

# Focus

**Autumn 2025**



**Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit**



## Karen's Letter



Cliff Richard famously sang:

*"We're all going on a summer holiday, no more working for a week or two. Fun & laughter on a summer holiday; no more worries for me and you, for a week or two".*

In some ways this song is good advice! A holiday is an opportunity to get away to a new location for a couple of weeks, to escape 'normal' life and have rest and relaxation.

However, the origin of the word holiday, in old English, means 'holy day'. It was used in connection with a religious festival or a consecrated day. It was a day set apart for the sacred and holy. It was a day for stopping in respect and reverence. Certainly servants, in large houses, were often given Sunday afternoons off in respect for the holiness of the day.

In the Bible, Genesis 1 & 2 tells us that when God had finished creating the world he took a day off to rest. God realised that his people would also need time off to rest from their work and so he commanded them to keep the Sabbath once a week as a 'holy day', a day to stop from work and rest. God knew the importance of rest and relaxation. There were also times of festival (extended holidays) for celebration, praise and remembrance in God's presence.

Around the 1400's, the word 'holy day' had acquired a more secular meaning. It became known as a day on which ordinary work (of an individual or a community) is suspended for a day of festivity, recreation and amusement.

By the 1800's the Victorian seaside holiday was the most popular destination. For those who could afford it, the south of France or Italy were popular. But for the general public, British seaside holidays became the place to be. People flocked to places such as Blackpool, Scarborough or Brighton for fun with buckets, spades, ice creams and donkey rides!

Today, with easier travel we prefer to holiday abroad and we head for sunnier, warmer climates! However, whether we travel abroad or stay in the UK, our holiday is a 'holy day'. It's an opportunity to set apart some time in our busy lives to rest. This

is exactly what God wants for us.

So, enjoy your holidays. Remember to have fun, relax and escape the everyday strains and stresses. But also remember that our holiday is a 'holy day' too. Happy Holidays!

**Rev Karen**

*Thank you to Karen who so ably covered as Acting Superintendent whilst Andy has been on sabbatical.*

\* Thank you **Shirley Veater** for our cover "End of Summer" harvest painting. The golden cornfields reflecting the intense light of the Summer sun. The nearby field reminding us of the farmers constant care by ploughing, sowing, reaping, harvesting.

## Focus: People

### Farewell Revd Dr David Hinchliffe

Our outgoing Chair of the South East Methodist District, Revd Dr David Hinchliffe had his farewell service at the new Emmanuel Church in Eastbourne on 22nd June. He led communion and preached and received tributes from Revd Dan Balsdon (Assistant Chair) and Revd Nick Oborski (Synod Secretary) as well as gifts including a new home Communion set and some of his favourite Yorkshire tea! He said "Thank you so much for the love, prayers and support you have given to me over the last six years.



It has been such a privilege to serve in the South-East District." David is moving to the Darlington & Teesdale Circuit. If you missed the service you can still view it <https://www.youtube.com/@EmmanuelEastbourne>

Revd **Conrad J Hicks** is our new Chair of District from 1st September and moving from Gibraltar. His Welcome Service will be taking place at 3pm, followed by refreshments on Saturday, 6th September 2025 at Redhill Methodist Church, Gloucester Road, Redhill, RH1 1BP (see poster).

### Tribute to Alan Cutting

**15th Aug 1933 - 22nd June 2025**

We remember Alan Cutting from Dorset Gardens who served many faithful years as Lay Pastoral Assistant at the church and as a member of the Circuit Meeting of the Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit since its inauguration until he retired from that



post. He was made Lay Pastoral Assistant in Revd Peter Shilling's time and so was also a member of Brighton (Dome Mission) Circuit Meeting.

Alan had worked in the travel business for many years and used his experience to organise countless coach trips for the Church and Circuit which were always enjoyable.

He was also a very keen photographer and used this expertise to make greetings cards. Many members and others received birthday or get well cards and these were also sold at circuit events to raise money for many good causes.

We particularly remember his partner (of over fifty years) Graham Wall who has moved to a care home in Littlehampton. Both attended the last Circuit Together service at DG in May. Alan will be remembered as a devoted and quiet servant of God who always gave the best of himself.

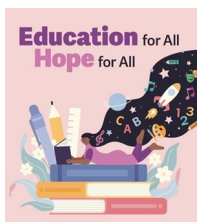
## Revd Deborah Cornish

Congratulations to Deborah, who has now officially 'sat down' from her role as a stipendiary presbyter at Wimborne Methodist Church in Dorset, and entered supernumerary ministry—a wonderfully Methodist way of saying she has retired! At the end of July, Deborah, along with John and Alf, moved from Wimborne to their new home in Beaminster, West Dorset. We wish them all good health, happiness, and many blessings in this next chapter.

The photo (right) shows Deborah cuddling a Royal Python at her Wimborne church in June—a joyful reminder that all are truly welcome in our churches!



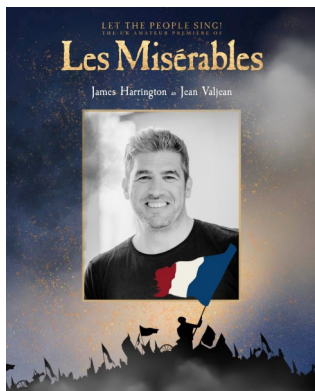
## Easter Offering



Thanks to all who contributed so generously to this year's Easter Offering which was dedicated at our May Circuit Together Service with its theme Education for All, Hope for All. A magnificent £1,037.50 was raised for the World Mission Fund of the Great British Methodist Church for work in our partner churches around the world.



## Harrington star shines at the Theatre Royal.



This August, James Harrington—son of the very proud Geoff and Esther—will take on the lead role of Jean Valjean in select performances of the iconic musical *Les Misérables* at Brighton's Theatre Royal, running from 13 to 23 August.

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of *Les Misérables*, producer Sir Cameron Mackintosh has granted a limited number of UK amateur companies the rare opportunity to stage the production—and Brighton Theatre Group is among the fortunate few. Don't miss this chance to experience the epic and uplifting musical at local prices,

delivered with full West End-quality staging and performances.

