

THE VOICE

MERROW METHODIST CHURCH MAGAZINE



NOVEMBER 2026

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NOVEMBER 2026 – ‘AUTUMN WIND’



Greetings for November. The clocks have changed, the nights are getting longer, the days shorter and – other than beginning with the completely obvious – I have definitely noticed a cooling of the season in recent days. Having ignored weather forecasts for the whole of the summer (every day

seemed hot and sunny), I am starting to keep an eye a little more now. Autumn can be a wonderful season, full of colour and changes and a beauty all of its own. Of course, on wet, blustery days when the wind is inverting your umbrella and the rain becomes horizontal, it is less enjoyable!

When Nicodemus came to see Jesus at night to ask him all sorts of questions, Jesus used the wind to represent the Spirit of God. He said: *“The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”* Nicodemus said to him, *‘How can these things be?’* (John 3:8-9)

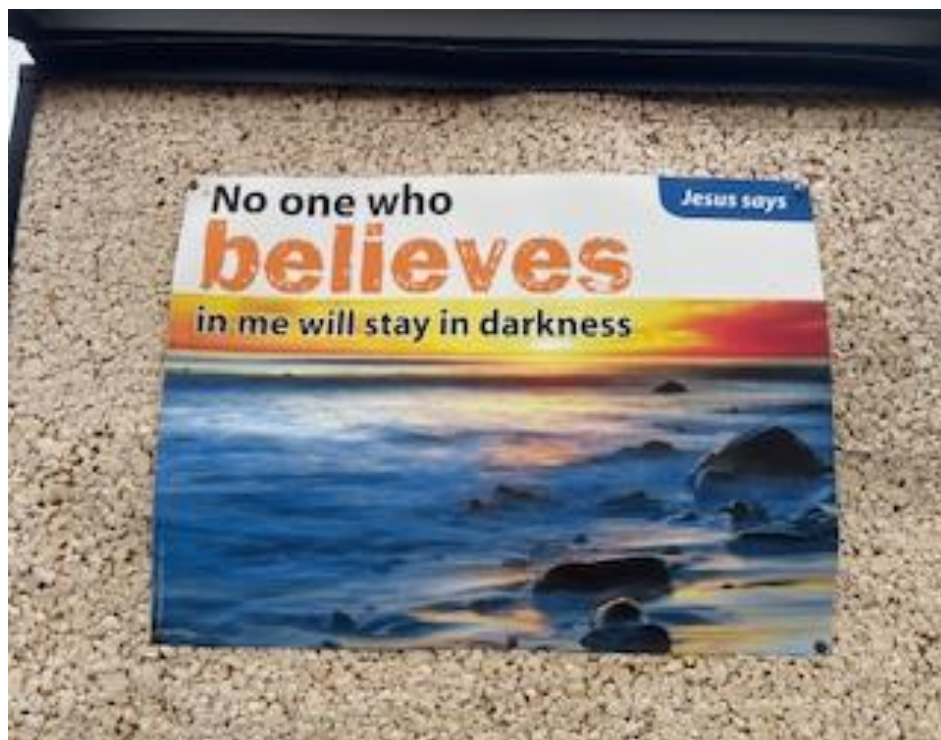
It strikes me that there is actually zero criticism from Jesus at all in this sentence. Nicodemus is not expected to know everything and certainly not everything about the work of God’s Spirit. In fact that’s not for him to know fully – and it’s not for us to know fully either. While Jesus points the way to the Kingdom and to the love his heavenly Father has for all his creation (see John 3:16 a few verses later), the Spirit makes it possible for the human heart and soul to dare to reach to know this, to feel this, and to follow Jesus’ way. I wonder if Jesus is even subtly telling Nicodemus that God’s Spirit is already in him, prompting him to speak, to ask, to recognize that Jesus cannot be anything other than from God.

We will never know it all, you and I – but we can know enough. By God's grace, and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can dare to face questions about life, death, eternity, the depths of love, the heights of grace, the freedom to live as people who are cherished in spite of all our failings. The wind, the Spirit may be beyond our understanding, but is with us all the way. By God's grace we'll continue to receive glimpses of his kingdom: the one in our midst, and the kingdom to come.

Blessings to all this autumn!
Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev Paul", written in a cursive style.

Rev. Paul Tabraham



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and

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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:

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EDITORIAL NOTE



November complaint!

