

Friends,

On Sunday July 23rd starting at 3pm the Accreditation Service for Liz Amis and Gillian Ross will be held at Grays Methodist Church. Rev'd Dr. David Chapman will preach and the service will be led by Rev'd Dr. Marion Cole. Parking will be available in the school next door to the church. Light refreshments will be served after the service. All are welcome.

Celebrating 40 years of Methodism in Herongate

St. Andrew's Church will be open to visitors all day from 10am – 5pm on **Tuesday July 11th 2017**. Friends old and new, church neighbours and passers by are all welcome. Light refreshments will be served during the day.

Isaiah Study Day

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders recently enjoyed a fascinating day at Trinity listening to the very articulate Rev. Dr. Michael Thompson expounding his passionate thoughts on the Book of Isaiah. Michael is a retired Methodist Minister who has served most of his appointments in Circuit Ministry. In one appointment in West Africa he used his interest and studies in the Old Testament in serving as an Old Testament tutor in a Theological College. He has published several books on the Old Testament and those who gathered to hear him speak were rewarded for a very entertaining, insightful and thought provoking session.



Michael started describing how the Book of Isaiah is the most-used part of the Old Testament in the lectionary, apart from the Book of Psalms. It clearly had a prominent place in the life of the Qumran community - as one complete scroll (and an almost complete one), were found by Bedouin shepherd's when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in November 1946-February 1947.

Michael explained that there was probably not one author of the Book of Isaiah, but three or maybe even more, which may help explain the variations and historical references in the writings. However, it is important to understand that the various parts of the book just haven't been put together randomly or for purely practical reasons (e.g. to all go on one scroll!), but rather it is collated as part of conscious and careful editing. Our scholastic guest also explained how the book was divided into different sections and the significance of that arrangement. He then led us through the themes of worship, forgiveness, the 'remnant' and the prophetic messages, amongst other subjects that are contained in the writings and in the historical context in which they were set.

All in all, it was a most enjoyable way to spend a Saturday. Michaels' enthusiasm was infectious and as we met together to review and discuss some of the key verses in small groups, it was clear that all who gathered thoroughly enjoyed the occasion.

I heartily recommend attending any similar type events that may be organised in the future. There's always something to learn and get excited about when the 'real experts' take the time and trouble to share their wisdom with us in the South-East Circuit.

Thanks to Michael and wife Hazel for travelling from Manchester to share with us and also to Daphne for organising the refreshments.

Steve Burton, Local Preacher

Worker with Families and Children in Billericay:

Hello there! My name is Julie Swann and I am delighted to have been appointed as the Worker with Families and Children at Billericay Methodist Church. We moved to Essex in August last year where my husband Rev Steve Swann has been stationed as a Pioneer Minister in the Colchester Circuit. Previously I have held two similar posts in Cornwall and the West Midlands providing me with a wide experience of this aspect of ministry.



I am passionate about nurturing faith with people of all ages but with a particular emphasis on the family and feel that we must consider an intergenerational approach to our mission and service within the church and community which is very much in line with many biblical models.

We have two children, James and Sammi and 3 grandsons aged between 1 and 5 years and a granddaughter who will have been born by the time you read this. They all live in West Sussex. We also have two Cornish cats: Sandy and Pebbles who keep us on our toes!

In my spare time I enjoy anything creative, in particular card making, as well as gardening and catching up with friends.

I look forward to meeting Circuit folk over the coming weeks and months.

Footsteps to the Cross.

Good Friday arouses strong emotions.

I admit I felt excited when Julie Cristin persuaded me to join her once again in leading the Good Friday service at Herongate. This is such an emotional time which many shy away from if too raw but the danger in glossing over the emotional depths is that the personal nature of what Jesus did weakens.

We had a theme, Footsteps to the Cross with selected readings pointing to significant events in the life of Jesus, and my challenge was to write something to bring these well told events to life in a fresh way. Julie's challenge was to bring it all to life too through objects (scripture signposts), materials, hymns, music and frankly the things I am less good at!

So through prose and poetry we heard about the future Man of Sorrows and followed one King with his gift of myrrh on his arduous journey to the infant Jesus. We felt Mary's joy and grief as she heard the prophecy about the destiny of her first child and we wondered who we could relate to in the scene where Martha's sister Mary anoints Jesus as her King whilst Judas is focusing on the material things of life.

Finally we end up on that dreaded hill with others, facing as they did that very first time, the crushing sense of grief, despair and fear. We have followed Jesus' footsteps to the cross and although we feel this is the end, a terrible end, we are also aware that actually it isn't the end. Indeed, it is a beginning. But at this point we feel our own pain of love and loss keenly. We are free to feel.

It is always an honour (albeit a nerve wracking one) to be able to share what I write with others, and to share worship with my friend Julie and the congregation. There was an amazing atmosphere in church which is difficult to describe but was so rich, deep and ironically full of life.

Rachel Gallehawk, Local Preacher

Horndon-on-the-Hill Feast and Fayre: Saturday and Sunday 24th & 25th June

Come and join us for the annual village Feast and Fayre, where there will be a Flower Festival and Exhibition in the Chapel and the usual range of refreshments in the Church Hall.

Our exhibition this year focuses upon reading and translating the Bible. 2017 is the 500th anniversary of the occasion when Martin Luther nailed his 75 theses on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg. Four years earlier he had been reading Psalm 31 as part of his preparation for presenting a lecture at the University, when he read the words 'Deliver me in your righteousness'. Further study convinced him that through His loving righteousness, God was willing to show mercy and forgiveness to all and this was something that was received '*Sola Fide*', through faith alone. This realisation brought Luther to declare 'I felt myself absolutely born again'. He believed that being able to read the Bible for themselves was essential for all people. We shall be giving out copies of the Gospels to visitors.

All the money raised in the Chapel today will be donated of the work of the Bible translation, particularly for the people of Bukina Faso in west Africa, where our former minister, Rev'd Rosemary Pritchard is living and working.

If you have a spare half hour, please and come and help us on either day.
Cleveland Key

On Saturday 8th July from 10.30am onwards Stanford-le-Hope Methodist Church will be holding a **Flower and Plant Stall** event. Light refreshments will be available.

Visit to British Museum, London

When: Saturday August 12th. ENTRANCE IS FREE

Why: To explore Old and New Testament backgrounds through the galleries and artifacts on display: includes 2 short talks by experts.

Own Transport: Russell Square on Piccadilly Line is nearest stop

Meet Together: at main Museum information desk by 10.15am includes some free time and to finish at approximately 4.30pm.

Further Information: Please reply by 30th June and to register as part of group: email brendagutberlet@btinternet.com or telephone the office on 01375 672848.