

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



NEWSLETTER

April 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

First, A **Very Happy Easter to you all.** Christ **IS** Risen: Alleluia!!

As I write we are still journeying through the Wilderness of Lent and anticipating the joy and celebration of entering the Promised Land of Easter. Currently we see signs of Spring and its abundance of new life preparing to explode into bloom, once the warmer weather arrives more permanently!!

During Lent we have worked through the study series entitled: ***Pause. Breathe. Make Space for God.*** It has been an excellent time of sharing and learning together but also a celebration of the transforming ministry of Holy Spirit of God in bringing New Life. In the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is empowered to take the ordinary of our lives and transform them into something very special. Our challenge is to allow our faith to be daily renewed by the Power and Grace of the Holy Spirit.

During Lent many of us *have* taken time to ***Pause. Breathe. Make Space for God,*** to hear what God is saying to us and to discover the things we need to lay aside and/ or the new things he calls us to fulfil. There is a song which says:

*Everything changes but God changes not;
His power never changes that lies in His heart.*

(Johann Wolfgang Goethe)

The sentiment that God is constant, faithful and that His nature, personality and character will never change are reassuring for us all. However, on the other hand we are called to be continually changed by the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is that Spirit of God that nudges, challenges and empowers us to become more like Christ in all we do, say and are. (It also challenges our churches, our traditions

and our beliefs for 2026: Some things really DO need to change)!

As Easter and the arrival of spring changes the natural world around us, so it is a call for us to die with Christ and be raised into a new and changed life.

By the time some of you read this I will be settling into the starting blocks, ready for the clock to strike mid-night on Easter Sunday which will mark the start of my sabbatical. (With apologies to those who are, by now, totally fed up with hearing about my sabbatical) - I will be away from ministry from 6th April and return on Tuesday 21st July. (Just in time for Rev Mmasape's Farewell Service on 26th July at 4.00pm). I will be unavailable during this time but if you have any queries, please speak to one of my wonderful colleagues or Jackie in the office.

The gift of a sabbatical which the church gives to its ministers every seven years, is both a real privilege and essential part of ministry. It is an opportunity for me to take some serious time to ***Pause. Breathe. Make Space for God*** over a longer period. My time away will include a retreat, some reading, a pilgrimage around the significant Christian sites in Ireland, time for family and friends and various other restful activities. It will also be an opportunity to reignite some of my other interests which have been squeezed out over recent years including, photography, walking, birdwatching and time to explore London. (Away from the 'touristy' areas).

Hopefully Easter (and for me, my sabbatical) will change, renew and re-energise all of us, and we will return feeling refreshed, alive to Christ and greatly blessed by the transforming New Life that God offers to us all.

May the Peace and Joy of Christ's resurrection be with you all.

Andy

Deacon Andy Packer

EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello everyone and welcome to the April Newsletter.

Quoting a BBC weather presenter who recently said – "*spring has definitely sprung!*"

Yes it's April! Yes it's Spring! But most importantly for Christians, it's Easter!

I found it interesting to learn that for the first time since the 1990s Lent coincided with the Islam season of Ramadan which marks the time when the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. For 30 days our Muslim friends do not eat or drink during the hours of daylight. They have recently celebrated Eid ul-Fitr (the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast) while we Christians look forward to celebrating the risen Christ on Easter Sunday.

Although Lent and Ramadan are two religious observances practiced by different religions, both are times of spiritual growth and renewal, a period of prayer, reflection and self-discipline, encouraging believers to deepen their connection with their faith and community.

See page 12 for all the Easter services and please take note that our Easter Sunday worship will start at 11.00am instead of the usual 11.15am.

Wishing you all a joyful Eastertide.





WE ASK FOR GOD'S BLESSING AND PRAY for those known to us who are in need of our prayers at this time.

WE PRAY for those unwell, in body and mind. For 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, family problems or health anxieties.

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

ALL THE NAMES of these people are in our thoughts Lord and you know who they are. May they all be comforted knowing you are with them all the time.

*I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'Come unto me and rest;
lay down, O weary one, lay down
your head upon my breast.
' I came to Jesus as I was,
weary and worn and sad,
I found in him a resting-place,
and he has made me glad.*

Horatius Bonar



HAPPY  **APRIL BIRTHDAY to:**



Dayane on the 17th



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.)

