

Dear Friends,

It's good to be back, starting to see some of you again.

I'd like to put on record my thanks to the Church for the gift of my recent Sabbatical and for everyone that has 'stepped up' and taken on extra work during my absence – those most recent three months and the many other months when I was unwell. You are an amazing bunch of people and I hope that you are able to see that and all that you have to offer in your localities.

Here's a few things, a few 'insights' that I gained from my Sabbatical:

LESS IS MORE:

I'm trying really hard to develop and see the value in doing one thing well, rather than umpteen things badly – I'm calling it 'mono-tasking' as opposed to 'multi-tasking'. I always thought the later was a good thing, a way of achieving more but have come to see that it probably isn't at all, and it's certainly not good for my own wellbeing.

The Sabbatical gave me time to 'slow down', focus on one thing (walking the dog, the sunset, a beautiful rose, a nice plate of food, friendship and family – to name but a few) and to really cherish that and give it all my attention. I think that helps us be better human-beings, not human-doings, as Suzette Jones at St Columba's House often says. (They have an interesting programme of events, please see their website, if you're interested www.stcolumbashouse.org.uk)

Makes me think this is part of what Jesus is trying to share with Martha, in Luke's gospel:

"Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things, but few things are needed – indeed only one. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."
(Luke 10:41-42)

REST IS GOOD/NECESSARY:

We kind of all know this but how often do we put it into practice? The gift of the Sabbatical time has allowed for sufficient 'slowing down', to really appreciate how fast paced our lives are, and therefore how important it is to 'rest awhile'.

The familiar words of Psalm 23 are close to mind in times such as these:

'He [The LORD] makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.' (Psalm 23:2-3a)

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL WORLD:

We all know that sadly many parts of our planet are troubled, dis-eased, ravaged and in pain – and the people in these places are in our daily prayers – for peace, for protection and for provision but, still, the world has so many stunningly beautiful places.

I don't quite know what I expected before my trip to Greece ('Ten Days travelling in the Footsteps of St Paul' – see * below), I imagine I thought it would be dry, dusty, barren but nothing had prepared me for the clear, azure blue of the Aegean Sea, or the lush green of the agricultural plains and valleys, along with the majesty and drama of the mountains.

Truly:

'The heavens are telling the glory of God' (Psalm 19:1a)

And

[Jesus said] "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these."



WE DON'T TRAVEL ALONE:

I was immensely grateful for the travelling companions I had during my times of journeying: whether it was my dear Daisy Dog on many a walk, or a good friend on other trips, or my fellow pilgrims in the travelling around Greece – it was good to have company, for many different reasons.

In our journey of life and faith, we are reassured by Jesus, that we never travel alone either; he is always by our side:

[Jesus said] "...remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

AND IT'S GOOD TO COME HOME:

After 10 days travelling and seeing amazing things, I couldn't wait to get home and get Daisy back and rest up a bit in my own space. After time spent in Suffolk (some holiday, some study/retreat time), or time staying with my parents in Hastings – as much as I enjoyed these things – it was good to get home.

On my first Sunday back taking a service at Trinity, they welcomed me with a slide on the PowerPoint display which said: 'Welcome Home Sam!' – which felt true and incredibly moving; it was really 'Good to be Home!'

Whether we have been travelling recently, or not, it's a wonder and a joy of our faith that we have a God who not only yearns and watches for us to come home but, when we do, doesn't even wait for us to get to the door but rushes out to greet us and hold us fast:

'But while he [the prodigal son] was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.' (Luke 15:20)

I hope (and pray) some of these reflections chime with you and I hope (and pray) that they stay with me in these coming days and weeks of 're-entry' into Church, Circuit and District life.

May the Peace, Light and Love of God be with you all!

Sam

* – If you're interested in my travels round Greece – I will be offering a Zoom 'gathering' one evening, to share some thoughts, stories and photographs (Rest assured, not all of them! Edited highlights only.) Details to follow later in the autumn.

Scripture quotations are taken from 'The New Revised Standard Version: Updated Edition' (British Text), © 2021, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Resources/Good News

The Power of Stillness

Many of us will be getting ready to go on holiday and will have been busy with all the preparations, stresses and responsibilities that this can bring. So perhaps this is a good time to look at what 'being still' can bring to our lives during the next few weeks of August? Tracey Collins, Wellbeing Officer for the South West Peninsula District, shares this blog.

[The Power of Stillness - The Methodist Church](#)

Today is International Left-Handers Day!

Approximately 10% of the population are left-handed.

Historically, left-handedness has been viewed negatively in many cultures, often associated with awkwardness and even evil. Children were often forced to use their right hands for tasks when they would naturally use their left hand.

Fortunately, much has changed, and nowadays many products are available to buy, such as left-handed scissors, tin openers, corkscrews, peelers and even knives (serrations on the right side).

