



Baptists and Methodists together at Hampton Methodist Church

March 2020



Hampton Methodist Church

Percy Road, Hampton, TW12 2JT

Hampton Mission Partnership is a member of Churches Together around Hampton

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

Brothers and Sisters, Friends

I write this in January, conscious that you will be reading it in a couple of months when what is around us now will be very different. I am off on sabbatical at the end of the month and Liz has asked me to write it before I go. Preparing for a sabbatical is, I discover, a balancing of doing more than usual so that things are covered and also refusing to try to fit three months' extra work in before I go, refusing to be available to people while I am away and refusing to allow unnecessary work to be piled up for me on my return. Which is harder than it sounds. Determining that no emails written to me while I am away will be read either during my sabbatical or after it for example, feels remarkably selfish and yet will be the only possible way of either doing any meaningful work when I get back or preserving at least some of the mental space and clarity I hope to gain in this time of retreat and renewal.

Knowing when to step back and rest is of course a very good thing and strongly recommended to us by everyone from doctors to well-meaning friends who note the dark shadows under our eyes are getting still deeper. We are constantly exhorted to "Learn to say 'no'" by self-help books, Facebook memes and still more well-meaning friends. Yet as the minister of a very busy little church, I am constantly asking people to say "Yes" and wondering how we will cope if you don't.

Although I am writing this on the day after Epiphany, you may be reading it in Lent and Lent is a time when Jesus stepped back from the world, went into the desert and wrestled with Satan, with his own thoughts and what sort of leader he would be. As we follow him into the desert, we can perhaps ask if he was saying "yes" or saying "no".

Over the years, I have had many people tell me that it was time for them to retire. Some do it gently, some are embarrassed and say it quite crossly, worried that I might make a fuss or try to persuade them to change their minds. But the best retirement conversation I ever had was with Janet Butler who many of you will still remember with great love. She felt it was time to stop being a local preacher and she said to me, "Vicci, I felt called to start and now I feel called to stop."

Saying "no" in the face of need, despair and deprivation, both physical and spiritual is not an option, whatever the gurus say. I can't, you can't, we as church, as God's called people, cannot in good conscience. We must say "Yes." But we are allowed to say "Yes" to rest, to withdrawal, to sabbaticals and leave and time in the desert to wrestle with ourselves and how we should fulfil God's calling in our lives. Saying "Yes" to these things as well as the other stuff of life reminds us that we are all of us people who live in seasons; as Ecclesiastes says, "There is a time for every purpose under Heaven." Jesus in the desert was not saying "No, I don't want to go and minister to these people" he was saying "Yes, I need to take some time to figure out what my ministry will look like."

Whether this spring for you is a time of resting and refreshing or a time of busy-ness and selfless giving, let it be a time of saying "Yes." Yes, to receiving and sharing God's gift of life in all its fullness. Yes, to answering God's calling in your life. Yes, to doing and being, to giving and receiving, to loving and being loved, each in their season.

I look forward as I write this to my sabbatical, to a time of doing different things in a different place and a different way; and I look forward to returning to the normality of a busy circuit life afterwards, knowing that I am called to both and that the refreshment of the one will feed the outpouring of the other. May you too know the balance of work and rest this Lenten season.

God bless, Vicci

New Year brings yet more changes

Before looking forward to what this new year will bring, let's look back to reflect what we have been up to before Christmas.

We had a lovely Harvest bring and share lunch in October to celebrate the start of Hampton Mission Partnership. It was well attended by all and a fantastic opportunity for fellowship.

In November we collected a cheque from Waitrose for £210 plus some toiletries that shoppers had donated for The Extra Mile. Thanks to Chris for organising a Quiz for Tear Fund which was part of a national event and raised a considerable amount for this charity.

The lead up to Christmas is always busy with lots of events to attend both inside and outside the church. There was a lovely carol service to attend at Sunbury Court (Salvation Army premises); this was for all churches in Sunbury and Hampton and was very well attended with refreshments afterwards. This was also mirrored by our own carol service with readings and carols and several members of the Partnership took part. Some 50 people connected with Hampton Mission Partnership returned to Sunbury Court to attend a fabulous Christmas lunch the week before Christmas which concluded with carols in the music room. We also had a successful Messy Church Nativity with children making crafts and taking part in our traditional nativity play.

Meanwhile The Extra Mile had been busy wrapping presents for over 40 children who would not be getting presents at Christmas. We were also supported by The Hygiene Bank who gave us a selection of new handbags filled with toiletries for mums of the families we support. A generous donation enabled us to buy a few new items for older children and a donation of new toys ensured that local children in need had a good Christmas.

So, what does the future hold! Well we have a new minister coming to join us in September when Vicci leaves to go to Windsor. Rev Kan Yu comes to us from Kent and will be looking after Hampton, Hanworth and Sunbury churches. We look forward to welcoming her and her family in due course.

On a personal note it is likely that I will be moving on in 2020. We hope to move to the south coast sometime this year, although moving house does seem to take ages these days, so I will be around for some time yet. Not sure quite what the plan is really yet, but I am sure it will all work out well as there is bound to be a plan behind it all and if it is meant to be it will be.

So watch this space as they say, and let's see what 2020 brings.

Pam Harrison





Ladies Guild Christmas Meal



Extra Mile Christmas Lunch

Christmas Messy Church



Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes

The shoeboxes we collected in 2019 went to Central Asia. OCC say that 52,451 boxes were sent there from the UK, but while political and religious sensitivities continue within Central Asia and for the safety of OCC ministry partners living in restricted areas, they asked that details of the specific country are not disclosed.

OCC say, 'We're excited to tell you that your shoebox has not only put a big smile on a child's face, but it is also helping build goodwill between peoples of different faiths. It was part of a distribution that local church groups made to children of all religious backgrounds in their community. Every shoebox packed with love and fuelled by prayer has the potential to impact a child's life in a very special way.'

An international representative described the power of these simple shoebox gifts. 'In the very restricted environments, we can't have local believers out being vocal about their faith. A shoebox becomes a key to a closed door. I desire to be involved in the work of love. In the remote areas where people have nothing, where people are dirt poor, this box gives them hope. This is love. True love.'

