

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



NEWSLETTER

March 2026



Minister: Revd Jacqueline Jones
Email: rev.jacquelinejones@outlook.com

[http:// www.drive-methodist.church](http://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

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I pray that you experience grace and peace through our Lord Jesus Christ.

During this season of Lent, we are called to pause, reflect, and renew our commitment to follow Jesus. Lent is a time for honest prayer, faithful discipleship, and practical love as we journey together toward the hope of Easter.

In Barking, Dagenham and Ilford our Churches are part of many different communities, each with unique joys, challenges, and needs. This Lent, let's pray for our neighbourhoods, our families, and anyone who feels burdened, forgotten, or in need of hope. Lent invites us to reflect personally and to notice how God is working in and through us.

The Methodist Church in Britain reminds us of Our Calling: We are called to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live as disciples through worship, learning, caring, service, and evangelism. Lent gives us a chance to renew this calling with fresh purpose.

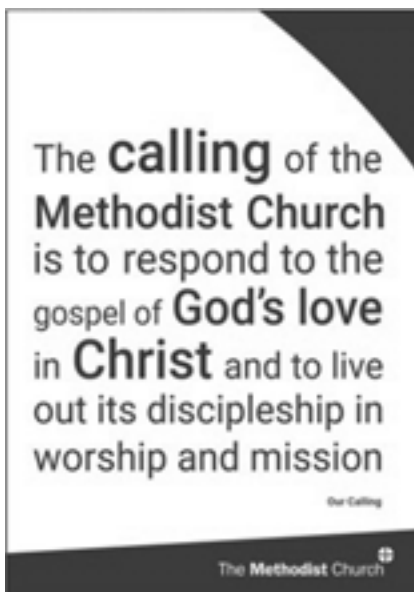
- In worship, let's draw closer to God through prayer, scripture reading, and time in silence.
- As we learn and care for each other, may we grow in faith and support one another with compassion and grace.
- In serving others, let's stand with those who are struggling, offering practical help and a listening ear.
- In sharing our faith, may our lives show Christ's love so clearly that others are drawn to the hope we have found.

Lent invites us to live with simplicity, generosity, and trust. Whether we fast, pray, give, or show kindness, may each of us find ways to open our hearts more to God and to each other. As a circuit, let's encourage, pray for, and support one another as we walk in faith together.

I hope this Lent, celebrated in the beautiful season of Spring, is a time of renewal for our churches and communities in Barking, Dagenham and Ilford Circuit. May we be strengthened to live out God's love in everything we say and do.

Wishing you every blessing for a holy and hope-filled Lent.

Revd Jacqui Jones





EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello and welcome to the March Newsletter. Can you believe we are already a quarter of the way through the year and a third of the way through Lent?

And talking of fractions we are also halfway through our six week journey towards our Centenary Mission Development Project Gift and Pledge Sunday on 15th March. Our journey began on 8th February when we heard from Jacqui on the theme of Faith, then on 15th February from Andrew and the choir on the theme of Service, particularly through music. On 22nd February Jacqui spoke on the theme of Purpose. Today, 1st March, TDY leads our service on theme of Commitment. We now look forward to the last two services in this series. The fifth, on 8th March, on the theme of Sacrifice led by Jeremy and members of the congregation and the sixth service, on 15th March on the theme of Gratitude will be led by Jacqui and Stephen Normanton. Details of all the events for our project can be found on page 11.

This year's Circuit Lent Bible Study via Zoom continues through March. Please see page 12 for details.

Beetle is almost here! A fun afternoon for all ages. Tickets are available now so let me know how many you would like! Full details on page 16.

Happening at the beginning of April this year, Easter will soon be with us. Details of Holy Week services are on page 12.

Have a great month

LORD WE BRING OUR PRAYERS BEFORE YOU

For family, for church members and friends who are in need of your love and care at this time.

We particularly remember those who are unwell, in body and mind. We remember those in hospital, for those awaiting operations and for those receiving treatment for ongoing illnesses.

We pray for those going through difficult times because of financial worries or health anxieties.

We pray for those who mourn the loss of loved ones, both recently and in the past.

