

THE VOICE

MERROW METHODIST CHURCH MAGAZINE



OCTOBER 2026

Message from the Manse

October 2026

Greetings!

It's a real pleasure to be able to write a little something for The Voice for the first time! I thought I would begin my first one with a little introduction. Although it's a first for me to be a minister in this Circuit, a first for me to have a university chaplaincy, a first to be superintendent – so lots for me to learn and get to know – I am coming back to a part of the world I've lived in before and know pretty well.



I was sixteen when I moved to Woking back in 1990 and years later when Claire I got married we lived in a flat in Knaphill and then moved to Guildford - so you could say I am back home! Claire and I have two sons, Matt and Evan – they are now 22 and nearly 19, (see above, Matt is on the left, Evan on the right).

After training for Methodist ministry, I was stationed to Eastbourne where we have been for twelve years. Although I will miss the sea, I am enjoying the rolling Downs again!

So, God-willing, as Merrow's minister you'll have someone who isn't completely brand new to either ministry or the local area, but it'll take me a little bit of time to get up to speed with everything. For me, the best way to do that will be through meeting you, speaking with you, finding out what's important in Merrow to the community that surrounds our church, the community that we're already a significant part of.

At the time of writing I've led worship at Merrow, we've had our first Church Council altogether and I've begun to get to know faces and names. One of the highlights so far was the Coffee Morning on 10th September with the talk by Dr. Ang Swee Chai – which was powerful, shocking, and inspirational somehow all in one.

A wonderful event for Merrow to host, and as well as highlighting the plight of so many vulnerable people, it also spoke to me about how this mattered to Merrow people too.

As I write this article I have a beautiful Bible text in my eyeline above my desk. It's the famous line from Jeremiah: *"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."* (Jeremiah 29:11).

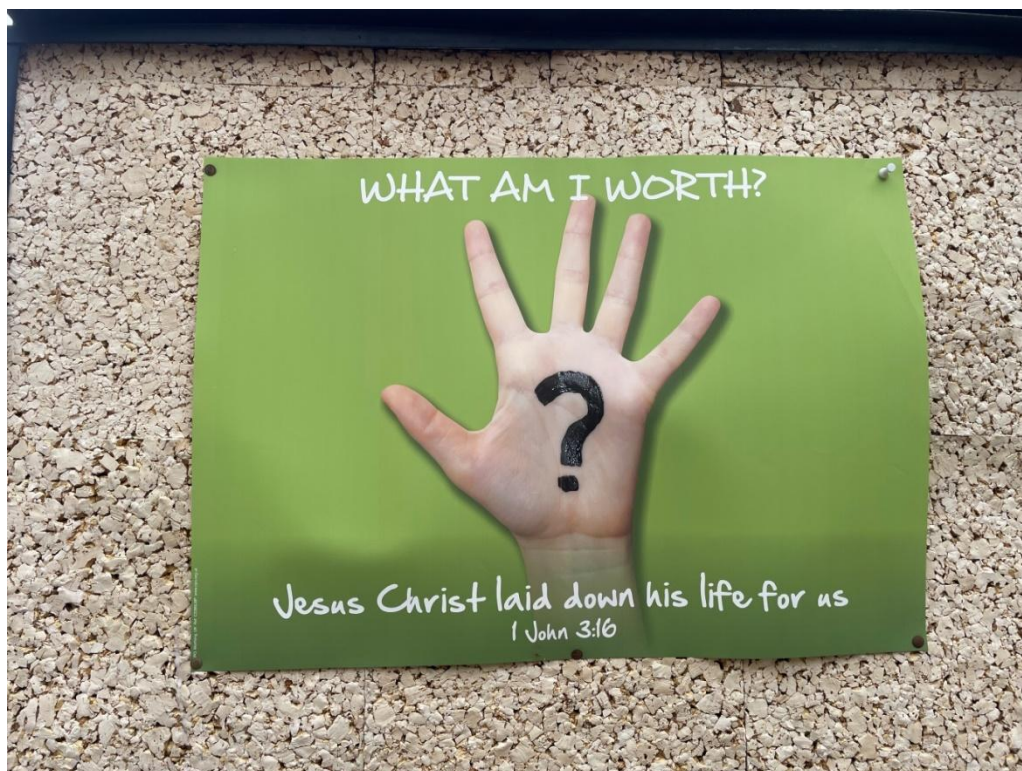
I don't believe in destiny at all, but I do believe with all my heart that God desires nothing but good for us and all creation, and that we can go into the future with hope that the love of God is always with us, prompting, shaping, guiding us forward.

