

THE VOICE

MERROW METHODIST CHURCH MAGAZINE



November 2025

Message from the Manse – November

Dear Christian Friends,

A Preacher at a Valentine's Day retreat in 2016 pronounced from a pulpit, "Divorce has no place in God's kingdom." Four years later, that same preacher separated from his wife. This is not a story of irony. It is a story of humanity.

Marriage, divorce, and remarriage are not just theological concepts. They are lived realities—complex, painful and beautiful. And while Scripture offers guidance, it also invites us to wrestle with the concept of grace.

What Did Jesus Say?

In Matthew 19:1-11, the Pharisees posed a question to Jesus about divorce. Jesus responded by affirming the sacredness of marriage: "What God has joined together, let no one separate." But He also acknowledged the reality of dashed dreams and hopes: "Moses permitted divorce because your hearts were hard." This was not a loophole. It was a lament. Their legalism did not trick Jesus. He pointed them back to the heart of God: covenant, compassion, and truth. And He did not condemn those who were facing difficulties and pain. He offered them a way forward.

Divorce is never easy. It can bring grief, guilt, and sometimes relief. It affects children, families, and communities. And yet, it happens among the faithful just as with any other group.

Some marriages die quietly. Others explode in violence. And some, tragically, become places of abuse. Let it be said clearly: no one should endure an abusive relationship. **NEVER.** The God of love does not ask His children to suffer in silence. To stay in a marriage that destroys your soul is not holiness; it is harm.

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What About Remarriage?

For some, remarriage is a second chance. A new beginning. A healing of what was lost. For others, it is complicated emotionally, spiritually, socially and financially. The church must walk gently here. Not with rigid rules, but with discerning love. Not with shame, but with wisdom. Every story is different. Every heart deserves to be heard.

A Personal Word

I have been married for 39 years. It has not been easy, cosy, or smooth. It has had its own ups and downs. But it has been a personal choice—a daily decision to make it work, no matter what. Not because it is perfect, but because it is precious. I do not speak as one untouched by struggle. I speak as someone who has seen the valleys and the mountaintops. And I know that grace is needed in both.

So, what do we say to the divorced? To the remarried? To those still holding on?

We say: You are not defined by your past. You are loved. You are welcome. You are not alone.

Let us stop using Scripture as a weapon. Let us start using it as a balm of healing. Let us honour marriage, yes, but let us also honour healing, safety, and truth. Let us be a church that reflects the heart of Christ: full of grace and truth.

“Divorce has no place in God’s kingdom,” some say. But I believe the kingdom is bigger than our failures. It is a place of restoration, not rejection. A place where broken things are made whole. Praise God.

A Final Thought

Jesus did not come for the perfect. He came for the weary, the wounded, and the wandering.

The woman at the well had five husbands, and yet, He offered her living water. The woman caught in adultery was surrounded by stones, and yet, He provided her with dignity and a new beginning.

So let us be careful not to build walls where Jesus built bridges. Let us not confuse holiness with harshness. The gospel is not a checklist; it is a lifeline. To those who have loved and lost, who have tried and failed, who have stayed too

long or left too soon: you are not beyond grace. You are not beyond redemption. You are not beyond belonging.

The church must be a place where broken hearts are mended, not judged, where stories are honoured, not silenced. Where the **ethics of Jesus Christ**, mercy, justice, and truth, guide us more than tradition or fear.

There is no marriage in heaven. But there is love. There is healing. There is God.

And here on earth, may we reflect that kingdom not by perfection, but by grace.

Loving God,
We thank You for the gift of relationship and the beauty of every season of life.
Bless those who are married with unity and strength.
Comfort widows and widowers with Your peace and presence.
Uplift the single with purpose and joy.
May each heart find belonging in You,
And may Your love be the anchor in every journey.

Thank you, and God bless.

Devotedly yours,

Rev George K. Quarm

EDITORIAL NOTE



The Quiz last month was lots of fun,
For those who lost and those who won.
Nine teams there were in all, I think,
Geared up to swim and not to sink.
The questions caused some brains to addle,
Their swimming strokes were doggy-paddle,
But yet some teams forged right ahead.
For they were clearly more well read
On subjects such as history,
For others, quite a mystery!
The end – a tie – we had to choose
One team must win, the other lose
A tie-break must take place, and so
They ‘head to head’ would have to go,
And this the ‘poser’ that was hatched –
“How many mobile phones were snatched
Last year in London?”- Closest guess
Will win the prize. So one teams stress
will be their valedictory.
The ‘J’team had the victory!

