



CONNEXION



With God all things are possible
Matthew 19:26

**The magazine of
Christ Church Methodist, Addiscombe
SEPTEMBER 2020**

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*Part of the Croydon Methodist Circuit and a member of
Churches Together in Addiscombe*

WORSHIP

SEPTEMBER		
Sunday 11.15am 3.00pm	6	All Age Worship on Zoom led by the Stewards Stephen Day's act of worship on YouTube
Sunday 11.15am 3.00pm	13	All Age Worship led on Zoom led by Rev Choi Stephen Day's act of worship on YouTube
Sunday 11.15am 3.00pm 5.00pm	20	All Age Worship on Zoom led by Mrs Comfort Croffie Stephen Day's act of worship on YouTube Cafe Worship on Zoom
Sunday 11.15am 3.00pm	27	All Age Worship led on Zoom led by Rev Choi Stephen Day's act of worship on YouTube

Our worship continues via the internet and telephone. The link to **Revd Stephen Day's service** for either live or later viewing is <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjsqXYbmrBE9GD4hNOUVEjg?feature=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fchannel%2FUCjsqXYbmrBE9GD4hNOUVEjg%3Ffeature%3Dem-lsb-owner>

All Age Worship from Christ Church takes place at 11.15am on Sundays via Zoom or landline – the links are on the email sending out the weekly Keeping in Touch sheet. Don't forget you can listen to previous services via the Christ Church website and also view 'special' services: <https://www.christchurchmeth.org.uk/worshi/sunday-worship>

Cafe Worship on 20 September at 5.00pm – the Zoom link will be sent out by email from Wendy. If you don't receive it, please contact her.

Also on Sunday mornings, **early prayers** are currently being held weekly at 9.40am for half an hour on Zoom. If you would like to join in, please contact Fiona.

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Welcome to the September edition. We hope you enjoy reading the magazine. Any suggestions to Fiona please or email bingham144@hotmail.com, *Please note that any opinions expressed in articles are personal to the authors and may not be endorsed by the editors.*

COPY DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER by **Sunday, 20 September** either by email to ccmamagazine@hotmail.com . Requests for email version to above address. Thanks as always to all contributors.

Editorial team

OUR MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear friends,

Over the last five months, well, almost half of the year, we have seen many changes in our lives, affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, and the church also has been impacted in various areas of its mission and worship. Now, we seem to get more used to 'new normals', such as keeping social distance, using sanitizer, or wearing face coverings. And, in the church, we are getting more familiar with online worship via Zoom, which few people have even heard about until five months ago.

In this time of changing and uncertainty, this month we are to begin a new Connexional year, which doesn't seem to give us great deal of hope or new vision, rather, casting a shadow of decline or closure. But, I wonder whether there is anything we have learned during the lockdown, whilst we have lost a lot, for example, fellowship and worship in the church, activities and reaching out in mission, and so on. At least, one thing I can say is that we have found a new way of worship through Zoom. Although it is quite different from the actual church worship, it still enables us to communicate and interact with each other, and to join in worship wherever you are, whether you are in Grenada or in Korea. In terms of pastoral caring, it has been very difficult as we are not allowed to visit, even family members were not allowed at the beginning. Nevertheless, our faithful pastoral visitors tried hard to contact people on the phone, and some of them helped out with shopping, which has made a huge difference in their lives, I am sure.

Having been through so far in this strange time of ministry, what impressed me most is that people still think we are the Church and they continue to take part in offering, caring, sharing, as well as worshipping. You may be surprised that the annual offering total hasn't dropped a lot, despite the loss of the loose cash collection each week. I am so grateful for the generosity and faithfulness of our people, and also the strenuous work of the stewards and the finance team.

It reminds me of the scene where after Resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples who were locked in themselves and said, "Peace be with

you. As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” Here we see Jesus wants them, and us, to carry on the mission entrusted with us. And, this command was clearly reflected in the work of Martin Luther, who faced several plagues in the 1520s and 1530s. In his letter to the church leaders, he insisted that leaders should remain at their posts faithfully and sensibly, saying:

With God’s permission the enemy has sent poison and deadly dung among us, and so I will pray to God that he may be gracious and preserve us. Then I will fumigate to purify the air, give and take medicine, and avoid places and persons where I am not needed in order that I may not abuse myself and that through me others may not be infected and inflamed with the result that I become the cause of their death through my negligence. If God wishes to take me, he will be able to find me. At least I have done what he gave me to do and am responsible neither for my own death nor for the death of others. But if my neighbour needs me, I shall avoid neither person nor place but feel free to visit and help him/her. (Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel).

