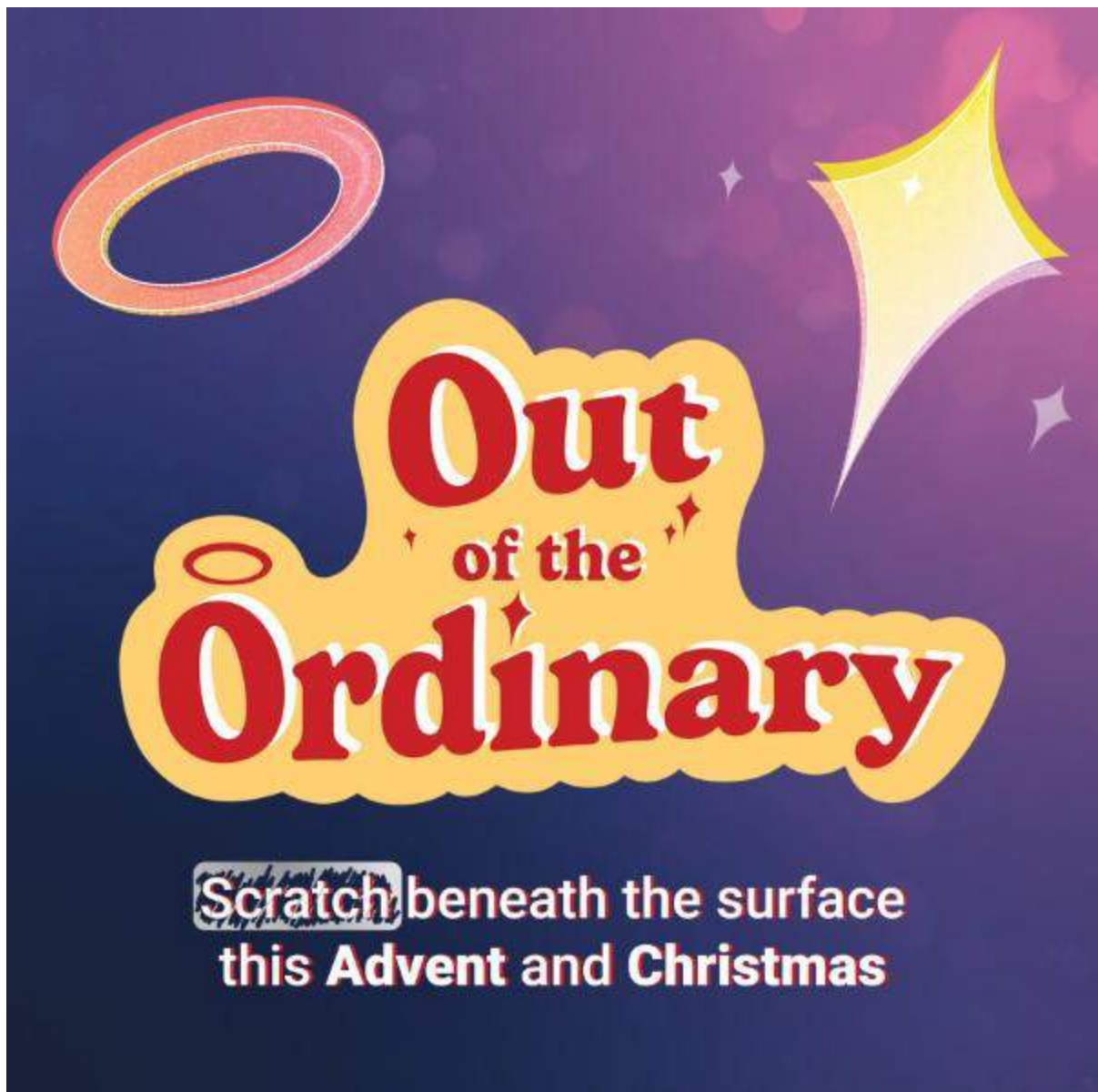


The Wey Forward

Issue 30 - December 2023 - February 2024

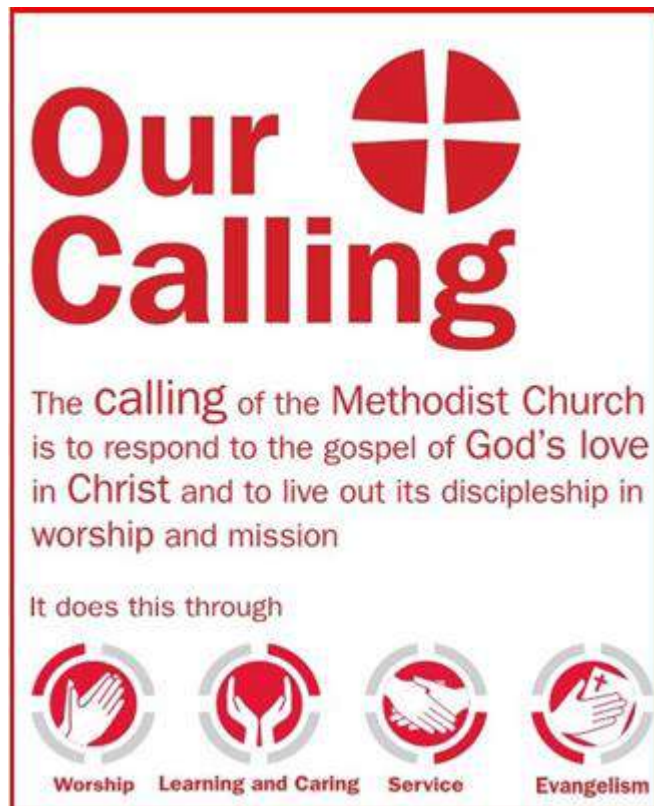


The Wey Valley Methodist Circuit

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 Lucy Venmore, 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.

