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Charity No 1134870

CIRCUIT NEWS SUMMER 2015

News from Strood (Peninsular)

The Karibuni Trust is a UK registered charity which aims to raise awareness about the plight of children living on the streets and in the slums of Kenya and to raise money to support projects to meet their needs. It was started 20 years ago by Corinne Murphy, a teenager who, after a severe head injury, had a vision of African children asking for help. She opened a bank account with £2.56 and it now raises about £200,000 a year. For more information see www.karibuni.org.uk. The quiz night at Strood on Saturday 16th May is to raise money for this

News from Hextable

We are still very conscious of Rev Velma Campbell's poor health and hope it will be not too long now before she gets the medical treatment she needs to resolve her health problems and will be back leading services throughout the Circuit.

Hosting Roughshod, part of Riding Lights Theatre Company, in March was a new venture for us. We didn't know how things would pan out. Their final programme had them performing at a wide variety of locations and groups. We started with a welcome tea for the group when they arrived on the Sunday, followed by our evening service lead by Rev Gary Watt, where they gave us a taster of what was to come by performing their Zaccheus sketch. Gary was very encouraging to the group and praised the work they were doing. At Hextable, they took a workshop for our older Boys' and Girls' Brigade members which centred on social justice and had them all thinking a little more deeply about things we all take for granted such as smart phones, flat screen TVs and the conditions they are made under, in places like China. They also performed some of their sketches to our Parent and Toddler group mainly for the benefit of the parents but engaged the toddlers as well. We were delighted to have over a hundred attend the show they put on at the end of the week having also performed at Gillingham and 3rd Bromley GB on previous evenings. All those attending were amazed by their very professional performance and strong message put over in the sketches which came one after the other in two hours of performing. Topics covered were William Wilberforce and the slave trade, Sister Megan Rice's protest at a major US nuclear base, the regime in North Korea, Christian Persecution and their own testimonies on life as well as biblical based sketches. They left to a standing ovation.

Roughshod were able to give workshops or performances in Prisons on Sheppey where they had some very emotional responses, schools, clubs and the Dartford Cold Weather Project. This was very much an outreach project to our local area which we hope many will have benefitted from.

The Ecumenical Lent courses through the local Churches Together based on the Praise Him, York Course were attended by many of our members and well received. The next event is an Election Hustings hosted by St. Peter's Church where it is hoped to put a Christian input/concerns into the Election discussions.

Our regular weekly and monthly meetings can be found on www.hextablemethodist.org.uk—church groups.

Future dates

2nd May—Plant and book sale 10.30am—1pm

16th May—Boys' Brigade Awards evening

6th July—Girls' Brigade celebration of achievements evening 6.30pm—7.30pm

12th July—Church Day Out

News from Larkfield and East Malling

Having celebrated the 50th Anniversary of our Church building last year, and having opened the new Welcome Area, this year seemed to start rather flat. We lost one of our beloved older members, Betty Freeman, to God's care and others were struggling with ill health.

So, at our Annual Church Meeting we counted our blessings. We ran out of time to mention them all, but here are some of them:

Tony's ministry, our daily email prayers. Increasing numbers in our Brigades, Toddlers Club, Messy Church, Monday Dance Fellowship, Thursday afternoon tea and our Tuesday "Muffins" group. Also the new Brigade weekday Worship session, new people coming in, and others returning, a new young steward (now aged 18), a returning steward, last year's Anniversary Celebrations and the resulting outreach, lovely monthly evening worship, and people coming forward to take on jobs.

What a lot we have to thank our Generous God for!

Circuit News

Special services. There's something special about milestones on our journey of Faith, and on Sunday 26th April we were delighted to share with Deacon Pru at her testimony service at Hope Street in Sheerness. We wish her well as she goes forward to ordination and pray that she will truly feel God's blessing on that occasion.

On Sunday 17th May at 4pm we have a very special service at Gillingham Methodist church when five people will be admitted as Local Preachers on full plan. They are Sara Crouch, Derek Gallagher, Irene Shepherd, Eddie Vincent and Colin Waldock. Please join us as we celebrate with them. Theirs has been a long journey of study, which at times can be quite difficult. See the later article about what it takes to train as Local Preacher.

On Sunday 19th July we have our Circuit Farewell service for our Co-superintendent Rev Clifford Newman and also Rev John Yap from our Chinese Church in Gillingham. This will be at 4pm at Union Street Methodist Church in Maidstone. Although we are all very sad that they are leaving, we hope that this will be a real time of celebration of their ministries with us.

Finally, do join us again on Sunday 30th August at 4pm at Union Street, as we welcome Rev Bonni-Belle Pickard as our new Co-superintendent and Rev Kan Yu who is coming as a probationer minister to the Chinese Church, and also serving in other Circuit churches.

