

## Baptists and Methodists together at Hampton Methodist Church



Spring 2023



Hampton Methodist Church, Percy Road, Hampton, TW12 2JT

Hampton Mission Partnership is a member of Churches Together around Hampton

Church website <https://hamptonmissionpartnership.org.uk>

Dear HMP family,

Shalom! Peace of the Lord be with you and your loved ones.

The season of Spring is full of life. The blooming of Spring flowers brings forth sunshine in the garden, beautiful colour in the park and pretty dresses on a green slope.

After the gloomy autumn and the winter blues we may feel, Spring reawakens us and our surrounding environment by bringing everything back to life. No wonder people see that Spring is all about new beginnings and transformations. It is a season that signifies starting fresh and starting over.

This is what Easter means.

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it (Psalm 24:1 NIV) So Easter is the time of renewal and starting afresh in which Jesus, the risen Christ, has launched the new creation where his renewed disciples would reflect his glory and grace to renew and restore the world with his self-giving love.

This is what we are called to do and be as Hampton Mission Partnership for God's world. Many are still yearning and waiting to know God's new creation in Christ, fully and eternally.

By enduring the hardship, we all bear witness of being Christ, not only on Sunday, but also in our daily living in which all these works are not in vain, but will become Easter Spring with many new beginnings and transformations for God's glory.

We give thanks to God for the brilliant "Follow the Son" Concert in March in support of The Extra Mile. We also thank God for the continuing faithful work of all ministries that we offer through Messy Church, Tea & Memories, computer club, The Extra Mile, pastoral support, music and singing, online streaming and more.

We look forward to the Coronation Lunch on 7th May after the service to mark the Coronation of King Charles III. Finally, by God's grace and his resurrection power, we look forward to what God has bestowed on Hampton Mission Partnership to bring forth new beginnings and new life in the coming months ahead.

Easter blessings,

Kan

## God of surprises - reflection on my pilgrimage to Iona during Holy Week 2022

Exactly a year ago during my sabbatical, I set foot in the picturesque Scottish Highlands to begin my very first pilgrimage to Iona during Holy Week. I joined a group called Scottish Cross that has been leading pilgrims from all over the world to embark on this pilgrimage for over 25 years.

The pilgrimage is 100 miles long and follows the spectacular Moidart Route starting just south of Fort William at Corran, a very small town situated at the foot of Glen Arnisdale, and arriving on the Island of Iona on Holy Saturday.

Just as Gerard W. Hughes titled his classic book, 'God of Surprises', similarly, my whole pilgrimage experience can be embraced in many 'surprising' ways.

### 1. Recognising my naive humanness

I was too busy trying to tie up some loose ends in my ministry before starting my sabbatical. So I didn't pay much attention to the details of the Scottish Moidart Route. All I knew was to walk more than 100 miles with a group of strangers over seven days, and the destination was Iona, the holy Island, and reaching this destination in itself would give me a tick on my bucket list.

To prove my physical ability, I walked with the group leaders up the hill and down the rocky valley on the first day. Though I managed to finish it, my left knee was playing up. With the help of ibuprofen, I managed to start the second day to cover another 20 miles walk. On the third day with the weather forecast for rain, I prepared myself with the only waterproof gear that I had packed- ski trousers. As we set off, the sun came out brightly so I had to endure a mini-sauna for almost 6 hours during the walk. My clothes were all wet apart from the waterproof trousers. I was totally knackered, physically and mentally, and I couldn't walk anymore.

I had to rest on the fourth day.

I was grateful that God gave me the courage to sign up for such a long walk which I had never done before. (Perhaps if I did pay attention to all details, I wouldn't have signed up.) But my inexperience of what a pilgrimage entails exposed my naive humanness: my default instinct was to use my own strength to deal with issues and challenges, instead of leaning on God's way to see it through.

"I have told you these things, so that in me, you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

### 2. Experiencing God's time: he has all the time in the world

After saying goodbye to my fellow pilgrims on my 'rest day', God allowed me to stroll along the beautiful coast of Tobermory on the Isle of Mull. I took my Easter book with me for a devotion by the sea. Then I went into different shops, like a tourist, to buy various souvenirs, followed by a delicious fish and chips lunch! When all these finished, it was just 1pm!! It gave me an opportunity to go up to the hill and find a spot for more reading.

During that time, I managed to read for a few more pages and then I dozed off under the beautiful sunshine for about an hour or so. I totally lost track of time. What a sabbath! When I looked out to the sea from the hilltop, God revealed himself and said, "I have all the time in the world, why are you in a rush?" That's the beginning of my true sabbatical that took on this pilgrimage with God.

"There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens." (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

### 3. Seeing God in all things

Resting for a day had certainly restored my physical or spiritual wellness. But I was a bit apprehensive as we needed to go over the 'saddle' of Ben More, the highest mountain on the Isle of Mull on the fifth day. It's over 300m high, the highest climb of the pilgrimage.

I kept asking 'would there be a path for us to follow?' The leader replied, "no worries, there is a path. It may look narrow, but the scenery is spectacular. You won't regret it."

