

THE LINK

Issue 50 September/November 2020



HAIL AND FAREWELL

AVE
ATQUE
VALE



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See page 5 for deadlines and Editor's contact information

MINISTERS'

From Jacqui: My first year as Superintendent has obviously been a strange one and made up of two halves: a 'getting to know you' first 6 months followed by a rapid transition to providing circuit leadership in a time of lockdown and living with covid-19. Both have been rewarding, though not always easy, and I have settled into an acceptance of being in the right place at the right time. God always knows what he is doing! Which is just as well as we go into an uncertain future as far as church is concerned. Uncertain, but not unexciting! Please see my separate article for my own thoughts about church in the future.



With love and prayers to everybody throughout the circuit.



From Jen: This last year has been very significant and special for me. It has been a real delight to settle in to Swaffham and into circuit life. I remain hugely grateful to so many for the welcome and support I have received. I also feel privileged to be able to serve in the churches and community. The way in which we have all lived has clearly changed a huge amount in the last few months. But, throughout it all there has been a real sense of fellowship, of faith, and of Christian love.

Looking forward there will, no doubt, be more times of change. But as we, together, forge a new way of being church we will be upheld by those values of fellowship, faith and love. Together we can find a new way of worshipping and experiencing the love of God. And through the Holy Spirit we can show that love to others.

God bless.

From Anne: Starting in a new appointment would normally involve going to all the churches, their various meetings and worship midweek and Sundays, seeing as many people as possible. With the current restrictions, my start will be rather different. I will go to the churches where they have decided to open. I will meet with everyone, whether you are confident about being in a 'socially-distanced' group or whether you prefer to meet 'virtually' on the phone, or via Skype, Facetime, or Zoom. I'm sure we'll find ways to make contact. Life is certainly different now and we all have to adjust, but I am thankful for our fellowship in Christ, where everyone is included and equally important. As Charles Wesley put it, "He bids us build each other up; and gathered into one, to our high calling's glorious hope we hand in hand go on." (STF 608) I look forward to doing that with you and alongside all my colleagues, lay and ordained.



LETTERS



From Cliff: Christian greetings to you all.

I have something to share with you about haste/ excessive speed, or hurry as some of us emerge out of lockdown. In the same way that passengers on planes rush for the exit the minute the plane lands at the airport (or even before!), there is a temptation for us to mentally 'rush for the exit'; to put, without any thought, the whole three months or so of lockdown finally and completely behind us as the restrictions are eased.

Haste can be a dangerous thing and I suggest one thing that we shouldn't forget:

We shouldn't forget unacknowledged blessings. Yes, it's been a difficult time, but for many people there were plus points too. We've had more contact with our neighbours and family, digital skills have been gained, books were read and parents have had more time with their children. You may have even had a deeper sense of God's presence or learnt more about him or dug deeper into the Bible. Why not take some moments to look back and thank God for those blessings. Read (1Thessalonians 5: 16-18).

Love, thoughts and prayers .

THE LINK

I had envisaged Lockdown as a time of enforced relaxation with much less to do than usual. I have noticed in life that God never seems to agree with those sentiments—it didn't work! And it's clear from reading this edition of *The Link* that he has been keeping us pretty busy and still has much for us to do as we start cautiously to consider re-opening our churches in the coming months. Please pray for all those actively involved in achieving this—for great wisdom and sensitivity as we approach both those anxious to return and those equally

anxious not to do so. We must not overlook anyone in our fellowship.

Once again it has been decided to publish this edition only electronically. Hopefully things will have moved on so the next edition will be printed again.

There was so much to include that I've had to make some adjustments to the format. You will find the deadline and the Editor's contact details on page 5.

Keep praying!

Tony Hey

THOUGHTS ABOUT CHURCH

Jacqui

Church but not as we know it

At first, the pandemic put a stop to everything. No shops, no cafés, no leisure activities, no church services. Just the lockdown. Then, gradually, things have eased – but nothing is as it was. Shopping is a different experience, as is having a coffee in a café, as are many other things that we just took for granted. We are living the ‘new normal’. Church services are no exception. Unless things change before September, many of us will be wearing face coverings, we will not be singing, we will be discouraged from too much social contact. The requirement for social distancing will mean that we may need shorter services with 2 or 3 ‘sittings’ in church on a Sunday. And preachers may be in short supply and should probably not travel too far to lead worship.

As with everything that is not easy in life, we can approach it in two ways – one negative, one positive. The negative view concentrates on what we have lost, and focusses on what we are unable to do for the time being. The more positive attitude searches for what God is saying and doing through the situation, looking for a new vision that will carry us through Covid and provide life and hope well into the future.

Several positive things have, in fact, come out of the crisis for the church, so far. I am listing these under the headings below with the questions that they raise.

Inclusivity

Current church attenders and current non-attenders have been brought together through the lockdown in a very equalising way. The circuit Worship at Home sheets have reached people that have been unable to attend church in recent times, or who have not wanted to attend a church. Similarly worship and daily prayers and thoughts have been accessed online by people for whom regular church attendance has been out of the question. Suddenly, we have been able to be far more inclusive and reach many more people. This raises the questions: **How can we continue to serve all these people? Is it really appropriate to go back to our exclusive worship and fellowship in a building on a Sunday?**

The availability of Choice

By not being tied to their Sunday church commitments, Christians have been freed up to choose to pray, reflect, and worship in different ways at different times. Some people have followed prayers or thoughts on Facebook, some have worshipped via YouTube or using the television, many in our circuit have used the Worship Sheets for personal engagement with the circuit service. We have to ask: **How can that flexibility and choice be continued as we throw the provision of a form of church service back into the mix?**

IN THE FUTURE

Horton

Belonging to a Community network

In conjunction with the above point about inclusivity, previous regular attenders and non-attenders have been brought together – whether online or through worship sheets – in community Christian networks. People have felt that they belong – some of them for the first time in years. The question arises: **With the increasing flexibility and choice, how can we continue to inculcate a sense of community and to link people together through appropriate networks?**

Less Burdens

The forced removal of church services has relieved many people of the ‘burden’ of church. Being responsible for the smooth running of church services, for the welcome of visitors, for the nuts and bolts of ordinary church life – there has been a break from these and other pressures. Ministers, who are used to taking multiple services Sunday after Sunday (with only 5 Sundays off a year) have suddenly been released to experience worship in other ways and, in particular, to be able to participate in worship at a personal level themselves. Ministers have been able to develop their own spirituality without the responsibility of facilitating worship for others. The question is: **Can we learn from this and let the new normal be less pressurised for lay people and ministers alike?**

We are going to have to do Church differently but maybe, in the process, we will discover the Holy Spirit challenging us, leading us on, daring us to be different. Maybe we can care for ourselves, give ourselves more in worship, reach out better to others, and extend our networks – in a whole variety of ways so that, in the end, we will not want to return to the ‘old’ normal!