I am really looking forward to the coming years, to see all the possibilities that God has in store for us all – and plenty of coffee and cake with you too!

Grace and Peace,



Rev. Paul Tabraham



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and

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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 May will be:

ANN CARPENTER 01483 535282

PAULINE DANIELS 01483 958905

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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



October

A month of falling leaves and cooler weather
As Summer ends and Autumn shows her face.
With fruit and flowers we celebrate the Harvest,
Our thanks to God for all his gifts of grace.

Our clocks go back an hour if we remember;
If we forget we find that it's our fate
To find that we have missed the morning service,
But for the coffee we are not too late!!

Any items for inclusion in the July issue of "The Voice" should be sent to me by:

October 22nd

via email: gillianbrierley13@gmail.com

[by hand,](#)

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

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There is a heavy fine for publishing such material without permission.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OCTOBER

HARVEST FESTIVAL : SUNDAY OCT 4th - 10.30am

Please remember to bring your Harvest gifts
of fruit, flowers, vegetables and non-perishable items
to be distributed to the housebound and others in need.

Stewards for Sunday worship:

Date	Time	Vestry	Worship Leader	PA/AV	Door
Oct.4 th Harvest	10.30am	Iris Walker		Glenys	Peter Walker Wendy Bradley
Oct.11th	10.30am	Joan Wells	Doreen Siame	Jane Vinall	Maggie Woolcock Ruth McCulloch
	6.30pm	Hugh Bradley		Cari Rayner	
Oct.18 th L/A	10.30am	Suzanne Burnham	Gillian Varley	Glenys Magill	Julie Wallis Ruth McCulloch
Oct.25th	10.30am	Joan Wells		Cari Rayner	Maggie Woolcock Joyce Goodall

Communion stewards:

Oct 11th 10.30am	<u>Preparation:</u> Suzanne & Doreen	<u>Assisting:</u> Julie Wallis
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Flower Rota:

Oct. 4 th	Iris; Gill; Angela; Margriet (Harvest)
Oct.11 th	Wendy
Oct.18 th	Ruth
Oct.25 th	Joan

Sunday Morning Coffee Rota:

4 th Oct	Glenys Magill and Maggie Woolcock Bradley.
11th Oct.	Hugh and Wendy Bradley Wells
18th Oct.	Joan Wells and Jan Walker

Charity

MHA	Hugh
Bible Society	Joan

Organ Rota

Gillian Varley : morning services;
Hymnal+ : evening services

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship will be celebrating their 70th Anniversary on
Monday 5th October at 2.30pm

A service of Thanks Giving will be held followed by tea and cake.

Please join us

RSVP Suzanne

Church Bible Studies

All are welcome.

Morning Bible Study

Theme – the Book of Ezra

Please note the change of dates and venue for October

at 4, Merrow Croft, GU1 2XH.

On Tuesdays October 13th & 20th

Please contact Gillian Varley for further details

Evening Bible Study

Thursday October 15th

led by Julie Wallis in the church at 7.30pm

Number 5 and Mulberry House

Thank you for all your generous donations for Number 5 and Mulberry house.

They are very appreciative of the support we give to them.

Weekly Coffee Morning

Thursdays from 10.30 - 11.45am

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

to support a different charity each month

from 10.30-11.45am

when a delicious selection of cakes will be served for you to enjoy.

