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PARISH MAGAZINE

April 2024



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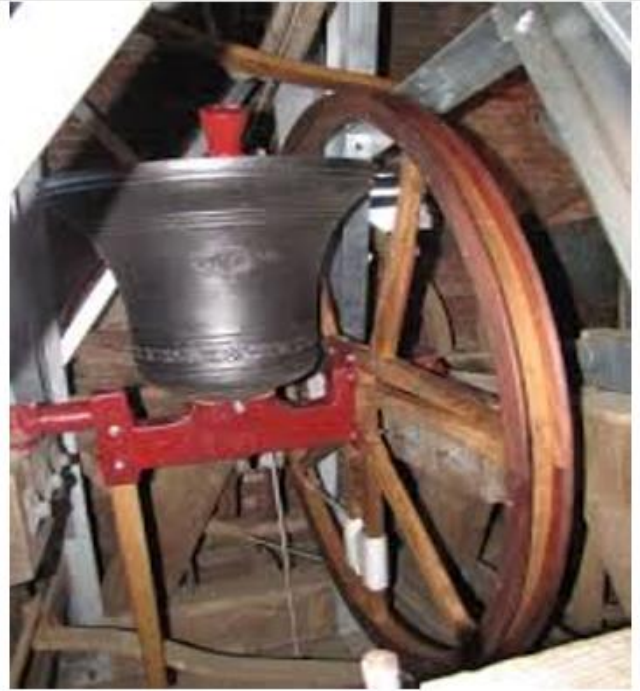
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St John the Evangelist

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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 9.30am to 4pm, Monday to Thursday 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.

April 2024 Sunday Services (Year B)

Sunday 7th April

2nd Sunday of Easter, White

Acts 4:32-35, John 20:19-end

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am All Age Worship

Please note no Sing a New Song this month

Sunday 14th April

3rd Sunday of Easter, White

Acts 3:12-19, Luke 24:36b-48

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

Sunday 21st April

4th Sunday of Easter, White

Acts 4:5-12, John 10: 11-18

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

Sunday 28th April

5th Sunday of Easter, White

Acts 8:26-end, John 15:1-8

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

Sunday 5th May

Rogation Sunday, White

Acts 10:44-end, John 15:9-17

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am All Age Worship

Letter from our Youth Worker

You will have heard of the 12 days of Christmas, but have you heard of the 50 days of Easter?

When we are getting ready for something, often we spend more time and effort getting ready than actually doing the thing itself. When we were planning our wedding, it took months and months of planning - sending out invitations, finding places for people to stay, picking the hymns, getting the rings (which I may or may not have lost, six weeks into married life.... At least Chris already knew I should not be trusted with jewellery). There is so much to do and then the day goes by in a flash. We get so wrapped up in the preparations that when the day finally comes we are so grateful to have got there that we can be guilty of forgetting to celebrate!

Over in the church centre on the first Sunday of Lent we talked to the children about how we are given 40 days to get ready for Easter, 40 days to prepare. We will each have done that in our own way, maybe through fasting, daily challenges, prayer and reflection. But now, after 40 days, then entering the darkness and sadness of Holy Week we have finally made it: He is risen! Let the celebrations begin! Jesus rising from the dead is so momentously huge and life altering, that here at church we give over a whole 50 days to celebrating that truth all the way up to Pentecost. 40 days to get ready, 50 days to celebrate - that sounds more like it!

With that in mind, I wonder how you are going to celebrate this Easter season? Maybe you will celebrate quietly, loudly, by yourself, with others, with food, with song, with prayer, with thanksgiving? Well, either way you have got 50 days..... why not try them all?

Georgie

<i>From the Registers</i>	
Memorial Service 23rd March Paul Ferris	Funeral 25th March James Robert Styles



Green, green, green!

