



North Kent Methodist Circuit

grapevine

CIRCUIT NEWS AND PREACHING PLAN



inside...

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CHURCH BUILDING

Issue Twenty
Winter 2021/22

The Climate Change battle has begun

There are manifold streams of news, initiatives, talks, studies, documentaries, all focusing on the undeniable reality of the changing world. Yes, the world is changing and so much good has been achieved. But what we are concerned about now is not the positive side of human activities, but the side effect of all our achievements. The burden is heavy for the planet's ecosystem, which is much more interconnected and much more fragile than we thought. We can feel all around us that there is a massive "wake up call" and that is great! One of the events we should support is the November **COP conference in Glasgow**. We can pray and perhaps look into the text of the Declaration which seeks to enforce a UK mandate to lead this great assembly of countries into new horizons. UK is the presiding country and according to the news 195 countries will be represented. A great assembly will claim to have the main say about the future course and how we are all going to handle the challenge of global overheating. Please pray and if you like, sign up to the Declaration to the Prime Minister, using the link below.

Something new is being born from this Global ecological challenge – we can sense it in words like Eco Church, community gardens,

rewilding, green investments. So many people are in support of this new, responsible way of life and it is exciting that each of us can do our part. Let us not give up but firmly believe that all the little things we do actually count. Perhaps you have read more and heard of some new initiatives – it is important that we share and update and encourage each other. Otherwise we will sink into a "doomsday" atmosphere. Generation "Z" especially struggle to see the future. We have to be careful how we talk about our future on this planet. Yes Global climate changes are on the march and it is all serious but there is still hope. We live in a fragile world, which God our creator carefully wove together and then gently placed us into it with the responsibility of being good stewards. We are stewards of tremendous treasures, mysteries, beauties of this, God's planet. Let's admit it. This is a call to repent on the scale of a mass revival, just as in ancient biblical history where we read records of how the whole nation was moved by the signs of God's power. (*Global flood, crossing the Red Sea, shaking the political and spiritual superpower of giant Egypt and many others*) or in more recent times

when evangelists like Billy Graham and the like spoke to crowds of people who responded to the Gospel. Perhaps that is what we are actually experiencing – a massive movement of God's power, signs of his presence, the laws by which he set up this planet. They cannot be ignored or violated but should be accepted and respected.

The future becomes clearer when we understand that we need the change. Another word for change is repentance, but enriched by that flavour of being sorry in the light of a new understanding, in the light of the Holy Spirit. This need for change around, 180 degrees, seems to be so interwoven with the entire world. It doesn't have to remain within church walls. It is offered to everyone. I hold my breath with expectation and hope that more and more people will find that Christ changes everything in the cosmos and in human history, present and future.

Tearfund Climate Coalition Declaration:
<https://www.tearfund.org/forms/reboot-declaration>

Robert Zachar



Churches Count on Nature

*All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small;
All things wise and wonderful,
the Lord God made them all.*

For several very hot afternoons in early June 2021, various members of our congregation at **Union Street Methodist Church** joined with a few from the community in our first engagement with **Churches Count on Nature**. This is a project connected with **EcoChurch** that attempts to survey the wildlife living on our church grounds. For this, our first year, we (14 of us) confined ourselves to patches of the front lawn to do a count of the 'wild things'. We explored nine patches of the front lawn, each about six feet wide and about 10 feet long (not quite the two metre squares that were advised). The sun was often fierce, but we persevered and were rather amazed at what we found!

As expected for a lawn, mostly there was grass. There were also trees, but it took some of us a while to put a name to the lime trees along the edges of the lawn. We also counted an apple tree planted a few years ago and a sycamore. Since the lawn had not been mowed for a week or so, we were also able to see what else – besides grass – was making its home on our front lawn. We found some 28 varieties of plants, mostly wildflowers including daisies, dandelions, buttercups, and thistles. The spent leaves of daffodils and bluebells were still in the borders after their flowering in the spring, and a single pansy had self-seeded itself on the lawn. We spotted clover and brambles, ivy and moss, the ever-present sticky weed/



cleaver/goosegrass whose proper name we discovered is *Galium aparine*, and some elder and stinging nettles.