Yet still the world seems made for right-handed people. Have you noticed that the slots/readers at ticket barriers at train stations are on the right? Or glasses at a table laid for a meal are always on the right? (So, I end up drinking someone else's drink!).

International Left-Handers Awareness Day seeks to raise awareness about the difficulties that left-handers encounter, such as using tools, devices, and products designed for right-handed users. By highlighting these issues, the day encourages the development of more inclusive designs and fosters greater understanding of the left-handed experience.



South East District Welcome Service



Join us as we welcome our new Chair of District, Rev Conrad Hicks



Saturday 6th September

3pm, followed by refreshments



Redhill Methodist Church, RH1 1BP



And streamed online

visit www.methodistsoutheast.org in early September for streaming instructions



The **Methodist Church**
South East District



Inspire

Enable

Encourage



St Mary's Church Quarry St

Guildford GU1 3UP

Heritage Open Days

12 – 14 September

Friday & Sunday 12.00 – 16.00

Saturday 10.00 – 16.00

**also open 16 & 18 September 11.00 – 15.00*

including

‘OUR TIME 2’

exhibition of art

from prisoners at HMP Send

Refreshments available

Saturday 16 August 2025 2.00-4.00pm

Knaphill Methodist Church, The Broadway, Knaphill GU21 2DR

(between Boots & the old Lloyds Bank)

Clothes4U

a clothes bank supporting the local community

To claim your FREE clothes, collect a voucher from 30+ places in Surrey. Email us to find out where they are:

clothes@knaphillmethodist.co.uk

Due to huge generosity lately from the residents of Knaphill and beyond, clothes donations are not being accept at all for the time being.

STOUGHTON METHODIST CHURCH

(On the corner of Stoughton Road and Grange Road)

COFFEE CORNER

Tuesdays from 10 am – 12 noon



5th August
12th August
19th August
26th August

2nd September
9th September
16th September
23rd September
30th September



Enjoy Coffee & a Chat, Coffee & a Game, or Coffee & a Book
The choice is yours!

Everyone welcome – bring a friend!

You are invited to a Cream Tea

**At Godalming United Church, Bridge Road,
Godalming GU7 3DU**

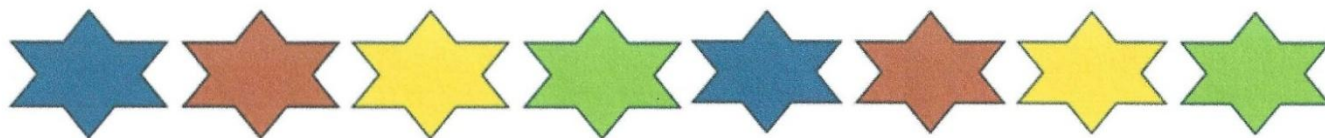
Saturday 6th September 2025

2.30pm to 4.30pm

**In the GUC Church Gardens or River Room
(depending on the weather!)**

**Donations in aid of the Gambian Ophthalmic Project
which provides funds for cataract operations and
follow-up care.**





**Saturday morning events at the
Addlestone Methodist Church Café on
Station Road**



***Come along between 10am and
12 to enjoy tea/coffee and cake
and join in with activities***

EVERY MONTH

1st Saturday – Fun Bingo

*Donations to Sam Beare Hospice or
Open Doors Charity*



**2nd Saturday – A time to sing – favourite
hymns & songs**

3rd Saturday – give popular games a go



**4th Saturday – Hymns, songs
and time for prayer**

Check notice board for any changes

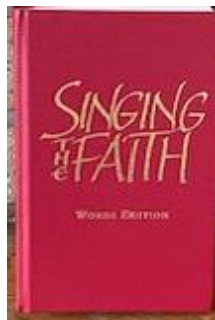


70 years at
MERROW METHODIST CHURCH

Join us for a

**SONGS OF PRAISE
SERVICE**

**On
SUNDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER at 6.30PM**





SHARP: Surrey Healthy Ageing Research Partnership

Are you interested in why some people are more prone to illness with older age, or how we may extend healthy-life span and independent living

Then join us at the University of Surrey for tea and coffee and a chance to learn about our research on healthy ageing.

On Tuesday 9th September 2025, from 2pm-4pm, in the Rik Medlik Building, University of Surrey, we will open our doors to older adults within the local community.

You will have the chance to hear about our research, see posters, can ask questions, and find out what it means to take part in research, and we will provide refreshments!

