

SYDENHAM METHODIST CHURCH MAGAZINE

2017



“COME AND WORSHIP”

From the editor.



Well - time really does fly! It doesn't seem like a year since our first publication of this Annual Church Magazine and here we are now having completed issue 2 which covers the timespan May 2016 to May 2017.

Once again I would like to say "thank you" to all who have contributed articles for this edition, and also thanks to everyone who has helped and encouraged its publication.

One of the comments I heard time after time since last year's publication is that "I didn't know so much went on in our church" and I hope this present edition is equally informative.

We are blessed in being members of the lively and caring fellowship of Christians called Sydenham Methodist Church. There is a lot going on in our church and this makes my job of gathering material for publication so much easier.

I hope you will enjoy reading this edition of the magazine. I am always open to suggestions on how it can be improved so feel free to speak to me or contact me at sylviamaxwell45@gmail.com.

Finally a word of advance notice - I'm now on the lookout for items for next year's edition - so please let me know of things happening that would be of interest to our wider church family.

Sylvia.

LETTER FROM THE MANSE

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this edition of our church magazine. I trust that as you read it, you will see that Sydenham Methodist continues to be a thriving and active church family.

During the year, there have been many highlights, not least when we ran out of Christingles at our annual Christingle Service before Christmas - where we had just over 200 people that evening - far more than we were anticipating.

It is a constant joy to see the number of young people and children who attend our uniformed organisations and other groups, and as always, I'm grateful to God for the many volunteers who serve within our church. From the MWI to Knit & Natter; from Parents & Tots to Senior's Fellowship; from Bowls to Badminton there really is something for everyone here.

During the year, we said thanks to Steph Neilands who finished her work as our Family & Children's Worker, and we have recently welcomed Tanita Robson as our new Community & Family Worker, building on the wonderful work that Steph has done. Tanita will be organising The Holiday Bible Week for Primary school age children from 21st – 25th August.

For a while now the Church Council, along with the Finance & Property Committee, have been considering about how we might modernise the vestibule area, and whilst at the time of writing this there is no decision, please know that if we do proceed with any refurbishment, the congregation will be kept fully informed.

As a congregation, we seek to be people who grow deeper in our love for God and each other. To that end, missional discipleship remains high on my agenda, as we seek to encourage each other in our journey of faith. Our prayer network continues to reach 60 people with prayer requests. Our Bible Study has between 15-20 attending, and our small groups totals about 30 people.



Messy Church reaches out to young families in our community, and Coffee Kindness continues to show God's love in a practical way with relationships being established with regular rail commuters.

In Sydenham, we are blessed to have so many gifted people who serve in leading worship. From the praise team and organists; to those on our rota for leading prayers, reading Scripture and doing the children's talk; to our Local Preachers, we are extremely well catered for.

It is worthy of note that Mrs Doreen Minnis celebrates 60 years as a Fully Accredited Local Preacher on 9th July, following in the footsteps of Mr Lewis Fisher, who celebrated 60 years as a Local Preachers a couple of years ago. And Don Murdock will be celebrating 60 years as a Local Preacher in the not too distant future.

I am grateful to God for such wonderful long-standing service and it is also an encouragement to see some younger Local Preachers who are in training.

During this year, Mr Andrew Irvine has been on placement with us as a Ministerial student, and we have been blessed and encouraged by his ministry amongst us. We pray for Andrew as he continues his studies

and formation for ministry, along with his important work as Chief Operating Officer in East Belfast Mission.

During the year, we have sought to enjoy a deeper level of fellowship with our friends from Strand Presbyterian Church and St. Brendan's Parish Church through monthly united worship, as well as through sharing Holy Week and summer evening worship together, which will continue this July and August.

Our Pastoral team continue to visit with some church members, particularly those who are housebound and in Care homes, and who, along with our Church visitors, provide a vital link with everyone in our church family. I'm always grateful to those who keep me informed about pastoral needs around the congregation, to which I can respond.

As we continue to share in God's life together as a church family, may each of you know the Lord's love and grace in your life each day.

Yours in Christ,

Robin



Nathan and Robin helping in the Dock during the Volunteers Evening.



Coffee Time

*Sunday morning
coffee, still
happening!*



*We are grateful to God for our church family and
having the opportunity to catch up with each other
each week after the service.*

*We are so blessed by our volunteers
and for those willing to pour tea &
coffee and set out chairs each week.*





Any donations of buns are gratefully received (devoured!!)



Everyone is welcome! Please come along, just watch out for the rowdies at the back of the hall!



From our Circuit Steward

We are blessed to have so much on offer in the life of our church. Our groups and organisations enjoy a full programme. We have something to offer everyone - I hope!

From the youngest child - Creche, Parents and Tots, to the older generation - Seniors' Fellowship. Sandwiched in between those are various activities. Church life offers us groups that encourage "down time" to enjoy fellowship with one another, and get to know people. Thanks to all those who make these events and activities happen.



On Sunday 2 April, we had a visit from the Reverend Bill Mullally - President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, along with his wife Val. Bill challenged us with his thought provoking sermon. Val contributed too with creative children's talk.

At Easter we joined again with St Brendan's and Strand Presbyterian for our Holy Week services. We hosted the services this year. All three ministers joined in sharing their thoughts.

On Good Friday, our church was open for private prayer in the afternoon. That evening we had a "Tenebrae" service which was both moving and reflective. We hope that these services were a blessing for all who attended.



Our Life Together Groups have been studying various topics from politics to human sexuality. They continue to be a valuable way to connect with each other and God. As a member of a Life Together Group I look forward to our time together, studying and socialising! It is enriching to study God's Word together.

Our uniformed organisations continue to be busy. The GB display on 7 April was an enjoyable evening. The girls showed us something of what they do each week.



On Friday 28 April, we had a barn dance. A good way to exercise and chat!

In January 2017, we thanked Stephanie Neilands for her committed and enthusiastic service as our Family Worker. Then on Sunday 7 May we were introduced to our new Community and Family Worker - Tanita Robson. We look forward to getting to know Tanita more as she works with us.



