



North Kent Methodist Circuit

Circuit News and Preaching Plan

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Issue Seven
August 2018

Working with Older Adults

Some years ago, one of my churches had hired a new children's worker and was working enthusiastically on a host of projects for young families: Messy Church, revamped Junior Church, Toddlers' Group, parenting classes. One day a wise older woman who had been in the congregation since she was a child gently took me aside to ask, "So what about those of us who aren't young any more? We love helping with the little ones, but we have our own issues, our own concerns."

We need ways to work through all the life we've lived – how to sort out what's important to pass on and what needs to be discarded, how to keep going with bodies that don't work like they used to, even how to prepare ourselves for death and dying." A few days later, at a conference, I found myself sitting next to a stranger who was leading some workshops on a theology of 'later years.' It was one of those Spirit-filled moments that got my full attention! The stranger was Ann Morisy, theologian and author of many books on practical theology. At that point, she had recently founded a group in north London called PSALM: Project for Seniors and Lifelong Ministries (stpancraschurch.org/community/psalm).

Over the years, I've gained much from interacting with Ann and PSALM in workshops, conferences and conversations. One of my churches started a group called Faith Studies, primarily for older members interested

in practical theology. A few years later, another church – not content to let the children have all the fun – decided to have a holiday club for seniors which they called 'Senior Space.' There were quizzes, crafts, hand massage, tea dances and lively seminars such as 'how to de-clutter' and 'how to plan your funeral.'

In our own circuit, we have various luncheon clubs and drop-in coffee mornings. We also have among us

the author of a recent book, *How to Handle Later Life* (Marion Shoard from Gravesend). Those in our midst who have lived long and survived well, who contribute abundantly to our collective well-being, deserve a space in our church communities to work and pray through the challenges and blessings of later life. This issue of Circuit News celebrates the work and presence of older adults.

Bonni-Belle Pickard

Good Companions at the Lunch Club



For over 40 years there has always been some form of group for older adults at **Kingswood Church**.

The names have ranged from Good Companions, started by Joyce Bland and Pat Morris, followed by the Evergreens and The Drop-In. The purpose, however, has been the same: to provide a social gathering for older people where they can chat over a cup of tea or coffee and enjoy light refreshments.

Last year on retirement I joined the latest of these groups, now called the Lunch Club, having moved from meeting on Tuesday mornings to lunch time to accommodate our local Pre-School. We used to buy food for lunch from the van that went around the local farms and villages until it broke down and couldn't be repaired.

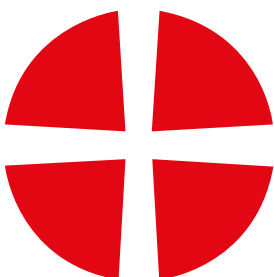
So we now provide our own food, with tea and coffee provided, and find we have more food than ever before!

We recently enjoyed a fish and chip lunch at The Square Fish Café at the Square, Lenham and all agreed that we must do this again and more often!

Probably one of the most poignant comments from one of our members when asked how he was doing was, "I am fed up with my own company." So the Lunch Club provides a way for us older folk to get together and enjoy each other's company.

I am reminded of Matthew 25:40, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Peter Roberts



Spiritual Care for Older People

Julia Burton-Jones, dementia specialist project officer for the Dioceses of Rochester and Canterbury, writes about the work of Anna Chaplaincy.

Faith is a source of hope and strength in later life, but the way we experience it changes as we age. Just as ageing implies psychological tasks, it also brings fresh spiritual challenges – our pilgrimage is ever changing and renewing.

Companionship and support in exploring what faith means in later life is the role of Anna Chaplaincy, a new ministry of spiritual accompaniment with older people which has as its home the Bible Reading Fellowship resource *The Gift of Years*. Pioneered through a covenant between the Methodist and Anglican churches in Alton, Hampshire, Anna Chaplaincy is spreading through the UK. My project has been funded by Henry Smith Charity to see it embedded in the work of local churches in Kent, Medway and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley. In our early work we have chosen to focus especially on the needs of older people with dementia.