At that point the identification got trickier, so we pulled out the wildflower guidebooks (and some pulled out their phones) and pooled our collective knowledge to come up with a further list of things that we'd seen before but not known by name. These included: birdsfoot trefoil, borage, common beardfoot, crested dogstail, corn speedwell, eyebright, garlic mustard, greater plantain, ribswort plantain, and mossy saxifrage. Some of these had tiny flowers no bigger than the head of a matchstick but as beautiful and intricate as the much larger species.

Of course, the real gardeners amongst us will be quick to point out that nearly all of the above are considered 'weeds', but we also noticed that the insects looking for nectar and nutrients didn't seem to mind the pedigree of our 'lillies of the field'. Amongst the 'creepy crawlies' we found the expected: ants, flies, wood lice, slugs, and spiders (especially in the trees). There were also bluebottles, bumblebees, a wasp, a hoverfly and a centipede.

We found several snails – including some discarded shells – and one snail pair mating!

We also spotted at least one robin and two blackbirds. Our survey was basically at ground level, so we didn't get the chance to explore what else might have been living in the trees. We're in the process of sending our 'species' report to the national group compiling a record of what's co-existing with us in churchyards across the country. Who knew all this was on our front lawn?

Nearly all of us came away with a new respect for the tiny wild ecosystem that exists on our front lawn. After spending an hour or so peering deeply into the grass and then gathering up our gear to go home, we found ourselves suddenly more aware of many more plants valiantly popping their heads out of cracks and crevices all along the pathway and sides of the building. What are their names? What other creatures depend on them for survival? How does our survival depend on theirs?

Perhaps our brief 'count on nature' will inspire us to continue considering how best to steward our natural resources for the good of all God's creation. This count took place at the height of summer, when we might expect to see a wealth of plants and other wildlife, much of which is less visible during the colder months. But what might we see if we look closely at our church surroundings or gardens? How about a winter 'nature count'?

Bonni-Belle

Insulating an older church building

*Peter Matthews traces heat-conserving improvements made over the years at **Hextable** church.*

Our church was threatened with closure about 55 years ago. Since then the Boys' Brigade was formed, followed by the Girls' Brigade 10 years later, and these organisations have been credited with bringing more people into the church. Family parade services became a squeeze and in the 1990s moves were made to build an extension to the building.

Plans were drawn up, specifying insulated cavity walls and roof structure – very different from the original church built in 1896, which had solid walls and no insulation above the wooden ceiling and tiles. The suspended wooden floor of the 1890s became a solid base for the extension. Carpeting was laid in the old church and the extension, reducing heat loss through the floor. However, the decision was taken to install softwood, single-glazed window frames on economic grounds. Some of these have recently been replaced with double glazed uPVC window frames, as they had suffered with the weather.

The original church was rectangular with transepts added around 1912 and a free standing Sunday School Hall added around 1937. Kitchen, store and inside toilet were added in the 1950s. By the early 2000s it was proposed to connect together all the rear of the premises so that most areas could be reached from corridors without passing through other rooms. This was done to better suit the activities and groups using the premises.

A new vestry and toilets now occupied the transepts with ceiling heights reduced. The solid floor had a polystyrene block incorporated to reduce heat loss through the floor. New insulated cavity walls were built connecting church and hall buildings with an insulated flat roof and double-glazed windows. Double-glazed roof lights were installed in the corridors to give natural light in the windowless corridors. The opportunity was

also taken to use stairs and slopes for disabled access, as there were differences in levels within the building corridors.

Since then single-glazed windows, mainly in the hall, have been replaced with double-glazed uPVC units. All the accessible roof spaces have been lagged and the hall cavity walls filled with insulation. The wooden hall floor is now covered with vinyl floor covering, adding to the insulation.

