

Baptists and Methodists together at Hampton Methodist Church



March 2022



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!

I used this Hebrew word to begin my letter in the October magazine. It seems fitting to use it again when we come to Spring 2022.

Covid is no longer causing such a huge threat in our country as we have gradually coped and learned how to live with Covid and reset our routines in a new way. But from this positive news, we have been shocked by Russia's horrific invasion into Ukraine. It is the eighth day since the invasion at this time of writing.

All humanity is suffering in the face of war, violence, upheaval and trauma near and far. No one is certain when the war will end. Fear escalates, anger roars, refugees amass, agony rages, death toll rises, and more disheartening and shocking news is circulated on social media. Most people may wonder, "Where is God?"

For Jesus' followers, we also wonder and ask, "Where is God? ***So that*** I can put prayers into action, love into service to witness God's active presence of his kingdom on earth as heaven."

The gospel tells us that God is always at the heart of the problem to bring peace and salvation, deliverance and hope through his son Jesus Christ. In the time of grief, loss, perplexity, persecution, and even being struck down, God was with us in our human frailty.

Remember how we journeyed through the chaotic Covid pandemic? How we travelled together as Hampton Mission Partnership? How we embraced change and yet another change to live at the present age as his faithful witnesses and keep telling his wonderful love in unity?

Our past 'mountain top experiences' through hybrid Sunday services, Junior Church, Breakfast Church, The Extra Mile, Computer Club, Messy Church, Bike Project, and more, have prepared us to follow Jesus, down the valley and go out to people who are in despair, in abandonment, and at the edge of being destroyed.

In this magazine you will find wonderful and encouraging stories in our church family that have offered their faithful service to bring joy and hope, peace and love wherever God has sent them.

By God's grace, may we stand firm, and keep thinking, praying and acting as God's people in one accord, being his body through his son Jesus Christ to bring God's peace and justice for this world.

With love in Christ,
Kan

Loving God, your Son Jesus Christ, wept over Jerusalem.
Today, we weep over Ukraine.
We weep for those uprooted from their homes and lives.
We weep for those cowering in basements.
We weep for those who have witnessed death and destruction
on their streets.
We weep for those separated from parents, from children,
from spouses and siblings.
We are amazed at the resilience of people seeking to comfort
those in need and so we pray for
Governments opening up borders so that Ukrainians can have
safe passage.
We pray for churches and individuals providing food,
clothing and shelter.
We pray for medical workers ensuring that shattered bodies
are put back together again.
We pray for ordinary Russians demonstrating and voicing their
disapproval of the military actions in Ukraine.
May the Holy Spirit give us the willpower to turn our tears into
action also.
May we, through our words, prayers and example pursue the
things that make for a just peace in the world today and
especially in Ukraine.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. AMEN

Charity begins..... with Christ

The old adage 'Charity begins at home' sounds biblical. Indeed, it has been suggested that it comes from a verse in First Timothy. The verse reads:

"And if anyone does not make provision for his relatives, and especially for members of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8).

However, the actual phrase was first coined by the author Sir Thomas Browne in 1642.

It is not at all surprising that people should look to the bible to see what it is saying about charity. There is a huge amount to reflect upon. The Old Testament has many stories of Hebrew culture demonstrating hospitality that extended to outsiders. The beautiful account of Boaz telling his workers to leave grain over in the field so that Ruth could glean it and thus feed herself and her mother-in-law Naomi, is a wonderful example.

The New Testament provides us with the core values of Christian charity. Indeed, the Christian bias to the poor secures us into a lifestyle that runs counter to the worldly emphasis on greed, materialism, and consumerism. Luke's Gospel alone sounds any number of warnings about the problem of being rich and ignoring the poor. The Sermon on the Plain (Luke 2:17-25) is much harder edged than the more well-known Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel. Luke writes:

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven"

"But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort"

This does not mean that those with wealth are beyond salvation. There are in fact a number of successful Lucan stories of rich people doing God's work including:

-Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

-Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37)

-Cornelius (Acts 10:2)

- Lydia (Acts 16:14)

The Gospel message is about the priority we give money, and how we use our material resources and our time to help others, especially the poor and the marginalised.

Recent lockdowns have been tough for charities, with most suffering a significant fall in income. The cost-of-living crisis continues to limit the ability of families to contribute. I suspect that most of us choose carefully which particular charities to support. Many have special meaning or connection to us such as a much-loved hospice or cancer related organisation. We have been doing a similar exercise at church. There is an admirable tradition within our Baptist and Methodist heritage to support charity work as a church. We accept that not everyone will be able to contribute, and that the amounts we raise will often be less than in the past.

Notwithstanding these issues we have drawn up a schedule for our church charitable giving. Most months we will hold a collection for a particular church charity. Over Christmas we collected for the Spurgeon Children's Charity and Action for Children. In February we have been collecting for the Samaritans. In March we have selected our old friends at the Leprosy Mission. In April we will use our Easter Offering envelopes to help poorer churches around the globe, while in May we will be

supporting Christian Aid Week. In June, our donations go to Action for Children, a charity with which we have had a long association.

In July we are doing something a little different. We will hold our Church Anniversary Gift Day to raise funds to provide a new bench on the church front lawn. We want this to be a visual piece of charity for local folk to sit in our garden. Sometimes our Christian charity does have to be visible, like The Extra Mile and the Bike Project so that others can get involved with the Lord's work. In the case of the bench, we are saying "share our little garden."

