

WEY VALLEY – WEEKLY CIRCUIT LETTER – 14 January 2026

Barrie Tabraham

'It's like . . . ' (No, it isn't !!)

A CONVERSATION OVERHEARD

A little while ago when I was coming back from London on the train, I couldn't help but overhear a conversation between two young-ish people – at least, they were a lot younger than me! It went something like this:

'It was, like, I was invisible, so I went like, "I'm speaking to you" And he, like, just said, "Whatever!", so I went, "As if! Like as if I care!"

'If I was you' [replied her friend], 'I'd like, show him the door, girl – know what I mean, like?'

I think I counted over 20 'likes' in about a minute's conversation.

Now, I know I'm of an age when I can remember the days when we were taught to 'parse sentences', and I've always been thankful that I had the opportunity to learn **Latin**. But in many ways I've passed the 'grumpy old man' stage and reached the next stage – what Arthur Smith [the author of the book of that name] calls 'the age of acquiescence', when we become more tolerant and accepting of modern trends.

But when it comes to Christmas, I have to draw the line. It's over 40 years since **the Good News Bible** was first published, and as a general read, it's got its points. But when the writers came to Paul's letter to the **Philippians**, they must have had a mental block, because when they came to that beautiful poem in Chapter 2 – which we all know in the hymn: *At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow* – they translated vs.7 as:

He [Jesus] took the nature of a servant. He became like man, and appeared in human likeness

Aaaarrgh! When I hear those words read out from the Good News Bible, I want to shout out "No, no, NO!! Jesus did not become 'like' man – he was fully human. That is the glory and the wonder of the incarnation. That is the reason why I'm writing this reflection, and you're reading it! Ripping into the GNB in this way may seem a little cruel, but makes us be careful with the language that we use, and when we speak of God and speak of Christ it's an awesome (a good modern word!) responsibility!

Ironically **the Message** is better than the GNB even though it might have been written by a teenager on a train: Philippians Chapt. 2 v 5-8

"Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death – and the worst kind of death at that – a crucifixion."

I wonder whether the word 'like' has crept into modern speech because it enables people to avoid committing themselves – and by inserting the word 'like' every now and again, they can be as vague as they like.

However, if Jesus only appeared in the *guise* of a human being . . .

- he would have nothing to say to the families in Gaza who have lost home, livelihood and family to the terrors of civil war, or to the millions suffering the consequences of war in Ukraine.
- he would have nothing to offer the Bangladeshi living in abject poverty and working in dangerous conditions so that Western Europeans can have cheap clothes.
- he would have nothing to give to you and me in our loneliness, grief, or pain – or whatever is the burden that we're carrying.

If God had not become genuinely, fully human in Jesus – *'incomprehensibly made man'*, as Charles Wesley put it in one of his hymns – then God would be just as remote – and irrelevant!! – as those mythical gods of Ancient Greece and Rome who lived high on Mount Olympus and ate ambrosia and drank nectar all day.

I never tire of repeating those words of the late **David Jenkins**, who was the gifted, loved, (and often controversial) **Bishop of Durham** who wrote: *"God's favourite way of being God is to be one with us – flesh and blood, body and bone, joy and pain, life and death and life again."*

So for you and I, he did not become 'like', but really human –

- born as a tiny, vulnerable baby whose early days were lived under the threat of death from a vengeful Herod;
- who grew up in an occupied country and lived among the poor;
- who knew hunger and disappointment – just like us;
- whose flesh would be torn by the lash and pierced by nails;
- who experienced the same death that all humans have to face

So, my friends, let us praise God who has become part of his own creation, who has revealed himself in one who is truly one with us:

*'He was little, weak and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew'*

And let us thank God that his Son Jesus Christ was not 'like' man, but flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone – truly our Immanuel.



A Prayer:

Loving God, we thank you that in your creative wisdom and goodness, you are like an artist who has painted himself into his own picture, and has become one with his whole creation. Because of this amazing truth, may we never feel alone, but pray to you in confidence as your children, knowing that you really do understand and *share* our humanity in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, and are truly 'God with us'. Amen.

