

The Wey Forward

Issue 41 – September to November 2026

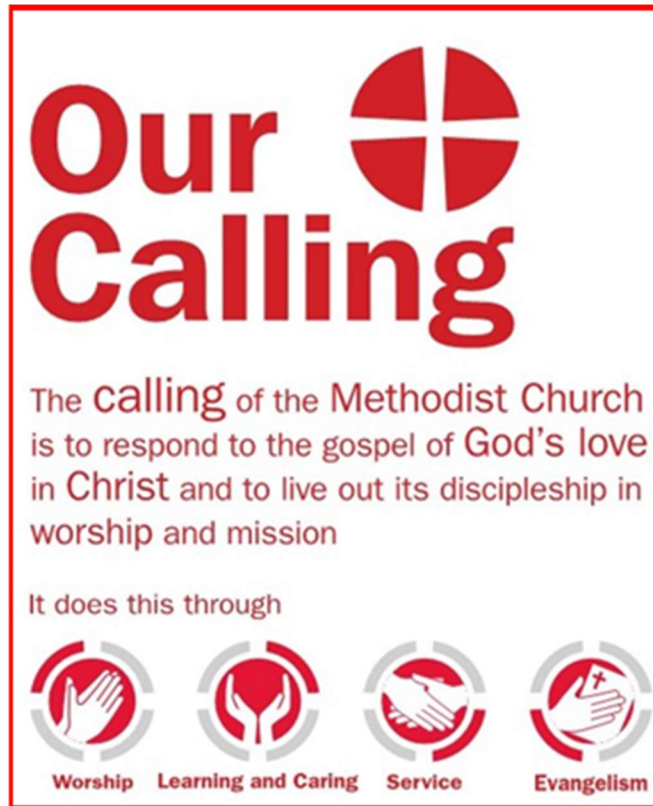


The Wey Valley Methodist Circuit

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 visit our website - www.veyvalleycircuit.org.uk to find a church that meets your spiritual and pastoral needs.

The Circuit 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 New Superintendent

Greetings!

I'm delighted to be joining the Wey Valley Circuit in September 2026.

I'm married to Claire and have two grown up sons, Matt and Evan. Although it's a fresh move and a new experience for me being Superintendent, as a family we previously lived in Surrey for years and have many friend and family connections here.

My professional background before Methodist ministry was social work. I became a minister in 2014 and served in Eastbourne for twelve years.

As a minister, you'll find me encouraging churches and congregations to be inclusive, to be involved in the community they're a part of and be ready to welcome friend and stranger alike. I'm passionate that our worship be joyful and relevant to the world we're in. I am particularly fond of Iona hymns and prayers, and worship I lead will often have a balance of modern and traditional. Pastoral ministry is very important to me, and I enjoy being alongside others whether within or outside of church life.

My hope is that here in Wey Valley we will worship and share fellowship, and day by day grow together in faith and love.

Grace and Peace

Revd. Paul Tabraham





Welcome Service

for

Revd Paul Tabraham

Our new Superintendent Minister

Light refreshments will be served before the service



Sunday 6 September 2026

6.00pm

**Knaphill Methodist Church
Broadway, Knaphill, GU21 2DR**

Methodist Conference 2026

The Methodist Conference elected and inducted the Revd Mark Slaney to serve as President and Caroline Stead to serve as Vice-President on Saturday 27 June at the Methodist Conference in Telford. The induction marks the start of their year of office.

The Revd Mark Slaney

The Revd Mark Slaney currently serves as Chair of the Scotland District and the Shetland District. His work has included formative mission, study partnerships and placements with the Church of South India and the Methodist Church and Sierra Leone and Interfaith Forum support.

He preached his first sermon at the age of 15 and prior to his ordination 24 years ago, Mark served ten years in youth work plus jobs as a builder's mate, cleaner and van driver.

In his address to the Conference, Mark said: "I am endlessly grateful to God for our salvation and life in Christ Jesus, for that divine call on our lives that accepts us just as we are and offers us a vision of who we could become together, giving purpose and reason and making us better people and the world a better place, in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

"Thanks to my parents to whom I owe the beginnings of faith and a place in the Methodist Church. I reflect that I inherit both your Christian convictions and your experiential and discerning questions."

"There are many more folk to whom I owe a debt of gratitude and for whom I hold deep affection for the ways in which you have supported, accompanied, challenged and borne with me."

The Revd Mark Slaney said: "Throughout the designate year I have experienced a growing sense of the weight, honour and privilege that comes with the role of President. That the Church has discerned this call at this time is affirming and humbling. Be assured of my commitment in serving the Methodist people and our ecumenical, interfaith and mission partners throughout the year to come."

Caroline Stead

Caroline Stead is passionate about inclusivity and ensuring that people are welcomed and safe within the Methodist Church, and about supporting volunteers within the Church.

A local preacher in the Yorkshire West District, where she is also the Synod Secretary, Caroline is an accompanist to a minister in training and serves on the Discerning Ordained Vocation (DOV1) Committee and on Chairs' nomination panels.

