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PARISH MAGAZINE
February 2025



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The Revd Tim Clifford Hill
Rector



Georgie Gregson
Youth Worker

A Caring Christian Community, here for everyone

St John's is open every day from 9.30am to 4pm. Please feel welcome to visit us. Warm Space in the Centre Foyer 10am to 2pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday during the winter months.

Sunday services are listed on Page 2.

Services during the week:

Morning Prayer Monday to Thursday at 9.00am in Church.

Holy Communion on Wednesdays at 10.30am in the Merrow Hall, St John's Centre.

Evening Prayer on Fridays at 5.00pm in Church.

All are welcome.

February 2025 Sunday Services (Year C)

Sunday 2nd February

Presentation of Christ at the Temple (Candlemas), Gold/White

Hebrews 2.14-end, Luke 2.22-40

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am All Age Worship for Candlemas

Sunday 9th February

4th Sunday before Lent, Green

1 Corinthians 15.1-11, Luke 5.1-11

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

6pm Sing a New Song

Sunday 16th February

3rd Sunday before Lent, Green

1 Corinthians 15.12-20, Luke 6.17-26

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

Sunday 23rd February

2nd Sunday before Lent, Green

Revelation 4, Luke 8.22-25

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

Sunday 2nd March

Sunday next before Lent, Green

2 Corinthians 3.12-4.2, Luke 9.28-36{37-43a}

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am All Age Worship

6pm Sing a New Song

Letter from the Youth Worker's Office

Welcome to the February edition of the Parish Magazine. February is a funny month, it is like it cannot make up its mind what it wants to be!

On the one hand we begin the month with one foot still in the Christmas season but by the end we are looking forward to Lent. With Valentine's day and half term (and in my family, quite a few birthdays) in between, February is a big mashup. The way I see it though, that means there should be something that should interest everyone and here at St Johns there is plenty going on!

Our Christmas season comes to end as we celebrate Candlemas on February 2nd, where we would like to invite everyone to bring their candles to Church to be blessed. Come along and see the beautiful paper candles that were made at our Messy Christingle, remembering Jesus as the light of the world.

Then next we have our Barn Dance! Let's be honest, after all the socialising over Christmas and new year we often go into a hibernation mode, but as the days grow longer, we start venturing out again ready to socialise and have some fun. So, why not come and join us for a bit of a boogie!

Last year, having just arrived, this was my first church event that I attended. I was quite excited, having not been to a Barn dance since I was about 10, but also a bit worried as I didn't really know many people yet. But as I was standing in the kitchen, surrounded by people, I was struck by the scene. There were people giving it 110% on the dance floor, others sitting chatting with friends, people jumping in to help with the washing up, while others sliced cakes, some selling raffle tickets and then I got to see Tim's most excellent Barn Dance hat. I thought to myself, "Oh yes, I like these people in Merrow! They get stuck in and I feel a real sense of community". A year on, I feel this even more strongly and am so pleased to have made the move to Merrow.

I hope to see lots of you at the Barn Dance and look forward to everything 2025 has to offer for us all!

Georgie

Barbara Lawrence RIP

Barbara was the lynchpin of the magazine team keeping us all up to speed in our various roles. She was the Editor every month for many years but still continued to fulfil the role several times each year right up to 2024.

Barbara ensured that the magazine contained a variety of articles, quizzes and other information whilst not forgetting the “funnies” which reflected her sense of humour. Contributors received a gentle reminder of the copy date and the need to submit their article in Tahoma 16 point.

Administratively, she was responsible for sending out the magazines which were sent in the post. These included copies to local clergy. She also dispatched magazines to the baptism, wedding and bereaved families when their particular service was recorded within.

Barbara’s contribution to the magazine over many years cannot be overstated. We will miss her.

