

# ST JOHN'S MERROW

**A place for the whole community to  
know God's love, grow in faith and  
live in hope.**

PARISH MAGAZINE

**May 2026**

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The Revd Tim Clifford Hill  
Rector



Georgie Gregson  
Youth & Families  
Minister

A Caring Christian Community, here for everyone

St John's is open every day from 9.30am to 4pm. Please feel welcome to visit us.

Sunday services are listed on Page 2.

Services during the week:

Morning Prayer Monday to Thursday at 9am in Church.

Holy Communion on Wednesdays at 10.30am in the Merrow Hall, St John's Centre.

Evening Prayer on Fridays at 5pm in Church.

All are welcome.

## **MAY 2026 SUNDAY SERVICES (Year A)**

### **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May**

Patronal Festival, Gold

*Psalm 117, John 21.1-19b-end*

9.30am Parish Breakfast in the Church Centre

5pm BCP Holy Communion

### **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

6th Sunday of Easter, Gold

*1 Peter 3.13–end, John 14.15–21*

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

### **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May**

Ascension Sunday, Gold

*Acts 1.1–11, Luke 24.44–end*

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May**

Pentecost, Red

*Acts 2.1–21, John 20.19–23*

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

## Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May

Trinity Sunday, Gold

*2 Corinthians 13.11–end, Matthew 28.16–end*

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

Wednesday Holy Communion will be weekly at 10.30am in the Merrow Hall.

### FROM THE REGISTERS:

#### Funeral

15<sup>th</sup> April Michael Stoughton



### LETTER FROM THE YOUTH WORKER'S OFFICE

May is always a busy and encouraging month! The days are getting longer, summer is on the way, and there's plenty happening in parish life to look forward to!

We'll begin by celebrating our Patronal Festival, on 3<sup>rd</sup> May (moved from 27<sup>th</sup> December, to tie in with another festival which mentions St John, called St John at the Latin Gate) which is always a special moment in our church year. This year we are mixing things up a little - instead of our two morning services, we are going to hold a Parish Breakfast at 9.30am, bringing together both our 8am and 10am congregations! It will be great for us to spend time together, sharing food and conversation - Jesus knew that community really grows well around a table and a shared meal!



**WEAR RED  
ON  
PENTECOST**

This month we also celebrate Pentecost, when we remember the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. It was the moment that changed everything for them — from uncertainty and fear to confidence and boldness. Pentecost is sometimes referred to as the “Birthday of the Church” and is a yearly reminder that God’s Spirit is still at work today in our churches, equipping and strengthening us to live out our faith in everyday life. If you are able to come and celebrate with us on 24<sup>th</sup> May, remember to wear anything you have that is red... as always, there will be a little prize for the best dressed!

Preparations are getting underway for this summer’s Holiday Club:

## **MISSION RESCUE HOLIDAY CLUB**

Monday 17th August - Friday 21st August 2026

9:15-12:00 every day

Mission Rescue,

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> to Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August. This year’s theme is based around spies and secret agents, trying to recover the stolen “Operation Moses Rescue Papers”. We’ll be exploring the story of how God protected Moses as a baby and how that rescue was part of a much bigger plan for His people. It’s a brilliant story to share with our children - full of courage, trust, and God’s care in uncertain situations. Bookings are going really well, which is so encouraging!

With all the planning going on behind the scenes, there are two prep sessions this year if you would like to get involved. There will be things such as painting, sewing, constructing, cutting, sticking, laminating and organising to do - no skill required! The dates for your diary are:

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 9.30am to 1pm**

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July, 12.30pm to 4pm**

I hope to see some of you there, many of you in red for Pentecost, and most of you round the breakfast table on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May!

With best wishes,

Georgie Gregson

ST JOHN'S, MERROW PRESENTS



# MISSION RESCUE

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## THE FRIENDS OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST (FOSTJ)



The Friends of St John the Evangelist is a registered charity formed by members of the community of Merrow to assist in maintaining and preserving the buildings and grounds of the magnificent Grade II listed Church.