If you would like to attend, please RSVP by email: SHARP@surrey.ac.uk



SHARP: Surrey Healthy Ageing Research Partnership

Tuesday 9th September from 2-4:30pm, in the Rik Medlik Building, University of Surrey

Open Afternoon Schedule

1:50pm	Arrival with tea, coffee and refreshments
2:00pm	Welcome by Dr Natalie Riddell
2:10pm	Talk 1. Dr Frances Sanders: <i>The AiH project: co-developing hospitable and age-inclusive communities</i>
2:25pm	Talk 2. Dr Kiran Ravindra: <i>Sleep monitoring technologies for improving health and sleep in older adults</i>
2:40pm	Questions and answer session
3:20pm	Meet the researchers and a poster and demonstration exhibition
4:25pm	Close

Please note that access to the Rik Medlik building will not be possible before 1:50pm

**Trinity Methodist Church
Thakeham Road Storrington
RH20 3NG**



We're Looking for A Choir Leader

- **patient, and musically skilled for our monthly dementia-friendly choir**
- **someone who can create a warm, supportive environment where members feel valued, safe, and uplifted through the power of music**

We meet on the last Wednesday of each month 1030 - 1200

Pay is currently £60 per hour - we're open to a conversation about an appropriate monthly fee

Contact:

office@westsussexcoastanddownscircuit.co.uk

for role description and further details

Closing date 5th September 2025

Surrey Churches Preservation Trust

Parisian Churches Weekend

26-28 September 2025



Join us for a weekend in Paris exploring five of its most celebrated churches

SCPT Members = £275 / person

Non-members = £300 / person

Your ticket includes:

- ◆ Return rail fare by Eurostar.
- ◆ Admission to the five churches mentioned.
- ◆ Tour guide.
- ◆ Two-course dinner and one-hour evening boat trip along the River Seine on Saturday.
- ◆ A donation to SCPT funds to help maintain churches at home.

It does not include:

- Hotel accommodation—you can book a hotel that best fits your budget and expectations using Booking.com or your usual travel agency. For convenience we encourage you to stay around the Gare du Nord or Gare de l'Est area where a range of boutique hotels is available at a spectrum of prices.
- Dinner on the Friday evening.
- Lunch on Saturday—we suggest you buy a sandwich and a bottle of water on the day so we can picnic on the Quai de Archevêché.
- Wine/drinks with your dinner on Saturday.
- Travel insurance.

Itinerary

Friday, 26 September

- 14:00—Depart London St Pancras Int'l.
- 17:30—Arrive Gare du Nord Station, Paris.
- Check in to your chosen hotel and make your own arrangements for dinner.

Saturday, 27 September:

- 10:00—Visit to Sainte Chapelle.
- 12:00—Tour of the Cathedral of Notre Dame.
- 14:30—Tour of the Église Saint-Louis-en-l'Île.
- 16:00—Tour of Saint Etienne du Mont.
- 18:00—Dinner at *Le Bistro Parisienne* on the Port de la Bourdonnais and cruise along Seine.
- 21:00—Evening stroll around the Eiffel Tower.

Sunday, 28 September:

- 09:30—Visit to the Basilica of Sacré Cœur.
- 14:30—Depart Gare du Nord Station, Paris.
- 16:00—Arrive London St Pancras International.

Our tour begins with a visit to Sainte-Chapelle, a palatine chapel on the Île de la Cité. Built for King (later Saint) Louis IX to house the Holy Crown of Thorns, a piece of the True Cross and various relics of the Passion that he had acquired from 1239 onwards, this former royal chapel boasts one of the finest collections of stained glass in Europe and is known as *The Jewel Box of Paris*.

Our second church is a 10 minute walk away—the medieval Notre-Dame de Paris. Recently restored following the tragic fire on 15 April 2019, the cathedral is a particularly fine example of French Gothic architecture, especially its pioneering use of rib vaults, flying buttresses and huge rose windows.

After lunch we have a 15 minute walk to the Church of Saint-Louis-en-l'Île, a Baroque church hidden behind a plain and innocent-looking façade. It was built 1664-1725 and although much of its original interior was lost in the French Revolution, it was extensively restored in the nineteenth century.

From here we have a 20 minute walk to Saint Etienne du Mont, a sixteenth century church that contains the shrine of St. Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris. Famous for its rood screen and double spiral staircase leading to a gallery, the church was renovated by the City Architect Victor Baltard in 1865-68. He restored the façade and replaced some of the sculpture and stained glass that had been destroyed in the Revolution.

In the evening we will dine together at a bistro by the Eiffel Tower and take a one-hour guided cruise along the River Seine. Once back ashore we can enjoy an

evening stroll around the Eiffel tower before returning to our hotels.

On Sunday, you can either spend the morning doing your own thing in Paris or join us for a visit to Sacré Cœur in Montmartre.

