



The Methodist Church

Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit Newsletter

Issue 34

August 2020

Superintendent Minister's Letter:

Dear Friends,

*'Begin the work...Take heart, all of you people, says the Lord of hosts,
and my spirit remains with you. Do not be afraid' (Haggai 2:4-5)*

I begin with these words from Haggai, the great post exilic prophet who encouraged God's people to rebuild and re-enter their places of worship after a long period of absence. These words have much to say to us today as we prepare to re-enter our churches and restart worship.

Earlier this week, our circuit leadership team met by videoconference, having again previously sought opinion across the circuit. The meeting decided unanimously to support those churches who wish to resume worship after 1st September on condition that they have completed and submitted a 'Covid 19 risk assessment'. This document seeks to ensure that our churches are safe places in which to gather.

I know that not all churches will feel that they are ready or able to return immediately, and the provisional preaching plan for September which you see over page reflects this. I also appreciate that worship will not be the quite the same as that we are used to, and that many are fearful of gathering in public. We do not want anyone to feel under pressure to return to worship and yet at the same time, we do not wish to hold back those who are eager to do so.

Alongside this, we are also developing two new forms of on-line worship to help support us through this difficult time. More information about this will be published nearer the time.

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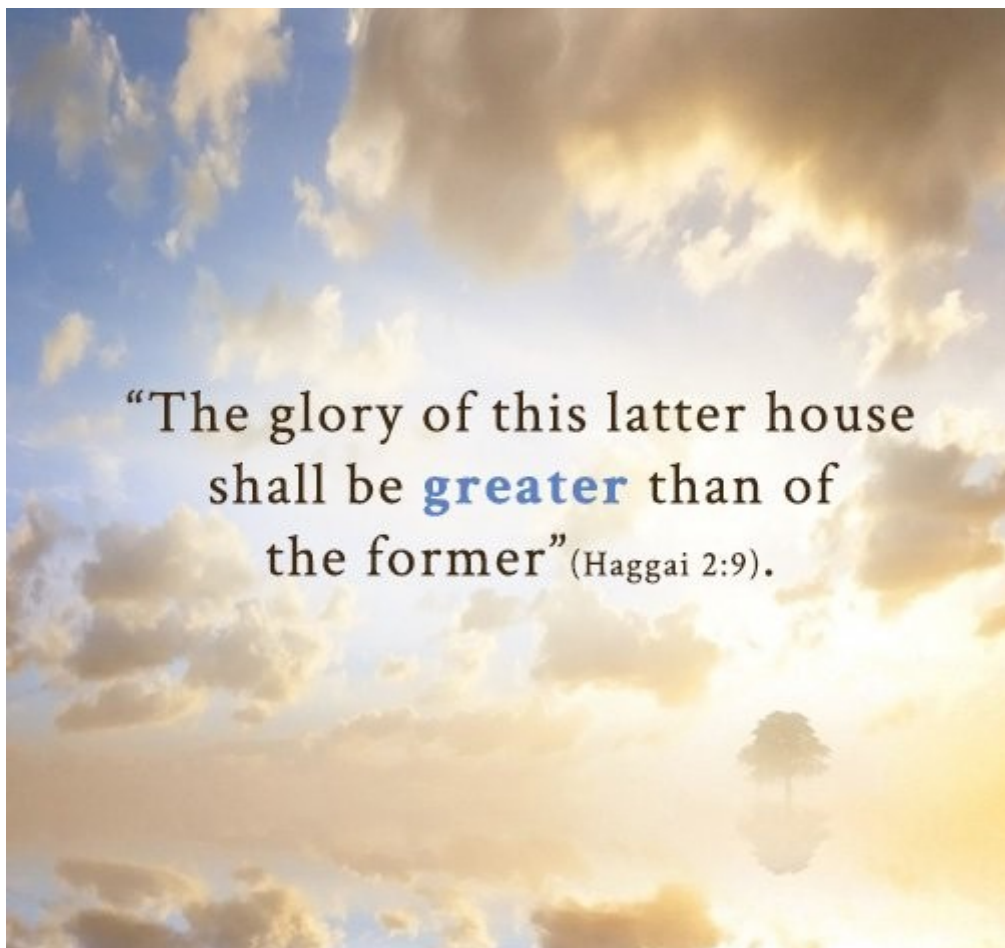
Other changes I have to share with you are, as we will see later in this issue, the arrival of a new minister, the Revd. Charles Ilunga who will be serving as minister to Forest Hill and Wesley Hall. We will welcome Charles to our circuit in a service on 29th August which will be live streamed for all to see.

We ask you prayers for Rohama, as she has had to return home suddenly to Pakistan to be with her mother who is seriously ill. Our thanks to Revd. Paul Hulme for staying with us during this time and the pastoral support he is offering.

