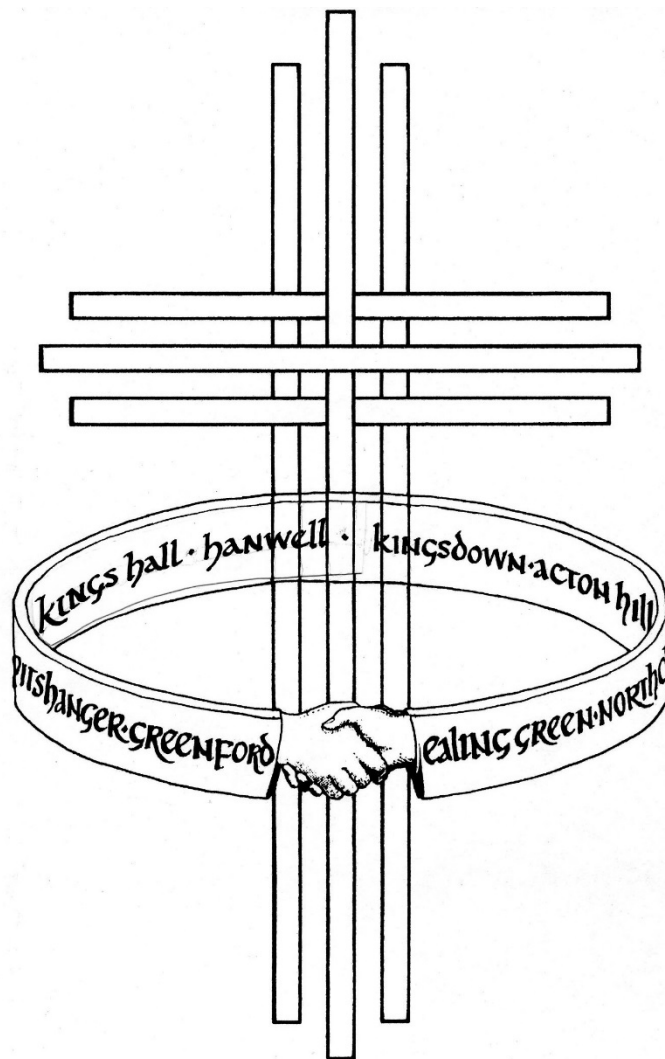


In-touch

No 80

June - August 2017



The magazine for *all* the Ealing Trinity Circuit.

IN THIS ISSUE

	Page
• From the Superintendent	3
• Some People Changes around the Circuit	4
• Dates to Note	4
• Summer Service Series	5
• From the Circuit Meeting	5
• Opening Devotions from the Local Preachers Meeting <i>Rekha Cheriyan, Local Preacher 'on trial'</i>	7
• Southall Christian Schools Worker Project	8
• Why I am a Minister <i>Rev Oluyemisi Jaiyesimi</i>	10
• Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill	12
• London District & World Church Relationship Event <i>Blossom Jackson, Kingsdown</i>	13
• MWiB Quilt Exhibition	14
• MWiB Swanwick Conference <i>Blossom Jackson, Kingsdown</i>	16
• Windows, Scams and God <i>Gerald Barton, Editor</i>	17
• Remember in Summer <i>compiled by Mary Newman, Pitshanger</i>	20
• Circuit Directory Update	24
• Forthcoming Events around the Circuit	24

Circuit website

www.ealingtrinity.org.uk

Front Cover designed by Marion Narain

From the Superintendent

Welcome to the summer edition of In-touch magazine! This edition marks the last with me as your Superintendent Minister, as I will be moving in early August to take up a new role at Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission on the other side of London. The Circuit also says goodbye to Mike Brown, who has done untold work as a steward, and to Randolph Turner, who finishes as our 2016-17 Associate Pastor.

Looking back, some things seem very much the same in our Circuit as they did when I arrived in September of 2009, and others make the Circuit almost unrecognisable. We still pray for God to raise up more people among us to lead and serve, and goodness knows we all pray for God to give us the right words and actions to share our joy in being part of a Christian community with others, to share this gift and grow our churches. We still have hard decisions to face, and sometimes neither the resource nor time to take them as well as we would like; we still get tired and our communities face increasing pressure on jobs, incomes, rent rises, social care pressure, and educational cutbacks.

And yet, the way you have responded to your communities in these years is extraordinary, and has changed who we are as a Circuit: there are the smallest tipping points in a church community, whether the encouraging word in a church meeting or the sacrifice of time made to organise a youth event that suddenly catches a momentum in church. One person can make an utterly fundamental difference in a church, and in a circuit. Suddenly the story being told is one of risk-taking, joyful fellowship, service, and satisfaction. Suddenly God feels present in the work together, and Jesus leaps off the pages of the Gospels and into our lives.

Together in these years I have served here, we have had a number of those 'smallest tipping points.' You have taken decision to stand with each other, to bear with each other, to try new things. You have not been afraid to say when something didn't work and then not to take your bat and go home, but to stick with each other to change and reform it, and to grow in the process. You have had some hard days, and we have gotten through them stronger, together.

