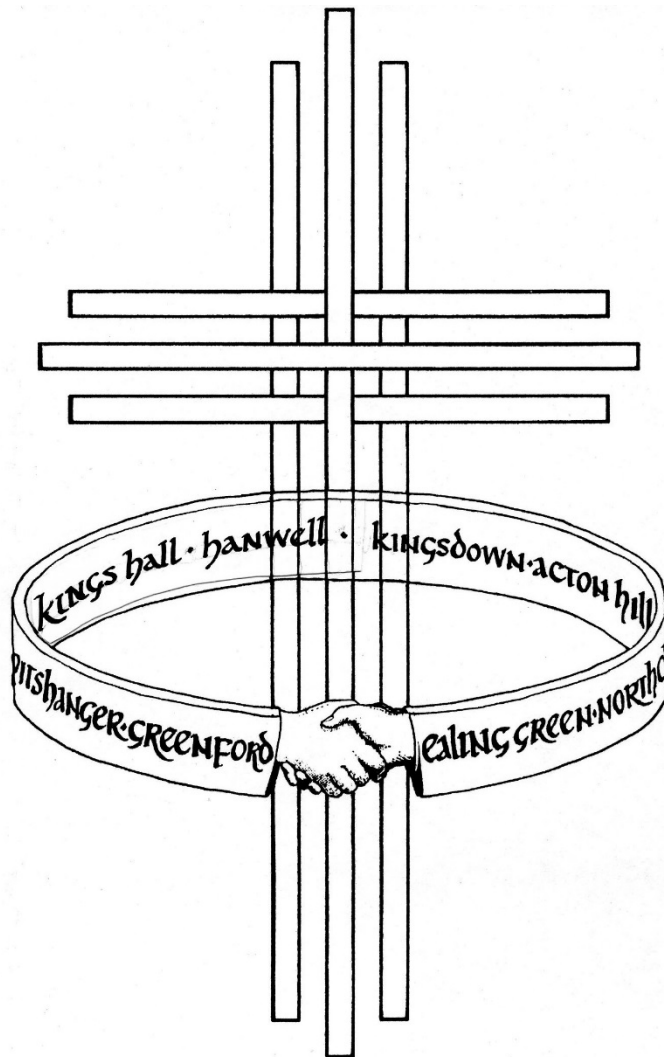


In-touch

No 83

March - May 2018



The magazine for *all* the Ealing Trinity Circuit.

IN THIS ISSUE

	Page
• From the Superintendent	3
• New Associate Pastor for King's Hall	4
• Maundy Thursday Supper and Service	4
• Pentecost Party	4
• Summer Series	4
• 3GENERATE Manifesto for 2018	5
• For Thanks and Prayer	7
• Acton Hill News	8
• Christian Aid <i>Ruby Warne, Kingsdown</i>	9
• How Did I Get Here, Or How I Became a Deacon <i>Deacon Ramona Samuel</i>	11
• If Only..... A Thought on Forgiveness <i>Gerald Barton, Editor</i>	12
• "Crucifix" by Walter Pancheri <i>Gerald Barton, Editor</i>	13
• Ghana Missions <i>Deacon Lemia Nkwelah</i>	14
• Remember in Spring <i>compiled by Mary Newman, Pitshanger</i>	17
• Circuit Directory Update	20
• Forthcoming Events around the Circuit	20

Circuit website: www.ealingtrinity.org.uk

Front Cover designed by Marion Narain

From the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

Recently I became aware that whenever I was out I felt heavy and lopsided. When I investigated I discovered that the cause was not an injury or illness but the fact that my handbag had become full of things I no longer needed to carry around and was now ridiculously heavy! Added to this there were several occasions when I looked in it to find something I needed only to discover that it wasn't there - it didn't fit because the bag was too full.

So I set about the horrible task of emptying and tidying the bag. I always dread having to do this. What happens if I remove something and then need it next time I'm out? Then there's all the things I've forgotten or failed to do. There are times when I find something much loved but never used in the bag and have to struggle to take it out because of its sentimental value. But the end result is nothing short of miraculous - my step is lighter, my back aches less and there's room for the things I need for today because I've removed the stuff I needed weeks ago but not now.

If this is true for my handbag, this build-up of once useful things is even more true in our lives and the lives of our churches and circuit. Ways of working, worshipping or being together that we began because they were needed at that time are retained meaning we have no time or energy for the things we need to have abundant life now. We need to spring clean, to make space, so that we get a spring in our step and give ourselves room for God's life and inspiration to get in. We need to clean out old habits that no longer work so that we have space for the new that will strengthen and reinvigorate us.