We have no plans to replace our lighting with LED fittings. All the current lights are energy efficient fluorescent tubes, the best standard at the time of fitting.

It is realised that standards change over time and improvements are made when the time is right. Our next project is to block off dead unused spaces over the vestry and toilets to reduce the volume of air needing heating in winter and fit dual flush to our toilets to reduce water use.

Peter Matthews



Insulate Britain!

The UK has some 29 million homes, many of which must belong to the oldest and least energy efficient housing stock in Europe. Every year vast amounts of precious energy are wasted in heating and, increasingly, cooling our buildings.

In recent months, using controversial, eye-catching methods of civil disobedience such as blocking roads and picketing public places, supporters of **Insulate Britain** have been campaigning for this issue to be addressed by Government at a time when climate change issues are under the spotlight as never before.

The message of **Insulate Britain** is clear and direct. In order to meet UK commitments under the Paris Agreement to stay below 1.5C, and legal obligations under the Climate Change Act 2008 (updated 2019), emissions from heating and powering homes must be reduced by 78% in less than 15 years and then to zero by 2050.

Nearly 15% of the UK's total emissions comes from heating homes, so an overhaul of the performance of the UK's housing stock is needed to reduce the energy demand. The UK needs a nationwide programme to upgrade almost every home in the UK with energy efficiency measures. That is 1.5 homes per minute to the year 2050. Currently, the UK Government does not have a robust long-term national strategy with a funding mechanism in place to retrofit our homes.

For more information visit:
www.insulatebritain.com

The activities of Insulate Britain caught the attention of Peter Matthews of Hextable, who reflects on changes over the years:

“Campaigns to improve our housing stock have been going on for years. It would appear the country still has many old houses which are difficult to insulate.

First, we were encouraged to insulate our lofts, then later advised to increase the thickness of insulation. I remember my father doing this in the 1960s. Next came double glazing or secondary glazing to eliminate draughts and heat loss through windows, but new houses were still being built with single glazing as it kept prices down.

Rapid expansion in house building in the late 19th and early 20th centuries had reduced overcrowding and poverty, but solving one problem often creates another later on. Solid wall construction on many terraced houses built before the 1930s did not allow modification to reduce heat loss.

So we moved on to cavity wall building and insulation. Initially there were problems with filling cavities, but eventually construction included ready-insulated cavities. I am not sure when, or even whether, Building Regulations adopted these technologies, but I do know that some grants were available to incentivise these modifications, all

of which should have given benefit to households in terms of lower heating bills. Full payback may have taken some years to achieve.

Gradually during the 20th century, insulation-filled cavity walls reduced heat loss through house walls. It's our expectation now to have a centrally heated home, where we are comfortable to sit around in light clothing, instead of adding heavier clothing in the winter months. We tend to heat a whole house, not just the rooms we use. Society now has different expectations and we now enjoy much greater levels of comfort, partly through advances in technology and increasing wealth, though these are not enjoyed by all. Should we consider changing our way of life to reduce our dependence on mineral resources like gas, oil and coal and consider how we can better use natural sources of power like wind, solar, tidal and water power?

A final thought – as a Manse Steward in the 2000s, I was surprised to find some manses had no loft insulation and all needed the insulation upgraded. This showed immediate benefits. I suspect this possibly reflects the situation nationwide.”

