

FEBRUARY 2018

SOUTH + DOWN



*The love of God
poured out..*

Romans 5:5



Harpenden Ministry Team

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Newsletter

Please provide copy by
E-mail by 10th of previous month

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Weekday Activities

Pre-school - Julia Prince 07908121891	
Weekdays (except Wednesday) 9.10am – 12.10pm in halls	
Study Group Vivienne Kendall 629930	
Alternate Wednesdays lounge 8pm	
Brownies and Guides	
Tuesday	
17 th Rainbows	5pm
14 th Brownies	6.15pm
Wednesday	
9 th Brownies	6.15pm
3 rd Guides	7.30pm
Thursday	
17 th Brownies	6.15pm
17 th Guides	7.30pm
Hall Bookings	
01582 769871	



*Your intercessions are
Asked this month for
weekly groups on p.3 of
the new church purple
church directory*

Mission Statement

The aim of Southdown Newsletter is to help develop the Christian faith through reporting about people, worship and activities of Southdown Methodist Church.

Putting Covenant promises into action

Dear friends,

In the Covenant Service one of the sentences refers to the work God gives us to do. Some, it says, are things '*suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests and other tasks contrary to both.*'

When Gill left I took over three of her rural churches in Gaddesden Row, Flamstead and Markyate as well as the outreach and some pastoral work at Southdown. I didn't have any more hours to do it in as I still only work 20 hours a week.

For the first few months it was quite difficult as I didn't have a pattern of work and I was working out in the country! I must admit that I did feel a bit like retired horse 'put out to grass.' The country is not a natural place for me to be - I'm used to towns and I like shops!

These three churches are small and were struggling as they tried to fulfil the outreach projects they had been doing when their churches were bigger and the members more able. It sounds a big task and it is, but I feel a little more at home now as I get to know the personalities and their problems. All the people in the smaller churches work really hard and try to reach out to their communities, often working alongside other denominations.

My real anxiety though was the driving. Since I had my accident I have really lost confidence in driving particularly as my neck movements are very limited. So to suddenly be plunged into having to drive frequently out to little churches along country lanes was not really one of my 'natural inclinations.' However I have conquered some of my fears and try to trust in Christ who gives me the strength to do the things I have to do.

I was very heartened because at the Carol Services we had very good attendances at all the churches and most of the villagers turned out to come to them, and so, over Christmas we had a lovely time together. It did mean that I wasn't at Southdown so much and I obviously missed being with all my friends at such a joyful time of the year.

People have commented that they hadn't seen me! (*Ed: But we missed you, Jenny!*)

We have started some new services at these churches which have a flavour of their own. At Gaddesden Row we now have a 4pm service once a month. This means that families who were more 'sport orientated' can come in the afternoon. We now also have a praise service that attracts up to about 20 people. We have a small music group and also have bought 'Singing the Faith' books and tapes to help when our organist, Keith Faulkener, is not able to come. I have found this little service one that I enjoy very much and find very spiritually inspired by. Gaddesden Row is very small (it only holds 35 people) and also has no toilet - another thing to get used to which is not within 'my natural inclinations.'



At Markyate we have a 'dementia friendly' service once a month. It is a service suitable for people with or without any difficulties but focusses on a short service at which there are well-known hymns and a short homily or reflection rather than a long sermon. Several people find this service which is



on 3rd Sunday of each month at 3pm, fulfils their needs and we have a lovely pianist who comes to play at it. At Flamstead I have a very lively toddler group and the church focusses on its family and children's work.

So I have three very different churches which are providing me with much joy and much work. Rachel, Derek and Vindra are very supportive. They come to help at church councils and take communions and lead some of the services.

At Southdown I am still involved in the outreach in Teddy Bears and Messy Church and Tuesday @ 3, as well as helping Mmasape with pastoral work. I hope I am never too busy to see people and can always be found on Tuesday afternoons at Tuesday @ 3 - or I am happy to arrange to see people particularly when they are ill or have a problem.



Now I am not at Southdown so much on a Sunday I do miss more news and rely on you to tell Mmasape or myself of any pastoral problems. I hope that soon we will be able to provide pastoral contacts for people so that we will not miss any pastoral issues. It is particularly apparent when people are living alone and not able to come to church that we can often miss a pastoral problem that has arisen so please let us know if you hear of those things . It is always better to be told twice than not at all.