We hold the names of these people in our thoughts Lord and you know who they are.

May they all be comforted by your presence.

"Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7



BELATED THANKS

It was very remiss of me not to mention in our last newsletter our 2025 Christmas Trees. As in every year, one week they aren't there and then the next, hey presto as if by magic, there they are, standing straight and tall at the front of the church and in the foyer. Beautifully lit and decorated.

We must have been on Santa's 'good list' for him to spare his elves to work so hard. But even the elves needed help. So a huge thank you to Jeremy and his team. He and Mike made a very early start to collect the trees and they, together with John and Colin spent many hours putting the trees up and decorating them.

Maybe if we're all really good this year as well Santa will let his elves help again?

Diane Foster



DON'T DO LIFE ALONE YOUTH DAY

At the end of January, we, along with Mounish and Raymond from Gants Hill Methodist Church, attended the London Methodist District's Youth Day at Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission. This was the first event of its kind in the London Methodist District specifically aimed at young people, so it was wonderful to connect with other young Methodists from across the capital.

The day began with an all-age worship, where we sang upbeat hymns of praise together. We were then invited to take part in creative prayer, with stations set up in each corner of the chapel to encourage us to pray in "different" ways. At the station we chose, paper covered the floor and we were given colourful pens to trace around our feet, write our names inside them, and then look at the others' footprints. We then "stepped" into each other's footsteps and prayed for one another: a simple yet powerful way to connect spiritually.

Next, we were separated into streams by age group (the youngest of us was just eight years old)! Joining the other 18-25s, we started with a (quite frantic) scavenger hunt, taking photos of everything from specific items across the chapel and Wesley's house to silly selfies with each other.

Once we settled down, we explored the day's theme, "Don't Do Life Alone", discussing what the Bible teaches about loneliness and how we can support one another across our circuits. We also shared ideas from our own communities, and it was inspiring to hear how young people in Enfield and Newham are engaging with their local communities in unique ways.

One particular highlight was magician Bron Ivy, who entertained us with her incredible tricks. As a member of the prestigious Magic Circle, she is among the elite of her profession. In one trick, she drew a small pink heart on her right hand, had Rochelle close her fists and tapped her left hand - and, magically, the heart appeared on Rochelle's left palm! We're still trying to figure out the logistics of how she did that.

Attending this event also helped us become aware of the numerous opportunities and mission trips/events that the Methodist Church offers for Young Adults, such as *Encourage Together - Italy* and *Cliff Festival*. We were also added to the WhatsApp community called **Methodist Young Adult Community**, where we receive regular updates on similar events and open roles. We plan to invite the rest of the TDY group to join this community group as well.

Finally, we had the opportunity to explore John Wesley's house more fully, including the prayer room where he would kneel for hours in the early mornings in devotion to God. It was a moving experience, giving a tangible connection to the history and spirituality of Methodism.

The wider Methodist Church is also seeking adult volunteers to support events for young people throughout the year. If you're interested in getting involved and making a difference, you can find out more here:
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/evangelism-growth/festivals-and-events/volunteer-with-us-at-festivals-and-events/>

Returning to The Drive, we also discovered that Jo's dad, Frank, served as a curator at Wesley's Chapel - and even

hand-wrote the covenant in his own calligraphy. It just goes to show: the reach of The Drive really is everywhere!

Rochelle Inbakumar and Sanjay Marreddi



(Sounds like you had a good day, Rochelle and Sanjay. Thank you for sharing with us. Ed).

