

Hampton Methodist Church News

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A warm welcome to this edition of the Hampton Church Magazine and many blessings to all our readers.

Earlier in the spring at Hampton and Sunbury, we found ourselves moving in exalted circles! I was contacted by Sir Vince Cable as a constituent had visited him, clearly in a bad way and it was hard for him to see how to help. In conversation with his people, he decided to approach the churches and see if we could help. And we could. We made referrals to the Food Bank and the Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity; we provided the Baby Basics starter pack for the baby about to arrive and The Extra Mile stepped in to fulfil needs for the older children. We were happy to do so and pleased to be able to invite Sir Vince to the Soup Lunch at Sunbury where we were raising money for Baby Basics and The Extra Mile and where he gave a short and to the point speech. Stepping back for the moment from any politically motivated feelings which we might have in response to the sheer levels of need we are meeting, we can simply be glad that we have been called to work in this way and that, in association with other churches in the Circuit and in Churches Together Around Hampton, we have been able to help not just this person, but many others. We do it well and we do it in response to a biblical narrative that calls us to serve the poor, the widow, the orphan.

It's easy therefore for people to look at projects like Baby Basics and The Extra Mile and see them as Church business. Non-church people can see church people as well-meaning do-gooders or as somehow only doing what they are supposed to do. Even Church people themselves can sometimes speak as if we are doing something that God requires of us. Certainly it is true, as we hear in Micah 6:8 we are enjoined to "act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God." Projects like Baby Basics and The Extra Mile help us to do that, but we would never want to suggest a faith that needs to do good in order to gain God's approval. God loves us because he chooses to, not because we earn Brownie points by doing good things. Church has, since its inception, cared about the feeding and healing and teaching of the multitudes, following in the steps of Jesus. I would suggest however, that many secular organisations and many other faiths care demonstratively about the feeding and healing and teaching of the multitudes and care also for children and young people.

Baby Basics and The Extra Mile share similarities with many of these other wonderful, worthwhile and caringly delivered projects. The difference is that what inspires the members of the churches in the Teddington Circuit and particularly at Sunbury and Hampton Methodist Churches where the projects are held and led, is a desire to pour out from within the churches some of the abundance of love that is found there through our relationships with each other and more specifically with God through Jesus Christ his Son. Viewed this way, they can be seen as creative acts of love from God to all people through the agency of God's church and as such they are very much Church business – just not perhaps in quite the way that some would see them. To subvert the call to Communion during Lent, we serve not because we must but because we may; not to declare that we are righteous, but that we desire to be true disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ; not because we are strong, but because we are weak; not because we have any claim on Heaven's rewards,

but because we seek to share with others all that has been given to us. We love, because he first loved us. It is in this spirit that we thank those who do so much on our behalf in this work and that we continue to seek to give and to share out of that which we have.

There are of course, other ways in which we continue to serve the community and to feed, heal and teach. The continuing growth of Tea and Memories and the annual round of Messy Church including our stall at Hampton Carnival speak to this as do the regular Friday Focus meals, Breakfast Church, Ladies' Guild, Insights and our regular trips to events hosted by Café Arts. As the summer wears on, I pray that the warmth of the sun, the Son and the community here at Hampton will continue to strengthen and refresh us all.

God bless

Vicci



Sir Vince Cable with some of The Extra Mile team

Spring Concert

On Saturday 17 February every seat was taken in the large hall as we waited in anticipation to enjoy the Spring Concert put together by Revd Vicci Davidson, and boy were we in for a treat!

The charming Sunbury children's choir and ukulele group Aloud! opened the evening with The Unicorn Song followed by a delightful piano duet from mother and son Bronwen and Struan. We also enjoyed hearing Bronwen on violin. Lily, and Mark Davidson each sang three songs from musical theatre and one from Sophie. The first half ended with unexpectedly brilliant illusions from Bronwyn. The start of a new career?

We mingled and chatted in the interval and tucked into the cakes and cookies baked by Mia, Vianna and Vuyiswa. This was their opportunity to fulfil a desire to raise money for the Leprosy Mission Purulia Hospital in India. On Leprosy Mission Sunday we had heard about the desperate need for better facilities at the hospital and the young people wanted to do something to help. The cakes were delicious and a very generous £100 was raised.

Duly refreshed we settled back for the second half of the concert with songs from Vicci, Elanor, Katie and George. What talent! The evening closed with the Butts Farm Community Choir singing 'If I saw you in Heaven', 'You raise me up' and 'The rhythm of life'. An excellent ending to a wonderful evening.

Ladies Guild were thrilled with the £305 from ticket sales which will enable them to continue booking interesting speakers at the fortnightly meeting. (Often open to men as well e.g. Everyone is welcome on 3 July when Richard Hawkins will be talking about his career as a barrister and then a High Court judge at The Old Bailey.)