Therefore I did take more notice of the Covenant promises, as I made them this year, and particularly of the words ‘let us give ourselves to him, trusting in his promises and relying on his grace’. I certainly need to be given some strength to do things particularly as I get older. Hopefully it will keep me ‘on the ball.’

Blessings *Jenny*

Embracing 2018

When all seems lost, when hope is dead
 A little snowdrop peeps its head
 Through frozen, hard, embittered earth
 And sings with pure triumphant mirth
 ‘do not worry, do not fear!
 Winter’s passing, spring is near!’

Poem written by *Gill Meredith*

(Gill worships at Bethany and is a Messy Church helper. She has also written the ‘Messy Church song’ which the children enjoy, accompanied by Gill on guitar!)





Happy New Year to everyone!
Yes I do know it is February!
We started the New Year at
Messy Church with the story of
Noah and the promise or
covenant that God made to
enfold the world in his love.

In the same way we had our Covenant Service in January, promising our commitment in our relationship with God especially through his Son Jesus Christ. It is emphasized in the Covenant service that it is not just our own relationship with God that is important but that of the whole faith community to which we belong. So now at the beginning of a New Year we will see how we can follow his vision for our church during this year.

At the Covenant service we were able to dedicate 15 more *Singing the Faith* books which were donated by Win Tilley's family in her memory.

It was with great sadness that many people gathered for the funeral of **Elsie Cooksley**, a wonderful character who stole our hearts. Her daughter, Sheila and her family had been through so much sorrow this year as her brother, Elsie's son, Graham, had also died in November. However, hopefully Sheila will now be able to devote more time to her own family in America and also to her church work there, where they support the work of 'Hope International in Haiti.' Sheila will be writing to us to tell us more about this work as Elsie's deepest desire was to build a whole house on the project at Haiti which has seen so many disasters.

Sylvia Johnson's husband, **Jack**, also died just after Christmas. Jack had supported Sylvia for many years during her time of dementia and was well-known for his involvement in a local brass band and his work with 'The working Men's' clubs.

Sandra Ford had a very difficult operation just after Christmas and she is recovering slowly at home, letting Barry do all the work!

Together with Mmasape we are hoping that we will be able to structure the pastoral work more efficiently so that people can each have a pastoral

contact and we hope you will want to help in this way. So please continue to let us know of any pastoral issues among our friends.

*Called by Christ to be disciples every day in every place,
we are not to live as hermits but to spread the way of grace;
citizen's of heaven's kingdom, though this world is where we live,
as we serve a faithful Master, faithful service may we give.*

(STF 660)

Jenny



Many thanks to those who contributed to making the church so attractive and welcoming for the Christmas period. **Anne Kilvert** continues to maintain the flower tub at the entrance and it is a pleasure to see the new growths each season.

Once inside the church, we found the Christmas tree- decorated in gold and white lights, plus the Advent ring and the shelf arrangements – all done

by **Mary. Muriel** continues to ensure the worship candle is lit weekly, and this year provided a new red candle for Christmas. Of course, let's not forget those who clean and tidy the church during the week.

As our congregation becomes smaller it is encouraging to see that many of you are willing to take on duties and roles within the church. As the saying goes, 'Many hands make light work' and it definitely helps to reduce the work load for us all.



The new church directory has been issued to those who have given their permission to have an entry. No paper copies are available due to data protection requirements

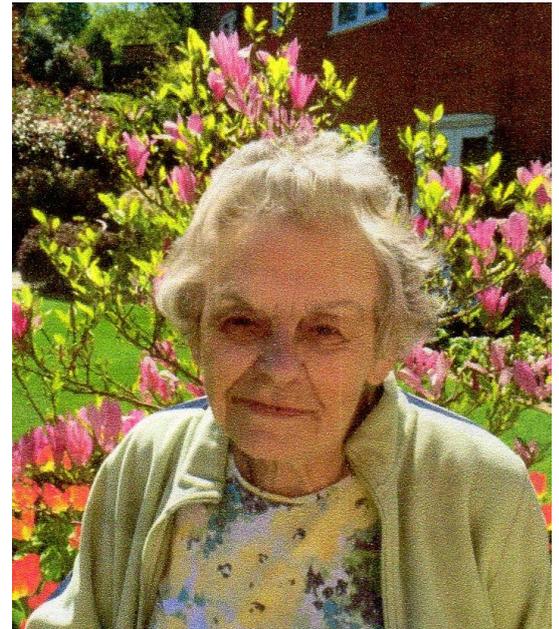
Elsie Cooksley September 1928 - 14 December 2017

