



LINK



STONELEIGH METHODIST CHURCH

Minister: Revd. Emma Cusack Fd.A; DipHE

February/March 2021

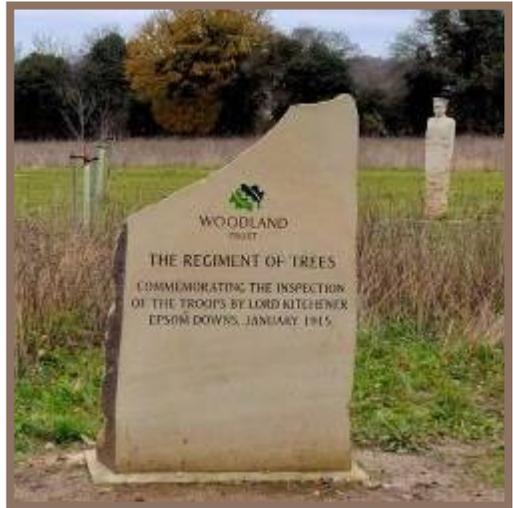


Photo by Tom

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Epsom, Surrey KT19 0RT
www.stoneleighmethodist.church



Photos taken by Pat and Colin on a walk over Langley Vale. Full story inside



Dear Friends,

First of all, my hope is to keep praying that our life's situations this New Year will be better as we all have belief in the prospect of the effectiveness of the new vaccines that have been rolled out as well as continuing to adhere to the Covid-19 instructions – face covering, handwashing and social distancing. Who would have thought that we would be in isolation for a year and possibly more? However, we hope for the best.

“For in the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His dwelling; He will hide me in the shelter of His tabernacle and set me high upon a rock”(Psalm 27:5).

For the first time last year, I led a New Year's Eve service via Zoom. There were twenty-four participants, and I want to thank those who joined in as well as the feedback which suggests that it should happen again this year – God willing.



The closer it gets to the start of my sabbatical leave the more I feel the pressure of the dominance of the pandemic and how it is affecting almost every decision now; what can and cannot happen, but I am confident that whatever the outcome, the three months' leave will be productive.

I am sorry to be escaping for my sabbatical ten days after the licensing of my long-awaited Anglican colleague at Ruxley Church – Rev Fiona Ellingham - however it gives me great pleasure to look forward to return to new collegueship and new friendship.

Please continue to keep safe and stay in touch with each other.
Every blessing

Emma

New colleague for Emma



Our sister church at Ruxley have appointed a new 'House for Duty' Priest - Rev Fiona Ellingham. Fiona



was licensed by Bishop Jo Bailey Well, Bishop of Dorking on Wednesday 20th January. On the Ruxley Church website Fiona writes, she is "delighted and thankful to be joining Ruxley Church. Fiona is looking forward to working with her colleague Rev Emma Cusack as the part time Parish Priest" 'House for Duty' priest is an appointment of the Church of England where there is a manse and a need for help with ministry but no money to pay a salary so the priest gets the house for free and offers three days work. The priest will be able to use the rest of her time for her own job.



Christine Williams

Our dear friend, Christine Williams, died very suddenly in hospital at the end of December.



From Catherine:

I came to know Chris better when I became a member of Tuesday Fellowship. She was a regular member and I used to sit near her. Chris had been a member of Stoneleigh Methodist and the Fellowship for a long time before I joined the church. She was always friendly and chatty and made you feel welcome, with her lovely smile. Chris attended church and was always willing to give lifts. Sometimes when her car played up she was worried that she would have to change it, because she said it really suited her and any new car would not have the same layout inside, making it more difficult for her to get out.

Chris told me of her water exercises at the Rainbow Centre, how much she enjoyed them and about a friend she made at the classes. Sarah had been a nurse and when asked, would talk to Chris about her medical problems and give her good advice. It turns out that this was the same Sarah who trained with me at Guy's Hospital and then had her nursing career in the army. It's a small world!



Chris was such a lovely warm person, but could be very decided when she made up her mind. I know we will all miss her, it was such a shame that with the pandemic, we have hardly seen her at all over this last year.



From Ruth:

Christine's death at the end of December came as a complete shock, as she had been shielding and taking great care. I knew



she was in hospital. However, her sons said her kidneys had deteriorated over the last year or so, and she would have needed to go on dialysis although she was not in any pain.

