

Grapevine, Summer 2022

This summer North Kent Methodist Circuit says a fond farewell to two ministers who have been with us over the course of a long journey: Tony Graff, who has been in this circuit or its predecessor for 23 years and Elaine Cranmer, Anglican Team Rector of our Holy Trinity Chatham LEP for the past eight years. Both of them have contributed immensely to the life of our circuit and will be missed greatly! We hope to have a good number attending their Farewell Circuit Service on Sunday 31 July at 4 pm at Gravesend Methodist Church.

On a personal note, I want to say how much I have gained from being a colleague of both Tony and Elaine. I have especially appreciated having Tony as a co-superintendent over the past seven years. Tony has been the main person with whom I have been able to share the considerable load,

always making himself available to talk through issues and give support, either by phone or email or face-to-face visits – and often several times a week! Whatever challenges there were to face, we were able to face them together, and Tony was always available to help me gain a wider perspective of how God was leading us. I shall miss him immensely! We wish Tony well as he moves to Burnley this summer to take up new challenges in ministry.

I have greatly appreciated having Elaine as a colleague as well, especially as she's been willing to attend many of our circuit ministerial and staff meetings, even though she could – as an Anglican – claim she was too busy with other responsibilities. Elaine has contributed thoughtfully to our situations, often reflecting to us how our Methodist efforts appear to Anglican eyes. That is an important gift of ecumenical work! At the same time, Elaine has been 'one of us,' sharing herself and her resources

generously. We will miss Elaine as she retires and moves out of our area.

In this edition of *Grapevine*, we have tributes to them both, along with two contributions to our request for readers to tell us their Favourite Hymn. It's interesting that one of those is 'One More Step Along the World I Go', which Sydney Carter wrote for one of his children who was anxious about starting Year Two at school. We pray God's blessing on both Tony and Elaine – and ourselves – as we all take 'one more step' into the adventures God has in store for us.

In the Autumn issue of *Grapevine* we will be welcoming in the Revd Alex Terrett who is coming to minister at Gravesend, The Brent, Swanscombe, and Dartford. We will also continue with 'Favourite Hymns,' so don't hesitate to give us your choice!

Bonni-Belle



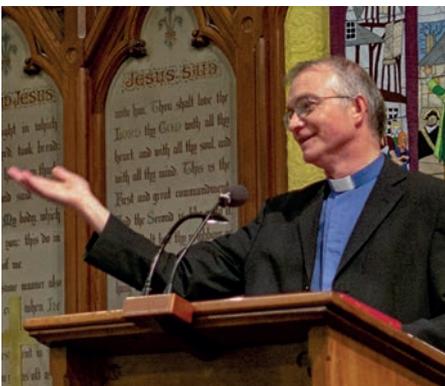
Farewell...

Thank you, Tony, and farewell!

Eleven years ago we were preparing for the coming together of four circuits into one, and for the inauguration of the North Kent Methodist Circuit. It was a time for meeting many new people from across our area, and I will never forget the first time I met the Revd Tony Graff. I had somehow found myself in the role of Circuit Steward in the new Circuit Leadership Team, with the particular brief of supporting Tony in Mission and Ministry – or Ministry and Mission, we never could remember which. I must admit I was terrified by the responsibility and at the task, but Tony quickly put me at ease and I soon discovered what a joy it was to work with him.

