

The Wey Forward

Issue 26 December 2022 - February 2023



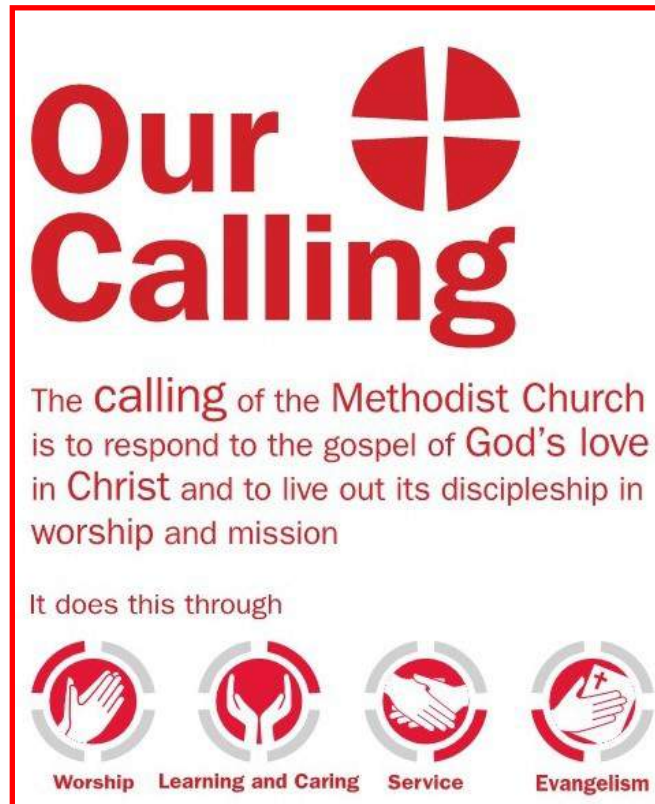
And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. *Luke 2:7*

The Wey Valley Methodist Circuit

The Wey Valley Methodist Circuit came into being on 1 September 2016. It was formed by the joining of 13 churches in the Guildford and Woking & Walton-on-Thames circuits. Each church has its own distinctive personality and gifts, and continues to look forward to mutual sharing and support and to responding together to the gospel of God's love in the community and the wider world. (For those not familiar with the term, a "circuit" is an administrative group of Methodist churches in the same geographical area).

Our churches can be found in :

- * Addlestone
- * Byfleet
- * Cranleigh
- * Godalming
- * Guildford
- * Knaphill
- * Merrow
- * Sheerwater
- * Stoughton
- * Walton-on-Thames
- * West Horsley
- * Weybridge
- * Woking



If you are a visitor or newcomer to the area, or living here and seeking a church for the first time, please use our website - www.veyvalleycircuit.org.uk to find a church that meets your spiritual and pastoral needs. We have included links to the websites of all of our churches in the Circuit but you can also contact the Circuit Office for more information. The office is open each weekday morning from 9am to 1pm and Sue Howson, the Circuit Administrator, can be contacted on circuitoffice@veyvalleycircuit.org.uk or 07808 046451.

This quarterly newsletter aims to showcase what is going on around the Circuit, provide relevant information for the forthcoming quarter and offer some thought provoking articles.

Sue Howson

Editor

A Message From Our Superintendent

I am writing this in the closing days of September and as I think back over the past four weeks I am deeply moved by the welcome we have received and the faithful Christian work I have witnessed.

I have been at meetings or services in ten of the churches in the Circuit during September and have witnessed all kinds of amazing work going on being delivered by a huge range of faithful, fantastic people. A huge 'thank you' for all that you (and your church) do.

I have been pondering (as no doubt many of you have) the recent passing of the Queen and the extraordinary scenes that came out of that event. There's a lovely quotation from the Queen that has given me cause to think - 'I have to be seen to be believed'. She was aware that the idea of monarchy is one thing but the reality of seeing the monarch is another thing entirely.

As we move towards Christmas and this extraordinary story of a God who comes to us I think this quote has a huge amount to teach us. I for one will miss the Queen's presence on Christmas Day. I am sure that our new King will do a splendid job of the Christmas Day broadcast but memories of the Queen, year after year (and perhaps even more so recently) being really clear about the Christian message of Christmas and the story of wise visitors, shepherds, angels and a baby being born to save us will live with me for a long time.

Her clarity about what Christmas celebrates was always one of my joys on Christmas Day.

'I have to be seen to be believed'. Our faith in Christ is of a God who comes to us - who lives life as one of us - with all that that means. This is not a God who is remote or far away but a God who is born into poverty, becomes a refugee, who is earthy and 'of us'. It is an extraordinary truth when you think about it.

And today - ours are the hands, the feet, the mouths, the actions through which that God speaks. So as I travel around the Circuit - as I see so much great work being done I am so incredibly moved by the knowledge that Jesus is being seen and experienced in so many ways around the Circuit. That the life and love of Jesus is being encountered by so many people because of us. 'I have to be seen to be believed' - every day the incarnate Jesus is being seen and believed in because of us and what we do. May that long continue to be the case.

Have a truly blessed Advent and Christmas time.

Paul

Rev Dr Paul Glass
Superintendent Minister



News from around the Circuit

Addlestone

Where have all the flowers gone? This is a song that I often sing to myself when I contemplate situations such as: What do we need to help us navigate through challenges and cultivate hope for the future? If we look for help from our neighbours, sometimes our neighbours may not be available to help us. For example, currently bramble and bracken are threatening to creep over from our neighbour's garden, blocking the alleyway to our church hall where the buzzing nursery and scout groups meet. We face an on-going battle to keep-off this negative influence from our neighbours but thanks to our very able-bodied property steward who keeps on cutting back the overgrowth we keep the path open.

Alongside our Lord and saviour who has commissioned us to spread the Good News contained in the Gospel that brings salvation and eternal life to believers, we hope, worship and serve as best we can.

