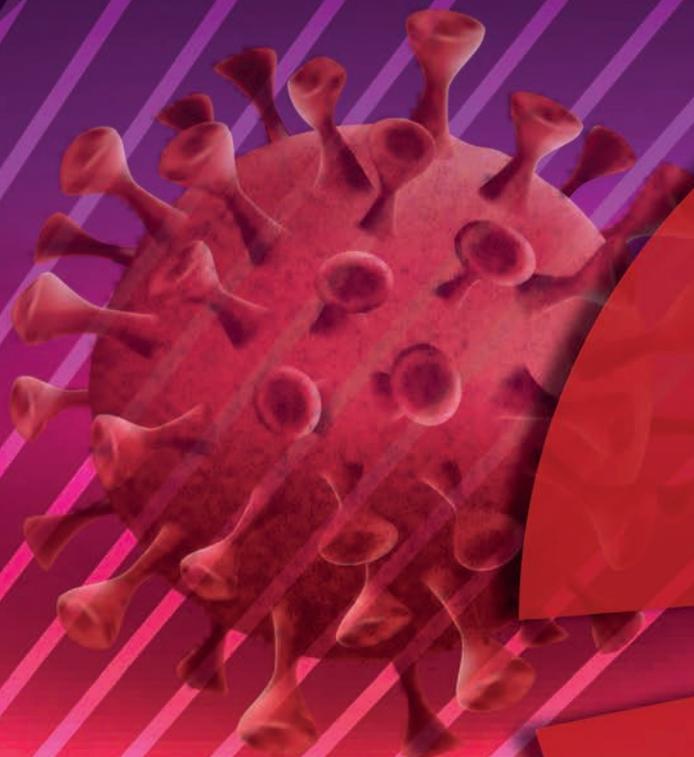




North Kent Methodist Circuit

grapevine

CIRCUIT NEWS



inside...

BREATHING DURING LOCKDOWN

ONLINE WORSHIP

Issue Fifteen
Autumn 2020

As this autumn issue of Grapevine is being published, we are still in the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, still full of uncertainties and a fair amount of frustration. We are also convinced that God is not locked down; this issue is dedicated to reflections of where God is and has been at work in our midst during the pandemic.

We also welcome two new members of our ministerial staff. Revd Gill le Boutillier-Scott and Revd Paul Lau are joining us with part-time interim responsibilities for Hextable MC and the Medway Chinese MC respectively. We look forward to working with them both over the coming year.

Bonni-Belle

Breathing during lockdown

The pandemic lock-down that started while we were in Lent and continued through Easter tide has now seen us into Pentecost, the season of the Spirit. The Hebrew word for Spirit, 'ruac(h)' means 'breath', and if ruach is pronounced carefully, there's a lot of breathiness in that final consonant sound. I've been struck by images of 'breath' and Spirit during this pandemic/ Pentecost season.

In Genesis, God's Spirit 'breathes' on the winds of chaos and darkness and so creates light and goodness and order. In the Joel text, God's Spirit/Breath pours out on all people, men and women, old and young, slave and free, enabling them to dream dreams and see visions. In the last chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus 'breathes' on the disciples who are gathered in fear after the Resurrection. His 'breathing' becomes a vehicle for their receiving of God's Spirit which counters their fear, enabling them to leave their confused isolation and become active witnesses in the world. In each of these Spirit-filled situations, God's breath was empowering and personal and life-giving. During the pandemic, though, we've learned that 'breathing' on each other can also be life-threatening.

Two specific incidents involving the 'breathing' of two individuals have been on my mind during the pandemic, one very public, one very personal: George Floyd and Bill Fisackerly.

In the public arena, George Floyd's gasp of 'I can't breathe' has echoed around the globe during this pandemic; it accompanies a photo of Mr Floyd lying on the ground with the knee of a police officer on his neck, suffocating him into submission. The fact that the police officer was white while Mr Floyd was black – and that Mr Floyd died as a result of this act of brutality – ignited a world-wide demand that racism again be addressed on personal and systematic levels. Several have commented that being in a time of pandemic has forced us to finally focus fully on issues we have often avoided in the busy-ness of normal times.

The prophet Joel would remind us that when the right of any of God's children to 'breathe' is wilfully restricted, God's Spirit is not fully available to any of us. When Jesus, with his last breath on the cross uttered, 'It is finished', he was revealing God's determination that human subjugation to the powers of evil, including racism, also must be finished. God's gift of the Spirit/Breath is for all: enabling, empowering, urging us all on

to a fuller understanding and expression of our common human dignity and responsibility for each other. Each of us must refuse any restriction on how God's Spirit is received by or shared with others, otherwise the ability of all of us to breathe is damaged.