We continue to receive prayer requests through our Prayer Network. If you would like to join our texting network, please get in touch with Robin.

As summer is almost upon us, we remember our young people in our prayers who are taking exams. We also pray for those who will be involved in outreach work over the summer.

Please continue to pray for Robin, Deryn, Rachel and Nathan. We are thankful for the blessing they have been. Please pray that they would have a refreshing summer break. We pray that God would continue to empower Robin with His Spirit. I know so many of you have been grateful for Robin's pastoral ministry.

I hope your summer is safe and restful. May we return ready and willing to serve again.

Take care.

Carolyn Hall
Circuit Steward



**We welcomed into our church family, through the
Sacrament of Baptism or Dedication**

26 June 2016

**Rosie Bodell,
daughter of Craig & Lydia.
Gemma Curry,
daughter of Richard & Donna.
Reuben Hamilton,
son of David & Ashleigh.**

16 October 2016

**Leo Matt Thompson,
son of Alan & Sonya.**

23 October 2016

**Rose Abigail Spence,
daughter of Timmy & Jenni.**

5 February 2017

**Amelia Martha Kane,
daughter of Andrew & Amanda.**

30 April 2017

**Harry Samuel Corbett,
son of Simon & Debbie.**



Congratulations to those recently married:

Stephen Gordon & Rachel McAuley

16 July 2016

Ryan McNaul & Christine Bennet

12 August 2016

Richard Curry & Donna Moore

3 September 2016

Ken McGuffin & Helen Fee

5 February 2017

We give thanks to God for those who now celebrate

The fullness of life:

Eveleen Darling - 20 July 2016

Tom Matthews - 17 September 2016

Roberta Galbraith - 20 September 2016

Billy Patterson - 6 November 2016

Jackie Carson – 9 February 2017

Aaron Bennett - 20 May 2017



Prayer Network

The early years.

The idea to form a Prayer Network came from a former member of our congregation, Trevor Moore, many years ago. Trevor approached people from our church to become prayer partners. There was a good response to his request and for some years he was responsible for coordinating the scheme. However, Trevor and his wife Evelyn moved house and this necessitated them leaving our congregation.

The era of the typewriter.

It was at this point that Trevor asked Rita and I to take over the responsibility of overseeing the prayer network knowing that Rita could type the schedule detailing the names of the prayer partners who had offered to serve in this ministry.



This was done for some years, updating the names and telephone numbers, amending the schedule as necessary.

Then, as in life, most things change and we moved into

The technological age.



We bought a computer! This enabled us carry on as before but also to be able to store and retrieve information and amend it much easier. Then someone mentioned that, when they prayed for people or situations, they would like to have an update if possible. I raised this suggestion with the then Quarterly Meeting in December 2002, when Rev. Ken Robinson was the Superintendent. There are no prizes for who got the job! The first Prayer Network Update was issued in January 2002 and produced every month of the year except during July and August, when they are combined.

In February 2016, the Rev. Robin Waugh suggested we offer the option of receiving prayer requests by text as well as telephone. This has been very successful. Currently we have over sixty people who receive requests by telephone.



We are always glad to receive new prayer partners and if you wish to join us, please speak to either Robin or myself.

The mobile number to phone, either to request prayer or to join the texting system is 07398501495 or if you prefer, the manse number is (028)9047 1782.

It is a privilege to pray for people who need prayer.

Over the years, we have prayed for people, both at home and as far away as New Zealand, Tasmania, Canada and the U.S.A.

We have had many wonderful answers to prayer and hope many more of our congregation will consider the invitation to join us in this ministry of prayer.

Jack Boyce.



Community and Family Worker

Hello, my name is Tanita Robson and I am delighted to start working at Sydenham Methodist Church. I am quite a talkative person so I have no doubt you will all find out about me soon enough but here is some basic info to start with.

I am getting married in September to Andy Lee which is exciting. I am also back at my parents' house after nearly 7 years being away and I am enjoying being a Forever Living Business Owner promoting health and wellbeing through aloe-vera based products.

I have just moved back to Northern Ireland after over 2 ½ years of Children and Families work in Warwickshire, during which I completed my Local Preachers Course.

I am not a stranger to East Belfast having previously worked at East Belfast Mission, for 3 years, as their Youth and Children's Assistant Worker. In this time, I completed my Masters distance learning through Cliff College, England. Previous to my time in EBM, I studied at Belfast Bible College for my degree through Queens University.

Recently I have noticed I have a pattern of working and learning/studying and I imagine being at Sydenham will be no exception... I enjoy learning, reading and chatting about faith.



Alpha

One of my favourite programmes is the Alpha Course. I think it's a great opportunity to engage with people and talk about faith in a non-threatening environment. Therefore, it comes as no surprise to me that I moved home recently and less than 24 hours later I found myself at an Alpha course!

One thing I have become more aware of over the past 18 months is that the journey with God is never boring and so I am excited for this new chapter and getting to be a part of the worshipping community at Sydenham.

I am looking forward to not only being back in the East Belfast community but specifically in Sydenham getting to know the local schools again, meeting with other Christians and churches in the area to see what they are already doing and to continue the great work that Steph and her team have already begun, and to dream big with God for His kingdom in this place.

I tend to think of myself as a child pretending to be an adult ... and to be honest I think there is a little bit of childlikeness in each of us. I love how children and young people see and experience God in different ways than we adults sometimes do. We all too easily forget how to be free from fear and allow uncertainty and doubt to hold us back. Children tend to launch

into things and fully experience the situation before fear or doubt have a chance to set in.

I think it is important that church families allow all those who walk through the door to be a part of the life and worship of church, regardless of their age. One of my biggest passions it to see children and young people realise and reach their potential in Christ. Also, to allow this to flow over into the adults who watch their faith develop and for us to also discover our potential in Christ. I don't think there is any role within church life that is outside the capabilities of a child or young person's input, if we are just more willing to step out on the journey of discovering this with them. (I'm willing to chat and be challenged about this if you disagree.)