I can list the work present now: the MHA Live at Home scheme, the Southall Schools Project, Pitshanger-resourced 'Quiet Zones', church site renovations for mission, Foodbank, Winter Night Shelter, Summer worship series, Bible study and participation of our youth in 3Generate, rebirth of our mission at the King's Hall, the Acton community meal - and behind it, a Circuit Steward and staff team who have tried their level best to get the infrastructure of policy and planning to support your ideas.

These things are all wonderful, and we have grown in our faith through them. But in the end, I am convinced that our willingness to grow in grace and faith, our gentleness with each other and our joy in Christ is what makes all else worthwhile.

You can be the tipping point person in your church, and in our Circuit: it does not take much – so my call would be that you yourself step up and take that intentional

encouraging role, and find your joy together. You yourself may be the person to speak up, to volunteer, to put a better idea into action. Two or three of you working together as Circuit Stewards could entirely bless our Circuit and release a wave of energy to bless not only our churches, but also our communities. Stand with each other, pray for what you hope for, and God will work in us. It may not look like what we expect at the outset, but God will continue to build this Circuit, and your church. And do not let discouragement overcome you: if you come to a bad day, pray, re-group, have a meal together and see what the problem looks like tomorrow. Stay together, choose to trust God and God in each other, and you can in Christ deal with whatever comes.

I have been fond of saying that if we think our goal is to fill our pews we have set our sights too low: I believe we can achieve that goal, but our joy is about more. We are about health care and accommodation and education, about church being the tipping point for our community just at the moment of need. Do not forget we are about advocacy as well as service, and we are always about the worship and discipleship that feeds our faith. It has been a wonderful privilege to serve with you these years, thank you.

Have a good summer, and God bless you richly.

Jen

Some People Changes around the Circuit

The Circuit has a new Circuit Treasurer – Stephen Sears. Stephen was confirmed as the new Treasurer at the Circuit Meeting held on 23rd February. He is a member of Hanwell church and was, until recently also their Church Treasurer.

Cathy Snow has had to stand down as a Circuit Steward for personal reasons. She will continue, however in her role as Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

The MHA Ealing Live at Home scheme has appointed a new full-time Scheme Manager, Trudie Bedeau.

Dates to Note

With the forthcoming changes to Circuit staffing, there are some important dates for you to note. Firstly, the Farewell Service for Rev Dr Jennifer Smith as she departs for to take up the her new role as Circuit Superintendent at Wesley's Chapel will be held on Sunday **23rd July at 6.30pm at Ealing Green**. This will also give us an opportunity to say farewell to Jen's husband Rev Keith Riglin.

Sunday 3rd September at 6.30pm at Acton Hill will see the Welcome Service for Deacon Ramona Samuel. In addition we will also celebrate the installation of Rev Rachel Bending as our new Superintendent Minister, and the installation of Rev Shirlyn Toppin as minister for Acton Hill Church.

Summer Service Series

As in recent years, the Circuit is developing a Summer Service Series. The series will provide services for a 6-week period running from 23rd July to 27th August and is based upon Desmond Tutu's book, "God has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time".

Desmond Tutu was the first black Archbishop of Capetown and rose to world-wide fame during the 1980's for the heroism and grace he showed as an opponent of apartheid. In this book, Tutu shares the spiritual message that guided him through those troubled times. We can look forward some thought-provoking services!

From the Circuit Meeting

The most recent Circuit Meeting was held on 23rd February at Pitshanger.

The meeting confirmed the appointment of Colleen Hicks as a new Circuit Steward and Stephen Sears as the new Circuit Treasurer.

Deacon Lemia Nkwelah reported on progress with the MHA Ealing Live at Home Scheme. The scheme is the fastest growing in the southeast with 700 participants and is attracting funding from Ealing Council. Since the meeting, a new manager, Trudie Bedeau has been appointed and she is expected to re-launch the scheme shortly. The Meeting also received a report of the Southall Schools Project – this is summarised elsewhere in this edition of In-touch.

The recent Summer Service Series had been reviewed by the Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting who approved continuing the pattern with another series this year. The series for 2017 will be based on Desmond Tutu's book 'God has a Dream' and a session was to be arranged for 29th April to start developing the series. Whilst on the subject of worship, the Meeting approved the accreditation of Ade Benson as a fully-qualified Local Preacher – her accreditation service was held on 14th May at Greenford.

The proposed changes to pastoral sections following Rev Jen Smith's appointment to Wesley's Chapel were formally approved to the meeting – full details of the proposals were included in the March – May edition of In-touch. During the discussion Rev Jen Smith outlined the dismay and disappointment that had been

expressed at meetings at Ealing Green and at Acton Hill. Rachel Bending made a similar statement about the situation at Kingsdown where members were generally very anxious that a further period of instability in ministerial leadership and pastoral care would be detrimental to the life of the congregation. However, despite having two ministers stationed away from them in successive years, Acton Hill was generally happy with the new arrangements.

There has been some major progress in the proposed development of King's Hall with the news that the Connexional Property Committee had approved funding of £6.5m towards the projected £22m cost of the scheme. To recap briefly, the proposal is for a joint development between Methodist International Centre (MIC) and the Circuit which will provide church space with accommodation for the Southall Schools Worker inside a hotel and conference facility run by MIC. It is envisaged that completion and opening of the re-built King's Hall would be in 2022. Prior to this, the Connexion would take over trusteeship of the site albeit with some continuing involvement by the Circuit. Ultimately, the Circuit can expect to receive a share of the profits from the operation of the hotel and conference centre. In the meantime, however the Circuit continues to incur maintenance costs for the site, although these should be covered by grant funding.

