

The Wey Forward

Issue 31 - March to May 2024



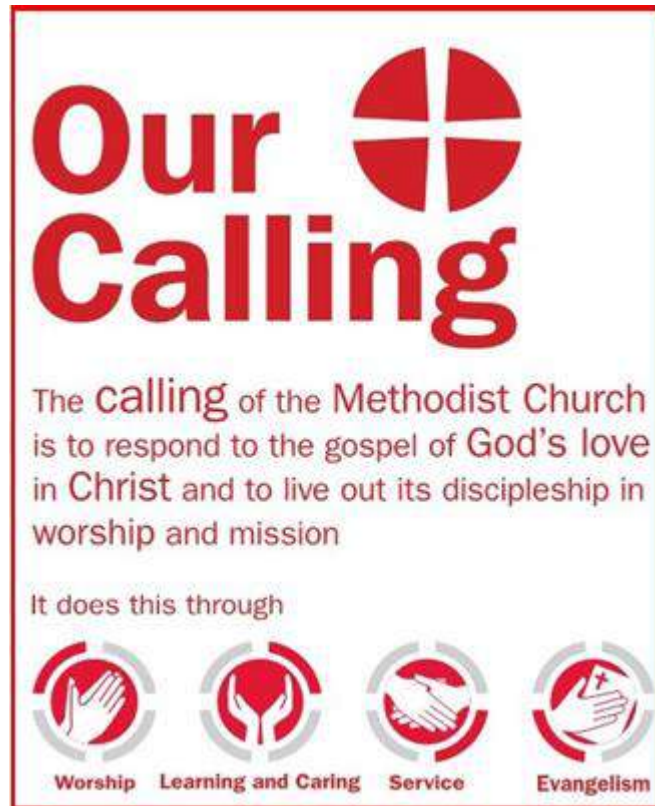
‘New Life, Rebirth’

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,

Someone kindly asked me recently how I was. Well...**there's** a question. And I'm not always sure that when people ask that they really want a full and honest answer! The long dark nights of January and February with the accompanying grey skies and cold weather can sap the energy of the best of us.

On top of that this is a time when 'things' happen. Meetings take place, big decisions can be made, important things happen. All at a time when we feel tired and perhaps a little bit washed out and grumpy. It's a recipe that is not attractive!

Are your days full or busy? I think there's an important difference between those two things. We can spend all our time like plate spinners rushing around from one wobbly pole to another trying to keep a series of plates from falling to the ground and crashing. OR we can spend time filling our days with things that feel as though they help us keep in control of things rather than being firefighters.

The preacher George Whitfield was asked what he would do if he knew Christ would return in three days, he replied "I would do just what I have scheduled to do." Looking at my diary for the next three days I am not sure that I would be able to say the same thing! John Wesley said 'I am not careful for what may be a hundred years hence. He who governed the world before I was born shall take care of it...My part is to improve the present moment.'

Perhaps one way of using Lent is to pay attention to what we spend our time doing and whether we allow those choices to be directed by God. So that when we get to the dawn of Easter Day itself we will be ready for the new life that that day brings.

Blessings,

Paul

Rev Dr Paul Glass
Superintendent Minister



News from around the Circuit

Addlestone

This week we have some evidence about generations that amounts to four in the lifetime of Mr Fred Rowe, the senior church steward of Addlestone Methodist Church.

The picture below of his daughter, granddaughter and great granddaughter was circulated to members of our church family by the technologically savvy Great Grandad.

Four Generations:



Mr Fred Rowe, his daughter in pink, his granddaughter, and his great granddaughter in his arms, 36 hours old

The blessing from the scripture is: *May you live to see your children's children (Psalm 128:6).*

Many people can testify to the services that Fred, and those that assist him, provide in the Addlestone Methodist Church which may be seen as contributions to the work of the church of God because of their relationship with God. The relationship between God and humans throughout historic generations principally mentioned in the Bible thus:

'It was at that time or in this generation (God our creator; Adam; Seth and Enosh son of Seth) that people began to

worship the Lord God, call on God and have a relationship with God (Genesis 4:26 NIV).

I wish to cite some of the blessings that are promised to people of faith who believe in God and the blessings to generations of their descendants. The scripture reveals the word of God saying: I will show love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. Before they call to me, I will answer. I will hear them whilst they are still speaking and like the new earth and the new heaven, they will endure (Deuteronomy 5:10 Isaiah 65:24 & 66:22).

As this blessing has come upon Fred, I am sure that we all, as family members of the Addlestone Methodist Church and as a circuit and community, wish to extend our congratulations to Fred.

I pray that God manifests his mercies upon all the readers of this article so that we shall live a life of faith and believing which affirms that God is our banner, and safe stronghold, through this and all generations of our relatives. May we continue to trust in the Lord and have our strength renewed that we may experience a long life with good health and strength for service. In the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Rev Sydney Samuel Lake

Byfleet

We have had a number of stand-out events since the last issue, which I mention briefly as follows:

The first was on 20th November when our minister was invited to the induction of Father Aaron Spinelli as Parish Priest at Our Lady Help of Christians' Church in West Byfleet and I was also able to attend. The Bishop of Arundel and Brighton was the celebrant and there were many clergy from the diocese present but our other local churches were also able to take part. It was quite a ceremony but rather more formal than our welcome of Sydney Samuel to Byfleet. We had this lovely photograph taken after the service.



Leo Wilkinson Photography (www.leothephotographer.co.uk)

On 2nd December the (Byfleet) Village Hall Christmas Fair took place, where Cynthia Haslam organised one of her “pound a parcel stalls”. This was very successful and our people were able to meet and be photographed with the Mayor of Woking and his party.

On 3rd December we enjoyed the Susan Robinson School ballet concert (mentioned in the last Wey Forward). As expected it was superb, with a variety of classical and popular music and dance. The cream tea that followed was also very good and well received.

Byfleet continued.....

The Village Amenities group asked if they could put Christmas lights powered from the church on the old oak tree that stands at the edge of our church. This was accomplished and we had a most spectacular tree over the Christmas period. My picture does not really do it justice, but it will give some idea of what we had in the pouring rain!



