



North Kent Methodist Circuit

# grapevine

CIRCUIT NEWS AND PREACHING PLAN



*inside...*

DREAMS  
AND VISIONS

Issue Eleven  
Autumn 2019

# Dreaming God's Dreams...

**As we approach the golden days of autumn, the words of Pentecost still ring in our ears:**

*'In the last days,' God says,  
'I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
your old men will dream dreams.'*

**(Acts 2:17)**

There are predictions of gloom all around us – climate change accelerating, church attendance declining, political uncertainties casting doubts on our future, *but still we move forward with hope!*

Is this hope of ours merely a refusal to face the 'facts' of the future? The scriptures remind us that God's people have been in places of despair many times before. It's been nearly 2000 years since Peter proclaimed the words above to a perplexed and sneering crowd of doubters in Jerusalem. Peter was quoting the prophet Joel's words, pronounced several hundred years before in yet another time of desperation: plagues of locust (environmental disaster), foreign invaders (political upheaval), social disintegration.

Neither Peter nor Joel were telling the people just to sit quietly and wait for God to act on their behalf. Dreams

and visions, even God's, don't become reality overnight. God invites us all to be part of the process. Both Peter and Joel were urging their listeners to first catch a glimpse of God's dream: "Where there is no [prophetic] vision, God's people perish." That verse from Proverbs comes in the midst of a long prophetic warning about how God's people are not living up to God's standards of love and justice for the poor, the vulnerable, even the earth.

Dreaming God's dreams into reality involves each of us recognising how the things we do, the ways we think and behave, often contribute to God's visions being thwarted. Having recognised our errors, we must proceed to the third essential part of Dreaming God's dreams: repentance – and changing our ways to accommodate God's plans.

As we listen for God's voice today, we can hear God speaking through the cries of those in distress, through the words of those working on solutions for difficult public issues, through the voices of those who are 'different' – in age, in ethnicity, in social status, in physical abilities. Each one has a perspective and listening hard to each other can help us gain a wider sense of what God is saying to and for all of us.

In this issue of Grapevine, we welcome in two new ministers: Naomi Oates and

Elizabeth Harfleet. They each come with new messages for us to hear. They each come with gifts and talents, with dreams and visions which may differ somewhat from ours. It will be important that we all take time to listen to each other for glimpses of how God will work amongst us for the good of us all and the communities around us.

In this issue, we also highlight a few of the dreams and visions of churches and individuals in our circuit. None of these are 'written in stone'; each is subject to considerable revision! And, like the dreams and visions of Joel and Peter, they may take centuries or millennia to fully come to fruition – and then be subjected again to new challenges. Our hope in this edition of Grapevine is that we will individually and collectively recognise God's dreams and visions and work together to see them come to fruition in our time and our place.

**Bonni-Belle**



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## *A dream come true*

My thanks to all those who supported me in my personal dream to complete my Doctor of Ministry degree. On 13 May 2019, I became a 'Rev Dr' of Wesley Theological Seminary at an impressive ceremony at the National Cathedral in Washington DC. As one of the oldest students on the programme, this study was my chance to concentrate on a topic which had intrigued me for many years: how best to support those in Interfaith Marriages.

Rather than being too old, I found that my lifetime of experience provided me abundantly with questions and insights and a determination to seek out some answers for one of life's complicated challenges: how to live at peace with the 'other.' The Prince of Peace still dares us to dream big dreams... and equips us to make those dreams come true.

**Bonni-Belle**





# Deacon Elizabeth comes to us from Scotland



**My life's journey to date has taken me to some interesting places. Originally from the picturesque market town of Knaresborough in North Yorkshire, it was a love of music which took me to London in 1980 to study at Trinity College of Music. It was during that time that I met my husband Graham. We married in 1985 and have a daughter, Sarah-Sophia, who is married to Bilshan and they live in Mauritius.**

Having begun married life in Southend-on-Sea, it was Manchester which was to be our home from 1988 until 2016 and proved to be the ideal place for Graham and I to establish our respective careers, mine as a freelance singer and vocal coach and Graham as a private medical insurance broker – as well as becoming parents along the way! I also trained to be a Nutritional Therapist, working with individual clients, presenting corporate workshops and undertaking media work.

Whilst I had a lifetime involvement with the Methodist Church, a call to ordained diaconal ministry was not remotely on my radar and I regarded myself as an unlikely candidate. Yet the discernment process revealed that perhaps there

had been a Godly purpose in the varied career path I had travelled along up to that point. The common denominator was people – and in particular, helping and supporting people and enabling them to be and give of their best.