The Magazine Team





NOTICE



A FUNDRAISER FOR ST JOHN'S, MERROW

>>> Saddle up and come on over for a <<<



BARN DANCE



..... at

St John's Church Centre Merrow

..... on

SATURDAY, February 8th 2025, 7pm

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11pm

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Dear Friends,

As we came back to school in January there was a most unusual occurrence in the playground. A taped off area appeared to be an alien crash-landing site – there was quite a lot of rubble and a small, yellow capsule spacecraft was visible. What on earth had happened at Merrow Infant School? The key stage one children were tasked with investigating the incident. They soon discovered that a small, alien creature, Beegu had arrived – she is lost and needs help. Fortunately, the children have been able to help her by giving her plenty of advice and making sure we all know to be friendly and welcoming. The KS1 term has begun with this exciting book-based topic which has really motivated their writing and set the term off to an exciting start.

In Reception we have started the new term with a topic called 'How do we get there?' all about the different types of transport we might use to make journeys. We have already looked at how transport has changed over the years, sorting pictures of old and new vehicles. The Penny Farthing bicycle caused a lot of discussion – mainly about how you would even get on it! We will consider how Beegu got to earth when we learn about space travel in the next few weeks.

Over the next few weeks all the year groups will be going down to the Spectrum for the Sportshall events; a competition amongst local schools for the children to try out various athletic skills from javelin to jumping! Chess club has a tournament against RGS for those who have a more sedentary competitive streak! We are all looking forward to celebrating the Lunar New Year with many of our families at the end of January; it is a vibrant festival that the children enjoy learning about across the school.

We are excited about the wide range of activities and learning opportunities that await us this term. It's wonderful to see the children's enthusiasm and curiosity come to life through these engaging topics and events. As always, thank you for your continued support and to our school community.

Warm regards,

Emma Hooper



ST JOHN'S Green Team

TUESDAYS 16:30-17:30

Green team is for children,
aged 6+, who enjoy getting
outside and love nature!

Together we learn more about
God's creation and explore
different ways we can care for it!

We meet, every other week, in St
John's Church Centre, venturing
in to the church yard and end up
back in the Centre with a drink, a
biscuit and a prayer.

www.saintjohns.org.uk

Green Team

Spring 2025

Dates

14th Jan

28th Jan

11th Feb

25th Feb

11th Mar

25th Mar

To find out more or
to register your child
please visit our website
www.saintjohns.org.uk





Wednesday Coffee Club

We returned on 8th January after the Christmas and New Year break much to the delight of club members. Acoustic tiles have now been fitted to the ceiling to reduce the noise level coming from all the chatter!

Our next event will be the annual fish and chips lunch which will take place in February for club members and helpers. It will be welcomed by all as the "term" is longer than usual because Easter is late this year.

New members are always welcome so do drop in to the Centre on a Wednesday 10.15 – 11.30 or contact Gerald Hunt at merrowcoffeemorning@hotmail.com or phone 07545 256 114 for further information.



Anna's Running the London Marathon on April 27th

For those of you that remember me, I am running the London Marathon this year, raising funds for Breast Cancer Now. Many of you will know that I have fought this disease twice and won both times. I'd be so grateful for any sponsorship. I have an online page that you can donate on: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/anna-collins-1718647417198>. Alternatively, if it is easier, please give the cash to Mum, Diana Matthews. Thank you so much in advance.

Best wishes and thanks

Anna x



View from the Pews

February is to me the month when there is the first clear sign of better things to come as the lighter days start to become visibly longer and those little white buds of Snowdrop joy reaching their peak of loveliness everywhere including at the back of our own Remembrance Garden.

As we face the uncertainty of a second Trump Presidency and the demise of social democrat governments in Europe, the fall of Bashir Assad, the ongoing and tragic uncertainty in Ukraine and the human catastrophe still unfolding in Gaza, the sands are shifting seemingly faster than ever. Back at home The Anglican Church battles with problems at the highest level.

Thank goodness then for the sanity, the comfort, the warmth, the joy and the sense of belonging to something so wonderful and constantly uplifting in our Parish of St John's here in Merrow. I write this piece after returning from the All-Age service at Epiphany and having been roped in by Georgie to dressing up as one of the Maji in bright orange headgear and leaving my offering of Frankincense in the humble stable for the baby Jesus.