When we write about someone who has died, we use the notation above – a hyphen, which separates the dates of birth and death. That little ‘dash’ represents their life-span. I often think it’s sad that a whole life is squeezed into a 2 mm line when so much has happened during a lifetime

As in the case of Elsie Cooksley there was so much life. Here was a lady, who in the words of her daughter, Sheila, was fab and fun-loving. She was loved by many, so much so, that the church was packed to capacity on 4 January, when we heard about her life.

Many of you knew Elsie better than I did and will have your memories. But, perhaps, some of you did not know that Elsie had a dream. She was greatly affected by the plight of the Haitians following the 2010 earthquake. Over one quarter of a million people died in the village of Sous Savanne, and 80% houses were destroyed. Elsie wanted to do something to support the surviving villagers and decide to raise funds to build a centre for help – in fact a whole house! What a brilliant way to make a difference.

Through various fund-raising efforts at Southdown and in Walkers Court, one third of the cost has been raised so far and donations following her thanksgiving service will have boosted that total. If you would like to make a donation in Elsie’s memory, gifts can be made to ‘The MacDaibhidh Charitable Trust’ c/o John Davidson, 4 York Road, St Albans AL1 4PL



Vivienne Kendall

Thank you ... David and Emma join me in thanking all Southdown friends for your prayers, cards and loving support during Ken's long illness, and since his death.

So many of you helped to ensure such a wonderful Thanksgiving Service ran smoothly. He would have been amazed to see so many people, and thrilled by your wonderful singing.

Your generosity resulted in the Leprosy Mission receiving £617 and Practical Action £467.

Thank you all

Gill

A blast from the past... was how **Brian Whitlock** began his e-mail, which I recently received. Some of you will remember that he was seconded to us from Australia in the 1980s for one year – and quite a memorable year it was too! I replied to Brian that it was a 'warm blast' – unlike some of the weather we've been experiencing lately!

As indicated in your latest copy, the passing of Ken Holmes will mean a real gap in the congregation and he will be greatly missed. We enjoyed an ongoing relationship with Gill and Ken, including time with us here on the Gold Coast on one of their trips to see family in Australia, and were deeply saddened at the news of his passing.

We have wonderful memories of our year at Southdown which regularly crop up in our conversations. Especially the snow as we emerged from a Christmas Eve service, lights up in the village and lots, lots more. We remember the church as a vibrant congregation with lots of children and young people, the choir and strong lay participation which enriched its life. Sadly like so many others there and here in Australia, congregations have declined with families on the move and 'aging' taking its toll.

We are now at an age when we observe the passing of so many colleagues and friends from home and around the world. It is such a joy however to recognise those who still take responsibility and serve so diligently and faithfully.

Please pass on our love to any who may remember us.

Grace and Peace!

Brian and June Whitlock

It's time to do your 'spring de-cluttering'

How many of your New Year resolutions are still unbroken? No matter, you can still make amends during Lent!

Tuesday @ 3 is asking you to turn out your cupboards for Lent – in order to help raise funds for the British Humanitarian Aid. Look out clothes, handbags, shoes and toiletries and bring them to T @ 3 on 13 or 20 February. (No food of any kind)

Of course, you can still continue to declutter during the 40 days of Lent as **Sue Walker** has suggested an excellent on-going decluttering activity. Make a Lent resolution to get rid of something **every**

day during the 40 day period. I, for one, will be signing up to this. My loft is going to be the focus of my attention, then my bedroom cupboards. I'd like to add my garden shed but that'll take considerably longer than 40 days!

Both of these ideas follow the old Lent tradition of 'giving up something for Lent', and it will actually be of financial benefit to charities. You need to be bold about it. Those items of clothing that have been hanging in your wardrobe, unworn for years, must go. And don't forget about all those things you've been saving to 'do something with'. Be honest, you'll never use them now, nor those unmatched cups and odd plates which might 'come in handy'? I guess if you're really bold you could organise a 'garage sale' - people can come and browse and take away your rubbish!

Don't delay – do it today!



“...but Tony, I do not need your help.”