A former maths teacher, Caroline was also a Lay Stationing Representative for 11 years. She has been a representative to the Conference since 2008, including six years on the Business Committee.

In her address to the Conference, Caroline said: "I suppose that I was literally a cradle Methodist and that upbringing continued after our move, at age 7, to Yorkshire.

"Thank you to those who have been key on my faith journey. Mark and I have chosen two words to work with next year: Joy and Sorrow. The Christian journey is a tapestry woven with threads of both joy and sorrow."

Caroline said: "I am humbled that I have been called by God into the role of Vice-President. In the year ahead I am looking forward greatly to living out this calling in service to the Church that is growing, inclusive, evangelistic and justice-seeking, a Church that has given me so much up to this point in my life.

"In particular, I am excited at the prospect of being able to visit many people and places, to share my lived experience of inclusivity and to support the many volunteers who give so much to the life and mission of the Church."

The role of President of the Methodist Conference is reserved for presbyters and that of Vice-President for lay people or deacons. John Wesley chaired the Methodist Conference during his lifetime, but after his death, the Conference was determined to elect a President annually.

The collection taken on Sunday 28 June at this year's Conference was in aid of partner charity Action for Children and All We Can's Middle East Justice Appeal.

On Saturday 5 September 2026, Knaphill will be hosting a Coffee Morning from 10:00am to 12-Noon in aid of the Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance (KSS)

There will be a variety of stalls including Cakes, Guess the Weight of the Cake, Preserves, Raffle, Tombola, Guess the Name of the Teddy, Guess How Many Sweets in the Jar, Model Railway & Bric-a-Brac, a "Silent Auction" and a visit from Rob from Surrey Police.



COFFEE MORNING

AND SALE

KSS 

AIR AMBULANCE CHARITY
KENT SURREY SUSSEX
Registered Charity No: 1021367

There will be various stalls including:
Cakes, Guess the Weight of the Cake, Raffle, Tombola,
Guess the Name of Teddy, Guess How Many Sweets in
the Jar, Model Railway, & Bric-a-Brac.
Offers of help and donations of items welcome! Contact Tarina Berry

To be opened by **Cllr Saj Hussain**

KNAPHILL METHODIST CHURCH HALL

Bacon Butties!

TEA
COFFEE
BISCUITS
BACON
BUTTIES

COFFEE MORNING FOR

AL-AHLI HOSPITAL – GAZA

(The oldest and only Christian Hospital)

Thursday 10th September
Coffee and Cakes from 10.30am
at Merrow Methodist Church

Talk by Dr Ang Swee Chai at 11.30am

A Senior Consultant at Barts Hospital. She has worked as a surgeon in both Gaza and Lebanon and has spoken at the United Nations. She is a founder member on the Board of MAP (Medical Aid for Palestinians).



Please come and listen to this wonderful, courageous lady who has worked tirelessly against injustice.

COFFEE AND CAKE

AT ST. MARY'S

QUARRY ST. GUILDFORD GU1 3UP

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER
2026



Thursday 27 August

- - -

Thursday 24 September

- - -

Thursday 22 October

10.30 – 12.00

- each month features a different charity

Everyone welcome

Farewell, Uncle George and Ama!

A truly international celebration was held at Merrow Methodist Church on 19 July, to mark the five years of ministry of Revd Dr Uncle George Quarm and his wife, Ama, in the circuit. As well as a packed service, a true Ghanaian celebration was held later in the afternoon and into the night where much singing, dancing and feasting took place.



Extraordinary Opportunities

As I move into half time ministry, one of the things that I am laying down is the role of Methodist Chaplain at the University of Surrey.

As some of you will not know very much about this role, I thought I might say something about what it has involved for me.

Where to start? The Methodist Church has had a University Chaplain at the University of Surrey since its earliest days, and I follow a long line of Methodist ministers in the Wey Valley Circuit (and previously the Guildford and Godalming Circuit) who have done this work. Each of us have brought our distinctive gifts and interests to the role.

These days, the University of Surrey has an enviable and growing reputation both in academic circles and in the area of student well-being and satisfaction.

Some 18,623 students study on two campuses in the town. In February 2026, of that number, 5,078 registered as Christian, 2,552 Muslim, 1,872 Hindu, 334 Buddhist, 253 Sikh and 58 Jewish – as you can see over 50% of the student body adheres to one faith group or another.

To reflect this, the Chaplaincy Team at the University is also enormously diverse and is one of the most significant and highly regarded chaplaincies in the country. Christian, Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim, Ba'Hai, Jewish and Humanist groups all have chaplains.

We meet weekly as a group, engage in training and each have particular strengths.

Methodist Minister and Rabbi of Guildford sign binding agreement over leavened food in the house (you may need to ask me about that!)



Jewish and Muslim Chaplain shoot some hoops at Freshers Fair.



