

(Aka Lockdown News 26)

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**Stanborough Park Church Newsletter:
October. 2022**



❖ CREATION SABBATH: CHILDREN'S SABBATH SCHOOL EVENT



Creation Sabbath, which was held on 22nd October, was a General Conference initiative and our Children's Sabbath School prepared a special worship service to celebrate the event. The children were invited to create a piece of art highlighting their favourite day of Creation as a collage, painting, drawing, poem, photo, sculpture or any piece of art they love. The Children's Sabbath School Department organised a Sabbath afternoon 'potluck' as part of the event.

The Children's Sabbath School's Superintendent, Paula Carrillo, has sent some photos of the event and



reports back how each age group responded to the invitation.

- Cradle Roll made flowers and butterflies with finger prints (led by Lydia)
- Kindergarten made decorations of fish (led by Nadia and Yvonne)
- Primary made birds (led by Esther)
- Juniors made planets (led by Elena)
- Earliteens led the hymns

Children from the different Sabbath School Departments joined forces to form an orchestra helped by staff from the Stanborough Park College of Music. Paula continues, 'Many thanks to Jiae, Jieun, Jihee and Yui for not only preparing the young people but also showing them that the young people were able to lead the orchestra. Following the service Uche helped organised the potluck with parents and we were blessed with Pastor



Shepley's message and Audrey's flower arrangement.



Expressing her thanks also to all who helped with the event Paula says, 'Thank you to all the children and Sabbath School teachers for supporting this initiative and talking to our children of the relevance of Creation in this age. Thanks to the parents for continuing the conversation on Creation at home.'

❖ CHURCH MATTERS 1: NEWS IN BRIEF

- **The Harvest Thanksgiving Service was held in the church on 1st October** organised by the Family and Parallel Worship Committees.
- **The Macmillan Afternoon Tea** held in September raised £455.
- **Pat's Sale** held on 23rd October raised £1500 shared between ADRA and the Soup Run.
- **The Young Adults** would like to thank everyone who participated in the Step by Step Concert on the 17th of September. Thanks to all the donations we raised £662 that will go towards helping the Young Adults' Ministry as well as the Herts Young Homeless.
- **We are sad to announce the death of Frances Johnson on 14th October.** Frances was the elder daughter of Pastor Ken and Beryl Gammon and arrived at Stanborough Park during her later childhood years. She spent many years working for the denomination, especially at the TED.
- **Basil Powell's funeral** service was held in the church on 7th October followed by burial in Tring Cemetery.
- **The funeral of Muriel Glendenning** was held in the church on Tuesday 11th October followed by a cremation service at West Herts Crematorium.
- **A Memorial Service** for Victoria Joseph, mother of Gillian, was held at the church on Wednesday 12th October to commemorate one year since her passing.
- **A Book of Condolence for the late Queen** was placed in the concourse with a video showing on the screens; the funeral was screened in the church and open to the local community.
- **Fire evacuation:** a successful fire drill was conducted on 10th October.
- **The Stanborough Primary and Secondary Schools** are holding their school assemblies in our church once a month starting at 8:30am. All are welcome to join them.
- **Newbold College has placed theology student James McMahon with us** from September to April

❖ STANBOROUGH PARK COLLEGE OF MUSIC CONCERT CELEBRATES ITS 11TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A CONCERT

The Stanborough Park College of Music is run as a church outreach project, originally as part of the church's Music Department. To celebrate its 11th anniversary a concert performed solely by its pupils and teachers took place on 8th October.

The programme consisted of classical music for stringed instruments, piano and organ, ranging from Pachelbel, through Handel, Bach, Brahms, Khachaturian and Saint-Saëns to more modern composers such as Bridge and Nigel Hess. Although there were solo performances as usual, this concert featured more ensemble work including a rare cello quartet, a string quartet, violin and piano duets as well as a piano trio performed by three of the College's younger students.

2023 which is a requirement of his course. He will work closely with the Pastoral Team.