These were the words, spoken by Mother Teresa, that greeted Tony Budell on his arrival at a Romanian orphanage in 1992. Like many others he had been greatly moved by

television programmes depicting the plight of the orphans in that country and had been compelled to act. He filled a van with aid and set off, driving into the unknown. Just imagine his disappointment on hearing those words - after a long hard drive.

However, Mother Teresa explained that, because she was well-known, she received more than adequate aid for her home but there were many others not far away where the help was desperately needed. *“God has called You. Do God’s work with a loving heart and never let God down.”*

Her parting words had considerable impact and led Tony and his wife, Valerie, to set up British Humanitarian Aid (BHA) with the express purpose of helping those, especially children, impoverished due to war, poverty or disaster. Since 1992 many people have felt the need to help and the ‘Convoys of Hope’ were one way of doing this.

BHA has successfully taken convoys to various places of extreme hardship including Romanian orphanages (6), Croatia and Bosnian refugee camps (47), the Chernobyl area of the Ukraine (37) and, recently, Kosova (4). That was a total of 94 “Convoys of Hope”, transporting in excess of 8000 tons of humanitarian aid – the largest was one numbering 105 vehicles, the largest peacetime convoy ever to leave the UK and actually setting a record into the Guinness Book of Records!

Sadly, red tape and the greed of the Italian Ferry operators made these convoys impractical after 2000. Since then all the work has been in Chernihiv Region.

Come to Tuesday @ 3 on 6 February to hear more from local workers.



Acts of loving kindness

February 14 is celebrated as St Valentine's Day and you won't have missed the numerous Valentine cards, chocolates and flowers appearing in the shops.

Appropriately, the week 11 – 17 February marks Random Acts of Kindness Week (RAK) when kindness

awareness is raised in schools, workplaces and communities. We don't really need to be reminded of the ways we can show love to our family, friends and in our dealings with others. Although sometimes a little nudge to give a friend a call or pop into see them doesn't go amiss!

The term '**loving-kindness**' is used as an English translation for the Hebrew word חֶסֶד (*Chesed*). This term is used often in the book of Psalms, and refers to **acts of kindness**, motivated by **love**. It is used primarily in reference to God, rather than people. Yet also, *chesed* emerges as one of the essential ways humans engage with God to sustain creation and also to communicate God's kindness and love toward humanity as well as human kindness and love toward each other. The Talmud establishes *chesed* as one of the core pillars of human behaviour, and furthermore, states that the reward for service is **in this** world, not in the world to come. Service can and should be valuable in some way to the person engaged in it.

Interestingly, 'loving kindness' is also part of Buddhist, Jainism and Hindu teaching as well as Judaism and Christianity. However an act of loving kindness is not confined only by one's religious belief as the RAK movement clearly demonstrates.



Lent Study Course

The Wednesday evening discussion group will be running a Lent course in February and March. This year we will be using material produced by 'Embrace the Middle East' - the charity through which we sponsor Fatima.

The course is entitled 'Making all things new' which brings to life God's passion for bringing about new beginnings. It further illustrates the work of those who are working together to make things new in redemptive ways in the area.

Eleven year old Emani is bubbling over with everything she is learning. She loves art and dreams of being a graphic designer.

She explains that her Syrian family fled to The Lebanon to escape the fighting, but found things not much better. They lived in a damp basement, and the children were unable to go to school. They were always hungry and she and her sister were threatened by 'bad men'.

Emani's new beginning began when her mother was approached by a member of Embrace, and Emani and her two sisters were offered a place in a safe centre for vulnerable children.

The girls are now safe and fed and being educated. Emani says, *'I feel I am someone now, I'm proud I'm Emani. I understand I am God's daughter and am valuable in his eyes.'*

Each session visits a well-known Bible passage to illustrate how it brings to life God's passion for beauty-to-ashes new beginnings; and then shares stories of Embrace's partners and individuals in the Middle East who are working together to make things new in powerfully redemptive ways. Thus we join with God's vision to make all things new; to embrace those who need new beginnings in the Middle East.

The first session will be on 14 February at 7.45pm and then on alternate Wednesdays. Come and join us!

Vivienne Kendall



All God's Creation is Very Good!

