

The Drive Methodist Church
Eastern Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG1 3PP

NEWSLETTER

May 2025



Minister: Revd Jacqueline Jones

Email: rev.jacquelinejones@outlook.com

<https://www.drive-methodist.church>

Church Mission Statement of The Drive Methodist Church

The Drive Methodist Church aims to be faithful to the commandments of Jesus, and the calling of the Methodist Church.

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission, and to fulfil the promises detailed in the Methodist worship book.

Provide a weekly opportunity for all people to worship God in Christ, here at The Drive Methodist Church.

Enable people to grow and learn as Christians through mutual support and care.

Be a good neighbour to the immediate and wider community. Sharing our faith with others through pastoral care, church activities and communication.

MINISTER'S LETTER

The gift of Eastertide is a call to the Church to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus as we wait for the Ascension Celebration that ushers in Pentecost. A time of renewal and hope. Jonathan Dean our District Chair, reminded us "On this Easter, in 2025, there is so much in our world and in us that cries out for freedom and fullness. From countries that covet one another's territory and terrorize one another's people, to leaders who prize naked power over compassion and wisdom, to our own struggles with pride and status and self-advancement, we are all confronted with the majestic sight of the risen Jesus, still bearing the wounds of crucifixion, who invites us to be unbound, to be set free, to be wrenched from the graves of our own choosing and into the miraculous newness and fullness of life of all who are children of God.

This clarion call invites us as the Circuit to keep seeking miracles and to witness renewing faith. Since my last reflection with you, I have personally experienced the overwhelming joy of the birth of my beautiful grandson Rhys-Sampson William Hall and a very sad loss of my Father, William Brian Jones, each within the same month. The staggering and sobering extremes of joy and grief stumble into one's life and conscience and are at times a sieve that winnows out the chaff from the wheat and I have found myself aware of what matters most.

As we turn to the miraculous newness of full life for all as children of God, it's our full joy and our full grief that intermingle and help us be witness of the cross and empty tomb.

Methodists join in these days in prayer and sympathy with our Catholic sisters and brothers recognising the pain that this brings, for many Methodists Pope Francis's witness to the Christian faith holds a special resonance, and his loss is felt deeply.

As John Wesley reminds us this Eastertide:

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can!"

In Christ's love

Jacqui



EDITOR'S NOTE

Goodness me - is it time for the May Newsletter already? It's just that my birthday is in May and last year I reached a big zero. Now I suddenly realise I'm almost one year into that decade! Where on earth does the time go? I remember at my 21st birthday party an older guest said to me "now the time will really fly by - just you wait and see". My 21-year-old self just smiled and dismissed her comment. Well that was 50 years ago! I lost touch with that lady so I have never been able to tell her how right she was!

I suspect Audrey would also agree with my party guest as she shares her memories of the VE Day celebrations on 8th May, 80 years ago. See page 12.

It seemed a long time coming but Easter Day has passed. I hope you enjoyed all our events and celebrations-see page 9.

At the time of writing we are looking forward to our open church meeting on 23rd April to discuss our Drive Centenary Project and how we all might celebrate 100 years of worship and community service at The Drive in 2028. So watch this space!

On page 15 Anne takes us back to when she was a youngster and tells us about another church that was special to her at that time and the final part of Thea's mystery is on page 17. Did you guess the ending?

So you could say this is a newsletter of past, present (and future!) If you've got stories to tell about events in your life, either recent or some time ago that you would be happy to share please send them to me. And don't forget to let me know about any special celebrations or achievements.

Have a great month and I look forward to hearing from you
Diane Foster



WE ASK FOR GOD'S BLESSING on all those who are unwell and that we have concerns for at this time. Our thoughts are with those who are unable to come to church because of ongoing illnesses. We remember them all in our prayers.

We think of those going through bereavement and particularly remember **Oli Fadojutimu** whose Mum, Caroline, recently passed away. Our prayers are with Oli and all the family.

We pray for all our Catholic brothers and sisters around the world grieving the loss of their leader, Pope Francis.

