

Baptists and Methodists together at Hampton Methodist Church



October 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>.

“Everything got started in Jesus and finds its purpose in him.” — (Colossians 1:16b The Message)

Dear HMP family,

Peace and Grace of the Lord be with you and your loved ones.

Many months have passed since I was informed that I was to be stationed at the Teddington Circuit. A pandemic, radical protests, and economic uncertainty were not amongst the questions that came to mind in our conversations.

Life and ministry of our church might be different in many ways, and some of our new practices according to the government's guidelines challenge how to signify where we are as church and who we are as Jesus' disciples.

During this crisis, we are easily tossed and swayed by the changing environment. We are bound to look around us and be shaped by it. Every time when we focus on ourselves, our worrying, our anxiety, our evolving environment and our loss, we will never reveal our life's purpose. As time goes on, some people may have developed the 'withdrawal' or 'queueing' syndromes that restrict our way of life: to love and be loved. In times like these, we need an anchor!

Be very sure that Jesus, the image of the invisible God, has shown us that God is love. He is our refuge and strength, a very present help in all troubles!

Jesus will not overlook our worry, our anxiety, and our loss. He stands by us and listens to our agony and pain. He even weeps with us in our moments as he weeps with the mourners by the tomb of his friend Lazarus. (John 11:35)

But he doesn't stop there. After shedding tears with his friends, he raises Lazarus from the dead and asks him to come out from the tomb. He also commends others to unbind him from the grave clothes and let him go freely as a living man. (John 11:44b)

For this very reason, the apostle Paul proclaims that we were made by the loving God and to live with a purpose for him. "It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living" (Eph 1:11 MSG).

Through faith in Christ, we can ask ourselves, 'in spite of all these adverse situations around me, how can I remind myself that life is really about living for God, not myself?'

Remember the centenarian, Captain Tom? He started small by walking in his garden but his purpose was right. He set his eyes on the love for others. He did what he could to raise money for the NHS. God has done amazing works to build up many through his genuine offering.

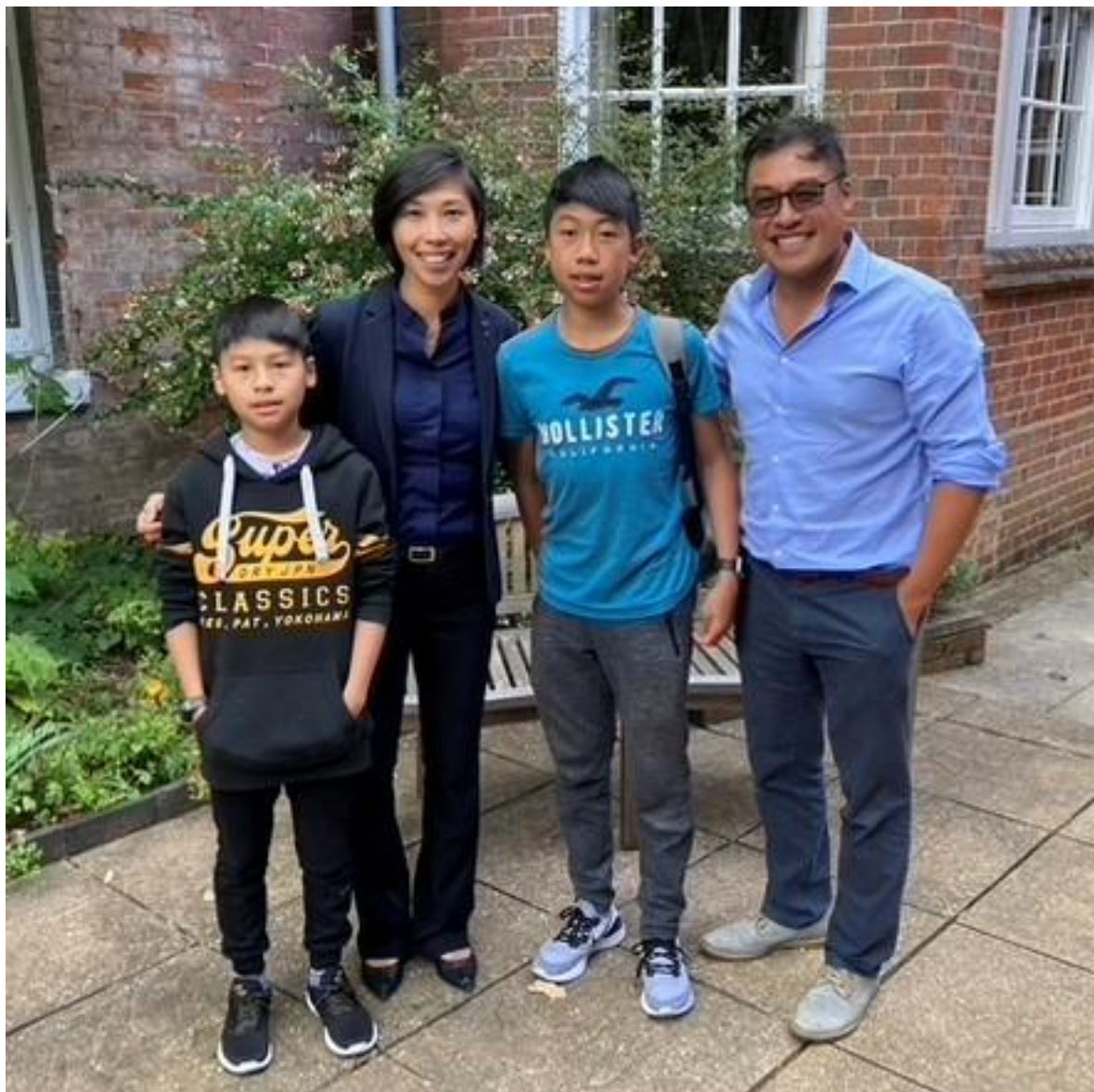
My family and I are small, consisting of four members. I am married to Tim who is an architect. I have two boys, Max who will turn 14 in December and Jonas who is now 12 years old. I was born and grew up in Hong Kong. After graduation, I worked in the hospitality industry for a few years before moving to the UK. I started my ministerial training at Queen's Foundation, Birmingham in 2013.