Churches are responding with practical initiatives, setting up dementia cafés and establishing dementia friendly worship. Working with care homes is a key dimension of our ministry.

Although I work in an Anglican setting, Anna Chaplaincy is ecumenical and community-based. A growing team of Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends have been commissioned to work in parishes, gathering regularly in Anna Chaplaincy hubs for mutual support, learning and encouragement. Links with other denominations are in place in some areas, but we are keen to grow the ecumenical dimension of Anna Chaplaincy in our area.

A project we hope will be ecumenical from its outset is a new partnership with Heart of Kent Hospice's specialist dementia project. Heart of Kent Anna Chaplaincy will be launched at a service in Aylesford Parish Church on Monday 1 October. The hospice works with 200 people with dementia who live in and around Maidstone. Our aim will be to link individuals with their local church wherever possible. To enable us to

The Gift of Years



achieve this, we hope to build a network of contacts in the churches.

If you would like to find out more about Anna Chaplaincy, please visit the website of *The Gift of Years* (thegiftofyears.org.uk). Information about the work in Rochester and Canterbury Dioceses is found at anglican.org/mission/dementia/ and rochester.anglican.org/mission/anna-chaplaincy/.

If you would like to be linked with the new Heart of Kent Hospice Anna Chaplaincy hub, as a new Anna Chaplain or Anna Friend, or as your church's link person, I would love to hear from you (email Julia.Burton-Jones@rochester.anglican.org).

Julia Burton-Jones

Contact and company at Tonbridge Road

The church provides a number of activities for older people, each welcoming both members or adherents and people from the wider community.

Ladies' Evening In 1961 a Young Wives' Club was formed with an upper age limit of 40, later raised to 45, and in 1970 the name was changed to Wives' Club with no age limit. Members enjoy a variety of activities: hearing from guest speakers, discussing matters of mutual interest, sharing musical tastes, family photographs, stories from younger days and childhood and much else. There is an annual theatre visit, a dinner and a cream tea. When there is an appropriate

speaker men are usually invited to attend. Meetings are now held monthly on Tuesday evenings and the current membership largely falls into the 'Older People' category.

Tuesday Club This weekly afternoon club was formed in 1987. Members meet to play board games and enjoy refreshments and each other's company. The current membership is all female although men are always welcome to attend.

Friendship Lunch A monthly lunch is held on the first Tuesday when a modestly priced three-course meal is enjoyed. Although there is no age restriction, the attendance is mainly from those in the 'Older People' category. Apart from the meal, there is time to chat about anything and everything and to enjoy the fellowship of others.

Film Night A monthly film night is held which, again, is attended by a number of older people. There is no charge but donations are made which go towards the crèche in Brazil which the church supports.

As time has gone on we now have a number of members or adherents who are unable to go out due to age or infirmity. We have an encouraging number of Pastoral Visitors and others who make regular visits to these people taking news of the church and the church magazine, at the same time providing some welcome company for those who would otherwise be very lonely.

John Young

200 Years of Methodism in Bearsted



The celebratory events of May and early June 2018 will live long in the memory of Bearsted Methodist Church and we hope of many people from the wider community who attended them.

Celebrations began on Friday 18 May with an exhibition describing decade by decade our history as a Methodist church, the influence of particular people on the life of the church and our current involvement in the wider community. Each well illustrated panel and accompanying artefacts was contributed by different members of the team responsible for putting the exhibition together and provided a fascinating insight into the ups and downs (and presently ups!) of a church community based in the village over the past two centuries. We were delighted to welcome many visitors, both past members and from the local community, all of whom expressed appreciation at the content and quality of the exhibition.

The response of both members and the groups who meet on our premises to our commitment to a programme of refurbishment has been impressive. The funds donated and secured through grants enabled us to purchase new chairs for the church, to upgrade the lighting throughout the building and to completely redecorate the church in time for our celebratory events.