## Spotlight On....David Rutter

*Continuing our feature where in every edition we put the spotlight on one of our Circuit members and perhaps we will learn more about them. This edition we feature David Rutter..*

I was born at 13 Bracewell Road, Shepherds Bush, West London in December 1935 and later my family, Mum, Dad, and brother Adrian (3 years older) moved across the road to number 46. I enjoyed very happy early years with a park nearby, plus the well-known Wormwood Scrubs playing sport with my brother. Our local church, St. Francis, North Kensington was a big influence where my mother Margaret was Youth Club Leader.

During the war years we moved to Brighton to get away from the bombing, settling in Montpelier Street and worshipping at St. Michael's and All Angels Church. I attended St Mary Magdalen's School locally and later went to Clark's College in Dyke Road.

I was first employed, aged 16, at the Legal & General Assurance Society Office in West Street and although passing the Insurance Institute examinations, I was happier playing cricket, tennis, and table tennis as a member of the Alliance Building Society sports club, one of the perks of the job. I was called up for National Service two years later but was not accepted due to my hearing deficiency. Aged 18, what should I do?

As my parents were self-employed Licenced Trade Stock Auditors, they suggested I join the family business. I recall my first stocktake at The Duke of Cambridge Pub near Wimbledon. I remained in that Licenced Trade until my retirement aged 86, an

incredible 68 years. I was immensely proud of my two children following the same trade and enabling the family business to continue for over 70 years.

In my early 20s I enjoyed many Saturdays in London walking around theatre land in the West End, watching the all-conquering (in the early 1960's) Tottenham Hotspur in the afternoon, then dashing to the London Palladium for the 6.15pm first house variety show. I always made it back to Brighton to watch on TV 'Match of the Day' featuring the match I had seen earlier.

My family were committed Christians and worshipped at the famous Methodist Sunday Night service at the Brighton Dome, where 2,000 gathered. I also attended Sunday morning and mid-week events at Dorset Gardens Methodist Church.

In 1966, aged 30, one Sunday morning sitting in the balcony, a pretty lady sat next to me, and this proved to be a supreme moment in my life. She was Elizabeth Sarah Caines known as Beth and this was her first Sunday



back in Brighton after spending 3 years working in America as a family Nanny and then touring the US, Australia, and New Zealand. I quickly forged a close friendship with Beth, and we were married the following year and in the next few years had our two children Alison and Jonathan. Our family of four was now complete.

We set up home in our large house in Nevill Road, where we remained until 1996. When Alison and Jonathan flew the nest, we moved 500 yards away to a maisonette in Holmes Avenue, by the West Blatchington Windmill.

All my married life I worked hard at growing the stocktaking practice, with Beth assisting me. I loved the by-product of my work meeting so many people, diverse characters, also travelling and visiting attractive inns across the Home Counties.



I particularly enjoyed hotel stock taking, the Hydro in Eastbourne was a special favourite where we have held many family celebrations. Over the years I did the stock at prestigious premises including the Stock Exchange Bar in the City, Stafford Hotel St James, Kensington Palace Hotel, Imperial Wine

Stores across London and top quality outside caterers Searcy's. All in all I enjoyed nearly 50-year of special relationships with many proprietors.

I love show business and used this to help raise funds for my beloved Dome Mission Circuit by organising five big variety shows at the Dome, featuring top stars of the day such as Russ Conway, Roy Hudd, Peter Goodwright, Mary O'Hara, Joan Regan, Bill Pertwee, Jack Warner, John Boulter, Dickie Henderson and Bonnie Langford. These proved to be memorable nights; I was so grateful for the incredible generosity of so many stars who gave their services free of charge, and I maintained contact with all of them throughout their lifetime. I am particularly proud of getting Sir Cliff Richard to speak at a Dome Mission Service in 1993 and former Olympic Gold Medal winner Steve Ovett kindly offered his English track suit for a Dome Mission charity auction as well as taking part in a charity carol service for the church.



Another of my loves is long distance running and I've run over 20 marathons (including six London marathons) raising £36,000 for my church, charities, and hospitals. My love of running includes the famous London to Brighton 54-mile race (considered an ultra-marathon) and every year since its inception in 1951 I have watched the finish line at Brighton, with my Dad in earlier years. I was very proud that from 1990 I became responsible for organising everything at the finish (by the Aquarium), a huge job in which my family helped. I loved every minute of these race days. One year I secured Sally Gunnell (Olympic gold medallist of the 400 Metres hurdles) to come and greet early race finishers and she did us proud with her enthusiasm, chatting and signing autographs.



Through my work on these charity concerts and my 6 years compiling the Dome Mission magazine, I was invited to chair other big Methodist Mission anniversaries in Newquay, Sheffield, Tooting, and Bethnal Green. I love the Methodist tradition and although I never considered myself to be a good speaker I have always loved sharing my faith in these practical ways.

Overall I feel blessed and fulfilled with my family. I so appreciate such a happy marriage to Beth, full of joy and laughter. My children give me infinite joy, and I am so proud of all they (and my daughter in law Lulu) have achieved as well as my five wonderful grandchildren.

**David Rutter**

## Focus: Features

### Travelling Man

Amongst all of the words spoken recently about Pope Francis the ones that surprised me the most were that in his younger days he had been a nightclub bouncer. An unusual choice, but if you are funding yourself through education then the job has to be evenings or nights and relatively well paid. However, for



someone who spent most of his life committed to Christian love and the care of the disadvantaged it still remains a strange choice. But we need to remember that life is a journey and one must wonder what an effect his time as a bouncer had upon his life and whether there were life changing moments that altered the trajectory of his journey.