Local Preacher Training. How wonderful for our Circuit to be receiving five new Local Preachers coming on full plan, and hopefully another two later this year! This has been a long and rigorous few years for Sara, Derek, Irene, Eddie and Colin. They have been studying Faith and Worship for the last four years or so, with fourteen in depth assignments submitted, plus four Worship Portfolios. Each of these includes two exegesis passages (in depth exploration of a Bible passage, as if preparing for a sermon), a reflection on a service they have attended, a report by one of more Local Preachers or minister on a service they have led, including a transcript of their sermon, their own reflection on the service and points for future development. They have had several services reported on, and have received positive, and sometimes not so positive feedback on all they have done. They have had to learn to be quite tough-skinned. And they have survived! They would not have done so without the support and encouragement of many of you. They haven't finished yet though, as they all still have to complete Unit 18, a study of their own choice, which will be presented to a future Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Meeting. Please continue to encourage them in their ministry.

Worship: Leading and Preaching. This is the name of the new course which will soon take over from both Faith and Worship, and the present Worship Leader training. The new course is up-to-date, challenging, inspiring and also flexible to allow for different abilities and interests. I have felt privileged to be involved as tutor, with three of our Local Preachers in training, plus others from the South East District. We cannot accept new people on to the pilot but if anyone is interested in joining the course when it runs out as a non-pilot, which may be later this year or early next year, please do speak to me. The course is also suitable as a refresher course for accredited Local Preachers and for personal interest or development.

Monica Wilding

News from Eccles

Eccles Church had some very uplifting services and meetings this Easter. Thanks to all those involved. We now have a "singing group" meeting most weeks on a Tuesday at 7pm. They have an enthusiastic leader in Diana and enjoy all sorts of songs. Emily is able to teach Line Dancing but her offer to form a group has not as yet met with much success, if anyone is interested in joining her please let us know.

Eccles Church Anniversary will this year be held on the weekend of 27th and 28th June. We hope to have an entertainment before our supper and time to reflect on the foresight of those who built a place of Methodist Worship here eighty four years ago. Rev Clifford Newman has agreed to take our service on the Sunday when we shall be able to thank him for all he has done for us since he came to the Maidstone Circuit. We shall all be very sad to say goodbye to Clifford and Linda, and wish them a very happy and peaceful retirement.

News from Hartlip

Here at Hartlip the next few months are a busy time for us.

Apart from our usual Sunday evening services and the Retreat Centre always ready and prepared for all the groups, and personal retreats that come to us on regular visits, we have our Spring Tea on Saturday 9th May with the usual array of homemade cakes and tasty treats for an afternoon tea. This will start at 2.30pm.

A few of the gardens in Hartlip are open on Sunday 7th June and we at the chapel will be open and offering a Ploughman's Lunch, tea and coffee.

On Sunday 13th June we have our Chapel Anniversary day with a tea at 4.30pm, followed by our service at 6.30pm which will be taken by Alan Hewitt. This will also be our Gift Day where we will all be invited to bring an extra gift of money to help with the upkeep of the chapel.

On Saturday 18th July we have our Strawberry Tea. Hopefully you will be able to join us for a tea in the garden (weather permitting) or in the Retreat Centre, where you can have a chat and a catch up with friends whilst enjoying your strawberries, cream and scones.

On Sunday 23rd August there will be no service at Hartlip as we will be joining Rainham church for their final service.

Last but not least we are all delighted here at Hartlip and offer our congratulations to Dr Derek Gallagher who has completed all his training and studies as a Local Preacher. He will be accredited as a Methodist Local Preacher together with four other preachers who have completed their training, at a special Circuit service at Gillingham Methodist church on Sunday 17th May at 4pm. There will be no evening service at Hartlip on that day. This is a very special time for us as no one can remember when the last local preacher was trained at Hartlip.

Come and join us at some or all of our special days, you will be very welcome.

DON'T FORGET THESE DATES

May

- 2nd Book and Plant Sale at Hextable from 10.30am
- 9th Spring Tea at Hartlip from 2.30pm
- 16th 4th Bromley BB awards night at Hextable at 6.30pm
- 16th Quiz Night at Strood at 7pm

July

- 6th 1st Hextable GB Achievements evening at 6.30pm
- 18th Strawberry Tea at Hartlip
(contact Glenis 01795 843624)
- 19th Circuit Farewell Service at Union Street at 4pm

June

- 7th Open Gardens at Hartlip. Chapel will be open for refreshments.

August

- 23rd Circuit Final Celebration Service at Rainham 4pm
- 30th Circuit Welcome Service at Union Street at 4pm