

The Wey Forward

Issue 35 – March to May 2025

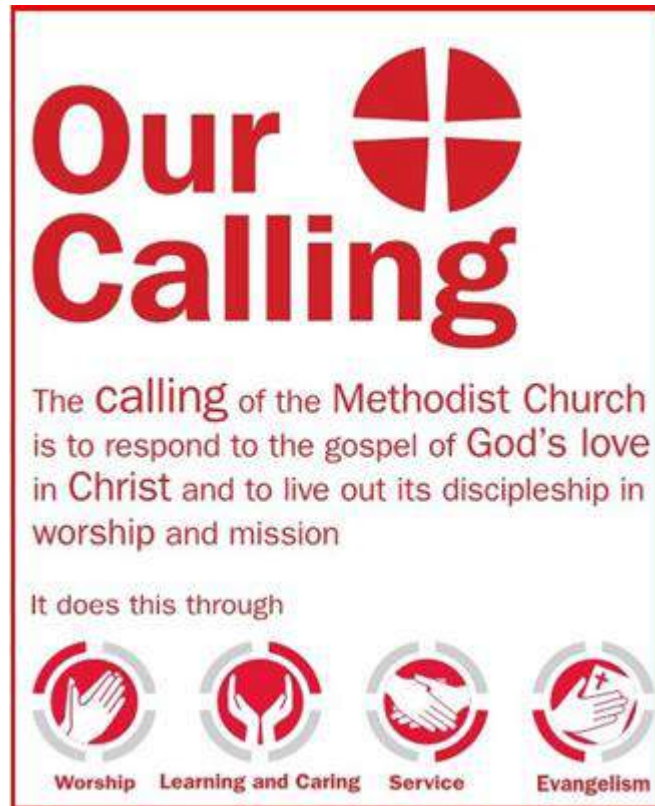


The Wey Valley Methodist Circuit

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

As I'm writing this letter, I'm thinking about a range of events that have been happening around us over the past few weeks.

At the time of writing, it was Holocaust Memorial Day a couple of days ago and moving scenes were shown of the events commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Again, at the time of writing it is Lunar New Year and I am writing a sermon to incorporate the ideas of the Year of the Snake (reflection, growth and personal transformation) into a sermon about following the way of Jesus for a joint service at Woking of our English and Cantonese speaking congregations.

A couple of Sundays ago I took part in an event in Guildford to mark the 750th Anniversary of the expulsion of the Jewish community from Guildford in 1275. We used the opportunity to sign a new declaration of Freedom of Religious Faith and Belief for the town.

Then last Sunday I attended a service at Guildford Cathedral to welcome the new Dean of Guildford to his role. The Very Revd. Bob Cooper comes to us from the Durham Diocese and is rightly proud of his Lancastrian roots. It's been a busy couple of weeks!

All these events may seem unconnected and random – and in many ways they are – and yet in all of them I have felt swept up in the passage of time and in the sense of one era handing on to another. In the middle of all this, there is something about the fact that new life is not possible unless there is death first. But death of what? A lot was said around Holocaust Memorial Day of the importance of remembering the past so that those mistakes – that evil – NEVER happens again. In the world at the moment it is more important than ever to hear that message.

The events of Easter speak to us of life and hope. Hope in the midst of the most dire of circumstances, life that emerges out of the tomb. And that life – that way of living is different than it was before. It is infused with the grace and power and life and love of a God who will not let us go.

I know that the life and story of our planet can feel pretty bleak at the moment. But Easter gives a different message. It is why the Pope has declared this Jubilee year one of hope because the tomb is empty, the body has gone, and there is a figure at the entrance saying, 'Why look in a place of the dead for one who is living? He is not here...he is out in the world and he needs you to join him there - to share his risen life'. Remembering the past but looking to the future with life and hope.

We were saddened recently to learn of the death of Dereka Gadney. Dereka was a long standing and faithful member of Godalming United Church. She came onto the Plan as a Local Preacher in 1989 and for 36 years she faithfully held that office and preached the Good News of Easter joy to people around this Circuit. Her ministry was significant, gifted and important. She served her Lord with her gifts and graces - may she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Revd. Dr Paul Glass

Superintendent Minister

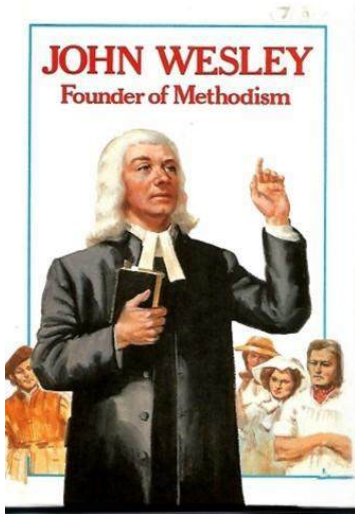
News from around the Circuit

Addlestone

Another year passes and we realise it has been a year in which war, crime, suffering and death of innocent people has been reported daily in the news. In all of this, the love of God, loving your neighbour and the teaching of Jesus appears, sadly, to have been missing. Through the year our church tried to respond by helping those in need at home and abroad to an extent that justifies mention, and we thank members, friends and visitors for their generous response.

The need in this country to provide food and support to those who are struggling has existed for several years, and we continue to regularly provide goods to our local FoodBank.

We continue to support Grace, a 12-year-old Ecuadorian girl, helping her with her education and her faith in God. Grace is hoping to become a nurse.



We sent Harvest Sunday food donations to the York Road Project in Woking again last year, but we also donated to Water Aid, providing clean water in countries where it is badly needed.

We continue our regular Saturday coffee mornings with its monthly fun bingo event, in which donations are made alternately to the Sam Beare Hospice and the Open Doors Charity.

John Wesley made us aware of the importance of helping those in need with his words in 'ALL WE CAN', and we have chosen to support the Methodist All We Can charity this year, in events such as our Gift Day and Christmas Fair.

We can't help everyone, but we can help someone. Long may we continue to do so. Our thanks again to our church family that is trying to follow the advice of our Lord and Saviour to love our neighbours as ourselves.

Thanks be to God.

Fred Rowe



Byfleet

Our wonderful FoodBank continues apace, as do the weekly visits by the Citizens Advice Woking, with both charities supporting real needs in our community. From this work and circuit meeting discussions, we have implemented the suggestion to include regularly in our intercessory prayers various groups and activities from Byfleet. Through our website, we invite others to ask for prayers to be included in our intercessions.