To fast forward to the present – Graham and I have just spent three very enjoyable and fulfilling years in Scotland, based in the Forth Valley Circuit, where I worked in churches in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Fife and drove hundreds of miles each month, including regular trips across the new Queensferry Crossing with frequent views of the iconic Forth Rail Bridge.

Hobbies and interests include music of all kinds, cookery, reading, gardening, animal welfare and conservation, care for the environment, humour, Rooibos tea and good TV drama!

I am delighted to have been appointed to the North Kent Circuit and very much look forward to all that lies ahead, trusting in God and in his unfailing love for each one of us.

Blessings,

**Deacon Elizabeth Harfleet**



## *A new adventure for Revd Naomi Oates*

Naomi is moving from Twickenham in South-West London to take up her first appointment as a probationer minister in the North Kent Circuit. She has worked in a variety of roles for the Connexional Team since 2012, most recently as Executive Officer to the Secretary of the Conference. For the past three years, she has been training part-time for presbyteral ministry at the Queen's Foundation in Birmingham, where highlights included time spent with a prison chaplaincy team and the opportunity to set up a new youth project with her Link Church. Although this will be her first circuit appointment, as a daughter of the manse, Naomi has lived in a range of circuits across the Connexion – but Kent will be an entirely new adventure! She is passionate about social justice, hospitality and baking (and particularly opportunities to combine all three).

Naomi is moving to North Kent with her husband, Luke. When not working for the Greater London Authority to support rough sleepers, Luke can usually be found lending enthusiastic support to the Welsh rugby team. Together, they enjoy swimming, cycling and hiking, and are looking forward to exploring some of the trails and pilgrim routes that Kent has to offer.





# *Daring to dream*

Towards the end of May 2019 a few Local Preachers who had been planned to lead worship during the summer months met with Bonni-Belle and Bart at Burham for an initial discussion on how we could encourage the congregations of Burham and Eccles to implement their dreams of showing Christ to their communities, especially in the newly-built areas. With proposed developments at Eccles and the continuing growth at Peters Village these congregations have some wonderful opportunities to work ecumenically and to grow our faith family by showing and sharing the love of Christ with these new neighbours.

We are in the early stages of this dream and some of us arrived late to it, so we are not terribly sure quite which directions we are going to take. However, it is an exciting opportunity that is rooted in prayer and the dreams of faithful worshipping communities. We're dreaming that new friends will be made by showing the love of Christ to neighbours old and new, and that they too will become brothers and sisters in this awesome family of Jesus.

Please pray for us as we discern and implement the dreams and the ideas that the congregations with the preaching group may arrive at. Pray that the dreams of Burham and Eccles will come to fruition and will be the seeds of dreams that will blossom and grow into a reality; that their seeds will be successful and can then be sown further into areas of the circuit that perhaps are also Daring To Dream.

Trish Robb

## *Dreams from Bearsted*

**We've long dreamed of having more parking spaces available... and now we hear that the coal yard next door is to be revamped, perhaps allowing more accessible parking near us.**

**We're also dreaming about setting up some new small groups for prayer, fellowship, and/or Bible Study. We're exploring how to make that dream come true.**