Lucy Venmore

Editor

A Message From Our Superintendent

Hello everyone,

I'm writing this letter on Sunday, November 5th and yesterday I had the pleasure of attending the first of our two Circuit Development workshops where we looked particularly at Worship and Discipleship.

I was really excited by the engagement, thoughts and ideas that came out of that day and I am absolutely committed to seeing some of those ideas come to fruition. Thinking took place around Local Arrangements, Themed Services, the use of Preachers around the Circuit, how we develop the faith of the members of our churches through small groups, uses of technology and help with that - all of these themes and more came out of our discussions. I am so grateful to all those who planned the day and took part.

Both Worship and Discipleship were matters that were raised by circuit churches as areas where help was needed, and we are committed to assisting (and where possible resourcing) churches to see opportunities rather than problems so that they can move forward into the future with confidence and hope.

I was very aware of God's presence with us as we envisaged the future yesterday and that is fundamentally what this time of year is about. As Christmas adverts already crowd around (it's only the first week of November!), and the pressures of the season build, it is surely really important for us to celebrate that what Christmas speaks to us about is a baby being born in what was then (and now) a troubled part of the world.

That baby is Emmanuel - God with us. A baby born to bring peace and hope and love - a baby born to heal a broken relationship. As Charles Wesley reminds us:

'Our God contracted to a span

Incomprehensibly made man.'

God is with us - has come into creation for us and history pivots and everything changes. We worship that God - we are disciples of that Saviour - lets us move forward with confidence and hope as we journey together with the God who walks with us.

Have a wonderful Christmas.

Paul

Rev Dr Paul Glass
Superintendent Minister



News from around the Circuit

Addlestone

It is sad to have to report that two of our members have passed away since our last letter - Colin Smith and, more recently, Maria Leney. We miss them greatly; not only for the support and help they gave to the church but also as our very good friends.

Colin and his wife, Dorothy



Our recent Harvest Sunday went off well - that was after having apologised to our preacher for not making him aware of it! With a last-minute change to the order of service, all went well. As usual the goods donated were taken to York House in Woking, primarily helping the homeless, where it is always much appreciated. Our thanks go to all who contributed.

Our support for the local FoodBank, Woking and Sam Beare Hospice and for Grace in Ecuador via Compassion continues.

The continued support of preachers who provide our Informal Type Services is very much appreciated, giving us the confidence that when visitors attend our services, we have a good chance they will return.



For the second time since before covid, we enjoyed a social evening at a local restaurant. This one was a little unusual, as shown by the balloons hanging from the chair behind me celebrating my 90th birthday. The last nine of those years I have been attending the Addlestone Methodist Church and was richly blessed to be sharing it with my church family, past and present. Our thanks to Cecilia and others for this enjoyable evening together.

Photo taken by Selvi

Fred Rowe

Circuit Services



Knaphill

The Circuit Service on 10th October at Knaphill to recognise Rev Dr Paul Glass and Rev Sydney Samuel Lake as Ministers in Charge of Knaphill and Byfleet respectively, was a joyous occasion.

Walton-on-Thames

We had a very special Circuit Service in October at Walton. Following the lovely refreshments, we were joined by Alex from All We Can (the Methodist Relief and Development Charity) who spoke about the new and innovative ways in which All We Can are partnering with projects around the world. After the service a retiring collection of £486.00 was raised for the wonderful work that All We Can is doing. For more details go to <https://www.allwecan.org.uk/>



Byfleet

We are now well into Rev Sydney Samuel Lake taking us into his care and have greatly enjoyed having him and his family join us for services and other activities. It may be mentioned elsewhere, but I just want to say what a wonderful service the Circuit laid on at Knaphill to welcome him and the Rev Paul Glass to their new and extra charges.

Our usual activities continue with numbers attending not large but keeping up thanks to the support of family and friends bringing people to us. As a senior citizen of some length, I know there are all sorts of problems, but I think the most disappointing of those is having to give up car driving. We also have a fine selection of users of our premises which bring a lot of people into our building, and I am always happy when the opportunity comes to show them what a wonderful Art Deco church we have and as the picture shows, tell them about it. My most recent "captive" was a gentleman who had lived in Byfleet for over 40 years and happened to look in because he had wondered what the inside looked like.

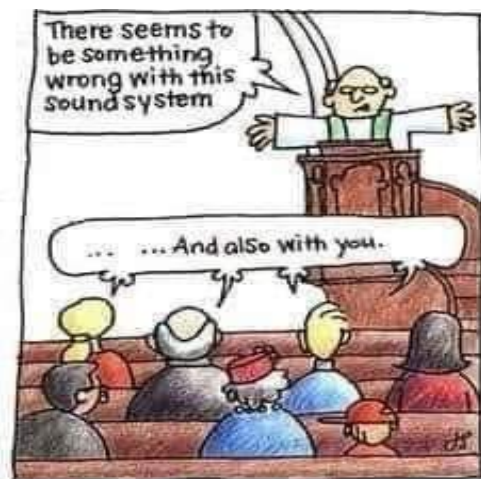
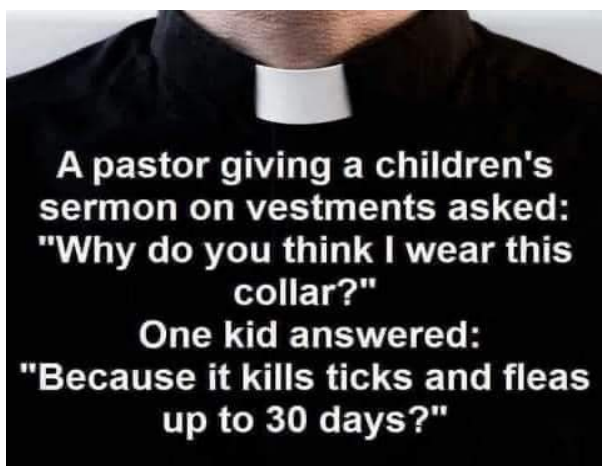
The FoodBank and the associated services also continue to provide wonderful support for our local community.