If you would like to help in our endeavours in any way and keep up with our news, please visit [www.fostj.org](http://www.fostj.org). We would love you to become a member.

Thank you very much to Channies & Pewleys for sponsoring our colour cover again this year.

## FORTHCOMING MAGAZINE INFORMATION

Issue	Copy date	Editor	Editor's email address
June	17 <sup>th</sup> May	Helen Chambers	<a href="mailto:helen.chambers@saintjohns.org.uk">helen.chambers@saintjohns.org.uk</a>
July	14 <sup>th</sup> June	Chris Starr	<a href="mailto:chrisstarr10@btinternet.com">chrisstarr10@btinternet.com</a>
August	12 <sup>th</sup> July	Susan Harrington	<a href="mailto:suzh90@outlook.com">suzh90@outlook.com</a>

(If you draft your copy in Tahoma, 16 point, on an A4 page, you'll get a good idea of how much space it will take up.)

## VIEW FROM THE PEWS



### Family Service - At the Foot of the Cross

I nearly didn't go to the Family Service on Good Friday. I thought it would be aimed at children and, although very sweet and lovely, rather simplistic and basic.

How wrong I was. The service was designed for the family, all the family from small children to grandparents. Georgie preached a thought-provoking address on "Our King is Different", which challenged us to see how Christ combined the contradictory roles of majestic king and suffering servant.

For the thespians among us, she then presented the thoughts of several people who were at the crucifixion, movingly read by members of the congregation. We heard from Mary Magdalene, the beloved disciple John, Mary the mother of Jesus, the thief on the cross and one of the Roman soldiers.

After some moments of silence for prayer and reflection, we were invited to carry a ribbon, given to us when we entered the church, up to where Georgie had made a very large crown of thorns. This was propped up at the foot of an empty, wooden cross. We took our ribbons up and tied them to this crown of thorns as we left our sins, our worries and fears at the cross of Jesus.

Everyone, from youngest to oldest, took part with great interest and reverence and there was a deep and warm feeling of community and shared purpose.

This was truly a service for all the family of our church.

Rosemary Stoughton

## **VIEW FROM THE PEWS 2!**

In the midst of the war in the Middle East seemingly escalating to unknown levels of destruction and bloodshed and the incongruous wonders of the Artemis II space mission to and around the moon, there I was standing opposite the children's chapel on Easter Sunday, about to take communion and then be one of the chalice assistants.

I had arrived, awash with news reports and graphic images of these two unfolding events affecting both global stability and the significance of our place in the wider universe, to then be standing in the very familiar, calm surroundings of St Johns, where I have been worshipping for over 40 years. The incongruous context was baffling and I had wondered what emotions and feelings would emerge.

The view opposite, in the children's chapel, was an uplifting and joyful vision of so many families and children, who had chosen to be here in an age where there are so many alternative activities and events at weekends. The joy of Easter Day, the resurrection and these growing young families, alongside the experiences of the astronauts looking down on the whole planet, and our entire earthly civilization, through one small window, just spoke of the joy of life on our miraculous planet and the vital part that these children will play in the world as they grow.

Their values, born of their parents, honed through school teaching and in their journey through Christian life at St John's, will ultimately help to shape their character and the brighter future that we must pursue, and challenge the horrors of human conflict and warring nations in our fragile, precious and unique world.

Peter Tappin, April 2026

## **GIFT SUNDAY – 14th June 2026**

On Sunday 14th June, we will thank God for all the gifts he has given us in the past years and ask for inspiration to use them for his glory in the year to come.



As usual with our previous Gift Sundays, we will look ahead at the financial challenges set before us and our continued efforts to financially support our Young People's Ministry Fund. We will also be thanking and hearing from some of the many volunteers who give of their time for the life of St John's and why they enjoy helping their church as much as they do.

This Sunday is one that I hope will encourage us and help us to keep going as we continue to proclaim the Good News in this corner of God's world. I also hope it will enable us to think afresh, both as individuals and as a community, about other ways we might serve God and God's people in Merrow.

