

# Focus

**Autumn 2024**



**Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit**



## Andy's Letter



Dear friends

So we arrive at the beginning of another Methodist New Year. We welcome Karen amongst us (see page 5), looking forward to sharing ministry with her and finding ways to build our communities together.

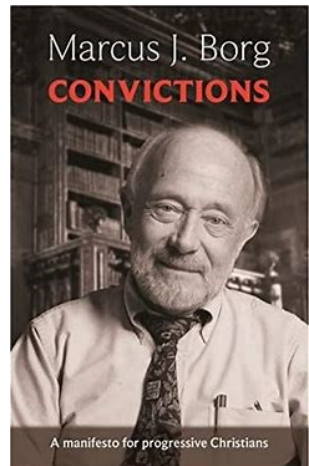
Charles Wesley wrote in his hymn 'Sing to the great Jehovah's praise' (Singing the Faith 127):

*His providence has brought us through  
another various year;  
we all with vows and anthems new  
before our God appear.*

and truly it has been another various year and each edition of the Focus magazine shows that through the many different articles that are published. Many thanks to Steve for all he does in gathering articles and collating them in a way that keeps us well informed of the many activities that our communities organise and the reports on them as well as the other articles which are aimed to inform and inspire.

Of course the one thing we have in common is our faith that in Jesus we have seen someone who has shown us how to walk with, and for, God. Which is not saying that we all hold the same beliefs and I continue to be encouraged by the openness that I find as people are willing to be challenged and to think about what it is they believe whilst being able to worship and work together for God's kin-dom.

At the moment I am reading a book called 'Convictions' by Marcus Borg. One of the chapters, one of his convictions, is titled 'The bible can be true without being literally true'. After talking about why he can't accept a literal-factual interpretation of the Bible he goes on to say 'The positive alternative to the literal-factual interpretation of the Bible is "historical-metaphorical interpretation."' He speaks of how both adjectives are important and whilst both are simple to understand their effects on our understanding the Bible are far reaching.



He reminds us that the Bible was written some 2,000 years and more ago in a place and culture far removed from ours and he comments "It wasn't written to us or for us". And he tells us that historical interpretation is not primarily concerned with "how much of this happened" although that is one meaning of the word historical, but historical interpretation "focuses on what the texts meant in their ancient historical contexts.... What were they saying to the communities to whom they spoke or wrote?"

Metaphorical interpretation focuses on finding the meaning of the story, and refers to the "more-than-literal, more-than-factual meaning of language".

For many of us it is when the Bible is interpreted with this historical-metaphorical approach that it bursts with promise, like a flowering bud, and leads to deep meaning and new insights.

I don't know how you found Bible Month this year as we spent 4 weeks looking at the book of Genesis but for me it asked all sorts of questions, and as a Preacher, set me all sorts of challenges to try and communicate the scope of that book and the picture it paints of God and of a small nomadic tribe which began to believe it was a specially selected and God favoured nation.

Many of us will remember being taught some of the stories in Sunday School and the lessons that were drawn from them. At that stage in our lives, at that stage of our cognitive development, they became foundational stories in our faith development and ones that we just accepted as true. But, if we are honest, some of the stories are horrendous and the picture they paint of God truly appalling. If I had to take the stories literally, as factual, then I would not, could not, be part of the Christian Church. It is only by using a historical-metaphorical interpretation of the book that enables me to find value in it.

Another one of Borg's convictions and chapters in his book is 'Jesus is the norm of the Bible'. For me that is one of my guiding principles as I read the Bible. Through his story, his life and teachings I best know/understand/experience that which I call God and in that light find the lens through which I understand the Bible and Christianity.

So I pray that this year, through whichever we hear and interpret the Bible that we will discover new insights, deeper understanding and the inspiration and encouragement to be Kin-dom building communities.

Happy New Year,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

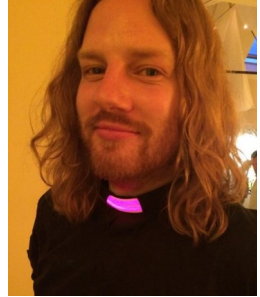
# Focus: People

## **Farewell to Revd Dan Woodhouse**

We wish Dan well as after five years serving here he moves to the Wirral Circuit where he will have pastoral oversight of one church over four sites and a second church, so five in all. He will be joined by most of the existing Patcham Community Manse to a new home, recently purchased in the Prenton area.

On 28th July friends from across the circuit joined him at Patcham Church, where after his last service a special farewell lunch was held.

We wish God's blessing on this move and much happiness to Dan & all the community in their new home and work. Also thank you to Paul McGrail, our Barnstormers reviewer par excellence.



## **Farewell to Revd Sue Jacobs & family**



In the words of Winnie the Pooh... 'How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.' My time in the Brighton and Hove circuit was only ever meant to be a passing 60-hour placement that turned into an amazing two and a half years. Now as the moving boxes are delivered, and we prepare to say goodbye I find myself needing shares in tissues! As a family, we have been loved and treasured across the circuit and you have embraced every part of the quirky family that we are. You have also welcomed my random ideas, dodgy song choices, and rambling sermons. For all of this I am truly grateful. Because of your patience and acceptance I will leave

this fabulous circuit having learned so much. My biggest thank you goes to Andy, who has been such a great support, encouraging me and my family in every part of this demanding journey. I couldn't have asked for a better supervising Minister. So as I leave the city, I go with a heart full of treasured memories of all that we have shared, and I pray that you will continue to live out God's love in the city by being the unique and awesome people that you are. Every Blessing.