I wish you all a blessed restful month of August, take heart, remember God's Spirit goes with us all as we continue to travel in his ways.

Kind regards,

Richard.



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For your guidance, below is the draft preaching plan for September 2020. Please contact your church stewards as this is subject to change.

		September 2020			
		6th	13th	20th	27th
Lectionary		Ezekiel 33:7-11 Ps. 119:33-40 Romans 13:8-14 Matt. 18:15-20	Gen. 50:15-21 Ps. 103:1-13 Romans 14:1-12 Matt. 18:21-35	Jonah 3:10-4:11 Psalm 145:1-8 Philipp. 1:21-30 Matt. 20:1-16	Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 Psalm 25:1-9 Philipp. 2:1-13 Matt. 21:23-32
		23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	24th Sunday in Ordinary Time	25th Sunday in Ordinary Time	26th Sunday in Ordinary Time
ANERLEY	11am	H. Waterhouse	A. Konadu-Yiadom		A. Konadu-Yiadom
BURNT ASH	10.30am	P. Hulme	M. Sparkes	J. Warren	LA/JA
ELTHAM PARK	10.30am			R. Grocott	G. Young
FOREST HILL	11.00am	C. Ilunga	R. Grocott	C. Ilunga	
HITHER GREEN	10.30am	R. Grocott	P. Hulme	E. Buck	
LEWISHAM	10.30am				R. Grocott
SUNFIELDS	10.30am	S. Watkin/ L. Murray	M. Boothe/ J. Koroma	P. Hulme	
UPPER NORWOOD	11.00am	A. Konadu-Yiadom		A. Konadu-Yiadom	
WESLEY HALL	11.00am		C. Ilunga	C. Watkins	C. Ilunga

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**We look forward to welcoming Rev. Charles Ilunga to
the Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit from 1 September 2020**

Charles will have pastoral responsibility for Forest Hill and Wesley Hall



Charles has kindly sent us this photo, and piece about himself by way of an introduction:

Charles MPunji Djikubi ILunga, 30 December 1960,
my wife Josee and our 5 Children: Sergine, Albert, Irene, Celestin and Vodie
are from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, (DRC)

The Dem. Rep. of Congo, the second largest country at the centre of Africa, has been the theatre of much bloodshed and plundering from colonisation time to this day. It's rich mineral reserves have sadly contributed to unending wars organised by the powerful nations of the west leaving its population scattered and in an unspeakable state of poverty and suffering.

My coming to the UK was the result of flight of war.

I started active ministry in 1996 in Moba Port at the shore of the Tanganyika Lake. Sunday the 15th November 1998, while in the pulpit leading worship, in the middle of the service, violent war broke out, forcing many to run away. My family and I found ourselves in Zambia before we moved to the UK after 8 years as refugees in Mporokoso Mwange Refugee Camp.

Upon arrival in the UK, we were given our first home in Motherwell, Scotland in February 2007, where we started our new life. The Government, through Job Centre Plus, took care of us socially, materially and financially. Social workers were appointed to help us with how to deal with different things, such as where

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to go for shopping, road safety, to Church and many other areas of life. All this meant for us a great blessing through the hand of God.

Castlehill Methodist Church, Lanark, Scotland became our first spiritual home where I introduced myself as an ordained Methodist minister and started the process of joining the British Methodist Conference. With the support and guidance of Revd. Eric Pott, Kathleen Pearson was appointed to look after us pastorally and spiritually, and to teach us all different things including English. Four months later I began the process of getting into British Methodism Ministry.

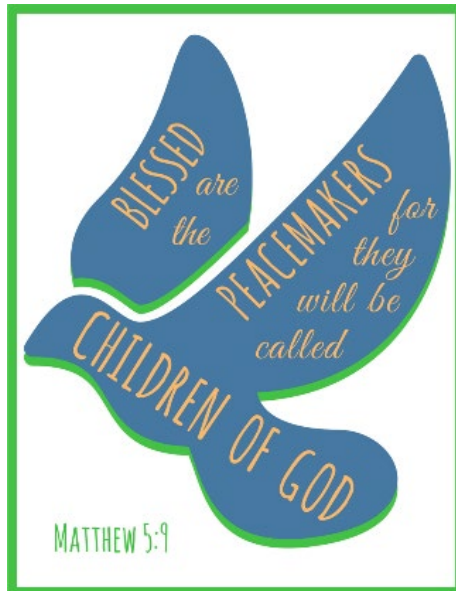
My letter reached the Ministerial committee at the Methodist House, who subjected me to three interviews; one in Motherwell, another in Edinburgh and the last one in St Albans asking me to produce an episcopal letter transferring me from the Katanga Methodist conference (DRC) to the British Methodist Conference.

