

The Link

Between you and

Hockley and Hawkwell Methodist Church



Editor's Note

Many thanks to all who have given me articles for this issue of The Link. Do keep them coming.....the deadline for our June/July magazine is Monday 15th May.

Here is a QR Code link to our Church Web Site.



The views expressed in this magazine are those of the various authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the Church Trustees

Issue: 186

Message from the Manse

As we begin to reflect on our last Easter here in Rayleigh, we've noticed how we are starting to be asked "Are you looking forward to your move?" At which point I take in a deep breath, and answer, "I've not really had a chance to think about it yet!"

The move for us has many emotions, yes we are looking forward to being closer to our family, and that was always the main reason for our move. BUT there are also feelings of loss. Having been here for nearly 5 years you have all become part of my wider family, and we care for you deeply. To allow for whoever comes in and takes pastoral charge of you in September, we have to sever that link, and that will be hard for us, as much as it will be hard for you. The large unwritten rule book of the Methodist Church, the one that is contained in word and mouth and tradition, states that a Presbyterian is not allowed to return to the area for at least one year. (You could of course see us in November by volunteering to be Stewards at 3Generate though!)

We are also feeling very difficult over the lack of a Methodist Presbyterian to replace me in September, and I am still working hard with Peter and Kathy to seek a "Lay Pastor & Preacher" and also hopefully some hours from a "Community & Youth Worker". We have already been successful in getting approval for an OPP – a One Person Project for Rochford Community Hub, so we know there is money out there, down the back of the Methodist Sofa for us to access. Peter made a promise at Circuit Meeting that no church would be without some form of minister in September.

To balance the loss that we are all feeling, we must remember the people in the Hereford (South & East) circuit, who will be going through the same feelings for their minister and superintendent Revd Deborah Cornish, as she and her husband prepare to move to Brighton and Dorset Gardens Methodist Church where I was on placement in 2010. Hopefully they will also be excited at the prospect of Caroline and me coming.

It is Easter soon, and we are death and resurrection people. I found myself telling the children at assembly this week that Easter is a time of happiness and sadness. Sadness at the death of Jesus and happiness and rejoicing at the resurrection and the promise of Jesus being alive within us and eternal life.

Let us look forward to our last Easter together, and share in the sadness and happiness, and look to the future, whatever it may bring and rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus and the promise of eternal life.

One of the things I am looking forward to this Easter is our Good Friday service at Our Lady of Ransom. We have a good working relationship between the churches

in Rayleigh, but this is really the cherry on the cake, for us to be able to share together in worship in a Roman Catholic Church. We thank Father Paul for extending an invite to us all. (Father Paul was in our congregation and took part in the Good Friday service at Rayleigh Methodist in 2016).

This Easter I want us to ponder on one of the new hymns in Singing the Faith – Jesus the carpenter. It is a lovely hymn that grounds us in remembering that Jesus was human (as well as divine) and had an ordinary job, and was an ordinary bloke. The song reminds us we are the other workers he calls to join in his ministry. It reminds us to be courageous as he was, and that it all ended triumphantly.

275

*Jesus the carpenter, hanging on Calvary,
nails through your feet and your work-hardened hands —
wood you have worked with and wood is your destiny —
paying the price of our sinful demands.*

- 1 You came to our world as a part of a family,
living and learning the carpenter's trade.
You followed your father's instructions so faithfully,
shaping and crafting the yokes that you made :
- 2 You called other workers to join in your ministry,
laying rough hands on the sick and the lame.
You taught of God's love with such power and authority,
people who knew you believed you insane :
- 3 You faced with great courage the open hostility
coming from those who believed they were right.
They stripped you and beat you and laughed at you finally,
thinking your death was the end of the fight :
- 4 But we, who now know that you ended triumphantly
working with wood till your task was complete,
can come to your cross with our hope and humility,
laying our pride at the carpenter's feet :

Marjorie Dobson (b. 1940)

After Easter Caroline and I will have to start making some preparations for our move, and a big change in our lives again. Thank you for your continuing support for us, and we appreciate your care and prayers at this time. However, try not to ask "Are you looking forward to the move?" Remember, that even after we have gone, we are all still part of one family, God's family, workers in his ministry, and we will all work courageously, remembering that God will triumph in the end.

Every Blessing for a joyous Easter.