Above all, it is a Sunday that gives me, as Rector, a chance to thank everyone at St. John's for all that you do to continue to make this church a place for the whole community to know God's love, grow in faith and live in hope.

With good wishes to you all,

Tim



## **WEDNESDAY COFFEE CLUB**

Now that summer is almost here, and it is nicer to get out and about, why not come and join us on a Wednesday morning?

We are here from 10.15am until 11.30am.

Enjoy some good company and a lot of banter with refreshments, all are welcome, as the diversity is what makes the club have such a good atmosphere.

It may not be for you, but how can you tell without trying?! You will only be wasting one hour of your life, and how many bad cafes have you already willingly wasted an hour in!

I personally think it is 'the best thing since sliced bread', but I would say that, wouldn't I!

If you feel you are too young for this, then come and help serve the teas and coffees - volunteers are always valued, and an important part of the mix.

It is open house, so please just pop in and say hello.

All the best,

Gerald Hunt

Should you have any queries, please contact me on my e-mail [merrowcoffeemorning@hotmail.com](mailto:merrowcoffeemorning@hotmail.com), or ring me on 07545256114.



## ST JOHN'S WOMEN-IN-FELLOWSHIP

### Women in Fellowship upcoming Events

Your Women-in-Fellowship team are busy planning events for 2026 and here is a summary of what you can look forward to...

- Saturday 30th May (from 10am) - Exclusive tour of Guildford Cathedral with St John's Men-in-Fellowship
- Saturday 11th July - 8.30am - Breakfast with talk by Rev'd Margaret Dean – 'Life in a rural parish'
- Saturday 10th October - 8.30am - Breakfast and talk – TBA

If you wish to know more about the Women-In-Fellowship or the events, please contact Carole Burtonwood [carole.burtonwood@saintjohns.org.uk](mailto:carole.burtonwood@saintjohns.org.uk) or Lindsay Dobson [treasurer@saintjohns.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@saintjohns.org.uk)

### BRING & BUY SALE

St John's next, ever popular, Bring & Buy Sale will be held on **Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May** after the 10am service (so starting at about 11/11.15am).

Please start to look at home for items you no longer want, that you feel others may like, to bring along on the day.

And please note the date and join us on the day, to enjoy some tasty cakes and to browse items you may wish to buy by donation.

Proceeds to our Young Peoples' Ministry Fund.

If you would like further information, please speak to Cathy Thompson.





## **ST JOHN'S MEN-IN-FELLOWSHIP**

### **March walk and lunch**

For our March event, the Men-in-Fellowship group continued their exploration of the Surrey countryside by making the short journey along the A246 for a walk around the Horsley area followed by lunch in one of the local pubs.

The first half of the walk took us around the fields and woods of the Horsley Place estate and, following a short stop for refreshment, the second half led us via a gentle climb into the Sheepleas, eventually looping back to St. Mary's church, a total of 4.7 miles.

The 11 thirsty walkers made their way to the King William 4<sup>th</sup> pub in West Horsley where, joined by our 3 after-walk members. We all enjoyed excellent conversation over a hearty lunch in convivial surroundings.



Our next walk & lunch is planned for mid-June, details to be advertised in due course. As usual, walkers and non-walkers will congregate for lunch.

Martin Day

## Men-in-Fellowship upcoming Events

Your Men-in-Fellowship team has been busy planning events for Spring/Summer 2026 and here's a summary of what's coming soon...

- Saturday 30th May (from 10am) - Exclusive tour of Guildford Cathedral shared with members of St. John's Women-in-Fellowship
- Friday 19th June – Walk in the local area – details to follow
- Saturday 18th July - Watercress Line "Real Ale Train" – evening departure from Alton Station – always a popular event / more details to follow.
- Saturday 25th July (8.30am) - Breakfast Meeting with Philip Pratley on a talk entitled "Reflecting Ethics in leadership; inverted or subverted"

Please save the dates and we hope you can join us.