Tony was to give me many challenges, the first of which was to be part of a team planning the Inauguration Service for the North Kent Circuit. For this service Tony wrote a prayer likening our journey from four circuits into one as a voyage across the waters, very appropriate as the service was held in the Dockyard Church. The prayer begins:

*We will step out on to the waters,
with all familiar footholds gone.
We will launch out on to the seas,
with God our only compass to
guide us home.
Our voyage will take us
through strong winds and
stormy waves.
But we will look to Jesus,
who holds us when we falter,
and will not let us fall.*



Perhaps the biggest challenge Tony presented to me was to be a tutor in the pilot scheme of *Worship: Leading and Preaching*, the new training for Local Preachers. He knew I was interested in finding an update for the old Faith and Worship course, but W:L&P turned out to be a huge learning curve for all of us – students, mentors and tutors as well as supporting ministers. I would never have managed this without the support of Tony, who managed to persuade me that I did have the skills and ability to do it! Another challenge was when we were looking for a more up-to-date Worship Leaders course, and *Leading Contemporary Worship* was planned out. Tony encouraged this to become a Circuit-wide course and, with the support of already accredited Preachers and Worship Leaders, several new Worship Leaders were trained.

Many of us will remember Tony's services, especially his sermons, always without notes, sometimes based around a single word such as "abide", but usually there was a story. Tony will always be for me the great story-teller. Many of us have loved his retelling of Bible stories, bringing people and their situations to life. In his short time with us in Larkfield he was always so willing to be our story-teller at Messy Church. The

parents would sit quietly spell-bound, while some of the little ones (we had some naughty and noisy ones at that time) would carry on with their play, and Tony would just carry on with the story. The parents really loved his stories!

Stationing has been a very important part of Tony's role while he has been with us, and it has been good to support him as he is always so welcoming and able to put visiting potential new ministers and their families at their ease. He himself has proved immensely flexible and willing to move to the parts of the circuit where he has been needed, firstly many years in Sittingbourne, then a short stay in Larkfield before going to Gravesend where he has been able to offer a much-needed sense of stability for some years. Sadly, at least for us, stationing is taking Tony far away to pastures new, and I know he will bless the people of Burnley, as he has blessed us in North Kent for many years, with his interest in each individual, his kindness, calmness and compassion.

I will leave you with the last words from Tony's prayer at the Inauguration service, which sum up his faith, and his ministry:

*And so our Captain calls
"All hands on deck,"
and we give ourselves to share his work.
With his help,
We will worship and pray;
We will learn and care;
We will be good neighbours to
those in need
and challenge injustice;
We will make disciples for Jesus Christ.
We will share God's mission of love
as he brings us with the whole creation
to his heavenly kingdom.
To God we give our thanks and praise
Amen*

Thank you, Tony, for all you have given to each of us and to the North Kent Methodist Circuit.

Monica Wilding

Farewell and thanks to Elaine



Whenever a minister retires or “sits down”, to borrow the Methodist term, it is tempting to view their ministry in terms of numbers: years of service; baptisms, weddings and funerals; committee meetings chaired at various levels; school assemblies delivered; sermons written and pastoral visits undertaken. We might add-in the numbers of people supervised, those trained and sent forth into ministry, or encouraged along the path to confirmation. However, Christian ministry cannot be measured by such things.

The Reverend Elaine Cranmer joined the Parish and Local Ecumenical Partnership of Holy Trinity South Chatham as Team Rector on 4 February 2014. For those counting, that was over eight years ago. But these eight years are only the most recent stretch of Elaine's forty plus years of service to the Church, first as a Lay Reader licensed in Durham Diocese in 1981, and then from 2000 onwards as a full-time ordained Minister in Southwark and Rochester. That's a lot of leadership, service and pastoral care!

In South Chatham as Team Rector, Elaine's service has included a lot of behind the scenes administration –

returns to the Circuit, Diocese and Local Authorities – the preparation and cooking of meals (St David's Lunch Club), and the setting-up of tables and chairs – a major feature of any parish where the buildings are used as much by the local community as the worshipping congregation. Highlights of Elaine's time in South Chatham also include the training of two curates, both of whom through their own unique gifts have brought life to the parish; a stint as Chaplain to the Mayor of Medway and a three month sabbatical in 2018. Elaine was instrumental in the installation of new windows at St William's, a project which was on the back-burner for what seems like an age, and as a Parish we hosted a wonderful Deanery Confirmation service attended by the Reverend Tony Graff, which saw a number of candidates confirmed from all three churches in the LEP. But again, we are beginning to talk about numbers and measurables!