In the desire for good neighbours and strong supportive family, we find that on Christ alone our hope should be founded. For on that foundation is the will of God who has a plan for us. A plan to prosper us will be found after we have gone through all the changing scenes of life. For now, we pray in faith an adaptation of the prayer of serenity:

*God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change;
The courage to change the things we can; and
The wisdom to know the difference. Amen.*



Our coffee lounge is open every Saturday from 10am till 12 mid-day with hosts which include Weybridge church members (great homemade cakes) and the Scouts.

Why not come and join us for a bit of fun for charity. We continue to raise money for Woking and Sam Beare hospices through our regular Saturday games of fun bingo. Do come along and feel free to bring a game or two on non-bingo Saturdays. Fun and fellowship.

We thank God that all our stewards, our committed members and the people who use our premises are proving to be our existential hope through thick and thin. Hence, we as covenant Methodists march on like brethren. We appreciate members of the community who share our dreams and aspirations in our moments of need and hopefully, in the future. Long may our patrons continue to support us and always feel welcome.

Loving regards,

Sydney Samuel

Byfleet

I am pleased to say church activities are progressing well. As stated in our last notes our monthly Coffee Mornings are back to normal and we hope to start the monthly Sunday lunches again very soon.

Our Harvest Supper on 24 September was very well supported and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. The evening started with a lovely range of songs from the folk singer John Tanner. We were delighted that Rev Dr Paul Glass could join us after a busy day at the District Synod and give us another opportunity to meet our new Superintendent informally.

On the following Sunday we had our Harvest Festival service when our harvest gifts were donated to our Food Bank. The Food Bank continues to help those in need in our area and I am pleased to report that the partnership with Citizens Advice Woking is continuing to be successful.

On Saturday 29 October at 2.30pm we hosted a concert by the Susan Robinson School of Ballet followed by afternoon tea in the Church Hall.

Peter Hall who leads our Bible study group started another *Faith Lessons* series from Ray Vander Laan on *Experiencing the Bible in a Historical Context*. They ran on Thursdays from 29 September through to 27 October 2022 at 2.30pm.

The series "*Paul proclaims Jesus as Lord - A Clash of Kingdoms*" had five lessons, each approximately 30 minutes:-

- 1.The Gospel of Caesar
- 2.The Believers
- 3.The Powers of Darkness
- 4.The Philippian Jailer
- 5.Confronting the Empire

By way of some background a short piece on Peter Hall is included on the next page.

Our Christmas worship begins with "Advent Songs of Praise" on Sunday morning 27 November and a Gift Service for the York Road Project (a local homeless charity) on Sunday morning 11 December. Our Christmas Carol service will be held on the morning of Sunday 18 December. All are welcome.

We start the New Year with our Covenant Service on Sunday 1 January, 2023.

Although we have had a turbulent year and the future at the moment looks rather unstable our faith in God will carry us through. We at Byfleet would like to send our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all our friends in the Circuit.

Margery Babb



Peter Hall

Peter Hall and his wife Annalina joined Byfleet Methodist Church in 2019 after moving from South Africa to the UK. The picture of them was taken at our recent harvest supper.

Peter was born in Derbyshire and emigrated from the UK with his parents and siblings to Rhodesia in 1953 where he completed his schooling. There he met Annalina and they were married in 1959 and now have 4 children, 10 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.

In 1954 Peter started work in the Rhodesian Post Office and in 1961 transferred to the Rhodesian Army Signals Corp. Then after retiring (!?) he and Annalina moved to South Africa in 1981 and subsequently he took up an appointment with the South African Army as second in command of the Eastern Province Command Signals Unit in Port Elizabeth.

Peter then retired again on 3 January 1999 and worked with his daughter Wendy's business until leaving for the UK in September 2018.

Peter had been a steward at their Methodist church in Humansdorp, South Africa from 2004 -2018 and led the Bible study group during this period. Meantime Annalina was appointed Woman's Auxiliary President and later District Secretary.

Peter was appointed as steward at Byfleet earlier this year and currently leads our Bible study group.

Margery Babb



FRIDAY NIGHT VIGIL



Call in to St. Mary's
on Friday evenings
between
21.00 and 23.00
to light a candle,
pray and reflect.

Cranleigh



Here at Cranleigh, we have been introduced to a new member to join the congregation - her name is Henrietta and she is a yellow chicken! She comes to the services with Rev Dr Paul Glass and at our very first meeting, she was very vocal, especially with the children, telling them how eggscited she was to meet all of us! Various and many other eggsacting jokes continued to pepper her conversation and we are very much looking forward to eggstending another warm welcome to her next time!

We had a local arrangement at the end of August when Hilary Strawson brought us a café style all age worship service which was received very well. Our planned local arrangement, led by Ian Smalley, Songs of Praise for 11 September, was obviously overshadowed by the announcement of the sudden death of our beloved Queen. We will all miss her and her smiling face, her bright clothes, her devotion, and her exemplary service to us all.

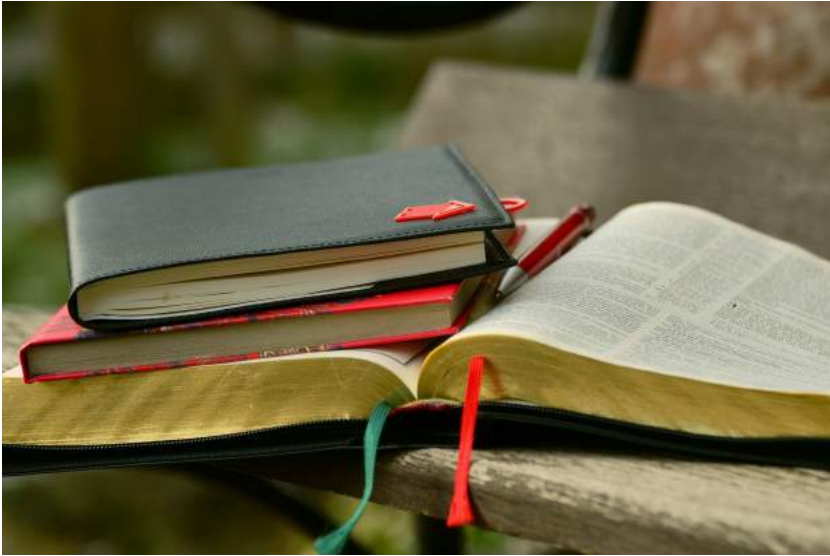
We have had our first leadership team meeting with Paul and are getting to grips with ambitious plans for 2023. We have decided to do our utmost to strengthen our membership and get others into the church for activities. Our Baby Bank and Time Out Together sessions on a Tuesday morning are very popular and the service to provide clothes and equipment for the under-fives is certainly being well used. We may extend Tuesdays to include a warm bank whereby local people can come into the church for a day to keep warm and to save their own heating bills at home. We are working alongside the local Baptist church and the community centre, so we all do a day each and spread the time, effort, cost, etc. and provide a service to the local community.