With this sensitivity and gritty wisdom, I hope we all continue to do the work entrusted to us and be the Church throughout the year ahead.

Every blessing,

Rev. SC Choi.

FAMILY NEWS



September and the start of the new Methodist year bring fresh starts and we send our love and best wishes to all facing new challenges at school, colleges, universities and work, including George Parkinson and Suri (daughter of Ruth née Salter and Siv) who are starting school, Rosie Tompsett who has successfully completed her nursing degree – congratulations Rosie! - and is starting her new role in Birmingham and Sarah Winser who begins a new teaching role in Croydon.

We hold in our prayers all who are still vulnerable and unable to emerge from lockdown. May they know God's love and comfort during these months.

We thank God for the safe arrival of Claire and Andy Peacock's new grandson Edward (a brother for Alice) and send our love and congratulations to Laura and Richard.

Several of our friends celebrated birthdays in August, including Terence Timms, Gill Winser, Rosemary Dalrymple, Andrew Thynne and May Belfon. Looking forward to birthdays in September are Revd Choi and Sarah, Daphne Jones and Wendy Thompson. We send them and all with special dates our congratulations, love and best wishes.

Please tell/send any family news to Fiona Assaly: bingham144@hotmail.com. We really want to make sure our prayers are offered for all our friends. Do remember the prayer chain – again, contact me if you would like to include anyone on the prayer chain but remember to ask their (or a family member's) permission first.

Emmaus Bible Study group

The group will reconvene on Tuesday 8 September at 7.30pm on Zoom. If you're interested in joining in, please contact Fiona (as above).

Pastoral Committee

Will be held on Thursday 17 September at 7.30pm on Zoom.



*See weekly Keeping in Touch sheet
for updates*

**We meet on the third Sunday of the month
SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 5PM on Zoom -
the link will be on the Keeping in Touch sheet**

We are not able to worship on church premises at the moment due to the continuing coronavirus restrictions but we haven't stopped worshipping.



Wendy Thompson

LOOKING FOR HOLIDAY CLUB 2020



A year ago 'Team Holiday Club' prepared to sail the 5 Cs! Sarah T's craft, Mary's bible stories, Tony's challenges and games together with drama, songs, exercise routines, were the entertainment aboard the 2019 'Adventure Cruise'.

With the presenters, Jordan and Cassandra, at the helm, we sailed the 5cs: Choice, Courage, Call, Change and Commitment. With good humour, an eagerness to challenge and entertain the crew, the presenters not only shared how the 5Cs linked to our 'faith' journey but they introduced Lucy and Bert to our church community.

Lucy and Bert were keen to join 'Team Holiday Club 2020', however the pandemic meant this could not happen. Indeed it also changed the way we were to deliver our Holiday Club Service. You could say the pandemic introduced a 6th C ...no... not 'Covid-19' but... 'Community', the theme of the service.



The puppets, unaware that Holiday Club 2020 had been cancelled, were filmed in different locations of the Church, looking for Holiday Club. In the film, Lucy and Bert bumped into 'Grandma' who explained that whilst it had been cancelled, they could attend the service via Zoom. Thanks to Adrian's fabulous filming skills and Emma's amazing script, Lucy and Bert were reconnected with the Christ Church Community.

This year's holiday club service was much like previous years, creative, joyful and prayerful with a message of community. Altogether a wonderful experience. Thank you to all who made it happen, particularly Pauline L (puppet owner), Sarah W (puppeteer) and Sue A (Grandma). Karen Taylor

[Editor's note: Karen is too modest to say that she too was a puppeteer – and the rest! Thanks, Karen]

Superintendent's Letter



Dear friends,

I don't know about you but I am finding this moment in time quite tricky to navigate. On the one hand, we are given the freedom to move around and engage in activities which weren't possible several weeks ago; however, on the other hand, I find myself making decisions about what to do – for my wellbeing and that of others. Some of us may be facing significant decisions about study, employment and finance which have major long-term consequences.

