

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



NEWSLETTER



December 2025



January 2026

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

YOU ARE A GIFT!

This is our Advent declaration for 2025, as we begin this sacred adventure, I offer from me and my family a prayer that Peace be within You. Advent is the season that we celebrate the Gift Giving God. Taken from our opening liturgy, our prayer together is:

*Gift-giving God,
may Advent be for us a time of giving and receiving
Lord God of this Advent season, of every season, every day,
minute and second, give us, we pray, the gift of peace in this
season of Advent.*

*Bring peace to the world but also bring peace within each of
us.*

*Lord God, we give ourselves afresh to you as we step into
Advent.*

*Let us iron the crumples and the creases from our lives
so that we may be the best gift that we can be.*

*May we start today and not wait to become, and to be, the
person/people you want us to be,
so that we can give the best that we can of you and
ourselves, to those around us.*

*Gift-giving God,
may Advent be for us a time of giving and receiving Amen.*

On a personal update, I welcome visitors from Africa for Christmas and am so happy to prepare a special meal in the new kitchen which I am so deeply grateful to the BDI circuit for and celebrate with my grandson for his first ever Christmas, that this year will mark a time of love and joy and in those moments of pain I remind you that Jesus at his birth received the gifts of myrrh and frankincense, spices that

foretold his death but become a balm for our tears and longing and so I conclude with the prayers from our Blue Christmas Liturgy as we embark on being a GIFT to each other this ADVENT:

*Creator God,
thank you for the gift of the world you made.
Thank you for the gift of one another.
Thank you that we do not have to struggle through alone,
that you made us for community (and especially BDI Circuit).*

*Living Lord Jesus,
whose birth we are here to remember,
thank you for giving us the gift of you –
for coming to be with us, as one of us,
for taking on our humanity and sharing our pain.*

*Holy Spirit,
thank you for bringing us the gift of God's presence,
turning every heart into a Bethlehem stable
and every moment an opportunity for grace.*

*Eternal God,
Creator God, Son and Holy Spirit,
you have given us so much
and we have received so little.*

*We are sorry for the times we have thrown your gifts away
through selfishness, through thoughtlessness,
or simply because our eyes are full of tears.*

*Thank you that you keep giving anyway, because you love us.
In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen*

With love in Christ Jacqui
Revd Jacqui Jones

EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello and many thanks to all those who have contributed to this double issue of our Newsletter for December and January.

Can you believe it's December already and it's nearly here? (No, I'm not talking about the *Strictly* final...!) I mean we're into the season of Advent with just weeks to go until our celebrations of Jesus' birth begin. I hope you enjoy the anticipation and excitement that Advent brings with the expectation that something really wonderful is about to happen.

At The Drive there are lots of preparations going on for this special time of year:

Our young people (and older!) are rehearsing the Nativity presentation. This well-known story is still magical every year. On Tuesday evenings Andrew leads the choir as they practice the anthems and carols that he has chosen for our Candlelit Carol Service. We hope you enjoy our singing! Our Property Team will be collecting the Christmas trees, putting them up and decorating them. They always look wonderful. Our Flower Team will be making our church look beautifully festive with their arrangements. And as we approach the 25th I think of the first line of the Advent hymn "*Christmas is coming, the church is glad to sing*". And we certainly are!



Details of all our Christmas services are on page 20.

And then into January and, along with all Methodists, we begin the year by renewing our Covenant with God. This service at The Drive will be held on 11th January. (See page 26).

Finally, thank you all for your support of our Newsletter in 2025. I wish you a joyous Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

God bless,
Diane Foster



WE PRAY for those known to us who are unwell and those we have concerns for at this time.



WE PRAY for those who are unable to come to church because of ongoing illnesses.



WE PRAY for those in hospital or about to have operations.



WE PRAY for those going through difficult times because of financial worries.



WE PRAY for those in a time of grief following the loss of loved ones.



