

STAINES & FELTHAM CIRCUIT - 36/5

Written by Mark Savage (Circuit Prayer Coordinator)

SUMMER 2010

SUMMER 2011 :” A Peripatetic, Pentecost People”

The **Staines and Feltham Circuit** (36/5) is something of an anomaly in the South East District. Although the majority of our ten churches are in the current county of Surrey up to the Berkshire border, two of them remain in what, for local government purposes at least, is now Greater London but was formerly Middlesex, a county of which many remain proud. Indeed the churches in Ashford and Staines still bear that as a postal county address.

In fact, people of this area are used to a somewhat dual existence- the hustle and bustle of one of the world’s super cities are easily accessible by fast rail links and many of our members work there, commuting back to the greener territory, perhaps, of suburban Staines and Feltham to their families and their places of worship and leisure. Our churches are served by two ordained ministers- **Rev Beale Griffin** and **Rev John Izzard** (Superintendent), and a lay pastor, **Mr Mark Conlon**.



The **Circuit Team** is completed by our two circuit stewards, **Roger Griffiths** and **Michael Ashford**, and by Mike’s wife **Linda** (known affectionately as “Lou” to all) who manages “The Village Centre”, the exciting project which opened last September and now provides a much-needed community focus for Englefield Green, at the north-western extremity of our circuit, in its former Methodist church building.

<http://www.villagecentre.org.uk/>

The other main centre of employment for the circuit is nearby London Heathrow, the world’s busiest international airport by passenger volume with its five terminals. One of our local preachers, **Paul Murphy**, is a free church chaplain to this complex community of many skills, and is a regular visitor to the quiet oasis of St George’s Chapel in the Central Area, where the original passenger terminal (confusingly named Terminal 2 since the sixties!) was recently demolished as part of a massive re-development to meet the needs of 21st Century travellers.

If you’d like to know more about the Staines and Feltham circuit, its staff and each of the ten churches, please visit our recently re-launched website:

www.sfmc.org.uk

It is full of information and articles on this busy and diverse circuit’s life which- talking of commuting- even finds time for an increasingly popular “barbecue with steam trains” each summer.

I aim to update this prayer information section on the district website three times a year. Pressure of other commitments however means that it may not always be possible for the circuit co-ordinator to do this, so please see the website for the latest news. Meanwhile, here are some prayer pointers for the summer months of 2011:

PEOPLE, PARADES AND PARTIES

Please pray for our ministers and pastor and the circuit team as they prepare for the end of one Methodist year and the beginning of another. Thoughts of summer holidays are naturally in mind, but there are also many things happening within the circuit and beyond before then which they are involved in. Particularly:

-**The Pentecost Festival** in London, through til Pentecost Sunday on the 12th June. Pastor Mark Conlon has a particular affinity and connection with this now well-established London-wide event pioneered by Andy Frost.

Please pray for the organisers of all the many events and all those who will attend.

Festival 11 dovetails with the end of the London festival, and will be taking place in the borough of Spelthorne between the 11th and 18th of June. It is the product of the very successful partnership of **Churches Together in Spelthorne**, including Staines Methodist Church and Laleham Methodist Church, while in Ashford, the church is supporting several events including a men's "Quiz and Curry Night" on the 14th, and a "Girls Night Out" with comedian Liz Babbs. These are designed and intended as an ideal opportunity for the residents of Spelthorne and beyond to enjoy each other's company and at the same time experience Christian fellowship in a "non-criinge" environment.



Staines

This is the first time this festival has been held. Please pray that all the events will be well-supported, building bridges and providing firm foundations for future outreach to the people of the area both inside and outside our churches.



Christchurch

Feltham and Bedfont Carnival, meanwhile, takes place on Saturday 11th June. It's timing this year over the Pentecost weekend has been grasped by the churches of the Ecumenical Parish of Feltham, which includes Southville and the United Free Church of Feltham (Christchurch), to hold a "mini party" on the carnival showground with something for everybody. There will be games for the children, free goodies and a "consumer survey" will provide the opportunity for visitors to the carnival to answer the question: "What would you like the church to do for you".

Please pray for the many Christians involved in the carnival, on the stalls of the individual churches, on the carnival committee and the carnival announcer. Like many similar ventures, the carnival struggles for practical and financial support but has kept running for 58 years. Please pray that the 2011 carnival will be blessed with plenty of warm sunshine, for energy and enthusiasm for all taking part, and the opportunity to share the love of Jesus with the people of the area.

Magna Carta Day, in Egham on 11th June. Runnymede borough is named after the Thameside meadow, about a mile from the centre of Egham, where the most famous legal document in history was sealed by King John in June 1215. Egham's connection with this part of English history is commemorated in the name of a local secondary school, and this annual community festival in the High Street and environs. The United Church of Egham will be taking part, making use of its ideal location in the centre of the town and next to a popular pub.

Give thanks to God for the liberty we enjoy in England and pray for all in our churches working for justice and community cohesion, especially Rev Roy Howard Brown (chaplain to HMP Bronzefield at(Ashford) Feltham Young Offenders Institute and for the Heathrow Chaplains.



United Church of Egham

Ongoing Projects and Mission

The Circuit Missions Working Group

After some promising developments in 2010, sadly our Circuit Missions Group has not met for nearly a year, although individual projects continue to be initiated and prosper in each of the ten churches. The role of the Circuit Missions Group is:

To **Promote** work going on in our churches

To **Support** these events and each other in prayer

To **Communicate** information to each other and the churches

To **Encourage** activity in our churches

Give thanks to God for the Holy Spirit at work in our churches and the lives of individuals, inspiring us with new ideas and enthusiasm to see his kingdom grow. Pray that the Circuit Mission Working Group can again meet regularly to fulfil its aims, and spread the Good News in creative, relevant ways.

OTHER PROJECTS

“More than Gold”: Preparing for the 2012 Olympics

“More than Gold” is the umbrella organisation aiming to help Christians make the most of the opportunities for outreach and witness that the biggest sporting event in the world will bring to our doorstep- and even our churches- in two years time. A local group has been set up in the Staines area and has made a promising start, but it needs to build momentum so that we can give of our own ‘personal best’ when the world comes to watch.

The Olympic rowing events in 2011 will be taking place at Eton Dorney Lake, not far beyond our circuit’s boundary with the Thames Valley Circuit. One of our circuit’s local preachers, Maggie Netto, will be very heavily involved with the games, as she is a manager of GB Rowing. The cross country cycling events also pass through this part of Surrey and Middlesex and are bound to attract very large crowds to the area.

Please pray for the involvement of members of the Staines and Feltham circuit in “More than Gold”, that more volunteers would come forward to glorify God’s name when “the games” return to the UK.

Give thanks to God for what we share together with other Christians. Pray for Churches Together in Spelthorne, and for similar initiatives in Feltham and Runnymede. Pray that people would get caught up with excitement and real hunger to bring souls to Christ and to “prepare the ground” for the Olympics in 2012.

Street Angels

The Street Angels initiative in Staines is providing a much needed service to the young people of Staines on Friday nights when night clubs and pubs close. Please pray for all who are involved.