

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



NEWSLETTER

May 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 BETWEEN BLOSSOMING AND BREAKING

Beloved Siblings in Christ,
Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

And yet... the world does not always look like resurrection.

As I write this, I am looking out at trees that have quietly, faithfully turned green again. What only weeks ago stood bare, almost lifeless, is now clothed in abundance. Creation is doing what creation does; it is proclaiming resurrection without needing permission. The earth remembers what it means to live.

And we, too, have just walked through Holy Week: through cross, silence, and empty tomb. We have sung our Alleluias, declared victory over death, and proclaimed new life in Christ.

But if we are honest, there is a dissonance.

For even as the trees blossom, parts of our world are burning. Even as we celebrate life, others are burying their dead. Even as we gather around tables of abundance, many are facing rising food costs, fuel pressures, and deep uncertainty.

The suffering of innocent civilians in ongoing global conflicts is not abstract—it ripples into our everyday lives. It shapes economies, stretches households, and weighs heavily on the human spirit.

So how do we hold this? How do we sing “Thine be the glory” while hearing the cries of those still in Good Friday? Resurrection does not ask us to ignore suffering. It invites us to see it differently. The risen Christ still carries wounds. This is the mystery we live in: that resurrection is not the absence of pain, but the transformation of it. The empty tomb does not erase the cross, it redeems it. And so, in this Easter season, we are not called to a shallow joy that denies the world’s reality. We are called to a defiant hope; a hope that dares to bloom even in troubled soil.

Like the trees.

They do not wait for perfect conditions.

They do not ask if the world is at peace.

They simply respond to the call to life.

And perhaps that is our calling too.

To be a people who:

- Notice the suffering, and refuse to look away
- Respond with compassion where we can - locally and globally
- Tend to one another in a time of rising pressures
- And still... choose to live, to love, to serve, to hope

Because resurrection people are not naïve.

We are witnesses. Witnesses that even now, God is at work.

In quiet acts of kindness. In shared meals.

In communities that refuse to fracture under pressure.

In justice that is still being pursued. In love that still shows up.

This May, may we be like the trees—rooted, responsive, and
unafraid to flourish.

Even here.

Even now.

As we journey together in this season, I warmly invite you to
gather with us at two significant moments in the life of our
circuit:

“Being A Woman in God’s Kingdom” – Saturday, 6 June
2026, 10:00–16:00 at Barking Methodist Church.

Superintendent Farewell Service – Sunday, 26 July 2026 at
16:00 (venue to be confirmed)

These will be sacred spaces of reflection, celebration, and
community - do come and be part of them.

With every blessing,

Revd Mmasape Thathane-Tyolweni
Superintendent Minister

EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello and welcome to the May Newsletter.

Goodness, another year gone! No, don't panic it's not December yet! - it's just that I have another birthday this month. Where on earth does the time go? As I get older I seem to say that quite a lot!



Easter for this year has come and gone, with lovely services and of course the Easter Egg Hunt - see pages 8/9. By the time you read this we will have launched our Development Project to our church and the local community with the Strawberry Cream Tea – report in next newsletter. All these events which, at the start of the year seemed a long way off, took a lot of planning and organising and suddenly they are over! Where on earth does the time go? Ooops said it again!

But there is still a lot to look forward to. With the clocks having gone forward at the end of March, we can look ahead to longer days and warmer weather.

You may be thinking about your gardens or window boxes. Come along to our plant sale for the Centenary Project on the 16th May – see page 13. Our Annual Church Meeting is on the 24th, on the same day as Pentecost and Aldersgate Sunday see page 14. Sophia has a special birthday next month – see her invitation on page 16.

As our church year passes there'll be many other events to enjoy so I've decided I'm not going to think about how quickly the time goes but thank God for each moment I have now.

Have a wonderful month.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine', followed by a small flourish or cross at the end.

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.

AND WE PRAY FOR OURSELVES, Lord, at those times when we are in need of your healing touch.

*You who know each thought and feeling,
teach us all your way of healing;
Spirit of compassion, fill each heart.*

*Healer of our every ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.*

Marty Haugen



HAPPY  **MAY BIRTHDAY to:**



Annika on the 2nd
Richard on the 5th
Tahlia on the 9th
Ruth on the 11th
Diane on the 20th
Debbie on the 26th
Folake on the 27th



and 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:



Moji who recently qualified as a chartered civil engineer with the Institution of Civil Engineers.

That's excellent Moji, well done – Ed.