Our services at Elmbridge Retirement Village continue to be very popular. We had one on the morning of the Jubilee Sunday, incorporating our own church service, and we had over 60 people attend. Our recent harvest festival service, followed by supper, was led by our honorary Chaplain Rev Allan Taylor and again over 50 people contributed to the tins, packets, boxes and fresh fruit and vegetable donations which filled my car boot! The fresh produce went to the local day centre and the other donations were gratefully received by the food bank in Cranleigh.

Our own volunteers continue to provide a 'hear here' service where they can clean out and provide new batteries for NHS hearing aids both in Cranleigh and also at Elmbridge Retirement Village on a monthly basis. Our minister Paul has been invited to regularly share leading services at Cedar Court, our local nursing home. It has been a busy and fulfilling start to the new connexional year and we hope it continues and will provide the membership we need to thrive as a centre for Methodist worship - eggscitiing times certainly!

Jane Briggs

Exciting News - New Bible Study Group



A new Bible study group started in September at Merrow. This group will be meeting at the church in the evening of the third Thursday every month at 7.30pm.

The study notes will be based on notes provided by Gillian Brierley and used at the Tuesday morning Bible study group.

Background

Earlier this year, a Bible study questionnaire was given out to our church members. Of the responses received, most were happy with either morning or afternoon meetings but some members were only able to come on an evening due to work commitments. As there already is a daytime Bible study group, it was decided to add an evening group to ensure that no-one is excluded.

It is not intended that this group is in competition with our Tuesday morning group (which runs on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month).

For some, 'Bible study' generates fear but please note the following:

1. The aim is to provide an opportunity for friends to read and learn from the Word of God. It is not an examination.
2. I am happy to 'lead' the group but it does not mean that I have any 'expert' knowledge of the Bible. There is no such thing as a 'stupid' question – we are all here to learn from each other and the Bible.
3. If you do not wish to read out loud or speak – there will be no pressure on you to do so.

Please seriously consider coming to this group as it will be a good way of increasing your knowledge of the Word of God and learning how to apply it to modern life. It will also help develop fellowship with fellow Christians!

All are welcome, whether you worship at Merrow or not.

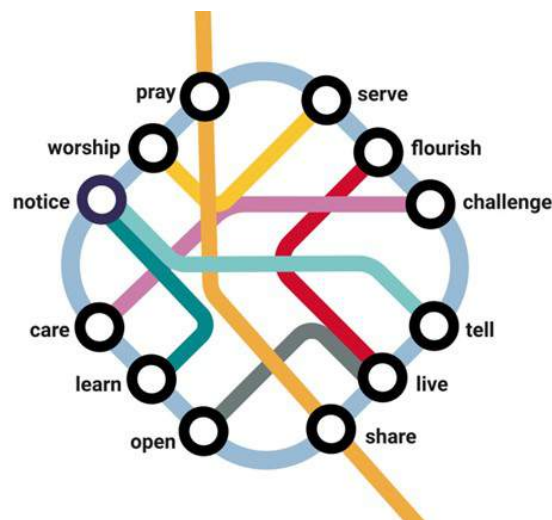
If you have any questions, please ask.

Julie Wallis

South East District Synod, 24 September 2022

It was the Wey Valley Circuit's turn to host the District Synod this year and Trinity Methodist Church in Woking did a superb job on our behalf. Presbyters, deacons and lay members from across the District - which includes Gibraltar and Malta as well as Kent, Sussex, Surrey and small sections of Berkshire and Hampshire - started to gather from 9.30am for breakfast and the opportunity to meet up with friends and colleagues. The day included a little business, a lot of sharing of information and time for worship. After welcomes from Paul, on behalf of the Circuit, and Sam, on behalf of Trinity we had a lovely un-rushed communion service led by Rev Dr David Hinchliffe, our District Chair. When there is a lot to be said and done, I am grateful that plenty of time is given for worshipping together particularly for those who are usually called to lead worship.

After more coffee, the guest speaker, Rev Andy Fishburne, who is part of the Connexion's Evangelism and Growth Team gave a presentation entitled *Minding the Gap*, a new way of exploring the excellent Methodist Way of Life (MWOL) material. A Methodist Way of Life identifies twelve practices that help us grow as disciples both as individuals and as a church. Hopefully you will have received the little MWOL card that is distributed with our membership tickets. The diagram below summarises each practice in one key word and suggests possible links between them creating something that looks like a rather busy train network. We were encouraged to consider our commitment to each station, what our individual home station might be and how this links with other stations our churches are good at, and which stations need more development. This may sound rather complicated but it helped us to reflect and appreciate our interconnectedness and seemed exciting and liberating!



More details can be found on the Connexional website:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/a-methodist-way-of-life-resources/>

After lunch we had a number of short talks on All We Can, Christ Church (Feltham), work with Refugees and Asylum Seekers, the new Candidating process and reflections from the two newly ordained presbyters including our own Rev Sydney Samuel Lake. A short time for business followed and the day concluded with worship. Altogether an interesting, thought provoking, God-centred day.