Come and join us for a cuppa that changes lives

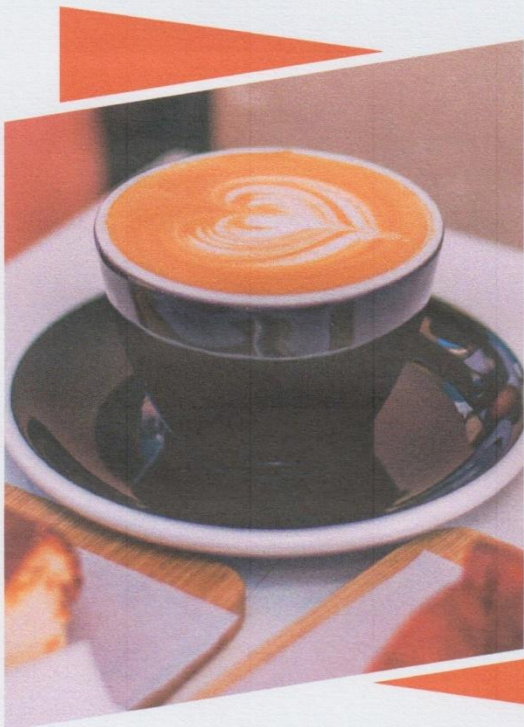
For our October **Charity Coffee Morning**

See the poster on the following page.



Merrow
Methodist Church

Coffee Morning



JOIN US
for
coffee/tea,
homemade cakes,
and
a chat

Thursday 15 October 2026
10.30 am – 12 noon
Merrow Methodist Church

biblesociety.org.uk | Registered charity 232759 | Photo: Engin Akyurta PIXABAY

NEWS & DIARY DATES

Sylvia Parsons died peacefully, in the early morning of September 11th.

A much loved member of our church for many years, one of Sylvia's many roles was as one of our organists, until, in her 90s, frailty meant that she moved from Burpham into a care home.

Sylvia's funeral service will be at 11am on October 22nd
at the church
with refreshments to follow.

Sylvia on her 90th birthday.



In "The Voice" next month there will be an abbreviated version of Sylvia's autobiography which she prepared for us some years ago.

The cross at Ffald y Brenin

Photo – Julie Wallis



Christian *retreat* centre and house of prayer
located in the breathtaking Preseli hills of West Wales

At Ffald y Brenin, they have a high cross which looks out over the Gwaum valley. As you can see, it is very picturesque. At my last retreat, we were informed of a recent occurrence that happened at the cross during the summer.

Ffald y Brenin had been hosting 25 Hong Kong Christians and one of them had brought over a set of bagpipes. The group decided to hold an impromptu worship service by the cross using the bagpipes for accompaniment. The valleys therefore were filled with Amazing Grace, Abide with Me etc.

After a while, they were joined by a man and a horse. He had been ‘walking his Shire horse’ (as you do), had heard the music and wanted to find out what it was all about. He then joined in the worship, was shown around Ffald y Brenin (which he hadn’t heard about) before leaving with his horse!

I had heard about the pipes being used to muster the clans in the Highlands but never really understood just how it would have worked. This has proved that it really did work – even if it takes Hong Kong Christians to convince me.



Tapestry from Cawdor Castle

Photo – John Wallis

Tapestries have been in the news a lot recently with the recent opening of the Bayeux tapestry at the British Museum. It is the first time the tapestry has been on display in England in 1000 years although it was originally made in Canterbury. It is anticipated that thousands of people will visit the exhibition between now and July 2027 when it returns to France.

After my recent retreat to Ffald y Brenin (more on that later), John and I took the opportunity to visit another tapestry located in Fishguard, Wales. This tapestry was called the ‘Last invasion 1797’ and was created by the community in 1997 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of what actually was the last invasion of the UK. During the Napoleonic wars, the French attempted several times to invade England. On this occasion, the winds blew them off course so they ‘successfully’ landed at Fishguard in Wales. That is where the tale takes a rather unusual turn.

