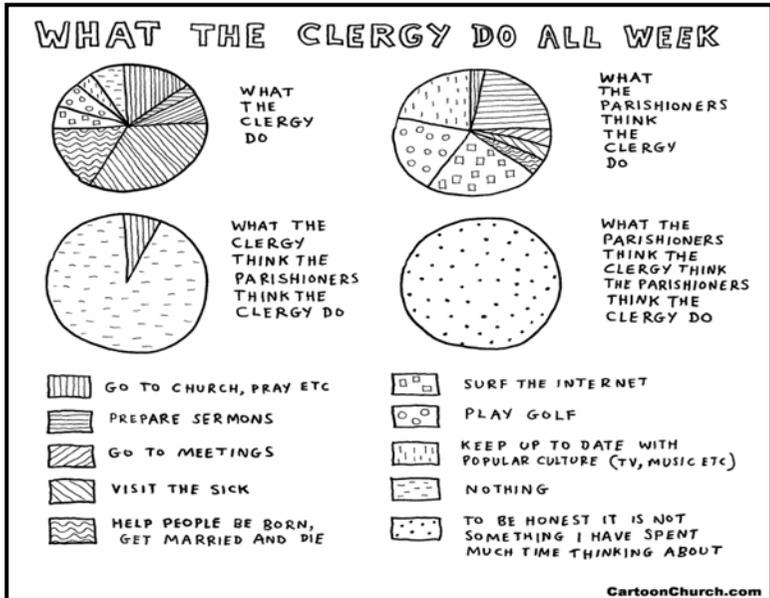


Shirley Methodist Matters



What does a minister do? See page 27

October 2021
Shirley Methodist Church

One of 'Churches Together in Shirley'
Eldon Ave, Shirley, CRO 8SD



www.shirleymeth.org.uk

80p

Praise and Worship in October



ALL THESE SERVICES WILL BE HELD IN CHURCH AT 10.30AM

| | | | |
|------------|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| SUN | 3 OCT | REVD CHOI | HOLY COMMUNION |
| SUN | 10 OCT | BENNIE HARMS | ALL AGE WORSHIP |
| SUN | 17 OCT | REVD LESLIE GRIFFITHS | FREEDOM SUNDAY |
| SUN | 24 OCT | REVD STEPHEN DAY | |
| SUN | 31 OCT | CARYL RAPPS | BIBLE SUNDAY |

If you have not yet been back - please be assured that the chairs are arranged with Covid safety in mind. We shall continue to follow all Government guidance.

The services will also be available on Zoom. You can watch on your screen or listen on your phone. Get the link by emailing smchurchzoom@gmail.com It will be the same link each week.

An audio recording will be put on the website by 7pm each Sunday.

Many thanks to all those people who are making these different forms of worship available to us.

A Sunday School teacher asked the children, "Why do we have to be quiet in church?" A small child replied, "Because people are sleeping."

Revd Choi writes our Circuit Letter

Dear friends,

You may remember that I had three months sabbatical last spring, which was a precious gift from the church, and I gratefully enjoyed its privilege. For the sabbatical project, I intended to focus on the issue of **'Reconciliation'** as a theme, with a particular interest in the issues of the Korean Peninsula, which had been the theme of my previous sabbatical project. My initial plan was to go back to Korea and walk along the DMZ (De-Militarised Zone, 155 miles), visiting the actual places of division where the scars of war and fighting can still be found even after the ceasefire almost 70 years ago.

But, as you can imagine, Covid-19 prevented me from proceeding it as planned and I had to repeat the postponements and cancellations of my plan so many times, which was disappointing. Instead, however, I changed the plan, and Sarah and I managed to walk along the Thames, 85 miles in six days, from Hampton Court

to Canary Wharf on the North Bank and crossed the river, and walked back from Greenwich to Hampton Court on the South Bank. It was a challenge, but we so much enjoyed it and learned the beauty of the River Thames and the history of London, passing through rough areas as well as posh areas, historical sites as well as natural sites. Although this walk didn't have much to do with my theme of reconciliation, it made me think about **what it means to live together peacefully in a global, diverse city.**



As the restrictions of the lockdown were eased in June, we had an opportunity of visiting Belfast which was actually part of my project, as it is **the heart of division in Northern Ireland and still needs 'reconciliation'**. And, I learned a lot about the issues of Northern Ireland. It is not just about sausages and meats. It is about the division between two groups: Loyalists

vs. Republicans, or Catholics vs. Protestants. And, you will be surprised that there is a separation wall 15 metres high and 7.3 km long. That is the wall which divides the community in two, and separates the people in hostility. On the High Street of one side, we saw many churches; Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of Ireland: on the other side, of course, Catholic churches. But, I wondered what gospel they were preaching, and which Jesus they were following.

