

South Kent Circuit Magazine, June/July 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](#)

[Planning the Plan](#)

[Page 5](#)

[Collection for Deacon Carys](#)

[Page 6](#)

[Circuit Prayers](#)

[Page 7](#)

[Page 8](#)

[Circuit News](#)

[Charing](#)

[Dymchurch](#)

[Page 9](#)

[Elham](#)

[Page 10](#)

[Folkestone](#)

[Hamstreet](#)

[Page 11](#)

[Headcorn](#)

[St Michael's, Hythe](#)

[Page 12](#)

[Lyminge](#)

[Page 13](#)

[New Romney](#)

[St Andrew's, Cheriton](#)

[Page 14](#)

[Shadoxhurst](#)

[Page 15](#)

[Wye](#)

[Page 16](#)

[Grace Court](#)

[Rainbow Centre](#)

[Page 17](#)

[The Monday Club](#)

[Bible Month](#)

[Page 18](#)

[MHA](#)

[Farewell Service for Deacon Carys](#)

[Page 19](#)

[Dates for your Diary](#)

[Page 20](#)

[Thinking About Marriage and Relationships](#)

[Page 21](#)

[Page 22](#)

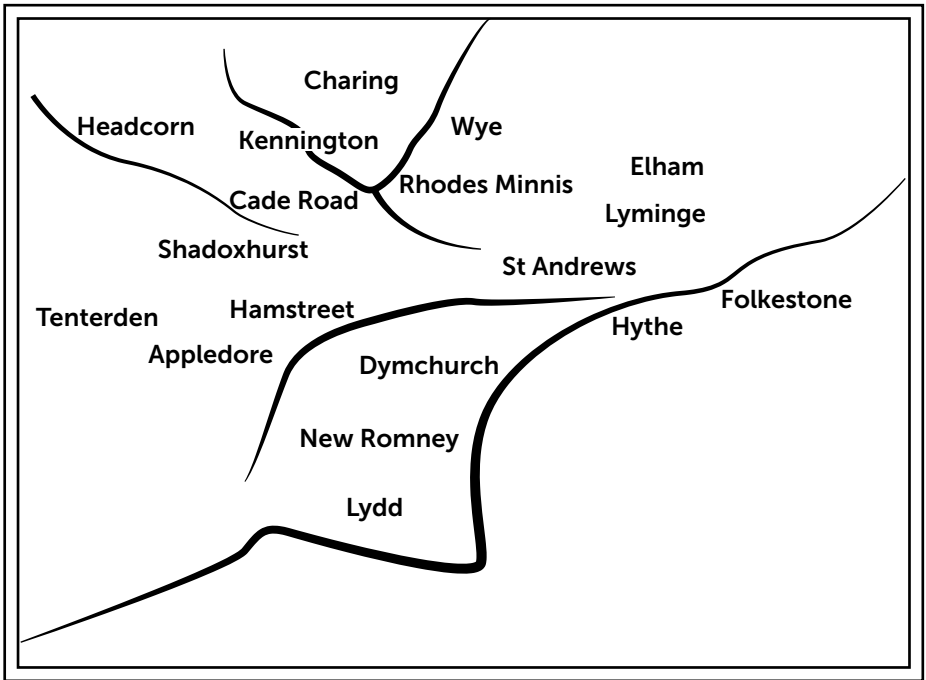
[Page 23](#)

[Page 24](#)

[Circuit Map](#)

SOUTH KENT CIRCUIT MAGAZINE

June/July 2019



South Kent Methodist Circuit Ministerial Team

	Telephone	Rest Day
Rev. Sam Funnell	01303 240228	Tuesday
Rev. Robin Blount	01233 629611	
Rev. Dr. Paul Dean	01233 879358	Monday
Rev. Tricia Fogden	01233 758250	Monday
Rev. Helen Hollands	01233 621216	Friday
Rev. Judy Muxlow	01580 291016	
Rev. Kevin Taylor	01303 261500	
Rev. Rod Whateley	01233 732274	Thursday
Deacon Carys Woodley	01233 500244	Friday

Circuit Office 01303 270190

Hours: Mon, Tue, Thurs, Fri 9.00am -1.30pm. Closed Wednesdays

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 August/September issue: 6 July 2019**

Lisa Cooper
9 Nairne Close, Shadoxhurst
Ashford TN26 1NA
Tel: 01233 732178

cooperplace@btinternet.com

PLEASE CLEARLY MARK ALL ITEMS 'MAGAZINE'

From the Manse

Dear Friends,

Hopefully when you receive this newsletter I will be walking somewhere between Cornwall and the top of Wales. (The Methodist Church has gifted to me a sabbatical, three months to find rest, renewal, new insight and re-equipping.) I have always wanted to walk from one end of the country to the other, this is just the start, and maybe on another sabbatical I will be able to do another walk.

This is not just a walk but chance to recover past passions that I have put aside for ministry. In ministry, maybe because we have just one day off a week, I have less time for walking and sadly haven't been able to wild camp much. I suppose it comes down to priorities and when I do have time off I spend it visiting family.

As a purpose for this walk, along the way I am exploring Christ's Presence. I hope to hear good news stories, seeing what churches and communities are doing as I walk through. Also I want to explore Christ's presence in and out of churches. What signs are there of Christ's presence. My prayer for each day is that I will be surprised by an encounter with Christ in the most open and broadest sense.

My question for you to ponder is: How might I encounter Christ in the broadest and most open way? How have you encountered Christ in a surprising way? In my preparation time for sabbatical I have been exploring these questions and I have been asking people what they think. These are some of the answers; in a sunset, beautiful view over the sea, a squirrel, through generosity of others, through stillness and quiet, and being surprised by looking back and realising the unseen presence.

I suppose if we were to go on from that we could look at our churches, villages and towns - how do they show Christ's presence? How do we as individuals show Christ's presence?

Wherever we are, we are all on a journey with Christ. As we journey I leave you with this Celtic blessing.