Over and above the year on year task of overseeing the pattern of worship in the parish and many hospitality events from Messy Church to the Blue Bell Hill Summer Fayre at St Alban's, Elaine has shared something far more important. As St Paul writes in his first letter to the Thessalonian church, Elaine has shared with us not only the Gospel of God but

her very self (1 Thessalonians 2:7-9). As colleagues in ministry, it has been a privilege to pray with, and learn from Elaine through her reflective leadership, spirituality and discipleship. On more than one occasion Elaine has drawn our attention to the Rule of St Benedict, a tradition she values highly, especially the themes of transformation (conversion), obedience, stability (which one might wrap-up in the word faithfulness), and hospitality. Each of these values, Elaine has modelled throughout her time with us.

Thank you, Elaine, for the gifts you have shared and for your leadership over the past eight years. We wish you well in your retirement. May you now enjoy even more hours spent behind a camera as well as time with your family both in the south-east and north-west of England. We will be praying for you as you continue to walk with Christ in all that lies ahead.

(As one Church Warden recently remarked, Elaine does not appear in many Parish photographs because she is usually the one taking them! But we found these... “one is a cracker!”)



Revd Tony Graff

At Spital Street we have been so very fortunate to have Tony as our Minister for a number of years.

It has been a difficult time for all churches and Ministers but Tony has always ensured that he is accessible and there for us. Although it hasn't always been easy, Tony has continued to be generous with his time, arriving early when he leads worship and spending time over a coffee following the service. We have really appreciated sharing this time of fellowship with him.

He has a very special gift for preaching. His sermons hold the listener's attention as they are delivered as a story, relevant and understandable. We often remark that it feels like Tony is just speaking to us as individuals.

His workload has been huge but he has always made himself available for meetings and to answer any worries that we may have without ever making us feel that we are a nuisance. He has given of himself 100% and we have been encouraged by his honest, gentle, caring and faithful ministry.

We wish Tony all the very best as he begins a new chapter of ministry in Burnley. At Spital Street we shall miss his sense of humour, his smile, his care and his ministry.

We thank God for him and are very grateful for the time we have spent together.

Sheila Sanderson
Spital Street steward



Two Favourite Hymns

StF 357 **'JESUS – the name high over all'** **Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)**

As a young person I attended Luton Road Methodist Church where one of the opportunities given to us was to join a Mission Band, sharing in leading worship. I was 16 when I became a member of the Mission Band and it was there that I found my call to preach. So I set out to prepare for my Local Preacher Examinations with one subject a year to study Old Testament, New Testament and Christian Doctrine followed by written examinations.

On 2 June 1958, having been 'On Trial' for several years, I was accepted by the Chatham Garrison and Naval Port Mission Circuit on behalf of the Methodist Church as a Fully Accredited Methodist Local Preacher.

I have had the privilege of preaching for 63 years, not only in the Circuit where I have resided but also in many churches with the Connexion.

My call to preach is as real today as it was when I was 16.

Over the years there have been many new and modern hymns written but I still turn to Charles Wesley for my favourite hymn which means everything to me: 'JESUS - the name high over all'.

What is the task of the preacher? Verses 5 and 6 of this hymn sum it all up for me and the words are really relevant.

*'Tis all my business here below
To cry 'Behold the Lamb!'*

'Preach him to all' – and that is what I have tried to do over these past 60 years.