Our Harvest appeal in September will be for 'All We Can,' the relief and development agency that collaborates with local communities to aid farming and educational projects. We have not forgotten our own Linked Missionaries, for in October we will collect for them and enjoy reports about their activities. Hopefully, November will see the return of our popular Tearfund Quiz, and a collection for MHA, the homes for the elderly.

We totally understand if folk cannot afford to donate, and we realise that the sums we raise will sometimes appear paltry. But every little helps, and as believers we know that Charity begins..... with Jesus.

Mark Gilks

A new ministry

Some years ago I had to give up my preaching ministry, partly because my public speaking voice had given out, and partly because, with Pam's health deteriorating I didn't have the time and energy required to prepare services, nor were Pam and I able to minister to a house group as before.

When Pam died last January, Kan told me that the Lord would open up a new ministry, and so it has proved, and it has come in two parts. One is keeping in touch, by phone on a regular weekly basis, with church folk and friends who have lost loved ones or are feeling lonely.

The other is a consequence of my current voluntary research work. Some of you will be familiar with Prof. Chris Lintott from the Dept of Physics at Oxford (who is roughly the opposite number of my brother-in-law's nephew at Cambridge), who runs the BBC programme, 'The Sky at Night'. Chris has organised an online series of research programmes for citizen scientists to get involved in, to obtain help to assess masses of bulky data. This started with astronomy, and has spread to a huge range of areas. I have been involved in subjects like identifying supernova stars across the universe, studying the structure of the Milky Way in infra-red, and in the Gravity Wave Project identifying false signals that are picked up so as to understand what is causing them and seeking a cure.

In these projects you make friends, one of whom coloured the photos used in Pam's funeral order of service and the church magazine, as well as confirming the marriage links between Pam's family and the Wright Bros. family. One lady, Leonie who lives in Holland was very supportive of us during Pam's illness, and now her husband is terminally ill with cancer. I think she is a lapsed Catholic, although her sister is a theologian, so I am seeking to support her, by sending her a message of support, with relevant Bible quotes on a weekly basis, and lighting a candle for her every Sunday morning (at a time when I won't set our extremely lively kittens on fire - we call them 'water cats' because they are utterly fascinated with water). There is Jose, who lives in Portugal who is recovering from a series of major operations, and Elisabeth from Belgium who carries a lot of administrative work, and seeks to sort out disputes when they become heated. Melina, who I believe lives in France, is a casualty of the pressures in this work, and I am trying (so far without success) to keep an eye on her; she has reported that she has psychological problems and is, most uncharacteristically, incommunicado. Please pray that I have wisdom in this work.

Brian Goodwin

Together we can end leprosy forever

High on a hill in Nepal sits Anandaban Hospital, a beacon of light to people battling the physical and emotional effects of leprosy. Alongside The Leprosy Mission's hilltop hospital lies a cramped and crumbling research lab. Appearances can be deceiving! Inside this unassuming building, cutting edge research is taking place to reach the greatest height of all – ending leprosy.

Here the research team are developing an early diagnostic test that could diagnose leprosy on a smartphone! It would mean people like Shakti, pictured, could be diagnosed on the spot in her remote community.

If Shakti's leprosy was diagnosed and treated earlier, she would not have needed a life-saving leg amputation. A pioneering natural treatment, birthed in the lab next to Shakti's ward could have healed her leg ulcers caused by leprosy.



Shakti need not have endured rejection and prejudice because of leprosy. Scientific breakthroughs would have allowed her to live her dream of becoming a doctor. This bright 16-year-old could now be applying to medical school. Heartbreakingly, Shakti says her disability means her dream is now out of reach.

Clinical trials are in progress at Anandaban that will reduce leprosy's devastating grip globally. Through ground-breaking science, people like Shakti can reach the great heights they deserve.

Anandaban is home to scientific breakthroughs that pave the way to the end of leprosy. The mountainous challenge now faced by The Leprosy Mission is that the lab is at risk of closure. It's too small, not fit for purpose and was severely damaged in the severe earthquakes of 2015. It simply won't pass the upcoming Nepali Government inspection. Without this lab, the chance to end leprosy in our lifetime is lost forever.

To stop people like Shakti facing the devastating effects of leprosy, a new world-class research centre is needed at Anandaban.

God challenges us all to go to greater heights in His name. Will you make medical miracles happen by helping to build Anandaban Research Centre? Together we can give the research team the best possible environment and tools to end leprosy. Inspired by the ministry of Jesus, together we can reach the summit and end leprosy forever. Please visit www.leprosymission.org.uk for more information.

You can get involved with helping as at Hampton Mission Partnership 13 March is Leprosy Mission Sunday and you can donate then or on the following two Sundays.

Getting to know Robert and Rose

Many of you will know exactly who I mean when I mention Annie Tanner and Brian and Jackie Chilvers – “She was and they are HMP’s link missionaries” you will say, but Robert and Rose?

They are our other partner missionaries working in what the Baptist Missionary Society describes as “a sensitive country” somewhere in Europe. They have permission to be there and are known to be Christians but there are restrictions on what they can and cannot do. These focus on inducing people to convert to Christianity (proselytism) and overt evangelism such as public meetings. Whenever we contact them, we have to assume that all emails and other communications will be monitored and use non-sensitive language such as Father or boss for God and family gathering for Church. Partner churches like HMP are asked not to display printed materials about missionaries serving in these places or to circulate their newsletters. This is why we report on Robert and Rose in church services, prayer meetings and the like but do not display or share their newsletters.