We have so much to learn from children in how they think and relate to God. Therefore it's important that we allow them to lead us too.



Laura's favourite hymn

Choosing my favourite hymn was harder for me than I thought. Nowadays, there is such a range of different songs - new modern songs that for me are easier to connect with and old classics that will never lose their meaning. Every time you go to a service in a different church there seems to be songs that I have never heard of.

For me, my favourite worship song is *In Christ Alone*. This is a song that is played everywhere and there are so many different versions of this song, there is a version for everyone. I love this song because it follows through the story of Christ's life and resurrection. The song starts off showing us how much Jesus loves us- *'What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease'*. This is powerful, as it shows me Jesus' love is boundless and is always there for me even when times are hard. The next verse goes on to tell us about how Jesus laid down his life for us and how he suffered on the cross. To me, this verse really reminds me of the reasons Jesus did this - *'For every sin on Him was laid'*, and that he did it all for us. The 3rd verse then goes on to show us how he rose and how he *'stands in victory'* with sin no longer having the same effect on the world as it once had. The last verse is my favourite verse. They say every story has a happy ending and this verse reminds me of what my happy ending will be. *'No power of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from His hand'*. This reminds me that nothing can separate me from him and that he will be with me for the rest of my life. This song has been described as timeless and I truly think that it is. The lyrics are so powerful and for me will never lose their sense of meaning. *Laura Gray*


is the voice of the soul

9th East Belfast Squirrels

Squirrels cater for boys aged 4-6 years old at Sydenham Methodist Church. We meet every Wednesday evening for one hour. We currently have 10 Squirrels who take part in a range of activities towards our SMILE badges. We have learned about healthy eating with our fruit men and regularly create big Art Attacks.



9th Beavers

Beavers have been busy since our last report. Some of our older boys joined with other Beavers in the District for a sleepover. This enabled some of our boys to gain the highest award in Beavers, the Chief Scout Bronze Award.. We finished last year with an outing to Dundonald Bowling, where everyone had a great night. We also said goodbye to Valerie our Assistant Beaver Leader. Valerie had been with the Beavers since 2002 and was a great asset to the Colony. She is very much missed. We were delighted when Anna Rainey, a young member of church, asked to come and help at Beavers. We started back in September with 18 boys and had a very busy month. We completed our Emergency stage 1 for some new boys and stage 2 for our older boys. We also learnt about different disabilities that people can suffer from and completed our Disability Badge. In October we joined with other Beavers in Northern Ireland at Armagh Planetarium to start our Space Badge. Our Family and Children Worker Stephanie joined us for the day, where we learnt a lot more about space. This was a great day out organised by our Northern Ireland Commissioner for Beavers. We then finished our Badge over the next few weeks. In November we started our Safety Badge. 8 Beavers moving into the Cub Pack.

We also had a few more boys join us from the Squirrel Drey. At Christmas, we finished with a visit from Santa and a party.

We started our Air Activities Badge in January, when Ben Fullerton came along and explained different aspects of flight. With his help, our boys completed their Air Activity stage 1 Badge. Some boys took part in the District Unihoc Competition. We didn't win but we had fun.

During February and March, we learnt about different cultures. We celebrated Chinese New Year, heard about St. Patrick and how he is the Patron Saint of Ireland.

We have had a very busy time so far and we have other outings planned for May but will tell you all about them the next time we write.

From the Beaver Leaders and Helper



9th Cub Pack

Our Cubs for 8 – 11 year olds, have been learning many skills, including craft, knotting, first aid, and much more, while completing badgework as set by Scout HQ. They have taken part in District Unihoc, 5 aside football (which we hosted) and an art competition, as well as joining with the District at our St. George's Day Parade.

There have been special activities and a new badge to wear for the year as we were celebrating the Centenary of the Cub Section. On May 16, 4 of our Cubs and their Fathers joined Cubs from all over Belfast at a camp to celebrate the Centenary. They experienced many outdoor activities and had a brilliant time.

Following this, one of the Dads, James Banham agreed to join the Cub Team as Akela in September, and has settled in very well so" Welcome James" and "Thanks for joining our Leadership Team."

9th Scout Troop

Our Scout Troop for 11 – 14 year olds, have increased their Scouting Skills, while having fun and learning to work together in their Patrols. We were pleased to welcome Jeremy Hamilton as a new Leader in that Section. Jeremy had been a Cub with us when his Dad Rev. Billy Hamilton was our Minister.

The Scouts have been learning skills such as knotting, pioneering, tent pitching, First Aid, how to wire plugs, and some plumbing skills which were part of the Handyman Badge and have done most elements of the Cyclist Badge. They have also joined with the District at our St. George's Day Parade.

Unfortunately, our Explorer Scouts have closed temporarily, but we were so pleased that Laura Gray, who has now moved from Explorers to become an Adult Leader, has completed all requirements to achieve her Queen's Scout Award – well done Laura.

70th Anniversary

Our Scout Group was formed in 1947, and we are therefore celebrating our 70th Anniversary this year. We had a Dinner for Leaders on Saturday 25th February and were pleased to be joined by Leaders who had recently left our Group. We had a great time, good food and great fellowship together.



The following day was our Special Founder's Day Service, very ably led by Aarin Trimble, with other members participating. Rev. Waugh kept the boys very interested in his Address, which was evident by their good behaviour as they listened intently. After the Service, we moved to the Hall, where we had a super Anniversary Cake, which had been baked and beautifully decorated for us by Rebekah Bryans. We thank her for that. Georgie Beckett, whose husband Roly was a previous Group Scout Leader, helped cut the cake. We had communication from a Dr. Hodgett from England, who had been a Scout in our Group in the 1950's and he would have been keen to attend our celebrations, but due to illness that did not work out. However, as he visits NI once a year, he will make contact when he next comes over. It was good to hear from him, read of his experiences and his gratitude for the training he received while in our Scouts, without which, he says, he would not have come so far in Academia and life generally.

