

# VISION

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Please see pages 5 and 18

## ***MINISTRY TEAM:***

**Rev. Dr. Bonni-Belle Pickard (07590 564477)  
and all members of Union Street Church**

***JULY/AUGUST 2024***



**Union Street  
Methodist Church**





**We would very much like to keep our congregation together. Please join us for both the on line services and at the various locations if you are able. If you require transport please see the weekly notices.**

July	7th	<b>10-30am</b>	Online
July	14th	<b>10-30am</b>	<b><i>St Faiths Ringlestone</i></b>
July	21st	<b>10-30am</b>	Online
July	28th	<b>10-30am</b>	Tonbridge Rd.
August	4th	<b>10-30am</b>	Online
August	11th	<b>10-30am</b>	Burham
August	18th	<b>10-30am</b>	Online
August	25th	<b>10-30am</b>	<b>Bearsted</b>

**Online Services**

*Details will be available on the circuit website  
Laurel will also keep us informed in the newsletter  
Please check the circuit website for details of services  
[www.nkmethodists.org.uk](http://www.nkmethodists.org.uk)*

### How to be a church outside a building?

We've long told ourselves that being 'church' is more than having a building, but now we're trying to live out that reality! Since our 'last service' on 26 May, we've been working through the sorting of the contents of the Community Centre and Church: What to keep? What to sell? What to throw out? Put another way: What will have value for us in the future? What might have value to others? What's value has long since passed?



Maxine and a host of others have spent time and energy dealing with items that range from a children's paddling pool to old hymnbooks, from the old Youth Club snooker table to the kitchen crockery, from the organ to broken chairs. Each represents something that has had value to our congregation and community as it has pursued its mission and ministry in the past. What will be useful for our future mission and ministry?

Some of the items, such as the stained-glass windows, the stone memorials, the front façade, and the wrought iron communion rail, are heritage items that we are required to keep. How can they best be used in the future? The cracks in front façade will hopefully be restored to their former glory as a sign of welcoming presence and stability for the community. The stone memorials on the 'back' wall of the Church will probably be moved to a more visible position along the proposed walls leading to the worship/fellowship area. We are negotiating with a stained-glass conservation expert about the possibility of moving the two southern-most stained-glass windows to a 'first floor' position above the other stained-glass windows in the main worship area. This will allow us to enjoy them in worship and prevent them from being 'hidden' in the new kitchen and office areas. (Their movement would also allow better access for the kitchen exhaust.) How we reposition the communion rail is still to be decided, but those decorative pieces have already adorned several areas in the past, so serving a new purpose will be part of their historic 'journey'.

Other items need more deliberation: do we really want/need to keep the large pulpit that was made at the time of the last Church renovations? We will keep the small lectern, as that will fit better in a reduced chancel area. But the days of a large structure that physically separates the preacher from the congregation are hopefully past. In an increasingly confusing and sometimes hostile world, we need to hear the Word of God close to us. Baptism font, communion table, the large cross on the wall – these will continue to be with us as signs and symbols of our living faith.

I'm personally going through stacks of books and resources that have served my ministry over the past quarter century. Like so many items we realise we don't really need from the church cupboards, the next decision is where those items need to go next. We hope the community will take most



of it in our sale at the end of June. We'll be in touch with the recyclers about scrap metal and second-hand book dealers about hymnals and the like. If anyone is good with selling things online, we've got plenty of items for you to process!

And of course, this interim period requires us to think carefully about how we maintain our relationships with each other. The building only houses us; we as a church still need ways to work together and support each other in doing all that is good and right and true, and in serving God in our community. It's been good to see various initiatives such as the Monday Muffins starting up and efforts being made to worship together at various churches. Others are considering how small groups might meet in homes. Ernie is inviting more folks to join in the Tuesday morning zoom meetings which continue to enrich our faith journey. Alfred and I are looking forward to hosting many of you at our Open Manse on 7 July. Perhaps it's only when we are in transition that we recognise what matters most!

As we sang at our last service: 'God who sets us on a journey to discover, dream and grow...keep us travelling in the knowledge you are always at our side; give us courage for the journey, Christ our goal and Christ our guide.'

