



North Kent Methodist Circuit

# Grapevine

CIRCUIT NEWS AND PREACHING PLAN



*inside...*

WHAT DOES A CIRCUIT DO?  
CIRCUIT STAFFING & PROPERTY

Issue Fourteen  
Summer 2020

# So what does a circuit actually do?

**When we first set out to answer that question in this issue of Grapevine, we had no idea how radically our lives would be changed by the Corona virus! As I write this, we are just into our second week of isolation/working from home and I'm still waiting for the promised 'free time' to materialise! Overseeing/organising/enabling the worship, pastoral care and administration of 1000 members stretched across the expanse of North Kent is a challenge in itself; doing it when those thousand are in isolation is still another matter!**

The past few weeks have served to strip away many of the parts of our lives together that we have considered essential, especially meeting together. That stripping away has reminded us of God's Spirit of creativity in us that allows our concern for each other to blossom in the midst of chaos. We are still 'connected' as Methodists. We have discovered new ways of worshipping together; our Sunday morning services have become 'circuit services' by necessity, using technology in new formats. We've discovered latent talents

in ourselves and others in the circuit. Our well-established Pastoral Care system has provided with a robust form of keeping in touch with each other. We've learned how to 'meet' together virtually for prayer and Bible Study and committee business.

In this issue of Grapevine, we're exploring some of the behind-the-scenes work that enables our circuit to continue functioning in normal and in chaotic times. Like any good 'backstage' operation, we often only notice the work that goes on when something goes wrong. This issue of Grapevine seeks to give a few glimpses into that 'backstage' world of circuit stewards, administration, property and finance, safeguarding, communication, preaching plans and ministerial and lay staffing issues. We hope you'll enjoy getting to know more about the inner workings of the circuit that keeps us all connected to each other as we work together for God's Kingdom here in North Kent.

Bonni-Belle

## Circuit Staffing

**Can you name all eight of our current Methodist circuit ministers (presbyters and deacons)? How about the three Anglican clergy connected with our Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs)? Do you know the names of our five supernumerary (retired) Methodist ministers? How about our nine part-time circuit lay workers? And the five Circuit Stewards who volunteer their time and energy and experience for the good of us all? (See below for the full list!) We are a diverse and lively bunch – our ministers alone originate from five different countries – but we all find ways to work together creatively and constructively within our Methodist Church in the North Kent segment of God's kingdom!**

Our ministers meet in area groups a few times each month; all our ministers meet together every month, joined on alternate months by several of our lay employees. The Circuit Leadership Team of ministers and circuit stewards meets every second month and the Superintendents meet with the Circuit Stewards in the intervening months. Every staff member, ministerial or lay, has a pastoral supervision session at least six times a year, and our lay employees have regular contact with their Line Managers and an Annual Review.

Methodist Ministers are usually appointed (stationed!) for five-year periods, and during the final year of that period the Circuit Invitation Committee meets to consider the needs of those ministers, the congregations they have worked with, and the circuit in general. Sometimes ministers are re-invited to remain in the circuit, other times they 'go into stationing' at the Connexional level to find new places to exercise their ministries.

This summer, our circuit will be losing two of our Presbyteral Ministers: Velma Campbell will be 'sitting down' (the Methodist term for retiring) from her active ministry, and Kan Yu will be moving on from her work with the Chinese congregation and the Peninsula Church to new presbyteral work within the Methodist Connexion. Both Velma and Kan have made considerable contributions to our circuit, and we will miss them greatly.

# North Kent



While we were not able to secure a new minister for their work through the connexional stationing process, we have managed to find several persons willing and able to join our circuit staff in the coming year. We hope to be able to announce their names and positions very soon!

