

The magazine of New Eltham Methodist Church & Centre



July to August 2025

View online: <https://newelthammethodist.org.uk/>

New Eltham Methodist Church

Minister: Revd. Hannah Faal-Heim

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www.newelthammethodist.org.uk | www.widmorecircuit.com

Quote

Being in Christ, it is safe to forget the past; it is possible to be sure of the future; it is possible to be diligent in the present.

Alexander MacLaren

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Proposed Church Magazine Schedule:

Edition	Articles to the office by:	Available:
Sept to Nov 25	July 31 st	Last week of Aug
Dec 25 to Mar 26	Oct 31 st	Last week of Nov
Apr 26 to Jun 26	Feb 27 th	Last week of March
Jul 26 to Aug 26	May 29 th	Last week of June

OUR MINISTERS LETTER *by Revd. Hannah Faal-Heim*

Dear New Eltham Methodist Church members & friends,

We are having a transition as Rev. Duncan MacBean, your minister, is on Sabbatical leave until 1st September. Until that time, I will be the minister responsible for New Eltham's pastoral matters.



I am especially pleased that we can look forward to experiencing new relationships and fellowship. We can continue the good work and support that you have already established in encouraging, praying together and working together, so that all goes smoothly. We will continue to focus on strengthening each other through pastoral support and the building of relationships to enhance our experiences in the church and community.

I want to thank all of you for your valuable contribution to a successful transition. I look forward to getting to know you better as we work together for our Lord.

During the summer and before the summer breaks, the Methodist Church rounds off the Connexional year, September to August, with its Annual Conference. Here is a reminder about the conference. This year the Methodist Conference will take place 26 June - 2 July 2025 at the Telford International Centre, International Way, Telford TF3 4JH.

We can take time to watch how the Conference is shaping up and be inspired by the various items and events at website: methodist.org.uk

Please pray for the Conference, the Methodist Church in general, its faith, vision and mission and for the new Connexional year starting in September 2025 to August 2026.

I wish you all a blessed summer. God bless you richly,

Revd. Hannah

(day off Monday's)

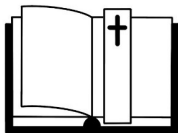
WE GATHER TO OFFER WORSHIP TO THE GLORY & PRAISE OF GOD

July

Sunday	6th	10:30 am	M. Tinson
Sunday	13th	10:30 am	Local arrangement
Sunday	20th	10:30 pm	D. Morris (Holy Communion)
Sunday	27th	10:30 am	Joan Mayes

August

Sunday	3rd	10:30 am	Local arrangement
Sunday	10th	10:30 am	Rev H Faal-Heim (Holy Communion)
Sunday	17th	10:30 am	Joint service at Emmanuel
Sunday	24th	10:30 am	T. Lemmon
Sunday	31st	10:30 am	Revd H Faal-Heim



FAMILY NEWS:

We pray for Rev Duncan and Deacon Laura MacBean as they take Sabbaticals over the Summer. We pray for Rev Eric Bediako and his family as he begins work at Orpington and Petts Wood Methodist Churches in September.

NEW ELTHAM CALENDER OF EVENTS:

June	Sat 28 th	Summer Quiz Night	NEMC
July	Sat 5 th	Summer fair, 10-2pm	CANE
	Sat 12 th	Festival of Cultures	ASC
	Sat 19 th	QUIZ, 7pm booked tables only: 0208 850 7122	CANE
	Sat 26 th	Murder Mystery Afternoon/Evening	NEMC
August	Tues 12 th	Teddy bear picnic 11.30 -1.30pm	CANE
	Fri 15 th	Breast cancer Afternoon Tea	ASC
September	Sun 14 th	Parkfest	FOSP
	Thurs 25 th	Cockney afternoon 3pm	CANE
October	Fri 17 th & Sat 18 th	Blackadder (3 iconic episodes)	NEMC
	Sun 19 th	Big Band afternoon entertainment	CANE
	Sat 11 th	Autumn Fair	ASC
	Sat 25 th	Craft fair	ASC
November	Sun 9 th	Company 3 Remembrance afternoon	CANE
	Sat 15 th	Christmas Fair	NEMC
	Sat 22 nd	Christmas fair, 10-2pm	CANE
	Sat 29 th	New Eltham Christmas Lights switch	NEBA
December	Sat 6 th	Drag Bingo 7pm	CANE
	Sat 13 th	NSPCC Mince pie morning	ASC

The Church Through Different Eyes, by John Lampard

There are not many books which get a review in both *The Church Times* and *The Financial Times*, but *The Divine Economy: How Religions Compete for Wealth, Power and People* by Paul Seabright (Princeton University Press, 2024) achieved this unusual honour.