So what can we share? Robert and Rose are aliases, they are both qualified teachers and work in a team based in their country’s capital to further God’s work focusing on education, reconciliation and faith. Among other community activities they run a pre-school. Rose recently gave birth to their second son. Whilst they were in the UK for the birth, their mission field home was burgled and there was a carbon monoxide leak because the chimney was blocked. They are thanking God for their landlord and his devoted care for their safety and local friends for their support.

They would value prayer:

- That their work will glorify God
- That they will build strong relationships
- That they will make a difference in the lives of those they work with
- That God will help them to manage practicalities and logistics well.

Barbara Spittle

Hampton Mission Partnership Prayer Wheel

The prayer wheel is a way for us to all pray for members of our church family, church activities and our community every day of the month. It consists of 31 boxes with names next to them. All you need to do is to find your name and put the number one in the box then move down the table adding numbers sequentially to 31.

The numbers represent each day of the month and because we all start at a different point on the list, everyone will be covered with prayer daily. So when you come across Robert and Rose you will now know who they are!

Pick up a copy in the narthex.

Liz Windaybank

Knitting and crochet adventures



In the autumn we started meeting at church every other Thursday afternoon to knit and crochet angels of hope to be put on the church wall for passers-by to take just before Christmas. It was also an opportune time to meet together with folk who had been more isolated in the pandemic and it proved to be a good opportunity for the hesitant knitters to learn and gain confidence. The three angels made by one member were a major achievement, though she insisted that they were a bit 'wonky'! Eventually we displayed 136 angels which were soon snapped up.



Meanwhile I was trying to find a pattern for clothes for a small doll for a Christmas present. To the rescue Ladies Guild! Rosemary remembered that she had some patterns from years ago which unfortunately were not the right size for my project but they were gratefully received by a knitting group in Farnham who support The Extra Mile. At Christmas they brought us some lovely items that were included in the presents The Extra Mile were putting together and included Barbie-type dolls in handmade outfits. Janice came up trumps with the doll pattern.

Gladys brought a leaflet to Ladies Guild about the care home clothing packs being put together by her neighbour (see back cover) and Pam had already made some lovely shawls (below) as she had previously knitted for Embracing Age. After that we arranged to meet Mary and were able to give her lots of suitable clothes.

We still meet every other week at 2.15 and welcome anybody to join us. Our newly confident knitter is now making a baby's cardigan. We are hoping to make some shawls for care homes but are looking for easy patterns!

Liz Windaybank



The Clothing Project

When mum died it took me a while to really say goodbye. Her clothes stayed in her wardrobe, and my back bedroom still seemed to echo with the sound of her sleeping. Passing by her door I'd say "goodnight mum" without thinking, and time stood still for a while. The sun shone and the moon waned and one day I gently folded her clothes for charity.

Most of them were "adaptive" or specially designed to accommodate her illness. Not a winner for charity shops selling to the young and fit. The recycling skip was not to be contemplated for such dear memories, so the black sack stayed a long while in the hallway waiting for a destination. The road to Calvary eventually took me to the foot of the cross, a care home in Teddington. A town full of our family's growing and journeying, it was fitting to finally leave her clothes there among her fellow travellers. Clothes custom made for suffering. The last signs of her earthly journey were given to the residents to use in their turn.

I returned home bemused by the blessings of the nurses caring for these cross bearers. Their undisguised joy at my simple offerings was puzzling as were their requests for more. Was this indeed such "manna from heaven"? I was puzzled. Could there really be care home residents in my own home town without enough clothing for their final journey?! Bad enough to be left alone outliving all family. But to be left with barely enough clothing for trials to come?! Surly that happened elsewhere?! The haunting question would not leave me (for who else but my mother would be asking it).

Then came Tina a lady with a great heart for the elderly. There she was on the worldwide web running her local charity Embracing Age. Holding elderly hands and helping them on their way. Surely, she would have the answer to my question? Caught up in Covid we met in her office, and as we talked our mutual bewilderment unfurled. We needed more research to find out the facts. Tina spoke to her contacts and her enquiries identified another local care home owing to a need for clothing for emergency admissions who often "arrive with nothing". We decided to run a small and manageable pilot project to supply good quality clothing to these two local homes.

Tina rolled her troops into action organising an appeal for suitable clothing from local churches. Friends and neighbours also kindly provided a rich source of quality supplies. I dealt with collecting donations from doorsteps (Covid safe), and deliveries to the care homes which started in mid-August 2021. The Spirit moved. Clothing donations rolled in just on time for the cold of winter and were delivered as fast as they arrived. The two care homes seemed to just soak up clothes and the dry desert began to bloom. The Spirit moved again as the Embracing Age knitting team sprang into action producing very popular warm shawls for vulnerable residents needing cosy winter comfort.

As I write it is now mid-January 2022 and a final set of donations from the original appeal is awaiting delivery. A total of almost 700 quality items of clothing will have been delivered with an estimated replacement value of at least £16000. The two local care homes are by all accounts well "topped up" with extra clothing after five months of winter deliveries. The care home managers involved are to be highly commended for putting the welfare of their residents first before other more pragmatic considerations. It takes character to vocalise a need and accept the help offered. We are fortunate indeed to have found them. But above all we are blessed to have been allowed to assist, and blessed by so many kind and brave donors (several of whom have given after their own bereavement). We now pray for all our vulnerable elders as they journey onwards in our midst with quiet dignity and courage. It's been a journey of listening and learning, not to mention witnessing.

Love in action. As my own dear mother used to say "God moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to behold".

Mary Maloney

(Embracing Age)

Tina English will be coming to give a talk at Ladies Guild on Tuesday 29 March at 10.30 am in the small hall. Everyone welcome.

