



# The Parish Church of Saint John the Evangelist Merrow

Vibrant, Witnessing and Worshipping Church at the Heart of the  
Community

Common Questions about Church  
Services – the Church Year  
Mission and Outreach  
Electoral Roll  
History of St. Johns



## Common Questions About Church

Questions you would like to ask but haven't!

1. Why do people go to Church? - There are as many reasons as people! But some of the reasons you'll hear are: Because I've always gone, I enjoy singing hymns, To find some peace, To learn about God, To meet people, It makes me feel good, I like to pray, To talk to God.

4. Is there someone I can talk to before coming to a service? Any of the clergy would be happy to talk to you, or, if a dog-collar puts you off, one of the Pastoral Assistants – just ask in the Parish Office.

5. Can I bring my children? Yes. Many services are not particularly child orientated and for the 10 o'clock service on a Sunday morning, when it is not All Age Worship, the Junior Church and Crèche meet in the Centre before coming in for the end of the service.

6. Can I come if I haven't been christened? Yes – the Church of God is open to everyone.

7. What is communion? Holy Communion, The Lord's Supper, Holy Mass and The Eucharist are all names for the same service in which Jesus' actions and words at the Last Supper are recalled. His command, when giving bread and wine to his disciples, was "do this in remembrance of me" – so we do! Through this we remember all that Christ did for us and, by receiving the bread and wine we take something of Christ into ourselves – hence we are "in communion" with God but also in communion with our brothers and sisters who join us at the Lord's table.

8. Can anyone take communion? The rule in the Church of England is that you should be “confirmed” (when you make the promises for yourself that were made on your behalf at baptism by your parents and godparents). In this Church, children over the age of 7 who have been properly prepared may receive communion before confirmation.

9. Do I have to pay? The simple answer is no – all publicised services are free, but there are statutory fees for weddings and funerals. Collections are taken but this is for a voluntary offering to the Church in response to God’s love for us.

10. Where does the collection money go? Unfortunately, most goes to pay our staff, bills and maintenance, but we aim also to support missionaries and other charities. Sometimes special collections are taken for specific charities; for example when there is a major disaster somewhere we send money through the Disasters Emergency Committee.

11. Does it matter what I wear? No! The idea of “Sunday Best” comes from days when people had very few clothes but there was also the idea of looking one’s best for God.

12. Can anyone go to coffee after the service? Yes – fellowship is important and chatting over a cup of coffee is a good way of enjoying fellowship together.

## Services – the Church Year

What services can I go to?

All Church services are public services and therefore open to everyone!

What is the difference between the services?

8am 10am 6.30pm

8 am

## Holy Communion (Common Worship Order 2)

- a said service (no music) that lasts about half an hour and uses the language of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) - 'thee' and 'thou' instead of 'you' and 'your' when addressing God

10 am

On most Sundays the service is a Parish Eucharist

- a communion service with hymns and other parts sung. This is in modern language and the service lasts about an hour.

On the first Sunday of the month we have *All Age Worship*

- where the service is put together with families in mind (much more child friendly!), sometimes this is a shortened communion service – we aim to be out in about 45 minutes!

6.30 pm

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday

- Informal Eucharist - as its name implies it is a communion service but more relaxed than the morning services. On the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday, Hymns are sung, the readings are discussed rather than a sermon preached and the prayer time is open for everyone to take part and offer their own prayers. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday it is a said service with no sermon.

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday

- Meditation and Compline – this starts with a guided meditation (talk followed by a longish period of silence for reflection) and ends with the ancient late evening service of Compline (in modern language). Quiet, peaceful and reflective – but we do tend to sing a couple of hymns!

4th Sunday

- Evening Prayer (said) from the BCP - a peaceful reflective service with readings and prayers - no sermon!

## Colours and the Seasons of the Church Year

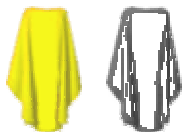
St John's uses the Church's traditional seasonal colours in its worship.

### The Season of Advent



Advent is a season of spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth and reign of Christ. Advent is a preparation for, rather than a celebration of, Christmas. Royal Purple symbolising the sovereignty of Christ is normally the liturgical colour.

### Christmas and the Christmas Season



The readings for Christmas and the following twelve days, culminating in Epiphany, invite the church to reflect on the Incarnation of God as a human being. The traditional colours of the season are White or Gold, symbolising joy in the light of day.

## The Season after Epiphany



The season following Epiphany continues the theme established on Epiphany Day, the spread of the Good News of Christ to all nations on earth. The traditional liturgical colour is Green, the colour of growth.

## The Season of Lent



The forty days of Lent correspond to the forty-day temptation of Jesus in the wilderness and the forty-year journey of Israel from slavery to a new community.

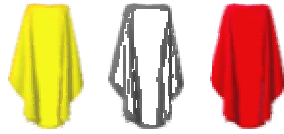
Most of this time of preparation is symbolised by the colour Violet.