I think I heard Vicci say the Spring Concert should be an annual event, so watch this space!

Liz Windaybank



The Leprosy Mission

I just want to thank Mia, Vuyiswa and Vianna for organising a cake sale to raise funds for our work at Purulia Hospital in India. Thank you so much for your generous gift of £100.

Lalit sits in her wheelchair on a sunny afternoon at a leprosy hospital in India. Her two legs worn down to stumps from a lifetime of leprosy, she gets around by pushing her wheelchair backwards, using her right leg to push off the ground. She affectionately holds a framed photograph in her lap: a handsome young couple and a child. 'This is me and my husband, and this is our child together'. When Lalit's husband found out about her leprosy, he threw her out of their home. 'He was right to do this. I still love my husband, but I must live with the curse that was given to me.'

For Lalit and so many like her, the stigma and superstition surrounding leprosy cuts them off from the normal human contact most of us take for granted. Too many leprosy sufferers believe that they have little worth, simply because they think that their leprosy is their own fault. I was saddened when I saw Lalit's story on YouTube, but it reminded me how much there still is to do for the millions living with leprosy.

The Leprosy Mission will not only help to heal people like Lalit, but we also aim to demonstrate the love of Christ, so that leprosy sufferers may know they have value because God has created them and loves them.

Jarrett Wilson - Leprosy Mission Regional Manager (London and the South East)

Butts Farm Community Choir

Three or four years ago at Hanworth Methodist Church, we had a young woman running singing classes who started a community choir which, for a number of reasons didn't get off the ground. She then went on to bigger and better things, but there were still two people who had been in that choir and missed it and a couple of other people who were interested but hadn't been able to make the time-frame or afford the cost. As I was also missing the fun I used to get out of running a choir, from time to time I toyed with the idea of starting one up and eventually last June we found a good time and a small group of people and we were up and running.

We had a short window to prepare for our first gig as we run an annual community fun day at the church on the August bank holiday, and we managed to get two or three numbers together for that and five singers plus me on the piano. By Christmas there were eight of us singing at Cod and Carols and we fielded a smaller number for the Hampton concert, but really enjoyed it. Currently there are eight singers - four adult women, two men and two children and they are not all able to come every time. We charge £1 per family and one of the really enjoyable things about it is that it is something parents can do with their children.

This year we are working on the opening song from The Greatest Showman as well as two medleys, one made up of songs by Queen and one from Mamma Mia. We rehearse weekly on a Wednesday at 6:30 - 7:30 and would love to welcome new members. My goal is to get it to 24 members by the time I leave the Circuit and we are looking forward to further performances this year at the Bank Holiday event again and at Cod and Carols. Excitingly, we have also been invited to do a joint project with Crane Park Primary School and although we still have to work out exactly what that would look like, I am really excited at the possibility. Hopefully, parents would then want to join the choir as well - look out Gareth Malone!

Vicci

South Africa to the UK in Faith for the Duncans

Six years of work-searching brought us to the decision for Craig to accept a job in the UK. Nine days after saying 'yes' Craig left and we were not to see each other for the next eighteen and a half months. All he had to live on for five weeks was £235 and God's grace. As God provides for all our needs he still had change in his pocket on payday.

For us to cope we decided Craig was on yet another business trip with an open ticket for me to join him, unaware of the journey of faith God had planned for us. It was not easy. My daughter and son-in-law were in shock so there was no support for our decision for months to come. I was on my own as was Craig.

I prayed for a family to support and mentor him. God provided firstly Hampton Methodist Church, Reverend Vicci and Mark and Eunice. Without this help I do not know how either of us would have coped. Through regular messages and calls I felt I knew Eunice long before met. Sisters in Christ.

We discovered that Hampton and Pinetown Methodist Churches had had very strong links for years through Phakamisa, which is a Non-Profit Organisation. From home to home.

The constant prayers from all at HMC and further afield were more than we dreamed. Pinetown Methodist Church was less involved as Pinetown is a small place and rumours spread rapidly, as I was to suffer the consequences of later at work. Gossip is evil. But once I resigned, PMC prayers were in abundance for us to be reunited.

Work had no idea and so each day was one of survival and it became a nightmare of continual stresses. A few customers and a supplier knew and prayed for us all the way through. I cried many a tear of loneliness and frustration. I had to move home two weeks later and downsize from a house to one room under a double garage. Craig was a lifetime hoarder but it did help later on.