The thesis of the book is in the title. Seabright looks at religious organisations (mainly Christian, but not exclusively) as though they were the same as any other commercial organisation, which wanted to succeed in today's world. It does not look at theological issues as such (although they are often close to the surface) but the effect churches have in a social setting.

A theme often revisited is, 'Why do poor people give money and help to richer people?' Seabright instances a young Ghanaian girl, Grace, who earns a pittance selling pieces of ice to motorists stuck in traffic jams in Accra. On a Sunday she donates more than a tithe to a church with a wealthy pastor, who is bedecked with gold jewellery. On a less dramatic scale the same question often went through my mind when I received the collection plate at a church I served in the 1970s, in a very rundown area of Leeds, containing many (then very poor) pensioners. Although we as a family felt we were just scraping by, our standard of living was considerably higher than many in the congregation.

Seabright suggests that Grace 'benefits' from an opportunity to dress up, to be treated with respect, to find friends (and possibly a suitable husband), she can sing and express herself, act as a 'greeter' and be responsible for younger and more vulnerable people than herself. I also think of a village chapel where many of the women who had known each other for years, and who were in service as maids etc., called each other 'Mrs' because the church was the only place they received that respect from others. Perhaps treating people with 'respect' is one of the most powerful evangelical tools available to the church.

Perhaps the most penetrating insight of the book, at least to me, is that it looks on church organisations as 'platforms' rather than as organisations. The word 'platform' conjures up today the digital universe of social media, search engines and apps, but Seabright argues that platforms, 'Are organisations that facilitate relationships that could not form, or could not function as effectively, in the platforms' absence.' It occurred to me, as I read Seabright, that Mr Wesley was ahead of his time in creating a connexional 'platform' which was more about relationships, with travelling preachers and class leaders, rather

than an organisation. A platform facilitates relationships into which people can opt in or out as they wish or as they feel the need.

Seabright uses the idea of the platform to examine three areas which a platform understanding can address. First, what are the needs in individual human beings which religious movements address? Time and again he comes back to 'purpose.' 'Human beings find purpose in activities that have a collective dimension.' And religious organisations (unlike other purpose-creating organisations such as political parties) 'have access to historical traditions, and stories from those traditions, that give them a powerful edge.'

The second series of questions are organisational. For example, why do different religious movements flourish, split, or die? Seabright concludes, 'they turn around questions of mission, of structure, of strategy, and of message. The way in which religious movements make these choices bear a marked resemblance to the ways that secular businesses do.'

The final questions are about the use of power. One insight I found particularly illuminating was the way in which religious organisations are more eloquent about the need for the sacrifice, that violence strategies require, than secular organisations. They can articulate the need for sacrifice (and Christian organisations have an advantage here with the centrality of the Cross) more successfully than a political organisation, which may need to base its appeal to 'country.' Think of the Crusades, the churches on both sides in World War One, and the Russian Orthodox Church today. Perhaps one of the reasons the churches struggle today is that sacrifices (giving, service and commitment) are not popular in a culture of me, me, me.

I am, in conclusion, aware that a contribution to Theology Everywhere, which is about a book which is not about theology, may seem an odd choice. But my grounding in the sociology of religion has been a constant insight into the theology I have tried to proclaim, and the church leadership I have tried to offer.

Source: www.theologyeverywhere.org

FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART:

Word Search: Names in the Bible

All the names listed below are in the puzzle

After you have found all the words, order the leftover letters in the correct order to form the mystery answer.

Mystery answer on page 19.