Phil

Church Council

At its February meeting, Council members:

- * heard that the Circuit had so far been unsuccessful in securing a replacement for Rev Phil Warrey who would be moving to Ledbury in August. Permission had been given to seek a pastor from outside the Methodist church if necessary;
- * accepted a suggestion to consider the employment of a Community Worker on a part-time basis with particular emphasis on youth work;
- * noted that District Synod would be meeting at Rayleigh on 6 May when assistance in staging the event was needed;
- * thanked Margaret Byford for her work as Church Steward and wished her well on her move to Potters Bar;
- * agreed to put in hand a refurbishment scheme for the church kitchen under the guidance of a subcommittee of Council members;
- * approved a £1 per hour increase in hire charges for non-church activities;
- * asked the Finance and Property Committee to look into the possibility of rationalising the storage of chairs on the premises;
- * noted that the Church Anniversary would be held on 25 June and agreed that proceeds from the associated Gift Day should be devoted to Church funds;

**Michael Deedman,
Secretary to the Church Council**

Annual Church Meeting

Donations from the church members who enjoyed lunch together after the Annual Church Meeting on 18 March came to more than the cost of the meal itself. The difference was just £18 but was added to a donation from church funds which enabled £100 to be sent in response to the Disaster Emergency Committee's current appeal for East Africa Famine Relief. Being well fed ourselves on the day, this was a good opportunity to remember the plight of others so much less fortunate

Michael Deedman

Financial Update

The following notes supplement the Treasurer's Report in the Annual Church Reports for 2016-17.

- The Circuit Treasurer has recently reminded all Church Treasurers that it is a statutory requirement for the weekly offerings, together with all other income allocated to the Church Fund, to be used in the first instance to pay the circuit assessment. Standing Order 650(4) states:

'The first charge on the General Church Fund shall be the sums required of the Local Church by the assessment of the Circuit Meeting'.

- Hockley's assessment for the financial year 2017-18 is £18,897, a rise of £900 on the current year. This means that our average weekly offerings need to increase by £75 a month, some £15 of which will be recovered via Gift Aid. This increase needs to begin in May because the first instalment of the 2017-18 assessment is payable in August this year.
- At present a church's assessment is determined by considering its membership and weekly offerings, including Gift Aid. A recent Circuit Meeting decided that this method should be reviewed and that if any change was recommended, and subsequently agreed by the Circuit Meeting, it should be applied for the financial year 2018-19.

Stan Rae
Church Treasurer

Resident Caretaker?

I had already been to open up the church hall for a party and had spoken to the little girl who was having the party. I returned later to lock up the hall and as they were not quite ready to leave I sat down in one of the large chairs in the coffee room. The little girl came up to me and told me all about her party. She then said where is your bedroom? I know that sometimes we all feel that we have been at the church for a full day but she felt sure that I lived there.

Her Mum and I had a good laugh about it as we told her that I had just come along to lock the door.

Carolyn Sturgess

ActionAid - letter received by one of our church members

Dear Supporter

I send you warm greetings from my village here in Mombasa, Kenya where I live with my six children and three grandchildren. My name is Janet Sanga and I am 54 years old. Lizzie Kabeyu from ActionAid has asked me to tell you how your generous support of ActionAid's work through 'The Next Step' in Kenya has helped transform my life and that of my community.

For many years I kept poultry to feed my family, but I found them really difficult to rear. However, when ActionAid started, working in our community, helping us to improve our lives, I took the opportunity to learn new skills and joined the newly established ActionAid Poultry Keeping Group. That was back in 2012. The group consisted of me and 19 other people, each of us contributed one chicken to the group's flock. Over the course of the first year the chickens bred and our flock increased to 50.

We were so excited with our success. At the end of that first year we sold 30 of our chickens for £4 each. We used this money to buy medicine and food for our remaining chickens and opened a bank account where we could deposit the extra money we had made selling our chickens.

As the number of our chickens increased, we approached ActionAid and asked if they could provide us with more chicken rearing training. They agreed and trained us how to build poultry houses, control common diseases, select good breeds, how to make chicken feed rather than buy it, plus marketing skills to ensure we get the best prices for our birds.

To ensure the long term development of our group, in 2014, ActionAid linked us with the Mombasa county government's agriculture development support programme. Through this programme we have been provided with building materials for a poultry house and follow up trainings on best practices. In 2016, we received a further 103 chickens. Our poultry group has gone from success to success, we recently sold a further 50 chickens at £4 each, plus 300 eggs.

Another benefit of belonging to the group is that each member keeps 30-40 chickens at home. Using the knowledge and skills I have learnt at the poultry group, I am able to take good care of my chickens. They are providing me with a steady income that has helped me meet the needs of my family, such as paying for their education, medicines and food. My whole family is delighted with this new scheme and the benefits it has brought to our home. My husband helps me care for the chickens and with transporting them to and from the market.

I am also a keen member of other ActionAid/groups, including the Sauti ya Wanawake [The Voice of Women]. Women's Movement which is helping fight the injustices women face whilst helping us build the confidence to have a voice in the future development of our communities

I really thank ActionAid for supporting us and uplifting our lives.

Thank you very much,

Janet

PS I'm enclosing a picture of me feeding my chickens



The Sauti ya Wanawake Women's Movement started in 2001. It aims to create a safe space for women to meet and discuss the issues that affect them.

To date the movement has over 6,500 members. It has been instrumental in reducing and preventing cases of violence against women and children, and has provided guidance and support to women who have undergone physical and sexual violence. Group members also mentor young girls in their communities on reproductive health.