#### **Superintendent Ministers**

Rev Dr Bonni-Belle Pickard  
Rev Tony Graff

#### **Presbyteral Ministers**

Rev Velma Campbell  
Rev Naomi Oates  
Rev Robin Selmes  
Rev Kan Yu  
Rev Robert Zachar

#### **Diaconal Minister**

Rev Elizabeth Harfleet

#### **Supernumerary Ministers**

Rev Peter Daone  
Deacon Vic Downs  
Rev William Prince  
Rev Bryan Tolhurst  
Rev Gareth West

#### **Lay Employees**

Mr Christopher Chare  
*Circuit Administrator*

Miss Angel O'Nyon  
*Circuit Administrator*

Mrs Lynn Rainer  
*Circuit Administrator*

Dr Bart Woodhouse  
*Pioneer Minister*

Mrs Vicki Clarke  
*Gravesend Community Centre  
Manager*

Miss Helen Young  
*Youth Pastor, Third Ave and  
Chinese congregations*

Mr Xie Aaron  
*Chinese school*

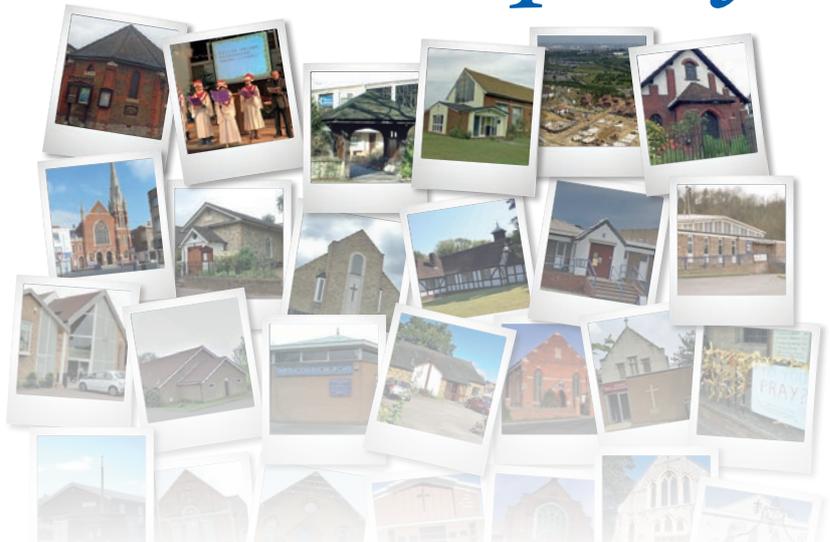
Mrs Jessica Liu  
*Chinese School*

Mrs Yi-Ling Shen  
*Chinese school*

#### **Circuit Stewards**

Mr Alan Wood  
Mrs Gill Gray  
Dr Bart Woodhouse  
Ms Claudette Bramble  
Mrs Tracey Burch

# Circuit Property



**When I first heard that, as a co-superintendent of the North Kent Circuit, I'd have responsibility for overseeing the circuit Property, I made a mental note to switch portfolios with one of the other co-supers as soon as possible! Having never owned property myself, it was not one of my areas of particular interest or expertise. But God had other ideas, and five years later, I find myself deeply immersed in property management, having gained quite a bit of knowledge and experience in the process.**

Apart from learning to deal with surveyors and solicitors and architects and developers, I've learned that God's work comes in many different shapes – and it's essential to do each bit of the work with care and diligence. *"God in God's mercy has given us this work to do, and so we do not become discouraged."* (2 Corinthians 4.1). Though we recognise that God's work can go on without buildings (Corona virus continues to teach us!), we also realise that having a safe and sturdy structure in place can give us a sense of belonging, of community, a framework for who we are locally as well as who our local community needs us to be.

There are currently 24 Church buildings in our circuit and ten manses. Technically, all Methodist property is owned by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) which is headquartered in Manchester and London. Any sales, purchases, renovations, or major improvements and so on, must be sanctioned by TMCP

through the rigorous Property Consents process in accordance with Charity Commission and Methodist Church Act regulations. Whilst all Methodist property is 'owned' by TMCP, management of local churches is the responsibility of the local congregations themselves, with oversight given by the circuit. The Circuit is the managing trustee for its manses, though we depend heavily on volunteer Manse Stewards from the local churches to ensure they are kept in good order for the use of the circuit ministers. Thank God for Manse Stewards!

In terms of general oversight, the circuit is responsible for ensuring that the Church and Manse stewards keep up regular inspections and are informed of best practice with regard to maintenance and repairs, insurance, health and safety, and lettings. There are two or three meetings a year at which we compare notes, check on compliance issues and share best practice. The circuit's activity level rises dramatically when a church closes or the circuit's ministerial needs change. When a church 'closes', its property becomes the responsibility of the circuit to manage. The circuit leadership needs to decide if there is an alternative use for the property or whether the property should be disposed of. Leases or sales might need to be negotiated, each taking considerable time and effort.

