

South Kent Circuit Magazine, February/March 2019 edition

If you are using a PC or tablet, clicking on the links below allows you to access the pages or articles that interest you immediately. You could, of course, also just browse through the magazine page by page by scrolling through the pdf.

Page 1

Page 2

South Kent Methodist Circuit Ministerial Team

Page 3

From the Manse

Page 4

Conversations about marriage and relationships

Page 5

After the Big Day

Seaside Strolls

Page 6

Circuit Prayers

Page 7

Page 8

Circuit News

Charing

UCA Cade Road

Page 9

Dymchurch

Elham

Page 10

Folkestone

Hamstreet

Page 11

Headcorn

Page 12

St Michael's, Hythe

Page 13

Kennington

Lydd

Page 14

Lyminge

Shadoxhurst

Page 15

St Andrew's Cheriton

Page 16

Tenterden

Page 17

Grace Court

News from Deacon Carys

Page 18

Folkestone Rainbow Centre

Little Lambs

Page 19

Joan Eaton Obituary

Page 20

News from Ian Couchman

Christmas Day Lunch at St Andrew's

Page 21

Zimbabwe

Page 22

Lent Courses

Page 23

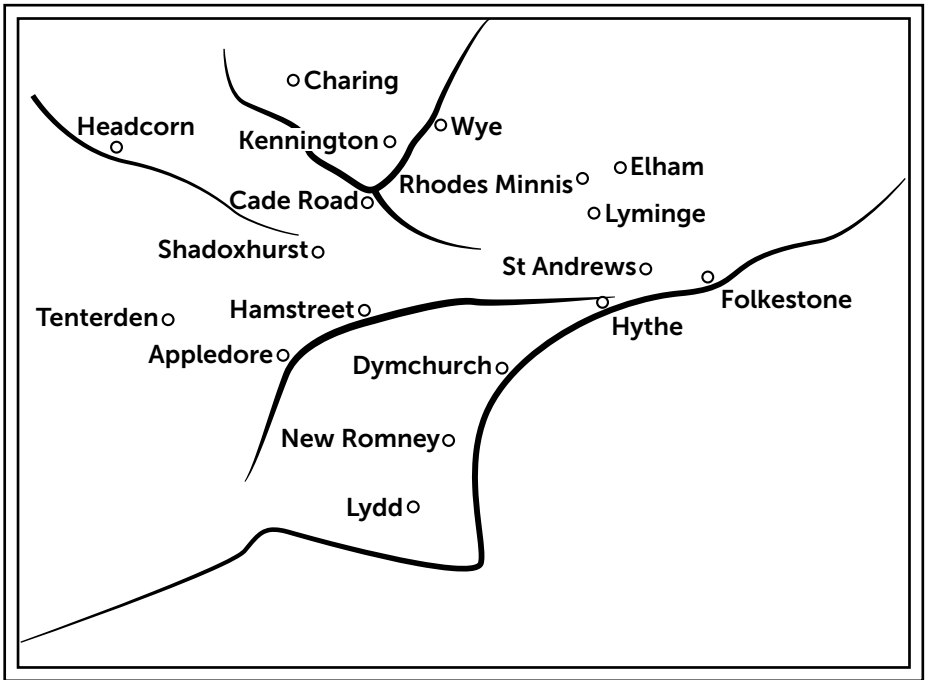
Dates for your Diary

Page 24

Circuit Map

SOUTH KENT CIRCUIT MAGAZINE

February/March 2019



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This is a publication of the South Kent Methodist Circuit, including the United Reformed/Methodist Church meeting in Ashford & the Anglican/Methodist Church meeting at Hamstreet and Hythe. Items for publication will be gratefully received, but may be edited if necessary or omitted if deemed inappropriate. No anonymous articles will be printed. The views contained in this magazine are not necessarily the views of the editorial committee.

450 The maximum number of words for articles to be printed in this magazine

**DEADLINE for articles (450 words max) and dates of events
for April/May issue: 1 March 2019**

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PLEASE CLEARLY MARK ALL ITEMS 'MAGAZINE'

From the Manse

I'm writing this on a beautiful blue-sky morning, as life returns to its normal sequence of routines after the celebrations of Christmas and New Year. So now we're in 2019, looking ahead to an uncertain outcome in our precarious relationship with our European neighbours. And whichever way you may have voted in that referendum, you certainly did not vote for the mess we seem to be in.

And yet, as my mum used to say when I was a lad, it'll all be the same a hundred years from now. True, she was speaking in the 1940s, and the war had only just ended, and things were slowly getting back to normal. But there's more than a grain of truth in the idea that however bleak the future may look, there still is a future and we should try to be hopeful as we gaze towards it.

Christmas had something to say about this. But we're so used to hearing the story that so often it just rolls over us, giving us a nice comforting dose of nostalgia and warmth that allow us to forget for a few days the busy and awkward world outside, with all its conflicts and misunderstandings. Instead we can enjoy – quite genuinely – the story of the babe born in Bethlehem, wise men and shepherds, angels in the sky, and Lee Marvin's wandering star.

And we'll hear it all again next year, and for many, Jesus won't be a day older. Unless, of course, we allow him to grow up and become the man that he was – a firebrand preacher with a message that subverts and challenges our lazy assumption that we cannot change the world and so we should practise holy resignation and keep praying for other people.

Christmas subverts and challenges this view. Christmas says that God thinks that we're worth loving, that there's hope for us all, and that we must find outlets for the good that is in us. Think of people you've heard of who spend their time in helping others – who go out of their way to offer compassion and reassurance to the unloved, the troubled and the lonely. There is good in all of us, and Christmas reminds us of this.

And so does Easter, in just as dramatic a way. Remember the 1966 World Cup, and Kenneth Wolstenholme's excited "They think it's all over!". Well, that match was, but Easter says, with even more excitement, "It's not over yet." For those followers of Jesus, who'd seen everything they'd hoped for come crashing down, the story was not over. It was just the beginning. And we're part of that evolving story in 2019.

May we all rejoice in living in a new year, full of hope for the future, and reassured that God who gives us life loves us to death.