Any items for inclusion in the December issue of “The Voice” should be sent to me by: NOVEMBER 22

via email: gillianbrierley13@gmail.com

by hand

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

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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 contacts each month will be:

Ann Carpenter **01483 535282**

Pauline Daniels **01483 958905**

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.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NOVEMBER

Stewards for Sunday worship:

Date & Time	Vestry Steward	Worship leader	P/A; A/V	Door Stewards
Nov 2 nd 10.30am HC	Joan Wells	Doreen Siame	Glenys Magill	Ruth McCulloch Wendy Bradley
Nov.9 th Remembrance 10.30am	Iris Walker		Jane Vinall	Julie Wallis Ruth McCulloch
6.30pm HC	Hugh Bradley		Glenys Magill	Glenys Magill
Nov. 16th	Suzanne Burnham		Cari Rayner	Wendy Bradley Joyce Goodall
Nov 23 rd 10.30am	Joan Wells		Jane Vinall	Ruth McCulloch Julie Wallis
Nov.30th	Iris Walker		Glenys Magill	Julie Wallis Maggie Woolcock

Communion stewards:

Date	Preparation	Assisting
Nov.2nd	Doreen Siame & Suzanne Burnham	Julie Wallis
Nov. 9th	Glenys Magill	

Flower Rota:

Nov.2nd Cari Rayner
 Nov 9th Margaret Hills (Remembrance Sunday)
 Nov 16th Glenys Magill
 Nov. 23rd Wendy Bradley
 Nov 30th Ruth McCulloch

Sunday Coffee Rota

2nd Nov. Pauline Daniels and Julie Wallis
 9th Nov. Glenys Magill
 16th Nov. Hugh and Wendy Bradley.
 23rd Nov. Joan Wells and Jan Walker.
 30th Nov. Ruth McCulloch and Margaret Hills

Organ Rota:

Gillian Varley: morning services
 Hymnal + : evening services

Women's Fellowship Monday

3rd November 2.30 pm

Rev. Peter Hills will be speaking on the Royal British Legion of which he is a member.

The meeting is open to all.

A voluntary collection will be held during the service.

Afterwards tea and biscuits will be served in the foyer.

Church Bible Study Groups

Morning Bible Study

at Lavender Cottage, Marlyns Drive, Burpham.

On 2nd & 4th Tuesdays each month at 10.45am.

On November 11th & 25th

we will continue a study of Mark's Gospel

led by Gillian Varley

&

Evening Bible Study

Monthly at Merrow Methodist Church

November 13th

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.

Each month, usually on the 2nd Thursday there will be one Charity Coffee
Morning

which will raise funds for a different charity every month

There is always a tempting selection of cakes on offer

The November

COFFEE MORNING

is in aid of The Royal British Legion.

which this year has commemorated both the 80th Anniversary of VE Day
and VJ Day.

MERROW METHODIST CHURCH

COFFEE MORNING

13th NOVEMBER 2025



10.30am to 12.00noon



Come along and bring your friends for coffee, chat
and homemade cakes.



As our 70th Anniversary year draws near to the close
with celebrations in November and December
DO NOT FORGET

NOVEMBER 15th - A CONCERT
beginning at 7pm

The programme is bursting at the seams.
There's talent and fun beyond your imagining!

So come along and bring your friends.

Enjoy an evening full of music, dancing, poetry and lots of fun.

There is no charge but donations are invited for the Matrix Trust.

THE MATRIX TRUST?

We are a Christian charity providing a lifeline for vulnerable young people across Guildford Borough.

Established for nearly 25 years, we are dedicated to working **with** young people, helping them to improve their lives, and **for** young people, catalysing change by nurturing, inspiring, connecting and empowering them.

Every year The Matrix Trust serves 1000's of young people in schools and the community, making a tangible difference to their lives.

Partnering with young people, local organisations, churches, schools and the community we help young people make the most of their lives and become active citizens in their communities.

DIARY DATES & NEWS

CHRISTMAS CHARITIES

It is hard to believe that the Christmas season is approaching already. Throughout our 70th Anniversary celebrations, Merrow have been raising money for various local charities. Over the Christmas season though, the charities will be:

Christmas Carol Service
Middle East

Sunday 14th December.

Embrace the

Christmas Day Service
House

Thursday 25 December.

No 5/ Mulberry

The Carol Service will be a joint service with our friends from the Chinese Church.