Jo and Andy who have become grandparents to Roman Harrison Wright, a baby boy for David and Izzy and little brother for Lilah.

Wonderful news, love to all the family – Ed.



Priya and Joel who celebrate their Silver Wedding Anniversary on the 5th May.

Many congratulations to you both.

Enjoy your celebrations! – Ed.

Matthew who has recently been awarded the Gulf of Aden Campaign Service medal for his deployment on operations in 2024.

Your parents must be very proud Matt! – Ed.



EASTER AT THE DRIVE

The Drive hosted the Maundy Thursday Circuit Service with supper. This was a moving and symbolic service, led by the



circuit ministers who washed the congregation's hands before they moved into the Parlour to share in the 'Last Supper' together, as Jesus had with his disciples on the night before his crucifixion.



On Easter Saturday, our annual Easter Egg Hunt was once again a great success with 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 always looks forward to this event, had a lovely time.



The Easter Sunday service brought our Easter celebrations to a close. As usual we began outside the church, with Andrew leading with words of scripture and the choir singing the hymn *Now the Green Blade Rises* while the congregation dressed the cross with flowers. The choir then went ahead of the people into church and sang the *South African Alleluia* while everyone settled in their seats. The service continued inside led by Revd Jacqui.

During the service the choir sang the anthem *He is Risen* by Cecil Cope and during Communion, *Surrexit Christus*, a Taizé chant by Jacques Berthier. Andrew finished the service by playing the organ voluntary *Now Thank We All Our God* by Sigfrid Karg-Elert.

A fitting end to Easter 2026.

Diane Foster



THANK YOU FROM TDY

Another sunny Saturday and another Easter Egg Hunt at The Drive. Thank you to everyone who generously sponsored an egg, supported the event, and all who worked so hard during the morning to ensure everyone had a great time. We had record numbers of children and families this year!

People come back year after year and travel from far and wide to attend the Egg Hunt. It's wonderful that we can offer a community event where we can share our Easter happiness with people of all faiths and none.

It is always so good to see Kaye and her pre-school families at the event too. Hopefully we'll see them again at Christmas!

Jo Wright

EASTER ON OUR NARROWBOAT 'TINTAGEL'



As many of you will know we have a narrowboat which we have owned as a family for some 33 years. It is moored at Little Hallingbury Mill marina which is on the River Stort, just above Sawbridgeworth.

At Easter we usually have our first cruise of the year to Bishops Stortford where we moor up and spend the weekend with other boating friends. We leave the Marina on Good Friday and return on Easter Monday. It takes a couple of hours operating three locks on the way to cruise there. The river is beautiful at this spring time and this year the weather was really fine with blue skies all weekend apart from strong winds from Storm Dave!

We met up with other friends on their boats at Bishops Stortford and spent the weekend together. On Easter Saturday friends asked us to go to their church, All Saints,

Hockerill for the Easter Vigil; a service we had never been to before. It was a very interesting service which includes Holy Communion and the renewal of baptism and confirmation vows and some wonderful organ music on their magnificent Willis organ.

On Easter Sunday morning we went to Bishops Stortford Methodist Church in the High Street where we have been quite a few times. The service was very joyous and we were all given small bunches of flowers to decorate the cross in the church which was placed after the service in the glass fronted foyer of the church for all to see. Their minister, Rev Gill Hulme, is a friend of our Mmasape, what a small world!

Our next cruise is at the end of this month to Little Venice, close to Paddington station for the Inland Waterways Association Canal Cavalcade over the early May bank holiday weekend. This year is the 80th anniversary of the founding of the IWA. A Sunday worship service is held in a large marquee there.

Maggie & Graham Smith

CENTENARY MISSION DEVELOPMENT FUNDRAISING APPEAL UPDATE



I am very pleased to announce that the National Lottery Community Fund have awarded our church a grant of £8050 towards the cost of installing solar energy panels to the hall roof.

We are currently awaiting final planning approval but expect to complete the work during this year's school summer holidays.

Jeremy Foster

REQUEST FROM THE CIRCUIT OFFICE



As you may be aware, Deacon Andy Packer is now on sabbatical until July, and this means that we are short of help at Grange Hill for the following duties:

- Collecting boxes and other items from Jubilee Church in Ilford, and dropping them off at Grange Hill, either from 11 am on Tuesday or from 1.30 pm on Wednesday;
- Setting up the Foodbank on Friday afternoon, from 3.30 pm onward.