We were also able to help two other outside organisations. We had a collection for the York Road Project (a brilliant local charity that offers aid and accommodation to the homeless in our area) and our Christmas Day offertory was donated to the Fund for Human Need. The FfHN is a small Methodist-affiliated charity established in 1960 by Revd. Donald McNeill, a Methodist Minister in Tooting, South London to relieve poverty and hunger by relief payments (once only, up to a maximum of £120) which are made, irrespective of faith, ethnic origin or social group to individuals in the UK. I remember Donald as one of our inspiring circuit ministers when I lived and worshipped in the Wimbledon Circuit.

On a different tack, for many years our church has had a Tuesday afternoon Fellowship Meeting, originally for ladies but more recently for men as well. Nevertheless, with numbers falling (sometimes to only one or two) I suggested at the Church Council it should be closed but I was roundly dismissed! A couple of members offered to see what they could do on a fortnightly basis. So, we continue, and I want to make a special note of the meeting on 14 January which arose from people saying after a funeral eulogy "what a shame we did not know this or that" about the departed. Our folk were invited to come and talk about their childhood and we had a wonderful afternoon with some 20 people talking about their personal experiences in the war years and afterwards.

One other matter of concern over recent weeks has been Woking Council's plan to make the 1939 part of Byfleet Methodist Church a locally listed building. It was not entirely clear what this meant but knowing that the 1939 building is not in the Byfleet Conservation area (as the Council stated) and that various alterations have already been made and more considered, we formally objected. While looking at papers on this matter, I came across this lovely picture of what was our 1928 church which now forms our church hall.

Ken Mears



Guildford Declaration of Freedom of Religion and Belief

On January 16th, 1275, the Jewish community of Guildford was expelled from the town by Queen Eleanor.

750 years later to mark that event, members of a wide range of faith communities in Guildford joined with the Bishop, MP and Mayor of Guildford to sign the Guildford Declaration of Freedom of Religion and Belief.

After an open-air act of reconciliation in the grounds of Guildford Castle, the group went to the Guildhall in Guildford where, after a ceremony including music, reflections and a fascinating conversation about the Medieval Jewish community in Guildford, the Declaration was signed.

Revd. Dr. Paul Glass signed on behalf of the Methodist Church.

St. Mary's, of course, is an Anglo-Saxon building and is one of the few current buildings in the town that was in existence at the expulsion in 1275.

At the event, Paul said: "In the Methodist tradition we emphasise shared responsibility, bearing one another's burdens and watching over one another in love. As we remember the pain of the expulsion 750 years ago, we are reminded of our duty to stand against injustice. In St. Mary's shared Anglican Methodist Church we once had frescoes that were designed to divide. Now, every Friday night we welcome people of all faiths and none to light candles and remember those facing hardship and persecution in the spirit of the Declaration we are signing today. May this memorial inspire us to work together for a future rooted in love, justice and hope."

It was an extraordinary privilege to take part in such an important and historic event.





Guildford Declaration of Freedom of Religion and Belief

Today, we gather to reflect on a solemn chapter in Guildford's history. On the 16th of January 1275, the Jewish community of this town was unjustly expelled by Queen Eleanor, an act that left a legacy of sorrow and exclusion. This event serves as a stark reminder of the perils of intolerance and division, and it compels us to reaffirm our commitment to the principles of justice, inclusion, and mutual respect.

We also honour the resilience and compassion that have defined Guildford's community through the centuries. During the Second World War, our town extended a hand of refuge to those fleeing persecution, including Jewish child refugees, who found safety and a chance to rebuild their lives here. Their presence enriched our community immeasurably. Refugees and their descendants have continued to shape Guildford, with some contributing to the establishment of the University of Surrey, which stands today as a symbol of learning, innovation, and unity.

Guildford is now a pluralistic, vibrant, and diverse borough, where people of different faiths, beliefs, and cultural traditions come together. This diversity is our strength, and we are committed to fostering a community that is welcoming, inclusive, and respectful of all.

In marking this significant anniversary, we, the undersigned representatives of Guildford, declare:

Commitment to Freedom of Religion and Belief

We affirm our unwavering dedication to the universal right to freedom of religion and belief. Guildford is a place where individuals and communities can express their faith, spirituality, or beliefs without fear, in mutual harmony and respect.

Celebration of Diversity

We celebrate the rich tapestry of cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity that strengthens our borough. We pledge to nurture greater cultural appreciation and understanding, recognising that our differences are sources of enrichment and inspiration.

Opposition to Hate and Violence

We stand united against all forms of hate, prejudice, and violence. We are resolute in challenging antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, and all forms of discrimination, ensuring that Guildford remains a safe and welcoming community for all.

Commitment to Mutual Respect

We pledge to cultivate a culture of mutual respect, where every individual is valued, and communities coexist peacefully.

Honouring the Past, Building the Future

While we remember the injustices of the past, including the expulsion of the Jewish community by Queen Eleanor, we also look forward with hope. Together, we commit to building a future rooted in inclusivity, understanding, and shared responsibility, ensuring that the mistakes of history are not repeated.

Let this declaration serve as a testament to Guildford's enduring commitment to these values, and as a call to action for all who live and work here to create a community of justice, peace, and harmony.

Cranleigh

As we write this, we are reflecting on the wonderful variety of Christmas services and activities we have shared together at Cranleigh and we are looking forward to the year ahead, whatever that might bring. We might all be getting older and have less stamina than before, but that doesn't stop us having ideas for the future of our church and its members, not to mention our outreach into Cranleigh itself.

We are encouraged to welcome some new friends to our services and activities, as well as local groups and individuals who are using our premises during the week.



The Baby Bank continues to be run by church members and is a much-needed resource for families in Cranleigh and beyond. Please spread the word that we are here on Tuesday Mornings from 10-12 during term time. It is a free service and we rely on local people for donations of clothes and equipment. At the moment, we are bursting at the seams and are very grateful to everyone who has donated items and who supports this valuable community outreach.

Further outreach has been continuing in Elmbridge Retirement Village. Our ecumenical services are every Tuesday morning at 10.00am and we have welcomed a variety of preachers and ministers to our services, including our own Revd. Allan Taylor and Revd. Dr Paul Glass. Paul was part of the team for our carol service on 21 December at Elmbridge when over 80 people attended and enjoyed mince pies and mulled wine afterwards.

Paul also led our New Year's Eve service on 31 December, again in the hall with the tree, decorations and not one but two nativity sets on display. We are thinking we might have a nativity set display for December this year and see how many we can assemble!

