

Focus

Winter 2023



Merry
CHRISTMAS
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit

Andy's Letter



Dear friends,

It is hard to start this letter anywhere else but with the horrific scenes from the ongoing horror that is being played out in the Middle East at this time. Words feel inadequate at best and empty at worst to speak of the human tragedy that has, and continues to, unfold in front of us.

Andrew Pratt who shared with us at our Local Preachers Study day and our Circuit Together service at Dorset Gardens over the weekend of October 14th-15th has sent me his latest poem which he was moved to write after watching the evening news on October 17th when news of the tragic events at the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza city

Now hell is here

*Now hell is here, and words are cheap,
a bloodied sheet, a shattered bed...
as women, men and children weep,
while prayer is silent, felt not said.*

*With seeds of vengeance sown not sought,
while roots in hearts of flesh, not stone,
bring carnage traced with quiet thought
as guilt will fester none will own.*

*And distantly, in muffled sighs,
of deep regret and dark despair
we wring our hands and harbour lies,
dare not admit the blame we share.*

© Andrew Pratt 17/10/2023

In this seemingly ever repeating cycle of conflict where blame can be laid at many doors, we hold the people of the Middle East in our thoughts and prayers and pray for wisdom for the leaders of the nations. We pray that they may work together for peace and justice so that a way may be found to establish real peace that can enrich all the human race and end this repeating cycle of violence and suffering.

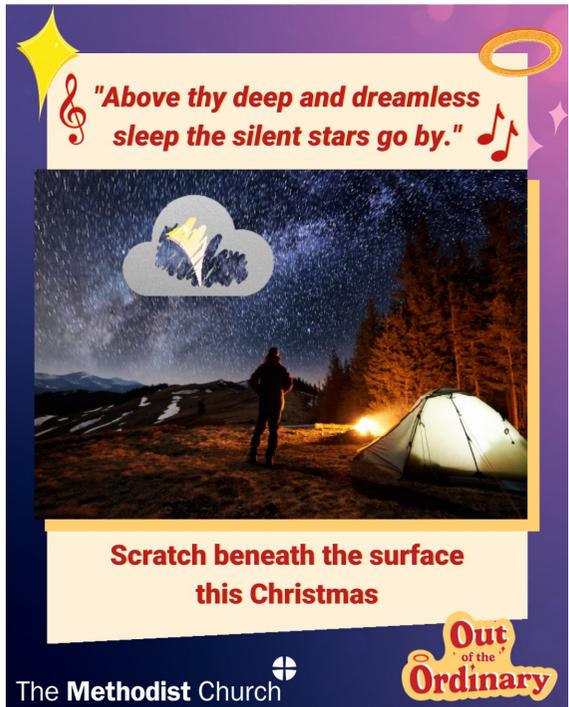
With Harvest celebrations past it won't be long before we are turning our minds towards Christmas but first we have remembrance to think about. In our All Saints service at Stanford Avenue on November 1st when we remember our loved ones who have died; and then on the 11th and 12th as we commemorate Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday and think of those who have died as a result of conflict and those whose lives have been forever changed because of the events of war. This year with fighting going on in many areas of the world it is as important as ever to remember, and, as we remember, commit ourselves again to living in peace with all people.

I want to thank Steve for all he does in getting articles and putting this magazine together. It is always good to learn more about people who we feel we know who then surprise us with what we don't know about them and I look forward to reading about Cath who is featured in Spotlight in this edition. Articles by Peter Farley, Mick Hickman and Dylan Andrews give us things to think about and reports of events past and invites to things planned give a real picture of the vitality and life in our churches and circuit. So thank you Steve and I am looking forward to reading this edition.

As we journey through the rest of this year my prayer is that we shall do so enjoying our lives 'and the good gifts from God in a spirit of faith towards God' which I take to mean sharing the blessings we have with all who we meet that all may be blessed.

May the blessing of peace be with all this Christmas season.

Andy



*"Above thy deep and dreamless
sleep the silent stars go by."*

**Scratch beneath the surface
this Christmas**

The **Methodist** Church

**Out
of the
Ordinary**

Focus: People

Greetings from Deborah & John Cornish



Dear Friends

Yes, we are missing you, but we're not racing back to Brighton & Hove, because being part-time is amazing. I would thoroughly recommend it, especially the being able to say 'no' when someone asks you to join their committee!

Wimborne is an ancient market-town, set in the beautiful Dorset countryside, with access to the coast in less than half-an hour. Admittedly we don't have the views from our manse, but we have some beautiful walks all on our doorstep.



The Methodist church is part of the Christchurch and Wimborne Circuit, comprising 14 societies, covering an area from Milford-on-Sea to Blandford Forum. The church itself is busy with a Coffee Lounge open week-day mornings, run by a regular group of people in the kitchen serving teas and coffees, plus a hosting team to provide a warm welcome. Then there are the different groups: Happy

Faces for pre-school children and their carers, Knit and Natter who've just completed knitting warm clothes and toys for some refugee families in Bournemouth, GLOW for young people with additional needs, and Hi Ten for school aged children.

Alongside this there is weekly mid-week communion, house group, and monthly walking group; so plenty to keep me busy on my working days.

The manse has a beautiful garden, which was designed by the previous minister. This has provided us and others with apples and flowers, and is keeping us entertained. We've also had several visitors: friends and family from Cornwall, Essex and even Woodingdean. John continues to work at Waitrose, with the store being a 15 minute walk away, though at 4.45am John tends to cycle. It'll be interesting to see what he does on a frosty morning in the middle of winter. So far we've had wonderful weather and the mornings have been bright and sunny.