This Lent why not take time to spring clean? Take a few minutes each day to consciously **make space for God**. Take time each week to attend the circuit's Lent study sessions on Wednesdays at Action Hill. If you feel you're too busy to stop, think carefully about what you could give up to make the space: could you watch television or listen to the radio a little less? Maybe take less time to do the crossword or on the shopping. **Make space for yourself**: is there something you've been longing to do, maybe a hobby or a visit you never have time for? Again, what could you give up to make it possible? **Make space for others** - spend time with friends but also make time to help others maybe by volunteering to help in the Foodbank or by helping a neighbour in need. And again think carefully about what you could give up to make the space to do it.

You could be amazed at the difference the space could make.

I wish you every blessing as we travel through Lent into Holy Week and Easter

With love and prayers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'R'.

New Associate Pastor for King's Hall (Urdu/Hindi)

In late January the Circuit announced the appointment of a new Associate Pastor to support the King's Hall (Urdu/Hindi-speaking) church, Rev Tasawer Samuel. Tasawer took up his duties at the start of February. In addition to supporting the King's Hall church, Tasawer will also preach around the Circuit so we will all see him from time to time. He will also get involved in the Southall Schools Project working in conjunction with Rev Karen Greenidge, the Interfaith Educator.

Maundy Thursday Supper and Service

The Circuit is organising a special meal and service for Maundy Thursday (29th March) at Kingsdown at 7.00pm for 7.30pm. We will share a hot meal and Holy Communion together. We are looking for people from across the Circuit to help – please contact Rev Rachel Bending if you would like to participate.

Pentecost Party

The Circuit is organising a 'Pentecost Party' at Acton Hill on Sunday 20th May from 4.00pm. The idea is for us to bring us all together to party and worship in a way that enables us to get a feeling for the energy of God. Everyone in the Circuit is invited – you will be receiving individual personal invitations nearer the time. Church representatives will be invited to meet together to discuss and make food for the party together. In addition, musicians from around the Circuit will be invited to join a workshop and to provide worship music on the day.

Summer Series 2018

As in previous years, the Circuit will again be organising a 'Summer Series' of services for use during July and August. The series will be based on the book 'Holy Habits' by Andrew Roberts, a Methodist minister serving as a Discipleship specialist in the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network, which explores what discipleship means in the 21st century. It is hoped that as many people as possible will be involved in developing the series and there will be a meeting led by Rev Rachel Bending to kick things off on Thursday at 8.00pm on 1st March at Kingsdown. A bit later on in May or June a creative arts workshop will be organised so that people can develop materials for use in the series at the same time as having fun together.

Linking to the Summer Series, it is also hoped to run a series of Bible Studies based on 'Holy Habits'.

'Holy Habits' is priced at just £9.99 and is available through Christian Bookshops and on-line Christian Retailers and can also be purchased through Amazon, Blackwells, Waterstones and WHSmith. You can also find out more about 'Holy Habits' by going to www.holyhabits.co.uk.

3GENERATE Manifesto 2018

3Generate is an action-packed and inspiring weekend for children and young people from across the Methodist Church, focussing on fun, faith and friends. The 2017 event took place in November at Southport giving children and young people the opportunity to speak out on a variety of issues that mattered to them. Here is a summary of what was said:

We want a church community that:

- keeps God at the centre
- is not afraid
- always takes action
- is relevant
- is about togetherness
- is an inclusive and safe space
- has children and young people involved in all aspects of its life

A church community that:

Keeps God at the centre:

- Where we do what God asks us to do – love each other.
- Where prayer and engaging with the Bible are central.
- Where sharing our faith stories is encouraged and valued so that we grow closer to God.

Is not afraid:

- To step out in faith and trust God.
- To lead the way on issues of injustice and social action.
- To have difficult conversations on challenging topics.

Always takes action:

- By sharing inspiring stories of action and change.
- By challenging injustice.
- By engaging politically e.g. in the debate around nuclear weapons.
- By praying for and responding to those in need eg supporting Foodbanks.
- By caring for the environment e.g. using less plastics.

Is relevant:

- Where people are equipped to engage with, and respond to, current issues.
- Where worship is engaging.
- Where modern technology is used effectively.
- Where we work towards being environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Is about togetherness

- Where adults value and support young people.
- Where better relationships are built, through conversations and questions, leading to acceptance, kindness, understanding and mutual respect.
- Where we learn about and understand other faiths.