Every blessing to you all,

Barrie Tabraham

Resources/Good News



Net Zero - Five ways to be better for the environment this year

New Year's resolutions are a tradition encouraging people to focus on themselves. What if in 2026, we all focused on being a little bit better for the environment? Small changes add up when we all participate and many of these shifts can also save you money while reducing your carbon footprint.

[Here are some easy tips we can all put into practice to be a little better in 2026](#)

Guildford Flood Alleviation Scheme public event

The Environment Agency, Guildford Borough Council, and Surrey County Council are working together to find a sustainable flood risk management scheme for Guildford town centre.

2026 Public information events

You are all invited to join the public information events taking place in January. We will be presenting updated sketches and maps of the proposed scheme, and staff will be on hand to answer any questions you have.

Please join us on:

- Saturday 17 January 2026, 12pm to 5pm at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford
- Thursday 22 January 2026, 3pm to 6pm at Guildford Borough Council, Millmead office
- Or join us online on Tuesday 20 January 2026, 7pm to 8pm

[Register here](#)

[Guildford Flood Alleviation Scheme | Engage Environment Agency](#)



**COFFEE
AND CAKE
AT ST. MARY'S**
QUARRY ST. GUILDFORD GU1 3UP

**NEW YEAR ...
NEW BEGINNINGS**

**- a chance to meet up and
look ahead through 2026**

**THURSDAY
22
JANUARY**

10.30 – 12.00

Everyone welcome

A photograph of a white ceramic coffee cup filled with coffee, sitting on a matching saucer. The cup and saucer are surrounded by a generous amount of dark brown coffee beans. The background is dark and out of focus, with a hint of steam rising from the cup. The entire image is set against a dark, textured background.



Stay for FREE tea,
coffee & a chat

Clothes4U

Pre loved clothes with TLC

from

Knaphill Methodist Church

Broadway, Knaphill, Surrey GU21 2DR



Saturday 17 January 2026 2 - 4pm

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



All are welcome to join us for tea, coffee, cake & a chat in a friendly environment



Whether you're looking for clothes for yourself, friends, or family



We have lovely, pre-loved clothes for everyone to take away & enjoy wearing



We look forward to meeting you & your family



If you would like to donate clothes, please contact us on the email below



If you would like to volunteer, we would warmly welcome your help

www.knaphill-methodist-church.com/clothes4U

clothes@knaphill-methodist-church.com

STOUGHTON METHODIST CHURCH

(On the corner of Stoughton Road and Grange Road)

COFFEE CORNER

Tuesdays from 10 am – 12 noon



2nd December

9th December
in aid of 'Cherry Trees'

16th December

23rd December

6th January

13th January

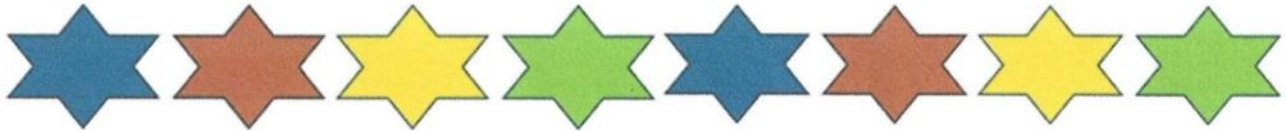
20th January

27th January



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

Everyone welcome – bring a friend!



**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



EVERYONE

LEARN TO SWIM WEEK FOR ADULTS THIS JANUARY

19th January - 25th January 2026 at Cranleigh Leisure Centre

ARE YOU SOMEONE...

- Wanting to become water confident?
- Wanting to master a specific skill/stroke?
- Wanting to improve your swim fitness?

How does it work?

Splash into water confidence with a FREE swim lesson taster session, available on select dates this January!

We have beginner, intermediate & water fitness taster sessions available.

After, you'll have the option to join our award-winning scheme, with a weekly lesson, if you want to do so!


***All teachers are aquaphobia qualified.**


Ready to book a space? Speak to our reception team today!


Cranleigh Leisure Centre
Village Way, Cranleigh, Surrey
GU6 8AF T | 01483 274 400


Waverley
BOROUGH COUNCIL

everyone
ACTIVE

 www.everyoneactive.com

 @everyoneactive

 @everyoneactive

 @everyoneactive