May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face;

the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,

may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

God Bless,

Carys

(to follow Carys' blog go to www.southkentmethodistcircuit.org.uk and click on 'circuit news')

Planning the Plan...

Many of you will be aware that we have seen an increasing number of LAs on our preaching plan in recent months. We do not actually have very many active preachers or retired ministers, and the age profile is increasing. Some are needing to do fewer appointments, and others have transport or mobility issues, or work or family commitments, affecting which churches they can be planned at, or how often.

At the circuit meeting in March, the following statistics were presented:

Out of the 265 Sunday services on the March-May Plan (yes, 265! - not counting any additional special events in Holy Week), these were covered as follows.

70 (26%) Circuit Ministers (Sam, Helen, Paul & Kevin - Averages 17 each over 13 weeks, but this includes services where 3 churches are covered by one person as in the Elham Valley and Marsh united services. We also need to remember that Sam is our only full time minister. Helen and Paul both have additional responsibilities to preaching around the District and URC Synod area, and Kevin is part time. Carys is counted as a Local Preacher since Deacons are not required to be preachers. We will of course be losing her soon).

85 (32%) own circuit Supernumeraries (retired ministers) or Local Preachers

12 (5%) Ecumenical partners in our LEPs – so no circuit cover required

13 (5%) 'Voluntary' LAs eg café church, tea services and guest services – no circuit cover required

50 (19%) Ministers/preachers from other circuits or denominations

33 (12%) LAs as last resort – when it is just not possible to cover because we have used all the slots people kindly offered and have been unable to find any additional outside help

2 (1%) TBC – probably further LAs – no cover found at the time (* now being covered by Sam as a united afternoon service – meaning she now has 3 services in one day).

The total covered by our OWN ministers, supernumeraries and Local Preachers = 59% (*including the adjustment for the extra one Sam is now taking).

Members of circuit meeting were asked to break into groups for discussion to see if we could come up with any good proposals and solutions. A suggestions box was passed round.

Questions put to the groups were: do we have too many churches, too many services all at the same time, or too few preachers? What can be done about these issues? Do we want more united services, less frequent services, changing the times of some of the services? more local preachers or worship leaders? (in an ideal world, yes, this would be great, but where are we going to find them – they don't grow on trees and you can't buy them online!)

The staff team have looked at the suggestions and there are a couple of things to be introduced and trialled in the coming months.

There will be a quarterly Circuit Service. This immediately reduces the number of services to be covered by about 17 on each plan. The first 2 are planned for 15th September and 29th December (when we would expect fewer preachers to be

Back to index

available anyway, and fewer people in our congregations too). Please avoid planning anything special for your church eg Harvest etc on these dates. We appreciate that not everyone may be able to get to a circuit service and may instead stay at home, or attend their local Parish Church, but this will only be once a quarter.

Another suggestion put forward was the circuit staff providing material that can be distributed to churches to assist in LAs. So, again once a quarter, there will be a 'circuit resource service' provided. This will be a 'one off' that is not tied to the lectionary and can be used at any time, to help cover an LA. If a church did not need to use it that quarter, it could be kept for future use. We are also in the process of obtaining a circuit-wide subscription to The Vine – a new resource that provides full scripts of services especially for LAs, for every Sunday of the year. This helps churches lead their LAs but does nothing to reduce the number or frequency.

Sadly, some of the suggestions overheard seemed to apply to 'them' not 'us'. For example, in conversations about churches changing the day or time of the service, to avoid the Sunday morning clash – was anyone actually offering to take the suggestion back to their church council and see if they could offer a solution, or was everyone hoping that 'some other church' would solve the problem so they can continue just as they are, without any changes or sacrifices?

We cannot bury our heads in the sand. We cannot expect so few people to go on covering so many services all at the same time on a Sunday morning. We as a circuit are one family and so it is OUR problem not THEIR problem. Which is why we are opening the discussion to the wider circuit, those who were not at the meeting, and asking you, please, to channel your inner Baldrick and come up with a cunning plan...

Joking aside, please prayerfully consider the issues we face, please discuss this in your church meetings or informally over coffee, and do send in any further suggestions. We would like a suggestion from each church about something they can do/change, that will help ease the difficulties of fixing the Plan.

Collection for Deacon Carys

As you know, Carys is leaving the circuit this summer to move on to her new appointment in Shropshire.

Churches and individuals are invited to contribute to a leaving collection for her – and a presentation will be made at her farewell service (28th July, see separate ad).

Cheques can be sent to the Circuit Office made out to 'South Kent Methodist Circuit' and with 'CW leaving gift' on the reverse. Please do not send cash in the post!

Donations can be sent either individually or as a group but must be received by 22nd July.

Thank you,

Lisa

Circuit Prayers

A Prayer for Pentecost

Exuberant Spirit of God,
bursting with the brightness of flame
into the coldness of our lives
to warm us with a passion for justice and beauty.
We praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
sweeping us out of the dusty corners of our apathy
to breathe vitality into our struggles for change.
We praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
Speaking words that leap over barriers of mistrust
to convey messages of truth and new understanding.
We praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
flame, wind, speech,
burn, breathe, speak in us;
fill your world with justice and joy. Amen.

Jan Berry

A Prayer for Trinity Sunday

God
Creator,
Jesus,
Holy-Spirit
Star-maker,
Story-teller
Breath of life.
The three in one

Back to index

*the one times three
(I was never good
with numbers).*

*Enough to know
you care
you challenge
you make me holy
and you circle me
with love.*

Ruth Burgess (from *Bare Feet and Buttercups*, 2008)

We pray for our current District Chair, John Hellyer, as he moves on to Gloucestershire in July. We give thanks for his care, support and service throughout our District over the past 13 years.