Robin Blount

"Optimism is a strategy for making a better future. Because unless you believe that the future can be better, you are unlikely to step up and take responsibility for making it so."— Noam Chomsky

Conversations about Marriage and Relationships – An Invitation

The Methodist Church is considering marriage and relationships and asking whether the current position of the church should be revised.

The current timetable:

The 2018 Conference received the report of the Marriage and Relationships Task Group and decided that the task group should produce a report for the 2019 Conference, setting out several key theological arguments for the understanding of relationships and marriage with recommendations.

The 2019 report will be referred to Synods for consultation and the 2020 Conference will make a final decision as to any provision for change as required by the report.

In the meantime, we are asked to hold conversations to talk about these issues in our churches, circuits and districts. These conversations include discussion about same-sex marriage but are not limited to that one issue. There is much more to consider, one example is our position on cohabitation especially as there are so many people who live together in long-term significant relationships without being married.

It is important to note the change in the law in 2014 which enabled same-sex civil marriage also gave churches and other religious groups the legal ability to opt-in to conduct weddings for same-sex partners if they so wished.

The Methodist Church has not, as yet, opted-in.

These current discussions are on-going and involve much prayer, reflection, discernment and conversation.

It is likely that some will hold contradictory convictions and it is essential in our conversations that we are gracious and respectful of one another as we talk and reflect together.

We would like to invite you to a facilitated conversation on these issues on one of two dates in our circuit. The conversations will be led by Revd. Helen Hollands and Revd. Miriam Moul from the Canterbury and East Kent circuit. All are welcome.

Tuesday 12th February 2019: Cade Road United Church: 7.30 – 9.15pm

Saturday 16th February 2019 St Andrew's Methodist Church: 10.30am – 12.15pm

Our conversation will include:

- A short history of marriage and relationships in the Methodist Church
- Current issues and discussion about any potential changes
- An opportunity to ask questions

These conversations are also open to people from the Canterbury and East Kent circuit.

After the Big Day

The Magi have gone from the stable,
The shepherds returned to the hill.
The angels have ceased their chorus of praise,
The infant is silent, and still.
And Mary, and Joseph, look down on God's Son:
Their Saviour, Redeemer, whose life has begun.

They cannot imagine the future,
The years spent in Egypt, exiled.
For all that they know is a feeling of joy
When they look at their still, silent, child.
And Mary, and Joseph, look down on God's Son:
The infant whose journey through life has begun.

This Jesus whom God had created
Whom Mary had felt in her womb.
How could they imagine, how could they conceive
Would one day arise from the tomb?
And Mary, and Joseph, look down on God's Son:
Whose Calvary journey had now just begun.

This, and other poems can be found in one of my 2 books of Poetry: "From Heaven and Back Again" and "More of the Same", available for £6.00 per copy (plus postage). All money raised is given to SMILE International.
God bless

Stewart French, UCA Kennington

Seaside Strolls

Join me for a walk every Saturday morning, starting at 9am at the Folkestone Harbour Arm entrance. The aim is to encourage people to get outside and take a beautiful walk along the seafront, if you're 18 or 80+ I would love to walk with you. A great way to meet new people, take in the fresh air and open up and talk to one another. If you're feeling lonely, going through a tough time, coming back from an injury or illness or just need someone to talk to, then let's walk!! Please come along. My number is 07887 536352 if you want to contact me at any time.

Georgie White (St George's Church, Folkestone)

Circuit Prayers

From Different Perspectives...

As the uncertainty of Brexit will be reaching its climax by the time this edition of the magazine is being published, it made me think that it would be good to share a few things that come from different perspectives and places in our world – a way of reminding ourselves that, whatever happens politically, we do live in one world, share one earth and have neighbours across this one beautiful planet. (Sam)

The Lord is my pace-setter (JAPAN)

The Lord is my pace-setter, I shall not rush,
He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals,
He provides me with images of stillness, which restore my serenity.
He leads me in the ways of efficiency; through calmness of mind,
And his guidance is peace.
Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day,
I will not fret for his presence is here.
His timelessness, his all-importance, will keep me in balance.
He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity
By anointing my mind with his oils of tranquillity,
My cup of joyous energy overflows.
Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours,
For I shall walk in the pace of my Lord, and dwell in his house
for ever.

Toki Miyashina – based on Psalm 23

Taizé Prayers

(INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN FRANCE)

God of mercy, you illuminate our souls
With unexpected light.
And then we discover that,
Although in each of us
There may be a portion of darkness,
In each person there is above all
The mystery of your presence. AMEN.

Jesus our hope,
By your Gospel we realize that,
Even in the hours of darkness,
God wants happiness for us.
And the peace in our hearts
Can make life beautiful
For those around us. AMEN.

Holy Spirit,
You never want us to be anxious,
But you come to clothe us in your peace.
And when there is joy
Drawn from the Gospel in us,
It can bring a breath of new life. AMEN.

The Lord's Prayer (MAORI & POLYNESIA)

Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe;
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world;
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings;
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trial too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.

From the Anglican Church in Aotearoa (New Zealand Prayer Book 1997)

News from our Churches

Charing Elizabeth Ellen

We had a busy and enjoyable Christmas here at Charing.

On December 16th the children led the service, with sketches, readings and songs. Many of their families were in the congregation and we thank Jackie for all she did.

On the Saturday before Christmas, we sang carols in the High Street and raised over £100 for 'Action for Children'. Unfortunately another planned carolling session was cancelled due to rain.

Our Christmas Day service was led by our minister Paul and the church was full, including visitors from London and Tenterden as well as visitors from Charing.

No sooner is Christmas over than our thoughts seem to turn to Lent and Easter. Our Bible Study Group will study a York Lent Course and then we will have our traditional service on Good Friday followed by coffee and hot cross buns.

We also look forward to Women's World Day of Prayer on Friday 4th March, which this year is prepared by Christian women in Slovenia on the theme 'Come – Everything is Ready'.

A happy and healthy new year to all readers.