Truth is also a journey. A recent edition of 'The Life Scientific' on Radio 4, which is an interview between Jim Al-Khalili and a famous scientist featured Anthony Fauci, a previous Chief Scientist in America who was the television face of the American response to the Covid 19 pandemic. One of the topics which was discussed was the difficulty of truth when dealing with the scientific research around Covid. Scientific truth is always changing as new information becomes available, especially so in such a new field of research. For those in humanity who like certainty, the radical and frequent changes surrounding Covid must have been difficult to cope with. Then the last segment of the discussion focused on the amplification effect of the internet and social media, which is almost without precedence in world history. This has created an additional problem because for some people there is no smoke without fire and if they see something that is written often enough, then that becomes the truth, irrespective of facts and what had come before.

Doubts about measles vaccines started in 1989 when Andrew Wakefield published an article, later retracted, in The Lancet associating measles, mumps and rubella vaccine with the subsequent development of autism.

Proving a negative is always difficult so I suppose that in the very best scientific tradition it is not possible at the present time to state absolutely that measles vaccine, or any other vaccine for that matter, does not cause autism, but diseases that are vaccinated against by and large are targeted because they kill children. I can still remember my mother telling me, as a child, that if I had a sore throat, I had to tell her, presumably she was worried about diphtheria. Why am I going on about this, well the logic to me is that if there is the chance that measles might kill

my child and an even slimmer chance that it might cause autism then I would rather have an autistic child than no child at all. But that then becomes a personal choice.

Our Minister this morning preached about the road to Emmaus. A village that is only mentioned in Luke's Gospel, is an uncertain distance from Jerusalem, and about which nothing else is known. So, from our standpoint the two disciples were on a journey from Jerusalem, the citadel to Emmaus, an unknown place, a venturing into the unknown. A journey which started with sorrow and ended in joy.



Not quite the journey of a scientist, but almost, without the experiments. The disciples started with an assumption, that all was lost. But the traveller recounts and explains all that had been said and done. So that in the end they reach a new place a new understanding and that is what good science does. It moves our understanding along.

Pope Francis' life was a journey for him and he turned it into the journey for the church, where latterly his focus was on the disadvantaged, the persecuted and the marginalised peoples of the world. His comment when asked about same sex relationships, "who am I to judge?" moved the churches understanding along very significantly from which there should be no going back. I noted recently that one of his last requests was that one of his Popemobiles should be converted into a mobile clinic facility and sent to Gaza. Once again moving the church thinking along his life trajectory of care for the disadvantaged.

**Peter Farley**

## **Font Memories**

FONT; From the Latin FONS, meaning a fountain or spring. Fonts were usually situated near the main entrance to the church, in a spacious area known as the Baptistry. Today they can be found elsewhere in the church.

Early fonts were made of stone often marble and were uncovered but later some were made from wood or metal, covered, with



lead sometimes used as a lining. At that time they sat directly on the ground but were later raised on a plinth some with steps. They were tub shaped , circular or square, designed to be ornate and symbolic with topics of new life and rebirth. Alabaster fonts with or without a stem came in a range of colours and were normally table tops. Wood fonts with ceramic glass or metal bowls became popular in the 20th C. The oldest font in Britain, estimated to be 900 years old, is in St. Martin's Church, Canterbury. Regional types include the 'Aylesbury Font' and the 'Table Font', both seen in many churches in Southeast England. They date from 1170-1190 and are chalice shaped with ornate carvings around the rim. Others are the 'Bodmin Font' in

Cornwall, the 'Seven Sacraments Font' in East Anglia and the 'Chalice Font' in Herefordshire.

Originally, fonts were large enough to fully immerse the infant but as later traditions of Baptism, were by partial immersion, sprinkling or pouring over the head, fonts became smaller in size and simpler in shape and design.

Usually, baptism is recommended within the first few weeks after birth, or sooner if the child is in danger of death. Some traditions allow for delay, others prefer to baptise as soon as possible and yet others do not specify age. The first baptism in England was that of the infant daughter of king Edwin of Northumbria in 625 AD.



Even though baptism is in decline generally, it is still popular. For non religious people it is conducted as more of a tradition than a religion. However, in Christianity, with baptism being the first Sacrament, it is considered a significant act of faith and rebirth and marks the beginning of our journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives.

**Patricia Hodson**

*From Hastings, Bexhill & Rye Circuit*

# The Apocryphal New Testament

*Continuing our look at some early Christian writings that are not in the New Testament*

## 4. The Ministry Gospels

The wide range of material in the Apocryphal New Testament has much about the birth of Jesus, and even more on his passion and resurrection, but there is little on the ministry and teaching of Jesus. An exception is the collection of sayings in the Gospel of Thomas, a gnostic collection which I dealt with in 'Bible Matters - 10' and will not repeat here. Most of stories about the ministry and teaching of Jesus has survived only in quotations from other writers. These are collectively known as 'The Jewish-Christian Gospels', of which three have been identified:

- a) *The Gospel of the Nazareans*, written in Aramaic in Syria. Closely connected to Matthew's Gospel.
- b) *The Gospel according to the Hebrews*, written in Greek in Egypt.
- c) *The Gospel of the Ebionites*, a Greek Gospel harmony used by Christians east of the river Jordan.

Here we shall look at two texts that have survived in part and which attempt to fill in some of the 'gaps' in the Gospels: the *History of Joseph the Carpenter and the Coptic Narratives*. Except where is a direct reference to a Gospel, please do **NOT** think that any of what follows is what Jesus said or did!

### 1. The History of Joseph the Carpenter (HJC)

This text survives in three versions, Arabic and the two regional dialects of Coptic, Bohairic and Sahidic (neither now a living language, Bohairic is the liturgical language of the Coptic church). Most texts date no earlier than the tenth-century.



The setting is Jesus teaching his disciples on the Mount of Olives. One saying that sounds plausible is, *'better is a single footstep in the house of my father than all the wealth of this world.'* After this teaching Jesus tells the life of, *'my father Joseph, the blessed old carpenter.'* There follows an account of Joseph's first marriage, and his children by that marriage, including James, how Joseph's first wife died and, merging the accounts in Matthew and Luke, how Jesus was born. According to **HJC** Joseph was one hundred and eleven years old when he died. Jesus was with him as he lay dying and Joseph

acknowledges Jesus as God, Saviour and Lord. Jesus then establishes a cult of Joseph and buries his father next to the body of Jacob, Joseph's father. This leads into a short discourse on death and the apostles asking Jesus about Enoch and Elijah (who, according to the Bible, had not died but had been taken into heaven). Jesus says that everyone must die.