I must admit when I first arrived, I was not sure what to do. How can you cover 18,000 students and tens of thousands of staff on six hours a week? The answer is you can't. What I have chosen to do is to concentrate my work on one particular department. And what better than GSA (the Guildford School of Acting) who this year celebrated 90 years of working in the town. They run undergraduate courses in Acting, Musical Theatre, Actor/Musicians, Stage Management and Community Theatre, as well as Masters courses. They are one of the most significant theatre schools in the country and it would be difficult to attend any London stage show and not find at least one GSA allum in the cast.

2nd Year student actors come to St. Mary's to learn about issues of faith and belief in Thornton Wilder's 'Our Town'

One of my favourite tasks has been to provide weekly hot chocolate and biscuits at a stall we set up in the GSA foyer every Wednesday from 4-5.30pm. Who knew that students could be attracted by free food and drink?

There are various models of Chaplaincy at work in the team. Some of my colleagues work hard at providing regular worship and celebration worship for their own communities. Methodists have not come beating a path to my door demanding that. Mine is far more a ministry of what I like to call 'Loitering with Intent'. Being there as a presence with my dog collar (or chaplaincy hoodie) on – allowing conversation to flow and showing that I (and God) are absolutely interested in what is going on in the lives of the young people we care for.

Time for graduation and the get dressed up in Leeds PhD hood and hat!



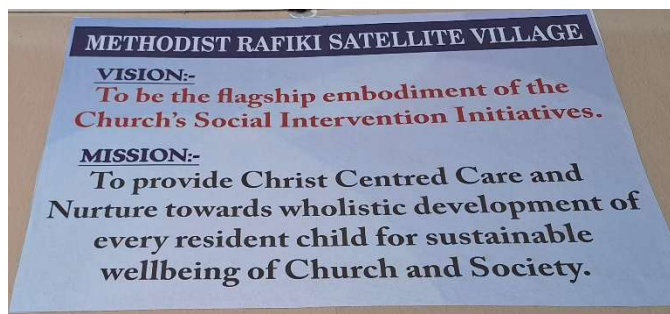
There are so many other things that could be mentioned – Big Community Lunch on a Wednesday where we welcome over 100 students each week to a free lunch, and Christmas Day lunch – where we provide a full Christmas Day lunch on campus to over 500 people (many postgrads are unable to go home for the Christmas holiday).

I have learned so much from my inter-faith colleagues – we work together – engage in discussion together, laugh together. We do not (and do not have to) believe in the same things as each other – but that does not stop us from respecting each other and treating each other's views with ultimate respect. Universities are places of learning and I have learned much.

Revd. Dr. Paul Glass

Mission Trip to Ghana – Part II

In the last issue of The Wey Forward I wrote an article about my joining a mission team to Ghana from the Blackheath Crystal Palace Circuit in January this year. One of the places we visited was the Methodist Rafiki Satellite Village Orphanage, about an hour's drive from Accra. The orphanage is a home and a school to 100 boys and girls aged from 4 to 21 years old.



Not all the children are orphans placed with the school by Ghana Social Services; some children have been rescued by the school from destitution on Accra's streets. None of the children are referred to as orphans. At the school, they are all part of a happy family. Of all the places – Methodist churches and Methodist cathedrals – yes Methodist Cathedrals! (the Methodist church in Ghana is an episcopal church with Diocese and Bishops) it was the orphanage, with its happy children in smart school uniforms that made a strong impression on me, particularly one lady with pastoral responsibility for the children. When she showed me the school's computer room with computers that were very old and some that did not work, she said to me 'I'm glad to meet you, have you come to help us?' Indeed, I was sent to help the school! I left the orphanage determined to help its children when I got back to the UK.

Thus, it is, that on 5 October I will be cycling 50 miles off road from Pyford to Shoreham with two friends from The Church of Good Shepherd in Pyrford to raise hopefully £4,000 to £5,000 to provide 10 new laptop computers, to replace ageing or broken computers in the school's computer room. Please watch out in the circuit newsletter for details of how to donate money to help my two friends and I (pictured on a recent practice cycle ride) raise sufficient money to buy the orphanage the 10 new laptops that they need for the children to gain all important IT skills.

My undertaking this 50 mile off road cycle ride in October is quite a challenge for me at 80 years old. I am endeavouring to follow John Wesley's rule for my life at 80 years old and beyond.

'Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as you ever can.'

Mike Widdup
St. Michael's Sheerwater



News from around the Circuit

Addlestone

The Holy Spirit - Billy Graham - 1950 to 2026

The only way for me to send the Addlestone contribution to the magazine this month is to tell you a true story.

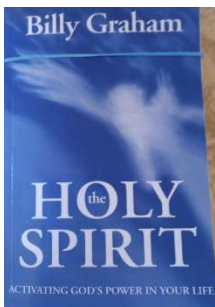


Going back a few years to 1950, I am 17 years old, studying mechanical engineering with Babcock & Wilcox in Renfrew, living in a company complex in Paisley. My parents and I had no involvement in a church, or in Christianity – all the more reason for my being surprised waking up one morning and wanting to go to church. No Billy Graham around to explain, yet it was a strong enough feeling for me to find and attend the local Paisley Church – my attendance was limited and I was more interested in their badminton club than their church services! A slow start but it was the start of something special.