On 20 May we were delighted to welcome the Rev David Gilman to lead worship at our Church Anniversary, a well-attended service which included former members who had returned for the weekend. In the afternoon we held a Hymn Festival, celebrating the hymnody of the past 200 years decade by decade. As we explored the social and theological context the absence of any hymns written by Charles Wesley or Isaac Watts was hardly noticed!

The following evening we were delighted to welcome Bearsted Choral Society to the Church to perform music by John Rutter. Several of his anthems were followed by the main work, his powerful setting of the Magnificat. The audience filled the church to capacity and was very appreciative of the performance.

The next weekend we held our Flower Festival with exceptionally fine displays provided by church and community groups. We were delighted that the Festival brought much pleasure both to those who saw the displays and to those whose skill had made them.

As we have celebrated the past and welcomed so many people to our events, it has confirmed us in our confidence that God has a future for us in Bearsted.

Roger Byard



REAL EXTRA TIME IN REALLY EDIFYING DAYS

When I retired in 2014 my thoughts were of having relaxing days of reading, writing, painting, gardening and fishing. However it seems the Good Lord had other plans for me and now I could not be happier.

My wife Ruth has been involved in Christians Against Poverty (CAP) since 2008 so I started helping her in 2015 with the courses she ran and giving a bit of admin support. CAP has grown into a passion for me and now I am a trained CAP Money Coach and a member of the National Speaker Team. Now I am also the Community Link Coordinator for the new Swale CAP Debt Centre of which Ruth is the manager. We both have the same passion for the organisation and its work: Serve the poor, Save the lost, Through the church, Across the nation. Being able to share this journey together brings joy to us both. Although we fill different roles we are now known as Team Wiseman. It can get a bit hectic at times but now I have a far more rewarding and joyful life than in my workdays.

We live in a society which is far too quick to write off the capabilities and usefulness of older people. It ignores the wealth of knowledge and understanding that older age can bring. Sometimes it seems that if you are not up to date with all the latest technology and gadgets you are of no use, but those of us over a certain age often have the advantage of being able to work things out and actually think without an electronic support system around us. I'm not saying we should or could do it all, only that a mixture of youth and older experience would work to the benefit of all.

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Backbone of our church

In the church, as with many organisations, people grow up within a group, which changes to meet the needs of the time. Here are the activities mainly attended by older people, who form the backbone of our church at Hextable.

About 60 years ago it was decided to start a Young Wives group and a crèche was provided. After a few years this became Women's Fellowship which is still flourishing today, mainly supported by older members.

Our previous smaller circuit had a women's committee which organised The Summer Scene, an evening of entertainment in which all the churches took part. They also organised another important event, the Easter Offering Dedication Service. Hextable and the two Dartford churches still organise this

service, and we are always pleased that Gillian and Rosemary from Sittingbourne come to join us.

Our monthly Women's Fellowship has 24 members, mostly from our church but there are also friends from other local churches. We always start our meetings with devotions and either have a speaker or a Songs of Praise with poetry or a quiz. We have an annual lunch in June and in December a short carol service followed by a lunch. If anyone would like to join us they would receive a warm welcome. We meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 10:15 am, led by Joyce Matthews.

More recently we started a social evening on the last Friday of the month, hoping to attract young parents to enjoy a social time together. This has evolved into a time when a number of older folk

meet, chat over tea and coffee and play board games with background music. Table tennis and darts were popular once but now it is Scrabble, Triominos, Upwords and Rummikub. It is still open to all but retired people are the main attenders.

A very recent venture has been seniors' lunches or teas, open to anyone in the community. This is a welcome initiative by the Brigades Parents and Friends Association. As a fund raiser, it has been well supported although numbers are limited to about 30. Our GB older girls serve at tables.

We have two house groups, mainly consisting of older people, that meet weekly for bible study, prayer and socialising. A third is held monthly for a younger set.