Our circuit has also been involved with selling/buying a half-dozen manse properties over the past few years: each has to go through the rigorous Consents

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process to ensure that the purchase/sale agrees with Methodist and Charity Commission standards. A manse, for instance, must have a minimum of four bedrooms (hard to find in affordable new builds!), and the Charity Commission requires that any sale of Methodist property must be at or above 'market price' according to a qualified Surveyor. The days of casual 'gentleman's agreements' of sale of a church or manse to another friendly church/charity are long gone.

In our circuit, Chris Chare (as Property Assistant) and Alan Wood (as Treasurer) take on quite a bit of the day-to-day chasing down of valuations and negotiations with estate agents, solicitors, and property advisors. As the Super, I still need to keep oversight of their negotiations, bring necessary motions to Circuit Meetings for approval, and give authorisation on the Consents website at each stage. That means I need to know what they've done and what needs to be done next!

For some of the negotiations, I need to be the 'up front' person, such as negotiating a long-term lease of the Northfleet (Wood Street) church which ceased worship many years ago. I was recently asked at one of those negotiation meetings: "Are you the person in charge? If you say OK, is that the final word?" Ah! If it were only so easy... I have tried to explain some of the above to them – but our 'Methodist' way of property management is not always easily understood by those outside the church.

Last, but not least, many of you will be aware of a few property renovation/redevelopment projects being explored in the circuit. This concept of redevelopment for income generation is new territory for us all – but one that promises to bring some new possibilities for Kingdom work in the future. It takes time and effort to learn the new systems, to imagine new possibilities, and then to translate all that for congregations who are wary of putting energy into something not fully known or understood. And yet that: 'putting energy into something not fully known or understood' is a very good way of describing what 'faith' is all about. Perhaps our Property has much to teach us still about putting our faith in the One who goes before and invites us to follow.

Bonni-Belle

我們的牧者 - Kan Yu

## Our Shepherd – Reverend Kan Yu



五年前，當葉觀池牧師向執事會宣佈，將會有一位牧師接任為蜜惠堂之堂主任牧師職位的時候，我在想，誰有這樣的膽量，竟敢闖這龍潭虎穴？難道是「我不入地獄、誰入地獄？」擁有基督耶穌的犧牲精神。

Five years ago, when Reverend Yip announced at the stewards' meeting that there would be someone taking over the post of ministering the Medway Chinese Methodist Church, I was thinking at the time, who has the courage to take up such challenge, who dares to enter into this "dragon's pool and tiger's den"? Could it be "if I don't do it, who will?" – someone possessing the sacrificing spirit of Christ Jesus?

一個陰天的早上，一位身穿牧師領襟上衣的女子映入眼簾，說話剛強有力，充滿自信，滿有抱負，言談中透露她是兩子之母，家中還有丈夫、老爺和奶奶，原來她是余威嶽牧師、Hazel Yu 牧師的媳婦，可謂「牧師世家」，相信功力會不俗吧！

On a cloudy morning, a woman appeared wearing a minister's collar. She spoke strongly, confidently and ambitiously. She revealed that she is a mother of two sons, living together with her husband and in-laws. It turned out she was Reverend Kan Yu, daughter-in-law of Rev Hazel Yu and rev Ernest Yu, hence from "a Minister family," so we trusted that she had extraordinary capability.

經過多月的磨合，她的幹勁、努力、組織能力、領導推動、按步就班，有條不紊，真令人刮目相看。但她的才能，總有人看不順眼的，故在牧師就任第二年，教會發生了風波，但在風雨飄搖、狂風巨浪中，她仍奮力，帶領全是老弱殘兵的執事會，戰勝風浪，穩步向前；我們曾一同悲傷、一併痛哭、一起鼓勵，一齊禱告，互相攜手，共渡難關。她亦有輕鬆活潑、開朗的一面，在教會旅行遊戲、宿營集會、小組團契、節日慶典、拜會探訪、大學活動、義賣籌款等各類參與中，親力親為，她的投入、樂觀、快樂，表露無遺，引象深刻。

After months of settling in, she impressed many by her motivation, hard work, organisational ability, leadership, step by step approach, and methodical skills. However, there were bound to be people who did not support her. During her second year in office, there was a crisis within the church, but no matter how strong the turbulence and waves were, she was still determined to do everything she could to lead the congregation full of the elderly, the weak and the disabled to soldier on, overcome the storm, and move forward steadily. Together, we had sad times, wept, encouraged each other, prayed together "hand in hand", mutually supported each other and overcame difficulties. Kan also has a relaxed, lively and cheerful side and is determined to make sure all activities and events are organised to the best they can be, such as church outings, conference, fellowships, festive celebrations and events, home visits, university activities, fundraising, etc. Her dedication, optimism and happiness, shows no regret and will be deeply missed.

