

Rejoice!

July 2017



**The Magazine of the
West Norfolk Methodist Circuit**

Dear Friends,

Every seven years after the first ten years in ministry the Methodist Church gives its ministers the opportunity for a sabbatical, which we are expected to take. The idea is to have a bit of a break from the regular work of ministry, but also to focus on something which might enrich one's ministry.

I am due for a sabbatical this year which I will be taking from the beginning of August until the end of October. I have decided to focus on two things.

Firstly I will be endeavouring to translate into modern English four of the homilies of John Chrysostom on St Matthew's Gospel. They are in Greek. I have always found it fascinating to read Christian texts from the early centuries. Of course we look to the Bible as our foundation text, but is it not wonderful that we have other texts also from generations ago which testify to how Christians were faithful in their time? John Chrysostom, 4th century, actually preached on umpteen books of the Bible. A large collection of his work has come down to us. His sermons tell us not just about his own faith but also about life in the Christian world of his time. I am working with others from different parts of the world on the translation and we are hoping that eventually the translations of all ninety homilies will be published.

I will also be doing a little genealogical research into some of the mysteries and missing links in my father's family line. It is amazing what can be discovered these days through online genealogy records and also through DNA tests - where it is possible to have a relatively inexpensive test through which one can then see "matches" in an online database. I have already started on this and there can be some remarkable coincidences. The most remarkable one so far was that a "match" (a woman living in Australia) for my father, possibly going back five or six generations, is descended from a family of Moles where one, a Richard Richardson Mole (1795-1840), was a Wesleyan Methodist Minister. Two of his sons were also Wesleyan Methodist Ministers. We have found conclusive evidence that these Moles originated from nearby in the Fens, at Outwell and Walsoken. What a coincidence! The Australian lady had no idea of where Richard Richardson Mole was brought up, so her knowledge of her family background has developed hugely. I can't be certain whether the "match" with my father comes through the Moles (there are so many possible family lines once you go back a few generations), but what a strange possibility that just maybe some eager Methodists in the early 1900s were linked with my ancestors. No doubt there will be more surprises.

So hopefully I will be enriched through exploring our Christian roots from the early centuries and also my own family roots.

Andrew Maguire

Praying together in the Circuit

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you,
the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.

Numbers 6: 24-26

Aaron and his sons were given this priestly prayer to pray over the Israelites. In 1 Peter 2: 9 Christians are called a royal priesthood called to pray for those with whom we come into contact. We will only know part of their stories, the joys and sorrows, heartaches and concerns woven into a tapestry of memories, some treasured, some too painful to recall. God knows each person completely, every need, concern and care.

Lord, you have searched me and you know me. Psalm 139

Lord, thank you for this season of summer, brightness and colour.
For the beauty around us which you have created for us to enjoy.
We pray for times of blessing, refreshing and renewal for all people.

For children and families enjoying holiday adventures.

For young people waiting for exam results.

Keep each precious person secure in your love and peace.

Let the light of your love shine deep within their being,
dispelling every cloud which overshadows their lives.

Guide, direct and lead them in the way of everlasting life.

Heal the broken hearted, broken families, broken lives.

Comfort and strengthen those who mourn in their darkest hours.

Minister to the families of victims of recent tragedies
and those who sustained injuries.

Restoring, renewing Lord, let your healing love flow.

Prayers have been requested for:-

Derek + Viv, Stephanie, Janice, Amy, Trisha, Linda, Andrew, Mavis,
Julia., Rachel, Judy, Dulcie + Neill, Kelly, Kath, Stephen + Victoria,

William, Tom, Ken + Norma, Brian Osborne, Sarah. Willie receiving treatment and for Valerie, his wife.

For Amy and all the other young people undergoing treatment at UCLH.

For those who can no longer recall precious memories of events and people, leaving them feeling deprived and incomplete. May their dignity be respected. May light shine in to disperse the confusion and recollection break through. For those who are alongside them on their journey. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.

Sylvia Cornwell would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, calls, visits and expressions of condolence on Walters passing; they gave great comfort, peace and reassurance.

