

THE VOICE

MERROW METHODIST CHURCH MAGAZINE



April 2026

Dear friends,

I write this letter on behalf of Uncle George, who is taking a well-deserved break. I write it as we emerge once more from the gloom of winter into the light of spring. Easter takes place – or, rather, begins – on the Sunday following the first full moon after 21st March – the beginning of spring. It marks our passage from the gloom of Lent and Passiontide to the glorious light of the Resurrection: it marks the passage from death to life.

Easter is not only a day, but a season. It lasts until Pentecost in the early summer. The early church used to call this period of fifty days the Great Sunday. We celebrate Easter every Sunday, but especially at this time of the year, as days grow longer and nights shorter. There is a joy about Spring that from time immemorial has lifted the human spirit. It was encapsulated for me in a passage I once heard read at a fellowship meeting, about a slender bluebell dislodging an old brick as it strives towards the warmth and light of the sun.

Easter, like Christmas, celebrates a happening that many people find difficult to believe in. A man, Jesus of Nazareth, is executed for a political crime and buried, and in three days is alive again. Unbelievable! Yet resurrection is at the heart of Christian belief. The evidence is strong, albeit circumstantial and anecdotal. That God raised Jesus from death is a belief held by millions, among them nuclear physicists and astrophysicists, engineers and chemists, biologists and surgeons, philosophers and psychologists, tinkers, tailors, soldiers, sailors and the rest. Maybe even a journalist or two! There may be disagreement about what in fact happened on that day so long ago, even amongst Christians. Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, favoured taking the empty tomb as a sign of God's historical act of raising Jesus 'as a person.' For him, it was 'the least difficult interpretation of the New Testament record.' I am content to accept it as a mystery, like the mystery of the Incarnation itself – God dwelling on earth in a human life.

It is the one sign of hope at a time when so many people are without hope. No wonder, as war spreads across the world and draws nearer; another disease is causing fear and uncertainty, so soon after the pandemic; new experiences of poverty drag people down; and awareness grows of the rising tide of mental ill-health amongst the young. Despair, darkness and death are the companions of so many. Can these dry bones live?

Yes they can. A fragile bluebell forces its way through a brick wall. The tomb is empty. Despair can turn to 'respair'. Death has no more dominion. Christ is risen and life reigns in freedom. May you know the healing and life-giving presence of the risen Christ.

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!

God bless,
Peter



Our poster for the month

USEFUL ADDRESSES

SUPERINTENDENT MINISTER:

REV. DR. PAUL GLASS **01483 575667**
revpaulglass@gmail.com

MINISTER:

REV. GEORGE QUARM **01483 575432**
unclegeorge.quarm@gmail.com

CHURCH OFFICE:

Bushy Hill Drive, Guildford, GU1 2SH. **01483 537655**
office@merrowmethodistchurch.org.uk

PROPERTY LETTINGS

ADMINISTRATOR: **01483 537655**
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:

ANN CARPENTER **01483 535282**
PAULINE DANIELS **01483 958905**
CARI RAYNER **07887 692598**
DOREEN SIAME **01483 578214**

EDITOR – ‘The Voice’

GILLIAN VARLEY **01483 495567**
gillianbrierley13@gmail.com

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

The winter's chill is past
And hibernating hedgehogs seek the light,
For Spring is here at last
With blossom laden trees
And humming bees,
Blue skies and sun to add to our delight.
Squirrels unearth their hoard,
But best of all we hail our risen Lord.