# North Kent Circuit

## Preaching Plan September - November 2019

		SEPTEMBER					OCTOBER				NOVEMBER				
		1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	
		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	German	Pickard <i>hc</i>	Byard	Pickard	us @ Bearsted	LA	Hodge <i>hf</i>	E Vincent	Pickard <i>hc</i>	M Harris	Pickard	Lovelock <i>hc</i>	Pickard	
BURHAM	10.30	LA	Price	R Vincent	Oates <i>hf</i>	Graff <i>hc</i>	M Harris	S Pooley	G Harris	Oates	Myles	Robb	G West	Oates	
CHINESE	1.30	Yu <i>hc</i>	Yu	Yu <i>ca/hf</i>	Yu	E Yu	Yu <i>hc</i>	Kai	Yu	Beh	Yu <i>hc</i>	Yu	Yu	Hii (Mandarin)	
DENE HOLM	11.00	Myles	LA	Packham	Boulwood <i>hf</i>	S Pooley	Graff <i>hc</i>	Force	Waldock	Gray <i>ca</i>	Rowe	Rowland	Stunell	Graff <i>hc</i>	
ECCLES	10.30	Laity	LA	Oates	Myles	Stunell	Tohurst	Byard	Oates	LA	Selmes <i>hc</i>	Oates	Myles	R Vincent	
THIRD AVENUE	10.30	Selmes <i>b</i>	Zachar	Selmes <i>hc</i>	Selmes <i>hf/aa</i>	German	Selmes	Gallagher	Selmes <i>hc</i>	Selmes	LA	Boulwood	Selmes <i>hc</i>	Selmes	
GRAVESEND	11.00	Force	LA	Graff <i>hc/b</i>	Graff	S Smith <i>hf</i>	Rowland	LA	Graff <i>hc</i>	Graff	Laity	Downs	Graff <i>hc</i>	Scott	
	18.30	us @ Emmanuel	XX	Encounter 4pm	XX	XX	Campbell <i>hc</i>	XX	Encounter 4pm	XX	Graff <i>hc</i>	XX	Encounter 4pm	XX	
HARTLIP	18.30	Zachar	Selmes <i>hc</i>	Foreman <i>hf</i>	Graff	LA	Trott	Bowerman	Selmes <i>hc</i>	Brown	German	Selmes <i>hc</i>	Zachar	Davies	
HEXTABLE	10.30	Packham <i>aa</i>	Campbell	Rowland	Campbell <i>hc/cov</i>	Willing	LA <i>hf</i>	Campbell <i>hc</i>	Hollands	Campbell	G Harris <i>aa</i>	Campbell	Force <i>mha</i>	Campbell <i>hc</i>	
	18.30	Campbell <i>hc</i>	Church Lite 5pm	Graff	LA	Campbell BB/GB 5pm Enrolment	Graff <i>hc</i>	Church Lite 5pm	Campbell	Markova	LA	Church Lite 5pm	Campbell <i>hc</i>	Graff	
HOPE STREET	10.30	Price	Wade	Zachar <i>hc</i>	Le Masonry	Gambell	Collins	Le Masonry <i>hf/hc</i>	Bowerman	Davies	M Smith	Le Masonry	German	Gallagher	
KINGSWOOD	11.00	Cafe church	Newell	Baptist	ang	Ecumenical	Cafe church	LA	Baptist	ang	Cafe church	Watton	Baptist	ang	
LARKFIELD	10.00	Oates	G West <i>hc</i>	E Vincent	LA	Oates <i>hf</i>	Willing	Pickard <i>hc</i>	Myles	Newell	Oates	Tohurst <i>hc/pfs</i>	Shepherd	Zachar	
	18.30	XX	XX	pp	XX	XX	XX	XX	pp	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	
NEWINGTON	9.30	Gray	Brown	Bowerman	Wade	Zachar <i>hc/hf</i>	M Smith	Prince	Price	Zachar <i>hc</i>	Collins	us @ St Mary's	M Smith	LA	
ST ALBAN'S	10.00	Tohurst <i>hc</i>	ang	ang/hc	Newell	us ang hc @ St William's	ang/hc	ang	ang/hc	ang	us ang hc @ St David's	ang	ang/hc	ang	
ST DAVID'S	10.00	ang/hc	ang	ang/hc	ang	us ang hc @ St William's	ang/hc	ang	ang/hc	ang	us ang/hc	ang	Tohurst <i>hc</i>	Laity	
ST LUKE'S	10.30	LA	Selmes <i>hc</i>	Davies	Burch	Selmes <i>hf</i>	G Harris	Selmes <i>hc</i>	Stunell	Brown	Gallagher	Selmes <i>hc</i>	Woodhouse	S Pooley	
ST WILLIAMS	10.00	ang	ang/hc	ang	ang/hc	us ang/hc	Price	Tohurst <i>hc</i>	ang	ang/hc	us ang/hc	ang/hc	ang	ang/hc	
SITTINGBOURNE	10.30	Zachar	Collins	LA	Zachar/Cohen	Brown	Zachar <i>hc</i>	Zachar <i>ca/hf</i>	Zachar	Wade	Zachar <i>hc</i>	Davies	Zachar <i>hc</i>	Prince	
	18.00				Zachar <i>caf</i>					Zachar <i>caf</i>				Zachar <i>caf</i>	
SPITAL STREET	10.30	Graff <i>cov</i>	Byard	Willing	Gray	LA	G West <i>hc/hf</i>	A Pooley	Burch	Rowland	Graff <i>hc</i>	Gray	Packham	A Pooley	
STOKE	10.30	Stunell	XX	XX	XX	XX	Waldock	XX	XX	XX	Robb	XX	XX	XX	
STROOD	10.30	LA	Yu <i>hc</i>	Robb	Laity	Yu <i>hf</i>	LA	Yu <i>hc</i>	Trott	Stunell	Davies	Yu <i>hc</i>	M Harris	Byard	
SWANSCOMBE	10.45	Watton	Graff <i>hc</i>	LA	A Pooley	Gray <i>hf</i>	Scott	Packham	LA	Force	Packham	Graff <i>hc</i>	LA	Burch	
TONBRIDGE RD	10.30	Shepherd	Oates	Tohurst <i>hc</i>	LA <i>hf</i>	us @ Bearsted	Myles	Oates	G West <i>hc</i>	Byard	Shepherd	G West <i>pfs</i>	Oates	Kasongo	
	18.30	Encounter	Zachar <i>hc</i>	XX	XX	XX	Encounter	Selmes <i>hc</i>	XX	XX	Encounter	Graff <i>hc</i>	XX	XX	
EBBSFLEET	10.30	Woodhouse S Pooley	Woodhouse S Pooley	4pm @ Gravesend	Woodhouse S Pooley	XX	Woodhouse S Pooley	Woodhouse	4pm @ Gravesend	Woodhouse S Pooley	Woodhouse S Pooley	Woodhouse S Pooley	4pm @ Gravesend	Woodhouse	
THE BRENT	10.30	Campbell <i>fs</i>	Force	Campbell	LA	Campbell <i>hc</i>	Campbell <i>hf</i>	Dennis	Campbell <i>hc</i>	LA	S Smith <i>fs</i>	A Pooley	Campbell <i>hc</i>	T & V Coates	
UNION STREET	10.30	R Vincent	LA	Pickard <i>hc</i>	G West	us @ Bearsted	Pickard <i>hc/hf</i>	Shepherd	Pickard	Yu	Pickard <i>hc</i>	R Vincent	Pickard	E Vincent	