In the private arena, Bill Fisackerly is my father, a nearly-ninety-year-old retired Methodist minister living in Florida who had a fall just before the lock-down and, due to a combination of pandemic-related issues, ended up in isolation in a hospice. While he was able to continue to receive some necessary medical care, the mandatory isolation policy meant that he was no longer able to physically be with his wide circle of family and friends or communicate with them in the usual ways. With his age and condition, this was very confusing for him. Particularly difficult was being apart from my mother, to whom he had been married for 65 years. A few times, he was able to 'visit' her with a glass door separating them. During a rare skype conversation with him, I asked about that visit. He said, "Oh, we could see each other and hear a little, but we couldn't breathe on each other."

That phrase, revealing his own innocent confusion with COVID restrictions, has summed up for me many of the

Introducing the Revd Gill le Boutillier-Scott

I'm Gill and I will be joining the North Kent Circuit in September on a part time basis. I have been in the ministry since 2005, having served in Sutton Coldfield and Sevenoaks where I still reside. I am originally from Guernsey in the Channel Islands, hence the French part of my name.



I suppose in this type of article there is an opportunity to speak of strengths and what I might bring to the team, but I have always found that quite difficult. So perhaps if I tell you what I am passionate about in my ministry that would be a good place to start. I have been told that I have an enthusiastic demeanour and I am passionate about preaching and teaching the Word of God. I really enjoy encouraging people to grow in their discipleship by engaging with scripture and one another, which I believe leads to confidence in sharing our experience of God's saving love. We can then have a greater community engagement too as we seek to show others what it means to love our neighbours.

On a more personal note I have four children: Isabella, 11, Noah, 9, Eva, 7,

and Elias who is 3. They are the main reason for stepping back a little from having a full-time stationed appointment. I have a love of cats, of which we have five, including two kittens acquired during lockdown! I also rather like shoes! If I get any spare time, I do a bit of knitting and am musical, although it has been a while since my instruments have been out of the cases!

I am really looking forward to working with you and getting to know you and the Circuit.

With love and prayers
Revd Gill

frustrations each of us have felt about being separated from our loved ones – and how that relates to 'breath' and 'breathing'. We instinctively resist wearing face masks because they restrict our breathing. We Methodists – and choirs everywhere – are frustrated that we can't gather to sing. As we look at each other in virtual meetings or through glass windows or across one or two-metre spaces in back gardens, we have recognised that there is something essentially human about 'breathing' together. When this is free-breathing is restricted by a tiny virus, we feel our spirit challenged.

And yet we know that the restrictions have been there to keep us all as physically safe as possible. While we have struggled with knowing when and how to 'open our churches' for public worship, we have also known that only allowing a few of us to 'breathe' while restricting others – by race or ability or medical condition – is not the justice God seeks. We pray for the day when we will be able to gather together again and 'breathe on each other', but we wait for the fullness of time when that is as safe as possible for as many of us as possible.

In the meantime, God's Spirit breathes on us, individually and collectively. God is bigger than lock-down restrictions. God's Church reaches beyond our usual expectations of how things can or should be. God's Spirit keeps calling on us all to create and re-create new ways of being with each other so that all God's children and all God's creation can breathe freely.

Yours in the Spirit,

Bonni-Belle

Introducing the Revd Paul Chow Sing Lau



The North Kent Circuit is pleased to welcome Paul, who will be assisting the Circuit with the leadership of our Chinese congregation based in Gillingham.

Originally from Hong Kong, Paul studied at Taiwan University and the University of Pennsylvania, USA, and trained for ministry and ordination at Chung Chi College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Paul is married to Edith Fung Ming; they have a daughter, Catharine, working in Hong Kong, and a son Timothy, a pharmacist in Kent, who

is married to Michelle; they have one son, Asher.

Edith is co-ordinator of a Community Centre based in the lower crypt of St Martin-in-the-Fields, London. She is also a self-supporting priest in the Diocese of London, serving at St James-the-Less, Pimlico.

Paul was ordained in 1981 and has previously served in the Dioceses of Hong Kong & Macau and Wellington, New Zealand.

He served as an Associate Vicar for the Chinese congregation at St Martin-in-the-Fields from 2001 to 2019.