On behalf of the two King's Hall congregations Rev Rachel Bending reminded the Meeting of the immense pastoral risks that King's Hall members had taken in being displaced from their own building for what will be a total of 8 years. Nevertheless, representatives from both congregations spoke of their members as being in good heart and excited by the proposals. The King's Hall Class Meeting gave thanks for the hospitality of Hanwell Church members, and both congregations were immensely grateful for the Circuit's support of their centenary celebrations last autumn.

The Meeting approved a grant of £5,000 to Northolt for a feasibility study on the redevelopment of Northolt church. Following extensive preliminary discussions members at Northolt have concluded that their buildings need major refurbishment or re-building to accommodate their growing worshipping community and to provide more modern and user-friendly facilities for both congregational and community use.

The annual Circuit accounts for 2015/16 would normally be presented to the Meeting at this time of the year. However, they had not yet been completed because the auditors had requested additional information. The half-year figures for this year and the revised Circuit budget for 2016/17 both showed increased overall deficits compared to the previous year (approximately £141,000 for the full year). These reflect the need to purchase the new manse in Dormers Wells Lane before being able to sell the property in Green Drive, Southall – the eventual sale of the Green Drive property will redress this situation. However, the Circuit's underlying financial position is one of on-going deficits which the Circuit's medium term financial strategy aims to reduce year by year. This is likely to involve some increase in assessments paid by the churches – an increase of 5% was to be

discussed at the Church Treasurers' Meeting on 4th May and full proposals will be put to the next Circuit Meeting.

The next Circuit Meeting will be held on 14th June at Northolt.

Opening Devotions from the Local Preachers Meeting **16th February 2017**

Rekha Cheriyan, Local Preacher 'On Trial'

Philippians 2:13-15

...for it is God who works in you to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky

Two groups of psychology students were given a period to socialise freely. Both groups knew they would be filmed but only one group were told they would be monitored on how frequently they complained. Which group do you think grumbled more? The answer is they both complained as much as each other. Why? Because it is apparently our first and natural response and we barely realise we are doing it.

We can see it in the first pages of the Bible. Adam's response to eating the apple was *"well, I wouldn't have, but the woman you put here with me made me"* and Eve's response was *"well I wouldn't have, but the serpent deceived me"*. Neither accepted responsibility for their choices and instead complained about the others.

In one of our local preacher tutorials with Shirlyn, I said I couldn't understand how the people who Moses led out of Egypt and who had seen so many miracles including walking through the Red Sea which was parted just for them to escape, then spent so much time grumbling and complaining when they were in the desert. And Shirlyn pointed out that actually we are all the same even today and many of us will often be complaining about something or other even while we are on the journey back from church. And that made me think. Especially as these verses came up in one of my morning devotions shortly afterwards.

"Do everything without complaining".

I hear a lot of complaining. At home, at work and yes, even at churches around the circuit. And what's worse is that I am as guilty of it as anyone else. If we're honest, we all are. But it doesn't help. Because complaining is contagious. It invites others to join in with their negative experiences which in turn creates a polluted family, workplace or worship space. And those that find the stress, anxiety or negativity of the complaining too much will often then find somewhere else to be.

Even thinking “*well if I don’t say something, nothing’s ever going to change*” isn’t helpful, because it’s not easy for positive change to come from negative words.

And besides, we often complain when we want to avoid facing, dealing with and/or solving the problem and that then makes us part of the problem because complaining creates a negativity that blunts our ability to receive creative ideas from God.

We need to think about why we complain. Is it to show how we are right and others are wrong? Is it to come away looking good by making others look bad? Is it to win a personal victory?

Complaining often focuses on a past that we can’t change. It keeps us searching for evidence about who did what and why, while hope for a different future slips away.

Of course, because we are called to be salt and light in this world there are times when NOT speaking out against for example injustice, gossip, libel, prejudice, abuse, etc would mean we are failing in our Christian responsibilities. But complaining about it is not doing something about it.

Rather than complaining, our first response should be prayer as that defuses our anger, restores our objectivity and allows us the time to think rationally and to come up with a solution that glorifies God. Often that will be as simple as talking privately with whoever we have the issue. That isn’t easy as it takes courage, humility and wisdom. But, that is God’s way. He wants us to speak in love, with words that are gracious, conciliatory and rooted in solution - not one-upmanship. If we do that, we can shine like stars in the sky.

Southall Christian Schools Worker Project

The Southall Christian Schools Worker Project kicked off in January 2016 with the appointment of **Rev Karen Greenidge** as **Interfaith Educator**. The project is a joint initiative by Ealing Trinity Circuit and the Southall Group of the Church of England and was set up with the following aims:-

- To build links between the Christian churches and secondary schools in Southall.
- To raise the profile of churches amongst Southall schools and youth.
- To provide a Christian voice in Religious Education, Ethics, Personal Social & Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship provision in Southall secondary schools and help schools deliver their Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Values (SMSC) requirements.
- To promote knowledge of, and an encounter with, living Christian faith among young people in Southall.