- **Florence (Flo), one of our young missionaries,** will be returning to her home country at the end of this year. However, her colleague, Gabriel, will be staying with us for 2023. Please pray as we seek to recruit another missionary for next year.
- **Stanborough School's Annual Speech Night** was held in the church on 20th October.
- **SEC Pathfinder World Day:** our Pathfinders joined clubs across the South England Conference in worship celebrating the Pathfinder Ministry worldwide on Saturday 17th September in the BUC grounds.
- **Another Narrow Escape!** During the summer Ed Hammond was summoned home to find all three emergency services and a group of neighbours outside his house along with a car, its driver still trapped inside, marooned on his drive. The driver, unfamiliar with the area, finding himself in a cul-de-sac, had attempted a 3-point turn and somehow managed to turn down Ed's steep driveway demolishing a wall in the process, scattering concrete blocks far and wide and finding himself unable to get out of the vehicle! The whole incident appears to have been recorded on a video doorbell! All has now been made safe again with something more suited to his current mobility needs. He also found out after taking a Covid test that the virus was responsible for his feeling really unwell for a total of **just two hours** before feeling much better again. Obviously a sign of healthy living as he is one of our oldest members and, clearly, demonstrates that walking is good for your health!



❖ **THOUGHTS FOR THE HEALING OF CHRISTIANS AFTER THE COVID CRISIS** (A **NEW** SPC Health Department Initiative)

We cannot deny that the coronavirus has affected everyone in some way. The virus didn't discriminate; it didn't care whether you are a Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, or atheist. And now that the crisis is over, we are facing more issues than ever before. Many have been left with 'Long Covid', many are faced with a barrage of mental health problems and many are still grieving the loss of a loved one. As a Christian, how do you deal with the problems Covid has left you with? How do you go forward with the knowledge that God has promised to work all things together for good for those who love Him whilst in your life it feels like many things have not worked in your favour?

Join Pastor Terry Messenger and the Stanborough Health Team as we break down essential steps for dealing with the coronavirus aftermath as a God-fearing Christian. Learn how to stay healthy and strong spiritually, mentally and emotionally regardless of the impact Covid has had on you.

If you are a Stanborough Church member who is struggling and would like to have chat, please feel free to reach out to the health team: Adewale Ademuyiwa & Caroline Perry. <https://youtu.be/SLtMGgKZiqc>

❖ **CHURCH MATTERS 2: NOTES FROM THE CHURCH BOARD**

- **The Treasurer reports** that giving has increased slightly but cleaning costs have increased in view of the need for 'deep cleans' and the cost of utilities will increase in the new year. Hall hire rentals are still down and there are plans to streamline the invoicing system.
- **The Church Management Committee** reports that the fire alarm panel has been changed along with replacing 18 of the red ceiling and wall indicators [sounders]. Also, in view of the recent break-in in the church car park, the possibility of installing external cameras is being investigated. (The Chairman is concerned about general security around the church as there are more keys in circulation than people entitled to hold them and often some of those in charge of locking up can be rather lax about this.)
- **Evangelism Training:** most of the 20 participants have completed their training and some have started giving Bible Studies. Ten members of the group have requested to continue Bible Study training.
- **Deaconate reorganisation**, planned to improve flexibility, has been passed to the Nominating Committee to propose details of roles and responsibilities.
- **As our current organist, Yui Hanada**, is currently studying at Newbold she has been awarded part-time, self-funded missionary status allowing her use of a room in the flat for weekends/student holidays.

❖ **REQUESTS FOR VOLUNTEERS**

- **Adventurers: URGENT appeal** for volunteers for the Adventurer club; we need 2 willing volunteers to support in two of our classes alongside the other counsellors. Please contact Megan Joseph Adventurer Director on 07944144825 as soon as possible if you are willing to help.
- **The Pathfinders would also welcome helpers.** Both clubs meet every other Sunday and you need to commit to 4 - 6 hours a month only! Contact Davide, Bukky, Megan, Ophelia.
- **Sabbath School Teachers:** We are calling everyone from 16 - 100 years old to join us in this rewarding ministry to help telling the story of the week or lead the craft. All parents are warmly invited to join a rota to help as safeguarding persons to ensure the classes always have 3 adults available. Contact the Children's Sabbath School leaders, Paula or Yetunde.
- **The Communications Department** would welcome offers of help with managing the church's web site or writing up stories. Contact news@stanboroughchurch.org