J	E	S	S	E	E	O	S	B	N	J	A	R	E	D
N	L	N	R	Z	M	B	E	E	L	I	J	A	H	S
I	U	O	A	E	O	A	T	N	A	O	M	I	T	B
A	C	R	H	K	L	D	H	J	N	E	B	E	U	R
C	A	A	S	I	A	I	U	A	H	A	P	L	I	Z
C	S	A	I	E	S	A	T	M	R	H	A	C	I	M
I	P	I	L	L	I	H	P	I	O	B	O	C	A	J
T	J	O	E	L	O	T	A	N	M	J	A	M	E	S
H	O	G	I	N	H	I	S	O	A	O	J	D	N	L
S	N	E	R	E	H	B	L	E	N	O	T	E	E	A
A	A	K	B	C	E	A	U	H	S	O	J	H	D	S
V	H	U	A	E	S	T	H	E	R	O	C	A	Y	I
Z	Z	L	G	B	A	A	P	U	S	A	M	U	E	L
R	A	M	A	T	U	H	T	O	R	H	T	E	J	A
M	A	T	H	E	W	H	A	D	U	J	E	S	U	S

Names:

Aaron, Abraham, Absalom, Adam, Angels, Benjamin, Cain, Elijah, Elisha, Esau, Esther, Ezekiel, Gabriel, Isaac, Jacob, James, Jared, Jesse, Jesus, Jethro, Joel, Jonah, Jonathon, Joseph, Joshua, Judah, Lucas, Luke, Malachi, Mathew, Micah, Moses, Naomi, Noah, Obadiah, Phillip, Rachel, Rueben, Ruth, Salome, Samuel, Seth, Silas, Stephon, Tabitha, Tamar, Timothy, Vashti, Zilpah

Questions & Answers (Q &A)

Q: Where do sheep go to get haircuts?

A: To the Baa shop

Q: Where do bulls get their messages?

A: On a bull-etin board.

Q: Where does a tree store its stuff?

A: In its trunk.

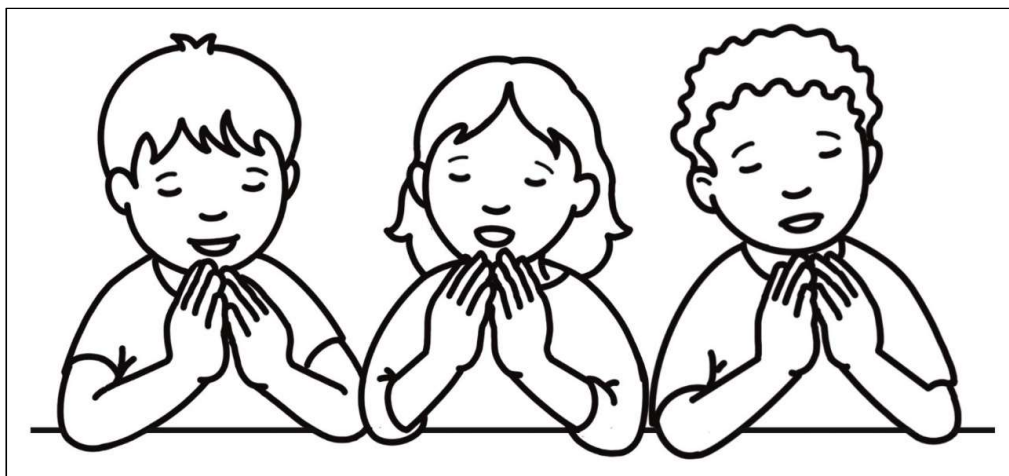
Q: Why couldn't I catch some fog earlier?

A: I mist it.

Q: I can run but not walk, have a mouth but can't talk, and a bed, but I don't sleep. Who am I?