The one thing we were really looking forward to with the move was being closer to the family, which has meant we can see them more often. We've been able to watch them swimming galas, doing the school run, and cooking dinner for when they all get home from school and work.

Shalom **Deborah**

Greetings from Cynthia Tudor

In our last edition we wished Cynthia well on her move to St. Mary's Convent & Nursing Home in Chiswick. We were in touch in mid-October when Cynthia was celebrating her birthday with an afternoon a tea party at St. Mary's and she remarked ". I am so fortunate to be able to enjoy being in this good place in my less able years!" She also sent the following note:

"Thank you so much for the invitation to the circuit service. I have to admit that I wasn't looking forward to it but in the end thoroughly enjoyed it as did my son! It was a lovely occasion and wonderful opportunity to thank everyone for their support over the years as well as an appropriate send off for my new life here. Thank you too to the circuit for the book token. There is a Waterstones in Chiswick so I will be making my way there before long! Every blessing Cynthia x "



Farewell to Elin



Elin Star retired from her role as Administrator at Hove on Friday 13th October with a magnificent farewell tea arranged in her honour and a room full of friends and colleagues gathered to wish her well. Many will know Elin who has supported the circuit in a variety of ways over the years. She and her husband plan a move to Wales next year and she will be much missed.

Introducing JJ Baiden

Hailing from Accra, Ghana; I arrived on these shores some 28 years ago as an International Student to study Civil Engineering at the University of Brighton. With the pull of the Brighton currents and matters of the heart being so strong, I quickly acclimatised to life on the south coast and integrated into the local community as a local DJ and



owner of urban stores; Mic-Check & RPRZNT. At a period that some would define as the 'golden age' of UK urban culture, I was fortunate to be part of a movement of black talent, expression, and creativity unique to Brighton.

At the time, living on Clarendon Rd/ Shirley Street in Hove, I would often visit HMC where the services and occasional MHB hymn selections would

remind me of my Methodist upbringing in Ghana. Fast forward a few years, and still based in Hove, I now juggle the roles of Husband to Kirsten, Daddy to Lily, Supporter of The Arsenal, Freelance marketer, Trustee to BARCO (Brighton & Hove Black Anti-Racism Community Organisation) and Church Administrator & Steward of Hove Methodist Church. I'm always keen to identify with and contribute to my community on the basis of my faith & culture.

We are delighted to welcome JJ to this role and wish him well.

Congratulations

- ◆ To **Ben Parrish** and **Dariusz Plata** (right) who were married at Dorset Gardens on Saturday 7th October, the first same sex wedding at DG and a wonderful celebratory service led by Andy. Ben and Dariusz were thrilled that they could have a Christian ceremony to celebrate their marriage, that reflects their beliefs. They described the day as truly magical and felt very guided and supported throughout by the Church.
- ◆ To the **14th Brighton Scout Group** based at Dorset Gardens who are celebrating their centenary this year with a recent celebratory weekend.
- ◆ Did you know we have a TV celebrity in our midst? **Angela**, the Administrator from Dorset Gardens and her daughter **Riziki** were contestants on The Hit List on BBC TV.
- ◆ Thanks to **Agi Rigo** from Hove who created the individual church portraits on our front cover this edition with **JJ Baiden** providing the festive setting.



Author meets acting royalty

Local Hove based author **Mike Kingston** recently met with Lord of the Rings actor Sir Ian McKellen at the actor's Grapes pub in East London. The pub features in Mike's novels *A Flyblown Solution* and *A Candle for Consuela* and Sir Ian was delighted that his centuries-old pub on the River Thames provided an iconic London backdrop to the novels. Critics have described the works, the first two books in the "Omega Files" quartet, as "absolutely brilliant", "exciting and provocative", a "must-read" and "fabulous". They are available on Amazon now www.omegafilesquartet.com



Spotlight On...Cath Oddhayward

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. The person is given a list of 18 questions and asked to select and respond to 8. Here is Cath's choice and answers:

What is your earliest memory?

I broke my left leg falling down the stairs when I was sixteen months old and I remember the nurse appearing in the doorway of the hospital with a saw to cut off the cast.

Where did you grow up and what was family life like?

I grew up in Great Wakering in Essex, near Southend - longest pier in the world you know!

Family life was with my parents who were both teachers and my twin brothers plus additional folks who frequented our house as the back door was always open and we had a snooker table, darts board and lots of toast available.

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

I have been an educator for nearly 30 years, teaching 3 to 19 year olds in mainstream and specials schools and recently specialising on young people with communication difficulties, autism and developmental language disorder. I train other teachers, take on research projects and really hope sometime to finish my PHD.



Who have been your strongest influences in life?

My parents, who believe in making things better for now, heaven on earth as well as later, those in my church at home and here in Brighton and my many friends who do jobs that are making a difference for folks who need more help.



Do you have pets?

We have a cat called Mopsey and a tortoise called Topsey!

If you could be or do anything else - what?

I wanted to be one of the Roly Poly tap dancers on Les Dawson years ago but then he sadly died and they were disbanded.

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



Not sure that would work as this is probably the best time for women so far, hoping it is going to get better for all people in the future.

I could do a couple of days in Viking times if a noblewoman as they had the same rights as men, could have money, slaves and property.

Just a couple of days though as the sanitation and food was grim.

If you could have dinner with five famous people from history, who would they be?

Maria Montessori, Mary Seacole, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglas and Agatha Christie

What one word would you use to describe yourself?

Determined

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

Health issues keep popping up but I keep plodding on.