DEADLINE

**FOR THE
DECEMBER—FEBRUARY
EDITION**

**SATURDAY 31st
OCTOBER**

*Please include details of activities
up to the end of February*

CONTACT DETAILS

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FAREWELL MESSAGE



Methodist Ministers do not retire, they ask permission of their District and Connexion to “sit down” This is what I wrote to our Spring Synod where, sadly due to Covid 19, I could not deliver it in person. I was so looking forward to wearing my colourful cardigans and stoles and having my 5 minutes in the spot light. Never mind, compared to what others have had to miss this was indeed small potatoes! Here are some parts of my letter to them.

I didn’t get the call to preach until I was 40 and it took the best part of 10 years to discern what that meant and where it would lead me. On reflection my whole working life had been about pastoral care, I had been a Police Officer but was more

concerned with the causes of crime rather than the outcome. I left to become an Education Welfare Officer in Luton and again I was more interested in why children didn’t go to school, what was happening at home or school first that made the outcome truancy and so I discovered Isaiah 40 from verse 1 became my guiding purpose, “Comfort, Comfort my people sayeth the Lord” believing every Saint has a past and, best of all, every Sinner has a future.

I left Education Welfare after 16 years to become a Lay Worker in the Luton Circuit with shared pastoral oversight of 3 churches and part of the chaplaincy team of Luton University. I think my heart has always been with children and young people, helping them to get the best out of their lives even in the poorest of circumstances. I trained at Wesley House, Cambridge, with a wonderful cohort of people, mostly families with young children and it was there that I discovered the love of making pancakes to the masses! Shrove Tuesday Wesley House 2007 started a yearly trend for me, latterly at Toftwood. A different version to the feeding of the 5,000. I only had 2 appointments, firstly at The Broads Circuit where I was their first woman minister. I think I was a bit of a shock for them, I was told it was a rough area but I thought, “compared to Luton and the riots of 1995, this is a breeze!” It suited me down to the ground, placed in the middle of council house estate where there was a lot of unemployment, we started up Messy Church, a youth club for 6 – 12 year olds and a Youth Project called Identity for 16 – 20 year olds. I just loved it. I am very proud that all of those projects are still going strong 5 years after I have left. My extra Bible verse was Matthew 25 verse 40, “The King will reply, ‘I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least of those members of my family, you did it for me!’ I loved taking weddings and Christenings and the bigger, the brighter, the bolder the better. I could write a book and will in retirement!

FROM BETTY

My last 5 years have been with you all you in mainly rural ministry with 7 churches (plus 2 extra for my last year!). The emphasis was ministry to the elderly and again I loved it, if you love people and treat them as Jesus would, age is immaterial. I loved taking services in care homes, visiting the housebound, back to Isaiah's "Comfort, Comfort my people", funerals were particularly an important part of that ministry. I saw myself as a facilitator, making sure the service was exactly what the family wanted and needed. Happily, I did set up other Messy Churches and gave support to the Youth for Christ team in Dereham as well as school assemblies; that fulfilled that side of my ministry too. I had a perfect village church location at Mattishall where we started up a Dementia Club and that has been something I know will carry on without me. My preaching has always been from the heart and I hope with humour and colour. Apparently I am known at New Holkham as "Vicar Jumpers!"

Only a big woman could display the whole Nativity scene on her back with a Christmas tree and flashing lights on the front! Easter, Pentecost, Harvest, you name it some clever person knitted or made me a less than subtle scene. I have a dozen colourful stoles as well, better a budgerigar than a raven has always been a good motto. For some of my congregation I know they will go and lie down in a dark room and wonder... "who was that mad woman who swept through here like a tornado?", others will say, hopefully, "boy that was a fun ride". I know that's how I feel and will miss the full-time ministry but know that I will still have work to do in North Norfolk, where Mark and I live.

I wish you all God's blessings and hope to see you again when, hopefully, I get invited to take specials in the years to come.

COMMUNITY

Community forms,
Community norms,
Community storms.

Community lives,
Community sieves,
Community gives.

Community stays,
Community plays,
Community frays.

Community cares,
Community shares,
Community dares.



Community meets
Community eats,
Community treats.

Community works,
Community shirks,
Community hurts.

Community weaves,
Community leaves,
Community grieves.

Community finds,
Community minds,
Community binds.

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WELCOME



It's been said that first impressions are really important when forming relationships. Also oft quoted is – 'you can't judge a book by its' cover'! Having been asked to introduce myself via print, I wonder what first impressions some of you have of me already and whether this will correct or enhance them? Unlike most ministers moving into a circuit appointment, I have been in the circuit for 5 years and through preaching appointments I have probably visited most of our churches, so we already have an idea of each other.

I thought first to give you a potted life-story so you can see what led me here. I'll try and

keep this part short and sweet.

Life began for me in Plymouth and I had a very happy childhood, enjoying home and school life. Then I went to college to train to be a teacher and taught primary school pupils before I felt the call to ministry. It's not been an easy calling, yet I can't deny God's grace as He has faithfully led me and kept me. My first appointment was back in a neighbouring circuit in Plymouth, so I could be near my widowed mum. Following advice from a college tutor, to always have a hobby that meant you could switch off from work for a few hours a week, I started learning British Sign Language. Then I discovered a Deaf Church, and I felt a new call, to minister within the Deaf Community.