If anybody is able and willing to help with either of these jobs they should contact me with the dates they are available from now until the end of July.

I can assure you that all offers of help will be very much appreciated.

Best wishes
Jackie Saito

Administrator, Barking, Dagenham & Ilford Circuit Office
c/o Beacontree Heath Methodist Church, The Broadway,
Dagenham RM8 1DZ;
bdicircuitoffice@btconnect.com; 020 8517 6159;
barking-dagenham-ilford-methodist-church.org.uk



WEIGHTWATCHERS MEETINGS

Beginning on 2nd May, there will be a Weightwatchers meeting in the Cranbrook Room on Saturdays, 9.00am – 11.00am.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 11TH – 16TH MAY



Christian Aid Week began in 1957 with a small act of generosity, raising £26,000 in its first year. That single week in May sparked a national movement that became central to Christian Aid's mission. Decades later, the purpose of Christian Aid Week remains the same – to mobilise the Christian community to take action against poverty and injustice.

This year marks the 69th Christian Aid Week — a rich legacy that has raised millions of pounds to support life-changing work in the world's most vulnerable communities.

from Christian Aid website

Collection envelopes will be given out in church – Ed

ASCENSION DAY 14TH MAY

Ascension Day is like a door we walk through. It leads us from the season of Easter towards Pentecost.

The story records the moment Jesus returns to heaven following his resurrection and his several post-resurrection encounters with his disciples. It is a transition moment when Jesus promises his disciples they will be gifted with God's Spirit, to be their comfort and strength for the work of mission that lies before them.

It falls exactly 40 days after Easter Sunday. The ten-day period between Ascension and Pentecost is known as Ascensiontide.



Adapted from The Methodist Church website



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



PLANT SALE



SATURDAY 16TH MAY 2026

10.00AM - 12.30PM

IN THE CARPARK AT

THE DRIVE METHODIST CHURCH

and

**TEA, COFFEE & CAKES
IN THE CHURCH HALL**



**ALL DONATIONS OF CAKES WOULD BE
MOST APPRECIATED**





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.

ALDERSGATE SUNDAY 24TH MAY

Aldersgate Sunday is the Sunday before Wesley Day, 24th May which this year happens to fall on the same day.

It was on this day in May 1738 during a meeting with other Christians in Aldersgate, London, that Methodist founder, John Wesley had a transformative experience, as he felt God's love in a most personal and life-giving way. Wesley described the experience as his heart feeling "strangely warmed" and convinced him of the truth of his salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Afterwards his relationship with God became more real and heartfelt and he began to preach that this salvation was available to everyone. He is estimated to have travelled 250,000 miles in 50 years to preach the gospel.



In the twenty-first century, the Methodist Church continues to be a discipleship movement of Christians, intent on mission: nurturing faith and engaged in action for social justice at home and abroad.

Adapted from The Methodist Church website

A HYMN FOR PENTECOST 24th MAY



It was a new beginning on the day the Spirit came.
The house was filled with roaring wind and heads were touched by flame.
Their lips were blessed with languages that all could understand
and Peter led the charge into this new uncharted land.

It was a revelation when the doors were opened wide
and all could see what happened to the ones who were inside.
"These men are plainly very drunk, at only nine-o'clock.
It's surely very clear they've had a monumental shock."

It was a new translation when the Spirit led their speech
and Peter stood in front of them and then began to preach.
The people were amazed because they understood each word
and, what is more, they acted on the message that they heard.

It was a new beginning, but the story carries on,
as people still find inspiration, though the years have gone.
For Pentecost is here and now, the Spirit still holds sway.
and helps us to translate God's word and challenge for today.

*Words written by: Marjorie Dobson
Sung to the tune of: "The Lincolnshire Poacher"*

Marjorie Dobson is Methodist local preacher as well as a hymn writer. She was a member of the Music Resources group that sifted through many hundreds of hymn texts to select those appropriate for *Singing the Faith*.

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

SUNDAY 7TH JUNE 2026

JOIN US FOR



**MORNING WORSHIP 11.15AM
THE DRIVE METHODIST CHURCH**

and afterwards

**REFRESHMENTS IN THE HALL
1.00PM - 5.00PM**



(RSVP: 07985 411043)



MESSAGE FROM SOPHIA

Praise God for his unwavering faithfulness. I am so blessed to be part of such a wonderful and loving church family. From the very first time I attended a service at The Drive many years ago, I was welcomed with open arms.