A letter sent to the Superintendent

I am the MHA rep for East Anglia. Although 11th June is the official date for an MHA Sunday if any of the churches in the Circuit would like an MHA service at some point in the future I would be happy to fit them in. or an “event” of some kind on a Friday/Saturday afternoon or evening?
Thank you

Pam Bayliss

Around the churches



Downham Market

Ladies Friendship Group

Our two May meetings were a great success Peter Thorpe gave a wonderful slide show of his life as a "Country Bumpkin" it was interesting and amusing. Our outing to Clacton was a beautiful day we had sunshine all day and as they say "we all had a lovely day at the seaside"

July 12th we have a poetry evening and a bake a cake competition.

July 26th Coffee Evening with a Bring and Buy Sale for the Deep Sea Fishermen's Mission

This is our last meeting for the season I hope you all have a nice break.

We commence again Wednesday 13th September 2017

Margaret Fox

Messy Church continues to attract and care for youngsters and their parents and celebrated their third birthday this month. Great fun was had by all as the story of The Prodigal Son evolved, with a feast, fun with binoculars, a pig hunt amongst other things. Then a pair of clowns arrived!!

Our stalwart team who provides freshly cooked lunches every week day continues to provide a vital service both as regards the food and also the companionship. Our property team also works hard behind the scenes ensuring the wellbeing of our premises but (a bit like painting the Forth Bridge) no sooner is one problem sorted before another pops up. Our merry band of volunteers turns up each Saturday morning to provide home made cakes; to set up the varied bric a brac and book stall and erect the gazebo on the grass at the front of the Church for my plant stall. Neighbours of our members have come to buy recently, having been told we have varieties which can't be bought from supermarkets and considerably cheaper than garden centres; 'try the Methodist Church they tell their friends'. I do enjoy having a chat with new gardeners who don't know what to plant where and hearing from long standing customers how the plants they bought years ago are thriving in their gardens. No longer is gardening regarded as an older person's hobby. We really are in fashion now as it is realised (as we've known for a long

time) that gardening can be very therapeutic and good for our health, providing we have someone to do the heavy work. But now there's not so much heavy work as even digging, let alone double digging is said not to be beneficial to the soil. I must admit that years ago my family bought me a plaque saying "Gardening forever, housework whenever". I must say a big thank you to all the folk who bring their discarded plant pots, I've never had to buy any, and also to those who bring clumps or roots they are disposing of from their gardens. If you have a clear out, don't throw anything away, I'll always replant

I must also say a big thank you to all the organisations in the Church who took on one of our thirteen windows to decorate for Easter. It was so good to have the youngsters, Junior and Messy Church, Brownies, Guides and Boys' Brigade produce their interpretation of Easter and I am sure they enjoyed the preparation work. While some groups did arrange flowers the variety of offerings did make the Easter Services more meaningful for us all than just beautiful flowers at every window. The children especially also enjoyed the knitted figures made by Rob Argent and we remembered his sister Sandra Crossley who had also made some of them.

We enjoy good fellowship in so many ways in our church family and hopefully the ripples spread out to others. One lady telling me how well the plants were doing in her garden said looking at them reminded her to come and see what else I had on offer. So let me close this ramble with a piece taken from my previous URC in Southend.

You Matter You might think you don't matter in this world, but because of you someone has a favourite mug to drink their tea out of because you bought it for them.

Someone hears a song on the radio and it reminds them of you.

Someone has read a book you lent them and has got lost in its pages.

Someone remembered a joke you told them and smiled on the bus.

Never think you don't have an impact.

Your fingerprints can't be wiped away from the little acts of kindness you've left behind.

Enjoy the early summer month of July, we're half way through the year already, the days will start to get shorter, so make the most of every moment of every day and keep well.

.Joan Macey

Wimbotsham

In May we reflected on the celebrations of both Aldersgate and Pentecost. First, there was John Wesley's conversion experience when his "heart strangely warmed" whilst attending a Moravian service in Aldersgate on 24th

May 1738. Pentecost reminded us of when the Holy Spirit came upon the early followers of Jesus, fifty days after His Resurrection.

Our other services during the month led by visiting preachers reflected on God's loving presence as a shepherd cares for his sheep and our relationship with God. Members of our own congregation spoke on the theme of visions ... Malcolm on Visions in the Bible and Joy on Visions for the future.