To avoid any disappointment and slowing others down, I loaded myself with a double dose of ibuprofen to make sure that my knee would be cooperative.

The view of the valley was absolutely stunning. Unfortunately it was marred by misty, rainy and windy weather. The higher we reached, the windier it became. The higher we were, the mistier it became. The higher we climbed, the narrower the path became and it was practically hidden by the overgrown bushes. Eventually, the pilgrims began to get separated and dispersed into various different directions. This was not great at all.

In that crucial moment, the leader called everyone to follow him in single file. Silence descended on all pilgrims as we all focused our walk on the unmarked path and followed the pilgrim in front of us. I didn't know exactly where I was because it was so misty that I couldn't see a thing beyond 5 meters around me.

While looking down at my footsteps, to tread carefully in such misty surroundings (and catching my breath at the same time), I realised the fellow pilgrims in the front of me had begun to slow right down. Then, I looked up. I was speechless and astonished.

Out of the misty weather, the sun rays gleamed upon the little village at the other side of Ben More. The picturesque views of God's undisturbed nature were no longer a faraway distant view but a vivid living presence right in front of my eyes.

And I felt that I was invited to be part of it organically and naturally. The joy within me burst forth. The pain of my left knee was gone completely. My worry of not completing the journey was gone. My fear of disappointing myself and letting down my fellow pilgrims was gone.

God surprised me by transcending his living presence in that moment to embrace me wholly in his bigger and wider creation. I left the awe of this experience just being me, fully content. Indeed, God was absolutely in all things, big and small, suffering and relief, sorrow and joy throughout this pilgrimage.

He had prepared the table before my enemies so that I was no longer seeing the unforgiving weather nor the challenging terrain, nor my fear of exposing my vulnerability in front of others as enemies, but the necessary moments of reconciliation to the reality in Christ.

"God is in all things for the Lord is my shepherd. I lack nothing." (Psalm 23:1)

#### 4. God's commission

The deep joy and contentment filled my heart from my 'mountain top experience' and cast out all fear and pain. I welcomed the rest of the pilgrim walks with perseverance and eagerness. On Holy Saturday, we gladly arrived at the Isle of Iona. With gladness and elation, we gathered round the nunnery to praise God for his guidance and protection throughout the pilgrimage. And on Easter Sunday, we attended the celebratory Easter service in Iona Abbey. God revealed himself and reminded me of our common mission that we are all invited to take part as pilgrims.

"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.!" (Isaiah 52:7)

Pope Francis once said, "God is the God of surprises, that God is always new: he never contradicts himself, never says that what he had said was wrong, ever, but he always surprises us to understand his kingdom."

No doubt that we are people on a journey, for life is a journey. So when we are on a path, whether it is popular or less travelled, we always discover new things, things which we did not know. On this journey, it is not the path in itself. But rather, it is the path toward the definitive manifestation of the Lord within us toward the fullness of Christ Jesus. I have learnt that in all pilgrimage toward God, we journey on regardless. Nothing should stop us. Not the weather, not the terrain, not our fear as long as we have the right gear, i.e. when we are clothed in Christ.

What's your life journey heading toward? May you be clothed in Christ and be surprised by him that brings you great joy and contentment on your life's pilgrimage.

Kan



Glen More



At Iona Abbey





## Brian Thompson

Brian was born on 10 April 1932 in Feltham where his parents were living while their new house in East Molesey was completed. He was the eldest of three children. His sister, Valerie, was born in 1934 and brother Michael in 1938.

Brian's first school was Orchard Infants. World War II broke out in 1939 just as Brian was about to start Junior School in Thames Ditton, so this was delayed for six months until air raid shelters had been built. In 1940 the school was hit by an incendiary bomb and closed for repairs. Brian's education was often interrupted by the war.

He left school in 1947 and was accepted as a trainee at Bentalls Estate Office, earning £1.15 shillings a week. He progressed in his job and studied to qualify as an Auctioneer and Valuer. He stayed at Bentalls for his working life and was the manager of the Sales Department and deputy manager of the Estate Office.