May God give them all comfort and strength at a difficult time.

*Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.
Isaiah 58:8*



HAPPY MAY BIRTHDAY to:



Ruth Joyce on the 11th
Diane Foster on the 20th

and to everyone celebrating a birthday this month.

Have a lovely day!

Belated birthday wishes to Sanjay Marreddi's nephew, Jayden who recently celebrated his 1st Birthday!
That year went quick!



CONGRATULATIONS to...



AMY, DEREK AND MANI GABBIDON on finally settling into their new home. We wish them every happiness and joy. May God's blessing go with them as they start their new life in Colchester.



ISAIAH LASHLEY ALLEN on being selected to play for his football club's under 13s team to play in the Echo League Cup Final. Isaiah is 11 and also plays for the under 12s team.



Well done Isaiah – we wait to see you on Match of The Day! God bless.



THEA GARNER who has secured a Staff Nurse position at the Royal London Children's Hospital, Whitechapel. Well done Thea, we are all proud of you and wish you God's blessing as you continue your nursing career.



PHILIPPA AND REVD STEPHEN G NORMANTON, previous minister at The Drive, on the birth of their granddaughter, Jessica Faith, born to Susannah and Mike on 28th March. We wish God's blessing and every happiness to the proud parents, grandparents and all the family.

KING CHARLES 111 AND QUEEN CAMILLA on the occasion of their 20th wedding anniversary. May God bless them and grant them many more.



CUPPA WITH A COPPER 2ND APRIL



On 2nd April we held “Cuppa with a Copper” in the Church parlour with PC Jason Marchant and PCSO Craig Westley from the Cranbrook Safer Neighbourhood Team. There were about 10 people from the church and there were various discussions about what is going on in our ward. This was the first session at the Drive, the date of the next “Cuppa with a Copper” is to be arranged and the date will be displayed on the church noticeboard. SNT have also said they would be happy to attend any of our upcoming church events.

For your information Cranbrook Safer Neighbourhood Team is made up of four representatives from the Police service: PC Jason Marchant, PC Orla Egan, PCSO Craig Westley and Acting Police Sergeant Daniel Green.

The Safer Neighbourhood team can be contacted on CranbrookSNT@metpoliceuk In an emergency always dial 999.

Peter Bendon

Lorraine writes:

“Really interesting time this morning with a couple of officers from the local policing team. They were most helpful with several issues raised. They are eager to attend other events in our church calendar to get to know local residents.”

I was unable to attend this event but it sounds like it was a success. We look forward to the next one – Ed.



TDY EVENING 12TH APRIL

TDY enjoyed a fun filled evening on Saturday 12th April. Games, fun, and fellowship was shared, as well as a slice of pizza. It was good to see some familiar and new faces at the event.

Jo Wright

EASTER AT THE DRIVE

Services for Holy Week were shared around the Circuit and The Drive hosted Maundy Thursday. This was a moving and symbolic service, led by the circuit ministers and included the choir singing Bob Chilcott's arrangement of *There is a Green Hill Far Away*. The service culminated in moving to the 'upper room' (the Parlour) where we broke bread and drank 'wine' as Jesus had on the night before his crucifixion. We then ate 'The Last Supper' which consisted of lamb, bean stew, pitta bread and horseradish. A very tasty meal which we were very pleased to share with over 40 people from around the circuit. Special thanks to Jo for her organisation to make this event happen.



Our next event on Easter Saturday was our annual Easter Egg Hunt which once again was a great success. There were many young people attending both from our church family and the Pre-School. Crafts and activities kept them busy until it was time to find their eggs in the church grounds. My sister Susan, who many of you have met, always looks forward to this day. With Easter being later she had to be patient a little longer this year! This was another event brought together by Jo so many thanks again to her and her TDY team.