70th Anniversary Celebration still to come:

DECEMBER 8th - CHRISTMAS FINALE

'A QUIRKY CHRISTMAS'

The Anniversary Quiz on October 18th was a great success and raised the grand total of £685 for the Oakleaf Enterprise Charity.

Church Family News

**It is with great sadness that we announce the death
of**

Frank Winder

Frank had been a member of this church from its beginnings, faithfully serving his Lord here in many and varied ways. He passed peacefully into his eternal rest on Saturday October 25th with Catherine and Chris by his side.

||
Sunday·7th·December·2025¶
·at·5pm¶
Merrow·Methodist·church¶

¶
From·Loss·to·Light¶



¶ Take·this·opportunity·to·pause·and·remember·
those·who·are·no·longer·with·us.¶

Through All the Changing Scenes of Life – Cynthia Winder

This piece was written by my beloved Mum at Rev David Coote's request during his time in Merrow.

Soon after her death in May 2024, we found the text and a tape-recording Mum had made of it. We chose to play the recording at her thanksgiving service so she could give her testimony – and to remind us that she never lost her Cornish accent! Re-reading it recently inspired me afresh and I thought others might like to read it in what would have been her 100th birthday month.

Catherine

I was privileged to be born into a Christian home. My father was a Methodist pastor and our family came from a background of Wesleyan Methodists and Bible Christians and so I suppose I had a good head start as far as my faith was concerned, but in my early teens I really began to think about and question my faith. But after attending a mission service, I decided to give my life to the Lord and became a church member (that was over 60 years ago!).

However, a few years later, I did drift away from my church and faith, deciding that I wanted to go my own way and be free of the regular routine of church attendances, prayer and Bible reading but thanks to God I overcame that time of drifting in the wilderness.

With the Holy Spirit working through the prayers of my family and friends, I returned to the fold and realised that there was far more joy and freedom in following and serving Christ than in going my own way. It was a strange experience – I felt almost as though I was being drawn by a magnet into His loving arms and I have continued to thank God for that experience ever since.

Many people would have us believe that life for the Christian should always be a 'mountain-top' experience but I don't think that is so. I do thank the Lord for those mountain-top experiences for there have been times of great joy and happiness but so much of my life has been lived 'on the plains' or even in 'the valley of shadows and despair'... times of bereavement, family problems, a couple of bouts of deep depression, a severe illness when I was on the brink of death, trying to find somewhere to live when I was expecting our first baby, severe financial worries when Frank was doing his nursing training, to mention a few. But I know as did my Bible Christian forebears who added another credo to their simple creed: 'I believe the Lord will provide'. And He has proved his faithfulness to me time and time again in my life. All my needs have been supplied, material and spiritual.

I also believe that no experience in life need ever be wasted, the good and the bad, and we can use our experience to help others in a more understanding way; I believe the Lord wants us to do this so that even the unhappy and distressing times in our lives can be put to good use.

Several years ago, I was invited to become a Class Leader or Pastoral Visitor as we are now known. This, together with my sick visitor role in and latterly leadership of the Women's Fellowship, is such a privilege and has given me so much joy in serving the Lord Jesus and trying to care for some of His people.

I still have a long way to go in my spiritual life. I let the Lord down time and time again by my impatience, my selfishness, my laziness at times in my prayer life and Bible study and in so many other ways. But I know that I am loved by a forgiving Lord and Saviour, that I am upheld by my family and my Church family here – loved ones and friends who have given me so much love, understanding and help, those who have prayed for me and with me, and I thank God for them, but most of all that I have Jesus walking beside me 'through all the changing scenes of life.'

This poem was found amongst Cynthia's personal papers after her death,

*A little birthday poem on your 94th birthday
from Gillian*

*You have been an inspiration
To so many through the years.
Strong and steadfast, always there,
With gentler smile to calm our fears.,
Loving, giving, always caring,
Finding strength to battle through
All the ups and downs of life, yet
Holding on to what is true.*

*These few lines, my tribute to
The privilege of knowing you.*

JUNIOR PAGE – for the young and young at heart
A November word search

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

Can you find these November words in the square above?

Bonfire

Fireworks; Flames; Fog; Frost

Gloves; Guy;

Mist

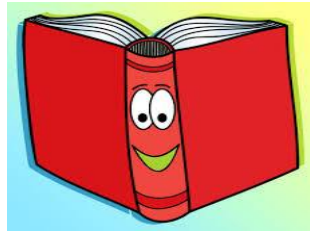
Potato

Rain

Scarf; Sparks; Star; Stew.

