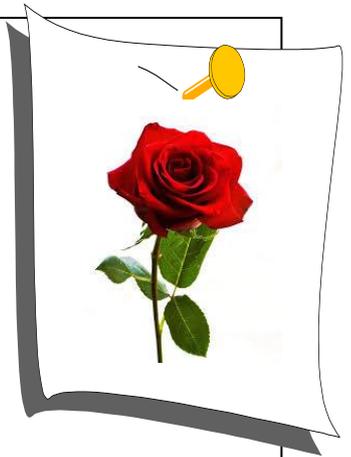


JUNE 2018



SOUTHDOWN



5 June 2018

www.southdownchurch.org.uk

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Newsletter

Please provide copy by

E-mail by 10th of previous month

Editor: Vivienne Kendall

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Your intercessions are asked for our friends on p.7 of the church directory

Weekday Activities

Pre-school Jo Trussler 07973 601354	
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	

Mission Statement

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

Unattributed articles are written by the editor

When the Holy Spirit comes...

Dear Friends,

With the increase in daylight and the improvement in temperatures it is good to see spirits begin to lift. As our spirits lift, at this time of the year the church celebrated the falling down of a different Spirit – the promised Holy Spirit of God.

In the days preceding the day of Christ's Ascension, we read in Luke's account:

"While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. This is what you have heard from me; for John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1.4-5)
And shortly thereafter whilst gathered in Jerusalem, the Spirit of God came upon them as though in tongues of fire and they began to 'speak in tongues'.

The event was astounding to all who witnessed it and as a result many asked to be baptised in the Way of Christ. This marked the beginnings of the Christian church. Driven by this experience and love for Christ, the good news of Christ's saving grace spread throughout the region and soon to far places.

For over 2000 years the Christian Faith grew and hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world believed in Christ. Recently, the numbers of those following Christ and those coming into faith in Christ continue to drop. The good news hasn't changed, the love God in Christ is still assured, so how can we continue to testify and witness to this truth in a way that changes lives?

In the Gospel of John, Jesus says this about the work of the Spirit:

"When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning..."



During the 10 days of the ‘Thy Kingdom Come’ initiative, the churches prayed to make Christ known and for all believers to be bold enough to increase their commitment to talking about Christ – having God conversations. Having shared in this, I am encouraged to increase my commitment to talking about Christ to the people I meet or spend time with; to set aside time intentionally praying for the continued presence of God’s Spirit in our community as we share Christ in all we do.

At our recent annual church general meeting, as a community of faith here in Southdown, we agreed to explore ways of engaging the youth in a way that meets them where they are. This would mean listening to what our young people need and to use the media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) that they use. This speaks of the way the Godhead continually moves through the Spirit to make things new.

Let us share together in the prayer for Thy Kingdom Come:

Almighty God,

Your ascended Son has sent us into the world

to preach the good news of your Kingdom:

inspire us with your Spirit and fill our hearts

with the fire of your love,

that all who hear your word may be drawn to you,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mmasape

So let’s keep on fishing!

It’s essential to understand that, regardless of our personal comfort level, we are called to share our faith because Christianity is a missionary faith. Despite the change in our culture and the way our faith is regarded, Christians are commanded to tell people about Jesus. In Matthew 4:19, Jesus called fishermen as his first disciples and told them he would make them “fishers of men.” His disciples are still called to be fishers of men. (Ed Stetzer)





During June, the New Testament lectionary readings focus on Paul's missionary journeys, and his letters to the churches, especially the church in Corinth.

As I was reading about this, in preparation for my services, it struck me that this is what I do practically every month in writing letters to our church for the magazine. I hoped that I would be able to offer the same sort of encouragement as Paul to live out our faith in a world where life and society has so many problems.

Life in the small Christian communities where Paul set up his first churches was not so different from life in our own churches. Paul is hearing ideas and giving challenges not unlike those we were giving a few weeks ago at our AGM. As we read Paul's letters we can join in the conversation almost. It is a conversation about living the faith, and showing love in action, not unlike those we might have in our discussion groups or in other groups that meet in the church.