**Sue (and the Jacobs Crew)**

## Hello from Revd Karen Bell

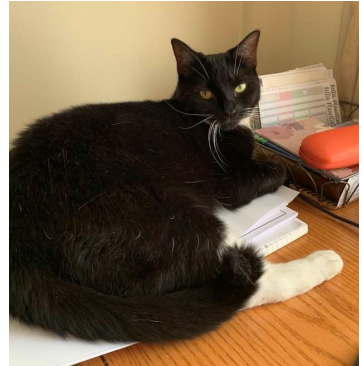
Hello Friends,  
I will soon be with you in sunny Brighton and I'm looking forward to working with you all for the Lord's kingdom. Let me introduce myself.

I have been a Methodist all my life, having been baptised at Rustington Methodist church (not too far from Brighton) when I was 6 months old. I made a commitment to follow Jesus when I was 14 years old and became a member of the Methodist church. To cut a long story short, I have been a Presbyterian for 14 years. I served the Purley Circuit for 7 years and the Romford Circuit also for 7 years.



I am a self-confessed 'crazy cat lady'! I have two cats (Phoenix *left* & Willow *right*) who rule the roost. I am definitely the least important member of the household!

For hobbies, I am an avid reader of books, especially fiction. I love all things Disney and I am partial to browsing in charity shops! I believe God's timing is always perfect and for a



reason. Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, *For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.*

As I move to the Brighton & Hove Circuit we begin a new chapter of journeying with the Lord together. We don't know where the Lord will take us, but we know that we can trust him completely because he has promised to never leave us or forsake us.

The writer of Ecclesiastes was wise in observing that there is a season for everything in life. We don't always understand why life unfolds the way it does, but we trust the Lord's timing since he has both the present and the future in mind. So, let's embrace this new chapter in the book of our lives and walk with the Lord together in the coming years.

God bless you all,

**Revd Karen**



## Postcard from Wimborne

It's hard to believe that by the time you read this it will be twelve months since we left the Circuit. How time flies when you're having fun!



Wimborne Methodist Church is a friendly welcoming church (ask Terry & Marion Hammonds), where there is something happening most days of the week. Every weekday the Coffee Lounge is open, serving good coffee and tea cakes, and providing a meeting place for every age group. The week starts with Sunday worship, which includes Café-style once a quarter. The last one I held involved making bread, ready for use during communion.

Monday afternoon is Happy Faces, similar to Tear Away Tots. On a Tuesday we host Knit & Natter, they've been knitting school jumpers. In the evening there is GLOW, which offers a space for adults with additional needs to come and socialise, play pool or table tennis, chat whilst piecing together a jigsaw puzzle, or doing some craft work. Once a month we have mid-week communion. Friday evenings is HiTen for families with school age children, which includes Fish & Chip supper.

Some of the highlights have been around the seasonal events which are called Celebration Time. These included Harvest, Christmas and Easter. As our Easter one was held following Easter Sunday we focused the event on the resurrected Jesus inviting his disciples to a lakeside BBQ.

On Advent Sunday we welcomed into membership nine people, some were new to church, others had transferred in from elsewhere – it involved a celebration cake.

The most recent highlight was the marriage of Paul & Fay, whose dog, Bernie was their ring bearer. This was the first wedding in the church for approximately 15 years. This wasn't just a highlight for me, but for the congregation, many of whom came along to support the singing. The couple had no



connections with the church, but one of them works with John at Waitrose, hence the booking. They were so impressed by the welcome, that since the wedding, Bernie and his humans have taken to coming along to the Coffee Lounge on a regular basis.

In June there was the Wimborne Folk Festival, when the church was open all weekend providing the regular Coffee Lounge fayre, but also lunches in the Wesley Hall upstairs, and the selling of every kind of cake imaginable in the foyer. Worship on that Sunday was held on the Minster Green, when the Book team shared the story of Zacchaeus, and I was asked to preach on *Everyone is Included*.



As we come to the end of our first year in this church, I can honestly say it has been good to take the opportunity to semi-retire by taking on the half-time role. If this were a postcard I might say 'Wish You Were Here', however, I don't want to drag you away from Brighton & Hove, but if ever you are in the area we would love to see you. The kettle is always on, and we can usually manage to find something to eat. We talk of you often and remember our time with you with fondness. In fact,

this coming Saturday it's the annual Cornish Cream Tea in the manse garden (hopefully summer will start by then).

Love & Prayers

**Deborah & John**

## Congratulations

On the 2nd June, **Revd Heather Leake Date** celebrated 20 years as an HIV Chaplain and congratulations for all her work both within the HIV community to remove the stigma of HIV and as a presbyter in our circuit.

**Paul Richards** has successfully passed part 1 of his Local Preacher Studies and now moves from *Local Preacher on Note* to *Local Preacher on Trial* designation. Onwards & upwards.



## More Congratulations

### Paul Harrington

received a special mention in a recent edition of the *Methodist Recorder* (see right).

Also did you see the feature in the *Methodist Recorder* at the beginning of May which retold the history of the Brighton Dome Methodist Mission



marking 50 years since ABBA won Eurovision at the same venue. Well done **David Rutter** for the content and **Paul Harrington** once more for the photos.

Congratulations to **Pat and Michael Hill** (left) from Hove who celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary at the end of June.

Finally, congratulations to **Dr Avanka Fernando** who was conferred with her Sussex Uni doctorate in July.

## Spotlight On....Alan Imms

*Continuing our feature where in every edition we put the spotlight on one of our Circuit members and perhaps we will learn more about someone whom many will have known for a while. This edition we feature Alan from Patcham who was given a list of 18 questions and asked to select and respond to 8. Here are his choice and answers:*

### What is your earliest memory?

One of my earliest memories was sitting on a bus aged about 3 with my mother, and she put her hand in my coat pocket to find me a handkerchief but instead pulled out a dead mouse. The cat we had at the time was a good mouse catcher and small boys do love to collect things!

