

# **THE VOICE**

## **MERROW METHODIST CHURCH MAGAZINE**



**April 2025**

## Message from the Manse

### Beyond Lip Service

Dear Friends in the Faith,

As we journey through this sacred season of Lent, which began with Ash Wednesday, we are called to a time of introspection and renewal. Jesus' words, "These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me," resonate deeply within us, challenging us to reflect on the authenticity of our faith.

Let me share Lily's story with you. She faithfully attends church every Sunday, singing praise songs and reciting prayers. Yet, over the years, she has found herself merely going through the motions, each week feeling more like a checklist than a heartfelt expression of devotion. Deep down, she knows something is missing. This Lenten season, Lily reflects on her faith, questioning whether her actions stem from a sincere connection to God or are merely "lip service."

Not far from our community, the story of James serves as a reminder of what it means to live authentically. James, a teacher in our local school, recently faced a tumultuous period when his school was grappling with the impact of budget cuts. Faced with uncertainty, he realised that many of his students relied on the meals provided during school hours. Rather than merely expressing concern during staff meetings or discussing it in passing, James decided to act. He gathered teachers, parents, and local businesses, forming a coalition to create a weekend meal programme for students in need.

Through this initiative, he exemplified a faith that translates into action—an embodiment of true love and service towards others. His commitment transformed not only the lives of his students but also inspired teachers and community members to engage beyond their comfort zones, creating a circle of compassion and support.

Like James, we too might find ourselves caught in routines, with worship becoming a series of familiar phrases and songs. This Lent invites us to look deeper within ourselves: Are our actions truly an overflow of heartfelt devotion to God? Are we responding to the needs of those around us with authenticity and love, embracing our calling as agents of God's grace? This season, let us take a page from the journeys of Lily and James, examining where we may similarly wander from God and calling us back to a life of faith that is vibrant and impactful.

True worship is an act of the heart. As we embark on this time of self-examination, let us not shy away from uncomfortable questions. Are our beliefs reflected in our actions? Are we living consistently with our convictions? This Lent, let us encourage one another to forge a genuine connection with God, allowing our outward expressions to resonate with the authenticity of our hearts.

Faith is not a destination but a dynamic journey. Lent offers us a unique opportunity for growth through prayer, fasting, and acts of service. These practices can deepen our relationship with God and open our hearts to His transformative grace. Within our church community, let us cultivate an environment of honesty and vulnerability. Like Lily, who opens up to a friend about her struggles, and James, whose actions inspire change, we too must support each other through accountability, challenging one another to seek spiritual growth together.

As we reflect on our journey of faith, we also look forward to a significant milestone in our church family: the 70th anniversary of Merrow Methodist Church. This year, as we celebrate seven decades of worship, community, and service, let us remember the foundational values that have guided us: love, fellowship, and a commitment to sharing God's grace with all. The anniversary festivities will not only commemorate our past but also galvanise us for the future, inspiring us to continue our mission with renewed enthusiasm and dedication.

In a world often fixated on appearances, the call to heartfelt faith is ever more pressing. We must strive to live authentically, demonstrating that true fulfilment arises from a genuine relationship with God—not from the fleeting nature of external validation. As we engage with life's complexities, let us address these challenges with compassion and integrity.

This Lent, let us heed Jesus' call not just to look the part but to embody a faith rooted deeply in our hearts. Through honesty, sincerity, and a commitment to inward transformation, we can strengthen our connection with God and inspire those around us with our authentic witness to His love and grace. As we celebrate both the Lenten season and the upcoming anniversary, let us take a moment to pray:

**Heavenly Father,**

As we enter this sacred season of Lent, we ask for your guidance and grace to examine our hearts and deepen our relationship with you. We thank you for the gift of our church community and the 70 years of faith and fellowship at Merrow Methodist Church. We pray for wisdom and inspiration for the committee as they plan for our anniversary celebrations, so that they may honour our past while looking forward to a vibrant future. May we continue to embody a sincere faith, reflecting your love in all we do.