Shalom, Bonni-Belle

## Tribute to Freda Wilson

*Freda Wilson's funeral in the last week of May was a time to celebrate her life. The crematorium at Vinters Park was full, and Bonni-Belle talked about Freda's life, growing up on a farm in Kent, then working as a nanny to two small boys, before fulfilling her life-long ambition to train as a nurse. She had a long career in the NHS, and was a hospital night sister by the time she retired. She and Alan were married for 66 years and had two children, Philippa and Guy, and four grandchildren. She was well-loved at Union Street, a stalwart in the kitchen there, and her trifle was legendary!*

*After Bonni-Belle had concluded, Freda and Alan's son, Guy, on behalf of the family, delivered his own very warm tribute to his Mum, which made us smile and conjured up lovely memories of Freda through the years.*

*Guy has kindly let us have a copy of the memories he shared, so that those who could not be at the service can learn a little more about Freda's life.*

*Here is what Guy said:*

Good morning, firstly can I start by thanking everyone for coming today to remember Mum and celebrate her life.

I think we can safely say Mum was born to nurse: looking after and caring for people was what she did best. This began at a very early age when, whilst at home on the farm, she would look after her twin sister Joan and her younger brother Ronald whilst her elder sister Barbara, and her Mum and Dad worked the land.



As we have already heard Mum's true ambition was to become a nurse, but before she could start training, she needed a job: she could have worked in bakery a butcher's, a pub or restaurant, but no - she chose to care for those two little boys.

Then she embarked on her near 40-year career in the NHS. She probably told you all about it at some time, and she did talk about it, but only because she was so proud to be a State Registered Nurse and to wear that navy uniform.

It was whilst training that Mum met and fell in love with the person she would spend the rest of her life with – our Dad.

I've heard many stories over the years mostly revolving around the West Kent Nurses' Home. It seemed to me that Mum's training was a cross between *The Great Escape* and a *Carry On* film, with Mum trying to get out, Dad trying desperately to get in and Hattie Jacques as Matron appearing at the wrong time, trying to stop young people enjoying themselves!

Anyway, Mum qualifies, they get married and move into their new house in Rochester. However, the course of true love rarely runs smooth and one day, for reasons only known to himself, Dad presents Mum with his muddy hockey boots to clean! Did I mention Mum was a very caring loving person? Well, I believe she politely declined the offer! Last week when questioned about this, Dad's defence was that his mother had always cleaned them!

With that small bump in the road negotiated, Mum's next outlet for her love and affection came in the shape of, firstly Philippa and then (many years later!) myself. I speak on behalf of my sister and myself when I say we felt like the most loved children in the world and could not have wished for more caring and loving parents. Although Mum did know how to shout and tell you off as I can testify first hand!

In between working and looking after children, Mum found time to be an active member of the British Red Cross. She would take first aid courses, send Dad out selling flags to raise money and attend things like fetes and point to point races.



I have memories of sitting in a damp field with a thermos flask waiting for someone to fall off a horse ....no-one ever fell off a horse! This was all voluntary and was done so others could enjoy themselves. And Mum liked nothing more than enjoying herself, be it with friends or family at a party, or dinner and dance, or cheese and wine party - any excuse for a gin and tonic really.

Socialising was one of Mum's pleasures and she liked nothing more than to pop in to see a friend for a cup of tea and a chat, which is all well and good if you don't have something on the stove when you leave. This led to the Fire Brigade being called to every house she ever lived in! One particular incident, which didn't



actually involve the emergency services, I came home from school and casually asked what was for tea? Mum replies and I then ask, what about pudding? Mum then looks to the ceiling..... apparently if you leave a steam pudding in a pan of boiling water for long enough, then that's where it ends up!

Fast forward some years: Philippa and I are both married and Mum has grandchildren that she can shower with all the love and affection in the world, not to mention spending Dad's money on them. Mum spent many days looking after Victoria, Andrew and Thomas whilst Philippa and I were at work and when we moved to Worcester and Matthew came along, Mum and Dad would visit regularly, and Mum would spend hours in the garden helping Matthew on his latest building project. Mum always cherished her time with the grandchildren, and they always very much looked forward to seeing their Granny (and Grandad).