A: A River

Colour in



NEMC REGULAR EVENTS/CLUBS:

Sunday Services

- 10.30 Worship - Every week and Young Church - Weekly (except August Holidays)
- 12.30 New Eltham Methodist Church - Zimbabwe Fellowship. There are services in SHONA at this Church (12.30 - 14.30) each Sunday. For more details, contact 07707310098 or 07944881977
- 18.30 Evening Worship - Once a quarter, when programmed

Mondays

- 09.30 Alex Warner Football Alex: 07771 747 129 <http://www.awfootballcoaching.com>
- 13.45 Diddi Dance for 2-4 years Jane: 07944623338 www.diddidance.com
- 13.30 Jigsaw Group, 2nd & 4th Monday of the month Graham: 07810 201 818
- 17.15 S Green Education Tuition services Sam: info@sgreeneducation.com
- 17.30 Fudoshin Shotokan Karate Club Amelia: 07723 535 353
- 20.00 ZUMBA - Dance Generation Maria: 07811 823467 www.urbandancefactory.co.uk

Tuesdays

- 11.15 Baby Sensory Hayley: 07468 587430 www.babysensory.com
- 14.00 Adult Activity Group Tony: 0208 309 1862
- 16.00 S Green Education – see above
- 17.00 Loopy Lou's Funky Fitness Classes Louise: 07967 346 797
- 18.30 Soulja Taekwondo Sam: info4taekwondo@gmail.com
- 20.00 New Eltham Community Productions (NECP) 0208 300 9027 www.necp.org.uk
- 20.00 Yoga Lily Jude: 07776 205 301

Wednesdays

- 10-1pm Warm Welcome Wednesday, all welcome for tea, cake and chat. Contact the office for details
- 14.00 Badminton - non-league Eileen: 020 8850 7621
- 18.30 Iyengar Yoga Maggie: yoga.maggie@yahoo.co.uk
- 20.00 ZUMBA - Dance fitness Marie: 07811 823467

Thursdays

- 10.00 Civil Service Retirement Fellowship (3rd week of the month)
- 14.00 Sidcup Active Retirement Assoc. (SIDARA) (3rd week of the month) Secretary: 020 8302 5880
- 11.15 Joanne Eagle Pilates Joanne: 07956 210326
- 17.15 S Green Education Tuition services Sam: info@sgreeneducation.com
- 18.30 Soulja Taekwondo Sam: info4taekwondo@gmail.com
- 20.00 New Eltham Community Productions (NECP) 0208 300 9027

Fridays

- 10.00 Alex Warner Football Alex: 07771 747 129
- 11.00 Diddi Dance for 2-4 years Jane: 07803 531782 www.diddidance.com
- 14.00 Sidcup Active Retirement Assoc. (SIDARA) 020 8302 5880
- 16.15 All the Arts Theatre School, 3 -18 years Lucy: 020 8850 2384 www.allthearts.co.uk

- Saturdays** 10:00 All the Arts Theatre School, as above

God in a Bottle, by Philip Sudworth.

“When a scientist brings a bottle of sea water back to his laboratory, it is still essentially sea.” A church leader used this analogy to try to explain how the man Jesus was still actually God himself. What it did illustrate to me was how we can sometimes have too limited a view of God.

Suppose an exchange teacher took a bottle of seawater to a landlocked country, showed it to the children and told them that they had now seen the sea. What a limited understanding of the sea that would be.

Even those who have dived into the depths only have a partial knowledge of the oceans. South Sea islanders may spend most of their lives by, in or on the sea but they have no appreciation of what the sea can be like for the crew on an Icelandic trawler in a winter storm. Even oceanographers would not claim to know everything that goes on in the great deeps. On Boxing Day 2004 the world was shocked at the power within one wave.

How much more beyond our understanding then is the creative force that produced the oceans and the thousands of species in them on this minor planet orbiting one of trillions of stars? Yet we too often think that we can encapsulate God in doctrines. Some even have the effrontery to claim that they have the only truth about God and all other religious experiences are invalid. It is like telling people that unless they have ridden the waves on a surfboard, they have no real experience of the sea.

No such attempt to present the “the simple truth” about God as a neat package of ideas is going to come even close to doing him justice. He is far more wonderful and multi-dimensional than we can ever imagine. St Augustine warned us that, “If you understand, then it is not God.” When we insist that people see God as we do, we attempt to contain God within our own faith-shaped bottle.

Too often we project onto God our own understandings of unlimited power and complete knowledge. Hence God is often depicted like a medieval king on his throne – listening to petitions, munificent to those who submit to him but executing terrible justice on those who disobey him. Just what we would do, if we were in his place. Some even claim to know how God thinks and attribute to God motives, such as “God must always act against sin” or “God can only forgive people if they believe the church’s teaching.” This measures their own level of compassion rather than the depth of God’s love and mercy. Such thinking puts God in a bottle shaped in our own image.