**In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

May God bless our church, community, and world.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rev. George

## **USEFUL ADDRESSES**

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**01483 537655**

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### **PROPERTY LETTINGS**

#### **ADMINISTRATOR:**

**01483 537655**

[lettings@merrowmethodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:lettings@merrowmethodistchurch.org.uk)

### **PRAYER SUPPORT GROUP:**

This is a small group willing to put time aside for praying each day for special needs within the Church community. Your request will be passed on to other members of the group, where it will remain confidential.

The prayer contact for April will be:

PAULINE DANIELS

**01483 958905**

### **EDITOR – ‘The Voice’**

GILLIAN VARLEY

**01483 495567**

[gillianbrierley13@gmail.com](mailto:gillianbrierley13@gmail.com)

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**Important:** It is our practice at Merrow to publish THE VOICE on the website. This is an important source of information about the life of our church and we want to share it with others. However, if you feel uncomfortable with a mention on our web page we will be happy to omit your name and any other personal details in any future issue if requested to do so. Please advise at the time of submitting the copy.

# EDITORIAL NOTE



## April

Twixt March and May,  
And this I know,  
Comes April, month of showers,  
Or so they say,  
And yet today  
Is fair with sunny hours.  
There may be cloud,  
But that's allowed;  
The daffodils, abundant  
Display their gold.  
If truth be told,  
Old sayings are redundant!

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Any items for inclusion in the May issue of "The Voice" should be sent to me  
by: **April 22nd 2025**

via email: [gillianbrierley13@gmail.com](mailto:gillianbrierley13@gmail.com)

by hand:

or by post to: Gillian Varley - 4, Merrow Croft, Guildford. GU1 2XH

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN APRIL

## Stewards for Sunday worship:

| Date                   | Time    | Vestry          | Worship Leader | PA/AV         | Door                            |
|------------------------|---------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| April 6th<br>H.C.      | 10.30am | Iris Walker     |                | Glenys Magill | Wendy Bradley<br>Julie Wallis   |
| April 13th             | 10,30am | Suzanne Burnham | Doreen Siame   | Jane Vinall   | Joyce Goodall<br>Jan Marshall   |
| April 20 <sup>st</sup> | 10.30am | Doreen Siame    |                | Glenys Magill | Maggie Woolcock<br>Jan Marshall |
| April 27th             | 10.30am | Helen Belsham   |                | Glenys Magill | Ruth McCulloch<br>Joyce Goodall |

## Communion stewards:

|           |  |                                   |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|
| April 6th | <u>Preparation:</u><br>Suzanne Burnham | <u>Assisting:</u><br>Doreen Siame |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|

## Flower Rota:

April 6<sup>th</sup>                      Ruth McCulloch  
 April 13<sup>th</sup>                     Joan Wells  
 Easter                         Margaret Hills, Jan Walker, Iris Walker, Ann Carpenter

## Sunday Morning Coffee Rota & Charities:

6th April     Julie Wallis & Helen Belsham                      MHA - Hugh Bradley  
 13th April     Maggie Woolcock & Margaret Hyam.     Action For Children -  
 Suzanne  
 20th April     Ruth McCulloch & Margaret Hills                      Bible Society - Joan Wells.  
 27th April     Pauline Daniels & Sheila Shackleton     Embrace the Middle East -  
 Hugh

## Organ Rota:

Gillian Varley: Morning services; Hymnal+ : Evening services

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# **Women's Fellowship**

Women's Fellowship on Monday 7th April 2.30 pm will be celebrating  
Easter Communion with Rev George

All are welcome

## **Our Easter Services**

### **Tenebrae on Maundy Thursday at 7.00pm**

A communion service characterized by the gradual extinguishing of candles,  
with readings about the Passion of Jesus,  
symbolizing the darkness surrounding his death.

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### **Good Friday at 2.00pm**

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### **Easter Sunday at 10.30am**

A communion service to celebrate the joy of the risen Lord.

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## **Unlock Annual London Sponsored Walk**

### **Saturday 12th April - All day event**

This year's walk is approx 8 miles and covers Kennington, Camberwell, North Brixton, Stockwell and Battersea. Please see the March edition of The Voice for full details or the Church Notice Board.