When on land, the French pillaged and plundered the local villages. Whilst awaiting the soldiers to respond to the invasion (communication took a little bit of time in those days!), a Welsh lady – ‘Jemima Nicholas’ took things into her own hands. She rounded up 12 French soldiers and held them prisoner overnight.

After handing them over to the Captain, she then persuaded several other women to join her in marching to the coast to join the soldiers. All the women were dressed in traditional Welsh dress (tall black hats, bright red cloaks etc). When the French saw them coming, they thought that lots of reinforcements were on the way so very promptly surrendered. From then on, it was then said that the women put an end to the invasion.

In 1997, the community decided to commemorate the invasion by creating a tapestry which described the whole event. As the Bayeux tapestry describes the 1066 invasion (or at least 1 of them – there were 3 that year!), it was felt that there should be one which described the last invasion. It was therefore designed along very similar lines – 100 m long with a border. It took 4 years to make with 78 people involved in its making. Listening to what was involved in its construction gave a very good idea to what was involved in the making of the Bayeux tapestry.

It was well worth a visit if you happen to be in the area. Thanks go to Gillian for informing me of it as I had been completely unaware of its presence. It is amazing the gems that exist around about us.

FYI – if you are unable to obtain tickets for the Bayeux tapestry in London, there is an excellent copy of the tapestry on display in Reading Museum (and admission is free). This was created by Victorian ladies.

Julie Wallis

JUNIOR PAGE – for the young and young at heart

How many words?

October is the month when the leaves of our deciduous trees take on their autumn colours and begin to fall.

How many words with **3** or more letters can you make from the letters of

LEAVES?

(No plurals)

Write your words here

SCORES: 12 Moderate: 12
15 Good: 15
19 Excellent: 19

I have found 19:

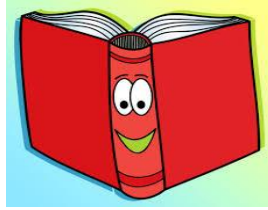
4 x 3 letter words

10 x 4 letter words

5 x 5 letter words

Can you beat that ?

List of words on the back page - no cheating!



Story time

Us Two by A. A. Milne

Wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
Whatever I do, he wants to do,
"Where are you going today?" says Pooh:
"Well, that's very odd 'cos I was too.
Let's go together," says Pooh, says he.
"Let's go together," says Pooh.

"What's twice eleven?" I said to Pooh.
("Twice what?" said Pooh to Me.)
"I think it ought to be twenty-two."
"Just what I think myself," said Pooh.
"It wasn't an easy sum to do,
But that's what it is," said Pooh, said he.
"That's what it is," said Pooh.

"Let's look for dragons," I said to Pooh.
"Yes, let's," said Pooh to Me.
We crossed the river and found a few-
"Yes, those are dragons all right," said Pooh.
"As soon as I saw their beaks I knew.
That's what they are," said Pooh, said he.
"That's what they are," said Pooh.

"Let's frighten the dragons," I said to Pooh.
"That's right," said Pooh to Me.
"I'm not afraid," I said to Pooh,
And I held his paw and I shouted "Shoo!
Silly old dragons!" - and off they flew.
"I wasn't afraid," said Pooh, said he,
"I'm never afraid with you."

So wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
"What would I do?" I said to Pooh,
"If it wasn't for you," and Pooh said: "True,
It isn't much fun for One, but Two,
Can stick together, says Pooh, says he. "That's how it is," says Pooh.

Moral: In scary situations it's better to be with a friend than to be alone.

Gill's trills



Winterfylleth or October

In Roman times the year began
In March, which seems quite strange;
But then in 1582
Pope Gregory came into view
And brought a wider range;
For Jan. and Feb. were added in,
Two months of wintry weather,
And March a newer song did sing
By leaping forward into Spring,
Much nicer altogether.

But now the month which once came 8th
'October' was its name,
Became the 10th month of the year,
Its name now obsolete I fear
Until a new one came;
T'was 'Winterfylleth;' thus explained
in Anglo-Saxon lore,
That when th'October full moon shone
Winter began and 'Fall' was gone
That's it, there's nothing more!