As we know, Paul says in Ephesians 2. 14- 16,

“For he (Jesus) himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of

them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.”

I am sure that is the message we need to bear in our hearts as the followers of Jesus. Personally, this sabbatical gave me some precious lessons, one of which is ‘We plan, but God proceeds’. However well we plan, it is all up to God. Nevertheless, the great thing is, even though it was quite different from what I planned and wished, I learned a lot and experienced many new things which wouldn’t be possible otherwise.

And, I’d like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who covered my absence in various ways.

Every blessing,
Rev’d SC Choi.

Please contact us if you would like someone - or yourself - to be prayed for by members of our Prayer Chain. Names are only taken with the consent of the person concerned and stay on the chain for a week.

Elizabeth Smart 020 8777 2055 or via the ‘contact us’ form on www.shirleymeth.org.uk



Prayer Chain

Your Church needs you!

There is a sentence in the covenant service, "Christ has many services to be done, some are easy others are difficult". This is certainly true in the life of the Church. It is salutary sometimes to enumerate all the jobs that are done, often behind the scenes, which keep the building and the various activities that take place inside running smoothly. Two important vacancies have recently been filled. **Heather Tarling** has become **our Leprosy Mission coordinator** and **Ray Roberts** has now taken responsibility for **TWAM**. Thank you.

Bill Smart has told us that in the spring he is stepping down from his role as Property Steward. If I were to list everything that Bill does there would be no space for this article in the magazine. To find one person to take over from Bill and to give the time, energy and expertise that he has is, I think, impossible. We are therefore hoping to split the role and **find a group of people able to take on the responsibility for our property.**

Could you be one of those people? Please give careful prayerful thought to this appeal and offer your services if you feel able to do so.

Rosemary Jones



You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving

Family News

Elizabeth Smart writes:

We have just celebrated Harvest and, in church on Sunday 25 September, we were given an oak sapling from the no-cost garden to plant somewhere of our choosing: it would be interesting to know where the members of our church family planted them! We are all conscious of how global warming is affecting the world and hope they will all grow into mighty oaks and become rich habitats for wildlife – it's thought our oak trees support 280 different species so look closely next time you are in the vicinity of an oak tree! We say thank you to the volunteer gardeners who dug and potted up the saplings – very hard work!



We have been delighted that Judith and Ray Roberts have shared their family news this

month (see page 9). Eleanor's ordination at Exeter Cathedral is wonderful news and we send our love and blessings to her and the family as she begins her ministry in a number of rural churches in Devon. We have followed Eleanor's journey for quite a number of years, especially her time spent in the Dominican Republic. We always looked forward to hearing news from Colin and Pearl from their family visits to Eleanor and Ben and Ray and Judith as they followed their family round the world – sometimes exciting and occasionally scary!



We hold our Church family in our thoughts and prayers and remember Jean and Frank Brooks; Adele Sluce and her brother John; Anthony and Lesley Vigurs; Andrew Moore; Gwen Richardson; Akos Abadoo and her family; Pam Harper; Sureya dos Santos and Marcos, and George Howard in hospital.

We have been pleased to be able to greet friends on the Zoom Sunday morning services – Dennis Blount with his family in Dorset gives us all a greeting – and so we give thanks for the wonderful technical team that supports us in this way and helps us to see each other.

We continue to remember all the Hall Grange family and give thanks for the genuine care of MHA throughout the country helping to keep residents connected with their families. We pray that new residents will feel at home and make friends as they settle in to life at Hall Grange.

Spring bulbs to brighten up the church garden in 2022!



The church garden's name is changing
- from 'No cost garden' to
the **'Anniversary Garden'**
to celebrate the church's 90th anniversary this year!

Kate Marsden would be very grateful to receive
any donations of spring bulbs to plant in the garden.

Kate will be happy to receive them on Sundays
or they can be left for her in the Welcome Area.

Thank you.

Nature, with all its beauty, is cheaper than therapy

Sandwiches for Nightwatch

As the Floating Shelter will not be operating again this winter, we have been asked to provide **loaves of sandwiches** to **Croydon Nightwatch on Sunday evenings in November and December** (and possibly October too). We shall also providing **5 hot chicken meals on some Tuesdays for the Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub** in the grounds of Croydon university Hospital. If you can help with either/both of these, please let Jonathan Baxter know on 020 8777 3158 or landjbaxter@talktalk.net Thank you.