I love green! It is, and always has been, my favourite colour. It's another reason why I love spring. The world has been, let's be honest, kind of grey and brown over winter. Then it starts to burst forth with all kinds of colours - but mainly green! So imagine my joy when I start at St John's and am told there is a Green Team!!

Is this a collection of fellow green lovers, a green appreciation society if you will? Is it a group of people who come dressed in green, to drink green tea, who wave green flags whilst listening to the music of Greenday? No. It is something even better and even more up my street! A group of children who are interested in looking after our planet, with green fingers and a green mindset coming together with a hands-on approach to learn, play and grow.

What a great idea! I am a keen (note the word keen, not capable) gardener, who loves growing veg, finding ways to help wildlife and just generally being outside! My husband always says he can tell when I have had a good day as I am usually covered in mud! So, I was thrilled to find a group of like-minded people at St John's! If this sounds like something your children might enjoy to here are the details:

Green Team meets in the St John's Centre from 16:30 -17:30 on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. For children aged 6+. In our monthly sessions we will be using the churchyard and our new vegetable plot where we can create, learn, plant & take part in projects. This group aims to learn more about creation, looking at what the bible has to say about it and explore different ways that we can care for it! We will end each session back at the Church Centre with a drink, a biscuit, and a prayer.

If you would like to know more, please contact me on youthworker@saintjohns.org.uk

Georgie



A C T I V I T I E S

and services for children and youth

Sunday 7th
Monday 8th
Sunday 14th

Monday 15th
Tuesday 16th
Wednesday 17th
Sunday 21st

Monday 22nd
Wednesday 24th
Sunday 28th

Monday 29th
Wednesday 30th

10:00 All age service
9:15 Baby and toddler group
10:00 Parish Communion with activities in the Children's Chapel
17:00 Sunday Night Youth Group
9:15 Baby and toddler group
16:30 Green Team
17:00 Youth Café
10:00 Parish Communion with Sparks children's group
9:15 Baby and toddler group
17:00 Youth Café
10:00 Parish Communion with activities in the Children's Chapel
17:00 Sunday Night Youth Group
9:15 Baby and Toddler Group
17:00 Youth Café

For more information on any of these groups or to register your child please visit our website or contact Georgie on youthworker@saintjohns.org.uk



StJohnMerrow www.saintjohns.org.uk St. John's Merrow @stjohnsmerrow

Children's Society house boxes

Having recently completed the opening of house boxes and counting the donations, I have pleasure in advising you that the total amount donated this year is £544.07. I would like to say a big THANK YOU to all of those with house boxes for their continued and generous support in what continues to be a trying time for many. The Children's Society are so grateful for this support to enable them to continue their valuable work with vulnerable children and teenagers in our communities.

If there is anyone reading this that would like to have a house box then please email me at Judithsampson@aol.com or to find out more about the work that The Children's Society does please go to their website at www.childrenssociety.org.uk

Many thanks

Judith Sampson (House Box Co-ordinator)



Mothering Sunday Posies

A huge thank you to everyone who came and made posies for Mothering Sunday. They looked so pretty and were much

appreciated.

Alison



An update from Compassion on the current crisis in Haiti.

Haiti has experienced many challenges in recent years. Political instability, economic insecurity and food scarcity have caused violence to dominate the major cities. We all feel heartbroken at the current crisis the people of Haiti are facing and we wanted to share an update and invite you to join us in praying for the nation of Haiti.

To minimise risk to the safety and well-being of children, families, staff, and volunteers, our church partners will adjust or pause in-person meetings as necessary. Some church partners in areas with high levels of gang violence have temporarily paused meetings at the Compassion project. In these cases, our partners will deliver programming as they are able. This might be through home visits or other virtual options. Compassion's teams continue to monitor the situation closely, and we'll provide updates as we have them.

Join us in praying for:

- The restoration of security throughout the country of Haiti.
- Protection of and provision for children, youths and their families living in areas affected by insecurity or who have been displaced by the unrest.
- Wisdom, discernment and protection for pastors, staff, social workers, volunteers and their families as they continue to serve in the midst of these extremely difficult circumstances.
- The protection of all Compassion Haiti staff who are living and working in hostile areas.
- Health and protection from cholera and other illnesses.