The project is jointly funded by Ealing Trinity Circuit, the London District and the All Saints Educational Trust. The Southall Group of the Church of England provides support 'in kind' with office space and materials.

The initial months were inevitably slow as Karen began the work of building relationships with local churches, schools and, in particular the Southall Faith Forum, a group set up in 2012 to improve and develop interfaith relations within Southall. In addition Karen has attended meetings of Ealing's Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) and since November has been a member of this Council. This initial 'spadework' developing relationships has borne good fruit as Karen's vision for the project has itself developed as a result.

One of Karen's objectives has been to set up '**Youth Interfaith Forums**' within schools. The idea is to give school students safe opportunities to express their faith, or non-faith and their cultural backgrounds in discussions of different perspectives on belief systems and moral, ethical and social issues. One thing that has become clear during the year is that the project needs to embrace not just questions of religious faith, but also other belief systems such as atheism and humanism as well. To help plan and organise these Forums, Karen has set up an interfaith team called '**In the Mix**' which is made up of four people from Southall representing the Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh faiths. So far the group has approved workshops on 'Religion and the Media', 'What is God like?', 'Where is my life going?' and 'Prayer'. These will be launched at Featherstone and Villiers High Schools during this year.

During the year Karen arranged for several schools to visit local churches. In the summer she arranged three visits by Year 7 pupils from **Featherstone High School** to St John's Church, Southall. The visits included practical activities to help the pupils gain an understanding of how Christians worship, what priests do, what happens at baptism and at Holy Communion and the function of the Bible. Also in the summer, a total of over 100 pupils from **Villiers High School** visited St George's Church, Southall. Taking the link with Villiers further, Karen has worked with their Religious Education department to create lessons and workshop plans for Year 10 pupils. She delivered these in November and December. In September she was invited to become one of the school's governors and is now responsible for their Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Values (SMCS), Personal Social & Health Education (PHSE) and British Values curriculums.

In a very encouraging development, Karen has been working with an Islamic school, the **Aysha Siddiqah Girls School**. She was invited to take an assembly at the school on the subject of Advent during December and followed this with a visit for pupils from the school to St George's Church. In addition, the school has asked Karen to deliver some lessons during 2017 on Christianity to Year 10 and 11 pupils for their GCSE exams. It is very unusual for a Christian minister to be invited to give lessons at an Islamic school and demonstrates the good relationship that Karen is building with the school.

Although the project is primarily aimed at secondary schools, Karen has also worked with **Dairy Meadows Primary School** where she has assisted the Religious Education Co-ordinator to set up a Faith Forum for the children. This has involved assisting the RE Co-ordinator with workshop ideas, skills development and how to develop links with local faith communities. This support has been highly appreciated – as the Co-ordinator commented, “Karen is a very important link for me as lots of the children from Dairy Meadow go to some of the high schools Karen works at. Her experience and knowledge of teaching RE has enabled me to trial and adapt some of these at Dairy Meadow School, as often RE is not given the importance it needs in the primary curriculum.”

Karen has also developed links with Northolt High School, where she participated in the ‘Quiet Zones’ when they were taken to the school, and Twyford and William Perkin Church of England Schools. In addition, she participated in a visit by Charterhouse School as part of their interfaith religious studies, and was involved in a visit by Prince Charles to St John’s Church to see how churches can be used to support interfaith projects.

During 2017 Karen aims to develop relationships with Dormers Wells High School and also the Guru Nanak Sikh Academy in Hayes as well as getting the Youth Interfaith Forums up and running in high schools in Southall, introducing ‘Quiet Zones’ to schools and providing training for leaders and volunteers from our Circuit and from the local Anglican Deanery (the nearest Anglican equivalent to a Methodist circuit) on how to engage effectively with secondary schools.

All in all, the first year of the project has been successful and very encouraging.

This article is a summary of the annual report on the project submitted by Karen to the Circuit Meeting on 23rd February 2017 – Editor.

Why I am a Minister

Rev Oluyemisi Jaiyesimi

Let’s start from the very beginning.....

The very beginning was on 9th July 1892, the day a small band of Wesleyan missionaries and workers left Lagos in Nigeria and landed the same evening at Ikorodu. They all put up in Balogun Jaiyesimi’s compound. The next day at the first Christian service Rev J.H.Samuel, later Adegboyega Edun preached the sermon which was based on Luke Ch 19 v 9 “This day has salvation come to this house.” The seed sown that day led to my grandfather Albert Adekoua Jaiyesimi to become a Christian, although this did not happen until the start of the next century. Albert was the son of Balogun Jaiyesimi, a military commander who had led the band of missionaries from Lagos.

Ultimately the Christian faith was passed on to my father Afolabi Jaiyesimi who, during his days as a law student in the UK took me to Sunday school at the local Methodist Church in Stoke Newington, close to Clossold Road where we then lived.

Flash forward to 1968 in Nigeria; I was invited to the Foursquare Gospel Church and it was there that I came to fully understand the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ, that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus. Consequently, I surrendered my life to Jesus as Saviour and Lord. The seed sown in 1892 had fully blossomed, producing another seed – a desire planted in my heart by Jesus to preach the same Gospel that had changed my life. Right from that time, I had the desire to be a minister, to proclaim the Good News to the multitudes.

