

New Medway Mayor

On Sunday 18th June, I had the privilege of attending the dedication of the Mayor of Medway, Councillor Nina Gurung on behalf of Kent Workplace Mission. She is the first female Mayor of Nepalese and British Gurkha heritage in the country. The Deputy Mayor is Councillor Marian Nestorov, who with his wife, are originally from Ukraine.

The service took place in Rochester Cathedral with many community organisations and charities being represented. It was good to meet other representatives and to learn about them and share how KWM supports those in workplaces.

The hymns led us all to consider our calling to perseverance and service and included "Oh Jesus I Have Promised". The Very Revd. Dr Philip Hesketh, Dean of Rochester prayed for Councillor Gurung and the Council members, who pledged to serve the people of Medway.

Councillor Gurung is a practising Buddhist and so is her Chaplain, David Quirke-Thornton, an ordained Buddhist Priest, who gave the address. According to Medway Council's website, "There will be a multi-faith chaplaincy with representatives from different faiths speaking ahead of every full Council meeting."

The charities she will support this year are SSAFA - the Armed Forces charity, Medway Help for Ukrainians, and Young Medway, a youth charity.



Penny Culliford (Coordinating Chaplain)

Putting chaplaincy on the map

Workplace mission is nothing if not varied. In a time where I have tried to visit as many of our Chaplaincy teams as possible, it has been apparent that there is no one way of doing Chaplaincy. Visiting a relatively new, but enthusiastic team that is making a difference in the lives of staff at Ashford's Designer outlet and supporting them on their faith journey, to a one-person Chaplaincy in Birbeck & Anerley who knows everyone's names and is making an impact in his local area.

It's all about the High Street in Bexleyheath, but it's also supporting the staff who work at The Marlowe in Canterbury. We also have retailers supported in Tunbridge Wells with another new team, and an established team at Bluewater. Our more industrial workplaces, including ports, transport links, power stations and defence systems companies also benefit from regular visits.

We have also been raising the profile of Chaplaincy with three Chaplains giving a short presentation on retail Chaplaincy at the Rochester diocesan Lay Ministers' annual conference as well as KWM having input at the Rochester Licensed Lay Ministers' training programme.

During a time of so much turmoil in the world stage, we are looking forward to an Interfaith Walk visiting places of worship in Gravesend as a demonstration of unity and friendship. Of course, we are also eagerly anticipating Christmas, where our new KWM Christmas card portrays a peaceful nativity scene – very apt in a world that yearns for peace and looks to the example of the Prince of Peace.

Penny Culliford (Coordinating Chaplain)

Merchant Navy Day

Chaplaincy on our shores



The Merchant Navy Memorial on Dover seafront remembers the 30,248 British merchant seamen who lost their lives during World War Two, a death rate proportionally higher than in any of the armed forces.

A service is held each year near to 3rd September, the date the first merchant ship was sunk in that war. The Port Chaplains and Town Ministers lead the service, which has a wide local support from civic leaders, veterans and those linked to the sea.

Rev Catherine Tucker (KWM Chaplain), Canon (hot off the press) David Slater (KWM Secretary), Cllr Goran Cown (Chair of Dover District Council), Captain Don Hunter (Merchant Navy Memorial Fund), Ian Hunter

News from Bexleyheath

We are a small team of 3 chaplains, but in the process of increasing to 4 and maybe 5! All three of us worship at Christ Church, Bexleyheath. If there were a notice on the inside of the church door which people could read on the way out, it should say 'You are now entering a mission field'. Because as we go out of our church building, we are surrounded by shops to the west, south and east. Our mission field couldn't be much closer!

We've been going for about 5 years, and we minister to a huge variety of shops. We want to introduce you to 3 of them which all have something in common.



Chaplains John Ormes, Jane Linington, (former Chaplain), Penny Culliford (Coordinating), Jennie Long, Marilyn Ormes

They may seem unlikely bedfellows, but just as we minister to them, so they minister to others. Many people with learning difficulties go into the **Wimpy** and the staff really look after them, helping them choose what they want to eat and drink, helping them count out the correct money and above all, listening to them. Of course, many of the **florist's** customers are there to order funeral flowers – and she takes such care of them at a crisis point in their lives. And the same of course applies to **undertakers**.

Hopefully we provide a safety valve for those staff when they are under stress. Quite often chaplaincy is very humdrum but over the years we have ministered to people facing redundancy or bereavement. And we have been there in the joyful times of weddings and births as well!

This is a ministry we are all passionate about and we pray that with God's help it will continue for many years.