Now boxed in at work and home too. Isolation is a wonderful place to journey inwards seeking faith in God our Father for wisdom, strength and direction. Walking and talking to Jesus, just being close in all creation is soul food and through reading and listening to Christian Radio I was nourished. Our fellowship group gave us support and a shoulder to cry on. I spent time making cards and seeing my best friend Sharlene (who taught me how to make them) and her family and some time with my daughter and family. I was grateful to be there to help looking after my grandchildren when my daughter and son-in-law had a serious motorbike accident.

Knowing Craig was facing daily challenges of hard physical work and home life alone was not easy. Also having to provide for his financial needs and mine. But he survived and without a pot or pan or salt. As UK law requires a minimum of six months working to prove you are able to look after and provide for your spouse on their arrival and until they obtain work, all we could do was wait. That was the start of my Spousal Visa Application. There would be no bribes or shortcuts for us. I needed to get my paperwork in order but lacking the details of all that was required and would not be provided until payment was made to the Immigration services, which was another delay.

There is a mountain of paperwork to get from both the SA side and the UK too. I spent many a time on my knees crying out to God for my eyes to be opened to see and understand each step, especially as I was not computer savvy and was trying all of this on my own. Craig's job. In July 2017 the ball started rolling. All this needed to be done during the day using lunch and tea breaks to make calls etc. The TB test was quick and easy, Life Skills English language test only available on 30 September,

three letters of reference to prove our marriage along with our letters of relationship. Unabridged certificates both birth and marriage.

Then ten years-worth of physical proof of our marriage. SA Home Affairs was a nightmare asking for documents which they had in their possession but were too lazy to look for. Five months later after emails and phone calls and queueing for answers I finally got my Unabridged Marriage Certificate the afternoon before my appointment to lodge all these with the British Embassy. Six kilograms of proof including books, photos, a diary, birthday and anniversary cards, certificates and more.

I finally spoke to my boss notifying him of my intention to leave and giving one and a half months notice. It came as a big surprise. He was wonderful in assisting me with time off to sort out Home Affairs and going to the British Embassy. All this done in Faith without any idea if I would be successful with my application.

Once handed in there followed the wait of six to twelve weeks to receive an answer. Still I needed to hand in notice where I lived and keep downsizing to have as little as possible to ship over. Eleven weeks later I received my 'yes'.

A bitter-sweet time of leaving my only daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren with no close family of my side to support her or knowing when we would see each other again, and fly to my husband and new home in the UK. A crazy time as you only have a month within which to arrive in the UK but I only gave myself two weeks to get it over with as soon as possible. The stress was getting to us and the UK weather extremely unpredictable.

Our heavenly Father provided the best for us and we reunited on 8 March 2018. Our new journey had begun. God's grace and love flows in abundance in our lives. I pray I will always be able to share this love. Hugs are free and always available.

Thank you all for without you we would not have made it.

Love Kathy and Craig Duncan.



A Breakfast meeting with a difference

It is daybreak. You find yourself walking along a quiet country lane at first light. The pathway becomes more and more sandy, until you see before you a row of large sand dunes with pockets of spiky grasses poking out in small clumps. You slip off your shoes and slowly, in your bare feet, you struggle up the steep sandy dune. As you reach the ridge at the top, you hear that beautiful sound. It's a noise that has thrilled you since you were a child. It is the gentle rhythmic sound of the waves against the beach. The ebb and flow of the waves provides your early morning walk with an enchanting sound track. From the top of the dunes you gaze out along the misty beach. It's almost empty, save for a pin point of light away to the right. You focus your eyes and see, yes, it's a small fire. You walk down the dune and along the beach. A soft breeze picks up and you take in the aroma of the charcoal fire. Oh, there's some other scents that the wind shares with you as you progress along the beach. It's the inviting smell of barbeque fish, and there's something else, you pause as if to give your senses a chance to really take it in, yes, it's freshly baked bread. Your mind has been so totally focused on deciphering the aromas that you have hardly noticed a solitary figure standing by the fire. Dark hair, dark face and what looks like a white tunic. You instinctively are drawn towards the man, who has prepared this breakfast on the beach, and as you draw close he looks at you. It's a look like no other, for it feels that he has not only looked at you, but through you. He seems to read you as if you were an open book. He knows you totally. Without a word he offers you a piece of cooked fish and toasted bread and you realise just who has been waiting to have breakfast with you on the beach.

A small group of the disciples met Jesus on the beach for breakfast. It is a powerful Resurrection story, which you will find in chapter 21 of John's Gospel. It's quite a meeting for Simon Peter.

Sadly (I think) we don't have a beach in Hampton, but we do have regularly a breakfast meeting with a real difference. Indeed, we have been running Breakfast Church for over a year. Many of you will know the story of how we stole the idea from Crediton Methodist Church. Wendy and Liz had been visiting former Hampton MC member Hilary one weekend and were introduced to this different way of worshipping on a Sunday morning. What a delight that our sister Hilary, who gave so many years of service to our Church, should still be making a vital contribution long after she and John moved to the West Country.