“A safe place where we are not judged”



At Gravesend we have been helping homeless people for a number of years. Initially this was via the Sanctuary winter night shelter and latterly by providing homeless people daytime support. Sanctuary is now a charity in its own right and has moved into council provided accommodation, leaving us to develop our daytime homeless support which we now call our “Daytime Hub”. As the name suggests, we aim to provide a “hub” where local homeless people may receive support, providing a place to meet over a cuppa while waiting for a shower, getting laundry done, being given new clothing or getting advice and support. This has now developed into “Tea & Toast” on three mornings a week, plus form filling and advice at other times. A number of agencies work alongside us, including the charities Porchlight and Sanctuary, and various organisations including the local councils and Job Centre. The following was written by **Vicki Clarke**, our Community Centre Manager.

“On 23 March 2020 the Lockdown Daytime Hub at Gravesend Methodist Church opened its doors to all our homeless guests. I realised the week before that everywhere was closing its doors in order for staff and volunteers to self-isolate and protect their families. I knew that the most vulnerable people (homeless) would feel abandoned and scared. I couldn’t allow that to happen and so after a couple of emergency meetings, a small team of amazing volunteers agreed to help me run the hub. We knew there would be challenges along the way, but we set out with the knowledge that we could change and adapt daily with the constant changes to the government guidelines and also to the emotional state of our homeless guests.

Our plan was simple. Let the people know we cared and they had a safe place to come for food, shelter, laundry facilities and a hot shower. We realised straight away we would need to provide a hearty breakfast and a good evening meal. With the help of another organisation, The Table, we were able





to arrange an evening meal every night and provide a cooked breakfast three mornings a week.

We also set up a mini foodbank that allowed guests to take enough supplies for lunch times and the days we were closed. A few calls were made and we managed to get a deal with the local butcher to supply the bacon and sausages at a discounted price. A week after starting we received our first donation from Foodbank which has continued. Local businesses were brilliant. Places such as McDonald's donated loads of food they couldn't use, Marks and Spencer and Sainsbury and many more large companies have helped to support us. We have also had an amazing response from small independent suppliers in Gravesend. AJ Fresh Fruit and Veg has been very generous throughout this time along with a small news agency, Premier.

Networks of volunteers, especially in Meopham, have been instrumental in our success. They provide huge

amounts of food for our guests. This pandemic has brought out the best in people.

With strict guidelines in place on social distancing and hand washing, the guests have followed our rules without question. Our guests are very grateful for everything we do and all try their best to help. They take turns in cleaning down the tables or doing the washing up. Although this has been a rollercoaster, I can honestly say I have had an amazing time at the Hub. We have laughed, cried and sang together. Porchlight workers have been with me and my amazing volunteers every step of the way and now many more agencies want to work with us...."

As Vicki says, the Daytime Hub has had to change and adapt during the lockdown and it now sees 25-30 homeless people per occasion. Following the Government guidelines many of our fantastic long term volunteers had to self-isolate, so a team of dedicated volunteers stepped forward to help, ensuring the Daytime hub was

able to operate, while our long term volunteers provided support from afar with generous donations of money, food and other essential items.

We have had amazing support from our Member of Parliament, County, Local and Parish Councillors, the CEO and Directors of our local council, the Government's Advisor on homelessness, our contract cleaner and many local people. Regular donations of food and homemade cakes are very welcome. Working with the local Council, we are being asked to continue support after lockdown; particularly with tackling mental ill health issues and life skills so that homeless people are able to sustain a life off the streets.

Why us? Why the Methodist Church? The answer given by our homeless people is that unlike some other organisations, we "provide a safe place where we are not judged". If you are interested in learning more about our Daytime Hub visit <https://www.facebook.com/vicki.clarke.7927408>

May God continue to lead us in ways that glorify his wonderful world.

Eric Davis – for Gravesend Methodist Church & Community Centre

Relocation, relocation, relocation



“We are in lockdown “ is the message from Government. So what does that mean for the Circuit Office?

Luckily Lynn, Chris and I had a bit of warning so we were each able to collect files, laptops, stamps, envelopes, paperwork and anything else we thought we might need. Lynn lugged hers home on the train, Chris filled up the boot of his car and I was able to borrow my daughter’s car instead of carrying things home on the bus.

The office relocated three ways: to Lynn’s little bedroom/study, to Chris’s second bedroom on the top floor and to my dining table in the sitting-room. For the first couple of days it all seemed novel, then the reality of how everything would actually work started to set in. For me it was finding a way of still being able to issue cheques that need two signatures, but a visit from Alan (Circuit Treasurer) and that was sorted.