Loving and merciful God,
Hold close all who are unwell, bereaved,
or burdened with anxious hearts.

Wrap them in your peace
that surpasses understanding,
and let your light break through
the shadows of fear and sorrow.

Bring rest to tired bodies,
calm to restless minds,
and hope to those who feel lost in grief.

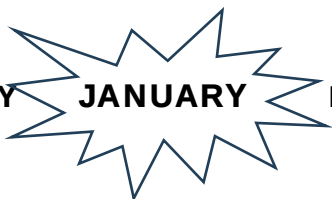
Surround them with kindness,
and remind them they
are never alone in their pain.

Amen

HAPPY  **DECEMBER** **BIRTHDAY to:**

LORRAINE BENDON ON 3RD
TOJU FADINA ON 17th
JO WRIGHT ON 30th
FUNMI FADINA ON 30th



HAPPY  **JANUARY** **BIRTHDAY to:**



PHELO ZIHLE ON 5TH
MATTHEW FOSTER ON 5TH
JOEL INBAKUMAR ON 25TH

**AND TO EVERYONE CELEBRATING A BIRTHDAY
OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS
HAVE A LOVELY DAY!**



*(If you would like yours or somebody else's birthday
mentioned then please let me know! – Ed.)*

CONGRATULATIONS to...



Jemimah Serrote for being awarded a Bronze medal in the recent London Schools Judo Championships - *Well done Jemimah, you did your school proud!* – Ed.



Funmi Fadina for doing very well in a recent maths test – *Well done Funmi, excellent!* – Ed.

Lorraine Bendon who will become a Great Grandma again in May! The 4th time! Another baby for grandson Jordan and Beth and a little brother or sister to Rafe aged 3.



Lovely news, congratulations to all the family – Ed.



THE REDBRIDGE MUSIC LOUNGE BEREAVEMENT PROJECT EVENT 25TH OCTOBER

The Redbridge Music Lounge is based in the former Cranbrook Park Bowling Club in Valentines Park. The Bowling Club boards are still in place inside the building. I noted that in 1970 the Hon. Treasurer was R.H. Runeckles*. I didn't recognise any other names.

On Saturday 25th October an event was held to mark National Grief Awareness Day. As well as musical events there were speakers from St. Francis Hospice and others who gave their own insight of the subject. During those four hours on Saturday afternoon a lot of positive ground was covered.

Bereavement is not the same for everyone who has to deal with it.

Susan Ruckes

Thank you for this Susan. I hadn't heard of it before. I've put details below for those interested.

**Colin tells me Rupert Runeckles was his paternal grandfather, father of Bert who was a longtime member and Senior Steward at the Drive– Ed.*



Singers, musicians, composers and songwriters meet weekly or more at our bespoke venue in the wonderful surroundings of Valentines Park. The Cranbrook Centre, Melbourne Gate, Melbourne Road, Valentines Park, Ilford IG1 4SB.

More details can be found at www.rmluk.org

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE SUNDAY 9th NOVEMBER

WARTIME MEMORIES



At our Remembrance Service people were asked for wartime memories, either their own or from someone they knew. Andrew read out the following during the service:

BRIAN TAYLOR

Brian was a young boy growing up in Ilford. He shared some of his memories:

A bright orange glow in the sky after the Becton gasworks was bombed - no gas for cooking; the emergency basket containing food and clothes to be grabbed when there was an alarm during the night; collecting shrapnel; sitting on the floor of the reinforced school corridor on an uncomfortable rush mat doing puzzles until the all-clear sounded; watching a doodle-bug streak across the sky and wondering when the drone would stop and where it would land; no school but a few children would meet a teacher in one of their houses for lessons on the sitting room carpet; rationing of food, clothes and furniture; attending the funeral of my friend, killed with his parents when their house was bombed.