Our Cubs & Scouts have enjoyed a weekend camp at Crawfordsburn Scout Centre as part of our Anniversary celebrations and our Squirrels and Beavers will join together for a visit to the Zoo at the end of this session. Hopefully in the Autumn we will celebrate some more. We look forward to the new session and hopefully more boys to join us.

Ann (Group Scout Leader)



Just for Fun



Thanks to Stephen Olsch (See Genesis 4-11)
WE WERE TOLD YOU WERE TAKING CREATURES THAT CAME TO YOU IN PEARS



"Please don't pray for healing. If it works, your insurance won't know who to reimburse and it messes up our accounting system."



From the Treasurer



I'm glad to report that, at the moment, our church finances are in a reasonably healthy condition. It was very pleasing to see an increase of about £4000 in our 2016 Free Will Envelope offerings compared with 2015, and hopefully this will be an ongoing increasing trend.

Our income from Gift Aid has remained reasonably constant at about £11,000 over the past few years, and I would encourage anyone who has not yet signed up for Gift Aid to make contact with Derek Cottney, who will be delighted to give you further information. Our expenditure is also very carefully monitored and budget estimates have been prepared for this current year.

As you may know, Steph Neilands has embarked on a nursing career and is no longer our Children's and Family Worker. Our financial projections showed that we could continue, at least for the first year, to fund this post and it is good to have Tanita Robson as our new Community and Family Worker. Tanita's contract is initially for 1 year, although it could be extended for a further 2 years, depending on the availability of funding, and this is an area which is currently under consideration.

Finally I would like to thank each one of you for your financial support of the Work of God through our Sydenham Church.

Gina Neill

Treasurer



MWI

Why not join our ladies group for fellowship. We meet every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month, from September to May.

We are a very friendly bunch who would make you feel at home.

All ages welcome.

In the past year we have had various guest speakers – some from Christian charities and others speaking on the history of old East Belfast and C.S.Lewis.

We have had various fun nights e.g. quizzes, a night out and ten pin bowling.

Mrs Jean McGuffin receiving her winners Certificate.



*We had an Easter bonnet competition,
when we brought our bonnets to be
judged.*



*Our annual outing is held on a Saturday at the end
of our year.*

Why not give us a try. We'd love to see you.

Witness and Outreach

The work of Witness and Outreach has continued this year. As a committee our desire is to show God's love to the wider community and to provide opportunities for each of us to explore our faith and deepen our relationship with Jesus our Saviour.

As usual there has been a range of activities to help us engage with the people of Sydenham.



Coffee Kindness has continued each week with many regulars of all ages.

We had another very successful 'Meet the Neighbours' event which was very well attended. There was a barbecue, a games hall and a place to sit and enjoy tea and traybakes. It was thoroughly enjoyed by young and old alike.

You're Invited to a



*A new event held this year was our Golden Oldie Film and Afternoon Tea, which was held in December. We gathered to watch a screening of *White Christmas*, complete with popcorn, an interval and choc ices. It was*

lovely to see members of the congregation join with the committee to prepare for and serve the tea. Many who attended said how nice it was to see younger members and many couples helping to serving the tea. It reminded them of when they did the same things in years gone by.

We are always looking for new ideas of ways to reach out to those around us and we would love to hear any new ideas that you might have.

We have continued to have opportunities to spend time in prayer and exploring our faith. There was an Away Day last September, which allowed time for reflection without the interruptions of daily routine.

We have had two prayer breakfasts so far this year. We gathered for a continental breakfast and a devotional time focused on our area and how we could pray effectively.



Every member of the congregation had the opportunity to take a little notebook with the name of a street so that they could record what God was saying to them when they prayed.



The church was open on Good Friday for prayer and we had our second prayer breakfast and reflection on Easter Saturday.

As the year goes on, there will be more opportunities to engage with the people of Sydenham to share the love of Jesus in our area. We are hoping to arrange another 'Meet the Neighbours' event, probably in September and, in October, to have another 'Away Day', at the Tobar Mhuire Retreat and Conference Centre, in Crossgar.

Joanne Young

Ulster Project

The Ulster Project originated in the mid 1970's to help break down the prejudices and stereotypes rooted in 'The Troubles'. Today, it brings teens from different faiths and traditions together to learn from their similarities and differences. It aims to build relationships, foster trust and help these teenagers from Northern Ireland and Wisconsin learn from each other.



What will I be doing?

1. Working with the other young people on the team to undertake various service projects within the Milwaukee community
2. Learn to live with a different family for a month
3. Broaden my thinking of the world – exploring ways of peace making and conflict resolution through discussions & training
4. Use my skills in music and dance....

Prayer points as Erin prepares to go to Milwaukee....

1. Safe travel
2. To 'fit in' with my host family
3. For my health, especially in the hotter weather
4. To be challenged in my thinking and creativity
5. For courage to try new things and step outside my 'comfort zone'
6. That my relationship with and dependency on God will grow deeper.....



Thank you for your support and prayer



Ramblings from the Society Steward!

In relation to our church stewards, I'm the new face on the block.

I've been around the Sydenham church for a few years now, and before Robin asked me to be Society Steward, I had been convenor of the Witness and Outreach Committee, having been asked to do that job by our previous minister Rev. Karen Spence.

I found it very daunting to be asked to be Society Steward, considering that we are blessed with so many capable people who are far more experienced in the life of our church than I am. In fact, between you and me, it took me almost seven months of thinking and prayer (no fasting though!) until I agreed to take on the role of Society Steward. It was an honour and a privilege to be asked and it was a real test of Robin's patience as he waited for an answer!

So much for the past – now what about the present? and the future? There is a lot of vitality and life within the worship and witness of our church. There is a real sense of outreach, not just to the surrounding community but also for God's work throughout the world and this is evidenced through our support of World Development and Relief and the Methodist Missionary Society.