What are you most proud of accomplishing?

Making things better for folks in a variety of ways



How would you like to be remembered?

My gran used to say 'when I'm gone if it's not worse that's good and if it's better that's better' and I hope things are better for me having been here.

Cath Oddhayward

Thank you Cath for answering these questions and sharing your thoughts and recollections.

Focus: Features

Privilege

At the last Thinking Allowed meeting we were discussing Evil. Unfortunately, we really didn't get past first base, because of our inability to agree amongst ourselves what evil is or whether it actually exists at all and especially its relationship with the Devil. Maybe others would like to contribute their thoughts/answers to that question for inclusion in this magazine at a later date. One definition which I liked included its interrelationship with God. If God is the sum off all goodness, then the Devil has to be the sum off all evil. Unfortunately, this didn't get us any nearer to a real understanding of evil.

One side track that we explored at length was the famous quotation, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing", widely attributed to Edmund Burke and John F Kennedy. But how would one square this with pacifism and the war in Ukraine or, if you equate climate change to a real and present evil, the reluctance of people and Governments to do enough to prevent it, thereby leaving a dreadful legacy for our children and grandchildren. And so, the debate went on.

The other Sunday we sang a non-StF hymn, which included a verse, which is relevant to this discussion -

*Be kind within your circle, but look past what you see;
Be kind to those in trouble — the poor, the refugee.
The world is filled with violence; write letters, call out sin!
Don't ever sit in silence and let the evil win.
Encouraging us not to stand by as good people and let evil triumph.*

Then last Sunday was Education Sunday and the preacher's discourse included thoughts about welcoming little children into the Kingdom of God, regardless, which as any parent will tell you, is sometimes difficult to maintain on an ongoing basis. Working with children at any time can sometimes be a challenge and yet at the same time sometimes be a privilege.

Privilege is one of those words which evokes a mixed response. Its context is often perjorative, especially when associated with the 'privileged class' who live in a world where they believe they have special rights. However, it does have a separate but related meaning



describing a situation where a person expresses thanks for being allowed to do something extra special.

Whilst we were staying in Padstow earlier in the summer we had a privilege which is experienced by only a relatively small number of Methodists. We had lunch with an ex-minister, a Presbyterian who had ministered at our church in Birmingham when our children were teenagers. Having done several jobs in-between, she has now been appointed as Superintendent to the Wadebridge, Bodmin and Padstow Circuit from 1st September. We met at the Polzeath Methodist Church and had lunch amid the noise and the bustle of the Tube Station café, which operates from the sanctuary. The only church that I am aware of where there is a skateboard ramp in the place you would expect to find a pulpit and an altar table. It was a delight to see her again and we spent an interesting couple of hours catching up with our lives. As she is now local to Padstow, we may see her again and maybe even hear her preach again.



Soon after we returned from Padstow, we had another wonderful experience, part of an ongoing privilege. We arrived at our grandson's house to share jacket potatoes with the family, and we were greeted with a strange scenario, the children were cleaning

Mum's car! Apparently, they had seen a book in Waterstones which they had wanted, and which was beyond their combined savings to purchase and so a deal was made, and they had to clean the car on a couple of occasions to make up the difference. What a privilege it is to share in the growing up of grandchildren. When I look back, because I was often moving for a new job, neither of our parents were really able to share in the formative years of our children. A weekend here and few days there was the sum total of their involvement, with hindsight they missed so much.

There appears to me to be a relationship between the good versus evil debate and good and bad sides of privilege, which is also recorded by the gospel writers "to whom much is given, much is expected". Because to be effective in standing up to evil requires that we use all of the personal gifts that God has given to us. Likewise, to avoid the pitfalls of privilege and thinking oneself as special also requires a lifetime of using the best that

God had given to us. Cue another verse from the same non-StF hymn.

*Be kind in all your speaking and hear what others say.
Be open to Christ's teaching, and in all matters, pray.
Be gentle, loving, faithful and keep a humble mind.
Remember what is truthful. In everything be kind.*

We are reminded to resist evil and to resist the evil of believing oneself to be special.

Remember what is truthful. In everything be kind.

Peter Farley

Dylan's South Korean Adventure

Dylan Andrews had been selected as one of two from East Sussex to attend the World Scout Jamboree held in South Korea in August 2023. He had already done much to raise money himself plus he received financial support from Dorset Gardens and the Circuit towards his costs. Having recently returned here is story.



In the beginning, the first I heard of the Jamboree was from John & Helen our Scout Leaders here at Dorset Gardens, and I thought to myself 'that would be Cool'.

So I completed a form saying why I should go to the camp and some details about me and saying why I would be a good representative for East Sussex and the UK.

A couple of weeks later I went to the Selection Weekend Camp at Bushey Wood Scout Camp, Hailsham. They had to pick 30 young people from 90 to be the East Sussex contingent, we took part in



various activities, and we were watched constantly. I arrived as the only person from Brighton, the rest were from Lewes, Seaford, Eastbourne through to Hastings. Another few weeks went by, and we got an email saying that I had been selected for the trip and would have to start fundraising. I was overcome with joy.

Fundraising was tricky at first because I could not think of any big things to do. With the help of some massively kind donations from the Church and anonymous donations, which I am truly grateful for, my fundraising activities were underway. I did a game stall at the Queens Jubilee party in Dorset Gardens and then decided that my main fundraiser would be to cycle 160 miles. It is the distance from Seoul, the capital city of South Korea, to the Jamboree Camp. Thank you to everyone who supported me and funded me.