THE 1943 BETHNAL GREEN TUBE SHELTER DISASTER

submitted by Lorraine Bendon

One dark, wet evening in 1943 in London's East End, 173 people were crushed and asphyxiated to death as they attempted to take refuge in Bethnal Green's underground from an expected German attack.

Shortly after an air raid warning on the evening of 3rd March 1943, hundreds of people on the streets of Bethnal Green fled

to the underground station for shelter. Clusters of people were already milling around the entrance to the station as they often did when expecting a raid, chatting, smoking and drinking tea. There had been a heavy Allied attack on Berlin two nights previously, so many were expecting a reprisal attack.

As a consequence, a lot more people than usual made their way from their homes to the shelter that night. Just as several buses were emptying near the station, the Royal Artillery who were testing ammunition in nearby Victoria Park fired off a series of anti-aircraft rockets. These gave off a loud and unexpected 'whoosh', followed by explosions.

Fearing it was a bomb, people rushed to get into the shelter. The one and only entrance was unmanned. Its first flight of 19 steps, which led down to a landing just above the ticket hall, had no handrails and was lit by a single low watt bulb. In the hurry, a woman with a child stumbled and tripped, causing an elderly man to fall on top of her and this set off a disastrous domino effect that resulted in an appalling human crush. 173 people died and 62 of these were children. Most were women and children.

The tragic number of deaths makes the event one of the worst civilian disasters in modern British history, not directly caused by enemy action. Many witnesses were told by government officials not to talk about the incident for fear of harming morale and helping the enemy.

While East Londoners know of the disaster, considering the scale of the casualties it is perhaps surprising that it is not more widely known. Details of the event were successfully kept from public knowledge until after the war had ended.

It is not surprising that so many were traumatised by the terrible events of that evening and, as instructed, tried to push their experiences to the back of their minds and were never able to speak of them.

Eventually, with the help of the National Lottery Fund, a book was produced, bringing together over 30 oral history interviews, recorded with those involved in the disaster. For many survivors, this was the first opportunity to speak publicly about what happened on that night and to record the impact of the disaster on their lives.

The first memorial service dedicated to the disaster was not held until 1993. This took place on the 50th anniversary at St John on Bethnal Green Church. A plaque was unveiled above the station entrance.

There were no other services for 15 years until the Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust was formed and organised a service in 2008 on the 65th anniversary. Since this time, a memorial service has been held annually.

Peters father, George Bendon, a resident and shop owner in Bethnal Green, serving with the Home Guard was one of the rescuers on this fateful evening, unaware that Elizabeth Bendon aged 38 had become a victim.

PETER FOSTER – submitted by Jeremy Foster

Jeremy's father Peter served during the last 18 months of WW2. He was in the Royal Corps of Signals and was attached to a heavy artillery unit. He landed at Sword beach in the second wave. The following is an extract from the transcript of a talk he gave at Louise and Matthew's school in 1994 – which was the 50th anniversary of D Day.

"We had driven to Tilbury coming right through Ilford, but of course I was not allowed to call in at home. We boarded a ship and set sail, but we then sat in mid channel for two days in very very rough weather. The toilet facilities were primitive and it was most unpleasant.

When we reached the shore there was still fighting on the beach and the enemy were firing at us with mortars and heavy guns. As soon as we had crossed the beach we set up our guns and went into action".

ELSIE BLANCHARD – submitted by Ruth Joyce

Elsie also had memories which she had told Ruth.

Before the war, Elsie did some nursing training for a period of time so had a good knowledge of infection control. She was based in Malta and told me she was in "communication" but who knows what she did.

I believe that Malta was in the thick of it with aerial bombing which must have been very scary. At a certain point, the military were going to do a 'big push' against the enemy starting from Malta. However, there was a flu alert and everyone had to be immunised. Elsie was at the end of a very long queue of people being vaccinated and was horrified to see that the doctor was injecting someone, putting the needle into the vaccine then into another arm and again and again, never disinfecting and always using the same needle.