HAPPY  MARCH BIRTHDAY to:



**Brian on the 2nd
Amy on the 3rd
Lorna on the 5th
David on the 16th**



**Revd Mmasape on the 20th
Iris on the 23rd**



**Andrew on the 23rd
Tunrayo on the 24th
Imanri on the 25th**



**It's a busy month for birthdays!
I think we'll be singing every week!**

**Birthday wishes to everyone celebrating a
birthday this month.
Have a lovely day!**

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

CENTENARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME SAVE THE DATES!!		
DATE	PREACHER/ LED BY	THEME
Sun 1 st Mar	Morning Worship TDY	Commitment
Sun 8 th Mar	Morning Worship Jeremy Foster & Members of the Congregation	Sacrifice
Sun 15 th Mar Gift and Pledge Sunday	Revd Jacqui Jones & Revd Stephen G Normanton	Gratitude
Sun 25 th April 3pm	Church and Community Launch event – strawberry cream tea and entertainment – see page 21.	
May 16 th May	Plant Sale 10.00am	
October (Date TBC)	Autumn Fayre	
November (Date TBC)	Big Sing	



CIRCUIT LENT BIBLE STUDY

Thursday 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th March
on Zoom:
Meeting ID 928 6267 9529
Passcode 645269



HOLY WEEK SERVICES

PALM SUNDAY 29TH MARCH
11.15am at The Drive led by
Revd Mmasape Thathane- Tyolweni



MAUNDY THURSDAY 2nd April
Circuit Service & Supper
7.30pm at The Drive

GOOD FRIDAY 3rd April
3.00pm Circuit Service at Barking



EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE
with Holy Communion at The Drive
11.00am outside led by Andrew Taylor
then in the church
led by Revd Jacqui Jones



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 6th MARCH



The World Day of Prayer is an international ecumenical Christian initiative celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March. The worship service has a special annual theme which is developed by women of a different country each year. This year the country is Nigeria and the theme is '*I will give you rest, come*'.

For more information and to find a service to attend go to www.wwdp.org.uk

CIRCUIT MEETING 11th MARCH 7.30pm at BARKINGSIDE METHODIST CHURCH

Even if you are not one of The Drive's representatives at the Circuit Meeting you are still welcome to attend to observe and hear what's going on in the circuit.



SATURDAY LUNCH 14th MARCH 1pm THE DRIVE CHURCH PARLOUR

We will be serving homemade quiche, salad and new potatoes. The cost is £5. All are welcome. Please add your name to the list at the back of the church or send a WhatsApp message.

Lorraine Bendon

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING 18TH MARCH 7.30pm BY ZOOM

Zoom link details will be sent to Church Council members nearer the time. If you are not a member and would like to join the meeting to hear what's going on at The Drive please let Thea, our Church Council Secretary know.

CUPPA WITH A COPPER in the Church Parlour.
Date and time to be arranged - *check The Drive Together Whataspp Group and Weekly Notices.*



A PRAYER FOR MOTHERING SUNDAY

Creator God,

We thank you for your love which shapes us
and helps us to grow.

On this coming Mothering Sunday
we give thanks for women who have been
examples of self-giving love,

who have given time, wisdom and care
to the nurture of children, their own or others.

We pray for those who find this a difficult day,
who do not have happy memories of their own mothers,
those who grieve for their mothers or for their children,
and those who long to be mothers but cannot be.

We remember mothers in the Bible,
giving thanks for the tenacity of Sarah
the generosity of Hannah and the courage of Mary.

May your Spirit continue to shape us,
heal us and guide us today.

Amen

from The Methodist Church website

HAPPY
MOTHER'S DAY





**ANNUAL JMA BEETLE DRIVE
AND TEA (and raffle)**

**SATURDAY 21ST MARCH 2026
THE DRIVE METHODIST CHURCH HALL
2.30pm for 3pm start**

**Join us for an afternoon of fellowship,
food and fun for all the family
to support the Methodist Church Mission Funds
Don't worry if you've never played before - all
will be explained on the day!**

**Tickets available now from Diane Foster
So put the date in your diary
and tell all your families and friends**

Watch out - there's a Beetle about!



WORLD WATER DAY 22 MARCH

Dr. Andrew Ashdown, Methodist Partnership Coordinator for Africa, shares these thoughts ahead of World Water Day, held on 22 March. World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water.

"We have waited all day by the water-hole, but there is not enough water to fill even a small bucket."

Boreholes are the only way to guarantee a water supply through periods of drought. The World

Mission Fund Committee agreed a grant to dig a borehole in Balanda and provide two others in the region. *



Climate change is here to stay and is having a devastating impact on millions of the most vulnerable people on the planet. For that reason, Methodist partners all over the world are undertaking small-scale projects to mitigate its consequences at a local level.