The circuit has a number of vacancies for lay representatives this year. If this sounds like something you might be interested in, please get in touch with Linda Weedon or myself, Helen Belsham.

Helen Belsham

Godalming United Church

Sunday services continue to be streamed and can be accessed at <https://guc.online.church>. Recordings (audio and video) are available through our website www.guc.org.uk, or, after the service, <https://bit.ly/GUCYouTube>.

At the beginning of August the National Methodist Youth Brass Band made our premises their base for their summer tour of the South Coast – *Bandstand to Beaches*. The Rowling family (GUC's answer to the Von Trapps) all take part, and this outline is taken from Eloise's contribution to our church magazine.

Starting on the Isle of Wight, the first five days were based at Ryde Methodist Church. One of the Band's chaplains led Sunday morning worship, assisted by members contributing readings, prayers and testimony. The following week, the mainland base was Offington Park Methodist Church, with concerts in Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings. Leading Sunday worship at Offington, members reflected on their study theme of the week – the story of Joseph. This not only chimed in with their collective love of the Andrew Lloyd Webber music – but pointed to God's plan for Joseph, His plan for all of us, and the theme of Welcoming.

The Band's autumn fixtures include 3Generate - the Methodist Church Youth Assembly - and a weekend in Stamford in November.

We went ahead with our charity cream tea on Saturday 10 September – feeling that following the late Queen's death people would appreciate the opportunity to sign our foyer condolences book and have a gentle chat. £411 was raised, meaning that 27 Gambians will have their sight saved.

Harvest Festival on Sunday 2 October was a joyful occasion, followed by a bring-and-share lunch – the first for three years.

Following the disastrous floods in Pakistan we held a retiring collection for Christian Aid for three weeks starting on 18 September.

During September and October Adam led a twice-weekly Bible study – “Basics of Christianity” – something for all, from newer Christians to “veterans”.

Looking ahead

Sun 13 Nov – no morning service as GUC will be supporting the Town's Service of Remembrance at the Phillips Memorial on the Burys

Sat 26 Nov – Godalming Christmas Festival 10am onwards; lighting up the town Christmas lights; Godalming Band leading carols at the Pepperpot 4:00pm—5:30pm

Sat 3 Dec – GUC: early evening “Preparation Party” including seasonal food & music and making Christingles

Sun 4 Dec 10:30am – Gift service with Christingles

Sat 10 Dec 3.00pm - 5.00pm - Messy Church “Christmas is Coming” messy.church@guc.org.uk

Sat 17 Dec 7.00pm - Godalming Band Christmas Concert at GUC. See page 11 for details

Sun 18 Dec 6.00pm – Candlelit Carol Service

Sat 24 Dec 4.00pm – Christmas Eve Holy Communion

Sun 25 Dec 10.00am – Christmas Day family service

Sat 28 Jan - Messy Church messy.church@guc.org.uk

Don't forget our spring 2023 pantomime – Cinderella - the first weekend in February. Always a great coming-together of the organisations and generations within the church community. Four performances; advance booking strongly recommended - contact frymaile@gmail.com.

For more information and other future events, please visit www.guc.org.uk for a constantly updated rolling calendar.

Nancy Wilks



Godalming Band and Godalming Youth Band
present an evening of festive music and cheer at a joint

CHRISTMAS CONCERT



SATURDAY 17th DECEMBER, 7PM
at Godalming United Church, Bridge Street

Tickets: £8 adults, £4 under 16, £20 family (2 adults, 2 U16)

Book online at www.godalmingband.org.uk or call 01483 355129

Registered charity no. 1025290, www.godalmingband.org.uk

Guildford St Mary's

In a world of uncertainty, where do we stand?

In this deeply unpredictable phase the world is going through, it's incredibly difficult in late September to predict what will be topical and on our hearts in December.

I would like to think that there will be no need by then for our weekly Vigils for Ukraine but sadly that is not looking likely. When we started them back in February immediately following the invasion, we had no idea that they would be running for months on end but they have met a need right through the summer and into the autumn, with well over 2,300 people having attended by September. Each week there is something to touch the heart or inspire the team, sometimes even to amuse – like how do we record the attendance of a fox who ventured through the doors of the church (not very far, fortunately)?

Or the young couple passing by between hostelries who doubted they would be welcome in church, having had a few drinks, and needed some support (moral, they could still walk) to enter the church but came out some minutes later, full of appreciation. The icing on that cake was that, a few minutes later, when they'd met up with friends at our nearest pub, the young man felt moved to come back bringing another friend so she could light a candle. That turned into a conversation with the man about his mother, who is training for the priesthood, and his surprise at the amount she is expected to do in her training. When asked if he was supporting her in her training, he said he was probably showing her 'a different side of life'. I'd love to know if he's told her of his visit.

I would like to think the cost of living crisis will have been solved, or at least eased, so that millions will be spared the worry of how to pay their bills or to choose between heat and food. Sadly, that too seems almost inconceivable but I hope St Mary's and our other churches in Guildford and the Circuit will be able to play a role in keeping people warm and welcome during the coldest months, as well as helping with Foodbanks.

It would be nice to think that politicking could ease and our elected representatives clearly work together for the good of all by December but I won't hold my breath for that one either.

Fortunately there is a certainty of something to look forward to – the Good News of Christmas that we are called to share and which remains a solid, reliable promise. In the build up to Christmas we will again hold a series of 3 Thursday lunchtime Advent Reflections, starting on 1 December, and look forward to seeing friends from around the Circuit joining us. This time our reflections will be centred around some images from the Methodist Modern Art Collection, and then followed by Carols at Lunchtime on 22 December. Watch out for more details.

Christmas is not just a time to celebrate but also to reinvigorate our faith and our readiness to share it, maybe by word but certainly by deed. So whether the need is concern for peace in Ukraine or elsewhere, or to ease the lot of those struggling with finance, to welcome strangers or any other need, let us all be renewed in our desire to show the love of Christ - for there is another certainty - that there will be plenty in need of Christ's love.