I would like to mention that our Christmas day collection went to the Fund for Human Need, a relatively small Methodist charity founded in 1960 by Rev Donald McNeill, a Methodist minister in Tooting, South London, to help the poorest and most needy people. For me this was rather special because I knew Donald when I lived and worshipped in Wimbledon.

Finally, and significantly not a one-off event, the FoodBank and the associated services continue to help those in our local community.

For the future I should mention our plan to have a local Lent Bible Study from 22nd February to 21st March 2024 on "Experience the Bible in Historical context with Ray Vander Laan" a video filmed on location in Israel and Italy.

Ken Mears

LENT REFLECTIONS



Trinity Methodist Church & Rev Sam invite you to share in our

- Lent Reflections -

on Zoom on the following dates:

1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd March

from 5.30pm to 6pm.

'Drop in', 'Chill out' and give yourself some time and space to reflect on all that God has done for us, through Jesus, by the Holy Spirit.

All are welcome!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82784901109?pwd=Q040WUhpL3NNazBRcFpYbEMvRFNJdz09>

Meeting ID: 827 8490 1109 and Passcode: 405162

Cranleigh

Cranleigh's services over Christmas raised awareness, gifts and funds for Action for Children. Weekly ecumenical Advent reflections across the village churches were well supported, as well as a service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Planning for Lent and Easter has taken place - we will have a lenten liturgy as objects to aid us in our devotion are added to the cross each week. On Palm Sunday there will be a procession through the village with a donkey! There will be two options for Good Friday as members of the church can either attend the ecumenical open-air service at Stockland Square or go to the hall at Elmbridge Retirement Village where Rev Allan Taylor will be leading worship.

Cranleigh has been giving thanks for the lives of two great servants of God. Peggy Mason and James Strawson. Peggy was our church organist for over 40 years before retiring in 2020. Her attitude to life, her resilience in coming to terms with invalidity, and her husband Roger were all part of Peggy's love of life and her constant smile and good humour. She will be very much missed.

James Strawson lived out his Christian beliefs in a wide range of ways. James has been a loyal, committed member at Cranleigh for some considerable years, taking part in being not only a church steward at Cranleigh but also a circuit steward both for the old Guildford Circuit and for the combined Wey Valley Circuit. He had a pivotal role and career at the University of Surrey. His kindness, cheerfulness and dedication were remarkable. His commitment to and deep love of all that Methodism stands for are an example to us all. We are deeply thankful for the blessings that God has shared with us through his life.

Our services and mission at Elmbridge Retirement Village continue apace with a wonderful congregation of around 90 to our joint carol service led by Paul and Rev Roy Woodhams, Cranleigh St Nicolas Parish minister. We had a well-supported coffee morning in December and we will have another one in March. Our chaplain Rev Allan Taylor visits about twice a week and is part of the faith group and the preaching team.

The Cranleigh Baby Bank continues to operate from our church, with the coffee morning on a Tuesday to which mums and babies/toddlers are welcomed. They can take the opportunity to acquire clothes, shoes, equipment, nappies, baby milk and even toys for new-borns up to 5 years or just enjoy company and chat. We are trying to encourage more folk to come and make use of the baby bank because, if nothing else, we have such huge 'stocks' on the premises, we could expand into other rooms!

Paul continues to provide monthly services at Cedar Court Nursing Home and Collective Worship at Cranleigh Church of England Primary School twice a term.

Paul will soon be on sabbatical for three months, so our church will be without him and his leadership, but we will be rewarded by welcoming Rev Allan Taylor to our church more often in the meantime.

Jane Briggs

Godalming United Church

The turn of the year was marked by the baptism of the youngest child of Daniel and Grace Pratt Morris-Chapman - Ewuradwowa Catherine (Catherine for short!) – a joyful and colourful occasion. Grace and Daniel are Mission Partners for the Methodist Church in Uganda and over the years they've worshipped regularly at GUC when in the UK. The congregation was swelled by many of their friends and family, among them Catherine's maternal grandparents, the Most Reverend Titus Pratt and Mrs Anna Pratt. Titus is a former presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Ghana and had travelled with his wife from Accra to be present. Also present was Rev Andrew Ashcroft, Partnership Coordinator for Africa for the Methodist Church of Great Britain. After the service we were all invited to a buffet lunch in the church hall.

Our Lent Appeal this year is in support of the work of Daniel and Grace in Uganda. Most Methodist churches in poor, rural areas are without buildings and meet under trees. Those being built often have only walls because they cannot afford roofing materials. This is in stark contrast to the mosques being financed by, amongst others, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, meaning that Islam is growing rapidly with mosques often built even before congregations have formed.

Daniel writes movingly: "As we were about to leave Inula, a lady got down on her knees and asked if we could do something to help them roof the church. I was really overwhelmed by the situation. I don't know what came over me but, spontaneously, I also found myself kneeling in front of the whole congregation. We cried and prayed together and I promised to try and bring help."

So GUC is supporting the completion of the church at Inula, Uganda. Another UK Methodist church has funded a concrete lintel and they now need help to provide a roof and finish the church, which will cost approximately £3000. If we can raise the funds for the roof – about £1800 – then, working with Daniel, Ryan Kelley can source the funds for finishing the church. Daniel and the Methodist Bishop of Uganda have given an undertaking that with this help the church will be completed by July.

If you would like to support our Lenten Appeal, you can donate by cheque or on-line. Cheques payable to 'Godalming United Church' should be sent to Kath Riddy, Broadbridges House, The Avenue, Compton, Godalming GU3 1JN. For details of online banking please contact Kath on 01483 861446 or GUC.Missions@gmail.com

Messy Church in January was on the theme of The Lost Son – Love and Forgiveness. Much intergenerational fun was had icing heart-biscuits, modelling playdough piggies, and fashioning party hats. Adam led the worship-time story, helped along by some vigorous audience-participation.

The first weekend in February has been Panto-time for over 20 years now – and this year's was the biggest yet, with 4 showings playing to 440 people. The cast of 70 from the youngest (Rainbows) to the oldest "mature" church members included newbies as well as veterans, and over 30 extras were involved backstage and helping. Keith Nye, our organist, provided keyboard backing for many of the musical numbers, Kris Benjafield organized dozens of colourful outfits, and electronic projection provided a new dimension to the scenery. Thanks as ever to Barbara Keene for masterminding this very special form of church outreach.