### Where did you grow up and what your family life was like.

During the late 1940's I lived with my parents in a flat in Moulsecoomb. In about 1952 we moved to a house on the newly





built Coldean estate. In September 1952 I started at Coldean Primary School, so I was very lucky, a brand new house and new school. My dad was a shoe repairer, later to open his own shop in Lewes, and my mum had worked in the finance department of the Co-op.

**What did you do as a career and why?**

In 1964 I left Stanmer Secondary Modern School, which I had attended since 1959, (built early 1950's, now demolished, the site becoming a carpark), and joined the Post Office Telephones as an apprentice. That was the period when the telephone service was expanding rapidly and the Youth Employment Officer who visited our school during our final year suggested I try for it. Brian Latham, who some readers may know from Hove M.C joined at the same time. Part of the training involved attending the Post Office Training School at Bletchley Park. During the 1970's Bletchley became famous for it's role in code breaking during World War 2, but at the time that we were there, that was of course unknown. After my training I spent most of my time on maintenance of telephone exchanges, then in the late 1980's with the advent of digital technology, I retrained and worked on those systems until early retirement in 2005.



**Do you have a pet?**

Deznie and I had a cat for nearly 16 years but he sadly died in May this year with kidney failure. Although they are reputed to be independent animals, they still like attention and always meet you when you get home.

**What are your favourite books, food, TV Programme, hymn?**

I have enjoyed reading a series of books by Fred Secombe (brother of Harry) and his life as a vicar in South Wales. I also enjoy local history subjects, especially the Victorian era. I think I have read almost every Thomas Hardy book. I listen to a lot of

radio and like documentaries and investigative journalism, plus comedies such as "I'm sorry I haven't a clue". Film favourites are mainly older ones such as the Ealing comedies from the 1950's plus some of Woody Allen's.

As to my favourite hymn? That is a difficult question but one that stands out is "Let us build a house where love can dwell". I remember singing it when we first attended Patcham M.C and I particularly like the line in the chorus " All are welcome in this place".

**If you could live in any other time, when might that be?**

Living in Brighton from about the 1830's, to witness the transition from stagecoach travel to the railways and watch the construction of the massive Preston road viaduct would have been exciting to see. It would be good to enjoy the relatively unspoilt Sussex countryside as well. Downsides, poor medical facilities and who would want to go to a Victorian dentist?

**What has been your biggest obstacle in life and how did you overcome it?**

Possibly, if you are not very good at something, give it a go. You never know it might turn out ok.

**What are you most proud of accomplishing?**

Deznie and I were married in 1980 and have 2 sons and a grandson. Before we had children we were members of Brighton Excelsior cycling club for several years. They used to hold an annual time trial to see who could be the fastest to ride up Ditchling Beacon and one year I came second. Looking back it was crazy and I wouldn't dream of doing it now! After I left B.T I was for some time a volunteer driver for the Ambulance service which involved taking patients to routine hospital appointments. I met many interesting people and am glad I did it.



*Thank you Alan for answering these questions and sharing your special thoughts with us.*

# Focus: Features

## Boxes of Privilege

A while ago we had a Chatty Café Church service at Hove Methodist Church and during the service, we watched a short video which centred around the boxes that we subjectively or overtly put people into. The voice on the video talked about asking people to reveal the secrets of their lives by moving into an appropriate box, bullies or bullied, straight or gay, happy or depressed, hearing or deaf to name but a few from memory. This short video was used as a conversation starter whilst we chatted around our tables. During the feedback from our chats the relationship between the boxes and 'privilege' was raised. The idea of 'privilege' is an interesting concept which has moved up the ladder of social awareness in recent years.



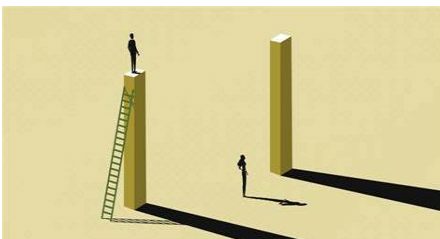
The dictionary suggests a privilege is "something that you are proud and lucky to have the opportunity to do" or "the rights and advantages that rich and powerful people in a society have" or "a special right or advantage that a particular person or group people unknowingly perceive that they have". Historically I have always associated privilege with the first of these definitions. I remember feeling privileged when I first walked onto the University of Birmingham campus to start my Doctorate. Then more recently I have become a little cynical about the political classes in relation to the second of these definitions and number of Prime Ministers who were educated at Eton and appear to have been members of the Oxford Bullingdon Club. But it is the third definition of privilege that concerns me today, the rights which people unknowingly perceive that they have i.e., their 'privileges', particularly with respect to how this affects how they interact with disadvantaged or vulnerable people.

This was brought home to me many years ago now. I grew up in the world of being a young man of 6'1", a world where I was taller than any women I might meet either at work or socially. However, when I was doing some teaching at The School of Pharmacy in London, I came across a female post-doctoral researcher who was quite clearly taller than me. This caused me quite a lot of difficulty. I found that I could only interact with her if I was sitting on a lab stool or at least perched on some other convenient piece of lab furniture. I came to realise that my height gave me a 'privileged' view of the world, because if I made an effort to avoid it, i.e., not stood up face to face, then suddenly I had no problem.



However, this is just a trivial example of an unknowingly perceived 'privilege' and the associated problems. One of the things that we noticed when we moved to Hove from Birmingham was the difference in the local population. In Birmingham the population is ethnically diverse, but in Hove the population is almost entirely white with a significant proportion of Europeans. In Birmingham we had experienced problems in discussions with church members about same sex marriage but on our second Sunday morning worshipping in Hove the service included mention of the beautiful wedding of Lou & Jackie held two days before. These differences could make the unknowingly perceived 'privileges' of people in Birmingham and Hove quite different.