Your continued support is critical during this time, and we can't thank you enough.

Yours in Christ,

The Compassion Team



Christian Aid Week 2024 – 12-18 May

This year's appeal is focusing on Burundi, one of the most densely populated and poorest countries in Africa. Heavily reliant on agriculture, it's also one of the least prepared to combat the effects of climate change, including droughts, floods and landslides. The global cost of living crisis has intensified the challenges: more than 70 per cent of the population live in poverty and more than half of children are chronically malnourished.

Alongside local partners, Christian Aid, helps establish Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). These community-led groups mean people can save and borrow money, making small businesses possible, so families can eat regularly, get medicine when they need it, and build safer homes.

Thirty-five-year-old Aline Nibogora is the chairperson of a VSLA which supports some 25 families in a remote village in Makamba Province. Aline escaped an abusive marriage only to find herself on the streets begging for a place to stay. Her life changed when she went to a Christian Aid-funded community workshop. With a small start-up loan, Aline began trading avocados and peanuts locally. She's now a grocery wholesaler and living on her own plot of land where she's building a home for her family. In the next five years she hopes to expand, so one day she can buy a mill. This will provide a source of income without the need to transport heavy goods over long distances.

"I don't want my children to have a painful life like mine, remembering it makes me weep. I could never have dreamed I would one day have a brick house and be a successful businesswoman, able to feed and clothe my children. This is a plan and I will do it; I am a woman who is an achiever."

Like last year, we'll be having a collection for Christian Aid on Sunday 12th May and there will also be an e-envelope to give directly to the Christian Aid website. Look out for more information in May's magazine and in church.

Sara England



News from Carol Potter

So this is definitely a different life to that in Merrow! We arrived in Avoriaz in the French Alps -one hour from Geneva - at the end of November. To find snow up to our knees! After two weeks training we went to our chalet - me as the 'chef' & John as housekeeper and assistant to me!

At our welcome speech to our guests who are here for three or four days I introduce myself as Fanny Craddock & Johnny my assistant! I think I'm not as bossy as Fanny though John may disagree! It's been fun cooking and looking after 13 guests but we work long hours and we think we're the oldest change hosts ever! It's beautiful in the Alps and my skiing is slowly progressing but I don't want to push myself as we'll be sent home! I'm looking forward to two of my children visiting next week and my sister after Easter .What I have really missed is everyone at St John's, Tim and the fellowship. It's been a challenge following on-line on a Sunday . We're back by the end of April for definite so will look forward to catching up with everyone.

God bless you all, Carol and John

Margrave Solicitors LLP

You'll see that one of our long-standing advertisers has a new look. Jennifer Margrave retired from the firm in April 2018 and enjoys a happy and healthy retirement. Some six years later, Joanne Mason and Julie Orgill have decided to rename the firm **Margrave Solicitors LLP**. The website and email addresses are changing but the friendly, professional team remains just the same.



View from the Pews

Guildford Cathedral hosts 90s disco in the nave

What are your thoughts on reading that headline? Are you shocked and outraged at such a violation of a sacred space? Or are you encouraged by this innovative way to attract a different section of the community into the cathedral?

Firstly let's affirm that the discos are silent, and people dance to music played through their wireless headphones. The music is broadcast via a radio transmitter, rather than using a speaker system. So anyone present who is not wearing headphones can hear no music. The effect is therefore of a room full of people dancing to nothing. The company organising the discos is holding a whole series of events throughout 2024 at venues including Guildford, Winchester and Canterbury cathedrals.