Over the nearly two years from selection to the actual trip I made good bonds with the other young people going on the trip, who are now my very close friends.

July 29th, 2023. The time came for the trip itself and we had to get up at 3am to meet up at 4.30 so that we could check all our kit, documents and say our goodbyes. Then it was on the coach to Heathrow, everyone was very excited. It was a two-hour flight to Munich where we had our changeover to the 12-hour flight to South Korea.

When we landed in Seoul we were welcomed with such warmth. We did so many fab things before the camp, we climbed the N-Seoul Tower, ate street food and enjoyed the heat, and ice creams definitely helped with that.

It was a four-hour drive to the camp which felt a lot longer in the heat. We set up camp and met others from all around the globe. The opening ceremony was great, and my friends and I had the best time. Unfortunately, the facilities and the food were not great, so after 3 days at the camp the UK Scout Association were first to make the decision to leave the site. (The monsoons had caused flooded areas, the 40-degree heat with no shade and poorly kept





sanitation could easily have caused bigger health problems). It was not as bad as you may have heard because the news made it sound worse than it was, but Scouts are resilient and always prepared.

After the camp we were back to Seoul when a Typhoon hit the country and everyone who was left at the camp had to evacuate. We did so many amazing things whilst in Seoul including going to Palaces, climbing a mountain with my

friends, water sports and a lot more. Some people even went to a cafe which had Meerkats that you could sit with while enjoying your drinks.

Finally the time came to depart from Korea on another 12-hour flight to Munich. Once we got there all onward flights were cancelled. It may seem like everything went wrong but I promise you we loved it, and it was the best thing I have ever done in my life. Our flight back to England came two days later, so we had a nice city break in Munich where we swam, explored, and went sightseeing. We split into 3 groups to fit us all on flights back to England and I was in the last group to arrive home to Sussex. This trip has been a once in a lifetime opportunity and again I thank everyone who helped me to get there.

The memory of the trip I will keep with me forever.

Dylan Andrews

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.

15. The Therapeutae

If you have never heard of the Therapeutae you will not be alone: although the Church historian Eusebius (c. 260/265-339) thought, wrongly, that they were early disciples of Mark. Of contemporaries, they are mentioned only by Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C. – c. 50 A.D.) and then only in one of his books, the *Contemplative Life*. I write about them to emphasize the diversity in Judaism in the Roman world at the time of Jesus, and I do so at this stage because of the similarities with the Essenes about whom I wrote last time. Indeed, some have thought of them as a branch of the Essenes. However, as Philo did not think of them

like this and as he describes a few significant differences, we can follow the consensus of modern scholarship and treat them as distinct. Like other Jewish groups such as the Essenes and Pharisees, as well as the early Christians, they were trying to answer the same kind of question: 'How to come close to God and his commandments?'. For the Therapeutae the answer lay in meditation.

Philo stated that they lived in many parts of the world, but 'the best of them' lived near Alexandria, by Lake Mariot when it was a freshwater lake. As he was writing in Alexandria it would have been easy to check his statements, so it must be assumed that he was reasonably accurate. They were a small group from the affluent and educated section of Alexandrian Jewish society who viewed themselves as disciples of Moses and followed the commandments. One of the most obvious differences with the Essenes was that the group contained both men and women who followed the same way of life, although meeting in separate sections. They were probably celibate, the women definitely were. When someone joined the group they gave up all their property but lived in separate, simple houses that were not too close to each other. Each house had a dedicated room of study where each person spent most of the day in studying 'the laws and the sayings inspired through the prophets, and psalms and other things'. They also composed hymns. Like Philo, they interpreted the scriptures allegorically. They also studied the writings of those who had started allegorical understanding of the Bible.

Having spent six days in solitary study they gathered on the seventh day, the Sabbath, where a senior member of group gave a talk. Both men and women attended these meetings, although in separate sections. They had two daily prayers, morning and evening. In the morning they focussed on the idea, 'that their minds may be filled with the heavenly light', and in the evening the focus was on the idea, 'that the soul, being entirely lightened and relieved of the burden of the outward senses', may be able to fully appreciate truth. Between these times they studied but it was a form of meditation. It is far removed from the Pharisaic,



and later rabbinic, approach to interpreting and applying the Torah.

At festivals they heard a sermon, sang hymns, ate bread (with salt), and drank water – like a Methodist Love Feast! Men and women sang together in separate choirs making, as Philo commented, 'a truly musical symphony'. They only had one meal a day, and that sufficient to stave off hunger and thirst, and they wore one simple garment. Philo does not explain where the bread or clothing came from. Like Essenes, but unlike almost everyone else at that time, they rejected slavery: all service within the community was done on an entirely voluntary basis.

So, here we have a group of Jews who rejected slavery, lived a very simple, contemplative life, where men and women each studied and worshipped. The equality of women as philosophical members was very unusual in ancient sectarian groups, the Pythagoreans were another example.

Next time we shall look at almost the complete opposite, those who sought armed revolution against Rome.

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.

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/>

5. Learn

We learn more about our faith

Jesus calls us to be disciples, which is a like being an *apprentice*. We need to learn, grow, change, be surprised by the master.

There are lots of things that can block learning. We might be over-nostalgic and sceptical of the unknown. Or get stuck in an ideology that limits curiosity. Or just get distracted. But disciples are learners, by definition, so stay open-minded!