This set of unknowingly perceived 'privileges' that we all develop as we grow and which constantly form the basis for how we interact with the world can be very difficult to change, as my interaction with the post-doctoral researcher demonstrated. For me as I grew up the world I lived in I was a tall, dark, handsome (!!!) middle-class, church going, singer, then later car driver, house owner etc, etc. Unknowingly perceived 'privileges' are all pervading. We all have them and at a practical level they form the basis of our prejudices. Have you ever stopped to think what your unknowingly perceived 'privileges' are and how they underpin your prejudices and thereby influence your view of the world.



However, as Christians we are told to 'love our neighbour as ourselves' and therefore that must be irrespective of how our neighbour is viewed through the lens of our unknowingly perceived 'privileges'.



Putting it another way, we have to love our neighbour as another person made in the image of God, but our unknowingly perceived 'privileges' mean that we may have to work a bit harder to like them.

Also, there is one other thing we need to feed into our list of 'privileges'. From the hymn 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus':

*Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
(but) What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer!*

**Peter Farley**

## **Christ Begins His Earthly Ministry**

We know that the baptism of our Lord, the descent of the Holy Spirit, the voice from heaven and His immediate (Mark 1.12) move to the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil, all mark the start of Christ's great earthly ministry for us. There was no teaching, miracle, or other such work before this time.

It was a Mission that was godly, obedient, redemptive and self sacrificial, and we should reverence the days when He took that most courageous decision. And yet we do not celebrate the start of His great mission to humankind in any church of my acquaintance. This should surely be a mixture of regret, shame and sadness to us all.

However, the baptism was not the whole story. Things were relatively straightforward and unopposed then. For He had not yet encountered Satan and overcome his temptations.

And what a remarkably odd set of temptations they appear to have been. But surely this was because behind each probing question there was one single one - the only one that mattered to Satan. And how superficially appealing it was. You don't have to go to Calvary - there's no need for anything that extreme. There are lots of other ways. Just do as I tell you and everyone will hail you, follow you as King. But Jesus had his Father's divine plan to compare with Satan's devious one. For He, too, was God, and Satan's vain attempts to divide the Trinity were inevitably doomed to failure.

We owe the sinless Son of God so much. It would be a fitting response, unlikely as it is, if His churches came together- just once in the year - to praise Him and worship.

After all, it was for us, for all of us. And what a testament that would be to His great and self-denying commitment. We sadly just don't have that same commitment

**Selwyn Veater**

## People and Groups in New Testament times:

*This series of articles look at a number of matters relating to peoples and groups in the Mediterranean world in the period c. 150 B.C. to 96 A.D.*

### 18. The Baptizers and the Mandaeans

In the last of this series we look at groups, one of which is familiar to Christians through John the Baptist, and one of which (I suspect unfamiliar to most Christians), has survived (just) to this day. These were the baptizers. John was not the only 'baptizer' at the time of Jesus. The Essenes practised baptism and the New Testament does not record any surprise that John was baptizing in the Jordan. A few of these baptizing groups were mentioned, all too briefly, by early Christian writers like Justin Martyr (died c. 165), and Eusebius in his history written in the early 4th century. Some of John's disciples became followers of Jesus, e.g. Jn 1 vv 35-37, and there are a few other tantalizing hints in the New Testament, e.g. Acts 18 v 24. At least one group of Jews wanted to replace the Temple and its cult with baptism and repentance. Unfortunately we know very little indeed about John's disciples, or the other 'baptizers', or what happened to any of them.

Although known of in Europe in the 16th century it was not really until the 19th century that some Europeans travelling in the Ottoman empire in what is now Iraq, came across a group who practised weekly baptism by full immersion, believed in one God, and who held John the Baptist in high esteem. These were the **Mandaeans**. Recently, the Mandaean Synod of Australia stated that:

*"Mandaeans are followers of John the Baptist. Their ancestors fled from the Jordan Valley about 2000 years ago and ultimately settled along the lower reaches of the Tigris, Euphrates and Karun Rivers in what is now Iraq and Iran. Baptism is the principal ceremony of the Mandaean religion and may only take place in a freshwater river."*

Their main rituals are related to bathing in, and drinking, running water, the symbol of life. In 1990 a group of Mandaeans who were visiting the Vatican and had an audience with the Pope, wanted to bathe and drink in the river Tiber. They had to be dissuaded because of the state of Rome's river.

In the 1930s there was some excitement in New Testament studies that archaeological discoveries of Mandaean artefacts and texts might shed some light on the New Testament.

Their sacred text, the *Ginza Rabba* – the Great Treasure – is written in Eastern Aramaic, Jesus spoke a dialect of Western Aramaic. Rudolf Bultmann, probably the best-known New Testament scholar between the two World Wars, was a proponent of this thinking. This excitement proved to be unfounded and the 'so-called Mandaean fever' passed quite quickly, at least in the field of New Testament studies. However the Mandaeans are important in the history of religions in that they are the last surviving Gnostic group from the classical world. Gnosticism is the belief in a 'secret' or 'hidden' knowledge, 'manda' is an Aramaic word 'to have knowledge', only available to the initiated. Mandaeans do not seek converts.



*Australian Mandaeans celebrating the new year in 2017*

Tragically the turmoil in the Middle East over the last 40-50 years has seen a great reduction of the numbers belonging to many ancient communities who once lived there. Before the invasion of Iraq in 2003 there were about 60-70,000 Mandaeans there. Under Saddam Hussein there had been some persecution which was intensified greatly by ISIS/Daesh and others. It is thought that there are now only about 5,000 Mandaeans left in Iraq. More Mandaeans live in either Australia (c. 10,000, hence the quotation above) or Sweden (c. 10-20,000) than anywhere else.

With that account we end this investigation of the great variety of religious groups who were present at the time of Jesus.

**Mick Hickman**

# A Methodist Way of Life

*God loves you unconditionally, no strings attached. That's the good news.*

A Methodist Way of Life is a way of saying yes to the good news.