Bringing our Easter celebrations to a close was our Easter Sunday service led by Mr Samuel Agyekum. We began outside the church, with Andrew leading with words of scripture, prayers and a hymn. The choir sang *Now the Green Blade Rises* while the congregation dressed the cross with flowers. The choir then led the people into church and sang the Taizé piece *Alleluia (Canon)* while everyone settled in their seats. The service continued led



by Samuel. During the service the choir sang, *Joy is Come* by Andrew Carter and following the blessing and the saying of The Grace, they sang the *Alleluia (Canon)* again. Many thanks to Andrew from everyone in the choir for leading and encouraging them in their singing.

Andrew finished the service by playing the organ voluntary *Now Thank we all our God* by Sigfrid Karg-Elert.

A fitting end to Easter 2025.

Diane Foster

WHAT A WONDERFUL EASTER!

Thank you to everyone who cooked and supported the Maundy Thursday meal. It was good to share the meal with friends from the circuit.



Easter Saturday was such fun. We had over 40 families join us at The Easter Egg Hunt. Thanks to all who helped at the event and everyone who came and enjoyed a hot cross bun. It was wonderful to see our preschool families again too.

Over £100 was raised that will be sent, through the Methodist Church, to the world mission fund. They are supporting the Methodist Church and local area in Myanmar where the catastrophic earthquake hit.

The flowers, the wonderful music, and the transformed cross made Easter day very special indeed.

Jo Wright

POPE FRANCIS 1939-2025

The Methodist Church in Britain receives with deep sadness the news of the death of His Holiness Pope Francis, and gives thanks for his life and Christian witness.

The Revd Matthew Laferty, Director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome, said:

“Pope Francis was a man of deep Christian faith, clear conviction, and prayer. His ministry extended beyond the Catholic Church as he sought to pray and work for the unity of all Christians. Pope Francis challenged and inspired Methodists and Catholics to move beyond ecumenical dialogue to be a pilgrim people walking and working together, particularly in care of creation, migration, and human fraternity. He called the Church universal and all the world to live as Jesus Christ - in holiness and in loving the poor and the marginalised.”

A PRAYER

Almighty God, we thank you that you continue to call disciples to represent you on earth.

We recognise this call in the life, faith and ministry of Pope Francis.

We give thanks for the unique gifts with which you blessed him for this task, and for his obedience in fulfilling all that you asked of him.

Thank you for receiving Francis into the eternal home that you have been preparing for him.

We pray that all who mourn his loss will be comforted and for the Conclave that will elect his successor.

We hold before you the Roman Catholic Church and pray that we might continue to work together for the unity of your Church and for peace, justice and compassion in your world.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen**

from The Methodist Church website

VE DAY 8TH MAY

Audrey Taylor remembers:

I was nearly 9 on VE Day. I remember we had a children's street party where I lived in Danehurst Gardens, with games and gifts made by Mr Fordree (a relation of John Fordree, former member of The Drive) and I had a doll's cot.



A PRAYER

O God of truth and justice, we hold before you those men and women who have died in active service, particularly in the Second World War, whose sacrifice brought Victory in Europe.

As we honour their courage and cherish their memory, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever.

Amen

AGCM 25th MAY

Our Annual General Church Meeting will be held on 25th May following the morning service. Everyone is invited to attend and a copy of the Annual Report will be available. So pick up a cup of tea or coffee and join in hearing about the work of the church.



EARTHQUAKE IN MYANMAR

The Methodist Church Upper Myanmar (MCUM) is a Partner of the Methodist Church in Britain, and the main MCUM offices are in Mandalay, at the centre of the earthquake. The Methodist Church in Britain has been in touch with our partners offering prayer and solidarity.

This is part of a message received from the Revd Mal Sawn Thang, President of the Methodist Church, Upper Myanmar:

“The devastating earthquake on March 28 has brought great hardship to our country. In this difficult time, we are deeply moved and comforted by the prayers of the Methodist Church in Britain.

The earthquake was so strong that many buildings collapsed. Many people lost their lives and many were injured. Disaster and suffering engulfed our hometown of Mandalay. Even now, the earthquake continues to tremble, keeping us on edge and forcing us to remain outside for safety.