Ken Mears

We are also busy planning our Advent and Christmas events including our gift service for a homeless charity in Woking. Our Susan Robinson Ballet School have a concert for us in December and we hope to have a family quiz night in November. This latter event reminds me that the old Walton and Woking Circuit used to have a circuit quiz competition with a tiny cup for the winning church to hold until they organised another round. I remember this particularly because Byfleet won it some time ago and in putting the cup in our safe, I managed to break the stand. Nevertheless, we got the cup engraved and the firm were able to attach a new base (which actually made the cup slightly bigger) and then we lost the next quiz competition and the cup to one of our other churches!

Ken Mears



Cranleigh

At the time of writing this, we are both reflecting on the past and looking forward to the future. We reflect on and give thanks for two amazing Harvest Festival services led by our own minister Paul. Our morning service was attended by over 30 people and our village ecumenical evening service filled our church and was attended by members of all four churches in Cranleigh. Cranleigh FoodBank received all the goodies generously given by members of our congregation.

We have held a toy sale to raise funds for Church and to provide people with choices for early Christmas shopping. We are very grateful as always to those who organised and ran this and to those who came to buy.

In August our church was packed for the thanksgiving service for the life of Beryl Stedman who sadly passed away earlier in the year. She is fondly remembered by all as a lifelong and loyal member of our church, a friend and as a Sunday School teacher for many years.

We are looking forward to the season of Advent and wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Our church life at Elmbridge continues to blossom, our regular weekly congregations for the fast-becoming ecumenical services, average 30 to 40 each week. Our harvest service saw 45 attending the service and 35 to the supper afterwards. Four very large carrier bags with both tins, boxes and other packaged food together with fresh fruit and vegetables, were donated to Cranleigh FoodBank and very gratefully received. They now support about 26 families each week.



By the time this publication is read, our Remembrance service will have taken place on 12 November. We will be supported by the Godalming Band, as we were last year, welcoming the retired Bishop Peter Hancock to preach at the service supported by other clergy both from the Methodist circuit and the local Church of England, St Nicolas. We expect around 70 to the service with tea and cake afterwards. A local deputy lieutenant of Surrey, Mary Cresswell, will read a lesson and other readers will be drawn from our own residents.

Forthcoming services include a Quaker experience, Catholic Father Alistair leading worship, and plans are underway for the carol service on Saturday 16 December at 2.30pm when our own Paul Glass, together with Rector of St. Nicolas, Roy Woodhams will lead worship followed by mulled wine and mince pies. We hope to welcome up to 70 to this service.

Hilary Strawson and Jane Briggs

Godalming United Church

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

Rev John Goatley 1929-2023

It is with sadness that we report the death of John Goatley, a much-loved member of our ministry team since he and his wife Margaret moved to Milford in 2013. John was very much a West-Countryman, being born in Saltash and spending much of his adult life in Budleigh Salterton. In the 50s he trained initially as an engineer in the Sheffield steel industry and Glasgow University, simultaneously taking up local preaching (and meeting Margaret), then entering the Methodist ministry in 1958. The growing family spent 10 years in Sierra Leone - a good friend travelled from Freetown to be at the funeral - and John retained a keen interest in the work of the worldwide church and Christian Aid. On moving back home he was stationed in circuits successively around the country – Exmouth & Budleigh Salterton; Aldershot, Farnborough & Camberley; Diss; South Wirral and then 19 years of retirement back in Devon. John possessed compassion, a keen sense of humour and a sharp intellect wrapped up in rock-solid faith. He was a wise and thoughtful preacher. His was a long and well-lived life, and a blessing to many people.

Looking Back

Our charitable link with The Gambia continues to be as much needed as ever. In the summer a 40ft shipping container was loaded at Guildford Safestore with upcycled treasures for educational and medical use – including an entire suite of office furniture (already earmarked for use in the Education department!), a dental chair from Southampton, 315 pairs of children's shoes from a Kent-based charity, 60 bags of children's clothing, and 105 boxes of books and stationery with September's Cream Tea raising over £400 for the ongoing Ophthalmic Appeal (funding cataracts at £15 a procedure).

In August the Rowling family accompanied the National Methodist Youth Brass Band on their 10 day annual tour – this time to Wales. Starting at Mumbles, near Swansea, they played in Clyne Gardens and local churches, then moved north to Aberystwyth (hosted by local church members - beds to sleep on – not church floors!) – with a special appearance at Abergynolwyn Station on the famous Talylyn railway. Continuing north they played in the beautiful Italianate surroundings of Port Meirion and on to the highlight of the tour – performing in the heart of Caernarfon Castle at the spot where in 1969 the then Prince Charles was invested as Prince of Wales. The tour concluded at Penmaenmawr and a concert on the pier at Bangor. Daily reflections – delving into faith and meeting God together - are integral to the tours, this year's theme being "God is ..." The band led worship in their host churches on both of Sundays. In September local member Tom Hart was inaugurated as Youth President of the Methodist Church of Britain.

September's Pantomime 20th Anniversary Celebration was attended by over 80 performers, helpers and supporters past and present. It was a great opportunity to reminisce and relive golden moments with videos & photos and light refreshments – plus a chance to dress up in the array of wigs, hats and costumes and props available! And of course, a huge tribute to Barbara and Malcolm Keene who have

steered this project from small beginnings to the important community and church outreach event that it is today. Preparations for next February's panto are already under way.