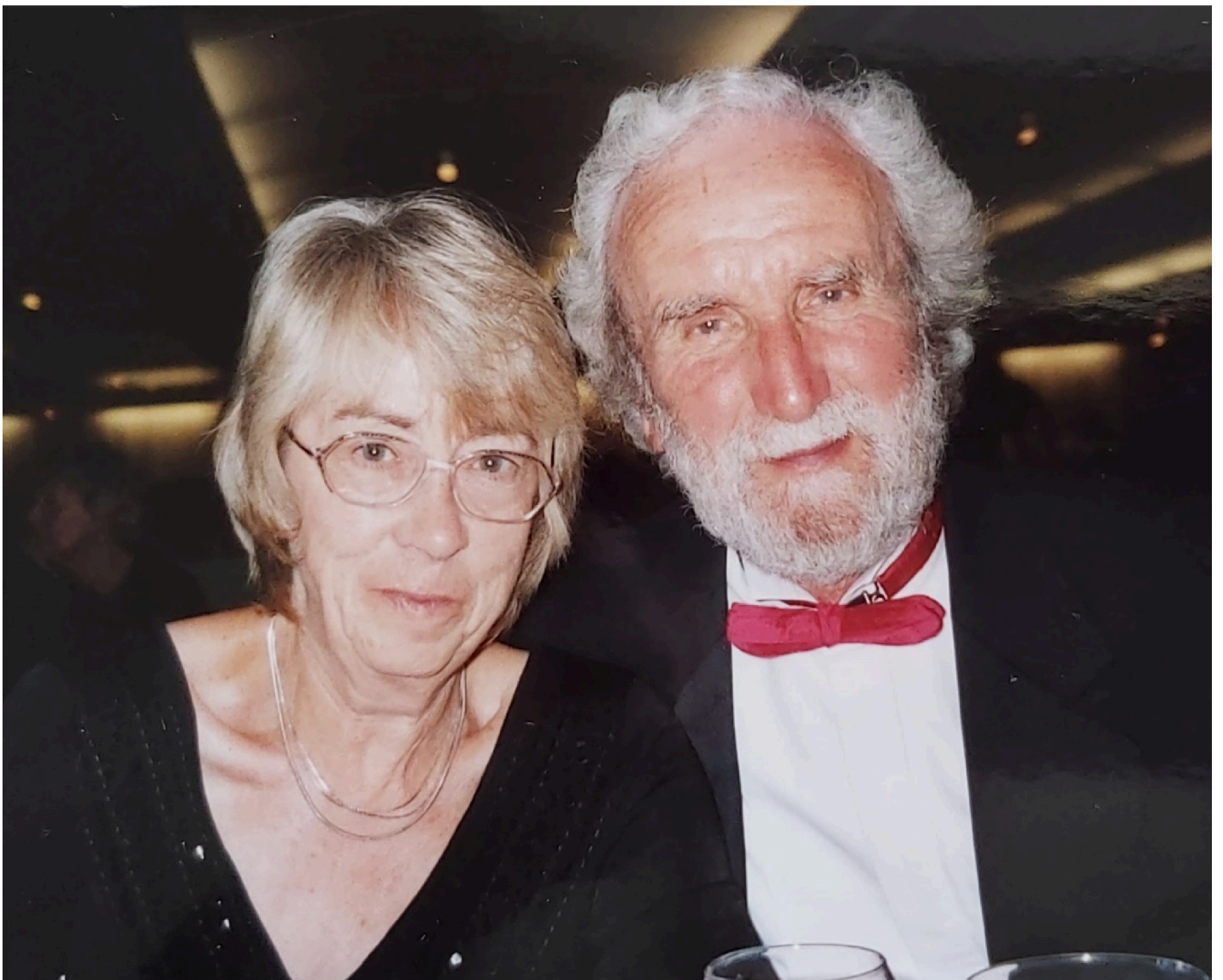
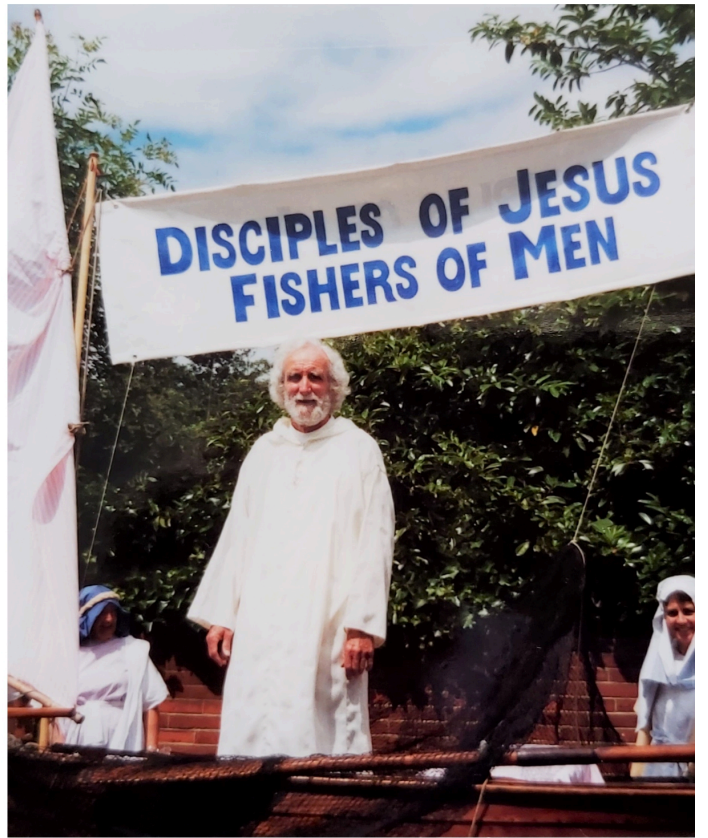
In 1957 Brian married June, and they had two daughters - Janet and Catherine, who have given Brian five grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Sadly, this marriage ended in divorce. Brian took early retirement in 1990, but was asked back by Bentalls to be Father Christmas in the store. He did this for two years, having already had experience of performing this role in various Hounslow schools. After becoming "professional" he continued to go to schools, play groups, Scribblers and Junior Church parties.