At that time small groups of people who believed in Jesus began to meet and worship in each other's houses. These groups of people, in cities like Corinth and Ephesus, were the very first 'churches.' When Paul moved onto a new place, he wrote letters back to these Christian communities, encouraging them to live in the way Jesus had taught. There are thirteen surviving letters, in the New Testament, that Paul wrote to these small early churches, full of encouragement, sometimes reprimand, but always telling them that God loved them and they were saved through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Religious life in Corinth would have been mainly pagan, where Greeks and Jews would have ridiculed Paul's message. There were also rival teachers at work in Corinth, questioning Paul's authority so Paul has a troubled relationship both with the church there and with the secular population of the city. However he goes on telling the Christian story, often getting himself in deep trouble with the authorities.

Paul was not a good orator but he was confident in the power of the Holy Spirit and the transforming experience he had on the road to Damascus.

In writing this letter to you as a church in Southdown I am basically doing the same as Paul, encouraging you to tell others about our faith and the love God has for every person; to tell your story to others with the enthusiasm and courage that Paul had.

In the past month we have been to visit **Cliff and Margaret** in their flat in Hitchin, a part of the Methodist Homes scheme. They seem very happy there, still taking part in Bible studies arranged by the chaplain to the home. We also visited **Aileen**, who was living just up the corridor from them. Unfortunately she has had a fall during this last month and we hope to hear some better news of her recovery soon.

Margaret Williams also had a fall and our thoughts and prayers are with her at this time and with others who have been unwell, particularly **Evelyn Chapman** and **Pauline Boy**. Others have ongoing problems within their families and we continue to pray for them.

We send our congratulations to the happy couple who got married on 19 May. No, not **that** happy couple! **Emma Urwin**, the granddaughter of Muriel McKie and Joan Harris, and **Michael Hall** were also married on 19th May.

We are reaching exam time again and we pray for all those especially within our own families whose children are reaching times of exams and decisions about their futures.

To the church at Southdown may the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all.

Jenny

Salvation Army worshipping at Southdown

We extend a warm welcome to Captain Kenneth Guest and members of the Salvation Army who are meeting on our premises while theirs are being refurbished. They have been waiting for some time for the building work to be started and now have the green light for Go! They will be holding Sunday worship in the halls during this period.

During June, the main lectionary readings will be from the book of Jonah.

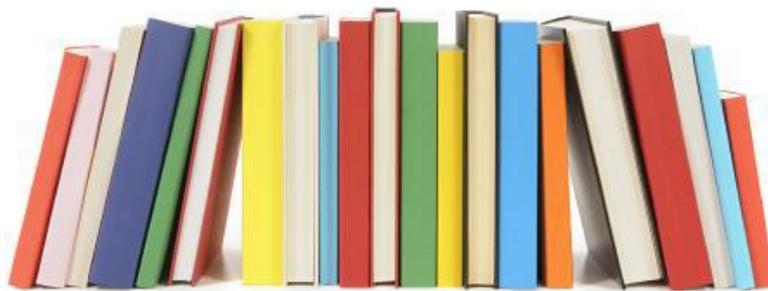
This is the book chosen by the Methodist Church as 'book of the month', and it is possible that the only remembrance you may have of Jonah is that he spent some time inside a whale!

Jonah is a short book of just four chapters, and it relates an episode in the life of the prophet when he disobeyed God's request to go to Joppa to warn the people of the consequences of their wicked ways of life

So, if you've never read Jonah, now is a chance to catch up – or join the Wednesday discussion group on 13 and 27 June at 7.45pm.

BIBLE
MONTH **2018**
30 days with Jonah
— #BibleMonth —

Books, books and more books!



Still on that topic of decluttering - take some time again to inspect your bookshelves! You can take your unwanted theological books to Digswell Village Church and possibly help yourself to any books you fancy by giving a donation to All We Can (formerly Methodist Relief and Development). Books remaining at the end of the day will be taken to Book Aid, a charity that sends books to churches and Theological Colleges in Africa and Asia.