So Mum, on behalf of the countless people you nursed over the years, Dad, Philippa and I, Victoria, Andrew, Thomas, Matthew and all your family and friends, for all the love you showed each and every one of us over the years and the many happy memories: thank you. Thank you for everything

# MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



Here we are in July and as always we are taking a break and the next Vision will not be available until September.

Hopefully the church renovations will be under way by then.

As you will have seen, I have listed the venues that we are planning to visit over the next couple of months on page 2 of this magazine.

I am certainly going to try to be present at all of these and I am hoping to see you all there too.

Don't forget if you require a lift or any assistance please consult the weekly notices where Laurel will post any relevant information.

**Your Editor Dennis Makowski**





Recent discussions have considered how our congregation can stay in touch with each other whilst the oncoming refurbishment to our church takes place.

Every Tuesday morning at 11-00am there is a zoom session which enables folk to talk to each other. However I am very disappointed in the very low number of people taking part and wonder why?

This is an excellent way of keeping in touch with each other, and discussing any topics that are important to you.

Therefore my plea to you all is , please consider taking part in this initiative on a regular basis which hopefully will help our renovated church move forward into a better future.

ERNIE MUNN.





Answers to the  
June  
Quiz

1. In the beginning
2. Noah.
3. Sloth
4. Fast.
5. Samson.
6. Barabbus.
7. Cain.
8. Raven.
9. Samsonite.
- 10 Raven.



## July/August Quiz for you. Answers can be found in the readings below the questions

1. Which people were responsible for killing Saul's sons?  
**1 Chronicles 10:2 NIV**

2. Upon which mountain were Saul and his sons found dead?  
**1 Chronicles 10:8 NIV**

3. In which god's temple did the Philistines hang Saul's head?  
**1 Chronicles 10:8-10 NIV**

4. When David first marched on Jerusalem, which people lived there?  
**1 Chronicles 11:4-5 NIV**

5. Who lead the attack on the Jebusites of Jerusalem?  
**1 Chronicles 11:6 NIV**

6. How many men, was it said, that Jashobeam, the Hacmonite, killed in one encounter?  
**1 Chronicles 11:11 NIV**

7. How tall was the Egyptian (who had a spear like a weaver's rod) that Benaiah killed?  
**1 Chronicles 11:22-23 NIV**

8. Who was Zechariah's father?  
**Zechariah 1:1 NIV**



9. In Zechariah's vision, what went throughout the earth and found it at rest?  
**Zechariah 1:8-11 NIV**

10. Where was the wedding where Jesus turned the water into wine?  
**John 2:1-2 NIV**

# Circuit Walks

Members of the Maidstone Methodist churches meet once a month for a morning country walk of around 5 miles. This happens on the third Thursday of each month. If you would like to be involved, please contact the organiser for further information. **Organiser: Lesley Hitch (Mobile:07733 046915)**

## Oh no! Fake news in Vision!

Dear Editor,

In composing a report of this month's walk, it has come to my attention that a previous walk report of mine may have inadvertently passed on 'Fake News'. I am sorry to demean your esteemed journal in such a way. If you can't believe the church magazine, what hope is there?

In reporting a previous walk around Shoreham (Kent), it was noted that the 'green and pleasant land', on which we walked, had inspired William Blake's words for the hymn *Jerusalem*. Alas, this appears not to be the case. The article I found last time seems to have been withdrawn. In its place is an article justifying why the facts stated are in error. The new article claims that Blake didn't visit Shoreham (Kent) until around 20 years after *Jerusalem* was published. The claim is that it was the pleasant pastures of Sussex that inspired the words during the period when Blake lived in a cottage at Felpham in Sussex. But doing a bit of 'due diligence' on this claim unearths a further claim, this time by locals, that the words were written in an alcove, inevitably an east-facing alcove, of the Earl of March public house in Lavant, near Chichester.



Looking at a map, and remembering my infrequent trips to the area, I feel the countryside around Goodwood, in the Chichester parish of Lavant, would be more likely to inspire the words than the cottage in Felpham, which is near the beach. More 'due diligence' on this topic reveals the pub still exists having been built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. But it was originally called the Bat and Ball. I have so far failed to find out when the name changed. The pub website also claims local records show the poem was written in its alcove, whatever the pub's name at the time.