UCA Cade Road Maureen Giles

A Heavenly Host

Several weeks before Christmas, the family of our much-missed friend Danny Wickens asked us if Junior Church would like the Knitted Nativity set which had belonged to her. We were of course delighted, but it was not until a couple of weeks before our Nativity Service that I opened the box to make a list of the characters. There they all were, Mary, Joseph, Donkey, Baby in manger, Shepherds, sheep and Wise Men – all exquisitely made and a gift to treasure... but wait – no Angel Gabriel! The next Sunday I put out a call, hoping that someone would be able to help ...

On the day, thanks to the skills of Lenore Rumsey and Rosemary Reynolds, not only did we have an Angel Gabriel to add to our tableau but also other smaller Angels to 'appear' to the Shepherds. A Heavenly Host indeed!

(Interestingly, Helen brought along her own knitted Nativity set, made to an identical pattern – and again no Angel! The designer had obviously not read the script!)

Thank you to everyone who was involved in our Nativity presentation.

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God." – Corrie ten Boom

Dymchurch Diana Blackwell

We all miss Winnie Field after her many years spent worshipping here. So, in remembrance of her, our Knitters and Stitchers Group (which she was a member of) have bought NIV pew Bibles for the Chapel. We regularly read our Old Testament Lesson each week so it seemed an appropriate way to remember her.

Our Knitters total for 2018 is as always amazing! Blankets – 81, Jumpers – 87, Baby Hats – 149, Hats – 89, Cot Blankets – 38 and Baby Cardigans 12. Our thanks to all who have contributed. Our special thanks also to Gina Hyson who has the unenviable task of sorting all the contributions out and bagging them up to take to Operation Sunshine, as well as keeping track of “our statistics”.

Our Dymchurch Christmas Card raised £56.20 this year, which has been donated to the World Church Family.

Our Christmas Eve Service was very well attended. It was led by Sam and Kevin (good to see Kevin looking so well) and followed by fellowship and refreshments. Thank you Beryl for playing the organ. The Chapel was warm and the heat enhanced by about one hundred night lights burning on the window ledges and giving a magical atmosphere. Thanks to Richard for lighting and extinguishing them all. Thanks to all who helped with the decoration of the Chapel for Christmas including Emily who made an excellent job of refurbishing our Christmas Star. £128.57 was sent to Embrace from our Christmas Eve Offering.

Terry and Anne completed The Walk of the Kings in aid of the Rainbow Centre on January 5th. Final totals aren't known yet as sponsorship is still coming in but Anne has raised £200 to date. Thank you to them.

Our best wishes and prayers to all for this new year. To those who are sad, anxious or unwell we hope the year improves. We especially remember Joyce and family following the recent death of her husband, John.

At this time of much uncertainty may we all have faith and love to carry us through 2019.

Elham Alice Mills & Max Laker

Elsie Cullen has had to give up playing both organ and piano due to increasing mobility problems. We have been very grateful for her vital contribution to our worship for many years. Many thanks, Elsie. We miss you, and are now having to try to sing to the digital machine.

Over 300 people visited an exhibition commemorating the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War we hosted over the Remembrance Weekend.

We enjoyed the Christmas services and the lovely Carols. At Elham we had a joint village carol service with St Mary's Church - held this year late afternoon on the Sunday of Elham's Christmas market. It was well attended and really appreciated by everyone. Thank you to Derek for this and our Christmas Day service.

One of the nice things over the holiday was seeing so many younger members

Back to index

back in Elham. A special thankyou to Meghan, who played the piano for our service on Christmas morning, ably assisted by her sister Rosie as page turner. We had a beautiful Christmas Tree in memory of George Crowe who loved to decorate the tree every year. It was lovely to feel so near to you George!

Deacon Carys led another Forest Church on the first Saturday of the New Year in the field opposite the car park at Farthing Common. It had been arranged there to see the sunset, but unfortunately the day was cloudy, so there was no sunset but a stiff, cold breeze, which soup and hot drinks did not alleviate. The next Forest Church is planned around a bonfire, so it is sure to be a hot sunny day!

And now on into 2019 with all we have to look forward to. Our Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast has proved so successful of late that it has been decided to hold them every second month starting on the first Saturday in February. All are welcome.

Folkestone Marjorie Williams

We had an enjoyable Christmas at Folkestone. On 22nd December we sang Carols on our Forecourt. 23rd was our Christmas Communion Service followed by a lovely Christmas dinner. On the 24th our DIY Christingle Service was, as always a great success. Then of course there was our Christmas Morning Service. We give thanks to Liz for making Christmas dinner for 30 of us. Our collections from these events go to Action for Children and we raised nearly £400.

Just before Christmas we had the lead stolen from the church roof, fortunately it was fixed quickly, needless to say, not with lead this time.

The building next to the Church is being converted into flats so the wall between the two buildings has to be removed, and replaced with a new one which will achieve a better exit from our Grace Hill Room.

Our premises are used every day of the week now. It is great to see people using it for food bank and hot dinner for homeless. Both of these run twice a week and winter shelter on Monday nights.

Our usual "Joy of Music" sessions are twice a week, aerobics on Monday and Friday. Saturday morning is "singing for health" and coffee morning every Tuesday. Friends from around the circuit are welcome to attend any of these church-run events. We send our best wishes for the coming year to all around the circuit, thinking of all those who are ill or have lost loved ones recently.

Church of the Good Shepherd, Hamstreet Bill Miller

Our advent celebration on 2nd December took the form of the annual "Toy Service", which was very well attended by around 40 children and 65 adults. 185 toys were donated which was a record. These were passed to the Willow Centre who combine with Sure Start to distribute to deprived children in South Ashford. The

service theme was “Cracking the Code”, where encrypted words were held up and the congregation had to work out what elements of the Christmas story were encrypted. These words were: Advent, Bethlehem, Shepherds, the Star/Wise men, Jesus and the slogan “God’s Christmas Gift Jesus”

Each word when found by the congregation meant they could open the contents of a bucket. These buckets held: a flat unmade Christmas cracker; ribbons to tie the cracker ends; stars to decorate 5 sides of the cracker; a “Milky Way” as the present; the words “God’s Christmas Gift Jesus” which could be stuck to the sixth side. The cracker, decoration and contents were patiently assembled during the service reminding us that Advent is a time of waiting, expectation and patience. Everyone took home a cracker and was told to be patient and remember what each part meant.