Thanks to your support of the 'Next Step' in Kenya we are helping women like Janet Sanga increase their income and live a sustainable life.

Thursday Social Club

Have you ever thought that as people get older they get less competitive? Don't you believe it. This was evident as we all met at the home of Chris and Olive on Thursday 19th January for "A Games Evening." A number of games were played with no quarter given, even by octogenarians. Table football evoked deadly rivalries reminiscent of many a local derby match. Air hockey was another brutal game with rules broken consistently and needing a very strong referee. Golf was a little more genteel as was bagatelle bringing back memories of yesteryear. With fitness levels being challenged we then retired to the lounge for our recuperative cups of tea together with an assortment of energy giving cakes. Thank you Chris and Olive for an entertaining evening.

On Thursday 2nd February we met at the church for a talk by David Clarke on "Some of my favourite gardens." A number of shots were shown of gardens from near and far. Amongst the gardens displayed one of my favourites was Compton Acres. It is many years since I visited this garden and when staying at Bournemouth we always made the short trip to Poole and if you are in the area it is well worth a visit.

With much of our coastline disappearing into the sea each year, the name of Happisburgh, near Stalham in Suffolk, is often heard. There are magnificent gardens nearby at Ruston East and the views of this garden must be seen while you can. Fountains Abbey is a well known place of interest but the gardens surrounding this historic site should be visited too. Many more gardens were shown as it just goes to show how lucky we are in this country having so many beautiful places to visit. As always, a most interesting talk by David.

The Anchor at Danbury was our venue during Valentines Day week as we met together for a lunchtime meal on Wednesday 15th February. A number of us met first at Hyde Hall for a coffee and an opportunity to walk around their impressive gift shop. As we have visited this public house a number of times we all found the venue without too many problems. Our selected meals had been advised to the staff a few days earlier which allowed for us all to eat our meals without any long delays for individuals. If you have not visited this establishment before, it is certainly recommended, especially if you like your food to be big helpings. For people with lots of stamina, go for a starter, main meal and a dessert. After that you will not need to eat in the evening.

When I used to work for an insurance brokers in Witham, I used to drive to work giving a lift to a good friend, Nick Hart who lives in Hawkwell. On Thursday March 2nd we met at the home of Stan and Joyce as Nick came along to give a talk on "Havens Hospice." On the drive home from Witham, Nick's daughter, Katie, often rang to speak to her dad on his mobile phone. I never met Katie but it was clear that Katie and Nick had a very strong father and daughter relationship.

Competitive time again but on this occasion it was our brain power that would take centre stage as we met at the home of Kay and Michael on Thursday March 16th for one of their exacting quizzes. We were tested on news headlines, states of America, celebrity photos, musicals, obscure object identification and well known phrases. These rounds were most enlightening as the highest scoring rounds were celebrities and musicals. What a learned lot we are. We will now all be going on a course to identify the exact location of every state in the United States of America. A most entertaining quiz by Kay and Michael which certainly made us think.

Next Meetings:

Thursday 30th March - A talk by City of London Guide, David Williams at church 8.15 p.m.

Wednesday 12th April - A visit to Southchurch Hall - further details to follow.

Ray Williams

Church Family

Welcome

To everyone entering our church doors; may you enjoy friendship and fellowship.

Illness

Our thoughts and prayers are with all who are unwell, having hospital treatment or facing difficult times. Especially we think of Harold Collingridge.

Bereavement

Our love, prayers and sympathy to all who mourn the loss of a loved one; thinking especially of Sheila Hayman and Beryl Beresford and their families.

Congratulations

To Anne and Colin Sains who celebrated their Ruby (40th) Wedding Anniversary on 26th March.

Warm Wishes

To Margaret and Stuart on their move to Potters Bar.

St Peter & St Paul's 19/03/17 10:00am

This is the transcript of Revd. Phil's Sermon from our Pulpit exchange with St Peter & St Paul's.

Thank you for this opportunity to exchange pulpits this morning and for allowing Rev Ken to be able to speak at the Methodist Church. This of course is the second time I have preached here, when your Rural Dean (Rev Canon Mike Lodge) asked me to speak at a Deanery Service in the week of prayer for Christian Unity. Then I spoke about the Anglican Methodist Covenant. I spoke to Mike earlier this week to wish him well in his collation service this afternoon. I am sure he will be a great Arch Deacon.

As Methodists and Anglicans in this village, we have celebrated Harvest Festival together, and in many ways that is appropriate, and it is a reminder that the harvest could be plentiful but the workers are few. Together we have more workers for the kingdom, let's continue to look for things we can do together to build God's Kingdom in Hockley.

So here we are in the third week of Lent, in the Methodist Church we also follow the same lectionary and Ken will hear the same readings being read and will preach on a similar text to me. However, the richness of God's grace is such that our messages will no doubt be different.

This morning we will consider the meeting of Jesus with the Woman of Samaria, and what it has to say to us today.