This is a fundraising annual event for Unlock, a small Christian Mission Charity, so any sponsorship money for the Merrow walkers is welcomed.

There will be a sponsorship list on the Notice Board.

Please confirm with me if you're intending to walk, or ask me if you would like more information. We will travel to London by train from Clandon and I'll confirm travel times nearer the event.

**Maggie**

**Woolcock**

### **Morning Bible Study**

at Lavender Cottage, Marlyns Drive, Burpham.

On Tuesdays April 8<sup>th</sup> 'Is Passover our Easter?'

& April 29<sup>th</sup> at 10.45am

led by Gillian Varley

-All are welcome

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### **Evening Bible Study**

April 24<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm

at Merrow Methodist Church

led by Julie Wallis

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### **Weekly Coffee Morning**

on Thursdays from 10.30 - 11.45

If you are free, do drop in for a drink and a chat with others from the church and local community.

There is no charge.



On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday each month this is usually

## **A Charity Coffee Morning**

when a delicious selection of cakes is served for you to enjoy.  
Come along to help us support a different charity each month

**On**

Thursday 10 April

10.30 am - 12 noon

Coffee Morning

in aid of

Merrow Community Garden

@ Merrow Methodist Church

**Home made cakes and free seed planting!**

**All welcome**



# DIARY DATES & NEWS

## World Day of Prayer at Emanuel Church

The service was compiled by the Women of the Cook Islands  
It was well supported ecumenically  
The church was beautifully decorated  
and participating ladies, including Pauline Daniels,  
were dressed and garlanded in the Cook Island style.  
Special thanks to Doreen Siame,  
our church representative to the local World Day of Prayer committee  
for all her hard work in helping to arrange this important event

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## The March Charity Coffee Morning

Raised a total of £450.  
The visiting speaker spoke with passion about the prevalence of this disease  
and its impact on the lives of those who are suffering from it.  
Some countries still hold to ancient beliefs about leprosy and  
we saw film about leper communities in India,  
highlighting the plight , even today, of sufferers.  
This is a treatable and ultimately preventable disease.

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## Number 5 and Mulberry House

Your generous donations for Number 5 and Mulberry house  
are always gratefully received.

Thankyou  
Ruth McCulloch  
Please continue to support and pray for these local charities.

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We congratulate Judith Kyeremeh, wife of Solomon and mother of Anuonyam  
who graduated at York St.John University  
with a Masters degree in Digital Marketing

## Our April church poster



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This year we celebrate 70 years of worship here at Merrow Methodist Church.

The celebrations will span the whole year  
and in November we are planning to hold a church concert .  
The date we are looking at is Sat.15th

Gillian Varley (your editor) is planning the programme  
and is eager to hear from any 'would-be' participants.  
Several people have already put forward suggestions  
but perhaps you have a 'party-piece' to offer.

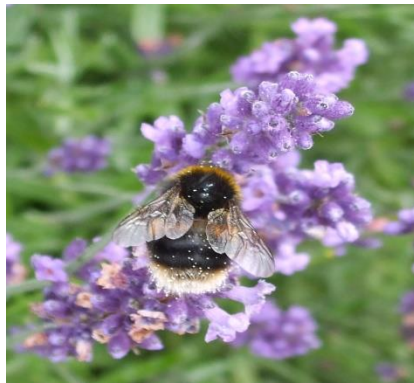
Now our choir is small in number perhaps you could augment it  
just for this occasion so that we can have an item by  
'The Merrow Methodist Singers.'

No auditions and very little rehearsal required,  
only the ability to 'sing something simple' and in tune!