CONGRATULATIONS to:



JEMIMAH who has won a Gold medal at the recent British Schools Judo Championships
Brilliant achievement Jemimah – well done! – Ed.



REDBRIDGE ZERO WASTE VOLUNTEER TEAM
who were awarded the Mayor of Redbridge Community Award for 2026.

The registered volunteers of this initiative go to various stores at the end of the day to collect left over food items

that will not be sold and would otherwise go to landfill. They support between 300-500 families throughout Redbridge.

One of the sites they use to distribute the food is Grange Hill Methodist Community Centre on a Wednesday morning and I have seen firsthand how hard they all work.

They are certainly deserving of the award – Ed.

TDY SERVICE - COMMITMENT 1ST MARCH FEEDBACK

I have collated the feedback from our recent TDY service and have hopefully included everyone's ideas.

All your thoughts are so helpful and interesting. Moving forward we will continue to pray for and support our young people in our church and circuit.

- **Things that happened to support youth in the past either here at The Drive or at other churches that people have attended:**

Youth bible studies, trips out, junior church led services, junior choir (Quavers), tales around the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve, JMA, Beetle Drive, circuit youth club, The Drive youth club, summer holiday bible schools, community activity faith groups, all age worship, junior church reward system, bake sales, car washes, Easter egg hunt, light party, Nativity service, carol concert.

- **What would we like to see happening in the future to support the youth of our church and circuit?:**

Meeting with other youth groups in the circuit, using technology more, more games in junior church, youth music

worship group, more instruments that young people can play in the service, concerts, youth festivals, having junior church take on duties at church eg collection, book, door, and communion stewards, circuit sports days, church seminars, testimonies, and arranging speakers from other churches.

Great ideas. Watch this space!

Jo Wright

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 6TH MARCH

This is an international ecumenical Christian initiative celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March. This year's service was developed by the women of Nigeria with the theme '*I will give you rest, come*'.

When I have been able I have attended the service many times and have taken part for quite a few years. My dear late Mother, Vera, loved the service and I used to attend with her when possible.

This year's service for our area was held at Barkingside Methodist church led by Rev Jacqui and women from other churches. They were dressed in very colourful Nigerian clothes and there was a wonderful display of bright fabrics, fruit, vegetables etc. They followed the service booklet produced by WDP HQ. This tells of life in Nigeria for women, prayers, hymns etc. A well attended enjoyable afternoon followed by a cuppa!

Maggie Smith

BEETLE DRIVE 21ST MARCH

A big thank you to all who supported the JMA Beetle Drive and Tea and to those who kindly made donations. I'm very pleased to let you know we raised the splendid sum of £340 for The Methodist Church Mission Fund.

From the kitchen it sounded like a lot of fun, with the noise of dice being thrown, shouts of BEETLE! followed by the inevitable groans! It was good to have a few first timers who quickly got the hang of how to play so hopefully they will join us again next year!

Special thanks to Michelle, Jeremy and Colin without whose help it couldn't happen.

Diane Foster

GIFT AND PLEDGE SUNDAY 15TH MARCH

Our six-week journey of services reflecting on 'Our Church, Our Story, Our Future' came to an end on 15th March with the theme of 'Gratitude'. It was good to have our former minister Stephen leading the service with Jacqui. Pledge forms were brought forward during the service.

We now look forward to our Church and Community Launch event. Details below. If you haven't got a ticket yet and would like one please let me know. There is no charge for this event but you may wish to make a donation to the Centenary Mission Development Fund. Forms giving information on how you can do this are available in the church.

Diane Foster

CENTENARY MISSION DEVELOPMENT – PROJECT UPDATE



Our Development Project is now moving forward at pace.

The demolition of the Scout Hut and Garage has been safely completed, the new fence defines our boundary and the slightly larger car park is now back in use. Our architect has submitted Planning Applications for those works requiring approval and he has started work on the detailed plans and specifications so that we will be ready to go out to tender later this year.

In terms of funding the project, we had a very successful Gift & Pledge Day with £24,625.20 committed for the project.

CENTENARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME SAVE THE DATES! 	
DATE	EVENT
Sun 25 th April 3pm 	Strawberry Cream Tea And Cakes with Music and Entertainment Tickets Available Now!
May 16 th May	Plant Sale 10.00am see page 18
October (Date TBC)	Autumn Fayre
November (Date TBC)	Big Sing

This is a fantastic response and shows how every gift, large or small, contributes to the total. However, we still have further to go and the Fundraising Committee are hopeful that

with gifts and pledges still to come, plus our appeal to past members and friends, together with the various fund raising activities planned, we will exceed our local target of £50,000.