In many ways our church building is set in a prime location on the East Side of Sydenham and it presents us with a challenging mission field right on our doorstep. There are the longer established houses and there is also new building work going on in the vicinity and that means the possibility of new people and families arriving. Hopefully they will have an opportunity to experience the warm welcome offered by the Methodists of Sydenham. Yet it's a fact of life today that people have so much lifestyle choice, for many, faith does not figure high on their agenda.



The challenge to us is that, after much prayer and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to “serve the present age” as the hymn puts it and to explore just what is “our calling to fulfil”. I am so pleased that we were guided to appoint a Community and Family Worker, and I trust God will bless Tanita’s work.

I think it is also good that consideration is being given to “brighten up” the entrance porch area of our church as, in my view that will release a lot of potential for us to meet the demands of “what mission means” in today’s world. We have to bear in mind, of course, that we do not have unlimited resources - but let’s accept that as a challenge to each of us, whether new (like me!) or more established, whether old or young or in-between, to become even more involved in supporting God’s work in this part of His Kingdom.

Well, enough of my ramblings (at least for the time being).

I would just repeat that it is privilege to serve the Lord, and you and Sydenham Methodist Church in the capacity as Society Steward. If you would like further information or clarification concerning aspects of our church life, I’d be very happy to meet with you for a chat.

Blessings,

Brian Maxwell

Society Steward



The Crèche

The crèche is available on a Sunday morning in the Taylor room for children up to three years.

We have toys, books, music and games. Orla has been doing craft with the older children.



The crèche helpers are invaluable and I want to thank them all for their time and help.

At the moment we need at least 3 on each week, on occasions more are needed.



So if anyone in the congregation feels they would like to help please,

contact Pauline Gammon.

The Seniors Fellowship

The Seniors Fellowship meets on the third Thursday of the month, at 2.30pm. We meet in the Taylor Room, unless otherwise stated on the programme or in the Bulletin.

We meet for tea, chat and outings.

*In **October 2016**, we went on a bus run to Harrisons Greyabbey. We enjoyed tea and scones while overlooking the lough and lovely countryside.*

*In **November**, Linda had us making Christmas Cards.*

*In **March 2017**, we explored the Titanic Quarter on the WEE TRAM with commentary by Chris Bennet. A very informative and worthwhile trip was followed by tea in the Dock Café.*



*In **May** we went go to the cinema in Comber.*

The above is just a taste of what we get up to.

***NEW MEMBERS** are more than welcome, so do come along and join us. There are no meetings in June, July and August. The new session commences in September.*

See you then!

‘PROBLEMS AT THE MANSE - NOW RESOLVED’

Last year we had to have the manse rewired, which is a pretty drastic situation to be in when a house is occupied. Robin and family moved out lock stock and barrel for an extended holiday to enable the work to be completed. We had 6 weeks to have everything done before the manse family returned.

At 11.30 a.m. on Monday, 4th July, I waved the Waugh family off. The electrician was to start on the Tuesday morning having been assured that the house would be completely cleared and all carpets lifted – no pressure!! By 7 p.m. the removal men had cleared all the furniture to their storage facility and the carpets had been lifted, rolled and stored in the garage.

Chris Rae, the electrical contractor, was well pleased on his arrival on Tuesday morning, to find he had a blank canvas to work on. All of Monday’s efforts proved worthwhile and, because the house was clear, the rewire was completed by 4.30 p.m. on Thursday afternoon – very impressive.

The pipe work of the central heating system had to be changed from “microbore” to normal 28 mm and 15 mm pipe. The contractor (Solv) was bang on time starting at 9.00 a.m. and completing the work by 5.30 p.m. on Thursday. I was over the moon, electrical work and plumbing completed and the manse family only 4 days into their holiday! However the traditional July holidays were looming with most contractors finishing on Friday for 2 weeks.

As a result of tracking the walls for the rewire, every room in the house had to be redecorated. The decorators started stripping wallpaper on Friday only to discover that some rooms had 4 layers of paper on the walls

– a big job just got bigger. The double glazing contractor started their work on Thursday, 28th July.

The clock was ticking as the Waugh family were due back home on 8th August, only 6 working days left. The decorators continued to burn the midnight oil and completed all the wallpapering and repainting by Monday, 5th August, the carpets were re-laid on Tuesday and the furniture returned from storage on Wednesday 3rd - **JOB DONE** with a week to spare – prayer was answered.

Before



Some of the completed work





My sincere thanks to all the contractors and members of the congregation (you know who you are) who helped me to complete the work ahead of time.

Neville Thomson – Manse Steward



Dave Gordon in South Africa

South Africa is a long way away.

Last March I met with several other Irish Methodists to discuss and plan a mission trip to South Africa. It wasn't to be your usual mission trip. We were heading out

to observe how Methodist churches engage with their communities. Both the Methodist Missionary Society (Ireland) (MMS(I)) and the Irish Methodist World Development and Relief (WDR) wanted to move away from the more traditional project based mission trips. We had two more training and planning days before we set out in August.



We had planned a day with the Methodist Central Mission in Johannesburg, with most of the two weeks spent at Phakamisa and Pinetown Methodist Church as well as Hillcrest AIDS Centre and a final day with the Church Land Project in Pietermaritzburg. I noticed that these churches and projects were pushing forward, welcoming change and their sphere of influence was growing. They all had strong leaders who weren't afraid to take chances and had a clear drive and vision for their church or project. These strong leaders are putting God first, leading by example and drawing people in.

In regards to mission, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa has five core points that influence the organisation of the church; Justice and service, Spirituality, Education and Christian formation, Evangelism and church growth and Human empowerment and economic development. With these structures in place the church can connect to its purpose. These were clear to see throughout our visit, as we saw both Phakamisa and Hillcrest AIDS Centre having education programs, Church Land Project, fighting for land rights and Johannesburg Mission growing their church by engaging the people where they were at.