On Sunday October 15th we celebrated Harvest with gifts of non-perishable foodstuffs for the St Mark's FoodBank, followed by a delicious Bring-and-Share Lunch. The older children at St Hilary's School generously donated a mountain of school stationery for our charitable link with Kola Kundi School in The Gambia as part of their Harvest Assembly. We're very grateful for this continuing link – recent photos show children there wearing hand-me-down items of St Hilary's school uniform!

Looking Ahead

- Saturday December 2nd – Christingle Party 6:30pm. Bring the family and your favourite Christmas snack to share and have fun making Christingles with informal Christmas music-making. Hot chocolate provided.
- Sunday December 3rd – 10:30am Annual Gift Service with Christingles. An Advent service with the opportunity to bring gifts to our Christmas tree for the less fortunate in our community – toys and gift vouchers please (to be distributed by the Cellar Camino Café).
- Saturday December 9th – 3.00pm-5.00pm Messy Church – Nativity-based activities for all the family. messy.church@guc.org.uk 01483 414778
- Saturday December 9th – 7.00pm Godalming Band Christmas Concert. Tickets 01483 355129 or www.godalmingband.org.uk
- Sunday 17th December – 6.00pm Candlelit Carol Service
- Sunday 24th December - 10:30am Morning Worship
4.00pm Christmas Eve Communion
- Sunday 14th January – 10:30am Covenant Service
- Saturday 27th January – 3.00pm-5.00pm Messy Church Bible-based activities for all the family messy.church@guc.org.uk 01483 414778
- Weekend Sat/Sun Feb 3/4 – 4 performances of "Snow White" Pantomime. Tickets £8, children free. Contact beckylkeene@gmail.com

For other 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 9th 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

Students (and Chickens) and Church

Third year students from GSA (Guildford School of Acting) recently spent a productive couple of hours at St. Mary's Guildford filming a student project.

GSA is a very highly regarded school of acting and musical theatre - past students include Penelope Wilton and Michael Ball.

The project (which seemingly involved someone coming from work in a chicken costume and meeting her friend at a church service!) is the result of a growing and fruitful relationship between St. Mary's and the University.

This particular group of students had previously visited St. Mary's in the summer as part of the research for their production of Thornton Wilder's play 'Our Town'.

A recent exhibition of photos of students from various faith traditions has been displayed at St. Mary's throughout September and has been seen by over 1,000 visitors.

The Wey Valley Circuit supports and provides the Methodist Chaplaincy at the University of Surrey which, this year, is the home to over 20,000 students.

Paul



Guildford St Mary's

NEW WAYS OF THINKING

This autumn we marked 10 years since Guildford Methodist Church moved to St Mary's and stepped into a new phase of its life. The journey has been, and continues to be, an adventure with challenges, surprises and opportunities along the way.

The key driver in the move was a desire to be back in the heart of Guildford's Town Centre where the people are – we had to give up comfortable modern premises which were then out of proportion to the size of the congregation and move to an ancient building with (to put it mildly) limited facilities for the 21st century. What we hadn't realised was that the drawing power of the ancient building would itself 'open the door' to encounters with thousands of people from all over the world.

Encountering people was undoubtedly an objective but quite a scary one and, as I came to write this, an online devotional happened to point me to Jeremiah's resistance to God's call to prophecy (chapter 1) on grounds of youth and not knowing how to speak. We couldn't plead youthfulness (!) but weren't sure how to speak to those we encountered. God's reassurance to Jeremiah not to be afraid of those to whom he was to speak *'Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord'* has rung true for us - but we do have to keep reminding ourselves of it.

We have to overcome shyness and nervousness to engage with people of all backgrounds, be non-judgmental, and learn from them:

- The foreign residents coming to terms with life in England who visit ChitChat and have such a variety of needs beyond just coping with the language.
- The visitors from around the world stunned to learn that one church building can be a place of worship for Methodists, Anglicans, Orthodox and Roman Catholic worshippers.
- Young people gobsmacked to find themselves in a church during a Friday night out between pub and club visits.
- A 'confirmed atheist' who declared it was a miracle that he'd been persuaded to come into a church building to light a candle of concern.
- A young man who'd clearly indulged generously at local hostelries and wanted accompanying to place his Vigil candle on the steps in the church with those of other visitors, expressed his amazement at the setting in his vernacular and engaged in conversation about prayer and communication for some time, but obviously satisfied as he left with a friendly fist bump!
- An Ethiopian Christian couple who were amazed and heartened that our recent Students of Faith exhibition included pictures and testimonies from Muslim and other non-Christian students and

contrasted the prominence of our church building with their historic ones carved into the rock for protection and concealment.

- The drama students Paul has encouraged to feel at home filming in the building.

I have a feeling that some of the lovely, caring, faithful Methodists who nurtured my earlier years might have struggled with some of this and we have had to adapt our thinking to recognise that our encounters are primarily to give a glimpse of God and his love, and less of a recruitment drive to find worshippers for 10.30 on a Sunday morning.

So we were in a mood to celebrate 10 years together, the privilege of our situation and richness of our ecumenical partnerships and commit to develop GMC/St Mary's ministry going forward.

And looking forward, we extend a warm invitation to you all to:

- Call in for a chat and coffee or tea during our daytime opening – usually Tuesday 1-3pm and Thursday 11am to 3pm- but check before travelling!
- Drop in during our Friday night Vigils for Peace 9-11 pm.
- Come along at 12.30 to our lunchtime Advent Reflections – Thursdays from 30 November to 14 December - and Carols at Lunchtime on Thursday 21 December.

Nigel Campion-Smith



Knaphill

We have had a very busy time in Knaphill over the past two months, with more activities to come. We had a lovely Harvest Festival service on 24th September, with donations of food, clothing and money being made to the Whitechapel Mission. We were able to send £175 directly to the Mission and hope to take the goods there on 19th November, when three members of KMC are planning to attend their Anniversary Service. There was also a well-attended Harvest Service at The Vyne Community Centre in Knaphill on 13th October, organised by Churches Together (C4K) with donations going to Woking FoodBank. The congregation were all of an older generation and clearly enjoyed singing the traditional harvest hymns.