I am loving the fact that I can work when

I want. I can start early in the morning, or work late at night leaving the rest of the day free to home school my six year old daughter. I can leave everything out on the table and not have to lock things away after each session. I am not watching the clock so that I don’t miss the bus for the school run. I can work listening to music and even wearing my pjs, apart from when I’m attending a Zoom meeting!

So for me personally working from home is working well...

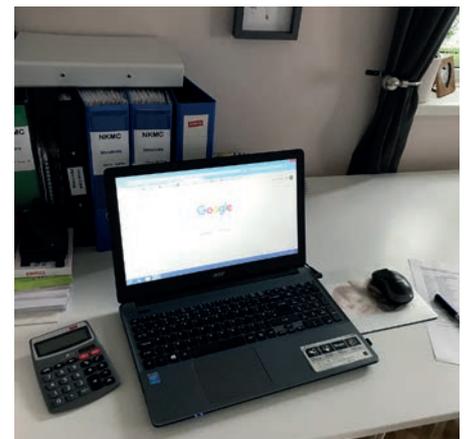
Except I miss seeing people. I miss having a laugh with Lynn and Chris. An email to them just isn’t the same. If something goes wrong and I say “Oh!” out loud, there is no one there to ask what’s wrong. When the printer messes up, there is no one there to sort it with me. When I can’t spell a word, there is no one spelling it out for me.

My greatest challenge will come when I have to prepare the end of year accounts ready for the accountant and

auditor without being able to meet them in person. Hopefully by then I will be used to having Zoom meetings! I’m sure they will be patient with me though, as they themselves will be doing easy everyday tasks in a more roundabout way.

So I look forward to seeing everyone again and having someone to laugh out loud with!

Angel O’Nyon



I'm driving down a near-empty road with my car filled to the roof with toilet rolls, tins of baked beans and packets of spaghetti. What looks, at first glance, like a chronic case of pandemic-induced panic-buying is, in fact, a testament to the generosity of shoppers and churchgoers in Larkfield, Aylesford and Maidstone. For the past seven



Food for Thought

weeks, twice a week, I've driven to four supermarkets and several homes to collect donations for 'Food for Thought,' the foodbank based at Homeless Care's Day Centre. These donations are added to others from local businesses, schools and shops, sorted by a small team of dedicated volunteers, and distributed (in partnership with other local charities) to individuals in our local community who would otherwise go hungry.

As a result of COVID-19 and its devastating impact, the Trussell Trust reported a massive 81% increase in demand for emergency food parcels from foodbanks in its network during the last two weeks of March 2020 compared to the same period in 2019 – including a 122% rise in parcels given to children. At the same time, panic-buying meant that supermarket shelves were often empty, and a large number of devoted foodbank volunteers, many of whom are over 70, were having to self-isolate. The Government asked Local Authorities to ensure that homeless people were housed immediately in isolation-suitable accommodation. In light of all these changes, Homeless

Care (which usually focuses on offering a comprehensive service to homeless women and men in Maidstone) shifted its operations to concentrate more on distributing food to those at greatest risk of food poverty.

I moved to Kent last August, having been stationed to four churches in the North Kent Circuit. I heard about the excellent work of Homeless Care almost immediately, as the churches are proud to offer support through raising awareness and funds. However, when the lockdown began, and churches had to close their doors and find new ways of living out their faith, I found I had the time to offer (on behalf of the churches I serve) some practical assistance, by collecting the food donated at the checkouts of local supermarkets and taking it to the Maidstone Day Centre for distribution.

It has been a privilege to see first-hand the work of Zofia, the Day Centre Manager, and her team of volunteers. It has been a privilege, too, to witness the generosity of local shoppers and members of my congregations – pasta, toilet rolls and tinned tomatoes continued to appear in the donation

baskets, even when they were nowhere else to be found. It has also been a great privilege to get to know the staff working in the four supermarkets I visit, who never fail to greet me with a smile and a friendly 'hello' despite the pressures of recent weeks and the risks to their own health of working in a busy retail environment. Over the weeks, regular appearances in my clerical collar have prompted some fascinating conversations – not least with a member of staff who offered to let me convert her, if she could convert me to using a self-scanner (reader, I failed.)

Service is a vital component of the Christian faith. Jesus came so that all people might have life in all its fullness – and that means not having to worry about where the next meal might come from. Churches across the country are proud to support, host and run foodbanks for their local communities. And yet we will continue to campaign against the policies that make foodbanks, for so many people, a daily necessity. The recent rise in demand as a result of these unprecedented circumstances has highlighted the food poverty that is, for many people in Britain today (not least those supported by Homeless Care), a daily reality in 'normal' times. I pray, when this crisis ends, that not everything will return to 'normal' – and I hope that you will join me in doing so.