As a family, we have encountered God's amazing grace in our ups and also our downs. And we believe, no matter how big or small or what differences we hold, Jesus wants us to be a freeman and freewoman to declare: "me and my household, we will serve the LORD."
(Joshua 24:15)

So, even if you may have felt in the dark about your purpose of life, take heart and be strong, let's walk into the light to rediscover your life's purpose through Christ, the risen Lord to serve the present age together.

For me, I love blending traditions with creativity, meeting and working with people, witnessing people to sing a new song in a creative way and seeing our amazing God do new things! I am excited and I look forward to working with the wonderful people of Hampton Mission Partnership!

God bless you all,
Kan xx



Welcome Service for Revd Kan Yu

On September 4 we had a welcome service for our new Minister Revd Kan Yu at Sunbury Methodist Church. She will have responsibility for Hampton, Hanworth and Sunbury churches. This was also to officially recognise Revd David Innes in his new position of Superintendent for the Teddington Circuit. Our own Jacques Kotze was recording the service so it could be shared to a wider audience as we were only allowed up to eight people to attend the actual service from Hampton Mission Partnership and these were mostly allocated to stewards.

It was strange having to wear masks (although we are used to that by now), but also to sit so far apart with lots of empty seats in between so you couldn't really talk to anyone before the service started. I just waved to a few people I knew even though they could not see if I was smiling at them or not.

After the initial welcome by the steward at Sunbury we started with the hymn Bless the Lord, O My Soul. This was followed by our own Doris who read the first prayer and she did an excellent job for the Partnership. Although there was a music group who sang it was strange not to be able to sing the hymns as the words were up on the screen.

After the reading we had Hampton's choice of hymn which was There is a Redeemer. This was the hymn we had when the Baptists joined us way back in July 2019. What a different world it was back then.

This was followed by the sermon given by Michaela Youngson, Chair of District, who knows this circuit well having temporarily served here, so admitted to having a 'soft spot' for Teddington Circuit and mentioned we had a strong circuit leadership team. Her sermon was about Love in Action and related to the reading where Jesus washed his disciples' feet. She talked about how the gifts each one of us bring is different and how David and Kan will bring different gifts to their ministries. We all represent Jesus to the World and are all called to 'get our hands dirty' and live out love in action. We must remain grounded and no one is too important to do the washing up after a church activity for instance, giving us a good example of what she meant from her own experience. It was a very inspiring message and I am sure David and Kan appreciated it.

After the promises were made Kan and David gave a short address in response. Then it was onto the next hymn Beauty for Brokenness, another prayer read by Frances from Hanworth and the Lord's prayer; finishing with the hymn I, the Lord of the Sea and Sky.

It was a strange but lovely service and it was really nice to see Kan's extended family attending to support her. To quote the end of the promises made:

We welcome you both to your new ministries. Let us all serve God together.

Pam Harrison



Becoming Super

The first Superintendent Minister that I remember knowing was called Wesley. Not the John Wesley, I hasten to add. This minister used his middle name. His first initial was J, so it wasn't hard to guess after whom he might have been named! He was a very sombre man. He always dressed completely in black, except for a white collar. I remember once when we knew he was taking some holiday. I saw him walking in the park, still dressed all in black as a minister. One of his fellow-ministers commented that he thought he even kept his dog collar on in the bath.

As I take up the role of becoming your Superintendent Minister I'm not tempted to adopt that sort of image! I do recall that Wesley preached some very thoughtful sermons. I can still remember some of them forty years later. That's a much more helpful example.

His successor was called Arnold. He once gave me a lift in his orange Austin Allegro. As we drove past Roker Park (home of Sunderland AFC), I asked him how I could become a Local Preacher. I'd only just turned 18 at the time and was very hairy, so he probably didn't expect a question like that from me. We drove along at 5 mph (I think the Allegro could go a little bit faster than that) whilst he explained the system to me. Three weeks later, I was helping another preacher in the circuit. So as Superintendent, I expect God to do the unexpected and hope I can respond quickly as Arnold did.

The Superintendent who oversaw my journey to training for the ministry was hopeless at administration. That wasn't good when there were deadlines to meet for submitting forms and reports. It made the whole process even more nerve wracking than it can be. I'm not keen on admin either, but I'll try not to let you down with things that need to be done and I hope that I'll find others who actually enjoy admin who can take on some of the jobs that need to be done.

My first Superintendent as a minister had the same name as me and came from the same home town, though he definitely came from the posh end. After three years cooped up in college, I needed to be able to spread my wings. He was wonderfully supportive, giving me the freedom that I needed, yet always there to listen and advise when necessary. Each of the churches in our circuit will develop its own mission priorities. As Superintendent, I want each church to be free to develop its own way forward, but hope to be able to support your work where needed.