During the last couple of months leaders within our churches have been wrestling with risk assessments to consider the re-opening of church buildings for private prayer, Sunday worship and other activities. I salute leaders in all our churches for the diligence and care they have taken when conducting these risk assessments. I have met with senior stewards and property stewards from all our circuit churches on several occasions and have been impressed by the depth of engagement with the complex issues we are facing. We have been grappling with the implications of Connexional guidance – based on government guidance – which has changed frequently, sometimes weekly, making it difficult to keep up to date. I know that all churches have consulted their members about reopening, or are in the process of so doing, to assist decision-making by the Church Council as the managing trustees.

From the beginning of September we anticipate gathered Sunday worship taking place in five churches and so I have prepared a Preaching Plan for the first time in several months. For the next few months I expect to produce a monthly Preaching Plan to give

us flexibility. We anticipate that online worship – Zoom and YouTube – will continue alongside gathered Sunday worship.

Please note that the YouTube services will be livestreamed on Sundays at 3.00 pm, beginning on Sunday 30 August, allowing me to lead worship in church on Sunday mornings and then offer YouTube worship in the afternoons. I hope that you will feel able to continue to experience and find support, inspiration and encouragement from Sunday worship, whether in church or online, as is appropriate to your situation.

You will be aware that all of our churches have been struggling financially during the past few months with limited giving from members and no lettings income. The result is that some churches have been unable to pay their circuit assessment in full; the circuit is thus needing to consider means to reduce circuit expenditure, especially since we have no certainty about finances going forward. Based on proposals from our circuit stewards, last month's Circuit Meeting agreed for an independent HR consultancy company to conduct a review into the roles of our three circuit lay employees. The circuit stewards will bring the findings of the review, and proposals stemming from it, to the Circuit Meeting next month. I would ask you to hold in your prayers everyone involved with and affected by this process.

I conclude with a lament which is part of the Connexional resource *Beyond Exile: A service to celebrate a return to public worship*. We may find some of our own recent experiences reflected in this lament.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Steven', with a horizontal line underneath.

God bless,

Marking loss – A lament

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.

Eve, the Chrysalis Mother **– carved by Heidi**



A long time ago, a woman called Eve walked with her husband, Adam, through a beautiful garden. She walked with him every day. Eve was expecting a baby and at times like this she was glad that he was close. She was also glad that a baby was growing inside her, but she felt that she would be even happier once her baby was born.

Adam did not know much about a baby inside someone and he felt helpless and unsure. Eve reassured him 'You must give me space and keep all the animals away as my baby arrives; that will be important when the time comes'. Adam was a bit impatient but glad he would have a job to do.

As the first birth day came close, Eve no longer asked things of Adam; she gave orders, 'I want a very comfortable bed of soft leaves just here and I want a flintstone knife just there' and so on. Eve had a dream that she was standing in a warm cocoon that shielded her from the sun and the outside world. She was changing; changing completely, like a caterpillar changes into a butterfly inside her chrysalis. She knew without anyone telling her that when the time came for her to step out of her shielding chrysalis she would be a mother, a very different person from the young woman she had always been. Yes, she had enjoyed sleeping side by side with her husband but soon she would be a mother. She would be a mother for the rest of her life. What a responsibility; what a joy: what a life-changing difference it would be. She awoke and quietly smiled and her smile remained on her face.

Eve's first baby was a boy she called Prime and Adam could only look on as Eve attended to Prime's every need, feeding, clothing and wiping his bum; it was a full-time job and Adam busied himself searching for food for the family.

Prime grew and in time became a bit more independent and then he became a bit selfish and moody when sisters and brothers began to surround Eve with their more insistent needs. Eve put her arms around him and explained patiently that his brothers and sisters had important needs but this did not mean that she did not love him less. 'In fact', she explained, 'you're the First Born and you will always be the First Born'.