Peter Matthews



North Kent Circuit

Preaching Plan December 2021 - February 2022

		DECEMBER				JANUARY					FEBRUARY				
		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	
		2nd of Advent	3rd of Advent	4th of Advent	1st of Christmas	2nd of Christmas								Sunday before Lent	
BEARSTED	10.30	GALLAGHER	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	G HARRIS	–	ZACHAR <i>cov</i>	TROTT	BYARD	TOLHURST	READ	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	NEWELL	LA	R VINCENT	
BURHAM	10.30	LA	R VINCENT	LA	–	LA	E VINCENT	LA	OATES <i>cov</i>	LA	LA	LA	LA	OATES	
CHINESE	13.30	P LAU <i>hc</i>	E LAU	P LAU	LA	P LAU <i>hc</i>	NGUANG <i>(Mandarin)</i>	E LAU	P LAU	S LAI	P LAU <i>hc</i>	E LAU	K YU	P LAU	
DENE HOLM	11.00	LA	S ROWE	LA	–	LA	LA	GRAFF <i>cov</i>	BURCH	LA	ROWE	LA	LA	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	
ECCLES	10.30	LA	E VINCENT	OATES <i>cs</i>	–	LA	LA	OATES <i>cov</i>	LA	LA	LA	LA	OATES	LA	
THIRD AVENUE	10.30	SELMES	WADE <i>nat</i>	SELMES <i>hc</i>	–	SELMES	WILLING	SELMES <i>hc/cov</i>	COOKE	SELMES	SELMES	TROTT	SELMES	LA	
GRAVESEND	11.00	DOWNS <i>b</i>	LA	M HARRIS	–	LA	GRAFF <i>cov</i>	ROWE	WOODHOUSE	DOWNS	BURCH	LA	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	GRAY	
	18.30	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	–	S SMITH	–	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	–	–	<i>us</i>	–	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	–	–	–	
HARTLIP	18.30	SELMES	LA <i>cs</i>	LA <i>am service</i>	–	LA	SELMES <i>hc/cov</i>	LA	GALLAGHER	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	LA	SELMES <i>hc/cov</i>	WILLING	GALLAGHER	
HEXTABLE	10.30	LA	PACKHAM <i>nat</i>	LA	–	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	S SMITH	LA	GRAY	PACKHAM	LA	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	BURCH	DOWNS	
	18.30	–	–	PACKHAM	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
HOPE STREET	10.30	TRAD SERVICE	LE MASONRY <i>hc</i>	LE MASONRY <i>cs</i>	TBC	LE MASONRY <i>hc</i>	<i>hc</i>	ROBB	THOMPSON	LA <i>fs</i>	BOWERMAN	ZACHAR <i>cov</i>	LE MASONRY	ELLIS	
KINGSWOOD	11.00	LA <i>ca</i>	LA <i>nat</i>	LA	ANG <i>hc</i>	LA <i>ca</i>	R VINCENT	LA	ANG <i>hc</i>	ANG <i>hc</i>	LA <i>ca</i>	LA	LA	ANG <i>hc</i>	
LARKFIELD	10.00	OATES <i>hc</i>	LA	WILDING	–	OATES <i>cov</i>	LA	SHEPHERD	M HARRIS	BYARD	OATES <i>hc</i>	G HARRIS	WILDING	E VINCENT	
	18.30	–	WILDING <i>ca</i>	OATES <i>4pm cs</i>	–	–	WILDING <i>ca</i>	–	–	–	–	WILDING <i>ca</i>	–	–	
NEWINGTON	9.30	LA	BOWERMAN	ZACHAR	–	TOLHURST	LA	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	TROTT	G HARRIS	LA	BROWN	PICKARD	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	
ST ALBAN'S	10.00	TOLHURST	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	
ST DAVID'S	10.00	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	TOLHURST	
ST LUKE'S	10.30	BYARD	SELMES <i>hc</i>	SELMES <i>cs (pm)</i>	–	G HARRIS	SELMES <i>hc/cov</i>	M HARRIS	WADE	TOLHURST	LA	SELMES <i>hc</i>	WATTON	SELMES	
ST WILLIAMS	10.00	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	TOLHURST	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	LA	
SITTINGBOURNE	10.30	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	NEWELL	–	–	BYARD	ZACHAR <i>cov</i>	BOWERMAN	ZACHAR	PICKARD	LA	M HARRIS	ZACHAR <i>hc</i>	BROWN	
	16.00	–	–	ZACHAR <i>cs</i>	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
SPITAL STREET	10.30	BURCH	HARFLEET	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	–	LA	GRAY	LA	LA	HARFLEET	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	LA	LA	BYARD	
PENINSULA STROOD	10.30	M HARRIS	WOODHOUSE	TROTT	–	–	WOODHOUSE	WILDING	SELMES <i>hc/cov</i>	YAMOAH	BYARD	WOODHOUSE	WADE	M HARRIS	
SWANSCOMBE	10.45	LA	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	LA	LA	LA	LA	DOWNS	LA	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	LA	LA	HARFLEET	LA	
TONBRIDGE RD	10.30	SHEPHERD <i>ts</i>	OATES <i>hc</i>	–	–	LA	OATES <i>cov</i>	G HARRIS	WEST	LA	SHEPHERD	OATES <i>hc</i>	READ	WEST	
	18.30	–	–	OATES <i>cs (6pm)</i>	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
EBBSFLEET	10.30	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
THE BRENT	10.30	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	LA	LA	–	BURCH	HARFLEET	LA	GRAFF <i>hc</i>	ZACHAR	GRAY	DOWNS	LA	HARFLEET	
UNION STREET	10.30	G HARRIS	PICKARD <i>hc</i>	READ	–	–	PICKARD <i>cov</i>	NEWELL	PICKARD	OATES	LA	PICKARD <i>hc</i>	ROBB	PICKARD	