At the last interview, the Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee (MCSC) accepted my application but conditional on three main areas: Language, Culture, and Theology. I was moved to Queen's Foundation College in Birmingham where I received my formation for almost three years, a blessing, as this was to help me stretch my theology, learn English and understand the British Methodist Church working system.

I was then received into full connexion at the Conference in Scarborough and was in the end appointed to the Forest circuit with pastoral charge over two churches: **Leyton Trinity and Wanstead Methodist**, which I took on in September 2010.



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Reflection by Charles Ilunga

My experience of flight of war, hardship, and memories of lots of suffering in the DRC, always take me into deep thoughts on the meaning of life and the nature of violence and its general impacts on the victims and perpetrators. It has left me with a strong interest to study and meditate on scripture all the time. When I read passages on Jesus teaching like the 9th 'Beatitudes' I am always compelled to ask myself how peace in the world can be a reality, and what to do, not only for the DRC my country, but for any other country in the world in situation of turmoil.

I ask myself, why do people issue decrees of wars? How have people lost the sacredness of life to easily enjoy killing their fellow human being? Whether we really need weapons in this world? Why spend energy and money to build weapons and manufacture weaponry of massive destruction while people are going hungry in a world that is in itself already dangerous enough? Do we need those nuclear bombs?

Tsunamis, Malaria, Earthquakes, Cholera, Floods on top of poverty and Ebola, now Covid-19 ... Aren't these complications enough for man to understand his duty to ...

Any future war between two powerful nations will mean an unthinkable level of destruction and loss of lives, says S. Wesley Ariarajah.

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My thought and understanding of violence are that war is the culmination of evil that dilutes the power of religions in general with the perennial problem of evil and suffering. War is a dirty and foolish business.

While I believe that the meaning of life can only be found in the supreme creator God, my thinking is also always challenged by these endless wars that are going on and on and on in our world yet man thinks he is intelligent.

Man has achieved a lot in his research and there is in this world enough room, enough potential and plenty of minerals for every human being to enjoy life. Life is sacred and should not be destroyed anyhow. *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.* What a privilege to be a called child of God!

Revd. Charles M. Ilunga

Why not take a while to reflect on, and colour in, this image?



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**Liturgy prepared by Rev, Michaela Youngson
and circulated with the Connexional magazine**

We thought we knew how the world was meant to be,
Day followed night, every week had a Sunday,
and that was the day for church,

How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

We thought we knew how the world was meant to be.
We made our plans, held our meetings,
Kept the roof on the church and the show on the road,

How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

We thought we knew how the world was meant to be.
We would see colleagues, friends and loved ones again,
And we would embrace, laugh and share stories as we always have,

How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

And now, we know something new.
We know that the world is not ours to control,
And that our plans are confounded by the smallest microbe.

God is teaching us a new song, for a new land.

And now, we know something new.
We know that church is not committees, agendas and buildings,
It is us, in homes, streets, hospitals throughout the world.

God is teaching us a new song, for a new land.

And now, we know something new.
We only have today with those we love, today is the day,
To say 'I love you', to mend an argument, to hold on tight.

God is teaching us a new song, for a new land.



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3 July 2020

Faith leaders call for a green recovery

Faith leaders have called for an environment-focused economic recovery. The statement has been signed by our Methodist President, the Revd Richard Teal and Vice-President, Carolyn Lawrence.

COVID-19 has unexpectedly taught us a great deal. Amidst the fear and the grief for loved ones lost, many of us have found consolation in the dramatic reduction of pollution and the restoration of nature. Renewed delight in and contact with the natural world has the capacity to reduce our mental stress and nourish us spiritually. We have rediscovered our sense of how interconnected the world is. The very health and future of humanity depends on our ability to act together not only with respect to pandemics but also in protecting our global eco-system.

At the same time, less travel and consumption and more kindness and neighbourliness have helped us appreciate what society can really mean. We have also seen yet again that in times of crisis, injustice becomes more obvious, and that it is the poor and vulnerable who suffer most.

All this shows us how precarious our previous 'business as usual' was, socially, economically, ecologically and spiritually. Yet we have also demonstrated our capacity to adapt to new realities. Many people have discovered a deeper sense of spirituality. We have seen the possibility of creating a more sustainable and generous society in which we care more deeply for each other and the world. Our faiths teach us that our planet, with its rich resources and inspiring diversity, is lent to us on trust only and we are accountable for how we treat it. We are urgently and inescapably responsible, not just before God but to our own children and the very future of humanity.

This unique moment calls us to develop a shared new vision for our future which we cannot afford to miss. As faith leaders we are committed to working alongside the people and governments of this nation and the world to formulate and live by such a vision.