I could keep on writing about more Superintendents that I've known – the things that I might want to try to copy from them, and the things that have been less helpful, that I'll try to avoid. It's certainly been an exciting three years working alongside Vicci and seeing her passion for social justice. But God calls each of us to be the individuals that he uniquely created. I'm not Vicci. Kan isn't even Vicci. The church grows when everyone enjoys using the gifts that God has given them, rather than miserably trying to do things that aren't their gift. When some of the Circuit Stewards came to ask me about whether I felt called to take on the role of Superintendent, I did warn them that I would still be me – and so I am.

So let's all use the gifts that God has given us to share in building his kingdom. Let's be open to the unexpected as we see where God is leading us next. It's going to be an exciting journey.

Your friend and superintendent

David

Onward and Upward

So here we are; the new normal as we work towards some kind of getting back to what we are used to. It seems everything has changed in what we do and it is all strange. Looking at pictures before Christmas where people were gathered together whether in worship, pleasure or sport, who would have believed we would not be able to meet together in large groups. You never know what you have until it is taken from you as the old saying goes and I think we are all guilty of taking these small pleasures for granted. I think it will be a long time to be anywhere near where we were pre-lockdown and as I write this, Football Focus (Not that I watch Football Focus, that is for Mr. H) is talking about games going on still with no fans, the Who Wants to be a Millionaire million pound winner had to celebrate without an audience and we are still not allowed to serve refreshments after church services.

So, what has been going on since the last magazine:

Thankfully we have had the fantastic blogs and service sheets which have been sent out by email and hand delivered to some, prepared by Mark, Paul and other people in the team. These have been invaluable in reaching more people than we might have had on a normal Sunday and have enabled people to worship in their own homes knowing that others are doing the same. This is a tremendous amount of work and we thank all those involved in preparing them each week and sending them out.

The two taster services we ran taught us a lot about what our capabilities and limitations were. These were well attended and I think everyone was pleased to be back on a Sunday seeing familiar faces, in person. This has led us now to be able to stream services on to YouTube so people at home can see our September services now we are back following the circuit plan. This would not have been possible without Jacques' hard work in setting up, which took hours of his time, and using his own equipment. So, a big thank you to Jacques. All services are socially distanced by two metres and must be booked in advance so we know how many to expect and can cater for everyone needing to worship.

In early September we welcomed Revd Kan Yu to our Circuit and I am sure she will prove an asset to Hampton Mission Partnership as she guides us through these strange times. Hopefully by now you have had the chance to see Kan's welcome service on YouTube.

The Extra Mile has been as busy as ever. We thought we would just do emergencies, but in essence we carried on with reduced volunteers meeting all referrals and just didn't take any donations without quarantine first.

So many of our planned gatherings and celebrations have had to be cancelled or changed so when we are allowed back, I think there should be a big celebration. Talking of gatherings and celebrations, I would have liked to say goodbye to you all properly after church at coffee time, but sadly that could not happen as hopefully when you read this, I will be reading it in West Sussex. I have loved being part of Hampton for more than 30 years when we walked into the church with Anna who was six weeks old at the time; she is now 32. Lots of love and God Bless to you all.

Pam Harrison



On Pam's last day.

Friday Fellowship

When the Coronavirus restrictions came upon us, we quickly found that we couldn't enjoy Christian fellowship, which is so much part of our sense of belonging to the family of believers called church. This was especially hard during Easter. My own church (Ashford Common Baptist Church) benefited from the fellowship we found in our daily meetings via Zoom during Holy Week. It seemed natural to extend this to weekly meetings and to offer the same to the Hampton Mission Partnership. Friday Fellowship was born.

I have been blessed to lead the group of six to a dozen singles or couples each week. We have met (almost) every week for around 45 minutes during which we chat, share some thoughts from John's gospel, pray and sometimes sing (to ourselves). We have used these times to reflect on Jesus' teaching and his example and been encouraged in our own faith.

The group has plenty of room for others to join in. If you are not used to 'zoom' it is not too hard to take the plunge and you can even join through a normal phone call (although obviously won't see others). Friday Fellowship is at 5.15 pm each week and you can join through www.bit.ly/ACBC-zoom. You can join by phone through 020 8080 6592, but please call me on 01784 245989 first for the other information you will need.

David Priddy

Peter Clark

(1948 – 2020)

In 2002 I was senior circuit steward and we were looking to appoint a new minister for Teddington and East Molesey churches in 2003. Someone in Teddington church knew Peter and Ailsa and knew they were intending to come to the UK from South Africa and that Peter would go into stationing for that year. Colin and I were going to South Africa in May 2002 hot air ballooning and I agreed to try and meet Peter while there. The daily activities of the balloon meet, plus the distance from the Orange Free State where we were and the Durban area where Peter lived meant that this was not possible. I recall telephoning him from a public call box (no mobiles in those days!), he had just come in from a run and we had a long conversation. On my return I recommended that if Peter went into stationing we should select him.

The Circuit Stewards selected Peter and we were fortunate that the Stationing Committee matched Peter with Teddington Circuit from September 2003 and he became minister for Teddington and East Molesey churches.

The running that Peter had spoken about in May 2002 remained very much part of his life in the UK and he formed a running group of firm friends. As well as regular running he competed in marathons across the world. In 2007 the running group ran the 'Three Peaks' (running up Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowden within 24 hours); Colin and my younger brother did the driving between the mountains.

His ministry was different to any minister I have known, a very spiritual person but very pragmatic and never afraid to 'do things differently'. He had a gift for writing and would regularly email his 'From the Manse' and later 'Letter of the week' which were always interesting and thought provoking. Whilst in our circuit Peter and Ailsa ran an 'open group' at their home; it took place early on Sunday mornings and attracted a small group of people who met regularly for discussion on selected books, videos and religious issues. Colin was a regular attender.