Any items for inclusion in the May issue of "The Voice" should be sent to me by:
April 22nd 2024

via email: 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
Maundy Thursday 2 nd April	7.30pm	Suzanne Burnham		Glenys Magill	Glenys Magill
Good Friday 3 rd April	2.00pm	Joan Wells		Glenys Magill	Glenys Magill
Easter Sunday 5 th April HC	10.30	Joan Wells	Gillian Varley	Jane Vinall	Joyce Goodall Maggie Woolcock
Sunday 12 th April	10.30am 6.30pm	Iris Walker Hugh Bradley	Doreen Siame	Cari Rayner Glenys Magill	Maggie Woolcock Wendy Bradley
Sunday 19 th April	10.30am	Hugh Bradley		Jane Vinall	Wendy Bradley Ruth McCulloch
Sunday 26 th April	10.30am	Joan Wells		Cari Rayner	Joyce Goodall Glenys Magill

Communion stewards:

	<u>Preparation:</u>	<u>Assisting:</u>
April 2 nd 7.00pm Tenebrae	Doreen Siame & Glenys Magill	
April 5 th 10.30am	Suzanne Burnham & Doreen Siame	<u>Doreen Siame</u>
April 12 th 6.30pm	<u>Glenys Magill</u>	<u>Hugh Bradley</u>

Flower Rota:

April 5th & 12th Margaret Hills; Ann Carpenter; Iris Walker; Jan Walker
 April 19th Cari Rayner
 April 26th Glenys Magill

Sunday Morning Coffee Rota

April 5th Glenys Magill and Maggie Woolcock
 April 12th Hugh and Wendy Bradley.
 April 19th Joan Wells and Jan Walker.
 April 26th Ruth McCulloch and Margaret Hills.

& Charities:

Coffee Funds- Hugh Bradley
 MHA - Hugh Bradley.
 Bible Society - Joan Wells
 Action For Children - Suzanne Burnham

Organ Rota: Gillian Varley: Morning services; Hymnal+ : Evening services

Women's Fellowship

Next Fellowship meeting will be on 4th May.

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.

Good Friday at 2.00pm

A service of readings, poems, meditations and hymns as we accompany Jesus on his

“Walk to the Cross”

Hot cross buns will refresh you after the service

Easter Sunday at 10.30am

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

Morning Bible Study

The Thursday Bible Studies

led by Gillian Varley

are at 10.45am

on April 14th & 28th

at Lavender Cottage, Marlyns Drive, Burpham.

All are welcome

Evening Bible Study

Thursday April 16th at 7.30pm

at Merrow Methodist Church

led by Julie Wallis

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 2nd Thursday each month this is usually

A Charity Coffee Morning

when a delicious selection of cakes is served for you to enjoy
and to support
a different charity each month



EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

SUNDAY 5 APRIL, 6.00AM

2026

ST MARTHA'S HILL, AT THE CHURCH

Speaker: Noelle Coe, Town Chaplain at GTCC

The service will be followed by tea/coffee and hot cross buns. Please bring a travel mug.

*Parking available at Halfpenny Lane car park and Guildford Lane car park.
Please dress warmly and bring a torch.*



“UNLOCK” ANNUAL LONDON SPONSORED WALK SATURDAY 18th APRIL 2026

This year’s Annual London Walk, organised by “Unlock” and subtitled Homes, History, Hills & Heath, is on Saturday the 18th April. Our church has been supporting these walks since the very first one in 1984. This year it’s the 43rd Walk and I’m hoping that we can continue to support this event both through walking and sponsorship - although I appreciate that for many of us (including myself) walking 7 miles feels a lot longer than it used to!

The Unlock London walks always offer an interesting and unique experience. Hundreds of walkers from churches of all denominations across London and the South East join in the walk and there is always a good sense of fellowship.

The walks cover different areas of London each year, both well-known and some less well-known areas.

Walkers experience a range of very different communities often living in close proximity to each other. During the walk a number of different denominational churches (7 this year), are visited where there is the opportunity to learn more about the role each church plays within its local community. The churches we visit provide interesting displays and fact sheets about their role and work within their local communities.

This year’s walk is approximately 7.2 miles long and for a change is around the Kilburn & Hampstead areas of North London including parts of Hampstead Heath with some steep hills. Thankfully we’re not expected to complete the route without rest and refreshments stops which are provided at selected churches along the way. There is also the option of covering parts of the route by bus for weary walkers.