The worship was a combination of Christmas carols, prayers and readings. Three readings were by a Hamstreet Primary Academy pupil, a student from Highworth School and a parent. The Hamstreet School choir sang for us “We are the world”.

In all, an enjoyable, informative and successful service which attracted folk from way beyond our congregation. This service is fast becoming a tradition in our village. Gill and David Smith planned and conducted this event and we are very grateful for this great service to our church.

On 15th December we held our annual Carol Concert. It was an eclectic mix of Christmas carols, songs and music along with bible readings telling the Christmas story. Many congratulations to the music group for planning and leading the evening’s entertainment. Sadly, the awful weather that evening greatly reduced the attendance.

Headcorn Colin Pearson

We were delighted in early December to play hosts for one of the Circuit Advent Services, and valued the different perspective it gave on the Christmas story. It was particularly enjoyable to welcome those valiant folk who had made the journey the entire breadth of the Circuit to share in the occasion.

A Christmas tree with a difference was the Cake and company entry in the biennial Christmas Tree Festival in the Parish Church. To reflect our purpose of providing a welcoming space for those affected by loneliness or by memory problems, the tree was decorated with mince pies, cup-cakes, gingerbread men and gingerbread house, knitted or made of felt as well as “cups of tea”. The tree was completed, not with a star, but by a forget-me-not as a symbol of dementia. Forty decorated trees in the Church is an impressive sight, and we had a good site near the entrance.

We had a busy day of singing a week before Christmas. In the afternoon we joined in the Churches Together Carol Service, with five of our members joining the scratch choir for the occasion. In the morning we had our own carols, with the tree having crossed the churchyard from the Anglicans to the Methodists. The church was enhanced by the crib scene that the people of Ruckinge have handed on to us; we can promise them it will be cherished.

St. Michael's Methodist Anglican Church Centre Dudley Shipton

It is always pleasing to report and celebrate when an event is successful. The people of the Church long to feel part of the Community that surrounds its buildings and invite any who are interested to come inside and have refreshments. At St. Michael's at last we are carrying out this idea. Before Christmas we ran three Community Coffee Mornings on Fridays from 10am until noon. It was a joint venture with the three Parish Churches, St. Leonard's, Holy Cross and St. Michael's. People kindly volunteered to set out the room, prepare refreshments and act as welcomers. At least 50 people attended which exceeded expectation. It was an opportunity for the local community to meet, share ideas and talk amongst themselves and was open to everyone. Carers brought their partners who have dementia and this enabled them to mix with confidence and feel part of the caring community.

In 2019 further Community Coffee Mornings have been planned starting again on Friday 18th January from 10 until noon. Followed by 1st and 15th February, 1st and 15th of March. Please support this initiative and invite friends and neighbours, local Churches and Societies to become involved.

In the approach to Christmas the congregations gave practical help to people less fortunate than themselves. The collection point for the Food Bank is set up and running every Friday morning and the Tuesday Fellowship has sent £60 to Porchlight. St. Michael's has been collecting for Action for Children, and we anticipate that over £400 will be raised. The congregation have donated £240 and given goods to the Gift of Love at Christmas initiative which prepares boxes for distribution to local families.

Nibble, Knit and Natter have contributed £50, from the sale of bobble-hats, to the Dementia Forum who have also received donations from the Art Group that meets in the Wesley Room who gave £110. Waitrose presented £438 which someone kindly rounded up £500, while the local Masonic Lodge presented £400. In addition, Shoe Box Gifts for 39 children were prepared for Operation Christmas Child.

Very many thanks to all involved in all these activities. The spirit of thinking about others and giving positive and practical help has been part of our approach to Christmas. Like the work of Christ, it is Good News.

Community Coffee Mornings

10am – 12 noon

at St Michael's Methodist Anglican Church Hall, Hythe

Friday 1st & 15th February

Friday 1st & 15th March

Friday 5th April

Everyone Welcome – Free admission

Kennington Jill Pearson

Over the years at Kennington we have had a dream “Wouldn’t it be nice to have a larger kitchen?” It seemed to be out of reach!

Now miraculously our building project is nearly complete. We have a lovely new enlarged kitchen, including a dishwasher, a new rear entrance and a fully adapted disabled toilet.

This project has been a testimony to God’s Provision and Guidance, generous Grants and money from various sources, the generosity of the congregation, others who also gave generously of their time and money and especially the hard work of Stewart French, in applying for grants and searching for sources of Grants etc.

The work has gone smoothly with the provision of temporary fixtures, such as a sink in the church and a Portaloo to meet our needs and comfort.

On Sunday 17th February at 12.30pm there will be a ‘Bring and Share meal’ followed by a Service of Thanksgiving and Rededication at 1.30pm. We hope we will be joined by some friends from round the Circuit, as well as the 7th Day Adventists and the Light Bearers for Christ, who also worship at Kennington on Saturdays and Sunday Afternoons.

We would also like to thank all the people involved with the project, particularly the architect and the builders for their dedicated work.

Lydd David Richards

Greetings from Lydd to all our churches.

It was lovely to see the church decorated for the Christmas services and with Christmas activities now over we wish everyone a very Happy and Healthy New Year. The seasonal illnesses have kept our numbers at services down, but we have been pleased to see new people to the town attending and we trust they will enjoy and continue worshipping with us. We were also pleased to have Kevin lead our Candle lit Carol Service. Good to have you back Kevin.

Our new disabled toilet is now operational and we hope to have heating installed shortly.

We were sorry to hear that Iris Spinks, who returned to Durham last January with her husband Geoff, ended up in hospital over Christmas having fallen in her kitchen and broken her pelvis. We are also sorry that Mary Boulden has been returned to hospital. We remember these and all who are unwell in our prayers.

The Dementia Café and Yoga groups have continued to use the school room on Tuesdays, and the Little Chicks have had their sessions on Wednesday mornings, these will start again now that the Christmas break is over and we hope that their use of the Church Hall will help them form a link with the Church.