The shops are swamped with Christmas cards.
The price of stamps is dire.
My purse is not elastic, and If they go any higher
My list of cards to send this year must be severely cut.
The ones to family must stay, then friends by Email, but
To send them electronically is really not the same.
No cards upon the mantelpiece,
That really is a shame.

The rattle of the letterbox
As cards fall on the mat
Is such a special Christmas sound for many people, that
I'll make more hand-made Christmas cards to limit costs this year.
So blow the price of stamps, I'll not cut back on Christmas cheer!
And now to all our readers I make this simple plea,
Consider what I've written,
Then do the same as me!

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

via email: gillianbrierley13@gmail.com

by hand,

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

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NOVEMBER

Stewards for Sunday worship:

Date	Time	Vestry	Worship Leader	PA/AV	Door
Nov. 1st	10.30	Iris Walker	Doreen Siame	Glenys Magill	Peter Walker Wendy Bradley
Nov.8 th Remembrance	10.30	Suzanne Burnham		Jane Vinall	Joyce Goodall Julie Wallis
	6.30pm	Hugh Bradley		Glenys Magill	
Nov 15 th	10.30	Iris Walker		Cari Rayner	Peter Walker Ruth McCulloch
Nov.22nd	10.30	Joan Wells		Jane Vinall	Maggie Woolcock Julie Wallis
Nov.29 th 1 st of Advent	10.30	Hugh Bradley	Gillian Varley	Glenys Magill	Wendy Bradley Joyce Goodall

Communion stewards:

	<u>Preparation:</u>	<u>Assisting:</u>
Nov 1 st am	Suzanne Burnham & Doreen Siame	Doreen Siame
Nov 8 th pm	Glenys Magill	Hugh Bradley

Flower Rota:

Nov 1 st	Catherine Winder
Nov.8 th	Margaret Hills
Nov.15 th	Joyce Goodall
Nov.22 nd	Suzanne Burnham
Nov.29 th	Pauline Daniels

Sunday Morning Coffee Rota:

1st Nov Pauline Daniels and Julie Wallis.
Fellowship
8th Nov Glenys Magill and Maggie Woolcock.
15th Nov. Joan Wells and Jan Walker.
22nd Nov. Hugh and Wendy Bradley
29th Nov. Ruth McCulloch and Margaret Hills

Charity:

Mission Aviation

Coffee Funds
Christian Aid
JMA
Transform Trade

Organ Rota

Gillian Varley : morning services
Hymnal+ : evening services

Women's Fellowship

on

Monday 2nd November

Will hold their AGM in the Foyer followed by tea and biscuits

Action for Children

the Methodist Children's Charity

Bringing joy where it's needed. I will be collecting the One4all gift vouchers on Sunday 6th December. We will be donating them once again to AFC Fostering Service at Gosport Hampshire. This year, AFC are especially grateful to have been nominated as one of the charity partners of the President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference for 2026/27. Thank you all for your generosity to AFC

Suzanne

Church Bible Studies

All are welcome.

Morning Bible Study

at Lavender Cottage, Marlyn's Drive, Burpham.

On Tuesday 10th & 24th November

'From Ezra to Nehemiah'

Please contact Gillian Varley for further details

Evening Bible Study

Thursday 19th November

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

The next one will be in December

NEWS & DIARY DATES

Women's Fellowship

Celebrated their 70th Anniversary on Monday 5th October with a special Church Service. It was a joyous afternoon with Catherine Winder giving talk of the history of Women's Fellowship from 1956.

Her mother Cynthia was President for many years.

Rev Darlene McCarley led prayers. Darlene was one of our previous Ministers for 9 years.

Gill Vinall cut the celebration cake.



Gill is a long standing member and was President till 2017.

The service was followed by tea and cake in the hall. Suzanne

THANKYOU

to all those who came forward to answer the question "Where do you see God"

at the Local Arrangement service on October 18th.

We all meet God in different ways and in different places and it was very special to hear so many members of our church family share their testimony with us all.

Sylvia Parsons

Sylvia died peacefully, in the early morning of September 11th. A thanksgiving service for her life took place on 22nd October in the church, and here, as promised, is an abbreviated version of her autobiography which she prepared to celebrate her 90th year.

MY LIFE – Sylvia Parsons

90 years in a couple of pages that is a tall order!

