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Charity No 1134870

Circuit News

Winter 2014



CAROL SERVICES—SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER

Burham	6:00pm	Rev Tony Graff
Hartlip	6:30pm	Rev Will Grady
Swanscombe	10:45am	Local Arrangement
Union Street	6:00pm	Rev Clifford Newman

CAROL SERVICES—SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER

Bearsted	6:30pm	Rev Clifford Newman
Gillingham	6:30pm	Local Arrangement
Hextable	10:30am	Local Arrangement
Hope Street	6:15pm	Deacon Pru Cahill
Larkfield	4:00pm	Local Arrangement
Newington	09:30am	Martin Smith
Rainham	4:00pm	
St. Luke's	5:00pm	Rev Tony Graff
Spital Street	4:00pm	
Strood	3:00pm	Rev Tony Graff
Tonbridge Road	5:00pm	Rev Clifford Newman

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES

Bearsted	09:30am	Local Arrangement
Dene Holm	10:00am	Jenny Force
Hextable	10:30am	Rev Velma Campbell
Larkfield	10:00am	Local Arrangement
Spital Street	10:00am	United Service with Baptist Church
The Brent	10:30am	Jane Braund
Tonbridge Road	10:00am	Irene Shepherd
Union Street	10:00am	Rev Clifford Newman

THE CHURCH IN BURHAM

We are named The Church in Burham, being the only Church now in our village. The population of Burham is a mixture of those who have lived here all their lives and those who have moved in over the years. We are committed to ensuring that our Church is an important part of our community and therefore as well as our weekly Sunday services, we aim to make the Church welcome to all. There are regular activities to which a number of non-regular worshippers come ie a monthly Country Lunch, a monthly Film Club, a monthly Book Exchange and a weekly Afternoon Tea. We ask for a small donation at each of these events. Our Church is fortunate in being financially secure and we are able to send all these proceeds to a number of different charities. This year we have donated over £2,000! It is also satisfying that this Outreach is gradually increasing our membership as well as being a strong Christian beacon in the village.

On November 15th we are holding a Concert in aid of Children in Need when Robin Oakley and his friends will be singing a variety of popular songs. Do come and join us at 7:30pm for a wonderful evening for which we will ask a donation for this great charity.



GILLINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH

We have started to run a fortnightly Youth Club on a Wednesday night from 7-9pm. It is a time and space for young people to come, relax and hang out with each other. Some weeks the activities are video games and table tennis and other weeks we have more structured activities such as a Messy Games night. The age range for the group is those at senior school which is year 11 upwards. For more details please contact the church office.

Helen Young (Gillingham Methodist Church Youth Worker)

Those who have had the joy of hearing our junior choir “Heather’s Angel’s” rehearsing can attest to the quality of the music and know that those who will have been able to come to their concert will have had a very enjoyable and uplifting time. Special thanks must go to Heather Gallagher who gives of her time to coach and encourage the youngsters. The concert was free but a collection was taken on behalf of ECHO—Evelina Children’s Heart Organisation.

Other recent events have included the Strawberry Tea, the exercise groups BBQ and our Big Sing – Open Air Service. We were blessed at each of these with warm and dry weather, despite a few grey stormy looking clouds that could have made their mark. Across these events, we have seen many people join us who are not part of our regular fellowship. We know from comments how much those who come along appreciate what the fellowship does for others.

Of course none of the activities would take place were it not for the cover of prayer and the dedication and hard work of those who organise and serve the church and community.

It’s also that time of year when a number of changes in the church take place. Several stewards are standing down, as well as several, including the council secretary and (in the autumn) the treasurer, from church council. We are grateful for their service and commitment to the church over recent years, which has seen the formation of the NKMC, two changes of Presbyter and development of the work and life of GMC. It’s probably an understatement to say it’s been a challenging period. As some stand down others step up and we are equally grateful to those who have heard the call and will become stewards, council secretary, treasurer and circuit rep.

GRAVESEND METHODIST CHURCH & COMMUNITY
CENTRE

Hooray—we have a new resident Minister (along with Dene Holm and Swanscombe of course). Rev Noreen Daley-Lee is the answer to many prayers and we look forward to a new chapter in the life of our town centre church.

We have been fundraising over the last four years for our **C21st Project** and the time now seems right to start phase 1 (out of 3 phases). This phase is to improve and re-arrange some of our rooms behind the church to enable us to continue and grow our town centre community work. We are busy finalising plans with our architects; applying for grants to close the gap between the £72,500 we have available (thank you circuit for the £30,000 recently agreed) and the estimated cost of £150,000. We hope works will commence in February and will be completed by the summer. We will then turn our attention to phase 2 which aims to improve the frontage of the church, create better facilities for worshippers as well as extend our community work. If you have any spare cash lying around we would love to put it to good use!