There are twelve things that we can do as individuals or as a church community. We have previously looked at the first seven: Pray, Worship, Notice, Care, Learn, Open and Share. In this edition we look at number 8 **Challenge**.

None of this makes God love you any more - but they may help you realise how deeply you are loved.

May you be transformed as you reflect on your encounters with God that come through doing these activities.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/worship/>



## 8. Challenge

### We challenge injustice

God is a liberator. God always takes the side of people experiencing poverty and injustice and we are called to do the same.



*Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? (Isaiah 28:6)*

We long for God's justice in the world. Around the globe and in their own local communities,

Methodists are working for justice through responding to needs and campaigning for change.

Challenging injustice is never easy – it is rare for a challenge to be welcome. This can be something you do as an individual, but it can be better to work together as a small group or a congregation.



“Henry’s shift patterns enable him to pop into ‘tea and toast’ on a Friday morning. There is a community larder, debt advice, and offers of prayer, which Henry has valued. Because the organisers have built community and seen the effect of poverty on those at Tea and Toast, they’ve joined a city-wide lobbying group, working with the council to end food poverty in the local area.”

### Pause for thought

In what ways are we powerful/powerless when it comes to an issue of injustice (eg bullying, homeless, human trafficking, poverty, racism)?

Interested in having conversations like this with your friends, neighbours and community? Buy [Conversations against Mundanity](#) now.

[www.methodistpublishing.org.uk](http://www.methodistpublishing.org.uk)



### Simple things to try

1. Sign up to regular campaigns, eg from Christian Aid or the Joint Public Issues Team, and commit to write letters and talk with people at your church about the issues. Listen to members of your church and community to find out what issues matter to them, and together ask your MP to meet with you.
2. Find out about the principles, priorities and practices of A Justice-seeking Church. How can you respond as an individual and a community?  
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/social-justice/a-justice-seeking-church/>
3. Explore how to start a Church at the Margins in your area.  
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/evangelism-growth/discover-church-at-the-margins/>
4. Check out resources, campaigns and actions you can get involved with from The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT).  
<https://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/>
5. Join the Let's End Poverty movement.  
<https://letsendpoverty.co.uk/>
6. Listen to a Taketime meditation based on Matthew 21:12-13: Anger in the Temple.  
<https://taketime.org.uk/themed-meditations/anger-in-the-temple-2/>

## A Multitude of Blessings

- Blessed are you who can question your own assumptions and listen with an open mind; **you will receive new insights beyond your imagining.**
- Blessed are you who suffer the attacks of others to stand up for what is right; **you will not be alone, for your courage will inspire others to rise.**
- Blessed are you who build friendships as well as justice; even when you lose an issue, **you will have strengthened the foundation of your community.**
- Blessed are you who take delight in people; **you will not be bored in meetings.**
- Blessed are you who agitate the placid waters of complacency; **you will create waves in the inertia of privilege, and will know the thrill of riding the surf of change.**
- Blessed are you who lead with enthusiasm and confidence, resisting the temptation to shame the apathetic or self-absorbed; **you will inspire curiosity and hope in others.**
- Blessed are you who play as well as work; **you will have more fun, build more energy, and will draw the powers of the impish to your cause.**
- Blessed are you who ask for help in your role as leaders; **you will find teachers at every turn, and your work will remain interesting and alive.**
- Blessed are you who, when wrongfully attacked, find safe outlets for your righteous rage; **your mind will be clear, your decisions strategic, and your progress will not be derailed by the backlash of the fearful.**
- Blessed are you who do not demonize your opponents; **your eyes and your hearts will be open.**
- Blessed are you who sing and dance; **you will find energy and joy to lift you on your journey.**
- Blessed are you who offer thanks and praise five-fold for every critique; **your children will want to visit after they are grown, people will want to serve on your committees, and friends will be interested in your opinions.**
- Blessed are you who study the rhythms of history; **you will have knowledge with which to shape the future.**
- Blessed are you who work in coalition rather than in principled isolation; **you will meet great people, learn**

**things you didn't realise you needed to know, and have partners for the journey when you are in the lead, or in need.**

- Blessed are you who volunteer to be secretary and take good minutes; **your words will become history, and your efforts will move steadily forward rather than running absent-mindedly over thoroughly discussed ground.**
- Blessed are you who discover, train and encourage young leaders; **you will see your work expand and grow beyond your own time and talent.**
- Blessed are you who can change your mind; **you are still alive.**
- Blessed are you who will not let the perfect be the enemy of the good; **you will see progress in your lifetime.**
- Blessed are you with an active spiritual life; **you will find perspective and comfort in times of loss and betrayal, and will rise without cynicism to meet the challenges of a new day.**
- Blessed are you who live from a place of gratitude; **for you will know the meaning of Life.**

**By Lindi Ramsden** *shared at the last Circuit Meeting*



# Focus: Summer 2024

## A look back at some recent events:

### 'Twas a Mystery at Stanford Avenue

In the midst of May a challenge was set "Who killed the director?" as the Stanford Avenue players reunited for a murder mystery which kept everyone guessing until the final reveal. Audience member Kate MacCormack commented: "I must say, I haven't enjoyed myself so much in a long time. This was my first experience of a



Murder Mystery whodunit, and in all honesty, I was rubbish at solving the case, but, the acting was superb, as was the beautiful meal. 101% effort by all concerned, for putting so much effort into providing us with such a great night out. Sincerely hope there will be another such performance to look forward to, in the not too distant future."

The evening raised over £700 and tributes were paid to Karen and Lis for the food, John and Karen for the generous donation and Vic for the Sound and Lights. Well done all and our lips are sealed as to the identity of the killer.

Other fund raising events at Stanford Avenue included a **quiz night** in April, under the questions of Mags and Dave Bunting and raised £333.