Joyce Tsang

在教會弟兄姊妹的靈命牧養方面，她亦積極培育，例如舉辦門徒訓練課程、敬拜訓練課程、聲樂崇拜訓練課程、培靈會、佈道會、啟發課程，甚至實用的急救訓練課程、夫婦家庭講座等，無不涉及。

In the spiritual and pastoral work among her brothers and sisters, she enthusiastically cultivates discipleship training courses, worship training courses, vocal worship training courses, revival conference, evangelical conferences, Alpha courses, even the basic first aid training courses and couples' marital seminars/workshops, etc.

推行中文教育方面亦不遺餘力，並於2019年九月份成立了蜜惠中文學校，造福地區華人、推廣福音事業。在行政方面亦貢獻良多，先後完成多份計劃書，導致成功聘請了青年宣教士一職，推動

教會青年事工；此外，亦成功獲得了香港循道衛理聯合總會、英國循道公會總區和聯區的財政支助，使本教會各項事工都能成功推行，實是功不可沒。

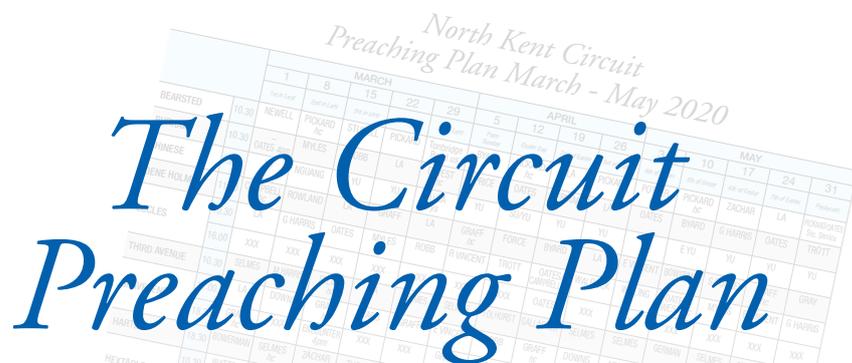
She has spared no effort in promoting the Chinese language and cultural education. The Medway Chinese School was established in September 2019 to benefit the local Chinese community and promote the gospel. She has also contributed enormously in her ministry, accomplished a number of proposals, successfully recruited a Youth Pastor in order to promote the youth ministry; all of these would not be possible or implemented without her dedication and determination, and as a result, she has secured the financial support from the Methodist Church (Hong Kong Central Administration), the Methodist Church (UK) Connexion, the Methodist Church (UK) District and the Methodist Church (UK) Circuit.

在這近五年的歲月中，她在崇拜中加入了活潑色彩；在關顧方面實踐了聖經的愛；並帶領超過二十人歸入基督門下或轉會到英國循道公會的大家庭。

Over the past five years, she has added vibrancy to the worship; through pastoral care she practised the way the Bible taught to love, and led more than twenty people to Christ as well as attracting brothers and sisters into the Medway Chinese Methodist Church family.

我們懷念這五年的教會生活，既充滿了喜怒哀樂，亦促進了靈命的增長；在信仰歷程上，加添了美麗的色彩；妳的離去，是我們的損失；我們不捨、我們懷念；妳的勸勉、妳的教導、妳的言笑、妳的悲哭，將刻在我們的記憶中。在主內，我們願妳更為主發亮發光、榮神益人，將主的愛，帶到其他地方；我們以禱告互相紀念吧，我們的牧者-Kan Yu.

We will miss the church life of these five years, which were full of sorrow and joy but together allowed spiritual growth. During the course of faith, she has added beautiful colours. Kan, your departure is our loss; we will miss you and keep you in our thoughts. Your advice, your teachings, your laughter and your weeping will all be carved into our memory. In Christ, we wish you further to shine and glorify the Lord, benefit others and bring the love of the Lord to other places; may we remember each other in our prayers, our Reverend Kan Yu.