Liz Windaybank

Circuit Service at Hampton on 29 December

The circuit service was led by Rev David Priddy, who invited someone from each of the circuit churches to speak about what 2019 had held for them, which was very varied and quite inspiring! Vicky spoke on behalf of the Hampton Mission Partnership, as below. Dorothy Innes spoke for East Molesey and told us about The Well – see the next magazine article.

'2019 has been a momentous year with the formation of the Hampton Mission Partnership. As a brief background: In Autumn 2017, Hampton Baptist Church began to explore our future purpose. With words from Romans 15 'Encouragement, Endurance & Unity', we started to seek a partnership with another Hampton Church.

2018 brought much prayer, thinking and discussion with Hampton Methodist Church, and in particular much time from the leaderships of both churches. Over 18 months it slowly became clearer and was agreed by both churches, that Hampton Methodist and Hampton Baptist should join together as Hampton Mission Partnership, to be shoulder to shoulder as we live, love and serve God.

As a member of Hampton Baptist, I'd like to thank our Methodist friends for welcoming us with open arms, so we have quickly felt at home together.

The purpose of this Partnership is to further the expression of Jesus' love for the people of Hampton.

I want to mention some of these expressions:

- The Extra Mile providing items for disadvantaged children – which is approaching the amazing milestone of helping 1000 children.
- Over 250 bikes collected for refugees & asylum seekers.
- A thriving Tea & Memories café, Ladies Guild and Magical Me, a gospel magic club for 8 to 12year olds.
- Computer Club helping the older generation navigate the new digital age.
- The successful Quiz night raising money for Tear Fund.
- Messy Church with 22 attending Christmas Messy & Nativity.

Other highlights this year include:

- 5 teenagers becoming members of the Church.
- 12 ladies from the Partnership attending the 'Inspiring Women' Autumn Day at Waverley Abbey.
- And 50 of us going to the first ever Hampton Mission Partnership Christmas lunch at Sunbury Court.'

Vicky Hall

Covenant Service

In the annual Covenant Service at Hampton on 12 January, Vicci added an extra paragraph, which perfectly captured the essence of our partnership, its mission and the shared renewal of our commitment.

'We thank God for the continuing growth of friendship and spirit of co-operation in the building of the Hampton Mission Partnership. We believe that our two congregations have been called together to work for Kingdom values and to spread the word of God's love for all people in the community of Hampton. Here at the beginning of the year, we pledge to continue this work so that the Gospel will be preached and that we will do our part to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour is here, always following in the path of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, obedient to the Father and empowered by the Spirit. Amen.'

We were thrilled to also welcome Levi Laing into church membership at this service.

Getting to know Maggie and Geoff Sollors

I (Maggie) was born in King's College Hospital in February 1948, one of identical twins. I was only 3lb 15oz at birth! We grew up with Mum and Dad in Mortlake. We went to East Sheen Primary School, and then Hertford Avenue Girls Secondary school, having narrowly failed our 11+ exam. After leaving school I worked as a hairdresser, which I did not enjoy! I gave that up when I had my daughter Colette. I was then a childminder for 20 years! When my youngest child was 13, I went to work at Waitrose in Richmond, where I remained until I retired in 2014.

Geoff was born in Richmond in February 1947, and attended Holy Trinity Primary School and then Gainsborough Secondary School. He had several jobs after leaving school, but for a long time was a TV engineer, and then a school caretaker, retiring from Hampton Infant School in 2014.

He attended Covenanters at Duke Street Baptist Church, and was baptized at age 17. He later attended Teddington Baptist Church with his wife, before moving to East Sheen Baptist Church in 1994, where we met in 1995 when I started going there with my then husband Alan after the collapse of the Baptist Church in Kew, which we had attended since 1988 and been baptized there.

After our divorces Geoff and I started to go out together, and were invited to Hampton Baptist Church in 2001, which we attended regularly until we joined with the Methodist Church last July.

We were married in August 2003, coincidentally on the same day as Mark and Eunice!

Life has not always been straightforward, with children and grandchildren in the mix!

We lived in separate homes for several years after our marriage, until 2010 when I swapped my local authority house in Richmond for our present home in Hampton, where we continue to live happily.

Maggie Sollors



The Well

I was about 13 years old, just after I gave my life to Jesus, that I had my first experience of hearing God speak to me. I was sitting praying and reading the Bible when the words, 'I have set before you an open door which no man can shut' (Revelation 3 v.8) leapt out of the page and seemed like they were talking to me. I continued to pray and asked God to tell me what this open door was. I read on for a couple of hours and found the verse, speaking to Paul, 'Behold I have set before you an open door to speak the Mystery of Christ.' (Colossians 4 v.3)

From then on, prayer and the Bible became alive and I couldn't get enough time with God. God has used me many times since then with words of supernatural knowledge and has led me to others who have helped me grow and develop this gift.

Through life I have at times been seeking God fervently and at other times life has taken over and God has waited patiently for me to once again give him my time. He welcomes me but never with condemnation, just like the Prodigal Son and his father (Luke 15 v.20-24). He only has joy in my company.

My heart began to have a call to help other Christians begin to hear God for themselves and to have that same excitement as they experienced the supernatural in their own lives. I began to find that I was reading on many different occasions the passages about Abraham and his ten wells that he had dug to provide water for his livestock. Water was power and prosperity. After his death, the surrounding powers filled in all the wells. His son Isaac began fighting back and digging out all the rubbish, and unblocking them again. (Genesis 26 v.15-18)

Water is a metaphor used for God's Spirit, and I began to hear God say that the wells were our lives that have been blocked up by all sorts of rubbish preventing God's Spirit from overflowing in us, and he wanted me to open a well to help people hear him and be refreshed.

About four years ago I was working as the Evangelism Enabler at Kingston Methodist Church and was invited to the lay worker conference. I had a strong sense that God was going to speak powerfully that weekend. That first night at the conference I had a dream that I was trying to turn a huge cogwheel but couldn't as it was covered in thick black oil. I went to the first session with a sense of the magnitude of the task he might call me to, and my inadequacies. At the end, a young woman came up to me and said that she felt God wanted her to tell me that she had a picture of me wading through a black, sticky substance and although the progress is slow, he is still turning the wheel. I was so excited! God was speaking and I asked him to make things clearer.

That night I had another dream that I was on a bus but not the driver of the bus. I was handed a baby that was not mine. I felt God say, 'You don't need to worry about where I am taking you. Just carry the gift.'