Well Worth Walking for Cancer Research



The Taylers - Simon, his son Will, his nephew Henry and his brother John took part in the London Shine Walk for Cancer Research on 25 September, in memory of Simon's wife's aunt.

The 12 mile walk around central London took place overnight. Simon walked 13 miles in 4 hours 25 minutes and was awarded a medal - which he'll bring to church to show Sunday Morning Club, and anyone else who is interested!

Team Tayler raised just under £1,300 and the whole event made £2 million!

Eleanor's Ordination

Judith Roberts writes:

On 11 September the family travelled to the Cathedral Church of St Peter in Exeter to celebrate my sister Eleanor's ordination. Sixteen people were ordained as new ministers during the service: seven women and nine men, ranging in age from 26 to early 60s. Eleanor was keen to point out that she was not the oldest!



The Order of Service included a helpful list of those forming the large Procession of church Dignitaries. We were rather bemused by the first processor being the Dogwhipper - the man with the long black robes and heavy wooden stave with the silver point - he was in charge of pushing dogs out of the way of the bishops!

Eleanor became a reader in the Church of England about 15 years ago. While she was working as a teacher in Kenya, she took on the role of school chaplain. She will be serving in a Benefice of six churches in rural Devon working with the incumbent minister. She hopes eventually to become a Chaplain working with the elderly.



It was a very memorable, happy and colourful occasion and we were delighted to share in the start of a new chapter in Eleanor's ministry.



Guild dates for October and November

On **Thursday 21 October** take an illustrated journey through the beautiful Gower peninsula with Malcolm Jennings and his superb photographic slides and well informed commentary.

On **Thursday 18 November** Revd Jennifer Potter tells us about her life before Shirley.

All are welcome – we meet at 8pm in the Lounge.

RIP Tilly

Regular Guild members will remember Janet Ambrose's lovely dog Tilly who was one of the quietest members of the audience at Guild meetings. Janet reports that she went to doggy heaven towards the end of September.

Annual Thanksgiving Service for MWiB

*West Croydon Methodist Women in Britain celebrates its Annual Thanksgiving Service on **Sunday, 10th October at 11:00am.***

Preacher - Mrs Eve DeGraft President MWiB London District

Please join us in our Worship and Thanksgiving for God's faithfulness and goodness throughout the past year. There will be light Refreshments in the hall after the close of service. Thank you

When you give a talk, you can guarantee no-one is listening until you make a mistake



Jean Beecher writes:

We are again selling **Traidcraft Christmas Cards** this year. From **Sunday 17 October** you will be able to select from a number of attractively designed cards which help some of the world's poorest communities to earn a living and feed their families.

After a break our stall will again sell homemade marmalade. This is highly recommended and, if you haven't sampled it, we invite you to give it a try. You will not be disappointed. Christian Aid continues to be there for the most vulnerable in times of crisis and for the long term. The following is one of their projects we have been supporting:

To describe as 'tough' the conditions in which many of the **refugees who fled the violence in Myanmar** nearly two years ago and who ended up in a camp in **Bangladesh** is a huge understatement.

I have a letter from Christian Aid thanking our church for our donation and telling how this has helped people in this crowded camp to lead safer lives.

Lack of lighting at night made it dangerous for women and girls to venture out to use the toilets. Many, too frightened to leave their tents, suffered health problems consequently. Taslima is a sixteen year old girl who, with her sisters and many others, has benefited from the installation of over 300 solar lamps in the camp, making it safe to use the toilets at any time.



Christian Aid, working with local partners, has also provided women-friendly spaces where they can meet, talk and share experiences.

Thank you for your giving.

Stories

I just love to hear people tell the story of their lives. The other day, I drove an elderly lady home from the 'lunch club' at the church. It wasn't very far and as we talked, she told me a little bit of her story. She's 98 years of age! She certainly didn't look 98. Then she told me of how, during the war, the factory where she worked was bombed whilst they were working. Before long, it had been rehoused in another building and they carried on working.



One afternoon, at another lunch club I was visiting, one of the ladies at the table spoke of how she used to fly Spitfire aircraft from the factory to the airfield where they would be used as fighter planes. She wasn't bragging or saying how good she was – it was simply a fact of life and something she had done.