In John Chapter 2 we read the account of Jesus driving the moneychangers and the market stallholders out of the temple in Jerusalem. 'Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!' So how is this any different? Can we condone such 'raves in the naves' where our great cathedrals are being turned into nightclubs? Critics argue that cathedrals are sacred spaces, built for the worship of God, and discos are 'profane and sacrilegious'. They say that such events will not bring young people closer to Christ, showing instead that entertainment is more deserving of our attention than God. Perhaps they also show that Christians do not take their faith or their holy places seriously. How would we feel if St John's were to host such an event?

On the other hand, we all know that cathedrals (and churches!) are very expensive to run, and Guildford cathedral must find over £1million a year. There is no Government funding. Not only do music events like these generate income, but they are held at times when nothing else would be going on. Maybe attending a silent disco at Guildford cathedral will help to change people's perceptions, and knock down a few barriers. They are certainly very successful, with over 1,000 people attending two sessions on a Saturday night, each paying about £25 to enjoy the music. Guildford Cathedral's vision is 'open to God open to

all', and any revenue from events like these will help to fund worship and mission, care for the building, outreach, and staff needed to run operations.

So, let your opinions be known - and how about going along to one of these events to see for yourselves?!

=====

Thank you very much to Chantries & Pewleys for sponsoring our colour cover again throughout 2024 and to Jane Stevenson for taking the photograph.

Bereavement Teas

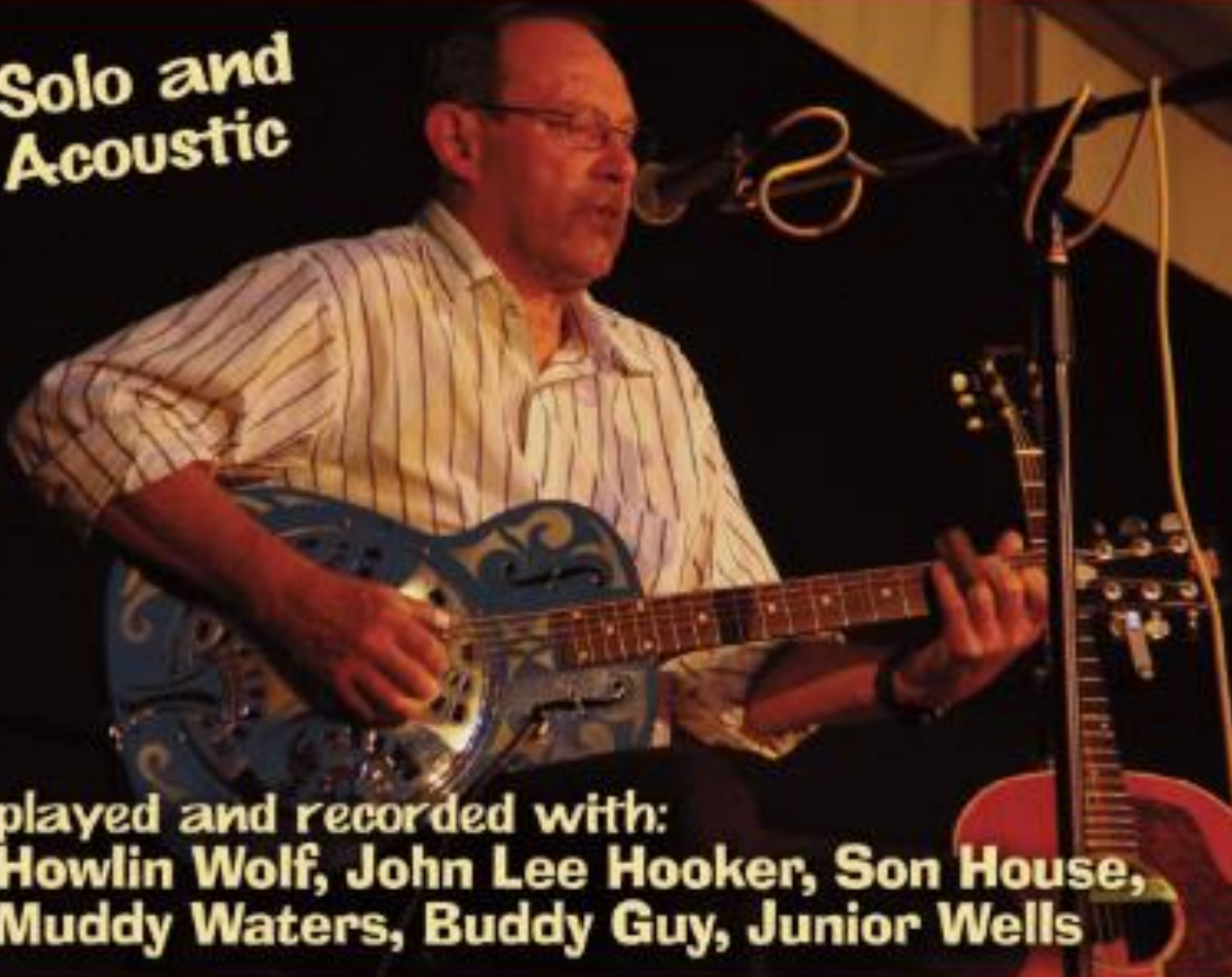
We invite anyone who has experienced the bereavement of a loved one to join us for tea on 16th June in the Merrow Hall, in the Church Centre, at 3pm. It will be an informal gathering, but an opportunity to share memories of our loved ones. You will be welcome to bring a photo, a memento or memory of your loved one to share. Refreshments will be available.