This situation continued for the next 4 years until, aged 21, I was sitting waiting for a game of tennis at the company's sports ground, my work studies just completed, thinking about an evening at the Glasgow dance studio. It would be nice to take a partner. Next to me was sitting an attractive 17-year-old girl named Jenny. Jenny was willing to join me – not realising it would be for the next 60 years. Jenny and her family were committed Christians at the Renfrew Church of Scotland. They all attended a Sunday morning and evening service and Jenny led a Sunday School in the afternoon. Just what I needed to help me learn what I had been missing.



Shortly after we met, I went with her to the Billy Graham 'Tell Scotland Campaign' event in Glasgow. Several of those attending went to the front to commit to a Christian life. Billy told the rest of us this was a first step for them. When they attend their church, will they be welcomed and will the experience encourage them to go back? 65 years later, now in Addlestone, I remembered Billy's comment and recommended our church introduced a more 'informal' type of service to meet the needs of today's society. It was supported by our preachers and welcomed by our congregation, as well as our visitors.



How clear are we of the part played by 'The Holy Spirit' in our Christian life? I now have a clearer understanding of that wake-up message and am sure where it came from. Although I still have a lot to learn about 'The Holy Spirit' and its role within the trinity and how it communicates with us.

Purely by chance, Billy Graham was back in my life when I came across his book '*The Holy Spirit*' - **Activating God's power in your life. The Holy Spirit brought to life. If you have any doubts, it is worth a read.**

Fred Rowe

Godalming United Church

**GODALMING UNITED CHURCH,
BRIDGE ROAD, GODALMING, GU7 3DU**

Online services: <https://guc.online.church>

Service recordings: www.guc.org.uk, <https://bit.ly/GUCYouTube>



A big Thank You to everyone who contributed clothing, toiletries and non-perishable food items to our annual collection for the Whitechapel Mission to the Homeless in June/July. The trailer was (as usual!) full to bursting by 8 July.

Our congregation and pantomime families came together in May for a sparkling Talent Show. The 33 performers included dancers, singers, sketches, jokes, creative writing, drummers and magic acts and a family group incorporating mum and dad. Many thanks to Becky Keene for her impeccable organization – pizza and soft drinks for over 100!

Music Kids singing group has been going from strength to strength this year. In June they again performed at ChoirBLAST on The Burys Field, along with over 100 other choirs across the day. (Thousands attended this joyful openair event – to be repeated in 2027.) They have also sung at Eastlake Care Home, and in Sunday morning services.

The quiet month of August was marked by our summer holiday Messy Church – “Party Time” – based on the parable of the Great Banquet. This was part of Godalming’s annual Staycation week during which local organisations and community groups showcase their activities. Much fun was had by all and the session ended with a shared bring-your-own picnic lunch.

Sadly, the Gambia shipping container project transferring pre-used school and medical equipment has now had to close, due to insurmountable distribution issues on arrival. This amazing project has been a close association between our church and the Whitmore Vale Charity, masterminded by Ryan and Sylvia Kelley. We are grateful to them and their volunteer helpers for organising and loading the 68 containers over three decades – to hugely benefit The Gambia. Meanwhile our other Gambia links flourish – for example the Ophthalmic Project (see below).

Looking Ahead

Starting Tuesday 1 September 11:00-12:30pm and first Tuesday of every month – Tea-and-Talk Café with CHD Living – a dementia-friendly community space for people living with dementia and their carers.

Friday 4 September 12:00-1:30pm Friday Lunches re-start. Join us for modestly priced home-cooked food in support of local charities.

Sunday 6 September 2:30pm Pantomime read-through “Beauty and the Beast”
thekeenes@btopenworld.com

Godalming continued....

Thursday 10 September 2:30pm Communion Service in the River Room led by Revd Adam Payne with a cuppa and chat afterwards.

Saturday 12 September 2:30-4:30pm Cream Tea on the patio in support of GUC's Gambia Ophthalmic project. (Just £15 pays for a sight-saving cataract operation.)

Friday 18 September 6:00pm Music Kids re-starts – for children ages 5-teens
thekeenies@btopenworld.com

Saturday 26 September 2.00-5.00pm Messy Church "What a Wonderful World!": Bible-based activities for all the family, story-time and songs, party tea. messy.church@guc.org.uk

Sunday 4 October 10:30am Harvest Festival. Gifts – non-perishable foodstuffs for foodbank, please.

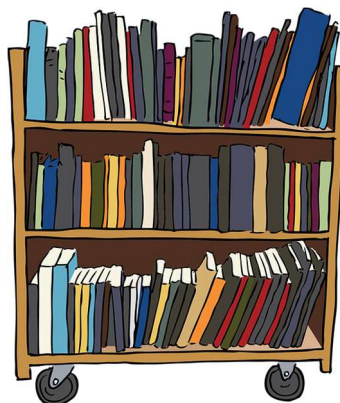
Sunday 8 November No church service – GUC will be supporting Godalming's civic Remembrance Service at the war memorial on The Burys.