Those who believe that God is perfectly revealed in scripture forget that God cannot be contained in words. The pre-scientific and often poetic descriptions of people’s experiences of God present such different pictures as a God who orders genocide and joins in battles by hurling great hailstones and one who is the good shepherd going to great lengths to find one lost sheep. Whenever we read or discuss scripture, we interpret the words. Unfortunately, we too often use scripture more to condemn others and to exclude their beliefs rather than to challenge ourselves. Scripture becomes the word of God when it is lived out and so changes people’s lives. God does not fit into a book-shaped bottle.

We should encourage people to develop their own personal experience of God rather than try to impose our own faith upon them by telling them what they must believe about God. How many people have we lost because we insisted that their faith must be a particular shape and their experience of God did not fit into that bottle?

Jesus compared the attempt to contain the power and vibrancy of a living and dynamic faith within inflexible religious traditions with the folly of putting new wine into old bottles. Attempts by church leaders to constrain new experiences of God within the bottle of orthodoxy have led to young people leaking out of the church in huge numbers in recent decades.

Albert Schweitzer only fulfilled his potential in God’s service when he stopped trying to shape and contain God with definitions and dogma and allowed God to shape him. Like him, we have to worry less over doctrine *about* Jesus and respond to the call to live out our faith *in* Jesus by the way we live our lives.

Source: www.theologyeverywhere.org

WARM WELCOME WEDNESDAYS:

Wednesdays 10:30 to 1pm. Everyone is welcome for refreshments such as tea/coffee, biscuits, toasties and more. Come along to our inclusive space for all ages where everyone can expect a warm welcome from our volunteers.

Entry is FREE and it's a great place to connect with your community and make new friends in a totally safe environment.

For more information, contact the office

Tel: 0208 859 6932 Email: newelthammethodist@gmail.com

Drop in any time before or after shopping etc. and meet your friends in a relaxed, friendly environment.



SAVE THE DATE:



WELCOME SERVICE INVITATION

Join us as we welcome

Rev'd Eric Bediako

Thursday 4th September 2025

Refreshments from 6pm
Service commences at 7:30pm

Orpington Methodist Church,
19 Sevenoaks Road, Orpington
BR6 9JH

RSVP: Joanne Cummins, circuit
administrator, widmorecircuit@gmail.com

OUR CHOSEN CHARITY:



During the past year the church has chosen to support the charity, Railway Children, as our Annual Good Cause. The charity believes in a world where every child can thrive, away from a life on the streets. A huge thank you to everyone for your support, at time of writing we have raised a whopping **£1835**

What a difference your money makes:

- £100 could pay for four hours of one-to one support for a vulnerable child in the UK when they need it most
- £500 could pay for an outreach worker in Tanzania to search the streets and bus stations for a month looking for and protecting children at risk.
- £1000 could keep one of our 24-hour Child Help Desks in India running for seven weeks, protecting children arriving scared and alone at stations.

As this year starts to draw to a close we will shortly be looking for ideas for what charity to support this year. If you have any suggestions, please do let Paul or Clare know.

A to Z Guide to Absent Friends

A's an agnostic against church attending
B bounds about his/her business unending
C comes to church when his/her children are christened
D dwells in doubt, since to Darwin he/she listened
E's is energetic and eager on hiking
F finds "the flicks" are far more to his/her liking
G by his/her gardening and golfing is "grounded"
H hates the hymns with a horror unbounded
I is indignant at fresh innovations
J joins in jaunts and jollifications
K's college knowledge has kept him/her from playing
L's lately lapsed, not lost, only straying
M minds his/her car more than the mandates of Moses
N is so nervous, he/she is near to neuroses
O owns opinions too obviously odd
P prefers playing to praying to God
Q can't quite quiet his qualms on the creeds
R rests at home and recumbently reads
S says sermons are so uninspiring
T thinks theology is a terrible thing
U upon uplift for others is urgent
V voices views from the Vicar's divergent
W worships by wireless on week nights
X is an eccentric and expert at freak rites
Y yields to custom at Yule tide once yearly
Z's zeal for Zions's at zero - or nearly
(with acknowledgement to the "Lond Churchman")

THANK YOU:

A big **Thank you** to all those who came along to our **Summer Barn Dance** in June. We raised £535 for this year's chosen charity The Railway Children.