This was the beginning of working with the Church of England, as in those days, most Dioceses had a Chaplain for Deaf people and a Deaf church. The Methodist Church gave me permission to serve another church, and in 2005, after the death of my dear mum, I went to the London Diocese, to take up a post as F/T Chaplain among Deaf and Deafblind people. I had never thought I would be living and working in London, but it was a fabulous time and I met so many lovely people! I also worked to improve my sign language skills eventually gaining qualified interpreter status. I thought I would be there for a long time but started to feel an inexplicable nudge towards Norfolk. When an interpreter position was advertised in Norwich, in 2014, I felt I should apply, trusting to God's guidance. Fortunately, the Methodist Church agreed that I could transfer to Norfolk, keeping the same status.

I soon discovered that the Deaf Church in the Norwich Diocese had ceased to meet! I also found Deaf people who wanted to worship, have fellowship and learn more of the Christian faith together, so I rolled up my sleeves and re-started church for Deaf people, calling it Sign the Cross. This has become a District-recognised ministry, with proper oversight and reporting.

ANNE

I've supported myself by working as a Sign Language interpreter part-time, giving the rest of my energies to getting Sign the Cross established, building up the Deaf Christians in faith and confidence.

So why I am coming back into circuit ministry? As always, trying my best to follow the Spirit's leading, it felt right to offer my 10 years before retirement to serve in a circuit appointment. I have been increasingly aware that we don't have enough ministers to fill all the appointments nationally and felt that I should 'come home' and do my share! I hoped to stay within the District, to build capacity within the Deaf church so they can become more self-sustaining, but trusted that if I was stationed elsewhere, God would have a plan! It seems that plan is to be here with you – at least for the next 5 years!

So, this is how I got here! What are your impressions so far?? I haven't taken the normal route for Methodist Ministers, I know. Nowadays we talk about Pioneer Ministry and Fresh Expressions, and I have always had a heart for those who find themselves on the fringes and want to learn from them and share with them.

Since lockdown, most of my face to face interpreting work has stopped, and I've been working occasionally online. Church events have all gone online and I've been learning new skills with the computer. It's been challenging and exhausting!

I hoped I would be able to join in regular keep fit classes and virtual choirs online, but somehow, I didn't make it! One thing I have been able to focus on more is the garden. I love gardening. I love watching new growth. I love the various colours and shapes. I'm not afraid to prune where it's needed, but prefer to nurture and feed, and cultivate, watching the plant that nearly died off over the winter start to flourish again. I like to watch and wait and find refreshment for my soul in those quiet moments at the beginning of the day or as the sun dips below the neighbouring rooftops. I look forward to watching and waiting alongside the churches in my section, finding refreshment in God together, nurturing growth and rejoicing in the diversity we find amongst us and around us.

Apparently, most of us will make decisions about someone within 6 seconds of meeting them. Thanks be to God who really knows each person, who before our birth decided to love us and save us through Jesus and who calls us into community to be Kingdom people.

MY PRAYER—by Olive Brown

Take my hand, Lord, Guide me and, Lord, Lead me along life's narrow way. Give me strength, Lord, For its length, Lord, Stay with me, constantly, each day.	Be a part, Lord, of my heart, lord Fill me with love for every man. I will take, Lord, For thy sake, Lord, That love to share with all I can.	Help me, dear Lord, Serve you here, lord, And with my whole heart I'll rejoice. I'll give you praise, Lord, All my days, Lord, With a grateful, thankful voice.
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A BUSY WALSINGHAM TEAM

The last few months have been quite eventful and busy but in a different way for the Walsingham Team. It is fair to say that we are the focus for a gathered congregation but must be one of the few churches to have doubled the frequency of services since the start of the lockdown. We have been holding a fortnightly Zoom service on a Thursday evening at 7.30 p.m. which has been a great time to get together and share in worship. We have learnt a lot about the technology, screen sharing etc and have come a long way!



In addition, we have hosted the Northern Prayer fellowship and Bible Study each week on a Monday evening which has increased from monthly to weekly and increased in number of participants. We follow a couple of readings from the lectionary for about 30 minutes followed by about 10-15 minutes of prayer together.

I for one will be sorry if these zoom meetings fall by the wayside once chapels are open again as they have really opened up a new sense of togetherness. If anyone wishes to join us please give either myself, Tony or Sam a ring or drop us an email. You would be most welcome!! Alternatively, we record each service and if you would like to watch afterwards, we can forward you a YouTube link.



After a frustrating few months when access to the chapel was strictly limited to once a week we have (after discussion with the relevant connexional and district officials) been able to start remedial work. The roof has hopefully now been sorted and the ceiling is drying out... the pictures show the offending hole and the scaffolding needed. We are now having the upstairs windows reputtied and



repainted as I type this. Once this is sorted the ramp and access work will begin.

We are not anticipating welcoming pilgrimages or school groups during 2020 but this should allow us to get all the maintenance sorted so we are spick and span for 2021.

Watch this space... we are keeping busy!!