Is an inclusive and safe place:

- Where all are welcomed, respected and accepted.
- Where we celebrate uniqueness and difference.
- Where we can have safe, open-minded conversation.
- Where there is support for those with mental health issues.
- Where we can be still, rest and connect with God.

Has children and young people involved in all aspects of its life:

- Where we are trusted.
- Where there are opportunities for us to lead.
- Where our voice is heard and responded to.

Who is 3Generate for?

3Generate is a weekend planned and shaped by children, young people - and their workers – for children and young people.

If you're aged between 8 and 23, 3Generate is for you!

There are lots of activities and entertainment for you to choose from, largely organised in four separate age streams:

8-11s (school years 4-6)

11-14s (school years 7-9)

14-18s (school years 10-13)

19-23s.

3Generate 2018 will take place from 23rd to 25th November at Pontins, Southport. Booking for the 2018 event will open on 24th April 2018. Details of the 2018 booking procedure will be posted on the Methodist Church website prior to this date – go to:

www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/3generate/how-to-book/

Acton Hill News

Flower Festival

We held our annual flower festival again last June with the theme “The Garden of Eden”. Our award-winning flower artist, Sylvia Jones, organised the event and was joined by her star pupils who made stunning arrangements with both real and artificial flowers. To support the event there were various stalls including one with delicious cakes. The whole event raised over £400.



The Children of Acton Hill

Nativity Play

The children at Acton Hill excelled themselves in a performance of a Nativity play during the carol service on 17th December. They practised very hard learning their lines and with the invaluable assistance of their mothers and Sylvia Murray they costumed up and put on a perfect performance. Bearing in mind two of the children were only three years old, this was indeed a remarkable achievement.

The Three Kings

Galvanised by their Christmas debut, the children re-gathered to perform the narrative of the three kings complete with camels (courtesy of Chris Spring), a glittery star and traditional mime language (for sleeping). David Bowater was a very convincing angry and jealous King Herod!



Do *you* know the names of the kings, their countries of origin and the colour of their cloaks?

Answers: Gaspar, green, India; Balthasar, purple, Egypt; Melchior, gold, Arabia.

(nb Scholars are not unanimous about the origins of the kings)

Gospel Chorale Concert

The Gospel Chorale's concert was a gem and very well attended. Under the expert baton of Josie Moise they sang a wonderful selection of gospel songs and hymns. There was a touching tribute to Mr Clifton Rose Brand, Josie sang "The white rose of Athens" and Trudy "There's a new world called the promised land". Other solos included Sylvia Murray "Somewhere over the rainbow" and Josie "Just a closer walk". Their next concert will be in July—please come and support them.

Cakes for sale!

The enterprising ladies of Acton Hill will be busy bees baking cakes for sale starting in February to help raise funds for the church. Come and satisfy your sweet tooth after the service at noon. Orders taken!

Iris Axon Concert series

In December the early music group *Improviso* charmed us with ensemble and solo music for theorbo, recorder and baroque violin. Their energy and verve was captivating – we hope they will return. In January the young Singaporean pianist Ning Hui See gave a brilliant recital of Scarlatti, Robert Schumann and the rarely performed G minor sonata by Schumann's wife, Clara. At the time of writing we are looking forward to the piano recital by Robert Bridge.

Forthcoming concerts 4.00pm on the first Sunday of the month

March 4th Fatima Lahham – virtuoso recorder
April 15th Karis Stretton - piano
May 6th Helen Karikari, a young Ghanaian soprano,

Christian Aid 2018

Ruby Warne, Kingsdown

Christian Aid Week this year is 13 – 20 May and many of us in the Circuit will be taking part. Christian Aid Sunday throughout the UK is on 13th May and as usual we shall be house-to-house collecting during the following week. Flag Day in the London Area is Saturday 19th May and this year we have the Royal Wedding and Cup Final on the same day! However, it should be possible to collect for 2 hours before the Royal Wedding and 2 hours before the Cup Final.

The 'Circle the City' sponsored walk is on Sunday 20th May when we shall have the opportunity to discover some of London's historic place of worship. It's the 21st anniversary this year, so it's a very special 'Circle the City' this year.

The focus last year was on refugees (over 65 million worldwide) and this year we will focus on displaced persons (over 400 million worldwide). They have been forced to leave their homes, but unlike refugees they remain in their own countries with no guarantee of protection. Although the majority of internally displaced people

make up the majority of people leaving their homes they are often ignored by the international community.