Future teas will be held on 22nd September and 8th December.

Dave Kelly

founder member of **THE BLUES BAND**

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A photograph of Dave Kelly performing on stage. He is wearing glasses and a light-colored, vertically striped shirt. He is playing a blue electric guitar with a decorative pattern. A microphone is positioned in front of him. The background is dark, suggesting a stage setting.

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Wednesday Coffee Club

So we are now into April - who would have thought it? A third of the way through the year already; doesn't time fly? It definitely feels like summer is here - with the lighter days, the trees in leaf and just feeling the extra warmth. It always makes me feel so much more positive, being able to get out and sit in the sun and listen to the birds singing.

A belated Happy Easter to everyone and hope you had a very enjoyable one. The coffee club is having a short break and will return on the 17th April and hopefully everyone will come back invigorated. As a helper I so enjoy coming and as the club has such a jolly and friendly atmosphere, it is more like having friends round to tea, than an organised event.

Part of the reason for its success is the hard work that Rosanne puts in week in week out organising lifts for those in need: a very thankless task, but vital and she is very much an unsung hero.

Hoping everyone keeps well.

Gerald Hunt

Should you have any queries, please contact me on my email merrowcoffeemorning@hotmail.com or ring me on 07545256114.



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.

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(Editor's note: Several of us at St John's belong to Emily's Motivation by Music Contemporary Gospel Choir which meets at Merrow Infant School just before the ToC Voices choir. Emily is such an inspirational choir leader! This choir is funded by an incredible local charity called Topic of Cancer. It's on Zoom as well as in person. Sara)



About our Cathedral.....

You may remember that last month I reported on the vandalism that resulted in the shattering of one of the panes of glass in the west front door of our Cathedral – part of a sacred set of sentinel angels engraved on each door by renowned artist John Hutton. At the moment, I have no further news on this only to say that I am pursuing the story and will report on the outcome as soon as I can.