As with other friends from the Circuit, I had the great pleasure of attending "Fired Up" at London Road Methodist in King's Lynn on 20th May when Elizabeth and Philip Batstone were presented with Local Preachers' long service certificates. We heard amusing and inspiring accounts from them both about their first meeting and their Christian experiences. I have fond memories of Elizabeth and Philip and other members of Dersingham Methodist Chapel having worshipped there and attended Philip's Bible Study group whilst I was living in Dersingham in 2013 - 2015.

Which leads me on to happily report that our own Bible Study/House Group has got off to a promising start. We meet on alternate Thursday mornings and would be delighted to have others join us, so please get in touch if you would like to hear more about it.

A reminder that Wimbotsham Chapel is hosting the Fellowship Breakfast at 8.30 am on Saturday 8th July. It will be great to welcome all who can come along.

Mary Davies

Terrington St Clement

At Network Rev. Catherine Dixon spoke about characters from the Bible beginning with "J". These are included in the apocrypha [not in all bibles]; Joel, Judith, Jezebel and Joanna .Catherine told us of their exploits in her usual exuberant style and she was thanked very much for her visit. Rev. Andrew Maguire spoke at our next meeting .He is hoping to learn more about Joseph Chrysostom, a great preacher in the 4th century, on his coming sabbatical. He told us some of what he has discovered so far , which proved very interesting, Eileen Spurgeon read from Helen Steiner -Rice about Hatred and Love and Frauke read from James 3 Verses1-12

We have two more meetings before our Summer break but we hope to have Tea and Chat on the following Wednesday afternoons 2.30.-4pm .Everyone is welcome.

Wednesdays July 26th, August 9th and 23rd in the chapel.

Linda Howling

Dersingham

Our Flower Festival is over and was again very successful both financially and with regard to the support from people from the village and from friends from around the Circuit. The sum of £2,390 was raised, £500 of which has been donated to the charity "Look Good, Feel Better". This charity supports cancer sufferers at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who are going through the traumas of chemotherapy by supplying wigs, make up and skincare. The positive results of knowing they look good helps them to feel better. Thank you to all those who came and supported us. It was good to see you.

A concert by the West Norfolk Reeds, a group of clarinet players, will take place on Saturday 24th June. This will be part of Methodism's Radical Hospitality project so admission will be free with free refreshments, a gift from the church to the community instead of asking the community to support the church all the time with money making events. We hope to have a good response.

The Coffee Morning on Saturday 29th July will be in aid of Vasculitis UK. Another Chicken Foot evening was arranged in June and this resulted in £48 being given to Tapping House and £48 for Church Funds. We are grateful to Rene Hayward for continuing to arrange these popular and amusing events. The next one is in August.

On the 23rd July we are expecting about 40 Boys and Girls Brigade members from Chelmsford to our morning service. They will be camping at Wolferton. It will be good to welcome them among us.

Rosemary Caink

Pott Row Methodist Chapel

Strawberry afternoon Tea.

Saturday July 8th at 3pm

Plenty of Sandwiches, Cake and of course Strawberries.

Entertainment by The Springwood Cello Group.

Hope to see you there

For more information Ring Beryl on 01485 600593.

North Lynn

There was life!

So ended the words from North Lynn in the June 'Rejoice' But what of the remainder of the story of the Mustard and Cress that grew in our Easter Garden?

Well the seedlings grew and grew and grew. The whole table on which the garden stood was a swathe of green heading skywards. We turned the garden regularly so the growth was even. At that point we wondered about harvesting the crop and offering it to go in egg sandwiches, but refrained.

So a living illustration of new life appearing from desolation. A true example of the Christian message. We tended the garden and sustained it until Whitsun. But would it last until Pentecost?

Well indeed it just did! Looking in need of the Holy Spirit to lift the bending stalks we were reminded that it wasn't the plants that needed a revival – it was us. The messages of Easter, Whitsun and Pentecost come afresh to us each year and enable spiritual growth to be carried into our church life. As a visual reminder we were given a 'Prayer Candle' as part of the world wide Anglican 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative, encouraging prayers for church growth between Ascension and Pentecost and we lit ours on many occasions during that time. And did that happen? Well through prayer, praise and participation in the community, our regular activities have continued to prosper. In addition we now have a working party coming regularly on a Friday to tidy the patio and garden area at the back of church. Hopefully we can then have a few outdoor events during the summer. (Possibly to rival the wonderful 'Celebrate' in the Walks)!