So, who is right? Whether written in the cottage, or in the pub, I lean to the theory that the Goodwood countryside inspired it. But I secretly like the idea that Blake was so desperate to capture his thoughts, inspired by his visit, that he popped into the pub and had a quick drink to oil his creative writing whilst he covered the paper with verses we know. And as he wouldn't have had to drive back to Felpham in early 1800, maybe he had another a little stronger drink to celebrate his completion of the poem before trotting back to the cottage.

My apologies once more. If you wish me to resign from the Guild of Dennis's Writers, you have only to ask.

Murray



## **A bit like buses, apologies come in pairs!**

As if an apology to the editor isn't bad enough, some May walkers may feel they are owed an apology. Read on.

We have been lucky to experience fine weather for our recent walks. After another unsettled period, our walk day was again sunny for this month's walk in the Darenth Valley. At this point the leader's luck ran out. As our driver set off, the route planner told us we would be in Otford in 32 minutes time, well ahead of the start time. When we first encountered problems, caused by traffic trying to get around the gridlock on the M26, we were satisfactorily navigated around the queues with the arrival time unchanged. But soon we were treated to a demonstration of all that is wrong with Sat Nav apps, they assume all vehicles are suitable for the routes they recommend. Gridlock! After an articulated lorry and two white vans had caused three separate jams, our driver descended from the Downs to travel along the Pilgrims Way . Roadworks!

We then had the joy of having to further divert around two further road closures, eventually joining the queues on the A25. There are times when we should follow our own instincts rather than being seduced by the voice on the Sat Nav. We eventually arrived 50 minutes late. And as if that wasn't embarrassing enough, the leader had to listen to the proud boast of how some of our more regular 'laggards' got there early! I guess I will be reminded of that on a few more occasions.



The sun shone brightly as group set off from the playing fields beyond the Otford car park. After a gentle climb we found ourselves walking in trees between the fairways of a golf course. We were soon descending gently towards Shoreham, passing the picturesque cricket ground before reaching Shoreham Church. We walked down the tree lined path in the churchyard to reach the clear waters of the River Darent, a chalk stream which rises above Westerham and passes through the North Downs to flow into the Thames north of Dartford

As we passed through the village, we noticed that the annual duck race was to be held the following Sunday. This is an annual race for artificial ducks, real ducks are forbidden. People are encouraged to make their own ducks, the theme this year being the Olympics. If you lack imagination, there are orphan ducks available for competitors to purchase. There are prizes for the best ducks as well as for the first duck to complete the course. The Master of Ceremonies is Duckmaster who arrives in his Duckmobile. It seems this event attracts several hundred spectators and participants.

We continued the walk along the picturesque tree lined banks of the Darent. This section, it transpires, is the 'Duck Race' course. This was the first time I had led the Shoreham circular walk in an anticlockwise direction. On a previous occasion, some found the clockwise climb too steep. Now they can judge, the anticlockwise climb has a gentler gradient but is MUCH longer.



Having reached the top of the hill, the party flopped onto a couple of benches just above Shoreham's chalk cross. This is a memorial, created in 1920, to those who lost their lives in the First World War. It is a marvellous viewpoint looking out over the valley. As we enjoyed the sunshine and let lungs and muscles recover, a 'pop up' bakery appeared unannounced. A feature of some recent walks, the prices are very reasonable – a smile, thank you and a compliment suffice, no need for cash or credit card. The produce was as tasty as ever and by a baker regularly acclaimed for her contributions for attendees at Tuesday Teas.