At KMC itself, Coffee Mornings have continued successfully, with the extra one on 9th September raising the fantastic sum of £1002.15 in aid of the Air Ambulance Trust, KSSAAT. Tarina Berry, who organised it, was delighted with this amount which was significantly more than last year's figure of £855. She has already fixed a date for next year's event – Saturday 7th September 2024. Meanwhile, we are gearing up for our own KMC Christmas Coffee Morning on 25th November, with all our usual stalls having a “flavour” of Christmas!

The Clothing Bank, Clothes4U, continues to be very well used, with many families able to obtain the items they are seeking from the large amounts of clothing currently available. Donated refreshments are served throughout the afternoon and the ladies in the kitchen are always kept very busy!

The Circuit Service on 10th October to recognise Rev Dr Paul Glass and Rev Sydney Samuel Lake as Ministers in Charge of Knaphill and Byfleet respectively, was a joyous occasion. We were very pleased to welcome members from all parts of the circuit to KMC.

Next month we have a Remembrance Service at the War Memorial in Knaphill on Armistice Day. This is arranged by C4K, with participation from clergy and members from all four churches, two local schools, our Woking MP, Mr Jonathan Lord and local Councillors, plus army representatives from Pirbright Barracks. It is only a short service, but it is most moving and has even been known to bring the traffic to a standstill – literally.

On 3rd December our morning service will include donations of gifts for the Salvation Army to distribute to needy families at Christmas, with representatives from the Woking SA Corps attending to receive them. This is followed on Sunday 10th by the Christmas Afternoon Tea with Carols for folk in the area who are elderly or live alone. This has become a standard, very popular fixture, so we expect it to be well attended and most enjoyable.

By the time we reach the end of our Carols by Candlelight Service (starts at 6pm on Sunday 17th December), we will all be ready for a rest!

Lynda Shore

University Chaplaincy in action

It has been a busy term for Chaplaincy at the University of Surrey. The University has more students than ever this year and Freshers were delighted to receive free hot chocolate (and other drinks) from the hard-working Chaplaincy Team in Freshers Week. There will be more!



GENESIS CHORALE
PRESENTS
BORN A KING



MARC-ANTOINE CHARPENTIER
MESSE DE MINUIT POUR NOËL
Soloists: Maddie Perring,
Esmée Loughlin-Dickenson,
Thomas McGowan
& Matthew Silverman

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
FANTASIA ON CHRISTMAS CAROLS
Soloist: Thomas McGowan

WILLIAM LLOYD WEBBER
BORN A KING
Soloists: Matthew Silverman
& Maddie Perring

Directed by Yvette Murphy
Organist: Ben Collyer
Saturday 2nd December 2023
7.30pm
St John's, West Byfleet, KT14 6EH
Tickets: £18 Adults, £9 Students
From Brittens, Website, Choir Members & On The Door



www.genesischorale.org.uk
Charity 1048381



Merrow

Where has this year gone? I don't seem to get through one 'celebration' before it is rapidly onto the next.

It has all been 'buzzing' at Merrow. We celebrated Jerusha's christening on 7th October. This was Uncle George's first christening here – but hopefully not the last. The photo shows Jerusha with her parents, Roy and Shirley (plus a proud Grandma) – and George and Ama too.

Our Warm Welcome Coffee Mornings on Thursdays between 10.30 and 12.00 now have a regular contingent of attendees from both the church and the local community. This was started last year in response to the cost of living crisis and has proved very popular. Some attendees have then come to join the Lunch Club, etc.

The free 8 week 'Together We Can' Course started again recently. This is a programme for over 50s covering different topics like protections against scams, improving IT skills, eating healthily, handling stress, 'move it or lose it'. It is designed to help people meet and get out and about again. One attendee had invited her neighbours to come along as well. She was also invited to come to the coffee mornings. She made the following comment 'I never realised that anyone could come to the coffee mornings. I thought it was only open to church people.' Innocent comments like that have really made me realise that no matter how friendly our banners, posters, leaflets are – we will only attract people to church by personal invitation.

The Christmas Season will very shortly be upon us – as all are aware, it hit the shops a long time ago! It starts at Merrow with the Advent Carol Service held on 3rd December at 6.30pm. All are welcome to come and start off the Advent season with carols. Our Christmas Carol Service will be held on 17th December at 11.00am and will be a joint service with the Chinese Church (Guildford Church of the Holy Word) who also worship at Merrow on Sunday afternoons. This will be followed with tea and coffee and mince pies.

Our Covenant Service will be held on 7th January. This is always an impactful service especially at the start of a new year.

Julie Wallis



St. Michael's, Sheerwater

Where are we at with the Building?

We reported in the last issue of Wey Forward that, following the loss of their financial support, the Borough Council had encouraged us to pursue a funding application with SCC's "Your Fund Surrey".

Update on this below from Simon Perkins: -

Our project is continuing to gain "likes" on the Commonplace website – the first stage in applying to Your Fund Surrey. We have met again with a Your Fund Surrey representative from Surrey County Council, and we have taken the next step - Idea Submission. This comprises a description of the project and its likely impact, information about the level of local support and a first financial estimate - £1.3m for the whole project.

We are likely to hear whether we may proceed to Full Submission a month or so after making the Idea Submission.

We are still gathering likes (link below) this will only take a couple of clicks: -

<https://yourfundsurreymap.commonplace.is/comments/64be8deca8c8710008799d86>

We would like to encourage anyone within the circuit who feels able to support this initiative to add a "like".