*Merciful God,
author of the cosmos and reader of souls;
we give you the worship that to you alone is due.
We offer to you all that we are and have,
our bodies and our minds.
Forgive us when we conform to values and standards that
fail to reflect your purpose.
By the power of your Spirit, who raised Jesus from death,
transform us through and through,
so that we become effective signs and agents of your perfect will.
Amen.*

John Hellyer, South-East District Chair (from MPH 2018/2019)

Every Blessing,
Helen

News from our Churches

Charing Elizabeth Ellen

We recently had our schoolroom refurbished and then held a special coffee morning and cake sale on 13th April so that people could see what had been done. We were pleased to be joined by friends from round the circuit – the schoolroom was full and the improvements much admired. Now our usual activities can resume - the board games afternoon, Wednesday coffee morning and, most importantly, Sunday School.

Our Good Friday service this year was led by our Worship Leader, Jean Murray, with help from other members of the congregation and the music group. We were pleased to welcome visitors from Cade Road and we all enjoyed hot cross buns after the service.

Our Easter Sunday service was led by Paul Dean and was very special as it included the reception into membership of Nigel who has worshipped with us for some time and married Kerry last year. The church was almost full and it was good to hear such rousing singing for the familiar Easter hymns.

Dymchurch Diana Blackwell

Thanks to a very generous local grant we have been able to purchase new chairs for our school room. Not everyone agrees that they are completely comfortable as they are quite firm, but they are new, smart, clean and, most importantly, wipeable. Within two weeks of receiving them they had been used by Knitters, Meeting Point, Heritage and of course our congregation. We are most grateful to have received this money and now have chairs that should last for a long time.

Our collection for the Malawi Emergency Appeal raised £100 for "All We Can". We remember all those who suffered and are suffering in this disaster in our prayers.

The Parish Church united with us for our Good Friday Meditation, led by Kevin. This was preceded by a Bread and Cheese lunch. Thanks to all who helped and came along, enabling us to send £161.30 to Christian Aid.

We recently had our first Café style church service in our school room. It was led by Jim Wilson and fairly well attended. We have yet to analyse its success to see if we want to do this again at some time in the future. Cim was at the piano and the singing was excellent.

At a recent meeting of our local Heritage Group, who use our Chapel, we had 68 people on the pews - oh that it could be like that on Sunday mornings. The subject was "Lookers" i.e. Shepherds. If only there was as much interest locally in the "Good Shepherd".

We celebrated our Church Anniversary on 5th May. The service was led by The Rev Canon Harvey Richardson, and we were also pleased to welcome his wife. Our

organist (as Cim was away that week) was Steven Greenhalgh – our thanks to him.

We send our thoughts and prayers to all who are unwell. We hope that Kevin continues to improve. Our thoughts are also with Rev John Lines and his wife Christine. To those in our congregation with health problems and anxieties we wish you well; and we hope that Anne recovers quickly when she has her operation.

Elham Max Laker & Alice Mills

On March 29th a very special dedication service took place at Elham school. The family of the late George Crowe presented a beautiful oak chair in memory of George who attended Elham school as a boy. George's wife Joyce told an audience of about 50 people and all the children at the school how much he loved his time there and that she hoped the teachers would use the chair at story time in the Forest school. A lovely and touching memorial to a well-loved gentleman. The service finished with readings of poetry from the children following the blessing and dedication by Reverend Jane Weeks.

Mothering Sunday this year was a united service at our church led by Sam. It was a very happy service and all the ladies received a plant. Easter events started on Good Friday with the annual Walk of Witness around the village, stopping at various locations to listen to a reading about our Lord's journey to the Cross, sing a hymn and pray. The walk finished at the church hall, where coffee and hot cross buns were very welcome. On the Saturday the Valley Churches got together for a sumptuous tea to say farewell and Godspeed to Carys as she leaves on her walking Sabbatical. We were interested to hear about Carys' plans for her long journey on foot. On Easter Sunday we shared a Communion Service with friends from Rhodes Minnis, led by Rev Robin Blount. We were very grateful for his offer to play the piano too, so that we did not have to try to sing with the digital machine. Thank you Robin.

Prayer Breakfasts

These have been a feature for many years now and are well supported by members of both the village churches. Attendance fluctuates between eight and fourteen, but more can always be accommodated. They are led by various people, both ordained and lay and are held on the first Saturday of alternate months. We meet at 8 am, have a half hour or so of worship and discussion, then enjoy a breakfast of cereal, fruit, toast and tea and coffee. We are still hoping to find someone who will provide a full English!! The next one will be on Saturday 1st June, then 3rd August, 5th October and 7th December. Friends from other Circuit churches are welcome to join us, but we realise that the early start and distance may be off-putting.

Prayer Meeting

We hold ecumenical meetings for prayer at 7.30pm on the first Thursday of every month in the Hall. We start with tea and biscuits, think about any current Christian festivals, pray for about half an hour, then close with a discussion. All are welcome to join us.

Folkestone Marjorie Williams

We had a very good Easter Season. Carol Thomas made small arrangements for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day, so with the other flower arrangements for Easter Day, the church looked splendid. Val Redding led our service on Easter Day, thank you Val for that (and the chocolate egg after the service!)

The roof over our Sanctuary has now been repaired. The parapet around the flat roof above the Grace Hill Room is still to be done. We would like to thank the circuit for the Grant of £4000 they gave us towards the cost of these works and many thanks for all the other donations, large and small towards this hefty bill we face.

The old hot cupboard (which did not work) in our kitchen has been removed and we have had four cupboards replace it along with a good work top. So having transferred plates and placed new mugs into these cupboards it was made easier, and a joy, to serve lunch from the kitchen on 28th April. On this day approximately 27 of us sat down to Sunday lunch together, many thanks to Liz who made this for us and we raised over £200 towards the roof fund.

May 25th is the day we Celebrate Africa at the Folkestone Prayer Group. A day of Celebration with prayers for Africa, lunch and other refreshments is planned and as I write this I pray that many people join them for this.

All our usual meetings are continuing to take place with our friends from around the circuit always welcome.