The church members were very active in the growth of their churches and reaching to their communities. The ministers and church leaders weren't always the ones with the BIG ideas. Phakamisa and Hillcrest AIDS centre were both started by members of the church who had a dream and pursued it. They didn't wait for things to happen, they put them in motion. In every circumstance the project was started with zero funding.

The projects we saw were all supported by the church members and or outside organisations like WDR and MMS(I), in a country that still has poverty throughout. Even though they cannot plan financially for these projects, they are still expectant of God to provide for these needs. However, not every idea or plan has worked out. Many dreams didn't become a reality but the church is moving on, pushing forward and trying new things believing those that are a success are part of God's plan for their church and community.

Even though there is not a wealth of capital within the church they still have a caretaker, secretary, youth worker and, on occasion, a couple of ministers employed. There is a spread of responsibility - volunteers and paid church staff.

The churches and communities we visited all had older members who were acting to improve their surroundings. It was mostly older ladies,(Gogos), who were working towards making the church and community grow and improve. The older congregation has stepped up. They have used their free time praying, giving and living in a way that is changing their communities. They teach sowing classes, help as groundskeepers and volunteer in Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust and Phakamisa.

The African churches understand the needs of the people in the communities. Whilst many do live in these communities, others who do not, still know them by name as they are intentional in getting to know the people and their needs. In Johannesburg Mission Rev. Richard summed it up simply explaining that "we walk the streets and talk to them." There is a greater openness to spirituality in South Africa and this does give a strong starting part when discussing God and the church with those who do not attend. The church recognises that each church stands in its own mission field and acts accordingly. Compared to the Methodist Church in Ireland, the South African church has a more recognisable mission field. It is clear that issues regarding health and poverty impact the people of South Africa and the church is addressing this in its community.

Everywhere we went our team was welcomed with warmth and generosity. The South African people were always very hospitable. The team would frequently be invited to meals and engage in fellowship over food.

We would frequently have a 'braai', a traditional South African custom where silly amounts of food are cooked over a fire, or on a barbeque. It was more food, more fellowship and more relationship and community building.

From my time in South Africa I saw that its people are wanting to improve and make a better life for the generations that follow. It addressed issues that, faced with strong Godly leadership, its congregation followed or was left behind. It recognised that change was important. At Johannesburg mission it was clear that the church had moved to a more Evangelical style of worship. Whilst at Pinetown and Hillcrest Methodist Churches we experienced a more traditional western style of worship. The country's diversity in culture and the plethora of ethnic groups has seen worship from ranging conservative styles to vibrant charismatic styles. Regardless of worship styles there was always strong use of liturgy and the importance of God's word was evident.

It was an incredible experience that would not be possible without the help of the congregation here at Sydenham supporting my fundraising events and praying for me and the team whilst we were away. I witnessed different cultures and their approaches to worship and church. I saw how they are impacting their communities in a positive way and how everyday members of the church were making changes. I saw clear examples of how God works with small dreams and creates something big and life changing. In the two weeks in South Africa we merely scraped the surface of what God was doing out there.

Braai



Gogos





"Mums and Tots"

Since the last Newsletter issue, Mums and Tots has been thriving.

We have had numbers of between 20 -30 children each Wednesday.



We have also bought new mats and toys.



Our thanks go to all who help in the kitchen each week.

Many thanks

Kathleen, Dorothy & Lillian



World Development & Relief (WDR)

Back in September 2016, Ruth Cooke from International Justice Mission was our speaker at the annual WDR service.

<https://www.ijm.org/>

IJM are one of the 10 partners of WDR. Ruth was able to explain how IJM work with the poor by providing legal support for those being exploited and discriminated against.

As Christians, we believe that God is just and that we should be working for justice to actively demonstrate the values of Christ's kingdom. Supporting the work of IJM through WDR gives us a chance to be involved.



**Methodist Relief &
Development Fund**

Over five and a half thousand pounds was generously contributed by the congregation through the 1% appeal to the work of WDR. Thanks also to those who support WDR by standing order and to those who gave recently to the WDR appeal in aid of the East Africa famine.

Your giving is a great practical way to show the love of God to others in real need.

<http://www.methodistworlddevelopment.org/>

Please have a look at these websites.

Methodist Missionary Society (Ireland)

More recently, in February 2017, Dave Gordon from our own congregation took the opportunity to tell us about his trip to South Africa in August 2016. Dave travelled with a team from around the Irish Methodist Church connexion. He was able to tell us about some examples of how the church in South Africa is engaging with the community and challenged us to think about how we can do more in our situation.

42% of the world's population is unreached, that amounts to 3.1 billion people. The task of evangelism is still a huge one today and MMS Ireland is committed to this task with your support. Last year, almost thirteen hundred pounds was raised through congregational envelopes and mission boxes for the work of MMS (Ireland). Thank you to those who contributed.



One of the partners of MMS (Ireland) is Frontiers Ireland which is concerned with reaching people for Christ in the Muslim world. Soon, there will be an opportunity in Sydenham again to obtain a copy of the 30 Days of Prayer guide for use during Ramadan. This provides Christians with an informed means of praying for Christ to shine among Muslims so that they may understand who Jesus really is.

Alan Hall

SYDENHAM BOWLING CLUB



Bowling is a skillful game. **A DRAWING GAME!**
To be a good bower takes a lot of practice.
The aim of the game is to get the bowl
as near the jack as possible.



Our aim is to keep the bowl on the mat!

The Bowling Club has been going since the early 60's, when the completion of the Ferguson Hall in 1966 gave us a good quality floor.



A mixed Bowling Club was formed in the evenings.

At the end of the night, we have an epilogue taken by some members of the club, which prove to be a real blessing.

We can't forget the cup of tea and a sticky bun.

There are about 20 of us, and we all have a bit of fun.



(Can't play very good bowls, but we have fun.)

We had a few new members during the year, but we are always looking for new members.

So why not join us and make new friends.

We should be restarting around the 5th September 2017

Hope to see you then.



I don't know if many of you use Facebook but if you do you will know that it likes to remind you of posts from previous years. This one from six years ago made me smile :

Six years ago 2 May 2011

Knitting and needles check, tea biscuits and coffee check, people ...Gulp!