In terms of the wider funding plan I am delighted to report that the Circuit approved our application to the BDI Circuit Mission Investment Fund for a grant of £125,000. With the land sale monies, your gifts and pledges plus the generous support of the Circuit we now have a total of £514,000 in the bank or identified against our target of £600,000. Over the next few months we will be submitting applications to various other Methodist and third party trusts to try and secure the rest of the funding we need.

We remain very much on track to see our project delivered in 2027 ready for our centenary celebrations in 2028.

Jeremy Foster

HOLY WEEK SERVICES



MAUNDY THURSDAY 2nd April
CIRCUIT SERVICE & SUPPER
7.30pm AT THE DRIVE MC

GOOD FRIDAY 3RD APRIL
3.00pm CIRCUIT SERVICE at
BARKING MC





**EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE
with HOLY COMMUNION
11am at THE DRIVE MC**

Please 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.

**The service will continue led by
Revd Jacqui Jones**

A PRAYER FOR EASTER

Lord Jesus Christ, risen from death
We praise you for changed lives and new hopes at Easter.

You came to Mary in the garden
And turned her tears into joy.

You came to the disciples in the upper room
And turned their fear into courage.

You came to the disciples by the lakeside
And turned their failure into faith.

You came to the travellers on the Emmaus Road
And turned their despair into hope.

You come to us in our unworthiness and shame
And turn our weakness into triumph.

Lord Jesus
Wherever there are tears
Or fear, or failure,
Or despair, or weakness:
Come, reveal to us
Your love, your mercy,
And your risen power;
For the glory of your name.
Alleluia. Amen

Church of Scotland



TDY
wish you all a
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



**Children to be accompanied
by an adult at all times.
Thank you.**



PLEASE SPONSOR AN EGG



If you are able, please sponsor an Easter Egg for our Easter Egg Hunt. At the back of the church there is a box for your donation and you can write an Easter message to hang on the Easter

message to hang branches.



SATURDAY LUNCH 11th APRIL 1pm
THE DRIVE CHURCH PARLOUR

We will be serving homemade soup and crusty bread. The cost is £5. Please add your name to the list at the back of the church or send a WhatsApp message.



All are welcome.

Lorraine Bendon



TAI CHI CLASS

A Tai Chi class will be starting on 2nd April. They will be meeting in the Hall from 5.30pm to 6.30pm on Thursdays weekly. Please note that for the first week only the class will start at 6.00pm. If you are interested the organiser is John Poon and he has said to just come along.



TASTER: 14TH APRIL 2026 7PM

You can register at any time of year, although the online

Explore is an opportunity for any member of the Methodist Church in Britain to take a step back, and consider how you are called to respond to God's invitation to church leadership

course element starts May or September.

NEXT COURSE STARTS 5TH MAY 2026.

9 sessions, 1 hour per session, 1 evening a month
countless benefits

To book for the whole course, contact Patrick at
explore@methodistchurch.org.uk or download forms from
www.methodist.org.uk/exploring

The **Methodist** Church



UMBRELLAS

One of the most miserable sights I notice in the street is a discarded broken umbrella. When it rains we know how valuable umbrellas are, but when broken



they are not only useless but can be dangerous. When discarded in the mud and rain they are pitiable.

Some years ago I realised how useful the fabric in the canopies is for mending some items. That led on to me experimenting with turning them into bags. It reminds me of how God embraces us in our broken, useless and often filthy state. He is not afraid to lift us up tenderly, remove the part that is broken and can only cause us further damage, clean us up, restore us and give us a new purpose.

To date I have made about 100 bags of various colours, and with new handles. All are individual, but share the fact that they have been 'rescued and redeemed', and given a new identity and purpose. I call them Hope Bags, the little bags with a BIG story.

"Each bag, made from a broken umbrella, represents a broken life that has been rescued, restored and given hope. Like a life it is only good if used, so may you get a lot of good use out of it!"

I am always happy to receive broken umbrellas in ANY condition, so see what you find on your next clear out. Thank you.

Rosemary Jackson

How clever Rosemary – I'm sure I've got a broken brolly somewhere! – Ed.