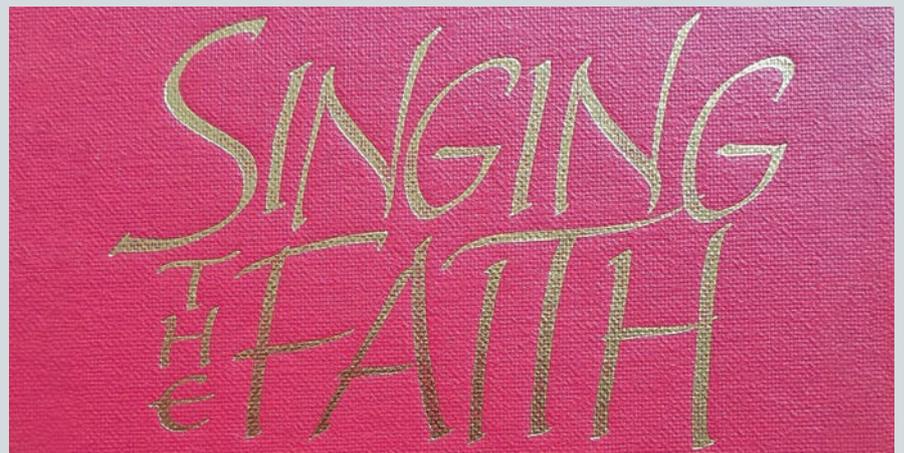
Brian Davies

StF 476 **'One More Step'** **Sydney Carter (1915 – 2004)**

What's my favourite hymn? There are so many, but today my favourite hymn is "One more step" by Sydney Carter.

I remember when this was first published my Mum was a Sunday School teacher and this was her favourite. This is one of those hymns I will sing (badly and loudly) in the car when I am about to do something new or difficult; I sang it (badly and quietly) on the operating table when I was having a stent inserted in my leg. It is the one hymn I definitely want playing at my funeral: "From the old I travel to the new, keep me travelling along with you".

Martin Smith



Goodbye to Helen!

We have recently said our farewells to Helen Young who was the Youth Pastor for Third Avenue Gillingham and the Chinese congregation.

Helen began working with Third Avenue eight years ago, and added depth, organisation and purpose to the youth programme – as well as a great deal of fun! She has moved to a new position working with young people at a school in Birmingham. She will be greatly missed. I personally enjoyed the Reflective Supervision sessions I had with her over the past several years, especially our wide-ranging discussions of theology.

BB



Helen worked at Gillingham for around eight years, initially coming to us as a Youth Worker and then a Youth Pastor as a Circuit employee. Helen was a real team player and loved working with people, chatting through ideas and making other people feel valued.

She organised a varied and stimulating programme for the young people on a Sunday morning. Until lockdown she also ran a Wednesday evening youth club, bi-weekly Bible studies, twice weekly 'drop ins' after school for the local secondary school and mentored several of the young people. She also spent some time working alongside other youth workers at the local college, but unfortunately she had to give this up because of time limitations. During lockdown she embraced Zoom and



set up as many groups as she could to keep in touch with the young people.

We wish Helen every success in her new role in Birmingham and will miss her smile and her bouncy personality around the church at Gillingham.

Carol Waldock
Church treasurer



I have worked with Helen most of the time she has been Youth Pastor at Third Avenue and we have met lots of young people, mostly from the school across the road from the church, going in to their breakfast time to invite them to our youth cafe after school. We've played many games of uno and made lots of hot chocolate. We have been away on weekend trips with young people from the church as well as youth club and Sunday Squad.

The most challenging thing was to work out how to carry on over the last two years when everything else stopped. What could we do when we couldn't see anyone? We had to work out how we could still keep in contact with our young people when we couldn't be with them. We set up youth club on line, getting to know the young people in a different way on Zoom. Then there were the Sunday Squad videos – neither of us was very keen on being on camera so we started in a small way with a quick story, but as time went on we went out on location. Helen learned how to edit and we used props and invited others to join us and some people even did a holiday club video. We had so much fun and lots of people seemed to enjoy watching them – we even have our own YouTube channel! Sorry, we have destroyed all the outtakes but we had a good laugh over them. It has been a good journey – Helen has been great, sharing her sense of fun and her faith with the young people, listening to them and encouraging them to be their best selves and to know the love of God. There is so much more to say – we are sad that she is leaving but happy for her in her new life in Birmingham.

