

CONTACT



'You are my Son, the Beloved'

CHISLEHURST METHODIST CHURCH

JULY 2013

www.chislehurstmethodistchurch.org.uk

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Next edition of Contact is in September

All this for you....

For you Jesus Christ came into the world;
for you he lived and showed God's love:
for you he suffered death on the Cross;
for you he triumphed over death,
rising to newness of life;
for you he prays at God's right hand:
*all this for you,
before you could know anything of it.*
In your baptism,
the word of Scripture is fulfilled:
We love, because God first loved us.'



What is your earliest memory? My earliest memory is the birth of my younger sister when I was not quite three years old. I remember going to stay with my Auntie Joan when my mum was in hospital and I remember watching my mum bath the baby in a folding brown rubber baby bath on a wooden stand. My little world was obviously turned upside down when a new baby came into our house, which is why, I imagine, it is all so clearly lodged in my mind. Many things had happened to me before this event but I do not have clear memories of them. It has sometimes been assumed that so long as our basic needs are provided for it really doesn't matter what happens to us as babies because we won't remember. I am quite sure myself that the experiences of our early infancy have a profound effect on us even if we are unable to recall or articulate these experiences. For many of us one of these profound experiences, before we knew anything of it, was our own infant baptism or blessing.

*all this for you,
before you could know anything of it.*

At church over the last few months we have all been delighted to share in the infant baptisms of:

5th May

Ava Marie Adedolapo Adekola

Aidan Henry Preston Olabade Alabi-Boorman

9th June

Rachael Lula Terwilliger

16th June the blessing of:
John Mark Kofi Scales

And we have several more baptisms. On Sunday 21st July the annual Junior Church Service is on the theme of baptism. For this service we have chosen the story of Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16. 22 -34) The conclusion to this dramatic story is that the jailor and his entire family are baptised 'without delay'. Even two thousand years later, through the words of scripture, you sense the excitement and joy of the jailor as he and his family are baptised in the holy spirit,

'he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.' (verse34)

More of this story on 21st July.... but our own story here at Chislehurst is that on Sunday we will share in the joy of the entire Jeffries family – Mum - Sarah Dad – Ross, and the children Laila, Ryan and Clarke as they are all baptised together in addition to the infant baptism of baby Charlie Smart. As adults Sarah and Ross will be confirmed and received into membership of the Methodist Church at the same time. Baptism happens only once so for Sarah and Ross ...and the children this will be very special as together they will be asked:

'How do you respond to the offer of God's grace?'
I thank God and ask to be baptised.'

At the service on 21st July there will also be a couple of families who have asked for baptism for their baby but who do not go to church. I suggested to them that, before I meet with them, they come along on this special Sunday to discover a bit more about the meaning of baptism and what it means to be part of the family of God.

Many of us do not remember our own baptism as it happened when we were infants. But every baptism we are part of is an opportunity for us to hear the baptismal promises again and renew them ourselves as we pledge our support in the congregational prayer;

Generous God,
touch us again
with the fire of your Spirit
and renew in us all
the grace of our Baptism
that we may profess
the one true faith
and live in love and unity
with all those who are baptised
into Christ. Amen

Barbara Calvert

CHURCH OUTING: SUNDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER

A church outing to Danson Park is planned for Sunday 8th September, the date on which our junior church will restart after the summer break. This will be our fourth visit so is in danger of becoming a tradition! We shall set off after the morning service and enjoy a picnic lunch in the park. All are welcome and transport can be arranged.

The park is a Grade II listed area in the English Heritage register of parks and gardens of special historic interest and it offers extensive recreational facilities. The more energetic could

- enjoy the children's playground. This includes a splash park- great fun if the weather is good.
- follow the orienteering course.
- go boating on the lake.
- play tennis - hard or grass court.
- use the 18 hole putting course or the 9 hole pitch and putt.