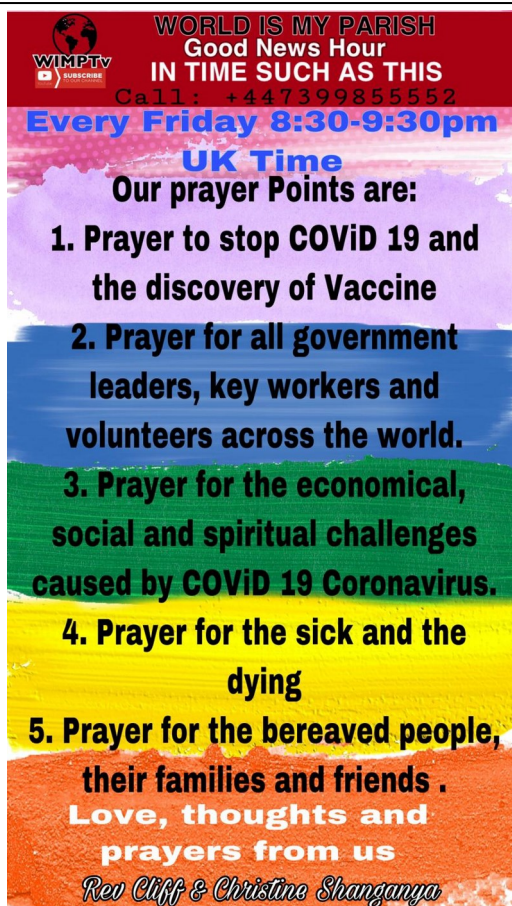
FROM OUR PIONEER RURAL CHURCH PLANTER

The Pioneer's office has been busy working behind the scenes, I published a set of four Complines on Facebook over the same number of weeks which reached over 450 people, along with daily prayers for Thy Kingdom Come and lots of bits to do with heritage. I've also been working on the beginning of a project at Walsingham based around community listening. As part of this I'm keen to record the social history of Methodism in Walsingham, what life was/is like as a Methodist here. If anyone's got any interesting snippets that they'd like to share please get in touch, I'm hoping to build up an archive that will be helpful in our educational role and in our listening work. I've also been spending time keeping up to date with Church Planting Theory and models of Church Planting and have been reading some really interesting books on the subject, many of which have found their way to me during lockdown (thank goodness for online book stores!) Keeping in touch with fellow Pioneers around the Connexion has also been important as we continue our work on these unprecedented times.

I have greatly missed seeing and being with people in person, but have been heartened to see the seeds sown during this season of innovation and have faith that the fruit will ripen, even if the tree it's grown on might look slightly different!

Love and blessings

Sam xx



WORLD IS MY PARISH
Good News Hour
IN TIME SUCH AS THIS
Call: +447399855552
Every Friday 8:30-9:30pm
UK Time
Our prayer Points are:

- 1. Prayer to stop COVID 19 and the discovery of Vaccine**
- 2. Prayer for all government leaders, key workers and volunteers across the world.**
- 3. Prayer for the economical, social and spiritual challenges caused by COVID 19 Coronavirus.**
- 4. Prayer for the sick and the dying**
- 5. Prayer for the bereaved people, their families and friends .**

Love, thoughts and prayers from us
Rev Cliff & Christine Shanganya

How do we have hope in times of uncertainty?



Dear Child of God,
In times of uncertainty we need a hope that is unshakeable. All the things we have been putting our hope in, be it a growing economy, longer life expectancy, or increasing personal freedom and self-understanding, are suddenly revealed as a glass castle. What we need is an unshakable hope. Surprisingly for some, this hope is offered to us in the person of Jesus. Even if one does not believe in Jesus, the message that God loves the world enough to send his only Son to conquer death and offer us eternal bodily existence in a world of love called Heaven, suggests that, despite the worst of circumstances, our future is incredibly bright. If we believe this message to be true, we have a hope greater than death. Jesus' own hopeless life (he came to earth to die) offers us a death conquering hope. That is exactly what we need right now. Please be assured of our thoughts and prayers always.

Love thoughts and prayers from
Rev Cliff and Christine Shanganya

THOUGHTS FROM

Sarah

So, where do we go from here?

Now that restrictions are being eased and, as a Circuit, we have a skeleton plan from September, are we taking the opportunity of exploring how we might reinvent our times of worship and fellowship?

At Swaffham, if social distancing continues, we won't be able to accommodate the 45 or so regular worshippers at one time, in one place. Service times will be (even) shorter, we won't be able to sing and we won't be able to enjoy the social gathering after the service. That seems a lot to lose, but perhaps there is a lot to gain as well.

Over the lockdown period, we have been keeping in touch in virtual housegroups of 10 – 12 names in the church directory – telephoning, emailing, WhatsApping, zooming, distance door-step chatting and so on. In some ways, it has brought us together as a community and, importantly, enabled people to get to know one another better. We certainly need one another, but perhaps we don't need to put all our eggs in the 'Sunday' basket. That might mean we develop more as every day of the week Christians!

Geraldine and I have been experimenting with how music can still play an important role in an environment where both voices and wind instruments have been banned. We are happy to share with you Hums of Peace and, no, that is not a mis-spelling. On the next page is a musical example of a new chant which of course can be sung out loud at home, and, maybe, in church or at gatherings, it could be hummed with sealed lips.

The idea is that the words are few and can run through your mind as you hum the tune, repeating several times to let the words take root. The musical accompaniment holds the tune and is very simple and to help you get to know it, we have created a sound file which is on the Swaffham Methodists YouTube channel under the playlist 'Music and Spirituality'.

<https://youtu.be/KIChofr7FI>

THURSFORD SONGS OF PRAISE 2021

As you may well already know, Thursford have cancelled all of their indoor programme for the remainder of this year.

Having been in conversation with them, it is logistically impractical for them to set up the Museum for us to use for one afternoon

next spring, as it takes them several days to do so, along with the associated staff costs, so it has been decided that we will be welcomed back in 2022, assuming that solutions to the ongoing situation are in place by then, but the 2021 event will not take place.

SWAFFHAM

Rodgers

Hums of Peace

Sarah Rodgers

Colossians 3:15

A gentle chant to find stillness

Hum with closed lips while the words run through your mind

The musical score is written for a piano and voice. It is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The score consists of three systems of music. The first system starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'Let the peace of God rule with in your hearts and be'. The second system starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'thank - ful, and be thank - ful. Let the peace of God rule with in your hearts and be'. The third system starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'thank - - - ful. Let the thank - - - ful.'. The score includes a repeat sign and a final time - slowing down instruction.

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At time of writing, at Swaffham we are still talking through ideas and it would be lovely to hear from other churches about your innovations and newness. Despite the pandemic and all its interruptions to life as we have known and lived it, as John Wesley said, "The best of all is, God is with us."

The poster features a central image of a lit candle in a decorative holder, a white mug with a floral design, and a small white card with text. The entire poster is framed by a decorative border of colorful fish icons. The text on the poster is as follows:

Midweek worship with Walsingham

Every other Thursday at 7.15 pm

A short online interactive service of prayer, praise and reflection

Contact Sam on 01263 711824 or Glyn on 07793 866072 to join

All are welcome !

ISOLATION HAS PROMPTED MEMORIES

Rosemary Wakelin

Isolation has prompted memories. I've been back in the 50s. Paul, my husband to be, was Superintendent of the Methodist Mission hospital at Maua, a remote village in N. Kenya. The Mau Mau was coming to an end, though violence continued, armed gangs held up cars, robbery and murder continued. The hospital had been there a long time, was hugely respected, and cared for the wounded of both government and Mau Mau. The Mau Mau prison camps had been opened up to reveal a TB epidemic, Paul was in the thick of it.