Anyone wishing to donate to 'Food for Thought' should contact Zofia on 01622 674064 during office hours or email manager@homelesscare.org.uk

By the Revd Naomi Oates, minister of the Methodist churches in Burham, Eccles, Larkfield & East Malling and Tonbridge Road



Slovenský ekumenický preklad Písma – dobový kontext vzniku a význam

Mariana
Kušiaková

Dejiny prekladu Biblie do slovenského jazyka sa začínajú v porovnaní s inými európskymi národmi pomerne neskoro, čo súvisí s neskorším historickým vývojom konštituovania slovenského národa.

Idea vytvoriť na Slovensku ekumenický preklad vzišla oveľa skôr, než sa pristúpilo ku konkrétnym prípravám. Stretnutie zástupcov kresťanských cirkví, ktorí pripravili podmienky na vyhotovenie nového ekumenického prekladu Písma do modernej slovenčiny, sa uskutočnilo z podnetu Ekumenickej rady cirkví v bývalom Československu 19. 12. 1988. Bolo to po tom, čo v Čechách vyšiel český ekumenický preklad (1985). Slovensko bolo v tom čase súčasťou spoločného štátu Čechov a Slovákov, Československej socialistickej republiky, a cirkvi na Slovensku sa zhodli, že takýto preklad je potrebný.

Prvý ekumenický preklad Biblie vyšiel na Slovensku po viac ako 17-ročnej práci, a to v r. 2007; Nová zmluva a Žalmy v r. 1997. Na prácach sa zúčastňovali zástupcovia jedenástich štátom registrovaných cirkví združených v Slovenskej biblickej spoločnosti.

Cirkvami nominovaní prekladatelia sa zišli prvýkrát 20. 2. 1989 v Bratislave, kde sa dohodli na spôsobe práce a zvolili si predsedov, zriadila sa 17-členná riadiaca komisia a 2 prekladateľské komisie. Predsedom starozmluvnej komisie sa stal doc. Juraj Bándy a predsedom novozmluvnej komisie prof. Karol Gábriš. Prekladateľská komisia pre NZ mala 15 členov, pre SZ 13 členov. Po smrti prof. Gábríša prevzal vedenie NZ komisie doc. Ján Grešo, ktorý viedol aj preklad deuterokánonických kníh SZ. Koordináciu práce oboch prekladateľských skupín prevzala Československá biblická spoločnosť, od roku 1993 Slovenská biblická spoločnosť.

Prekladateľská komisia sa riadila Smernicami pre medzikonfesijnú spoluprácu pri prekladaní Biblie. Ide o materiál, ktorý je dohodou medzi vatikánskym Sekretariátom pre napomáhanie jednoty kresťanov a Spojenými biblickými spoločnosťami.

Pri začatí prác na preklade navštívili prekladateľské komisie odborní poradcovia zo Spojených biblických spoločností:

Dr. Jan De Waard z Veľkej Británie a Dr. Tuinstra z Holandska. Ich úlohou bolo pomôcť pri zadaní zásad spoločného prekladu a podeliť sa o svoje skúsenosti z podobných ekumenických projektov v zahraničí. Spojené biblické spoločnosti poskytovali všestrannú materiálnu, osobnú a technickú pomoc. „Pomáhali nám medzinárodní konzultanti, ktorí síce nevedeli po slovensky, ale dokonale ovládali metodiku. (...) Preklad bol lingvisticky korigovaný. [...] reagoval] i na aktuálne výsledky, ktoré zaznamenali iné odvetvia vedy a výskumu“ (J. Bándy).

Jednotlivé participujúce cirkvi mali možnosť v závere preklad pripomenovať. Text slovenského ekumenického prekladu prijalo na Slovensku deväť cirkví z jedenástich, vrátane Metodistickej cirkvi,

Biblia – slovenský ekumenický preklad Písma vychádza od čias svojho vzniku v dvoch verziách: bez deuterokánonických kníh a s deuterokánonickými knihami. Datujú sa 4 opravené vydania a niekoľko revidovaných. Ako nutná sa javí požiadavka preklad generálne aktualizovať.

Potrebné je, aby bol zrozumiteľný pre adresáta; nová generácia vstupuje do iných kultúrnych a historických súvislostí.



Taktiež treba jazykovo reflektovať posun bádania v biblických oboroch. Ekumenické dôvody a teologické požiadavky a nároky na nový preklad sú najväčšou výzvou, ekumenické dôvody bývajú v procese prekladu najväčšou premennou. Zámer však ostáva rovnaký: jednotný ekumenický preklad Písma by mal zostať mostom medzi cirkvami a opevnením pred profanizáciou cirkvi v značne zmätenom sekularizovanom svete.