Simple things to try

1. Ask a friend to recommend a good Christian book.
2. Subscribe to some podcasts - here are some of the Evangelism and Growth team's favourites:
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/>
The Bible for Normal People at:
<https://thebiblefornormalpeople.com/podcast/>
The RobCast at:
<https://robbell.com/podcast/>
For the Love at
<https://jenhatmaker.com/podcast/>
3. Keep a journal and make notes on each book that you read.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39Xq4tSQ31A&t=834s>

Understanding the Progress Pride Flag

At least three of our churches prominently display the progress pride flag outside their buildings and two have recently experienced damage in what is likely to have been hate crimes. Do we understand what the design and colours actually denote. We looked into the design and development of this flag.



The original Pride flag was created by American artist and gay rights activist Gilbert Baker, and first displayed in 1978 to be a symbol for the LGBT community.

Forty-three years later the Pride flag is still a widely used and recognised, however, over the years the original rainbow flag has been redesigned, with some within LGBTQ+ movements arguing it needed to better represent and reflect more communities.

In 2017, Philadelphia's Office of LGBT Affairs added black and brown stripes to the Pride flag to recognise people of colour.



One year later, an artist called Daniel Quasar released a redesign of the Pride flag, called the Progress Pride flag, which was widely shared on social media.

It included black, brown, pink, pale blue and white stripes, to represent marginalised people of colour in the LGBTQ+ community, as well as the trans community, and those living with

HIV/AIDS.

"The arrow points to the right to show forward movement, while being along the left edge shows that progress still needs to be made." explained Daniel Quasar.

In 2021, Valentino Vecchiotti of Intersex Equality Rights UK, shared an updated version to the Progress Pride flag, which included a yellow triangle and purple circle to represent the intersex community. Intersex people are born with a combination of male and female traits, including hormones, chromosomes and genitals.

Focus: Autumn 2023

A look back at some Autumn events:

August Circuit Together Service

On 13th August we gathered as a Circuit at Stanford Avenue to bid farewell to Revd Deborah Cornish and Cynthia Tudor (both of whom have written to you as featured earlier) and thanks were given to Mick Hickman retiring from his role as Secretary of the Circuit Meeting. Luckily we retain his unrivalled knowledge of the Methodist Constitutional Practice and Discipline (CPD). Revd Nick Oborski (Synod Secretary) represented the District to thank Deborah for her role as Assistant Chair of Southern District.



Special September services at Patcham

On 10th September it was just like old times as we welcomed Elisabeth Brooks (now of course Reverend) back to lead our service, with Chris and Simeon Brooks providing the music. It also co-incided with the 90th birthdays of Avril Gutsell (Elisabeth's mother) and Barbara Walker whose birthdays were actually within a few days of each other.





Our Harvest flower display was provided by Christine Ashby. At our service on 17th September we collected 32kg of food which we were able to donate to the Brighton & Hove city mission food bank, plus also a sizable amount of food and other items which went to the Voices in Exile appeal.

Alan Imms

Methodist's like to sing

Deeptima organised another BIG SING on Saturday 9th September at Dorset Gardens, with the theme of praise and thanksgiving. Ken Smith provided pianist accompaniment. This was so popular that another Advent Big Sing will follow at DG on Tuesday 12th December from 1.30 to 3pm.



It's church, Jim, but not as we know it!

Our first venture into our **Circuit Earth Church** took place on 30th September; a beautiful sunny Saturday afternoon.

We gathered at the Rev Cynthia Park's home where, in the garden, we shared a time of preparing with a reading and prayer surrounded by birdsong and butterflies and, high overhead, we spotted what we thought was probably a buzzard.

Moving to Withdean Park, we were met by the reps from the Friends of Withdean Park group and the Brighton & Hove City Park Rangers. They had come equipped to do battle with the somewhat overgrown undergrowth around the lilac trees.

Unloading the pickup there were loppers, forks, secateurs, first aid kit, water and, essentially, biscuits!

After a briefing, we set to work clearing brambles and nettles as well as the occasional elder which had grown too close. Opening up the area to allow the lilacs to breathe to help them achieve



their full potential. In the course of our work we came across a toad and a vole, we really felt very close to nature. Although working together as a team and helping one another, I found I was quietly meditative in the space, I suppose a form of informal prayer.



The couple of hours we were there flew by and we were surprised at how much we had done in the time. It was very satisfying, and our work was very much appreciated.

We then went back to Cynthia's where we discussed our experiences, closed with a prayer and in good Methodist tradition, finished by enjoying a reviving cup of tea and homemade brownies. Many thanks Cynthia and Murray for your generous hospitality.

But is it church? We were certainly enfolded by the prayers before and afterwards, and our thinking about God in nature was stimulated by our readings. Our work was to the good of the community. We felt close to nature, and in my eyes, that is close to God. So I would say, yes, it is church, but perhaps not as we currently know it

Sue Harrington

Going Potty at Stanford Avenue

Stanford Avenue Church are always finding ways to reduce, recycle and reuse items, so after the success of their Flowerpot Festival last year, they organised a second on Saturday 30th September and once again some very inventive sculptures were on show (see below) resulting smiles all round.

Liz Coblenz



Harvest Happenings



Woodingdean had their Harvest Service on 8th October with a table with donations and flowers. It was a lovely service led by Andy and the food donations were taken to the local food bank, which we support all year. The potted flowers were taken to members of the congregation who are unable to attend services. **Terry Hammond**



Meanwhile the pictures below from Harvest services at Hove and Dorset Gardens.



Local Preachers' Study Day & Circuit Together Service

What a 'WEEKEND' we had at Dorset Gardens on October 14th and 15th.

The local preachers of our circuit had been looking forward to their bi-annual training day, which this year was to be led by Revd Harvey Richardson and Revd Andrew Pratt.