We have a number of exciting initiatives to report. Before Half Term Adam guided us through an intriguing Bible Study on “Whatever happened to ... Jesus’s Disciples?”; Wednesday morning pop-up prayers were launched in February; and on March 7th an Afternoon Tea with Communion was appreciated by those who often can’t get out on Sunday mornings.

Nancy Wilks



Christmas Day 2023

After delivering two services on Christmas Day, it was a delight to rush over to the campus of the University of Surrey to hand out 700 Christmas lunches to students who were alone on campus at Christmas. A large number of overseas postgraduate students can't go home over the Christmas break. For the week before the Christmas weekend the University Catering Department is hard at work putting together Christmas gift boxes and sandwich packs. Then on the day itself - full of festive cheer - members of the Chaplaincy team and volunteers give out the lunches, pull crackers, explain jokes, play Christmas music and have a great time!

Rev Dr Paul Glass



Guildford St Mary's

I started thinking about this article after returning from a planning meeting about Lent. Easter falls early this year and it seems we have hardly had time to draw breath before our thoughts are turning towards the coming season. Yet it is important to take time to reflect about the Christmas season and the many opportunities that we had to share the wonder of the Christmas story with others [this included providing a boxful of home baked chocolate muffins for the cast and crew of the pantomime at the Yvonne Arnaud! – see page 12]. According to recent data, many churches have reported that they saw an increase in people coming to services during the Christmas season, possibly because of the very uncertain and troubled times we find ourselves living through at the moment.

Our Advent reflections focused on “Searching for Home” giving people a chance to reflect on attitudes towards those who find themselves displaced and without anywhere to call home.

By chance at one of the sessions we had the opportunity to hear from two representatives from the charity Big Leaf, who work with young refugees in the area. Their account was profoundly moving and gave us much to reflect about.

The week before Christmas saw several carol services at St Mary's including Common Ground carols with a difference and our annual carols at lunchtime service where the numbers were significantly higher than we were expecting. On Christmas Eve itself, we welcomed over 500 people through the doors of St Mary's as they came to be part of one of many different services that were taking place during the day. We hope and pray that all who came will be able to reflect and ponder about their experience.

Our weekly Friday night vigil continues and following the outbreak of civil war in Sudan and the horrific events of October 7th leading to further conflict in the Middle East, it has simply become a Vigil for Peace. Over 7000 people have come through the doors since the vigil began and visitors continue to be thankful for the opportunity and experience that the simple act of lighting a candle brings.

On 23rd February at 7.30pm together with our friends in the Orthodox Church, we held a special service before the vigil to recognise and commemorate two years since the invasion of Ukraine.

It was with real joy that we joined with our Anglican brothers and sisters to celebrate the induction of the new rector at Holy Trinity & St Mary's, Reverend Canon Simon Butler. Simon led worship for the first time at St Mary's a few weeks ago and many thanks to the team who organised the lunch we shared together afterwards!

Our thoughts and prayers are with Simon as he begins his ministry here in Guildford and we are excited about what the next chapter might hold!

Please keep an eye out for news of events at St Mary's in particular the series of Lent Reflections that commenced on 15th February entitled Love Unbounded.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Rosemary Lee

Panto!

Panto (professional or otherwise) is a key part of winter. This year a member at St. Mary's Guildford baked loads of delicious cupcakes for the cast and crew of Cinderella at the Yvonne Arnaud. We delivered them on dress rehearsal day with a card from the church wishing everyone a good run and thanking them for the joy they were about to bring to the people of Guildford. The gift went down really well. Are there simple acts of kindness that you can do to bring joy to parts of your community?

Paul





SAVE THE DATES!

**UNBOUNDED
LOVE**

**God's love
doesn't stay
in the lines**



A series of Lent Reflections inspired by
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
St Mary's Quarry St GUI 3UP
Thursdays 15 & 22 February, 7, 14 & 21 March
12.30 – 13.30: followed by a bread and soup lunch



The **Methodist** Church 

Circuit Safeguarding Officer Vacancy

Do you have a passion for keeping our churches safe places?

Do you like working in a supportive team?

Then this could be the role for you!

The Circuit needs a new Safeguarding Officer as our current Circuit Safeguarding Officer, Maggie Woolcock, will be stepping down this summer. The post could be considered as a "job share".

Main roles:

- Working with the Circuit Safeguarding Admin Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Officer to ensure that robust safeguarding practices are in place throughout the Circuit.
- Planning and facilitating Safeguarding training as required.
- Advising on safeguarding matters to Church Safeguarding Officers, Ministers and others within the Circuit.
- Organizing and chairing Church Safeguarding Officer's meetings twice a year.
- Preparing and presenting Safeguarding Reports at Circuit Meetings twice yearly plus preparing and presenting the Annual Circuit Safeguarding Policy at the July Circuit Meeting.
- Involvement in the setting up and ongoing maintenance of Safeguarding Contracts with the support of the District Safeguarding Officer.

The post is well-supported by the Circuit Safeguarding Admin Officer and the Deputy Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

A full job description for the Circuit Safeguarding Officer can be found on the Methodist Church website. If you're interested in the position, please contact Lucy Venmore in the Circuit Office.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedures-posters-and-leaflets/policies-and-guidance/>

Knaphill

When last I wrote of activities at Knaphill for the Wey Forward, we were gearing up for our special Christmas Coffee Morning in November and our Afternoon Tea with Carols for the elderly and those who live alone. The Afternoon Tea, on December 10th, was most enjoyable. The tasty sandwiches, sausage rolls and other savouries, plus a selection of lovely cakes on each table, were very well received and nothing was wasted. Also much enjoyed was the piano playing which entertained guests while they ate and the carol singing when they had finished.

The November Coffee Morning was very successful, being well-attended by regulars and visitors and raising £750 for church funds. We have just held our January Coffee Morning, which also did well, with many folk enjoying a chat in the warmth, along with their coffee and bacon roll. Our next dates are 24th February and 23rd March, 10am to 12 noon.