On 25th January I attended the annual London Team Christian Supporters Day and saw most of the resources – posters etc for Christian Aid Week. There are two ‘special’ booklets available, of course to everyone – one for Lent ‘Will you walk with Dimma this Lent?’ and ‘God’s Kingdom is Stronger than Storms’, an 11-day devotional covering Christian Aid Week from 10th – 20th May. Both will be available through your Christian Aid Co-ordinator.

‘Walk into the Wilderness this Lent’ – meet Dimma and Ibrahim and Soni in Nigeria. Will you walk with them this Lent? As we follow Jesus’ journey in Lent let us confront the wilderness in our own world. Let’s walk with our own neighbours like Dimma, Ibrahim and Soni who have been forced to flee their homes. You’ll reflect on the blessings in your life, and you’ll see how your support gives people hope.

‘God’s Kingdom is Stronger than Storms’ – an 11 day devotional for Christian Aid Week with a foreword by Archbishop Justin Welby. This year Christian Aid Week falls within ‘Thy Kingdom Come’, a global ecumenical prayer movement throughout the 11 days between Ascension and Pentecost. The focus is on Haiti, one of the world’s poorest countries and we shall meet Marcelin and Vilna whose home was destroyed by Hurricane Matthew. They have found refuge, security and peace in the new house which Christian Aid’s partner built. Each day we are invited to finish by saying the ‘Kingdom Prayer’:

Holy God,
In your Kingdom
The strong heed the weak,
The rich are transformed by the poor,
The fortunate are welcomed by the homeless.
Your Kingdom is built by those who expect their God to come.
Amen

Christian Aid in 2017

Last year, churches in our Circuit participated in Christian Aid events. The total amount collected by our churches came to £9,803.49.

A message from John Beastall, Ealing Christian Aid Treasurer, “I pass on the thanks of Christian Aid HQ to all involved. Everyone’s efforts are much appreciated.”

How Did I Get Here? Or How I Became a Deacon

Deacon Ramona Samuel

My first recollection of feeling a sense of call to Christian ministry was in my early teens. I had a strong sense that God wanted something from me, or maybe it was that I needed to be wanted by God. In any case, this stayed with me and when I was around 16 or 17 I spoke to my then youth leader about it. I was not prepared for her response which was essentially that I could never be in fulltime ministry as a woman unless I was prepared to remain single and become a missionary. Leadership ministry was out of the question simply because of my gender. I left utterly crushed but with a new sense of purpose and a determination to become a missionary!

By my early 20's I had left that church and was heavily involved in youth ministry, evangelism, and ecumenical work and again felt the pull toward full time ministry. I made the bold decision to leave home to train for ministry at a Bible College called Christ for the Nations in Jamaica, and spent two of the most fulfilling years of my life. In those two years I became even more convinced that God was calling me and so put forward myself for ordination at the end of my studies. After graduation I spent 3 months working with a church plant running Bible studies, youth and children's work, and pastoral care. When I returned to my local church in Antigua I took on the role of youth and children's director and continued for two years.

I moved to the UK in 1996 and found myself working as a lay worker for a Methodist Church in Manchester and later became a local preacher. In the years that followed I had children, went to university and did different types of jobs, but the pull to ordained ministry remained throughout. When I began looking at Methodist ministry, I attended exploration days and felt that the Diaconal Order was closest to what I felt that God was calling me to. My passion and interest was towards evangelism and outreach, particularly among unchurched people and those for whom life has been difficult.

As a Deacon, I feel that it is part of my role to come alongside others; to enable them to find their place in God's world, and to discover more of God in their world. I remain committed to evangelism and mission and in recent years have discovered that creativity is a tool that can be used to engage with others in helping them find their way to God. Being in community with others, accountability, and service, are crucial aspects of the Diaconal Ministry, and helps keep me grounded in my discipleship and calling.

If Only..... A Thought on Forgiveness

Gerald Barton, Editor

Just before Christmas, Rev Lucy Winkett, Rector of St James Piccadilly spoke on the subject of forgiveness on Thought for Day during the BBC Radio 4 'Today' programme. She made a quote which stopped me in my tracks, or, rather sat me up in bed –

“Forgiveness means giving up all hope of a better past”.

That was a thought that set me thinking. At first sight it might seem absurd. The past is, well, the past. But, how many of us have wished that if only I/we/you/he/she/they hadn't done whatever it was? How many of us have felt the twinge of pain or discomfort those thoughts inevitably bring? Those thoughts reflect a forlorn hope that somehow we can make the past better when the past is something none of us can ever hope to change. So, giving up hope of a better past is an essential step on the road to forgiveness – forgiveness for others and ourselves.