On the Saturday morning Harvey opened the first session in which he gave us an insight of the importance which music has played in his life and this has led to an overall increasing relevance to and participation in worship. In seeking to emphasise his point in this respect we were reminded that each of us is a 'body' and part of the Church (i.e. the body of Christ). Our appreciation of music and its use is of paramount importance in our worship.



*'Forget God Above
Forget God Around you here.
Put God Before you in person.'*

In a world of sacred music around us, such is a very present help and assurance in our witness of and mission of the Gospel. Following the above and after coffee we had our second session given by Revd Andrew Pratt who is a prolific hymn writer and as one would expect his theme was the importance of 'The Word'. Andrew started to reflect on his earlier life prior to finding the Church, studying and lecturing in Botany (a profession, thoroughly dependent on true delivery of the word.) On finding the wonder of the Church's message, again in the word Andrew really started to find his calling and to illustrate his point he gave us in worship his poetic words:

*Day by day without a word
The sky declares God's glory!
The sun, the moon and all the stars
So quietly tell the story.
May the thoughts and words I say,
Please you, God, as much today.*

These words convey much of what we are about! After the wonderful day on Saturday the weekend continued with a wonderful Sunday Circuit Together Service which contained many of Andrew's hymns and sermons and this was crowned with a celebration of the Lord's Supper led by Harvey with over 80 people receiving the Sacraments.



After the Benediction we were surprised when being presented with a Hymn of Sanctuary which was so appropriate for us.

Ken Smith

Big Archive Give Away

As was explained at the Circuit Meeting in September, we arranged to offer freely, at our Circuit Together service at Dorset Gardens on Sunday 15 October, all the spare archive material that we had. We started at 9.45 with the full contents of two box-files, one shoe box, and one larger cardboard box. We ended with by not being able to fill the larger cardboard box. I was especially pleased that most of the copies of Outreach, the magazine of the Dome Mission, published between 1968 and the mid-1990s, disappeared. One couple, visiting on the day, had been members of MethSoc between 1966 and 1971 and were delighted to take away all the Outreach of that period. Others took copies to give to housebound members who had been at the Dome Mission many years ago. Yet others found copies with photos of themselves looking far, far younger!! The Revd Harvey Richardson was delighted to find the 1971 edition for which he had written a letter when he was a theological student.

Other material also went rapidly. All the copies of the Dome Mission Hymn Sheets for May 1921 (I have no idea why we had so many just for that month) have gone, including one to the Revd Andrew Pratt to add to his wonderful hymn collection. Local Preachers took old Plans, including those from the Wesleyan Circuit in 1902-1903: Bob Hinton was pleased to find the first Plan on which he appeared as a preacher in the Brighton and Hove Circuit.

I must re-emphasise that all these items were 'spare'. Our archives are at the County Record Office at The Keep, near the Amex Stadium, with much material also at Dorset Gardens. This is available for research. See page 30 in Focus for how this can be accessed.

The whole venture today was a great success, well surpassing my expectations. I must thank Ian Lamb and Steve Preston for their very great help in getting everything set up, and put away!

Mick Hickman, Circuit Archivist

Other Autumn occurrences:



Macmillan Fundraising

At the end of September Dorset Gardens hosted a coffee afternoon and the day after Hove held a coffee morning. An array of homemade cakes and Indian takeaway meals resulted in a good turnout at both and together they raised at least £422, an

impressive result for such a truly worthy cause. Thanks to everyone who came and supported (below left at Hove).



- * Above Sue Jacobs is in women's World Cup final mode when leading worship on Hove on Sunday, 20 August.
- * On Pride Sunday Lai from Hove made rainbow striped cakes.



- * As sheep play such a big part in the Bible, Ruth Samur shared this Hinton/ Samur photo (above left) with Shaun at Stanmer Park on a glorious Autumn day. Did you spot any others?
- * Meanwhile, Hove shared in a true celebration of the love with the baptism of Harmony (above middle & right).



- * Deb & friends provided music while guests enjoyed a cream tea at Hove at an end of Summer concert.
- * Lai making another cake to celebrate Andy's birthday at Hove.
- * Finally, congrats to Jonathan Gravestock who participated in an international table tennis competition held in Wels, Austria; held to raise awareness of the benefits of playing ping pong for the Parkinson's community.



Mission Focus

Circuit of Sanctuary Refugee Project News

After a break for the summer, Project Reps from all over our Circuit recently met up at Cynthia Park's home for a wonderful planning meeting in person! (We usually Zoom!). We are moved and happy that recently the Circuit Meeting agreed to a 2-year extension to the project. All 5 churches so recently became Churches of Sanctuary – thanks to everyone for putting your kindness and compassion into action with such a range of activities, events, fundraising and donating. Plus our whole circuit is building up such awareness and knowledge about how to provide a welcoming environment for everyone, in our troubled world.

We had a range of events this Autumn.

On 22nd September, Jollof cafe, run by Refugees and hosted by Dorset Gardens MC. The hall was full and there was a real buzz of conversation. The food was amazing, Egyptian Moussaka and vegetable curry were followed by a delicious Tres Leches (milk cake). Ruth and Ibrahim planned to share a dessert but it was so tasty we decided to have one each! So we will definitely attend again if this becomes a regular event. More photos and details about the Jollof café via their Facebook page at <https://m.facebook.com/jollofcafe>



Jollof Café

4d · 🌐

The Jollof #dreamteam from last night 🥰 Watch this space for our next evening event ⭐



Tres leches cake (milk cake)

Terry Hammond from Woodingdean reported: "On Saturday 14th October we had our Harvest Tea and enjoyed the Ukrainian Ladies Choir singing a range of Ukrainian folk songs; they were excellent and joined us for tea after their performances.