I was quite taken up with the story told during the TV show, 'Countryfile', about the hop pickers in Britain during the early 1900's. The presenter visited a lady who had been a child at the time and she spoke of the 'holiday atmosphere' on the farms at the time; also, how her mother stuck a big, black umbrella into the ground and she had to fill it with hops before she could go and play with the other children, and finally how she bought her first bicycle with the money she had earned picking hops.



Yet, there was another side to it; the living conditions of the pickers were sometimes quite squalid and unhygienic. That side of the picture was not shown at all and I'm sure there are just as many stories of pain and injustice to the pickers.

I must admit there are times when I listen to the stories of others that I'm quite ashamed of myself for times I thought I was hard done by and I'm extremely thankful for the way my life has turned out. That's where our stories become '**restored**' by the Grace of God and the new life we receive through Jesus Christ. I sat enthralled as I listened to a Minister's wife tell her story. How the only work she could get was to wash dishes through the night. She spoke of how her faith grew by listening to recorded services whilst washing the dishes. She worked nights, whilst her husband looked after their young family. She returned home at 5am so that her husband could go to work during the day. She said she was never happier, despite the hard times they faced.

So, what about your story? Have you ever shared it with anybody? Has your story been **restored by God** and how has this been for you and others around you? I can tell you that as I've shared my story with

others, I am reminded of God's grace and the His power in **restoring my life**. Not just being restored in Him, but Him re-writing the story of my life and His goodness and part in doing it all. You can listen to my story, entitled "Falling out of the tree", by going to this link <https://soundcloud.com/londonmethodist/falling-out-of-the-tree-bennie-harms-31-october-2020-for-gods-story-your-story-every-story> If you want to write and share your story with me (I will treat it with utmost confidence), please feel free to do so by sending an email to bennieharms@croydonmeth.org You can also share it with a close friend or members of your family. I'm sure they'll be blessed and encouraged.

If you want to know more about the way, God can restore your life then just send me an email or write to –
Bennie Harms, The Manse,
Huntingfield, Croydon,
CR0 9BA

May God bless you and your story.

Bennie Harms
Lay Pastor

Prayer Fellowship

Saturday 9 October at 9-15am

Do join us in the Lounge. We meet with God through prayer and the silence of our hearts.

A croissant and a drink awaits those arriving slightly earlier!

All are welcome.



House Group

Thursday 23 September 10.30am

We meet in the Lounge, looking at **praying for the marginalised.**

There is interest in another group being set up in the new year, meeting on a different day.

If you would like to be included, please let me know.

Brian Sherrell

Shirley Scarecrow Festival - The Movies

Do you remember last year we had a wonderful entry in the competition - Monty Don and his dog! Would anyone like to organise this years entry? The Festival is in early November. The Scarecrow can sit in our lovely new garden and be part of this community festival. Why not chat it over with a friend - and volunteer!

***I know God loves everybody, but I don't think he's met my sister.
(From a six-year old)***

Suzy Stoyel - Community Champion!

Shirley Neighbourhood Care's Manager manager, Suzy Stoyel, received an award this month for her work during the COVID pandemic, keeping essential services running for elderly clients.

During 2020 and the first six months of 2021, SNC provided personal shopping, telephone befriending and regular meals delivered to the homes of lonely and isolated elderly people.

The Community Champion award was presented to Suzy by Barchester Homes' Louise Wood at a special lunch at Peony Court - Barchester Homes' newest high- end residential care home on Addiscombe Road.



SNC is very short of volunteers in the following areas:

- Driving clients to medical appointments and outings
- Shopping bus escorts
- Film club stewards
- Lunch club helpers on Mondays and Thursdays

If you would like to take on new duties or know anyone who is looking to volunteer, please let me know or ask your friends to give Suzy a call on 020 8662 9599.

Suzy says, "Thank you to our volunteers for all you are doing for our clients. They have really enjoyed all the activities we have organised over the last few weeks – it has made an incredible difference to their lives after such a long period of lockdown."

Two great men

Leslie Griffiths writes:

Two men whose lives touched mine were honoured in the columns of the Methodist Recorder recently. One had just died, the other (who died six years ago) would have been 100. They were two extraordinary men.

The first was **Eddie Fox who headed the Board of Evangelism of the World Methodist Council**. It was in that capacity in 1976 that he invited 17 ministers from all over the world to come to the United States to preach the gospel from north to south and coast to coast. I was one of them.