The years came and went and as the children grew, Eve's work grew. Food, clothes and teaching were only the start of her work. There was rivalry, jealousy, deception and near fighting. Through all of this, Eve made it her business to teach each of her offspring how to live in peace with one another. She brought civilisation to the children and to Adam, who was keen on laying down the law to sort out noisy arguments and fights. In the long-term, it was Eve's patient teaching of peace and healing, not hard words and fists and hurts, that remained with her family for the rest of their lives.

When Eve grew old and looked back on her life and her wide and spreading family, she remembered how when Prime was growing inside her she had gone through so much change; it was as though she was cocooned from the world and became, when Prime arrived into her arms, like a new, completely new person bursting with unconditional love.

Other babies came. It was hard work but it was the work of love. Amongst it all she saw some failures. One child was once obstinate and cruel which made her so sad but Adam and the others looking back agreed that Eve and all the following Eve mothers had brought civilisation, oil of healing and how to live together, to the world.

Rex (from a male perspective)

Eve and Adam

A long time ago, Eve strolled with her husband Adam, as she did most days, through a beautiful, peaceful garden. Above them, shape-shifting clouds explored the sky as the tranquillity formed by majestic trees enveloped them. It was here that the couple often reflected on their previous choices regarding forbidden fruit, which had led to their removal from a similar idyllic garden, and the painful consequences that came with this. Their memories of summer smiles in paradise had faded like dying rainbows.

Eve was pregnant and happy to share the closeness with Adam. She felt a strong connection with the wriggling baby growing inside her. However, the underlying anxiety relating to whether all was going well with the baby's development, as well as the fact that it was uncomfortable when the baby's head bounced on her bladder and tiny feet found their way to rest between her ribs, meant that she looked forward to the time when she could finally meet her baby and hold them safe.

As Adam thought he did not know much about a baby inside someone, he felt helpless and unsure. Eve wished that Adam knew that he didn't need to understand; he didn't need to 'fix' her anxiety; she just wanted him to be there for her as she was for him. She had told him this before but was aware he had not listened and thereby invalidated her opinion. This made her feel alone and unable to share how she felt with him. Instead, Eve reassured him, "You must give me space and keep all the animals away as my baby arrives. That will be important when the time comes." Adam was a bit impatient but glad he would have a job to do. He seemed oblivious that Eve was already starting to feel lonely in the relationship.

As the due day came close, Eve was swollen and tired: every step was painful, sitting was uncomfortable and laying down not much better. Moreover, she was scared about the labour and the outcome. Distressed, she just wanted to offload what she was feeling with Adam and for him to share her emotional space with her. Adam, who thought this pregnancy was a women's issue where he had no place; didn't understand and could n't help, had withdrawn to doing things which interested him, made him feel

useful and gave him a sense of purpose. Drawing on her inner strength, Eve now gave clear, literal, direct requests to Adam about what he could do to help such as, "I need a very comfortable bed of soft leaves just here and a flint stone knife just there." She thought that in this way, at least they could connect on a practical level. Adam reasoned that Eve and become less passive and wanting to please; her tone seemed bossy.

A little later, Eve had a dream that she was shrouded in a soft, comforting, compassionate veil that shielded her from metaphorical darkness and the outside world. Like a caterpillar to a butterfly in a chrysalis, she was metamorphosing.



It felt emotionally painful but safe to change. Intuitively, she sensed that when the time came for her to step out of her shielding cocoon, as a mother she would be a different person from the young woman she was leaving behind. Yes, she had enjoyed sleeping side by side with her husband but soon she would be a mother too. She was mentally preparing for the responsibility, joy and life-change. Eve awoke and smiled. She felt at peace and ready.

Eve and Adam's first baby was a boy they called Prime. Adam looked on as Eve attended to Prime's every need: feeding, clothing and changing his nappy. It was a full-time job for Eve because Adam busied himself searching for food for the family. Eve felt increasingly let down that Adam seemed to have devised clear gender roles without discussion. She wanted to walk together with Adam in their marriage but he was creating his masculine identity; devaluing anything he saw soft, nurturing and feminine.

Adam continued to provide for the family with food and material items, but chose not to involve himself looking after their children and home; rationalising and internalising that women were somehow better at these 'soft skills' so he could get on with what he perceived to be masculine activities like hunting and gathering. In correlation with Adam's gender role constructions, as the years passed and the children grew, so too did Eve's workload. Preparing food, sewing clothes and teaching were only the start.