Saturday 28 November 2.00-5.00pm Messy Church "Light up the World!": Bible-based activities for all the family, story-time and songs, party tea. messy.church@guc.org.uk

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

Nancy Wilks

Do you have a Library Trolley that needs a new home?



Godalming United Church is seeking a pre-loved book trolley, or similar, to store Hymnals and Bibles on. If you have a spare that is going unused, we would love to put it to use. Please contact Adam at minister@guc.org.uk



St. Mary's Church

Quarry St GU1 3UP

visit

OUR TIME 2

**- an exhibition of art
created by**

women prisoners from HMP Send

Opening:

Thursday 1 October	11 am – 5 pm
Friday 2 October	11am – 5 pm
Saturday 3 October	11 am – 5 pm
Sunday 4 October	12 noon – 5 pm

Guildford St Mary's

4 ½ years on, our weekly Friday evening **Vigil for Peace** continues to attract strong attendance, commonly bringing in 90 or more people out and about in Guildford on a Friday night. Amongst recent highlights:

- a man came in a little reluctantly but, as he left, hung back behind his friends to share with us excitedly that he'd just been moved to pray for the first time in 20 years
- another man took the trouble to find an e-mail contact from our team to explain that he had been visiting town with his family to celebrate the graduation of a son and, as they were walking from a restaurant to a nearby pub to meet up with others, they'd been drawn into the Vigil and commented:
 - o Your kind invitation to join your peace vigil touched us all and created another powerful memory on a special day. Also, personally, as someone who is currently 'between churches', this simple act has encouraged me to seek out a church where I can once again feel part of an active faith community.

For Heritage Weekend (18 to 20 September) we're delighted to be welcoming again **Our Time 2**, an exhibition of works from women prisoners at HMP Send. They will be providing an exciting and broader range of work. Speaking to some of the artists recently at the prison, it is clear that they are still thrilled by the church's readiness to display their works, and we are pleased to share them with the wider community.

Even better, this year the exhibition will be extended to form part of the **Guildford Festival of the Arts**, with increased opening for the festival from 2 to 4 October. Coincidentally this is our Harvest weekend which has prompted the artists to create additional works to go on display with a harvest theme. The exhibition will form part of an art trail through the town, with us joining other venues in stamping visitors' trail cards – why not join them?

Nigel Campion Smith



St. Mary's Quarry St Guildford GU1 3UP

Knaphill

The beginning of the new Methodist year is very busy for us at Knaphill. On Saturday 5 September Tarina Berry takes up her fundraising mantle for the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance Trust (KSSAAT) with a further Coffee Morning. Tarina has already raised over £3000 for the trust and is hoping to add a significant amount in September 2026. Please see the poster on page 6 for details of stalls.

The next day, Sunday 6 September, is just as busy. At 10am we welcome our new minister, Revd Paul Tabraham, who will conduct our Covenant Service. Then, at 6pm, he will be formally welcomed as the new Circuit Superintendent in a service taken by Revd Conrad Hicks, Chair of the District. We expect this to be a well-attended service and will give everyone a warm welcome with refreshments from 4.30pm. Please come along for what should be a joyous event.

Later in September, we have the clothing bank, C4U on Saturday 19th (2-4pm) and our regular Coffee Morning on 26th (10am-12noon). This is immediately followed by our Harvest Service on Sunday 27th, at 10am. As usual, we will be collecting donations (clothing, food items and money) for the Whitechapel Mission and decorating the church windowsills with harvest themed displays.

However, that is not all this year. Following Godalming's example, we wanted to produce posters displaying elements of "Thy Kingdom Come" in the activities and good causes which members of our congregation (or fellow village churches) are involved in or support. It wasn't possible to do so during pentecost, so we are trying this out at harvest time. The posters produced will be on display at the time of C4U and the coffee morning, so do come along and have a look. You will be sure to get a drink and biscuit, but also cake and bacon rolls at the coffee morning, and we'd love to see you!

After all that, October and November seem to be quieter, which may be a good thing.

Lynda Shore

Coffee Mornings at Knaphill, 10.00 to 12 noon

- ❖ 5 September
- ❖ 26 September
- ❖ 24 October
- ❖ 28 November

Clothes Bank at Knaphill, 2.00 to 4.00pm

- ❖ 19 September
- ❖ 17 October
- ❖ 21 November



Merrow

Looking back and looking forward!

July was certainly a month of celebrations. We welcomed our previous Superintendent, Revd Keith Beckingham to lead our Church Anniversary on 5 July. His theme was 'Jesus was and is the cornerstone/capstone of our faith'. This was followed by a family lunch which was enjoyed by all.



Revd Keith Beckingham and his wife, Hilary

The newly formed circuit choir sang out the 'Hallelujah Chorus' at the farewell circuit service for Revd Dr Uncle George Quarm and his wife, Ama. George was celebrating his doctorate from Texas University so was in full university regalia (despite the heat) and Ama was celebrating her retirement. The church was full with friends – many who had travelled from afar – to celebrate with George and Ama. Even Gillian, the organist, ended up having to share her seat! It was lovely to have such a full church – and the hymn singing was phenomenal. The service was followed by a party in the hall, then the manse! It was certainly a send-off that has gone down in the history books!