He came home on leave, we got engaged, and he took a temporary job at Kelling, then a TB Sanatorium. A routine X Ray revealed he had TB. He released me from our engagement, so I went to the Registry Office, got a special licence, and we married 3 days later. I spent my first married year visiting Paul 3 times a week.

Two years later we were in Sierra Leone for some years, and then back in Kenya. Jomo Kenyatta was President and things had settled down, but many young ex- Mau Mau, men, unwilling to go back to rural life, roamed the country, armed as highway robbers. We were remote and saw little trade traffic, but we knew that all cars were armed. Our Landrover carried the UNICEF logo, the hospital name and a Cross.

My job was to take the Landrover every Thursday to the railhead at Meru, 40 miles away, to collect the medicines etc coming up from Nairobi. Mr. Noordin, a kindly Indian trader, used to load the Landrover while I had a coffee with his wife. So off we set one Thursday morning, my three children and me. The police had offered us guns but we had refused. About 20 miles into the journey we were held up at gun point by 5 armed men. I stopped and they all climbed in, taking the children on their knees and told me which village they were heading for. I remember saying to the children "Don't touch the triggers, they are loaded".

POETIC INSPIRATION - JUST ONCE

Jeff Smith

Jeff Smith was the final Superintendent Minister of the Fakenham, Wells and Holt Circuit before the amalgamation. He now lives in retirement in Banbury. He has been in contact with David Yarham and sent his one and only poem with permission to publish. Ed.

I fancied a change today,
So I came through Piccadilly.
Round to the left and up two flights,
There ahead was today's sunlight.
Just up the stairs and into the street,
Wondering who I might happen to meet,
Walking through Piccadilly.

I didn't meet anybody;
Blindly rushing their targetted ways.
Off to the office, off to the shops,
A day's sightseeing, Downing Street last stop!
But on the stairs was a problem to meet;
A young girl asleep, wrapped up in a sheet.
In the middle of Piccadilly.

Maybe sixteen, I wonder who knows?
As she tried to uncrease the stairs from her bones,
But they offered no ease to her arms or her head,
As her hair framed a face asleep like the dead.
We stepped over or round, whatever we dared,
Wondering whether, what, when and who cared.
In the heart of Piccadilly.

I got to the office on time.
Grabbed a coffee, my pen and the phone.
And thought of the girl asleep in her sheet,
With nowhere to go and nothing to eat.
I stared over Downing Street, Whitehall, the whole heap,
And pondered a question that made my flesh creep –
"Prime Minister*, how do you sleep"?

J I Smith
Spring 1992

* Originally "Mr Major, how do .."

GARVESTONE CHAPEL

Andrew Durrant writes, with the proviso that by the time you read this it will be Methodist 'Church History'

During these past few months we at Garvestone chapel have found that there are some advantages in being a small congregation in small premises!

Financially, we have maintained a healthy bank balance by our members paying monthly cheques into our church funds, in lieu of weekly Sunday collection contributions. We have therefore been able recently (July), to play 'catch-up' on all the charity donations that we would normally have raised by special Sunday service collections, sending cheques to several Methodist and other good-cause organisations.

Our wonderful big news is that, by mid-July, we have 'jumped through all the hoops' and 'ticked all the boxes' and have been given permission to meet together again for Sunday worship, albeit sitting two metres from each other, not singing the hymns (but reading them to musical accompaniment), and not drinking tea and coffee! So, on Sunday 19th July, seven of us met for our hastily-arranged re-opening thanksgiving worship – and our strange spacing would allow ten to meet. Our intention is to meet weekly at 6.00 p.m., with

alternating prayer meetings and worship services, using the 'Vine' resources; and this arrangement should take us through to the end of August.

All through the shut-down we have kept our chapel ready for re-opening, with live plants on the inside window-sills and tidy grass and gravel outside. The notice-boards by the road have tried to keep any interested passers-by informed that we have continued to be 'in business'.

And we have now started planning and praying for the big event in September, when it is our chapel's turn this year to host the village United Harvest festival, when our new minister, Rev. Anne Richardson, will lead our worship. (We fervently hope that by September 20th the 'social distancing' seating will have been safely relaxed so that we don't have to turn away any of the 'once-a-year' villagers because we are full inside the chapel.) Even if, however, we are sadly unable to hold the harvest festival in its usual form, we intend to collect goods which will be sent to the Mid-Norfolk Foodbank.

ZACCHAEUS

Climbing the tree
high above the heads,
you see me.
I, passing through,
do not pass by, and
I call you down-
dark crossed boughs
no quarter for you.
I follow
into your home,
a sinful house they say.

Here we dine.
True to your name
you come clean, vowing
to return
fourfold your debt.
Well, it is a start.

I shall climb a tree,
forgive every debt
and return lost souls to God.

Andrew Fielding

HOLT CHURCH

Christmas was past, a new year had come and after a very long time in the planning (understandably some people were asking 'when is anything ever going to happen?'), contractors arrived, the car park was closed, temporary fencing went up and we were off.



Hard work began right away with scaffolding erected on the north side of the building and...the scaffolding on the south side was all taken down only to be replaced a few days later. I know this sounds bonkers but there was a very good reason for it and it was all planned – don't ask!



After nearly three months work during which very little in the

way of unexpected nasties turned up and even some expected and budgeted work found to be unnecessary, we were within a few days of completion right on time. And then... lockdown! Everything stopped immediately, of course, and so it remained to our frustration but resigned acceptance until the Government permitted building sites to resume work, after which the remaining tasks were rapidly completed (apart from the inevitable few snagging jobs) and the site cleared. We can't claim it was all finished on time – but it would have been – but it was completed under budget. With the money and grants we had raised plus the Circuit generously converting a loan of £100K (which originally was thought to be the minimum the work would cost) to a grant of £50K we have all the money needed and final cheques are being signed. We are told by the surveyors the roof should be good for at least 50 and probably 100 years. Alleluia – praise God!