Now an advert—it was January 2013 when we last hosted the **African Children's Choir** and people still talk about the infectious enthusiasm of the children and their singing. If you missed that concert, or would like “your winter blues to be blown away again”, you now have another chance to see the choir at Gravesend. They will be “In Concert” with us on the evening of Saturday 17th January and entry will again be by advanced ticket only. (How about giving a friend a lovely Christmas present of a ticket?) Please contact Robert Hardy tel 01474 357681 email roberthardy33@gmail.com

HEXTABLE METHODIST CHURCH

We were glad that a number of our members attended the Welcome Service at Gravesend to meet and greet Rev Noreen Daley-Lee and Deacon Jane Paine. We have since been blessed with two evening services from Noreen with her family in attendance and visits from Velma and Jane to some of our weekly activities which are of interest to Jane.

Our BB & GB Parents and Friends Association Craft Fair was again well attended with some lovely craft items in wood, pottery and glass as well as jewellery, cards, jams etc and an art display by our Art Group. GB girls waited tables for us in the café and the BB lads helped with all the moving and carrying. The next event is a Jumble Sale.

The harvest was celebrated with gifts of tinned and packaged food which was donated to the Whitechapel Mission. As a church, we held a Harvest Supper of fish and chips, with a quiz and games to a packed church hall of all ages.

Our Youth (Bible Class & God Squad) have just taken a Local Arrangement service which was very well received and did them all great credit, providing the music, sketches, monologues, poems, video and the Magic Eye. All very refreshing for those who attended, who also learnt some new songs.

Forthcoming services, which we look forward to, are our BB/GB Enrolment, Remembrance Day, Sunday School Nativity, Christingle and Carol services not forgetting the Christmas Day service which normally fills the church.

Looking ahead into next year we are hosting Roughshod, part of Riding Lights Theatre Company, which one of our younger members is joining for six months. We will be holding a performance at our church and would like other churches in the Circuit to hold performances. They help with church services, youth groups, schools etc. Please see the information circulated by the Circuit.

If you were able to watch the special programmes on BBC Songs of Praise—Big Sing, you may have spotted four of our members along with Tracey Burch (Sutton at Hone) and her daughter, who arranged the tickets. An event they all enjoyed being part of.

Two of our GB girls will be playing in the 50 strong London Massed Bugle Band at the Lord Mayors Show on the 8th November representing the BB & GB. Fingers crossed for good weather.

We are fortunate to have our Circuit Ministers take most of our evening services and would welcome members from other churches who would like to join us, or have missed their morning service and feel Sunday wouldn't be the same without one, as others have done in the past.

TONBRIDGE ROAD METHODIST CHURCH

Mission Near and Far. Tonbridge Road Methodist Church is again acting as a host church for the Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter. This project aims at helping rough sleepers over the worst of the winter period. It began last winter with seven churches in a weekly rota providing accommodation for a number of rough sleepers—mainly young men. As well as somewhere warm and dry to sleep, they were provided with an evening meal and a chance to socialise. They also had the opportunity of getting advice about ways of getting employment, benefits and housing. Free toiletries and new socks were also on offer.

Volunteers from the churches concerned and other churches acted as greeters, preparers, cooks, dish washers, cleaners and “overnight staff”. The scheme, co-ordinated by the Salvation Army and some paid staff, was partly funded by the council, partly by charitable giving and partly by the participating churches. The shelter operated for eight weeks. This winter it will operate for twelve and will cater for more guests.

It was a great opportunity for Christians to work together in the service of the poor and of the Lord.

In 2010, a small group from TRMC and Larkfield, led by Gary Watt, visited the Methodist Church in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Those who went were privileged to visit a number of local Methodist churches and to enjoy their generous hospitality. Using money raised before departure and money raised by selling donated children’s clothing and toys at an “English Fair” held at the central Methodist Church in BH, we were to finance renovations at a crèche run by the church in a favela/slum area and to provide food parcels for some poor families in another favela/slum area.

The crèche caters daily for around 120 children up to the age of 7. It provides food, washing facilities, play opportunities and education. It also gives some parents the opportunity to find employment without leaving their children on their own or on the street. It receives state funding but a lot falls onto the shoulders of the local churches.

Since the visit, TRMC has continued to support the crèche by raising money through monthly film nights and from an on going “donate & donate” table. The donations from both initiatives have raised several thousand pounds to help the creche.

Whilst on a visit to Brazil this summer, Gary was able to revisit the crèche. Apparently our donations are now making the difference between the crèche continuing or closing.

ST. LUKE'S METHODIST CHURCH CENTRE

Now that St Luke's grant from Circuit Funds to its Building Project has been approved we enter a new, exciting and challenging few months. Subject to planning permission it is envisaged that the project will commence at the beginning of 2015.

We have been fortunate to have already received several donations for which we are very grateful. Our fundraising begins in earnest now with various events for our local community and the whole circuit. Please watch for further details. Anyone wishing to make a donation or offer ideas for fundraising please contact Ian Smith, Property Chairman on 01634 723477 or Danny Gibson, Property Secretary on 016234 290079. Any offers of help or advice will be most warmly received.

All members and friends at St Luke's would like to wish all in the Circuit a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*As we look forward to a new year, let us
remember that.....*

"God will direct our steps"

Proverbs 3:6