Update on Sheerwater Regeneration:

The Borough Council held a public consultation giving residents the opportunity to have their say over what should happen with the remainder of the regeneration site. Two phases of the consented scheme have been completed and a further three are underway, this will require additional borrowing by the Council to ensure their completion. The proposal is to refurbish roughly 100 properties and look to sell areas for redevelopment. All information can be found on the Woking Borough Council website.

The Church:

The start of the term saw the Pop-up Café and Tots Praise resume. It was lovely to welcome back the families and to meet new ones.

We are always grateful to everyone who supports us in prayer, time, and financial ways as we continue our work within the local community and working with our partners.

Please continue to hold us in your prayers as we go towards 2024 with all that God has in store.

Tracey Francis



Stoughton

It seems some time now since George led our Harvest Festival service and we enjoyed a shared lunch together afterwards. We were also able to donate our Harvest gifts to the Salvation Army for distribution to those in need.

Stoughton has had a difficult financial year following the closing down of the nursery in February, lead stolen from the church roof in June and a break-in at the beginning of September which caused damage to a set of main entry doors and two internal doors as well as an attempt to open our very old safe!

As I write this article the roof has been repaired, we are awaiting news of another nursery and, by the time this edition of Wey Forward is issued, we will have had estimates for replacement doors, so we are still here! The safe has survived and been repaired thanks to Guildford Lock and Safe Company.

I doubt the perpetrators of all the damage will be sunning themselves on a Caribbean Island as, apart from the stolen lead, all that was taken from the break-in was a filing tray and a pencil box – not the best planned burglary of the year!

However, when all that misfortune is weighed against the suffering in Ukraine and the Middle East, we have to thank God that our problems are so small.

As we look to Advent, Christmas and the start of another year, we send our best wishes and blessings to all in our circuit and a prayer for peace in God's world.

Linda Macbeth

Circuit Missions Morning

We had a great Circuit Missions morning in October at Knaphill. A good crowd of us were joined by Maggie Dodds from Anna Chaplaincy -

<https://www.annachaplaincy.org.uk/>

Anna Chaplaincy comes out of the Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) and provides Chaplaincy for elderly people wherever they find themselves - Care Homes, Residential Homes, Residential Flats. It is ecumenical. Many inspiring ideas and stories were shared and people left with inspiration for what they might try in their home churches.



SEARCHING FOR HOME

A SERIES OF
ADVENT REFLECTIONS
ON THE GOD WHO
WELCOMES EVERYONE

ST. MARY'S GUILDFORD GU1 3UP

Thursdays: 12.15 for 12.30

30 November: Leaving Home

7 December: Fleeing Home

14 December: Carrying Home

CAROLS AT LUNCHTIME

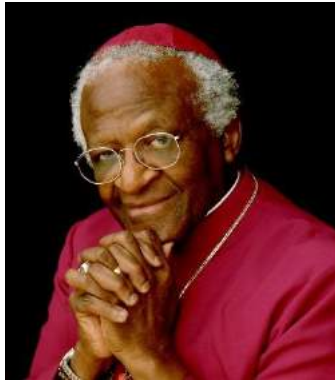
21 December: Finding home

The Reflections will be followed by
a Bread & Soup lunch



Common Ground
Guildford
PRAY • TOGETHER • GO

St Mary's
Church



South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1931–2021) envisions God’s dream for the world through a message of hope, justice, peace, and inclusion:

Dear Child of God, before we can become God’s partners, we must know what God wants for us. “I have a dream,” God says. “Please help Me to realize it. It is a dream of a world whose ugliness and squalor and poverty, its war and hostility, its greed and harsh competitiveness, its alienation and disharmony are changed into their glorious counterparts, when there will be more laughter, joy, and peace, where there will be justice and goodness and compassion and love and caring and sharing. I have a dream that swords will be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, that My children will know that they are members of one family, the human family, God’s family, My family.”

In God’s family, there are no outsiders. All are insiders. Black and white, rich and poor, gay and straight, Jew and Arab, Palestinian and Israeli, Roman Catholic and Protestant, Serb and Albanian, Hutu and Tutsi, Muslim and Christian, Buddhist and Hindu, Pakistani and Indian—all belong.... We have heard of God’s dream from His prophets throughout history and in modern times from great leaders and humanitarians like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi. King spoke of it ... when he dreamed of the day that the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners in Georgia would be able “to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.” [1] Gandhi wrote about it in 1929 when he stated that his goal was not just the brotherhood of Indian humanity but “the mission of brotherhood of man.” [2] (Today they would have referred to daughters and sisterhood, too.) The visions and triumphs of these prophets of God helped change their nations and inspire the rest of us around the world in our own struggles for equality.

Tutu finds God’s dream for an inclusive community embodied in Jesus:

We can look at the life of Jesus to see what God asks of us. Jesus came into a deeply divided and polarized society. There was the divide between the hated foreign oppressor and the citizens of the vassal state. Within Judaism there were different religious groupings, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Zealots. There was the divide between the Jew, the Gentile, and the Samaritan. And then men were segregated from women. There were free persons and there were slaves. There were the rich; there were the poor. The world saw a veritable miracle unfolding before its very eyes as all sorts and conditions of women and men, rich and poor, slave and free, Jew and Gentile—all these came to belong in one fellowship, one communion. They did not regard one another just as equals. That, in itself, would have been a huge miracle.... No, they regarded one another not just as equals but as sisters and brothers, members of one family, God’s family.

Walton-on-Thames

The start of the Methodist Year in September has been busy at Walton, with a well-supported fund raiser for the Macmillan coffee morning drawing in support from our local community, including a visiting American couple who came back for our Sunday service.

A significant achievement for us was to resurrect our Pudding and Praise café worship as well, which we held in our freshly decorated hall with a focus on modern worship led by Breeze. We have a simple focus on praise, prayer, meditation and worship in these services. We hope to build on the use of this informal, alternative worship to draw people into our church.