I went to the morning session, where a deaconess was talking about her work with prostitutes and how she had taken them to church where the nativity scene was out. One of the women picked up the baby and told her amazing story of how God had rescued her. She handed the baby to the next woman who then did the same and passed the baby on, again amazed at God. I just needed to tell my story and pass the baby on. The speaker then spoke about the woman at the well and Jesus's life-giving water and ended by saying, 'Are you going to go home and open up wells in your church?'

It has taken nearly five years for a well to open in my church. Dave asked if I would start a daytime bible study to meet a request by a young mum unable to get out at night. I said, 'No. Out of my comfort zone.' A few weeks later he asked me to reconsider. Again I said, 'No. Out of my comfort zone.' And a third time. 'Where have I heard that before?' I said I would pray about it. A great get-out clause! I opened my daily reading book and it was...yes you guessed it...the woman at the well! (John 4)

Although I felt very inadequate for the task, our 'well' is now up and running and we are being blessed as we explore finding God and seeing him in fresh new ways. The Well meets at 9.30 am fortnightly on Monday mornings at the East Molesey manse and all are welcome who would like to discover more of God and his Spirit in our lives. For further details email info@emmc.org.uk Dorothy Innes

Puppet and Creative Ministry Festival 2019

Back in 2016 Vicci and I went to the Puppet and Creative Ministry Festival for the first time. It was a completely different world of creative ministry than we had ever experienced before – brightly coloured puppets, jugglers, clowns, exciting and lively story tellers from America, balloon artists... all there to share the Good News in a visually fresh and vivid way. It was a way that was fun, different and above all, creative.

And of course, there was magic. Jared Hall was one of the guest trainers at the festival that year and he led a variety of workshops. He was so engaging, with so many quirky and unusual ideas which made use of everyday items. Seeing him perform was a whole other level. He filled the stage, and I was mesmerised by the illusions he produced and performed. I left with an arm full of exciting looking magic props, keen to make use of them in the children's ministry I do and in services.

That wasn't the only thing I left with. Over the weekend Vicci and I caught the creative arts competition on the first day. Of the five competition categories this is the only one not to include puppets, the use of which is strictly forbidden. The competitors instead were made up of magicians, jugglers, clowns, balloon artists and actors. All entertainers have a moment where they see other entertainers performing and think "I could do that" and that moment happened for me as I watched ordinary Christians like me make use of their creative talents to share a gospel message. I knew that one day I wanted to come back and be on that stage too.

It took another three years before I could take the time off work to attend and compete, though I suspect any earlier would have been too soon. In 2018 I wrote a Christmas show for the Splodge holiday club in Molesey, which I also performed at Messy Church. I spent the summer of 2019 adjusting the routine, improving it and enhancing the soundtrack. Also tweaking and rehearsing the length, as the creative arts competition had a strict five-minute time limit. Anything over would be penalised.

Although I had been preparing over the summer and rehearsing throughout the autumn there was one thing I hadn't quite prepared for – at the end of September we found out I was expecting our daughter. Joy was soon overtaken by an overwhelming morning sickness, and I spent much of the first few weeks horizontal where I could. I put my energy into work, and was often too tired or too sick to properly rehearse. At best I could run through the five-minute routine twice (the set up each time took just about as long) before needing to lie down again.

When the competition came around, I was nine weeks pregnant – pregnancy guides made cruel promises that morning sickness would hit its peak around this time. Thankfully Tim was able to take the time off so we were able to go as a family. I slept for most of the journey, repeating to myself that I just had to get through those five minutes. That was all. Just five minutes on stage.

I didn't just have the morning sickness to contend with that day; my stomach was a bag of butterflies as we pulled into the carpark at Rugby College, where the event was being held. Volunteers waving puppets greeted us as we pulled in, and people with puppet bags and puppet team jumpers milled about the carpark and the entrance. We joined the throng with Tim carrying a go pack table in one arm and the packed-up screen in the other, with Dain pushing my box of props and costume ahead of us.

After checking in Tim and I prepared as much of the equipment as we could and I got into my costume (the stage managers were impressed when I asked whether there was a changing room, as no one had asked to change into "costume" before!) The competition pool was small so I didn't have to wait long to go on. The stage was large, bigger than anything I'd performed on for a long time. There was a proper lighting rig and a smoke machine, plus a powerful sound system.

As soon as the soundtrack began nerves melted away. The audience – whose faces I couldn't quite see thanks to the strong lights – applauded, laughed and gasped in all the right places and I found myself loving every second. It makes a huge difference when you feel supported by an audience, as any performer will tell you.

I kept my Christmas dress on after the show which meant I stood out from the crowd. I could hardly move around the site after for people stopping me to compliment me on the show. One particularly young team were very excited when I spoke to their team leader – they considered me to be something of a celebrity!

I managed to bump into the infamous Steve the Juggler, a Christian performer from Scotland who had won the creative arts competition that first year Vicci and I had attended. After bonding over magic workshops led by Mark Shortland we left the event on friendly terms and now keep in touch with each other via Facebook. It's always exciting to meet people that share the gospel in such an unusual way, and Steve's gospel juggling is certainly one of a kind!

At the close of the event the results were announced. The competition pool was small enough that when the second-place title had been announced it was clear that I had won. I didn't think that after such a short time in the world of creative ministries I'd be taking home the first-place trophy! Once again, I felt like the audience was on my side, though it was certainly Tim and Dain that were cheering the loudest! We'll certainly have a tale to tell our baby girl when she arrives in June!

I think back to that weekend and I'm filled with such happy memories of a time when – even though I wasn't feeling 100% – I was blessed to be around so many Christians who were passionate about using their creative gifts to share stories about Christ and gospel truths. Seeing what other churches around the country (and beyond!) were doing was inspirational, and meeting professional magicians like Jared Hall and Mark Shortland who are not only well-respected magicians but Christians too is such an encouragement. Knowing that there are Christians in the often cutting world of entertainment is kind of comforting.

There is so much I love about magic – I love the people that it's introduced me to, I love the performance, I love the creativity in putting together a show or routine, I love to share it with others but I love it most when a routine comes together to share a story or a truth about Christ that maybe hadn't been heard before, or not been heard in a way it's been presented before. I'm grateful to God for drawing me into this world, and pray that He'll continue to inspire me to find even better and more creative ways to share His good news.