❖ **PRAYER CORNER - please pray for:**

Leopold Johnson, Morgan Charles, families who are facing challenges from cancer, COVID, other health issues and recent bereavement.
God to guide our government in helping families to cope with the extreme economic crises
the requests in the Prayer Box



If you have private Prayer Requests please place them in the Prayer Box or you can email Stanboroughprays@gmail.com. *Please note the change in the email address.*

❖ ONE VISION COMMEMORATES THE LATE QUEEN WITH A TREE-PLANTING CEREMONY:



Education Secretary as well as OV Trustees along with some children from the primary school who will see the tree grow.



from October to March, the initiative has now be extended to include the full tree planting season, beginning in October 2022 and concluding in March 2023 thus the initiative will build on this legacy and serve as a lasting tribute to Her Majesty's extraordinary service to her country and her people.

CORRECTION: in the previous newsletter it was wrongly stated that Alain Fidelia is trustee of One Vision. He points out that this is not the case. Sincere apologies for the misunderstanding.

Spotted a new tree in the Peace Garden? 'One Vision' has been privileged to receive one of the saplings from the 'Tree of Trees' sculpture which was erected outside Buckingham Palace for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations as part of the late Queen's 'Green Canopy of Trees' which was a unique tree-planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's historic achievement. This involved inviting people from across the UK to 'Plant a tree for the Jubilee', thereby not only creating a legacy in honour of Her Majesty's leadership of the nation but also benefiting future generations.

OV Founder Enoch Kanagaraj says that of '28,000 nominations we were fortunate enough to be one of the 300 who received a tree in recognition of the work we have done improving the quality of life within our community.' He adds, 'It was a real honour to have been presented with a tree as recognition for the work we have done in our community.'

The tree-planting ceremony took place on Wednesday, 19th October in the Peace Garden and was attended by Akthar Zaman the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Annie Brewster the Leader of Hertfordshire County Council, TED's Pastor Daniel Duda, GC's Audrey Andersson, BUC's Pastors Eglan Brooks, Pastor John Surridge, Sharon Platt McDonald and the



Cllr. Brewster, as chair of the county's Green Canopy Committee, had attended several tree-planting ceremonies and commented that this one, a pollarded birch, was the largest one so far. After several rather lengthy speeches, Dr. Duda began the tree planting itself with the ceremony's participants and the children adding a spadeful of compost. The Park's groundsman, Gary Montague, has promised to give the tree a generous dose of TLC in the forthcoming months to help to get it established in its new home.

Background note: The Queen's Green Canopy is a nationwide initiative created to mark the Platinum Jubilee with the intention of creating a living legacy with over a million trees planted in Her Majesty's name across the nation during the first planting season, October 2021 to March 2022. It was due to conclude in December – the end of the Jubilee year. However, as the official tree planting season in the United Kingdom is



❖ CHURCH MATTERS 3: ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION



CHRISTIAN

KARAOKE NIGHT on
Saturday 26th November,
8pm in Cedar/Sycamore.
Free admission,
refreshments on sale.

Upon arrival people will be able to choose a song to perform from the list we will have prepared if they would like to. There is no obligation to sing, just come and enjoy the show. We will have many surprises prepared for those who join us. Invite friends and family, and youth ministries 18+ from other churches.

- **(REMINDER) In order to facilitate the engagement of our children in our worship services** when either Pastor Terry or Pastor James preaches the children will be given questionnaires based on the sermon. There will be a prize for the child who has answered the best at the end of the year. Only children attending the service will be able to participate. This will begin in October.
- **Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting** is being held in the Cedar Sycamore Room at 7pm. **Zoom Meeting ID:** 519 552 6863; Passcode: pray3r. *Please note that the Zoom details have not changed.*
- **There is a Young Adult Sabbath School** for ages 19 - 30+ happening every Sabbath in the Maple Room from 10am. **Zoom Meeting ID:** 519 552 6863 Passcode: Sabbath.
- **Pastoral Team Baptism Class** runs during Sabbath School time. If you or your child (13+) would be interested in joining this class please let a member of the Pastoral Team know.
- **(REMINDER) Parallel has a website** which you can use to find the latest updates. www.parallelservice.co.uk.
- **SPCM:** If anyone would like to find out more information, please contact Jiae Ahn (info@spcm.org.uk) for more details.
- **Prayer Ministry** is inviting everyone to Morning Manna 6am - 6:30am each morning, **Zoom ID:** 8316619709 Passcode 777. Presentations are from the book, 'Steps to Personal Revival' ([link](#)). Any queries please contact Bella Rajasekaran on 07988045461.