If none of this has any appeal, other options include

- taking a walk in the 180 acre park.
- wandering around one of the gardens - there are three, an old English garden, a rock garden and a Peace garden - and they have plenty of seats to just sit and enjoy the view.
- visiting Danson House, a classic Palladian villa and a Grade 1 listed building. There is an entry fee but members of the National Trust or English Heritage get a reduction and entry is free with a National ArtPass.
- visiting the tea room.
- just chatting with friends and watching everyone else doing any of the above!

As an added attraction this year you will be able to meet and handle a parliament of owls in the glass houses at Danson House for a small entrance fee.

So - definitely something for everyone. Do put the date in your diary.

PLANT SALE was another huge success raising over £600. However, this is my last year of organising this event but I am sure there is someone out there happy to take this on. If that is you and you need any advise, please let me know. Adrienne Beale (8467 2038)

DISASTERS: THE FACTS



We believe in life before death

There seem to be disasters very often these days. Do we get blasé about them or immune to their impact in these days of instant communication and mobile phone videos? The following article by Christian Aid gives us an interesting perspective, and is reproduced with their permission.

Almost half the world's population has lived through a disaster at some point in the past decade. It's enough to make you fear the future.

Storms, floods, famine, cyclones, drought, typhoons, earthquakes, mudslides, avalanches. Each year for the past decade, an average of 258 million people have lived through some kind of disaster – in total, this is the equivalent of almost half of the world's population.

According to the Red Cross, an average of 354 natural disasters occurred throughout the world each year from 1991 to 1999. Between 2000 and 2004, this figure more than doubled to an average of 728 natural disasters per year.

And each year, the death toll from disasters is growing greater – from 84,570 in 1995 to 249,896 ten years later, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The tide is rising

Climate change is propelling the incidence and intensity of natural disasters.

The number of geophysical disasters – earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions – has remained steady. However, the number of climate-related disasters – including droughts, windstorms and floods – is increasingly steadily. Floods, hurricanes and droughts have increased dramatically over the last 20 years. From 1987 to 1998, the average number of climate-related disasters was 195. From 2000 to 2006, the average was 365, representing an increase of 87 per cent.

Today, more than 70 per cent of disasters are related to our changing weather.

Who's hit hardest?

Over the last 15 years, about three times as many disasters happened in developing countries as in developed countries. But:

- The number of people killed by disasters in developing countries was more than 10 times higher than those killed in developed countries
- More than 50 times as many people were killed by floods in poor countries as in rich countries
- More than 50 times as many people were affected by disasters in developing countries as in developed countries.

The cost of disasters

- Letting it all happen isn't the cheap option. As television news showed us, disasters cost lives and money
- In 2005, disasters caused more than \$150 billion worth of damage

- The World Bank estimates it will cost \$7.2 billion to make good the damage done to Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India after the Indian Ocean tsunami
- The UN estimates that rebuilding after the Kashmir earthquake will cost \$5 billion
- In Mozambique, one of the poorest and most indebted countries in the world, it cost more than \$600 million to reconstruct destroyed public infrastructure after the devastating floods of 2000.

Backward steps

While the cost of providing emergency relief and reconstruction after disasters is huge, the damage they do to development is often immeasurable.

Hurricane Mitch in 1998 set back the development of Central America's worst affected countries by as much as 50 years.

In economic terms, disasters reduce the output of the poorest nations by around three per cent, depriving them of resources they need to help people escape poverty, according to the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department.

That's why preventing the worst effects of disaster before they happen is such a top priority for us.

It's cost effective, it's practical, and it works

Do people have to die when a disaster hits? We don't think so.

- In Pakistan, 500 children in one school alone were crushed to death when the building collapsed on them. £500 could have paid to make the school earthquake resistant – just £1 per child
- While Japan warns its citizens of possible tsunamis within 30 seconds of a major earthquake, there was no warning system for the Indian Ocean. Yet just £20 would pay for a wind-up radio to help warn a village of cyclones, floods or tsunamis
- Without a comprehensive disaster risk-reduction strategy, the World Bank predicts that the costs of helping people after a disaster will rise to \$6-10 trillion over the next ten years – up to 230 times more than it spent in post-disaster reconstruction in just over two decades to 2003.

In UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon's words: 'The need to engage fully in disaster risk reduction has never been more pressing. Disaster risk reduction is about stronger building codes, sound land use planning, better early warning systems, environmental management and evacuation plans and, above all, education. It is about making communities and individuals aware of their risk to natural hazards and how they can reduce their vulnerability.'

‘HERE HANGS A MAN DISCARDED,

A SCARECROW HOISTED HIGH...’

These are the opening lines to a hymn written by Brian Wren which first appeared in the 1970s.

The hymn is in our new Methodist hymn book ‘Singing the faith’ (no. 273) and it has attracted some criticism. Under the headline “*‘Worzel’ image isn’t right for Jesus*” in the Methodist Recorder (8 March, 2012), one reader complained that the opening lines of the hymn, “Here hands a man discarded, a scarecrow hoisted high”, conjure up an image of Worzel Gummidge – a man-made effigy stuffed with straw.

“I feel that to describe Jesus as a ‘scarecrow’ and a ‘clown’ (v.2) is both insulting and offensive”. Arguably, this is precisely the point of the hymn – to reflect the scandalous idea that the God worshipped by Christians could have been degraded, derided and pinned naked to a cross. This “divine folly”, says St Paul, was an idea that Jews and Greeks simply couldn’t get their heads around. Brian Wren’s hymn helps us re-experience the shock-factor of Christian belief.



However, in writing the hymn, Brian was also addressing another issue:

‘To anyone who really experiences life as empty and meaningless, the Church’s gladsongs about grace and resurrection can be an alienation – to the person who sits bowed down in depression and emptiness, there is no good news in being invited to join the celebration next door. Good news may come, however, in the accepting silence of one who sits with the desolate, and in the story of the Messiah of God whose life was “emptied of all meaning, drained out in bleak distress” (v4), when the sense of God’s purpose and presence was withdrawn from him at the greatest crisis of his life. This, for contemporary humanity, is part of the absurdity (folly) of the cross.’

Such a theme might seem rather heavy for a Harvest Festival. However in any act of worship there is a creative tension between praise of God - a God of overflowing abundance, confession, prayers for the sorrowful and afflicted, the thirsty and the hungry. At harvest our worship would lack integrity if we failed to consider those who do not have a harvest to celebrate. Harvest is an opportunity to commit ourselves afresh to seeking to share God’s abundance with all humanity and act and pray for food security for all. . The IF campaign ‘ Enough Food For All...IF reminds us of the part we are all called to play or the responsibility each of us bears for 1 in 8 people in our world going to bed hungry each night.

So this harvest, Sunday 29th September, we will look to the wonderful creative invention of the scarecrow as our inspiration and see where God’s gift of imagination leads us. An invitation has gone to young peoples groups to make a scarecrow for our harvest festival but all are welcome to contribute! You may see a scarecrow working in a field when you are out about and about this summer. Take a photo and then we can include it in our worship. And if you are fortunate enough to be out and about wandering our beautiful countryside ...reflect on the theme of scarecrows and Brian Wren’s hymn and see where your thoughts take you....

“For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”. 1 Corinthians 1.18

Barbara Calvert
June 2013

FLOWERS IN CHURCH

Could you put some flowers or flowering plants in the Welcome Area where everyone comes into church on a Sunday? They give so much pleasure. Here are some details to encourage you.

From September, there will be sign-up list hanging inside the cupboard where the hymn books are kept. Will you take a Sunday? Dates already accounted for by Festivals etc are filled in. Forget fancy pedestals – just a simple vase on the old font is all that is needed. If you lift the lid of the font, there is a wrought iron base which levels the top and a much bigger wooden base in the Loft if required.

You can get into the church from 9.30 am on a Sunday or at other times by arrangement, or you might have keys and codes. As the church is used for various events during the week, flowers should be taken away after the Sunday service unless you know they will last and you can monitor them during the week and no-one has booked the next Sunday. Various vases and containers etc are kept in the Ladies' cloakroom under the sinks.