We often say in our Stewards meeting and Church Council that there are many ways of "doing church". Messy Church and Memory Café have been excellent examples of this willingness to do something different. We discussed the idea of Breakfast Church and we acted. In all fairness we thought that Breakfast Church would attract about 12-15 people. But we were wrong. The numbers although highly variable, are usually above 30 and on Easter Sunday were over 40.

We have been asked to provide a "full English", but we stick to a happy formula of cereals, toast, croissants and a delightful mix of fresh fruit and yoghurt. We have also tried Rubina's Portuguese omelettes and for the sophisticated teenager we have American half-dipped granola slices. We echo the pleasure of the early Christian food fellowship that you find in

Luke's Gospel. Once we have eaten, we have devotions, which can be in the form of a talk, a story or even a drama, then we have a variety of activities on each of our tables. These activities can be a talk about a topic in the news, or an issue that the devotions has thrown up, or a Bible study.

Breakfast Church is held on the first Sunday in the month, and on that Sunday, we start the second service a little later than usual at 10.45 am. It has been important to retain the tea and coffee after the second service, as we believe that fellowship is also valuable.

We are very aware of the demand of taking two services that are very different, probably amounting to three times the preparation time of a 'normal' service. Yet the support we have had from Vicci, David, Bron, Margaret, Denise, Naomi and Nick White has been superb. Remember these preachers are expected to provide most of the table activities for a whole range of different age groups. We owe them so much.

Breakfast Church has much going for it. It is suitable for all ages, so it is ideal for families, and is a positive place for teenagers to come to church. It is also a great place to invite non-church goers to our church and for them to meet us in an informal and relaxed service. Breakfast Church really does have a different feel. Now it can appear to be a little noisy and even chaotic but that is because it is busy, friendly and relaxed.

So, despite all the hard work, Breakfast Church is worth it. Not just for the food, the fun, the excellent fellowship but because it is a chance for any of us to share breakfast and meet Jesus.

Mark Gilks



The Bike Hub Project

In November last year Liz Chadwick (who formerly ran the 'Merrygoround' group on Wednesdays in our large hall) contacted me about an exciting new Project that she had become aware of. She wanted to know if our church would be interested in becoming a 'Bike Hub'. I obviously wanted more information which she has given me and it can be found on the website www.thebikeproject.co.uk.

Basically, the Bike Project (TBP) is a community of refugees, mechanics and volunteers (which would include HMC.) The Bike Project give refurbished second-hand bikes to refugees and asylum-seekers in the UK. They also run bike maintenance workshops and a project where they teach refugee women to cycle.

There are 20,000 asylum seekers each year in London. Around 27,000 bikes are abandoned in London in the same period. Just one of these bikes can help an asylum seeker get to crucial appointments and save them £21.20 a week on a bus pass which, when you are living on just £36.95, can make a huge difference. A proportion of the bikes that are donated are sold and 100% of the profits go back into supporting the charitable work that TBP do. So, Hampton Methodist Church made an application to TBP and is about to become a Bike Hub.

Unwanted bikes (adults and children's) in any condition for the project can be donated to us and will be stored securely with locks in our cycle shed at the side of the church. When we have 10 bikes they will be collected by TBP to be taken away for refurbishment.

Liz Chadwick has kindly offered to do all the advertising for the church and has already started contacting the local schools who will advertise it in their newsletters.

So, if you know anyone who has a bike that could be donated to the project please tell them to bring it to the church on a Sunday between 11.45 and 12.15 where we will be happy to accept it for the project.

We look forward to another exciting outreach project at HMC.

Wendy Salmon

Embracing Age

The small things make such a big difference. I will never forget an animated conversation I had with a local care home resident about her imminent trip to Marks and Spencer's. You would have thought she was being taken to The Ritz, such was her level of excitement and anticipation. She was just so delighted to be able to go out clothes shopping for herself.

I run Embracing Age, a Christian charity for older people in the Borough of Richmond, which I set up three years ago. We train volunteers to spend time and build friendship with care home residents, who are twice as likely to feel severely lonely as older people living at home. I often hear them talking about feeling "cut off from the outside world" or "alone in a crowd". There are 17,500 care homes across the UK and over 50,000 churches. Our vision is to see every care home adopted by a local church, with trained volunteers befriending residents. Together we can make a huge difference in the lives of some of the oldest and frailest people in our community.