Brian always loved boats and the river Thames, and got as much enjoyment from boat maintenance as on the water. He built his first boat, a canoe, while still at school and enjoyed using this on the river and camping with a friend on some of the very small islands near Hampton. He owned a number of boats over the years including a sailing dinghy named Paddington Bear, but trips in this were never successful so it was sold. Brian and Jan had bought all the yellow sailing gear, and wearing this, met the Queen on one of her Silver Jubilee walkabouts at St Katherine's Dock. They obviously stood out like two canaries! Next Brian purchased a wooden boat called Rita, in which he loved to potter up and down the river between Molesey and Sunbury. This boat often featured as the church entry in the Hampton Carnival - as Noah's Ark, and The Voyage of Life, to name two. Eventually Rita was sold and replaced by Merlot III which he shared with his friend Colin.

Another hobby was birdwatching. Brian and Jan attended evening classes and often went on outings and away for long weekends, including the South and East coasts, Norfolk and Pembrokeshire. Brian was particularly keen on ducks and geese.

Visiting Norfolk encouraged them to buy a house in North Norfolk where they made many friends, and enjoyed having visitors, particularly over New Year. It became a tradition to go for a walk on New Year's Day, however cold, wet or windy the weather, followed by a visit to the pub used by Horatio Nelson. Brian and Jan kept this house for 25 years and only sold it, reluctantly, 7 years ago.

As a boy, Brian sang in the choir at All Saints Church, Weston Green and, on moving to Hampton in 1960, joined All Saints Church, Hampton, where he sang in the choir. In 1989 Brian and Jan married at Hampton Methodist Church where he became a member and performed various roles, Pastoral Visitor, Door Steward and generally helped where he could. Sadly, he was not able to attend services since 2019, firstly due to Covid restrictions, and then because of health and mobility issues, but greatly appreciated visits from Rev. Kan.





## Memories of Brian Thompson

During the 1990s Jim Stockley, our pastor at the time, decided to create housegroups and 'allocate' all members of the congregation to one of them. Janice and Brian were 'allocated' to my housegroup which met once a fortnight. This was how we got to know them and became friends with Janice and Brian. They attended these meetings regularly until they discontinued in 2011.

We have memories of going to Claremont for concert and firework evenings with them; these were great fun as we used to dress up for whatever the theme was. One really memorable one was the film night theme when we went as Four Weddings and a Funeral. A group of eight of us went, ladies dressed in wedding dresses and men in morning/dinner suits complete with a cardboard coffin!

Colin and Brian between them purchased a small motor boat which they named Merlot II (last of the summer wine). This was moored on the Thames at Hampton and they had many happy times on the river. Brian loved the river and to Colin's amusement was always adding gadgets of one sort or another to the boat! But they got on well and enjoyed their times together. A couple of years before Lockdown they lost the mooring, due to the land being sold, and the boat was sent to Mark Edwards 'to have its bottom scraped' and in the end never came back!

We also had several visits to the holiday home Janice and Brian had in Norfolk. It was in a delightful spot not far from the north Norfolk coast and for several years we went there over New Year. A brisk walk along the coast on New Year's Day was delightful, even then though Brian was unable to walk very far but would cheerfully meet us at the end of the walk.

Brian was a gentle and very friendly man, always good tempered and cheerful and a very committed Christian; he will be greatly missed.

Colin and Hazel Greasby



## Plenty of Room at the inn – Hampton Church Lettings

As you are probably aware, I took over from Wendy Salmon as the Halls Lettings Manager on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022. I am ably assisted in this job by Barry Reeves.

I have found it an intensive job which requires almost constant attention every day for 7 days a week, so I take my hat off to Wendy for doing this job for the last 25 years, and I know that the whole of our church family will endorse the thanks that we owe her.

The reason for the intensity of the job is that, while we have regular hall users, the halls are also rented out for party bookings and other events. Party booking enquiries are received by email and therefore the email account has to be constantly monitored.

The revenue in this financial year has been significantly reduced due to some of our major users having found other premises, the main one being Aston Pierpoint who ran both a Pre School Breakfast Club and an After School Club – this booking generated an income of around £1,400 per week during term time when both these clubs were operating, which translates into approximately £50,000 per annum.

Therefore we need to take positive steps to address this shortfall, and a working party is being set up to develop ideas for increasing our premises letting capacity. The lettings income contributes significantly to the Hampton Methodist Church meeting its financial obligations in terms of the Circuit Assessment and no doubt this also impacts upon financial obligations to the Baptist Union. So this entry in the Church Magazine is designed to provide an update on the state of the lettings income and to request support in order to develop this income.

There is more information on the church website including photos of both halls, kitchen facilities and availability of parking and the prices for hiring the halls. [www.hamptonmissionpartnership.org.uk/hall-rental/](http://www.hamptonmissionpartnership.org.uk/hall-rental/)

We need to pray for a solution to be found so that the work of the Lord can continue progressively, and to keep our eyes and ears open for further opportunities.