Our faith coffee mornings are quarterly and the next one is in early March. We are hoping to hold days of activity and reflection during Holy Week. We will set up stations in the meeting room with tranquil music, colouring sheets etc for the five-week days, plus a supper after an evening service on the Tuesday, and the Good Friday service on the afternoon of 18 April.

Hilary Strawson and Jane Briggs



Circuit Mission Supper Saturday 8 March 2025

**Trinity Methodist Church Woking
6.00 for 6.30pm**

Fish & Chips (battered sausage/Vegan options available)

Cost £10 – tickets available from church stewards.

Bring your own crockery & cutlery

Speaker - Trey Hall



Trey Hall is a Methodist pioneer, church planting strategist, and evangelist. Since 2000 he has established and led churches in the United Kingdom and the United States, served as Mission Advisor for the Birmingham District of the Methodist Church in Britain, and coached scores of practitioners renewing inherited forms of church or launching fresh expressions of church.

Godalming United Church

At the end of November, we celebrated the 100th birthday of our friend Ruth Searles with a party of over 60 of her family (some from as far away as Australia!) – two children, four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren – and friends. Ruth has lived in Farncombe for over seventy years and is held in great esteem and affection, attending church regularly. For her birthday over £400 was raised for the Farncombe Foodbank in lieu of presents – what a lovely idea.

Born in Northumberland, Ruth and her twin sister Annie were premature, and the doctor in attendance told their mother to “Enjoy them for the day, they won’t be here to stay” (how wrong was that?!) After moving south, Ruth trained as a pharmacist, working in Westminster Hospital, then St Peter’s, and finally for 28 years at St Luke’s Hospital in Guildford, earning herself the title of “the walking archive”.

Once again, we were able to offer over 30 Advent gifts to families with children associated with our church but not regularly attending. Each “Step into the Christmas Story” pack – developed by the URC, our other parent church – contained activities for the whole family to explore together – Advent poster, stickers, games, recipes, stories etc.

On 19 January we were delighted to host the annual Godalming Churches Together combined New Year Service of Holy Communion. It’s always a joy to worship with our brothers and sisters from other churches – attested to by the surrounding buzz and the lusty singing of 180 voices. The theme was the raising of Lazarus and Jesus’s challenge: “I am the resurrection and the life: Do you believe this?” with the response “Lord we believe; please help us in our unbelief.”

Our panto in February was Goldilocks and the Three Bears, written by Josh Dixon, and specially adapted to our multi-age cast of 44 children (upwards from 4) and 19 adults. With 24 musical numbers, three choreographers and two musicians – and with many changes of costume (thank you Kris Benjafield) – it was a wonder of organisation and timing. The overall theme was Circus – with Madame Rosie’s “good” Big Top in red and yellow, switching seamlessly to Gruber & Gertie’s “bad” Big Top in purple and green, thanks to the wonders of IT. There was plenty of scope for a huge cast of characters – human, (including two “dames”), animal and make-believe – a Great British Bake-Off involving Prue Leith and Paul Hollywood (really?!), and an adults-only sketch firing water-pistols at the audience.

The whole production couldn’t have taken place without the help of numerous church members and friends – with make-up, refreshments, supervision and a multitude of backstage jobs. The cast had great fun rehearsing and performing, and the audience enjoyed a fantastic show. (Oh, yes they did!) Thanks as ever to Barbara Keene for masterminding this very special form of church outreach.

Looking ahead

Saturday 29 March 3.00-5.00pm Messy Church Easter Egg Trail messy.church@guc.org.uk
Bible-themed fun for all the family: crafts, games, church trail, storytime and songs, party tea

Spring Bible Studies with Adam Tuesdays 10.00am, repeated Wednesdays (same week) 7pm

Wk 1 - 4th & 5th March

Wk 2 – 18th & 19th March

Wk 3 – 1st & 2nd April

Godalming continued....



Ruth Searles, with family and friends



Goldilocks...



...and the Three Bears

Genesis Chorale presents

MASS IN C
BY LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Te Deum by Bizet
Ave Verum Corpus by Mozart
How lovely are thy dwellings by Johannes Brahms

Music Director:
Florence Price

7.30pm, Saturday
5th April 2025

St John's Church
West Byfleet,
KT14 6EH

Tickets: £18 Adults,
£9 students.

Order from website,
choir members and
on the door.

Genesis Chorale

www.genesischorale.org.uk



Registered Charity no 1048381

Guildford St Mary's

In this volatile and fast changing world, it's hard to tell what will be happening today, let alone by the time this issue is published. We will, by the time you read this, have passed the 3rd anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In late February we will again have held an anniversary service to mark that invasion and think of all the suffering which has followed from it. The one near-certainty at the time of writing is that there will still be a need for lasting peace and justice in many areas of the world and, sadly, our weekly Friday night Vigil for Peace won't have become redundant.