Nigel Campion-Smith



Knaphill



Our Clothing Bank sessions and Coffee Mornings have now settled back into their former routine, for which we are thankful. Numbers of clients at Clothes 4U vary, but we sometimes have quite a lot of visitors and it will not be surprising, sadly, if numbers increase in the current harsh financial climate. Clothes 4U opens 2pm to 4pm on the third Saturday of the month and Coffee Mornings from 10am to 12 noon on the fourth Saturday.

Several Autumn events are planned in conjunction with the other Knaphill churches, via C4K (Churches Together in Knaphill). Once again, after an interruption because of the Covid-19 pandemic, there will be a proper Remembrance Service by the War Memorial in Knaphill, on Friday 11 November, with representatives of the army and local schools, as well as local Councillors, one of whom, Mr Saj Hussein, is Woking's Mayor. In December, members of the different churches will also come together for carol singing at various venues around Knaphill.

At KMC we plan to have the very popular afternoon tea with carols, for the elderly or anyone who lives alone, on Sunday 11 December, and an evening Carol Service on Sunday 18 December at 6.30pm.

In the last Wey Forward, I welcomed a new hirer to KMC – a pre-school. With their contribution it looked as though KMC could begin to undo some of the damage done to our finances during the pandemic. Sadly, that is not to be, because they have found an alternative venue where they will not need to pack away equipment every day and are able to have longer sessions. We would ask for prayers for KMC as we try to find other hirers.

Lynda Shore

There is Room

There is Room is the Methodist Church's 2022 Advent and Christmas campaign. It seeks to demonstrate the Methodist Church as an open, welcoming and inclusive place for all. Through the lens of a Methodist Way of Life, it will offer content relevant for today's world, aiming to encourage and support anyone who wants to find out more about Christian faith and the Methodist Church.

Resources, including the image on the cover of this magazine, can be found and downloaded at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/there-is-room-advent-and-christmas-2022-resources/>

In the Christmas story, we are made acutely aware that there was no room for Joseph and Mary to rest when they arrived in Bethlehem, in the more traditional places reserved for hospitality in Jewish culture. This meant they had to use other spaces which were available.

Jesus' birth changed everything and made room for us in God's Kingdom. As part of the Methodist Church, we seek to demonstrate our open, inclusive and welcoming nature by saying to all people, 'There is Room' for you.

Sue Howson



Merrow

I am writing this article the day after watching the State funeral of our much loved Queen Elizabeth II. The Archbishop of Canterbury's sermon emphasised the Queen's faith and service to the country and how we can all have the same hope if we focus on the Lord.

The summer proved to be a 'surprisingly' eventful time at Merrow. On 7 August, we were blessed to welcome many friends and family of George and Ama to Merrow for the service of Holy Communion – this was then followed by a 'surprise' party to celebrate Ama's special birthday. The afternoon also included the renewal of their wedding vows officiated by Rev Peter Hills. There was plenty of dancing, singing, food (always important!) and festivity – and somehow Ama never guessed anything was being organised!

The 'Holiday at Home' afternoon tea on the 18 August was also very popular with guests. 'The food just kept coming' was one comment received.



On Sunday 18 September Merrow celebrated Harvest with our minister, Rev George, leading the service. Our Harvest theme this year was 'apples' which led to the church being well decorated with displays based on this theme (apparently there has been a glut of apples this year!). George reminded us that it is important to be grateful for everything that we have – all our food, clothes, possessions etc and not to take it all for granted.

This was then followed by a church family lunch in the hall which everyone greatly enjoyed.

Another big event was the 'Wedding of the Year' when our organist Gillian Brierley, wed Choir member, Derek Varley on the 22 October. It was great to have a wedding to celebrate.

And now to the future!

We are planning ahead for Christmas. We will kick off with the Advent Carol Service on the evening of 27 November. Our Christmas Carol Service will be held on Sunday 18 December at 4.30pm. It will include a contribution by the children from the Chinese Church, (Guildford Church of the Holy Word), which meets at Merrow on Sunday afternoons. They had a starring role last year which was extremely popular.

Bushy Hill School are also going to hold their School nativity play at the church this year. This regular event was suspended due to Covid but it is now being resumed. The live performance will be on Thursday 15 December. It is a fun way for the school and church to interact together.

A Citizens Advice Outreach Hub will soon be starting face to face sessions for clients on Tuesday mornings at the church. They will be dealing with clients experiencing issues with debt, finances and the cost of living, etc, something of increasing importance at this current time. Hopefully, I will be able to provide an update on this in the next issue.

Julie Wallis

The Citizens Advice logo, which consists of a blue speech bubble shape containing the words "citizens advice" in white, lowercase, sans-serif font.

**citizens
advice**

St Michael's, Sheerwater

Plans for the refurbishment and extension at St Michael's Community Hub are gathering pace. We hope to go to planning before this magazine is published and then, alongside finalising the detail of our plans, we'll have the daunting task of packing away and storing everything in the church building. It's a good time to turf out cupboards, use up supplies and resist buying anything new! We hope to be leaving the building for a few months after Easter 2023 IF all goes to plan.

What then? Well, our expectation is that we will use the community centre and the MASCOT (Maybury and Sheerwater Community Trust) Hub and work flexibly until we can return to our building. The pandemic has at least taught us that we don't always need a building to be church. We will have to do things differently for a while, but we have some idea of how that might work now.



In the meantime, our community work continues: Pop up café for Primary School age children and their carers is hugely popular and we know that the food, games and craft are valued by all the families we see. The growing team of volunteers include Woking Borough Council employees who value the time to connect with families on the estate. With the help of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Pyrford, Tots Praise is off to a good start, and we hope to build on that by improving our advertising. Our great value community lunches happen each month (where else could you get a 2-course home-cooked meal for £6?) and it won't be long before we're planning our annual Christmas feast. St Michael's is never knowingly under catered!