During some of the most difficult moments of my life, especially through seasons of grief, my church family surrounded me with comforting words, heartfelt prayers and steadfast support. I am immensely grateful for everything they have done for me.

My heartfelt thanks to our ministers, Revd Mmasape and our new minister, Revd Jacqueline Jones, for their guidance, care and spritual leadership.

And to my entire church family – your kindness, encouragement and love mean more than words can express.

Your support has been deeply appreciated.

To God be the Glory, Amen.

Sophia Bampoe



MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY!



SATURDAY 6TH JUNE
BARKING METHODIST CHURCH
10.00AM – 4.00PM

hosted by

Revd Mmasape Thathane-Tyolweni with
Guest Speakers:

Revd Dr Kate Coleman, Revd Charity Tozvepi Nzegwu,
Revd Cham Kuar-Mann

Ticket: £20 includes refreshments.



FAREWELL SERVICE for
REVD MMASAPE THATHANE-TYOLWENI
SUNDAY 26th JULY 2026 at 4pm
(venue to be confirmed)



THE DRIVE CENTENARY MISSION PROJECT
FUNDRAISING EVENTS 2026



10TH OCTOBER



The Big
Sing

NOVEMBER
(DATE TBC)

More details to follow for both these
Drive events – watch this space!

SOMETHING NEW

It was just over eighteen months ago that I finally got round to booking piano lessons. I never had the opportunity as a child to learn and it was something I had been meaning to do for years. About 40 years ago we bought a piano from a former member at The Drive so our children could have lessons. Both Louise and Matthew had lessons with exams so the piano was well used. Then they grew up and left home. The piano sat sad and neglected in our dining room, forming a convenient shelf for family photographs and adding another piece of furniture that needed dusting.

Although regularly tuned, it was only played when Matthew, who still plays, visited, so I was determined to give it a go. I booked lessons with a piano tutor, recommended by Ruth, and went along for my first lesson. This was in the October and I was excited (and naïve!) to imagine myself by that Christmas playing Christmas carols and songs while my family sat singing round the piano! That wasn't to be. I struggled with the chorus of Jingle Bells!

Although I feel somewhat disappointed that I haven't progressed as quickly as I would want, my tutor, who is very kind and patient, constantly reminds me that I am doing really well considering I started from scratch never having played a note before my first lesson.

My latest homework piece is *Joy to the World* which, did you know, starts with all the notes of the C major scale? It's coming on ok but as my tutor recently said "don't worry, there's nine months yet to go before Christmas!"

Diane Foster

*Have you taken up something new? How are you getting on?
I'd love to hear about it. – Ed.*

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.

APRIL		DIARY	
Sun 26 th	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Revd Jacqui Jones	
Tues 28 th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Parlour	
MAY			
Sun 3 rd	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Mr Alfred Mensah	
Tues 5 th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Parlour	
Sun 10 th	11.15am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Revd Stephen Normanton	
Tues 12 th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Parlour	
Sat 16 th	10.00am – 12.30pm	Plant Sale See page 13	
Sun 17 th	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Ms Janet Tweedale	
Tues 19 th	7.45pm	Choir Practice Parlour	
Sun 24 th Pentecost/ Aldersgate Sunday	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Revd Jacqui Jones including Annual Church Meeting see page 14	
Sun 31 st	11.15am	Morning Worship led by Members of the Congregation	
JUNE			
Sat 6 th	10.00am - 4.00pm	Being a Woman in God's Kingdom, Barking MC see page 18	
Sun 7 th	11.15am	Morning Worship led by TBC	
Sun 7 th	1.00pm – 5.00pm	Sophia's 80 th Birthday Thanksgiving see page 16	



MAY'S GRACE IN CHRIST



When May arrives with blossoms bright,
We lift our hearts to God in light.
Each flower blooms, each tree stands tall,
A testament to His love for all.
The gentle rain, the warming sun,
Remind us of the work He's done.
In every leaf, in every hue,
His faithfulness shines ever true.
O Lord, renew our hearts this May,
Guide our steps and show the way.
May we grow in grace and love,
Reflecting blessings from above.
Through trials faced and joys we share,
We see Your mercy everywhere.
As nature wakes from winter's sleep,
Your promises in us we keep.
Let gratitude and hope abound,
In every sight, in every sound.
May this month of life and cheer,
Draw us ever closer, Lord, ever near.
Amen.



Anon.

DEADLINE FOR ITEMS FOR THE JUNE NEWSLETTER:

24th MAY 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