In 2006 Peter and Ailsa led a circuit group on a holiday to South Africa and they promised to show us South Africa 'warts and all', which they certainly did. We had a wonderful holiday, from Cape Town, the Stellenbosch area, the Drakensberg Mountains, a safari park, a Zulu village and then to Pinetown, Durban where we saw the work that Pinetown Methodist Church was doing through a charity called Phakamisa. The charity exists to serve and uplift impoverished communities through the provision of training, resourcing and support; they provide a hand UP, not a hand OUT. The group were struck by the poverty, children looked after by grandmothers and the anomaly of the beautiful children we saw and who danced for us but frequently had no food from one day to the next apart from what Phakamisa gave them and there we were going on to a luxury lunch. The group had an immediate collection for them and vowed to fundraise on our return to the UK. Many of us still support Phakamisa through monthly giving and fundraising.

Peter became Circuit Superintendent and during this time he developed multiple myeloma, a bone marrow cancer which meant gruelling treatment which he coped with amazingly. This went into remission but did return and he had further bouts of treatment. As his term of office in our Circuit came to an end he was appointed to the Staines Circuit and so we continued to receive his regular newsletters.

In 2016 Peter retired and he and Ailsa moved to Beverley, East Yorkshire and settled there very well. Unfortunately Peter became poorly again but after treatment went in to remission; this year he was diagnosed with an aggressive blood cancer which he did not survive.

Peter was a deeply thoughtful and Christian man with a heart of gold. He leaves his wife Ailsa, his four sons and three grandchildren. He touched the lives of so many people and we all carry parts of him into the future.

At Peter's memorial service Leonard Cohen's Anthem was read and I finish with the final words of that anthem.

Ring the bells that still can ring

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack, a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in.

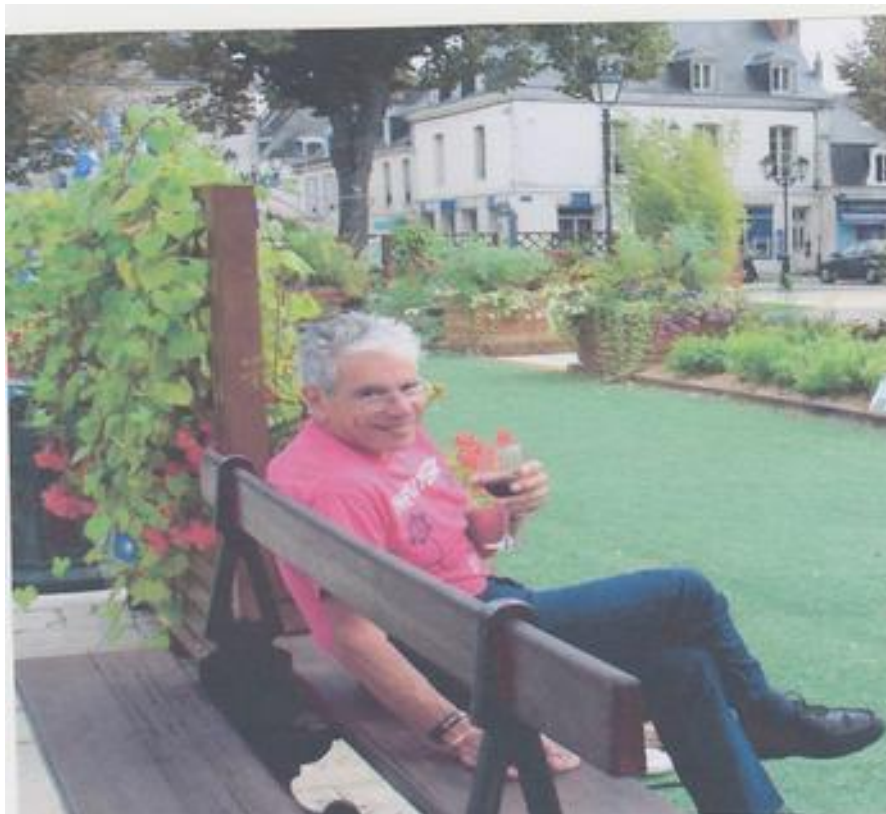
Hazel Greasby



Peter and Ailsa outside their home in Beverley



Three peaks run 2007 – Peter on the left



Peter on holiday in France; the picture on his Celebration of Life order of service

Ladies Guild update

Like most other church activities, we have been unable to start our regular meetings again. However, a small number of members met at the end of July to say farewell to Vicci. This had been planned as our last meeting of the summer session, with us providing tea and cakes and with Vicci entertaining us for the final time. Obviously, this was not possible in the church hall, so we met in my garden, socially distanced with chairs and tables sanitised, and enjoyed the tea and homemade cakes. We were extremely fortunate with the warm, sunny weather and total lack of aircraft noise. We were able to present Vicci with a farewell gift, and she sang 'Summertime' unaccompanied for our enjoyment and that of any neighbours who happened to be out in their gardens.

Since then we have consulted members as to how we may proceed in the future when safe to do so. We have lost two members, and others are unable to attend for a variety of reasons. Therefore, it does not seem viable to invite speakers. There is also a reluctance to attend evening meetings. The suggestion is that we meet fortnightly on Tuesday mornings, with possibly one meeting in the church hall, and alternate fortnights go out for coffee or lunch at different venues.

All of this is very much dependent on the situation with the virus, and must be on hold for the time being. In the meantime, we continue to keep in touch by telephone and emails. We also may consider setting up Zoom meetings!