Our church building has suffered significant damage. At this moment, we are without electricity, making it impossible to pump water. The city is facing a severe water shortage, and the situation is urgent. With an engine, we could restore power, pump water, and prepare food, not only for ourselves but also to support our neighbours.

The water crisis in the city is overwhelming, and immediate action is needed.

So, I'm asking you to pray for us and to assist us as much as you can."

For details of how to donate to The World Mission Fund or The DEC's Myanmar Earthquake Appeal go to The Methodist Church website. www.methodist.org.uk

A PRAYER

Loving God, we pray for all those affected by the earthquake in Myanmar. Our hearts are heavy as we see scenes of extensive damage experienced by people who are already suffering from the uncertainties and deprivations of war.

We pray for all those who have lost friends and family members, and those unable to find out if loved ones are safe or not, especially those who fear for the lives of those trapped under collapsed buildings in Myanmar and Thailand. We pray for restoration of power and communication, and enough information to allow appropriate relief to be channelled quickly.

We pray for all those involved in relief efforts, and for all those trying to provide logistical, emotional and spiritual support.

And we give thanks that you, Lord God, know the details that we don't know, care about each person, and are present in every situation.

May we show your compassion through our prayers and our giving.

Amen

from The Methodist Church website

A TALE OF FIVE CHURCHES – PART THREE

Whilst thinking about the tale of my fourth church, I came to the realisation that my fondest memories are mostly of times spent around the perimeter of the church rather than inside it. I hope my explanation retains the interest of the reader.

All Saints Church, Blurton Road, Clapton, Hackney E5.

Built 1870-1871 to the design of Francis Thomas Dollman. He was articled to Augustus Charles Pugin from 1827-1832. Dollman commenced independent practice in 1846. All Saints seated 800 people and held two services a day. In 1973 the church was demolished to make way for a block of flats.

All Saints Church stood on the corner of Blurton Road and Elderfield Road. I lived at the other end of the road, just around the corner and from my bedroom window I could look across to the back of the church. I was seven years old and eager to join the church, especially as it had a Brownie Pack. Inside the church it was dark and very cold. I can hardly remember the Sunday School but I loved belonging to the Brownies. We met in an old hall next to the church. It was kept warm by a paraffin heater which smelt dreadful but it never bothered us as we enjoyed playing lots of games and dancing round a large wooden toadstool. I've still got the brass badge that used to go on the kerchief around my neck.

The houses in the street were quite old but I remember the vicarage looked new, was detached and had a nice front garden. When the vicar moved in we learnt that he had two daughters who went to boarding school. I hardly remember them talking to us and they were never allowed out to play.

The East End streets were our playgrounds but we never went too far. My mum would not have approved of one of my favourite pastimes which involved going into the coal cellar of the church. To access the cellar we had to lift a heavy wooden shutter then climb down some steps. We ran under the church and out through a manhole cover into grounds at the back of the church.

I went to the Salvation Army church a couple of times. I enjoyed singing and they had brass bands and marched down the street to the marketplace where I stood with them for ages wondering if I should become a Sunbeam - the Army's equivalent to a Brownie. That idea soon changed as my friend Sylvie had joined The Mission, a church near the market and they needed some recruits for a drama production. I only appeared once as life had other plans for me.

St. Edmunds Church, Suffolk was waiting in the wings!

Anne Dellow

I believe that was the Sylvie who joined our drama group here at The Drive - Ed.



THE CHOIR AND THE CASE OF THE MISSING KEYS



Previously....

It was a Tuesday, the same as any other when the choir congregate in the parlour.....for an hour the choir rehearses the anthems.....with the final note on the piano, comes an air of change.....their hairs stand on end and the unease returns.....Michelle asks if Andrew has locked the vestry..... six heads turn to look at Andrew as he pats down his pockets.... his movements become frantic....the warmth and laughter melts away....Andrew lifts his head slowly, the terror evident on his face.....

“The keys...they’re missing.”