Lyminge Mary Blanch

Some of us attended the Circuit Advent Service at Hythe, where we were given individual candles, but suddenly we witnessed a larger light, when Dudley's candle ignited the microphone. Fortunately, no great damage was done and Dudley was unscathed, but it made for a memorable moment! Thank you, Dudley. After that start, Deacon Carys led an Advent Valley service, when we shared thoughts around the Advent candles, followed by a delicious tea provided by our Elham friends. Our Christmas celebrations were soon under way with the Haywardians' concert at the beginning of December, followed by the Christmas market and carols at Rhodes Minnis. The Sunday before Christmas our Worship Leaders presented a very moving and thoughtful service in the morning and in the evening we held our Carol Service, when we welcomed many from around the village. What a joy to have our minister, Kevin, back and in such good spirits, but we hope he will ease himself in gradually following his months of treatment. Our thanks to those who decorated the church so beautifully and indeed all who care for and clean the premises week by week.

Unfortunately, as I write this, we have just experienced a nasty case of vandalism, when both the Parish Church and our own have undergone extensive damage, caused by two young men. One pane of our front door was smashed, together with four other windows in the church, but fortunately they did not gain entry, as they did to the Parish Church, where they also set off the fire extinguishers. They also disrupted the allotments behind the church and we believe tools from there were used for the vandalism. However, it is at times like this that the community really comes together and we have received great support.

A few of us braved the winter gloom to join Deacon Carys for her latest Forest Church event. It was unfortunate that a spectacular sunset the previous evening was not repeated for our gathering, but nevertheless it was good to be together.

We continue to pray for Ian as he returns to his studies and also for those suffering from ill-health. As we look forward to spring we pray that people's spirits will be lifted.

Tayne Centre markets will resume on the 3rd Saturday each month from March, 9am-12noon.

Shadoxhurst Lisa Cooper

Christmas at Shadoxhurst saw the church decorated with tinsel, candles and greenery as usual and, most importantly, a manger taking centre stage.

The 'Christmas Unwrapped' study course at our chapel led by Robin Blount was well attended and much appreciated – thank you Robin.

Our Christingle Service on 23rd and our Candlelit Midnight Service, on Christmas Eve, were thoughtfully led by Helen and we had several visitors at both services. These included a very special visitor in a red suit at the end of the Christingle Service, who gave wrapped gifts to everyone. Thank you Father Christmas - and your helpers who

made this possible!

For our LA at the end of December, we thought about New Years' resolutions – are they important? Does anyone ever keep them? We thought about the fact that God is faithful and keeps his promises, that every day can be a fresh start like the first day of a new year, and concluded that maybe the meaningful resolutions are those we need to make in our Christian lives. Perhaps this quote from John Wesley makes a good resolution for us all, whatever the time of year: ***Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.***

On 6th January we were celebrating again, with a special lunch after the service to mark the 90th birthday of our dear friend Kathleen Davey, who many of you in the Ashford end of the circuit will have known as an active local preacher. She has been a stalwart of our church for many years and we are all grateful for her faithful witness, example and friendship. Two people, who some of us assumed to be invited guests, come for the special occasion, turned out in fact to be newcomers. They happily stayed for a superb lunch they had not been expecting and we hope the warm welcome and opportunity to chat to us will encourage them to come along again. We have warned them we don't do lunch every week! Afterwards it was a case of 'many hands make light work' as washing up was done, the Christmas decorations returned to the loft, and furniture put back in place ready for Café Church the next week. This 'alternative' service style still attracts new people – some have become quite regular attendees and some just come from time to time to try something a bit different. A warm Shadoxhurst welcome is extended to all.

Sadly, among all the happy news, we must also report the passing of Gladys Lunn, Barbara's mum, who died peacefully on New Year's Day. Readers may remember we celebrated Gladys' 100th birthday back in October. Our thoughts and prayers are with Barbara and the rest of her family at this time.

St Andrew's, Cheriton Christine Slater

On Thursday 8th November over 70 people attended the funeral of Joan Eaton, many of whom stayed to the meal afterwards. It was Joan and her family's wish that any donations that were taken should go to the boiler fund and this amounted to just over £500 for which we are very grateful. A tribute to Joan can be found elsewhere in this issue of the magazine.

Our Carol Service on Sunday 16th December was led by the Friday Fellowship group and after problems with computers, projectors and microphones prior to the beginning of the service all went well. Ruth managed to get 13 members to work in harmony and we were treated to a discussion of the ordinariness of Christmas with pictures of today intermingled with traditional depictions of Christmas with commentary from seven voices. We had a mixture of modern and traditional carols, some to different tunes, just to keep us on our toes! Although different the consensus was that we enjoyed it and it got us all in the mood for Christmas. Well done

‘Friday Fellowship’.

On Christmas Eve afternoon many of our congregation joined with Sandgate Road for their Christingle service which was taken by Sam with Daisy Dog also present. Later at 11:30pm there were some of us from St Andrews who joined with our friends at All Souls for their service which was led by Rev Jo Richardson and Rev Sam Funnell and included Holy Communion. The setting for this service was beautiful with the candles lit and as we left the church we were given chocolates too!!

On Christmas Day Sam led a short act of worship at 9:30 am, again with Daisy supervising. She did a splendid job and was a very good girl (that’s Daisy not Sam).

The Watch Night Service on New Year’s Eve was well attended with 22 humans and 2 dogs in the congregation. We were prepared for “fun & games” at the Watchnight, since the Minister was taking Daisy and the organist was taking Rupy! In the event, however, both dogs behaved very well – not a sound from either of them. Refreshments were served in church before and after the service. The service included a Candle Litany of 7 short readings, and afterwards we were invited to join members of the Nepalese church outside for fireworks.

Looking forward to forthcoming events - on Saturday 16th February there will be another quiz followed by a hot meal organised by Paul and Jill Missin and Darron and Susie Sharp. Look out for further details.

Tenterden Christine Endersby

Happy New Year to all the other Churches in the Circuit.