Toffee

November



Story time

The story of why we celebrate a failed plot!

“Remember, remember, the fifth of November!” is a famous saying to remind us of Guy Fawkes and his plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament in 1605. His father was a lawyer, and the family were quite wealthy people of that time.

In the 1500s, most of England was Catholic but King Henry VIII declared that England would become a Protestant nation and so the government tried to stop people being Catholic.

Henry VIII was followed by Queen Elizabeth I and she commanded that everyone needed to be Protestant and that they had to attend Protestant services, not Catholic ones. If they did not attend Protestant services, they would be fined.

The Fawkes family were members of the Church of England but Guy's mother's family were Catholics. Guy's father died and his mother married again, a man who was a Catholic and the family began to follow the Catholic religion.

When he was 21, Guy Fawkes became a soldier. He went to Europe to fight in a war with Spanish Catholics against non-Catholics. He now wanted to help return Catholicism to be the main religion in England. So, in May 1604, five men, including Guy Fawkes, met in a London hotel and made a plan to blow up the Houses of Parliament on opening day with gunpowder.

They thought that this would kill King James and his son, who would be there, and leave King James's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, to be Queen and she could easily be persuaded to bring Catholicism back to England. However an anonymous letter was sent to the police warning them of the plan and so the police went to the place beneath Parliament around midnight on November 4th. They found Guy Fawkes waiting there ready to light 36 barrels of gunpowder which were stacked next to him and arrested him. They found his co-conspirators and arrested them too. The plotters were all found guilty of high treason and they were all executed in January 1606.

Gill's trills



Childhood Bonfire Nights

A special night, when neighbours
All gathered round a fire
Built up from logs and branches
It couldn't get much higher.
Some came with tins of parkin,
Potatoes too to roast,
My mother made some toffee,
But I loved chestnuts most.

And then the magic moment -
The fire was set alight.
A cheer, a whoosh, then crackling
flames
Sent sparks into the night.
Whilst up on top, a ragged guy,
Who we had wheeled around
To earn "A penny for the guy,"
A fiery fate now found.

The grown-ups lit the fireworks:
The Rocket's dazzling burst:
Beware the Jumping Crackers
They really were the worst.
They leapt in all directions
And gave us quite a fright.
The toddler's Sparklers waved to make
Patterns of starry light.

Not even rain could dampen
The joy of bonfire night.



Ken's Pen

SOME THOUGHTS ON HUMILITY

Wanting to be important: a temptation I have faced much of my life. But the following will put me in my place.

If you want to realise your own importance ,put your finger in a bowl of water, take it out and look at the hole.

.....

If anyone feels disappointed with their position in life, or in church, think of young Jamie. He was trying to get a part in the school play. He set his heart on it, but Mum thought it unlikely he would be chosen. When the parts had been chosen, Jamie rushed home, eyes full of pride. He explained to Mum that he had been selected.....

.....to cheer and clap.

Maybe you are seldom, if ever, "in the limelight", but so many tasks, although apparently insignificant, are still important for God's work to continue. It may be just doing the washing-up, putting the chairs away, giving encouragement or thanks ; do it like Jamie, with eyes full of pride. Before God, we are ALL important.

.....

The father of a schoolboy rang his son's friend's home. "Is Jack with you ? "he asked" "Sorry, no he's not here, but he might be over at Paul's " "Well, if you see him, please send him straight home, I need some help with his homework. "

.....

With greetings from Puddletown, Dorset. Ken Mills

POETRY CORNER

The Green Eye of the Yellow God by J.Milton Hayes

There's a one-eyed yellow idol to the north of Khatmandu,
There's a little marble cross below the town;
There's a broken-hearted woman tends the grave of Mad Carew,
And the Yellow God forever gazes down.

He was known as "Mad Carew" by the subs at Khatmandu,
He was hotter than they felt inclined to tell;
But for all his foolish pranks, he was worshipped in the ranks,
And the Colonel's daughter smiled on him as well.

He had loved her all along, with a passion of the strong,
The fact that she loved him was plain to all.
She was nearly twenty-one and arrangements had begun
To celebrate her birthday with a ball.

He wrote to ask what present she would like from Mad Carew;
They met next day as he dismissed a squad;
And jestingly she told him then that nothing else would do
But the green eye of the little Yellow God.

On the night before the dance, Mad Carew seemed in a trance,
And they chaffed him as they puffed at their cigars:
But for once he failed to smile, and he sat alone awhile,
Then went out into the night beneath the stars.