Slovak Ecumenical Translation of the Scriptures – Contemporary Context and Meaning

by Mariana Kušiaková

The history of the translation of the Bible into Slovak begins relatively late in comparison with other European language translations, which is related to the later historical development of the constitution of the Slovak nation.

The idea to create an ecumenical translation in Slovakia arose well before concrete preparations began. The meeting of representatives of Christian churches, who prepared the conditions for the production of a new ecumenical translation of Scripture into modern Slovak, took place at the initiative of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the former Czechoslovakia on December 19 1988, following the publication of the Czech ecumenical translation (1985) in the Czech Republic. Slovakia was at that time part of a common state of Czechs and Slovaks, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and the churches in Slovakia agreed that such a translation was necessary.

The first ecumenical translation of the Bible was published in Slovakia in 2007 after more than 17 years of work, whereas the New Testament and

the Psalms had already been published 1997. Representatives of eleven state-registered churches associated in the Slovak Biblical Society participated in the work.

Church-nominated translators met for the first time on February 20, 1989 in Bratislava, where they agreed on the method of work and elected chairmen. A 17-member steering committee and two translation commissions were established. The chairman of the Old Contract Committee was Professor Juraj Bándy and the chairman of the new contracting commission Professor Karol Gábriš (after his death it was Professor Ján Grešo, who also organised the translations of the Deuterocanonical books of the OT). The translation commission for the Old Testament was formed of 13 members, the New Testament one of 15 members. The coordination of the work of both translation groups was taken over by the Czechoslovak Bible Society, and since 1993 by the Slovak Bible Society.

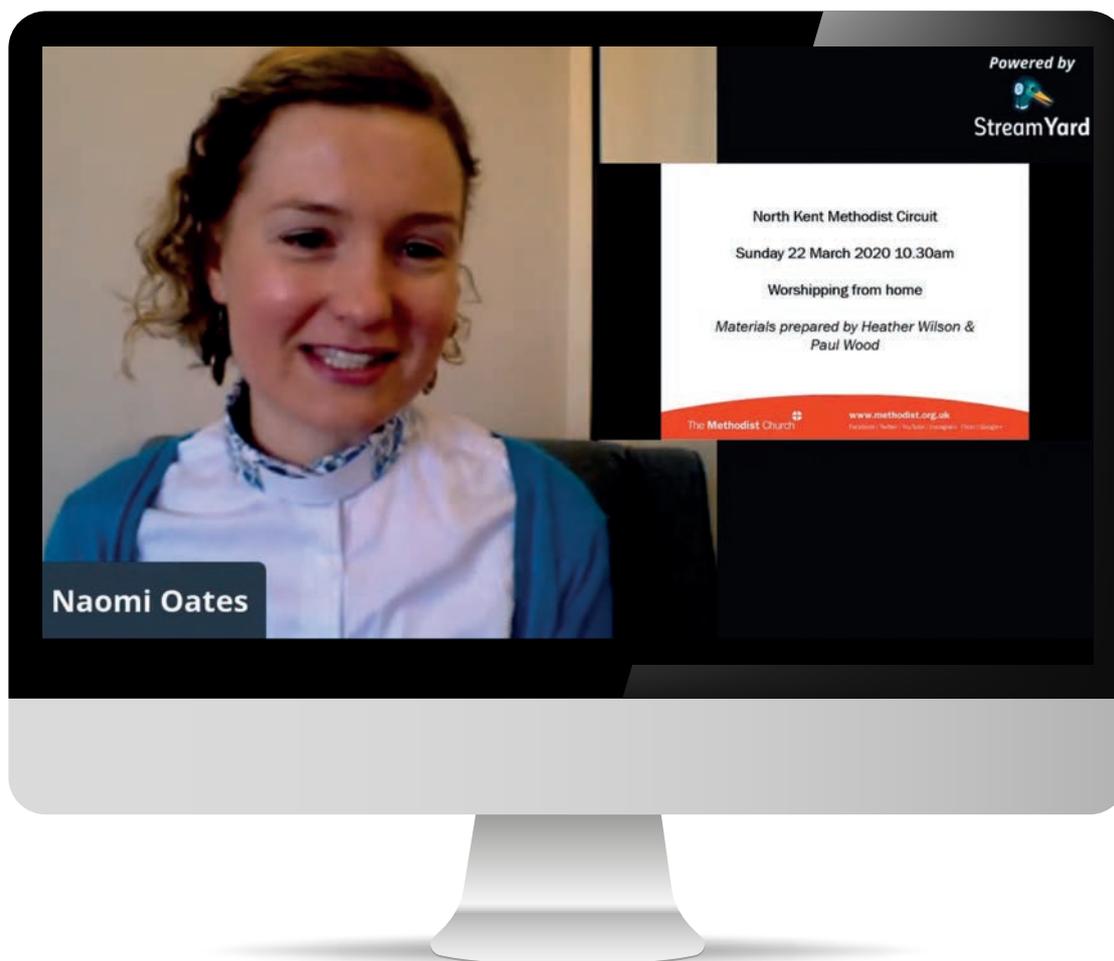
The Translation Commission was guided by the Guidelines for Inter-church Cooperation in Bible Translation. This commission prepared material that was an outcome of agreement between the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the United Biblical Societies. At the beginning of the translation work, translation consultants from the United Bible Society paid a visit to Slovakia: Jan De Waard from Great Britain and Dr Tuinstra from the Netherlands. Their task was to help define the principles of joint translation and to share their experiences from similar ecumenical projects abroad. United Bible Societies provided comprehensive material, personal, and technical assistance. "We were assisted by international consultants who did not speak Slovak, but mastered the methodology perfectly. (...) The translation has been linguistically corrected. [...] also corresponded to the current results recorded by other branches of science and research" (J. Bándy).