But first let me give you a little context about me and where I am coming from. I was born and brought up in Gowerton on the beautiful Gower Peninsular, I was Baptised and Confirmed into the Church in Wales, moving to the Methodist Church when I went to college in Pontypridd. I moved to work in Bristol as an Engineer and became a local preacher in 1989. I'm married with 2 grown up and married children and have a grandson called Eric. I was made redundant from Engineering in 2009 and that was the catalyst for me to follow a calling that I had subdued for a number of years. I started training for the ministry the same year, and was stationed here in Hockley, Rayleigh and Rochford in 2012. We have a 5 year appointment system, so this year in August I move to Ledbury where I will be Superintendent with one colleague looking after a small circuit of 4 churches.

If I look a little tired and if my preaching is a little lack lustre this morning, this is due to me taking my turn in running the Winter Night Shelter last night at Whittingham Avenue Methodist Church.

Let's turn to our scriptures. Water is definitely a theme today. Water is life giving, and has a huge significance in our faith story. In Genesis we meet God not in the

formless void or the darkness but sweeping over the face of the water. Water was used in a flood to try and cleanse the earth of all that was bad – God said, never again; sending a rainbow as a sign. The waters of the red sea were parted in the first salvation narrative after God had heard his people groaning and helped them escape from Egypt. Moses is worried the Israelites will throw stones at him, if he can't provide water. We are born of water and blood. Water is used in our Baptism. Jesus turned water into wine, and in our Gospel reading we find Jesus offering living water which leads to eternal life.

Quick question to see if you are all still awake – can you think of any other water stories in the bible? In our Exodus reading we find the people of Israel still on their journey to the Promised Land, they are in the wilderness. It's pretty hot and very dry. The people are demanding water from God. Moses turns to God in prayer, and his prayer is answered by God. For me, this reading is here to remind us that God provides for our needs.

In Romans, we find another need being fulfilled. We are in need of Grace. We are but sinners and here we are beautifully reminded that God sent his son to die for us whilst we were sinners and because of that we are made right, put right, set right, in our relationship with God, not under his wrath, reconciled and redeemed.

Let's look a bit closer at our John reading. Jesus liked to turn the conventions of his day on their head. A Rabbi, a respected Jew was not expected to speak to a Samaritan, let alone a Samaritan Woman, or even ask her for Water, or drink from the same utensils, that would make him unclean, and mean he could not go to the temple to worship.

Jesus was not going to take any notice of their purity regulations, and had no worries about being with men or women, of high class or low class. Jesus did not need the temple for forgiveness.

You will no doubt have noticed and realised as the reading was being read that it was the middle of the day, it was noon, when the sun is at its highest. Jesus stops at the well, the disciples have gone to buy food, and along comes the Samaritan woman. Most of the women would have collected their water in the cooler part of the day in the morning. They would have met and chatted around the well. Not this lady, she comes on her own in the heat of the day. Some of you will have realised that she does this because she either does not want to meet the other ladies of the town, or perhaps she is not allowed to consort with them, because she is considered a lady with low levels of morality, a person of shame. Yet Jesus talks to her and note, he does not condemn her. (John 3:17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.")

We then have this insight into Jesus' world; here is a lively conversation, all about water. This well is famous, it's Jacobs well, and there was a legend that when

Jacob needed water from this well it overflowed. Jesus has no utensils, no way of drawing water from the well. They tease each other back and fore.

Jesus talks about living water, running water, fresh water – not the brackish stale still water of an open well in a dusty dry country. Jesus is offering her life a fresh new, different kind of life, very different from the kind of life she has been living to this time, with her five previous husbands, and living with another man.

Jesus gently comes alongside her, in way that is appropriate for her, teases her to build a relationship and offers her a new outlook on life.

The water of our theme, the water of our bible stories, the water of our baptism and cleansing, the water that was turned into wine, all this water is a signpost to the living water that Jesus has to offer. The water that will quench our thirst so that we will never be thirsty again, bubbling up inside us offering up to us the new life that Jesus has to offer.

We don't need to live our old lives, our stale brackish lives, surrounded by sin and greed and hurt and lies. Jesus offers us a better way, a new way, a new life, an eternal life.

All we need to do is ask him for this living water, choosing to follow his way. Water was significant in the Night Shelter last night, we fund raised last year to fit showers in Whittingham Avenue Methodist Church, and last night we were able to offer 10 of the rough sleepers some dignity in being able to have a shower and clean clothes. My team from Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley have run the night shelter 4 times between December and March. Next year have a think about whether any of you would fancy joining the team, either as caterers, hosts or overnighters. It is a good thing to serve, tiring but good.

BUT how is this story relevant to us in the church today, to us here in this town? At our church meeting yesterday we talked about the old ways of the church, of how we convinced people of their sin, of how we condemned them for their sins, and then offered Jesus as the way out. That form of evangelism is called conquer and keep. It has not really worked for us.

