

I will still be back visiting Hampton regularly though, so don't worry!

Love Sarah xxx





My Name is Nicola Spencer and I am the project coordinator for The Shelter Project Hounslow. I have only recently taken on the role in March, having been a volunteer with the project for five years.

So..... what is TSPH? The project is a multi- church initiative that was first started in 2012 after extreme cold weather had hit the London area the previous year. It started originally to offer respite and a warm meal to local rough sleepers during the harshest winter months. Initially it ran from January until March and provided up to 14 male guests with the help they so desperately needed. Originally, five churches were involved with the project, employing a project coordinator to oversee the day to day running. Now in 2107 we have 12 churches involved! As our capacity has increased, we have been able to extend our open season so that we run from the beginning of December until the end of March. The night shelters operate on a weekly rota, with a different church opening to our guests on each night. We have shelters across the Hounslow borough from Chiswick through to Hounslow, all accessible on 235/237 bus route.

Each venue provides their own team of volunteers, and that team is led by a venue coordinator, who oversees the evening. The team is split into groups who take on the various jobs, cooking, meet and greet, servers, etc. The volunteers stay at the shelter until 10 pm when the night volunteers take over until morning. At 6.30 the morning shift arrives to provide a cooked breakfast, to clear away the bedding and clean and tidy the venue.

So let me run you through a typical shelter evening. Our guests arrive at 8 pm, and after signing in are shown to their bed. Guests are offered a hot drink and biscuits on arrival.

Once they have settled in, the chatter starts! It can get very lively, and very noisy when you have 14 guests sharing their stories with volunteers! As well as conversation, we offer a range of board games, although the majority of our guests much prefer to dazzle us with their card skills!! Black Jack seems to be a firm favourite with guests and volunteers alike, even setting up tournaments during the season!

Dinner is served about 8.30 pm with our volunteers sharing a meal with the men. In most venues, main course and dessert are served, although I have heard of one venue also providing a soup starter and coffee to finish! Once dinner is cleared away, the guests are free to choose their own activity, many staying to chat with the volunteers or continue their games, although some do choose to go to bed, especially if they have work the next day. The evening closes at 10 pm when all guests must be in bed. The men are not allowed to go out of the shelter after this time.

In the morning, the men are woken at 7 am and they fold up their bedding. Cooked breakfast is served from 7.15 until 8.00. All guests must leave the venue by 8.30 am, when some go to work, others spend their days in the library, job hunting or going to appointments. Then they all make their way to the next venue that evening, ready to start all over again!

So that's TSPH in a nutshell!

We also provide ongoing care in order to help with long term employment and housing, and we work very closely with St Mungo's, Hounslow Council and various other agencies, to ensure our guests have access to all they need.

We are very proud to announce that TSPH has been awarded The Queen's Award for Voluntary Services. (QAVS) It is the MBE for voluntary groups and we were so honoured to have been nominated and awarded this fantastic commendation in the Queen's birthday honours in June.

I hope I have given you an insight to TSPH and the work that we do. If you feel that you would like to volunteer, or would just like to know a bit more about the project, please don't hesitate to contact me. We do have a Facebook page, and a website, so please go on and have a look. There is a Just Giving donation page attached to the Facebook page if you would like to donate to the ongoing upkeep of the project.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and feel free to get in touch

Nicola Spencer

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Phone : 07739 447590

Website : www.theshelterprojecthounslow.org

Facebook : www.facebook.com/theshelterprojecthounslow.org

This photo taken at Hounslow Methodist Church last year



Dates for your diary around the circuit and beyond

On 21 October there is a **Methodist Women in Britain District Day** at Wesley's Chapel. 11 – 4.

Our next **Messy Church** is on 24 October from 10.30 – 12.

Everyone is invited to the **Circuit Fireworks Party at Hanworth** on 3 November from 6 – 8.30 pm. Soup and sausages are provided. Each family asked to bring one large firework.

Another food-related event on 3 November is the **Fish 'n Chips Film Night at East Molesey**. Book by 4 pm on 1 November for fish and chips. Call Valerie on 01932 221247 or speak to Mark. Food plus film costs £6. The film is 'A United Kingdom', the true story of an African King and how his loving but controversial marriage to a British white woman put his kingdom into political and diplomatic turmoil.

Teddington will be holding a **Christmas card sale and fair** on 11 November. 10.30 – 12.30.

The Betrayal of Edith Cavell. Geoff Buckingham and local supporting cast will perform and record this original production as a 'radio play' in front of a live audience at Sunbury Methodist Church on Remembrance Saturday 11 November at 7.30 pm. The moving story of a Christian nurse whose heroism saved the lives of hundreds of allied soldiers in WW1.

St Richard's Church is holding a family entertainment event on 11 November from 7 – 8.30 pm. **Tricks and Laughs with Steve Legg**, it will be a crazy mix of comedy, magic and mystery with some Christian content.