Janice Thompson



Foodbanks update

Richmond Foodbank has continued to operate during lockdown. Our centres in Whitton, Isleworth and Barnes remained, seeing our Foodbank guests from behind closed doors. A guest would come to the centre with a voucher and they would be given some pre-packed bags of food. This isn't ideal, as the personal contact that we usually offer isn't there, but at least we are still able to provide something to eat. Richmond and Hampton Foodbanks moved to a delivery model in March. British Gas offered their drivers and vans, to assist in this, which proved invaluable. As we moved out of lockdown and British Gas returned to their usual roles, we wondered how we could sustain this, but a new group of volunteer drivers came on board, and we are continuing to deliver to approx. 35 families / individuals a week.

As you can imagine we have seen a dramatic increase in people needing to access a Foodbank, including those who were shielding and unable to leave the house, plus those that had lost their jobs or learning to live on a Furlough wage. We adopted a more relaxed approach, as people were finding it hard to access a referral agency who was operating and could issue vouchers, so we now have a mobile phone number for those who were unable to get help elsewhere, to ensure that anyone who needed food could access it as easily as possible. This may be discontinued once we are up and running again but for now it's on from 9 – 5 Monday to Friday to take any enquiries.

Moving forward, the plan is to re-open Hampton and Richmond Foodbanks as soon as we can. You may be aware the White House is under new management, albeit perhaps temporary, as the council currently hold the lease, but are looking for a new leaseholder. We have signed a contract to re-enter the building and are looking at ways we can operate in a manner which is safe for staff, volunteers, and foodbank guests. We are hoping to use one of their rooms for this, as previously we were operating from the corridor, which isn't ideal in the current climate. We are also in the process of having a risk assessment, provided by Richmond-Upon-Thames council. Once this is done, we will develop our own Risk assessment, and once all the recommendations are put in place, and we believe it is safe to do so, we can re-open, provided we don't end up in lockdown again.

We have seen an amazing increase in donations over the last six months, so much so that we decided that we didn't need another 9 tonnes of food, usually donated during Harvest. Therefore, for this year only, we have asked many of our regular donors to consider donating money towards a much-needed larger van for the Foodbank. Many have taken this on board and for those who would rather continue to donate food, we are asking for donations from a much smaller list. Our current shortages are as follows

- Jam
- Small jars of coffee
- Shampoo/ conditioner
- Toothbrushes/ toothpaste
- Tinned veg and pulses
- Instant mashed potato
- Long life milk and fruit juice
- Tinned meat and fish

We currently have enough volunteers to open up Hampton, but are very short of volunteers at Richmond, due to the fact many are in the older age bracket and understandably are not wishing to return as yet. If anyone would be willing to help out there please get in touch caroline@vineyardcommunity.org.

Many thanks and God bless

Caroline Ferrier

Golden Wedding Anniversary

In the autumn of 2019 Colin and I started to plan for our Golden Wedding Anniversary on 18 July 2020. We booked Warren Lodge for Sunday 19th July for a lunchtime 'do'. Colin and I were married at Hampton Methodist Church, our children were all baptised there, our two daughters married there and our four 'English' grandchildren were baptised there. Our son Jonny and his wife and two children were going to come over from Australia and it seemed a good idea for our two 'Australian' grandchildren to be baptised on our anniversary day. Vicci was 'booked' to baptise the two children and we sent out 'Save the Date' notes with Christmas cards to folk who we particularly wanted to join us on the day, other invitations could go out nearer the time.

Well, that was before COVID -19 hit us all. It soon became clear that our planned event would not take place. The hotel was contacted and they agreed to take a booking for 18 July 2021 and transfer our deposit; an explanatory note and a new request to save a new date was sent to close friends and family.

So what to do? In the end we decided to hold a celebration in Elizabeth and Mark's garden (our eldest daughter and her husband). There would be ten of us – Elizabeth and Mark and their two children, Caroline and Doug (our younger daughter and husband) and their two daughters plus us – socially distanced of course! The forecast for Sunday 19th was not good and so we decided on the Saturday, which actually was the correct day! We had a truly lovely day, the sun shone and the food which we had prepared between us was excellent and we had a lot of fun; Caroline picked us up (complete with facemask and open car windows!), Elizabeth had made an anniversary cake and the ten of us had a memorable day. We had to make do with a Zoom call to Jonny, Gabbi and their two children in Australia.

We are looking forward to being able to celebrate again next year with friends and family although with the current progress of COVID-19 we are not too hopeful!

Hazel Greasby



18 July 1970



18 July 2020 in the garden!



We held our breath for this one, not socially distanced!

Hall lettings

Our regular hall lettings had to stop at the end of March when we went into lockdown. We were able to get both halls redecorated towards the end of this time. Since September some of the hall users have started to return-obviously all of them have had to do a risk assessment to make sure that everyone using our halls is safe.

The Suzanna Raymond School of dancing has had to cease using our halls after many years for financial reasons and Playball (a preschool ball skills class) has also ceased to meet as their teacher had a new baby in August. We are pleased that a number of new lets have started to use the halls. These are: -

Jean Bannister-Line dancing

Bernadette Chandler and Mairead Corby-children's Irish dancing class.

Lynsey Delaforte-Ballet and Tap classes

Thameside Harmony Chorus-are due to start when they are allowed to sing in a group and there may also be an Art class starting after Easter in 2021.

Party bookings are currently not permitted. We are grateful for all our hall users as they provide a significant source of income for the church. The list of regular hall users is displayed on the noticeboard in the halls lobby area.

Wendy Salmon

Hall to church and back again!