I visited our Cathedral this afternoon and discovered that unusually there were no welcoming guides at their desk. It was a bit disappointing as I like to have a conversation with them however brief it may be. So, left to my own devices I wandered around the passageways, chapels and wide-open spaces of the Cathedral's interior. All was quiet except for occasional and mysterious noises like the sound of distant doors banging or quick footsteps receding which reverberated and echoed around about me. There was no one in sight. I stood for a while and listened and tried to count the windows between the great columns on each side of the nave but soon gave up: there are far too many. The vast majority of the windows are clear glass towards the very top with a limited number of stained-glass images reserved for the base of each window. Idly I pondered what it might be like to be locked in overnight in our Cathedral. If it were a summer night one could wake in the early morning and watch the dawn light slowly creeping through the great eastward facing Round Window with its descending dove portrayed in a myriad of stained glass. On a bright morning the sunlight would be reflected through the multitude of colours as it moved down and across the interior walls and the great columns one by one. It would be a breathtaking sight. The moving pattern of colours slowly and eventually disappearing as the sun moved on its silent and inexorable journey across the heavens. So, come along with me and on a summer night we'll camp out together in our Cathedral and in the morning watch the fabulous light show. Don't forget your pillow!

Nick Bond

Gardening hints for April

We have certainly had plenty of rain in the last month with no doubt more showers to come as we look forward in hope to May flowers.

Second early potatoes should be planted in the first half of the month leaving maincrop potatoes until the end of the month. Beetroot, carrots, leeks, lettuce, radishes, spring onions and turnips can now be sown outdoors. Brassicas should be sown in small pots for transplanting later in the summer. Broad beans which were sown indoors in the autumn can now be planted out. Tomato seedlings which have developed their first true leaves should be potted up.

Plant summer flowering bulbs such as gladioli and lilliums. Remove faded daffodil and tulip flowers leaving the foliage to die back. Dead head pansy other spring flowering bedding plants to encourage a continuous display.

Sweet peas can still be sown outdoors, plant out autumn sown plants into their flowering positions. In the greenhouse sow the seeds of summer bedding plants such as French marigold and tagetes: once they have germinated and have produced a good pair of leaves they should be pricked out into seed boxes before they become leggy.

Cuttings can be taken from dahlias which were started into growth last month. Prune choisya, forsythia and viburnum immediately after flowering. Tie in honeysuckle and clematis branches as they begin to climb. Cut back lavender to keep the plant bushy; do not cut into old wood as it will not produce new growth. Lift and divide large clumps of herbaceous perennials. Increase the feeding and watering of indoor plants, repotting into a larger size pot any which are overcrowded or pot bound.

Mow the lawn when rain permits with the mower blades set on a higher cut, apply weed and feed with mosskiller or lawn sand as necessary. Slugs and snails are enjoying a banquet at this time of the year with new growth appearing everywhere. They are particularly looking forward to the new shoots of delphinium, hosta and lupin - use either animal friendly slug pellets or a dressing of sharp sand, grit or crushed eggshell to deter them. *John Boon*



News from Merrow Infant School

Dear Friends,

As I write on the Spring Equinox, we are in that 'is it or isn't it?' phase. We have frogspawn in the pond, the crocus, primroses and daffodils are out around the field and the children have been very quick to abandon their coats today! We have just a week left before we break up for our Easter holiday and still much to look forward to.

We were very lucky to have Ross from Surrey Wildlife team support us creating a new wildflower bed on the edge of our field as well as using the cut turf to create a 'bee bank' for the insects and a 'bug hotel'. We are hoping that these will make Merrow a veritable hive of insect activity in the summer months! Thank you to Mrs Tyson and the PTA for arranging and facilitating the gardening day!

The wonderful Open the Book team brought the story of The Great Parade to life for the children as they told of Jesus riding joyfully into Jerusalem. The children were very engaged in the story and were happy to share their new Open the Book song with our visitors!

Next week we will be walking up to St John's for our Easter service with Rev'd Tim and Georgie; we then have an Easter Pause day at school to give the children the opportunity to engage with some high-level thinking and reflection during an 'off-timetable' RE day, which also contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Throughout the day the children will have opportunities for creating artwork, taking part in role play and reflective story telling as well as creating Easter gardens.

In Early Years we follow some other Easter customs such as egg rolling, egg & spoon races and an Easter Egg Hunt – encouraging our youngest children to experience the different ways people may celebrate significant times in the Christian calendar.