Looking ahead we are planning a stall at Patcham Christmas Fair and selling goods at Stanford Avenue's Christmas & Craft Fair on 18th November. Dorset Gardens Advent Hymn Sing on Tuesday 12th Dec will give any donations to the Circuit Project. There are a couple more ideas which may come to fruition too, so please watch your local news notes for details nearer the time. It will be fantastic to have attendees from across our Circuit of Sanctuary, you are always welcome.

Ruth will speak about our experience of going on the 'Church of Sanctuary' journey at a Brighton & Hove Faith in Action event this month 'Becoming a Place of Sanctuary'. The Soroptimists' Southeast branch (Ruth had to google that one!) are planning a similar workshop to hear our story and others, next Spring.

In 2024 keep an eye on your local news notes as we firm up our plans to:

- ◆ Re-launch the Circuit Project at a Saturday morning Community Breakfast at Hove – date TBC. Everyone across the Circuit is invited.
- ◆ Offer a Circuit Workshop 'Speak Up for Sanctuary' at Woodingdean Methodist Church on Saturday 27th January 2024 from 14:00 to 16.30 pm. We plan to show a 45-minute recorded webinar on this topic from the City of Sanctuary website, then feedback/ discuss together after a cuppa and biscuits. Ruth Samur, who attended the live webinar will lead. Ruth has checked there are no Seagulls fixtures on that Saturday afternoon!
- ◆ Fundraise with an inclusive Sponsored Walk – walk the whole Circuit or half the Circuit from church to church OR just walk for one block from your own church – in the spirit of Captain Sir Tom Moore, just do as you are able and let's see what amazing funds can be raised to support people from around the world who have made some very difficult journeys to get here.

If the range of events & activities, we reel off in these updates make you think you or your church are 'not doing much', take a step back, look at what you have achieved so far and what we all continue to do.

The City of Sanctuary panel gave us such positive feedback about the amazing initiatives, experiences and welcome that our churches have built

Brighton & Hove Methodist



Circuit of Sanctuary

up over the years, even before the current Circuit Refugee Project started.

Remember, it may be as simple as does your church support a foodbank? The chances are that refugees and asylum seekers will access it, even if it's not for a specific refugee or asylum seeker charity.

Do you have the 'Refugees and Asylum Seekers are Welcome' poster up? Even if people are not coming in, they will know we support them and that there is a safe space they can access should they need it. You are creating a better, welcoming community. Ruth is researching an additional poster with 'Welcome' in a selection of different languages, maybe you could display this too?

Yes, there will always be things we can do to extend our engagement with the Circuit Project, but if you're encouraging people in your congregations and wider communities to go to events which the project is part of, or communicating updates from the project, remembering the project in prayer, raising funds or raising awareness, you are doing a good job. Thank you, keep up the good work!

Ruth Samur & Sue Harrington

Circuit Refugee project Co-Leads

and all the Circuit Project Church Representatives:

Kay Harwood (Patcham) **Terry Hammond** (Woodingdean) &

Rob Patching (Stanford Avenue).

Business Focus

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) events

On Sunday 19th November from : 1.00pm - 4.00pm at Patcham Methodist Church.

An in-person **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

Training facilitated by Deeptima Massey.

This training is mandatory for church/circuit stewards, local preachers, presbyters, lay workers if you haven't already completed the Methodist online course:

<https://mcb.theologyx.com/course/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-foundation-module/>

The aims of this engaging and interesting training are as follows:

- a) For us to collectively understand the importance of EDI to the gospel and our Christian faith
- b) To equip us to treat each person with dignity and respect, free from discrimination
- c) To celebrate the rich diversity of humanity and recognise that

all people are made in the image of God and have gifts, talents and skills to offer

d) To share experiences and learn from each other so that we can make our church (buildings) a safe space for all

In advance of the training session, you will be asked to complete 2 short tasks of around 20 minutes each.

RSVP by 13th November to Steve Preston

steve.preston@brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk

There is a limited number of places so first come first served.



The Southeast District are pleased to facilitate three new online EDI talks (via Zoom) on:

a) **Just as I am: The joys and challenges of being a gay minister** on Thu, Nov 2, 2023 7:30pm

b) **Understanding and Supporting LGBT+ People** on Thu, Nov 9, 2023 7:30pm

c) **Bringing life in all its fullness: ending HIV stigma & discrimination** by our very own Heather Leake Date on Wed, Nov 15, 2023 7:30pm

All three online talks are opportunities to hear someone's experiences rather than a chance to debate theological differences, and so there is a participant agreement to sign up to when booking.