The swelteringly hot weather didn't put us off and everyone, young and old, had a great time dancing to new and old routines, enjoying a delicious supper of hot dogs and ploughman's, as well as a deliciously refreshing choice of mocktails provided by Judith and Simon, mixologists extraordinaires.

We welcomed quite a few new faces as well as our regulars and everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

Thanks to all the organisers, and especially Mark, Barbara and Clare, who kept us all moving mostly in the right direction. Yeehaw!



MISCELLEANEOUS:

- **Christmas Fair donations**

Do you have any unwanted gifts that we could sell on our church stall this Christmas? We are looking for unopened toiletries and make up sets. New, nearly new or good condition second hand jewellery and anything that you may have that could make a lovely Christmas gift for someone else such as tea light holders, scented candles, jewellery boxes, scarves (woollen or fabric) etc. Please pass to Dawn Roy or Clare Seed or alternatively place in cupboard 8 in room 4 from now until the Christmas Fair on Saturday 15th November. Thanks

- **A joint update from All We Can and the Methodist Church in Britain**

As justice-seekers we can't stay silent!

We cannot stay silent in the face of atrocities that continue to be perpetrated in Gaza.

The Church institutionally is no expert in international law. But it must take seriously the findings of the top experts in the field, many of whom are adamant that Israel's actions in Gaza constitute the crime of genocide. 'The international community must heed the warnings of genocide and act to avoid being complicit in the loss of tens of thousands of lives.

We have a duty to stand in solidarity with our partners on the ground who are bravely continuing their life-transforming work in the face of 'mass forced hunger, mass forced displacement, mass killings and mass atrocities.'^[1]

In November, All We Can, the Methodist Church in Britain and the United Reformed Church [launched the joint 'Gaza and Lebanon Justice appeal'](#) to raise awareness of the unfolding disaster, and to meet the humanitarian need resulting from the worsening crisis in Gaza and Lebanon. But to give financial support alone is not sufficient.

We will act and call for justice.

We believe that all are made in the image of God, each worthy of equal value and dignity. God wills the flourishing of creation and human community within it. We believe, that in solidarity with others, we are called to challenge injustice that contradicts God's plan for a just world.

The Hamas attacks of 7 October against innocent Israeli civilians, and the ongoing cruelty of holding hostages, is criminal. However, the escalation of attacks in the wake of these events in the name of self-defence by Netanyahu's government – resulting in the persecution, killing, and repeated expulsion of Palestinian communities across Gaza and the West Bank must stop. This appalling reality is something that the Church can neither ignore nor condone, for any reason whatsoever.

We have a duty to use our voices and power to challenge what is unjust. The UK government, along with France and Canada in [a joint statement](#), has called on Israel to halt military operations and allow humanitarian aid to enter the territory. It says that 'We will not stand by while the Netanyahu government pursues these egregious actions. If Israel does not cease the renewed military offensive and lift its restrictions on humanitarian aid, we will take further concrete actions in response'. However, despite the suspension of some arms export licenses to Israel in September last year, the UK still supplies components that are used in combat aircraft operations in Gaza, and we are concerned that these concrete actions are an empty threat which will not alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people.

Therefore, we call on the UK Government to act with decency and morality, and to urgently implement these threatened actions. We encourage people to [write to their MPs](#) to echo this call. We also ask that people continue to support our partners by [donating to our appeal](#) and find out more about their work. We offer this prayer for decision-makers, may they be guided by what is right and have the courage to act.

We commit to working towards a just and lasting peace, and the recognition of the state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel.

Source: www.methodist.org.uk

ARTICLES OF INTEREST, *can you help:*

We hope you have enjoyed the first edition of the new look Church magazine. We want this magazine to be enjoyable and useful to you so if you have anything you would like to see in the next edition or have any articles of interest you would like included please email Joanne in the office by **31st July 2025** for it to be included in the September to November edition.

Thanks in advance,

Joanne, Church Administrator

Mystery answer for word search on page 7: NEBUCHADNEZZAR