Below is an extract from information provided by Unlock about the 2026 London Walk which gives a flavour of the experiences and aims of the walk. “This year’s walk takes us to wonderful churches that reflect the character of the peoples and places they serve. You will discover how these churches are working to address the issues and concerns facing their communities in this very diverse area.

The different levels of prosperity along the walk can be quite stark, but there are lots of subtle contrasts here, too. So, for example, as you walk along the handsome road in Hampstead called New End Square look for Wells House and you will discover its part of a council estate snugly built around the gardens of

Burgh House, the grand mansion next door.

We pray that this year's walk will help us connect people with places, faith with the past and future, nature with frenetic urban activities and lively worshipping communities with the beauty and dangers that face those living in this part of the city. It is not just the high viewpoints that can give us a new perspective. The love and commitment of all we meet today, and the heritage and history they are placed in, should give us all hope for this challenging year."

The walk will be an all-day event and walkers will meet and travel to London by train and then by public transport to the start of the walk. Details of timings will be confirmed nearer the date but there is usually an early start between 8.30-9am returning late afternoon. Comfortable sturdy shoes are a must and it's a good idea to bring some light refreshments as we never know in advance which churches will be providing refreshments. Walkers also need to bring some small change for donations at the churches visited.

The Annual London Walk is the main source of income for Unlock who are a small but dedicated Christian charity supporting the work of Christian Mission within inner city and deprived urban areas. They do this by helping to make the messages of the Gospel relevant to those who would not normally attend church or read the Bible. Unlock supports and funds project workers to work in urban settings, providing both practical help and emotional support as well as sharing the good news of the gospel. These projects have been shown to make a real difference to those attending. Unlock workers will have a presentation to demonstrate their work at one of the churches we will be visiting during the walk.

Walkers are encouraged to ask family and friends to sponsor them and there will be a group sponsorship list on the Church Notice Board closer to the event. I'm pleased to say that in recent years the generous sponsorship received from church members and friends, has meant that we are one of the top 5 churches raising funds for Unlock through supporting the Annual London Walk. It would be great to maintain that record so, if possible, please do support this annual event.

Please let me know if you'd like to join this year's walk or if you'd like any further information about Unlock or the walk.

Maggie Woolcock

DIARY DATES & NEWS

World Day of Prayer

The service this year was written by the women of Nigeria. It took place on Friday March 6th at St. Francis Church in Beckingham Road, Guildford and was led by the young Nigerian minister, Pelumi. The focus was on the theme "I will give you rest, come" and the ladies who took part were all in colourful 'traditional' dress.



Doreen Siame (centre of the photo) is Merrow's representative on the organising committee and we thank her and all her colleagues for a vibrant and moving service.

The Importance of Faith and Reflective Practice in Chaplaincy

– Julie Wallis

I hope you will find the above title 'intriguing' especially as this article is written by someone who isn't an ordained minister.

Background

On Tuesday 17th March, Joan Wells and I attended the above conference at St Saviour's which was put on by the Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy. This charity was setup 18 years ago by Guildford churches to care for Guildford and 'oversees' 3 projects:

1. Street Angels – Volunteers who patrol Guildford town centre on Friday

and Saturday nights, providing care and support to anyone in a vulnerable state. Joan has been a Street Angel for several years previously.

2. Community Angels – A befriending project for vulnerable adults of any age. Joan is now a Community Angel!

3. Volunteer Chaplains – Trained Chaplains who go out into the businesses and workplaces.

Although, the conference was about Chaplaincy, the topics covered are/were relevant to anyone who has some type of relationship with other people eg. Pastoral visitor, 'friendship group' etc.

The Volunteer Chaplains do receive training. Some are ordained- but many are not. They are just 'ordinary' people who have felt God's calling to bring his presence into the workplace. There are now Chaplains in Sports clubs, GP practices and Schools (George Abbot School for one). The 'criteria' for a Chaplain is described below:

- Can sit in silence
- Emotionally aware
- Are grounded in faith
- Willing to grow
- Not experts -but 'present' people

Christ is shared by listening, respect, being a calm presence, providing a gentle hope. It is likely that the words will come when invited.