A couple of years later, in 1970 I had the opportunity to preach my first sermon during a school assembly at my high school, the Methodist Boys' High School in Lagos. The title of the sermon was "Who is a Christian?" It earned me the nickname "Rev" from my mates.

While in high school I had a desire to be a teacher and before that, a desire to be a lawyer like my father. I did eventually become a teacher, but the desire to become a minister still persisted. Eventually I commenced training as a local preacher. At some point, my presbyter asked me if I would want to be a minister. My response was a definite 'yes'. However, I also said that I still wanted to teach. He then said that with the "Tent-making" scheme the Methodist Church in Nigeria was offering, like Paul the tent-maker and minister I could be both a minister and a teacher. So, in 1982 having become a fully accredited local preacher I commenced my training to become a minister in the Methodist Church at Immanuel College of Theology in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Way back since 1968, I had wanted a wide platform to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ to as many people as I can, in the ways that I can, in all the places that I can, by all the means that I can, for as long as I can; and being a minister, I can.

Why am I a minister? That's why - to be able to proclaim through word, sacrament and service the Good News of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and to do this in the power of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father who has and continues to provide all I need.

Why am I a minister? The word minister means 'servant'. I am a minister because Jesus graciously and mercifully chose me long before I was born and consequently ordained me to serve in His vineyard; to serve the Word, the Good News of love, peace and joy to people; to serve the bread and wine in remembrance of His life so lovingly given for us; to serve the present age as a preacher, teacher, counsellor, helper, guide, encourager and in all other possible ways I can and to do this by the grace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

As a minister I am privileged to serve the Word so I end, serving you the Word that has meant so much to me. "God so loved you, the He gave you His very best, His

only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, that if you believe in Him – wholly lean on Him – you will not perish but have a life that continues for ever, the very life of God, a life full of love, enabling and ennobling.” (John 3:16 amplified by Yemi).

Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill Church

The concert series grows from strength to strength thanks to our new website (we are now fully booked for the 2017-18 season with some very exciting artistes). This season’s concerts included Richard Boothby and Dr Sam Stadlen playing bass viol duos on April 2nd – quite a rarity and much enjoyed by the audience. The programme comprised a variety of music from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The high point for most was the Christopher Simpson variations on a ground, permitting the players to exhibit astounding feats of virtuosity.

On June 4th we welcome concert pianist Jayson Gillham from Australia for the first time, and then on June 18th in June we will have another rare concert, that of viola solos played by Arun Menon. The final concert of the 2016-17 season will be on July 2nd when we welcome the Passepartout Piano Duo of Alexandria Zlătior and Nathan Tinker. The Duo, formed in 2011 presents a variety of works, ranging from classical to modern, both original compositions and transcriptions, also performing jazz and popular tunes.

Please come and enjoy a moment of tranquil relaxation whilst supporting this outreach programme as part of our music ministry at Acton Hill Church.

Concert time 4.00pm - 5.00pm. Programme £6.00, £5.00 concessions, £2.00 children. Further information at www.classicalconcerts-acton.com or www.actonhillurc.org.com.

In Busy Days of Noise and Action.....

We read in the Gospel, Lord,
that you went away to lonely places to pray.
In my busy days of noise and action,
remind me of my need
for time alone
and for peace and quiet
and silence within.

Be with me now
as I pause for a few moments in quietness.

Nicholas Hutchinson

London District & World Church Relationship Event

5th April, Central Hall Westminster

Blossom Jackson, Kingsdown

On 5th April, along with other invited Circuit representatives including ministers and lay workers, I attended the reception given for Bishop Juan Alberto Cardona, Bishop of the Colombian Methodist Church and Yuleida Alvarez, Director of the Clinton Rabb Clinic in Brisas Del Mar. The event was chaired by Rev. Nigel Cowgill, Joint District Chair, with responsibilities for Authorised Ministries Commission.

After refreshments, both Bishop Cardona and Yuleida Alvarez spoke about their work in Columbia, a country that has suffered immense travesties of justice during 30 years of civil war and more recently from the landslide that claimed the lives of hundreds of people. The interpreter for both presentations was Sandra Lopez-World Church Partnership Coordinator for Latin America & the Caribbean. Bishop Cardona also told us about the ongoing work of reconciliation and reconstruction led by the Ecumenical Churches and the respect and trust afforded them by the opposing factions - the Columbian government and the drug barons and their followers.

I was shocked to learn of the grossly disproportionate amount of money that has been spent on arms in that small country by both the government and the drug barons. At the same time, the vast majority of people have been deprived of education, health and other vital facilities. We also learnt that the church had consulted not only South Africa, but also Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to learn how they have been able to promote reconciliation in preparation for similar programmes in Columbia.

Yuleida Alvarez told us of the work of the Clinton Rabb Clinic and their hard work to eliminate disease and provide essential health care, such as immunisation, antenatal care, elimination of infant mortality, health checks and much more. It was evident that a great fight remains in Colombia for reforms not dissimilar to those required to tackle the 'Five Giants' identified by William Beveridge in his wartime report on welfare reform for the British government. Reforms are needed to eliminate squalor, ignorance, want, idleness, and disease! So, it was good news to hear of the decision that our World Church Department is to finance Yuleida Alvarez for leadership training to further the advancement of health care in her community.