(Rosemary is a member at Woodford Baptist Church and is a regular at our Saturday lunches).

SOME FUTURE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY!



**THE DRIVE METHODIST CHURCH
CENTENARY MISSION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING SUNDAY 24TH MAY

Our Annual Church Meeting this year will be held during the morning service on 24th May. This meeting is held once a year primarily to elect church officers. A booklet of reports from all the different sections of the church is also presented to be accepted by the church members. Through these reports we witness the present and future work of God at The Drive Methodist Church.





**SOPHIA'S THANKSGIVING
80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**



SUNDAY 7TH JUNE 2026

JOIN US FOR MORNING WORSHIP at 11.15AM

at



THE DRIVE METHODIST CHURCH

and afterwards

FOR REFRESHMENTS IN THE HALL

1.00PM - 5.00PM



(RSVP: 07985 411043)



**FAREWELL SERVICE for
REVD MMASAPE THATHANE-TYOLWENI**



**SUNDAY 26th JULY 2026 at 4pm
(venue to be confirmed)**



Mmasape was our minister at The Drive from 2019 – 2024 after which she became Circuit Superintendent and minister at Barking Methodist Church. She will be leaving the Barking, Dagenham and Ilford Circuit this year to take up an appointment in Exeter. Her service on Palm Sunday will probably be her last at The Drive.



EASTER SCRAMBLE

Unscramble to find
the Easter words!

YBAB CSICHK _____

TSABEK _____

DEDY SGGE _____

TRARCO _____

LYJEL ASEBN _____

NYUNB _____

CTOHCLAOE _____

GPNIRS _____

GGE NTHU _____

PLUTIS _____

ESEART _____

THERE ARE 17 EGGS WITH 8 MATCHING PAIRS
SO WHICH IS THE ODD ONE OUT?





EASTER WORDSEARCH



R	H	N	R	F	A	I	T	H	E	H	N
J	B	C	H	I	C	K	H	H	E	C	W
U	B	S	H	E	S	J	U	K	E	E	C
R	E	F	L	O	W	E	R	S	B	L	A
G	A	R	J	E	C	B	N	I	A	E	E
W	U	C	E	B	G	O	K	N	S	B	E
T	H	U	S	W	U	N	L	G	K	R	T
N	H	K	U	M	W	N	G	A	E	A	U
K	H	E	S	E	G	E	N	C	T	T	S
H	H	L	B	G	Y	T	L	Y	E	E	W
N	R	H	U	N	B	U	N	C	S	E	N
A	L	L	E	L	U	I	A	O	S	U	A

ALLELUIA
BASKET
BONNET
BUNNY
CELEBRATE
CHICK

CHOCOLATE
EGGS
FLOWERS
JESUS
RISEN
SING





HELPLINES

SAMARITANS

Available 24 hours a day 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 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 and Supper at The Drive MC
Fri 3rd Good Friday	3.00pm	Circuit Service at Barking MC
Sat 4 th	10.30am- 12.00pm	Easter Egg Hunt see page 14
Sun 5th Easter Sunday	11.00am see page 12	Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Revd Jacqui Jones
Sat 11 th	12.30pm for 1pm	Saturday Lunch Church Parlour see page 15
Sun 12th	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Dr Tony Russell
Sun 19th	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Mr Samuel Agyekum
Sat 25 th	3pm	Church & Community Launch Tea see page 10
Sun 26th	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Revd Jacqui Jones
MAY		
Sun 3rd	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Mr Alfred Mensah

EASTER MORNING

"The sun arises from the sea,
And all around his rays is flinging,
The flowers are opening on the lea,
The merry birds are singing.

The summer breeze is rustling past,
Sweet scents are gathering around it,
The rivulet is flowing fast,
Beside the banks that bound it.

All nature seemeth to rejoice,
In the returning summer weather;
Let us with nature raise our voice,
And harmonize together.

But not alone for summer skies
Shall praise unto our God be given:
This day our Saviour did arise,
And oped the gate of heaven.

To sinful man, if only he
His errings will confess with sorrow,
Then, after earth's night-misery,
Shall dawn a glorious morrow:

A blissful bright eternity
Bought by the rising of the Giver,
To Whom all praise, all honour be,
For ever and for ever."

Christina Rossetti



DEADLINE FOR ITEMS FOR THE MAY NEWSLETTER:

20th APRIL 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