We wish God's blessings to all our friends around the circuit and hope to see many of you at Carys' farewell service.

Use of Folkestone Methodist Church Car Park

Please can we ask any friends from around the Circuit that make use of our car park in Sandgate Road, to do so with consideration for other premises users. We've had some issues with people getting blocked in and this causes concern and inconvenience - as well as Church people being on the receiving end of irate comments. Thank you.

Sam

Church of the Good Shepherd, Hamstreet Bill Miller

The annual coffee morning in aid the MS Society charity was held in our church on Saturday 30th March. It was well supported and raised a sum approaching £300.

Mothering Sunday took the form of Cafe Church. It was good to see so many young people who participated enthusiastically. As expected, the service was devoted to "mothers" and families. There were, of course, times for singing and prayers. There was a series of activities including an entertaining sketch, and appropriate bible readings. The youngsters were given a number of activities and they, and some

older folks, worked with energy to produce some lovely items. Refreshments were available throughout. As ever, the service was planned and directed by Gill and David Smith and they should be thanked for another successful occasion.

We were pleased to welcome Roy Hollands who, for the first time, conducted our service on Palm Sunday.

Our Easter celebrations started with a well attended service on Good Friday. It was good to be joined by several visitors on this occasion. Our normal procession following the cross was cancelled this year but the congregation was invited to the Rectory for refreshments and hot-cross buns.

On Easter Day the sun shone and we had a Communion service conducted jointly by David Smith and Rod Whateley. Rod was conducting three other services in the Benefice that morning. Again it was well attended and all enjoyed singing the glorious Easter hymns.

Headcorn Colin Pearson

Tuesday evenings in Lent saw us meeting in our House Group, which Helen led for us. It was a new format for us, and we found the material thought provoking, leading on to some good discussions.

On Good Friday we joined with the other churches of the village in a walk of Witness. After a prayer at the Catholic Church, we set off to walk the length of the High Street behind the Cross, stopping for a prayer at the Baptist Church, Foreman's Walk (the main shopping focus of the village) and the Methodist Church before our final stop at the door of the Parish Church. Then it was time for hot cross buns and coffee in the church.

After our own service on Easter Sunday morning we were again in Foreman's Walk, joining with members of the other churches to show our Easter joy by singing a collection of Easter hymns; hopefully it provided a reminder to the village of the true meaning of Easter.

St Michael's, Hythe Dudley Shipton

I have always believed that the Good News of that first Easter Morning brought new life into the people who accepted Jesus' example and teaching. He spoke of the love of God for everyone and his ministry was to all who would listen. The rich and the poor, the sad and the lonely, the ill and maimed, those in distress, to Jew and Gentile, even you and me.

Part of our faith is to react positively to the needs that we see all around us, and there are many. I want to thank all those in the Parish who have been supporting Dementia Awareness in Hythe. Concerts at the Hythe Sports and Social Club, St. Michael's and St. Leonard's Churches have raised the profile of dementia in Hythe. Very many thanks to those who donated £371 at the Lights of Love Service in February

and £374 at the Concert given by Becky Haisell, when every pew was filled, in March. Both of these events took place at St. Leonard's Church.

The Community Coffee Mornings from 10am until noon on the first and third Friday of each month have been well supported and by popular demand will continue from May onwards. Please do not leave it to others to attend, but come and enjoy the company of the variety of people and organisations involved in the life of Hythe.

As Christians we live this New Life, get involved, give our time, meet together within and outside the Church to show that the goodness of God is all around us. We are indeed the people of God in Hythe.

Those who attended the Living Words event at the Tin Tabernacle were very moved indeed by the conversations and recall of their memories by four local people with dementia. Susanna Howard, the Artistic Director of Living Words, has been working alongside them over a number of weeks and together they have produced a booklet full of memories. It was an uplifting occasion with emotion and empathy all around us. A fitting reminder to us all of two of the five key messages about those with dementia. It is possible to live well with dementia. There's more to a person than the dementia.

Jesus commanded his disciples to spread the Gospel of Good News. With this in mind, please continue to spread awareness of those with dementia and their carers in the community of Hythe and elsewhere. I am very grateful to all who contribute to this challenge.

Lyminge Mary Blanch

This year the World Day of Prayer was held in our church and once again we found the Reflection extremely helpful and thought-provoking as we shared the service prepared by the women of Slovenia. We were particularly grateful to Phyllis Couchman for making the beautiful carnations, which were distributed during the offering. Thank you, Phyllis!

Lent lunches were held every Friday when we shared fellowship with friends from the village, raising nearly £200 towards Water Aid. The Good Friday meditation was well-attended and it was lovely to stand beneath the cross in the sunshine with the sound of the birds in the background! Then on Easter Saturday some of us shared the Celebration Tea for Deacon Carys, when we heard of the work she has encouraged in our Elham Valley Churches. Our contribution centred around the items knitted at the Knit and Natter sessions (from angels and poppies to the latest 'creatures' being knitted for the June flower festival) and her encouragement of the Tayne Centre market. We are also extremely grateful for her introduction to Forest Church, the final one being around a bonfire, when we baked bread and shared thoughts about the Last Supper. What wonderful memories we will have of her ministry, especially through the photos which Daphne has diligently taken, and we pray her sabbatical will be a time of blessing. Arriving for our Easter celebration we were greeted outside by the cross, now smothered in yellow flowers, a transformation painstakingly carried

Back to index

out by Marilyn and Christina. Bless you both!

Congratulations to Hannah (Bailey) on passing her Grade V ABRSM flute exam with Merit!

As indicated above, we are all working towards the Flower Festival, which will be held on the weekend of the 23rd-24th June. This is part of a week of activities within the village and it would be lovely to welcome others from around the circuit.

We continue to pray for those with health problems, especially Christina, having finished her radio-therapy and now awaiting her operation, and Sid Jacobs, also waiting for surgery. May God's healing power be with all in their need.

Tayne Centre markets are held on the 3rd Saturday of each month from 9am-12noon.