Revd Dr Uncle George Quarm and his wife, Ama

Merrow is looking forward to the arrival of our new minister, Revd Paul Tabraham, and learning how he will lead the church forward.

On **Thursday 10 September**, Merrow will be hosting a coffee morning for the Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza, followed by a talk by **Dr Ang Swee Chai**. Dr Ang is a senior consultant at Barts Hospital and has worked as a surgeon in Gaza and Lebanon. She has also spoken at the UN. The talk will start at **11.30am** (see poster on page 7).

Julie Wallis



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

***Heritage Open Days
18 – 20 September 2026***

**Friday & Sunday 12.00 – 16.00
Saturday 10.00 – 16.00**

including

‘OUR TIME 2’

***exhibition of art
from prisoners at HMP Send***

Refreshments available

including Heritage Café on Saturday run by the Brownies and Guides

POP-UP PLAY CAFÉ

Wednesday 29 October 9.30 – 11.30

... call in at
ST. MARY'S

Quarry St
Guildford GU1 3UP

- space to play
- time to relax
- coffee and cake

All ages welcome



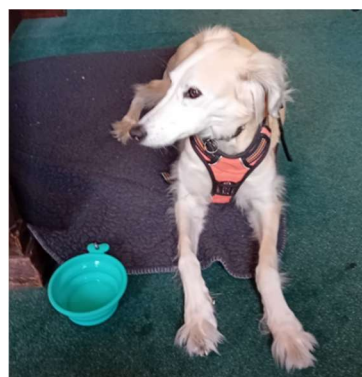
Walton-on-Thames

It has been a busy few months at Walton, and it has been a joy to see people using the bench we installed outside our church. It is proving to be well used by those walking to and from the town, taking a welcome rest while carrying shopping. Whilst tending flowers in the pots outside, we have had conversations with a number of people making use of the bench: a family stopping for a snack; an elderly woman recently moved to the area to be with family, and who might start coming to our church; a young woman who expressed an interest in looking around the church and was delighted with it. Hopefully all who pause here for rest will notice in the front window our Mission Statement and our plea to all to 'Always Pray for Peace'.

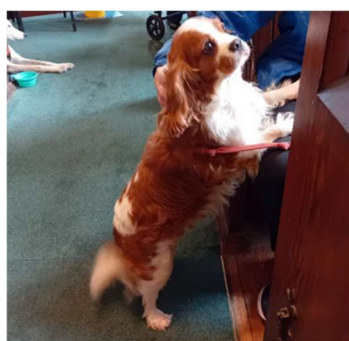
Our second Pet Service in June was a great success. All pets were blessed by Shaun. Dogs who regularly attend services were joined by other dogs and their owners, mostly but not all from our congregation. One family who came brought their hamster in a cage, and several people shared pictures of their cats. A passer-by, a visitor from America, was welcomed, and was fascinated and bemused by such a service! All dogs were well behaved and enjoyed some treats; we humans too enjoyed lovely refreshments after the service.



Buster



Flo



Bea



Ross

It was a delight to arrange baptism services for children of two local families in June and July. One of these was the family who brought their hamster to our pet service, so it was good to see that this service provided another opportunity for them to come to church. Looking ahead, we are delighted to welcome our Uniformed Groups, who will take an active part in our Harvest Service on 27 September.

Ross Richardson



Saturday 21st November 2026
2pm

At Walton Methodist Church Hall
A maximum of 6 people per team
Refreshments being served at half time.

Email:

waltonmethodistchurchsecretary@virginmedia.com

to book your place!

tearfund.org/quiz

Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, United Kingdom

☎ +44 (0)20 3906 3906 ✉ info@tearfund.org 📱 @ /Tearfund

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tearfund

Sheerwater

Broadmere Primary School – Moving on Assembly

A small group, ably led by Gracie (Community and Families Worker) went in to celebrate with Year 6 as they prepared to leave the school. We reflected on their years at Primary School and prayed and wished them well for their move to Secondary School in September.

The morning began with the children engaging in activities to think about regrets and worries, saying thank you and remembering the “wow” moments.

We then moved into a short reflective assembly, bringing together all we had thought about during the various activities. Looking forward, we prayed and lit a candle to represent lighting a new path that lies ahead. The church also presented each pupil with a moving-on book produced by Scripture Union.

The engagement from the children and teachers was amazing.

Tracey Francis/Gracie Luke

West Horsley

Our 150th anniversary celebrations at West Horsley are still continuing.

It was great to see two of our previous ministers back to take our services again – Revd David Coote on 16 May and Revd Darlene McCarley on 19 June. Retirement seems to suit them both – they didn't look any older and their preaching skills are undiminished.

Revd Paul Glass led our service on 9 August, prior to him having pastoral responsibility for us from September.