We also help churches across the Borough in their work with older people in the community. For example, we supported Hampton Methodist to set up Tea and Memories, the monthly group for people living with dementia and their loved ones. We have also helped two churches in Teddington set up Memory Cafes. In October last year we showcased the many activities available for Seniors in churches across the Borough, at the Council's Full of Life fair to celebrate older peoples' day. We hope to do the same this October.

We're called Embracing Age for a reason: partly it's all about embracing the frail elderly with God's huge arms of love, but it's also about all of us embracing getting older with confidence, knowing that God has a plan and a purpose for our lives in every season.

At Embracing Age we're in a season of growth and change. We are in the early stages of replicating our Care Home Friends project nationally, with a project up and running in Norfolk and further projects due to start in Bury, Belfast, Great Bookham and the Isle of Wight. Locally we are recruiting a new Volunteers Co-ordinator to manage the 60+ volunteers we have visiting care home residents across the Borough.

We believe in the power of prayer and would love you to pray for us. You can sign up for our prayer letter on our website, where you will also find lots more information about us:

www.embracingage.org.uk/support-us.html

Tina English

Tea and Memories

Our next Tea and Memories is on 6 July between 10.30 and 12 and is for those living with dementia and their care partners, and for older people in the community who would enjoy a trip down memory lane. Come and enjoy tea, cake, biscuits and conversation plus jigsaw puzzles, colouring, memorabilia and a sing-a-long of old songs. We are not meeting in August but will be back on 7 September. Special thanks to our local Waitrose who supported us with their green token scheme which has funded some lovely cakes and also a jigsaw puzzle storer.

Liz Windaybank



The Dennisons and parkrun

We didn't know it at the time, but Saturday 12 February 2011 was the start of something that would hugely change our family's life. It was the day that Sarah and Zoë did their first parkrun. It had taken a while for Sarah's friends at school to persuade her that running 5km at 9am on a Saturday morning would be a fun thing to do, but she eventually did it (provided that Zoë came along too). That first week was tough. 5km feels like a very long way when you've never really done any running before, but they both completed the course, Sarah in a time of 33:17 and Zoë in 29:23. Over the next few weeks they both gradually improved, and five weeks later Mike decided to see what it was all about. Without any running gear, he ran it in his normal trousers and some walking shoes! But he did it in a time of 26:48 nonetheless.

For those of you who don't know what parkrun is, it is a free 5km run at 9am every Saturday in thousands of locations around the world. It started in Bushy Park back in 2004 and has grown ever since. Every runner registers online and prints off their own personal barcode to take along with them. They attend a first timers' briefing to be told about the specific course they are at, then it's time to go! You complete the 5km at your own pace – everyone from professional athletes to walkers take part. The event is timed and once you cross the finish line you receive a position token which has another barcode on it. Your personal barcode and the finish position barcode are then scanned together and all the data is processed to link each runner to the time on the stopwatch when they crossed the finish line. Later in the day you receive an email with your time and that's it – very simple, and all for free!

Back in 2011 none of us realised what parkrun would do for our family. Mike, Sarah and Zoë quickly became hooked and cycled to Bushy Park every week to complete the course. With consistency they all gradually got faster, always hoping for another PB (personal best). After 10 runs each Sarah and Zoë received their white '10' t-shirts – awarded to junior runners who have completed 10 parkruns.



Sarah and Zoë receiving their '10' t-shirts

For both junior and adult runners there are red '50' t-shirts, black '100' t-shirts, green '250' t-shirts and blue '500' t-shirts. All are awarded for free (+ postage) once you have reached the corresponding number of runs. There is also the purple '25 volunteer' t-shirt which is awarded when you have volunteered to help organise the event 25 times. Each parkrun is organised completely by volunteers who help out in every role, including timing, barcode scanning, marshalling the course, handing out finishing tokens and giving the first timers' briefing. It's the fact that it's completely run on the goodwill of a group of people that gives parkrun such a friendly community atmosphere. Mike, Sarah and Zoë are all the proud owners of every t-shirt apart from the blue '500' ones!



Zoë, Mike and Sarah in their '250' t-shirts

Over the years running has become a bigger part of all of our lives. So much so that Mike, Sarah and Zoë have all entered 10km races and Mike and Sarah have both completed half marathons as well. Sarah and Zoë both continued running parkrun whilst at university and now in Winchester for Sarah. All three have also run several parkruns on holiday, including ones in Wales and the Lake District, and even on a work trip to South Africa for Mike! It's lovely to know that wherever you are there will be a parkrun nearby with a group of friendly people ready to welcome you.

Finally, on 31 March 2018, Sue decided to do her first parkrun. After years of spectating and giving up her Saturday mornings whilst we were on holiday to go and support the others, and testing out the course with Mike beforehand, she completed her first parkrun in 42:47 and has improved every time since then! Mike has improved to a PB of 19:35, Zoë has 21:01, Sarah has 22:14 and Sue has 36:30 (at the time of writing!). Between all four of us, we have completed 926 parkruns – that's 4630km!