DEVELOPMENTS

So now our thoughts are turning to phase 2, the interior modifications. Despite our period of enforced closure and all the current uncertainty we are finding it very exciting planning and praying ahead for what God has in mind for us in the coming years. The false ceiling will be removed (the Connexional conservation Officer is very enthusiastic about this as it



will reveal the original splendid design!), pews will be adjusted, the rear wall be converted to an opening partition to increase both flexibility and room, heating will be improved, lighting will be made much more interesting, and a clock installed in the tower which



was planned when the church was built in the 1860's but never done. Also we have noticed something rather odd about the area in front of the original pulpit and communion table. Look at the photograph below and see if you can work out what it is. We intend to address this. More details next time!



There is, of course, a great deal of detailed planning still to do and the necessary permissions to be obtained. The Church Council and the Circuit have given their approval and some preliminary design work has already been done. Inevitably Covid-19 has slowed this and delayed the important site meetings which must take place but



Can you spot what is odd about this arrangement?

we hope these can be arranged during the autumn. Once we have the plans approved and an realistic idea of costs our fundraising team



can get into top gear but we fully understand that it is very unlikely we shall see contractors on site before late 2021 at the earliest. Just to set your minds at rest we have given a commitment that we shall NOT ask the Circuit for any more funds.

SAHAM HILLS

We continue in our care for our building and its surrounds and have celebrated Easter and the end of WW2 in Europe with outside displays.

We have helped each other and our friends who support us as much as possible and have been lending out our stock of books and jigsaws to those isolated at home.

We have all appreciated the correspondence received from Revd. Jacqui and Deacon Jen and the thoughts and writings of our Circuit friends. It has been said that Revd. Jacqui will soon have written more words than Jane Austen! However, while 1:1 contact is good we will be joyful to be back together in our church while observing the new rules.

WATTON

We still hope to restart the events during the autumn. After a few 'garden' meetings, we are trying to make progress toward the future, but as yet things are still unclear. We can only wait and see what happens next (*this can be exciting! Ed.*)

WENDLING

If churches open for activities such as Coffee Mornings, Wendling will be having Coffee mornings on the first Wednesday of the month. But we don't know if that will happen.

We have been keeping in touch with each other by phone calls. Pam has been going into the church once a week to play the organ and make sure that it is not suffering from neglect!

MATTISHALL

At Mattishall we have survived the lockdown. Everybody has had the weekly service sheet either electronically or hard copy and we have been able to keep in touch. Congratulations and thanks to those who have produced and contributed to these sheets. There have been other forms of worship available on various Medias. We have had the church open three Tuesday afternoons for prayer and a chat with Rev. Betty but numbers have been low.

We are about to say goodbye to Rev. Betty and wish her a long and happy retirement. It has been a pleasant five years with her, she is a good preacher and has worked hard and enthusiastically. I am sure she will be a blessing to North Norfolk. We looked forward to welcoming Rev. Anne Richardson.

The redevelopment of our sanctuary is proceeding. It seemed a good opportunity to get work done when we were unable to hold services but Methodism in its wisdom decided to ban us from the building, but as we don't need the sanctuary yet nothing is lost. The decorating is 90% complete and we look forward to having the whole building available.

Most activities are in suspension and we wait further relaxation of restrictions and an increase in confidence.

TOFTWOOD

We have been all keeping in touch weekly. We are beginning to open the Chapel for an hour on a Sunday for private prayer.

CHURCHES

HOLT

Like everybody else we have been living with the frustration and disappointment of cancelled activities and inability to meet in person. However, as has been apparent right across the Circuit, we have managed to keep in touch by sending round worship and other material either electronically or by hand, thanks to some willing couriers, and this material has been much appreciated. Our wonderful Joselyn has been supplementing this with her remarkable ministry of cake!

It was frustrating that the lockdown happened just as our roof works were coming to an end (see the article on pages 16–17) but now that these have been completed we are looking ahead in the short term towards re-opening our building for those who feel comfortable to return (and ensuring we keep in regular contact with everybody who isn't) and also looking ahead to Phase 2 of our development project. So we look forward to being socially distanced but spiritually close and sharing God's love with our community in whatever way is appropriate as things develop.

WELLS

Having absolutely no idea what I could send for the Link this time, I contacted Colin Garwood and Sadie Spalding. Cliff got in touch with me about writing in the Quay, our local parish magazine. Colin said I could mention that the newsletter he writes each week now goes "far and wide". I understand that Cliff is conducting a survey of how people feel generally about reopening of churches. I suspect we all feel very differently. Keep safe and well.

LITCHAM

As with most of our churches, the age of the majority of our congregation has meant that we have been shielding over the past few months.

One of the things that we have missed is our regular Thursday coffee morning, so I decided to keep the church in the community's mind in a different way. Some of you will know that Sheila and I live at the end of a cul-de-sac, near to the local Health centre, so, if the weather allows I now set up my PA and keyboard on my front drive and play for an hour each Thursday morning.

I have had some very kind comments from residents and also the staff at the Centre, who say it helps to lift their spirits. We also took the opportunity, while the 'Clap for Carers' initiative was running to do our estate clap during the morning while the staff were present, rather than during the evening when the Centre was deserted.

This was something that would never have crossed my mind until this situation arose, but I am so thankful to have been given this gift to share with others, and use as an expression of God's love for all people.

SPORLE IN THE PAST

This postcard was discovered by Glyn Constantine for sale on eBay.



AROUND THE CIRCUIT

For your information, prayer and support

BEETLEY

Bible Study: Contact John Hull 01362 695154

Drop In: 2.00 – 3.00 p.m. first and third Wednesdays in the month.

Prayer Meetings with Rev Betty Trinder: 9.30 a.m. first Wednesday in the month.

Natter and Knit: 2.00 – 3.00 p.m. fourth Wednesday in the month.

Coffee Mornings: 9.30 - 11.30 a.m.
Saturdays in alternate months in aid of a local charity.

STIBBARD

Praise Together: 4.00 p.m. first Sunday in the month.

Ecumenical Prayers and Coffee: 10.30 a.m. last Tuesday in the month.

Lunch @ The Centre: 12.30 p.m. second Wednesday in the month.

Railway Film Afternoons with Tea and Cake: 2.30 p.m. first Saturday in the month.