Joyce and Peter Matthews

What Churches Should Know about Older People

Church ministers often find themselves treated as the natural repository of wisdom on many topics far removed from theology. Their knowledge of matters of health, law, personal finance and much else they may be asked about is unlikely to be all-encompassing. Yet to admit ignorance is to disappoint. Unsurprisingly, the questions with which they are perhaps most often besieged relate to ageing.

Does the minister think Granny should go into a care home? Should Grandad ask not to be resuscitated? How is a minister to know? Giving the wrong advice could have catastrophic consequences.

The Church of England Newspaper published a 2,000-word article on 8 June 2018 which set out ten things

I think ministers of any denomination should be able to tell church-goers about later life – and be aware of themselves. This is also available on the North Kent Methodist Circuit website, at www.nkmethodists.org.uk.

My first eight tips are:

- Get independent advice before you go into a care home
- Don't miss out on financial entitlements
- Check the NHS Constitution
- Appoint an attorney
- Let the train take the strain
- Think carefully before a house move
- Retirement housing may not be what it seems
- Check whether you're a carer

My final two tips are aimed at churches:

Friendship clubs: these can play a hugely important role in the lives of older people at a time when many council-funded day centres have closed. The provision of hot food and activities are valuable, but don't underestimate the importance of a place in which older people can simply meet, empathise one with another and share advice and experience. They are also crucial in tackling loneliness.

Church premises: older people can find these uncomfortable if not forbidding for reasons of which ministers may be unaware. For instance, people in their eighties need four times as much light as the young. Physical realities call for strong lighting, warm,

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Sixty Years a Preacher

My Note to Preach was given to me in 1958 by the superintendent minister with the advice, "Always go to preach with a full heart and an empty bladder." A spiritual and practical super! These were the days in Maldon, when Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist churches were 50 yards apart.

One early word of advice came from a senior member: "It was lovely what you had to say this morning, boy, but I couldn't hear a word of it." I was always grateful to him and have always attempted to ensure that the congregation can hear (but why do the deafest people always seem to sit at the back?)

Training was by means of a correspondence course with written essays and four examinations. I never met my tutor but when I transferred to the Gravesend and Dartford Circuit I had occasional sessions with the Revd Leonard Waddy and Bernard Hall. For my final examination I won the National Swire Prize and received a book of my choice.

Since then, the Circuit has had 60 years to put up with me. Be wary though, because reading the *Daily Express* (not my usual choice of paper) I discovered that a drug I take is a wonder drug which could prolong life to 130 years!

Should I advise the Local Preachers' department to start preparing centenary certificates?

It has been a privilege to lead so many acts of worship over the years. Mostly people do not comment on the service although sometimes they seem to have heard something I did not say (or intend to say). Perhaps it was a message they needed to hear at that point. Sometimes I've thought that people need to be given the opportunity to question what they have heard, which may be possible to organise in a smaller congregation.

Most of our churches do not now use a pulpit on high – the preacher is much more on a level with the congregation; not her/him but us and she/he is a part of us. I think we have to beware of the time after a service when we think, "That went well." Recently I felt the sermon was poor and apologised to one of the congregation who replied, "I've heard worse."

Be patient with us preachers. I find it much easier now that I have time to prepare, but many working preachers are under pressure at work and then have the added pressure of sermon preparation.

Thank you to all – come, listen, encourage and pray for us. Without you we are nothing.

Alan Pooley

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Dennis Allen & Joyce Woodcraft

disabled-friendly toilets, hearing loops, plentiful seats with arms and cushions, and well-heated or well-cooled rooms. Also important is a warm welcome, even if this means a steward leaving their duties at the front of the church during the service to bring an older member a warm drink on a December morning – as Joyce Woodcraft welcomed Dennis Allen at my church, Gravesend Methodist, last year.

My book **How to Handle Later Life* (1060 pages, 2017), £22.99 is available from bookshops, through Amazon or at a cost of £22 including post and packing direct from the publisher, Amaranth Books Ltd, c/o Central Books Ltd, Freshwater Road, Romford, RM8 1RX.