This all sounds complicated but it isn't really. Here is the **SIMPLE VERSION**: Sign up, bring some flowers for the Old Font in the Welcome Area between 9.30 and 10 am on the Sunday and take them away after the service.

Do sign up Thank you Gillian Beecher Bryant 020 8467 6906

EASYFUNDRAISING

Through Easyfundraising we have so far raised £239.40 for Church funds. Thank you to everyone who is taking part.

We could make that a much larger amount if more people participated in the scheme. It is an easy way of raising funds through on-line shopping at no cost to yourself.

For details please see posters and flyers or have a word with Anthony Faulkner or Ruth Dawe.

SILENCE, A CHRISTIAN HISTORY, by Diarmaid McCulloch,
published by Allen Lane 2013

Diarmaid McCulloch is probably best known for a book called quite simply A History of Christianity. Quite a challenge, you may rightly think; certainly, but never dull. The book led to an acclaimed television series, presented by the author who strode over key geographical parts of the life of the church in various scattered places, explaining to the viewer what the story was and what it might mean for our interaction with Christianity today. The 'master class of a history book' was praised for both its breadth and width - it covered pretty well everything and offered the reader fresh insight again and again. Rowan Williams described it as 'compulsively readable' and Melvyn Bragg as 'essential reading for those enthralled by Christianity, and for those enraged by it.'

So, it was with considerable interest that I turned to his recent publication about the nature of Christianity. In contrast to the broad sweep seen in his History, **Silence** selects one single and very particular lens through which to see the history of the Christian faith, the lens of 'silence'. It is a bold way into the history of Christian theology, which was expressed first in a series of Gifford Lectures. McCulloch jokes that six hours of lectures is a strange way to deal with the subject of silence. What he does is to illustrate and explore various ways in which silence, both good and bad, positive and negative, marks our common history as Christians.

His survey begins rightly with the Hebrew scriptures, illustrating the awareness of a God who speaks and who is also often strangely silent. Here he touches on the stillness before God spoken of in the psalms, as well as the silence of the suffering servant in Isaiah, both providing models for early Christians to understand who Jesus was. The chapter on the New Testament focuses on Jesus who ended centuries of silence yet embraced silence himself, especially at the time of trial and crucifixion. He contrasts this with what he calls 'Paul's noisy Christians', a feature of a people struggling to understand what God's Word and God's silence meant.

Later material offers a helpful account of the development of the monastic movement, including the origins of the 'desert fathers' whose preserved writings have been so influential in recent decades today. And there are also chapters on the 'Three Reformations', noting both 'protestant noise' and the development of inner silence, including the special features of the Quaker movement.

The final part of this Christian history draws attention to several key features encountered on the journey through Christian history: the times when silence was a necessary tool simply for survival; the silences which have enabled wickednesses in the church to be hidden and denied, such as silence about sex and gender, slavery and child abuse, the role of women, the treatment of whistle-blowers; the place of silence and music in worship. The book invites us to reflect on both the danger of some silence and the fundamental value of some silence. When to be quiet and when to speak out is still an almost daily struggle of conscience in the world and the church today, or should

be. That is what makes Diamond McCulloch's history of silence so significant for this and every future generation.

David Calvert

THE IMPERIAL PLAYERS - FLARE PATH

Most readers will know that since 1965 there has been an amateur dramatic group, the Imperial Players, at this Church. It was founded by a group of Church members, and the Hall which also dates from 1965 was designed specifically to facilitate the production of plays. The very first production back then was St Joan by George Bernard Shaw. Over the years the Society has put on 86 plays here, as well as absorbing the Chislehurst Dramatic Society and the Mottingham Players. It was conceived as a Church Society with the Minister in pastoral charge as President, and remained so until very recently when the Church Council decided that it should lose that status. Nowadays most of the members are from outside the Church, though the current Chairman, Chris Towers, is a former member, and has in fact been in the Imps since its foundation in 1965.