Bronwyn Coveney

Bron runs a monthly magic event at Hampton Methodist Church called 'Magical Me' on the third Saturday of the month between 10 am and 12 noon for 8 to 12 year olds.



Another Mission Partnership

Mark chapter 6 describes how Jesus sent his disciples out in pairs – a model for a partnership which I also believe applies to churches working together. I have been blessed to play a part in establishing the Hampton Mission Partnership, but have been asked to describe another Mission Partnership which began in 2005.

'My' church, Ashford Common Baptist Church, felt God prompting us to form a partnership with a church overseas. We sought God's guidance and it became perfectly clear through prayers being answered that this would be in Bangalore, South India. Now known as Bengaluru, this is the fifth largest city in India with currently 8.5 million people. The church we were guided to was a Pentecostal Church, much larger than ours, situated in a less affluent area to the north of the city. Since establishing the partnership, I have personally visited our partners 15 times. A number of others have joined me and each one of us has been immensely blessed every time we go (and remained healthy). No one has ever come only once! Those who cannot come are also part of the partnership through prayer prompted by frequent exchanges of information and through financial or other gifts.

My most recent visit was in November and I valued the prayer support of many from the Hampton Mission Partnership during that time. This was a solo trip and I met Paul Barker for prayer in his capacity as a Chaplain before leaving Heathrow. The Tuesday flight to Bengaluru arrived on Wednesday. I was welcomed by Pastor Timothy and taken to my budget hotel. After rest, a warm welcome was given by Pastor's family – Glory always cooks delicious meals.



The next morning – still feeling the effects of the 5½ hour time difference – I went to visit the children in one of the two schools run by the church. The Providence School takes children from all faiths from age 5 to around 15. Not all Indian children receive education, so this is valuable social ministry with a strong Christian ethos. It is always a delight to watch the concert programme comprising dance, tableaux and bible reading / memory verses by all ages. In this picture a Hindu boy opens the programme with a bible reading.

Each visit joins in all aspects of the Church programme, so Thursday evening brought us together for Bible Study attended by around 50 of the church. Each person brings their bible, all of which are highly valued and well used. This and every meeting included a 'sermon' in one form or another and I brought a total of 25 messages in the 13 days – mostly prepared in advance, but there are always 'extra' meetings. Generally, the ministry is translated into Tamil by Pastor Timothy, so great care is taken in preparing the messages.

Friday morning took me to the second school: The Ashford Common / Elim Partnership School which provides a simple education in a safe environment for Dalit ('untouchable') children, many of whom we would refer to as 'street children'. Dalits form the lowest social group in the Hindu-orientated society. More than 160 million people in India are considered "Untouchable"—people tainted by their birth into a caste system that deems them impure and less than human.



We know God loves each one and our Partnership School helps (typically) 40 a day to experience His love. We teach the children a bible story, sing songs and do craft work using materials brought from the UK. Thank you to my wife Eileen for much of the inspiration and preparation. The bible story was of Zacchaeus who wanted to see Jesus so much that he climbed a tree to see over the crowd. Each child receives a lunch, to which we are able to add a



sweet (or two).

We fund one teacher from the UK and a separate charity I have formed has provided DVD / TV equipment to enrich their experience. (You can find the charity at www.sicewt.org.uk. We have also helped to equip the Providence School with necessary computers). I returned to the school to teach more later in the visit.

Friday evening brought us to the 'Fasting Prayer' session. Prayer is so important in the life of the church and I feel their reliance on prayer puts us to shame in the UK.



Most days occupy us for the morning and evening but Saturday was a full day. We held the first two house meetings. It is always a joy to visit these 'cell groups' which are often in tiny two room homes absolutely packed with Christians and a few Hindu seekers. Some meetings even spill out into the street.



Saturday also included the baptism of four young people who had made a personal commitment to Christ. Conversion is illegal in many parts of India and we have to be very careful when speaking to people about Jesus. Each of the converts will sign a legal declaration to affirm that they have reached their decision of their own free will and without inducement. Sometimes, converts are ostracised by their families. The baptisms are by full immersion in the Baptist tradition in a church building provided by a Korean fellowship – another good example of a partnership at work.



Sunday is always a busy day. There are four services starting at 07:00, two dedicated to the Young People to whom I speak without translation. The two main services – each around 2½ hours long – include lively worship with around 400 attending during the morning – some for more than one service – so that's 4 sermons to preach! There is always a queue of people who wish to receive personal prayer after each service. We have seen many examples of people being healed, evil spirits being cast out, babies being conceived after many years of waiting and other blessings too many to describe here. In the evening it was joy to be invited to a party in honour of a young lady who was baptised the previous day. The party was on a roof-top and of course started with worship and a 'Word' to be followed by a celebration supper and fellowship.

Monday was the 'day off'. We always take one day off during the visit to relax or see some sights. I took the opportunity to meet with a friend who ministers to Tribal groups in India. Other than journeys to the airport, travel was always by 'auto' (aka tuk-tuk) which is an exciting experience. My auto was owned by a Church Member, James.

The pattern continued in much the same way – more cell groups, bible study, prayer times and another Sunday 'marathon' – without any sense of repetition. Every meeting brought new experiences of seeing God at work in the lives of dedicated believers. The material poverty of many and the sense of repression enhances the reliance the Indian Christians have in spiritual solutions.

That doesn't mean there are no problems to face, but the church knows the power of our awesome God and rely on Him. At present they are in the process of acquiring land for a new church building and school. Such acquisitions are fraught with bureaucratic and legal difficulties but Church know they are on the winning side. For example, one of the Cell Groups was held in the office of a new Church Member who runs a construction business – God is preparing the way for the necessary building work. A number of new Christians are in the firm.

After a Leaders' Conference and final 'Board' meeting, I was able to spend a few days with Pastor Timothy touring through the beauty of Kerala before flying home after 18 days away.

Partnerships can take many forms, but we give God sincere thanks for His guidance in bringing Ashford Common Baptist Church and the Elim Full Gospel Church (<http://www.efgministries.com/>) together. For more information and videos of previous visits please take a look at our YouTube channel www.youtube.com/user/AshfordCommonBaptist. If you would like to be blessed by getting involved, please contact me, Rev'd David Priddy on 01784 245989 or by email davidb.priddy@gmail.com

Catching up with the Revd Naomi Oates

It's hard to believe that six months have passed since I waved goodbye to my friends from the Teddington Circuit and packed my life into boxes for the move to North Kent. It was a delight to see some of you at the welcome service in September and when I snuck back for the opening of Hanworth's stunning extension. But I thought I'd share with you just a few reflections from my first six months as a probationer minister – the joys, the surprises, and the moments of sheer panic.