I was born in Sunbury-on-Thames, a small cluster of houses straggling along the banks of the River Thames. Both my sets of grandparents lived in the Dublin area. One grandfather was a dentist in the Army Dental Corps; the other was a church organist who also taught in the Irish Academy of Music.

After my parents married they came over to England in search of employment. It was a happy home and one where my sister and I were taught the love of God. On Sunday we all drove up to London to St Paul's Church, Baker Street. A memory was standing on the church steps with our paper Union Jacks, waving as King George and Queen Mary processed in front of us for their Silver Jubilee.

As we grew older more houses were built in 'our' road and I can remember the tremendous excitement when the first bus came down our road. The river was a great attraction; we had a rather broken down 'shack' on the bank where we were able to moor a dinghy and as we grew older we became quite expert at 'messaging about with boats'!

The war years were approaching and from a small private school locally I went to the Lady Eleanor Holles school which had just moved out from Hackney to Hampton Hill. One bomb fell in our road but landed in a garden and didn't explode. I took my General Certificate, but as I started the 6th form I contracted double pneumonia and wasn't able to do much for a couple of years.

I did not want to become a secretary or a vicar's wife like my sister (that meant going out to social functions and being polite!) I much preferred being in the garden, so began to think about going to agricultural college, but that was ruled out for health reasons.

My plans were evidently not God's plans. I ended up at a school with a Christian ethos near the New Forest and became secretary there for four years. In the summer holidays I helped with a C.S.S.M. beach mission in Norfolk and there met Derek, my husband-to-be. He was in his last year at theological college and later we married and lived in Cambridge until Derek was ordained. His first curacy was in Maidenhead and while there our first daughter was born. Shortly afterwards he became Chaplain, Housemaster and Careers Adviser at King Edward's School, Witley. We remained there for twenty happy years.

We later moved to Guildford as Derek was by then teaching at the Howard of Effingham School and I was working at the University of Surrey as a secretary.

I got to know two other Christians working in non-academic posts and we felt God wanted us to start a staff and post-graduate fellowship there. I later became chairperson of the committee linking the chaplains and representatives from various Christian student societies: a real challenge, but very rewarding.

Derek retired and on Sundays he was nearly always travelling to different churches in the area to take services. I rather wanted to feel I had some church 'home' and thus began my time in Merrow Methodist Church.

Sadly, in 1992, Derek became ill with leukaemia and after six months he died. I took early retirement, but the minister, David Coote, suggested I might like to become his part-time secretary and secretary of the Church Council. Other roles came my way through the years, including playing the organ and joining the choir. With it all have come many happy years of fellowship, prayer and learning.

God has led me in many ways I never expected, but he has been with me on my journey and I thank him for that.

‘Cyril’ the Squirrel
From Julie W.



‘Cyril’ the Squirrel enjoying eating the peanuts from the supposedly Squirrel proof peanut feeder. I suppose no one actually told the Squirrel that!

Harvest Festival Flowers



And every radiator shelf was beautifully decorated too.

Future dates: Advent carols – Sunday Dec.6th -6.30pm

Carol Service – Sunday Dec 20th – 3.00pm

JUNIOR PAGE – for the young and young at heart

A November Quiz

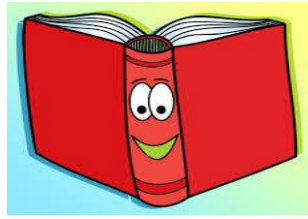
- 1.What number month of the year is November?
- 2.How many days are there in November?
- 3.In which season is November?
- 4.Who led the Gunpowder Plot?
- 5.What is the date of Bonfire Night?
- 6.What date did World War 1 end?
- 7.What is that day called?
- 8.What red flower is especially connected with that day?
- 9.Where in **Belgium** and **northern France** did these flowers grow?
- 10.November 28th 2026 is the first Sunday of - - - - - ?

A Catherine Wheel is a circular **spinning firework** named after **Saint Catherine of Alexandria**.