❖ **Membership Transfers: IN**

Isabella-Maria Asbjornsen (Watford Town)
Sofia Asbjornsen-Charles (Watford Town)
Esther Mirembe Kansere (Basildon)
Elizabeth Roberts (Southall)
Glenn Pringle (Houston, USA)
Rachel Haworth from Ilford

- **(REMINDER) The Prayer Ministry Team** has started a 'WhatsApp' Group for everyone. On this forum you can make your public Prayer Request and you will be reminded of all the Prayer Activities. If you would like your details to be added please contact [Bella](#).
- **Join Pastor Terry Messenger and the Stanborough Health team** as we break down essential steps for dealing with the coronavirus aftermath as a God-fearing Christian. (See page 4 for details.) Link www.shorturl.at/ant57
- **ADRA UK - Just Giving Page** for 2022 Link to donate: www.justgiving.com/page/audrey-balderstone-1652806487047
- **SEC Teens Day of Fellowship:** Sabbath 10th December. Registration at <http://www.secteens.org>
- **Stanborough Prayer Ministry** will be starting the '40 days of Prayer and Devotion' on 21st November at 6am using the book #2 of that name by Dr. Dennis Smith.
- **Members/Business Meeting:** Sunday, 20th November at 7pm. This will be a brainstorming session looking at planning for our church in the next couple of years. Your input is vital and welcome.
- **Fire Drills:** to view a short clip of our Emergency Evacuation [Click Here](#) Details can also be found on the church's web site, Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Sheila Luz (Welsh Mission)
Lisa Leal and Rui Dias (Ringway Church)
Marjorie de las Alas (Passy, Philippines)
Christopher, Marlene and Gabrielle Levy (Croydon)

❖ **EARLY WARNING: Annual Toy Service ahead! Scheduled for 10th December.**

- The Annual Toy Service will take place on Sabbath 10th December. Your gifts of toys for disadvantaged children and toiletries for their parents will be more needed this year than ever, so please start thinking about what you will be able to contribute. (Pat Walton)



❖ CHURCH HISTORY: THE CHURCH REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

As November 6th is the seventh anniversary of the re-opening of the church following the massive 17-month redevelopment project it seems appropriate to jump the customary chronological approach in this section and deal with a more recent issue. The beginnings of the Soup Run and the construction of The Stanborough Centre will be dealt with in a future issue. (Yes, it is anticipated that this newsletter will continue into 2023 despite its original temporary expectations! There is still a lot of material left in the editor's archive.)

Looking at the empty spaces to be seen in the church post-Covid it seems a world away from the packed pews of yesteryear which led to calls to opt for a complete redevelopment to increase the seating capacity to cope with the increased number of worshippers rather than just a refurbishment of a tired church interior even if it did plunge the church into debt – after all loan we had on The Stanborough Centre was soon paid off!



Fired with enthusiasm, fundraising activities began; there were many concerts and special events. Terry Menkens found his own sponsorship method, see page 11. Finally, July 2014 saw the last services taking place in the old building and transferring to a large marquee, filled with a mixture of the old pews and garden furniture, situated on the field adjacent to the BUC, generally referred to as 'The Tent'.

As with all activities involving builders, it seems, the planned one-year project turned into 17 months before the sanctuary was once again available for services. Altering the plans midway delayed progress.

However, not everyone made the transfer. Parallel continued to use the Cedar/Sycamore Room and a shortened early morning service for those with no liking for the cold took place at 9am in the Cedar/Sycamore Room.

Pathfinders, Adventurers and activities based in The Stanborough Centre were able to continue as normal.

Stanborough Park reopened
by June Coombs

After a 17-month-long refurbishment and extension, Stanborough Park Church members are 'home at last'.