In the North Kent Circuit, which lies along the south side of the Thames Estuary between Dartford and the Isle of Sheppey and stretches south along the River Medway as far as Maidstone, I'm working with four churches – two on the edge of Maidstone, with memberships of around 60 each, and two tiny village chapels, with memberships of around 12 each. It's taken me a little while to get used to the size of North Kent, and the fact that I cycle across my 'patch' in the same time it used to take me to cross the entirety of the Teddington Circuit. The different settings present their own opportunities and challenges – the two larger churches have a wide range of community activities, from Brigades to winter night shelters, and from lunch clubs to Messy Church. The two smaller chapels are the only Christian churches in the villages, and so have a vital role to play in the life of the community, not least in key moments in village life, such as Remembrance and the annual Christingle service in Burham, where 80 people squeeze into the church and try not to set fire to one another.

Being stationed as a probationer minister has meant change in almost every area of life – Luke and I are now living in a manse, and where we could Hoover our old flat from one plug socket, we now have more toilets than people. Having worked behind a desk for over seven years, I now find myself spending most of my time cycling around Kent, meeting people face-to-face, and working with local schools, community groups and other churches. One of the things I've enjoyed most has been the constant variety. In one day not long ago, I met with someone at the manse to do their DBS check, something routine, but important. Then, I was called over to someone's house, to say prayers with his wife as she reached the end of her life. Then, I travelled into London for a meeting about resettlement of ex-prisoners in the community. Finally, I went to someone's home to help lead a new house group for younger people from the churches, where we talked about 'fruitfulness' over delicious homemade pizza.

I'm so grateful to Hampton and everyone in the Teddington Circuit for supporting me and giving me the tools for this new adventure. Some of you know that I went on pilgrimage in the summer, walking St Hilda's Way to prepare myself for the challenges of ministry. Some of you also know that I found myself on the three trains to Danby, where the pilgrimage began, sat next to Chris from Hampton Baptist Church. We got chatting and realised our connection – and I felt God whispering: 'You see, you don't need to travel six hours on trains to spend time with the saints preparing for ministry. The saints have been walking alongside you throughout your training and are waiting for you in North Kent.'

I've drawn on my experience in the Teddington Circuit in North Kent – not least at Larkfield, where we've recently set up a Breakfast Church on the first Sunday of the month! So please do pray for us when you're tucking into your croissants, as we'll be doing likewise.

Please do pop into the manse if you find yourself in North Kent and please be assured of my prayers for the ministry of Hampton Mission Partnership. If all goes to plan, I'll be ordained somewhere near Birmingham in the summer of 2021 – I'd love to see you there!

Naomi Oates (the Revd!)



News from Hanworth

Hi. My name is Jenni Matthews and I am the new Centre Manager and Community Outreach worker at Hanworth Methodist Church. I was a regular at the playgroup, so knew Vicci already! When I heard about the job, I was excited, as it is something that I have always wanted to do, but with five children, I genuinely thought that my dreams were on hold for the foreseeable future. But I am now doing a job that I love, working around my children!

I have lived on Butts Farm for nearly 15 years, and I grew up near to Fulwell Station. I have also lived in Hampton, Kingston, Teddington and Hanworth, so I know the area very well.

As I am not a regular church goer, although I did attend Sunday school as a child, I will admit to being very nervous when I first started. I did anticipate it being much harder than it actually was, as everyone here at Hanworth, and in fact all of those who I have had the pleasure of meeting across the circuit, have been lovely! I do not feel like an outsider at all, in fact I do not remember having a job where I have felt so welcomed and appreciated. The Methodist Church has given me such an amazing opportunity, and I am truly grateful for it. I love coming to work, and I go home feeling that I have achieved something different every day.

I currently work on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. I run the coffee bar, two playgroups, the youth club and a teen girls' group. I am currently setting up a craft coffee morning, and have just completed the training to set up a bereavement café. I am also about to start a youth work training course, run by Brentford Football club. We also have a youth leadership course and football training sessions coming up in the Spring!

During our coffee bar opening hours, I obviously serve coffee, but I am also around for anyone to drop by for a chat! I can refer people to relevant services, Baby Basics and The Extra Mile being two. I have helped people with application forms, food bank referrals, and had a listening ear when needed. I am also not afraid to change the odd nappy!!

Vicci and Bronwyn already had a successful Tuesday morning playgroup running, which I have taken over. We now have more families attending weekly, and I have started to run a different session on a Thursday morning too. Tuesdays are soft play days, and on Thursdays we like to do something slightly different, so we have had art mornings, basic cooking mornings and a party! The parents will often come to a session, and then stay for a coffee and a sandwich in the coffee bar afterwards.

Every Friday evening, I run a primary school aged youth club. My eldest son comes along to help as he is much better at football than I am! We have a craft or similar set up, as well as a pool table, table football, games, air hockey and Lego! We are slowly growing in numbers, and we seem to have a new child along every few weeks. All of our children have found us through word of mouth, so we are hopefully doing it right, as it seems that those who attend are raving about us to their friends!

Once a fortnight we run an 11+ girls' group, which the girls have recently renamed 'Girls night in'. Both the youth club and girls' group were already established groups that had to close before I came, so unfortunately the numbers are still a bit low. But again, those who do attend keep coming back! I have found that the girls like to have a structured session, so we have done things such as making bath bombs, peppermint creams, cake baking, Christmas card/decoration making, which included lots and lots of glitter!!

I am excited at the prospect of working here for many years to come! I am passionate about helping the local community, no matter what their background! This job has given me opportunities that I could only have dreamed of just a short time ago!

Jenni Matthews



Baby Basics

Baby Basics now has 42 centres across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Together it is estimated that they have provided 6005 Moses basket starter packs to families in need since 2009. The national office is in Sheffield, and they employ staff who offer us support and undertake awareness raising on a national level. It is helpful to use this support and to build links with other centres.