Circuit Choir Practice: 7.30 p.m. first and third Friday in the month.

HOLT

Stepping Stones: 9.30 a.m. a weekly session for pre-school children and babies with their parents or carers in term-time.

Service at Lloyd Court: 11.00 a.m. on Thursdays.

Prayer service: 9.30 a.m. on Fridays

Cream Teas and Olive's Bargain Basement: 2.00 – 4.00 p.m. third Friday in the month.

Contemporary Worship / Healing Service: 6.30 p.m. third Sunday in the month.

Healing Service: 6.30 p.m.

Bereavement Support Group: 10.30 – 11.45 a.m. second Monday in the month.

TOFTWOOD

Monday's Lace Group: Mondays 9.30 a.m. – 12.00 noon.

Guides: Mondays, 7.00 – 8.30 p.m.

Messy Church: second Tuesdays 3.30 – 6.00 p.m.

Carpet Bowls Club: Tuesdays 7.00 – 8.30 p.m. (except first Tuesday)
Thursdays 2.00 – 4.00 p.m.

Coffee Mornings: first and third Wednesdays 10.00 a.m. until 11.30 a.m.

Prayer Meeting: 9.30 a.m. every third Wednesday

Craft Group: first Wednesday 2.00 – 4.00 p.m.

Lunch and Linger: second Wednesday, 12.00 noon – 3.00 p.m.

Film Club: second Friday 2.00 p.m.
Admission by donation of £2.00 for refreshments at 4.00 p.m.

WENDLING

Coffee mornings: 10.30 – 12.00 noon first Wednesday.

DEREHAM

Trinity

Women's Own: 2.45 p.m. every Tuesday
(details Olwyn Brough 01362 692799).

Wednesday Club: 7.30 p.m. last Wednesday
of the month (details Jacky Woor 01362
697860).

Coffee Mornings: 10.00 a.m. third Thursday.

Lunch Club: 12.00 noon second Thursday
(details Pam Beardsmore 01362 854394).

Mid-Week Communion: 10.30 a.m. fourth
Thursday.

Cards & Chatter: 11.15 a.m. fourth Thursday
(details Sylvia Meredith 01362 693425).

Prayer Meetings: 10.00 a.m. first Thursday
(details Rev Betty 01362 692279).

Coffee Morning: fifth Thursday at 12 Elvin
Road Dereham (details Sylvia Meredith
01362 693425).

MATTISHALL

Monthly Charity Coffee Mornings: 10.00 –
11.30 a.m. first Saturday in the month.

Led Prayers: 8.45 - 9.15 a.m. with Rev Betty
second Friday in the month.

**Mattishall Dementia Support Group – “The
Link”:** 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon. first and third
Tuesdays in the month.

BLAKENEY

Messy Church: second Tuesday in the month
3.00 p.m. in the Parish Church

Bible Study: Tuesdays 10.00 a.m. in the
Parish Church.

Contemplative Prayer: Tuesdays 5.45 p.m. in
the Methodist Church.

Thursday Worship: Thursdays 10.00 a.m. in
the Methodist Church with Holy Communion
on the 3rd Thursday.

SWAFFHAM

Power of Prayer Group: Every Friday 9.30
a.m. Praying for our world.

Coffee Mornings: Every Saturday 9.30 a.m. –
12.00 noon

The Meeting Place: 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon
every Tuesday and Thursday Free
refreshments and a friendly welcome. Pause
for Thought at 11.00 a.m. on Tuesdays.
Traidcraft stall on the first Tuesday of the
month.

Thursday Group: 2.30 – 4.00 p.m..

SCULTHORPE AND FAKENHAM

**Fellowship, tea and biscuits at Lee Warner
Avenue Lounge:** 3.00 p.m. third Sunday in
the month.

WATTON

Christian Meditation: 7.45 p.m. first and third
Monday each month in the vestry.

Every Wednesday:

Coffee Morning: 9.30 a.m. – 11.30 a.m. in the
Christian Community Centre

Open Church for Private Prayer: 10.00 a.m. –
12.00 noon

Midweek Service: 10.00 – 10.30 a.m. second
and fourth Wednesday held in the vestry

TITTLESHALL

Coffee Mornings: every Wednesday 10.30 –
12.00 noon.

WELLS & WIGHTON AT WELLS

with Churches Together in Wells

Prayer and Praise: 10.30 a.m. every Wednesday.

Informal Art Group: 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon every Tuesday. All welcome. For further details please contact Frances Graham on 07398 127935.

HINGHAM

Market and Coffee Shop with Crafty Corner for children: 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon first Saturday in the month.

Bible Discussion Group: 10.00 – 11.30 a.m. at Hassingham House Care Home, Hardingham Street, Hingham fortnightly on Mondays.

GREAT ELLINGHAM

Coffee Mornings (including sales table and home-made cakes): 10.00 – 11.00 a.m. first Tuesday in the month.

Fellowship Meetings: 2.30 p.m. second and fourth Tuesday in the month.

NORTHERN PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

Normally meets monthly.

Until further notice it is meeting weekly on Mondays at 7.30 p.m. via Zoom

If you would like to join ring Glyn Constantine on 07793 866072

SAHAM HILLS

Coffee Morning: 10.00 – 11.30 a.m. September 12th. Open all day for Norfolk Church Cyclists.

Harvest Festival Service: 10.30 a.m. September 20th.

Coffee Morning: 10.00 – 11.30 a.m. October 10th.

Christmas Sale: 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon November 28th.

GARVESTONE

Knit and Natter: 10.30 – 12.00 noon September 8th, October 13th, November 10th. For details of venues please phone Lorna Folkes (01362 858391).

Prayer Meetings: 2.00 p.m. September 18th, October 16th, November 20th.

LITCHAM

Coffee Mornings: every Thursday 10.30 – 12.00 noon.

SPORLE

Ecumenical Men's Prayer Group: 8.00 a.m. weekly on Saturdays.

WALSINGHAM

Fortnightly Midweek Service on Zoom: See display advert on page 13.