Lucy Winkett got the quotation from Marian Partington, someone who knows about hoping for a better past. In 1973 Marian's younger sister Lucy disappeared from a bus stop in Gloucester after visiting a friend. For 20 years Marian had no knowledge of what had happened to her sister. In 1993 Lucy's remains were discovered in the basement of 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester where she had been brutally tortured, raped and murdered by Frederick and Rosemary West.

Whatever else may have happened to me during my life time, nothing as dreadful as that has ever happened to me so I cannot be sure how I would react in that situation. For Marian Partington, the road to forgiving the West's started when she began to understand something of Rosemary West as a human being who had in her own past been abused, abducted and raped. This allowed her to take the first steps towards avoiding demonizing Rosemary West as simply 'evil' and to see her basic humanity, badly damaged though it was.

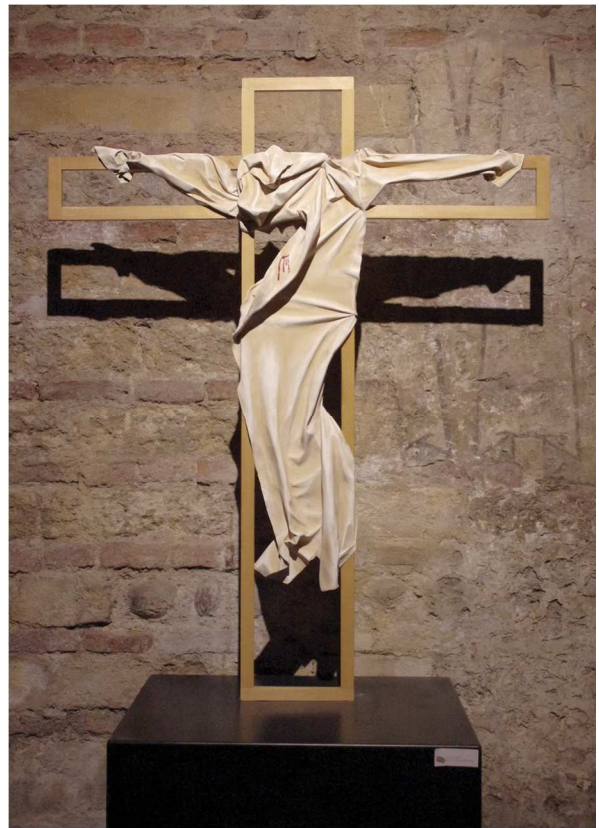
For Marian working towards forgiveness was the most imaginative way of becoming free of the past. However, she felt that it was only something she could 'line yourself up for'; she couldn't just make it happen. Trying to forgive can run counter to our deeper feelings. Maybe the point is that we should not block the process of forgiving, but let it run, allowing our feelings of hurt to gradually diminish, and stop hoping that somehow the past could be made better.

You can read more of Marian Partington's story on the Forgiveness Project website – go to <http://theforgivenessproject.com/stories/marian-partington-england/>

“Crucifix” by Walter Pancheri

Gerald Barton, Editor

Last October we spent a pleasant few days in Verona visiting as much of the city as we could whilst dodging the bits (dubiously) associated with Romeo and Juliet. In the lower church of San Fermo we came across this intriguing crucifix by the Italian sculptor Walter Pancheri (b1962). The form and shape of a crucifix are both there, but Pancheri has omitted all the usual elements – the solid wood, the body, the nails, the crown of thorns etc. Nonetheless, it is still clearly recognizable as a ‘crucifix’.



Pancheri has used only two elements; a frame of lime wood and an acrylic sheet spread over the cruciform shape. The sheet follows the sinuous shape of the crucified body similar in form to the great crucifixes painted by such masters as Cimabue and Giotto. The curvature and lines of the sheet reflect the posture of a crucified body already deprived of life with the head inclined downwards giving it a natural elegance. The only note of colour is the red of the blood that flows from the tear in the cloth in the area corresponding to the side of the body.

The originality of Pancheri’s vision can be seen in the way he subtly emphasizes its underlying theology: the simple wooden frame and the way the cloth is stretched out are sufficient to show this is a representation of Jesus on the cross. However, the sculpture seems to go further: the linen cloth connects Jesus’ death to the burial that followed. Beyond that, the disappearance of the body follows a theological reflection from the early centuries of Christianity: the death of Jesus is a supreme gesture of unconditional love containing within itself the seeds of the totality of His life, both human and divine and reflects the instant when His presence transcended the limitations of space and time for ever.