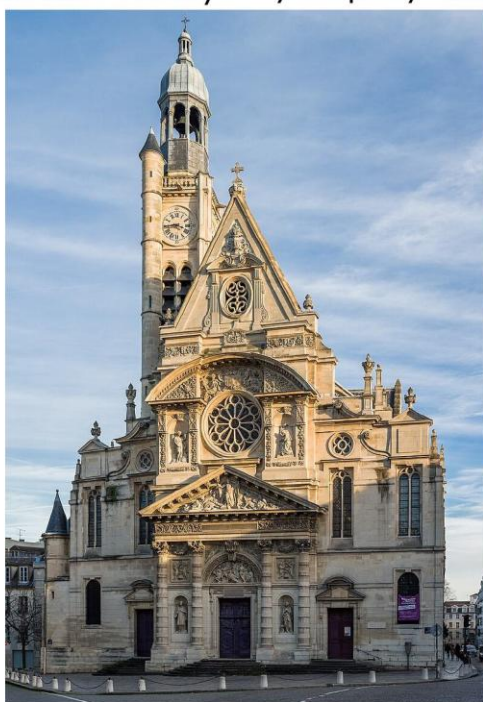
The tour involves a walk of about 30 minutes duration (2½ km). If you have difficulties walking any distance, please let us know so we can provide you with a Navigo Travel Card and map with bus and metro details.

Bookings must be made by writing to Andrew using plumridge@architect-uk.com, and include the names of everyone in your party and confirmation that they have a valid passport. You will then receive a letter giving you further details about the trip and how to pay, as well as a list of hotel suggestions.

Places are limited to 20 on a first-come-first-served basis.

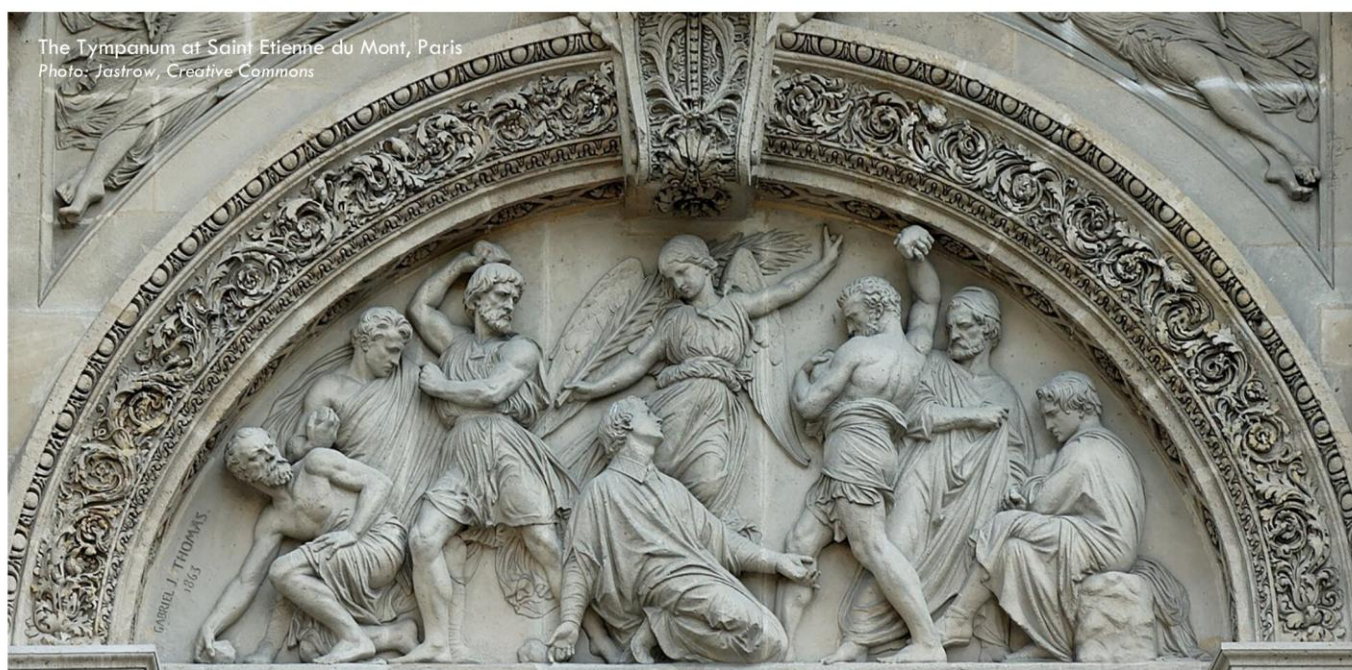
Bookings close 22 August 2025.

If you have any questions, special needs (including diet) or have trouble finding an appropriate hotel, contact Andrew on 07484 062333.



Saint Etienne du Mont, Paris

Photo: David Iliffe, Creative Commons



The Tympanum at Saint Etienne du Mont, Paris
Photo: Jastrow, Creative Commons