Some of you might recall that in 2012 I was privileged to accompany Rev Tom Quenet as representatives to the Methodist Conference for the Americas & the Caribbean held in the Turks & Caicos Islands that year. We heard first-hand about the activities of the Methodist Church in that region, and were even able to lead morning devotions on one of the conference days! So, it was pleasing to talk with some of the ministers who had once served in this region who were sitting at my table. We can but hope that the good work currently being done by the churches in Colombia continues.

MWiB Quilt Exhibition

During 28 – 29th April Ealing Green hosted an exhibition on behalf of MWiB of quilt artworks by Jackie Smith. Here are a few images of some of the artworks presented. During the afternoon of the first day, Jackie led a Bible Study based on one of the artworks, “Living Waters”, shown below.



Detail of
'Living Waters'

'Living Waters' – the basis for the Bible Study



Creation 1

In the beginning – God –
In the beginning was God
In the beginning is God
You were there – You are here.
Your hand
Your word.
Your breath.

Spinning, whirling, revolving.
And your creation came into being,
And your creation comes into being.

In the beginning was then.
In the beginning is now.
In the beginning will be –
Evolving

Revelation 1



In the middle of the journey of our life,
I found myself in a dark wood,
The right road was lost.

Ah, how hard it is to tell
The nature of that wood,
Savage, dense and rough –

The very thought of it renews my fear!”

Dante: The Divine Comedy

I'll take the hand of those who don't
know the way, who can't see where
they are going. I will turn the darkness
into light before them and make the
rough places smooth

Isaiah 42:16

Broken Church – Broken God?

Based on the ruin of a hospital founded in the 1250's by Abbot Hugh of Northwold, what was it about this ruin that inspired Jackie? “In all its sad crumbling state there was a beautiful pure white rose growing through the shattered window panel. A building that in the past had been a place of hospitality and healing was showing signs of new life and I felt, resurrection.

“As with a seed there is need for death before that new growth, and before resurrection itself, can take place.

“Broken church – maybe,
but Broken God? Never!”



Photographs: Gerald Barton

MWiB Swanwick Conference

31st March - 2nd April 2017



Blossom Jackson, Kingsdown

The Annual MWiB Conference held at Swanwick, did not fail to deliver as over 200 delegates, would, I feel agree! The theme was Welcome!/Willkommen!/Bienvenue! and in this report I aim to highlight some of the most interesting parts of the weekend's activities.

The Keynote Speaker was Bishop Rosemarie Wenner, of the German United Methodist Church. The opening Bible Reading for the morning worship on 1st March was taken from Hebrews: 13 vv1-3- *'Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it....'* (NIV)

Bishop Wenner told us of the work that was being done in Germany by ecumenical groups and the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Angela Merkel. The much talked about welcome of refugees in Germany has been controversial, but she expressed the view that *'this support was not a task, but an enrichment.'* She went on to say how Methodist congregations were engaged in raising funds from the European Methodist Council, the UK and the USA and highlighted the work that was currently being done in one region in Germany that has a population of 6,000 and had welcomed 1,500 refugees! She then focussed on the 'Matthew' movement, which started in the USA during the Donald Trump presidential campaign with its motto: *'I pledge to protect and defend vulnerable people in the name of Christ'*.

I had met Bishop Wenner in Rome at the last European Seminar of the World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women and so I asked her whether Angela Merkel was a Methodist and she responded that she belonged to the Lutheran church. It is strange that in the reports I have seen from Germany on the refugee crisis that I did not see that the Chancellor had been working with the churches.

The workshops which included the work carried out by Touchstone and the use of popular songs as a medium for delivering a message, were illuminating. In the latter, the hit- *'I am only Human'* by the Rag & Bone Man, was an interesting approach, which young people especially would find compelling.

The rest of the programme including Bible study, led by the New World President of the World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women, Alison Judd was captivating as usual.

The Annual Conference is for me an 'Oasis of Calm' that provides refreshment, renewal of acquaintance with friends and an opportunity to meet new ones!

Windows, Scams and God

Gerald Barton, Editor

It is one of the curses of the modern age that anyone with a personal computer or a phone will receive no end of scam e-mails and phone calls all attempting to get hold of personal information for fraudulent purposes, to spread computer viruses around the world or to tell you you've had an accident you somehow can't remember. One of my first tasks when arriving at the Circuit Office is to go through my e-mails to weed out all those with dubious invoices, notifications that banks the Circuit doesn't bank with have suspended our (non-existent) accounts, summonses to, generally courts in the USA etc etc. Then there's the occasional e-mail telling me someone has a large amount of money they need my help to move from one country to another with a cut for me. The best one of those purported to come from Col Gaddafi's daughter - good for a chuckle but nothing else.

Some years ago I put a stop to marketing phone calls at home by joining the Telephone Preference Service. This does not of course stop the illegal scammers. Often, I can tell if a call is likely to be from one of them because the 'caller id' shows as 'Withheld', 'Unavail' or 'International'. Unfortunately, we have some legitimate callers whose numbers show as 'Withheld' so we can't entirely ignore these calls. Usually, it's pretty clear when a call is going to be a scam – 'I'm calling from Windows Technical Department', or 'This is the UK Accident Helpline' etc is a bit of a give-away. On hearing these kinds of openings I generally do one of the following

- Just cut off the call without saying anything beyond an initial 'hello'.
- Put the phone on the table so the caller speaks into empty space for a while.
- Tell the caller it's a scam, that they know it and suggest they get a proper job before cutting off the call if they haven't already done so.