The United States was celebrating the 200th anniversary of its independence. We all met together in Nashville, Tennessee, for some initiation and that's where Eddie held forth. He told us that America needed to hear the gospel all over again. Its love of Christ had grown lukewarm and our task was to rekindle the fires of

faith! And then we were all sent out to lead a "mission" in three different states. Mine took me to West Virginia, Virginia and Pennsylvania. I preached twice (sometimes three times) a day, I visited high schools, did media interviews, made courtesy calls on local officials, and stayed with local people. Some of these became lifelong friends.

Jimmy Carter was running for the presidency that year and I attended one of his campaign meetings in Kentucky. I loved the bluegrass music, the razzmatazz, the words of Mr Carter. So much so that I bought all the badges, stickers, scarves and tee shirts which my small dollar allowance could afford and wore them loudly about my person. I was a Democrat to end all Democrats. That's how I looked when, at the end of the West Virginia leg of my journey, I flew over to Norfolk, Virginia.

There I was met by the President of the Ladies of the Revolution – a very Republican outfit – who would be my host for the following week. My Carter insignia were soon languishing at the bottom of my suitcase hidden in my dirty washing! I blotted my copy book even further when, offered some English muffins and a cup of tea, I refused both. I'd never heard of the former and greatly disliked the latter. Every evening during that fateful week I had to preach from a platform beneath a massive poster announcing in that bicentennial year, "We beat the Brits." For all these mishaps, we had such fun and I learned how to tune my sermons to three very different sets of people.

That was Eddie Fox. The other figure to be given column inches in the Recorder is **Philip Potter**. He was a different kettle of fish. He hailed from Dominica in the Caribbean and rose through the ranks till he became **General Secretary of the World Council of Churches**. He held this position from 1972 – 1984. He was the first director of the WCC's Programme to Combat Racism, a programme aimed at racism within the churches as well as beyond them. His leadership was astounding and he was often referred to as "the Black Pope."

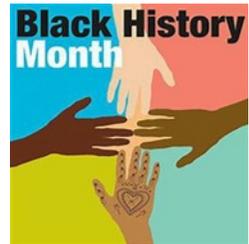
You can see Philip (on the left) alongside one of his life-long friends Marco Dépestre on the day of their ordination.



I keep this picture above the desk where I'm writing these words. Marco was my very first superintendent when we arrived in Haiti in 1970. He was a trained agriculturalist and the work he did was startlingly brilliant. Whole communities were brought back to life under his leadership. Philip Potter had himself begun his ministry in "the first black republic in the world." The local Créole language was spoken in his native Dominica as well as in Haiti. Not many people choose to mention the opening of Philip's ministry in Haiti. It's a detail that's air-brushed out of most accounts of his remarkable life. These

two men were truly extraordinary – one on the world stage and the other within his native Haiti.

I never met Philip Potter. I lived in Haiti for just about the whole time he held the top job at the WCC. I followed his doings and sayings from afar. But he and Marco Dépestre are daily reminders of a spiritual, theological and personal greatness that continues to inspire me and I'm pleased to pen this tribute to them both as we begin -



Go out for lunch & support a good cause!

During the pandemic major alterations took place at a charity shop and tearoom which supports children in Albania. It is now named the ***Olive Tree Bistro and Tearoom***. It opens at 10am daily, serving a range of drinks, cakes and a varied menu at lunchtime. It's very popular so it's best to book for lunch to be sure of a table!

11a, High Street, Otford. Kent TN14 5PG Tel 01959 524322

There is a car park just off the High Street.

It's well worth a visit to a small attractive village on the edge of the Darent Valley.

Holidays! Getting away! Having a change of scene!

Many of us missed holidays and visits to friends and family last year. Over the past few months some have enjoyed getting away, and here they tell us how it went!

A Journey out of Lockdown

with Jean Beecher

Being of a somewhat nervous disposition, it was with some trepidation that I anticipated the train journey to Carlisle this August. True, I was fully vaccinated and the virus was on the wane but after many months of not travelling more than four miles from my front door it seemed a mammoth venture.

What outweighed my fears was the opportunity of again spending time with my sister and brother-in-law: and so it was that I stepped out, case packed and mask at the ready, on a sunny day. It was a delight to sit at a café outside Euston Station for a coffee and chat to a fellow traveller. The Glasgow train was full but people were

in 'holiday mood', cheerful and helpful – and all wearing masks! How lovely to watch urban landscape give way to rolling fields and sheep-dotted meadows – to enjoy the wonderful scenery of the Lake District again, where back-packed ramblers alighted at Oxenholme and Penrith.



Finally, what joy to arrive at Carlisle and be given a hearty welcome by Joy and Ian after so long.

At last, life was getting back to normal.