This just made me realise the special significance and the joy of feeling truly part of something which we all believe in, why we come together to share in worship and to share each other's company on Sunday mornings. This morning in particular was all the more special with the altar adorned with all manner of Kings and Wise Men of vastly different colours and sizes brought to church by parishioners for the service.

Three lines in particular resonated from the Poem, The Maji by Malcolm Guite that Tim included in the January Magazine...

A steady step that finds an inner rhythm,

A pilgrim's eye that sees beyond the stars

To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.

I came home from our church a happy man!

PJT January 2025



GUILDFORD
CATHEDRAL

About **our** Cathedral.....

How difficult can it be to photograph the interior of our Cathedral? Well, quite difficult, actually, as I discovered the other day. Firstly, I need good light. Secondly, I need time for contemplation. Thirdly, I need a lack of visitors! Above all else I need time to contemplate, time to plan and time to SEE. After all, I'm not trying to capture the *decisive moment* like Cartier-Bresson who, in the busy streets of Paris, would almost dance around his subjects to get that perfect shot. Nor am I David Bailey exasperatedly trying to get a model's pose just right My method is more like Ansel Adams the great landscape photographer. He never worried at all about his subjects moving because they never would. A bit like our Cathedral. Just recently I embarked on a photographic session at our Cathedral. I'd picked a good afternoon; plenty of sunlight, lots of contrast and interiors with straight lines and/or pleasing curves. But, it was a busy afternoon with lots of visitors. Of course, they have every right to be there but they do make a photographer's life difficult; suddenly appearing round a corner just when I press the shutter or standing statue like right in front of my carefully prepared shot while the light begins to diminish. Carrying on a conversation with their companion in my earshot even so, I was reasonably encouraged by the shots I took but there's more to be done before I'm content with the results. The interior of our Cathedral is simply stunning and I continue to strive to capture its essence. I could never join photographic groups who go on photographic safaris trying to capture a subject whilst continuing a conversation with each other. I don't need to chat. To me photography is a solitary pastime. Our Cathedral is full of architectural beauty and the best way to capture it is in colour, I think. Black and white is always an option and, even though one can bring out the angular forms and vistas of the interior with monochrome, I believe colour is the best medium to use for our Cathedral. With colour it's possible to enhance its wonderful honey coloured stone. I can't wait to go back.

WHAT CHRISTMAS GREETINGS DID YOU GET?

I wondered as we took down the Christmas cards in January what they were saying about Christmas as the birth of Christ. How did the greetings we received from friends, relatives, colleagues and occasional acquaintances spell out the message? So, I sat down and analysed our Christmas cards.

I'll not tell you how many we received because it will either make you envious of us or sad that we are Johnny No-Mates. We had slightly fewer cards than last year but more e-mailed greetings. A number of friends said they would switch to email next year as to post them was now too expensive.

Of the cards received:

40% carried overt Christian themes, e.g. the Nativity

30% were of traditional Christmas symbols, e.g. Christmas trees.

20% carried birds or animals – usually in snowy scenes

10% were others, e.g. flowers.

Of the Christmas scenes, the Nativity won, closely followed by the kings racing in on their camels and Christmas wreaths. Shepherds, churches, angels and carol singing were poorly represented.

Of the traditional Christmas symbols, Christmas tree led the way (they were first overall with 16% of the total). Christmas decorations were next, followed far behind by Father Christmases and snowmen. Perhaps the last is a sign of global warming.

There were more birds than animals. Doves, bringing hope of peace in 2025, might have been counted as a Christian theme but I decided not to do so. Robins, once a favourite, mustered only four but there were plenty of puffins and penguins to make up for them. Of the animals, deer and hares challenged us in equal numbers to survive the cold.

Of the final 10%, a profusion of delicate snow drops brought hopes of life in the New Year, along with general wintry scenes supporting lifeboats and other good causes.

Whatever, it was a delight to think that there are people we meet regularly or infrequently who are kind enough to wish us well at Christmas and that the custom of card sending is still just about surviving being swamped by social media.