## 2. Coptic Narratives of the Ministry and Passion (CN)



These come from collections of fragments in Egypt, probably after the fourth century. Two types of material have survived. One repeats some stories found in John's Gospel, with some 'interesting' additions. For example at the Wedding at Cana, Mary is the sister of the parents of the bridegroom who ask her to speak to Jesus. Another type

concerns conflict within the Herodian family and the actions of the emperor Tiberius.

One of the longest fragments starts with John's account of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, adding that Judas Iscariot was the last to be given bread and '*had no inheritance*' in it. Thomas then says he wants to see the power of Jesus to raise someone from the dead. This leads into a lengthy address by Jesus followed by the story of the raising of Lazarus, again John's Gospel. This is followed by a bizarre account which concludes with the emperor Tiberius writing to a Roman official that Jesus should be made king, as the Gospel says (see John 6 v 15)!

Whilst Jesus is comforting the apostles on a mountain messengers arrive from Theophilus (brought in via Luke's Gospel) to make him king, to which Jesus replies '*My kingdom is not of this world*' (John 18 v 36). There is then an argument between Pilate, who wants to make Jesus a king, which Herod Antipas opposes. Other fragments mention the wife of Judas Iscariot who, it turns out, was foster mother to Joseph of Arimathea's child! What we see in these survivals are attempts to flesh out the story of Jesus. **CN** probably arose from sermons. Throughout Christian history preachers have used their imagination to expand on the Gospel narrative, as we do in our hymns and art. There is no problem with this at all as long as we recognise it for what it is: and do not think that Judas Iscariot had a wife (he may have done, we have no way of knowing) or that the emperor Tiberius wanted to make Jesus king (he definitely did not!).

**Mick Hickman**



# A Methodist Way of Life

*God loves you unconditionally, no strings attached. That's the good news.*

A Methodist Way of Life is a way of saying yes to the good news. There are twelve things that we can do as individuals or as a church community. We have already looked at the first eleven: Pray, Worship, Notice, Care, Learn, Open, Serve, Challenge, Flourish, Tell & Share. In this edition we look at number **12 Live**. None of this makes God love you any more - but they may help you realise how deeply you are loved. May you be transformed as you reflect on your encounters with God that come through doing these activities.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/worship/>

## 12. Live

**We live in a way that draws people to Jesus**

**You be you.**

**You are made in God's image, so let that shine out. e share our faith**

**You have great power to influence and affect other people by the way you live your life.**

The best way is to live authentically as a whole self; the self who God made you to be. In this way we worship God in our day-to-day lives at work, at home, and out and about.

Living A Methodist Way of Life roots us in God, and opens us to allow God to shine out of us.

That's not to say that any of us are perfect. But there is something luminously attractive about people open to God making us more holy and loving each day.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23

The last verse of Welsh hymn '*Dod ar fy mhen dy sanctaidd law*' by Eifion Wyn is a prayer for such a life:



Dod i mi galon well bob dydd  
A'th ras yn fodd i fyw  
Fel bo i eraill drwof fi  
Adnabod cariad Duw.

*Grant me a better heart each day  
And grace a means to live  
So that others may through me  
Know for themselves God's love.*  
(English translation by Delyth Wyn Davies)

*"Sometimes I think this is so hard. How can I possibly live up to Jesus?! Other times I think that all Jesus is asking me to be is who I am. I try to ask the Holy Spirit to act within and through me without trying to fake being a 'perfect person'."*

## Pause for thought



If you wrote a book about yourself, what would be the key message? What would you call it?

Interested in having conversations like this with your friends, neighbours and community?

Buy [Conversations against Mundanity](https://www.methodistpublishing.org.uk/conversations-against-mundanity) now.

[www.methodistpublishing.org.uk](https://www.methodistpublishing.org.uk)

## Simple things to try

1. Tell someone what you love about them.
2. Use a personality tool like the Johari Window, Enneagram, Clifton Strengths, or Myers Briggs to learn more about your personality and gifts.
3. Ask a friend which of the fruit of the Spirit they see in you. Galatians 5: 22-23
4. Read this Friday Fix reflection on the power of words and reflect on how your own choice of words might affect the people around you.  
<https://thefridayfix.home.blog/2023/09/29/enjoy-the-silence-depeche-mode/>
5. Invest in a new or existing hobby, so that you can invest in relationships outside of church. Maybe you will have to free-up time by giving something up first.
6. Do you have any local addiction recovery groups? Put up signs on the noticeboards so people can find the support they need, and to show that the church community cares about healing and transformation.
7. Listen to a Taketime meditation based on John 15:9-17: Love each other as I have loved you.  
<https://taketime.org.uk/themed-meditations/love-each-other-as-i-have-loved-you/>

# Focus: Summer 2025

## A look back at recent events:



### **Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat: Presented by Barnstormers at Patcham Methodist Church, May 2025**

This is the third time they've staged this vibrant musical since 1992. For me, having first performed it many centuries ago (or so it feels!) as part of a school choir, it was a real joy to revisit this much-loved classic. What was once a familiar school production is now a polished, energetic, and glitz-filled spectacle. Based on the biblical story of Joseph from the Book of Genesis, this tale of sibling rivalry, hardship, and redemption was brought to life with colour, humour, and heart. Joseph, Jacob's favourite son, is sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, falsely imprisoned, and ultimately rises to power in Egypt through his extraordinary gift for dream interpretation. It's a timeless narrative, presented here with warmth and wit.