The first Methodist Church in Percy Road, Hampton was built and opened in 1926 and was what we now know as the large hall. The land had been bought for £532, and £4,377 was spent on having the buildings erected towards the rear of the site, leaving room for a new church to be built later on, these buildings then becoming the church halls. Photos below of the hall in the 1950s and the wedding of Wendy's parents in 1948.



What we now know as the church was built in 1963. Churches were closed for worship from March 2020 during the pandemic and we held our first services when allowed in August. Due to the fact that our church still has pews, it has been difficult to use the church in a socially distanced way, as we do not have the flexibility of chairs. Therefore, we used the large hall with chairs spaced out at 2m and in family bubbles. Photos below of the all-age service in August and Kan's first service at Hampton in September.



The church website has lots more information and photos of the history of the church if you are interested.
www.hamptonmethodistchurch.org.uk

Liz Windaybank

The Extra Mile

When lockdown happened in mid-March, we considered whether we could continue or not and decided we would just do emergency referrals. Well in actual fact we carried on but with less volunteers. We met all the referrals sent to us and ensured socially distanced working and PPE were worn as appropriate.

Any donations were bagged, labelled and quarantined until they were safe to sort and assurances given from those donating that they were Covid free. It was a very busy time and we managed to fill the church as it was not being used for worship; whilst we sorted what we were keeping and what was going.

In the summer we usually have a break and this was no different as we decided not to take any donations until September and just to complete referrals. Usually this is a quieter time anyway with people being away. Wendy, Liz Lucie, Helena, Elaine and Sarah kept the 'fire burning' and managed to sort out the walk-in cupboard which thankfully looks so much better. During this time, we went down to the church as and when rather than our usual regular times.

Now we are back to our normal Monday and Wednesday sessions and Janet and Cathy are back on board. So, it is full steam ahead for a busy time as referrals have again started to come in and donations are back with everyone having a sort out.

Usually around this time with Baby Basics we start to plan our annual soup lunch for January, but this year we cannot meet as we would like, so that idea has been postponed until January 2022 when we hope to revive the event. This is an important fundraiser for both Baby Basics and The Extra Mile. We are hoping to organise a different kind of fundraiser in February 2021. In the meantime, our funds have depleted as we are unable to fundraise by doing tea, coffee and cake at the Mum 2 Mum sales and other such events. However, people are always very generous and church members have supplied us with items of clothing for older children which has saved us buying new items i.e. warm coats for the children of families referred to us.

In October we are expecting a visit from our local MP Munira Wilson, who is keen to find out more about us and what we do.

Pam Harrison

You don't need me to tell you that we are living through an emergency. The impact of the pandemic is widespread, and in addition to the health challenges it generates it is having a severe impact on the lives of ordinary people. Simply put, there is a steep increase in families living in poverty. Just as night follows day, this is having a major marked effect on The Extra Mile. Last week we received this encouraging message from one of our referrers, 'Thanks for all the hard work you and your volunteers have done to satisfy my multiple order. I wish they could have seen the joy on the 6-year-old boys' faces at the toys in particular.'

I recently spoke to a senior midwife at West Mid Hospital, who told me that they are braced for an increase in destitute mothers; other professionals who work for Social Services are in agreement. Please hold us in your prayers, continue to be understanding about the apparent untidiness in the church and look forward to the fundraiser in the new year. We follow Jesus' example by making the poor and marginalised a priority. We can only do this with your love and support. A heartfelt thanks to our supporters and The Extra Mile team.

Eunice Gilks

A Tale of Three Cities (Well almost!)

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times - that's Covid 19!

Australia (Melbourne)

I had arranged a trip to visit my sister-in-law and her husband (Margaret and Malcolm) who live in Melbourne and this had been planned for around nine months.

I left Hampton on Friday 13th March (not a good day in hindsight!) and arrived in Melbourne the following day. M&M picked me up from the airport for the 30-minute drive to their house in Glen Waverley. We had arranged a trip to Tasmania due to start on the 16th March. Twenty-four hours after my arrival Australia closed its borders due to the pandemic and shortly after that Melbourne went into lockdown!

Tasmania had to be cancelled and we were more or less confined to the house and garden with one walk locally every day.

We would normally attend the Glen Waverley Anglican Church on Sundays but instead these services were conducted online.

We did manage a trip to Phillip Island for a few days - my Australian niece and her family own a property on the island. Although an island, Phillip Island is accessible by a bridge.

However it was good to visit the family and some friends (socially distanced of course!), and the weather was warm (late 20s - early 30s).

I was able to arrange a flight back to the U.K. one week before my scheduled return.

In the meantime, Ruth, Reuben and Joseph arrived back in the U.K., as Ruth has detailed in the previous issue of this magazine.

Germany (Hausen Im Wiesental)

At the end of July we were able to arrange a trip to visit Rhona and family in Germany. Adam had to stay behind as he was working but Ruth, myself and the boys travelled to Germany by car, using Le Shuttle. It is a long drive but manageable with two drivers. The journey from Calais to Hausen is around 480 miles and we arrived on 1st August at 17:45. We then collapsed and enjoyed a cold beer in the garden (temperature was around 30 degrees) - not the boys of course, they had to make do with apple juice!

It was great for us all to meet up again there were nine of us: -

Rhona, Mark, Ethan (9), Amy (10), Grace (11), Ruth, Willem, Reuben (9) and Joseph (6).

The children all got to revive their relationships as they had not seen each other for some time, and they all slept in the same room which was great fun!

During the week the weather was very good, quite warm with some rain but this was mostly during the night.

Rhona and Mark have two dogs - Dooby (Wisla) and Gyopar (Wire haired Wisla) and we spent the week going for walks, swimming in the nearby river and visiting places.