(An article by Sheila Allison in the *Winter 2017 Circuit News*, on the theme of *Mission*, also mentioned several tips from Marion's book, *How to Handle Later Life**, intended to make life smoother for older people.)

Marion Shoard

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Stan & Ruth Wiseman

This is why I believe older people should get involved with mentoring and working with the younger generation, joining in where possible, volunteering to help the relevant organisations, showing how useful we are and not accepting the "over the hill" label. This would give us a fulfilling and rewarding role in society and help society at the same time. Mutually beneficial arrangements are always the best way.


Perhaps the best way to put it into perspective is to use the comparison of cars as an example of how things have

changed over the years. When I started driving in the early 70s any standard car with over 65,000 miles on the clock was classed a bit of a banger. My present car has done over 150,000 miles and is still purring along. The levels of health and capability of the older person have increased, so their usefulness has been extended far beyond retirement age. To me it seems a pity not to use all the knowledge and experience I have and I won't accept that it's my turn to stand down and let younger ones do it all.

Stan Wiseman

North Kent Circuit

Preaching Plan September - November 2018

	SEPTEMBER					OCTOBER				NOVEMBER				
	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	
	22nd in Ordinary Time	23rd in Ordinary Time	24th in Ordinary Time	25th in Ordinary Time	26th in Ordinary Time	27th in Ordinary Time	28th in Ordinary Time	29th in Ordinary Time	30th in Ordinary Time	31st in Ordinary Time	32nd in Ordinary Time	33rd in Ordinary Time	Sunday before Advent	
BEARSTED	10.30	Pickard hc	Daley-Lee	Brand	Peach hf	Pickard ss	R Vincent	Pickard hc	G West	Pickard	M Harris	Pickard hc	LA	Pickard
BURHAM	10.30	Newell	Byard	Crouch	Daley-Lee hc	LA	E Vincent	Myles	Robb	Daley-Lee hc	Tolhurst	Daley-Lee PM service	LA	Daley-Lee
CHINESE	1.30	K Yu hc	E Yu	K Yu	K Yu	Yu/Foo ca	K Yu hc	Beh	K Yu	Nguang	K Yu hc	K Yu	K Yu	Lai
DENE HOLM	11.00	A Pooley	Stunell	Scott	Graff hc/hf	Burch	Gray	Campbell hc	Force	Rowe	LA	Graff hc	S Smith	Packham
ECCLES	10.30	G West	LA	Daley-Lee	Newell	G Harris hf	Willing	Daley-Lee hc	Trott	Lee	Myles	Daley-Lee	M Harris	E Vincent
THIRD AVENUE	10.30	Selmes	Wilce	Selmes hc	Crouch	LA hf	Selmes	Gallagher	Selmes hc	Selmes	LA	LA	Selmes hc	Selmes
GRAVESEND	11.00	S Smith	Downs	Graff hc/hf	Rowland	Graff	Scott	Graff hc	LA	Burch	Downs	Waldock	Graff hc	S Pooley
	6.30	Graff hc	X	X	X	X	Campbell hc	X	X	X	George hc	X	X	X
HARTLIP	6.30	Downs	Selmes hc	Graff hf	Gallagher	George	Trott	M Harris	Selmes hc	Davies	Brown	ecu	Graff cir	German
HEXTABLE	10.30	Campbell pfs	Gray	Campbell hc	Grady	Campbell	LA hf	Packham	Campbell hc	LA Springer	Campbell pfs	Sturt	Force	Burch
	6.30	LA	Graff	Force	Campbell cov	LA ca	Burch	Graff	Graff	Campbell hc	Paine	Scott	LA	Campbell hc
HOPE STREET	10.30	Collins	LeMasonry hc	Davies	Selmes	Morgan	LeMasonry/Morgan hf	Prince hc	LeMasonry	Gallagher	German	Morgan hc	Wade	LeMasonry