We will miss her very much at Tuesday Fellowship and at church. She was always bright and cheerful, and willing to help. She regularly helped in the kitchen and contributed to the lovely windowsill arrangements at Harvest and Christmas. She picked up Susan and myself for church every Sunday, where Susan receives and gives great pleasure in helping Christine on door duty.

As a family, Chris, Tony, and their sons spent many weekends on their boat. Also, Chris and Tony enjoyed many holidays abroad. Her sons, Martin and Ian, were very supportive, keeping in daily contact, and spending time with her on Sundays particularly enjoying Formula 1.

We give our sympathy to Martin and Ian on the loss of their mum. She was a very sociable person and enjoyed company. I appreciated Chris's kindness to me.



From Pat:



It was with great sadness I heard of the passing of Chris Williams on 31st December. Chris was well known to us all from her attendance at church and Fellowship. She will be greatly missed.

Over the years that Chris has been at SMC I have lost count of the number of scones and cakes that she has contributed, and the number of times that she has been present "just to help out" at many Church activities. Her lovely warm smile and softly spoken words will remain with me always. Chris did not enjoy the best of mobility but never complained and was always willing to help, despite the difficulties. She was a great support to me over my years leading Tuesday Fellowship and I will miss her wise words and comforting presence.

There are many in the church who spent more time in her company on visits out to houses and gardens before this became more difficult for her, and I know how much they enjoyed her company and her sense of humour, plus her willingness to

provide transport to friends whenever she was able.



The knowledge that she would always be at the end of a phone for a chat and a giggle will be something

that will be missing in our lives. We all send our deepest sympathy to Martin and Ian and families on their sudden loss.

Thank you, Chris, for being a friend to us all. Rest in peace now with your beloved Tony.



**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
(A WOMEN LED, GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT)**



Press Release



BUILD ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

Women of the Republic of Vanuatu (located in the South Pacific Ocean) have prepared this year's service. The black and white sandy beaches, coral reefs with coloured fishes, lovely birds, fruits and nuts in the forest, all make the islands a pristine environment, but they are vulnerable to frequent tropical storms, earthquakes, cyclones, tsunamis and active volcanoes. Women, men and children of all ages are called to 'Build on a strong foundation' and live in unity, love and peace in the context of ethnic and cultural diversity like Vanuatu and so many other places around the world.

World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church organisation which enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world; their hopes, concerns and prayers. The preparation for the day is vast. An international committee is based in New York and there are national committees in each participating country. Regional conferences meet to consider the service and then local groups make their plans. Finally, on **Friday 5 March 2021** our area will celebrate with an online service prepared by the women of Vanuatu.

The Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 170 countries. It begins in Samoa, and prayer in native languages travels throughout the world – through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas, before finishing in American Samoa some 39 hours later.

For further information and resources, together with details of services in your area see the WDP website wwdp.org.uk

World Day of Prayer

Churches together in Ewell will be holding their World Day of Prayer service on Friday 5th March. The service will be based at St Mary's Church, Ewell, and we hope to stream the service on Zoom and YouTube. Links will be publicised later in our SMC NewsSheet, as will the time of the service.

We will have booklets available for those who want to read the service, especially if you have no online connections, or even if you have. You should also be able to dial in on your phone. Part of the service asks for a stone to be available, so you could start trying to find a suitable one. Just the right size to easily hold in your hand.

Catherine



Where is Vanuatu? It took a little while to find a good map – in my old atlases it was called New Hebrides. However, here's a sketch I made to show you where Vanuatu is – in that great curve of islands round Australia. *Ed.*

Notes from Church Council:

As we are all under lockdown, Church Council met on Zoom. At least we were able to discuss what is going on and continue moving forward.

For the moment, we are unable to open the church for services. Our thanks to Richard for leading us forward in providing online services, and to Pat for helping people to dial in so that most can now join in worship every week – however limited. We will continue to provide online services via YouTube in the long term, for those who are housebound, and for those on the fringes who



are looking to explore church. We are investing in new equipment and faster broadband services which will help us to improve our streaming.

You'll be pleased to know that we authorised a donation to Whitechapel Mission, as we didn't have the normal collections over Christmas.

In case you haven't heard the news from elsewhere in the magazine, Emma is having her sabbatical – at last – for three months covering February, March and April. She is unable to go away but, if you see her in the street, do stop to pass the time of day – no church business, but any other conversation will be good. We wish her well in her time out. If you need to speak to anyone in the meantime, contact Jeananne, and she will pass on your queries to the relevant people.