The Bike Project update

Since we became a 'Bike Hub' for The Bike Project in May 2018, we have collected **938** bikes-which have gone to refugees and asylum seekers to give them a means of transport and also exercise.

Thank you to all who have donated bikes to the Project.

Since 2013, The Bike Project has given away over 7500 bikes to refugees from dozens of countries including Syria, Eritrea and Albania. They also run Bike Buddies, a cycling befriending project, and Pedal Power, teaching refugee women to cycle - sometimes for the first time in their lives.

As well as their charitable activities, they sell a proportion of the wonderful refurbished bikes to the general public through an online bike shop. Every single penny made from bike sales is ploughed straight back into the charity. This much-needed cash injection helps secure long-term sustainability – and that means even more refugees cycling!

The shop also has bike accessories, clothing, merchandise like Bike Project water bottles and cycling caps, gift cards and gifts for refugees such as a cycling safety kit, van delivery of a bike to a refugee, and cycling lessons.

So keep collecting those old bikes and tell family and friends about the Bike Project. Visit www.thebikeproject.co.uk for loads of information and stories.

Wendy Salmon



Sunday School then...

In 1864 there were said to be 117 children in the Sunday School at the Wesleyan Chapel in Church Street, Hampton, three years after the chapel opened. One reason for the move to Percy Road in 1926 was because the old church had a very small school room. The Main Hall and Primary Hall were built at the rear of the land because there was not enough money at the time to build the church as well and the main need was for a Sunday School. What is now the church was built in 1963.

Wendy remembers, *When I was very young (a long time ago!) Sunday school for the Primary school children (up to the age of 7 years) was held in the small hall. We sat on small wooden chairs in two rows. Ethel Clark and Jeannie Trotter were the teachers, assisted by Pam Goodwin who played piano for our songs.*

I remember singing 'Hear the pennies dropping, listen while they fall, everyone for Jesus, He shall have them all' as we walked around the room eventually reaching the glass money box on the table where we 'posted' our pennies. As a child I thought Jesus must be very rich if he gets all this money every week! Another song I remember was 'Jesus wants me for a sunbeam' and 'Praise Him, Praise Him all ye little children, He is God, He is God.' We learnt Bible stories, sometimes dramatizing them with dressing up clothes and said our prayers together.

When I went to the junior school I was promoted to the Junior Sunday school which was held in the large hall. Reg Clark was the Sunday school superintendent and various church members were teachers over the years. If you became a Sunday school teacher you were expected to attend 'Training class' which was held at the Clarks' home on a Thursday evening. This was where we discussed and prepared the lessons for the following Sunday.

Every year the children were encouraged to take the Scripture Exam. For this you had to study hard and also memorise Bible verses. You then had to sit a written exam to be tested on what you had been learning. I still remember some of the verses I learned for the Scripture Exam.

The Sunday School Anniversary was usually held in May and the Sunday School children and their teachers would do a presentation (usually involved singing songs and perhaps reciting poems) in a church service. The girls would wear 'buttonholes' of fresh flowers on their cardigans-I can still remember the smell of lily of the valley flowers that my mother would pick from our garden.

A highlight of the year was the Sunday School party. We played traditional party games (Pass the parcel, Musical chairs etc...) in the large hall followed by a lovely party tea in the small hall. Jeannie kept a book where she had lists of how many sandwiches, fairy cakes, biscuits, jellies etc. would be required for the party- and various people in the congregation would make the food for the children.

In 1968 the Sunday School was flourishing with an urgent need for more teachers for the 95 children. By 1973 there were 70 children in the Sunday School – nearly as many as the 82 adult members of the church!

Reg Clark was Sunday School Superintendent from the 1970s to early 1990. After this Junior Church was led by Ethel Clark, Paul Goodwin and David Salmon on a rota basis using Partners in Learning. Teaching secondary age children were Ros Sandberg, Margaret Thorn and Hilary Everitt. At this time the children took part in a monthly family service, sometimes acting out bible stories. They enjoyed outings like seeing a production of Joseph at Raynes Park Methodist Church and having a riverside picnic and walk at Laleham. They also took part in the annual circuit sports day and the Council of Churches rounders match. The first Holiday Club was held in October 1997.

With dwindling numbers of children, in 2004 a new direction was desperately needed and on 25 April Discovery Club began led by Pam Harrison and Louise. It ran at the same time as the service every week and took the format of a holiday club with crafts, music and games whilst discovering more about the life and work of Jesus. By 2010 it was led by Pam with help from other folk like Gloria and Pam Goodwin and often had only two regular attendees. As younger children wanted to join, a Junior Discovery Club began in November led by Sue, Emma and Louise, meeting every Sunday in term time with the children starting off in church until after the second hymn. This continued until around 2017.

In October 2019 we launched Bethany Corner, a Godly Play area in what had previously been the space for the church musicians. Bethany Corner arose out of our need to offer something of value to our children and young people in a context where there were not enough volunteers to run a traditional junior church. It was well resourced and the children enjoyed it but some adults found it distracting and then it was not used during the pandemic because of social distancing and fears about its soft furnishing being a source of cross infection.

And so we prayed for new leaders for a Junior Church for our young people and at the end of 2021 our prayers were answered!

Liz Windaybank

...and now ...Welcome to our HMP Junior Church!

Guided by John 3:16 (NIV), the Junior Church at HMP is child-focused, bible based and fun. All children do feel a valued part of the wider church. The purpose of Junior Church at HMP is twofold:

- To learn about stewardship through bible stories, bible quizzes and fun bible-based activities.
- To act out stewardship: with focus on caring for God's creation.

