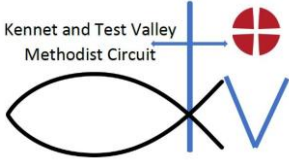


Kennet and Test Valley  
Methodist Circuit



LAND

# Section News

15 JULY 2021

**Reflection**

**Notices**

**Church for  
All**

## Superintendent's Thoughts

### FOOTBALL'S (NOT) COMING HOME...



So... England didn't win the delayed 2020 Euro Football Championship! There was a certain sense of déjà vu as the match moved through extra time to penalties... Some of you may have watched every nail-biting minute; others will, I am sure, have found something more urgent to attend to during that period on July 11<sup>th</sup>! What I hope we can all agree on, whether we are football fans or not, is that there is no place for the appalling racism and behaviour which followed the match and targeted three young British men who had stood up to be counted.

Much has been said about the amount of charitable work and lobbying that Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka have done alongside fulfilling their footballing dreams and that what they have done off the pitch should ensure that they were not subjected to racial abuse. However, I would like to suggest, along with many others, that they should not receive racial (or any kind of) abuse because they are human beings. Abuse of any type, based on the variety of differences we celebrate within the human race, is never acceptable in any circumstances.

Sadly, no area of life is free from abuse and I am fully aware that some of you reading this may be either survivors of abuse or (and I hope this not the case) currently experiencing abuse. If the latter **is** true, please let someone know... you are not alone.

One of the challenges before the church as the COVID restrictions begin to be lifted is to ensure that situations which have become more obvious during the lockdowns do not disappear back into the woodwork in the reopening process. In addition to the Conference report, *God in Love Unites Us*, which examined the nature of relationships and of marriage in particular, there was also a really important report about Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. It is not enough to look at what was being offered before and how and simply re-instate it. How can we continue to include those who are still not able to attend worship in a building or online?

This challenge of being a "Church for All" is so much more than being "politically correct". It is about recognising the diversity of God's creation in humanity and being committed to ensuring that the welcome and inclusion thought to be on offer is found by those who come looking... It is also about enabling those already participating in the life of the local church to do so more fully and by looking at the traditions of the local church and evaluating if they are unnecessarily exclusive.

God, through Jesus' ministry and teaching, has provided a pattern for living and loving, inviting attention to be paid to both the spiritual and pastoral needs of the community. Although Jesus was a Jew, little of his ministry took place in the synagogue... what opportunities might that open up for the re-emerging church in the months to come?

Peace,  
Rachel.

## Notices

<b>Dates for the Diary</b>				
Week beginning	July 18 <sup>th</sup>	July 25 <sup>th</sup>	August 1 <sup>st</sup>	August 8 <sup>th</sup>
Sunday 4.00 pm <i>Reflection – a short 30-minute gathering using images, music and words led by Revd Rachel Borgars.</i>  <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84235746908">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84235746908</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monday 7:30 pm <i>Discussion Group – originally called the ‘Hot Potatoes’ group, this is an opportunity to discuss current issues with some theology as part of the mix.</i>  <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84961411119">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84961411119</a>	✓		✓	
Thursday 7:30pm <i>Circuit Bible Study – a more formal Bible study which usually meets monthly on the last Thursday in the month.</i>  <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88651459988">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88651459988</a>		✓		
Friday 9:15 am <i>Prayer Group – an opportunity to pray together, bringing both joys and concerns in prayer.</i>  <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82103846709">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82103846709</a>	✓	✓	✓	

### Presidency and Youth President condemn racism following Euro 2020 final

The Revd Sonia Hicks and Barbara Easton, President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, have issued the following statement responding to racist attacks against England team members after the Euro 2020 final:

“The hideous response towards the young black players of the England football team after the penalty shootout at the European cup finals is both abhorrent and deeply upsetting. “Our theme for this year is God's invitation to all people to take a place at God's table. In her address to the Methodist Conference, Sonia spoke about the experiences of racism that had touched her and her family; Barbara spoke about diversity and inclusion bringing out the very best that people had to offer. “We pray for the many who experience racism in their everyday lives and that we may all model ourselves on principles of love, compassion and respect for self and our neighbour alike.”

Phoebe Parkin, Youth President, has issued the following statement:

"Sancho, Rashford and Saka represented England so well. The racist abuse directed at them, and the toxic nationalism shown by some England supporters burning Italian flags, booing during the national anthem and attacking Italian fans is inexcusable. "Football isn't the problem. The problem is that we live in a society where sexism, racism, nationalism, and violence are enabled, where not enough of us (including myself) actively work to challenge even the lowest levels of sexism, racism and nationalism. Jesus showed us that we should be peacemakers and showed us that we should love others as ourselves, showing the same grace and compassion that God shows to us."

## Pastoral News

Please remember the following people and circumstances:



For all in leadership who must consider the decisions of the Government as to the relaxation of the restrictions around COVID and whether to maintain some social distancing in the various public venues for which they hold responsibility.

***“Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10)***

### Reflection on Mark 6.30-34,53-56 from the perspective of an exhausted disciple.

‘We had had a fantastic time telling people all the things Jesus had been teaching us. We had also been able to heal people, and the buzz of excitement about what was happening got better and better. You can imagine the noise when we got back to where Jesus was – all of us trying to tell him our bit of news, trying to get his approval and find out what had been happening to the others! And, at the same time, other people were arriving, asking to see him. And he was talking to them and healing them as well. It was...well, it was chaos – and we never even got round to preparing anything to eat!’



‘Fortunately, Jesus realised what was going on. And seeing how exhausted we all were, he suggested we got away from it all, and have some time to get our breath back. We thought we had managed to slip away by boat, across the lake. But somehow people had spotted us and ran round to the other side. They beat us to it. By the time we got to shore, there was already a crowd waiting. My heart sank. We needed some peace and quiet. But Jesus quoted that verse from the Book of Numbers to us: “They are just like sheep running about without a shepherd,” and he just got on with teaching them – right up until it was too dark to see any more.

‘The same thing happened when we got into the boat and went to Gennesaret. There was the crowd, waiting on the shore. Everywhere we went – towns, villages, out to the countryside – it was always the same. People begging him to heal their friends, their family – whoever they had brought. Some just asked if they could touch his cloak. And even they got better. It was a most exhausting time...but I wouldn’t have missed it for the world.’