Elizabeth Wright tells us that, following the cancellation of the MWiB coffee morning in August, all other MWiB meetings at both Circuit and District level have also been cancelled for the time being. *[Hopefully they will soon be back—they do a great work. Ed.]*

REGULAR MEETINGS

Continued from page 24

Thurs	10.00am	W	Thursday Worship	Blakeney MC
Thurs	10.00am	M	Coffee Morning	Dereham Trinity MC
Thurs	10.00am	M	Prayer Meeting	Dereham Trinity MC
Thurs	10.00-12.00	W	The Meeting Place	Swaffham MC
Thurs	10.30am	M	Mid-week Communion	Dereham Trinity MC
Thurs	10.30-12.00	W	Coffee Morning	Litcham MC
Thurs	11.00am	W	Service at Lloyd Court	Holt MC
Thurs	11.15am	M	Cards and Chatter	Dereham Trinity MC
Thurs	12.00noon	M	Lunch Club	Dereham Trinity MC
Thurs	2.00-4.00	W	Carpet Bowls Club	Toftwood MC
Fri	8.45-9.15am	M	Led Prayers	Mattishall MC
Fri	9.30am	W	Prayer Service	Holt MC
Fri	9.30 am	W	Power of Prayer Group	Swaffham MC
Fri	7.00pm	M	Prayer Meeting	Garvestone MC
Fri	2.00-4.00	M	Cream Teas and Olive's Bargain Basement	Holt MC
Fri	2.00pm	M	Film Club	Toftwood MC
Fri	7.30pm	F	Circuit Choir Practice	Stibbard M Ch Centre
Sat	8.00am	W	Ecumenical Men's Prayer Group	Sporle MC
Sat	9.30-11.30	M	Coffee Morning (in aid of a local charity)	Beetley MC
Sat	9.30-12.00	W	Coffee Morning (usually run by a local charity)	Swaffham MC
Sat	10.00-11.30	M	Charity Coffee Morning	Mattishall MC
Sat	10.00-12.00	M	Market and Coffee Shop	Hingham MC
Sat	7.30pm	M	Railway Film Evening (except August)	Stibbard M Ch Centre

DATES ALREADY FIXED FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND SUPPORT

Dates printed in black are definite.

Dates printed in blue are provisional.

Sept 8	10.30-12.00	Knit and Natter	Garvestone—see page 22
Sept 12	10.00-11.30	Coffee morning and Open Day for Norfolk Cyclists	Saham Hills MC
Sept 18	2.00pm	Prayer Meeting	Garvestone MC
Sept 20	10.30am	Harvest Festival	Saham Hills MC
Oct 10	10.00-11.30	Coffee morning	Saham Hills MC
Oct 13	10.30-12.00	Knit and Natter	Garvestone—see page 22
Oct 16	2.00pm	Prayer Meeting	Garvestone MC
Nov 10	10.30-12.00	Knit and Natter	Garvestone—see page 22
Nov 20	2.00pm	Prayer Meeting	Garvestone MC
Nov 28	10.00-12.00	Christmas Sale	Saham Hills MC

Please be aware that this list was prepared at the end of July and will certainly be out of date by the time you read it. However it was printed to show that God does have plans for us even if we are moving towards them with understandably slow and uncertain steps. Each church will move forward at its own pace—there is no competition!

REGULAR MEETINGS

These will re-start as and when permission is granted and churches feel able to resume.

The frequency is indicated by a red letter:

W weekly
F fortnightly
M monthly

*Further details can be found under the relevant church on pages **20—22***

Sun	3.00pm	M	Fellowship at Lee Warner Avenue	led by Sculthorpe & Fakenham MC
Sun	4.00pm	M	Praise Together	Stibbard M Ch Centre
Sun	6.30pm	M	Contemporary Worship / Healing Service	Holt MC
Mon	9.30-12.00	W	Monday's Lace Group	Toftwood MC
Mon	10.00-11.30	F	Bible Discussion Group	Hassingham House, Hingham
Mon	10.30-11.45	M	Bereavement Support Group	Holt MC
Mon	7.00-8.30	W	Guides	Toftwood MC
Mon	7.45pm	F	Christian Meditation	Watton MC
Tues	9.30am	W	Stepping Stones	Holt MC
Tues	10.00am	W	Bible Study	Blakeney Parish Ch
Tues	10.00-11.00	M	Coffee Morning	Great Ellingham MC
Tues	10.00-12.00	F	Dementia Support Group—"The Link"	Mattishall MC
Tues	10.00-12.00	W	The Meeting Place	Swaffham MC
Tues	10.00-12.00	W	Informal Art Group	Wells MC
Tues	10.30-12.00	M	Knit and Natter	Garvestone—see page 22
Tues	10.30am	M	Ecumenical Prayers and Coffee	Stibbard M Ch Centre
Tues	2.30pm	F	Fellowship meeting	Great Ellingham MC
Tues	2.45pm	W	Women's Own (until June 23rd)	Dereham Trinity MC
Tues	3.00pm	M	Messy Church	Blakeney Parish Ch
Tues	3.30-6.00	M	Messy Church	Toftwood MC
Tues	5.45pm	W	Contemplative Prayer	Blakeney MC
Tues	7.00-8.30	W	Carpet Bowls Club (except first Tuesday)	Toftwood MC
Wed	9.30am	M	Prayer Meeting	Beetley MC
Wed	9.30am	M	Prayer Meeting	Toftwood MC
Wed	10.00-11.30	F	Coffee Morning	Toftwood MC
Wed	10.30-12.00	W	Coffee Morning	Tittleshall MC
Wed	10.30am	W	Prayer and Praise	Wells MC
Wed	10.30-12.00	M	Coffee Morning	Wendling MC
Wed	9.30-11.30	W	Coffee Morning	Watton MC
Wed	10.00-10.30	F	Midweek Service	Watton MC
Wed	10.00-12.00	W	Open Church for Private Prayer	Watton MC
Wed	12.00noon	M	Lunch @ The Centre	Stibbard M Ch Centre
Wed	12.00-3.00	M	Lunch and Linger	Toftwood MC
Wed	2.00-3.00	F	Drop in	Beetley MC
Wed	2.00-3.00	M	Natter and Knit	Beetley MC
Wed	2.00-4.00	M	Craft Group	Toftwood MC
Wed	7.30pm	M	Wednesday Club (except August)	Dereham Trinity MC