New appointments:

I am **Jacky Trice**, recently co-opted as a Members' Trustee of KWM. I am a member of Larkfield and East Malling Methodist church, where I am a Worship Leader.

I was born in Corby, Northamptonshire and moved around a lot with my family landing in Kent when I was 16. Much of my working life was spent with the Land Registry, in Tunbridge Wells in the Legal Department and then at Head Office, where I worked in CID (Computer Implementation Division!). The CID work was interesting where we tested, piloted and trained staff on new software, often travelling to different offices. I loved the train journey to Plymouth where the software developers were based.

After redundancy KWM 'found' me! Ray Borrett (then Lead Chaplain) and Alan Wood (then a new Trustee) suggested me for a vacancy and following a trial period I was the Team Support Coordinator from November 2013 to June 2021.



Jacky Trice (Member Trustee)

I thoroughly enjoyed my time working for KWM – getting to know lots of different people from various denominations. To work supporting those furthering the reach of workplace chaplaincy across Kent was a privilege. I am full of admiration for the work of all the chaplains – to be that 'intentional presence' in a workplace is not something I think I could do so I am pleased to be a Trustee to try and support you in that work.



Richard Oliver (Chaplain)

Hi I'm **Major Richard Oliver**, I was ordained as a Minister of Religion in The Salvation Army in 1996, and so have been in Full Time Ministry for 27 years. And have had appointments leading 2 Salvation Army Churches in the West Midlands, 14 years Overseas Reinforcement (Missionary) service in Brazil, and 9 years in Margate, Kent, before my new appointment to Folkestone in July of this year 2023.

With this new appointment, comes an added dimension of half a week secondment to Kent Workplace Mission. I do have previous Chaplaincy experience from some years ago, however, this was solely in Prison Chaplaincy.

I am so excited to already be part of the Port of Dover / Eurotunnel chaplaincy team, enjoying meeting the varied people from day to day, sharing their stories, and offering words of encouragement. God has already changed some of my daily plans to be in different places I was planning to be, in order to be where He wants me to be, to "BE AVAILABLE" to someone.

It's so good to hear of so many KWM initiatives, in and around Kent. I'm looking forward to becoming more involved especially across the East Kent Region. Looking forward to meeting Chaplains already in place and searching for new opportunities in other towns where God's People can be a presence in the Workplace, whatever that workplace might look like.

And then, taking the lead to re-activate the Kent Emergency Chaplains group. Re-affirming our availability to Local Authorities, by knowing what Local plans are in place across our geographical area, and more so knowing where we as Chaplains can provide a valuable assistance to Local Emergency Situations.

My life as a Minister has 2 mottos...

First and foremost, wherever God leads me, there must I follow, but also this, I have no great ability other than that of my availability.

Whether Ordained Ministers/Clergy or Lay Personnel, there is no difference in Chaplaincy, we follow in Christ's Footsteps, for He is our truest and best example of Church without Walls.

Christ the Worker

1st May is observed in many places around the world as International Workers' Day, or Labour Day, honouring the role of work in society and the dignity of workers.

Churches around the world have adopted the *first Sunday in May* as a day to honour workers. As [Kent Workplace Mission](https://kentworkplacemission.org) is an ecumenical trust providing workplace chaplaincy it follows that Christ the Worker is a fitting feast to bless those in work around us and bringing KWM to our churches.

We will be developing resources for Bible Study, Prayer, Worship and Reflection in the lead up to next year. Consider approaching your church leaders to mark the day in honour of all at work. The Blessing cards are just one resource that we offer as a start of a conversation with those we come across in our daily lives.

✠ bless you

blessings be at work for you
as you are at work for us
kentworkplacemission.org

A date for your diary:

Christ the Worker
Sunday 5th May 2024



Weekly Fellowship

Wednesdays, 10.00am-11.00am on Zoom

We really look forward to you joining us some time to share with us in an engaging hour of reflective Bible study and supportive prayer for the work of KWM. For joining details follow this link on our website: [Weekly Fellowship | Kent Workplace Mission](https://kentworkplacemission.org/weekly-fellowship)

or email: admin@kentworkplacemission.org

Chaplaincy at Bluewater M&S

Providing Chaplaincy through small talk

I am a Roman Catholic deacon, and I started my time as a chaplain in Bluewater about ten years ago having already been a chaplain at Darent Valley Hospital for some years.

I normally visit M&S at 9.00 on a Monday morning when there are fewer customers, and this enables me to chat to staff on the shop floor. However, there are some areas where the staff are usually too busy to chat e.g. the food hall, operations (where goods arrive), and the cafeteria.