**Willem Sandberg**

### Follow the Son

On Saturday 11 March we welcomed Christian -ethos band Follow the Son to give a concert in the church to raise funds for The Extra Mile. They very kindly gave their time free of charge. They were absolutely fabulous and sang a wide variety of songs including items from musicals, songs of the sixties, more modern ones and worship songs.

It was wonderful to see the church full of people having a good time! The band invited audience participation and very quickly the aisles were full of people of all ages dancing! The band even commented on how fantastic the audience was and this made their enjoyment even greater.

During the interval everyone crowded into the small hall for cakes and drinks. We even ran out of mugs and had to resort to the 'Call the Midwife' era green crockery! Liz did a sterling job of selling raffle tickets and somehow raised £199.

The church, circuit and community came together to support The Extra Mile, baking or buying cakes, providing raffle prizes, putting up tables, helping with the techy bits and of course, coming to the concert and having a good time. The amazing total of £430 was donated at the door. Huge thanks to everyone from The Extra Mile team. This money will help us provide much-needed equipment for the families referred to us. See Pam's article following this one about the impact of TEM.

Follow the Son is only able to offer concerts in March and October due to other commitments and time to rehearse but you can contact the band via Rev David Innes david1a1innes@gmailcom.

Liz Windaybank





### The impact of The Extra Mile

In this article I have been asked to give information about the impact we have had to families with all the referrals we have been supplying to health care professionals over the years we have been running. They are always grateful when they collect their referrals, but as they are very busy people, we do not always have the chance to ask them how the items were received; although occasionally we get emails when there has been a particularly positive response and these are shared with the team of volunteers.

So here goes, see below some quotes from professionals and the impact The Extra Mile has had:

**Michelle Gurney**

**From Stanwell Family Centre: -**

'Where shall I start. We cannot thank The Extra Mile enough for their assistance helping us with our families who are in need. The Extra Mile has made a great deal of difference to families who need clothes and toys and are unable to buy them for themselves.

The Extra Mile made a massive impact to my families especially during the Christmas period when we received toys and hygiene packs not only for children but for adults as well. My families could not believe that they were receiving a gift as well.

My families have been supplied with cots and pushchairs which I cannot describe what a relief it is for them knowing they now have the equipment for the child. Pushchairs are a great help with our families who are facing isolation.

We at Stanwell Family Centre could not thank the ladies enough.'

**Janet Deboo**

**Senior Coordinator, Family Support**

**Home-Start Richmond, Kingston and Hounslow: -**

'The Extra Mile always respond incredibly promptly to our requests for items for the vulnerable families that we support. Whether it is equipment such as a pushchair or travel cot, toys, books or children's clothes, they are always chosen with great care and attention to the children's age and interests, and in excellent condition.

Families they have helped include a mum with a 6 months old girl, an asylum seeker with no recourse to public funds housed in a bridging hotel by the Home Office, who was overwhelmed by the care shown to her and her baby. The travel cot, play mat, toys and rocky chair provided will enable mum to provide a safe stimulating environment for her young baby as she grows and develops.

Another mum living in a refuge with her 4-year-old daughter after fleeing domestic violence texted her thanks saying 'My daughter loved all the stuff, especially the books and toys. I am very thankful for your help and support. The clothes are a perfect size and beautiful. I don't have words to thank you. Blessings.'

**Karen Finnegan**

**Parent Support Advisor**

**Hampton Primary Partnership: -**

'When some of our families are really struggling and don't know where to turn, The Extra Mile has been there to offer an invaluable lifeline. We are living through very difficult times and the families that have received support are so very grateful. Without The Extra Mile they would simply have nowhere else to turn to.

One parent in particular was at her wits end and felt like she was failing her children as she had no money left for nappies and baby wipes. I was instantly able to reassure her that there was help available and that many families needed help from time to time. She was so relieved and thankful to be able to provide the basics for her child with the support she received. The support the Extra Mile provides means that children are able to carry on living happy, healthy and safe lives. A genuine thank you for all your help and support.'

I hope these three people have given you an idea of what your support and kind donations have meant to vulnerable families and how The Extra Mile puts loving our neighbours into practice.

Pam Harrison



## Tea & Memories: For the community and beyond

1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month: 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023  
11.00am – 12.30pm

Tea & Memories welcomes people living dementia and their carers/loved ones. It is a chance to relax and just be themselves, share stories and take part in a range of activities. We encourage our participant to talk about their memories.

A typical session will begin with refreshments served to the table and a conversation starter or simply engaging with a participant about their week. Our sessions are planned to be accessible to folk who may be living with one of many different forms of dementia and also fun for those who are attending in a caring role. Activities might include board games such as Dominoes, Drafts, Ludo or Pairs and very often a quiz; recent quizzes have included sayings and 'old wives' tales' and topics on the theme of 'green' and 'red'. We sometimes enjoy a game of picture-based Bingo and at our March session our participants took part in Bagatelle, whacking ball bearings into holes to try and achieve the highest score. We were fortunate to be loaned this bagatelle game which was believed to be a 1940s edition! A lot of fun was had by all (and was somewhat competitive!).