We hope to add to every family's effort in their attempt to lay down a spiritual foundation, that in God's timing, will lead a child into, and later grow in, a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

How many children attend?

On average, 10 children are involved each Sunday.

Our Curriculum

We use the Holy Bible and follow a range of bible-based resources.

When does it run?

Every 2nd and 4th Sunday

The children come to the adult morning service at 10:30 for the first fifteen minutes and then split off for their own activities until about 11.30.

What about the helpers?

We have a team of dedicated teachers and helpers who have the children's interests at heart and make each week as exciting and relevant as possible. All the teachers and helpers have been appointed according to new safeguarding recommendations in line with the HMP Safeguarding Policy. We want Junior Church to be both a safe and fun place for all our children.

What do our JC children think about their sessions?

Mimi- Mirai – age 6

I love coming into Junior Church because it's an incredibly fun way of learning about God and Jesus Christ. I love listening to the bible stories and working through the bible quizzes with my junior church family. Learning to write The Blessings in Cantonese at Junior Church was amazing!

Jacques – age 9 I like all the activities at Junior Church and seeing friends is the best.

Emillie – age 5 It's absolutely amazing.

Fae – age 11

Religious Studies, though important, isn't the most exciting thing for a child but at junior church we use games and activities to incorporate fun while learning about the Holy Spirit.

I hope this has given you a flavour of what Junior Church is all about. If you would like to know more, please feel free to contact us.

Benis George



The Extra Mile

The New Year is often a time of reflection and as I write this, I find myself reflecting on how far we have come and what we have done this year to improve the lives of our communities.

Sometimes things happen so fast that when you look back it is hard to remember it all and when it happened, but let's start with our recent activity. This Christmas we exceeded ourselves with Christmas presents for children and families in need. We supplied over 220 presents (wrapped and unwrapped) and received some great feedback from healthcare professionals. Thanks to Stripey Stork, donations from the public and some local companies including the Hygiene Bank we were able to meet all the referrals for presents, even though some were very last minute. We benefitted from 'it's in the bag' campaign run by the Hygiene Bank, giving bags of toiletries and treats for adults as well as children and our local Waitrose also helped us out with some things. Thanks also to other churches in the circuit for donations and support. So many generous donations mean we have a few things left which can either go out with our referrals or kept for Christmas this year. Some examples of the feedback are below.

We set up a Wish List on a site called For Common Good, with some of the items we would like to receive. The idea is people purchase items from our wish list and these are sent to us and recently we received a box of goodies including toiletries and art materials such as felt pens, pencils, paper and other bits. All these connections ensure we can continue to help those in need.

www.forcommongood.co.uk/pages/the-extra-mile

Our Facebook page sees a lot of followers, likes and shares. When we are short of certain things, we can ask for specific items or age range of clothes. We usually have a good response as more people are now aware of our existence.

Feedback from Professionals:

Stanwell Family Centre – *“Extra Mile always go above and beyond for the families we work with ... within 24hours they reply to us as to when we can collect and if they do not have the exact things that are needed, they have been known to purchase them. The ladies are all amazing and very friendly. We have also taken a few donations to them and they have been extremely grateful. Let's just say they always go the 'extra mile'. Your support is paramount to the complex needs of the families we are supporting – without you families would not have the items they so desperately need to clothe their children or have furnishings or equipment to make a home.”*

Hounslow Social Worker – *“The Extra Mile was able to provide me last minute Christmas presents for a family. The mother is now a single mother and is the primary carer for her four boys. Since there had been a change in the family dynamic, she was struggling financially. The presents allowed the mother to feel as though the boys would have presents to open on Christmas Day. She was extremely grateful and I believe the help the mother has received has empowered her to feel independent and strong.”*

Hope Church Hounslow – *“One single mum had nothing for a newborn and a mum with postnatal depression and under social care was given clothes and toys for her 2-year-old and newborn. It made such a difference to her as she felt she was able to provide for her two children herself and not be reliant on social services or benefits. It really boosted her self-worth as a mum.*

One mum with five children, two with diagnosis of ADHD and autism were given clothes and toys for all the children. Mum was in tears as she felt she wasn't coping and judged by everyone as a bad mum. Giving her the clothes and toys brought her some joy and empowered her to carry on

parenting her challenging family. She felt very down trodden and judged by people and was struggling with benefits and social care involvement.

Three refugee families were given toys and clothing for their families. The children had arrived with nothing and were living in one room per family in local hotels. We were able to show such kindness with the things that The Extra Mile had given to us. The children were so pleased with the toys; it brought such joy for them to have something to play with whilst they were in such confined space.

A family from Goa was given toys and Christmas presents for their children and along the way have requested clothing for their boys. It's been tough for them to get established in a home with no money. When they first arrived, they were able to get winter clothes for their children. They were so cold.

These are just a few of the families that The Extra Mile has been able to help this past year. The things given so generously to them have brought hope and joy. This has enabled families to be able to cope so much better in the difficult circumstances in which they have found themselves. We are so grateful at Hope Church Foodbank to be able to refer to you for our families who are in real need and very vulnerable."

Pam Harrison

STOP PRESS!!

Just been advised that The Extra Mile has been nominated for the 2021 Community Heroes Awards for London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. It is a great honour to be nominated and we are all delighted that this work has been recognised. We will be sending a small delegation to the awards evening on 23rd March and no doubt you will hear all about it in due course.