Prime grew and in time became a bit more independent. When brothers and sisters arrived, Eve gently helped her son learn that everyone has different needs at different times and how to work together in a loving, respectful environment. In the midst of sibling ambivalence: love, hate and rivalry, Eve effectively used restorative justice practices to repair and improve relationships. For example, once the children had calmed down after a fight, she would ask both sides what had happened, what they were thinking, what they thought with hindsight and what they could do to repair the hurt caused.

As Adam had internalised a masculine identity, which devalued 'feminine' traits, he refused to recognise or react to his emotions and thereby struggled with his mental health. He reasoned that he was 'the man of the family' and therefore had to show physical and emotional strength; to fix everything. Within his rigid ideas of gender roles, he missed out on a deep emotional relationship with his wife and children and vice versa. He sometimes felt lost and alone but never acknowledged or spoke of this, even though his denial emotionally exhausted him.

When Eve grew older and looked back on her life and her ever increasing family, she remembered the time when her firstborn, Prime, was growing inside her and her own change within her metaphorical chrysalis, where she had learned protection and unconditional love – how they felt and how to give them. As life and no one is perfect, amongst it all she saw what some would call failures but she preferred to see as learning opportunities. For example, their third son's behaviour was cruel which made Eve so sad.

Adam and other men looking back, agreed that Eve and all the following mothers had brought social skills, healing and the ability to live together to the world. Paradoxically, they also formed a misogynistic society for a long time, in which women were seen as second class citizens and represented purely from the male perspective in two stereotypical extremes: saint or femme fatale.

Susan - Rex' daughter (*from a female perspective*)



Memories of **Starting School in 1944**

On my fifth birthday I was excited – I could start school. On my birthday Mum had invited three or four local children to a party. They were aged 3 or 4, including Audrey with whom I am still in touch – she is a member of Cheam Methodist. We all went to the bottom of the garden with some flower pots to make mud pies –it was fabulous.

The next afternoon, Mum took me to the local school – a few minutes from home. Miss Bachelor seemed nice and asked when I wanted to start. I replied ‘now please’ but she suggested the next morning. I loved it, with Miss Hepworth as my teacher. I could tell the time, could read a little and knew my numbers.

On the third day, I told Mum I was going on my own and was so insistent that she let me but followed me. I kept telling her to go back. There were three or four small roads to cross but cars were very rare during the war. Eighteen months later, I was taking Audrey to school.

After a few weeks, doodlebugs were bombing London – they were pilotless rockets and caused a lot of devastation. All the children were sent home with a letter offering to be evacuated with the school. Mum explained that I would have a new Mummy and Daddy as well as them. I said ‘I want to think about it!’. Mum also thought about it and realised she might not see me for quite a long while and my Dad was at sea in the Navy. The next day, I said ‘Mummy I am going’ – she could not dissuade me.

Parents had no idea where their children were going but we were all singing – most of us had never been on a train before. We ended up in Leicester and were taken to a hall where the local

people picked the children they wanted. I was the last one left. I did not know the warden in charge had already decided I was going home with him. Both Auntie Edie and Uncle Len had decided not to have an evacuee, having lost a baby at a few days' old, but liked the look of me. They took me home – the first time I had been in a car. I was really happy for the six months I was there. I kept in touch with them for the rest of their lives. They came to my 21st and our wedding and we went to stay with them. I loved my school days.

Sheila Szzvanowski



FRIENDS REUNITED

As we approach September,
After August's holiday memory,
The heatwave that half melted our bods,
The promise of cooler climes.
After Covid's ravaging times,
And uncertainties of health.



There will be a 'new beginning',
That will bring a wealth,
A flurry of older friends,
Returning to activities, that will make amends,
For the hardships of long past months.

Friends reunited, Zoom colleagues in the flesh,
Off screen, in our midst, all freshly blessed.

An autumn, a harvest, scattered like good seed on the ground.

Bob Horne



On Methodism in Numbers (Statistics at a Glance 2020)

The Methodist Church is Britain's fourth largest Christian denomination, and part of the worldwide Methodist family representing over 80 million members and adherents in 138 countries. As of 31 October 2019, there were almost 170,000 people who have made and sustained a commitment to Christian discipleship within the Methodist Church of Great Britain as active members of a local Methodist church. While this represents a decrease of about 3,500 since October 2018, the decline has, compared to the previous two years, halved.