When it came to Elsie, she had a tantrum and insisted the needle was changed. During the next few days, the whole area came down with the flu, except Elsie and people immediately behind her, and the 'big push' had to be postponed!

SAMARITAN'S PURSE CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX APPEAL

Thank you to everyone one who donated online, brought boxes to church, or added items for a box. John took 39 boxes to the collection point. Thank you to Kay and the pre-school parents who donated boxes too.

And thanks to Jo for organising – Ed.

MEMORY FROM SANJAY

When I was maybe 5 or 6 years old, I used to get these Samaritan's shoeboxes (with the same logo: a gift box with aeroplane wings) from a church that belongs to a relative of my home church's pastor. I received it maybe for 2–3 years, one each year. When we were receiving them, all the children from the church were asked to gather for a children's prayer meeting.



We sang songs, and pastors prayed that the gifts would be a blessing to all the children receiving them. Once we received the boxes, we were asked not to open them until we went home! The excitement about what we might have got was a lot. So once the prayer meeting was finished and the boxes were given, we used to rush home to open them. Me, my sister, and two other cousins all went home, sat in a room, sat in a circle, and opened the boxes with a lot of joy. We loved the gifts in it—be it chocolates, toys, and everything in it. We used to compare between us about who got the best toys and best stuff. That entire day and the following weeks were definitely full of joy.

So, being one of the kids who received these gifts, I'm really happy that as a church now we are still contributing to these every year, which indeed are going to give hope and light and spread the love of Jesus in those little hearts.

Sanjay Mareddi

Thank you Sanjay. It's lovely to hear firsthand that the boxes are enjoyed and appreciated – Ed.

VISIT TO ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL 18TH NOVEMBER

A group of us from St Andrew's Church went to St Paul's Cathedral to Evensong and an Advent Event on Tuesday 18th November 2025. Evensong is at 5pm but it is advisable to get there at 4.30pm to be able to gain entry, there is no charge. The Advent event we had all booked started at 6.30pm and was titled 'God with Us' advent reflections in words and music. Evensong is always excellent at the Cathedral and I managed to secure a seat in the Choir stalls. The singing of the choir and the organ playing is very special. The anthem was 'For the Beauty of the Earth' by John Rutter, a firm favourite at the The Drive!

Dr Paula Gooder led the Advent event. She is the Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral and a leading biblical scholar and teacher. She is also the author of many books, her latest being 'Women of the Nativity' - an Advent and Christmas journey in nine stories. The music was by St Paul's Cathedral Consort choir. Paula Gooder gave the most interesting and enlightening talk on many different aspects of 'waiting'. She is very good at putting across her message in an extremely easy to understand way. This was interspersed with four different pieces of choral music exquisitely sung by the Consort -

'O viridissima virga' (Hildegard of Bingen – b.1098)

'Drop down, ye heavens, from above' (Judith Weir – b.1954)

'O Radiant Dawn' (James MacMillan – b. 1959)

'Hymn to the Virgin' (Benjamin Britten – 1913-1976) (Paula's favourite)

There is a film and Podcast of this event available on the website at: stpauls.co.uk/our-digital-resources. It is well worth viewing/listening. (We entered the Cathedral by the North Door near the wonderful statue of John Wesley).

Maggie Smith



HILARY'S PRAYER COLUMN

A PRAYER FOR ADVENT



We know you are coming, Lord
as we journey through these weeks of Advent to Christmas.

The shops and the TV won't let us forget it!
And Christmas does crown the year like no other festival.

But Lord you come to us everyday.
Often unnoticed and unrecognised.
You come to us in our worship,
for you are in each one of us.

We shall meet you tomorrow in the people
who will come to us to share their joys and sorrows.

In the people whose problems we seek to solve
and in those who just want someone to listen to them.

We shall meet you in the streets of Redbridge,
in the shops and offices,
on the trains and buses and in our homes.

Lord you come to us everyday.

Help us to expect you and
to recognise you when you come.