Many of the most vulnerable people on the planet are deeply aware of how connected the social, political and even religious implications of climate change are. It is incumbent therefore upon the 'developed' nations to witness the reality of the impact of climate change on the poorest regions, to listen to those most affected, and to seek transformative solutions to mitigate its effects and so be instruments of life and hope for all. The Methodist Church In Britain, with its' partners globally is committed to playing its' part in contributing to this goal.

For more information go to [Waiting for water - The Methodist Church](#)

(*funds from our Beetle Drive go to support these sorts of projects).



Holy Thursday by Emanuel Franco O'Carm

**REFLECT QUIET MORNING VIA ZOOM
FRIDAY 27TH MARCH OR SATURDAY 28TH MARCH 2026**

**ENTERING INTO CHRIST'S PASSION
PREPARING FOR HOLY WEEK**

9.30am – Welcome, Prayer & Introduction
10.00am – Session 1: *'...he loved them to the end'*
11.00am – Session 2: *'...crucified with Christ'*
12 noon – Conclusion (to include practical suggestions) &
Closing Prayer to end by 12.15pm

The event will be led by Joy Adams – Methodist presbyter
For more information and if you would like to attend please
email Lynne Tonge: 2tonges317@gmail.com
stating which date you would like to book.

FOODBANK

The Drive Methodist Church has supported the Trussell Trust for many years in providing donated food items to support the Foodbanks at Jubilee Church in Ilford and at Grange Hill.

Bringing just one item when you attend church each week, will fill our donation box.

Thank you.



GARDENING FOR LENT

First plant five rows of peas:

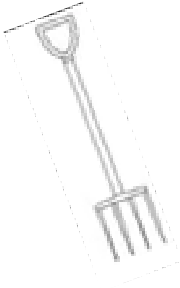
Preparedness

Promptness

Perseverance

Politeness

Prayer



Next to them plant three rows of squash:

Squash gossip

Squash criticism

Squash indifference

Then plant five rows of lettuce:

Let us be faithful

Let us be loyal

Let us be unselfish

Let us love one another

Let us be truthful



No garden is complete without turnips:

Turn up for worship

Turn up with a smile

Turn up with a new idea

Turn up with real determination



Then see what a wonderful garden you grow

Have a meaningful Lent.

Submitted by Maggie Smith.



APRIL NOTICES!



 Happy Easter 				
 		Join us for our Annual Easter Egg Hunt and Craft Morning		
The Drive Methodist Church Hall The Drive, Ilford Saturday 4th April 10.30-12.30				
Face Painting	Refreshments	Raffle	Crafts	Egg Hunt

EASTER SUNDAY 5th APRIL AT THE DRIVE

Our Easter Sunday morning service will start at 11.00am as we gather outside the church by the Easter cross. If you are able, please bring a few flowers with you. Andrew will lead this part of the service. He and the choir will lead the singing of a hymn whilst you are invited to decorate the cross with your flowers.



The choir will then proceed into the church to sing as you take your places.





*A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY
THE DRIVE METHODIST CHURCH
CENTENARY DEVELOPMENT
MISSION PROJECT
CHURCH AND COMMUNITY LAUNCH
SATURDAY 25TH APRIL
FROM 3PM
STRAWBERRY CREAM TEA AND CAKES
WITH MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT
TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW!*

"KEEP HOPE ALIVE"

THE REVD JESSE JACKSON 1941-2026 REMEMBERED BY THOSE IN THE METHODIST CHURCH IN BRITAIN



The death has been announced of the American civil rights campaigner, the Revd Jesse Jackson. Paying tribute, his family described his "unwavering commitment to justice, equality and human rights helped shape a global movement for freedom and dignity".

In 1985, the Revd Jesse visited the UK and preached at Wesley's Chapel in London, as well as several other Methodist and Baptist churches.