And, on 13 September, Janet England will lead a 'Back to our Roots' service in the open air under the village oak tree. This is the place where some of the early services were held before the chapel was built in 1876. The service will be timed for 11.00am so that, hopefully, it can be followed by a picnic lunch. The lunch may have to be adjourned to the Barley Mow Pub (opposite) if it rains! You are very welcome to join us – parking will be available at the Barley Mow.

Then on 18 October, Revd Claire Hargreaves will lead our Harvest Festival, and our celebrations conclude on Sunday 1 November when the service will be taken by Matthew Forsyth, last year's Vice-President of the Conference.

We wish Revd George Quarm and Ama well as they take up their new appointment in the South Essex Circuit. We gave them both a good send-off at their final service with us on 12 July and also at the circuit service the following Sunday. We shall miss them both.

Margaret Faulkner

Trinity, Woking

As we begin another Methodist Church year, the fellowship at Trinity sends their greetings to friends and colleagues in the other churches of our circuit and to our new Superintendent Minister, Revd Paul Tabraham.

As we journey on together, we may all know God's love for us, Jesus' presence to support us, and the Spirit's equipping and guidance in all things!

Four members from Trinity are recovering from walking with Refugee Tales, from Bognor to Chichester. We walked the nine miles in one day in unrelenting sunshine, with a brief start along the beach through fields of corn and courgettes, and then along the dappled canal into Chichester. Our company was a lovely mix of pilgrims from many nationalities. We celebrated at the end with a meal provided for, and entertainment from an Indian guitarist, together with letters to Refugee Tales.

Upcoming dates at Trinity – all are welcome!

- All Souls Service Sunday 1 November, @4.30pm
- Tearfund Big Quiz Saturday 14 November @6.00pm

Allison Jackson

'Sustaining Hope' in 2026 and Working to Support Refugees

'Sustaining Hope' gatherings take place on Saturday mornings twice a year. They are for anyone in our Methodist District who is involved, or interested, in supporting refugees, migrants and displaced people in our communities. The gatherings include time to network and pray together and there are two keynote presentations to broaden our awareness and help us be more effective.

The spring gathering was at Redhill Methodist Church on 25 April. The first presentation was by Revd Nigel Cowgill, the Global Communities Officer of the Methodist Church in Great Britain. He works with people from 19 different language communities who have come to live in the UK, aiming to ensure that they can flourish within the Methodist Church. He reminded us that since the earliest years of Christianity, the church has been global and facing the challenges that this poses:

- Today, @10% of the British Methodist church do not have English as their first language. We need to shed traditional ideas of host and guest and realize that everyone truly belongs equally 'at the table', even if eg. as a student, they are only part of us for a few years.
- Conversation with different global church communities is important, even though issues may be complex and challenging.
- If someone has experienced trauma, they need security in what is familiar to them, including food, language and celebrations, rather than being expected to become 'like us'. Generations may react differently from their parents to things both in the UK and in their ancestral country,

but continue to be impacted by what happened to previous generations, especially if they are still confronted with racism.

- Being a 'good neighbour' means being aware of how everything is interconnected: what is happening in someone's 'home' country affects how they see what is happening in the UK. Decisions made in Westminster constantly impact people across the world. It isn't enough just to give money to address issues of injustice – unjust systems need challenging – our focus needs to be on justice, not charity.

Nigel left us with the question: **How can the church be a transformative force in today's interconnected world?** He had certainly given us plenty of food for thought!

Our second keynote speaker, Mary Barrett, spoke about offering **support, friendship, and advocacy** to immigration detainees. For 30 years she has with others been visiting people held in immigration detention at Gatwick airport. It began with a small ecumenical Christian group, gathered together by a monk at Worth Abbey. Eventually they formed a charity, the 'Gatwick Detainees' Welfare Group' (GDWG), with Shirley Williams as their patron. Now they have 12 employees including a fundraiser. Their office in Crawley is staffed 24/7 and can receive phone calls from people held in detention (they are allowed a mobile phone). GDWG matches one of its visitors to someone who has asked for a visit. They probably spend about an hour with them on each visit and the promise 'I'll come back next week' has enormous impact on the detainee – it means relationship and trust can begin to be built.

Initially the setting was quite relaxed but regulations have been increasingly tightened. In 1996 the group began by visiting Tinsley House, where women, children and families were detained. Mary described how older children arriving in the UK can often be mistaken for adults and separated from their parents. Detention centres are now run by SERCO under government contract. Since 2009, members of GDWG have been visiting Brook House, on the perimeter of the airport, where adult men are detained, surrounded by high barbed-wire fences. Mary described it as "like a Category B prison": visits have to be booked in advance; you have to leave everything in a locker; to get to the visits room you have to go through seven locked doors; you can't sit next to the person you are visiting – even partners and children have to sit on the other side of the table; there can be no physical contact and you cannot give them anything.