At the end of November we took part in the Tenterden Christmas Tree Festival. This was part of the Tenterden Christmas Shopping Weekend and was held in the Baptist Church. Beryl Bancroft organised us into making Angels and we decorated our Tree to the theme of ‘Angels from the Realms of Glory’. I have to say it looked splendid and although we did not win a prize we were very proud of our efforts. The tree was ceremoniously dismantled on the Sunday and carried back up the High Street to our Church where it was re-assembled and was our focal point for Christmas. The tree was supplied by Stuart and Patricia freshly cut from their farm.

In the first week of December we held our Christmas Tea in the Church. This was supported by about 30 members and friends and we were also pleased to have Rev. Sam Funnell with us as well as Rev. Paul Dean. Our Christmas Carol Service was also well attended and taken by Rev. Paul Dean. We did not have a Christmas Day Service but we were extremely grateful to Tim James for his Service on the 23rd December and to Christine Slater on the Sunday following Christmas. We are now looking forward to the coming year and to hopefully welcoming any new members who may come from the new buildings around the Town.

“Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.” – Oscar Wilde

Grace Court Val Redding

Residents and 'Live at Home' members enjoyed a variety of Christmas activities throughout December. These included a successful carol singing afternoon (carols chosen by the singers). Thanks to Molly for the music, Sue's mum for the delicious cakes, and circuit friends for sharing in the social event.

The new spring events programme began with a well-attended coffee morning. Members are looking forward to further favourite and mostly food related events during January.

Emma Harvey our new 'Live at Home' area manager will continue planning the programmes with Sasha Williams. It is hoped that this will increase the membership.

All residential flats at Grace Court are currently occupied and a warm welcome is extended to our most recent residents.

News from Deacon Carys...

Ministry in my current places of work is continuing in the usual way, lots of prayer, being Christ's presence, listening, sharing, library group, prayer meetings and knit and natter. All valued work of encouraging the people that I meet in the churches and communities of Elham, Lyminge and Rhodes Minnis.

Before Christmas I led a 'Blue Christmas Service', with the support and help of Tim James. It is an idea that I have been thinking of for a while, but Tim encouraged me that we should do this now-this year. A Blue Christmas service is for people who are feeling blue around the Christmas season. It can be people who are grieving, but also people for whom Christmas is difficult for a whole variety of reasons. This gentle service gave space to name people or hurts, space to sit and pray. This service was held on 22nd December, the idea is that it is held around the longest night, often again a difficult time. A small gathering of people took the time to reflect, held candles and listened to music. It was a moving service and a valued time. I am hoping that next year when I will be in another area that here in this circuit, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders could take this service again and allow people from across the circuit to pray and hold light in the darkness.

The Forest Church idea is going well, we had our second event on 5th Jan where the plan was to watch sunset and reflect. It was a cold gloomy afternoon, cloudy, but sixteen people turned up all with their warm layers on. We gathered on Farthing Common, prayed, shared, chatted, drank tea, coffee and soup and ate homemade cake. We talked about what we might have seen and were reminded of hope. It was a lovely time of fellowship and it was especially nice to be together outside.

The next Forest Church event is on April 14th in the afternoon, hopefully a gathering around a bonfire. Look out for more details nearer the time. Until then I am committing my time on Saturday afternoons in Lent for reflections and creativeness within nature. All are welcome to join me for 'Wild Lent' afternoons 2.30pm on these dates 9th March, 16th, 23rd, 30th and 6th April. The first date 9th

March will be at Rhodes Minnis woods, meet in car park, it's the road between Six Mile Garage and Lord Whiskey Café.

Stop Press

Carys is pleased to announce that from September 2019 she will be ministering in the Shropshire and Marches circuit, working in the northern end of the circuit. Carys is pleased to be able to bring her skills and experience in rural ministry to another rural circuit. Please remember her and Iain in your prayers as they prepare for this time of change.

Folkestone Rainbow Centre Mary Blanch

At the last meeting of the Church Liaison Officers, we were given the wonderful news that the Centre had been recognized for Investing in Volunteers. Whilst there is a team of paid staff, there are also more than 300 amazing folk, who help keep the work of the Centre going in so many different ways, and it is gratifying to know that the training and support they receive has now been officially recognized.

The winter shelter is now under way and it is hoped that a new warehouse/foodbank manager will soon be appointed. A bid has been made to provide a mental health worker and ways are being sought to ease holiday hunger among children. There is some better news re the Pre-School, in that it is hoped it will re-open after Easter at the Salvation Army and that Trish and her staff will be retained.

The Big Sleep Out, attracting 80 people, raised an amazing £6,500 and we now await the result of the Walk of the Kings. There will be a quiz at St. George's on the 15th March and the details about the Annual Knit-in will follow.

Reminder: The Rainbow Shop now has Gift Aid facilities and will happily receive any un-wanted Christmas presents and good quality ladies' clothing.

Thank you for your continuing support in so many ways.

(Updates on events, etc., can be found on the Rainbow Centre Facebook page)

An inspiring story was told where additional needs children at a Folkestone Primary school decided to prepare gift boxes for the homeless people and their dogs, and these will now be distributed where appropriate.

Little Lambs Christmas Party

Our Little Lambs Christmas party, Thursday, 13th December was attended by 21 toddlers and their parents/carers. We started with a wonderful puppet show during which Joe, Jenny and the team put across the meaning of Christmas, telling stories, interacting and entertaining the adults and children alike. After the puppet show, there was face painting and a hunt the snowman competition. Snowmen were hidden around the hall and their numbers written down when they were found. We were pleased to see all our toddlers and their parents/carers take part in this and

they all looked forward to the prizes. Food and refreshments were enjoyed by all and of course the little ones had a special Christmas cracker.

It was lovely to have Rev. Sam join us to meet the parents/carers and toddlers. Sam gave out gifts, a Bible Society Christmas book called "The Mystery of the New Noisy Neighbour" and a wonderful knitted angel made by Phyllis Couchman. Through our links with other organisations we were donated eight large sacks of food to hand out to families we felt would benefit from such a gift. Delighted and overwhelmed the eight families were extremely grateful.