Following the Cost of Living Summit that Woking Borough Council ran recently in our brand-new leisure centre on the estate, all our community partners are aware of just how important safe, warm space is going to be this winter. Sheerwater is one of the targeted areas for specific winter pressures funding so Sheerwater Together (local residents and partnership organisations) will be making sure there are warm hubs with fun things to do, for free, across our community this winter. St Michael's, MASCOT, Eastwood Leisure and Parkwood Community centres will be sharing the funding to pay for things like heating and refreshments, crafts and games – all to be agreed at our mid-October meeting and underway by 1 November.

I consider all this to be at the heart of the good news we seek to share day by day as a church. As James says, 'Dear friends, do you think you'll get anywhere...if you learn all the right words but never do anything? Does merely talking about faith indicate that a person really has it? For instance, you come upon an old friend dressed in rags and half-starved and say, 'Good morning, friend! Be clothed in Christ! Be filled with the Holy Spirit!' and walk off without providing so much as a coat or a cup of soup – where does that get you? Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?' (The Message)

Reverend Gillaine Holland
St Michael's Community Hub

Stoughton

September is a bit of a “new” month with the start of a school year and the Methodist church year. This last September brought a momentous “new” as King Charles III became monarch following the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth II. She truly lived her life for the people she served with wisdom and grace, and as the Archbishop of Canterbury said in his sermon at her funeral, “her service to so many people in this nation, the Commonwealth and the world had its foundation in her following Christ”. During the month of August a “spring clean” was undertaken to some of our church rooms and thanks are given to all those who helped with decorating and cleaning tasks – many hands made light work! Gifts from our Harvest Festival are to be given to the local Salvation Army as we continue to support them in their work with those in need in Guildford. The months are moving quickly towards another Christmas and as November approaches we look to the time of Advent and pray that we can all share in the Hope, Love, Joy and Peace of that special season. All good wishes from Stoughton for Christmas and the New Year.

Linda Macbeth

Reflections on the Wey Valley Pilgrimage to the Holy Land - May 2022

Twenty-six people, from various Circuit churches together with ecumenical friends, travelled to Israel on pilgrimage in May this year. Some of us had been to the Holy Land before, some were visiting for the first time. All of us went with differing expectations, all were open to the possibility and hope of meeting with Jesus in the places where he walked, lived, ministered and died. Every one of us returned with some memories of profound and significant experiences that have deepened our understanding of the gospel message.



All agreed that one of the most prayerful and spiritual places where we felt close to Jesus was on the shores of the Sea of Galilee as we shared Holy Communion. This was the site where the risen Jesus appeared to his disciples as they were fishing and cooked breakfast for them. Surrounded by the peace and tranquility of this holy place, we could imagine Jesus standing on this same beach, sharing a meal with his disciples as we were sharing bread and wine.

continued.....



Manger Square, Bethlehem

Although the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem were busy, crowded sites, there was still an overpowering sense of the continuing presence of God. 2000 years of worship and prayers of faithful Christians permeated the stones of these historic churches, and other beautiful churches we visited. The Garden of Gethsemane with its ancient olive trees, the Shepherds' Fields on the edge of Bethlehem, the High Priest's House where Jesus was brought before Caiaphas – all these places and more brought Jesus' ministry to life as we read the relevant gospel passages and prayed together. Bassam, our Palestinian Christian guide, took us to look down on the ancient trackway in a deep gorge marking the way to Jerusalem from Jericho. The scenery seemed unchanged since Jesus' time. This might easily have been the road on which the Good Samaritan stopped to help the injured traveller.

There were many other aspects to this pilgrimage which impacted us and transformed our understanding of Jesus – too many to include here. One happy and lasting effect was the friendship we formed between us all, across ages, different churches and even denominations. If you do get the chance to hear any of the pilgrims speak about their pilgrimage, please do go and listen. It might prompt you to go on pilgrimage too!



Baptism site, the River Jordan

For further information do please contact Helen or Claire.

*Helen Belsham and Rev Claire Hargreaves
Co-Leaders, Wey Valley Circuit Pilgrimage*

Walton-on-Thames

July and August seemed to be a quieter time at Walton Methodist church as our minister and many of our members took the opportunity for a well-earned break to get away from what has been a busy year. So, the beginning of September felt like we had changed up a gear or two when we held a welcome service where we were pleased to welcome five new adults into membership at Walton. It was a busy joy filled service and a great opportunity to get to know our new brothers and sisters better.

In September, we welcomed our uniformed organisations to our church decorated for Harvest. The parade was solidly represented by Beavers, Cubs and Air Scouts. It has been three years since we held a gathered service with our uniformed groups and it was a delight to see the church packed again with active participation from all of the groups. We collected a car-load of food for our food bank and donations for All We Can. Patrick Coad led the service brilliantly using his gifts and talents for working with young people. WMC was packed with regulars, parents, the uniformed groups and their leaders. The young people contributed by creatively educating many of us about the "Elmbridge Community Eco Hub" www.elmbridgeecohub.org.uk

This is a brilliant local initiative which seeks to provide a safe, welcoming place for people to come together to access resources currently unavailable in our community. The aim is to focus on food security, initiatives to help our environment and to help people learn new skills and improve their mental wellbeing.



Some of our food donations packed up and ready for the food bank

At the end of September our young people headed up to the NEC for 3Generate (the Methodist Children & Youth Assembly). A group of seven of our young people and our leaders joined ten young people from the Teddington Circuit and their youth leader and headed up by coach for a weekend of spiritual festivity, frivolity and worship exploring the theme of 'Tune-In' (tuning in to God, one another, and the world). It is a wonderful opportunity for young Methodists around the country to come together and explore topical issues, worship together, and learn more about their faith.

At the end of October, we will hold an All-Souls service remembering those who have passed from our community in recent times. We are aware that as a Faith Community we stand on the shoulders of all who have gone before us. We are thankful for their contribution to our community in Walton.