Can you find these in the name “Catherine Wheel”:

1. An animal
 2. A fish
- and
3. Part of the foot

Answers on the last page



Story time

The Ant and the Grasshopper (Adapted from Aesop)

Once upon a time, during a sunny, breezy **autumn**, a Grasshopper spent his days bounding through the fields. He sang beautiful songs, danced on the crisp leaves and chirped to his heart's content. He did not have a care in the world. As he rested upon a warm stone, an Ant passed by. The Ant was grunting and straining, bearing along with great toil a heavy, plump kernel of corn back to his underground nest. "Why work so hard on such a lovely day?" chirruped the Grasshopper. "Stop what you are doing and sing a harvest song with me!" The Ant stopped for a moment to wipe his brow. "I am helping to store food for the coming winter," he replied wisely, "why don't you do the same? Soon the autumn winds will turn fierce, and the frost will cover everything we eat." The Grasshopper laughed, tossing his head. "Why bother about winter now? Autumn has given us plenty of food right this minute!" He hopped away to find another patch of sunshine, leaving the busy Ant to continue his tiring walk.

A few weeks later, the last leaves fell from the branches, and a blanket of frost covered the ground. Winter had arrived. The Grasshopper tried to dig through the frozen earth, but his legs grew stiff from the cold. Shivering and weak with hunger, he walked toward the ant hill. Peeking through the entrance, he saw the Ants in their warm tunnels, joyfully sharing the corn and grain they had gathered during the autumn months. The Grasshopper knocked faintly and begged for just a single seed.

The Ant sadly asked, "What were you doing all autumn while we were busy collecting food for the winter?" "I was busy singing and making music," the Grasshopper confessed quietly. The Ant replied gently but firmly, "Those who choose to play when they ought to work will find they are not ready when days of need arrive."

The Moral of the Story: It is best to prepare today for the needs of tomorrow.

(but the kind Ant took pity on him anyway and gave him one of her precious seeds)



Gill's trills

November already! Did I hear you say?
But surely September was just yesterday!
I've so much to do and I really do try,
But days pass so quickly and years hurry by.
Time took a more leisurely pace, so it seemed,
When life stretched ahead full of dreams to be dreamed,
Some dreams were fulfilled, some remain still "to do",
Some don't seem so urgent, but some, just a few,
Are on my back-burner, just simmering away,
And perhaps they will come to the boil one fine day.
But all of my hopes and my dreams, as it stands,
Are held for the 'now' in God's capable hands,
To come to fruition, as some of them may,
When He says "It's time, and today is the day."

.....

Ken's Pen

A rest from his monthly 'epistle' this month but huge thanks for Ken's regular outpouring of fun and wisdom sent from The Fairways, in the depths of Wiltshire.