All the team at Little lambs worked very hard to provide a wonderful time for our toddlers and their parents/carers. We would like to thank them all and ask for your ongoing prayers as we continue to work alongside families in our community.

Janet and Anya

Obituary

Joan Eaton

I've been privileged to have sat next to Joan at St Andrew's for close on 20 years. During this time we developed a very good friendship. I got to know her daughters Pauline, Liz and Chris, when they came to visit her - they were a very close and caring family.

Joan was born on October 16th 1918 and was christened in the Old Methodist Tin Chapel which was later pulled down to make room for the new church hall. Joan was educated at Kent College, Folkestone where she represented her school in both hockey and tennis. Joan started work at the general Post Office, married her lifelong friend, Frank, in 1941 and was kept busy by helping him in his business whilst bringing up her children. Joan had a great talent for crafts - knitting and producing beautiful cross stitch designs as well as enjoying dressmaking and gardening.

At St Andrew's she played an active role - selling Charity Christmas cards for ten years and helping out with the toddlers group. She asked Brenda to assist her. Brenda remembers her being welcoming, friendly, strong in her faith and having a wicked sense of humour. Joan welcomed visitors to church by handing out hymn books - a job she continued to do until she was 89!

After her husband Frank died in 1999, Joan moved to a flat in Court Place, Folkestone, and was a popular resident due to her positive and caring nature. She was always aware of other people's needs and was always willing to come forward to befriend and support anyone who she felt needed it. She had a great memory and always knew what was going on locally and in the world. Her positive and caring attitude, in spite of her handicaps in later life, was inspirational!

After a short illness, Joan died one day before her 100th birthday on October 15th. She leaves three daughters, 6 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. We shall all miss our friend Joan, someone I looked up to and admired.

Peter Wagstaffe, St Andrew's

News from Ian Couchman...

As I am sitting writing this it does not seem possible that I have completed my first term at Queens. I have settled into the rhythm of life at college. The train journey, currently, is still a novelty and allows me the opportunity to study as well as relax. Last term's modules have stretched and challenged me in ways I had not expected. I have enjoyed the lectures as well as the many conversations with my fellow students. I have submitted two assignments one on introduction to the Bible which I have passed and I will get the result for my Doctrine assignment on my return to college. Over the Christmas break I have been working on my next assignment which is on "the Old Testament" and have started to think through the next one based on mission and evangelism.

As part of my training I am working at The Beacon in Dover as a link church. I am involved in their work alongside the homeless, immigrants and those excluded in the local area. I am also taking part regularly in the church services including helping Miriam, the Minister, during communion.

I thank you for your continued enquiries and prayer support.

Blessings,

Ian

Christmas Day Lunch at St. Andrews Methodist Church 2018

This is now the fifth year in which we have hosted this event for people drawn to our attention by those who look after and support the lonely and homeless of our community; The Crisis Team, Winter Shelter, Local churches, friends from within the community and others too from Sheltered Accommodation.

The day was full on, with, as one of our volunteers put it, "every possible treat catered for, drinks, canapés, full Christmas lunch and a cup of tea or coffee to finish". They also felt the offering of any items from the gift room was a wonderful idea and much appreciated. It was lovely to have two families join us during the carol singing to offer their gifts collected around a Christmas Giving Tree to add to the collection. This together with a Christmas message from Rev. Bob Weldon before lunch and a quiz in between courses made for a special day.

With, once again, a beautifully decorated and arranged hall we this year served 70 meals and for the first time this included a number of 'takeaways'. These were for those who couldn't make it or who felt unable to be with lots of people. One lady who was desperately upset and homeless came in and felt unable to sit with others but was able to have a takeaway meal. Another meal was taken to a disabled gentleman who wasn't well enough to attend; he was thrilled with it and has said he wants to attend St Andrews as he would like to restart taking communion.

Our guests felt that this Christmas lunch was a triumph saying the food was

delicious, hot and plentiful. Life stories were shared with volunteers who said these would stay with them forever and because of this felt extremely privileged to have been part of their Christmas day.

Of course, none of this could have been achieved without the commitment, sacrifice and hard work of our volunteers and contributors all of whom know who they are and without which none of this could be remotely possible. One person told us “the organisation behind the whole event was incredibly impressive, we are in awe of you all” and another said “I would like to thank you for allowing us to be part of such a rewarding day. I don’t take my life comforts for granted and am fully aware that there are a lot of people much less fortunate than me. We all see homelessness on our local streets and can only imagine their loneliness and feeling not part of a community. Providing such a welcoming experience, on Christmas Day, goes some way to helping that”.

Our volunteers gave up their Christmas so others may have one; this I believe is a very special gift, so again, thank you.

Finally, please continue to pray for those who work tirelessly all year round to help and support people like those who joined us for our Christmas Day lunch at St. Andrew’s.

Thank you again,

Anya Goldsack

Zimbabwe 2018

During November 2018 I joined a group from Ashford Christian Fellowship on a mission trip to Zimbabwe. This was a truly life changing experience.

The trip provided an opportunity to visit hospitals, an orphanage and community projects distributing the generous gifts provided by many people from around the Circuit. Thank you!

During the trip the group were hosted by local families. This gave first-hand experience of the poverty experienced in the country. Zimbabwe is going through a period of economic difficulty with the Zimbabwean currency currently being worthless. The cost of many day-to-day items in the supermarkets was excessive and water and fuel were in short supply.

The Missions group are due to meet in January where we will agree a date and time for a presentation of the full Zimbabwean story, so watch this space for further details. In the meantime, I would like to express my very grateful thanks to so many people who supported my trip through donations of money and gifts towards the “Leap into Hope” charity. I look forward to seeing many of you at future Missions meetings, all are welcome and it would be wonderful to have representatives from more of our circuit churches.

Pam Couchman

Lent Course on 'The King's Speech' (2010)

This film, first shown in 2010, tells the story of the impromptu ascension to the throne of King George VI in 1936. It is a moving story of an unsure monarch who works hard to overcome a stammer and of his relationship with his speech therapist and friend Lionel Logue. It offers lots of opportunities for theological reflection and conversation.