Amen

Hilary Stevens

TDY NEWS

LIGHT PARTY 1ST NOVEMBER

We had a lovely time at the TDY light party in November. TDY glowed in the candlelight! Pumpkins were carved, quiz questions were found and answered, crafts were made, games were played and pizza was eaten. Thank you to all who came.

NATIVITY REHEARSAL AND PARTY SATURDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2-5PM

We will be having our annual rehearsal and TDY party in the church and parlour. Everyone is invited to the rehearsal on Saturday afternoon (that includes adults who are taking part too!) The actual rehearsal will last about an hour, 2-3pm, then the young people will continue with their party in the parlour. Adults, you are welcome to stay for mince/apple pies and a cup of tea.

TDY NATIVITY AND TOY SERVICE SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER 11.15AM

Please join us for TDY's annual Nativity play and toy service. If you are able, please bring an unwrapped, new toy/book or craft item to the service. These will be given to the Grange Hill food bank and warm space area for distribution to families in need this Christmas season. Thank you.

Team TDY

*Team TDY wish everyone a happy
Christmas and peaceful New Year.*





VALENTINE SINGERS



COME AND SING CHRISTMAS!



An opportunity to come and sing some Christmas choral music with the Valentine Singers, or just come and listen!

Three events, all on Friday evenings at 7:30pm:

28 November – Britten: A Ceremony of Carols

5 December – Baroque Christmas

featuring choruses from Bach's Christmas Oratorio and Handel's Messiah

12 December – A French Christmas

with extracts from Charpentier's Messe de Minuit

Holy Trinity Church, Mossford Green, Barkingside IG6 2BX

£10 for each Friday (£5 students/benefit holders)
- for singers and listeners

Advance booking required - phone 020 8504 1261
or visit our website valentinesingers.org





BDI CIRCUIT CHRISTMAS SERVICES

TDY NATIVITY PLAY & TOY SERVICE

AT THE DRIVE MC

SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER 11.15AM

(see page 18)



CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

AT BARKINGSIDE MC

SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER 3.00PM

led by REVD JACQUI JONES



CANDLELIT CAROL SERVICE

AT THE DRIVE MC

SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER 6.30PM

led by REVD JACQUI JONES



Christmas anthems by the choir and carols for all with readings telling the familiar Christmas story. Please stay afterwards for mince pies and refreshments.



CAROLS AND HOLY COMMUNION

AT GANTSILL MC

CHRISTMAS EVE 4.00PM

led by REVD JACQUI JONES



CHRISTMAS MORNING FAMILY WORSHIP



Christmas morning services will be held at
**Barking, Ilford, Goodmayes and Old
Dagenham Methodist Churches.**

(See diary pp.32,33 for times of services).

Take your pick and celebrate with our friends in the circuit as we hear again the news the angels bring – Jesus is born!

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE



In her letter, Jacqui refers to the 'Blue Christmas' liturgy and includes the Methodist Church's prayer for 2025.

For anyone not familiar with this term, the name 'Blue Christmas' is taken from an Elvis Presley song and has become increasingly popular over recent years, as it provides an opportunity for the difficulties of life to be acknowledged alongside the celebrations and Good News of Christmas.

Christmas can be a very difficult time for people for all kinds of reasons. A Blue Christmas service provides a space for painful emotions to be held and acknowledged rather than dismissed or hidden amidst all the jollity. It offers a space in which people can feel what they feel.

The service needs to offer good news of hope for the future without minimising the pain that is felt now. It is likely to demand less of participants: music may be performed rather than people being expected to sing along.

It is a reflective service of comfort and light, for those experiencing loss, loneliness or despair at Christmas.

The service is also known as 'The Service of the Longest Night' as it is offered specifically around the winter solstice – December 21st.

Diane Foster

Text adapted from the Methodist Church website where you can find more information.