Some of you may know that Church schools not only have the pleasure of Ofsted inspections but also SIAMS inspections (The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools): we welcomed the inspector to Merrow on Thursday 14 March. We will share the report

with you as soon as it is published but we would like to thank Rev'd Tim, Georgie, Michael Eagle and all the parents who gave up their time to support us during the day.

Look out for the Easter Egg Trail around Merrow organised by our PTA. We wish you all a joyful Easter.

Warm regards,

Emma Hooper

Dates for your diary

5th April	Dave Kelly concert in Church at 7.30pm
13th April	St John's Men in Fellowship tour of Portsmouth Cathedral
17th April	Coffee Club returns
5th May	10.45 Congregational Brunch in the Centre after the Rogation Sunday All Age Worship
12th May	Christian Aid Sunday and APCM in the Centre at 11.30am
8th June	Parish Fête at the Rectory

Forthcoming magazine information

Issue	Copy date	Editor	Editor's email address
May	14th April	Cathy Thompson	cathy.thompson@saintjohns.org.uk
June	12th May	Barbara Lawrence	lawrebarbara@gmail.com
July	16th June	Chris Starr	chrisstarr10@btinternet.com

(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)	951649
Youth Worker	Georgie Gregson (Days off Friday & Saturday)	07974 494504
Churchwardens	Mr Peter Tappin	07776 183701
	Mrs Jane Farquharson	07765 620017
Deputy Churchwarden Verger	Mrs Cathy Thompson	07518 202920
	Mrs Helen Chambers	846574
St Johns Centre Office	10 – 4.30 Mon, 9 – 4 Tues - Thurs 9 – 1 Fri	01483 454621
- Centre Manager	Mr Barry Dickinson	centremanager@saintjohns.org.uk
- Parish Admin Assistant	Mr Harry Talboys	office@saintjohns.org.uk

Web site: www.saintjohns.org.uk

Email: office@saintjohns.org.uk

PCC Secretary	Mrs Tricia Tappin	579193
PCC Treasurer	Mrs Lindsay Dobson	07809 836896
Gift Aid, Legacies and Parish Giving Scheme	Martin Thompson	578923
Joint Directors of Music and Choir	Mrs Micky Clare & Mrs Mavis Martin	
Babies and Toddlers Group	Mrs Jane Farquharson	07765 620017
Baby Basics	babybasics@saintjohns.org.uk	458128
Bell Ringers	Mrs Jane Farquharson	07765 620017
Bible Reading Fellowship	Mrs Jenny Welbourn	825541
Cathedral Link	Nick Bond	579462
Children's Society representative	Mrs Judith Sampson	571847
Christian Aid Organiser	Mrs Sara England	504205
Electoral Roll	Carole Burtonwood carole.burtonwood@saintjohns.org.uk	
Flower coordinator	Mrs Helen Chambers	846574
Head Server	Mrs Kate Verschoyle	533449
Magazine Advertisements	Mrs Sara England merrowadverts@gmail.com	
Merrow C of E Infant School	Mrs Louisa Dormer (Executive Head Teacher)	
	Emma Hooper (Deputy Head)	561501
Church Governors	Joe Bullock Michael Eagle	
Safeguarding Officer	Rosanne Bond	579462
St John's Merrow, Pre-School	Ms Amanda Bazley (Manager)	454625
Diocesan Lay Pastoral Assistant	Mrs Helen Chambers	846574
Readings and Intercessions Rota	Joe Bullock	07521 960480
Sunday Newssheet	Harry Talboys	office@saintjohns.org.uk
TiC and Lay Parish representative	Mrs Isla Stables	567599
Wednesday Coffee Mornings	Gerald Hunt	07545 256114
Transport	Mrs Rosanne Bond	579462
Website contact	Parish Office (as above)	

For any changes to Who's Who, please email Sara on merrowadverts@gmail.com

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