## Holy Week



During Holy Week, the congregation follows the footsteps of Jesus from his entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, through the Last Supper of Maundy Thursday to his death on the Cross on Good Friday. Red, is the traditional colour for Palm or Passion Sunday and the next three days of Holy Week. On Maundy Thursday, White or Gold symbolizes the church's rejoicing in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. But at the end of the Maundy Thursday celebration, the mood changes abruptly. All decorations are removed and the Holy Table is stripped bare.

## Easter and Pentecost



Jesus has been raised from the dead. The heavenly messenger invites the mourners to see the empty tomb and then go and tell the disciples that the Crucified One is alive!

The season from Easter to Pentecost is also called the Great Fifty Days, a tradition inspired by the Jewish season of fifty days between Passover and Shavuot - the feast celebrating the giving of the Torah to Moses. The liturgical colour for this season is celebratory White or Gold.

When the season ends on Whit Sunday, White is replaced with Red. This colour reminds the congregation of fire - the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The first Sunday after Pentecost celebrates the Trinity, and the colour again is White or Gold.

## The Season after Pentecost



This longest season of the liturgical year is a continuation of the "Time of the Church" that began on the Sunday after Epiphany. It explores the mission of the church and uses the colour of Green, symbolising growth.



## Mission and Outreach

Mission and Outreach are vital parts of our vision to be a witnessing church at the heart of the community. Underlying this is the recognition that there is a world of need out there, and the conviction that it is an essential part of our Christian calling to respond to such need as best we can, both as individual Christians and as a church. Our mission of reaching out to others includes, at one end of the scale, responding to major world problems, like poverty; and, at the other end of the scale, supporting, say, a local care home for the aged.

A major way of responding to needs is charitable giving, so each month we support a different charity, and the notice board at the back of the church is updated regularly to display information about our 'charity of the month'.

Although it is the responsibility of all of us to be involved in this way, we have a Mission and Outreach Committee to co-ordinate the many areas of charitable support that are undertaken by our church community; to raise awareness of needs, and to apply strategic thinking to our outward giving. We also seek to provide ways in which, as a parish, we can better educate ourselves regarding the 'big issues' that underlie the work of the charities we support. Sometimes we use sermons for this purpose. We also hold lunches at the Church Centre at which talks are given from those personally involved with other overseas projects we fund.

The Centre itself is an example of how we try to express our vision. Opened in 2001 at a cost of some £600,000, it was funded largely through gifts from the church members, assisted by a Community Fund grant. We aim through its operation to meet some of the social needs of the whole community as well as providing an attractive venue for local community usage and a good base in which to develop our own Christian fellowship.

# Electoral Roll

What is the Church Electoral Roll?

The Electoral Roll is the list of those qualified \* to attend and to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting where the elections take place for

- a) the parochial church council
- b) the parish's representatives on the deanery synod.

Any person entitled to attend the Annual Parochial Church Meeting may raise any question of parochial or general church interest.

By enrolling you become a voting member of the Church of England and so help enable church people at every level to be in touch with the Church as a whole and to play their part in decision-making also ensuring that the laity have their place in every aspect of church life, including its doctrine and services.

We currently have 220 members on the St John's electoral roll, new additions to the Roll are always welcome and forms are available at the back of the church.

\* A lay person is entitled to have their name entered on the roll if they are baptised, 16 years old and older and have signed an application form on which they have declared that they are either –

A member of the C of E and resident in the parish; or

A member of C of E and, not being resident in the Parish, have attended habitually for the last six months; or

A member of another Church (not C of E) and prepared to declare to be a member of the C of E plus habitually attended worship in the parish for the last six months.

## History of St. Johns

The first church is believed to have been built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of King John (1199-1216). It would have consisted of a chancel and a nave. At the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the south aisle and chapel were added.

The Onslow Chapel may have originally been a chantry chapel and was converted in the 17<sup>th</sup> century into a burial vault for the Onslow family who moved to Clandon Park in 1641.

By the 1830s, the church was in a ruinous state and saved by an unknown lady resident who gave the money to restore the church to the original plan, work which was completed by 1843.

The bell tower has a peal of six bells, which date from 1898 commemorating queen Victoria's diamond jubilee of 1897, and the clock was made in London in 1843.

In 1871 the fourth Earl of Onslow and his mother had the remains of their ancestors re-interred in a vault in the churchyard and gave the chapel back to the church. In 2003 the pews were removed, the floor rebuilt and the chapel restored for use for private prayer.

Lord Daryngton, President of the Church Army and resident of Merrow until 1925 built the chapel at the east end of the north aisle. This was in memory of his son, Ronald Pease, who was killed in France in 1916 during the 1914-18 war.

Miss Thrup, a resident of Merrow House in Merrow Street, loved this church and cared for the welfare of the people of Merrow and the pupils of Merrow Street Church of England School until she died in 1908. The pulpit we use today was given to the church in 1910 in memory of Miss Thrupp.

Taken from A Visitors Guide to St John the Evangelist Church Merrow  
(Copies of which can be found at the back of the Church)

Contacts – names and telephone numbers can be found in the Parish Directory at the back of the church.