We look now to a new way of evangelising, one of nurture and nourish. Jesus got alongside people, he invited them to join him on his journey "come follow me", he said. When they had followed, he gently showed them and taught them his way, until they believed in him. Then once they believed in him they started being, or behaving as Christians.

We are working in Hockley Methodist church trying to help people first belong among us, then gently explaining and showing our beliefs and hoping and praying this will lead folk to being and behaving as Christians.

Let's see if we can work in harmony, helping the people of Hockley to belong among us, and believe the same things about the love of God, of the grace of God as we do, and gently moving them along to being and behaving as Christians.

Jesus simply said: "Come follow me".

Amen.

Friends and Sunday Supporters Service

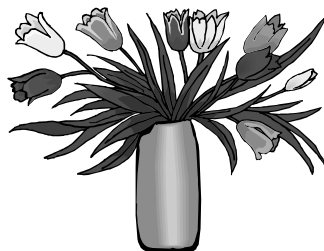
Every year there are social and other events, such as Harvest and Christmas, when we are supported by member's friends and relatives. We thought it would be good to provide an opportunity to say 'thank you' for that support by way of a special Sunday morning service which would include something about the history of the Methodist Church from its beginnings up to the present day. So it is that such a service will be held on Sunday 7 May at the usual time of 10.30am.

If you know someone who has been a friend or supporter of the church in this way and who might like to receive such an invitation (with no obligation of course), please add their name and address to the list at the back of the church.

Kay Deedman

Flower Rota

1 st Sunday	Kay Deedman	S.202802
2 nd Sunday	Carolyn Sturgess	S.203964
3 rd Sunday	Linda Clarke	S.204559
4 th Sunday	Linda Williams	S.204309
5 th Sunday	Anne Sains	S.202010



Murder Mystery Play

On Saturday March 11th we performed "Murder at the Big Top" at our church. This was our fourth murder mystery play and probably our most ambitious yet.

A lot of work goes on in organising this event and there are so many people I need to thank that it probably sounds like an Oscar acceptance speech. I must thank Mike and Muriel Pregnall for producing our advertising material which included flyers, tickets, posters and programmes. Sam Ashby was our musical director and was responsible for all the subtle intros of music incorporated into our production. We wanted this to be a performance that would make people laugh, which is a most needed commodity at this present time.

On the Saturday morning of the play I received a phone call stating that one of our leading performers would be unable to take part due to illness and this necessitated a reshuffle of our cast, so I thank Michael Deedman for stepping into the shoes of the ringmaster. I took over the role of The Great Donaldo, now leaving the role of PC Todd Sweeney to be filled. Our minister, Reverend Philip Warrey was contacted and kindly agreed to take up the role which included acting as MC in the second half of the programme.

Jamie Long acted as our Props director, together with being our curtains man and "man in audience" during our mind reader sketch.

We could not ask for better scene setters than Emily and Scott Kebbell who walked on stage at the opening of each act and scene. They also showed off their versatility when acting as PCs accompanying PC Todd Sweeney.

Our cast members worked so hard with rehearsals taking place all week, despite having to fit this in while working or doing school work.

I must thank Linda and all the catering team who prepared the food for our hungry cast and audience.

Before I list our cast members I must finally thank all our supporters who came along on the evening to be entertained, and paying their ten pounds admission.

I hope you were entertained and enjoyed the evening.

THE CAST:

TIMMY KIPPERFIELD played by MICHAEL DEEDMAN - Owner of the circus and ringmaster

THE GREAT DONALDO played by RAY WILLIAMS - The strongest man in the world (allegedly)

LESLIE HOPE played by PAUL HAYMAN - A juggler with high ambitions

CLARE VOYANT played by MURIEL PREGNALL - Mind reader extraordinaire

BORIS - played by JAMIE LONG - Man in audience

RIHANNA ROYCE played by MERLE KEBBELL - Trapeze artist with soft spot for Chocco the clown

MILEY MORRIS played by GEORGINA ELKINGTON - The youngest of the three trapeze artists

ADELE AUSTIN played by WENDY BENNETT - The leading member of the three trapeze artists

ZEBEDEE ZIMMERMAN played by DAVID ELKINGTON - The eldest of the three clowns

CHOCOCO CADBURY - played by JAMES BURTON - A slow witted clown who loves his chocolate

HARRY HARRIS played by REECE BURTON - Known as Happy the clown. Has had a troubled past.

TOMMY GRIMES played by CALLUM BANKS - The younger of the two human cannonballs

BOBBY GRIMES played by ETHAN BANKS - The elder of the two human cannonballs

PC TODD SWEENEY played by REV. PHIL WARREY - An old school policeman

PC AMY ABEL played by EMILY KEBBELL - Friendly policewoman. Owns her own handcuffs.

PC MIKE ROFONE played by SCOTT KEBBELL - A policeman with a very loud voice

Written by Ray Williams

Ray Williams

SPRING 2017

Our first two walks of 2017 are pleasant, undemanding ones and both involve lunch out. The Woodbridge walk also involves tea and cakes. Walking isn't compulsory on either event and we'll be glad to see non-walkers join us (especially Jean and Shirley!).