Saturday 16th June 2018 10am – 4pm

At Digswell Village Church,

Warren Way, Digswell, Welwyn AL6 0DH

Refreshments available Car park to the rear of building

Still active - Full of Years

MHA Sunday 10 June



As MHA celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2018, *Methodist Homes Sunday* will have a special emphasis on the achievements of age and the completeness of life. The theme of worship is *'Full of Years'*

In Genesis, we are reminded that 'Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out...' according to God's call. (Gen 12: 1-8)

Today we hear about lots of people doing amazing things in the 80s and 90s. The oldest woman to run in this year's London Marathon was 83 years old. Of course not everyone can do that - even when they are much younger! Coincidentally, as I am actually writing this article, while listening to BBC Radio 4 the announcer has just said that a 91 year –old woman has today (10 May) become the oldest person to 'wing walk'. Also, national press reported that Mahathir Mohamad has just been elected as President of Malaysia, aged 92. And let's not forget our Queen Elizabeth still carrying out duties at 92, the second oldest 'ruler' in the world.

What it means to be old has changed in our society. In the past people didn't usually live such long lives or so healthily. When Walter Hall began MHA the first home was for 12 elderly women aged over 60! Fortunately, for many of us reading this that's not an age generally regarded today to be elderly – at least, we don't regard ourselves as such. *(In fact, for most people, 'old' is someone who is 15 years older than you are!)*

MHA is asking people to think, not only about the achievements of the able-bodied older people, but also about ways in which the lives of older and more dependent men and women can be helped to live their lives as fully as possible. It is appropriate that we at Southdown should take time to remember our friends currently in an MHA residence in Hemel – Cliff and Margaret Woof and Aileen Hurst.

Brexit to Surrexit - Taizé refound

Rev Hilary Oakley confronts the ecumenical challenges facing the Church today

I first visited Taizé in 1970. I was 16, and the Taizé community was just about to enter its heyday. The community was founded during the war, when a young Swiss, Roger Schutz, left the safety of his neutral homeland to live alongside the people of neighbouring France and share something of their suffering. Taizé was near to the border of occupied and free France, and soon he was busy helping those pursued by the occupying German army to escape capture, and flee to Switzerland. He was joined by a small group of friends and so the tiny community began its common life. But by 1970, his story was being retold all over Europe, and increasing numbers of West European youngsters were coming to witness this place of reconciliation and share in its life. The numbers continued to grow, and by my second visit in 1975, young people were coming in their tens of thousands: indeed the numbers were so large that we sometimes spent the whole day - reading, talking, singing, discussing - in the meal queue! Taizé had the optimism of the 1960s and at times felt a little like a religious hippy commune. By day we sat under the trees in discussion groups, and each evening we sang round a number of camp fires.

But as a shy and rather anxious teenager, I found it confusing, and a little hard to engage. I was in a discussion group with 8 other people, and between us we represented 5 denominations and 4 languages - an entirely new experience. But I was deeply touched by the worship, in the large concrete Church of the Reconciliation, constructed in 1962. It was not so much the spirituality as the participation of people of different traditions, saying the Lord's Prayer next to me in French, Spanish, German or Dutch, and discovering that I too could use their words to praise God in the multi-lingual chants of the Taizé liturgy. My eyes were open to traditions, people and languages beyond my own, and I began to understand the importance of ecumenism, as well as my responsibilities as a European citizen. My last visit was in 1978, with fellow students from the World Council of Churches Graduate School in Bossey, Geneva.

In the second week of Easter, this year, I visited Taizé again. This time with Gerhard Tiel, Pastor in the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, in Germany, who had accompanied my last visit in 1978. The 1960s concrete church was still the same, but larger, with three waves of wooden extension at the west end. We still participated in discussion groups, and mine included three French people, two Germans and a lady from Hong Kong. Taizé counted us as adults not young people, and we had a special place to meet and eat, with just a little more comfort. We didn't talk about denominations or our distinctive traditions, perhaps because the support of Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches, is now accepted, understood and embedded. At any rate, it didn't seem to matter: we talked from our shared Christian and 'adult' experience.