The clothing bank, Clothes 4U, was well attended on both 18th November and 20th January. We are really pleased that people can come along and get warm and attractive clothing for free but concerned that so many people need to use our service. Many thanks are due to the ladies who run the clothing bank and to their dedicated team of workers who sort and hang clothing non-stop during a Clothes 4U session.

The first weekend in March will be a busy time for us at Knaphill. A number of us will be attending the Circuit Mission Supper on Saturday 2nd, while the day before we are hosting the ecumenical World Day of Prayer Service in Knaphill. It is the first time it has been held at KMC for some years, so we are looking forward to receiving guests from the other Knaphill churches. We are also hosting the ecumenical service which follows the Walk of Witness through Knaphill on Good Friday. The walk is done in silence through Knaphill, with a large wooden cross carried by volunteers. We stop at each of the churches in C4K (Churches Together in Knaphill) - St Hugh's RC Church, Knaphill Baptist Church, Holy Trinity and KMC – for a bible reading. Then we have a short service in the final church, followed by tea/coffee and hot cross buns.

Still some way off, but an important event, is the Christian Aid Week house to house collection between 12th and 18th May 2024. Last year, I received some very welcome help from C4K members and together we raised nearly £3000 in Knaphill, so we hope to do well again this year.

Lynda Shore



Circuit Service

At a moving Circuit Service in February at Trinity Woking, we celebrated the work and ministry of preaching. A lovely part of the service was being able to celebrate with Hugh Bowerman his 25 years as a local preacher in our Circuit. Family and friends gathered to think about the power and the impact of preaching and to tell stories of how it has helped them in their journey of faith.



Practical Aspects of Spirituality



Join us for
**Connecting with God -
what suits your personality?**

led by

Anna Carrington

**Saturday 23 March
09.30 – 12.00**

**St. Mary's Church
Guildford GU1 3UP**

Refreshments from 09.15

Merrow

It has been a busy time at Merrow.

All the Christmas events went well. The joint Christmas Carol Service (with the Guildford Church of the Holy Word (Chinese Church)) went very well. The young children sang well and all enjoyed the mince pies afterwards. Over £480 (incl Gift aid) was raised for Embrace the Middle East during the service.

Our annual games afternoon was held on 21st January. This event brings a little bit of joy (plus tea and cakes) during what is a cold and dull month. Any game can be played – some more active than others. The Chinese Church joins us for this too.

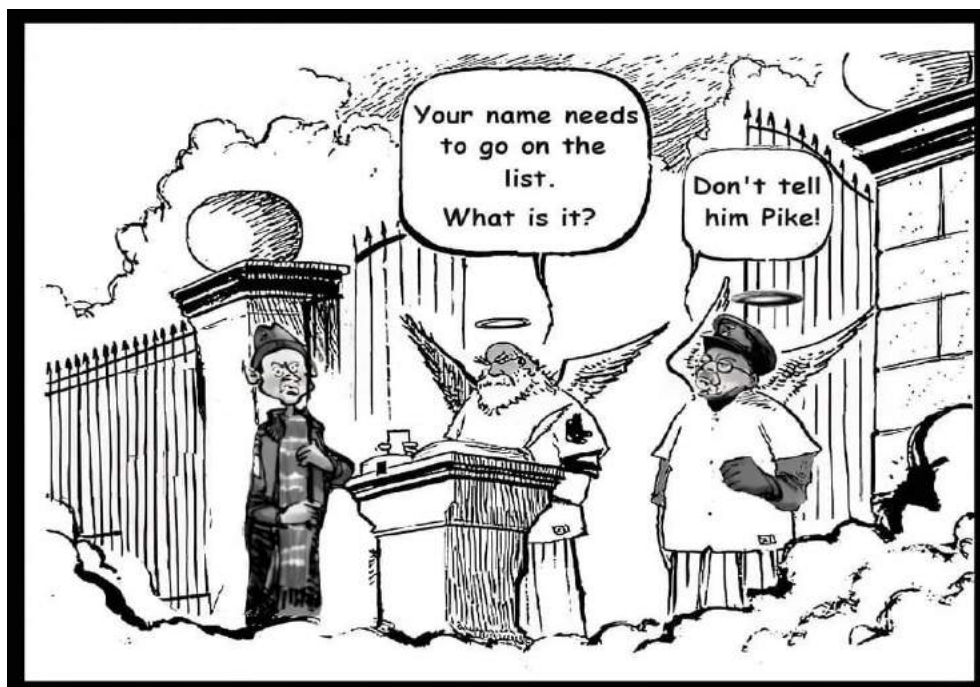
On 1st March, Merrow will be hosting the World Day of Prayer at 2pm. This service has been prepared by the Palestinian Women living in Palestine. The theme is "I beg you, bear with one another in love". With the current situation, the service will be even more moving than normal.

Aided by a Project Aspire grant from Guildford Borough Council, a small Community Garden is being developed on the front lawn at Merrow. The aim of the project is to enable local people to influence the development of the garden. It will be interesting to see how this develops over the coming months.

Plans are also underway for our Easter Services. The Tenebrae Service will be held on Maundy Thursday at 7pm and led by Rev Barrie Tabraham. This is always a very thought provoking, moving service leading us onto the Good Friday service at 2pm and then the Easter Sunday service.

We will also be looking forward to the next sectional service on 26th May where Merrow will be sharing fellowship with our friends from Stoughton and West Horsley. I'm certain it will be a very joyful occasion.

Julie Wallis



St. Michael's, Sheerwater

Where are we at with the building?

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

At the time of writing, we have had further meetings with representatives from SCC but have yet to hear whether we may proceed to "Full Submission".

The Church:

We continue to welcome families to Pop up café and Tots praise during the week. Families enjoyed a service around the Crib at Christmas, sharing the story and dressing up.

A local resident has begun monthly craft sessions at the church on the last Friday of the month. This is an opportunity to meet, learn and share craft ideas.

We were welcomed again to share a Christmas story and carols in Asda Sheerwater this year as Christmas Eve was on a Sunday. We had a captive audience during the browsing hour before the store opened at 11am.

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 move into 2024 with all that God has in store.

Tracey Francis



Carols in Asda on Christmas Eve



Feeding faith, growing community

We need to talk about trafficking

I was surprised to learn recently that most traffickers in the UK are British, and that most victims of trafficking are also British.