Messy Nights

Back in 2019 (I know, pre-pandemic! It feels a lifetime ago now, doesn't it?) Vicci and I had started to notice that the Messy Church activities were often just as popular with the adults as they were with the children. The solution seemed a no brainer– what we needed was a Messy Church for grown-ups!

We made a plan for a Christmas themed Messy Church for grown-ups in the December of that year, but unfortunately prospective attendees were all busy over that month and so we postponed the gathering until the New Year. A combination of Vicci's sabbatical and, of course, covid, meant that the plan for another session went onto the back burner.

When we did our first in person Messy Church post covid in summer 2021, many of the same families we had come to know so well came back, and once again the same families who enjoyed the crafts as much as the kids were asking whether they could join in too. The need for grown ups Messy Church was still there.

I spoke to some of these parents, who were still very keen to see a messy church for grown-ups happen. However, whereas Vicci and I had envisaged basic but formal crafts (think simple crochet, sewing, cross stitch) what I was seeing – and what I saw increasingly at other toddler groups – was that the adults were enjoying the children's craft materials. And so I planned to use these materials instead. This had the added benefit of adults attending requiring no prior knowledge or ability in craft. There was no pressure to be "perfect" and anyone of any ability could come.

I put out a feeler for interest and dates and times that would work for people, and although there wasn't a huge response there were enough people keen to see it happen on a Friday evening so we decided to go ahead.

We've now had three sessions and we're evolving as we go. Some attendees have been happy to splash paints, glitter, glue, tissue paper and buttons on to canvas to create their own, Scripture inspired artwork. Others have been keen to see a more focused approach, and at Christmas a small group of us learnt how to crochet a snowflake. There is also an interest in creating with a purpose in response to social issues and need, and we're looking at ways to incorporate "craftivism" into the offering.

The biggest hurdle has been the name of the group. Although I have been calling it "Messy Church for grown-ups" we fell foul of the Messy branding. A group of us had an email directly from Lucy Moore herself, who is one of the Messy Church founders! Part of the ethos of Messy Church is that the offering should be all age, without a set age limit. This was something we hadn't realised before, and so after some hasty website updates and grovelling we came back to Lucy Moore to say that we would remove the Messy branding from the grown-ups project altogether.

Her response surprised us all – apparently she had been keen to do a Messy Church offering that was more aimed at grownups for some time but never had the opportunity! She was very keen for us to use the Messy branding (but in a way that didn't imply that it was just for grown-ups, the same way that Messy Vintage doesn't imply that it's just for the elderly) and not only that, she wants to hear more from us and how the project is going, and for us to contribute to the national Messy Church magazine about the project in the future. In fact, I have had an email recently from her successor asking whether I could put together this article in the near future!

We are running under the name Messy Nights at the moment, but this is still open for debate. Any ideas for a good Messy name are very much welcomed!

Of course, Messy Church – as we are now very aware! – is an all-age event and so everyone is welcome to our next Messy Church session. However, if evenings are easier then come along to Messy Nights instead. It's open to everyone, but some of the smaller everyones are likely to be in bed!

Messy Night runs on the 3rd Friday of the month from 8-9:30pm.

Bronwyn Coveney



Hampton Mission Partnership website

In April 2021, along with modernizing our audio-visual systems, modernizing our website was the next big step, therefore the decision was made to produce a brand-new website for Hampton Mission Partnership.

Our wonderful website development team met for the first time in April via Zoom, to brainstorm and discuss ideas, and there were certainly a lot! Development of the website began the day after the first meeting, which gave us the ability to produce 'draft' copies of the website between meetings, to visualise how our ideas would look.

During the development we aimed to stick to multiple targets, which were usability, design, and unity. Usability was the most important aspect for us as we strived to create a website that is easy to navigate and easy to find the information you are looking for. This involved carefully curating the navigation menu to ensure pages are under the category you would expect them to be in and making the website mobile phone and tablet friendly. Design was another, by choosing colours and fonts that give a modern feel, along with adding subtle animations to pages. Finally, there was bringing a sense of unity, bringing both Baptists and Methodists together into a single unified website, created together.

Development continued until October, when we decided that the website was complete enough to do a 'soft-launch'. The site went live on 31st October, and we were greeted with a whopping 277 views, even views in the USA, Canada and Australia! We received a vast amount of feedback in the coming days about how usable and well designed the site is, which was amazing to hear, and to know that all our hard work was not misspent. The most appreciated aspect of the website was by far the service details on the homepage, which give an overview of the date and time of the next service, who is leading it, along with links to watch on YouTube.

We are very pleased that our most popular pages are The Extra Mile and Baby Basics, giving the charities even more reach. We have received many enquiries about The Extra Mile and Baby Basics through the new messaging feature, which has made it easier for anyone to get in contact with us.

With various aspects to cover, and over six months of work, we are delighted about how successful the website has been so far, and the positivity from everyone indicates it was time well spent. You can find the website here <https://hamptonmissionpartnership.org.uk>

Cameron Bools

Time Traveller

...or what Great-great-grandma would think of today's modern world:

On-line – where the laundry goes to dry
Hotspot – the chair by the fire
Went viral – caught the 'flu
Wireless connectivity – plugging in the radio
Reboot – getting a replacement pair of work shoes
Cybersecurity – Huh?!?

Rachael Brown

Bible Reading Notes

The Bible Reading Fellowship produces notes in January, May and September to help with reading the bible every day. At Hampton Mission Partnership you can order them from me to make it even easier! Email me at mike@mssz.co.uk I have copies of previous editions if you would like to see what is on offer and I have also put a small display in the narthex.