Director Imogen Fox aimed to ensure the audience felt every beat of the story through music and movement—and she can be proud of delivering a sparkling and emotionally engaging production. Each musical number embraced a different genre—from calypso to country, French chanson to full-on rock and roll—

beautifully supported by Russell Taylor and his outstanding ten-piece band.

Sam Clarke brought a quiet strength and gentle confidence to the role of Joseph, delivering a moving and powerful rendition of *Close Every Door*, which held the entire family audience in rapt silence. Billie Early and Louisa Taylor, sharing the role of Narrator, guided us through the story with polish and charisma—not to mention some truly fabulous jackets.

A personal highlight was *Those Canaan Days*, performed with flair and comedic finesse by Seb Harrington as brother Simeon—livré avec perfection. The production also featured an utterly charming children's choir and even a scene-stealing sheep and serpent, proving that with the right direction and care, working with children and animals can absolutely pay off.

With a large onstage cast and dedicated backstage team, the amount of preparation, commitment, and community spirit behind the production was evident throughout. While it's not



possible to mention every contributor by name, warm congratulations go to everyone involved in this Pharaoh-ciously dazzling show.

If you missed this production, make sure to mark your calendars for ***Treasure Island***, Barnstormers' upcoming pantomime, running from 13th to 15th November. It promises to be another unmissable theatrical adventure.

P.S. Did you know this production of Joseph ran on solar power...truly the sunshine show!

**Steve Preston**

# Singing our Faith

## A heartfelt afternoon of hymn singing brings hope and joy

On Saturday 10th May 2025, we enjoyed a wonderful gathering at our Hymn Singing Afternoon at Dorset Gardens, bringing together folk from across the Brighton and Hove Methodist Circuit. The event was an opportunity to connect through music, as participants shared how the hymns carried messages of hope, comfort, and strength.

We sang a selection of 14 hymns, each chosen for its uplifting words and melodies that encouraged reflection and spiritual renewal. The sense of community was truly felt as voices joined together, fostering a deeper connection to our faith. The hymns sung included beloved classics and modern favourites such as:

- *Be Thou My Vision*
- *Lord for the Years Your Love Has Kept and Guided*
- *In Christ Alone, My Hope Is Found*
- *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*
- *One Day at a Time*
- *Give Me Joy in My Heart, Keep Me Praising*
- *Let Us Build a House Where Love Can Dwell*
- *Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer*
- *I Serve a Risen Saviour, He Lives He Lives*

The afternoon left us all feeling uplifted, inspired, and grateful for the shared experience. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined and made it such a memorable occasion. We look forward to more opportunities to sing together and celebrate our faith.

**Deeptima Massey**





## Other recent events: At Woodingdean



After the Anniversary Service conducted by Revd Deborah Cornish on 1st

June, a few of us went out with her, John and Alfie for lunch at the Downs hotel Woodingdean. A very nice reunion with a very popular minister.

Separately the Woodingdean Men's Club held a fancy shirt competition and this photo above captures the fashions displayed!



## Terry Hammond

### Coffee Shop at Woodingdean



Twenty years ago our minister was Jonathan Budd who at a Church Council meeting suggested that we should get someone to come and speak to us on outreach. I was thinking that since I had decided to stop teaching I could start a coffee morning which was approved. For me it seemed the right time to stop working since I had decided to look after our daughter's first child Dino on Thursdays.

Thus on the 12th June we celebrated the 20th Anniversary of our Coffee Shop. We used this name to get away from the idea of it being a club. Our lovely Beryl Brown made a cake for us. It was so large that we had plenty for others to have over the usual coffee/tea after the following Sunday morning's service.

### Time to Talk Befriending

I was there when at great celebration on June 12th at Hove Manor. It was the day when 'Time to Talk Befriending' was one of the charities awarded the King's Award this year. There are now

well over 300 of us who visit vulnerable, lonely people for 'Time to Talk Befriending' in East Sussex. Local dignitaries attended the celebration. This award is the highest a local voluntary group can receive in the UK & is equivalent to an MBE.

To find out more visit: <https://www.tttb.org.uk/volunteer> or call 01273 737710.

**Beulah Fletcher**

## Hove happenings

V.E. Day was commemorated at the **Food & Friendship Lunch Club** in May with lots of party food, music, decorations, memorabilia and photos brought in by guests and volunteers; some of whom were there 80 years ago.

Michael Hill brought in his national service kit bag and newspapers from the day and Rose Bateman brought an album full of her dad's photos and his service book. Thank you to everyone who brought in items for us to look at and all who volunteered to make this event a success.



What an afternoon of awesome entertainment by the wonderful Martlets choir! They were on top form on Saturday 14th June for **The Big Summer Sing** raising £1600 for the Martlets hospice.

Thank you to everyone who supported this gig - whether it be cake making, cake eating, singing, serving refreshments, selling raffle ticket sellers...you know who you are!

What a fantastic day! On Saturday 12th July, our community came together for a sun-filled **Street Party** full of music, dancing, and neighbourly joy. We raised over £1,300

towards our new boiler — helping us stay warm this winter. Highlights included performances by DJ Chris Love, the Martlets Choir, Nam Yang Martial Arts, Vivi Mugunga, and a show-stopping finale by TJ Davis. Here's to next year!

**Rachel Richards and J.J. Baiden-Amissah**



## Stanford Avenue Church Anniversary 1898-2025

A bit early this year our 127th Church

Anniversary was an 'in-house job'. Led from the front by Ann Collins and Malcolm celebrating our past and future.

The music group led us into a lovely pre service sense of quietness with 'Lord you have come'.

We were also treated to 'Lead me Lord' and the Anthem 'Lord we have come'.

Both Geoff and Cath led very moving prayers

Angela and Lis revived an Easter themed dialogue, who knew that mobiles were around 2000 yrs ago!!!

We also looked a few pictures from our past, and shared memories from Angela, Lis, Malcolm and Cath.

It was a lovely nostalgic and thoughtful service.

The Local Arrangement in June saw congregation members choose hymns that were important to them.

But I think special mention to John Merrington, for having the congregation in fits of laughter and a few damp eyes.