In addition to this, Methodists are members of Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) with a total membership of approximately 29,000. 4,110 churches (also called societies) reported themselves as active as of 31 October 2019. Societies that have become a class of another or have formed a new merged church with one or more other societies are not counted separately. 34 congregations underwent such a change of status during the year.

Churches are grouped into 30 Districts, which are further organised into circuits. Churches in Shetland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, the Isles of Scilly, the Isle of Wight as well as Gibraltar and Malta are also covered by these arrangements. London, Yorkshire West and Northampton reported the highest numbers of Methodist members; and four Districts were able to record an upwards trend. LEP membership was highest in Northampton, the South East and Bristol.

The weekly estimated average attendance across the Connexion at typical worship services came to a total of just over 133,000. This includes services on any day of the week and does not differentiate between adults or children, or whether attendees are Methodist members or not. Compared to the 2018 figure, this is a decline of about 7,000 attendees per week, but attendance was up in four Districts.

Overall, London, Northampton and the South East recorded the highest numbers.

While deaths of members remain the major cause of membership decline, there have also been some encouraging signs of growth, with a handful of Districts reporting increased numbers.



OXYGEN & HOPE

He reached for my hand and I took it. Despite my goggles and mask across my face, I smiled with my eyes. As he closed his own eyes then, for him my mask and goggles and gown disappeared; my voice became the voice of those he wished to be there from times past, and times present. I held his hand as he pressed it to his cheek, his eyes still closed, and held it there a long time. In that moment, my blue gloved hand became the hand of all those he loved and remembered, who could not be physically present with him at the last. When it came, that last letting go of breath, it was as if Christ had become his oxygen, and a moment of almost sacred stillness.

I am part of the hospital chaplaincy team at East Surrey Hospital run by Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (SASH), where, as a Lay Chaplain I have ministered for the past four years to patients, staff and their families. Chaplaincy is a very distinct Ministry; by its nature we are called to walk with people of faith, different faiths, some faith, and no faith at all. It is a ministry of presence, where we are called to meet people as they are and, in their need and asking the question, “how can I help you?” In a way, to bring the hands, the voice and face of Christ into our stricken communities, even when sometimes one is constrained from speaking His name.

It is a ministry to be a presence of hope, whatever the situation or outcome may be. It is a ministry of holding and of letting go; of conversation and silence; of memories of the past and what may lie ahead. Most significantly, a ministry of being in the moment for those around and in need. The arrival of the coronavirus and the response to it in the hospital setting has been a challenge for us in

hospital chaplaincy with circumstances that we would have found unimaginable only a few weeks before.

The Trust provided support for the chaplaincy team to ensure that we would be comfortable with seeing patients with Covid-19. For us, spiritual care could still be offered, even from behind masks, goggles or visors, and cold blue rubber gloves. To avoid the use of books or paper, I needed to learn more scripture and liturgy off by heart than usual. The 23rd Psalm, the 121st, 139 Psalms, the Nunc Dimittis, the Prayer to the Ephesians, the Lord's Prayer became my refrain.

In line with Government advice, visitor restrictions were put in place at the hospital, so friends and relatives could not always see their loved ones. This was heart wrenching for us, that patients could not be reassured by their physical presence, and their loved ones could not be reassured by being with them. Where possible, the hospital let immediate family members in to visit their



loved one at the end of their life. They had to follow guidelines and wear PPE, yet even so these moments together were very precious. After leaving the ward sometimes the only support I could offer was to let them cry, and yes, sometimes to cry with them.

Many of our elderly patients were confused and fearful.... Protective equipment turned familiar faces into strange ones, so trying to create, a safe and comforting place was a challenge. We became practised at smiling with eyes only, while trying to make raised voices to the hard of hearing seem gentle and reassuring.

I trained to be a singer and I never thought this would become part of my hospital ministry, but in these last weeks I found myself singing with and to patients hymns, modern worship songs, monastic chants, popular songs from the thirties and forties- even singing 'smile, though your heart is breaking' with the nursing staff on one of the wards late one night. On one occasion I was singing Amazing

Grace to one patient in a ward when two of the other patients joined in and as our voices softly filled the air, so it seemed the still peaceful presence of the Holy Spirit filled the ward...