The event began with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on 6 November last year by Baroness Thornhill, the elected Mayor of Watford, and the BUC President, Pastor Ian Sweeney.

Richard Harrington, the local MP and senior staff from the BUC and SEC were also in attendance and took an active part in the service. BUC President, Pastor Ian Sweeney, reminded everyone that this must be a 'seven-day church' that reaches out to all the local community who require a helping hand.

The following day, after a shortened Sabbath School, the worship service became a special 'Reopening Service' with former ministers of the church and TED staff playing an active part. Pastor Audrey Andersson read the Scripture and Pastor Raafat Kamal delivered a sermon entitled, 'I will build my church', emphasising that a church is not just a physical building, but one made of living stones with Christ as its foundation.

The building was crammed to capacity as members past, present and distant, along with many visitors, turned up for the event.

According to Associate Pastor Sam Neves, about 600 people, including the choir and orchestra, filled the sanctuary, with at least a further 130 viewing the service remotely from elsewhere in the building.

This reopening service lasted for two and a half hours, featuring a mixture of hymns, music and presentations!

The day was rounded off with a splendid rendition of part of Handel's 'Messiah' by the choir and augmented orchestra under the leadership of Jean Ahn.

Despite the prospect of late lunches following this lengthy service, most seemed reluctant to leave and the organ postlude was almost drowned out by the sound of hundreds of voices as people who hadn't seen each other for months caught up with the latest news and shared their views on the changes.

Now that life at the 'Park' is back to normal, may the church and its members continue to serve the people of Watford and surrounding areas as faithfully as they did before!



Removing the pews was just one challenge. An electricity supply was needed for lighting and AV equipment. The AV Department needed to install cables to connect with the equipment in the Cedar/Sycamore Room to enable the continuation of livestreaming services and heating was needed for the winter months.



The AV team made an early start with the cabling. (Peter Cooper, left, displaying his ladder and cabling skills.) However, the team still faced challenges ensuring that the system worked each week and moving equipment back and forth for secure storage purposes. The team's members rose to the challenge and provided a regular service throughout the 'exile'. (See the article on back page for more details.)

Photos by Jef Nascimento, Dan Sabatier and June Coombs and unknown photographer for Peter Cooper.



Despite the challenges, including cold weather and condensation, the services in the 'tabernacle in the wilderness' were well attended.



- Meanwhile the heart and soul was being ripped out of the old building and its adjacent 1960's extension.
- Two open days in February and July the following year allowed glimpses of what was happening and what was to come; otherwise the site was closed off apart from the car park.



❖ **A (partial!) NIGHT IN THE WOODS** (a pre-development story written by **TERRY MENKENS**)



Photo: Carl Swain

Anxious to do his bit to raise funds to buy new pews for the church, Stanborough Park (then) elder **Terry Menkens**, a former teacher at Stanborough School, came up with a novel form of sponsorship. He decided to spend part of a night camping out on Stanborough Park and describes his adventure in the following account:

On Saturday 27th June, on the stroke of midnight, this intrepid adventurer nervously said goodbye to his wife and headed off to set up base-camp (cushioned chair), on the grassed area between the Stanborough Park Church and the BUC offices. The plan was to participate in an alternative sponsored endurance fund-raising event to help pay for the wonderful new church pews due to be installed in early October, one of many such funding schemes.

This particular fund-raising event was the brainchild of Roslyn Guenin who had staged the Stanborough 'Walk in the Park' sponsored walk on Sunday 7th June, which has already raised £1,500. I was preoccupied that weekend celebrating our Golden Wedding in Suffolk, so Roslyn agreed that I might devise my own challenge. So Stanborough Woods it was! Armed with my Panasonic camera, two torches, mobile phone (in case I got lost), chair and soft shoes for stealth, I settled down to await the nocturnal visitors.

To begin with, the lovely moonlit night was punctuated mostly by the sound of noisy revellers moving along St. Albans Road. So I set off to circumnavigate the splendid grounds. It was in the wooded area near Sheepcot Lane where the action started with the eerie scream of a disturbed owl, (I believe), raising my pulse rate somewhat.