Where Rhona lives is in a valley in the Black Forest and surrounded by mountains including The Alps so it is a very picturesque and beautiful area.

London (Hampton)

I have had to get used to a busy house. Separate rooms are required for Adam and myself to work in as we are both working from home, and this also places a strain on the Internet connection.

In the summer term Ruth also had to provide home schooling for the boys. She has also managed to get Reuben into Hampton Junior School and Joseph into Hampton Infants. Joseph was able to go to school in the latter part of the summer term although only for two days per week due to the Covid restrictions. Reuben did not start school physically until the current autumn term and both boys are settling in well and full time at school now.

Children do not start school until the age of seven in South Africa and consequently particularly Joseph was about two years behind, so Ruth spent much time in teaching Joseph to read and write before he went to school. The saving grace when the boys were unable to go to school and we were in lockdown has been striking up a friendship with Jeevi, the nine year old son of our next door neighbours. They devised activities playing games across the fence, and later in each other's gardens, and have even had sleepovers in each other's houses and tents in the garden!

Added to all this was the arrival of the family's pets from South Africa - a Weiderama dog called Sky and a Balinese cat called Siam. They go by the names of Sky and Si which can be confusing!

So the last six months have been both interesting and challenging from all sides but we have been able to live together without too many problems!

Willem Sandberg



To play or not to play?

That is the question. What should a Christian do about Sunday morning sport, when this clashes with the weekly church service? What should the Church do to reach those who play Sunday morning sport? Does it even matter?

These are well-rehearsed and well-established questions. I remember dealing with them as I was growing up, at a time that Sunday morning sport was much less prolific and when kids' sport, certainly, tended to fall on a Saturday. Both my sister and I loved sport, and were good at it, and we were lucky that our frequent school sporting commitments fell largely on Saturdays or during the week. But, as we got older and progressed to higher levels, it became more and more difficult to separate church and sport. When our club, county or England squads trained over a whole weekend, we had to attend, or else give up. For girls who loved their sport but who were also committed Christians, this was a tough call. What did God want us to do?

Our default position was always to go to church on Sunday, but when important sporting fixtures fell on Sunday too, then we would go to those instead. These actually turned out to be the exception rather than the rule, but what should you do if the only sport available to you (at any level) falls on a Sunday morning?

I believe that each individual must make their own decision about what to do, based firmly on what they feel God is calling them to. If the only means of Christian support and fellowship that you have is on a Sunday morning, then cutting yourself off from that community to play your sport may have damaging consequences. You need to make sure that you can grow in your faith, with the help of others, even if you cannot attend the usual church services. It is also worth considering how God views your sport. Can the act of doing it not be a means of worshipping him, with the gifts he has given you? How about being able to witness for him in your team or club?

More questions. Sport at all levels needs Christians right at its heart, because the world needs Jesus. It is no good if we are forced to excuse ourselves from certain activities, just because they happen to clash with church. Unfortunately, most children's sporting activities these days fall on a Sunday morning. Just google any sports club in the area, and you will see that they train on Sundays. We did just this when we came back from South Africa, where Reuben was lucky that all his sporting commitments (and there were many of them) fell either on a Saturday or midweek. All of the local clubs here, however, devote Sunday mornings to their kids' training.

We have not worked out how to manage this yet. We have put off joining any clubs for winter sports, but the issue is not so much dealt with as ignored for the time being (until Reuben asks again when he can start rugby). We shall see how this pans out.

But what about people who have never been to church or had a church background? How much less likely are we to see them in our services if their kids enjoy their Sunday morning sport? It is unrealistic to expect people to give up activities that they love in order to come and experience church, and simplistic to suggest that this is a hard decision that they have to make if they want to be committed Christians. They may never set foot in a church if we do not find a way of adapting to this facet of modern life.

I do not know quite what the answer is, but it may lie in looking outside the Sunday morning slot to minister in a different way. Sunday afternoons? Saturday afternoons? Kids' groups after school during the week, rather than on Sundays? Sundays have been the traditional service day, for good reason (the 7th day of rest) although, interestingly, when my grandma grew up, Sunday School was separate from church and on a Sunday afternoon. I am all for standing firm in our beliefs in an ever-changing world, but I am not sure that this means refusing to engage in the way that modern family life is organized. Maybe we need to be creative. The Messy Church model is one that brings church to children in a refreshing way. It is this thinking outside the usual way of doing things that should inform our regular engagement with families and, especially, with children. They are, after all, the church's future.

Ruth Lancaster

Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes

Last year Operation Christmas Child worldwide delivered over 10.5 million shoebox gifts to children in more than 100 countries - 178 million have been sent since 1990! Now, in the midst of a global pandemic, the lives of children and families have been turned upside down and the need is greater than ever before. Boys and girls around the world need to experience hope and joy, and a shoebox gift offers just that.

If you would like to pack a box in the usual way, you can pick up a flat-packed shoebox and explanatory leaflet at church. The leaflet gives ideas of the sort of things to include and which items not to put in. Remember that we can no longer put in toothpaste and sweets. However, this year one restriction has been lifted! Hand-made stuffed toys may now go as long as the filling is proper craft filling and not old clothes or dried beans etc.

Alternatively, this year you can build a shoebox online, so you do not have to shop and search for everything you want to include. Just go to <https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/> This also reduces the number of boxes to be checked. In past years, there was a shoebox warehouse in Hounslow, where every box from the surrounding area including Hampton, were taken for checking. John and I took part in this and you would not believe what some people thought was appropriate to send as a gift for a child, as well as liquids and other forbidden items!

