



Ven Andy Wooding Jones (Chair) and David Slater (Secretary) survey the horizon

Looking forward

Change is afoot as we say goodbye to both Susan Randall, our Team Support Coordinator, and Mark Ball, our Coordinating Chaplain.

Susan completed a year with us, and enjoyed getting to know and encourage our chaplains, and getting us singing! Reduced mobility and worsening health contributed to her decision to retire early this June.

Mark will have served nearly four years with us when he leaves at the end of September to take up a post with the chaplaincy team at Canary Wharf.

We thank them both for the good things they have brought to KWM, and pray God's blessing upon their next chapters.

Return of the Inflation Monster

For two years we wondered what could possibly knock the pandemic off the top spot in the News. Then President Putin invaded Ukraine. For many of us, however, we had no personal engagement with Ukraine and our lives were not much changed.

Then came the cost of living crisis. A series of factors came together to bring inflation back into our vocabulary. There were supply chain problems. There were after effects from emergency measures taken to support the economy during lockdowns. Most dramatically, the side effects of the Ukraine crisis led to oil and gas supply prices rising at a rate not seen before by anyone under the age of 50. And whether you remember 1970s inflation or not, the cost of living crisis is now affecting all of us very directly.

According to the Office for National Statistics, every household income group is showing signs of changed behaviour. The higher income groups are spending less on food. The lowest income groups, who were already shopping around for the cheapest food, have found this much harder to do. Shopping bills just go on going up. Not surprisingly, the lowest income groups are spending less on non-essentials. More worryingly, they are also spending less on gas and electricity, which raises alarm bells about what will happen when winter arrives. Alongside adjusting spending patterns, these lowest income groups are already increasing their use of credit. It seems highly unlikely that this is about extra holidays: more likely any unexpected bill means the weekly cash runs out before the end of the week.

Meanwhile the Bank of England has raised interest rates again, entirely rationally when viewed from the perspective of the national economy. The Bank is simply doing its job. But like inflation, the impact does not fall equally on everyone. Increasingly expensive loans and mortgages will be uncomfortable for some, but devastating for others.

As Christians we might feel with the Psalmist that these are ‘matters which are too high for me’ (Psalm 131.2), yet as debates about inflation dominate our news again, we do have concerns about the impact on the most vulnerable. We may not be able to stop the fighting in Ukraine, but we can offer our spare bedroom to a refugee. We may not be able to slay the inflation monster, but we can seek to protect its victims.

The Churches Mutual Credit Union (churchesmutual.co.uk) supported by most of the Churches who sponsor Kent Workplace Mission, and of which I have the privilege to be Treasurer, has taken the decision not to raise its lending rates. This may be counter-cultural in the finance sector but Churches Mutual wanted to do something positive to support those most affected by financial pressures. Elsewhere, a Christian college decided to bring forward the annual pay rise for its lowest paid staff so they had the money as and when it is most needed. Our chaplains support some of those overwhelmed by financial pressures and may have opportunities to challenge employers. What can *you* do?

John Ellis

KWM Vice-Chair

AGM Update

The AGM took place in May, and kicked off in prayer and worship with a round of *Father we adore you*.

We said goodbye and thank you to longstanding trustee John Hougham, who continues his KWM connection with the Bluewater team.

Treasurer Alan Wood was thanked for ten years of service, as he prepares to step down next year.

Anyone open to explore a possible calling to be a trustee or treasurer, please do be in touch!

Weekly Fellowship

After experimenting to facilitate accessibility and wider engagement with additional Friday sessions, we have reverted to one session:

Wednesdays

10.00am-11.00am

Updated details are on the website each week, and 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:

kentworkplacemission.org/weekly_fellowship

WCM UK

We are members of the national organisation, Workplace Chaplaincy Mission UK.

They are inviting us to spread the word about two forthcoming offerings.

The first is the latest of their online mini-conferences - *Good Business: chaplaincy and issues of tax, business ethics and economy*. It is being put on in association with the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility, whose Executive Director, Sarah Edwards, will be leading the event. It takes place on Monday 3 October, 7.00pm-8.30pm.

Then from Tuesday 25 October, the next online *Introduction to Workplace Chaplaincy Course* begins. This five-week course incorporates the opportunity for a practical placement, and is a great way to find out more about what we do as workplace chaplains - and why.