Finally the individual participating churches had the opportunity to comment on the translation. The text of the Slovak ecumenical translation was accepted in Slovakia by nine out of eleven churches, including the Methodist Church.

The Bible – the Slovak Ecumenical Translation of the Scriptures has been published since its inception in two versions: without Deuterocanonical books and with Deuterocanonical books. There are four corrected editions and several revised ones. The requirement to update the translation generationally seems necessary.

It needs to be comprehensible to the addressee, since each new generation brings fresh cultural and historical contexts. It is also necessary to reflect linguistically on the shift in research in biblical disciplines. Ecumenical reasons and theological requirements and demands for a new translation are the biggest challenge, ecumenical reasons tend to be the biggest variable in the translation process. However, the intention remains the same: a unified ecumenical translation of the Scriptures should remain a bridge between the churches and protection from the profanisation of the church in a much-confused secularised world.

(This article, written by a friend of Revd Robert Zachar, is based on her own research and may be of interest to those who know Robert and would like to learn more about the Slovakian context.)



Ramblings of an e-steward

Today I listened to Robin's Pentecost sermon where he reminded us that, "God will find a way."

On March 15th I had no idea of the many ways God was going to find for us. I attended morning worship as usual and apart from there being hand sanitiser at the door all was pretty much normal, "old normal" I suppose I should say.

There was to be a busy week ahead!