Detainees include:

- prisoners who have served sentences of more than 12 months, which may be made up of several shorter periods for minor offences.
- people who have stayed in the UK after their visas have expired, maybe because of changes in their lives - eg. a former student now in a relationship with a UK resident. People are not notified when their visas are due to expire - they just get on with their lives.
- people picked up eg. from a lorry and who have applied for asylum. Some may even, occasionally, have a British passport, but have been born outside the UK.
- many are struggling with mental illness, some severely so, but no appropriate care is available.

Mary described how many people are terrified of being sent back to their country of origin, for fear of

what might happen to them there. She said the worst thing about detention is that it is indefinite. There is no legal process involved in sending them to the detention centre; they have not been given any 'sentence' and they have no idea how long they will be there. There is no judicial oversight. The maximum stay should be 28 days and then release, or 'good reason' given for detaining longer. In practice, detention may last many months – costing the Home Office c.£120 per day. The indefinite nature of detention takes a huge toll on people's mental health, and many are already traumatised from previous experiences. The Home Office is not supposed to detain someone who is a victim of torture, but the default position is to disbelieve what people say. No allowance is made for the impact of stress or confusion on someone's ability to accurately sequence what has happened, or to recall details in their story. Discrepancies that arise through repeated questioning are taken as 'proof' that the person is lying.

People from the charity only see a tiny proportion of those who are detained. They offer friendship, but are prohibited by law from giving legal advice. They do though refer people to GDWG's office, where information about legal advisors can be given.

Mary spoke of the new issues around UK residency. It used to be possible to apply for 'Leave to Remain' after 5 years; now it is 10. Each application or re-application costs £1,000s. Many applicants are on a low income, and have to carefully put money away for a long time before they can apply.

At the same time, the threshold of minimum required earnings constantly increases.

Mary explained the development of (the now well-established) '***Refugee Tales***'.

Twelve years ago there was very little awareness of immigration detention centres. GDWG aims to inform by talking to opinion-formers – in local communities and with MPs. They work with former detainees, empowering them to be the ones who speak to delegates. In 2015 they walked from Dover to Gatwick over seven days, staying in church halls and community centres, and wherever they stopped en route, telling stories of people being held in detention. The concept was inspired by Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and by the ideas of pilgrimage, of walking ancient routes – and of refugees walking in search of safety. That first walk was so well received that there has since been a walk every year, except during Covid.

More than 100 people (on each of 5 days) now take part in the walk, in the south-east. On the evenings of the walks there are stories/letters from detainees and music. Originally these were compiled by professional writers but now over half are written by those with lived experience of detention. A meal is provided and people transport walkers' baggage between venues.

The recent *Refugee Tales* pilgrimage has been from 8-12 July from Angmering to Portsmouth in temperatures of over 30c. Allison, James, Sue W and Ruth from Trinity walked for a day, plus Bob from Chichester and Phil from Christ Church walked all 5 days. It was very hot!

More information can be found here: <https://www.refugeetales.org/> where you can find out about supporting this work, either by buying books, joining a day walk during the year, or with donations.

The autumn Gathering will be at Redhill Methodist Church on Saturday 3rd October, 10.00-13.30.

This Report from Hazel Forecast has been edited by Allison Jackson, Trinity Woking.

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 42 of The Wey Forward is:

midnight 30 October 2026

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 deadlines listed below. Pop them in your diaries now.

Issue 43 29 January 2027

Issue 44 30 April 2027

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
September 2026			
5 September	10.00am to 12 noon	Coffee Morning in aid of KSS Air Ambulance Trust	Knaphill
6 September	6.00pm	Welcome Service for Rev Paul Tabraham	Knaphill
10 September	10.30am	Coffee Morning and talk by Dr Ang Swee Chai	Marrow
12 September	2:30pm to 4:30pm	Cream Tea in aid of Gambia Ophthalmic project	Godalming
18-20 September	(See Page 20)	Heritage Open Days	St. Mary's
19 September	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Clothes4U	Knaphill
24 September	10.30am to 12 noon	Coffee and Cake	St. Mary's
26 September	10.00am to 12 noon	Coffee Morning	Knaphill
October 2026			
1-4 October	(See Page 16)	Our Time 2 Art Exhibition	St. Mary's
17 October	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Clothes4U	Knaphill
22 October	10.30am to 12 noon	Coffee and Cake	St. Mary's
24 October	10.00am to 12noon	Coffee Morning	Knaphill
29 October	9.30am to 11.30am	Pop Up Play Café	St. Mary's
November 2026 (and beyond)			
14 November	6.00pm	Big Quiz Night in aid of Tearfund	Woking
21 November	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Clothes4U	Knaphill
21 November	2.00pm	Big Quiz Night in aid of Tearfund	Walton-on-Thames
26 November	12.15 for 12.30pm	Advent Reflections	St. Mary's
28 November	10.00am to 12noon	Christmas Coffee Morning	Knaphill
3 December	12.15 for 12.30pm	Advent Reflections	St. Mary's
10 December	12.15 for 12.30pm	Advent Reflections	St. Mary's
17 December	12.15 for 12.30pm	Carols at Lunchtime	St. Mary's