The ability to do **"small talk"** is vital as this allows me to get to know them and more importantly, that they get to know me. They tell me what is going on in their lives, and I tell them what is happening in mine. This then gives them the confidence to "open up" to me with any problems or issues that they may have.

Sometimes they ask for advice about a family problem with a teenager or family relationships. I was a teacher for forty years and my experience of working with teenagers helped me in this case. I have also been able to help a small number of staff who are Roman Catholics and had marriage issues and put them in touch with the appropriate person to give them advice.

The pressure of staff redundancy in Lockdown

During lockdown the management asked staff for voluntary redundancies and about seventy people left the company with few replaced. This resulted in more pressure put on the existing staff as they had to spend more time on the tills than on their designated areas of responsibility. New self-service tills are now coming into use which should help relieve the problem.

Chatting to let off steam

When I have finished going round the store, I go to the staff canteen and have a 'cuppa' which allows any member of staff there to talk to me should they wish to. Normally this is just a social 'catch up' but sometimes someone needs help or advice about a particular issue. If necessary, I will make an appointment to see them in their own time.

Chatting with me often allows staff to let off steam and thus reduce, at least partially, the stress that they are feeling. I was told by a previous manager how much some of the staff appreciated my visit.



Colossians 3:23-24

It states in Colossians chapter 3 that whatever you do, work heartily, as if you are working for the Lord Jesus Christ and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

This applies to both chaplains and to those they visit.



Mike Dale (KWM Chaplain and Trustee)

Birbeck and Anerley Workplace Chaplaincy

Providing Spiritual and Pastoral Care

Our ecumenical workplace chaplaincy started in October 2020 as a practical church witness to Jesus' compassion for the area through providing pastoral and spiritual care for around forty local businesses, including shops, food outlets, estate agents, cafes and doctors' surgeries on Anerley Road, Croydon Road, and Elmers End Road SE20.

Although I am a lay minister at Anerley Team Ministry, I aim to represent all the nearby churches including St Michael's Beckenham, Avenue Baptist and St Anthony's RC and our chaplaincy is part of Kent Workplace Mission (KWM).

I visit the businesses once a week starting at the tattoo shop because of their warm welcome, although I am warmly welcomed in almost all the places I go to. Over the past three years I have developed good relationships and people are nearly always happy to chat and share their joys and concerns, although I try not to intrude if they are busy.

Carol singing and sunflowers

We have also developed some traditions, such as community carol singing outside the food outlets and distributing Christmas and Easter cards. Distributing sunflower seeds in Spring (which are grown outside the cafes or at home) are great conversation starters on how successfully they have flowered, or not! I also give out a postcard from my travels and some who cannot get away on a break really appreciate them. My aim is for people to sense a practical demonstration of Jesus' love and acceptance and that their own work in and for the community is valued by us and God.

Light in the Darkness, Betts Park

An exciting development occurred last summer when our local Catholic priest put me in contact with the Chair of the Friends of Betts Park who wanted to organise a service of blessing there. Liaising with all the Penge and

Anerley churches, we had an ecumenical Light in the Darkness service in the park one early December evening where nearly every church took part and seventy people from the community attended, including local councillors. Parts of the service, including a powerful testimony, were posted on the Park's social media page.

Ecumenical Easter Service

This service led to an ecumenical Easter service promoted by the Friends of Betts Park and attended by the Mayor of Bromley. A large cross was carried around the park as a symbol of hope and at various places we stopped and remembered the biblical Stations of the Cross with Bible readings and prayers. The sixty people attending from the community found it very moving, particularly when, at the tree planted in memory of a boy who had lost his life there, his father did the Stations of the Cross prayers and readings.

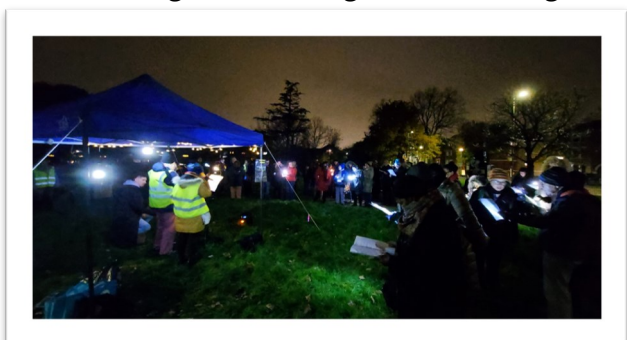


A big thank you goes to all the local churches and the KWM team for all their support.

Jeff Hawthorne (KWM Chaplain)

Could you join Jeff?