# The Circuit Preaching Plan

**Shortly after the last edition of Grapevine appeared at the churches, I nonchalantly left a stack on the table amidst the toast and coffee cups at a breakfast gathering of Maidstone church leaders. Church leaders are often very keen to hint that their way of doing things is the best, and so I was pleased to be able to show off our very professional-looking magazine! I watched as a few casually reached for a copy, flipping through to see what the Methodists were up to... One of the first things that caught their eye was the Preaching Plan. "Wow!" one exclaimed as he realised he was looking at preaching assignments for 24 churches over a period of 13 Sundays at Methodist churches from Gravesend to Sittingbourne. "That's a work of art! How on earth do you get all that organised?"**

Cue: my smug smile! Of course, we Methodists have been doing Preaching Plans for a couple of centuries now, so we tend to take it for granted. But my fellow church leader's amazement made me appreciate again how our Methodist systems do work – to provide an orderly and systematic way for ensuring that worship happens regularly and consistently for all our local churches. Yes, there are a few weeks each quarter when Tony and I are wondering how we're actually

going to cover the 300+ blank boxes of each Plan, but the Availability forms from Preachers eventually come in, and the Request forms arrive from the churches, and through a combination of strategy and prayer and negotiation and pencil erasures, another quarterly Plan is produced. It then goes through several rounds of checking: Are all the Communion covered by presbyters? Are special Sundays adequately resourced? Are the Local Arrangements equitably distributed? Are the Local Preachers' appointments spaced appropriately? Have we inadvertently missed or overloaded (or double-booked) anyone? (Yes, we've tried doing this with computerised software, but that brought its own set of complications!)

When all the entries are finalised and sent on for publishing on the website and the circuit magazine, we take a deep breath – and pray that no more glitches will emerge! Inevitably, something will need to be changed at some point. Preachers get sick, Corona virus raises its head, or churches realise they need to change something, but the Circuit Office sends around an email to find alternatives, and eventually a solution is found. Worship goes on for another Sunday at churches across the circuit. Perhaps we're so accustomed to this work of art that we don't even notice any more the Methodist Miracle in our midst.

Bonni-Belle

## What happens in the Circuit Office?

Angel, Lynn, and Chris are our three circuit office workers whose names some might recognise only from an email or the circuit directory. They each work at least a couple of days a week in the Circuit Office at Union Street Methodist Church, Maidstone, but what do they do all day?

Basically, they work hard behind the scenes to make sure our circuit is running well! Each covers a different set of responsibilities: Angel is basically in charge of the day-to-day bookkeeping and accounts for the circuit, the Circuit Directory and Safeguarding records, Statistics and general correspondence for the circuit. Lynn does the logistics for the quarterly Plan, the Circuit Meeting,

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# What does a Circuit Steward do?

**I have been a Circuit Steward for three years now and it is only recently that I can truly say what a Circuit Steward does. It's a role that seems to be ever expanding (a bit like the universe)!**

Often it seems my role is mostly about meetings, meetings, meetings, not just at my own church but also around the circuit. If that sounds dull, it's not. It's challenging and interesting, requiring some degree of discernment and decision making. It can be taxing on the conscience as some outcomes have wide implications, especially as most involve the spending of money which our congregations have donated to fund our ministry.

Some of these meetings are with just superintendent ministers and circuit stewards. We call these meetings 'Supps and Stews'. Some are wider and include all the ministers as well; these are called the circuit leadership team meetings (CLT). I meet sometimes with the circuit office staff, giving them a chance to discuss problems and successes and making sure all is ticking over as it should.

I also attend church council meetings as each circuit steward has been assigned some churches around the circuit for oversight and information sharing. It is interesting to compare the dynamics of these meetings to the one I am church council secretary for at Spital Street. It gives me ideas to bring to my own church, and I hope I can share some ideas about the direction and vision of the circuit overall with the churches I go to.

Finally there is the paperwork and form filling in. I am the named person to whom the District sends several administrative items. Currently I am working on future staffing proposals. The District leaders like to know our thinking for the next five years so that they too can plan ahead. Sometimes the information required is totally beyond my expertise and experience, but I can collaborate with others to complete these forms.