In early October, we held our Harvest Festival Parade service which was well supported by our uniformed groups. We set them the challenge of educating us about two of our local community charity outreach programmes. The first was The Elmbridge Eco Hub (www.elmbridgeecohub.org.uk) which is based in the centre of Walton-on-Thames. Everything they do is rooted in three things:

- 1) Community: emphasising benefitting people in our community, ensuring every member has access to food, skills and equipment, either free or at very low cost.
- 2) Opportunity: emphasising the provision of opportunities for people to learn and share their knowledge with others, striving to encourage and facilitate people to reach their potential, improve confidence and their understanding of the world we live in.
- 3) Environment: holding a strong belief in the circular economy and trying to improve our environment in many ways with aims to recycle, upcycle, reuse what we can, reduce waste and teach others to do the same.

Through this fantastic “practical tripod”, the Eco Hub provides our local community with access to a multi-functional, safe space where they can reduce waste and access many beneficial initiatives such as the [Library of Things](#), [Community Fridge](#), [Refill Shop](#), Skill Share, [Repair Cafe](#), [Small item recycling](#), [Community Garden](#), Seed Bank, [Jigsaw swap](#), [Book Swap](#) to name but a few – all under ONE roof!

The second charity is Smiles 2 Smiles (www.smiles2smiles.co.uk) which was started by a group of local mums 12 years ago, and whose aim is to support those across our community who are in need of a little extra support, with a big focus around Christmas. The aim is to relieve those suffering from poverty or financial hardship in the UK by providing items and services to individuals in need that they could not otherwise afford.

We were very pleased to support both charities through our Harvest Festival and we will support Smiles 2 Smiles running up to Advent with their Christmas present appeal.

Over the same weekend as our Harvest, five members from our youth group joined in with another 11 young people from the Sunbury and Teddington Circuit and headed on up (with five leaders) to the Birmingham NEC for the annual MC youth festival event which is known as 3 Generate. This was an unbelievably lively and busy event, going from early in the morning to late at night with the young people having access to over 180 different sessions and activities exploring every nook and cranny of what it

means to be a young Christian in 2023. On 14th January our Youth Group are planning their own Pudding and Praise, which will be an expression of and reflection on the issues and the styles of worship that they are interested in.

Our Carol Service is scheduled for 17th December, and we hope to have contributions from two singing groups which use our premises each week. This will be a good way to build bridges with these groups and the local community. On Christmas Eve, we have a Local Arrangement which we will use as an opportunity to have a Songs of Praise service themed around more carol singing and, in January 2024 we are hosting a virtual training session for Mental Health First Aid. This is an excellent opportunity to receive new insights into how to help people with mental health issues. There are subsidised (hugely!) places available on this course so please contact Ross Richardson r.richardson952@btinternet.com for further information or to book a place.

We ask for your prayers for both Rev Sydney Samuel, his family and Walton Methodist Church, as we all go through the stationing process over the next month.

The Stewards at Walton

Mental Health First Aid Course

Walton MC are planning to host a Mental Health First Aid course on Saturday 27 January next year. This course raises awareness of many aspects of mental health and will cover some of the following:

- What mental health is and how to challenge stigma.
- A basic knowledge of some common mental health issues.
- An introduction to looking after your own mental health and maintaining wellbeing.
- Confidence to support someone in distress or who may be experiencing a mental health issue.

For further information please see: <https://mhfaengland.org/individuals/adult/half-day/>

Date: Saturday 27 January 2024

Time: 09.30 to 14.30

Venue: Zoom Online or in person at Walton on Thames Methodist Church.

Cost: £20.00 per person (discounted down from £125.00)

Spaces limited to 25 places.

Please contact Ross Richardson at: r.richardson952@btinternet.com for further information and further programme details.

Circuit Prayer Vigil - December 2/3 2023



It is some years since our circuit held a 24-hour prayer vigil. The Mission Group believes that it is time we held another one which will take place from 8.00am Saturday 2 December finishing on Sunday 3 December when we trust that all those leading Worship on that day will bring the session to an end during their services.

As ever a timetable will be issued along with an 'Aide Memoire' ahead of the date.

In a circuit of 700 people across 13 churches we should be able to cover 24 hours, including the wee small hours, with ease.

The hour-long slots for each church could be covered by a group or an individual. It could be split into 15- or 30-minute sessions. People may choose to gather and pray as a group or pray on their own. People may choose to go to their church to pray, pray at home or whilst on holiday, indoors or outdoors, maybe whilst walking the dog or just strolling in the country or along the river/canal.

Our churches, circuit, country and world are all in need of prayer and there can never be too much.

Please join us for this event.

Rev Adam Payne and the Circuit Mission team

West Horsley

At West Horsley we are looking forward to the coming Christmas season, starting with our 'Carols for All' evening at 7.00pm on Saturday 2nd December. We do hope that you can join us for this uplifting start to the season.

For the first time that I can remember, we will be able to celebrate Christmas with Holy Communion at our morning service on Christmas Eve, when George is taking our service. Claire Hargreaves will be leading our Christmas Day celebration.

Looking back, we had a successful harvest festival in September, providing goods for our local FoodBank. This was followed by an afternoon tea organised by Celia Chapman and helpers. Over 30 of our friends and neighbours joined us for an enjoyable and social time.

At a recent Thursday Coffee Morning, we were very lucky to have a visit from a group of singers from the Kampala Children's Centre. They have come to the UK for a tour of England, including West Horsley! The young people engaged in conversation about the work of the Centre - assisting vulnerable children with accommodation, social support and education resources. Then they entertained us with some worship songs. See the photo below.

We are looking forward to participating in the development workshops that the circuit is organising and hoping to get some new ideas. Thank you to all the people who are making these happen.