FROM THE CIRCUIT OFFICE:



REDBRIDGE FOOD BANK

Grange Hill Methodist Community Centre would like to thank you for your continued support of the Redbridge Foodbank. Thank you for the generous donations over the Harvest period; some of these were retained at Grange Hill, however the majority were taken to the Foodbank.



Over recent weeks we have seen the number of callers at the centre more than triple and as a result we urgently need the following items:

Long life milk

Orange or fruit squash (max size 1litre), 750ml bottles are fine,

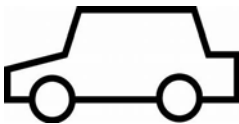
Instant noodles,

Washing tabs/gel,

Washing up liquid.

We are able to collect items from your Church if required.

DRIVERS URGENTLY NEEDED



We are looking to set up a rota of drivers who are willing/able to help collect our stock from Jubilee Church to deliver to Grange Hill on either a Tuesday morning or Wednesday afternoon. If you have a B or B1 driving licence it would be possible to arrange for the use of the RFB van, if you do not have a big enough car.

If you are able to help in this regard, please email Jackie at the Circuit Office – details on next page.

REDBRIDGE ZERO WASTE CHRISTMAS EVENT CHRISTMAS EVE



As you might know the Redbridge Zero Waste operates on two morning each week (Wednesday and Saturday 10am – 12noon) from Grange Hill Methodist. The team from RZW collect fresh produce from shops that is at its 'best by date/ sell by date'. The produce is made available free of charge to any caller. They normally run out within an hour of opening.

On Christmas Eve they are planning to run an evening event at Grange Hill to distribute the produce once the shops have closed. The time has not been confirmed but it is likely to be at 9.30pm or 10pm.

They are looking for help with the following:

- Collecting the produce (sometime between 7-8pm)
- Setting up the tables
- Serving customers
- Providing teas / coffee

If you are interested in helping on Christmas Eve, again, please contact Jackie.

Thanks again, for all the help churches have given to support the project in the past year.

From The Grange Hill Management Committee.

Jackie Saito
Administrator, Barking, Dagenham & Ilford Circuit Office
020 8517 6159, bdicircuitoffice@btconnect.com



SECRET SANTA WITH ACTION FOR CHILDREN



Spread a little Christmas joy this year, and make Christmas special for a vulnerable child. Action for Children's Secret Santa campaign is once again up and running. Make a donation or buy a gift from a teddy bear to warm winter clothes and bedding. Visit the Secret Santa webpage at: www.actionforchildren.org.uk for more information and to purchase your gift.



ST CECILIA – PATRON SAINT OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

I wonder how many of our congregation have looked closely at the wonderful stained glass windows in our church? Who is the woman playing an organ in the window above the choir stalls?

The Methodist Church does not venerate individual saints in the same way as, for example, the Roman Catholic Church or Church of England, but the woman in that window is St Cecilia. She was a 3rd century Roman noblewoman, brutally martyred for her faith, and her patronage of music comes from the story that when she was married against her will, she sat apart at the wedding singing "in her heart" to God. In art, she is usually depicted playing the organ or other musical instruments and accompanied by angels.

Our St Cecilia window is dedicated to Alfred Haynes, a founder member of the Eastern Avenue Methodist Church (as The Drive was when first opened), father of Vera Fudge and grandfather of our friend Maggie Smith.

St Cecilia's day is 22nd November, and is celebrated by musicians in many different ways.

The director of the Royal School of Church Music, Hugh Morris, completed a 25-hour organ-playing marathon on St Cecilia's day this year to mark Play the Organ year. Also, a friend of mine has got me into attending the annual Festival of St Cecilia, hosted by the charity Help Musicians, which involves the choirs of Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral and St Paul's Cathedral. This year it was held at Westminster Abbey. As you can imagine, with the three choirs combined, plus contributions from top professional musicians, the music in the service is always stunning, and it's an event I look forward to each November.