He returned before the dawn, with his shirt and tunic torn,
And a gash across his temple dripping red;
He was patched up right away, and he slept through all the day,
And the Colonel's daughter watched beside his bed.

He woke at last and asked if they could send his tunic through;
She brought it, and he thanked her with a nod;
He bade her search the pocket saying "That's from Mad Carew,"
And she found the little green eye of the god.

She upbraided poor Carew in the way that women do,
Though both her eyes were strangely hot and wet;
But she wouldn't take the stone and Mad Carew was left alone
With the jewel that he'd chanced his life to get.

When the ball was at its height, on that still and tropic night,
She thought of him and hurried to his room;
As she crossed the barrack square she could hear the dreamy air
Of a waltz tune softly stealing thro' the gloom.

His door was open wide, with silver moonlight shining through;
The place was wet and slipp'ry where she trod;
An ugly knife lay buried in the heart of Mad Carew,
'Twas the "Vengeance of the Little Yellow God."

There's a one-eyed yellow idol to the north of Khatmandu,
There's a little marble cross below the town;
There's a broken-hearted woman tends the grave of Mad Carew,
And the Yellow God forever gazes down.

*Part of the poet's account of the writing of the poem:
I wrote The Green Eye of the Little Yellow God in five hours, but I had it all
planned out. It isn't poetry and it does not pretend to be, but it does what it sets
out to do. It appeals to the imagination from the start: those colours, green and
yellow, create an atmosphere. Then India, everyone has his own idea of India.
Don't tell the public too much. Strike chords. It is no use describing a house;
the reader will fix the scene in some spot he knows himself. All you've got to say
is 'India' and a man sees something. Then play on his susceptibilities.*

After "The Sound of Music" it has become enticing for any tourist in Austria to
photograph the nunnery. Similarly, that temple in Kathmandu, fictional or otherwise,
has become a compelling must if only for the perversity of human nature!

Submitted by Peter Radcliffe

SCAMS

LOFT LIES

Loft insulation scams often involve high-pressure sales tactics and misleading claims about the need for, or benefits of, insulation upgrades, sometimes targeting older homeowners.

Scammers may cold call, claiming to represent legitimate organisations or use scare tactics about health risks related to existing insulation. They may also falsely claim to be working with government or official sounding schemes or endorse specific products and pressurise homeowners to waive their cooling off rights.

How the scams work

False Claims: Cold callers, sometimes using names similar to legitimate organizations, claim the existing insulation (often spray foam) is causing damp, structural problems, or issues with insurance or property sales.

Pressure Tactics: Scammers pressure homeowners into agreeing to removal and replacement, often on the spot, and may demand immediate payment.

"Free" Inspections: Scammers may offer a free loft survey, but this is often a tactic to identify potential victims and pressure them into unnecessary work.

The Disappearing Act: The original company that installed the insulation may have disappeared or stopped trading, making it harder to verify claims or seek redress.

"Rescue" Offer: The same or linked company may then offer to remove the "faulty" insulation, usually at a significant cost.

Your rights

When you arrange a service online, over the phone, or by a salesman visiting your home, you have a 14-day cooling-off period? This means you can cancel for any reason and get your money back!

Is it your bank?

Fraudsters often imitate banks' fraud departments to persuade you to transfer your money into their clutches. These top tips tell you how to ensure that the call from your bank is genuine. First step - hang up!

The only way to be sure that a bank call is genuine is to hang up and call it back using a different number, or wait 15 minutes to ensure that the line is free. Use the contact number found on your card or call 159 (an anti-fraud hotline, which connects you to the fraud team of most providers).

Prayers worth sharing



Lord God, Father in heaven, we praise you!
In you we live, in you we believe, in you we hope,
in you we want to live day by day and hour by hour.
May your name be honoured among us,
for you are our God and the God of all the world.
Let your light shine among all people
so that all the nations may glorify your name.
Protect and bless us today and in the coming days,
and may your Holy Spirit bring us new life and strength.
Amen.

Creator God

In the fading of the summer sun,
the shortening of days, cooling breeze,
swallows' flight and moonlight rays
WE SEE YOUR HAND

In the browning of leaves once green,
morning mists, autumn chill,
fruit that falls frost's first kiss
A. WE SEE YOUR HAND

For summer's passing
and harvest home
A. WE THANK YOU

For autumn's splendour
and winter's chill
A. WE THANK YOU

For seed that has fallen
and the promise of spring
A. WE THANK YOU

Amen