**Robert Patching**



## Focus: Mission

### Circuit Refugee Project Update:

May saw the meeting at Redhill Methodist Church, of the **District Sustaining Hope Gathering**, for people supporting or interested in supporting Refugees, Migrants & Displaced Persons.

Ruth was able to go to represent the Circuit Project. This is organised twice yearly by Rev Hazel Forecast. Prayer, reflection and discussion were followed by two speakers. Methodist Carolyn Thom told us about her charity *Their Voice*, which supports people, mainly women and children, rescued from modern slavery. Our Circuit Refugee project later donated £50 to *Their Voice*. The second, equally inspirational speakers were Andrea Campion-Smith and Rosemary Lee, who have been involved from the start in *ChitChat*, at Guildford St. Mary's

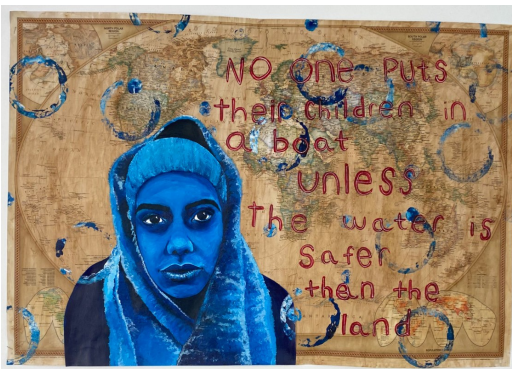
Anglican/ Methodist LEP. At *ChitChat* drop-in sessions, local residents from around the world, many of them refugees, can practise English informally and meet and make friends.

The next District **Sustaining Hope Gathering** is at Redhill Methodist Church, RH1 1BP on **Sat 4<sup>th</sup> October 10am to 13.30pm**. It's a 5 minute walk from Redhill Station. Our very own Paul Richards, in his new role at **All We Can**, is one of the speakers, on **The Impact of Climate Change**. See flyer for further details.

Also in May, family fun, crafts and fellowship on the theme of Welcome were enjoyed by all at Hove's Refugee Week themed Messy Church. We made bunting with orange hearts & hugs symbolising welcome, hope & kindness. Orange hearts are the colour of lifeboats/life jackets and the Refugee Nation flag. We decorated cup cakes to share, encouraging a sense of community spirit & welcome. Older children made friendship bracelets and a welcome sign in different languages. Our Messy band of Paul and The Messy Musicians helped worship time go with a swing.



Hove and Dorset Gardens decorated their churches with the orange hearts & hugs bunting for Refugee Week, 16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June. At DG, Deeptima suggested a refugee month prayer wall, featuring news items about war zones and other situations, in the welcome area. People from outside the church have gradually added to it too. It is lovely to have this engagement.



In our churches we have also hung a striking GCSE Art picture, '**Don't Stop the Boats**' by young local artist, Marla Gooch. She is now studying for her A level Art. If your church would like to borrow the print, it is framed, just get in touch with Sue or Ruth.



ALL ARE  
WELCOME



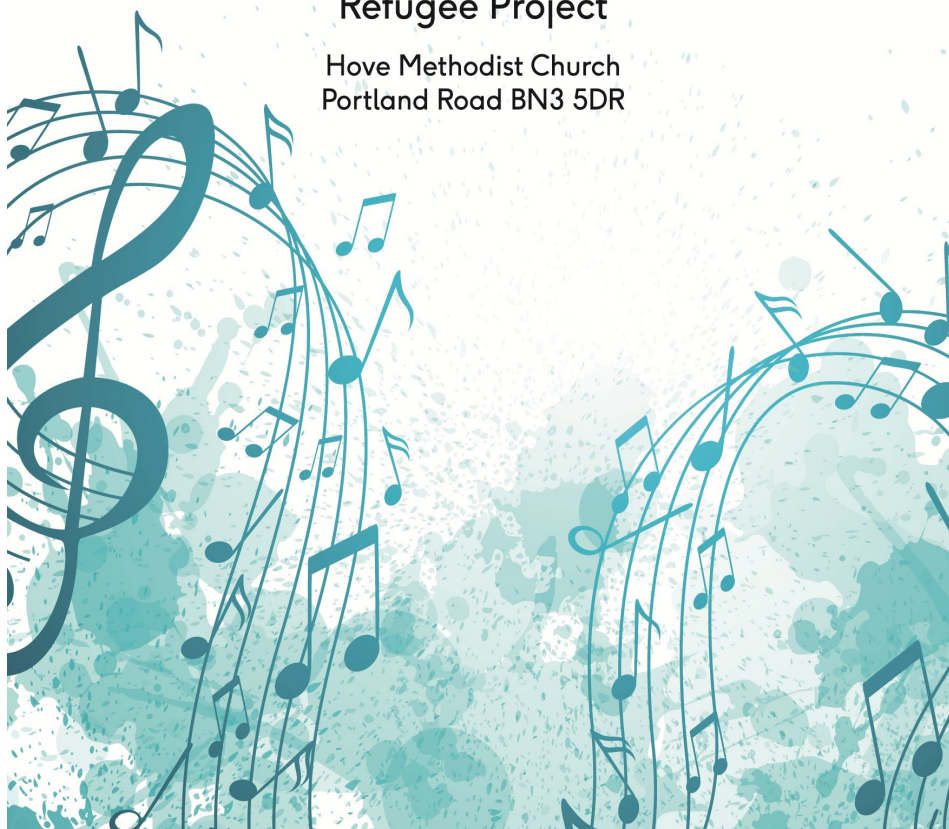
CAKE SALE  
AND RAFFLE

# WOMEN OF NOTE

Saturday 18th October 2025 3pm

Donations in support of  
The Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit  
Refugee Project

Hove Methodist Church  
Portland Road BN3 5DR





Dorset Gardens Methodist Church once again welcomed the Sussex Refugee & Migrant Self Support Group's Jollof Cafe pop up for a sold-out dinner on Friday June 20th. A delicious Afghan menu was served.