Baby Basics Sunbury started in 2014 and we have delivered 800 Moses basket starter packs, plus 200 additional gift packs in the area. The Hampton based charity "The Extra Mile" has grown out of the Baby Basics initiative and supports families with children from 3 months onwards. We work closely with them and particularly appreciate the support of Liz and Wendy who volunteer for both groups.

It costs at least £10 to send each basket out as we purchase new mattresses and towels. Other items are donated (toiletries and clothes) and we use Facebook to raise the profile of the work we do. More and more agencies are hearing about our work and so the geographical area we cover is expanding. We have supported families seeking asylum, those who have suffered domestic violence and escaping from slavery.

We have been fortunate to receive financial backing from a number of sources, including some standing order payments, Church groups, schools and local community groups.

On 25th January we held our annual soup lunch to raise funds for these two worthwhile local charities. Homemade soup and homemade cakes were on offer and Rt. Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP gave a talk in support of charities, as well as singing from our children's choir "Aloud!" and Hanworth Community Choir. The total amount raised was £923.47.

Please accept our thanks for all your donations and prayers and please keep them coming.

Mary Somerville

Baby Basics Sunbury

07770 168 115

babybasicssunbury@gmail.com



Phakamisa

'Phakamisa' is pronounced 'Pa-ga-mee-sa'. It is a Zulu word and means 'to lift up'. Phakamisa is a charity based at Pinetown Methodist Church which is near Durban in South Africa and exists to serve and uplift impoverished communities through the provision of educational training, resourcing and support. They provide a hand UP not a hand OUT and strive to make people independent through their Educare and Caregiver Training programmes and HIV/AIDS support group. Workshops begin with devotions as God is at the centre of all they do. The UK registered charity's principal role is to collect money raised in the UK and transfer it monthly to Phakamisa in South Africa.

So how did we become involved with Phakamisa? In 2006 Peter Clark, one of our circuit ministers at the time (and later Circuit Superintendent) and who came from South Africa, organised a trip there for several of us from across the Circuit. It was a holiday but he said we would see South Africa 'warts and all'!! And we did indeed – apart from a wonderful holiday a couple of our trips were to Pinetown Methodist Church and the Phakamisa projects which proved to be a real eye-opener. To see children who only eat every other day is heart-breaking.

HIV AIDS has devastated poor communities leaving thousands of orphaned and vulnerable children. Phakamisa's Caregiver Groups provide spiritual and emotional support to those caring for orphaned or abandoned children and it provides very practical teaching skills to people educating 0 – 6 year old children; their courses are recognised by the government of South Africa. Economic empowerment comes from sewing classes, cooking, beadwork, home based care and gardening are skills being taught and sales are made from these goods.

On our return to the UK several of us vowed to fundraise for Phakamisa and we still do, by special events and monthly donations. In our Christmas newsletter we were told that £68,000 was transferred to Pinetown in the year.

Seventy-five crèche teachers graduated from the Childminder course last June and twenty crèche supervisors received their certificates in the supervisor course. Beadwork continues and is an important source of income and cooking skills and healthy eating are also taught.

Following the recent gender-based violence they have taken part in a campaign to raise awareness of this.

I quote from the Christmas newsletter. 'Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. We cannot help but stand in awe of God's faithfulness in every season. We thank God for His mercies that endure forever.' To read more about Phakamisa see <http://www.phakamisa.org>

If you would like further information do let me know.

Hazel Greasby



Prayer

Hopefully you will be familiar with our Prayer Wheel, which enables us to pray for each other, our activities and the local community every day. This has just been revised and now includes our Baptist friends by name, instead of having one entry for 'Hampton Baptists.'

There are 31 boxes representing the days in the longest months. Just put the number '1' in the box next to your name then add 2 – 31 moving down from this then to the next column. The numbers represent days of the month, so each day find the appropriate number for the day's date and pray for those listed against the day. If your name isn't included, please let me know! Hopefully it will also be a way of getting to know each other. Please ask if you don't know who people are! Hazel's magazine item about Phakamisa will clarify what that is and also who 'Rev Peter and Ailsa C' are!

At the February Breakfast Church led by Monika Eilers, one of the activities was learning a hymn. A group of us gathered in the church to be taught the hymn by Dorothy Innes on guitar. (Incidentally, something she had never done before.) We sang it when we regathered in Breakfast Church and again in the main service.

Dorothy had taken the words of a prayer, written by one of our local preachers, Robert Mortimer, and as a gift to him had set it to music. I can still remember the tune several weeks on! Robert's prayer had been published in the 2019/2020 Methodist Church Prayer Handbook. This is it, reproduced with permission.

Lord Jesus, may we feel your presence in all we do today,

To be calm when we feel anxious,

To be strong when we feel weak, to be gracious when tempted to respond inappropriately

And when the day is done may we feel at peace in your presence.

Liz Windaybank



World Day of Prayer
Friday 6 March at 2 pm at St Mary's Church

Notice the change of title for this annual event! This year the service has been prepared by the women of Zimbabwe on the theme 'Rise! Take your mat and walk.' Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia, became independent in 1980 and still has many difficulties to overcome. Christianity is the main religion (80 percent) with the rest of the population following Islam, Judaism and traditional African religions.

All are welcome to attend this ecumenical service to take part in an act of worship that travels around the world in 24 hours.

Janice Thompson and Margaret Thorn



On 7 March at 7:30pm, St Theodore's is holding a Charity fundraising dinner for families facing starvation in Zimbabwe. As the tragedy of economic crisis, crippling drought followed by cyclones and flooding unfolds half the population (7.7 million people) are facing starvation. One in four children are malnourished. What better way to help than by attending this Charity Dinner at St Theodore's?

There will be delicious Zimbabwean food on offer and it will be all homemade. It is simple, tasty, nutritious and healthy. No gluten, no nuts, no dairy. A vegetarian option will also be available. The cost of each ticket is £10. All of the funds raised will go to help in Zimbabwe. No hidden costs will be taken out.

There are 50 places available so it will sell out quickly. How can you resist this opportunity to help starving families and at the same time eat delicious food and socialise with friends and family!

Tearfund Big Quiz Night

On Saturday 16 November 2019, a group of us came together at the church to take part in the second annual Tearfund Big Quiz Night, set to be the biggest, multi-venue, simultaneous quiz ever.