It was important that they were 'Companions' and not 'Saviours'.

It was also emphasised that the Chaplains do have mentoring and that regular reflection is essential. Regular reflection will prevent burn out and help us notice any boundary crossings, power imbalances etc.

Although, the above specifically related to Chaplains, I felt there were some things that can be relevant to everyone:

1. Listening to people is important.
2. Just being there (is sufficient)
3. Prayer – both for the friend and yourself!

This is only a brief summary of the conference. The link below goes to the website which provides far more information on all the 3 projects run by the Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy.

Please do take a look as it is extremely informative about all the projects.

<https://gtcc.org.uk/>

MERROW METHODIST CHURCH
BAPTISM OF NOAH BRIGHT YOUNG

MARCH 1ST 2026 10.30AM



MINISTER: Rev George Quarm



A very special day for Noah, his parents, relatives and friends
and for his grandparents, Hugh and Wendy Bradley

News from the Belshams

Thankyou for your lovely welcome last weekend. Some of you will know that we came back to support the wonderful Methodist Art Collection exhibition at St. Mary's.

Margriet and I went to see it in 2017 in Haywards Heath. It made a deep impression on me and have hoped that it would come to Guildford one day.

If you've not had a chance to see it yet it's at St. Mary's until 4th April.

We are now well settled in Barnt Green (North Worcestershire) and are getting involved in church and village life. We still take a keen interest in what is going on at Merrow and continue to be members so that I can continue my work at the Queens Foundation with Methodist ministerial students. Anna Carrington, who preached several times at Merrow, will be ordained at the end of June and I'm accompanying a new first year student.

Very best wishes for the remainder of your 70th year and our love,

Helen & Graham

These are some photos of the plants we bought with the gardening token you kindly gave us.



JUNIOR PAGE – for the young and young at heart

Spring snake:

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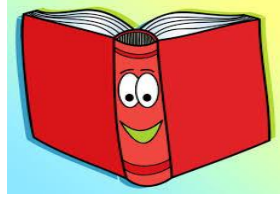
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J E S U S

You could make a snake of your own

by choosing an Opening Word and then adding another word beginning with the last letter of the first word.



Story time

In the beginning there was

no earth or sky or sea or animals,

NOTHING!

Then God spoke in the darkness: "Let there be light!" And right away there was light, scattering the darkness. "That's good!" said God. "From now on, when it's dark it will be 'night' and when it's light, it will be 'day'." The evening came and the night passed and then the light returned. That was the first day.

On the second day, God made the earth and over it a vast blue sky. He stood back and admired His creation. "That's good too!" said God and as darkness fell again the second day was over.

The next morning God looked around and thought, "The earth needs to be a bit more organized." So, He put all the water in one place and all the dry land in another. When he had finished that, God made plants to cover the land. Flowers and all sorts of trees and grasses began to grow. "It's looking good," said God and that was the end of the third day.

On the fourth day, God looked around and thought, "The daylight still needs a bit more work and the night is just too dark." So, he made the sun to light the sky during the day and the moon and stars to add a bit of sparkle to the night. He placed them in the sky and stepped back to look at his work. "This is coming along very well," said God.

The next day, God turned his attention to the water in the oceans. "I want these waters teeming with life!" he said, and in no time at all there were small fish darting through the shallow water and huge fish swimming in the ocean. God made birds too, to fly through the air. "Ah, that IS good!" he said. Dusk fell over the water and the sky grew darker but the moon shone and stars twinkled and that was the end of the fifth day.

On the sixth day, God added creatures to the land. Lions and tigers and bears, rabbits and sheep and cows. He made everything from ants to elephants, but he still felt something was missing. So God created Mankind to enjoy and take care of all that he had created. The whole universe was completed and God looked around and was VERY happy. So

..... on the seventh day God had a nice long rest and enjoyed looking at all He had made.

Gill's trills



April quotes

"The greatest lesson in life is to know that even fools are right sometimes."