My torch continued to unsettle several large birds but without any real sightings, so I continued in an anticlockwise sweep till I was opposite the majestic columns of the school's Assembly Hall where, at about

1:00am some nine rare creatures were startled by my torch-lit approach. A large-screen was showing a late-night movie which went to the familiar PAUSE mode, and the creatures in the sleeping bags upon ground mattresses sat bolt upright akin to the pose of a typical Meerkat Enemy Alert! "I come in peace", I said as I spluttered out reassurances with an explanation of my quest.

These occasions will be fond memories for these boarders in years to come - nights under the stars! They agreed to be photographed as my first real wildlife find before I moved on over into the deep woods. The overgrown paths were fraught with nettles, blackberry briars and fallen branches. Once more, the eerie noises of the night set the nerves on edge all the way down to the church rear fence but with no animal sightings.

On emerging back onto the playing fields, I found myself being stalked by several foxes. They seemed friendly and very curious so my camera and torch at last went into overdrive. Two of these perfect foxes continued to walk with me as close as two metres away, stopping when I did, seemingly glad of company. Then, under the streetlight just in front of me was my first badger, somewhat skittish, which soon slipped back into the foliage.

Returning to base-camp (my chair), I waited for some 15 minutes when a couple of finely marked badgers trotted past. I need to hone my Attenborough skills in snapping timid animals as I managed only a few photos before they disappeared. By 3:00am I was pleased to be back home in a warm bed.



❖ PASTOR GEERT'S 'GOODBYE' MESSAGE TO SPC MEMBERS:



Last summer Pastor Geert was asked if he would like to write a goodbye message to the church family. He agreed to write one a bit further down the line. He now works part-time for the charity

One YMCA, in the role of Mission Connector (building bridges between community and church families) in the Beds, Bucks and Herts area. Here he gives the reasons behind his decision.

The 'usual' journey of any pastor within the SDA denominational structure is to expect every 5 to 7 years a call from the Office, informing the minister and his/her family it is time to move to another church or district. In our case it was a call from the South England Conference Office, here in Watford, UK. I say 'usual', as in many other denominations a pastor remains in their parish until it is either the congregation that feels it is time for a change of spiritual leadership, or the minister feels he/she has given and learned all there is to be and it is time to move to another area.

There is a strong case for staying in and with a congregation and area for a considerable time, as this allows him/her to journey with the families in that specific congregation through their lives as they marry, have children, see their children grow up, perhaps get married too and have children of their own, and so forth. Deep levels of relationships and trust can be formed, and this not only within the church family. As churches and their spiritual leader(s) have been called to be light and salt in their communities; it is these same communities that are looking for true commitment and care to and for them.

In his book, 'The Power of Place', Daniel Grothe says: "*We move because we have not allowed ourselves to be bound to any place, to any one, to any particular community. We move because we have not committed to a people in a particular place that is worth dying for and dying within.*" Reading this amazing book, during a time we were all confined to our houses, churches closed as assemblies could not come together, learning to cope through a pandemic, the concept of what I call 'stickability' was revealed to me. Making a conscious and faithful decision allowing God to direct and choose my time (and that of my family) to stay in or move to other pastures.

Alas, this idea does not fit within our current operations, as moving pastors every number of years in my understanding follows the model of evangelists in olden days. These brothers would be sent to a town or area, called to plant churches, mobilise new members to minister in their communities and elders would be chosen. Through the few years they would learn from this evangelist to lead their new congregation. When done the evangelist could move to the next unreached area or town and the process would start all over again.

I can only imagine the confusion it will have created when the congregation of SPC was informed that a new pastor would come and join the team and congregation, and hearing that 'Pastor Geert' would cease to be the pastor and yet not leave. In the past I had heard of colleagues leaving the ministry and I would wonder, 'Why did he/she leave? Had they perhaps misbehaved, and the only thing 'The Office' could do was terminate their employment?' **When communication is not happening we tend to fill in the blanks ourselves, right? We start developing our own theories of reasons why, in this case, he/she is no longer a 'pastor'.**

Allow me to try and remedy this by first sharing with you that I am still a pastor today! God spoke to me and called me to the ministry in 1987 and that calling is still powerful and at work today. In my meetings with the SEC Office I was assured that my credentials as SDA pastor remain, allowing me to continue preaching, baptising, dedicate, marry and conduct funerals where asked.