New Romney Wendy Prigmore

Writing this at the beginning of May, Easter is still fresh in our minds.

On Maundy Thursday Rev. Alan Hewitt led a short service of reflection after Meeting Point.

Our Easter morning service was led by our very own Colin Hancox. We were joined by visitors which swelled our numbers.

Looking forward, our Church Anniversary service will be held on the first Sunday in June and we invite you to join us as Rev Alan Hewitt leads us in worship.

We still have several members with health problems and some who are now in residential care homes. We keep them in our hearts and prayers and miss their presence in Church.

On a joyful note we look forward to attending the blessing of Colin Hancox' marriage to Jenny at the end of July. They met at Meeting Point. We wish them every joy in their future lives together.

St Andrew's, Cheriton Christine Slater

Friday 1st March was World Day of Prayer, and this year the theme was 'Come everything is ready!' led by Slovenia. St Andrews took part in the service which was held at St Martins. It was a great success and classes from the local All Souls School attended. It was their responsibility to hand out red carnations, a symbol of celebration in Slovenia. They also took part in other aspects of the service which was a great celebration.

On 24th March Val Redding and Lisa Cooper led worship and it was good to be with Lisa at the beginning of her journey to becoming a Local Preacher; we are used to seeing her in her office here but not at the lectern; we look forward to her next visit.

On 21st April, Easter Sunday, Rev Sam Funnell led worship at 8:30am and this was followed by a breakfast. This was a bonus as we had thought that in the absence of the 'usual' chefs there would be none. Anya and Steve stepped into the breach, it

was mainly a cold collation with Steve in charge of boiling the eggs and a fine job he did of it. Sam led worship again at 10am and then in the evening we were treated to a double act when both Sam Funnell and Kevin Taylor led the service between them. It was a very different and reflective service. We had four readings, each followed by a brief comment and then a reflection on the reading with a hymn to continue the 'theme'. A really good way to end Easter Sunday.

Following the success of The Friday Fellowship rendition of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat for the LA here in February, they were invited to Cade Road to reprise the performance, on Sunday 28th April. The group were a bit concerned about a mass exodus from the St Andrews morning service but in the interests of circuit togetherness they agreed. James Sullivan again took the role of Joseph and Jim Moody-Smith that of Pharaoh. It was a great morning, the group were joined by some musicians from Cade Road and all were made to feel most welcome. Many of the group renewed friendships with circuit folk they had not seen for ages. The group also checked out Cade Road's new sound system and filed their thoughts away for future possibilities at St Andrews! Then to round the morning off the Friday Fellowship group returned to the Missins' house where Jill had produced one of her amazing meals for us all. It was an opportunity to share what this group at St Andrews do with another church from the circuit and it was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Shadoxhurst Lisa Cooper

On April 7th, we welcomed our newest member, as Isobel was baptised and confirmed. She has been attending our church since she was 2 weeks old and it is wonderful to see her regularly playing the piano for our services. Congratulations on getting a distinction in your Grade 8 piano exam - practising hymn tunes obviously helped!

Following the service we had a church council meeting, at which we were pleased to elect David Harden as a new church steward and Pauline as a new rep to circuit meeting. Thank you both for your willingness to serve. The meeting was followed by a delicious bring and share lunch and a good time of fellowship enjoyed by all.

On Palm Sunday we had Café Church led by Christine Slater and made donkeys, and used clip-clopping coconut shells to good effect in a dramatized reading. On Easter Sunday we were joined by our friends from Appledore and the service was led by Richard Blackwell. We were well supplied with chocolate eggs and Easter nest cakes. On 28th we joined with the Parish church for a united parade service for St George's Day - where the message was 'what are the nasty dragons we need to fight in the world today?' - and that no one is too insignificant to make a difference. Afterwards refreshments were served in our church and the cubs etc. were pleased to help dispose of some of our surplus of chocolate eggs.

Our monthly Café Church continues to be very well attended with a range of

activities and discussions that appeal to all ages and backgrounds. It is lovely to have a number of extra children, grandchildren of members, coming along to these on a regular basis.

We've decided to change the day of our monthly charity coffee morning from the 2nd Tuesday to the 2nd Monday of the month, at 10am. This is to avoid clashing with the same day as another village coffee & chat event, and to provide the opportunity for people to meet together in a village that does not have many amenities. All are welcome, if you're passing or fancy a day out!

Those of you who may have driven through the village recently will have seen a large number of new houses are being built on both sides of the road. Once they start being lived in, this will give us another opportunity to leaflet and invite people to join us. We have also renewed our ecumenical working with the Parish church, deciding that we will hold a united Harvest Festival at our church in October as well as a united service at the Anglican church on Remembrance Sunday.

Wye Paul Burnham

The present building of Wye Methodist Church is 150 years old in 2019, and the anniversary of the laying of its foundation stone will be celebrated with a service at 4 p.m. on Sunday, 9th June when we look forward to being joined by friends from other churches. We shall be singing the hymn which accompanied the initial stonelaying. This was Hymn 620 in *Wesley's Hymns with supplement*, entitled *Christ the Foundation*. The first verse reads:

Behold the sure foundation stone
Which God in Sion lays,
To build our heavenly hopes upon
And His eternal praise.

We shall thus be reminded of the need to look forward to 'the City that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God' (Hebrews 11, 10). We propose a further reminder of the foundations of our faith as we follow the studies in Paul's Letter to the Colossians chosen for the Connexional Bible Month. These studies will be on the other Sundays in June, during our 4 p.m. Tea Services, at which you are also warmly invited to join us. On the Sundays in June there also will be the opportunity to view a celebratory exhibition entitled 'The Wesleys in Kent'. It is hoped that the booklet on the history of Methodism in Wye being published by the Wye Historical Society will also be available.

Grace Court Val Redding

Residents and Live at Home members enjoyed a seasonal Easter afternoon tea - with a definite chocolate theme. During the summer months there is a varied social calendar, this includes seated exercise and a lunch club. For details and newsletter contact either Emma or Sasha (details below).