It might be that I'm talking to myself for 2 hours.

I needn't have worried as five people turned up at that very first meeting and six years later we have between ten and fifteen at each session.

Biscuits were quickly replaced by cinnamon loaf and pancakes for our morning coffee .

We have knit for many charities over the years . Our first was the innocent smoothies appeal for Age concern but others have included The Simon community (hats and scarves) , Hosford House (hats, gloves , scarves and mittens) , charities in Bosnia, Africa and for Jean and Margaret's sales in aid of Kiowoko Hospital .

We also made throws for the Dock Cafe which are still in use today. We have also embraced new techniques and in any week there will be shawls , socks , lace , Aran or colour work on the needles. Although it's called knit and natter you will also see lots of crochet projects too.

Each week is different but one thing never changes and that is that it's somewhere to relax and unwind. Everyone is welcome , everyone has someone to listen to them and someone who has time for them. So six years on I thank God for this wonderful group .

Joanne Young



Youth Work

Kidzone

Over the last few months at Kidzone, our children have been learning about prayer and over Easter they have been looking at the Easter story and why we have communion.



The children in Kidzone are full of questions and are excited to learn new bible stories. Alongside Jude, Faith and Joanna, we try our best, each week, to provide lessons that engage our children and help them understand that they are part of our church family, have amazing gifts to offer and that they are loved. We also seek to help them understand what it means to follow Jesus daily and to equip them with ways to pray and how to love others, even when it's tough. As Sunday school teachers and adults, we often realise that we learn so much from our children, such as how they help each other and how they are open to try new things. It is a pleasure to teach and be taught by our children!

Stephanie Neilands

Focus



Scouts

WNTMG



Girls Brigade

TBAG

SMORG

Storehouse

“For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me water; I was a stranger and you invited me into your homes; naked and you clothed me; sick and in prison and you visited me.” **Matthew 25:35-36**

Four years and counting! Sydenham Methodist Church - congregation, friends and family - have completed another year of serving our city through partnering with Storehouse. We have continued to see regular donations, leading to full trolley loads being delivered to the warehouse in Dunmurry on a fortnightly basis, to be sorted and delivered to those in need. This December, within a 2 week period, we managed to collect and deliver 180 jars of cranberry sauce for the Christmas Hampers!



This year has brought significant changes to the work done by Storehouse – including the relocation of their city centre base, on 29th August to 39 North Street,(appropriately enough just above the Human Rights Commission!).



Storehouse continues to exist to encourage dignity and significance to those living in poverty in OUR city – and to ensure access to the basic essentials of life.

Food continues to be one of the essentials that people need – *really need* – and this is provided through emergency food packages made up of our (and many others) donations.

Food Packages

- Tinned Meat / fish
 - Tinned Meals
 - Tinned Veg / potatoes
 - Tinned Soup
- Tinned fruit / dessert
 - Pasta / Noodles
 - Pasta Sauces
- Tea / Coffee/ Sugar
 - Long life milk
 - Cereal
- Biscuits / Crisps

However, Storehouse does not simply hand over bags of food. They also give time to their service users. Staff at Storehouse get to know those that they are providing for, and due to the complexities of life, the more they know, the more need they become aware of. As a service, Storehouse is constantly open to developing – working creatively to meet these needs.

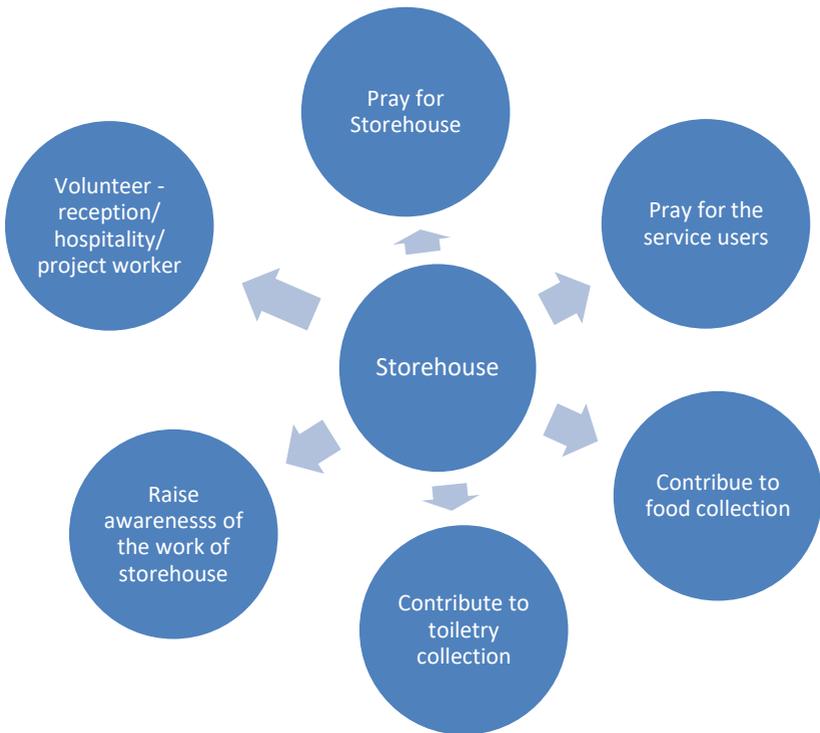
Developments this year have included the organisation and provision of Toiletry Packs:

Items from these lists can be left in the trolley at the entrance of the Church and will be delivered to the warehouse on a fortnightly basis.

Thank you to all who have enabled our congregation to continue to work in partnership with Storehouse; Going forward, I ask that we consider what we can contribute to demonstrate our commitment to those in need in our city, and that we continue to work together to show God's love, and to support those demonstrating His love in this very practical way.