And because I'm sure you're all itching to know – the organ voluntary I played at the end of the service on Sunday 23rd November was the March from the Ode for St Cecilia's Day by Handel.

Sometimes I do put some thought into the choice of music!

Andrew Taylor

Thank you for this Andrew. Very interesting and the voluntary was lovely – Ed.



ALL ARE WELCOME – THE COVENANT SERVICE 11th JANUARY

The Covenant Service, celebrated on a Sunday at the beginning of January, is at the heart of Methodists' devotion and discipleship, and their dedication in working for social justice. In the service the Church joyfully celebrates God's gracious offer that "I will be their God and they shall be my people". The service is a gift not a demand!

This idea of Covenant was basic to John Wesley's understanding of Christian discipleship. He saw the relationship with God in Covenant as being like a marriage between human beings (both as a community and as individuals) on the one side and God in Christ on the other. (*see Ephesians 5.21-33*).

Wesley recognised that people needed not just to accept but also to grow in relationship with God. He therefore emphasised that God's grace and love constantly prompts and seeks to transform us, and so we should continually seek and pray to grow in holiness and love.

Over a number of years Wesley gradually saw the need for some regular ceremony which would enable people to open themselves to God more fully. He looked for some means of helping them to hear God's offer and challenge ever more deeply, and to allow God to prompt and enable them to respond.

In 1755 Wesley created a form of service adapted from the works of Joseph and Richard Alleine. These works came from the Puritan tradition of pastoral and spiritual guidance. Wesley therefore insisted that the Covenant Service be located in a framework of pastoral care, preaching and guidance.

Text adapted from The Methodist Church website.

CHURCH LUNCH SATURDAY 10TH JANUARY **12.30pm for 1.00pm**



There will be no church lunch in December so we look forward to our next one on 10th January in the Church Parlour when a variety of homemade soups will be on the menu. A list will be put at the back of the church to add your name nearer the date. This is always a joyous event enjoying delicious food and chatting to people. *Many thanks to Lorraine, Ruth and Anne for working so hard to make it happen – Ed.*

TAP HERE!



The Property and Finance Committee has agreed to set up a card acquiring platform for our church. This means that in future you will be able to make freewill offerings and donations for charity appeals using a debit or credit card.

This facility moves us in line with many other churches who now accept card payments. There is no change to the envelope scheme and any standing order that you have set up for your freewill offering should continue as at present. The platform will also enable us to take online payments via our website. This will also be essential for our Centenary Development Appeal which will be launched in early 2026.

Jeremy Foster

CALLING ALL READERS!



A big thank you to all those who very kindly read our Bible lessons each week. If this is something you would like to do then let me know and I will be very pleased to add your name to the list. Thank you.

Diane Foster

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 27TH JANUARY



This international day marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp when we remember the six million Jewish men, women and children who were murdered under Nazi persecution.

The Holocaust threatened the fabric of civilisation, and discrimination and persecution must still be resisted every day. Our world often feels fragile and vulnerable and we cannot be complacent. Wherever it takes place, including in the UK, prejudice and the language of hatred must be challenged by us all.

Loving God, we come to you with heavy hearts,
remembering the six million Jewish souls
murdered during the Holocaust.

In the horrors of that history, when so many groups were
targeted because of their identity,
and in genocides which followed,
we recognise destructive prejudices that drive people apart.

Forgive us when we give space to fear, negativity and hatred
of others, simply because they are different from us.

In the light of God, we see everyone as equally precious
manifestations of the Divine,
and can know the courage to face the darkness.

Through our prayers and actions, help us to stand together
with those who are suffering,
so that light may banish all darkness,
love will prevail over hate and good will triumph over evil.

Amen

Text from the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust website

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 Hopeline UK 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

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.