KINGSWOOD	11.00	LA	R Vincent	ang/hc	Baptist	ang/hc	LA	LA hf	ang/hc	Baptist	LA ca	E Vincent	ang/hc	Baptist
LARKFIELD	10.00	Daley-Lee hc	Wilding	Wade	Lee	G West hc	Daley-Lee hf	G Harris	LA	M Harris	Daley-Lee hc	Wilding	Robb	LA
NEWINGTON	9.30	Grady	M Smith	Zachar hc	Robb	M Smith hf	Lee	Zachar hc	Collins	Scott	LA 4pm	Zachar hc	M Smith	Davies
ST ALBAN'S	10.00	ang/hc	ang/aa	Wilding	ang	ang	ang/hc	Tolhurst hf	ang	ang	ang/hc	us @ St. David's	ang	ang
ST DAVID'S	10.00	ang/hc	ang/aa	ang/hc	ang	ang	ang/hc	ang/hf	ang/hc	G Harris	ang/hc	us @ St. David's	ang/hc	Tolhurst
ST LUKE'S	10.30	German	Selmes hc	Laity	Downs	Selmes hf	Davies	Selmes hc	Stunell	LA	Selmes hc	G Harris	Daley-Lee	Shepherd
ST WILLIAMS	10.00	ang	Tolhurst hc	ang/b	ang/hc	ang	ang	ang/hc	ang	ang/hc	ang	us @ St. David's	Myles	ang/hc
SITTINGBOURNE	10.30	LA	Zachar hc	M Smith	Zachar	Zachar	Collins	Woodhouse hf/ica	Wade	Zachar hc	Zachar	Brown	Zachar hc	Prince
SPITAL STREET	10.30	Graff cov	Paine	G West	Pickard	A Pooley	Paine hf	Grady	LA	Graff hc	Rowland	Graff/Paine 4pm	Rowe	Gray
STOKE	10.30	Robb	X	X	X	X	Stunell	X	X	X	Laity	X	X	X
STROOD	10.30	Davies	K Yu	LA	Trott	Stunell	M Harris hf	Waldock	Laity	Yu hc	Newell	K Yu	LA	Collins
SWANSCOMBE	10.45	Sturt	Campbell hc	LA	Woodhouse	Packham hf	Force	LA	3pm Songs of Praise	S Pooley	Graff hc	A Pooley	Packham	Graff hc
TONBRIDGE RD	10.30	M Harris	Myles aa	K Yu hc/b	Shepherd	@ Bearsted ss	G West hf	K Yu pfs	Yu/Hollands hc/ca	Shepherd	R Vincent	G West	K Yu hc	Zachar
	6.30	Tolhurst hc	X	X	X	X	Pickard hc	X	X	X	Graff hc	X	X	X
EBBSFLEET	10.30	Woodhouse	Woodhouse	@ Eastgate	@ Swanscombe	X	Woodhouse	LA	@ Eastgate	@ Swanscombe	Woodhouse	Woodhouse	@ Eastgate	@ Swanscombe
THE BRENT	10.30	Scott fs	Sturt	Paine	Campbell hc	LA	Campbell hf	Paine	Coates	Campbell hc/b	LA	Campbell	Coates	Campbell hc
UNION STREET	10.30	Byard	Graff hc	Pickard	Myles	@ Bearsted ss	Pickard hc	Wilding	Pickard	Willing	Pickard hc	LA	Pickard	G Harris

aa	All-age	bb	Boys Brigade	cl	Church Life	gs	Gift Service	jca	Junior Church Anniversary	om	Overseas Missions	ss	Sectional Service	tr	Team Rector
ac	Advent Carols	cf	Cafe Church	cov	Covenant Service	hf	Harvest Festival	ls	Lent Service	op	Prayer and Praise	t	Teaching	un	United Nations
ang	Anglican (CoFE)	cs	Carol Service	ecu	Ecumenical Service	ht	Hextable Team	lc	Lessons & Carols	pp	Parade & Family	tp	Themed Preaching	us	United Service
as	All Souls	ca	Church Anniversary	ehc	Extended Communion	hc	Holy Communion	LA	Local Arrangement	p	Parade	(t)	Transport Required	ys	Youth Service
b	Baptism	cir	Circuit Service	fs	Family Service	hm	Home Missions	nat	Nativity	ps	Praise Service	ts	Toy service		

A Place of Sunshine

Four of us stand in front of a large door, ring the bell as instructed and hear it echo throughout the building. It is answered by a smiling, friendly face who ushers us in. After signing in we are led to the dining room where a number of elderly folk are beginning to gather. A few are still finishing their meals but don't seem to mind the intrusion. I'm not sure they are even aware we are there.