"April weather, rain and sunshine both together."

"April showers bring May flowers"

"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken."

"With the coming of spring, I am calm again." — Gustav Mahler

Ken's Pen

By the time you read this, I expect to be settled in to my new exciting life at The Fairways Care Home in Chippenham, one of many Methodist Homes for the Aged. I have had to contact so many organisations, societies and charities, to inform them of my new address. Lots of them needed me to quote my membership or donor's number. I tried to do the same for my bank, but they did not accept my letter, nor phone call, nor e-mail. I had to be taken in to Dorchester and visit my bank there. They were able to do it, but I had to give them my debit card number and pin number first. So often the world looks on us as mere numbers, rather than as people.

One of the loveliest stories of the Resurrection is that of Mary, distraught at finding Jesus' tomb empty, saw who she thought was the gardener. It was only when Jesus called her name, Mary, that she recognised Him.

However impersonal organisations may consider us, do remember that God knows us by name, and loves us all.

.....

A mother was shocked, and disappointed, when she heard that her young son had told a lie. Giving him a heart-to-heart talk, she explained what happens to those who tell lies. "A big man with fiery red eyes and two horns grabs little boys who tell lies, and carries them off at night. He takes them to Mars, where they have to work in the dark for 50 years." Satisfied, she concluded by saying, "Now, you won't tell another lie, will you?" "No Mum" he replied gravely, "You tell much better ones."

.....

With greetings from Chippenham. Keep praying and KEEP SMILING. Ken Mills

VARLEY'S PARLEZ

Come and join us at 'Time Out'
and enjoy an Autumn break in Torquay from October 26th -30th

This Christian short break is organised by Flame Trust,
a Christian charity based in the Midlands
and is a few days of fellowship, teaching and worship
as well as free time to explore the area.

The Livermead Cliff Hotel will host the event and the Rev. David Coffey,
A former President of the Baptist Union is to be the guest speaker.

The accommodation at the Livermead Cliff Hotel is extremely comfortable, and is on
a half board basis (breakfast and dinner),
and of course there will be tea and coffee during our sessions.



TIME OUT 2026 TARIFF: Monday October 26th – Friday October 30th

Standard room: £475.00 pp HALF BOARD

Double room for single use: £10 per night supplement (however, there is no
supplement for true single rooms, but these are very limited)

Seaview room: £10 per person per night supplement

Additional days (before/after): £65.00 pp on a half board basis (subject to availability
at the time of enquiry)

Day Visitor rate (no overnight stay): £40 pp per day (tea/coffee and dinner, and the
full conference programme)

***Bookings received by 30 April: £20.00 p/p DISCOUNT

EARLY BOOKING RECOMMENDED

Final payment by 31st July.

Derek or Gillian can let you have a booking form

See all details on the notice board

Hugh's News

Birding with Hugh!

Those with a very good memory - or back copies of The Voice – will recall that a pair of Blue Tits, who I named Tina and Tommy, started to prepare a nest in my bird box on the 19th March last year, and their chicks fledged on the 10th May, 18 days after they were born.

In hopeful preparation for something similar occurring this year, at the beginning of January I climbed up onto the roof of my garage - not my favourite expedition (Gordon will tell you that I do not like heights!) - cleaned out the box and covered the entry hole with a metal protector designed to stop larger predatory birds attacking the chicks.



Last year magpies and jays had pecked away quite large pieces of wood in their unsuccessful attempts to make the hole big enough for them to enter the box. I removed last year's nest, still containing the single egg which failed to hatch, and when you examine this closely you can see it really is a work of art, filling the whole box, creating two distinct layers of material, one for the bed in which the eggs are laid and then a larger area to expand into as the chicks get bigger.



I obviously did a good job with my spring clean, as later that month when I checked my camera I was delighted to find a blue tit roosting in the box overnight.

I say a "blue tit" although it looked more like a "black bird"!