This is probably because the media sets our understanding in its coverage of human trafficking around migration, leading to the mistaken belief that trafficking is the moving of people across borders.

At the Anglican Diocese-convened day at Guildford St Mary's to look at this issue, I learned that the definition of trafficking is to move someone (regardless of distance) for the purposes of exploiting them.

This event was organised for church folk because we tend to have detailed knowledge of our local communities – through the activities of our members we often have a good knowledge of where vulnerable people are in our community. And these are the people criminal organisations target, befriending them and grooming them until they are trapped in criminal activity. The most disturbing thing for me is the targeting of children, the elderly and disabled. It was shocking for me to learn that within our own geographical area county lines and mule bank accounts are operating.

The first of these I had heard of - the moving of drugs. What I didn't realise is that county lines refers not to county borders but to the dedicated telephones used. So there needs to be no crossing of county boundaries - it can be as small a distance as between two flats in the same building! Nor did I realise that children are targeted and tricked into involvement by other pupils in school.

Mule Bank Accounts are when children involved in criminal activity approach another child and ask to use that child's bank account. This other child might spin a sorry tale of wanting to start saving and explaining why he/she needs the child's help. Once it starts, it can escalate with the child being coerced into opening more bank accounts through which thousands of pounds are laundered every month.

Another ruse of criminals is to befriend a vulnerable individual who lives alone, with an increase of activities from using the home for storing drugs and other contraband to dealing from the accommodation. Signs to look for include people coming in and out at all hours, people arriving with packages regularly but always leaving empty handed, or others moving into the accommodation.

Trafficking does include the exploitation of foreigners in the UK by foreigners. Foreigners include but are not exclusively those trafficked in the UK for labour exploitation in agriculture, construction, private care, car washes, nail bars and hospitality industry businesses. Other areas of exploitation of trafficked humans include for sex, organ harvesting, illegal adoption, forced marriage and domestic slavery.

In every instance, trafficking de-humanises its victims through fear, violence and depravation. Vulnerable people are the prey of criminals, and with the current cost of living crisis making more people vulnerable, there are likely to be more people willing to exploit others, and more vulnerable to exploitation. And with trafficking accounting for over \$150billion a year - and second only to drugs in revenue-generation for criminals - it is an evil that is not likely to go away.

At the Methodist SE District support group meeting, the account was shared of a teenage girl who had been a victim of trafficking. Her story included grooming by an older girl at school, the request to do a

favour under pressure to please this older girl, the intimidation to get more and more involved which culminated in extended absences from school and home. She was rescued because she was at an address the police raided and it was soon evident that she was a victim. This teenage girl's academic career was one of good grades; she was an average child with caring parents. This challenged my assumptions about what a vulnerable teenager looks like.

Representatives from all the agencies (involved in tackling trafficking and supporting victims) I talked to at the event urged that we be aware, that we be educated, and that we spread the story because we are people who are engaged with our communities, that we keep good lines of communication open with those we care for. There are various signs that can point to someone being a victim of trafficking. In children and teenagers, it can include suddenly being part of an older friendship group, change in behaviour including to be fearful, a growing habit of not being where they would be expected to be. For vulnerable adults it can be the sudden appearance of a new group of people, especially if accessing the home of the vulnerable person. For labour exploitation it can include inadequate clothing and equipment, dishevelled appearance, malnourished, anxious when asked questions and possibly deferring to someone else, not having independent transport and accommodation.

If you are suspicious, any situation that is unlikely still to be present in the short term can be reported directly to the police as a 999 call, or 101 for an ongoing situation. Suspicions can also be reported through Crimestoppers 0800 555 111 or the Modern Slavery Hotline 08000 121 700. These last two are anonymous and therefore as much information as possible must be given in the call – including descriptions of perpetrators, vehicles, location, times of day and observed activities/concerns – otherwise the police cannot follow it up.

William Wilberforce said: "You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know".

If you would like to know more, I'm happy to talk about this.

Margaret Ireland



The United Nations Blue Heart Campaign raises awareness around the globe of human trafficking and its impact on people and society.

Stoughton

With the weeks of a new year already racing along, our memories of Advent and Christmas are once again fading fast.

However, just before Advent began, we were very pleased to share in a first sectional service at West Horsley with members of Merrow. Led by George, each church contributed to the service and with all seats taken the “roof was raised” in song! We look forward to the next gathering!

We held a coffee morning just before Christmas with proceeds going to Cherry Trees in East Clandon, where a safe and fun place is provided for children during their respite visit. The staff are to be commended for the work they do to support the children and their families.

Into 2024 and our Covenant service was led by George when we gave thanks for all that God has done for us and affirmed that we give our lives to Him. By the time we receive this edition of our circuit magazine we will have already prepared services for Lent and Easter.

I have read that Lent encourages us to do what we can – not what we can't. We must continue to do this at Stoughton as we try to encourage more use of our premises following the disappointing news that the proposed nursery is struggling to recruit enough qualified staff to allow them to open.

Linda Macbeth

Pick of the Archives #14



Derek was glad he'd noticed the typo in time!

©Andy Robb



Coffee & Cake

**St. Mary's Quarry St,
Guildford GU1 3UP**

Thursday 25 April

Thursday 23 May

10.30 – 12 noon

*~ each morning features
a different charity*

Everyone welcome



Important Volunteering Opportunity within the Circuit

Would you like to be involved in leading the strategic decisions that move the Circuit forward?

Would you like to be part of a team?

We are currently looking for new Circuit Stewards.

The role includes:

- Stationing and Invitations of Ministers to the Circuit
- Strategic Leadership including some attendance at Church Councils
- A positive role within the Circuit Leadership Team

For more information and details on time commitment and responsibilities please contact Rev Dr Paul Glass.



Walton-on-Thames

We had a good Christmas at Walton.

Four of us attended the circuit strategic planning day in early November and December and came away inspired and encouraged to “try New Things”. We decided to think hard about how we could put some of these “New Things” into our services across Advent.

New Thing 1:

Ross Richardson set up an Advent Reflection group which met for 5 sessions following the Ignatian contemplative practices found in the “Taketime” protocol sessions founded by Methodist minister Rev Clive McKie. This provided a space for people to step aside from busy lives and contemplate the Advent lectionary through guided meditation. We ran it simultaneously, in person and by Zoom, and it was a special time, helping to guide the preparation for Christmas for those who attended.