So what happened?

In November 2021 I was informed I would be moving to a different district. I had ministered at SPC for almost 6 years, and would now move to Swindon and Cheltenham. In principle I accepted the news, after all that had been the pattern for us as pastors, every so many years moving to another church. The then local pastor of the two churches, Pastor James Shepley, took the time and effort to connect me with the leaders, describing their history and the possibilities of further growth in ministry. Both churches and towns were and are beautiful in themselves, nestled between lovely hills and green forests. The members willing to be immersed in their communities, organising inspiring events and programmes. Believe me, my decision had nothing to do with the congregations to the west. I once again do want to apologise for the disruption and confusion my choice did bring to these churches and their members.

But...

Despite my acceptance, my spirit was restless. Sleepless nights and daily thoughts kept me wondering if this was what I felt God wanted me to do. The more I

prayed and shared my thoughts with dear mentors the more it became clear to me that God had something else in mind. And He had started His 'moving' in me already several years earlier.

In March 2020 we learned about Covid 19, and on Sabbath 21st our church doors were closed and worshipping via Zoom started. At that time we thought it would be a matter of a couple of weeks, perhaps even a few months, but definitely not two years. For a period of five months I found myself put on furlough, not allowed to visit or meet with members and leaders.

Not able to sit still I joined the national call to support the NHS in our immediate community around High Wycombe. Delivering groceries and medication to those locked in gave me a sense of purpose. At that time our Community Chaplain at SPC, Brother Kanagaraj, with the support of various church members and other community charities, led One Vision within our Church walls straight into our community. By creating a foodbank, which soon occupied the Cedar/Sycamore room and beyond, the Church was able to 'preach' the gospel of care for our neighbours who were in great need. As the Pastoral Team we joined and made contact with many people in our community we otherwise would not have met.

In 2019 I had already joined the ministry of the Street Chaplains in Watford, and together with charities like One Vision and One YMCA, and church organisations like Christians Across Watford and Churches Together, my personal roots within the Watford community and beyond grew deeper.

Background note: On 6th June 1844, 22 year-old draper George Williams joined 11 friends to organise the first Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), a refuge of Bible study and prayer for young men seeking escape from the hazards of life on the streets of London.

❖ HEALTH CORNER: The Cardiovascular Benefits Of The Avocado

The avocado with its delicious buttery and nutty flavour is one of the most nutrient-dense foods, rich in fibre, potassium, magnesium, vitamin E, monounsaturated/polyunsaturated fatty acids and other phytonutrients and bioactive compounds.

Previous, small, short term, clinical studies have yielded inconsistent evidence regarding the avocado-induced changes in cardiovascular risk. A recent US follow up study of 51, 529 men and 121, 700 women over 30 years, who were free of cancer, coronary heart disease and stroke at the start of the study, found that a higher intake of Hass avocado, (2 servings per week) was associated with significantly lower risk of coronary heart disease and coronary vascular disease. Although, no significant associations were observed for strokes.

This is good news for avocado lovers and this study suggests that replacement of fat containing foods such as butter, margarine, egg and yogurt with avocado could lead to a lower risk of coronary heart disease. These study findings also support the growing body of evidence that an intake of plant based healthy fats can have a positive impact on diet and may play a role in prevention of cardiovascular disease.

Reference- Avocado Consumption and Cardiovascular Risk: Pacheco et al. J Am Heart Assoc. 2022.
Stanborough Health Ministries: Caroline Perry MSc, PhD & Adewale Ademuyiwa BSc, PG Cert, Dip He.

Through 2021 my thoughts and prayers centred more and more around the question of God's call and purpose for my life and ministry. Praying and sharing my feelings with trusted spiritual mentors God affirmed my thoughts; He asked me to take a leap of faith and trust in Him and wait for His leading.

During the first months of 2022 I met with the SEC executives at various times, sharing with them my thoughts regarding the ministry in Watford and Hertfordshire. They could see what my vision was but were not able to accommodate it within the given structure.