Also in Refugee Week, Ruth attended a Refugees' Lived Experience Workshop: '**Work With Us, Not For Us**', run by **We Are The Tree**, in partnership with Brighton & Hove City Council, at the Jubilee Library. On the Saturday, **Best Foot Music**'s concert at the Jubilee Library also celebrated with joy and wonderful music, all the contributions of people seeking sanctuary to our local community.

The Network of International Women (**NIW**) Sewing Collective and **We Are The Tree** had their table fee paid by the Circuit Project at Hove MC Street Fair on 12 July. **We Are The Tree** also provided a singer, Vivi Mugunga, from Rwanda who sang about Peace for all and welcoming children into our world. (picture above) Find out more about about this organisation at [We Are The Tree | Empowering Refugees Through Healing & Community Connection](#)

We continue to support local refugee charities. In June, **Care for Calais** had an appeal for summer clothing and suncream. We donated more than a car boot full of clothing plus £100 for suncream from donations and project funds. Regular donations of food & toiletries are made to **Voices in Exile** and, less often, to **Sussex University** foodbanks. A big thank you to Hove and Patcham Methodist Churches, who have regularly been giving to the **NIW Sewing Collective**, including a whole car boot full of materials kindly donated by Kathy Oldham from Patcham MC (picture right at the Studio). The Collective have just moved their studio, so they cannot take any further donations for now. They will let us know when we can resume.



The **NIW** has a table at the **Patcham Duck Fayre** on Sunday 24 August, selling their beautiful handmade items. The Circuit Refugee Project has also been generously gifted some space there by Paula Bates on behalf of Patcham Methodist church, thank you Paula. It's a fun afternoon, do come and say hello!

Non perishable food donations for **Voice in Exile's** foodbank will be welcomed again at Hove Methodist Church's Harvest service this Autumn. Every church in our circuit has long standing traditions/charities they support for Harvest or Christmas, but if any church wishes to make a Harvest or Christmas appeal for the Circuit Refugee Project or donate any cash, do get in touch.

Our Circuit Refugee Project Leads are looking forward to the Saturday 11th October Study Day with guest speakers, at Dorset Gardens: **Speaking of Justice in Worship and Preaching**. (see details separately). The 2023 Methodist Conference **Justice Seeking Church Report** outlines 5 Methodist Priorities for Justice for an initial five year period. These priorities address a range of social justice issues, from tackling inequality and poverty & opposing discrimination to pursuing peace and enabling the right relationship between people, planet and God. You will notice that all the latter are of relevance to Sanctuary Seekers too. Social Justice issues do not occur in isolation from each other! One of the 5 priorities is more specifically about Sanctuary Seekers: 'Seeking Justice for refugees: one people, one world'.

We are planning with Cath Oddhayward for a **Women of Note** concert in aid of the Circuit Refugee Project on Saturday 18th (see poster on p23) We will be requesting circuit wide donations of new raffle prizes or home-made cakes.

The Project Reps are meeting in August to discuss updates on the Circuit Refugee Project and to plan for the future, including fundraising ideas and planning for our Church of Sanctuary renewal process which will happen in 2026. Watch church notices and Winter Focus for further developments!

Meanwhile, if any of **you OR your family OR your friends** would like to take on a sponsored challenge in aid of our Circuit Refugee Project, do get in touch with one of your Circuit Refugee Project reps. We are available to enthusiastically support you,

promote any endeavours and encourage our community to sponsor you! Likewise, the national City of Sanctuary movement have sent an appeal for people to run the Brighton Marathon for them, with a minimum target of £400. See [Run For Charity - Event Registration Page](#) for details.

Thank you all for your continued support and generosity. More details on our Circuit Refugee Project and the 6 Brighton & Hove charities we support can be found on our circuit website at <https://brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk/supporting-refugees/>

**Sue Harrington** and **Ruth Samur** project co-leads  
*Circuit Refugee Project Reps: Terry Hammond (Woodingdean), Kay Harwood (Patcham), Ann Collins (Stanford Avenue), Ruth Samur (Hove), Sue Harrington (Dorset Gardens).*

## Focus: Business

### Methodist Conference 2025

This is governing body of the Methodist Church and meets annually to discuss matters affecting the life of the Church, the nation & the world. It took place in Telford, 26 June to 3 July.

- The Revd Richard Andrew was elected as **President of the Conference**, & Matthew Forsyth as **Vice President**. They shared their theme 'Our Story, Our Song' in their addresses.



- On Sunday 29 June, 21 presbyters and three deacons were received into **Full Connexion with the Conference**, along with five presbyters by transfer, and two presbyters by reinstatement.
- Following the changes to the governance structure of the Church which took effect in September 2024, the **Connexional Council** is charged with responsibility for the general control and management of the connexional administration of the Methodist Church. The Council presented reports from the Ministries, Mission, and Resourcing Committees, along with other matters of report or for decision.
- The process began to revise the Church's authorised liturgies, particularly the **Methodist Worship Book**, to equip the Church with new and revised liturgical resources, available in a wide variety of formats, including digital and printed versions. This is also to enable the Church's worship to be as inclusive as possible, in line with the Conference's commitments in its strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity.
- The report of the Stationing Review Group asserted the need for significant changes in the processes governing the **stationing of ministers** within the Methodist Church.
- The **Youth President's report** considered how the voices of the young people are calling for the Church to be more accessible for those who are neurodiverse or unfamiliar with our culture. The Conference urged Circuit Local Preachers' Meetings to consider how they can involve children and young people in the planning and execution of acts of worship and recommended that Circuits and Districts bring together dispersed youth populations, especially in rural communities for activity-based sessions.