New Thing 2:

Advent started in Walton with the “Festival of Light” in the town centre. The High Street is closed to accommodate a street fair and the Christmas lights are turned on. In our Messy Church session in October, we made a flock of cotton wool sheep. Ten of these were placed in shop windows in the High Street and near to the church on the day of the Festival of Light. We put a sign up in our church window saying that we had “Lost our Sheep” and offered the reward of an Advent calendar to any children who could find all 10 lost sheep.

On the Saturday of the Festival of Light we distributed lots of sheets for collecting the names of the shops where the sheep were located. Their prize was an Advent calendar from the ‘The Meaningful Chocolate Company’. The Youth Group helped with handing out the question sheets, checking them in the evening and awarding the prizes of Fair Trade Advent calendars.

We also placed our knitted Nativity in the front window and as we passed through Advent, a big poster went up for each of the Sundays on the themes of Hope, Joy, Peace and Love.

New Thing 3:

We thought long and hard about leaving our “Peace” Advent candle unlit as per the suggestion from the Church in Bethlehem. We opened the debate up to our community and on balance, our members preferred to have the candle lit as a symbol of the peace which is needed in the world and in our hearts more than ever. Rev Lake suggested that we could have a separate unlit candle as a symbol of our lament over the current crisis in Israel and Palestine. We set this candle in a bed of rubble, and we continue to use it as a reminder to pray for peace in all places of conflict around the world.

At present, a quarter of the world’s population is affected in some way by conflict. As a “People of Prayer” we need to pray for peace more than ever.

New Thing 4:

Dave Paterson had the bright idea to fuse some video stories narrating parts of the Christmas message into our Carol Service. It was a great way to add a different dimension to our 9 Lessons and Carols.

New Thing 5:

For our Christmas Eve Sunday, a Local Arrangement had been planned, so we had the glorious freedom of a blank slate to decorate with a service as we wished. Again, we took a few ideas from the Circuit Strategy meeting and wove these into a Family Christingle Service with carols, christingle making, some new media and some refreshment from a local bakery before the service. There was a beautiful rendition of the Coventry Carol by some of our musicians from Breeze, an excellent video by Bob Hartman and an inspiring message from Dave Paterson. We had an excellent turnout with over 60 adults and children and will look closely at doing something similar again.

New Thing 6:

The last Sunday of December was another Local Arrangement, and we took the opportunity to call for thoughts, thanks, reflections, blessings and testimonies from our community, with a focus on looking back over the year and recounting ways in which their lives had been blessed. This was a moving session as people spoke of their blessings which were all quite different and this encouraged others to speak up as well. Ross even prayed a blessing over a new pet dog who is bringing great delight and comfort to its new owner! An excellent way to bid farewell to '23 and start thinking about '24.

We were delighted to have part of our Youth Group lead our first Pudding and Praise session on Sunday 14th January. Breeze provided the music and the young people chose the theme and prepared the short message and praise part of the evening. It was truly an evening of praise and worship that really got us thinking. And fabulous puddings! We hope that they will be encouraged by this to take a more active part in our services. Please pray for our young people; they have a powerful vision and a strong Christian faith.

At the end of January, we held the Mental Health First Aid workshop. In February we will run Lent Groups and are currently trying to discern which theme we might look at. March is a busy month at Walton as we have Gift Day, Church Anniversary and the Annual General Meeting. At the start of the month there is the Circuit Mission Supper. The speaker is Deacon Angleena Keizer who was Methodist Liaison Officer in Jerusalem between 2018 and August 2023. Those of us who went on the pilgrimage to Israel met Angleena. She is a captivating speaker with first-hand experience of life in Israel and Gaza and the current situation, so it should be an educational and absorbing evening to attend.

The Stewards at Walton



Circuit Pilgrimage to Iona

Thursday 28 August - Tuesday 2 September 2025

led by Rev Adam Payne

staying at the Argyll Hotel

<https://www.argyllhoteliona.co.uk/>



Please contact Helen
Belsham for further details

helenebelsham@icloud.com



West Horsley

We were very delighted and privileged to welcome four people into membership of the Methodist Church at our recent Covenant Service. They came from various other denominations and have been regular worshippers with us for some time. Both Rev George Quarm and Rev Claire Hargreaves took part in the service - a double blessing!