Saturday 22nd April Hyde Hall – 4-5 miles

Your choice of lunch at Hyde Hall then either stay and look round the RHS gardens or go for a walk through nearby countryside. Leave Church car park 11:45am. **Let us know if you have RHS membership by Monday 17th April**, so we can match you up with a non-member, otherwise there's an £11 entrance charge.

Monday 29th May Woodbridge – short!

Another visit to the Cogars on Spring Bank Holiday Monday pub lunch and walk then tea chez Cogar. More details later. Leave the Church Car Park mid-morning.

Please make sure you have sturdy walking shoes (not "fashionable" trainers) or boots, plus waterproofs and something warm to wear. Always bring something to drink.

All these walks are fairly straightforward but any activity like rambling (even the inactive variety!) needs care so please watch what you're doing and keep an eye on any young people.

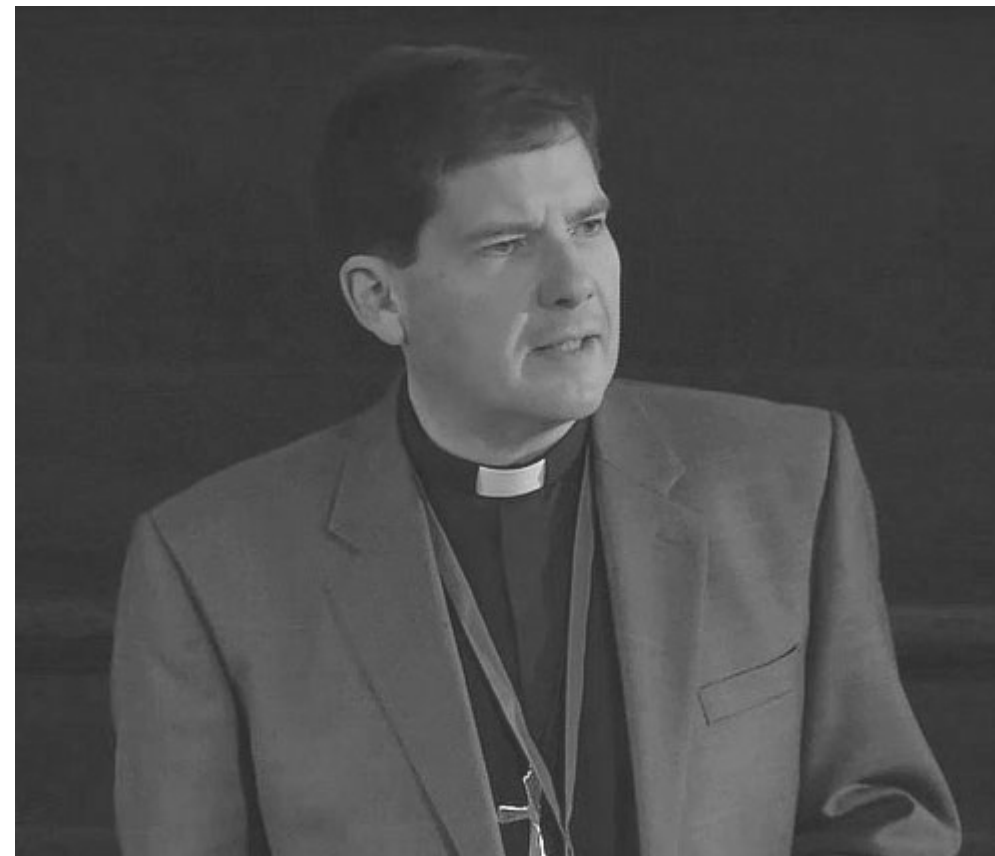
Contact Mike or Mu Pregnall on 01702 204748 or e-mail mumic@pregnall.freemove.co.uk if you want further details of any of these walks or need a lift.



Confident Apologetics

By The Revd Canon Gareth J Powell, The Secretary of the Conference

Having reflected on the themes of confident justice and imaginative mission in the life of the Church, I now want to consider the idea of confident apologetics.



The Revd Canon Gareth J Powell, The Secretary of the Conference

Apologetics — the practice of setting out a reasoned case for the Christian faith, to pave the way for a transformative encounter with the living God — is a little-used word in many of our churches, but there is — in my experience — certainly no shortage of enthusiasm among the people called Methodists for talking about God, for seeking to make a case for why we believe.

And yet, over the past 18 months, as Secretary of the Conference, when I have had the privilege of stepping into innumerable Methodist buildings across the Connexion as a visitor, I have found myself confronted with posters and leaflets offering me the opportunity to lose weight through Zumba, or gain it by attending a coffee morning with cake stall, far more often than I have been presented in explicit terms with the message of the gospel.

Why is this, I wonder?