Bring your filled shoeboxes to church on **Sunday 8 November**, when they will be dedicated at our Remembrance service as will the online boxes that we have sent.

Liz Windaybank

Christmas angels

For the past few years we have knitted or crocheted little Christmas angels with a message of hope attached with the aim of showing God's love to everyone. They are usually displayed at the Carol Service and blessed before winging their way into the local community. Some have been placed on garden walls or in bushes for people to pick up, or they have been given to friends and family. This year more than ever we all need a message of hope!

They are very easy to knit, so please have a go! If you need the knitting pattern, speak to Wendy. She can also give you the little tags to attach to the angels.

Liz Windaybank



Wendy's first 2020 angel

Congratulations!



Dain's fundraiser made £721 for BLISS for babies born premature or sick.



Nerys officially discharged from Oxygen on 28 September.



Kara and Alex's twins Brodie-James and Reuben-Ray with Skylar-Hope and Scarlet-Rose



Emillie's first day at school with Diana and Diogo

Ian Ross is sworn in as a Justice of the Peace at Swansea Crown Court.
He will be sitting in the criminal magistrate's court from November.



The Bike Project

We became a 'Bike Hub' for the Bike Project over two years ago in May 2018. This means we collect second hand used bikes for the Bike Project. The bikes are collected in a van and taken to the Bike Project in Herne Hill where they are refurbished, made road worthy and given away to refugees and asylum seekers.

To date we have collected 570 bikes. We recently had a brand new 'Pashley' bike donated (probably worth around £600.) Barry and Vicky help me to receive the bike donations on the first Saturday of each month. The donation process has become easier as the donors now register their bikes on the website and receive a donation number. They bring their number with their bike and we write it onto a tag which is then attached to the bike. Please spread the word and if you would like to help with the Project let me know.

Wendy Salmon



Change of Scenery

For it is certainly that; swapping the outskirts of London Suburbia to a life by the sea.

As I write this I have only been in our new bungalow for just over a week, which seems to have flown by. The move went very well in the end with exchange and completion happening within two days of each other. Still, we were prepared with removal quotes etc. and had been clearing out things which we would not be taking since the beginning of the year, when we knew we were planning to move.

In spite of this, as we unpacked, we still had so much stuff and boxes, boxes, boxes. We have managed to give to charity shops the things we do not have room for. Going from a 4-bedroom, 3 reception room detached house to a 2-bedroom bungalow has been a challenge. So many bits and ornaments to find room for; you forget that living somewhere for 17 years you find places for things, but moving to a smaller place you may not have room for everything. Going from having five drawers in a kitchen to two drawers was very difficult. I dreaded opening another box marked 'Kitchen china and glass' to discover what I might find and where I was going to put it all. Anyway, I eventually found somewhere for all the glass vases, and odd bits of cutlery/utensils that I have collected over the years. Unfortunately, we knew we would have no wardrobes when we moved in so we are waiting to have some fitted ones and then I can stop living out of cardboard boxes and suitcases.

Of course, moving to a new place takes time to adjust – how does the heating work and hot water, what day is bin day, where are the nearest shops, doctors, dentists, vets and of course parks for Rodney (our dog for those of you that do not know me). Luckily, we are only a 10-minute walk from the beach and there are four parks nearby ranging from football grounds to wooded areas. So, he is well catered for.

A card has just come through the door from the pastoral co-ordinator for Goring Methodist Church welcoming us to the circuit. On our first Sunday here, we walked the 10 minutes from our bungalow to the church. They were very friendly, but of course it is difficult to get to know people much at present. They have just started back to services like Hampton and last Friday we had a Zoom virtual coffee morning. They seem a friendly bunch of people and very welcoming so I am looking forward to seeing what my next steps there might be. Their services start at 10 am so I can sometimes get back here and catch the last half hour of Hampton's live stream services.

So not really in any sort of routine yet as we are still finding our feet and sorting out, but hopefully we will be soon. I have sent some pictures of the area below; although I am not very good at taking photos. I will keep in touch and let you know how I am getting on and what life is like here once we have settled in and got to know more people and how everything works out.

Pam Harrison





Care for the Family

Care for the Family is a national charity which aims to promote strong family life and to help those who face family difficulties. It was founded in 1988 and I have been a supporter for many years. They focus primarily on marriage, parenting and bereavement and their aim is to be accessible to every family whatever their circumstances and to create resources and support that are preventative, evidence-based and easy to apply. They support those with faith and no faith. There is also an excellent website <https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/>

They also organise very good events all round the country but unfortunately never seem to come anywhere near to Hampton! However, events had to be cancelled due to the pandemic so they filmed them all and have made them available free online during October and November. Check the website to book. All events are one hour long and start at 7.30 pm. Events are as follows: -

Free to be with Cathy Madavan, Bekah Legg and Sue Rinaldi. 21, 22 and 23 October.

Perfect for all women at any stage of life.

Run the Race with Rob Parsons, Gerrit Bantjes and Mark Chester. 10, 11 and 12 November.

Rob explores the realities of what perseverance looks like for men today.

Mum's the Word with Katharine Hill and Cathy Madavan. 17, 18 and 19 November.

A special event celebrating motherhood. Katharine and Cathy will talk about filling your emotional tank and instilling values in your children that will last a lifetime.

Primary Parenting with Rob Parsons and Katharine Hill. 24, 25 and 26 November.

Every stage of parenting can be wonderful but each new development in a child opens the door to new considerations. Rob and Katharine go through the ebbs and flows of parenting children up to the age of 12.

Liz Windaybank



Thank you to Emma Gale for the cover photos.

Magazine editors: Liz Windaybank and Willem Sandberg