- The Conference noted the current public debate regarding **assisted dying**, arising from the introduction of a Private Members' Bill on the subject and directed that a task group be established to review the Conference's position with regard to assisted dying and to report not later than 2028.
- The Conference spent time conferring on **justice for people seeking asylum and refuge**. This involved listening to the realities and experiences of people who have experienced seeking asylum and those who have been alongside them. The Conference was invited to listen, pray and confer, to discern together the call of God in this area of work

You can read the full Conference Business Digest online and or download it from [methodist.org.uk/conference](http://methodist.org.uk/conference)

### ***Exclusive Conference Extra***

Professional photographer Paul Harrington was working at the conference as usual and whilst he was not allowed to take a photo of the Vice President's bouncy cockapoo (Focus editor request) he did locate our very own Paul Richards on the All We Can stand which was an adapted version of snakes and ladders for people to play. It was Paul's very first conference so ask him what he thought.



## **South East District Welcome Service**



Join us as we welcome our new Chair of District, Rev Conrad Hicks



**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September**

**3pm, followed by refreshments**



**Redhill Methodist Church, RH1 1BP**



**And streamed online**

visit [www.methodistsoutheast.org](http://www.methodistsoutheast.org) in early September for streaming instructions





# Dates for your diary

## Calendar of Events:

- Sunday 17th August **Brighton Christian Climate Action** are organising a Sea Blessing at 3pm at the Doughnut Groyne near the Palace Pier. A short, reflective service honouring the sea — a tradition rooted in Jesus' connection to water, boats and fishermen. You're welcome to bring something that expresses gratitude for the sea.
- Sunday 24th August **Patcham Duck Fayre**
- Thursday 28th August **Local Preachers Meeting** 7.30pm at Hove MC
- Tuesday 16 September **Circuit Meeting** 7.30pm at Stanford Avenue MC
- Saturday, 20th September **District Representative Synod** 10.30am Gravesend MC
- Sunday 21st September **Climate Pilgrimage** 12.30pm, starting at St John's, Preston Park. A short guided city walk to reflect, pray, and call for urgent climate action
- Saturday 4th October **Sustaining Hope** from 10.00am at Redhill Methodist Church (see poster).
- Saturday 4th/Sunday 5th October **Flower Pot Festival 2025** at Stanford Avenue Methodist Church
- Saturday 11th October **Study Day: Speaking of Justice** 9.30am to 2pm at Dorset Gardens (see poster)
- Saturday 18th October **Women of Note** 3pm at Hove Methodist Church, BN3 5DR. (see poster)
- Monday 27th October **Local Preachers Meeting** 7.30pm at Patcham MC
- 13th to 15th November **Treasure Island** (Barnstormers pantomime) at Patcham Methodist Church
- Thursday 20th November **Circuit Meeting** 7.30pm at Woodingdean MC
- Saturday 22nd November **Christmas & Craft Fair** at Stanford Avenue Methodist Church

# Special Services this Autumn:

## Circuit Together Services

At Hove Methodist Church

31st August 2025 at 10.30am

Led by Revd Andy Lowe & Revd Karen Bell

At Patcham Methodist Church

23rd November 2025 at 10.30am

Preacher Revd Dan Baldon (Deputy Chair of District)

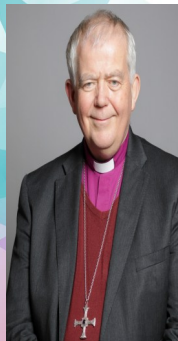
## Circuit Healing Services

On 24th August, 28th September, 26th October & 23rd Nov at 6.30pm at Dorset Gardens. Led by Revd Cynthia Park and Shirley Veater. These will be quiet, meditative services that will include communion & the opportunity for the laying on of hands.

## Study Day: Speaking of Justice in Worship and Preaching



**Rachel Lampard**  
Director of Social  
Justice & Social Action  
for The Methodist  
Church  
She is talking on  
*Politics in the Pulpit?*



**Right Reverend Nick Holtam**  
Bishop of Salisbury from 2011  
until his retirement in 2021.  
He is talking on *Study this  
age, sense its need, preach  
to its condition – preaching in  
such a time as this.*

**Saturday 11th October 2025 from 10.00am to 2pm**

At **Dorset Gardens Methodist Church, Brighton, BN2 1RL** [dgmc.org.uk](http://dgmc.org.uk)

Further details at [brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk](http://brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk) (Bottom of front page)

Please register attendance with Steve at [steve.preston@brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk](mailto:steve.preston@brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk)

Pastoral Support

Advocacy

Accommodation

## ***SUSTAINING HOPE AUTUMN 2025***

Interpreting



Foodbanks

Drop-in Centres

Created by John Kock  
from Noan Project

Place of Sanctuary

**Are you involved in responding to the needs of  
Refugees, Migrants & Displaced Persons  
- or interested in becoming involved?**

Befriending

**The Methodist South-East District 'Sustaining Hope'  
autumn gathering for 2025**

English practice

will include

- Prayer and time to network

- Keynote presentations on:

Cafes

***Surrey Refugees' Football Club - Martin King***  
***The Impact of Climate Change - Paul Richards (All We Can)***

Form-filling

**Date: Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> October, 10.00am - 1.30pm**

(Refreshments available from 9.45am)

Resettlement  
Schemes

**Venue: Redhill Methodist Church, RH1 1BP**

Redhill Station is 5 minutes' walk away

NCP car park on Gloucester Road opposite the church

Clothing Banks

**To register, or for more information, email  
Rev Hazel Forecast at**

**[hazel.forecast@methodist.org.uk](mailto:hazel.forecast@methodist.org.uk)**

*Something else...*



## Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit

# All Saints Day Service



Saturday 1 November 2025

7.30pm

at

Stanford Avenue Methodist Church

BN1 6FD

*At this service we remember with thanks the lives of those we loved who have died in the previous year. We read out the names and remember via the lighting of candles those whose funerals have been held in our churches or whose services have been conducted by ministers and lay people within our Circuit.*

*All are invited and welcome, please contact [steve.preston@brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk](mailto:steve.preston@brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk) if there is anyone who you wish to remember in this way.*



Thank you to Marilyn Richardson for proof reading and for all contributors.  
Please submit your articles & photos to Steve Preston for our Winter Edition by **12th October 25.**

## Circuit Office

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Superintendent: Rev Andy Lowe