Karen Willing



North Kent Circuit

Preaching Plan June - August 2022

		JUNE				JULY					AUGUST				
		5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	
		<i>Pentecost</i>	<i>Trinity Sunday</i>												
BEARSTED	10.30	WEST	G HARRIS	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	SHEPHERD	LA	LA	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	BYARD	us @ Newington	MYLES	LA	LA	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	
BURHAM	10.30	LA	LA	TROTT	LA	OATES	LA	MYLES	LA	G HARRIS	LA	OATES <i>hc</i>	LA	LA	
CHINESE	13.30	P LAU <i>hc</i>	E LAU	P LAU	HII	P LAU <i>hc</i>	E LAU	PICKARD	P LAU	LA	P LAU <i>hc</i>	LEUNG	E LAU	P LAU	
DENE HOLM	11.00	ROWE	DOWNNS	LA	LA	BURCH	LA	LA	GRAY	COOKE <i>hc</i>	LA	BURCH	WOODHOUSE	LA	
ECCLES	10.30	LA	LA	LA	OATES	LA	SHEPHERD	LA	OATES <i>hc</i>	LA	TOLHURST	LA	G HARRIS	E VINCENT	
THIRD AVENUE	10.30	SELMES	ASHBY <i>ca</i>	SELMES <i>hc</i>	SELMES <i>aa</i>	SELMES	LA	SELMES <i>hc</i>	LA	SELMES	WILLING	WATTON	M HARRIS	SELMES <i>hc</i>	
GRAVESEND	11.00	WOODHOUSE	LA	LINDLEY <i>hc/ca</i>	LA	WOODHOUSE	HINCHLIFFE <i>hc</i>	GRAY	LA	LA 4pm**	WOODHOUSE	READ <i>hc</i>	BYARD	LA	
HARTLIP	18.30	LA	SELMES <i>hc</i>	LA	GERMAN	THOMPSON <i>ca</i>	SELMES <i>hc</i>	LA	WILLING	GALLAGER	SELMES <i>hc</i>	M HARRIS	M SMITH	LA	
HEXTABLE	10.30	LA	LB-SCOTT <i>hc</i>	PICKARD	PACKHAM	LA	LB-SCOTT <i>hc</i>	LB-SCOTT	PACKHAM	LA	BYARD	PACKHAM	OATES <i>hc</i>	GRAY	
HOPE STREET	10.30	LE MASONRY	LE MASONRY	MAJ. CLIFTON	LA	LE MASONRY	LA	M SMITH	J THOMPSON	LE MASONRY	LE MASONRY	LA	LA	LA	
KINGSWOOD	11.00	LA <i>aa</i>	LA	BAPTIST	ANGLICAN <i>hc</i>	LA	E VINCENT	BAPTIST	ANGLICAN <i>hc</i>	ANGLICAN Area <i>hc</i>	--	--	--	ANGLICAN <i>hc</i>	
LARKFIELD	10.00	OATES <i>hc</i>	TOLHURST	WILDING <i>aa</i>	NEWELL	CARPENTER <i>hc</i>	LA	LA <i>aa</i>	SHEPHERD	OATES <i>us</i>	CARPENTER <i>hc/aa</i>	LA <i>aa</i>	WILDING <i>aa</i>	SHEPHERD <i>aa</i>	
NEWINGTON	9.30	LA	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	LA	LA	M SMITH	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	LA	LA	ZACHAR <i>us</i>	WILDING	LA	MYLES	TROTT	
ST. LUKE'S	10.30	LA	SELMES <i>hc</i>	K TAYLOR <i>ca</i>	LA	M HARRIS	SELMES <i>hc</i>	WEST	WADE	WOODHOUSE	SELMES <i>hc</i>	TROTT	LA	LA	
HOLY TRINITY	10.00	ST ALBAN'S	ST WILLIAM'S <i>hc</i>	ST DAVID'S <i>hc</i>	ST WILLIAM'S <i>hc</i>	ST ALBAN'S WILDING	ST DAVID'S	ST WILLIAM'S	ST ALBAN'S <i>hc</i>	ST DAVID'S <i>hc</i>	ST WILLIAM'S <i>hc</i>	ST ALBAN'S LA	ST DAVID'S	ST WILLIAM'S	
SITTINGBOURNE	10.30	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	LA	WADE	LA <i>gd</i>	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	ROBB	TROTT	LA	us @ Newington	LA	LA	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	LA	
SPITAL STREET	10.30	MYLES	GRAY	LA	HARFLEET	READ <i>hc</i>	BYARD	BURCH	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	LA	HARFLEET	LA	S SMITH	LA	
STOKE	18.30	--	--	--	--	--	--	WOODHOUSE	--	--	--	--	--	--	
PENINSULA STROOD	10.30	ROBB	WOODHOUSE	READ <i>hc</i>	LA	MYLES	WOODHOUSE	WILDING	TOLHURST <i>hc</i>	TROTT	LA	WOODHOUSE	WADE	LA	
SWANSCOMBE	10.45	BURCH	LA	WOODHOUSE	COOKE <i>hc</i>	LA	LA	M HARRIS	HARFLEET	LA	DOWNNS	GRAY	LA	LA	
TONBRIDGE RD	10.30	SHEPHERD	LA	OATES <i>hc/gd</i>	G HARRIS	WEST	R VINCENT	OATES <i>hc</i>	LA	LA	M HARRIS	SHEPHERD	TOLHURST <i>hc</i>	LA	
THE BRENT	10.30	LA	S SMITH	MYLES	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	V CAMPBELL <i>b</i>	HARFLEET	WATTON	SELMES <i>hc</i>	ROWE	GRAY	LA	HARFLEET	LA	
UNION STREET	10.45	WATTON	PICKARD <i>hc</i>	WEST	TOLHURST	LA	PICKARD <i>hc</i>	G HARRIS	PICKARD	JOINT URC	LA	PICKARD <i>hc</i>	LA	R VINCENT	
ONLINE SERVICES	10.30	PICKARD	MATTHEWS	BURCH	WOODHOUSE	PICKARD	TBA	TBA	WOODHOUSE	SELMES/ THIRD AVE	PICKARD	TBA	TBA	WOODHOUSE	