Just recently, however I let one of these calls go on. Incidentally, I strongly recommend that you do not do this. It went rather along these lines.

"Hello, my name is XXX (English name, foreign accent) and I'm calling from Windows Technical Department. Are you the person in control of the computer in your house?"

"What do you want?"

"Your computer has been hacked by a lot of illegal hackers and needs to be checked."

"Where are you calling from?"

"London."

"What address?"

“Victoria St.” Actually, it seems Microsoft does have an office of some description in Victoria St, but I’m not sure what it does there. Anyway...

“I don’t believe you. You are a scam and you know it.”

“No, we’re authorised by Microsoft to give technical support to corporate users.”

“Well, you’ve not been authorised by me.”

“We need to check your computer because it has a lot of illegal hacks and will close down in an hour’s time. Are you in front of your computer?”

“You’re not going anywhere near my computer.”

The conversation went round and around like this for a while which at least had the benefit of stopping the caller trying to scam anyone else. It then started to get bizarre.

“Do you believe in deesis?” He suddenly asked. Deesis, deesis, what on earth was that? Then I twigged, the caller meant did I believe in Jesus. Now what does Jesus have to do with a scam call, other than forgiveness when the scammer repents?

So, I asked, “Are you calling from Microsoft or a religious foundation?”

The caller then went on, “You won’t believe in me because you don’t believe in yourself. If you don’t believe in yourself then you are nothing, you are nothing. You are in a dark tunnel that leads only to death.”

‘Wowee!!’ I thought, we’re deeply into philosophy now.....

“If you won’t believe in me, I will never call you again, ever.” Now, wouldn’t that be nice.....

We then got back onto, “Are you in front of your computer?” and me refusing to let him go anywhere near it. Finally, he said he could prove he knew all about my computer by giving me the Windows Operating System licence number and proceeded to read out a 12 character code which I didn’t write down. After that he cut off the call. In all I spent, or wasted about 16 minutes on this.

Needless to say, my computer is still functioning normally.

This was all really rather bizarre, but shows the lengths some of these scammers will go to try to get you to do what they want. I have a stubborn streak and when I am so minded, I will put up a metaphorical stonewall and continually refuse to do whatever is requested. Normally, of course callers go away as soon as they realise it’s no use talking to me. This one, for some strange reason was different.

As I said earlier, I do not recommend talking to any of these callers – the best policy is simply to hang up as soon as you suspect the call is not genuine. However, here is some general advice about what to do when you get these types of calls or emails.

'Vishing'

A 'vishing' call involves a fraudster making phone calls to a victim, posing as bank staff, the police or other officials, or companies in a position of trust. These calls are made to coerce the victim into:

- sending their money to another account for 'safe keeping' or 'holding'
- withdrawing cash and handing it over to the fraudster for investigation
- giving personal financial information, which can then be used to access the victim's finances.

REMEMBER

- Don't be afraid to terminate the call and say 'no' to requests for information however insistent the caller may be.
- Never share your security details with a third party. It is important to keep your account and security details safe.

If you receive a telephone call and you think something's not right, just hang up. Before calling your Bank or Credit Card Company, make sure the caller has also hung up and you have a clear line – wait for a while first, or ideally use a different phone line, and call them on the number on your card or bank statement.

'Phishing'

This is where people receive e-mails directing them to a website where they are asked to provide confidential, personal or financial information. Whilst these e-mails may appear to come from a legitimate site, they are designed to steal your personal information which can then be used to access your accounts. This is known as 'phishing'.

REMEMBER

If you are suspicious about an email that claims to come from your bank or credit card company, don't open it and certainly do not click on any 'links' in the e-mail – forward it to 'phishing@(your bank)' and then delete it. The finance industry takes these matters very seriously and will investigate suspicious emails sent to them.

Remember in Summer

Compiled by Mary Newman, Pitshanger

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
Psalm 95:1 (NIV)

But you, O Lord, are always my shield from danger; you give me victory and restore my courage.

Psalm 3:3 (Good News Bible)

I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

Revelation 2:19 (NIV)

Don't ever lose hope!
The Lord has a great dream
which, with your help,
he wants to come true.

Message of Pope Francis to young people

Holy means set apart. Not like a set of cutlery that comes out only on Sundays. More like a Swiss army knife – remove a splinter, cut a rope, open a bottle, any time, any where. Whatever the boss needs.

Milton Jones

It's not great faith you need. It's faith in a great God.

Amen

Two Prayers from the Prayer Diary February 2012 of St. Peter's Henfield, St Peter's Woodmancote and St. Giles Shermanbury. They are from "The Book of a Thousand Prayers", compiled by Angela Ashwin.

Dear God
Bless the generations:
The tiny babies,
Fresh from heaven's sunrise.
The growing children
Exploring the bright new world;
The grown ups,
Travelling life's duty road;
The older people,
Enjoying the colours of the setting sun
Where earth's horizon touches heaven.

Father God,
Bless those who love us;
Those who make us a safe home;
Those who provide the things we need.
Bless them with your love.
Those who live too far away to visit,
Bless them with your love.
Those who remember us in their prayers,
Bless them with your love.