As well as parkrun, there is junior parkrun, a 2km run for children aged 4 to 14 at 9am on Sunday mornings. In September 2016 Mike started volunteering to organise the Hanworth one. He has now volunteered there 72 times in almost every role, including being run director. Zoë volunteers with Mike at Hanworth when she's at home and at Bath Odd Down junior parkrun whilst she's at uni.

Overall parkrun has provided our lives with many new friendships, some great memories, a healthier lifestyle and lots of happiness. We would definitely recommend it to everyone!

Getting Our Hands Messy!

Messy Church at Hampton has always been a work highlight for me – seeing children making wonderful creations out of paper, PVA glue and heaps of glitter, meeting and chatting with the parents and carers and the energy and comradery from the volunteers. It has always been a joy to be part of.

We saw a huge spike in numbers when Messy Church changed from Saturday afternoons to Tuesday mornings in the school holidays. The numbers have ranged anywhere from 50-100 children, with about half as many adults. It is a hugely popular event within the community and beyond with families coming from Molesey, Sunbury and further afield still. Families always comment on the quality of the crafts, how engaging the celebration part of the event is and how much fun their children have had. It's the highlight of their holiday.

Holidays can be a tricky time for families – I discovered this first-hand the summer Dain was born. We made it to our first toddler group when Dain was about 5/6 weeks old. This was after I got my head around having a newborn, recovered enough from surgery that I could leave the house for a reasonable length of time and could get myself and Dain to a point where we could only arrive half an hour late to whatever we were trying to get to, instead of arriving just in time to tidy up! We attended two group sessions at the Sure Start Centre, and then they closed for the summer holidays.

All of a sudden, there was nothing for me to take my tiny baby to. Nowhere to meet other parents. Nothing set up so that the awkwardness of introducing oneself to a stranger was removed by dint of being in a common place. No reason to leave the house. Dain and I managed by taking long walks, usually to the supermarket, most often with Dain in the baby sling wrapped to my front. We also had family over and a week's holiday in the middle of the summer. But most of that time I was very lonely.

Loneliness is very common in parents. Our children are absolute blessings but are not a substitute for adult conversation and companionship. Toddler groups do wonders in giving children and adults a place to socialise and make connections that is safe – both physically and emotionally – and either very low cost or free. It's no wonder families become anxious about impending school holidays as these safe pockets of normality suddenly cease, especially for those living away from families, those who struggle financially and those with more than one child to keep busy.

That's when we open our doors and say “You are welcome here.” That's when we open our doors and say “You are safe here.” That's when we open our doors and say “You're with friends here.” Families are met with a friendly face on the door, and then the children are free to do whatever crafts they wish, taking as long as they like, in any order they like. Messy Staff and Volunteers show patience, love and compassion as they show families what to do and keep the tables well resourced, whilst listening to them and asking after their wellbeing. Then the families are fed spiritually through Rev Vicci, who shares a gospel story which is always presented in a practical and engaging fashion, plus singing with actions and a short prayer before food. It's a mini act of worship with a congregation of around 100 people, all young families, many of whom may have never heard about Jesus before, or understood the miracles He performed or the teachings He shared. For many, their only church is our Messy Church.

Messy Church at Hampton isn't just messy play for children. It's an act of outreach and an expression of social justice; it's an act of worship and an expression of faith. It's fellowship; it's a faith community; it's church.

Bronwyn Coveney

Three Churches, two pubs, one Lord

Earlier this year, on a bitterly cold and snowy Sunday morning, I found myself speaking to a much depleted congregation (thanks to the weather) at Hounslow Methodist Church. A few weeks later Mark and I were invited to return and speak again about The Extra Mile and Baby Basics at one of their excellent Friday Supper Talks.

It is always enjoyable to go to Hounslow Methodist Church. They are doing so much good work with homeless people and provide a series of gigs under the label of Café Arts. We were warmly welcomed, attentively listened to and very well fed.

When the evening was over I picked up a text from my great friends Bridget and Sean. They have been generous supporters of the Extra Mile and on this occasion had acquired a Moses basket for Baby Basics. They were off on holiday the next day and wondered if we could pick it up that evening. I checked that a late night pick up was in order and we duly collected the Moses basket. Just as I drove out of Teddington we passed the Roebuck Inn, and I asked Mark if after all his talking at Hounslow, he wanted a quick drink. Silly question!