It must be based on the recognition of our limits: this planet is a complex ecosystem in which we are only one part. It must be rooted in sustainability and

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respect for nature and the earth's resources. It must be founded on the fundamental principles of justice and responsibility.

In this, the fifth anniversary year of Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si, we undertake to:

- Speak out urgently about the need for change;
- Promote the vision of the earth as our common home which must be shared equitably;
- Protect biodiversity and restore natural environments;
- Work with our communities to reduce substantially the carbon intensity of our activities;
- Build worldwide partnerships to reduce the impact of climate change on the poorest and most vulnerable;
- Model what we teach in our faiths and communities.

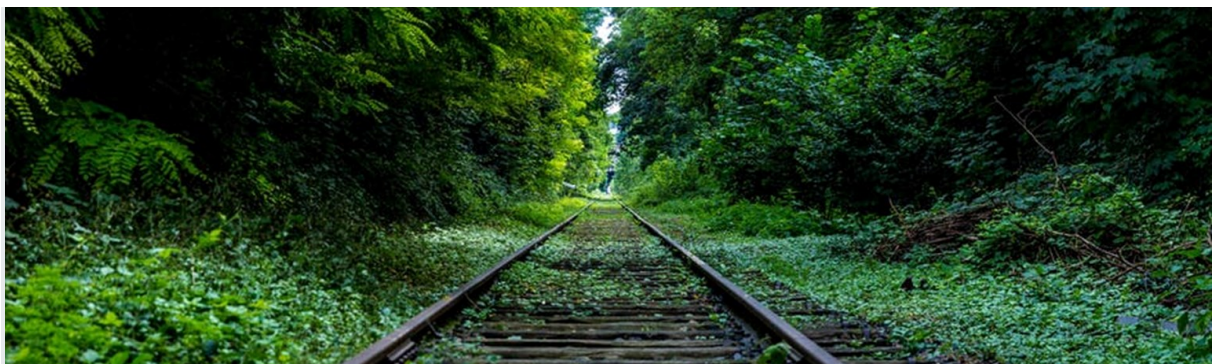
We therefore call on our Government to:

- Ensure that every element of the economic recovery strategy has at its centre the urgent need to reduce the risk of catastrophic climate change;
- Implement policies for sustainability in every sector of the economy;
- Take its due share of responsibility for a global & just transition, including through its approach to trade, investment and overseas aid;
- Use its COP26 presidency to work for a global commitment to net zero, building on the Paris Agreement;
- To protect biodiversity and restore the environment;

We urge every sector of civil society to use this opportunity to work together to create a better world.

For details of other signatories to this letter, see

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/faith-leaders-call-for-a-green-recovery/>



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A Pilgrimage To The Holy Land

With the Chairs of the London District
Tuesday 16th – Tuesday 23rd March 2021
8 Days Based in Jerusalem & Galilee

Cost: £1,795 (shared) and £2,220 (single).

Cost includes return flights, full board and en suite accommodation
except travel insurance

You are invited to join the London District as part of Woven, its theme for 2019 – 2021 to discover for yourselves the setting of some of the most important events in the life and ministry of our Lord, Jesus Christ: in Jerusalem, the surrounding area and further north in Galilee.

To make a reservation, visit methodistlondon.org.uk/pilgrimage or contact Fola Oyeleye on 020 7654 3845.

In the event of cancellation due to Foreign Office advice, our group will be offered an alternative date to travel or the opportunity for a full refund.

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Worship With Us

If you have missed any of the Circuit services on YouTube, details below, or available via the Circuit website

<https://bhcpmethodist.org.uk/>

The readings are taken from the Revised English Bible (REB)

Service for Sunday 2nd August 2020: <https://youtu.be/mMwcJzV-fwo>

Service for Sunday 26th July 2020: https://youtu.be/xrgznTFo_eQ

Service for Sunday 19th July 2020: <https://youtu.be/S7EH26SJP-w>

Service for Sunday 12th July 2020: <https://youtu.be/GSUvBeQ0wwg>

Service for Sunday 5th July 2020: https://youtu.be/fS_TIo4v-NM

Service for Sunday 28th June 2020: <https://youtu.be/LR14OfWY518>

Service for Sunday 21st June 2020: <https://youtu.be/LYDAmVFuiSU>

Service for Sunday 14th June 2020: <https://youtu.be/Nys42zaRWFQ>

Service for Trinity Sunday 7th June 2020: <https://youtu.be/bbURjUiKvTE>

Additional worship resources are available from the Methodist Church
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/>

The Methodist Church 'dial a prayer' can be accessed via
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus/prayers-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/dial-a-prayer/>

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