Toiletry Packs
•Shampoo
•Conditioner
•Showergel
•Toilet Roll
•Anti-perspirant
•Toothbrush
•Toothpaste
•Razors
•Shaving Gel
•Sanitary Products

Joanna Sloan



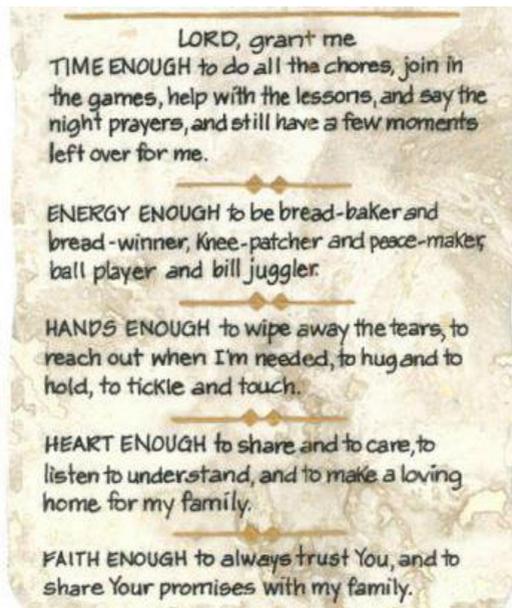
Card Making Group

The Card making group continue to meet in the Sam McGuffin Room at 7.30pm on the first and third Tuesdays of the month.



You are welcome to come along and try your hand at making a card and joining in the fellowship of other crafters.

*Our new session starts on Tuesday 5th September.
Linda Nicholson*



Stained Glass Windows

Sitting in church each Sunday, my eyes are drawn upwards to the beautiful memorial window.

The window depicts the Ascension of Christ and was given in memory of Robert and Francis Cooke and their family.

The Rev. Samuel McCready dedicated the window on 14th June 1958, during the opening of the new church.

On the north side of the church are two more beautiful windows.



The first depicts the story of the Good Samaritan. This window was provided by the church in memory of Mr. Frank Ferguson, former Society and Circuit Stewart and was dedicated on 15th March 1970.



The window next to it depicts the Resurrection of Christ and was a gift from the Johnston Family in memory of their parents, David and Isobel.

Thank you to those who have provided the church with these beautiful windows.

(This information was taken from 'A Century of Methodism in Sydenham

1884 – 1984 by S J McGuffin)

PRAYERS FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Lord, we pray for those in our local community.

We pray for young families in the area; for the safety of young people and children as they play on the streets. We ask that all living in our area will have respect for one another and that families will be safe.

We pray for children from broken homes being raised by a single parent who perhaps are struggling to cope.

For those who gather in the vicinity of the community centre from time to time. We pray that young people involved in drugs and anti-social behaviour may find alternative new and good activities that will provide them a real purpose for their lives. We also pray for those young people suffering with mental health issues that they may find the help they need.

We pray for the schools in our area - for the teachers, classroom assistants, other staff and the children and young people. We especially pray for those children who have extra needs - that all would find a healthy environment in which to learn.

We pray for the elderly, especially for those living alone - that they would know your presence and compassion, especially through the friendship of others. We pray for those who experience a disability - that they might have help with daily living.

We pray for those in Care homes and in sheltered dwellings. We thank you for all who work in these environments offering support and care to those in need. We bring before you those experiencing dementia and pray for their families and caregivers.

We pray for the local businesses - for those in offices or on a building site; for honesty and integrity in the workplace. We pray for those who are experiencing stress through pressures at work, or due to lack of employment.

Lord, we are thankful for the good travel facilities right on our doorstep - we pray for all who work in the transport industry and for those who use the airport, the rail, bus and commuter routes - praying for safe journeys. We praise you for the opportunity to share your love with those at the train station through 'Coffee Kindness'.

We thank you for open spaces in this area. We pray for the protection of God's creation that we see in flowers, trees and birds; for the safety walkers and joggers and for the stopping of vandalism. We also pray for new people moving into the area - that they would find a welcome from local residents and from our church.

We thank you for all of Gods people in this area, and so we pray for the work and witness of other congregations - especially for St. Brendan's and Strand as we share closely together.

Finally, we pray for our own church family. We pray for a greater openness to others and to be more aware of the Spirit's promptings and guidance. May we discover new ways to show your love to others. May we not be obstacles or barriers to those who want to follow Christ. May we be a sign of hope seeking to reflect the love, light and life of Christ within our community.

Lord, may all in our community know your love and peace.

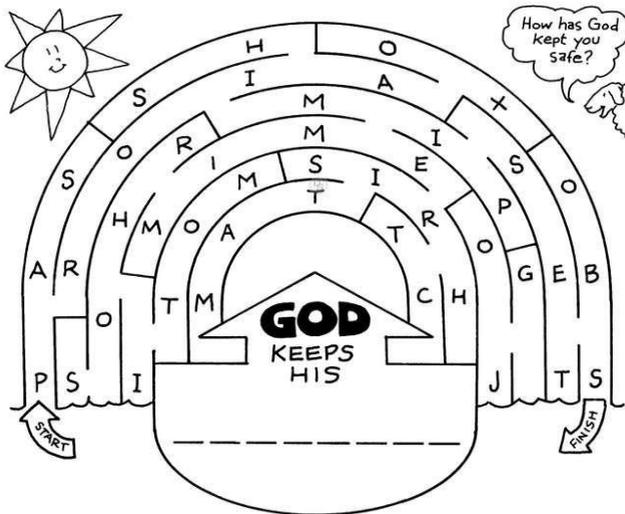
We offer these prayers for our community and for ourselves, through Christ our Lord. Amen

Bible Fun

A Rainbow of Hope

God told Noah to build an ark because He was going to send a flood. During the flood, God took special care of Noah, his family, and the animals inside the ark. God takes care of you too. He washed away your sin through the water of Baptism and made you His special child.

After the flood, God put a rainbow in the sky. What do rainbows remind us of? As you find your way through the maze, put the letters your path runs through in the blanks in the ark.



4

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U										M
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S	I	N	D	A	S	E	R	L	E	T