PART TWO

They all look at each other. The evening began like any other would but it was clear, the night wouldn't end the same as usual. The group all question each other; where were the keys? How could they have gone missing? Jo, Brian and Michelle apologise for their lack of keys but that still wouldn't provide an answer to what had now become the 'case of the missing keys'.

“Let's split up. We'll cover more ground that way.” Thea states. “I'll check the door.” Says Sue. “Andrew, let us help you retrace your steps.” Diane offers.

The choir all go their separate ways in the dark chill, hoping the church would provide a solution for them soon. The shadows around the church were prominent without the cheer and the seven were careful to keep their wits about them.

“Earlier, I thought I'd seen a person in these corridors with

us. I told myself it was just a trick of the light only now, I'm not so sure." Jo shares this with Andrew and Michelle as they enter the kitchen and feels a prickle against her skin akin to one she'd felt before. None of them say anything else, they simply re-trace steps in the hopes of finding something soon. With no luck on anyone's behalf, the choir all find themselves back in the Parlour where they began the night. The unease has grown significantly. Where were the keys? Should they be considering the possibility of an intruder? Would they be able to leave?

With the dim light and the chill in the air, it was hard to believe they had been so joyous just thirty minutes earlier.

Now it felt as though the happiness might never return. What should they do?

"We've looked everywhere. What now?"

"Maybe check again"

As they stand in a circle, Andrew goes back through his pockets. **ONE. LAST. TIME.**

The coat pockets provide house keys, the inside pockets another set but for his mother's house. Back jean pockets, nothing. Right pocket, nothing. Left pocket...

He reaches in and his eyes flare, a look of surprise crossing his features. He gasps, sending a shockwave across the room. Beads of sweat form on his brow and his heart beats out of turn. The surprise struck fear into the hearts of the six surrounding him and their trepidation increased tenfold.

"What?! What's happening?" One exclaims.

"Are you okay?!"

"What's going on?!"

"No no no no no...no it-it can't be" Andrew begins to withdraw his hand from his pocket slowly. So slowly. Until suddenly his hand is in plain view for everyone to see.



A simple set of keys dangles from his fingers and they laugh at the shock on everyone's faces. They seem to jest gleefully as they swing gently in the dim light as though we'd all played hide and seek knowingly.

"What?! No!!" Andrew says looking at the keys with surprise and disdain. "I was so sure I checked every pocket!" He exclaims with puzzlement.

"No it can't be!! I saw him check all his pockets before!" Thea tells the others. A chorus of surprised gasps and comments proving their disbelief, arose from the six who couldn't believe the discovery.

With the culprit found, all appears right in the world again. The relaxed ambience of the Parlour returns almost instantly. Light encompasses the room, bringing with it the warmth that had dissipated. The gentle melody that the church always seems to hum comes alive, carving through the echoing silence. The unease lifts and bright smiles return to the faces of the seven.

A chorus of laughs follows Andrew as he locks the vestry door and when he returns, the seven leave the church reminiscing fondly on choir and the case of the missing keys.

Thea Garner



Well, well...I never would have guessed!- Ed.

HELPLINES

SAMARITANS

Available 24 hours a day to provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts. www.samaritans.org 116 123 (free to call from within the UK and Ireland), 24 hours Email: jo@samaritans.org

MIND

Mind offers advice, support and information to people experiencing a mental health difficulty and their family and friends. Mon to Fri 9am to 6pm (except bank holidays). www.mind.org.uk InfoLine: 0300 123 3393 to call, or text 86463 Email info@mind.org.uk

PAPYRUS UK

Papyrus is the national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide. They support young people under 35 who are experiencing thoughts of suicide, as well as people concerned about someone else. Their HopelineUK service is open 9am - midnight every day of the year (including weekends and bank holidays). www.papyrusuk.org Helpline: 0800 068 4141 Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

YOUNGMINDS

www.youngminds.org.uk Parents helpline: 0808 802 5544 (Mon-Fri from 9.30am - 4pm, excluding bank holidays)

CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIVING MISERABLY (CALM)

A helpline for people in the UK who are down or have hit a wall for any reason, who need to talk or find information and support. thecalmzone.net Helpline: 0800 58 58 58 thecalmzone.net/help/webchat/ 5pm—midnight, every day of the year.