Our April session on Good Friday saw a good attendance with participants making an easy Easter garden with paper-based craft materials, topped off with mini chocolate eggs and a decorated polystyrene egg. Hazel devised a great quiz and we enjoyed a chocolate Easter cake from Café Plenty. All participants received an Easter egg treat.



The story of 'Tea & Memories' began in 2017 as part of a wider plan and desire to make our church 'dementia friendly'. We wanted to offer a safe space for those living with dementia and attendance grew month on month. The covid pandemic, sadly, put a pause on Tea & Memories for a good while and when we restarted, it took a while for our participants to feel comfortable in returning. In that time we also lost a number of folk who either moved into residential care or were clinically too vulnerable and no longer able to attend.

Over the last year we have had more and more interest in our café and are delighted to receive regular enquiries and new attendees. We are very proud to be listed in a number of online dementia directories and we now have links with Dementia Friendly Communities at Richmond Age UK. We are also on a borough-wide 'social prescribers' list and have links with local café, Plenty, in Station Road, Hampton who kindly donate a delicious cake each month.

Jackie, who attends with her daughter, Liz had the following to say about Tea & Memories:

*"I've been going to Tea and Memories for a few months now and thoroughly enjoy it. The ladies who run it are very pleasant and organised, and make you feel at home. Those who attend are happy to participate in whatever activities are on offer. My daughter takes me and also enjoys herself, especially the cake and treats on offer! My son in law joined us one morning and I hope to bring my grandchildren at Easter. We're very lucky to have this welcoming café club in Hampton and hope that more locals discover it soon. "*

Graham attends Tea & Memories every month. His daughter had the following comments to make about his experiences:

*"My dad's been attending tea and memories for the last few years. He loves his visits! We heard about the group through the local Alzheimer's society as my mum has dementia. I used to take them both together to the sessions as it was a dementia friendly environment however, since covid my dad now attends by himself. He always comments about how friendly the group is. He tells me how welcoming everyone is, and how much he enjoys the company and how at ease he feels as soon as he arrives. He loves the activities, each month there is something different to do. Lots of the games are things he hasn't played in years, like dominoes and bagatelle. He's also had the chance to look at newspapers and magazines from years ago. These are all types of activities that he couldn't do at home, which makes the sessions so special. He really looks forward to his monthly visits and he's full of praise for the team who run it. Thanks for all that you do!"*

If you know of someone who would benefit from attending Tea & Memories, further information can be obtained by emailing [tea@hamptonmissionpartnership.org.uk](mailto:tea@hamptonmissionpartnership.org.uk). If you would like to volunteer at one of our sessions, either helping with the activities or just making and serving refreshments, please speak to Louise, Hazel or Liz.

Louise

### **Richmond Gateway Club needs your help!!**

We are looking for volunteers to join our team on Tuesday evenings 7-8.30pm during term time at Linden Hall, Hampton. Richmond Gateway Club is a social club for adults with a learning disability. We have fun and laughs on Tuesday evenings: discos, bowling, bingo, Strictly Come Dancing night to name but a few!

Please come along and meet club members and volunteers.

Email: [info.richmondgatewayclub@gmail.com](mailto:info.richmondgatewayclub@gmail.com) or call: 07810 410536

Registered Charity No. 1097711

Website; [www.richmondgatewayclub.org](http://www.richmondgatewayclub.org)

Sarah Sones

## 'The craftsman'

On that Friday,  
For some reason named as 'Good',  
The craftsman,  
Whose hands were used for handling stone and wood  
Hefted a beam,  
Rough sawn dogwood it's supposed,  
To his shoulders  
In uncomfortable repose.

Those hands,  
Trained to sculpt stones or wooden grain,  
Strong and supple,  
Were to gain a different fame.

Those shoulders,  
Firmly sinewed, now bore scars  
Flecked with blood,  
Groaning underneath that bar.

Those arms,  
Which, around boulders had been furled,  
Like Atlas,  
Were destined to lift the world.

That face,  
With Judas' cursed kiss blessed,  
Thorn encrowned,  
Against agonised ordeal pressed.

Those feet,  
Dusted sandals cast aside,  
Walked a path  
That his true faith helped him abide.

That body,  
Stripped and hung high on Skull's Hill  
Wracked and pierced,  
Pleaded for forgiveness still.

That spirit,  
Freed from earthly image of man,  
Rose from death,  
According to God's published plan.

On that Friday,  
Held in Christian lore as 'Good',  
The craftsman,  
Trained sculptor of men, stone and wood,  
Carried a beam  
Weighed down with mankind's heavy load,  
Opening the way  
For God's children to find his road.

Holly



## Fun and Games

**On Saturday 19 November 2022** we hosted an event at Hampton Mission Partnership as part of the Tearfund Big Quiz Night.

This has become an annual event, running for the past five years, where across the UK hundreds of churches and thousands of people get together on the same night to support this great cause.