Come and join us! All welcome.

United Church, Cade Road 7.30 – 9pm on Thursdays during Lent.

March 14th: Showing of 'The King's Speech'
(This will go on longer than 9pm)

March 21st Session 1: 'The stuff of nightmares and the power of friendship'

March 28th Session 2: 'Chasing the dream or fulfilling the calling?'

April 4th Session 3: 'Pressing forward and breaking through'

April 11th Session 4 'Eloquence for evil and stammering for good'

Lent Course at Tenterden – all welcome

I am planning to deliver a four-part series called "Living Fruitfully" based on materials from Embrace the Middle East (formerly Bible Lands Society). This will be at Tenterden Methodist Church on Thursday afternoons at 2:30pm and lasting about an hour each time. Booklets will be provided to attendees, or for those with computer access they can be downloaded from www.embraceme.org. People from any of the Circuit churches are welcome to attend, or bring a friend!

The meetings are on Thursdays 7, 14, 21 and 28 March 2019 at 2:30pm.

There is no fee or charge for the booklets. If so moved, participants may wish to make a donation to Embrace, who have inspired this series.

Paul Dean

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 17th February – Bring & Share Lunch at Kennington at 12noon, followed by a service of Thanksgiving & Rededication at 1.30pm – all are welcome to join in this celebration.

Thursday 21st February – Leaders of Worship & Preachers' meeting – Cade Road 7 for 7.30pm

Friday 1st March – Women's World Day of Prayer – look out for details of local church/ ecumenical events

Wednesday 13th March – Circuit Meeting at Tenterden - 7 for 7.30pm

Hythe Coffee Mornings Fridays 10am-noon

Fridays 1st & 15th February, 1st & 15th March – all welcome!

Lent Courses

see also articles elsewhere in the magazine

At Cade Road

on Thursday evenings – starting 14th March

At Tenterden

on Thursday afternoons – starting 7th March

'Wild Lent'

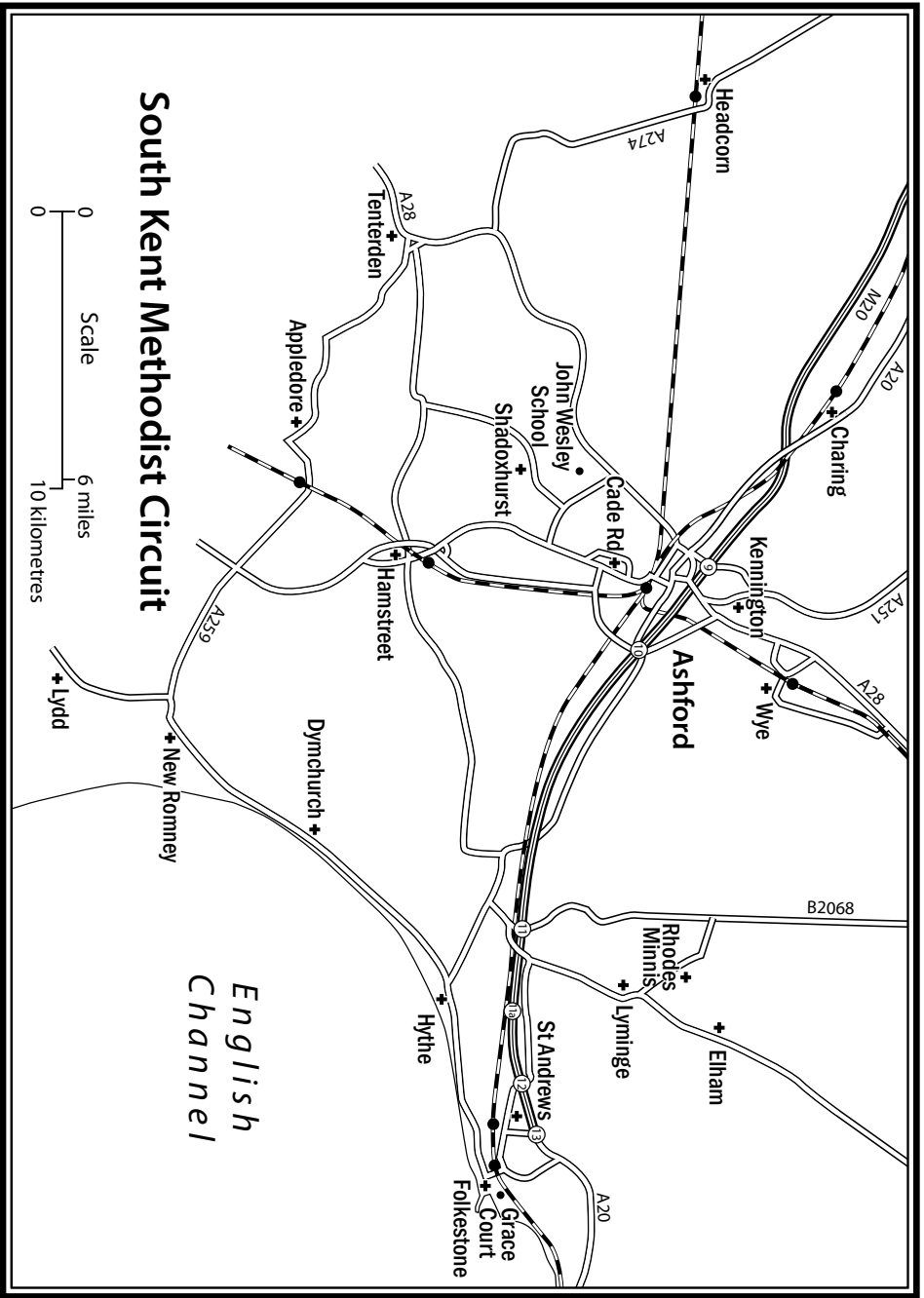
(Forest Church outdoor event with Carys)

Saturday afternoons – starting 9th March

Lent Lunches

Fridays in Lent at Wye from 12.30pm

all welcome



South Kent Methodist Circuit

Scale
0 6 miles
0 10 kilometres

English Channel