We have met to consider the next stage of our redevelopment and are to meet two prospective architects in the near future to brief them as to our vision and then see who can offer (and at what price) the concept we favour most.

Rev. Becca advised us of the next steps towards building of the new vicarage next to our church – she still has a hope to be moved in by Christmas! Two giant trenches were dug near the proposed foundations to see what was under the surface. Just as well they were dug! One site revealed a 415volt electric cable (not a good place for foundations) the other revealed fascinating archaeological history. At about 2 metres down they found sand and at 3 metres peat, evidence

that this area was both on the seashore and earlier covered in marshy forest. Indeed a sample of a tree branch was thought to be 100,000 years old. The foundations will be laid accordingly.

Finally we held our annual meeting at the beginning of June. We reviewed the work done and talked of the work still to do – prayer groups, faith explanation groups, extending hospitality into the community.

Sadly however there was another task to do. Heather and I are to retire (properly) to Lincoln in the near future. We were wished every happiness and thanked for our work in North Lynn. As is 'normal' we ended with a delicious lunch and were joined by St. John's, the Minster and 'Filling Station' congregations – thanks to all who provided and set up the hall so beautifully.

So in the spirit of post Easter renewal, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, North Lynn looks outwards to the community as we offer a blend of sacred, social and learning opportunities.

Neville Posnett
(who will miss writing for Rejoice each month)

As we will miss you. Every blessing as you put down your roots in Lincoln. Ed.

St Faith's Gaywood

The first sermon preached by St Faith's new Team Vicar, the Rev. Karlene Kerr, was on Sunday, June 4 - Pentecost.

She began her sermon by telling the congregation that she was half hoping a "gust of wind" would have carried her from her home in Jermyn Road to the church but admitted that, no, what had happened on that first Pentecost thousands of years ago, was a "once and for all time" event.

"Today we celebrate the birthday of the church - so Happy Birthday one and all," she said.

We were told by the Rev. Kerr that Luke, the writer of Acts, marks the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as a key event in "Salvation" history.

Pentecost, which means 50 - was so named because 50 days after the Passover, the law was given to Moses at Mount Sinai. It was also when people celebrated the first crops of the Promised Land. Jews came together at Pentecost to celebrate both the harvest and receiving God's law. As Christians, we, of course, celebrate Pentecost 50 days after Easter.

We were told by the Rev. Kerr that the 12 Apostles , other Disciples and Jesus' family were all together in one place when suddenly God makes his appearance in "sound and light".

"The sound is from heaven and is like the blowing of a violent wind which fills the whole house," she said.

The divided tongues that appeared seemed to be flames of fire, which rests on each person.

"This outward sign gives them an inner experience - they were filled with the Holy Spirit, which leads to an external expression of God's presence".

The Spirit inspires their speech and they all began to speak in different human languages other than their own native tongues".

Here is a further sign that something extraordinary has happened.

The ultimate cause of what they were experiencing is found in God, as the prophet Joel had foretold.

"God promised in the last days - to pour out his Spirit on all people" we were told..

Joel had used the imagery of a torrential downpour on parched earth to represent the coming of the Spirit.

The Rev. Karlene says it is a wonderful picture of God's generosity, it suggests abundance - God's Spirit raining down on a parched earth is saying that God is literally pouring himself out liberally - not in "bits and drabs".

John, the Gospel writer says that Jesus gives the Disciples their mission: "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you".

The Disciples are given the authority to bring people back to God, to reconcile those who have become separated from God.

This is ultimately the mission of today's Church - to work with God in building up His Kingdom.

We were told that the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost enables and equips us to do just that.

At any age we should expect to find a church filled with the Holy Spirit, enabling us to bear witness to Christ and his Gospel

The Rev Kerr said: "The coming of the Spirit, in such a spectacular way, may have been a once for all event, but God's spirit is constantly at work for each of us today".

"We just need to be open to the reality of his presence in ways we may not be expecting", she told us.

In conclusion, the Rev Kerr said: "We need to pray continually for the Spirit to lead us and guide us, we need to listen to the Spirit and we need to be ready to boldly seize the moment".

We look forward to listening to many more sermons from the Rev. Kerr and to getting to know her much better over the coming months. We wish her every success and happiness in her new ministry among us at St Faith's.