A single blue tit roosting overnight in an empty nesting box during winter or early spring can be a male or female preparing to claim that box for the breeding season. Both sexes use boxes to stay warm but the behaviour is commonly associated with territorial defence and site selection. As I spotted this one in January it was more likely to be a male who was claiming the box as his territory to defend.

A single blue tit can burn up to 5% of its body weight in a single cold night so to help it stay warm it will enter the box just before sunset, puff up its feathers (like a built in duvet!) to retain heat and sleep there for 12-14 hours until sunrise. The puffed feathers make it look much larger and very difficult to identify!

Assuming it was a male tit, who we will call Timmy this year, his main task was now to find a mate to share his new house with.

I spotted him showing a female bird around in early March and on the 17th March she (who we will call Tilly...) started to construct a nest in the empty box. Two days later it looked like this.



So hopefully in the May edition of The Voice we will be able to share some exciting news....

POETRY CORNER

In April

by Rainer Maria Rilke 1875 –1926

translated from the German by Jessie Lamont

Again the woods are odorous, the lark
Lifts on upsoaring wings the heaven gray
That hung above the tree-tops, veiled and dark,
Where branches bare disclosed the empty day.

After long rainy afternoons an hour
Comes with its shafts of golden light and flings
Them at the windows in a radiant shower,
And rain drops beat the panes like timorous wings.

Then all is still. The stones are crooned to sleep
By the soft sound of rain that slowly dies;
And cradled in the branches, hidden deep
In each bright bud, a slumbering silence lies.

Young Lambs

by John Clare

The spring is coming by a many signs;
The trays are up, the hedges broken down,
That fenced the haystack, and the remnant shines
Like some old antique fragment weathered brown.
And where suns peep, in every sheltered place,
The little early buttercups unfold
A glittering star or two--till many trace
The edges of the blackthorn clumps in gold.
And then a little lamb bolts up behind
The hill and wags his tail to meet the yoe,
And then another, sheltered from the wind,
Lies all his length as dead--and lets me go
Close bye and never stirs but baking lies,
With legs stretched out as though he could not rise.

SCAMS

Common April Scams to Watch for:

Tax Refund Phishing (HMRC/IRS): Fraudsters send fake emails or texts claiming you are due a tax refund, aiming to steal bank details or personal information.

Holiday/Travel Scams: As people book spring and summer vacations, scammers use social media to advertise fake low-cost flights or hotel deals, often mimicking legitimate travel companies.

Locksmith Scams ("Driller Killers"): Fraudsters quote low prices, then destroy locks with drills, charging excessive fees—sometimes over £700—for immediate replacement.

QR Code "Quishing": Fraudulent QR codes are placed on parking meters or signs, directing users to fake payment websites.

Energy and Home Improvement Scams: Misleading calls regarding "Green Deal" funding, insulation, or unexpected repairs.

SO:

- **Verify Independently.**
- **Be Sceptical of Deals**
- **Never Rush or be rushed**
- **Do not give out personal details**

THINK BEFORE YOU ACT!

Prayers worth sharing



We thank You Lord for Your love that never ends;
for your forgiveness and mercy.

We praise you for the hope we have through your cross and resurrection. Teach us
to live in gratitude each day,
and help us to share our joy in knowing you with others.

In this season of new life we thank you for sunlit mornings,
new warmth in the April air, birdsong, Spring flowers and budding trees.
Help us to look around and see the many wonderful things with which you surround
us, and to acknowledge the blessings you pour on us each day.

When we are happy, you are there.
When we are discouraged, you are there.
In our sorrows, you are there, our faithful and ever present God.

Amen.

Lord, guide me through April.
When I do not know what to do, please show me the right way.
Give me wisdom for my choices and courage to do what is right.
Help me not to rush or follow wrong advice.
Teach me to pray first, listen carefully, and trust You with every step.
Guide my words and my attitude.
Help me speak with kindness and truth.
Keep me away from anger, gossip, and harsh speech.
Teach me to listen more and understand others better.
Let my words bring peace, and let my actions show love.

Amen.