A visit to Wales to celebrate a very special 100th birthday with Ann Hatherill

Some of you know of my interest in engineering which I couldn't pursue as a career. Until the late 1960s women could not study engineering, nor be employed as engineers. My father was a chartered engineer and his hobby was model engineering - he built a model steam locomotive! As a teenager I learnt to drive model locomotives when I joined his model engineering society: I've now been a member for 69 years, longer than anyone else!

In 1951 the Talylyn Railway in southern Snowdonia became the first preserved railway in the world. It was built to transport slate down from the quarries in the local hills. Later a local MP bought it to provide public transport in a very rural area, but the railway had long been run at a loss before the owner died. Virtually everything on the railway was worn out; however a group of enthusiasts from the Midlands took it on, paying almost nothing for it. Immediately volunteers

arrived to help. A friend from the model engineering society, who was a fireman on main line steam locomotives, went there on holidays and encouraged Dad and me to do the same; my mum came to help too. In 1957 we joined a friend to visit the railway for the first time.

My father helped with repairs in the railway workshop while I went straight on to the locomotives as fireman which was easy after driving the models! The driver was Herbert Jones whose father and grandfather had worked in the local slate quarries.



In 1957 I was fireman on *Edward Thomas* (Peter Sam in the Rev Awdry books, *Four Little Engines* and *Very Old Engines*).

The Rev Awdry was a volunteer at the same time as me. He originally wrote the stories for his son Christopher. He was usually a guard and passengers didn't know he wrote the books! The railway still has special days when the engines have faces (and their book names for the day). Here he is with *Peter Sam* looking at him.



We 'retired' in 1968 when My son David was born, I had done 11 years and Gordon 14 years, staying locally and volunteering on the railway, most days on the locos.



Photo taken in 2018 with loco *Edward Thomas* again: this time the fireman is our grandson Edward, Mary's son. Like us, he has made so many friends there.

When I go back now I am just part of the 'Tallylyn family'. During my recent visit I took part in an aural history project. I was the first lady fireman on any preserved railway. They were interested in how I got on being the only girl with all the lads... I never thought about it, we all helped out with whatever job needed doing.

So why did I go back to Wales recently? I went for the celebrations for *Edward Thomas's* (or should I say *Peter Sam's*) 100th Birthday Celebrations.

The engine was made in 1921.

My late husband Gordon to my right - we met as volunteers. The chap in the middle sitting on the engine was driver on my first day. Gordon and I married in 1965, spending the second week of our honeymoon volunteering on the railway; we were one of many couples who met on the railway.

Our Adventurous Summer Holiday

with David Tayler

This summer Ruth and I were invited by our son John and his family to join them for a week “abroad” - Anglesey off the coast of North Wales. They had hired a cottage so they could take their three dogs on long walks on deserted pristine beaches, enjoy great food and get away from the memory of the tedium of lockdown. We could take a cottage nearby.

We did all sorts of unexpected things. One was taking the dogs on a boat along the Menai Strait to Puffin Island. The puffins had left at the beginning of July but we saw many seals. Another was when David, John and the two grandchildren were taken 2,000 ft up a slate mountain in Snowdonia to tackle the longest and fastest zip wire in the world! Within a minute of launch they were flying at just over 100 mph over a mountain lake on the way to cover just under 3 miles in 2 minutes.



A third unexpected experience was having a front tyre blow-out at 70 mph on the way back to the cottage with smoke pouring from the front of the car! This resulted in a bus ride through pretty villages in North Wales whilst our tyres and disc brakes were replaced as we went to see the magnificent Conwy Castle.

What did we enjoy most? The professionalism of restaurant staff, police and garage staff, but most of all the kindness and help ordinary people gave us which helped us completely recover from “lockdown fever”.

Some thoughts after a
visit to France
with Leslie Griffiths

Bags dropped off, passports and boarding passes shown, PCR test certificates presented, “on my honour” documents duly signed, NHS vaccination forms examined, the famous French “pass sanitaire” shown left, right and centre, money shelled out again and again, a packed plane, mounting excitement, the language of Shakespeare morphing into that of Voltaire, a taxi ride undertaken, hotel registration forms filled in, our luggage dumped in our room, watches glanced at nervously, meaningful looks exchanged and then, and then, and then! After all that, in they come, the two women of our dreams materialise. One has become a teenager since we last saw her. The other has had to handle and deal with huge amounts of pressure. Our desire to carry some of their burden has been limited to emails, phone messages and the wonders of zoom. But now,

here we are, at last, tearfully, all together.