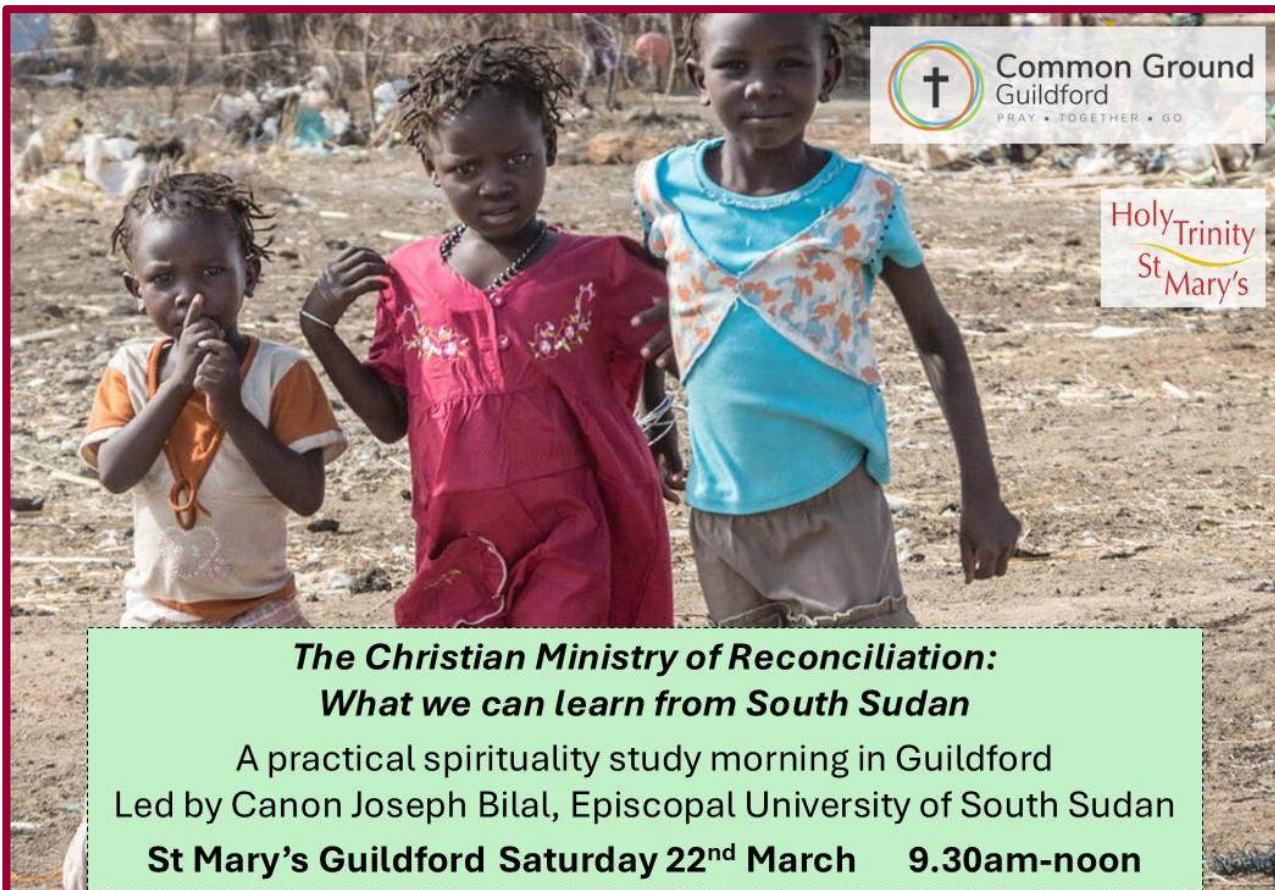
As the vigils continue, in them we remember not just Ukraine but also the Middle East and Sudan, where the massive humanitarian emergency has to date had little exposure compared to its scale. Sudan's vicious civil war has been in our vigil's prayer focus for many months. We're pleased that on Saturday 22 March we will hear first-hand of some positive news from neighbouring South Sudan which is struggling to cope with an influx of refugees from Sudan, and the aftermath of its own civil war. You'll find a flyer giving details of this event on the next page of this issue. There has not been a great deal of coverage, but the Catholic and Anglican churches have been working quietly and effectively to bring about reconciliation between those on different sides in South Sudan's civil war. We will be visited by Doctor Joseph Bilal, an Anglican priest and senior academic from Juba. He will lead a Saturday morning study looking at the Christian Ministry of Reconciliation and what we can learn from the South Sudan experience. Do please come along if you can.

At the heart of the Christian message is hope and we'll be following the theme 'Finding Hope in Hard Places' in our weekly Thursday lunchtime Reflections in Lent. These start on 13 March and finish on 10 April. We will have a range of speakers focusing on some of the dark places people face in their lives and finding grounds for hope when all may seem dark. It would be great to see friends from around the circuit popping in for these lunchtime events. After an address from the speaker, there is a chance to discuss what they have said over a simple bread and soup lunch.

While some of our exhibitions at St Mary's are topical and arranged at short notice, others require a long lead-time to coordinate all that is involved. This is certainly going to be the case for the long hoped-for exhibition of works from the Methodist Modern Art Collection which we are looking forward to in March/April 2026. Planning is underway and we will be inviting help from other churches in the Wey Valley Circuit, as well as encouraging you all to attend. We hope it will stimulate interest and discussion across the churches and beyond and we'd love to hear from anybody who would be interested in helping, please.

Nigel Campion-Smith





**Common Ground
Guildford**
PRAY • TOGETHER • GO

**Holy Trinity
St Mary's**

***The Christian Ministry of Reconciliation:
What we can learn from South Sudan***

A practical spirituality study morning in Guildford
Led by Canon Joseph Bilal, Episcopal University of South Sudan
St Mary's Guildford Saturday 22nd March 9.30am-noon

FINDING HOPE IN HARD PLACES

A SERIES OF LENT REFLECTIONS



**ST MARY'S
QUARRY ST
GU1 3UP**

12.30 – 13.30

**THURSDAYS
13, 20 & 27 MARCH
3 & 10 APRIL**

SAVE THE DATES!

**FOLLOWED BY
A BREAD AND SOUP LUNCH**

SACRE

SACRE is the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.

SACRE is made up of four groups which meet at least three times a year. The groups represent:

- Group A: Christian denominations other than the Church of England and other faith or belief groups that represent the main traditions of the area
- Group B: The Church of England



- Group C: Teachers' associations and representatives from Surrey RE networks
- Group D: The Local Authority (Surrey County Council).

Until fairly recently the Chair had to be, according to the constitution, a county councillor. After a change in the constitution that is no longer the case and the new Chair is Sarah Harris, the Jewish representative, and I'm the Vice-Chair. It is the responsibility of SACRE to:

- determine religious education content in Surrey maintained schools by producing a [locally agreed syllabus](#) and reviewing it every five years;
- advise on matters of collective worship in county schools and religious education (RE) in line with the agreed syllabus. This includes methods of teaching, choice of materials and training for teachers;
- assist with any complaint about religious education or collective worship in schools and to consider any requests from schools for a determination;
- publish an annual report detailing any action that SACRE has taken and any advice it has given, as well as any monitoring of Religious Education (RE) provision that has taken place in the County's schools or in relation to standards in RE.

SACRE continued....

Please do click on to the link above to see the locally agreed syllabus for 2023-2028 which is very comprehensive and the result of much hard work by a large number of people.

Presently there are representatives on the Surrey SACRE from the following communities: Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, Baha'i, Humanist, Sikh, Roman Catholic, Church of England, Baptist, Methodist, RE teachers and county councillors.

Members of SACRE do visit schools by invitation to talk to particular classes or year groups including 6th Forms. Schools visited include: George Abbott, Guildford; Gordon's, Woking; More House, Farnham.

Rachel Boxer is the Adviser to Surrey SACRE and can be contacted at Church House, 20 Alan Turing Road, Guildford GU2 7YF.