Details - and a whole range of other interesting content - are on the WCM UK website:

workchaplaincyuk.org.uk

Bexleyheath



The picture above shows John Ormes being garlanded in blessing at an event he and his wife Marilyn were invited to by a Hindu member of staff at Asda, where John serves as chaplain.

Marilyn serves the retailers on the Broadway, with fellow team-members Jane and Jennie.

Have *you* thought and prayed about starting a chaplaincy project where *you* are yet?

Port



I joined Stella Maris (stellamaris.org.uk) as a chaplain to seafarers in 2019, having previously worked in the rail sector for forty years. That included time with Eurotunnel, which is where I first came into contact with KWM, as our chaplain, Robin, lived in the same village as I did back then.

After retiring, I studied at St John's Seminary, and was ordained Deacon in the Catholic Church. My patch covers the Medway and Dover ports. Very soon after visiting Dover port, I met with David Slater who was so helpful in helping me to find my way around. I was invited to join the team meetings, and soon after signed up to KWM.

John Fogarty

Hospital



The team of volunteer chaplains at Maidstone Hospital were stood down from November 2020, because of lockdown. The following July, four of us completed fifteen online refresher training modules and were allowed back to visit patients on a trial basis. I was assigned the Acute Stroke Unit.

Others in our team have gradually returned now too. Staff are pleased to have us back, especially as visiting is still restricted to just one hour per day. Patients appreciate having a new friendly face to talk to, not least because we are not medical people! Prayer and bible verses are offered and shared when appropriate. It is a very rewarding and humbling experience.

Valerie Thornewell

Council



Chaplaincy at Medway Council has entered a new phase as the pandemic has brought desk occupancy down to about 8% of 2019 levels, with both employees and employer realising the benefits of home-working. Chance encounters are now rare, with most staff engaging with the life of the Council offices from a distance.

Highlights have included offering a reflective video for Remembrance Day alongside the Chief Executive, and running monthly online prayer meetings. Do pray for wisdom in engaging more of the workforce as someone good to turn to in times of need.

Martyn Saunders

Review

Love : Work

Reflections and Prayers for a World at Work

Phil Jump and John Weaver (DLT 978-1-913657-36-9, £12.99)

I love the moment when the disciples, having regularly watched and listened to Jesus at prayer, simply ask 'Lord, teach us to pray'. There are many times I have found myself facing unexpected breakthroughs, joyful celebrations, complex situations, painful challenges, deep uncertainties, hard relational difficulties in my places of work, and when I have wondered, 'Lord, how do I pray?'

The authors, who are the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Industrial Christian Fellowship, offer their *Ten Commandments for Working People*:

Be diligent; Be alert; Be forgiving; Be caring; Be honest; Be healthy; Be prayerful; Be generous; Be positive; Be reliable.

These values offer aspirational priorities as we seek to live out faith in the workplace. Like the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5 or love in 1 Corinthians 13, we recognise some as preferences we are already confident to pursue; others will come less naturally and need more work.

The book is helpfully written, with prayers and reflections to help the reader engage practically with these *commandments* and to find ways of applying them to everyday life. It has helped me in two particular ways. As someone coming to a church role from a background in organisational leadership in both business and charity settings, the chapters have encouraged me afresh to review how my Christian faith impacts on the world of work. This needs to be done slowly and the book is best read in bite-size chunks if it is truly to stand a chance of changing and transforming us as whole-life Christian disciples. The other way in which the book has been helpful is as an anthology of prayers which have proved useful when I haven't been sure how to pray. The book can be kept in a work van, a desk drawer, a tool bag, or a locker, and will offer a prayer that speaks an authentic response to the situations we (or even those around us) might encounter, particularly when we find we have run out of words to pray.

As a taster, here is a prayer from the chapter *Be Forgiving*, (p76):

*Loving God;
in a world where blame is easy to apportion,
and many will seek to capitalise on the mistakes of others;
grant us forgiving spirits,
that we might be your example
in our places of work, leisure and everyday life.
May the forgiveness you have shown inspire our resolve,
that the instinct of grace might always be our mark.*

Andy Wooding Jones

Chair of Trustees of Kent Workplace Mission

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

Rochester Diocese

Ven Andy Wooding Jones and Ellen Couzens

Canterbury Diocese

Revd Dr Jonathan Arnold the Ven Andrew Sewell

South East Baptist Association

two vacancies

Archdiocese of Southwark

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South East Methodist District

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South East Division Salvation Army

Major Mark Herbert and one vacancy

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