Currently our Sunday services are held monthly. We are grateful for the support of our circuit friends and Molly for our lovely music. This is a special time for those able to attend.

MHA Live at Home Scheme Folkestone

Since the last Circuit newsletter went to print the Live at Home Scheme has continued to grow, we have welcomed new members and volunteers and have new groups meeting regularly. Live at Home now offers a weekly seated exercise class on Thursdays facilitated by Jane Mackenzie; a qualified, local instructor – using resistance bands to work the heart and lungs, weights to improve stamina and strength and trigger point balls to improve circulation, it is well documented that exercise also has a positive impact on mental health. An out to lunch group meet on the first and third Tuesday of each month at various locations in and around Folkestone to enjoy good food and good company; Friday Club continues to meet at Grace Court every Friday where a 12 week program of events is compiled with members and Sasha the Co-ordinator; they enjoy monthly lunches, games and craft afternoons, trips out and much more. New members are always welcome - there is no membership fee. We also offer transport to groups where possible for a small donation. If you would like to join in any of the groups or know someone that might benefit from joining us please call me or Sasha on our new landline number 01303 258723 for more information.

Best wishes

Emma

Folkestone Rainbow Centre Mary Blanch

At our March Church Liaison Officers' meeting the new Warehouse/Foodbank Manager, Sam Humberstone, told us of the continuing need for food within our district. There are 90 agencies issuing vouchers, which provide 3 days' worth of emergency provisions, and in the Jan/Feb period this year there was a three-fold demand, compared with the same period last year. 283 adults and 160 children had received help, 80% of which was due to Universal Credit. She reported on 10 tons of stock in the warehouse with over 2,000 people being fed in the last year! Prayers had been answered when facilities enabled this work to be extended out to Lydd.

We continue to work towards obtaining help with the mental needs of our clients and a further discussion took place around holiday hunger among children.

The Walk of the Kings raised over £3,000 and a Disco over £5,000. We await the

Back to index

results of the Knit-in and the Count Your Blessings challenge and our continuing thanks go to all who support our work in so many ways.

As I write this, our CEO, Ali Chambers, is about to embark on her latest walk, this time around the Isle of Wight, all 106 kms, along with 3 friends, with the aim of raising £2,000.

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

The Monday Club (formerly The Ladies' Club)

We are a small but friendly group of both men and women and are always pleased to welcome new members. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at 7.30pm at Cade Road church. We aim to provide an interesting speaker, followed by refreshments. So far this season we have enjoyed a variety of speakers including a talk on cheese, a very interesting evening on the subject of tracing family trees and a session learning to make greetings cards.

On 27th June a trip to Merriments Gardens on the Kent and East Sussex border has been arranged. The price of £25 includes coach fare and a cream tea as well as the visit to the beautiful gardens. Anyone is very welcome to join us. If you are interested in joining us for our meetings, or coming along on our trip, contact me for more details.

Rosemary Hayward Tel: 01233 628536 Email: rm.hayward@talktalk.net

Bible Month

In June across the UK Methodist church we are all being invited to focus on one book of the Bible – this year the chosen book being Colossians. A magazine of Bible notes, suggestions for discussion and worship ideas has already been sent out well in advance to all our preachers, and on Saturday 23rd March a number of our own preachers and some from other circuits met at Cade Road to watch the 'live streaming' of talks on Colossians given by the Biblical scholar Prof. James Dunn, who wrote this year's material. We were able to interact and send our questions in to be answered at the session, which was being held in Salisbury (we even spotted our friend Philip Luscombe in the audience there!). It was an interesting and informative event.

It is hoped that preachers and churches will want to engage with this initiative so that there is continuity across 4 weeks of June (skipping a week for Pentecost) and we all get a deeper look at this one book. There are some spare copies of the magazine available to anyone else who is interested – if you run a discussion group, bible study, house group or just want to learn more about Colossians for your own interest – contact Lisa for a copy.

MHA

After 13 years I have stepped down as the MHA representative for the Ashford section of the South Kent Circuit. I would like to thank everyone who has supported me in this role. Mr. Noel Grabham of Headcorn has agreed to take over as the new representative and I am grateful to him for doing so. Please continue to support MHA. The official MHA Sunday set for this year is on 9th June, but the circuit is organising a circuit event for September – look out for further details.

Elva Bains

MHA Sunday & Donations

Information has been sent to all churches along with the magazine 'Full of years'. The theme this year is 'One Sunday', with a focus on those living with dementia. If anyone wishes to make a donation to the valuable work of MHA I will be pleased to receive your donations at any time. Funds raised in this way provide valuable life-enhancing services such as chaplaincy, music therapy and support through our Live at Home schemes.

Elizabeth Ellis

South Kent Methodist Circuit

Farewell Service for Deacon Carys

Sunday 28th July 6pm

at Lyminge Methodist Church CT18 8JA

Please come along to celebrate and give thanks for Carys' ministry in our circuit & wish her well in her new appointment!

**(Donations of refreshments
for after the service are welcome)**

Dates for your Diary

Tues 11th June – **Circuit Finance meeting** for church treasurers – Cade Road, 7.30pm

Sun 7th July – **District Farewell service for Rev. John Hellyer** at Redhill

Weds 10th July – **Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Meeting** – Rhodes Minnis 7.30pm

Sat 27th July – **Circuit outdoor Taize service** – details TBC

Sun 28th July – **Circuit Farewell Service for Deacon Carys Woodley** – Lyminge, 6pm
(all churches are invited to contribute refreshments for after the service)

Advance notices:

15th September – **Circuit Service** on this Sunday morning (no other services will be planned)

18th September – **Circuit Meeting** - 7 for 7.30 at Folkestone (Sandgate Road not St Andrew's)

20th October – **Think Mission Sunday** – start thinking now about how your church might mark this!