Women's World Day of Prayer

Friday 2 March

10.30am High Street

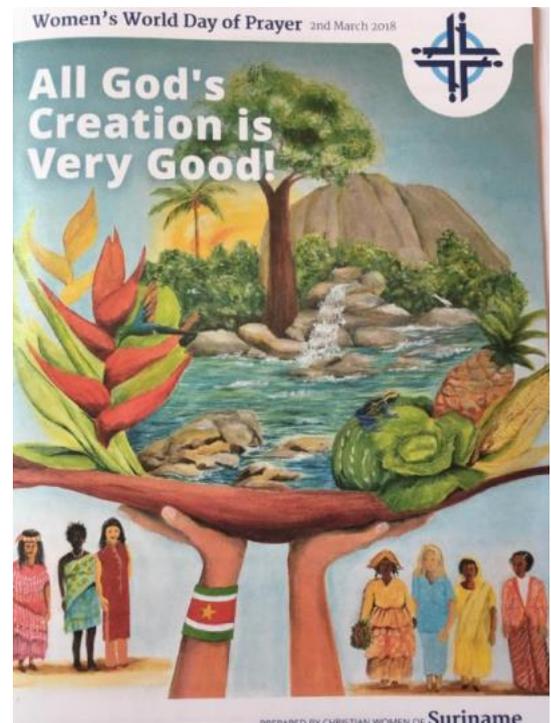
7.45pm St Mary's, Kinsbourne Green

The Women's World Day of Prayer service has been written by the Christian women of Suriname. The theme 'All God's Creation is Very Good!' focusses on creation and our responsibility to care and look after it.

The women bring to our attention the urgent need for caring at a time when more than 180 countries have signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. A commitment to keep the earth cooler depends on public policies implemented by governments, but also on our personal lifestyle.

The Republic of Suriname lies in the north eastern part of South America. Suriname is named after the Surinen tribe, one of the indigenous peoples of the land. About 90% of the population of Suriname lives in the coastal areas, of which more than half in the capital city of Paramaribo, which is situated on the left bank of the Suriname River. The name Paramaribo is believed to have been drawn from an indigenous word meaning 'city of flowers'.

The coastal area of Suriname covers approximately 15% of the land surface and is not only important for residential purposes, but also for its economic activity. However, this part of the country is less than two meters above the sea level and because of climate change and rising sea waters faces eventual floods.



Wow ... Southdown friends just keep on giving

A reminder that the charities Southdown is supporting this year are the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), Livability and Talking Newspapers St Albans.

We also sponsor Fatima, through 'Embrace the Middle East'. During the past year our monthly 'Cakes for Fatima' has raised more than enough to maintain this sponsorship. In consequence, SAT has decided to use this activity to help raise funds to support our chosen charities. At the end of the year (following Harvest) the proceeds will be shared between these.

Also, SAT has a few other fund-raising activities in the pipeline – so watch this space!



Still on the topic of cakes, those attending the Carol Service in December were very pleased to share the Christmas cake which Mary began on 'Stir-up Sunday' – this was a truly scrummy cake and we compliment Mary on her baking. She also provided smaller cakes which raised a total of £45 towards our cake project.

If you would be prepared to go on the cake-making rota – a couple of times a year - please speak to Margaret.

Cakes are special. Every birthday, every celebration ends with something sweet, a cake, and people remember. It's all about the memories.

Buddy Valastro

I think to eat cake is very good for us, but it's the size of the slice and how often you have it.

Mary Berry

You cannot have a cake and eat it too. Either you eat it, or you have it.

Zygmunt Bauman

You know you're getting old when the candles cost more than the cake.

Bob Hope

February		
4	Holy Communion Rev Mmasape Zihle	10.30am
11	Peter Syson	10.30am
18	Christine O'Reilly	10.30am
25	Bob Blencoe	10.30am
Messy Church Jenny Cope 768087		
February Friday 9 in halls 3.30pm – 5.30pm		
Tuesday at Three Jenny Cope		
Meeting in the church 3 – 4pm		
Diary for February		
6	British Humanitarian Aid	
13	Pancakes!	
20	tba	
27	tba	

Kindness quotes

No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted. *Aesop*

Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see. *Mark Twain*

A warm smile is the universal language of kindness.

William Arthur Ward

Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love. *Lao Tzu*

Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you. *Princess Diana*

You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind.”

Henry James

God-incident ... or what?



During his sermon in January Hilary Oakley was commenting on the need to listen to the voice of God when his mobile rang. We'll never know who was calling because Hilary turned the phone off without answering! A lost opportunity?