St. John the Evangelist
Merrow

CANDLEMAS

SUNDAY 2ND FEBRUARY

BRING A CANDLE ALONG
TO EITHER SERVICE
TO BE BLESSED



StJohnMerrow



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St. John's Merrow



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GARDENING HINTS FOR FEBRUARY

Having enjoyed the recent long spell of mild weather we need to watch out for frost to appear in the coming weeks. Make sure that all tender plants are undercover and that outside taps and pipe work are well lagged.

This month is the last opportunity to prune Apple and Pear trees. You will need to cut back to a fat fruiting bud as well as cutting out any old or diseased wood, to allow the light in.

A general purpose fertiliser should be applied to all fruiting canes, bushes and trees.

Rhubarb can be forced for an early crop by covering the crown with a bucket. Digging should be completed and prepared seed beds should be covered with clear polythene to warm the soil before sowing.

Chit seed Potatoes by standing them on their ends with eyes upwards in a cool light frost-free place.

During the second half of the month, Tomatoes, Peppers and Cucumbers can be sown in a heated propagator.

Towards the end of the month, cut back Grasses and Perennials which have been left over to provide Winter interest.

Beds and borders should be dressed with a balanced fertiliser such as Growmore.

Dahlia tubers can be started into growth in a light warm place.

Lily bulbs should be planted for a Summer display.

This is the last chance to sow Sweet Peas. Those sown in the Autumn, should be potted on.

Over-wintered Fuchsias and Pelargoniums should be cut back and watered to encourage new growth.

Prick out early sown seedlings before they become overcrowded.

All deciduous hedging, shrubs and trees should be planted by now.

Summer flowering shrubs, such as Lavatera and Buddleia should be pruned.

Mahonias should be cut back after flowering to encourage branching.

Prune Wisteria and Campsis, cutting back the side-shoots to 2 or 3 buds.

Late Summer and Autumn flowering Clematis should be cut back to the lowest pair of strong buds.

Dead-head with shears, Winter flowering Heathers as the flowers fade.

Protect Delphinium, Hosta, Lily and Lupin shoots from slugs and snails.

During a mild, dry period, scarify and spike the lawn to improve drainage.

Towards the end of the month when conditions allow the lawn can be given its first cut with mower blades on a high setting.

John Boon

HOT OFF THE PRESS.

23 Men-in-Fellowship Breakfasters were addressed by Justin Walford at their 18th January meeting. Justin is Editorial Legal Director at News Group Newspapers (The Sun etc.) and also chairs the News UK Christian Fellowship. Given the issues faced by the press these days, from phone hacking to competition from social media, there was opportunity for high argument. But Justin is seasoned barrister and the M-i-F members are always courteous so an interesting and stimulating conversation ensued. Justin took us carefully through how he aimed to keep journalists and editors within the law without cramping the fundamental right to freedom of expression illustrated with reflections on a few star cases. He worried that a minority now got their news from daily newspapers and the established news programmes and that so many relied now on Tik Tok, X and so on, largely unregulated. His approach to his work was based on a relatively late conversion to Christianity and was founded in so many ways on the Rule of St. Benedict. Despite the pressures he tried to make his faith rule all aspects of life. Work was not to be kept in a separate compartment and is a key part to expressing the Christian Life.

Much to think about, we said.





A Date for your Diary

Did you have any unwanted gifts for Christmas? Have you started to de-clutter? Or even thought of Spring Cleaning? Rather than throw things away put the date of 16th March in your diary. We will be having another of our Sunday Coffee and Cake bring and buy sale in aid of the three charities we support. It's a win- win event: you get shot of things you no longer need; you buy some lovely item you spotted; the charities get much needed support; and we all have a good natter over coffee and catch up with friends.

See you all after church on Sunday 16th March. (And before then of course)

Introducing St John's supported charities...