Revd. J. Allan Taylor

TRUST IN GOD

**I asked God for strength
and God gave me difficulties to make me strong.**

**I asked God for wisdom
and God gave me problems to solve.**

**I asked God for courage
and God gave me dangers to overcome.**

**I asked God for love
and God gave me troubled people to help.**

**I asked God for patience
and God gave me situations where I was forced to wait.**

**I asked God for favours
and God gave me opportunities.**

**I asked God for everything so I could enjoy life
Instead God gave me life so I could enjoy everything.**

**I received nothing I wanted
I received everything I needed.**

Knaphill

Christmas already seems a long time ago, but our services and celebrations at Knaphill all went well.

The Christmas Afternoon Tea with Carols was most enjoyable. Many thanks are due to those who supplied edible items and to Helen Chamberlain who organised it. The ecumenical carol singing around the village, organised by Churches Together in Knaphill (C4K), was also very well received, particularly the session in Sainsbury's. Shoppers smiled at us, stopped to listen with small children and staff even came across to say how much they were enjoying it! It was delightful.

Since then, we have had our first clothing bank of the year and our first coffee morning. The latter was very enjoyable and successful, as usual, with people sitting happily in the warm (on a very cold day), chatting as they enjoyed their teas/coffees and bacon rolls. The clothing bank had a lot of clients, who managed to find warm coats and/or pretty dresses, depending on their need/age. One little girl was very clearly pleased that she had found some pretty, new (to her) things to take away. We were very short of helpers on the day, however, due to illness or other commitments, so I am passing on an appeal from Helen Brice, one of the organisers. If anyone has an occasional 3rd Saturday afternoon of the month free and would like to help, it would be very much appreciated. No special qualifications or training are needed. The next session is on 15 February.

Also, on the subject of coffee mornings, we reported last time on how successful the event for Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance Trust had been in September. We now have a final total of £1,285.00 and a grand total over 3 years of £3,189.35. This is a fantastic achievement on the part of Tarina Berry and grateful thanks are also due to all those who helped Tarina to raise this magnificent sum!

We are looking forward to various upcoming ecumenical events in Knaphill, such as the World Day of Prayer service on 7 March, and the Good Friday Walk of Witness and Service. By the time we get to Easter, the current baptist minister and his wife will have retired and returned to The Netherlands. They will both be very much missed by C4K in Knaphill, as they have made a huge contribution to village life and activities. They will also be missed by us at KMC, because both Pieter and Hetty have most kindly taken occasional services for us.

Last, but by no means least, we continue to remember all those who are concerned about keeping warm in this very cold and blustery weather, especially if they have lost their fuel allowance, for those facing life-changing illnesses and those who are confused – we pray that God will grant them peace.

Lynda Shore



COFFEE AND CAKE AT ST. MARY'S

QUARRY ST. GUILDFORD GU1 3UP

APRIL - JUNE
2025

10.30 – 12.00



Everyone welcome

SAVE THE DATES!

Thursday 24 April

Thursday 22 May

Thursday 26 June



Circuit Service

**In 2025/2026 we celebrate 60 years since
the admission to the Order of Local
Preachers of**

**Revd. Allan Taylor and Revd. Peter Hills
and 70 years since the admission of
Roland Hamon**

**This service will celebrate the significant
milestone of 190 years of preaching, and give
thanks to the faithful ministry of those who lead
our worship.**



Refreshments will be served after the service

Sunday 11 May 2025 3.00pm

**Merrow Methodist Church
Bushy Hill Drive, Guildford, GU1 2SH**

Merrow

Time does seem to fly past rather quickly these days. It seems just like yesterday that I was writing the article for the December to February Wey Forward – and now here we are again!

Christmas is always a busy time at Merrow. It started by welcoming Revd. Darlene McCarley back to lead the Women's Fellowship Carol Service and Tea on the 2 December. On 8 December, our first '*From Loss to Light*' all-souls style service was led by Revd. Dr Paul Glass. This was a very moving service which was appreciated by all who attended.

Our carol service on 15 December was a joint affair with the Guildford Church of the Holy Word – a Chinese church that meets at Merrow on Sunday afternoons. One highlight was learning to say the Lord's Prayer in Mandarin. I don't think we were very successful – but we gave it a go!

On 12 January, our annual games afternoon was held. Again, we were joined by the Chinese church. Despite the cold weather, we had around 40 attendees all told. A wide variety of games were played from table tennis and bocce to whist and a variety of board games. There was also Pass the Parcel for the children – of course, no cheating goes on whatsoever! Tea and cakes were available for refreshments.

Our church anniversary has now been set for 22 June with Revd. David Coote leading. This will be our 70th Anniversary and we will be getting plans in place for celebrating it properly. Await further details.

Julie Wallis



Christmas Flowers

Bible Study at Merrow 7.30pm

- ❖ Thursday 20 March
- ❖ Thursday 17 April
- ❖ Thursday 15 May

Coffee Mornings at Merrow

Thursdays 10.30am - 12.00pm

- ❖ 13 March in aid of The Leprosy Mission
- ❖ 10 April in aid of our Community Garden
- ❖ 8 May in aid of Christian Aid

St. Michael's, Sheerwater

On 16 November, St Michael's welcomed friends from Woking People of Faith (WPoF) who visited during their Pilgrimage Walk. This is an annual event, taking in a different part of the Borough each year, and is held during Interfaith Week when one of the events suggested for local groups is to visit others' places of worship. The stops included a meeting with the Shia Muslim community, a meeting with members of the Sunni community at the Sheerwater Islamic and Education Centre, and a visit to MASCOT (Maybury & Sheerwater Community Trust), in each case learning something of their life and work. At St Michael's they heard about the plans for the church as a community hub and met with the Indian congregation of the Syrian Orthodox Church who meet at St Michael's on Saturdays.



Revd. Phil Simpson addressing the 'pilgrims' at St Michael's

WPoF was established in 2008 with the purpose of promoting community and religious harmony for the benefit of communities in Woking and the surrounding area. It brings together people of different faiths across the town, including Christians, Jews, Muslims (both Shia and Sunni), Hindus, Buddhists and Baha'i.

Other events organised by WPoF over the past year have included an inter-faith football tournament, conversations with local faith leaders, Faiths in Harmony – an evening of music from different traditions, clearance work on Horsell Common and a presentation in the town centre to mark International Peace Day.

WPoF is a registered charity and until recently was supported financially by Woking Borough Council. That funding has now ceased and ways are being sought to continue what is quite clearly valuable work.