To register for any/all three talks please click on the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-events-2391719>

Dates for your diary

- Saturday 18th November **Winter Celebration Concert** with Martlets Celebration Choir at Hove Methodist Church, doors open 1.30pm, music 2pm to 4pm (see poster).
- Saturday 18th November, **Christmas & Craft Fair** at Stanford Avenue Methodist Church.
- Thursday 23rd November **Circuit Meeting**, 7.30pm at Woodingdean

- Saturday 25th November, **Christmas Fair** at Patcham Methodist Church, 11.00am to 4pm.
- Sunday 26th November **Healing Service** 6.30pm at Dorset Gardens and are open to all in the circuit. They will be led by Revd Cynthia Park and Shirley Veater and will be quiet, meditative services that will include communion and the opportunity for the laying on of hands. Next dates 28 January, 25 February, 26 March and 28 April.
- Saturday 2nd December **Women of Note Christmas Concert** 3pm at Hove Methodist Church.
- Tuesday 12th December **Advent BIG sing** at Dorset Gardens from 1.30-3pm. Doors open 12.30 pm, bring a packed lunch. Tea, coffee and cake provided. Pianist Tony Leonard. If you would like to nominate a hymn please contact Deeptima Massey, deeptima@rediffmail.com by 30th November.
- Saturday 27th January 2024 Circuit Workshop '**Speak Up for Sanctuary**' at Woodingdean Methodist Church from 2pm to 4.30pm.
- Monday 19th Feb 2024 **Local Preachers' Meeting**, 7.30pm at Woodingdean
- 14th to 16th March 2024
Barnstormers present '**Legally Blond**' the musical at Patcham Methodist Church. Performances will be on 14th, 15th and 16th of March 2024 at 19:30 with a matinee performance on Saturday 16th at 14:00. Tickets are now on sale from our tickets page so get booking before they're all gone. We can't wait to see you there! <https://tickets.barnstormers.org.uk/>
- Monday 18th March 2024 **Circuit Meeting** 7.30pm at Hove



Special Services this Christmas

Dorset Gardens

Sunday 10th December	10.30am	All Age & Gift Service
Christmas Eve	4.00pm	Carol Service with Village Metropolitan Community Church
Christmas Day	10.30am	Christmas Celebration
Sunday 7th January	10.30am	Covenant & Communion.

Hove

Sunday 3rd December	10.30am	All Age & Gift Service
Sunday 17th December	4.00pm	Carol Service
Christmas Eve	2.00pm	Christingle Service
Christmas Day	10.00am	Family Service
Sunday 14th January	10.30am	Covenant & Communion.

Patcham

Sunday 17th December	3.00pm	Carol Service tbc
Christmas Day	10.30am	Christmas Celebration
Sunday 7th January	10.30am	Covenant & Communion.

Stanford Avenue

Sunday 17th December	6.30 pm	Carol Service
Christmas Eve	10.30am	All Age worship
Christmas Day	10.00am	Christmas Celebration
Sunday 21st January	10.30am	Covenant & Communion.

Woodingdean

Sunday 17th December	4.00pm	Carol Service
Christmas Eve	10.30am	Morning worship
Christmas Day	10.0am	Christmas Celebration
Sunday 14th January	10.30am	Covenant & Communion.

Circuit Services

Sunday 3rd December	6.00pm	World Aids Day Service at Dorset Gardens with Village Metropolitan Community Church
Sunday 28th January	10.30am	Circuit Together service At Hove Methodist Church
	6.30pm	Healing Service at DG



New Circuit Archives Deposit

Over the years I have accumulated a fair amount of material related to Methodism in Brighton and Hove. Much of this was done to help me write my two histories of Brighton and Hove Methodism, & of Dorset Gardens. It also includes a lot of material from Tony Funnell who was the Archivist of the B&H circuit before merger in 1997. We continued as joint archivists of the new Circuit from 1997 until his death. Outside the Record Office it must be the fullest collection of such material.

With the agreement of the Revd Andy Lowe and of Dorset Gardens, and the help of Steve Preston, we have managed to create a specific collection of material related to Brighton and Hove and house it in a lockable room in the basement at Dorset Gardens, the 'mother church' of Methodism in the city.

It is housed in the bookcase, cupboard, and filing cabinet and contains copies of material that is held on our behalf at the County Record Office at the Keep, Brighton. It does not contain confidential information nor minutes, nor treasurers' account books. The catalogue is available on our website and includes books, photographs, copies of newspaper reports church magazines, etc. In addition the scrapbook of the Dome compiled by David Rutter are also housed there.

The idea is that anyone in the Circuit will be able to go and look at it and use it. Because it is in a locked room and for obvious security reasons please email Angela Millanzi at Dorset Gardens to arrange a visit, which can be done on most weekday mornings. Because of the size of the room the most practical thing to do would be to take whatever you want to look at out of the room upstairs into the main entrance area of Dorset Gardens and look at it there: remembering to put it back where you found it and to lock the room afterwards returning the key to Angela in the office.

If you have any questions please do ask me.

Mick Hickman, Circuit Archivist



Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit

World AIDS Day Service of Remembrance and Hope

Sunday
3 December 2023
6pm
at
Dorset Gardens
Methodist
Church
BN2 1SA



All are welcome to this service which is co-hosted by the Sussex HIV Chaplaincy and The Village Metropolitan Community Church and will be led by Revd Heather Leake Date and Revd Michael Hydes.

Also on Sunday 26 November, Lunch Positive invite you to a **World Aids Day Community lunch** at Dorset Gardens Methodist Church. *Lunch Positive is a voluntary community organisation which runs a weekly lunch club every Friday for people living with or affected by HIV. They provide a welcoming, safe and supportive space for people to meet, socialise, make friends, share a healthy meal and peer support.*



Winter Celebration Concert

with **Martlets** 
Good Vibrations Choir

Singing songs through the decades, cool classics, with a sprinkle of festive cheer.
Everyone welcome.

Tea and cake!


Prize raffle!


Suggested donation £5, raising funds for Martlets Hospice

SATURDAY 18TH NOVEMBER

doors open 1.30pm, music 2-4pm

Hove Methodist Church
Portland Road, Hove BN3 5DR

Copy Deadline

Please submit your articles & photos to Steve Preston for our 2024 Spring Edition by 21st January. Thank you.

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