Regular readers of Rejoice! magazine will be aware that for the past six years I have served as one of two Anglican churchwardens at St Faith's. The two churchwardens work together as a team with our three Methodist stewards - Joan Greening (senior steward), Betty Guy and Irene Moll, being on duty each Sunday and generally working to facilitate the smooth running of the church for its programme of services and occasional special services.

I would like to sincerely thank former Churchwardens Dennis Stafford and Juanita Hawthorne for their support as fellow Churchwardens with me at various times.

Under the current Anglican rules, the post holders step down after serving six years and this I have now duly done.

I find it hard to believe that it is now more than six years since former St Faith's Rector, Canon Beryl Wood, first suggested to me that I might like to consider standing for election as Churchwarden.

At the recent Vestry annual meeting, held immediately before the Church Council Trustees annual meeting, Ian Swinton and Susie Cranko-Page were elected to serve as the new churchwardens. I offer them my warmest congratulations and hope they will enjoy carrying out their roles as much as I have,

In carrying out the role of Churchwarden at St Faith's, I have tried (not always succeeding) my best to serve God and our joint Church membership and, in various ways, the wider Gaywood community.

I feel it has always been a team effort and I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank St Faith's clergy teams and Methodist ministers (past and present) and my fellow churchwardens and Methodist steward friends for their wonderful support and encouragement that has always been shown me while carrying out my duties. Thanks to be God.

I am pleased to say that at the first meeting of the Church Council Trustees' New Year, I was elected to serve as a deputy warden serving alongside my friend and fellow deputy warden, Gill Hiles.

Over the past few years the St Faith's Coffee morning, held on the first Saturday of each month in Gaywood Church Rooms, has proved very popular. Church members and people from the wider community would drop in, enjoy a coffee (or tea) and a piece of cake or a scone and sit for a while and chat with their friends. *All proceeds go towards then on-going running costs of St Faith's Church.*

Now the Outreach committee has been working behind-the-scenes to give something of a "new look" to the event.

For the Coffee Morning on Saturday, August 5th, the doors will be open from

10am until 12 noon. Refillable coffees and tea will be available for 50p and cakes will be £1 each.

For the first time ,local traders have been invited to become involved and set up their stalls and two of these will include Bowers the Butchers, of Gaywood, and Smith's the Bakers, of Lynn.

Entry is free to the event and the Outreach committee hopes that lots of people from within the church, as well as from the wider Gaywood community, will come along and support the new look event.

The August 5th Coffee Morning also marks the start of the Norwich Diocese annual Open Churches Week. During the next week (from August 6th) the church will be open for people to call in for private prayer or just to enjoy the peace and quiet of the beautiful church building.

More information about the new-look Coffee Morning and Open Churches Week can be obtained by contacting St Faith's Church Office on 01553 774916 weekdays between 9am and 12 noon.

Richard Parr

Grovel, grovel, grovel.

This is an official apology for the mix up last month. I humbly beg the pardon of those whose articles were affected. Downham and North Lynn made reference to it and resubmitted their articles, so I hope the rest of pages omitted did not cause too many problems. **Ed. (Unless I am now sacked!)**



Any items for the **AUGUST** edition (Penance!) should be with the editor by **JULY 12th**, earlier if possible. **If you don't get an acknowledgment of emails PLEASE enquire if I have received them as some articles have found their way into my spam bin which I don't check very often!**

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**General information about arrangements in the Circuit during
Andrew Maguire's sabbatical
1st August 2017 to 31st October 2017**

Stephen Oliver will be Acting Superintendent.

We are doing our best to find additional offers from preachers during the sabbatical to cover for the services Andrew would normally take.

Maurice Stafford will take responsibility (in co-operation with Maggie Blowers and Sheila Johnson) for making the December 2017 to February 2018 Plan.

Catherine Dixon will chair the Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Meeting.

Gail Kerry will have pastoral responsibility for Clenchwarton and is willing, if needed and subject to her availability, to take funerals at Clenchwarton, Terrington St Clement and St Germans.

Gail, again subject to her availability, will also cover for baptisms in these three villages if needed. Gail is the "authorised person" for marriages anyway at Terrington St Clement.

Maurice Stafford will have pastoral charge at St Germans and chair the Church Council.

Catherine Dixon will have pastoral charge at Terrington St Clement and chair the Church Council.