The **Women of Note Concert** later in May raised £420, shared between the Church and The Trussell Trust.

**Action for Children weekend** at Stanford Ave has so far raised £550! So thank you to all who made cakes, jams, brought craft



work and bric-a-brac. And big thanks to all who came and bought things or donated. It was a really happy community occasion so fantastic all coming together, really thanks so much for the amazing support! Some of us sped over to Hove to the street party and I had a really yummy burger I could have eaten two! On Sunday Geoff Harrington took our service and as





usual it was so meaningful, thanks Geoff as ever for your support and input. We looked at AFC videos which were insightful and demonstrated the fantastic work of AFC. This year's focus was justice for families, and as our government had just changed it was an appropriate moment to reflect on lifting children out of poverty and our and the government's support to stop childhood poverty. Our musical interlude was the Isley Brothers *Harvest For The World*, with video and words. Thanks to Rob for managing all the

IT, projector and screen. Thanks to the congregation who were very patient whilst my granddaughters sped round the church during the service! God bless everyone, much love

**Gaynor Paul**

## **Hove Street Party 2024**

You were completely amazing. The love of our community filled the street and it was just beautiful. We also raised a whopping... drum roll please... £1000 from kind donations, sales of burgers, hot dogs, teas & coffees, soft drinks and cakes!!

Thank you to all who helped and all who came and supported. Now kick back and enjoy a few of our photos.

**J.J. Baiden-Amisah**



The Revd Duleep Fernando (Former President of the Sri-Lanka Methodist Church) preached at Dorset Gardens in July whilst visiting the UK for his daughter Avanka's graduation ceremony.



# Focus: Mission

## Circuit Refugee Project Update: The long and winding road

We can't thank you enough nor express how overwhelming we have found the response to our Journey4Sanctuary which launched on Saturday May 18th 2024. You absolutely smashed our original communal £800 target and at the end of June, when we closed the Just Giving page, you have raised an amazing £2182 which will be shared among 6 charities who support and welcome asylum seekers and refugees to Brighton & Hove:



- Care4Calais Brighton
- The Jollof Cafe (Sussex Refugee & Migrant Self Support Group).
- The Network of International Women, Brighton & Hove
- Sanctuary on Sea
- Thousand for Thousand (T4K)
- Voices in Exile

We have let them know they will be getting somewhere in the region of £360 each and we have had some lovely notes of thanks in return:

*"What a fantastic achievement, thank you so much to everyone for this support and for the awareness you have brought to vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees in our community. We are very grateful for this money and would like to buy food and toiletries for our food bank .... Also thank you for the two bags of food donations this week, all very much appreciated!"* Stephen Cummiskey, Food Bank Coordinator, Voices in Exile Food Bank.

*"This is wonderful, wow! Thank you so much for all your amazing work in getting the walk to happen, and to raise so much money. We will certainly let you know what we will do with it so you can feed that back."* Cathy Maxwell, Network of International Women, Brighton & Hove.



*"Wow! What a splendid effort! Thank you for all your commitment and hard work. Congratulations on a great result."* Angie Lynn, Sanctuary on Sea



In fact we have decided to round up the total using funds raised previously so that we can give each of them £400. Both Cathy and Stephen, along with Andrew Jackson, also from Voices in Exile, joined us on May 18th for parts of the walk.

We want to thank all the people who provided much needed refreshments at each of our churches, you gave us the restoration and energy to continue. Definitely the carrot (for which read cake and biscuits) waiting at each destination!

We were also keen to see how far we could travel within our Journey4Sanctuary by the end of Refugee Week - 23 June. I'm not sure if we have everyone's mileage recorded but it stands at 215.6 miles (346.98 km). 23 people journeyed between the five circuit churches, some in one day (we don't know how you did that, you're amazing!) and some over the course of the month (much more sensible!) Many more in our congregations and Messy Church did Church Sanctuary laps (brilliant!) This distance could take us to Leeds (what a shame, we just missed the Methodist Conference there!) or easily to Calais and back! In fact, as the crow flies, we could have walked to Paris!



Speaking of the Methodist Conference, Paul Harrington was there taking photographs for the Methodist Recorder and he met founder of the Sanctuary movement, the Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal who sends his congratulations, greetings and good wishes.



In other news, at the end of April at Dorset Gardens we hosted a study day for the South East of England Soroptimists whose theme was The Sanctuary movement. Ruth spoke and told them about the project. Cathy Maxwell from the Network of International Women (NIW) Brighton & Hove spoke too. Several members of NIW's Sewing Collective joined us and they enjoyed brisk sales at their table of



colourful hand sewn textile goods, clothing and bags. We then broke into groups - either discussion with Ruth or craft with Sue making paper boats and orange hearts. The feedback from the day was good and people had enjoyed the event.

In July, the NIW Brighton & Hove's Sewing Collective had two tables at Hove's street party. One table selling Middle Eastern snacks and baklava and the other selling beautiful hand sewn textile goods made from recycled fabrics. The Sewing Collective is a social enterprise and they also had a banner and a display showing what NIW do in our community, so lots of people came for a chat as well as to buy goods. Afterwards they texted Ruth to say: 'Thank you for the lovely day and we met a lot of great people from the community and neighbourhood' Another member said she had been nervous to come along but was so very pleased she came after all.

In Refugee Week, we made a donation to Care4Calais towards the costs of mounting their exhibition 'In Limbo' at the Jubilee Library. This moving photography exhibition shared stories and photos from Asylum seekers staying in hotels in Brighton and Hove. We have also made a donation to a national Refugee Charity who had contacted us; Refugees at Home. We continue to make regular donations of toiletries and new/as new clothes to Care4Calais who work closely with the local hotels. Patcham and Dorset Gardens continue to regularly donate items to Voices in Exile food bank.