## **JUNIOR PAGE** – for the young and young at heart

### Word-search for Spring

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | R | E | W | O | H | S | D | G |
| U | M | T | E | G | G | E | N | D |
| N | O | A | R | R | E | I | U | U |
| S | S | L | E | K | R | B | B | C |
| H | S | O | T | P | V | A | M | K |
| I | O | C | S | E | A | R | A | L |
| N | L | O | A | P | R | I | L | I |
| E | B | H | E | R | L | A | R | N |
| E | Y | C | E | E | B | F | O | G |



#### Words to find

April

Bee; Blossom; Bud

Chocolate

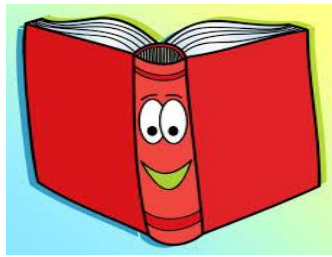
Duckling

Easter; Eggs

Fair; Fog

Lamb

Sea; Showers; Spring; Sunshine



## **Story time**

### **The farmer and the baker story**

Once upon a time, in a small town, a farmer and a baker did business with each other. In exchange for 1 Kg of butter that the farmer brought every day, the baker would give the farmer a 1Kg loaf of bread. The two developed a good bond between them and they became friends.

One day, the baker decided to check the weight of the butter to see if he was getting 1Kg as promised. When he measured the butter, he found that the farmer was giving him less than that and this made the baker very angry, so he decided to take the farmer to court to get justice.

#### **The Farmer's Trial**

When the farmer appeared before the judge, the judge asked him how he measured the butter. The poor farmer replied, "I weigh it on my weighing scale," and explained, "Your Honour, every day the baker buys butter from me and I buy bread loaf from him. So, every day when the baker brings his 1 Kg loaf which I put on the scale. Then I put my butter on the scale to match the weight of his loaf. So I give the baker the same weight in butter as he gives me in bread. If there is less than 1 Kg of butter it is because the loaf of bread must also weigh less and so it is actually the baker's fault."



The judge pronounced his verdict "The baker is a cheat and must be punished.

**Moral.** Be honest in life. Those who cheat will always be found out in the end.



# Gill's trills



## April unchecked

A month of reign and son and breeze  
When blossoms sent the heir.  
Spry squirrels leap from bow to bough  
With ne'er a thought to Y or how,  
And awl is bright and fare.

On April 1<sup>st</sup> the pranksters play  
There tricks on easy pray.  
They ring your bell, knock on the door,  
But awl this fun must stop before  
The clocks chime out mid-day.

The media try to fool us two  
They think there being cool!  
Don't worry if yore taken inn,  
It's really knot a dreadful sin  
To bee an April Fool

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## Ken's Pen

With the usual greetings from Puddletown, Ken

Mills

How many numbers relate to you? Pin numbers for credit and debit cards; NHS number; National Health ; landline and mobile phone; many chub memberships, and so on. Names seem to have gone out of fashion.

A Junior Church leader asked her young class. "God loves you all, but why does He?" They thought for quite a while then little Mary piped up "Is it because He has only one of each of us?" She was right. To our God we are NOT merely numbers. NOT just Church Members, citizens of Guildford, or British voters. You are unique; I am unique. God knows you and me by name.....

A young mum went to church just after Christmas, and the minister preached about the gifts the Wise Men brought, gold, frankincense and myrrh. As she went out she said to the minister, "If it had been three Wise Women they would have brought nappies."

.....

"I'm here to tune the piano," said a man to the church pianist. "But I didn't ask you to come," she said. "No, but several members of the congregation did" he replied

# VARLEY'S PARLEZ

## Who broke the walls?

A school inspector visited a classroom of a school in his area to get some idea of the standard of teaching. An R.I. lesson was in progress so he decided to ask a question on a Bible story. Calling on one small boy he said,

"Tell me, who broke down the Walls of Jericho?"

Stammering somewhat the lad replied,

"Please sir, I don't know - it wasn't me!"

Turning to the teacher the inspector asked

"Is that the usual standard of this class?"

The teacher replied,

"The boy is very honest. If he says he didn't do it, you can be sure he didn't."

The inspector left the classroom in disgust. Indignantly he related the incident to the headmaster who replied,

"That teacher has been with us for many years. I can assure you that if she had any idea who had broken the walls she would have told you."

Furious, the inspector sought one of the school governors who, after listening to the story said,

"Aren't you rather making a mountain out of a molehill? I suggest we just pay to have the wall repaired and then forget all about it!"

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## Hugh's News

### Birding with Hugh!

Last Christmas my daughters kindly gave me a new WiFi Bird Box Camera as a special present. They knew how disappointed I was that my last camera had stopped working and how much I enjoyed watching the Blue Tits nesting in the Spring.