The Imps put on a wide range of productions from popular to serious. In March it was time for something at the meatier end of the spectrum. The production was Flare Path by Terence Rattigan. Based on his own experiences in the RAF, it tells the story of a day in the life of a Bomber Command station in World War II, of a plane failing to return, a personal crisis for one of the pilots, and the return of an old flame. The production was widely felt to have been one of our best, in my opinion alongside Tartuffe, All My Sons, Laughter in the Dark and the Odd Couple. It was entered for the Bromley Full Length Play Festival, in which Chris Muggeridge received the award for the best sound effects and Beverly Ashman was runner up for best actress in a supporting role. The set, representing an inn close to the airfield, sought to evoke the atmosphere of hostelrys used by RAF personnel during the War. As a result of the show £1,348 was passed to the Church in charges for use of the premises, so the Church benefited considerably.

The next performance will be a Murder Mystery at St George's Bickley on Sat 20 July, to be repeated at the Crown, Chislehurst soon afterwards on 23 and 25 July 7.15 for 7.30 (booking essential tel: 07831 197512). Discussions are in hand for a full-length play in the spring.

New members are always welcome both acting and behind the scenes. The latter roles include prompt, stage management, costume, sound, lighting, props, publicity and set building.

Paul Crowther

WORKING AT WHITECHAPEL MISSION

One of the joys of preaching around the circuit is that you get to see what makes other churches tick along. Petts Wood Methodist church were looking for people to join their 'Breakfast Team Challenge' one Sunday when I was there.....

So it was that at 5am on a Saturday I was picked up by the other 3 members of the team and driven to Whitechapel. On arrival we see the clients waiting for the mission to open. We are met by Ramesh one of the full time workers who cheerfully receives any donations of clothing, towels, toothpaste and brushes, disposable razors and men's socks we have taken. Ramesh looks after the volunteers in the kitchen and dining room and organises people to clean the toilets and showers. He is so dedicated that on his day off he takes his hair clippers and offers haircuts to the men.

The screen tells us who else is volunteering that day. Often there are community service workers and people from workplaces in the City doing their charity day.

We are given the quick kitchen hygiene and rules routine by another member of staff and then we set to work no later than 6.30am. 10 loaves of bread buttered.... More toasted.

200 sausages to fry and 9 kilos of bacon too. 360 eggs, mushrooms, tomatoes, beans and hash browns all to cook before 8.30am. *More statistics on www.whitechapel.org.uk*

Meanwhile we serve the early birds with tea, coffee or chocolate and give out the toiletries people need. This is the bit I like the best because sometimes they chat...."Please will you clean out my flask and fill it with tea"... "You got a flask!" I say. "Yes I found it yesterday and it will be so useful....it's a shame I didn't find the cup to it though!" and we laugh.

"I'll have the orange one" says a Croatian, pointing at the razors..."No two...I need two" as he indicates his tough beard growth. Each person has his preference and we are asked to respect this, because this is the only place on earth homeless people are allowed to choose anything at all.

Usually one person is assigned to charge up the mobile phones in a special place for charging lots of them together. The back room is full of fridges, freezers, washing machines and shelves holding boxes of toiletries of all kinds donated by kind people.

A Nigerian man with a nice hat comes along.... David lives nearby and comes to chat to the homeless men. He spends most of his income buying breakfast for those who are not organised yet; those who don't know they can bulk buy breakfast on benefit days and then have each one scored off the card. They are charged 75p for a large breakfast which keeps them from feeling like charity cases and keeps them in touch with the real world of payment for goods... not that you can buy an egg for 10p these days.

We serve until 10.30am when the hatch comes down usually with a few faces getting lower and lower as the gap decreases. People who want...or need...or are simply too late. Usually the late-comers are the drunkards and sometimes they fight verbally and square up to each other but we are protected from that by the counter and Ramesh who sorts it out.



Community service people work downstairs underground in the clothing store sorting out the sacks of donations and putting clothes on racks and cutting up old towels into face cloth size. It's a massive organisation managed by Lay-worker and Local Preacher Tony Millar and his wife Sue for many years; indeed they have brought up a family there and their boys know exactly how important mission is for the community as they have had to help.