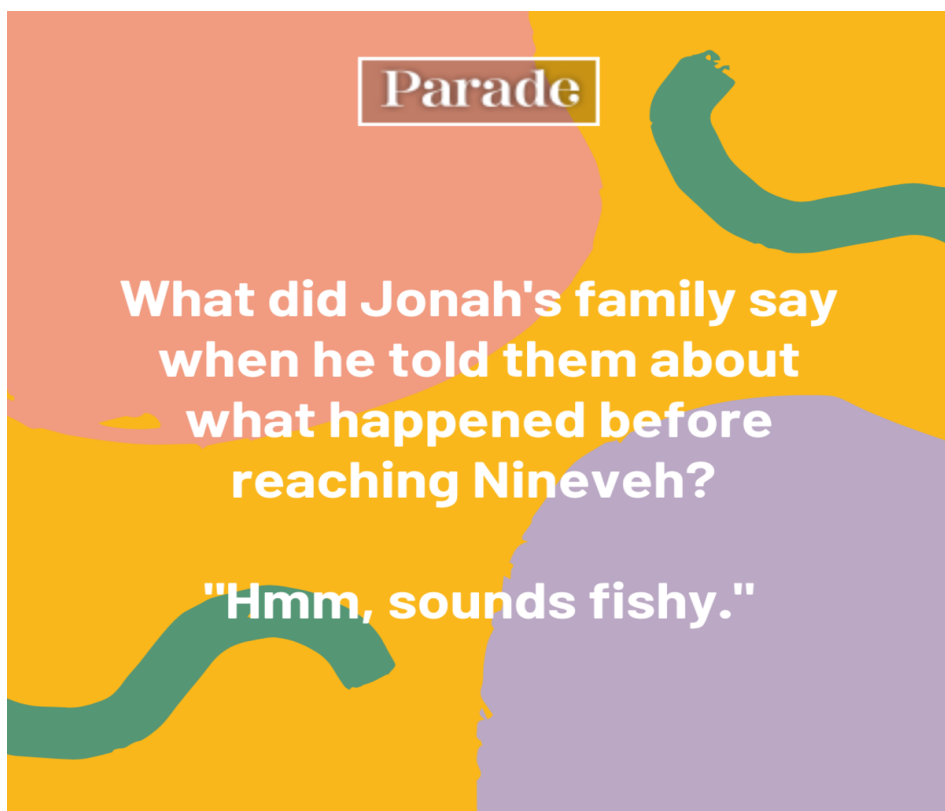
As the party sunned and fed themselves, the leader began to worry about getting to the lunch venue. Late from the start, our very enjoyable stop made us even later. The leader spent so long looking at a path below that he clearly began to hallucinate. He convinced himself that he had seen a path at such a level when we did the clockwise walk. It would cut off a corner and recover time. So down the path we went. All went well, trodden paths until we came to cows gathered round a gate into a field, but no path! *O me miserum*, a leader's nightmare. Wrong way, and cows, a phobia for at least one member of the group. And an organiser whose foot was hurting! Thankfully it was sunny, and the Darenth Valley so pretty, I seemed to get away without too much grumbling.



We did arrive in time for an al fresco late lunch in Otford. There we joined a 'satellite group' who had walked the so called Otford Solar System walk. It was a shorter walk for the benefit of one of our group recovering from treatment. Late we may have been, but people lingered and chatted in the sun. It was around 4.30pm before we finally broke up.

For all the disasters, I have never had so many positive comments about the chosen location. The day and the green countryside showed the valley at its best. If only William Blake had gone to Shoreham earlier, I feel sure it really would have inspired the sentiments in Jerusalem!

**Murray Gibson**



# Tribute to David Hitch

I think I speak for many of us, when I say that David was a constant in our church lives – for Alan and me, it was for over 40 years, but there are others whose church life with David goes back much further, to their childhoods and teenage years. For me, it was David, who more than anyone else embodied the character of Union Street Methodist Church and who was at the very heart of our church community.

I am only one among many who appreciated and admired him. He was unfailingly courteous, considerate and kind. He always took the trouble to speak to you on a Sunday morning, even though he might be busy doing various duties, with lots of other people to see. More recently, the greetings had to change, as he had to move to communicating via written notes on a memo board – but he still took the time to share news, to circulate information and to ask after people, even though it must have been a lot harder for him. I think I speak for us all in saying how much we admired him for the stoical way in which he adapted to his difficult circumstances.

Our children are just three of the very, very many young people whose lives David has touched and shaped. Just as they were outgrowing the Junior church they had joined as three-year-olds, he was there, ready to welcome them into the seniors, unfazed by their determination to challenge and argue, to question and dissent. His faith was strong enough for anything they could throw at him, and his style open enough that they could genuinely explore their own position. My three remember him very fondly – especially his warmth and patience, even when they were ‘annoying teenagers’ (as at least one of them admits!) - and he undoubtedly was a very real and positive influence in their lives.