This is **Shaws Wood, Strood**, a residential care home for elderly residents, some just finding it difficult to live independently, others having the beginnings of dementia or having lived with it for some time. We four, from **Peninsular Church, Strood Centre**, were there to hold a short service of about 20 minutes for those who might be interested. Carol the Manager greeted us warmly and while we set up the CD player and got out hymn sheets, she settled the residents down and rounded up others from various parts of the building. The home is big and bright with lovely pictures of 40s film stars and



other images which might spark a memory of times gone by.

At 2.30pm on a Monday afternoon we begin our service, introducing ourselves and saying why we are there. There is a babble of conversation between a couple of folk but we continue regardless with short prayers, a reading and a very short talk, no more than five minutes. But the thing they enjoy most is the singing. We choose songs

which they undoubtedly knew from their Sunday School days and their youth when it was expected of them to go to church each week. Some sing, some just look at the words and some just sleep, whilst there are some who are not sure what they are doing there and walk out. But at the end some are loath to give up their song sheets, so I presume these must be a comfort to them in some way. Walking frames clutter the room and sometimes cause an obstruction, but where would they be without them?

Each time we come we try to bring along something they might recognise and talk about it, bringing into the conversation God's love for them and how Jesus died for us all and that he is with us where ever we are. After finishing with the Grace and while preparing to leave we greet and talk to those still there and the light in some of their eyes is encouraging but the sadness in others is heart breaking. We just pray that God's love will surround them and give them his peace, and we thank God for

all those that take care of them, not only in this home but all care homes.

Next month, with God's help, we will do it all again.

Ann Pearce

Focus on Centrepont

Centrepont is a friendly and lively gathering of mature folk who have some connection with the church at **Union Street, Maidstone**. Our meetings are sociable gatherings held on a fortnightly basis, usually with a speaker and presentation of some sort. Recently discussion has taken place regarding the future of the group. We considered meeting once a month, however members do feel that the group forms a valuable mutual support network. They all really enjoy coming to the meetings, so bi-monthly meetings it remains.

Centrepont evenings vary. There are the regular evenings: AGM in October (sweetened with coffee and cake and chat), the Christmas party, a garden visit in early summer and a sausage sizzle or Faith Supper to mark the end of our year in June. We reconvene in September.

Speakers' evenings have included *An Evening with Pam Ayres*, *From Back Stage to Front of House*, *Kent's Victoria Crosses* and *Boxley Hand Bell Ringers*. In-house contributions have included Beetle Drives, board games and quiz evenings, French, English and Scottish evenings, with music, food and quizzes, and a successful *Call My Bluff* event. We have organised some very enjoyable charity evenings such as a barn dance and an evening of *Sweet Music and Just Desserts*, with live music and puddings – always a favourite!

We would love to have an influx of new members; if anyone is interested in joining Centrepont, or coming to one of our evenings as a visitor, please contact the Circuit Office for details. I hope to put some information on the Circuit Website in the near future.

Lesley Hitch

For the next issue:

Articles for the next edition of the Circuit Newsletter, on the theme of Learning, should be sent to the Circuit Office northkentmethodistcircuit@gmail.com by Wednesday 26 September 2018.

Please keep your articles relevant to the theme and think creatively about a title. Keep to 450-500 words and supply a good quality image if you can – send it separately, not embedded in a Word document. Include your name and a means of contact. *Thank you – Editor*