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of his His Wonder and Grace”

Churches Together in Ewell - Christmas Goody Boxes.

This Christmas Churches Together in Ewell delivered Goody Boxes to those who would be alone on Christmas Day - our customary



Christmas lunch for these people having been cancelled due to the ongoing situation. The Goody boxes contained assorted festive items including Christmas cake and pudding, a calendar, a cracker with hat and motto. These were prepared by the Together at Christmas group (led by Steve) and delivered to our regular guests by a band of helpers drawn from the many churches in Ewell. Our guests were very happy with their gifts and most grateful for all we do for them each year. Many thanks to all involved.

Sally



Minister

Revd. Emma Cusack Fd.A;
DipHE

Stewards

Vivienne Ridgway
Richard Graham



Leadership Team

The Minister.

Vivienne
Richard
Marion
Catherine
Ernie
Pat

Contact
Jeananne Holtorp
07729 028850



Church Council Secretary
Marion

Pastoral Concerns

Jeananne
07729 028850

JMA Secretary
Catherine

Bookings

Denise Gould
020 8393 2155

Church Pay Phone
020 8393 9743

Praise the Lord, O my soul,
all my inmost being praise his
holy name.

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and
forget not all his benefits.

Psalm 103v1

If you would like an item to be in
'The Link' please send it to

Vivienne Ridgway
vivienne@ridgworld.com

Articles for inclusion in the next LINK
should be with Vivienne by March 10th '21

*The right to edit or omit articles is reserved
to SMC, The Minister and Stewards*

The views expressed in this magazine are

Our Worshipping Community



We will continue to stream services live every Sunday morning on bit.ly/SMCTube, and the Service will form part of the weekly NewsSheet. We will do our absolute best to keep you up to date with changes as and when they become known to us.

We will not have Emma with us through Lent and Easter, but the Leadership Team is reviewing our opportunities for worship over this period. Of course, most services will probably not be in the church building, but you'll be able to join in using Zoom or YouTube. We shall almost certainly be doing a Good Friday service. Watch the NewsSheet or website (stoneleighmethodist.church) for further details. We are also going to promote some Lent material – study groups on Zoom of course, but again, watch the NewsSheet or website.



Our Covenant Service, sadly postponed from the beginning of January, will be held as soon as we can gather together again.

Still Waters –

Don't forget, Every 1st Sunday of the month @ 6:00pm via Zoom. You're invited to spend some time discovering the world through Art and Spirituality, led by Deacon Dawn. If you are interested the Zoom link is below.

To join 'Still Waters' go to

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6641594384?> and use Meeting ID: 664 159 4384, passcode 123123.

God is Here:

While looking at hymns for a service, I came across this one - 'God is Here' by Fred Pratt Green (StF 25). It's one I often look at as an opening hymn (although I don't always choose it!) and have used it as part of my Local Preacher training in one of my portfolio pieces.



However, while looking at it the other day I was struck by a sudden spark of inspiration to rework it slightly to reflect our current times, to remind us that although things seem a little different, and we may feel alone and isolated at the moment, God is still here, we're still meeting together in his name, and we're still trusting in him to keep us safe.

*God is here! As we his people meet to offer praise and prayer,
may we find in fuller measure what it is in Christ we share.
Christ unites us when we gather, whether on the screen or phone;
though we may feel isolated, God's still here—we're not alone.*

*All the symbols to remind us of our lifelong need of grace
may be closed away in buildings; still the cross has central place.
Here in honesty of preaching, here in silence, as in speech,
here, in newness and renewal, God the Spirit comes to each.*

*Here the servants of the Servant seek in worship to explore
what it means in daily living to believe and to adore.
But our world view has been shattered, and our future seems cut short;
yet our God is still the Sovereign, King of kings, and Lord of all.*



*Lord of all, of Church and Kingdom, in an age where fear is rife,
we look to you, Christ victorious, ris'n for our eternal life!
Keep us faithful to your gospel, all we have to give: receive;
we who cannot live without you, we adore you! We believe!*

Richard

O Lord of majestic mountain and roaring sea,
O Lord of astonishing beauty and outlandish loveliness,
O Lord of the minuscule, the overlooked and the never seen,
O Lord of the extraordinary and the everyday,
Open our eyes to see your presence.
Open our ears to hear the whisper of your voice
and, realising you in every place and every moment of our
existence,
may we live with justice, peace, care and hope.
Amen

Helen Kirk, Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District Chair.