That is really what a circuit steward's role is about: collaboration and teamwork. Collaboration between ministry, staff and church congregations, making sure that all voices have the opportunity to

be heard. I really value the opportunity that this role allows me. Yes, sometimes it requires prayerful consideration, sometimes the decisions I approve have big consequences, and sometimes I do ask myself if I am capable of fulfilling this role especially when I am puzzling over some financial accounts or applications for major building works. But I do feel called to this role as I have been blessed with the time and inclination to be able to carry it out, knowing that God's abiding presence is with me throughout this journey.

If you feel the call to become a Circuit Steward, be assured it is not all hard work with no reward. There is a lot of camaraderie at meetings, along with biscuits and the occasional slice of pizza, and you would be answering a call to help lead our risk-taking circuit through this current decade. Please remember us in your prayers and make us feel welcome when we come to visit your church. May God bless and strengthen our circuit as we strive to make his vision ours.

**Gill Gray, Senior Circuit Steward**

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and the Circuit Archives. Chris began his work with circuit by helping various churches with their financial systems but in recent years has taken on the bulk of logistics for buying and selling of circuit property, including manses and churches which are no longer needed. One or more of them are in the Circuit Office on week-day mornings, and on Wednesdays they're usually all in the office; that's the day Circuit Treasurer, Alan Wood, comes in to catch up on various projects and sign cheques. As Superintendent, I also try to check in at least once a day during the week to follow up on previous conversations or compare notes on upcoming meetings or projects.

On a recent morning when I stopped in to see how things were going, Lynn was putting the final touches on the Circuit Plan, making sure that the version going onto the website agreed with the copy that was going into Grapevine. Earlier

that morning, she'd been reviewing the notes from the Circuit Archives meeting that needed to go out to the various church archivists and Senior Stewards. Angel and Alan had been in conversations with the Auditor who was by that time scrutinising the accounts at a makeshift table outside the office (no room in the inn!). Angel had also been in conversations with Martin Smith about how best to coordinate the 'paper' and 'online' Circuit Directories – and with Sue Byard about updating the lists of DBS checks and those who needed Safeguarding training. She had also been in prolonged discussions with the energy supplier from a manse we were no longer using but for which we were still being charged despite Angel's repeated contacts... Chris was negotiating still another email with one of the several estate agents overseeing the sale of a disused manse – a process that had been going on for well over a year – and going over a new set of

accounts from the Chinese Church. And, since it was a Wednesday and Union Street's Lunch Club was about to start, the buzzer from the back door kept alerting them to the fact that someone else wanted to be let in!

All three of our circuit office staff work incredibly hard at behind-the-scenes tasks that are only usually noticed when something goes wrong. They each do so with remarkable cheerfulness and tenacity. They also tell me that when the three of them are each quietly concentrating on their business at their laptops, they hear themselves taking turns at sighing deeply and saying, 'Oh my...' – to which the others will respond with a comforting, 'You can do it!' I'm very grateful to have this team on hand, doing an abundance of circuit work on behalf of us all.

**Bonni-Belle**

# Each Supporting the Other:

## Local Preachers and Worship Leaders

Fairly recently I resumed taking preaching appointments on the Circuit Plan after over 30 years' break, so I regularly attend meetings at Circuit level which give Local Preachers and Worship Leaders opportunities to support each other.

As well as the formal Circuit Leaders of Worship and Preachers Meeting and the slightly less formal Area Support Groups, there is a circuit training group where we meet together to address those parts of the training material best done as a group. There are two of these groups, one currently working through the first half of the training, the other one on the second half. All our clergy are members of the meetings, having been trained as the Local Preachers have. The support groups keep us guided by each other, whether trainee or accredited. We share successes, concerns, new ideas, new materials, any feedback on worship led by others. We include time for devotions and may discuss a topic chosen by a member of the group.



We are now asked to undertake peer review, reviewing each other every three years. These reviews can take place at either meeting. Our training sessions are currently running at three a term. These sessions are extremely lively, questions are discussed and sometimes answered, though often because of the depth of delving we do, we end up with more questions than we started with!