BROOK YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICE

Information, support and signposting service for young people under 25 on sexual health. Local services available via text message offering free contraception, pregnancy testing, counselling. brook.org.uk 29

CHILDLINE

Emotional support for children and young people on issues relating to child abuse, bullying etc. 0800 1111

FORCED MARRIAGES

Enter Forced Marriages into search bar at top of site - Service provided by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office to protect young people from forced marriages abroad. Service offers help to young people in these circumstances to help get them back to the UK. 020 7008 0151 gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage

NSPCC CHILD PROTECTION

0808 800 5000 email: help@nspcc.org.uk www.nspcc.org.uk

For anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse.

FREEPHONE 24 HR NATIONAL DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE

0808 2000 247 www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/

Run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge, this is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.

NATIONAL LGBT DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE

0800 999 5428 galop.org.uk/get-help/helplines/

Emotional, practical support for LGBT people experiencing domestic abuse.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

Helpline providing support for families and friends of problem drinkers, whether the person is still drinking or not. 0800

0086 811 www.al-anonuk.org.uk

CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY

<https://capuk.org/> Free help getting out of debt, budgeting and making your money go further.

AGE UK ADVICE

0800 678 1602 www.ageuk.org.uk Information and advice for older people.

PRAYER FOR ASCENSION DAY 29TH MAY

All people are made in God's image and, as we celebrate the ascension of our Lord, we pray that the day will come when no one will be persecuted for their faith.



Loving God, from earliest times you have heard the cry of your children for justice and for peace.

In these days of tension, of difficult remembrances, of competing voices and desperate cries, help us to hear the whisper of your Spirit, calling us to love, to service, to prayer and to compassion.

Open our ears to the voices of those with whom we disagree and our eyes to see how things look to them.

Give us confidence to stretch out our hands across difference and division.

Help us all, Gracious God, to be channels of your grace and your peace, wherever we may be.

Amen

*The Revd Loraine N Mellor and Jill Baker
President/Vice-President, The Methodist Conference 2017/18*

DIARY

MAY

Sun 4th	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Mr Alfred Mensah
Tues 6th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Church Parlour
Sun 11th	11.15am	Morning Worship led by TDY
Tues 13th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Church Parlour
Sun 18th	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Mrs Foluso Famoyin
Tues 20th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Church Parlour
Sun 25th	11.15am	Morning Worship including Holy Communion led by Revd Jacqui Jones followed by AGCM see page 13
Tues 27th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Church Parlour

JUNE

Sun 1st	11.15am	Morning Worship led by TBC
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A FUTURE DATE FOR YOUR DIARY – 12TH JULY

Saturday 12th July is the circuit youth get together at Chigwell Row campsite. More information will be released soon. This is for all ages of young people.

***Deadline for June Newsletter items:
Monday 26th May 2025***

Services every Sunday at 11.15am

Communion services as announced

Senior Church Stewards: Michelle Garner, Diane Foster
stewards@drive-methodist.church

Property Steward and Bookings: Jeremy Foster
property@drive-methodist.church
bookings@drive-methodist.church

Church Council Secretary: Roxanne Lashley
secretary@drive-methodist.church

Music@The Drive: Andrew Taylor
music@drive-methodist.church

Pastoral Secretary: Lorraine Bendon
pastoral@drive-methodist.church

The Drive Youth: Jo Wright
junior-church@drive-methodist.church

Flower Rota Secretary: Anne Dellow
flowers@drive-methodist.church

Safeguarding@The Drive: Lorraine Bendon
safeguarding@drive-methodist.church

JMA Secretary: Diane Foster
jma@drive-methodist.church

Newsletter Editor: Diane Foster
newsletter@drive-methodist.church

Pre School: Kay Whiddon
Pre-school@drive-methodist.church
Term time only: Mon to Fri 9.15am-12pm; 1pm-3pm