Tearfund is a Christian charity that is passionate about ending global poverty. For more than 50 years they have been working alongside local church partners to empower communities to create a better future for themselves.

The event in 2022 highlighted the situation of Zuleima, a 35 year old mother of three from Venezuela, a country struggling beneath the weight of a massive economic crisis. Zuleima would have to queue for up to two days to get into a supermarket only to find that there was no food left when she got in.

Facing a choice of starvation or leaving, along with more than a million other Venezuelans, Zuleima made the decision to flee to neighbouring Colombia. Now a refugee in Colombia, she would have struggled to survive if it weren't for the support of the church. It is people and situations like this that are supported by Tearfund.

The event at HMP was well attended and it was great to be able to enjoy an evening together face to face rather than meeting on Zoom!

Including gift aid, we raised £312.50 which went toward the National total collected of £140,000. Well done to all!

**On Saturday 18 February 2023**, we hosted a games afternoon with refreshments at Hampton Mission Partnership. It was open to all ages and was attended by around 16 people including a family with two children.

Board and card games were supplied, and a very enjoyable afternoon was spent playing old favourites such as Scrabble and learning new games like Triominoes and Sequence.

The tea and cake were a very popular part of the proceedings and a fun afternoon was had by all.

So if all this talk of fun and games has wetted your appetite why not put the next date in your diary and plan to come along and join in!

**We will be celebrating the coronation of King Charles III with lunch on Sunday 7 May 2023.** If the weather is fine we will hold it on Hampton Methodist church front lawn but will retire to the hall if wet!

You are welcome to bring something to share for lunch if you wish and there will be coronation-themed Messy church activities and an all-age coronation quiz. So why not plan to come along and bring friends or family to enjoy the day. Lunch will follow the morning service to which all are also welcome.

For more information or if you are able to help with the event please feel free to talk to Chris Broomfield, Hazel Greasby or Wendy Salmon.

Christine Broomfield.

## Spring Harvest 2023

'The rain came down and the floods came up and the wind blew and beat upon the house'. So said Jesus in his parable of the wise and foolish builders. Which were we I wonder?! We certainly felt the rain as it fell and we picked our way amongst huge puddles and felt the force of the wind!

What an introduction to my first Spring Harvest. (Well, I wouldn't be British if I didn't moan about the weather, would I?) We did get very wet.

The question was, 'Did you enjoy it?' Well yes, I did. Who could fail to be encouraged by 2000 people at the main meetings all worshipping God together, and that number was doubled if you think that the same thing was happening at Skegness at the same time. (Only with better weather!)

We began our day at 9 am with the Big Start, which was really for the younger members but was really good fun with songs and drama. This year's theme was about the way in which in the Kingdom of King Jesus the ideals of the world are turned upside down. All are welcome and we are here to serve as Jesus did. Quite profound if you think about it.

The next session was bible study after a time of worship led by Lou Fellingham. The study was taken by John Swinton, who talked about the Beatitudes but in a way that followed on from the lessons of the Big Start earlier, because the teachings of Jesus run contrary to the world view of things.

The evening meetings were equally as busy. Noisy and as informative as the mornings but just as encouraging (in spite of the howling wind!)

The programme was very full, packed with workshops and seminars but I had been warned not to go mad, and choose carefully what I went to see. The best one was a session called 'Lou's Women.' (Lou Fellingham was the worship leader for the week.) This session was a time of informal chat between Lou and some of the other ladies who shared the stage with her from time to time. It was good to hear their stories of how God was at work in their lives and churches.

The main exhibition hall was great to visit and was dominated by a vast blue elephant on the Compassion stand with the question, 'How do you eat an elephant? Compassion is a Christian organisation committed to releasing children from poverty by working through local churches. There are currently 2 million children attending Compassion programs in 25 developing countries around the world. So why the elephant? You can only eat an elephant one mouthful at a time and poverty can only be broken by helping one child at a time. How clever!

'So what was the highlight for you?' Well that's rather surprising. One morning we went to an early communion service at 8 am. Mark Madavan was the minister leading this and he spoke about Psalm 23, talking about the deep, dark ravines where the shepherd would lead his sheep. He said these were dangerous places but the shepherd would deliberately lead the sheep because he knew that the good pastures were at the other side. Also, the shepherd was with us in the darkness so we had no need to fear. Mark went on to explain that he had a condition that meant he had been slowly losing his sight since his youth. Now he couldn't see any of us but he knew the abiding presence of God in the darkness.

For me, amidst all the noise and excitement, that was a very powerful moment, like the still, small voice for Elisha, and will remain with me for a very long time.

Janet Wright



## The Work of a Doula

**“Peace on Earth Begins at birth!”**

**“Whenever and however, you give birth, your experience will impact on your emotions, your mind, your body, and your spirit for the rest of your life.”**

**- Ina May Gaskin, midwife and author**

Ever since our second daughter Amy arrived spontaneously on the bathroom floor, I have been fascinated by the wonder and marvel of birth. It struck me that day, that my body had done what it was designed to do and that the power of those surges in my body had brought about a birth which I was completely capable of going through without the intervention of pain relief.