The only seats left at the Roebuck were on a small table sharing with the landlord Terry. Terry is a lovely man, who in many ways reminds me of my dad. Terry asked what we had been doing when he spotted Mark's collar and tie. I explained and went on to tell him about the circumstances of the families we help. He was clearly very moved, and asked barmaid Linda to bring him his cheque book. Terry then kindly wrote out a cheque to the Extra Mile, folded it and gave me it. You can imagine my amazement when I got home and saw that the cheque was for £200.00.

What a marvellous story we thought but did not realise that there was more in store. The next day Mark took a telephone call from Maeve Williams, a long-standing member at Teddington Methodist Church. Maeve wanted to know if it had been Mark and I who had spoken to Terry the night before. Maeve wasn't sure who to ring but our great Extra Mile worker, Claire Kilvington from Teddington Methodist Church, suggested it must be us! Maeve's daughter Rae is the landlady of the Mason's Arms in Teddington and is Terry's partner. Terry had barely been able to sleep that evening after hearing about the children we help. Rae also wanted to help. On the following Monday she was holding a Saint George's Day dinner at the Mason's and offered to give the Extra Mile all the profits. A few days later a card and cheque for £300.00 popped through our letter box.

We have, of course, on your behalf, joyfully thanked Terry and Rae for their generosity, support and compassion. But we also thank God, for I have no doubt that this tale of three churches and two pubs is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Eunice Gilks



Congratulations

To the new Mr and Mrs Tommy Thompson

19 May 2018



Dates for your diary around the circuit and beyond

Sing a New Song at Teddington Methodist Church on **Saturday 16 June**, 3.30 pm – 5.30 pm. A chance for all of us to learn new songs from Singing the Faith with a break for cake!

The next **Café Arts at Hounslow Methodist Church** is also on **Saturday 16 June** with Andy Flannagan. Doors open at 7 pm. Tickets £7. Andy is a London-based Irish singer-songwriter. He is foremost a storyteller, weaving hope and pain into songs that soar with beautiful, poignant melodies that betray his Irish roots.

Joy at Kempton Park on Sunday 17 June. Starts at 10 am. Churches Together in Sunbury is hosting an all-day event of praise, worship and great speakers. There will be a free lunch at which an attempt will be made to feed the 5000.

20 June - Insights into the Bible, Bible study at Hampton Methodist Church. 7.45 pm – 9.30 pm.

Saturday 30 June - Methodist Women in Britain Quiet Day at **Ruislip Methodist Church HA4 7BZ** Living in Ordinary Time. This Quiet Day offers the opportunity to reflect on the spirituality of ordinariness as we live, work and pray in the presence of our everyday God. Led by Revd John Swarbrick 10.00 am – 4.00 pm. Cost per head £5 including lunch. To book your place please contact Gillian Oxman 01895 634859 by Monday 25th June.

Saturday 30 June - Beetle Drive with Fish and Chip Supper at 5.30 pm at Teddington Methodist Church. Tickets are £8 for Adults and £6 for children. Fun for all ages.

Saturday 7 July -The Safeguarding Leadership Module Training will be running at Teddington Methodist Church between 1 pm and 5:30 pm. This training is compulsory for circuit staff, stewards (church and circuit), Local Preachers and Worship Leaders and Safeguarding Officers. The Circuit Safeguarders hope that you will recognise the importance of attending as we seek to model and develop best practice across both this Circuit and the Methodist Church as a whole.

14 July - Concert by the John Hackett Band at East Molesey Methodist Church. Doors open at 7 pm for a 7.30 pm start. Back by popular demand. John (brother of former Genesis guitarist Steve Hackett) performs with band members Nick Fletcher, Jeremy Richardson and Duncan Parsons as part of their national tour. Tickets £10 in advance or £12 on the door. Email events@emmc.org.uk

20 - 22 July - The London District Moving Stories Conference at High Leigh. Full bed and board £60 for adults and £40 for children aged 6 – 18. This is a family event with a children's and young people's programme offered. Share stories, learn about migration, equip yourself to make a difference. Register online at www.movingstorieslondon.com/conference or email admin@methodistlondon.org.uk

24 July- Messy Church at Hampton Methodist Church. 10.30 – 12 noon.

25 July- Insights into the Bible at Hampton. 7.45 pm – 9.30 pm

27 August - Bank Holiday Family Fun Day at Hanworth Methodist Church. 11 am – 3 pm. Stalls, games, lunch, afternoon tea, bouncy castle, performances by the Community Choir and others.

28 August - Messy Church at Hampton Methodist Church. 10.30 am – 12 noon.

Books

The Way of Wisdom: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Book of Proverbs by Timothy Keller

This book was recommended by another book club. At first I thought I would struggle as it has American authors and the spelling is not always correct in English as Americans sometimes spell words slightly differently; but once I got over that irritation I really enjoyed the value of the message.