David Lander

Free Training and Support

Across our churches we have dedicated and willing volunteers who undertake all sorts of tasks; each one essential to enable our churches to offer worship Sunday by Sunday. However, the world in which we are asking our folk to do this requires us to demonstrate that they have been appropriately resourced – through training and support – to do the work.

The circuit provides on-line training via the iHasco platform so that people can enhance their skills and make sure that they are aware of best working practices and, in some cases, health and safety regulations.

The courses are generally quite short and they do not need to be completed all in one go. The tests at the end shouldn't be seen as anything daunting but as a way of measuring understanding of the course material. As well as being informative they are FUN and FREE to sign up for.

You can choose to complete any or all of the courses below – whichever would be helpful to you personally.

- Risk Assessment
- Fire Awareness
- Health and Safety Essentials
- Food Safety & Hygiene Level 1
- Food Safety & Hygiene Level 2

If you are interested, please contact me with your email address and the name of the course/s you would like to do.

Lucy Venmore

circuitoffice@weyvalleycircuit.org.uk or 07808 046451



Stoughton

We entered 2025 with our Covenant Service led by George, who had recently returned from his well-earned sabbatical. On a very cold winter day he shared with us some memories of his time in a very hot Ghana!

A coffee morning held just before Christmas raised £130 for 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 young people and their families.

Our coffee morning was extended from fortnightly to weekly during January and February to offer a warm space alongside a hot drink and, usually, cake. This was much appreciated when we had some visitors from one of the local care homes.

By the time we receive this edition of Wey Forward we will already be preparing for Lent and Easter. Lent encourages us to do what we can – not what we can't. We try to keep that in mind as we continue to encourage more use of our premises here at Stoughton and we are grateful for the support of Revd. Adam Payne who is helping us to look at future opportunities.

Linda Macbeth



Very Punny!



What is a dentist's favourite hymn?
Crown Him with Many Crowns

What's a missionary's favourite kind of car?
A convertible.

What is a dentist's second favourite hymn?
Holy, Holy, Holy!

Why wouldn't the Pharaoh let the Hebrews go?
He was in 'de Nile.

Where was Solomon's temple located?
On the side of his head.

At what time of day was Adam created?
A little before Eve.

How does Moses make his coffee?
Hebrews it.

Why did the hawk sit on the church's steeple?
It was a bird of pray.



**SUNDAY
27TH APRIL
4.00pm**

PUDDING AND PRAISE

This will be led by

Ross Richardson and Dave Paterson

Come and have some delicious puddings at 4.00pm and then settle down to some great praise, worship and contemplation at 4.30pm

**Delicious puddings and
great Praise**

**If you like a good
pudding come and
taste some**

**Be uplifted by great
praise songs
led by 'Breeze'**

WALTON METHODIST CHURCH

Terrace Road
KT12 2SR

Telephone

01932 429184

<http://www.waltonmethodist.org>

Sunday 27th April 2025 4pm

Walton-on-Thames

It has been a busy quarter at Walton. In October we had a simple but poignant reflective All Souls remembrance service where our community was invited to remember those loved ones who are no longer with us. Their names were read out and candles were lit in their memory.

At our Remembrance Day service in November, we spent a little time reading out the names of those who are remembered on the two memorials (ours and the old Shepperton MC memorial) which we curate at Walton. It was a very simple but significant part of our service, to honour the members of our community who made the supreme sacrifice for their country over 100 years ago.

As 2024 drew to a close, the world seemed to grow a little darker, more fractured and more turbulent. What can we do in response to this as Christians?

Often, we simply do a lot of “verbal hand-wringing” regarding those things and places in the world over which we have no control. However, as Christians we are exhorted to pray “at all times” and yes, even for those impossible circumstances which fill our news feeds daily. So, to heed this exhortation we have a dedicated “Peace Candle” in our sanctuary which we light each week with a reminder for all of us to pray for peace. The next step would be to hold a peace vigil as a way of reaching out to our local community to give them the time, space and opportunity to reflect and pray for peace.

As part of our community outreach, we personally delivered 45 Christmas cards to local shops and businesses with our greetings, best wishes and an assurance of our prayers for them in 2025. This helps to connect us into the local business community, and many of the owners were touched by this gesture. Over Christmas both our carol and christingle services were well attended, with our young people helping to put the christingle service together and help out on the day.

Onwards into 2025, we cajoled our young people to leading a Local Arrangement earlier this month which they curated and put together brilliantly, with some help from Jeannette Curtis. Two of them preached insightfully and thoughtfully on the stories of Jonah and Zaccheus. Who knows... perhaps Walton is incubating some fledgling Local Preachers?

We plan to run a themed preaching series through our Pudding and Praise (Café Church) services this year based on the character and lifestyle of Jesus. These will be titled “Up”; “In” and “Out”. We held our first one last week which was centred around the parable of the Prodigal Son and in which Breeze led the worship beautifully. Our aim with these services is to try to use them as outreach services. Additionally, we are looking forward to hosting our local World Day of Prayer this year and some Lent Groups as we move into Lent, using the MC “Soul Food” material. Additionally, we will run six weekly Ignatian style contemplative meditation sessions based upon the lectionary Lenten readings for this season.

Ross Richardson

West Horsley

We celebrated Christmas in encouraging form at West Horsley this year.

It started with our usual Carols for All evening on Saturday 30 November, when we were joined by friends from other circuit churches together with local folk – thank you for making such a splendid and enjoyable rendering of carols old and new.

Revd. Claire Hargreaves led our carol service on 21 December with 27 people of all ages in the congregation, including a family whose father had been a member of the local scouts and since moved away, but recognised Bob as his scout leader!

A new venture for us was a crib service in the afternoon of Christmas Eve. As it got dark, we all held battery operated candles and the children brought up the figures to place them in the stable (see photo below). Many thanks to Sue Stratford for her encouragement with this – a great success and attended by 28 people. I'm sure we will repeat it another year.

On Christmas Day we were very grateful to Dave Paterson for taking a thought-provoking service which was appreciated by all in the congregation.

An experiment with YouTube enabled us to join the circuit service on 29 December without moving from our chapel – it worked well and we all felt part of the congregation assembled at Trinity Woking, without having to organise lifts. Thanks to the Superintendent for his message, and the mention of WH!

Now we move into Lent and Easter, but first, we welcome George back from his sabbatical when he takes our Covenant Service. Many thanks to Claire for 'looking after' us while George was away.

We invited 30 members of the community to a 'Soup & Pud' lunch at the end of January. It's always an enjoyable occasion, much appreciated by all who attend, and we were able to make use of the Horsley Community Bus for their transport.