Rebecca Rogers will have responsibility at North Lynn - where she already shares fully in the ministry as an "authorised to serve" Methodist Presbyter.

Catherine Dixon, with Andrew, is a Methodist member of the Ministry Team at St Faith's and will, working with the ecumenical team there, ensure that the responsibilities of the Methodist Minister at St Faith's are covered as needed. Julie Boyd and Andrew Maguire normally share (alternate meetings) the responsibility for chairing the Church Council. Julie will chair on the occasions when Andrew might normally have done so.

A big thank you to everybody for support during this period.

Where do baby apes sleep at night?

In an apricot!!

Safeguarding

We all know that churches need to be safe places. Many of us have attended a **Creating Safer Space** training session in the past. Things have moved on since that training module was introduced. There is a fresh understanding of some of the areas of abuse and the needs of all who experience abuse. The Methodist Church has decided that those people who were trained previously now need to attend a **Foundation Module Refresher** to ensure that they are up to date.

There are many people who need to attend. They include:

- Pastoral visitors
- Anyone working with 0 - 18 year olds in the name of the church
- Anyone working in activities targeted at adults who are vulnerable
- Church stewards
- Local preachers
- Worship Leaders
- Presbyters and Deacons

The sessions will be held on several occasions and in different places across the Circuit. Please note these sessions are for people who have already attended the original Foundation Training. If you are in one of the above posts and have not already attended the Foundation Training, a different session will be arranged for you. There will be more information about this later.

The dates for the Safeguarding Refresher Course which everyone who did the original course needs to do are;

Monday July 10th at 9.30am at Dersingham

Monday 24th July at 2.00pm at London Rd.

Friday 15th September at Downham Market at 9.30am

Please contact Linda Howling at lindahowling1948@gmail.com

01553829146 or mob. 07445340234 to book a place. We will be restricted to 24 per session

PRAYER HANDBOOK 2017/18 – JESUS THE FIRST AND THE LAST

Prayer Handbooks for Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, ministers and supernumeraries will be provided free of charge. Please let me know by **22nd July** at the latest if you would like me to order a copy for you.

Churches are also able to receive a copy free of charge, stewards please let me know if you require a copy.

Copies can be ordered as in previous years for anyone else wanting a copy either through your church contact or by contacting me.

The cost of handbooks is £3.50 each (for 10 copies or more). Large print copies are available at the same cost. Delivery will be mid-August approx.

LWPT DIARIES

Please let me know by 22nd July if you require a diary, cost £5.50, may be lower £5 if 10 or more copies ordered. Delivery should be early September.

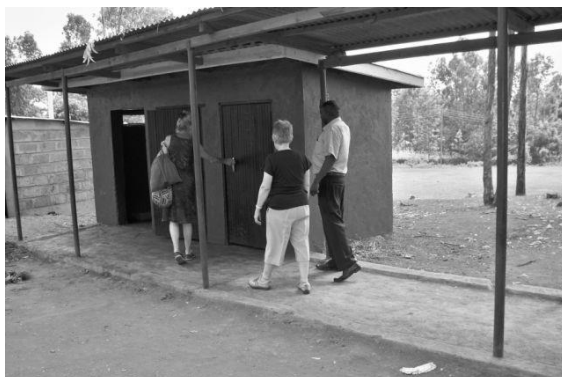
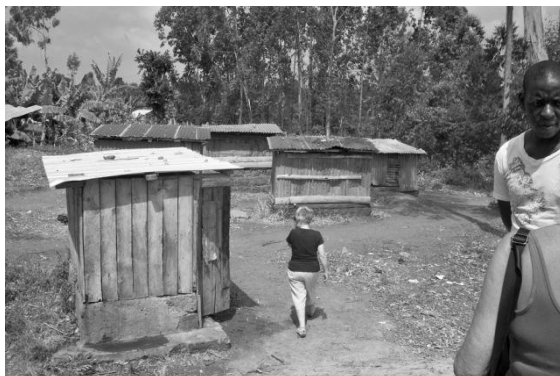
Elizabeth Batstone
Email: pebatstone@gmail.com
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Where do baby apes sleep at night?
In an apricot!!