Pentecost

*Praying persistently must have been the trigger
Expecting something big, they got something bigger
Nine in the morning winds roared, fires blazed
The disciples babbled as men who were crazed
Each heard his own language and stood amazed
Convicted by Peter's sermon, their minds were awoken
Over three thousand found their proud hearts broken
Spirit of truth, conviction and fire
Testified that Jesus really was the Messiah.*

©Harry Hunter online

Thinking about Marriage and Relationships

(Most of this material is taken from resources provided here: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/marriage-and-relationships-2018/a-model-statement-on-living-with-contradictory-convictions/>)

Diversity of views

Within the Church, there is a diversity of views on sexual orientation. A few days before the 1993 resolutions were adopted, the then President of the Conference summarised the range of views held within the Church in these words:

“For some it seems clear, on the basis of biblical teaching, that intimate sexual practices between persons of the same sex are forbidden ... for others it seems equally clear that the biblical doctrines of creation and grace, and modern insights into the nature of sexuality, call for an acceptance of such practices when they occur in the context of deeply committed relationships of love.” (Methodist Recorder, 17 June 1993).

Reflect

Some people feel that the debate on human sexuality and same-sex marriage is the wrong focus and receives too much attention.

Some people feel that this debate is a necessary focus because it concerns biblical witness.

Some people feel that this debate is a necessary focus because it is a matter of God’s unbounded grace and that this is an issue of justice.

A model statement on Living with Contradictory Convictions

(Prepared by the Methodist Church’s Marriage and Relationships Task Group)

“We continue to believe that God has been revealed in Jesus Christ, accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, and live in communion with God and in the power of the Holy Spirit. We cherish our place within Christ’s Church recognising that it is Christ alone who chooses, calls and confirms us as members of His church, the body of Christ.

Whilst we may not all agree about everything, we recognise the importance of the truths which bind us together as well as the issues which currently divide us.

Therefore, we resolve:

To engage with each other openly, honestly, prayerfully and graciously

To treat each other with respect and dignity, recognising the sincerity of the faith of those who may see things differently

To seek to learn from one another as we travel together as fellow pilgrims

To renounce all language and behaviours that attempt to coerce others to change their views or beliefs

To seek, as far as conscience allows, to preserve the fellowship of Christ’s Church

To unite under the authority of scripture as we seek live as authentic Christian disciples in our own generation”

Being biblical

The biblical passages that apparently speak directly about same-sex activity are:

Leviticus 18:22 (NRSV):

²² *You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.*

Leviticus 20:13 (NRSV):

¹³ *If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them.*

Genesis 19 (refers to gang rape and inhospitality to strangers)

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (NRSV):

⁹ *Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, ¹⁰ thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.*

1 Timothy 1:10

Romans 1:26-27: One perspective would be that idolatry, promiscuity and shrine prostitution are what Paul is addressing in Romans 1, not same-sex relationships between faithful and committed partners.

Different commentators respond to these differently

Some argue that these texts are speaking about sexual activity between two men or two women and therefore relate to activity today. If these texts are clear, then same-sex sexual activity is condemned.

Others argue that these texts need to be understood in the very different context in which they were written. For example, Genesis 19 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 are not referring to mutually loving same-sex relationships, but are challenging the ways in which sex was used as a way of exerting power over people, or even as part of a pagan religious ritual. The passages were challenging any circumstances where sex happens without love, or without consent.

These two perspectives are developed further in the table below and are presented as a dialogue

Exegesis and hermeneutics are two essential tools for understanding the Bible. Exegesis is a critical explanation of the written text: for example, looking at the genre, structure and meaning of its words and phrases, sentences and paragraphs and seeking to describe and reflect on them. Hermeneutics refers to theories of interpretation, i.e. how we understand and make meaning from the Bible.

In 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, Paul writes: “Women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”

“It’s cultural” we say. But, if that’s the case, why is the issue of the role of women regarded as ‘cultural’ by so many, while homosexuality isn’t?

Back to index

Commentator 1	Commentator 2
These texts are speaking about sexual activity between two men or two women and therefore relate to activity today. If these texts are clear, then same-sex sexual activity is condemned.	These texts need to be understood in the very different context in which they were written (e.g. Genesis 19 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 are not referring to mutually loving same-sex relationships, but are challenging the ways in which sex was used as a way of exerting power over people, or even as part of a pagan religious ritual. The passages were challenging any circumstances where sex happens without love or without consent).
Jesus affirms heterosexual, monogamous marriage, though as far as we know he did not marry.	Jesus is silent regarding any same-sex sexual activity.
Out of all the apparently specific Bible references to homosexuality, everyone is negative regarding its practice.	There are many other things prohibited within the Old Testament that we do not think of as problematic today. Examples include eating certain animals (Deuteronomy 14:3-5), or charging interest on loans, (Deuteronomy 23:19).
A discomfort with homosexuality resurfaces in the new covenant (New Testament) and is articulated in three new separate references. While the New Testament makes it clear that the ritual requirements of the law are now superseded in Christ (Acts 10:9 – 15), the moral law remains intact and in fact is reiterated forcibly.	The same-sex activity that would have been known in the time of the New Testament Church was embedded in Roman and Greek culture and was often sex between men and young boys, or with temple prostitutes and therefore idolatrous. Loving, stable relationships between two people of the same sex were not known (or at least not acknowledged) and therefore cannot be condemned by these texts. And because the context of life in the world was so different when these texts were written, these texts do not speak authoritatively for today about same-sex relationships.

Questions:

How do you respond to the different ways of reading these texts?

How do you relate to people who read them differently to you?