The Big Quiz Night saw the UK church stand up to make a difference for people living in poverty. Millions of people around the world have been forced to flee from their homes because of conflict and poverty. Now they live as refugees, struggling to access food, water and shelter, with many having lost family members and people close to them.

The Big Quiz Night was a great event; a chance to invite friends and neighbours along to a fun evening for such an important cause. It was a roaring success. More than 600 churches joined in, with 26,384 people taking part. In total, an outstanding £210,000 was raised to help people living in poverty!

At Hampton Mission Partnership we raised £191.14 towards Tearfund's vital, ongoing work across the world, helping to provide sustainable solutions to extreme poverty in the countries they work in such as Nigeria.

Quiz Nights took place all over the country, from Lands' End to the Shetland Isles, and Tearfund has been so overwhelmed with the support for this event that they have announced that they have already secured a date for The Big Quiz Night 2020 – Saturday 14 November!

So put the date in your diary (more details nearer the time) and round up some friends, family, neighbours to join us for another fun evening as together we can do something amazing and help end poverty for good.

Christine Broomfield.

Christmas angel journey

New Year 2020 saw me in Cape Town for the Test Match between South Africa and England, a trip which commanded a great deal of attention in certain Hampton Mission Partnership quarters.

Following the blessing of the angels on 8th December 2019, Mark Gilks presented me with this one saying, "She tells me she wants to go to South Africa", and so she did. I intended to leave her in the cricket ground but God said, "No, at the Waterfront".

The Victoria and Alfred Waterfront is now one of Cape Town's principal tourist attractions; it is a complex of shopping malls, hotels, entertainment venues and restaurants around a marina and network of canals and is always busy. So, I took her with me on the day I had arranged to meet a recently widowed friend, Polly, for lunch there and we talked about where we might leave her. As we were leaving the restaurant, we passed a woodworker's shop with a display of products outside and both felt this was the place.

We set her on the chair and prayed for her mission to bless others which Bob, Polly's late husband, would have enthusiastically endorsed and she glowed in the afternoon sun reflecting the glory of God.

Barbara Spittle



Win White

Win died on 4 January 2020, aged 98 and is now at peace with the Lord. For those who did not know her, she attended church regularly up until she moved into a care home in 2017 because she had become too frail to continue living in her own home. Win was the gentlest lady you could wish to meet, always smartly dressed, and always interested in the church family. She came from a very large family and had two daughters of her own, four grandchildren and four great grandchildren – a big and very loving family of which Win was very proud. Ivan, Win's husband, served in the army during World War 2 and Janice, their elder daughter was born during the war. Janice attended our church and pre-deceased Win. Ivan also attended church and was a source of information (and amusement) about his war service on several Remembrance Day services. Ivan died several years ago and so of recent years their younger daughter Toni was a great comfort to Win.

Win attended our Friday Focus meals regularly and made friends with folk from other churches who also were 'regulars' and who kept in contact with her once she went into a care home. On a personal level, she was always interested in my family and I recall her kind words and wisdom when we had concerns following a grandchild's birth – and her follow-up interest. A lovely person to have known.

God bless you Win

Hazel Greasby

Win was one of those gracious, graceful women who I aspire to grow into one day. Always beautifully dressed and with impeccable manners, even on days when the visit wasn't convenient. I usually ring before I make any visits but one day I rang and, having received permission to pop round, found that she was expecting Toni. In the end, it transpired that Win had mis-heard me on the phone and thought my phone call had been from Toni, but in the twenty minutes it took us to unravel the mistake, she was as always, charming.

Part of the nature of pastoral visiting is its confidentiality, and I will not share here the conversations we had. Suffice it to say that when I discovered how much pain she was living with I was astounded at the extraordinary strength of character that allowed her to continue to smile and refuse to speak bitterly about her world. Visits were never short. There had to be the offer of tea and cake and then the questions about me and my family before we could begin to talk about her.

The nature of our shared faith is that Win believed and I do believe that we will see each other again, and there is comfort to be taken in the knowledge that she will no longer be living in pain and that, renewed in resurrection glory, she and those she loved who had gone before wait to receive us in our time "on the other side." In my memory, she joins a small group of people who I hope to be able to emulate in my own old age. She was a special lady and I am glad to have known her.

Vicci



Books

Staying in the boat - and other things I wish I'd known by Jeff Lucas

From his many years in Christian Leadership Jeff has learnt a fair few lessons – from the profound to the painful, from the embarrassing to the hilarious. Hindsight can teach us a lot, but in this book Jeff is hoping that the reader will benefit from some of the things he wishes he'd known a little earlier on in his journey – such as the fact that we're all broken; heroes often go uncelebrated; and sometimes, our adventure requires us to faithfully stay put.

What matters is that we all learn from our wrong turns and mistakes and continue to grow. Jeff explains that maturity takes a while. He makes a good comparison that Peter was called by Jesus to walk on water, but his disciples were not invited and stayed in the boat; not all of us are called to the same exploits and it is important to know our own limitations.

Each section is only a few pages long and very short, which makes the book very easy to read and to pick up and put down i.e. if on a train journey up to town. Each part starts with 'I wish I'd known...' followed by a statement. For instance, 'I wish I'd known that God has a hobby' or 'I wish I'd known that saying 'sorry' can mean nothing'. The chapter entitled 'I wish I'd known that saying 'thank you' means a lot' is one that we all need to read.

Pam Harrison

I'm still standing by Fabrice Muamba

Fabrice Muamba was the footballer who was playing for Bolton Wanderers against Spurs in the F.A. Cup on the 17th March 2012, when he collapsed on the pitch and his heart apparently stopped for around 80 minutes whilst he was treated and taken to hospital. He is also a Christian and this book tells the incredible story of how he survived, supported by friends and family, and his faith in God.

This book has particular significance for me as I was at this match at White Hart Lane, Tottenham and can remember the shock and concern shown by the crowd and the players on the pitch.

One of Fabrice's favourite passages from the Bible is from Psalm 121 - "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills from where cometh my help. My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth."

You do not have to be interested in football to find this book inspiring but of course there are many football related references. I borrowed this book from the church bookstall to which it has been returned.

Willem Sandberg

Dates for your diary around the circuit and beyond

Sunday 1 March – An 'In loving memory' service to remember our former superintendent minister, Rev George Brigham, who died at the end of November. There will be opportunity during the service to share memories and anecdotes about George. At Teddington Methodist Church at 6.30 pm.