**Talk on their Kenyan trip by Andrew and Helen Maguire on
Friday 21st July at 7.00 p.m
at Downham Market Methodist Church**

We (Helen and Andrew) will show pictures of the places we visited, especially in Kivuria mid- Kenya. We stayed at the Denis Marshall Foundation where the charity 'Peacemakers' International' support a local school. People with disabilities of all kinds are also given paid work there. We spent a truly wonderful week.

Do come and hear of our interesting experiences and help raise much needed money towards water points for handwashing and improvements to toilets in the school.



THREE SCORE YEARS AND TEN

With all the excitement of my 100th birthday last year another very important occasion got overlooked, the 70th anniversary of my ordination on 18th July 1946 at Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London. I am so pleased that the preacher was the Rev. Dr WJ Noble who seven years before had first suggested that I should be a Methodist minister. Ordination is very important to us in the Methodist Church, but since the services are only held once a year and in connection with the Conference in one of our major cities, many good Methodists never have the opportunity of attending one, so perhaps I may explain what happens.

During the afternoon, at the Conference itself, the ordinands are "received into full connexion" i.e. formally recognised as Methodist ministers by a standing vote resolving that they be ordained by prayer and the imposition of hands. The ordination service is conducted by the President, or an ex-President, who solemnly reminds them of their high calling: (I quote from the modern service) "You are called to the ordained ministry within the ministry of the whole Church. It will be your task as ambassadors on behalf of Christ to preach the gospel by word and deed, to declare God's forgiveness to penitent sinners, to baptize, to confirm, to preside at the celebration of the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, to lead God's people in worship and prayer, to care for them in sickness and health, to teach them and equip them for their service. You must set the Good Shepherd before you as your pattern."

Ordination vows are made relating to the Scriptures, the doctrine and discipline of the Church, faithfulness in prayer and study. Each one chooses a minister friend to stand alongside him (or her). They go forward in groups of five. The President and others taking part, as well as the assisting ministers, all place their hand on the head of each one, with the prayer "Father, send the Holy Spirit upon (name) for the office and work of a minister in the Church of Christ." An Ordination Bible is then given to each one with the words "I declare that you have authority to preach the word of God and to administer the holy sacraments as a Minister in the Church of God. Be shepherds to the flock of Christ. Hold up the weak; bind up the broken; bring again the outcasts; seek the lost. So be merciful

that you are not remiss; so minister discipline that you forget not mercy”
.... A tall order!

Normally before this the ordinands will have had three years in theological college and two in Circuit but I had spent all those years of probation as a wartime soldier in the British army with no access to books or opportunity for study. I suppose I learnt quite a lot in the university of life, how to get on with all sorts of people, see the best in everyone, four and a half years in the Middle East and Italy. Being chief clerk of my unit was not a bad preparation for becoming a synod secretary and living under discipline is something I have never got out of my system. But I blush to recall my greenness when, a few weeks later, we put just seventeen boxes, a pram, a sewing machine and a bicycle (the one I rode up my 90s) on the back of an open truck – no removal van in those days – and drove in a borrowed car to our first manse.

So to my first Sunday in Circuit. I forgot the Lord’s Prayer. I missed out a lesson and two of the hymns. At the close of the service the steward came forward and said “We usually have a collection, Sir” I took as my text “I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me.” Those good folk soon found that there were lots of things their young minister couldn’t do but they were very kind, as people have been to me for all of the seventy years.

John Garfoot

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West Norfolk Methodist Circuit Diary

JULY 2017 onwards

Saturday July 8th Fellowship Breakfast at Wimbotsham at 8.30 am

Saturday July 8th Strawberry Tea at Pott Row at 3pm

Monday July 10th Safeguarding Refresher Course at Dersingham at 9.30 am

Friday July 21st Talk about Kenyan sanitary arrangements at Downham Market at 7pm

Monday 24th July Safeguarding Refresher Course at London Road at 2.00pm.

Saturday August 12th Fellowship Breakfast at Pott Row at 8.30 am

Saturday September 9th Fellowship Breakfast at St Germans at 8.30 am

Friday 15th September Safeguarding Refresher Course at Downham Market at 9.30 am

Saturday October 14th Fellowship Breakfast at Downham at 8.30 am

Saturday October 11th MWiB Autumn District Day at Ely Methodist Church

Saturday November 11th Fellowship Breakfast at Marham at 8.30 am