As I spoke with nursing staff it was evident that they were facing situations they had never experienced. Nursing teams drafted in from different areas of the hospital, found themselves learning to adapt to the different needs and circumstances in the face of this pandemic. The dedication of the medical staff continued to shine through despite this unprecedented situation. As a chaplaincy team we do a lot of work in the background and are called not just to be alongside patients and families but also to care for and support staff. Walking the wards in the evening, and called upon to be that listening ear, I heard the staff's stories. Some have families who are far away in other countries. Some staff moved out of their family homes into hotels, so they could protect their families, patients. One paramedic recently confided to me that he had not been able to hold his children for two months. I saw staff anxious, often emotionally and physically exhausted, but still resiliently continuing to put their own fears, concerns, and comfort to one side, to care for others.

In fact, it was humbling to continually witness the tenderness and care that medical staff gave to patients. One of my most privileged moments was at the height of the crisis, in a ward where tragically many had died that day. I was sitting and praying at one bedside, and hearing the voice of a nurse speaking softly, sitting with another patient nearby... "Don't worry ... you are safe... Keep drinking in the oxygen. Do not be afraid." Then there was tragic loss of much-loved colleagues and friends among the staff. The Chapel became a haven for remembrance with condolence books to write in, candles to light, little knitted mementoes, and other tokens to place on the altar or to take away. It became a space to seek peace, and a safe place for tears to be shed.

Yet, amid all this, there were also moments of grace...where the chaplaincy team sensed the ever-present movement of the Spirit across the hospital. Receiving requests for prayer from matrons and nurses at shift handovers, setting up a spirituality resource table

where we found that the free bibles, Quran's, rosaries, prayer cards constantly needed replenishing throughout the day. And there were moments of joy, giving thanks in prayer with one of our cleaners, for the birth of a grandchild - remembering the gift of life, in the midst of mortality.

From a personal perspective, I feel incredibly grateful for the rainbow of love and hope this ministry offers. I give daily thanks to God that he has enabled me to have the opportunity to share in this work, alongside such dedicated and caring chaplaincy colleagues.

My prayer life has become a precious solace as I processed the grief and rawness of emotions. Familiar verses of scripture have taken on a greater significance, and I find that I live more deeply connected to them ...” *Nothing can separate us from the love of God...*”
“How wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ...Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us” “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace”.

These, and others, have resonated throughout my daily experience - to encourage, embrace, comfort, uplift and strengthen for the tasks that will lie ahead. Challenging though the last weeks have been, it has also been a time of immense and intense privilege. It continues to stretch, widen, and deepen my understanding of the nature of service.

Jacqueline Dean came to East Surrey Hospital on placement as part of a post Graduate Certificate in Chaplaincy and stayed on as a Voluntary Chaplain where prior to the pandemic she provided spiritual care in the Stroke ward and Acute Medical Unit. She is currently employed by SASH as a Bank and On Call Chaplain and studying for an MA in Chaplaincy.

Weekly Services and Meetings at Christ Church <i>(We hope that worship and meetings/groups will be back at Church soon)</i>			
09.15	Holy Communion (2 nd Sun)		
09.30	Time for quiet prayer (3 rd Sun)		
10.10	Songs for Worship (2 nd Sun)		
10.30	Morning Service (Parade 2 nd Sun)		
10.30	Holy Communion (4 th Sun)		
10.30	Junior Church / Youth Fellowship		
10.30	Crèche		
17.00	Cafe Worship (3 rd Sun)		
Monday			
09.30	0-5 Stay & Play		
18.00	Monday Club (monthly, 3 rd Monday)		
Tuesday			
19.00	Rangers (fortnightly)		
19.30	Emmaus Bible Study Group		
Wednesday			
18.30	Guides		
Thursday			
09.30	0-5 Stay & Play		
18.45	Brownies		

Minister	Revd Soon Cheol Choi	8654 5481
Senior Steward		
Church Stewards		
	Sunday morning services only →	
	Sunday morning services only →	