Alister McGrath, in his book *Mere apologetics: How to help seekers and sceptics find faith*, suggests that the fundamental principles of apologetics have always been: 1) understanding the Christian gospel; 2) understanding your context; and 3) developing apologetic approaches that are faithful to the gospel and build on the 'points of contact' with the cultural context.

To find these points of contact, we must be willing to engage honestly and wholeheartedly both with the gospel and with the world around us — including and especially those areas of both that cause us discomfort. What is more, we must be willing not simply to tell the story in our contexts, but to be transformed by our encounter with both.

McGrath goes on to say that apologetics, in its true sense, “commends a mindset of engagement, encouraging Christians to interact with the ideas of our culture rather than running away from them or pretending they can be ignored... Apologetics celebrates and proclaims the intellectual solidity, the imaginative richness, and the spiritual depth of the gospel in ways that can connect with our culture.”

I suspect that, at times, our enthusiasm for talking about God is prevented from being made manifest in our conversations and on our notice-boards simply by the fact that our confidence, our identity, is not always grounded in the gospel we seek to proclaim.

We even go as far as to question what we could possibly have to offer to those who pass our doors. But it is not simply ourselves that we offer — to paraphrase 1 Corinthians 2:2, all we know and all we have to offer is Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

One of the churches that I have been privileged to visit in recent months was Sandfields Methodist Church in Port Talbot on the occasion of its 50th anniversary. In the church is a cross, given as a gift by the local steelworks when the church opened its doors.

Over the past year, the community in Port Talbot, and the steelworks in particular, has known great uncertainty, heartbreak and hope. What is it that the church has to

offer back into this situation? To me, the answer is the same. All that we have to offer is the cross — a cross of wood or steel, reflecting the points of contact between the gospel and the heart of the local context. Here a symbol of love was fashioned by those who now stand in need of love, and refreshed hope.

At the outset of his inauguration as the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2013, Justin Welby struck the West Door of Canterbury Cathedral three times with his staff to request entry.

He was greeted by 17-year-old Evangeline Kanagasooriam, who asked: “Who are you and why do you request entry?” He responded: “I am Justin, a servant of Jesus Christ, and I come as one seeking the grace of God to travel with you in His service together.”

We too can find our identity and our confidence not in our own abilities, nor in our church’s activities, but in the love of Christ and the grace of God.

It is perfectly understandable that we approach the task of apologetics, like Paul, in weakness, fear and much trembling. However, it is not by our own power that we seek to talk of God — faith does not rest on wisdom, after all, but on the power of God.

As we seek by our words, our actions and our buildings to offer that which we have and know — only the cross — we can have confidence, not only in ourselves and our tradition, but in the God we encounter in the gospel we share.

First published in the [Methodist Recorder](#) newspaper.

It was a long time ago!

January 1965 was a day of note, seeing at the end of the month, the funeral of Sir Winston Churchill. I remember seeing the TV pictures of the sombre proceedings, but it was a day of note for me, it was my first day of my 32 years service in the police service starting making tea and many other duties which oiled the wheels of Constabulary Matters.

Things were different then, in April 1965 the force lost Romford division which became part of the Metropolitan Police and the Essex County Constabulary underwent considerable changes of which I was a very small part. I became a Police Cadet at Basildon, one of four cadets working in the front office, operating the switchboard and many tasks that “the Cadet can do”.

I was living in Vange and worked Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday at Basildon Police Station and attended Chelmsford College of Further Education on Wednesday and Thursday.

It wasn't long until 'interesting' jobs came my way', I can remember spending all night searching for a missing child – found safe and sound just as dawn was breaking.

Occasionally, very occasionally I would go with a patrol car crew, Black Austin A60's with single channel VHF radios. Basildon had three cars and throughout the division an assortment of LE Velloettes (Noddy-Bikes) and a couple of small cars. I may be painting a peaceful picture but this was a fast growing area with fast roads into London and the town of Southend on its doorstep.

Throughout my 32 years service I worked with Essex County Constabulary, Essex and Southend-on-Sea Joint Constabulary and finally Essex Police but never moved outside this area (politics and mergers).

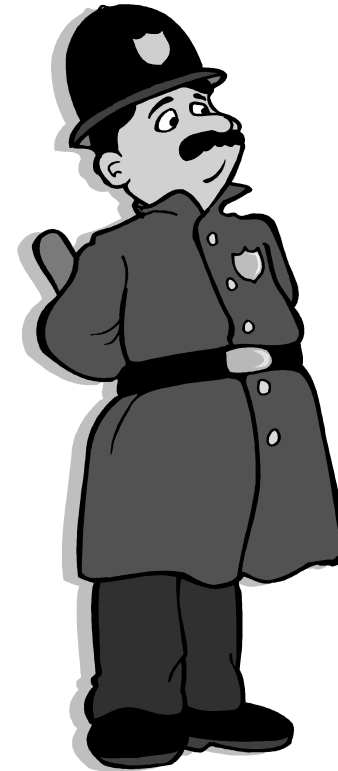
As time went on I had become a 1st class driver and was able to drive fast cars, I was fortunate enough to become a forensic science officer as a Detective Sergeant which gave me many challenges – but that's another story.