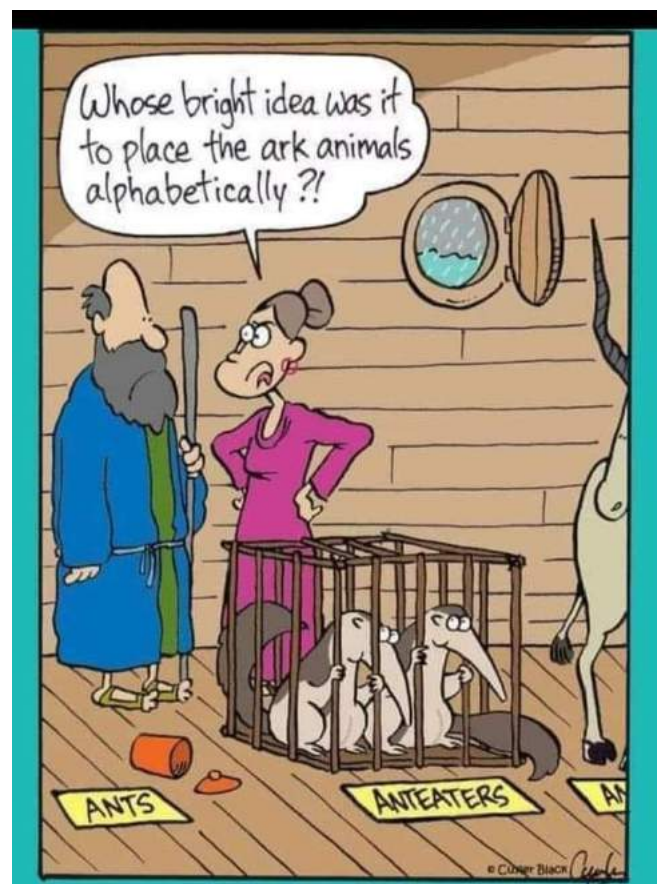
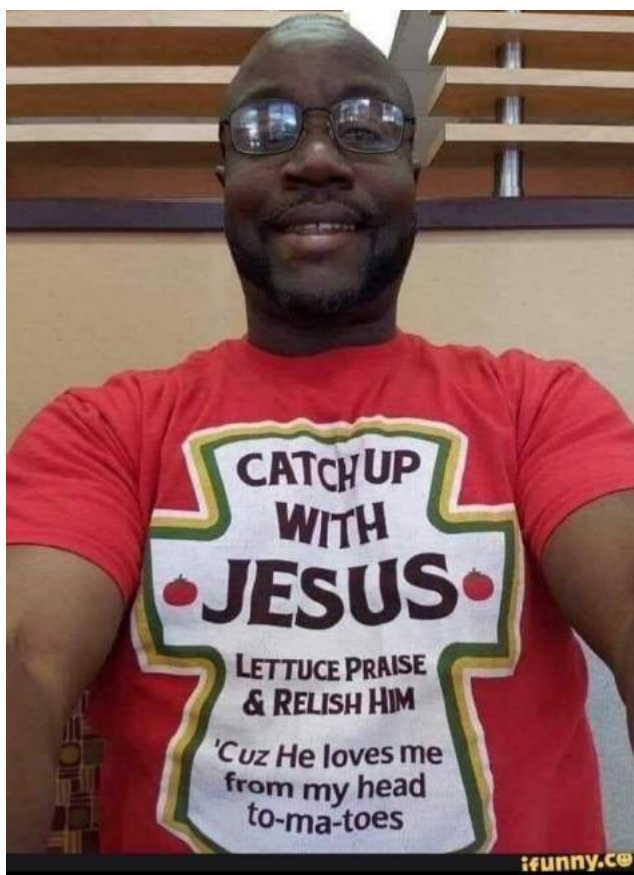
Celia Chapman organised another very successful afternoon tea for friends and neighbours on Sunday 14th January. Over 30 people came and enjoyed the chance to meet and have conversations.

'Soup and Pud' lunch took place on Monday 12th February. Heather Spackman kindly arranged for our local community bus to bring people who are without transport.

It is our turn to host the World Day of Prayer service for the Horsleys on Friday 1st March; this year prepared by the women of Palestine. We will be ecumenical again on Good Friday when we join with the other churches in the Horsleys for an Open-Air service in front of East Horsley shops. Just praying for fine weather!

An invitation to you all to join us for our Songs of Praise evening at 7.00pm on Saturday 20th April as part of our Chapel Anniversary celebrations. Do come and join us for this opportunity to sing your favourite hymns. See the poster on the next page.

Margaret Faulkner



Songs of Praise



Saturday April 20th
Horsley

Methodist Church

(next to W.H. Village Hall)

7.00p.m. Come and sing a selection of
favourite hymns. Phone 01483 282474 for
more details or to make requests.

Weybridge

Christmas at Weybridge was different in December 2023. 'The Place', a church who use our premises on a Sunday afternoon, joined us for our Carol service and afterwards we shared lunch together. A service of Nine lessons and Carols included a fabulous piece by the young children from 'The Place'. Lunch was comprised of many and very varied dishes thanks to the joint congregations – yum. Our thanks go to all those from both congregations who decorated both the church and the church hall. Plans are currently being discussed for a joint service on Good Friday.

Another exciting change in Weybridge is that Churches Together in Weybridge is enjoying a renaissance. A joint service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was held at the Parish church but the service was led by the presbyter from the URC. All churches were asked to staff a prayer station and a representative from each church spoke for four minutes about their own church and its activities. It was good to see so many from the Methodist congregation attending this service. Joint Lent groups are under discussion too.

The weather since the New Year has been relatively mild but windy. Three of our fence panels were blown down and, of course, on closer investigation proved to be rotten so had to be replaced. Another job to add to the list!! Sadly, one of our regular 'odd job' men passed away suddenly and unexpectedly last year which was a huge shock to several churches in the circuit who regularly employed him, but luckily, we have found someone else and by the time this goes to press the fence will be repaired.

Weybridge Methodist has taken steps to join the world of technology with the installation of Wi-Fi. This will position us for further technological additions in the future.

Earlier in January the church played host to the Weybridge Old Folks Club whilst their regular venue was unavailable. Our premises are not ideal as we are a longer walk from the town centre for the seniors, but we managed until the usual venue became available again. Church members continue to work with the old folks club and also with the FoodBanks and Walk the Walk breast cancer charity.

In happy news, a member of our congregation, 95-year-old David Marjot, has recently graduated from Kingston University! David (a retired psychiatrist) graduated with an MA in Modern European Philosophy. He completed his latest studies 72 years after he originally qualified as a doctor.

He is now contemplating a part-time doctorate, which could take him until he is 102 to complete. He said his degree was "hard work" as "my memory was not what it used to be". Offering advice to those thinking of re-entering education after decades away, he said: "It is a bit of a gamble, but the main thing is if you're interested then go for it. I was lucky to have world-class teachers and it was a very positive experience. I think it is important to always keep challenging yourself even as you get older."

We send our warm congratulations to David.

Linda Weedon

Trinity, Woking

ROC Woking to hold a second Big Conversation

In March 2020 Trinity Methodist Woking, as part of our outreach work, hosted a conversation bringing together around 185 people from key organisations and charities in Woking. This conversation was supported by ROC (Redeeming Our Communities) and Debra Green, their CEO. The aim of the evening was to find out what the key issues facing people in Woking were and where organisations could offer help.

At the start we wrote down all the good things happening in Woking and posted them onto large posters. We then shared our needs by pegging luggage labels on a washing line, with yellow labels being a need and green labels being an offer of help. Short interviews were conducted of Brett Freeman, principal of Woking College, Andy Greaves, Surrey Police Woking Commander and Dr Caroline Baker, CEO of NW Surrey Integrated Care Services.

Then the main part of the evening was round table discussions identifying issues in Woking. From the key issues identified, our small steering group set up three action groups, bringing together key people in Woking, of loneliness and social isolation (SILAG) – chaired by Hugh Bowerman, Mental Health – chaired by Caroline Page and James Mackay, and Youth chaired by Ruth Taylor and Kevin Page. A further member of our steering group is Lorraine Golli.