We have invited Revd. David Coote to take our Chapel Anniversary on 18 May and are looking forward to welcoming him back. We will be having a Songs of Praise evening on the Saturday before (see poster on the next page). I do hope you'll be able to join us.

Margaret Faulkner



Songs of Praise



Saturday May 17th
Horsley
Methodist Church

(next to W.H. Village Hall)

7.00p.m.

Come and sing a selection of favourite hymns.

Phone 01483 282474 to make requests.

Weybridge

Well, we have survived the winter and look forward to spring and the warmer weather.

We have just taken part in a Churches Together in Weybridge service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Many prayers were said for the life and needs of the town and the wider world.

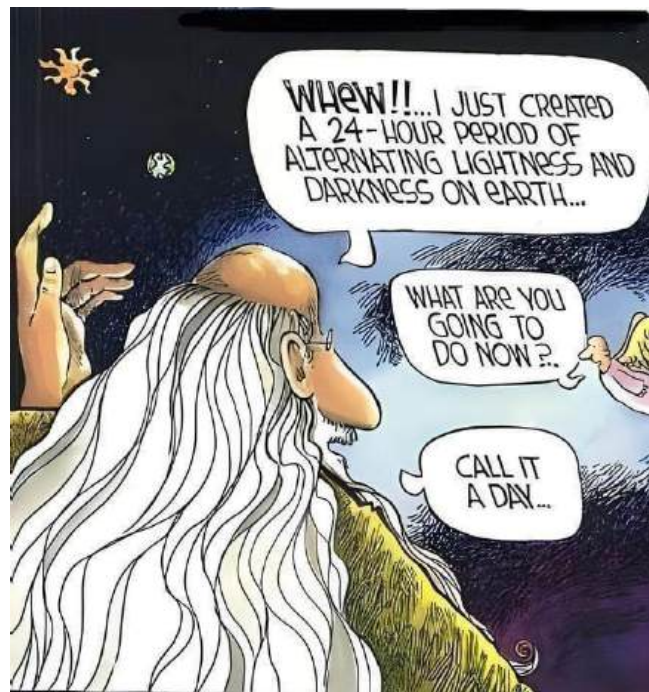
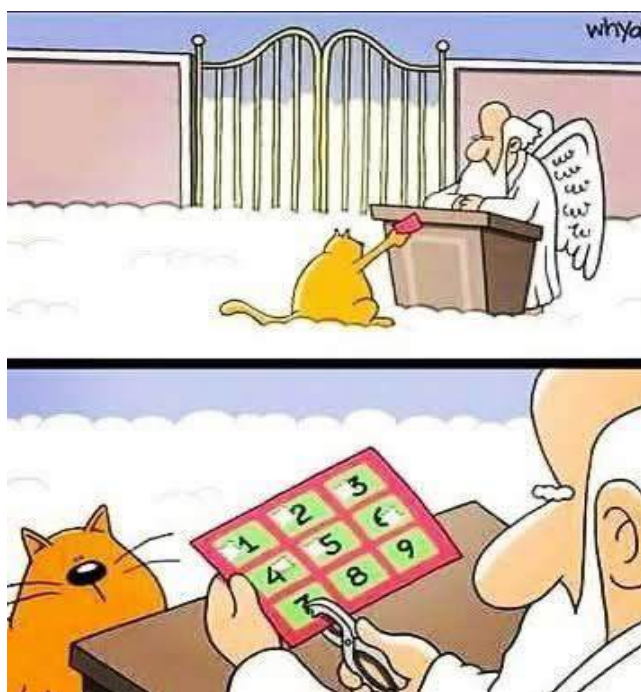
The highlight of the Easter season for us in Weybridge is the welcome return of the 'Churches Together' Walk of Witness on Good Friday. The Methodists are privileged to be leading this event. Revd. Shaun Sanders will greet Christians of Weybridge at the Methodist church and lead us in 10 minutes of prayer, before we all process in silence to Monument Green where we will hold a short service. Everyone who drives through Weybridge will see the service and it will hopefully remind people of the reason for the season.

Shaun will be paying a return visit to the Weybridge Old Folks Club, which our church has supported for many years. His subject for the visit is a surprise!

As a church we have recently opened our doors to the Elmbridge branch of 'Homestart', a charity for those in need. As the church has joined the modern age and now has Wi-Fi, Homestart are able to use our free space for those in need of their services in Weybridge – people who previously had to try and travel to Walton.

With a small church community, it is difficult to get involved with many needy initiatives but with God's help we continue to do the best we can.

Linda Weedon



Circuit Pilgrimage to Iona

Thursday 28 August - Tuesday 2 September 2025

led by Revd. Adam Payne

staying at the Argyll Hotel

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



Please contact Helen
Belsham for further details

helenebelsham@icloud.com





care UK



**Right
at
Home®**
Quality Care In Your Home

NEW! **THE SUNFLOWER CAFE**



Enjoy a cuppa, biscuits and great company at The Sunflower Cafe. The cafe is aimed specifically at individuals living with Dementia and their carers providing them the opportunity to meet with others in a welcoming environment!



**Godalming Baptist Church, 15 Queen
Street, Godalming, GU7 1BA**

**Nearest Parking: Queen Street Pay &
Display next to the Church or Crown
Court Car Pay & Display approx. 2-
minute walk.**

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

**Thursday 13th February 2025
Thursday 13th March 2025
Thursday 17th April 2025
Thursday 8th May 2025
Thursday 5th June 2025**

Woking

On Sunday 12 January, during our morning service at Trinity Woking, one of our members, Liz Penfold, was presented with an award for 50 years' service as a volunteer in Girlguiding by Jenny Ryan, the Division Commissioner.

Liz gave us this potted history of her life in Girlguiding.

I was a Brownie and then a Guide in Barnes.

I continued as a Guide when I moved to Walton-on-Thames as a teenager and became a Young Leader.

I moved to Woking in 1971 and started as assistant leader at 8th Woking Guides with Betty Eldridge. We had 60 guides. I was Assistant Leader and Leader for over 30 years.

I took girls to the 75th Anniversary of Guiding at Crystal Palace in 1985 and a celebration camp for the 100th Anniversary in 2010.