What I realised from the experience that morning was that the FEAR of BIRTH had been taken away BECAUSE my body had done it by NATURE, essentially by itself! It was the natural way of things, I had neither planned nor prepared for it to be like that...and my husband Mark will confirm this because he had to sort out the insurance claim on our fresh cream carpets and the white Egyptian cotton gift towel set, all of which had been irreparably damaged and later incinerated!

And I began to wonder what stops us as women, trusting our bodies and believing that we were made to do this! If you'll excuse the pun, why is it that the horror stories of birth, the screaming, the sweating, and the suffering of labouring women '*impregnate*' our minds when we consider the process of giving birth. As we read in Genesis 3, v. 16: "To the woman he said, 'I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing – with pain you will give birth to children...'"

I think as a Christian, I have also come to view birth from a deep spiritual perspective. I used many Worship tracks to prepare for my birth with Ethan and over time I was able to enter a place of deep relaxation and safety by listening to these songs. In the intimate moments of birth, I felt closest to God and after birth, a sense of absolute euphoria – a feeling I can remember to this day. Perhaps some of you reading this might remember the wonderful preacher Harry Dodd who was the local minister for Hampton as I was growing up in the 1980s. He attended Mark and my wedding in 2003 and said the Grace before we ate our meal together. He later said the following words, which have struck me as poignant to this very day: **“May you have days to equal or even excel this one!”**. The birth of all our children – Grace, Amy and Ethan have been such days!!

This is behind the reasons that I was inspired to pursue my dream of becoming a Doula, and over the past 18 months I have trained successfully in this role. I initially shadowed an experienced doula but since then I have completed my first assignment. My area of work is the state of Baden Wurttemberg in South West Germany. We live in a village called Hausen-im-Wiesental which nestles in a valley surrounded by mountains, including the Alps. It is close to both the French and the Swiss border. We attend the Anglican English Church in Basel, Switzerland.

So, what on earth is a doula and why do expectant mothers need one?

The work of a doula cannot be underestimated. The term 'doula' itself originates from the ancient Greek meaning "woman who serves", female helper or maidservant. Today the word doula refers to a professional, trained to provide emotional, physical and informational support to women during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum. She has often, but not always, given birth to a child or children herself.

The doula knows various techniques that she can practice with the pregnant woman that can help with the birth. Some examples are massage, meditation, visualisation, hypnobirthing, breathing techniques, relaxation techniques and the use of a Rebozo cloth.



A doula stays with the mother throughout the birth and offers aftercare and support with breastfeeding.

However, a doula is not a substitute for a midwife, nor is she allowed to carry out any examinations, contradict the advice of the doctors or interfere in the birthing process should complications arise. The continuous presence of a doula has been scientifically proven to significantly reduce the length of labour as well as the need for medical intervention.

She allows for greater maternal satisfaction and a better more sustained bonding between mum and baby.

In my work as a doula I am seeking to dispel the attitude that birth can only be experienced through ENDURANCE, PAIN and SUFFERING, as per the verse in Genesis quoted above.

I am determined for women to be the queens of society once more, where they are honoured for their role in re-creation, their bodies, the beautiful sanctuary of new life. I refer you to Psalm 139 – verses 13-16.

For you created my inmost being;  
You knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
I know that full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place,  
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
All the days ordained for me were written in your book  
Before one of them came to be.

(For more information visit my website at [www.rhonalockwood.de](http://www.rhonalockwood.de))

**Rhona Lockwood (Willem's daughter)**





## Arts, Crafts and Flower Show at Teddington Methodist Church

On **Saturday September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023**, we are having an Arts, Crafts and Flower Show. There are classes for adults and children. Everybody is welcome to enter (it's free) and also welcome to come and view the flowers, cooking, vegetables, crafts and pictures. We'll be serving tea and cakes while you do and then awarding certificates and rosettes! Full details are in the schedule which will be available very soon.

Last year was the first time that we have had a show for more than 20 years but we had lots of entries from the Church, the circuit and from Teddington locals and we had a great day. Now everybody knows what to expect, we are hoping for many more entries.

Now is the time to start growing that huge marrow or creating some amazing craft. Here are a few photos from last year. If you want any more details, please contact Cathy Trevelyan on [events@teddingtonmethodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:events@teddingtonmethodistchurch.org.uk)

Here are some of the classes that you might need to start planning right away.

- A collection of 6 vegetables. 3 kinds, two of each kind.
- Six tomatoes of one variety.
- Six runner beans.
- Any other vegetables—two of a kind.
- Three apples or pears.
- Largest marrow
- Largest pumpkin
- A handmade toy
- A knitted or crocheted article
- An embroidered, tapestry or cross stitch
- A greeting card (any medium).
- Any other craft not included above (eg woodwork, decoupage, bonsai)
- Picture—any medium (excluding embroidered, tapestry or cross stitch)
- A 3-dimensional work of art, any medium or media.
- One photograph of a celebration (black & white or colour).