The ‘dishonour of Golgotha’¹ resulting from the cruelty of the crucifixion becomes paradoxically the highest expression of God’s presence among suffering humanity. Pancheri’s sculpture, by lacking a body evokes the resurrection and contrasts the ferocious cruelty of the cross with the love and the unconditional forgiveness of Jesus that overpowers evil with grace.

Much of this article is a translation of the caption that stands alongside Pancheri’s “Crucifix”.

¹ The ‘Dishonour of Golgotha’ – a quotation from ‘The Fifth of May’, a poem by Alessandro Manzoni (1785 – 1873).

Ghana Missions

Deacon Lemia Nkwela

Deacon Lemia writes about her 'Mission' visit to the Methodist Church in Ghana last October.

On arrival in Ghana, we were welcomed with a hospitality that was above and beyond. We were given a minibus and a driver to take us across the country. The welcome at each station was splendid with amazing food. There is something about the work of Christ as it so often involves eating. There was a lot of eating good food in Ghana. I fell in love.

One of the places that touched me was Takoradi. Here we were received with a full Boys Brigade and Girl Guides honour which we felt we did not deserve. The performance was out of this world. Their brass band played powerfully. The whole welcome performance made us feel at home. The evening service that followed was uplifting. We sang English hymns mainly and their voices were just moving. We sang Ghanaian songs to which we all did some crazy dance moves for Jesus. Why not!

Ghanaians show a life lived in the footsteps of Christ and in deep trust of Him. Ghanaian Methodists show a commitment to do God's work in a way that is prompted only by the Spirit. They are doing some amazing work in their communities which I have not seen even in my own Zimbabwe. They were commissioned to go preach the Word of God to the whole world, to all creation, to all creatures; and they are committed to doing just that.

Jesus, in His ministry consistently taught about the Kingdom of God. His message of hope taught us what we must do in order to enter His Kingdom and He taught us what it was like to be in the Kingdom. My calling is a ministry of service. While it is a fact that it all begins in worship, I am called to take the Gospel into action. It is when I am in action that I personally experience the Kingdom of God. At the end of His ministry Jesus commissioned us (disciples) to go and preach the Gospel, and to heal the sick. The Kingdom of God for me is when we, in the presence of Christ; bind up the broken; heal the sick; welcome the stranger; gather the outcast.

The Ealing Trinity Circuit is already preparing for the summer series. Local Preachers and Worship Leaders are joining together to brainstorm how we can use the book 'Holy Habits'. This book describes the heart of our lives as Christians and it describes how we are shaped by Christ as we follow Him. In this book it says, 'It is in and through mission that we are changed by our encounters with others, for it is in them that we meet the 'otherness' of God. But at the same time, Christian mission cannot be a transforming process if we leave out the Christ part.' (p177)

Sunday worship was vibrant, with one of the churches we visited enjoying over five hundred worshippers twice every Sunday. However, worship does not end on Sunday in Ghana. During the week, the church is at work in the communities. The

Methodist Church in Ghana is not only inward looking and so they have not lost touch with the everyday life of the whole of society. They have not lost touch with the stranger outside of their Methodist community. They are journeying with the broken, binding them up. They are seeking the lost, bringing them home. They are gathering the outcast, showing them all are welcome. The Methodists are in the world, with Christ, touching the hearts of many, transforming their lives, and in the process making more disciples. If the church does not look outside to be the good neighbour; to share the Word and to journey alongside those in need, then we are not church. We all know that God is already there in these dark corners of our communities. He just needs our hands and feet to work in them. The Methodists in Ghana have brought down the walls of the church to meet with the community and to bring the community into church.

I cannot write about all the situations we experienced. We travelled from Accra and drove three quarters of the distance across Ghana to the Northern District. We stopped for two days or so in different towns and cities to drop some donations. We had with us a vast quantity of presents that were needed by these communities. These were donated mainly by the Ghanaian Fellowship in the UK. Other British Methodist congregations including our Circuit contributed to this act of mission. The Northern District Methodist Bishop sent heartfelt thanks for the donation (cheque) we (Ealing Trinity Circuit) gave them. Another group of Methodists working with local communities donated a boat to the Nzulezu Community. This boat will transport the school children to school in the mainland each morning. Nzulezu is an island and these people practically live in water and their homes are built like the piers that we see here in our seaside. That is how their homes are.