Each day has its own proverb and then there is a commentary explaining it and relating this to modern day life. It is a little bit like New Daylight bible reading notes, but this is solely on proverbs with some other biblical references to support in the commentary. There is normally a reflection or a prayer at the end of each commentary to make you think or discuss with others the meaning of the passage and how it is relevant to your own life. Currently we are looking at the 7 deadly sins.

I have enjoyed the short thought provoking proverbs and they are so relevant to life in today's society they could be written today.

Switch, when change is hard by Chip & Dan Heath

This is a book all about leadership. It can be related to any area of life; either in work, church or any type of situation where leadership is called for. It is particularly relevant and interesting regarding change and how to manage this successfully.

I was given this as a free copy from my director at work – not just me; she wasn't trying to tell me something! Again, American authors, which I thought 'Oh no, full of jargon and rubbish probably'. However reading the strategies was very interesting and it is easy to read with examples to illustrate how these methods have worked.

It talks about recognising the 'bright spots' and has three main strategies to successful change management, which as we all know, most people do not like change, these are:

Direct the Rider – What looks like resistance is often lack of clarity, so be really clear.

Motivate the Elephant – Engage in the emotional side of people as what can look like laziness is often exhaustion

Shape the Path – What looks like a people problem is often a situation problem; the situation is called the path. When you shape the path, change is easier.

The book is full of examples and I found myself recognising situations that I have come across in my working and personal life where some of their strategies could have been more effective.

Pam Harrison

12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You by Tony Reinke

When I began my ministry last century, one of my first practical tasks was to arrange to have some headed notepaper printed. Most non-urgent matters were dealt with by post. The landline would ring constantly to sort out more urgent things, which could, at times, be distracting if I needed to concentrate on writing a sermon or an article for a church magazine. That was so last century. Now, we use technology for most things. Most church business is done by e-mail. I think I've only written two or three real letters since I moved to the circuit.

Technology can be a real blessing. We no longer have to spend ages pouring over our diaries to try to find a common time when everyone is free to meet. We can arrange a doodle poll and track

down that elusive date when we're all free. We no longer have to wait a fortnight for a letter to arrive from a friend who is overseas. We have instant communication around the world. When I was chaplain at the University, I needed help to amend a poster design that we had made and had a very technical task that needed to be done which would require specialist knowledge and the right graphics software. I put out a request on Facebook to the students for help, and within seconds, the boyfriend of one of the students volunteered to do the task for me! Without his help, I wouldn't have known where to start. Without technology, trying to find the right person with the time to do the task would have been like looking for a needle in a haystack. We no longer have to puzzle over which other programme a TV star appeared in. We can Google them and discover all of their past performances and watch some of them online. Technology is such a blessing.

Technology can also be a curse. One of the founding directors of Facebook admitted a few months ago that Facebook had been set up to make you want to spend as much time on it as possible. It's all great, but we can spend forever on phones, tablets, laptops and never have time for real life. It's completely addictive. Tony Reinke's book, "12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You", sets out to explore whether we are now being controlled by our technology. It is a very challenging book and it gets off to a spectacular start by highlighting just how much our world has changed. Reinke highlights some key areas to think about. After a while, the book does become rather repetitive and it was a bit of a struggle to reach the end. I recommended reading the contents list rather than the book itself! However, it's key premise is a good one. Who is in charge of your life? Is it your phone or is it God?

David Innes

The Language of kindness: a nurse's story by Christie Watson.

Christie Watson was a nurse for 20 years, working in a variety of healthcare settings but mainly in paediatric intensive care in large NHS hospitals before becoming a resuscitation nurse. Having written two successful novels, she wanted to write something fictional about nursing and also to try her hand at writing non-fiction. Her agent suggested combining the two, which resulted in this book.

Soppy and sentimental it is not! Rather an insight into a dedicated body of people with huge responsibilities in often terrifying situations, which just makes you say, 'Thank God for nurses.' She says, 'Promoting dignity in the face of illness is one of the best gifts a nurse can give.' Trying unsuccessfully to make sense of why those with an unhealthy lifestyle live to a good old age and those who live and eat healthily sometimes get ill, she says, 'I can only remind myself, as I get older and see more and more cancer around me, to live well and happily, to value that which makes us who we are: not material possessions, but love, kindness, hope.'

She writes candidly about her father's lung cancer and death and says, 'When all else has failed...and hope has left the room..., it's the nurse at his bedside who offers something else: dignity, peace, even love.' As her dad had said, 'The only thing that matters in the end is love. Love each other.'

Beautifully written, this book had funny moments that made me laugh out loud and others that made me cry, but above all it gave me a greater appreciation of our wonderful nurses and the overall importance for all of us to show love and kindness.

Liz Windaybank

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