I set the new box and camera up in January and waited expectantly.....I have been able to download an app onto my phone and iPad and this notifies me if there is any movement or sound in the vicinity of the box. I continued to wait expectantly.....

Nothing happened until 8th Feb..... (see next page).....



# Hugh's News continued

.....when a male Blue Tit ( I will call him Tommy! ) paid a visit



A day later he brought a potential mate ( Tina! ) to show her around her possible new house.



I am not sure she was over impressed as there was no further movement detected until Tommy returned by himself on 28th February. (see next page)



On the 9th March he started pecking away at the base of the box (photo) and over the last ten days both birds have been dropping off materials hopefully with the aim of constructing a nest soon.



(Do you think he's seen the camera!)

Watch this space next month for more news....

HRB  
19/03/25

# POETRY CORNER

Keith Staniford handed me a lovely little poem for this page, about the benefits of smiling.

Unfortunately it is in copyright and not yet in the public domain, but if you are able, do look it up ....

It begins.....'Smiling is infectious.'

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## **An April Day**

*by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

When the warm sun, that brings  
Seed-time and harvest, has returned again,  
'T is sweet to visit the still wood, where springs  
The first flower of the plain.

I love the season well,  
When forest glades are teeming with bright forms,  
Nor dark and many-folded clouds foretell  
The coming-on of storms.

From the earth's loosened mould  
The sapling draws its sustenance, and thrives;  
Though stricken to the heart with winter's cold,  
The drooping tree revives.

The softly-warbled song  
Comes from the pleasant woods, and colored wings  
Glance quick in the bright sun, that moves along  
The forest openings.

When the bright sunset fills  
The silver woods with light, the green slope throws  
Its shadows in the hollows of the hills,  
And wide the upland glows.

And when the eve is born,  
In the blue lake the sky, o'er-reaching far,  
Is hollowed out and the moon dips her horn,  
And twinkles many a star.

Inverted in the tide  
Stand the gray rocks, and trembling shadows throw,  
And the fair trees look over, side by side,  
And see themselves below.

Sweet April! many a thought  
Is wedded unto thee, as hearts are wed;  
Nor shall they fail, till, to its autumn brought,  
Life's golden fruit is shed.

# SCAMS

## Royal Mail text

A dodgy text impersonating Royal Mail tells you that your parcel can't be delivered due to 'missing or damaged address information. It then provides a link to 'update your details' designed to steal your personal and payment information.

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Criminals claiming to represent energy firms and selling goods at inflated prices may claim

- They are working on a neighbour's address, noticed you need work completed and they have left over materials.
- They may inspect areas you can't access, for example the loft or roof and show you photos/videos as evidence that you need urgent repairs

**Beware : these images may not even be of your property.**

Always ask for identification and tell them to wait outside whilst you check this by calling the company. **DO NOT use the phone number on the person's ID card.**

### How to protect yourself

- If you are not happy about a person's identity, do not let them into your house under any circumstances.
- Take time to consider your options and research costs from other providers.
- If you feel pressured have the confidence to **be firm and say no**.
- Call the citizens advice consumer helpline following a doorstep caller on 03454 04 05 06.

### Fake emails, texts or WhatsApp

1. Offering discounts on energy bills.
2. Claiming a relationship and that they have lost or changed their phone.

**Do not reply, but report a scam text :**

forward the text to **7726**

forward a scam email to **report@phishing.gov.uk**



## Prayers worth sharing



### St. Patrick's Breastplate

I arise today  
Through the strength of heaven:  
Light of sun, Radiance of moon,  
Splendour of fire, Speed of lightning,  
Swiftness of wind, Depth of sea,  
Stability of earth, Firmness of rock.

I arise today Through God's strength to pilot me:  
God's might to uphold me,  
God's wisdom to guide me,  
God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me,  
God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me,  
God's way to lie before me, God's shield to protect me,  
God's host to save me From snares of devils,  
From temptations of vices, From everyone who shall wish me ill,  
Afar and anear,  
Alone and in multitude.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down,  
Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise,  
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.

Amen