Several times we have heard David speak of the influence older folk at Union Street had on him as a teenager, helping to set him on the right path through life. (Indeed he painted a picture of himself as a tricky teenager that we find hard to imagine, having only met him much later in his life!) He more than honoured the guidance he had from others in the way he paid it forward - supporting others over the decades and giving so freely of his time, wisdom and energy in so many ways. It was David who first persuaded me to help with own arrangements services and showed me how I could contribute (and made me want to be part of the process).

I can't begin to imagine the number of roles he must have taken on over the years – you might find him washing up in the church kitchen,



(he once debated with me the correct way to fry an egg!) arranging services, planning worship schedules, serving on Church Council and other committees, sorting out problems with the technology, liaising with preachers ... the list just goes on and on. Above all, he brought so much to the musical life of the church throughout the time we've known him, and probably everyone here will have special memories of his musical contributions in and out of services at Union Street.

David clearly found great joy in his family life. We still remember him messaging us when Jason was born and how thrilled he was to be a grandparent not only to Jason but also to Lara and Didi. I recently found an e-mail from him telling me about the grandparenting duties he was enjoying on one of his visits, taking and collecting Jason from nursery when Carla was away. The trips David, Norma and Elaine were able to make to Portugal, when the family could all be together, were clearly very special for him.

The years since the pandemic were especially hard for David, but his courage and tenacity throughout his illness have been an example to us all. We so much admired the way he continued to take part in church life, playing the organ right up until last December, his commitment to the church unwavering.

Above all we will remember how David showed us the joy of living a life of faith. We had not been churchgoers for many years until we found our way to Union Street but David was pre-eminent among those who showed us how faith and fellowship could bring joy and light into our daily lives. He was a man who truly made a difference to many, many others during his well- lived life.

We will miss him.

*Laurel Townend*



# Here is the poem that Lesley read at David's funeral

## TIME

Time, it passes, it flows, it ebbs  
Intricate patterns, intricate webs  
Strange on journeys, bizarre on trips  
You have just entered twilight - time slips.

And when you hear the speed of sound  
Or the speed of light is seen around  
Whatever happened, has passed, has gone  
At the speed of time which marches on.

But what is time? A month? A day?  
A year? A second? Or so they say.  
So why sometimes it goes so fast?  
Yesterday was a second of my past.

And other times, it's slow and drags  
With fifteen coffees and forty fags  
Without an engine, or wings in the sky  
Still it is possible for time to fly.

When I think of the places and things I have seen  
I sometimes wish for my own time machine;  
But all I have is a watch that ticks  
To visual time - the mechanical remix.

And now I am older than the day before last.  
And the day before the day before that which has  
passed.  
I can seriously say by means of this rhyme  
That nothing I've done was a waste of time.

And still it goes on with each second's drop  
You can't stop time unless it wants to stop...

SJH

1996

## Prayers to remember FREDa and DAVID

Gracious Spirit, creator of life, carrier of hope, make your presence known among us. Enable us to be brave in our remembering, honest in our sorrow, and open in love and compassion to each other. Help us to seek not so much answers to our questions, but, rather, the patience to mourn and grieve. Enable us to remember with joy the lives of those we have loved. Send us your peace. Amen

O comforting One, compassionate  
One be with us all when we suffer  
loss and ache with the pain of  
grieving. Give us a glimpse of the  
way it will be when love will never be  
taken away, when life itself will not  
be diminished when all that we hold  
most precious will live and remain  
with us forever. Amen.

Help us, God, to focus on that which enables us to keep going. Remind us that time will never erase the memories and that for a moment we're not alone. We give thanks for the times we had with our friends, both the ups and the downs of living life, but most of all we're grateful for love which is stronger than death. Help us to bear our sorrow without bitterness, to look forward slowly, one day at a time and to gain some comfort from those who can help us ease our pain... Be with us now as we encourage and support each other. Amen



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If you have any questions

On how you can continue  
to support the Homeless

Centre I am sure

Jan Hinchliffe would be

happy to give you

answers and she can be

contacted on 07976

444015 or 01622 735198



***Material Needed for the September 2024***

***Edition of Vision!***

Please send copy for the  
September edition of *Vision*  
to the Editor By Thursday 15th August

or by email to

**[vision@usmc.org.uk](mailto:vision@usmc.org.uk)**