aa All-age / b Baptism / ca Church Anniversary / cs Carol Service / hc Holy Communion / ts Toy Service / cov Covenant Service / nat Nativity

Please note: These services are conditional upon government guidance and are subject to change.

Climate emergency... our response

“Blah, Blah, Blah!” said **Greta Thunberg** at the **Youth Climate Summit** at the end of September 2021. She said this in response to national leaders who were claiming to ‘Build back better.’

She went on to criticise them for not doing enough, for using words that sound great but lead to no action.

Where do you stand on the Climate Emergency spectrum? Are you at the extreme end with those who believe the world will heal itself and it will all come out in the wash? Or at the other end of the scale, where you might support or even consider joining the direct action groups that we have seen recently on the motorways? I guess you are probably somewhere in between.

Politicians, or perhaps I should say Parliament controls the world of politics with words (its name is related to the French word for ‘to speak’). Political parties try to persuade us with words or promises in their manifestos; preachers will encourage, challenge, persuade or comfort using words. Actions, as we know, speak louder.

We know that wherever we may be pointing a finger, there are three pointing back at us. What are we in our churches doing to combat climate change? What are we actually doing to reduce our carbon footprint today? You may be concerned, and there are plenty of organisations out there willing to help. And there is one particular group which has been helping circuits and churches get started – A Rocha UK (arocha.org.uk).

Just before lockdown we got things going in our church with the project called Eco Church. We surveyed our church’s worship and teaching, buildings, grounds, community engagement and lifestyle and assessed our starting point to achieve bronze, silver or gold standard awards.

The Methodist Church has worked with A Rocha UK to develop Eco Circuit, specifically tailored to suit Methodist structures. In March 2019, the then Methodist President of Conference, the Revd Michaela Youngson, commended the Eco Church award scheme and the adoption of Eco Circuit by the Methodist Church. The award affirms a circuit’s attention to the care of God’s creation and encourages the adoption of Eco Church by churches in the area.

Eco Circuit status will be given to your Circuit when it has:

- registered its intent to become an Eco Circuit
- commissioned an individual or group
- agreed an environmental policy.

Please do have a look at the web site if you are not already involved and have a go.

See ecochurch@arocha.org

I know that the pandemic has halted many churches and circuits in their tracks with respect to getting groups working together, but as we emerge from the restrictions what better time to renew our resolve to ACT together now, so that we can demonstrate a Living Presence committed to restoring creation, rather than just talking about it?

Mark Salter
Reader with PTO (Permission to Officiate)
Parish of Holy Trinity, South Chatham

For the next issue:

Please send contributions as a Word document, no longer than 500 words, to bonni-belle.pickard@methodist.org.uk to arrive by 20 December 2021. If you can, please attach a suitable high quality image, but do not embed it in a document.