The full Circuit Leaders of Worship and Preachers Meeting covers formal matters such as the consideration of the possibility of someone being given a "Note to Preach". If that Note is granted a mentor will be appointed who will gently introduce the newcomer to taking a small part in leading a service, gradually building up their skills and confidence until they are ready to lead a full service. Transitions to "On Trial" and later to move to Full Accreditation are also the responsibility of this meeting.

As I write, our church buildings are currently closed for worship due to Coronavirus. This is offering our Preachers and Worship Leaders new opportunities to find alternative ways to worship and so far those who lead our worship are rising to the challenge.

I pray that these times will leave us with new talents and resources that will continue to be useful long after our church premises are re-opened.

**Margaret Bowerman**

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## Revd Velma Campbell, Minister and Friend



I hadn't long been going regularly to Hextable Methodist Church when Velma became minister. It was one of her family services that sticks in my mind and had my young daughters completely entranced. She had this amazing wallpaper roll (wonderfully coloured in) from which she brought the Bible to life, and from then on she's been my minister. Her services are always thought provoking and make me see things differently. As the AV desk operator

at Hextable, I'm always very grateful to receive her order of service at the beginning of the week, giving time to set it up correctly.

She is the reason why, a few years after starting to go to church regularly, my mother and I decided to become members. We had a very cosy membership course with just the three of us sitting round a candle at the kitchen table. Velma made us completely at ease; no question was too silly. She shared with us stories of her life and brought Christian discipleship to life for us. From then on, she became my friend.

She has had her troubles during her time at our church but has always made time for anything that was asked of her. She isn't perfect – who but Jesus is? I love the fact that she shares those imperfections and puts us at ease about our own, encouraging us to continue in our faith to put right those things with Jesus' help. I will most definitely miss my minister, but I am happy in the knowledge that I will always have Velma as my friend.

**Louise Sewell**

# The Hub at Gravesend

**Gravesend Methodist Church runs a daytime hub on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings for homeless and vulnerable people. Guests are provided with showers, clean clothing (thanks to our clothes bank and laundry service), as well as tea and coffee. On top of that we provide a warm and friendly environment where guests can talk about any issues they are facing. This can be anything including addiction, exploitation, loneliness or mental health to name but a few.**

To try and help those in crisis a number of agencies work with the church to help accommodate guests' needs. We have Porchlight, a homeless outreach charity, the JobCentre to assist with benefit issues, CGL to help with addiction, the Council to try and find housing and Human Trafficking to prevent/stop those who are being exploited and of course, Sanctuary, the night time shelter.

We have run several courses over the last few years, including a drama project that interviewed our guests and learned their stories before a team of actors put on a heart breaking performance to a selected audience.

This was hard hitting and honest in its reflection of street homelessness. There was also a cooking class where the guests picked the menu, bought the shopping and prepared the meal before we all sat together to eat as one big family. This helped to develop life skills such as communication, budgeting and cooking [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwXiAnNLms0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwXiAnNLms0)

Currently the Hub has a counsellor on Fridays to allow guests to talk in confidence about their worries (I am currently on my second year of training to be a counsellor as I spend a good portion of my working week in a pastoral capacity). We also have an artist who helps to relieve stress through an art workshop held during the drop in. Previously we enjoyed sports activities with guests which brought out the laughter and their competitive streaks. All of these have only been possible thanks to the hard work of my amazing team of volunteers who have opened their hearts to those in desperate need of a friend.

Funding from our local Council and the Police Commissioners Fund has gone a long way in helping get the Hub up and

running. However, grants are lovely but unfortunately come with so many rules that in our ever changing environment we need to be flexible and so regular donations and a large pool of volunteers would be amazing and would ensure our guests' needs are always met. Our new Facebook page is hoped to help raise much needed funds as well as informing our guests of what is going on at the Hub each day. Last year we helped 193 guests and this year we have served the needs of 107 guests so far and we are only in March.

[www.facebook.com/Gravesend-Methodist-Church-173724259868165/](http://www.facebook.com/Gravesend-Methodist-Church-173724259868165/)

Vicki Clarke



*For the next issue:*

Please send contributions on 'Where is God in the midst of lock-down' as a Word document, no longer than 500 words, to [nkmc.magazine@gmail.com](mailto:nkmc.magazine@gmail.com) to arrive by 24 June 2020. If you can, please attach a suitable high quality image, but do not embed it in a document.