.....

Old-Roman Name: comes from *octo*, the Latin word for eight

Anglo-Saxon Name: The Anglo-Saxons called the 10th month, Winterfylleth - "winter fullness," as winter was believed to begin around this month's full moon.

Ken's Pen

A little girl came home from visiting a nearby house where her best friend had recently died. "Why did you go?" asked her Mum. "To comfort her mother." she replied. Surprised, Mum said "How could you do that?" "I sat on her lap and cried with her" she answered.

Life in the Care Home is a bit monotonous, meals always at 8.30. 12.30. and 4.30, doing lots of crosswords, reading books etc. My son, Peter, and granddaughter Bryony, visit me once a week, and sometimes apologise if they are not able to take me out somewhere. I tell them that having them with me for a while is more important than a trip out.

Maybe we hesitate, after someone dies, to visit the family as we may not know what to say. Often just sitting quietly, a silent prayer, or crying with them, is all that is needed.

.....

A Junior Church leader asked the class, "And who was the very first woman?" No reply. "She had something to do with an apple" she added. After some thought one child said "Was it Granny Smith?"

.....

A boy came home from church one Sunday eating a large choc-ice. "How did you manage to buy that?" Dad asked. "I used the money you gave me for church," he replied. "The minister was at the door, and he let me in free."

.....

With greetings from The Fairways Care Home (MHA) ,Chippenham.
Ken Mills

*We are immensely grateful to Ken for all his contributions to this magazine.
They keep us amused and often challenged.
Thank you Ken*

POETRY CORNER

Fall, Leaves, Fall

[Emily Brontë](#)

1818 –1848

Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me,
Fluttering from the autumn tree.
I shall smile when wreaths of snow
Blossom where the rose should grow;
I shall sing when night's decay
Ushers in a drearier day.

“Autumn Rain”

[D. H. Lawrence,](#)

1885-1930

The plane leaves
fall black and wet
on the lawn;
the cloud sheaves
in heaven's fields set
droop and are drawn
in falling seeds of rain;
the seed of heaven
on my face
falling — I hear again
like echoes even
that softly pace
heaven's muffled floor...

SCAMS

Pensioners are being warned to look out for Winter Fuel Payment text message scams following a surge in activity from opportunistic criminals ahead of next month's payments.

Work and Pensions Secretary Pat McFadden said:

If you get a text message about Winter Fuel Payments, it's a scam. They will be made automatically so you do not need to apply.

These despicable attempts by criminals to target people are on the rise. We are raising awareness to make it harder for fraudsters to succeed.

If you receive a suspicious message about Winter Fuel Payments, don't engage - forward it to 7726 and delete it immediately.

Lotteries and prize draws

You may receive a letter congratulating you on winning a cash prize. These often look legitimate, with barcodes or ID numbers. The letter might ask you to pay an administration fee, buy a product or call a premium-rate phone number to claim your winnings. Don't respond to these letters, even if they look genuine. A genuine lottery won't ever ask you to pay a fee to collect your winnings.

Note from your editor:

I received one of these 'lottery win' letters in the post this week, so it is becoming quite a common scam at the moment. Remove and shred your name and address then destroy or dispose of the letter.

Prayers worth sharing



This prayer is from the Methodist Prayer Handbook
And is by
Annabel and Sophie
Year 7, Kent College, Pembury.

Dear Lord,
We thank you for filling our world with light,
filling our land with trees,
filling our towns with joy,
filling our families with hope
and filling our hearts with love.

And a prayer by the Year 2 class of
Nutgrove Methodist Primary School

Dear God,
Please help me to be joyful and have love in our hearts.
Help everyone across the world to have hope for a happy life
and future.
When we are sad, please comfort us.
Thank you for leading and guiding us to provide hope for others
when they need it.
Amen

Words from LEAVES: - Junior Page

Ale; Lea; Sea; See.

Ease; Eave; Else; Lave; Sale; Save; Seal; Veal; Vale; Vase.

Easel; Lease; Leave; Salve; Slave.