As we approach Christmas, we will celebrate ten years of Messy Church at WMC, we have a fellowship group up and running with a second to follow soon and we look forward to enjoying a fellowship meal together at the start of Advent as well.

Ross Richardson

A joyful start to Christmas

Carol Praise



Saturday 3rd Dec
7.00 - 9.00 pm
Horsley Methodist Church
 (next to W. Horsley Village Hall)
Come and sing your favourite
carols with a break for
refreshments and mince pies.
Phone requests to
01438 282474

Inter Faith Week 2022

13–20 November

An opportunity to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs




#Interfaithweek
 COOPERATE/LEARN/
 RESPECT/REFLECT/
 APPRECIATE/TALK/
 VOLUNTEER/MAKE
 FRIENDS/CELEBRATE
www.interfaithweek.org
 Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter:
[facebook.com/IFWeek](https://www.facebook.com/IFWeek) [@IFWeek](https://www.instagram.com/IFWeek) [@IFWeek](https://twitter.com/IFWeek)



Join us for this year's series of
Advent Reflections
based on paintings from
The Methodist Modern Art Collection
followed by a bread & soup lunch
Thursdays
1, 8 & 15 December
12.15 for 12.30
St. Mary's
Quarry St
Guildford
GU1 3UP

SAVE THE DATES

Please join us for an
African-themed
Coffee
&
Cake
St. Mary's
Quarry St
Guildford
 to help raise funds for
Esuubi
~ a charity helping some of the poorest children in Uganda
Thursday 23 November
10.30 – 12 noon



West Horsley

We held a very successful Harvest Tea on Sunday 18 September when we entertained 35 friends and neighbours in our Wesley Room. Some people were completely new to the neighbourhood and had not been inside our chapel before. This followed an inspiring Thanksgiving service in the morning led by Rev Allan Taylor. As well as traditional decoration of the chapel, there was an excellent response to our request for goods for the local food bank.

We are wondering whether we could provide a 'warm room' this winter if there is a need. We are discussing this with West Horsley Wheel of Care who are in contact with elderly people in the village. Early days yet, but we might be able to do this in conjunction with our regular Thursday coffee morning.

We will be holding our usual Carol Praise at 7.00pm on Saturday 3 December. Do join us for this joyous way of celebrating the start to the Christmas season. Sing your favourite Advent hymns and Christmas carols and enjoy our refreshments! For details, please see the poster on page 19.

Margaret Faulkner

Circuit Books of Faith Group

If interested please contact:

Rev J. Allan Taylor on 01483 200464



Dial a Prayer



FREE phone lines for prayers, reflections and news from the Methodist Church

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514

Listen to a pastoral message from the President and Vice President: 0808 281 2695

Listen to our Podcast: 0808 281 2478

Prayer updated every Thursday, Presidential message updated every Monday,

Methodist Podcast updated on first and third Thursday of the month.

Please share these numbers locally with people who are not online and may feel very isolated and in need of spiritual comfort.

Weybridge



Like many churches, Weybridge celebrated Harvest with a difference this year. Instead of a display of fruit and vegetables we had a display of items specifically requested by the Foodbank; these included washing powder, cooking oil and toiletries. These items are often ignored by struggling families who have to prioritise food for the children with their limited financial resources. These items are not the traditional Harvest gifts but are still gifts provided by a bounteous God, which will bring relief to many struggling families. A sad sign of the times but one we need to adapt to.

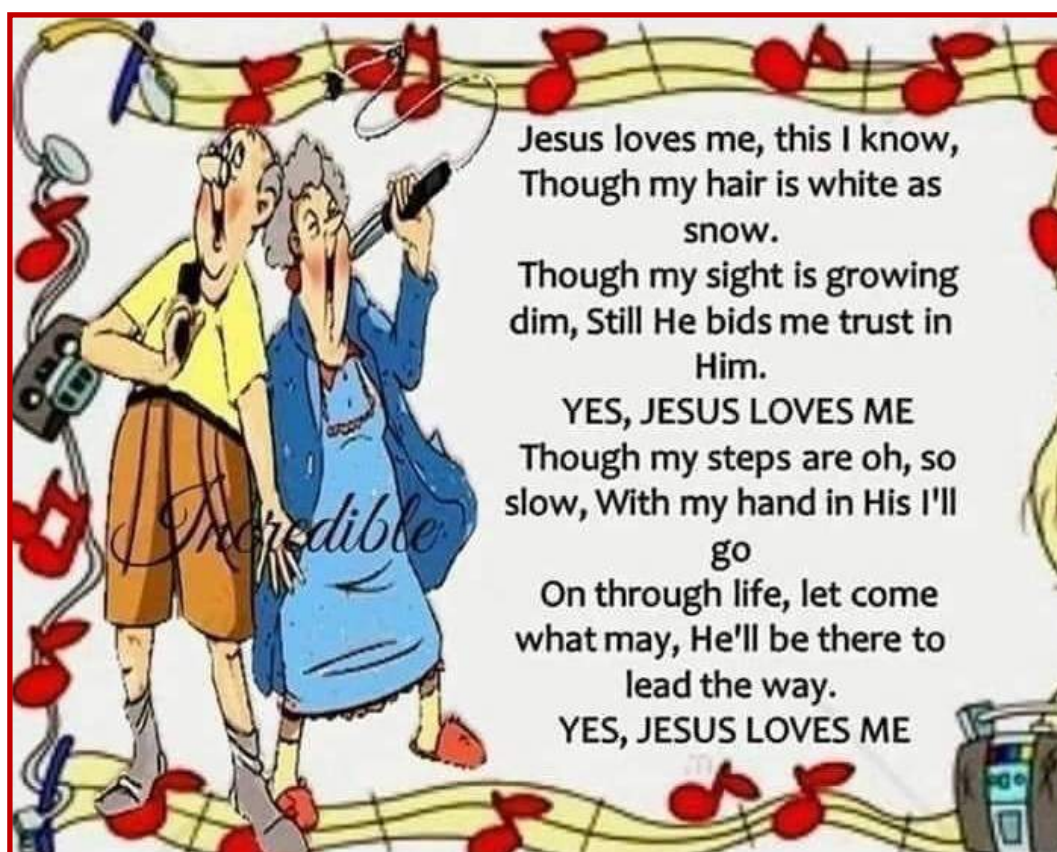
The church family shared a buffet lunch after Harvest worship.