Whilst stationed at Harlow Traffic I was 'asked' by Chris to take some cheese straws to the traffic garage for a social event that evening. I arrived at home to collect them in a Land Rover; Chris was convinced that it had no suspension as when they arrived they were just crumbs.

Whilst stationed at Epping we organised a fete every year to raise money for small donations to disadvantaged people both young and old, raising thousands of pounds. We also started 'Crucial Crew' which taught primary school children how to deal with emergency situations.

So many things happened to me during my service, sad, happy, funny, exhilarating, challenging and satisfying but the one thing that remained constant was my faith given as an example to me by my parents when I was young, and without the love and support of Chris, daughter Tasha and my extended family I couldn't have done it.

Ron Holloway



Palm Sunday Eggstravaganza

9th April 10:30am

Parade and All-age
Worship led by Pam Smith,
with Easter Egg hunt and
Hand-in Glove Puppets



Easter Sunday

16th April 9:30am

A service to celebrate
the joy of Easter Day
led by Rev Phil Warrey



Good Friday

14th April at 3:00pm

A reflective service
of readings, hymns and
prayers led by
Rev Phil Warrey



Messy Easter

Tuesday 18th April at 4:00pm

Make chocolate nests, enjoy
painting, sticking, singing
and listening to stories.
Share a meal together.
All ages welcome



HOCKMIRA Easter Ramble

Saturday 22nd April at Hyde Hall – 5 miles
Lunch at Hyde Hall then look round the RHS
gardens or walk through nearby countryside

Easter is a promise God renews to us each
spring
A promise that we'll always have Him there,
And like the flowers that bloom so bright
And birds that sweetly sing,
We always will receive His tender care,
A promise that He'll hold us up
Each time we start to fall
And see us through each hour of care and
strife.

Easter is God's promise
That His love rules over all,
And through Him
We will have eternal life.

Amanda Bradley

**The deadline for the next issue
of The Link is May 15th**

Please make a note of this in your diary

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

SUN	Morning Worship	10.30 am
	Children's activities every Sunday	10.20 am
MON	Brightstars Parent & Toddler Group	9.30 – 11.45 am
	<i>contact Linda 07964 864872</i>	
	Ballroom Sequence Dancing: IN THE HALL	7.30 – 10.00 pm
	<i>contact Fay 01268 780028</i>	
	Triple H Junior Choir and	4.30 – 6.00 pm
	Triple H Community Choir: (in church)	7.30 – 9.30 pm
	<i>contact Ashley 07581390448</i>	
TUE	Dru Yoga Class: <i>contact Ruth on 07818599183</i>	10.00–11.30 am
		& 7.30 – 9.00 pm
	Messy Church (3 rd Tuesday each month)	4.00 – 5.30 pm
	<i>Contact Anne S 202010</i>	
WED	PIYO Pilates & Yoga <i>contact Rachel Yates 07990513413</i>	9.30 – 10.30 am
	Bible Study followed by a Communion Service 2 nd Wed.	3.00 – 4.00 pm
	<i>contact Anne S 202010</i>	
	2nd Hockley Brownie Pack: <i>contact Amy Ensum, S 470134</i>	5.30 – 7.00 pm
	amyensum@hotmail.com	
	Badminton Club: <i>contact Wendy S 200484</i>	7.30 – 9.30 pm
	Gospel Rocks Choir (in Church)	8.00 – 10.00 pm
	<i>Contact: Hannah Conacher gospelrockscs@gmail.com</i>	
THU	50+ Keep fit, <i>contact Julie 07912622483</i>	10.30 – 11.30 am
	50+ Stretch & Trim: <i>contact Julie 07912622483</i>	11.45–12.30 p m
	U3A Floral Art Group, 4 th Thursday in the month	1.30 – 4.30 pm
	<i>contact Irene 202975.</i>	
	1st Hockley Beaver Colony: <i>contact Jane S 203739</i>	5.15 – 6.15 pm
	1st Hockley Cub Scout Pack <i>contact Mike, 01702 201253</i>	6.30 – 8.00 pm
	or email hockleycubs@yahoo.co.uk	
	Thursday Social Club: <i>contact Joyce S 201635</i>	7.30pm, alternate weeks
		8.15pm if in the church
FRI	Pilates, <i>contact Tracy Bateman, contact 07916954966</i>	9.30–10.30 am
	Friday Club (years 3-7) <i>contact Phil 01268 770333</i>	6.00 – 7.30 pm
	Friday Club + (years 7 & upwards)	6.45 – 8.15 pm
	<i>Contact Rev Phil Warrey 01268 770333</i>	

Minister: Revd. Phillip Warrey **Tel:** 01268 770333 **Mobile:** 07917077785
 259 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, SS6 7LF, **Email:** phil.warrey@methodist.org.uk

Web: www.hockleyhawkwelldist.org.uk