Marriage

Biblical texts that speak directly about marriage:

Genesis 1:27 and 2:24:

²⁷ *So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

²⁴ *Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.*

Matthew 19: 4 – 6: (Jesus is responding to a question about divorce)

<p>God created male and female to live in union with one another, designed to complement each other and to procreate. God blesses such unions which have a divine origin.</p>	<p>God blesses loving stable relationships and these verses do not preclude the possibility of God’s blessing on a same-sex, faithful and committed relationship.</p> <p>God celebrates loving partnerships of all kinds. Jesus demonstrates a radical inclusivity for all people, particularly those who might be considered outsiders. For example, the Samaritan woman at the well, tax collectors, the disabled and infirm. This is the spirit of Jesus’ teaching and should be understood in context. In our time we need to ask ourselves what radical inclusivity might look like. Many believe this will include the marriage of loving couples in same-sex relationships in our churches.</p>
<p>The Bible affirms celibacy as a calling to be celebrated (1 Corinthians 7)</p>	<p>This is true for all people and should not be imposed on those in same-sex relationships.</p>

Being theological

As well as thinking about the specific biblical texts, there are some wider issues within our faith that help us to think about same-sex relationships. We do theology whenever we talk about God (that is literally what theology means – ‘God talk’). So, what is it that the Bible and the teaching of the Church throughout the centuries tell us about being Christian? Again, different commentators point to different aspects of the Christian story.

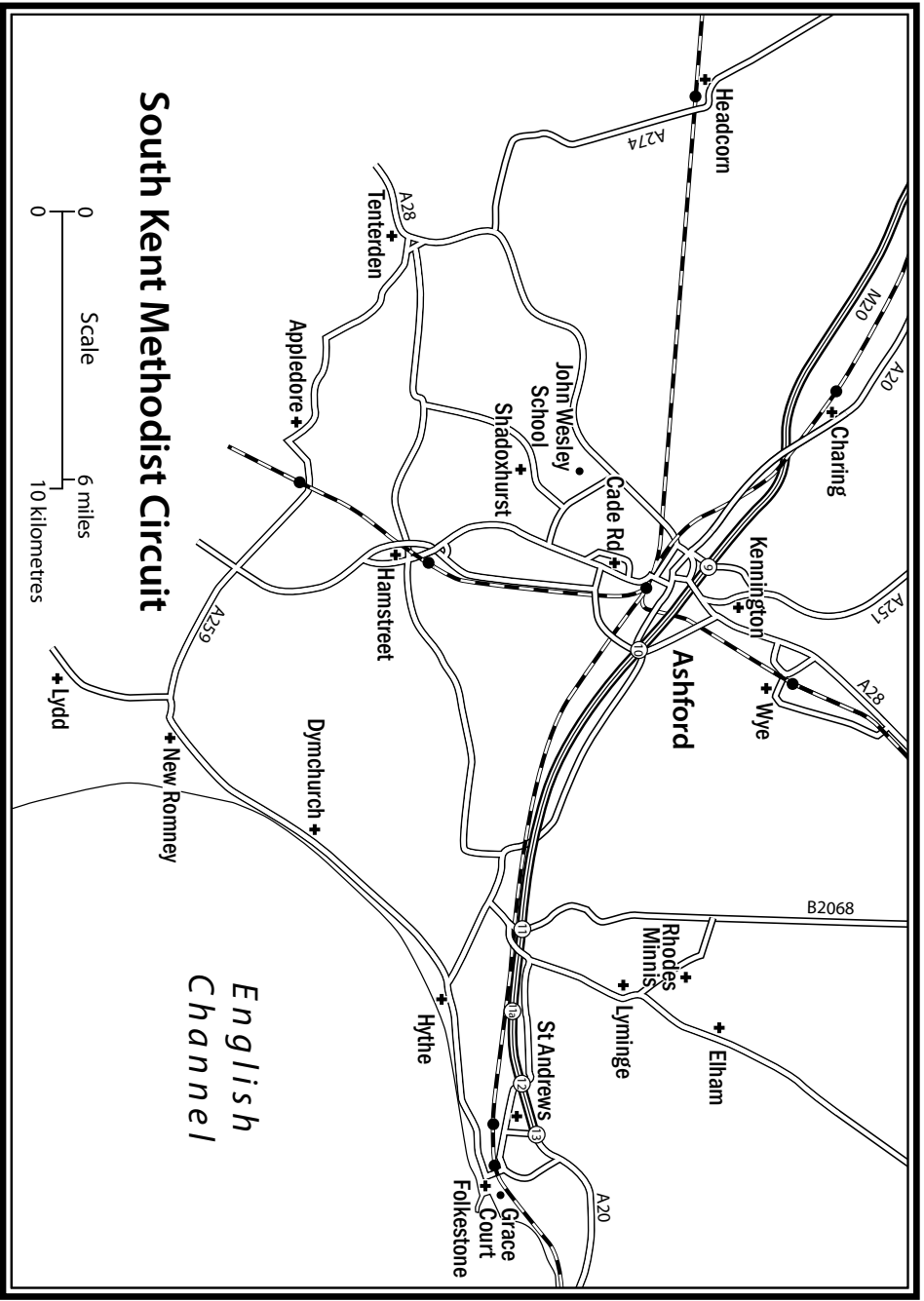
Some theologians think in different ways and might stress the following:

<p>That in creating human beings ‘male and female’ God intends men and women to complement one another by getting married and this is the pattern of Christian life in relationships.</p> <p>That the Church is called to a holiness of living which calls it to live differently from the surrounding culture.</p> <p>That God intends human beings to procreate, while same-sex relationships are, by definition, infertile.</p>	<p>That God calls people to a variety of different ways of living, some to marriage, some single (like Jesus) and others to same-sex relationships. The Bible does not stipulate one set way of living.</p> <p>Jesus has broken down identities such as male and female, slave and free, Jew and Gentile and sexual orientation is like this.</p> <p>That God’s grace is always including people who have been marginalised by society. It is a matter of justice.</p>
--	--

Questions:

What for you are the big themes of the Christian story? What do they say to you about how the Church might understand same-sex relationships?

How do you deal with living in a Church where other people profoundly disagree with you and what can we all do going forward?



South Kent Methodist Circuit

Scale
0 6 miles
0 10 kilometres

English Channel