The Mum Show – coming soon:

From 'Care for the Family' - a national charity which aims to promote strong family life and to help those who face family difficulties.

None of us could have predicted how long the pandemic would last. In fact, we still don't know! Many of us are finding the dark nights and renewed restrictions challenging, and it's hard to stop thinking, "Are we at the end yet? When will it be over?"

That's why we've created The Mum Show. Whether you're a mum yourself or friends with a mum, this show will encourage and help those who are finding life a bit tough right now or could simply do with a boost. It's a jam-packed twelve-part series on being a mum in today's crazy world, starting with Episode 1: Parenting in a Pandemic.

You'll find warmth, advice and a dash of humour. We want to remind you that you're not alone, and that together we can get through this tricky season.

If you're interested, please contact Vivienne at vivienne@ridgworld.com

Round and about: with Pat and Colin:

We have just been for a walk across the Downs to visit the Langley Vale Wood Fields of Remembrance, which explains the important part that the local area played in preparations for the war effort, including Kitchener's inspection of troops before they were sent to the Somme. There are life sized stone sculptures of soldiers and civilians among the Regiment of Trees, and a willow wreath for people to share their reflections as part of this 2½ mile walk.

However, there is no parking nearby so it makes for a longer walk across the Downs. The sculptures may go, as they were a special exhibition only open till the end of November, but the woodland walks are there all the time.

Pat and Colin

Pat and Colin took photos of the sculptures – see inside front cover – Ed

Cubs Christmas Sleepover. (written mid-December)

Despite the latest restrictions Cubs have continued to meet on Zoom with a wide range of fun activities, quizzes and badge work organised by their leaders. This week was due to be their last meeting and so, on Friday, they celebrated with a virtual sleepover. How does that work you may ask, as I did?



The evening began with 24 Cubs and some parents (who seem to enjoy all this as much as the children) taking part in an 'edible snowman make' followed by games. Then everyone settled down to watch a Christmas film accompanied of course by popcorn. Following the film, it was time for bed in a den they had built themselves and, in theory, they settled down to sleep. Early on Wednesday morning they were online again for a shared breakfast and a catch up, then a 'Christmas hunt' before saying goodbye for the Christmas break.

3rd Stoneleigh Cub Leaders have done an amazing job throughout these past 10 months, and we wish them a well-deserved rest this Christmas.

Lesley.

Knit and Natter spin-off:

Calling all you knitters!

I have had a request through Geetha from The Frailty Unit at Epsom Hospital asking for hats, cowls, neck- tubes, or scarves as patients are getting cold, or arrive without enough warm clothing.



I know we have a Knit & Natter group, but I felt we should open it up to everyone as we are all housebound now! When we have a bundle of them, I can take them to the hospital, or they could be posted. I looked on the internet for patterns for the neck tubes, but they all seemed to be on circular needles, which if you are like me then that is a no no. Geetha has sent me a couple of patterns and you could see if they are okay for you - but they need to be nice and loose to go over the head and sit nicely around the neck and shoulders.

Copies of the patterns are with me and in Denise's porch at 198, Stoneleigh Park Road, or could be emailed to you from <mailto:news@stoneleighmethodist.church>. I am sure all the great knitters out there will be able to help, and a call to Pat or Denise will probably be your first port of call. Margaret and her sister are already knitting hats so perhaps we could concentrate on scarves etc. But no problem if hats are your thing, Whitechapel always need them. So let's see what we can do for such a worthy cause.

Jeananne

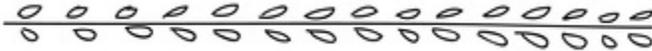
Ways of coping with Lockdown. My quilting group run a monthly competition. November was to make a cushion to be given to a poorly child so I made one - Brian liked it so much he kept trying to think up ways we could keep it! Definitely a No! But I made a replica in secret - not easy in lockdown - he is always around! I became adept at hearing doors opening, lights switching on, creaks on the stairs; but managed to keep the secret 'til Christmas morning.

Result- one satisfied child and one delighted husband!