There are five different series and hopefully one that suits you. 'New Daylight' is their most popular and there is a deluxe version with bigger text. 'Guidelines' is intended for church leaders and students, providing more in-depth study for today's mission and ministry. The focus of 'The Upper Room' is finding God in daily experience. 'Day by Day with God' is written for women by women who have found the bible a source of strength and inspiration for life. 'Bible Reflections for Older People' has 40 bible reflections and prayer suggestions plus interviews and ideas to encourage and inspire.

Liz W uses **'The Upper Room: where the world meets to pray'** and she says this:

Over the years I have used several types of daily bible reading notes and have finally found the one that I look forward to reading every day. Each day the notes are by different people from all over the world. A short heading describing the theme of the day is followed by a bible reading which I usually read at least a couple of times to mull over what is being said. This is followed by the meditation on the passage from the day's contributor then a short prayer and 'thought for the day'. Finally there is a 'prayer focus' somehow relating to the day's theme. For example, today's heading is 'Immeasurable God' with a reading from Psalm 147. The prayer focus is for maths teachers!

Eunice says, *In the days of Jim Stockley our beloved Pastor, (so a day or two ago), Alan Dennison introduced me to 'Daylight Bible Study Notes' (now 'New Daylight,') and ever since I have been on a bible study journey which has not only informed my biblical knowledge but more importantly has been a companion in my spiritual development. Time and again I have encountered God in these notes and our relationship continues to develop and deepen.*

A few years ago, Alan asked me to try 'Day by Day with God'. Many of the contributors I had met in 'New Daylight' e.g. Elaine Storkey, Veronika Zundel, Amy Boucher Pye and Lyndall Bywater, so reading their work is often like catching up with old friends and of course I have been introduced to 'new friends.' These are young writers who bring new and fresh insights to the bible.

The 'Day by Day' bible study notes aim to 'root women's lives in the bible,' but they are too good just to be read by women; everyone should be reading them. They will certainly enrich the lives of all who read them. In these days of equality and gender-fluidity it seems rather anachronistic to aim any bible notes to any specific gender, as Paul says, Christ is for all, so pick up a copy and enjoy your own personal adventure with God as you journey through the bible.

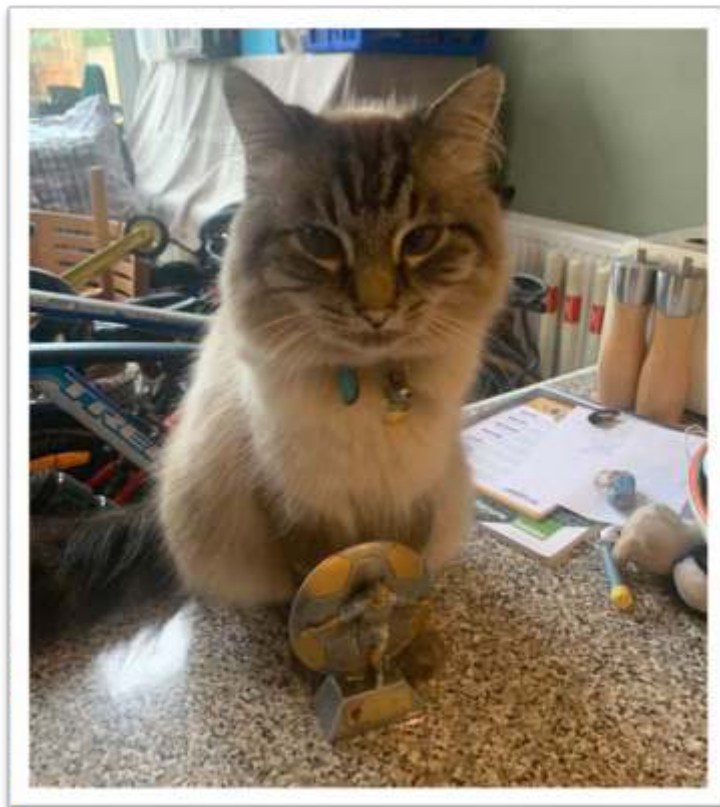
For more information have a look at the BRF website. <https://brfonline.org.uk>

Mike Dennison

My Cat (by Joseph Lancaster, age 7)

Si is as soft as a feather. He is very cheeky and likes stealing things. When he gets mad, he starts scratching you and biting you, like he did this morning. It is very annoying and selfish and also cheeky. His fur is very long like reeds growing in the wilderness. His eyes are as blue as the sky and ocean combined. His whiskers are as white as a cloud. His nose is very smooth and pink at the end. His pupils are as black as night and large. He is very lazy and really likes eating. He is as springy as a frog; he jumps over our fence and in a blink of an eye he leaps from place to place.

He looks like a royal cat. I can imagine him having tea with the Queen and eating all her sandwiches. Si's ears are the shape of a leaf that changes. When he is mad they lie flat against his head. When he is calm, they flop around happily. He has a blue collar with a bell that jiggles and wiggles.



He digs underground, does his business, and covers it with brown dirt. He is quite good at doing his hair. He licks his paw, wipes it around his body and cleans himself. I imagine he is always thinking about food. In the mornings and the evenings he meows until we give him his food. He cautiously walks when he is coming near to a bird, then he springs across to try and catch it. Si and our dog Sky caught a pigeon by working together. Si brought it into Sky's crate, and Sky got into trouble. Si got away with it.