Weybridge celebrated 122 years of the church building during October, although there was a Methodist congregation worshipping in Weybridge before the current church was built in 1900.

As we go forward into the winter months there will be many more opportunities to provide much needed help to those in need. Weybridge will be running a 'Reverse Advent' during December to help boost Foodbank supplies early into the new year.

Our regular monthly coffee mornings (held at Addlestone premises on the second Saturday of the month) continue and we remain committed to supporting the Weybridge Old Folks Club on a Thursday afternoon.

Weybridge Church Stewards



Trinity, Woking

What is Messy Church?

Is it really fun?

Messy Church is often run on a monthly basis, it is a church-based around hospitality and sharing the Gospel by using creativity, games, music, cooking and lots of fun and laughter.

Before lockdown Trinity offered Messy Church on a once-a-month basis on a Sunday morning alongside main church worship.

We also had a children's fun club on a Friday after school between 4.00pm to 6.30pm where we provided a light tea for all the families.

After lockdown our children's team took the decision to change fun club to Messy Fun Church. We all felt it was an opportunity to share the Gospel in the creative way messy church was designed to do. We have adapted it to include messy church goes wild and elements of muddy church, because the families we have attending enjoy getting their hands dirty - and learning about the environment we live - in and playing.



Over the summer months we learnt about how wonderful God's creation is to being a community by having Our Majesty's street party.

This autumn term we are learning about our holidays and other countries and how they share the gospel leading into advent. If you would like to find out more you can either drop by on a Friday between 4.30pm to 7.00pm (term time) to see for yourself or contact myself, Sue Waddington, Trinity's Children, Youth and Family Worker on 07949 128856.

Sue Waddington

A Note to Contributors

It is our practice to publish each edition of The Wey Forward, in its pdf format, on the Circuit website. The Wey Forward is an important source of information about the life of the Circuit and what is going on in each of the churches across it. We want to share it with others.

However, we recognise that some contributors may be uncomfortable with a mention on the internet. We will be happy to omit names and any other personal details in any future issue if requested to do so. Please advise at the time of submitting the copy.

A Message from the Editor

I hope you have found the latest edition of 'The Wey Forward' both interesting and useful. Thank-you to everyone who contributed to the articles. As always, it has been a real pleasure to receive and read each item as I put the newsletter together.

If you would find a large print version of the magazine useful then please let me know and I can arrange that for you.

We would like the focus of the magazine to be a forward looking one. So as you plan your events, bear in mind that the rest of the circuit would love to know about them.

**The deadline for Issue 27 of The Wey Forward
is midnight 16 January 2023**

Submissions to the newsletter are accepted at any time but we can only guarantee a submission **will be considered** for a particular issue if it is received by the corresponding deadline listed below. Pop them in your diaries now.

Issue 28 6 April 2023

Issue 29 5 July 2023

Issue 30 27 September 2023

**Please send your items (and photos) to
weyforward@weyvalleycircuit.org.uk**

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sue Howson

Diary Dates

Date	Time	Event	Venue
December 2022			
Fridays	4.30pm - 7.00pm	Messy Fun Church (term time only)	Trinity, Woking
Fridays	9.00pm - 11.00pm	Vigil—Pray for Ukraine	St Mary's, Guildford
Saturdays	10.00am - 12 noon	Coffee Mornings - check with church for theme	Addlestone
1 Dec	12.15pm for 12.30pm	Advent Reflections with bread and soup lunch	St Mary's, Guildford
7 Dec	7.00pm - 9.00pm	Carol Praise	West Horsley
8 Dec	12.15pm for 12.30pm	Advent Reflections with bread and soup lunch	St Mary's, Guildford
10 Dec	3.00pm - 5.00pm	Messy Church - Christmas is Coming	Godalming UC
10 Dec	10.00am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning with homemade cakes hosted by Weybridge	Addlestone
11 Dec	tbc	Afternoon Tea with Carols	Knaphill
15 Dec	12.15pm for 12.30pm	Advent Reflections with bread and soup lunch	St Mary's, Guildford
15 Dec	tbc	Bushy Hill School Nativity	Merrow
15 Dec	7.30pm	Bible Study Group - All Welcome	Merrow
17 Dec	7.00pm	Godalming Band Christmas Concert	Godalming UC
17 Dec	2.00pm - 4.00pm	Clothes 4U Clothing Bank	Knaphill
18 Dec	10.30am, 5pm, 6.30pm	Carol Services - please check with churches	Various
22 Dec	tbc	Carols at Lunchtime	St Mary's, Guildford
24 Dec	10am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning	Knaphill
24 Dec	2.30pm, 3pm, 4pm, 9pm, 11.15pm, 11.30pm, 5pm,	Special Christmas Eve services—please check with churches	Various
January 2023			
14 Jan	10.00am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning with homemade cakes hosted by Weybridge	Addlestone
16 Jan	Midnight	Copy deadline for The Wey Forward (Edition 27)	
19 Jan	7.30pm	Bible Study Group - All Welcome	Merrow
21 Jan	2.00pm - 4.00pm	Clothes 4U Clothing Bank	Knaphill
28 Jan	tbc	Messy Church	Godalming UC
28 Jan	10am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning	Knaphill
February 2023 (and beyond)			
First week	tbc	Cinderella, the Pantomime	Godalming UC
11 Feb	10.00am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning with homemade cakes hosted by Weybridge	Addlestone
16 Feb	7.30pm	Bible Study Group - All Welcome	Merrow
18 Feb	2.00pm - 4.00pm	Clothes 4U Clothing Bank	Knaphill
25 Feb	10am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning	Knaphill