Over the next few editions of the Parish Magazine, we would like to introduce you to the three charities we currently support at St John's: Foodwise, Compassion and Christians Against Poverty, and in this edition, we start with Foodwise! If you would like more information about these, please come and chat with any of us on the Stewardship & Giving Team at St John's (aka Cathy Thompson, Robert Avis, Helene Steinfeldt-Kristensen, Joe Bullock)



A Christian based charity delivering food provision, training and education to local communities

- Child poverty in Guildford is recorded at 15%, and in Woking, 16% (that's nearly 1 in every 6 children)
- There are pockets of deprivation affecting other community members' ability to eat healthily, including the elderly, disabled people and those with special dietary needs
- Foodwise works in partnership with churches and community groups in and around Woking and Guildford
- The charity seeks to relieve the impact of financial hardship through the provision of food coaching – they provide free cookery skills training courses to teach people how to prepare and cook nutritional food on a restricted budget
- All equipment and food required for each course is provided free of charge and course participants take the meals they have prepared home
- Foodwise works in conjunction with foodbanks and supermarkets, providing store cupboard items to course participants, and recipe cards for low cost nutritious meals

The Friends of St John the Evangelist (FOSTJ)



The Friends of St John the Evangelist is a registered charity formed by members of the community of Merrow to assist in maintaining and preserving the buildings and grounds of the magnificent Grade II listed Church.

If you would like to help in our endeavours in any way and keep up with our news, please visit www.fostj.org. We would love you to become a member.

Thank you very much to Channies & Pewleys for sponsoring our colour cover again this year and to Jane Stevenson for taking the photograph.

Forthcoming magazine information

Issue	Copy date	Editor	Editor's email address
March	9 th Feb	Helen Chambers	hmchambers@virginmedia.com
April	16 th Mar	Sara England	saraengland@gmail.com
May	13 th Apr	Cathy Thompson	cathy.thompson@saintjohns.org.uk

(If you draft your copy in Tahoma, 16 point, on an A4 page, you'll get a good idea of how much space it will take up.)

Who's Who

Rector	The Revd Tim Clifford Hill (Day off Friday and Sat am)	951649
Youth Worker	Georgie Gregson (Days off Friday & Saturday)	07974 494504
Churchwardens	Jane Farquharson	07765 620017
	Cathy Thompson	07518 202920
Deputy Churchwarden Verger	Michael Eagle	07850 000224
	Helen Chambers	846574
St Johns Centre Office	9.00 – 2 Mon, Wed and Fri 9.30 – 1 Tues and Thurs	01483 454621
- Centre Manager	Barry Dickinson	centremanager@saintjohns.org.uk
- Parish Admin Assistant	Sandra Rayner	office@saintjohns.org.uk

Web site: www.saintjohns.org.uk

Email: office@saintjohns.org.uk

PCC Secretary	Tricia Tappin	579193
PCC Treasurer	Lindsay Dobson	07809 836896
Gift Aid, Legacies and Parish Giving Scheme	Martin Thompson	578923
Organist and Choir Director	Micky Clare	538306
Babies and Toddlers Group	Jane Farquharson	07765 620017
Baby Basics	babybasics@saintjohns.org.uk	458128
Bell Ringers	Jane Farquharson	07765 620017
Bible Reading Fellowship	Jenny Welbourn	825541
Cathedral Link	Nick Bond	579462
Children's Society representative	Judith Sampson	571847
Christian Aid Organiser	Sara England	504205
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	carole.burtonwood@saintjohns.org.uk	
Flower coordinator	Helen Chambers	846574
Magazine Advertisements	Sara England	merrowadverts@gmail.com
Merrow C of E Infant School	Louisa Dormer (Executive Head Teacher)	
	Emma Hooper (Deputy Head)	561501
Church Governors		
Safeguarding Officer	Michael Eagle	07850 000224
	Rosanne Bond	579462
St John's Merrow, Pre-School	Amanda Bazley (Manager)	454625
Diocesan Lay Pastoral Assistant	Helen Chambers	846574
Readings and Intercessions Rota	Joe Bullock	07521 960480
Sunday Newssheet		office@saintjohns.org.uk
TiC and Lay Parish representative	Isla Stables	567599
Wednesday Coffee Mornings	Gerald Hunt	07545 256114
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For any changes to Who's Who, please email Sara on merrowadverts@gmail.com

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