On my breakfast break I was shown the church upstairs. A plain building with stepped grey breeze block walls striped with black.

"Interesting decoration" I say thinking of our beautiful stained glass.

"Oh those are the sleeping bags... we can have any colour of sleeping bag as long as we put it in a black bag," said Tony and continued "And on the nights when the temperature goes down to zero we have to open the doors and let the men and women in to sleep here and we find them a meal too.... Are you ever free on a cold snowy night? It's tiring when there's a few cold nights together and we still do breakfast and all the other events in the week"

I look at the alter surrounded not by beautiful oak and sculpture but by DFS sofas and I think how honourable this is to the one who said

"When I was hungry, naked or imprisoned, what did you do for me?"

Humbled, I returned downstairs to wash the cooker... made extraordinarily dirty by someone getting her own back for having to be there cooking eggs on her last day of community service! Such is life!

You can find out more about Whitechapel Mission what it does and its people by going to www.whitechapel.org.uk And I'm sure Petts Wood Methodist church would like more volunteers to do the Breakfast challenge three or four times a year.

Sue Cope

MHA 70th ANNIVERSARY in 2013

MHA is one of our Methodist charities. MHA provides care for elderly round the country. Begun in 1943, the first home was opened at Wallington, Surrey, in 1945. This home now has a special dementia care unit.

In all there are

- Over 90 Care Homes providing a mix of residential, nursing and specialist dementia care
- Over 60 Retirement Living with varying levels of support including 24-hour care, available for rent, part-ownership and full purchase
- Over 70 Live at Home Schemes which provide befriending, activities and social support for people living in their own homes, and a number of Day Care Resource centres for people with dementia

In all 16 000 people benefit. The residents are of all faiths or none. Methodists may be only a part of those living there. MHA place a special emphasis on the spiritual, as well as physical well-being of each person for whom they provide care and all homes and housing have a chaplain to provide pastoral support. MHA is at the forefront of quality dementia services, building new services and delivering care and support specially designed for individuals with dementia.

The standard of care is always highly praised in government surveys for example. Locally St. Raphael's in Orchard Rd. Bromley is one of those acquired when the Southern Cross organisation failed. Since taking over these homes MHA has been spending a great deal to bring them up to MHA standards.

Thank you to those in our church who regularly give donations to MHA.

Donations are used for extras such as chaplains for example. £10 will provide one hour's chaplaincy in a care home, £30 would provide an individual music therapy session for someone with dementia.

As some of us learned at a day conference organised by MHA in 2012, dementia sufferers can respond to music, when other parts of their brains have particular problems. I hope that as many as possible will make donations, if possible gift aided, in the envelopes which will be in the church at the beginning of June.

Alice Sennett

SERVICES AT CHISLEHURST METHODIST CHURCH

STARTING AT 1030AM

PREACHERS

Sunday 14 th July	Mr Chris Price
Sunday 21 st July	Rev'd Barbara Calvert, with Baptisms
Sunday 28 th July	Mrs Julie Gardner
Sunday 4 th August	Holy Communion Rev'd Barbara Calvert
Sunday 11 th August	Rev'd Dr David Calvert
Sunday 18 th August	Mrs Gillian Dodds
Sunday 25 th August	Summer Celebration

WEDDINGS TO COME

We pray for the following people who will celebrate their marriages here this summer.

On Friday 16th August Rebecca Wiffen and James Frost will be married here.

On Sunday 25th August Gloria Darko and Emmanuel Akinyosoye will have their marriage blessed here.





WEEKLY SERVICES

Every Sunday 10.30 Usual pattern:

1st Sunday - Holy Communion

3rd Sunday - All Age/Parade

Every Thursday (from September) 12.45

Informal Mid-Week Service (of about 30 minutes)

followed by sandwich lunch

If you would like members of the Church to pray for you, or about, for example, someone who is ill, a happy event, the community, world events, please submit your prayer by email to: methodistprayers@gmail.com

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