Margaret Faulkner



Chinese Congregation, Methodist Church Woking

The children and youth ministry of Chinese Congregation has experienced a lot of growth led by our Heavenly Father. There are different developments in Sunday School, youth summer activities and children's summer Bible school, witnessing the grace that God has bestowed on us.

Sunday School

As more and more BNO families immigrated from Hong Kong to UK in recent years, many Christian families who came to Surrey also brought their young children to attend our church. The number of young children (from nursery to year 6) is 40 while the teenagers are 25. Together with the team of devoted teachers and parent helpers, the total number reaches 85 in Sunday School. The number has continued to increase and the worship atmosphere has become more and more vibrant.

Youth Summer Activities July 2023

During the summer, we organised activities such as bowling, drama and Woking town check point, etc. and the 30 participating young people enjoyed the activities very much. Parents were very supportive, bringing their children and even participated, having fun together. We hope the future youth camp will be a great success in building their sense of belonging to church and the spiritual life.

Children's Summer Bible School August 2023

This year there are around 15 young children joining Summer Bible school. With the diverse content of group games, competitions, reciting bible verses, playing musical instruments and bible stories both children and parents found the bible is alive and lively in our daily life. They were keen to share the Chinese Bible verses for months after the summer. We can tell God's words are in their hearts.

Views of 3 youngsters:

Huko (15 years old)

Chinese Congregation is definitely a great help to Hong Kongers. Our family and I have made a lot of Hong Kong friends here. The Congregation is not only a worship place, but also a community centre where we can get to know one another. I am blessed we found a church in which we have Cantonese sermon and worship, since I have not yet got used to English Sunday service. Our spiritual home has a great opportunity to grow and develop in future and here we can share the Gospel to many people as we find that this church location and interior setting are ideal.

Ocean (14 years old)

I have made a lot of friends here. They are similar to my age and they are mostly Hong Kongers. I enjoy Bible Investigators and we can play a lot in this spacious church.

Aleis (12 years old)

I enjoy the church life here a lot as I meet many friends. I love to keep learning the Chinese Language in Sunday School. The church environment here is good and I like the Chinese Congregation.

Pastor Cyrus Yeung

Chinese Congregation, Methodist Church Woking

Summer activities 2023



FRIDAY NIGHT VIGIL FOR PEACE

Call in to
St. Mary's Guildford GU1 3UP
on Friday evenings
between
21.00 and 23.00
to light a candle,
pray and reflect.



Circuit Mission Supper Saturday 2 March 2024

Save the date

At Trinity Methodist Church Woking

Speaker:

Deacon Angleena Keizer



Angleena served at the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem between 2018-Aug 2023.

Trinity, Woking

Bringing in the Harvest

By the time you read this it will be almost Christmas(!) but Trinity held a happy Harvest weekend at the beginning of October.

We had a cream tea on the Saturday afternoon, with a beautiful selection of home-baked and shop scones, and of course, cream and jam (or jam and cream)! We also had cream cheese and walnut scones which was a first for me, but hopefully not a last. It was a lovely afternoon of food and fellowship and a chance to catch up with friends. The concert players for the evening concert were lucky enough to have the gleanings (loads!) of our tea to add to their picnics between rehearsal and concert.

At our Sunday morning service, we had contributions from all ages and a good selection of food was donated for the Woking FoodBank. The young people had made up personal hygiene kits for those at York Road Project shelter.

Harvests of the past with mountains of marrows and nearby fields that have been ploughed (and seeds scattered) are not a mainstay of most of our lives now, but we give thanks to God that we can share our resources and come together to celebrate all the gifts that we do have.

Allison Jackson



SAVE THE DATES

Join us for this year's series of
Advent Reflections
followed by a bread & soup lunch

Thursdays

30 November
7, & 14 December

Carols at Lunchtime
21 December

12.15 for 12.30

St. Mary's, Quarry St, Guildford, GU1 3UY



A Note to Contributors

It is our practice to publish each edition of The Way Forward, in its pdf format, on the Circuit website. The Way 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 Way Forward' both interesting and useful. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the articles. 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 31 of The Way Forward
is midnight 1 February 2024**

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 32 1 May 2024

Issue 33 1 August 2024

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

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Lucy Venmore

Diary Dates

Date	Time	Event	Venue
December 2023			
2 December	6.30pm	Christingle Party	Godalming
2 December	7.00pm to 9.00pm	Carols for All	West Horsley
2/3 December	8.00am on 2nd	Circuit Prayer Vigil	Circuit
3 December	10.30am	Advent Gift Service	Godalming
3 December	6.30pm	Advent Carol Service	Merrow
7 December	12.15pm	Advent Reflections	St. Mary's Guildford
9 December	3.00pm to 5.00pm	Messy Church	Godalming
9 December	7.00pm	Godalming Band Christmas Concert (see page 10)	Godalming
14 December	12.15pm	Advent Reflections	St. Mary's Guildford
16 December	2.30pm	Carol Service	Cranleigh
17 December	10.00am	Carol Service	West Horsley
17 December	10.30am	Carol Service	Addlestone
17 December	10.30am	Carol Service	Weybridge
17 December	11.00am	Christmas Carol Service	Merrow
17 December	2.30pm	Carol Service	Byfleet
17 December	6.00pm	Candlelit Carol Service	Godalming
17 December	6.00pm	Candlelit Carol Service	Knaphill
17 December	6.30pm	Carol Service	Walton-on-Thames
21 December	12.15pm	Carols at Lunchtime	St. Mary's Guildford
January 2024			
14 January	4.00pm	Youth Group Pudding & Praise	Walton-on-Thames
27 January	9.30am to 2.30pm	Mental Health First Aid Course	Walton-on-Thames
February 2024 (and beyond)			
4 February	6.00pm	Circuit Service	Trinity, Woking
3/4 February		"Snow White" Pantomime (see page 9)	Godalming
2 March		Circuit Mission Supper (see page 10)	Trinity, Woking