We shared our spirituality with them at every stop, we ate lots of food, we worshipped with them, we sang and we danced. As we went along, we were blessed by being in fellowship with them. We mixed with different rich cultures within Ghanaian Methodism which have one thing in common - a deep faith in a God who is alive.

While we were there we met with people with a very deep faith in God, we also met with odd news about others who believe in rituals and taboos and superstition. We met with some heart breaking stories at a place called Rafiki. This is a centre which cares for orphans and children with parents with mental illnesses. At this centre are children who had previously been taken by a group of fishermen under the pretence that they were going to take care of them and send them to school. They were children under the age of sixteen who were instead being used to jump into the sea during commercial fishing to draw nets in cold waters. It turned out that some of them died in the process and their dead bodies were being used as bait. These people stuck their dead bodies around the fishing boats to attract more fish. The community and the Methodist Church, with Christ, intervened and rescued these children. The Chief in the area of Rafiki gave the church ten acres of land and all these children are now under the care of the Methodist Church Ghana.

While we were at Rafiki, we were also introduced to a set of triplets whose mother suddenly passed away forty days after they were born. They were treated as

outcasts because of the death of their mother. According to local beliefs they had caused their mother to die. They were a taboo to the family and so they were starved until the Methodist Church heard about their plight and rescued them. They were three years old when they were rescued, but they could not walk as they were so malnourished. Now they are this bubbling trio blessing others at Rafiki. By welcoming these children into their care, the Methodist Church has welcomed God's presence in their midst. There is a dedicated team of staff taking care of these youngsters who begin to go out into the world when they are ready after reaching the age of 18.

Jesus has taught us to be especially attentive to the poor and the defenceless. What we do to the least of these brothers and sisters we do unto Him (Matthew 25:35-40). We are Christians and our lives are lived like Christ. The Methodist Church in Ghana, with Christ, is working against a disconnectedness from their surrounding neighbourhoods. A church that is not outward looking dies; it goes into decline because it has no chance to be in the world to preach the Gospel and make more disciples. We cannot just serve one another within our churches like we are a members-only club. We are a sign of God's presence in the world. God is already present in this world and by being His hands and feet we bring the Gospel into action, and the Kingdom of God comes to earth as it is in heaven.

And so the Spirit of God is upon the Ghana Methodists, leading them and guiding them to respond to the needs of the communities they are called to serve in; informing them that the Kingdom of God has come. It was a blessing to meet with God in Ghana. It was a blessing to serve in Ghana communities.

Reading Deacon Lemia's article as I was compiling this edition of In-touch, reminded me of a prayer I picked up at a church in Genova whilst on holiday some years ago and included in a past edition of In-touch. It seemed appropriate to repeat the prayer in this edition - Editor.

Christ has no hands,
He has only our hands
To do his work today.

Christ has no feet,
He has only our feet
To go to people today.

Christ has no voice,
He has only our voice
To speak of Him today.

Christ has no strength,
He has only what we can do
To guide people to Him.

We are the only Bible
That the peoples still read.
We are the only gospel
Written in deeds and words

Remember in Spring

Compiled by Mary Newman, Pitshanger

Some Verses to Inspire You this Spring

Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken.

Isaiah 54:10

You will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 4:29

In Jesus, God himself became Emmanuel, the God who walks along us --- in the pots and pans, as St. Teresa used to say.

Pope Francis

Where there are dreams there is joy. Jesus is always present.

Pope Francis

(The above quotes from Pope Francis are taken from a calendar beautifully illustrated by the Carmelite Sisters in Dumbarton.)

When my brother was 7 and I was 4 we were evacuated to a farm in Herefordshire, where we lived for 5 years. There I met a beautiful girl, Priscilla Powell (now Priscilla Scott). She and her family showed me much kindness during those years. Recently she sent me this poem, read at a funeral recently by the vicar in Kington; where she and Ian now live:

A bell's not a bell 'til you ring it,
A song's not a song 'till you sing it,
Love in your heart wasn't put there to stay,
Love isn't love 'til you give it away.

Oscar Hammerstein

Margaret Hunter came across the following dream of the Holy City in an old 'Methodist Recorder': Thank you Margaret.

I must have fallen asleep because I dreamt I was walking the streets of the Holy City and came across its Museum. I went in and a very courteous attendant showed me round. There was some old armour but nothing that had belonged to Alexander or Napoleon – no Pope's ring or even the ink bottle that Martin Luther is said to have thrown at the devil. Wesley's seal and keys weren't there neither the first Minutes of Conference.