Care for the Family is bringing one of their excellent events to Feltham on Wednesday 15 November at Riverside Vineyard Church near to Cineworld and the tenpin bowling. 7.30 – 10 pm. **Parenting teenagers: getting them (and you!) through it**.

A **Christmas Market and Model Railway Exhibition** at East Molesey on 18 November. 10.30 – 3.

On Saturday 2 December Teddington will be holding a **Family Barn Dance** from 6.30 – 9 pm. Supper provided during the interval.

On Thursday 7 December **Christian Aid has a Carol Service** at St John's Church, Waterloo Road, London SE1 at 7 pm. The theme is 'Enough for everyone'. It will be a time of reflection, prayer and praise and a way to think differently about our Christmas preparations.

We are invited to a special **Christmas Carol Concert** with the staff of **The Leprosy Mission** on Friday 8 December at St Giles-in-the-Fields Church, London, WC2H 8LG from 1 – 2 pm. Christmas music, bell ringing and readings with the Tredici Choir. Light refreshments provided.

Cod and Carols at Sunbury on 9 December at 6pm. Advance booking necessary.

There will be a service to celebrate **Alan Jameson's 60 years of preaching** on 10 December at 6.30 pm at Wallington Methodist Church.

Cod and Carols at Hanworth on 15 December at 6 pm. Advance booking necessary.

Our **Messy Nativity** will be on Saturday 16 December. 3 – 5 pm. The Carol Service will be on 17 December at 4 pm. Our Christmas Day service will be at 9.15 am led by Rev Vicci Davidson.

Books

Proof of Heaven: a neurosurgeon's journey into the afterlife by Dr. Eben Alexander

One morning in 2008 Dr Alexander fell into a coma with a rare form of meningitis. Scans of his brain revealed huge damage and he was unlikely to survive. However, he did recover and this book describes his wonderful journey and also some of the surprising moments he discovers after his recovery to make sense of what had happened to him.

This is a fascinating account of one man's experience after he suddenly fell dangerously ill. What was really interesting for me is the fact that he is a brain surgeon and was able to relate to what was happening and explain it to his colleagues who were sceptical. Being a brain surgeon himself he could answer their scientific explanations of what had happened and argue with scientific facts that what he had experienced was real.

Children of the Master by Andrew Marr

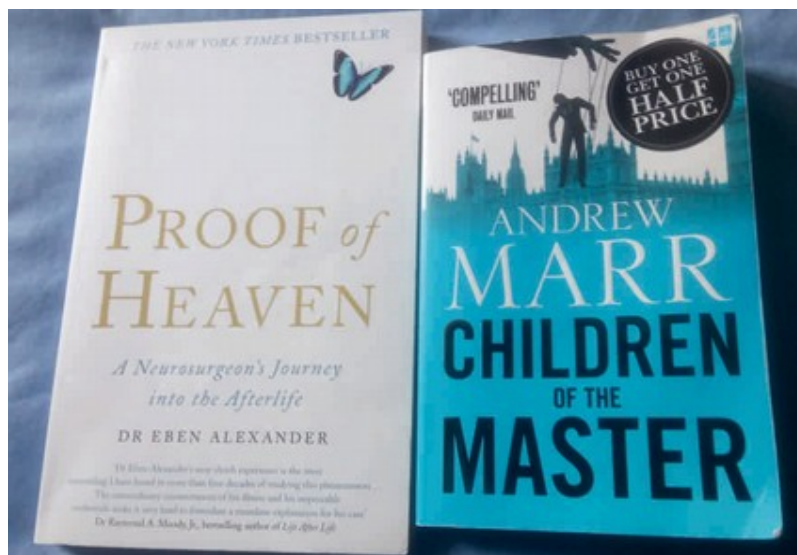
'If there's one thing British people hate, it's an unnecessary election. It gets in the way of television schedules, and greatly increases the number of irritating people knocking at your door.'

Known for his political programmes on TV and reporting on political issues Andrew Marr has written several books fiction and non-fiction. He couldn't have known when he wrote this book that there would indeed be a surprise election forced on an unsuspecting British public and what would happen subsequently.

This story mainly focuses on two characters; David Petrie (a Scottish businessman who becomes an MP) and Caroline Phillips (a high-flying Londoner, a Christian who has an unconventional private life and also becomes an MP). Whether Caroline demonstrates that she lives a Christian life, particularly at the end, I will let you decide.

This is a modern book with some strong language in places, but all in context. It certainly demonstrates a manipulative power behind the two main characters and at times you wonder who is in control and running the country. This story is all about power, who has it, what they do with it and who is pulling the strings that make them what they become. There are some surprising and shocking events that transpire, but I won't spoil it for you; it is well worth a read.

Pam Harrison



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Hampton Methodist Church is a member of Churches Together around Hampton.

Church website: <http://www.hamptonmethodistchurch.org.uk>

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