Your Prayers Are Needed

Pray for all our church leaders and their families, that they may know God's protection in all areas of their lives.

Pray for those who minister in our Circuit whose roles will be changing this summer and for Jen and her husband as they move away from Ealing.

Pray for strength and courage for those undergoing persecution. Thank God that his grace is sufficient for their needs. Pray that their faith will not fail but that their suffering will draw them closer to Him and increase their faith. Pray for the people who have lost relatives as a result of persecution or who have been injured in their homes or churches.

Pray for the people of Syria who continue to suffer so much. Pray that God will pour out his love and compassion on all who are hungry, hurting and without hope. Pray for those working to help all those affected by this conflict. Pray too that God will give wisdom to international leaders and politicians as they consider the way forward. Pray that a path to lasting peace will be found.

Pray for families whose children or young people have gone missing; for the families of Madeleine McCann and Alice Gross, and for all who have a gap in their heart where a child should be.

Pray for our own Prime Minister and Government that they may be given wisdom in the difficult decisions that lie ahead, and for ourselves that we will know God's peace in our busyness and stress.

Amen

My friend Valerie, who often sends me items that I use in “Remember” recently sent me this: (Valerie and her husband Geoff really put the sentiments of this verse into practice).

One thing only

If there's one good thing I can do, one heart that I can mend,
One teardrop that I can replace with laughter for a friend;
One unsaid word that I can say to take away a wrong,
One little thing that I can do to make a weak faith strong
If there's a kindness I can show, however great or small,
My life will have some meaning – that's what matters most of all.

The (Not So) Good Samaritan

Yesterday, April 26th, I went on a short basic First Aid course run by the British Red Cross. The trainer started by showing us a photo of a man lying out in the open, surrounded by beer cans and apparently asleep or unconscious. We had to say how confident we were to help the man.

There were 10 of us on the course and I was surprised that none of the other 9 had ever come across that situation. The two people who spoke said they would definitely go to the person and, if necessary, give him first aid, regardless of whether he appeared to be drunk or on drugs.

I said that I had come across a similar situation several times. Even in West Ealing I recently saw a person apparently asleep in a shop doorway. On several occasions I have seen people who appeared to be drunk or on drugs near St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington. I had to admit that I had never got close to investigate (though I did ring the police when I saw a man staggering in and out of traffic).

The story of the Good Samaritan is familiar to all of us. Yet I wonder whether you, like me, will have seen a man, or woman, lying in the street, or park, or sheltering in a shop doorway..... and passed by on the other side.

Answered Prayer

I'm sure that many of you will have stories of answered prayer. When it involves prayers for healing being answered some people will say, “Well, how do you prove that the person wouldn't have got better anyway?”

I'd like to tell you about my mum, who when she was in her seventies developed an itchy rash at the back of her head, which went into her neck and the top of her shoulders. It really troubled her and after giving her various kinds of medication her GP referred her to Ealing Hospital. There she was given more pills, potions and shampoo by the skin specialist. Nothing worked.

Years before, I'd been friendly with an elderly Christian lady, Mary Watts, who was very involved with the Anglican London Healing Mission in Dawson Place, Notting Hill. After months of suffering I suggested to Mum that we should go there. Mum had been a nurse and though she was a devout Christian she told me that she believed that God healed through doctors and nurses (which none of us will probably dispute).

It took a lot of persistence on my part for Mum to agree to come with me to the London Healing Mission, where she received prayers and laying on of hands. The next day I asked her how she was. Well, she was no different. Nor the next day or the day after that. However, I can honestly say that after about a week Mum no longer had the irritation in her head and neck and it never came back.

Readings for Summer 2017

God's goodness and love	Psalm 100
Jesus the Real Vine	John 15
God's love and mercy	Titus 3 vv 4-8

And finally, one to make you smile this summer

We mutter and spatter,
We fume and we spurt,
We mumble and grumble;
Our feelings get hurt,
We can't understand things;
Our vision grown dim,
When all that we need is
A moment with Him.

I wish you all a summer filled with blue skies and sunshine – and just enough rain to keep the farmers and gardeners happy!

Circuit Directory Update

Forthcoming Events around the Circuit

[as notified to, or discovered by, the Editor]

June

- 4th Sun 16.00 **Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill**
Jayson Gillham, piano
(£6.00, £5.00 concessions, £2.00 children)
- 8th Thur 19.30 **Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting at Kingsdown**
- 14th Wed 19.30 **Circuit Meeting at Northolt**
- 18th June 16.00 **Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill**
Arun Menon, solo viola
(£6.00, £5.00 concessions, £2.00 children)

July

- 1st Sat 10.00 Kingsdown Book Fair
12.30 *Proceeds to Action for Children*
- 2nd Sun 16.00 **Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill**
Passepartout Piano Duo
(£6.00, £5.00 concessions, £2.00 children)
- 23rd Sun 18.30 **Farewell Service for Rev Dr Jennifer Smith at Ealing Green**

September

- 3rd Sun 18.30 **Welcome and Installation Service at Acton Hill**

Articles for 'In-touch' Issue No 81 (September - November) should be sent by e-mail headed 'In-touch' to the Editor, **Gerald Barton**, or as hard copy to the Circuit Office.

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