Then, I noticed a widow's mite and the feather of a little bird. I saw some swaddling clothes – a hammer and 3 nails – a few thorns – a piece of fishing net and the broken oar of a boat. Then I saw the sponge that had been dipped in vinegar and a few small pieces of silver.

While I was turning over and looking at a common drinking cup which had a very honourable place, I asked the attendant "Have you got the towel and basin among your collection?" "No," he said, "Not here, you see they are still in continuous use".

Then I knew that in my dream I was in Heaven, in the Holy City with all the redeemed.

A Prayer from Brother Roger of Taizé

Agreeing to lose everything for you, O Christ,
In order to take hold of you.
As you have already taken hold of us,
Means abandoning ourselves to the living God.
Centring our life on you, Christ Jesus,
Means daring to choose;
Leaving ourselves behind so as no longer to walk
On two roads at the same time;
Saying no to all that keeps us from following you,
And yes to all that brings us closer to you,
And through you, to those whom you entrust to us.

(From The Prayer Diary, St. Peter's Henfield)

The Suffering and Rejection of Jesus

A couple of years ago Rev. Randolph Turner took the service at Pitshanger. He told of a group of Christians from a wealthy church in America who wanted to get closer to God and experience a little of the suffering and rejection of Jesus. They decided to spend a night sleeping rough and a group of them did just that.

It was a cold night and at about midnight it started to rain. They went to find somewhere to shelter and came across a church that was holding an all-night prayer vigil. They went up the steps and were met by a security guard.

The person who had organised the sleeping rough was a well known pastor but she was looking wet and dishevelled and the night security guard didn't recognise her. He spoke to her and the group politely but firmly. "I'm sorry folks, you can't come in. I've been hired to keep people like you homeless out."

The group turned and left. At that moment they came maybe as close as they would ever come to feeling the suffering and rejection of Jesus.

G.N.F.W.M.Y.

If you were asked what W.W.J.D. means I think most of you would know; “What would Jesus do?”

On 21st August 2017 in ‘Word For Today’ the reading for that day was headed ‘Stop Beating Yourself Up.’ The writer quoted James 3:3 from the NIV:

“We all stumble in many ways. But falling down isn’t what makes you a failure – it’s staying down! Get back up, dust yourself off, receive God’s grace, learn from the experience and move on. The Bible says, ‘There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.’ (Romans 8:1)

Apparently some years ago people used to wear a little badge with the letters G.N.F.W.M.Y. It meant, “God’s not finished with me yet.” Yes, you and I will continue to do things we shouldn’t and leave undone things we should. But God’s not finished with you yet. So stop beating yourself up.

Readings for Spring

Read the accounts of the Crucifixion and Resurrection in the four Gospels.

A Prayer for Easter

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope (Romans 15:13)

A Prayer for Every Day this Spring

God, go with us on our journey of faith –
revive us when we grow weary, direct us when we go astray,
inspire us when we lose heart, reprove us when we turn back.
Keep us travelling ever-onwards, a pilgrim people,
looking to Jesus Christ who has run the race before us,
and who waits to welcome us home. Amen

From Prayers for All Seasons – Nick Fawcett

Circuit Directory Update

Forthcoming Events around the Circuit

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

March

- 1st Thurs 20.00 **Summer Services Series Meeting at Kingsdown**
- 3rd Sat 10.30 **Ealing Animal Charities Fair at Hanwell**
16.00 *Lots of stalls – guest speakers – free admission*
- 3rd Sat 19.00 **Kingsdown ‘Beetle Drive’ - admission free**
- 4th Sun 16.00 **Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill**
- 10th Sat 10.30 **Kingsdown Book Fair**
12.30 *In aid of Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter*
- 29th Thurs 19.30 **Circuit Supper and Service for Maundy Thursday at Kingsdown**
Come at 7.00pm for 7.30pm start

April

- 15th Sun 16.00 **Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill**

May

- 6th Sun 16.00 **Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill**
- 12th Sat 10.30 **Kingsdown Book Fair**
12.30 *In aid of Christian Aid*
- 13th – 20th **Christian Aid Week**
- 15th Tues 19.30 **Circuit Policy Group at Kingsdown**
- 29th Tues 19.30 **Circuit Meeting – venue to be advised**

Articles for ‘In-touch’ Issue No 84 (June - August) 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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