Rita

the cushion won the November challenge too! (Ed) see back cover

Christmas by Zoom. I hope you had a pleasant Christmas in spite of all the restrictions. Ernie and I had a very quiet time with just the two of us but nevertheless we enjoyed ourselves. We had a very long Zoom meeting with family in Scotland on Sunday evening, but it felt good to see everyone on screen and it almost felt like the norm. *Marion*



Week of Christian Unity:

Letter from Paula (CTE) (abridged)

May God bless you and be close as we begin 2021, with so much 'darkness', concern and uncertainty around us.

I found myself yesterday reading Solomon's prayer as he dedicates the temple. From v29 onwards struck me particularly.... *"when a prayer or plea is made by any of your people each aware of his own afflictions and pains forgive and deal with each one according to all they do, since you, O God, know their hearts, so they may fear You and walk in Your ways"*.



I remembered too the verse in 2 Corinthians 6:16, that tells us that we have the Holy Spirit within us and are each a *'temple of His Spirit'*.



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity this year is 18-25 January – I hope we might 'come together' in some way, even though we cannot meet as such, by uniting in prayer.

God knows each of us and our situations, personally, and in our churches and communities. Let us pray (together) for His intervention at this time perhaps in a more concerted way - just a thought. I am going to try to pray the prayer below morning and

evening and I invite you to join me, knowing others will be praying it too. Let us place our hands into God's – His light will overcome the darkness and He has promised to never leave us.

God be with you all.

Paula



Almighty God our Heavenly Father
We come to you thankful you hear us, grateful for access to you through Jesus Christ, knowing your Holy Spirit will help us as we pray.
We look to you and want to trust you in these difficult times. We ask for healing for our land, our world and that all people may turn to you, knowing human efforts and wisdom alone cannot solve the great needs and distresses we are facing. **HAVE MERCY LORD.**
We pray for all those affected by Covid-19.
 For the sick and grieving.
 For the NHS and all care workers.
 For medical researchers and those running the vaccination programmes.
 For our government.
Thank you for all who work to provide essential services, risking their own safety –
 for shop workers,
 business services,
 those in education,
 for our clergy, church leaders
those who serve our community. We pray for all who feel in despair and who feel alone. Comfort those in deep sorrow and help us care for one another and those around us.
 Thank you that you are the all-knowing, all-seeing and all-powerful God. Amen

Stoneleigh Methodist Youth Club (SMYC)

SMYC was an extremely well-attended and popular youth club, particularly during the 50s and 60s and various names have popped up in the years since, which got some of us thinking perhaps it was worth setting up an ex-SMYC members group on Facebook.

I always tended to avoid Facebook as social media scares me somewhat, but joining a private group for Stoneleigh West Infants and Primary School and hearing from 'old' school friends encouraged me to set up a group for SMYC in the hope that we could reach out to 'old' members from those years. Sadly, we know that a few will have passed away but we have been contacted by some members with memories and photos.

If anyone reading The Link was a member of SMYC and has any memories or photos they would like to share, we would love to hear from you. SMYC was a thriving club and there were many years of holidays in Guernsey, camping, hikes, dances, pantomimes, Surry Shuffle, Chariot Chase, charity fundraising and of course going along to the MAYC (Methodist Association of Youth Clubs) weekends with thousands of youth



club members from around the country. Do you remember the Dave Stuart Five, The Fellas or any of the other groups that the club inspired? Are you in touch with anyone who was part of those happy years?

Ex-SMYC group can be found on Facebook group page. If you would like to join let me know through the church website and I can arrange to admit you as it is a private group. *Pat P (nee Maskell)*

Rita's Cushions –



During this pandemic we have had to use many different ways to interact with our families, this is how Steven and I had a pre-Christmas meeting with Patrick, Felicity and Timothy

Can you spot Catherine and Stephen?



Ruth would like to thank everyone for the lovely flowers and cards she received for her 90th birthday. The family are planning to celebrate her birthday when it is safe to do so.



*At the licensing of Ruxley's new vicar: from left to right,
Rev Emma Cusack,
Archdeacon Martin Breadmore (Archdeacon of Dorking),
Robin & Rev Fiona Ellingham (new Ruxley Priest),
Bishop Jo Bailey Wells (Bishop of Dorking),
Rev Rosemary Donovan (Area Dean).*



This photo and the cover were taken by Tom
on a misty morning walk on Box Hill