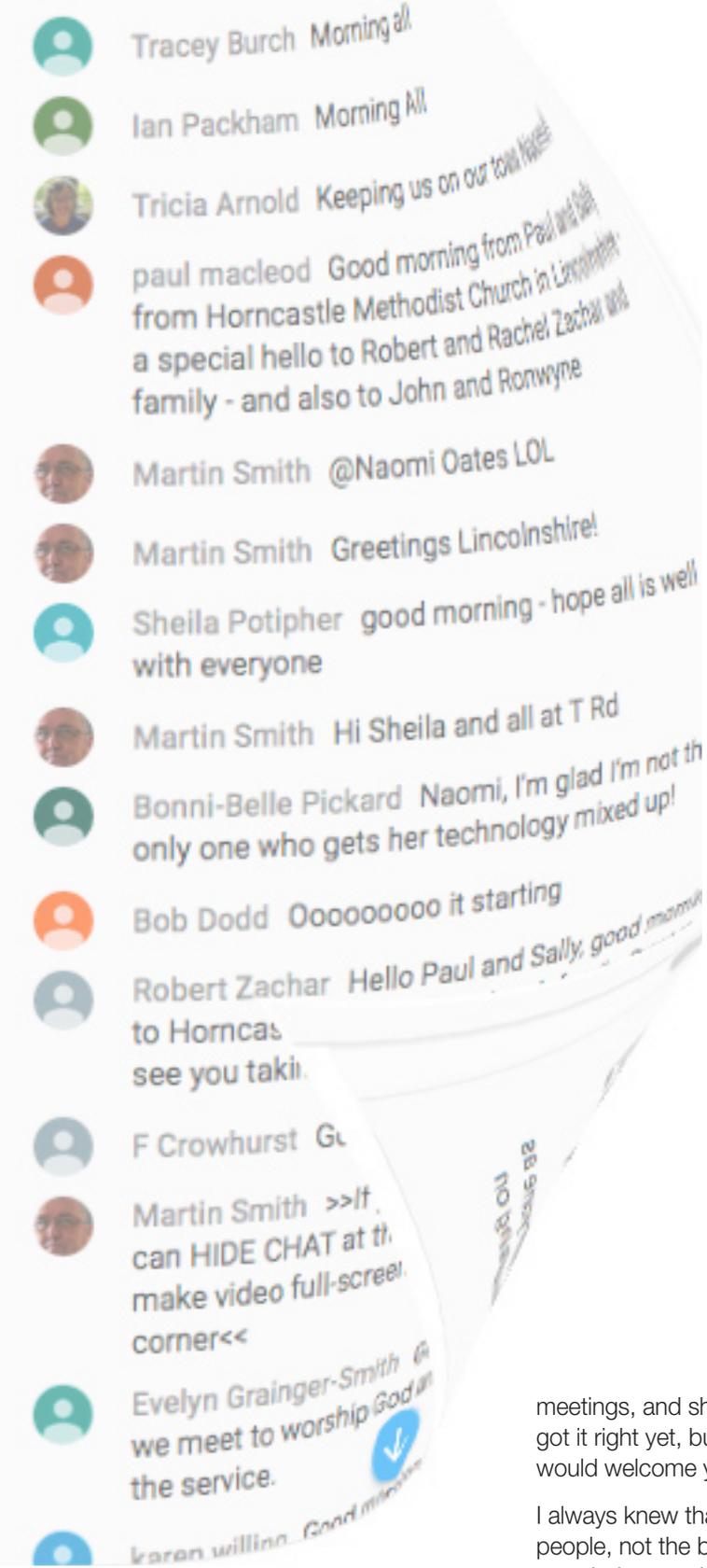
An unfortunate combination of circumstances meant the Circuit website was down for three days. Normally very few of you would notice this but, of course, it coincided with the time

when churches were making individual decisions as to whether to open – until it became clear that no church could open. The North Kent Facebook page suddenly became a major communications channel. The page started in 2012 and on March 15th had 72 members which grew in days to 154.

On 18th March Revd Naomi sent me an email: "We're looking into options for live streaming etc –". By Pentecost we had held twelve Circuit online services and numerous other initiatives by Bart, Cross Service, South Chatham Trinity, Third Avenue and, I suspect, others I have forgotten or don't know about. Nine different preachers have led online services as I write, with a variety of

technical aptitude, confidence and equipment. I think every service has used the technology differently in some way. All have cast their nets on the other side, all have come up with a rich catch, all have shown us the Lord.

And, of course, worship isn't always on a Sunday. Before March 15th I was aware that there was an online platform called Zoom. I hadn't dreamt that I would be Zooming coffee mornings, prayer groups, bible studies and circuit meetings with numbers ranging from 3 to 49, renewing some old friendships and enriching existing friendships. Local Preachers have created a WhatsApp group and I know there are many more initiatives, large and small.



Lock down in numbers

- 1029** Viewers for a Circuit service
- 309** Online at one time for a Circuit service
- 164** Views for a Mandarin language service
- 154** NKMC Facebook members (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/northkentmethodistworship/>)
- 103** Resources in Sharing Good News (<https://www.nkmethodists.org.uk/news/sharing-good-news.html>)
- 49** Participating screens at Circuit Meeting
- 36** Services in NKMC YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCIKB_iKAogAaJC5mH3yKsvVw2TVgSyr)
- 9** Ministers and preachers have taken online Circuit services

Numbers correct on 1 June 2020

None of this is perfect, none of it is a proper replacement for meeting each other face to face but all of it is valuable and much of it will give us food for thought on how we worship, witness and conduct business in the future. I am very aware that many are not on the Internet, however the Sunday service is now available by phone and many are being faithful in delivering paper notices and information where possible. Please keep looking at www.nkmethodists.org.uk for the latest news on services and

meetings, and share widely. We haven't got it right yet, but we are trying and would welcome your views.

I always knew that "Church" was the people, not the buildings. That has been revealed more clearly than ever in recent weeks. We may have locked doors, but God is not locked out of our lives and activities.

I very much look forward to breathing a silent Alleluia on the day when the services of an e-steward are no longer needed. But until then: we meet, we serve, we worship God, by any means we can, in any way we can, in all the places we can and at all the times we can. No excuses.

Martin Smith