How to describe that first moment? Our daughter sinks into arms and bodies that have always had her shape ready for her. She melts into it. Miracle of miracles, so does her daughter. The silence of those precious moments is so eloquent – how can words add anything when feelings are so intense? We’re where we need to be, where we’ve yearned to be for so long. In a moment we’ll be talking about where to eat, how tall our teenager has grown, how best to spend the next couple of days, how to negotiate the trams, what weather we can expect. None of that can challenge the moment of our rediscovery of each other, the simple joy of it.

All three of our children have been hammered by the pandemic. Our oldest son’s business was wiped away, our second son suffered long-Covid and our daughter’s marriage collapsed. We’ve had to watch it all play out without being able to be of much use to any

of them. This summer has seen the agony of our separation mitigated. And now we can turn our attention to helping them in this recovery period. They are all amazingly resilient but there can be no doubting the ravages of the last eighteen months.

“There are tears at the heart of things” – these were the prescient words of the Latin poet Virgil.

Sunt lacrimae rerum. He was referring to the tears that flow from suffering and loss. But as we’ve discovered over these last few weeks, as long months of separation and worry came so touchingly to an end with fearful hugs and cascades of kisses, our tears can also sometimes be the product of joy, sheer unadulterated joy. As this picture shows.



We feel as if we’ve turned a corner. Bring it on!

What is safeguarding?

Tau Wey, SMC Safeguarding Officer writes:

Have you ever wondered what safeguarding is, and why we should all know about it at church?

Churches are places where we meet people who become our 'family', and buildings become our 'home'. It is a community in which many people will invest a lot of trust, and expect a lot of trust. How organisations ranging from places of worship, schools, hospitals and care homes manage this is very important.

This is what the Methodist Church says about safeguarding:

The Methodist Church is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its life and ministry. Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will:

- *promote the welfare of children, young people and adults*
- *work to prevent abuse from occurring*

- *seek to protect and respond well to those that have been abused.*

Safeguarding in its positive sense is about **creating such an environment where we know how to relate to and respect each other**, regardless of who we are or what role we might have in church. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to ensure all those who run Sunday Club, for example, are police-checked at regular intervals, and trained in safeguarding. The same goes for ministers, pastoral visitors, and many others. **Safeguarding teaches us how to relate to and care for others in ways that are appropriate.**

Safeguarding is also about knowing **when something is going wrong**, so that action can be taken. Unfortunately, the Methodist church has not been immune from wrong-doings, as the Past Cases Review published in 2015 has highlighted. Past cases have included sexual, physical, emotional and domestic abuse as well as cases of neglect, including by

church ministers and lay employees. I mention this as I do think we should be open and honest as to what has happened across the Methodist Church in the past.

As a teacher in a school I have from time to time encountered safeguarding concerns.

- My first reaction has always been, **'I'm not really sure if this is a concern, am I going to look silly if I report this?'**
- The next question is inevitably, **'Who do I report this to?'**

The first question is easily answered: **No, you will never look silly.** Even if it is nothing, it is better to have talked about it with a trusted person in confidence. The second is more tricky, but the **important thing is to talk to someone.**



If you have a safeguarding concern, **please feel able to speak to me as the Safeguarding Officer in confidence** as a first port of call. It could be that you know that there is an elderly church member struggling to look after themselves at home and not receiving the care they need. Or there is a homeless person sleeping rough outside the church doors, which is quite possible.

Fran Byard is also a Safeguarding Officer and you can speak to her. You can speak to **Bennie Harms** or **Revd Choi**. If you cannot speak to any one of us for any reason, you can go to the **Superintendent Revd Stephen Day**, or the London District Safeguarding Officer. All these details are on the notice-board in the welcome area and on the church website.

It is much better to hold out a hand than point a finger.



What does a minister do?

This autumn Leslie Griffiths will be giving a series of six talks on various aspects of ministry. Although originally scheduled just as the pandemic began, this topic is just as relevant now, particularly as the Croydon Circuit and indeed Shirley Methodist Church begin the process of recruiting new ministers.

As a Methodist minister since 1973, we can be sure that Leslie will have much to intimate and divulge with us. He has declared the good news and celebrated the sacrament in far-flung places around the world, including in Haiti where his ordained ministry began.

We have previously heard and will surely hear more stories and anecdotes of how he has served the needy, abroad, here in our local neighbourhood, and through the House of Lords.

This promises to be a stimulating and thought-provoking series of talks not to be missed!