We would really like to build a team in Birbeck and Anerley. Jeff has created a solid foundation and would dearly love to expand that. If you think you, or someone you know, would like to get involved please contact Madeleine, the KWM Administrator or Penny, the Coordinating Chaplain.



Vacancy for: KWM Volunteer Treasurer **still open**

The Treasurer is a Trustee of the charity responsible to the Council for developing financial strategy and ensuring delivery. They work closely with the Administrator who normally handles financial transactions, book-keeping, and banking.

The Treasurer's contribution includes:

- **Leading thinking on financial strategy**
- **Leading fundraising for the charity**
- **Preparing the annual accounts**
- **Reporting the current position at the Operations Group and Trustee Council meetings**

There is a requirement for the Treasurer to be a practising Christian. He or she will mostly work from home but also attends meetings either on Zoom or at the Larkfield base, including the Council four times a year and the Operations Group on about another six occasions. Reasonable expenses can be reimbursed.

If this might be your calling or perhaps you know someone suitable or you have further questions, please contact initially the Administrator Madeleine Shepley at: admin@kentworkplacemission.org

Volunteer Chaplain at Carroty Wood, Tonbridge

Kent Workplace Mission is looking for a Volunteer Chaplain on behalf of Carroty Wood in Tonbridge, part of Rock UK www.rockuk.org/centres/carroty-wood/

The person would need to have a strong Christian faith and be a good listener to walk alongside and support staff and trainees within this Christian charity which specialises in providing outdoor adventure activities for all. Daytime availability is required and own transport would be helpful. Training and support in this role will be given by KWM. This is an unpaid role of up to 4 hours a week.

Applicants will need to complete an application form, be subject to an interview process and provide appropriate references and evidence of DBS certification and Safeguarding Training will also be required.



Tasks include:

- **Weekly visits to the site and availability for meetings. (Preferably Mondays, but day to be arranged with volunteer.)**
- **Listening and regular pastoral and spiritual one-to-one support and guidance**
- **Contribution to and occasional leading of "morning messages"**
- **Contribution to, and occasional leading of monthly bible studies**

If you are interested or would like to know more, please contact Penny Culliford (Coordinating Chaplain) at penny@kentworkplacemission.org

Horror and Hope

At the time of writing, the news is full of the latest horrors in what we used to call the Holy Land. Several people have said to me that they find watching the unfolding atrocities simply unbearable and have stopped turning on the television news.

I recall visiting the Gaza strip and being berated as a British person for the situation there, which was seen by the local Palestinians as the fault of our country among others. It is not of course as simple as that but what was impossible to miss was the contrast between the relative prosperity of Israel and the poverty the moment you crossed through the border checkpoints into Gaza. Hardest of all was listening to parents and grandparents teaching the children to hate those they see as their enemies, hard wiring into the next generation the idea that the other was not really a human being. The faint possibility of Israelis and Palestinians ever working together on a solution seemed to be being strangled.

Within our churches over the coming weeks we shall bravely remind ourselves of the Hope that Advent brings and try to believe that message. Outside the churches our chaplains will continue to meet all manner of people who have no Christian reason for Hope and may wonder how we can believe in a God of love if his competing followers can behave as they do in the Middle East.

Our chaplains will offer no trite answers; after all their credibility depends on their reputation for being honest and trustworthy. But we can pray that they will help those they encounter to see that the God who comes to live with us bears no relation to religious fanatics who are driven by hate. More than that, Love still brings the possibility of the seemingly impossible one day transforming our world, and it can start in the workplace.

John Ellis (KWM Vice Chair)



Jerusalem

Trustees and Office Holders

KWM is a Local Ecumenical Partnership being a mission partner of Churches Together in Kent, and so has trustees from the partner denominations, as well as trustees representing the membership. Trustees are appointed, and officers elected, annually.

Denominational Trustees

Anglican Rochester Diocese

Ven Andy Wooding Jones and Ellen Couzens

Anglican Canterbury Diocese

Ven William Adam and *one vacancy*

South East Baptist Association

two vacancies

Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark

Revd John Letley and Revd Michael Dale

South East Methodist District

Revd Dr David Hinchliffe and Revd Naomi Oates

South East Division Salvation Army

Major Mark Herbert and *one vacancy*

Southern Synod United Reformed Church

Richard Blackwell and John Ellis

Members' Trustees

Paul Buckley

David Slater

Jacky Trice

Alan Wood

Officers

Chair

Ven Andy Wooding Jones

Vice-Chair

John Ellis

Secretary

David Slater

Treasurer

one vacancy

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Registered Charity No. 1105783