I enjoyed camping and always joined guides and scouts at Scoutabout. One year, the driver of the coach the District had hired insisted that the girls had nothing with them inside the coach. We were the last unit to be picked up. This meant that there was no room for my equipment and tents, so I was left in the, (then), Brewery Road car park, with a big pile of equipment, having waved all the girls and leaders off!! What to do? Luckily, one of the girl's mums went home for their trailer, and very kindly drove me and the equipment to the South of England Showground, Ardingly, where the camp was being held!

I helped set up the Rainbows and I was District Commissioner from 2003 to 2007.

Since retiring from the unit, I am now the Division Training Advisor and County Mentor and a member of the Trefoil Guild.

Jean Normington and Liz Penfold



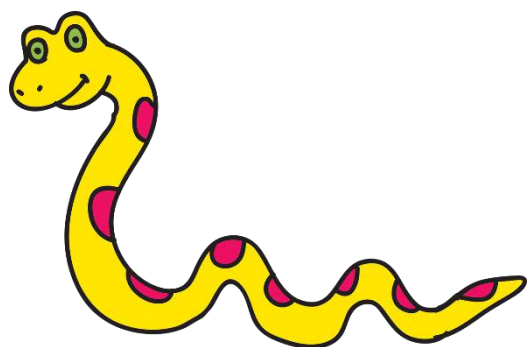
Lunar New Year Celebrations

On Sunday 2 February some 200 people crammed into the worship space at Trinity Woking. The English and Cantonese speaking congregations joined together for a service of celebration for the Lunar New Year. The worship was followed by a lavish banquet of Chinese food.

Colourful decorations celebrated the arrival of the Year of the Snake.

A wonderful time was had by all.

Revd. Dr Paul Glass



Pastoral Support

Advocacy

SUSTAINING HOPE SPRING 2025

Accommodation

Interpreting

Drop-In Centres



Foodbanks

Place of Sanctuary

**Are you involved in responding to the needs of
Refugees, Migrants & Displaced Persons
- or interested in becoming involved?**

Befriending

English practice

The Methodist South-East District 'Sustaining Hope' spring gathering for 2025

will include

Cafes

- Prayer and time to network
- Keynote presentations on:

Form-filling

- * ***Their Voice*** -supporting women rescued from slavery & their babies
- * ***Chit Chat*** at St Mary's Guildford - the story so far & into the future

Resettlement
Schemes

Date: Saturday, 17th May, 10.00am - 1.30pm
(Refreshments available from 9.45am)

Clothing Banks

Venue: Redhill Methodist Church, RH1 1BP
Redhill Station is 5 minutes' walk away
NCP car park on Gloucester Road opposite the church

Liaising with other Agencies

**To register, or for more information, email
Rev Hazel Forecast at
hazel.forecast@methodist.org.uk**

Mother-tongue worship

Something else...

LIVING WITH ARTHRITIS?

FREE SESSIONS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH ARTHRITIS

Join us for an Information Support Talk that covers a range of issues faced by people living with arthritis. The sessions will be delivered in a group where you'll meet other people facing similar issues and will spend a couple of hours finding out where you can get support and exploring ways to manage your symptoms.

Where: - **Guildford Institute, Ward Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4LH**

Managing Fatigue On: - **Thursday, 20th February 2025** Time: - **10:30 AM – 12:30 PM**

Managing Pain On: - **Thursday, 20th March 2025** Time: - **10:30 AM – 12:30 PM**

Places are limited so register now to avoid disappointment!

TO REGISTER FOR THIS SESSION:

Complete our online form: <https://forms.office.com/e/Aj7Y5eHXvx>

Or Scan the QR code below and fill in your details.

For more information email us at: southeastdelivery@versusarthritis.org

GUILDFORD
VERSUS
ARTHRITIS



Practical Aspects of Spirituality

Join us for

Wesleyan Spirituality

- 'real Christians'
not 'almost Christians'

led by

Allan Taylor

Saturday 22 June

09.30 – 12.00

St. Mary's Church
Guildford GU1 3UP

Refreshments from 09.15

If you would like to attend please email gmc.info@hotmail.co.uk



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 36 of The Way Forward is:

midnight 6 May 2025

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 37 1 August 2025

Issue 38 31 October 2025

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 2025			
8 March	6.00pm	Circuit Mission Supper (see page 9)	Trinity, Woking
13 March	12.30 to 1.30pm	Lent Reflections (see page 14)	St. Mary's Guildford
20 March	12.30 to 1.30pm	Lent Reflections (see page 14)	St. Mary's Guildford
15 March	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Clothes4U	Knaphill
22 March	9.30am to 12noon	South Sudan Study Morning (see page 14)	St. Mary's Guildford
27 March	12.30 to 1.30pm	Lent Reflections (see page 14)	St. Mary's Guildford
29 March	3.00pm to 5.00pm	Messy Church Easter Egg Trail	Godalming
April 2025			
3 April	12.30 to 1.30pm	Lent Reflections (see page 14)	St. Mary's Guildford
10 April	12.30 to 1.30pm	Lent Reflections (see page 14)	St. Mary's Guildford
17 April	7.00pm	Holy Communion Service	Godalming
17 April	7.00pm	Holy Communion Service	Knaphill
17 April	7.00pm	Tenebrae Service	Merrow
17 April	6.30pm	Holy Communion Service	Stoughton
17 April	7.00pm	Holy Communion Service	Sheerwater
17 April	7.30pm	Holy Communion Service	Walton-on-Thames
17 April	8.00pm	Tenebrae Service	Trinity, Woking
18 April	10.30am	Open-Air Ecumenical Service	Cranleigh
18 April	2.00pm	Good Friday Service	Merrow
18 April	10.30am	Good Friday Service	Walton-on-Thames
18 April	10.00am	Ecumenical Service	West Horsley
18 April	10.00am	Good Friday Service	Trinity, Woking
19 April	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Clothes4U	Knaphill
24 April	10.30am to 12noon	Coffee and Cake (see page 18)	St. Mary's Guildford
27 April	4.00pm	Pudding and Praise (see page 24)	Walton-on-Thames
May 2025 (and beyond)			
11 May	3.00pm	Special Circuit Service (see page 19)	Merrow
17 May	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Clothes4U	Knaphill
17 May	7.00pm	Songs of Praise (see page 27)	West Horsley
22 May	10.30am to 12noon	Coffee and Cake (see page 18)	St. Mary's Guildford
8 June	3.30pm	Pet Service	Walton-on-Thames
22 June	9.30am to 12noon	Practical Aspects of Spirituality (see page 34)	St. Mary's Guildford
26 June	10.30am to 12noon	Coffee and Cake (see page 18)	St. Mary's Guildford