aa All-age	bb Boys Brigade	cl Church Lite	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	pp Prayer and Praise	t Teaching	un United Nations
ang Anglican (CofE)	cs Carol Service	ecu Ecumenical Service	ht Hextable Team	lc Lessons & Carols	pfs 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 very personal *dream come true*

**In 2012 I found myself in hospital in Weston-super-Mare with a serious infection in my hip. Within 24 hours, without my knowledge, my test results were being discussed with the professor at the regional kidney unit in Bristol. I was moved into intensive care where my situation was explained to me.**

Although Weston had a dialysis unit it was decided a couple of days later to transfer me to Bristol. I had two sessions of dialysis in Southmead, but then a slight improvement occurred. Dialysis was stopped to encourage my kidneys to kickstart. Thankfully that worked gradually. After a few weeks in hospital I was discharged and then began the slow road to recovery.

A couple of years after this wake-up call, I took the action I should have taken sooner and my dream began. As a diabetic I had considerably reduced my sugar consumption but much more drastic action was needed. After an annual MOT at the doctor's, when all my test scores were going in the wrong direction, I felt I would be lucky to last another five years.

I joined Weight Watchers and took a serious look at ways to improve my lifestyle. I dreamed of being a healthy weight and reducing my health problems as far as I could. Along the way there



have been many struggles, many highs and lows.

In 2017 I added regular swimming to the equation, about three miles in total in an average week. I have also completed a number of charity swims, three of which have involved swimming "the channel" in 12 weeks (the 22 mile distance, in my local pool). Three and a half years later I reached a weight which my GP felt was right for me. That was six months ago and since then I have maintained that weight. It still requires a lot of self-control and discipline.

Lots of things have changed for me; many things I cannot change. There are still many areas for improvement in my life, but I now have an I can approach to life.

I find myself mentoring strangers at the swimming pool who have noticed changes in me over the past years, and the same is true in church circles. Last summer I re-offered as a Local Preacher after a 30 year break in service in that role. By then I felt able to recommit to a calling I had never lost but had felt unable to carry out.

A member of District Synod from another circuit is married to a Weight Watcher (now WW) member who has the same leader as I do. I received a message via his wife just before Synod about my progress, and there have been other cross links. My pilgrimage so far has affected my physical, mental, emotional and spiritual life in so many ways

The latest "coda" to this was when my GP said to me this week, "I am satisfied that you have reversed your diabetes" – words I thought I'd never hear. She then removed the diabetic coding from my current record.

My pilgrimage continues, supported by God, encouraged by fellow Christians and underpinned in prayer. This journey would have been impossible otherwise.

Thank you Lord.

**Margaret Bowerman**



## *For the next issue:*

Please send contributions on "Reaching Out This Winter" – how churches anticipate being active in their communities during the cold months as a Word document, no longer than 500 words, to [nkmc.magazine@gmail.com](mailto:nkmc.magazine@gmail.com) to arrive by 25 September 2019. If you can, please attach a suitable high quality image, but do not embed it in a document.