Alex Sarsah is a member of the Chapel and was there for the visit – he reflects on the events of the day:

"I was then driving 'my girls' to and from the church. He was slightly late for his schedule, nevertheless he pulled a reasonable crowd and set alight the Revd John Wesley's pulpit. After his message, he came down and answered some 'political questions'. He continued and took his message to the foyer, then to the yard. The political press were in full attendance jostling for space with their questions. He no doubt marvelled the crowd and quickly filled the yard which made him to overstay his schedule. Visibly exhausted, he went to the office and had tea with the Clergy, where he 'autographed' my Bible."

The Revd Dr Vincent Jambawo from the Belonging Together Ministers Group (BTMG) of the Methodist Church in Britain has written a memorial message for and on behalf of the group.

In it he writes:

The BTMG of the Methodist Church in Britain joins a worldwide choir in mourning the passing of the Revd Jesse Louis Jackson Sr, a loving minister of the Gospel, a courageous and yet compassionate human rights activist, and without doubt one of the most enduring moral icons of our age. We give thanks to God for a life poured out in the service of justice, dignity and the beloved community. We pray for his family, loved ones, colleagues and all whose lives were transformed by his ministry.

Across decades, the Revd Jesse stood shoulder to shoulder with leaders who shaped the moral imagination of the world and we grieve the loss of a venerated Black minister of religion whose footsteps traced the same pilgrim paths as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, and so many other giants of justice. His example continues to challenge and inspire us as we seek to embody a Methodist discipleship that is inclusive, justice-shaped, and globally connected. Among his many enduring messages, one stands out as a beacon of hope: “Keep hope alive. Keep hope alive. Keep hope alive.”

For now, we commend the Revd Jesse Louis Jackson Sr to God’s eternal embrace. May his memory be a blessing, a summons, and a source of courage for all who labour for a world where belonging, justice, dignity, and solidarity are not empty platitudes but the lived reality for all.

“Keep hope alive”—and may we do so in his honour.

Text taken from The Methodist Church 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 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

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		
MARCH		
Sun 1st 2nd Sunday in Lent	11.15am	'Commitment' led by TDY
Tues 3 rd	7.45pm	Choir Practice Parlour
Thurs 5 th	7.30pm	Circuit Lent Bible Study by Zoom see page 12
Sun 8th 3rd Sunday in Lent	11.15am	'Sacrifice' led by Jeremy Foster & Members of the Congregation
Tues 10 th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Parlour
Wed 11 th	7.30pm	Circuit Meeting at Barkingside MC See page 13
Thurs 12 th	7.30pm	Circuit Lent Bible Study by Zoom see page 12
Sat 14 th	12.30pm for 1pm	Saturday Lunch Church Parlour see page 13
Sun 15th Mothering Sunday & Gift & Pledge Day	11.15am	'Gratitude' led by Revd Jacqui Jones & Revd Stephen Normanton
Tues 17 th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Parlour
Wed 18 th	7.30pm	Church Council Meeting by Zoom see page 13
Thurs 19 th	7.30pm	Circuit Lent Bible Study by Zoom see page 12
Sat 21 st	2.30pm for 3pm start	JMA Beetle Drive and Tea Church Hall see page 16

DIARY Contd.

MARCH

Sun 22nd 5th Sunday in Lent	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Mrs Sharon Grundy
Tues 24 th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Parlour
Thurs 26 th	7.30pm	Circuit Lent Bible Study by Zoom see page 12
Fri 27 th or Sat 28 th	9.30am	Reflect Quiet Morning by Zoom see page 18
Sun 29th Palm Sunday	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Revd Mmasape Thathane-Tyolweni
Tues 31 st	7.45pm	Choir Practice Parlour

APRIL

Thurs 2nd Maundy Thursday	7.30pm	Circuit Service & Supper at The Drive MC
Fri 3rd Good Friday	3.00pm	Circuit Service at Barking MC
Sat 4 th	10.30am - 12.30am	Easter Egg Hunt & Craft Morning see page 20
Sun 5th Easter Sunday	11.00am See page 20	Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Revd Jacqui Jones

**Deadline for items for the April Newsletter:
Sunday 22nd March 2026
Thank you! ☺**

Services every Sunday at 11.15 am

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: 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