Beyond the 60 or so adults, there were also around 2,000 young people, many German, whose energy and exuberance brought Taizé alive, as it had done 40 years before. The numbers were smaller than I remembered, with fewer from the UK, but the languages were more extensive, and now included Polish, Bulgarian, Swahili, Chinese, reflecting a wider Europe, greater



mobility, and our engagement with a bigger world. It was challenging in a number of sometimes contradictory ways. The perspective was wider, the different traditions less important, the variety greater, the numbers smaller.

But it's time to come down from the mountain, and I've returned home to Brexit, tensions with Russia, cybercrime, the NHS funding crisis and more knife attacks on the streets of London...and in the church, declining numbers, a shrinking church voice in our national life, church leaders who are tired and stressed, and finances on a shoestring.

I just wonder how far, as a Christian community, we can continue to afford the luxury of division, divergence or mutual suspicion, as we struggle to maintain separate buildings and church infrastructures in parallel. Taizé has nudged me to find a renewed enthusiasm for ecumenism, an energy to try again to address and overcome those challenges that so constrained the previous generation of ecumenists, and lost us the last 40 years. As Brother Roger so simply put it: *“Make the unity of the Body of Christ your passionate concern.”*

Our country is also hugely divided as politicians struggle to find the Holy Grail of a Brexit that suits everybody. Yet on this biggest of all issues facing our national life, we the church have so little to say. Perhaps we just don't want to rock the boat, a stance so alien to the way of Christ. Perhaps we need to refind our commonality of faith and liturgy with our European friends and neighbours. Perhaps while the politicians argue, we should be building bridges across the Channel, a new European Christianity, to which we can significantly contribute, an integration, a reconciliation. Perhaps we can find a vision of a future where we can speak together, and speak out, about the issues that concern us all.

Brother Roger died on 16 August 2005, following a stabbing during prayers in the Church of the Reconciliation. Earlier that afternoon he had called one of the brothers and asked him to note down some specific words. But there was then a long silence while he attempted to formulate his thinking. Finally he began: “To the extent that our community creates possibilities in the human family to widen...” And he stopped, too tired to finish the phrase, which remains unfinished today. His vision was all encompassing – a Christ for the whole world, beyond Europe, beyond the church, beyond Christianity. And at the heart of that optimism was his belief in the capacity of young people to engage across boundaries, to share common human needs and solutions, to live reconciliation, to live resurrection.

Each day of my visit, we sang of resurrection. You will find the wonderful and uplifting Taizé chant, Surrexit Christus, at https://youtu.be/juhviS_UL2Y

June		
3	Holy Communion Rev Mmasape Zilhe	10.30am
10	Tony Higgins	10.30am
17	Jenny Harris	10.30am
24	Sarah Hagger-Holt	10.30am
Messy Church Jenny Cope 01582 768087		
June Friday 8 June 3.30pm – 5.30pm		
Tuesday at Three Jenny Cope		
Meeting in the church 3 – 4pm		
Diary for June		
5	No meeting	
12	Kay Nadon	
19	Chloe Jaiwal	
26	David Walters	
Discussion Group		
Wednesdays in the lounge 8pm Book of the Month study - JONAH June 13, 27 at 7.45pm		

The Scroll Church

The Harebreaks
Watford WD24 6NF



Saturday, June 23 at 7:00PM

Gospel Music

with a distinctly Jewish flavour
with ministry In word and song

Featuring: **Simon Elman**

Chrissy Rodgers Helen Shapiro

Free admission by ticket only
A freewill offering will be taken

Contact: 01923 221872

A few years ago, people of the nation of Vanuatu living on the small Pacific island of Ambae were among the ‘happiest people in the world’ according to a research report. Today, however, they are facing a total disruption of their lives. Volcano Monaro Voui violently erupted in March, covering the island with a thick layer of ash, acid rain and sulphur dioxide. So much so, that Ambae is now ‘the most dangerous place on earth’. The entire population of 10,000 must permanently leave this island and relocate, and attempt to rebuild their lives.

We must pray that these people will find courage and strength as they move on and we remember how Abraham was instructed by God to move on to a new life and greater things.