We began working on the Action Groups just as lockdown for Covid started, so most of our meetings have been run on-line. But we have achieved a remarkable amount despite the constraints of lockdown. Both SILAG and the youth action group have carried out surveys to find out the needs of isolated and lonely people and the needs of young people. We have been supporting lonely people by running a 'phone a friend' scheme, co-ordinated by Danielle Warr Schori. During Covid, ROC set up a 'laptops for schools' programme resulting in many young people being able to continue studying from home. A local IT firm has now taken on this project. Last year we were asked by Adam Thomas at Woking Borough Council to help reinvigorate the community work at Lakeview Community Centre on the Sythwood Estate in Goldsworth Park. Three ROC Trustees joined the Lakeview Community Action Group (LCAG) as they were running out of steam and Trustees. We ran a consultation day with the local residents, where the Bangladeshi Cultural Association provided refreshments, Graham Kirby-Smith and his band provided music, local churches ran stalls and local organisations, including Young Carers organised quizzes and activities for families and children.

More activities are now happening in the community centre including a youth club, a club 'Lift Up' to support people's mental health, Woking Dance in the holidays and Foodwise cooking support. In August we worked with the LCAG to run a Fun Day on the Sythwood Estate. This was a great day, with families enjoying the bouncy castle, a magnificent raffle with prizes donated by local businesses and entertainment by Woking Dance and Graham Kirby-Smith and local musicians, as well as many stalls run by local organisations.

Many people from Trinity helped us in setting up and running the initial ROC conversation evening taking on table hosting, moving furniture, praying, serving refreshments and many other tasks and we couldn't have run the event without their help. We are planning to hold a follow up conversation on 26th September 2024 and will need help again! We know that many organisations are being impacted by Woking Council's lack of funds and since the last conversation, the cost-of-living crisis has worsened and many people including youngsters are suffering from poor mental health. We are also seeing the most vulnerable members of our community being impacted by cuts in services. By working together, we hope to be able to support our vulnerable communities better.

Ruth Taylor

(Chair of ROC and Steward at Trinity Methodist Church, Woking)

Looking Ahead at Woking Trinity

Rev Sam Funnell will be leading Lent Reflections on Zoom: 1, 8, 15, 22 March 2024

5.30pm - 6.00pm

Meeting ID 827 8490 1109

Passcode 405162

Foundry Worship – Informal contemporary worship, 5.45pm for 6pm bi-weekly, on the following dates:

3, 17 and 31 March

14 and 28 April

12 and 26 May

Holy Week Services:

28th March – Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service at 8pm

29th March – Good Friday Reflection Service at 10am before the Act of Witness in Woking Town Square

31st March – (Easter Sunday) Rev Sam Funnell will lead Holy Communion at 10.30am, in Church and on the live stream.

Our General Church Meeting Service will be held on 28 April, combining a meeting and an Act of Worship. Brunch will be served at 10am, the Service will start at 10.30am, and conclude by 12 noon.

Our annual Christian Aid Plant Sale will take place on Saturday 11 May, from 10am to midday alongside the Woking Repair Café.

All the services and events listed are open to anyone who wishes to join us!

Lunar New Year Celebrations

It was brilliant to share worship with the Chinese Methodist Church congregation at Woking Trinity to celebrate the Lunar New Year recently (we have just entered the Year of the Dragon). The worship was wonderful. Members of the morning congregation at Trinity were invited to join a new year banquet - with around 300 people of all ages sitting down to the most amazing, delicious food. Huge thanks to our brothers and sisters in the Cantonese speaking church for your gracious hospitality.

Rev Dr Paul Glass



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. 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 32 of The Wey Forward is:

midnight 1 May 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 33 2 August 2024

Issue 34 1 November 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
March 2024			
22 Feb to 21 March		Lent Bible Study	Byfleet
1, 8, 15, 22 March	5.30pm to 6.00pm	Lent Reflections (see page 6)	On Zoom
7, 14, 21 March	12.30 to 1.30pm	Lent Reflections (see page 12)	St. Mary's Guildford
16 March	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Clothes4U	Knaphill
17 March	4.00pm	Pudding and Praise	Walton-on-Thames
23 March	10am to 12 noon	Coffee Morning	Knaphill
23 March	9.30am to 12 noon	Practical Aspects of Spirituality (see page 15)	St. Mary's Guildford
28 March	10.00am	Service of Reflection	Addlestone
28 March	12.00pm	Ecumenical Service	Byfleet
28 March	7.00pm	Holy Communion	Godalming
28 March	7.00pm	Holy Communion	St. Mary's Guildford
28 March	7.00pm	Tenebrae Service	Merrow
28 March	7.00pm	Holy Communion	Sheerwater
28 March	6.30pm	Holy Communion	Stoughton
28 March	7.30pm	Tenebrae Service	Walton-on-Thames
28 March	8.00pm	Tenebrae Service	Trinity, Woking
29 March	12.00pm	Ecumenical Service	St. Mary's Church of England, Byfleet
29 March	10.30am	Ecumenical Service	Knaphill
29 March	2.00pm	Good Friday Service	Merrow
29 March	10.00am	Open-Air Ecumenical Service	East Horsley
29 March	10.30am	Ecumenical Service	Weybridge
29 March	10.00am	Service of Reflection	Trinity, Woking
April 2024			
20 April	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Clothes4U	Knaphill
20 April	7.00pm	Songs of Praise (see page 26)	West Horsley
25 April	10.30 to 12 noon	Coffee and Cake	St. Mary's Guildford
27 April	10am to 12 noon	Coffee Morning	Knaphill
May 2024 (and beyond)			
11 May	10am to 12 noon	Christian Aid Plant Sale & Woking Repair Café	Trinity, Woking
12 to 18 May		Christian Aid Week	
18 May	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Clothes4U	Knaphill
19 May	4.00pm	Pudding and Praise	Walton-on-Thames
23 May	10.30 to 12 noon	Coffee and Cake	St. Mary's Guildford
25 May	10am to 12 noon	Coffee Morning	Knaphill