DIARY		
NOVEMBER		
Sun 30th	11.15am	Advent Sunday Morning Worship led by Mrs Lynn Packer
Sun 30th	4.00pm	Circuit Advent Service at Goodmayes MC
DECEMBER		
Tues 2 nd	7.45pm	Choir Practice Church Parlour
Wed 3 rd	12 noon	Dagenham Christians Together Carol Singing, outside Dagenham Heathway Library.
Thur 4 th	7.30pm	Circuit Bible Study 'Gifted' by Zoom – see page 34 for details
Fri 5 th	7.30pm	Valentines Singers – Come and Sing Christmas! – see page 19
Sun 7th	11.15am	2nd Sunday in Advent Morning Worship led by Rev'd Jacqui Jones with Holy Communion
Tues 9 th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Church Parlour
Wed 10 th	7.30pm	Centenary Fundraising Comm Mtg by Zoom – link to follow
Thur 11 th	7.30PM	Circuit Bible Study 'Gifted' by Zoom – see page 34 for details
Fri 12 th	7.30pm	Valentines Singers – Come and Sing Christmas! – see page 19
Sat 13 th	11.00am	Carolathon at Beacontree Heath MC
Sat 13 th	2pm – 5pm	Nativity Rehearsal and Party see page 18

DIARY contd.		
DECEMBER		
Sun 14th	11.15am	3rd Sunday in Advent Nativity & Toy Service led by TDY see page 18
Sun 14th	3.00pm	Carols by Candlelight At Barkingside MC led by Revd Jacqui Jones
Tues 16 th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Church Parlour
Fri 19th	7.30pm	Circuit Bible Study 'Gifted' by Zoom – see page 34 for details
Sun 21st	11.15am	4th Sunday in Advent Morning Worship led by Mr Matthew Walton-Thorne
Sun 21st	6.30pm	Candlelit Carol Service led by Revd Jacqui Jones See page 20
Wed 24th	4.00pm	Christmas Eve Carols & Holy Communion at Gantshill MC led by Revd Jacqui Jones
Thurs 25th	9.30am	Christmas Morning Family Worship at Ilford MC led by Revd Mmasape Thathane-Tyolweni
Thurs 25th	10.00am	Christmas Morning Family Worship at Goodmayes MC led by Revd Jacqui Jones
Thurs 25th	10.00am	Christmas Morning Family Worship at Old Dagenham MC led by Deacon Andy Packer

DIARY contd.		
DECEMBER		
Thurs 25th	11.00am	Christmas Morning Family Worship at Barking MC led by Revd Mmasape Thathane-Tyolweni
Sun 28th	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Mrs Sharon Grundy
Wed 31st	From 10.00pm	Watchnight Service at Barking MC led by Local Preachers
Wed 31st	11.30pm	Watchnight Service at Old Dagenham MC led by Mr Alfred Mensah
JANUARY		
Sun 4th	11.15AM	Epiphany Morning Worship led by Mr Robert Debrah
Sat 10 th	12.30pm	Church Lunch see page 27
Sun 11TH	11.15am	Covenant Service led by Revd Jacqui Jones with Holy Communion See page 26
Sun 18th	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Ms Florence Amoah
Tues 20 th	7.30pm	Centenary Fundraising Comm Mtg by Zoom – link to follow
Wed 21 st	7.30pm	Finance & Property Comm Mtg Valentines Room
Sun 25th	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Dr Anthony Russell
Sun 25 th	Following Service	Church Council in the Church

DIARY contd.		
FEBRUARY		
Sun 1st	11.15am	Morning Worship led by TDY

**Circuit Bible Study 'Gifted' Zoom:
Meeting ID: 926 7109 8929 Passcode: 212939**

*(Please note all services/events are at The Drive
except where stated)*

(Answers to puzzles in next Newsletter!)

**Deadline for items for February issue:
18th January 2026 – Thank you!**



May the faith of God

Be with you this year

*May the peace of God
surround you*

*And may you be blessed
each day.*

Anon.



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
bookings@drive-methodist.church

Church Council Secretary: Theodora Garner
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