Si is as cute as a bunny and guinea pig combined together. He is as fast as lightning that Zeus throws out. When he gets up, he yawns to show his teeth that are as pointy as blades. He likes sleeping on people's pillows. He has a girlfriend next door called Dafne. She is a friendly white cat.

Absurdities of a TV Licence

Dear Mrs. Iris Postlethwaite,
Has just today turned 98,
And what by post did she receive,
But billing from the BBC.

With glasses weak she could not read,
The printed font on background green,
So nephew came and had a look,
And talked her through the info book.

"This is about your licence fee."
"What's that you say, a cup of tea?"

"A LICENCE, Auntie, for your set."
"Oh, Nephew, dear, you do forget,
I do not need a licence, me,
For I last drove in '93."

"No, not that kind of licence, Dear,
A TV fee, you pay all year,
You must pay up, I fear it's time."
"What's that you say, sell beer and wine?!
Oh, Nephew, now you are confused,
A licence – me? – for selling booze!"

"No, dear Aunt, a TV fee,
For those past 5 and 70!"

The paperwork it is not clear,
To poor old Iris, what a dear,
In 8-point font the Ts & Cs
Befuddle those who barely see.

The free-phone number on the left,
Is just the thing for one who's deaf,
And pay-in-person payment points,
Are perfect for arthritic joints.

Absurdities they are not lost
On those beleaguered by the cost.
With Nephew's help she understood –
This licence fee, it was no good.

£800 per month she gets,
Pays council tax, no benefits,
And then there are the other bills
For cardigans and peptic pills.
Despite these costs the BBC,
Does ask her for a licence fee.

When asked about the nightly news,
She just replies with, "Who are you?"
The people living on TV,
Are all the friends whom she does see.

Yes, BBC has now revoked
Free licences for elder folk,
So now old dears from pensions eke,
A licence fee or see the Beak.

But they did underestimate,
Dear Mrs. Iris Postlethwaite,
For as she thought about the fee,
A nice fine loophole she did see...

And thus she went before the judge,
To argue that she DOES begrudge
And WILL not pay the licence fee,
"No matter what you do to me."
So off she went to HMP,
Delighted by the irony.

See, Iris saw a different side,
She saw potential, recognised,
That all of this was to her best.
"At least inside I'll get some rest,
Plus all my dinners cooked for me,
And no need for a licence fee!"

Rachael Brown

Congratulations



Celebrating Brian's 85th birthday on 31 October 2021



Alison Salmon and Matthew McWilliam celebrating their engagement on 15 December 2021

Books

Where the light fell by Philip Yancey

Philip Yancey is the best-selling author of 25 books which often focus on suffering and grace. When he survives a frightening car accident in 2007 he vows to write his memoir, which covers his parents' background, his strict fundamentalist childhood in 1950s Atlanta and how this impacted him and his brother Marshall's lives up to the present day.

When his father, a 23 year old Baptist minister, dies from polio his mother dedicates her one and three year old sons to God. She earns her keep as a Bible teacher but shows little love at home. He says, 'Each month she writes letters to her supporters using spiritual, upbeat language...She reserves all the darkness, all the anger, for us, her sons.' Marshall and Philip both struggle with life and faith and eventually take different paths, often with devastating consequences.

This is a fascinating insight, beautifully written, into what influenced Philip Yancey's writing, moving from thinking of God as 'an arm twister, a cosmic bully who schemes to break anyone who dares resist' to finding God through nature and music and unexpectedly through a college assignment.

Liz Windaybank

Us three by Ruth Jones

This novel centres round the lives of three women. They have been best friends since school when they were 5 years old in a small fictional Welsh village. The story starts in the 80s when they are about to get their A level results and then leave for a trip of a lifetime island hopping in Greece together before separating, for the first time they have known each other, to go to different universities. The plot shares the lives of the three women up to 2017, when they are middle aged, and all the life events both good and bad shape who they have become and how they behave.

Each character is completely different and the story follows each life which ultimately always comes back to the triangle of friendship they have for each other; even though it is sorely tested and almost broken by devastating life events. Can it be mended over time or is it broken for ever and with yet more shocking events ahead can the three friends go back to how it used to be?

So many good characters in the book where you can recognise situations that we may all face with some shocking and amusing situations they find themselves in. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and found it a real page turner, it was hard to put it down and I often found myself reading it almost to midnight. The writing makes the characters so believable and you can see how this could be an actual real situation.

Pam Harrison

If you enjoy reading do join the Circuit Book Club. The next meeting is on Friday 29 April at 7.30 pm when we will be discussing *All the light we cannot see* by Anthony Doerr. Hopefully back in person at Sunbury Methodist Church. Contact Jill Fraser for more information or speak to Liz W.

All three books are available from Richmond Libraries.

CARE HOME CLOTHING DONATIONS

Could you donate clothes for care home residents in need?

Local charity, Embracing Age, is compiling emergency clothing packs for care home residents admitted at short notice. We need clothes for men and women, in good condition, that are easy to put on and take off including:

- Blouses & shirts
- Cardigans & jumpers
- T- shirts & tops
- Trousers & track suit bottoms
- Nightwear & dressing gowns
- Ponchos & shawls
- Vests & stretchy socks
- Hats, gloves & scarves
- Jackets & Fleeces (waist/thigh length to avoid tripping)

If you can knit or crochet, we also have patterns for snugly bed capes we would love to include in the clothing packs.

If you have anything to donate, please contact Mary on mary@embracingage.org.uk or call 07757 450 951 to arrange a Covid-safe doorstep collection.

Thank you!



www.embracingage.org.uk/richmond
Reg. Charity No. 1160400

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