It was One YMCA who contacted me to consider joining their ministry within Watford and the three counties (Herts, Beds, and Bucks). In prayer and consultation I knew that God was leading indeed. In September I joined the Christian Mission Team of One YMCA as 'Faith and Community Mission Connector'. During these months I have seen God at work in mighty ways. The need is great. Many are homeless, prisoners to drugs and/or alcohol, abused, left on their own...but Jesus is the hope! In time I hope to get a chance to present to you as congregation the ministry I have become part of, but for now *feel free to catch me on Sabbaths and ask anything...and please pray for the ministry.*

P.S. Pastor Geert, in a recent conversation with the editor, spoke of how he was given a clean sheet to decide how to define his new role and has spent much of the last few weeks visiting schools and charities to establish links with the YMCA. **He adds that readers are welcome to contact him for any further info or clarification at g.tap@btinternet.com**



❖ LET THERE BE (MORE) LIGHT! A Request and Reminiscences from the A.V. Department

The Audio Visual Department feels that the time has come to improve the platform lighting which is inadequate for the task and has applied for funding to improve the situation as was planned in the Church Development project. Leader Eric Wolfram explains below why this is necessary.

The lighting within the sanctuary was going to be improved as part of Phase Two of the development. It was not installed as funds were not available but the infrastructure was put in place to provide the means to make the installation. The lighting at the front of the platform is very dark and the video cameras struggle to let enough light in. The platform is also lit in patches and does not provide an even distribution of light. This also coupled with the fact that there is no control of the temperature of the lights and no granular control restricting the areas of illumination on the platform.

For the time when we had to transfer services to the tent it was challenging as there was a lot of logistics involved and preparation in the tent with cabling. We had one week to prepare the cabling and electrics which we ran from the BUC. We had to buy a long video and audio cable and wire up the plug and then cable tie them to the tent framing. We also ran network cable from the Stanborough Centre to the tent through the woods to provide us with internet access for the streaming. This was a challenge as we needed to ensure it was high enough to allow high level vans to exit the car park. We had difficulty with setting up the ambiance microphone as we had to go quite high up in the apex of the tent. This did prove to be an issue in the colder months with condensation getting into the wiring and shorting the microphone. The organ sound was a challenge as we did not have the right connectors at first

and thus had to sacrifice a radio microphone for the organ sound. We did resolve this later on.

At first we left the majority of equipment all connected up and covered (to protect from condensation) on the table and transported stands, speakers and cameras every week from the church in our cars. However there was a theft and whilst we did lose some vital equipment (audio mixer, tally light system) we were still able to function as the core equipment was not taken - the amplifier (very heavy) and vision mixer were still there. This meant we needed a lockable container to store the equipment and would have to disconnect and reconnect every week. So we needed to start early every Sabbath to take the equipment out of the container and set it up and reconnect and check all is working before the start of the program at 9:45am. I think I recall starting this process at 8:30am, then reverse the process for packing up and putting all equipment back into the container - leaving only cables in the tent. So first to arrive and normally last to leave.

The seasons had their challenges as when it was cold the cameras would be foggy and we best trick was to heat them up by pointing them at the sun (if it was out). As mentioned earlier the condensation played havoc with the ambiance microphones and the equipment on the table. When it was summer it was very hot in the tent and there was risk of the equipment and personnel (during pack up) overheating.

One time (and only once) our internet failed so we had to pay a quick visit to ASDA and get a Wi-fi 3G dongle to run the service that week.

❖ **MESSAGE FROM DENNIS JOHNSON:** "I just want to send a note to thank all of you who have been praying so faithfully for Diane. As you know she is in care due to dementia and also has other serious problems including both hips broken at Watford General Hospital when they dropped her. She has a large hernia and was having seizures which by God's grace and your prayers have minimised to the odd shake. As many of you know she also had a heart attack just over a year ago. Please pray for her."



❖ THE LAST WORD:

The joy of singing is effortless, infectious and uplifting. It raises the pulse. It brings back positive memories. Hymns were invented because they make you feel part of something bigger than yourself. They have a binding effect on a congregation, connecting you with the people around you.

So, it's both a mood changer and a joy-bringer.

Gareth Malone, choir master