**** 4pm 31st July Tony Graff's Farwell Service at Gravesend**

aa All-age / *b* Baptism / *ca* Church Anniversary / *acm* Annual Church Meeting / *hc* Holy Communion / *gd* Gift Day / *ssa* Sunday School Anniversary / *us* United Service
Please note: These services are conditional upon government guidance and are subject to change.

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Methodist Tapestries Project

The Weardale Museum in Ireshopeburn, County Durham, is promoting the Methodist Tapestries Project, which will show the history and heritage of Methodism via the medium of embroidery. Relating stories not only local to the Museum but those of regional, national and international interest, the Project currently has forty-nine panels at various stages of construction and is looking for volunteers to take on further designs. Images of some of the current panels can be seen on the Museum's website, including in the Gallery section which showcases different panels every few weeks.

As we especially value input and involvement from Methodist communities, I am writing to ask if you would kindly share this with people in your circuit, in the hope that some of them might be interested in knowing more about the Methodist Tapestries Project. Contributions of local stories illustrating Methodist history and heritage are always appreciated, and of course if any potential stitchers were to come forward that would be excellent!

Liz Walsh Co-ordinator
Methodist Tapestries Project

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[www.instagram.com/
methodisttapestriescollection](https://www.instagram.com/methodisttapestriescollection)

[https://weardalemuseum.org.uk/
methodist-tapestries-project](https://weardalemuseum.org.uk/methodist-tapestries-project)

For the next issue:

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