And from us all here at Merrow Methodist Church

Ken

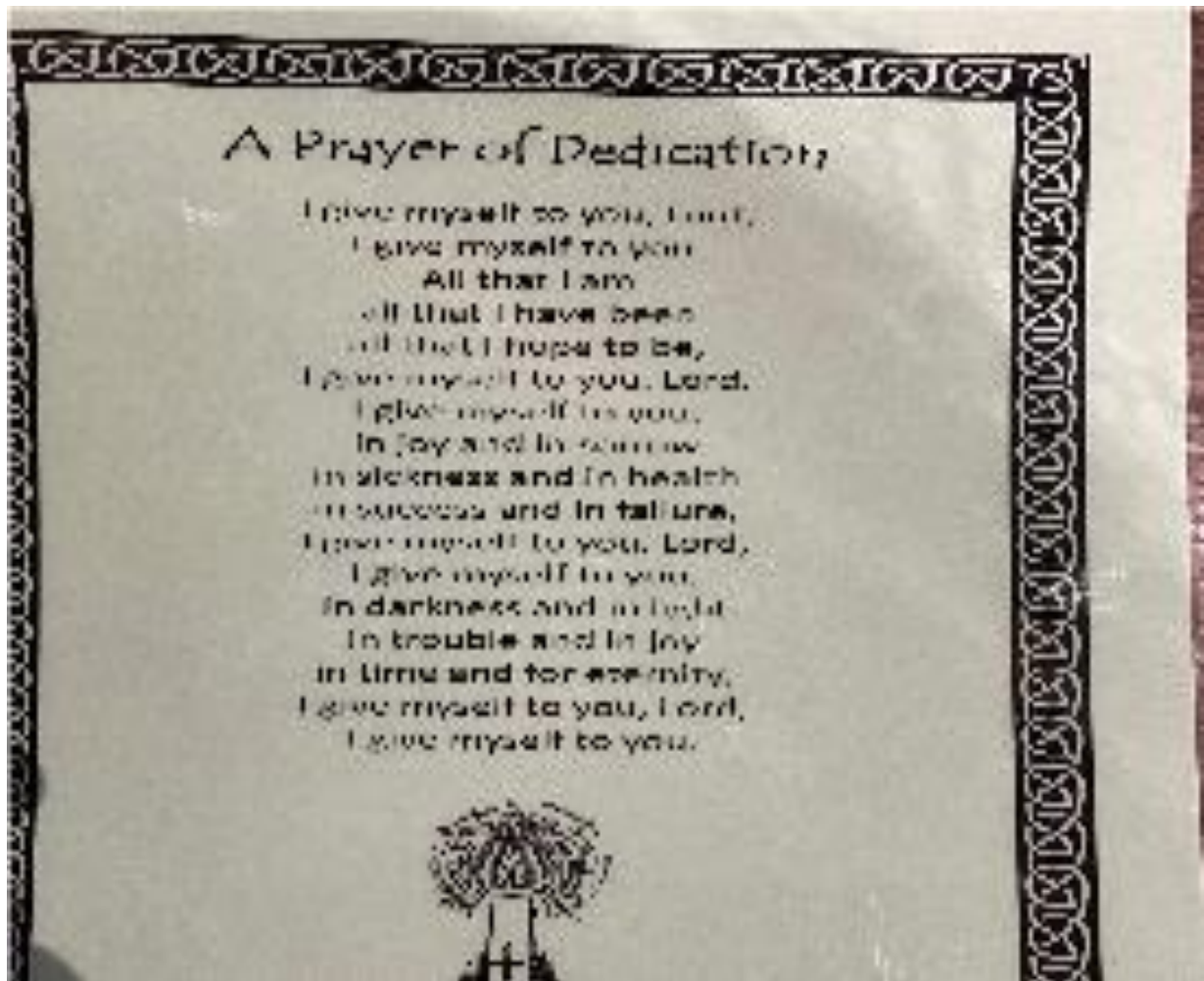
we wish you a very

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Prayer

from Julie

On a recent visit to Portchester Castle, we visited St Mary's Church which is located within the Castle (and still fully functioning). It was originally a monastery before becoming a Church – and now hosts a lovely tea room among many other activities. It is a thriving Church community. Whilst spending time in the Church, I found this prayer which I thought was lovely.



The prayer was written by Lancelot Andrewes 1555-1626

A clearer transcript of the above text:

I give myself to you, Lord, I give myself to you,
All that I am, all that I have been, All that I hope to be.
I give myself to you, Lord, I give myself to you,
In joy and in sorrow, In sickness and in health, In success and in failure.
I give myself to you, Lord, I give myself to you.
In darkness and in light, In trouble and in joy, In time and for eternity,
I give myself to you, Lord,
I give myself to you.

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



(Taken from Country Squire Magazine)

Dear Lord,

We thank You for the turning of the seasons.

For the cool mornings and the golden afternoons.

For the mist that lies in the valley and the dew that jewels the grass.

For the beauty of Autumn.

For the trees that blaze with colour.

For the bracken that turns to rust on the hillside.

For the low, slanting light that gilds everything it touches.

Such beauty, Lord. to store in our hearts for the grey days of winter.

We thank You for the harvest that is gathered in.

For the apples that fall from the tree and the blackberries that stain our fingers.

We thank you for the earth's abundance; let us share it with those in need.

We thank You for the creatures that prepare for winter.

For the squirrels that bury their nuts

For the hedgehogs that search for a place to sleep.

Let them find shelter and sustenance in the months ahead,

And let us remember to care for them.

We pray for the farmers in this season of change.

For those who are bringing in the last of the harvest and preparing the fields for winter.

For those sowing next year's crops, hoping for a better year to come.

Give them strength for the work ahead and rest when the work is done.

We pray for those whose spirits fall with the leaves.

For the ones who dread the darkening evenings and the shortening days. Be their light in the darkness and warmth in the cold.

We thank You for the lessons of autumn.

For the reminder that nothing lasts forever

For the teaching that letting go is not loss, but release.

Help us to let go of what we cannot keep, and to trust in Your promise of renewal.

Amen.

Junior Page Quiz answers

Eleven; 2. Thirty; 3. Autumn; 4. Guy Fawkes; 5. November 5th ;

6. 11th November 1918; 7. Remembrance Day; 8. Poppy; 9. Flanders Fields

10. Advent

"Catherine Wheel" answers – Cat; Eel; Heel.