Ruth has been attending some virtual meetings organised by the Methodist Connexion about what is happening nationally in and around The Methodist Church



regarding refugees and asylum seekers. This group, with up to 30 regular attendees, meets every couple of months and is seeking to embed 'Seeking Justice for Refugees' into the Methodist Church, as outlined in the Justice Seeking Church Report. While the initial meeting was more general, since then there has been an increasing focus on the Methodist Iranian ministry that is happening around the country. Some Iranian asylum seekers and refugees have fled persecution for their Christian beliefs and others are converting to Christianity or just finding out more, once here.



Finally, on 20th July at Dorset Gardens we were delighted to welcome the Brighton Male Voice Choir, thanks to the suggestion of Richard Fletcher who is Chair of the choir. They gave us a wonderful concert, with a wide range of musical styles and the opportunity to join in too! In

addition the afternoon, which also included a raffle and refreshments, featuring homemade cakes, raised a wonderful £182 for the project. We would like to thank everyone who supported in any way.

**Sue Harrington** and **Ruth Samur** project co-leads Circuit Refugee Project Reps: Terry Hammond (Woodingdean), Kay Harwood (Patcham), Ann Collins (Stanford Avenue), Ruth Samur (Hove), Sue Harrington (Dorset Gardens).

# Walking in the light of God

PICTURED by the Peace Statue in Hove seafroft are some of the members and friends of the Brighton and Hove circuit who walked a weekend total of nearly 140 miles for "Journey for Sanctuary" which is part of the circuit's refugee project.

This is an ongoing initiative to support and fund-raise for six charities who in turn welcome and help asy-

lum-seekers and refugees in Brighton and Hove. In order to make it an inclusive event, the walkers were allowed to use other means of transport during their travels. They took in some or all of the five churches in the circuit where hospitality was provided to speed them on their way.

Joint organiser Ruth Samur said: "Several of our old-

er members travelled to all five churches with one particularly fit octogenarian walking all 12.2 miles. Former President of the Conference the Rev the Baroness Richardson went 12.1 miles on foot and by bus to three churches."

On the following day churches upped the communal mileage by doing laps of their buildings.

Sue Harrington, who jointly organised the event, said: "We walked round to the joyful sound of "We are marching in the light of God" and the under-fives, the over 90s and those with limited mobility all joined in.

"Brighton to Calais as the crow flies is about 90 miles and we had this virtual target in mind for the walk which, over the weekend as a whole, we greatly exceeded; but people have until June 23, which is Refugee Sunday to make their own fundraising journey."

(Photograph: Paul Harrington.)



**Coverage from the Methodist Recorder of our Circuit Walk**



# Focus: Business

## Safeguarding Webinars

Our new District Safeguarding Officer Claire Coles has planned a series of 2-hour evening webinars (7-9 pm) via Zoom to take in some FAQ areas of work. These are open to anyone who wants to attend and are already open to book onto on Eventbrite.

Links are:

18th Sept 2024 7-9pm **Safer Recruitment:**

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/929161255327/>

21st Oct 2024 7-9pm **Neurodiversity:**

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/929170392657/>

21st Nov 2024 7-9pm **Risk Assessments:**

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/929688361917?aff=oddtcreator>

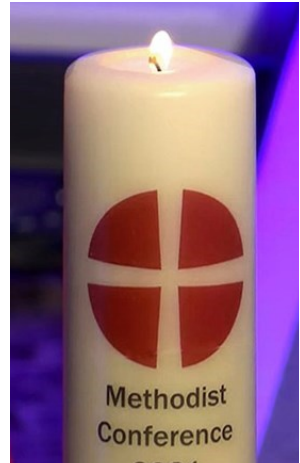
## Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

## Methodist Conference 2024

The Conference is the governing body of the Methodist Church and meets annually to discuss matters affecting the life of the Church, the nation and the world. The 2024 Conference took place in Leeds from 27th June to 3rd July.

- The Revd Helen Cameron was elected and inducted as President of the Conference, and Mrs Carolyn Godfrey as Vice President. They shared their theme of 'Seeking Justice' in their addresses to the Conference.
- Twenty Three Presbyters and seven Deacons were received into Full Connexion with the Conference, along with ten presbyters by transfer, and one presbyter by reinstatement.
- It was agreed that from 1st September 2024, the Connexional Council will come into being. This will be the trustee body for the Church's connexional business and property, and will undertake many of the functions of the present Methodist Council and Strategy and Resources Committee.

- The Conference agreed to the establishment of three new Districts from 1 September 2024: the South West Peninsula District, North West England District and the West Midlands District, all from amalgamations of existing smaller districts.
- Acknowledging the improved funding position of the Ministers Pension Scheme the Conference agreed that the voluntary contributions to the Pension Reserve Fund should now be returned to the donors with interest paid at the CFB Deposit Rate. (This will benefit our circuit & some of our churches funds).
- Following a notice of motion brought in 2022, the Conference received a report from the Faith and Order Committee which sought to offer some reflections on singleness. The report recommended exploring the synergy between welcoming, affirming and celebrating the presence and contribution of single people in the church's life and the theological foundations and emphases of the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS), adopted by the Conference in 2021. The report includes some practical guidance for local churches, and the Conference commended it for study and comment, inviting feedback to the Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee (faithandorder@methodistchurch.org.uk) by 1 September 2025.



You can read both President addresses and more conference updates at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/>

## **Earth church at Rottingdean**

**Saturday August 17th, 2pm to 5pm**

You are invited to meet by the duck pond at Rottingdean village green at 2pm for a walk round the beautiful Kipling gardens. Then a walk up the hill to 32 Nevill Road for tea and cake in our in-the-process-of-being-rewilded garden (6 steps up), with nature prayers and poems.