Tuesday 3 March – Ladies Guild at 8 pm. Open to everyone. 'Eel Pie Island Museum: Boatyards and bands, artists and inventors – celebrating all that made this tiny island so famous.' Talk by island resident Celia Holman.

Friday 6 March – World Day of Prayer service at St Mary's Church at 2 pm. This year the service has been prepared by women of Zimbabwe. Everyone welcome.

Saturday 7 March - St Theodore's Charity fundraising dinner for families facing starvation in Zimbabwe. The cost of each ticket is a mere £10. All of the funds raised will go to help in Zimbabwe. No hidden costs will be taken out. For tickets please ring Anita Tozzi on 07956 481136. Anita is also on Facebook so you can contact her that way too. Meal starts at 7.30 pm.

Wednesday 11 March – Christian Aid short service of prayer for Climate Justice led by Rt Rev Dr Rowan Williams near the Houses of Parliament. 10.30 am.

Saturday 14 March – Rituals and Romances: Charity concert for Good Seeds Project at St Mary's Church at 7.30 pm. Cello - Amy Gould, Piano - David Harrod. St Mary's Church has supported the parish of Mandimba in Mozambique for over 10 years. Through Good Seeds, St Mary's funds the schooling of over 70 children a year. Tickets £12 amycgould@outlook.com or £15 on the door.

Tuesday 17 March – Ladies Guild at 8 pm. Liz, Janice and Margaret will share photos and memories of holidays in Croatia. (There is a possibility that this may be replaced by a different talk but will be rescheduled.)

Saturday 21 March- Follow the Son concert at East Molesey Methodist Church. A mix of Christian and popular music from Simon and Garfunkel to Adele, rock, songs from the

musicals and more. Doors open 7 pm for 7.30 start. Tickets £7.50. Book online at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/east-molesey-methodist-church> or email events@emmc.org.uk

Friday 27 March – Fish and chips and film night at East Molesey Methodist Church. The film is 'Hunt for the Wilder people.' Raised in foster care, defiant city kid Ricky gets a fresh start in the beautiful New Zealand countryside with his new foster family. When a tragedy strikes, we watch two of life's rejects unwittingly embark on a fantastic adventure together. This is a heart-rending, beautiful film. Advance booking needed for fish and chips at 6.30 pm. Book by 4 pm on Wednesday 25 March but earlier to avoid disappointment as places are limited. Tel Valerie: 01932 221247 or email events@emmc.org.uk £7 for film and food.

Saturday 28 March- Café Arts at Hounslow Methodist Church. Gareth Davies-Jones presents Troubadour: On tour, which weaves together humour and poignancy with a sense of community and hope as you take a journey through songs and the stories behind them from Gareth's 15 years on the road. Doors open 7 pm for 8 pm start. Tickets £8 in advance (speak to Mark Gilks) or £9 on the door. Tea, coffee and homemade cakes.

Monday 30 March- Taizé prayer service at All Saints Church at 8 pm. Everyone welcome.

Tuesday 31 March- Ladies Guild Easter Service led by Bronwyn Coveney, and supper. 8 pm.

Saturday 4 April- Book Fair at East Molesey Methodist Church. 11 am to 2 pm. Books, CDs, DVDs and refreshments. Free entry.

Tuesday 7 April – Messy Church at Hampton Methodist Church. 10.30 am to 12 noon.

Wednesday 29 April – The Inspiring Women Spring Day will take place at Waverley Abbey House in Farnham. The subject is 'The Yeses of God' and will be led by Rachel Wright, who is a nurse, writer and speaker. She has written, 'Shattered', a brave, honest and funny devotional book. Rachel will be looking in scripture to highlight people who heard the message 'Be more' and 'Yes do it' and will take time to help us to discern where God is saying 'Be more' in our lives. The cost of the day is £29.25 (including lunch) if we book by the end of February. We will arrange lifts as we did last time. If you would like to go speak to Eunice asap.

Saturday 9 May – Unbelievable? The Conference 2020 at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. The conference will bring together renowned historians, theologians and communicators including Tom Wright and Tom Holland. 10 am to 5 pm. Book before 18 March for early bird tickets at £35 at <https://www.unbelievable.live/>

Saturday 16 May – Christian Aid Big Brekkie at Hampton Mission Partnership. More details to follow. Please let Janice know if you are able to help.

Sunday 17 May – Circle the City, visiting historic London churches with this Christian Aid sponsored walk. See Janice for details.

26 May- Messy Church at Hampton Methodist Church. 10.30 am to 12 noon.

Friday 29 May- Circuit Book Club in the Brooker Annexe at Sunbury Methodist Church. 7.30 pm. The book this month is Northanger Abbey by Val McDermid, a modern re-imagining of the classic. This is the second book in the 'Austen Project.'

You are invited to the 5th
RICH IN YEARS

Tuesday 10th to Thursday 12th November 2020

At the Chatsworth Hotel

This is a short break in a comfortable hotel for Christian Fellowship very close to the sea and shops. We have two clear afternoons to walk by the sea or go shopping. We have a speaker for four sessions which will be followed by discussion, and also one led by Paul and Maggie Revis and one for a video or questions and answers. It is a great time to relax, think about our relationships with God, make new friends from our own and other churches and have a really good time.

We do need to book as early as possible to be sure of getting our rooms.

- ◆ So please do join us
- ◆ Sign the paper at the bottom of this flyer
- ◆ And put it in your diary.

It is £189 per person for a double room and £199 for a single room. This includes dinner, morning coffee, bed and breakfast for two nights and travel by coach to and from Hampton Station. The only things you have to pay for are wherever you choose to have lunch. We stop at the Marine Gardens, Worthing, on the outward journey where it is possible to enjoy a variety of foods from sandwiches to a cooked meal.

We leave Hampton Station on Tuesday 10 November 2020 at 10.30 am and return to Hampton Station by 4.00 pm on Thursday 12 November 2020.

Do sign up, we look forward to meeting you. We will be giving further information nearer the time.

Deposit £30

Name

Email

Telephone

Any dietary needs?

Thank you. We look forward to your company

Please return to Pat Felstead or Nigel Francis at St Mary's Church Office, Church Street, Hampton, TW12 2EB

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