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Friday 15 October, 7:30pm | Declare the Good News |
| Sunday 24 October, 6:00pm | Celebrate the Sacraments |
| Sunday 31 October, 6:00pm | Serve the needy |
| Sunday 7 November, 6:00pm | Minister to the sick |
| Friday 12 November, 7:30pm | Welcome the stranger |
| Friday 19 November, 7:30pm | Seek the lost |

**“These things are your common duty and delight.
In them you are to watch over one another in love.”**

[The Ordination Service]

All are welcome!



St John the Evangelist, Shirley
Presents

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

A FABULOUS
EVENT FOR THE
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NOVEMBER 26-28 2021
FRI 1-5, SAT 11-5, SUN 12-4

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Shirley Church Road Croydon, CR0 5EE
www.stjohnsshirley.org.uk

Prayer of the Month:
For COP26 from the Archbishop of York

Creator God, giver of life, you sustain the earth and
direct the nations.

In this time of climate crisis, grant us clarity to hear
the groaning of creation and the cries of the poor.

Challenge us to change our lifestyles.

Guide our leaders to take courageous action.

Enable your church to be a beacon of hope.

And foster within us a renewed vision of your purposes
for your world, through Jesus Christ our Lord,
by and for whom all things were made,

Amen.

Association for Church Editors

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE REQUIRED

Shirley Methodist is a member of Churches Together in Shirley (CTIS) also comprising St John's, St George's, All Saints', West Wickham and Shirley Baptist, Our Lady's, Church of God Apostolic, Shrublands Christian Fellowship and Longheath Baptist. Normally a 30 minute prayer meeting takes place every month at one of the churches followed by a Council Meeting (once a quarter) where church representatives discuss future events such as the annual service for Christian unity, Ecumenical Bible Studies and a Quiet Day.

Representatives from our church and St John's also meet twice a year to discuss working together and joint services.

Elizabeth Smart has represented us at both CTIS and the SMC/St John's Link Group for several years and **we thank her for her devoted service**. We are now **seeking a successor for Elizabeth**. If you are interested or wish to know more please contact Jonathan Baxter on 020 8777 3158 or jandjbaxter@talktalk.net

Seeking Stillness

Jane Hoskins is a Retreat and Quiet Day leader, and a musician. She has a passion for seeking stillness for prayer and contemplation, and really enjoys sharing this with others.

Each day, morning or afternoon of 'Seeking Stillness' offers a gathering time, some input on the theme, silent space for individuals to pray, contemplate or 'be'.

Seeking Stillness offers an opportunity to step aside from the busyness of everyday - time to sit, and be, and rest in God's Presence. Jane is leading 3 sessions in October and November:

Beauty amidst Brokenness

Tuesday 5th October 9.45am – 12 noon

At: All Saints Church, Warlingham, CR6 9NU

Rhythm of Life

Thursday 4th November 2pm – 5pm

At: St Christopher's Church, Warlingham, CR6 9EQ

Advent Stillness

Saturday 27th November 10am – 3.45pm

At: All Saints Church, Warlingham, CR6 9NU

Booking is essential, as we continue to follow good practice to keep each other safe from Covid Infection.

For further information and to book your place, please email

j.hoskins233@btinternet.com

or ring 07398 290 969.



Shirley Methodist Matters

The magazine can be read on line www.shirleymeth.org.uk as well as being available at church. Thank you to all our contributors.

Kate Marsden will be the next editor.

katemarsden747@gmail.com

jenny.crook@blueyonder.co.uk



The next magazine will be published (and be on the website) on **Sunday 31 October**. **Please send contributions to Kate by Sunday 24 October**

A Sunday school teacher was explaining how God created everything, including human beings, A little boy seemed especially intent when she explained how Eve was created from one of Adam's ribs.

Later that week his mum noticed him lying down as though he was ill. The little explained worriedly, "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife!"

Shrublands Foodbank is in great need of car drivers. Volunteers to do Friday deliveries to people who cannot get to the centre themselves. Can you help? Or do you know someone who might be able to?

Email: info@shrublandstrust.org Tel: 020 3441 7887

Shirley Methodist Church **one of 'Churches Together in Shirley'**

As followers of Jesus Christ, our mission is:

✠ *to honour God by our daily living as individuals and our corporate life as a church*

✠ *to offer God worship which is both lively and dignified*

✠ *to offer welcome and care to all, regardless of age, status, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, ability or disability*

✠ *to stimulate one another to grow in our faith and develop our discipleship*

✠ *to work with our fellow-Christians in Shirley to serve our neighbours and share with others our experience of God's love*