(Voluntary donations for The Woodland Trust charity welcome!). If the weather is atrocious we will postpone to the following day.



**Anne Garrett**

# Dates for your diary

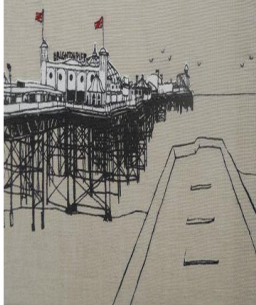
## Calendar of Circuit Events:

- Saturday 17th August **Rottingdean Ramble** (see above).
- Sunday 25th August **Patcham Duck Fayre** 11.00am to 4.30pm at Patcham Junior & High School Fields, look out for the Methodist stall.
- Weds 28th August **Sue Jacob's welcome service** at Davenport Rd, Witney, Oxfordshire at 7pm.
- Thurs 29th August **Local Preachers' Meeting** 7.30pm at Patcham.
- Saturday 14th September **South East District Representative Synod** on 10.30am to 4.30pm at Emmanuel Church, 48A Upperton Road, Eastbourne, BN21 1LQ.
- Tuesday 17th September **Circuit Meeting** 7.30pm at Patcham.
- Saturday 5th October **Flower Pot Festival** at Stanford Avenue Methodist Church, continues on the Sunday.
- Monday 28th October **Local Preachers' Meeting** 7.30pm at Dorset Gardens.
- Friday 1st November **All Saints Service** 7.30pm at Stanford Avenue (see poster).
- Thursday 28th November **Circuit Meeting** 7.30pm at Dorset Gardens.
- Saturday 30th November **Christmas & Craft Fair** at Stanford Avenue Methodist Church.

## Special Services over the Autumn

### Circuit Healing Services

On 25th August, 22nd September, 27th October & 24th Nov, 6.30pm at Dorset Gardens. Led by Revd Cynthia Park and Shirley Veater. These will be quiet, meditative services that will include communion & the opportunity for the laying on of hands.



**Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit**

## Welcome Service for Revd Karen Bell

**Sunday 1 September 2024**

3.00pm (Afternoon Tea)

4.00pm Service Commences

at

**Woodingdean Methodist Church**

The Ridgway, Woodingdean BN2 6PA

**Preacher: Revd Dan Balsdon**

Assistant Chair of South East Methodist District

*All are welcome, if any questions please contact  
[steve.preston@brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk](mailto:steve.preston@brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk)*



**Brighton & Hove  
Methodist Circuit**

## All Saints Day Service



**Friday 1 November 2024**

**7.30pm**

at

**Stanford Avenue Methodist Church**

**BN1 6FD**

*At this service we remember with thanks the lives of those we loved who have died in the previous year. We read out the names and remember via the lighting of candles those whose funerals have been held in our churches or whose services have been conducted by ministers and lay people within our Circuit.*

*All are invited and welcome, please contact [steve.preston@brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk](mailto:steve.preston@brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk) by 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024 if there is anyone who you wish to remember in this way.*



**BARISTORMERS**



Presents



# ELF

The Musical

**29th-30th November/6th - 7th December @ 7.30 pm**  
**Saturday Matinees @ 2 pm**

**Patcham Methodist Church Hall,**  
**Ladies Mile Road, Patcham**

**Tickets on sale soon**



Book by Thomas Meehan and Bob Martin  
Music by Matthew Sklar  
Lyrics by Chad Beguelin

Based upon the New line Cinema film written by David Berenbaum

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Music Theatre  
International All authorised performance materials are also supplied by MTI [www.mtishows.co.uk](http://www.mtishows.co.uk)  
All profits will be donated to the development fund of Patcham Methodist Church



A widow said "nobody at her Church  
wondered what she did after the service  
or even asked after her if she was away.

Say "Goodmorning" or "Goodevening" to the  
person next to you - or at least smile - it  
works wonders.

The following words are from a Keswick church-

"If after Church you wait awhile  
Someone will greet you with a smile.  
But if you quickly rise and flee  
We'll all seem stiff and cold, maybe  
The one beside you in the pew  
Perhaps is just a stranger, too.  
All here, like you, have fears and care  
All of us need each other's prayers.  
In fellowship we bid you meet  
With us, around God's mercy seat."

# THE METHODIST CHURCH

A PLAN TO HELP US CHANGE AND WELCOME NEW PEOPLE

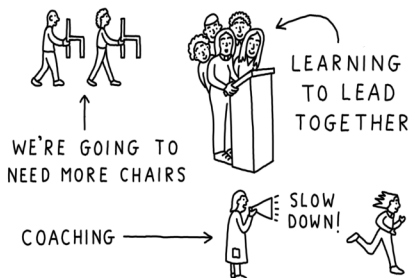
## 1 A CHURCH FOR EVERYONE



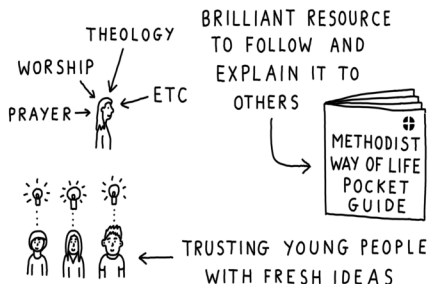
## 2 TELLING OUR STORY



## 3 PUTTING MISSION FIRST



## 4 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS



QUESTION: WHERE DOES GOD WANT YOU TO START?



1 NEW PLACES FOR NEW PEOPLE/ CHURCH AT THE MARGINS

2 EVANGELISM

3 MISSIONAL GROWTH AND LEADERSHIP

4 DISCIPLESHIP/ METHODIST WAY OF LIFE

The **Methodist** Church

davewalker.com

## Copy Deadline

Please submit your articles & photos to Steve Preston for our 2024 Winter & Christmas Edition by 13th October.

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Superintendent: Rev Andy Lowe