More details will follow, meanwhile contact Robert

[robertavis@raavis.plus.com](mailto:robertavis@raavis.plus.com) or Richard

[Richard.burtonwood@saintjohns.org.uk](mailto:Richard.burtonwood@saintjohns.org.uk) if you need more information.

## SEWING GROUP

**Tuesday 2nd June 10.30am**



Anyone is welcome to come along, sewing skills or not!

This time we are going to be finishing the tablecloths for the Infant school and tackling a few patterns for holiday club.

This will be the last session of the school year but look out for the 2026/27 dates soon!



## CHRISTIAN AID WEEK (10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> MAY)

St John's is raising money for Christian Aid during Christian Aid Week, on the above dates, to support communities living in poverty. Every year, during this appeal, people across Britain and Ireland have seven

days to make a difference and raise funds for Christian Aid Week. We hope people will get behind our fundraising and support their global neighbours.

Envelopes will be given out at church on **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May** and can be returned to Natalie Excell or to the Parish Office. Alternatively, you can give from now on through the St John's e-envelope on the Christian Aid website – use this QR code below or go to

<https://caw.christianaid.org.uk/envelope-2026/st-johns-envelope>.

There will also be a Christian Aid table in the Centre, on **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May**, with lots of edible goodies for you to enjoy for a donation to Christian Aid. Money raised will help Christian Aid and its partners to support communities to find practical and sustainable ways out of poverty. This year's appeal is focusing on work in Nairobi, Kenya, (see more about this on the next page) where intense poverty means families have a daily struggle to feed their children. With secure jobs hard to find, and most people earning less than a dollar a day, to cover school costs, rent and water, providing food for every meal is a relentless problem. But with tools, seeds and specialist training from Christian Aid's partner, Beacon of Hope, families are learning how to make the most of a small space in the city to grow a steady supply of fresh vegetables to cook or sell. Thank you for supporting the important work of this charity.



To find out more about projects like this, visit [caid.org.uk](https://caid.org.uk) To get involved with Christian Aid Week, visit [caweek.org](https://caweek.org)

Natalie Excell

## **Where hardship means hunger... urban farmers can grow hope.**

In the crowded and noisy settlements of Nairobi, most parents wake every single day knowing that they must go and earn money, otherwise their children won't eat that evening.

With no formal work opportunities, heartbreakingly low pay, and no social support, it's a precarious and frightening daily struggle that no family should have to face.

The aching hunger is bad enough. The relentless stress is overwhelming. 'When I wake up, I have a lot of worries. Sometimes I don't have food,' says Fridah Moraa, a recently widowed grandmother determined to support her family on what little she earns.

'Now I'm responsible for everything.' With school costs, rent and water to cover, providing food for every meal is a problem that never goes away.

But Fridah's faith in God, and in her own ability to provide, is unwavering. With tools, seeds and specialist training from Christian Aid's partner, Beacon of Hope, Fridah's now making the most of a small space in the city to grow a steady supply of fresh vegetables that she can cook for her family or sell on her market stall.



Reflecting on her new role in life, Fridah says: 'I never thought that a woman could also be a provider.'

With her inner strength, unstoppable resolve, and a little help from Beacon of Hope, Fridah's overcoming poverty to feed the youngest members of her family and protect them from the threat of malnutrition.

Fridah rightly takes pride in all she's achieving: 'When I harvest what I've planted, it makes me happy. Urban farming has changed my life.'

Christian Aid and its supporters are joining together once again during Christian Aid Week (10-16 May) to fundraise in all kinds of ways – from coffee mornings and craft stalls to hiking and biking for the 70k in May challenge.



## POEM

### Leisure

by **William Henry Davies**

What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.



## **GARDENING HINTS FOR MAY**

After a very dry April, let us hope that we can now look forward to a warmer and wetter month ahead. May is a busy month of catching up, but do not be too impatient when planting out tender plants and summer bedding - it is better to wait until the end of the month, or you might be paying a return visit to the Garden Centre or Nursery!

All plants should be hardened off outside before planting.

Dahlia plants and tubers should not be planted until at least the middle of the month.

Allow Forget-me-nots to set seed before pulling up.

Spray Roses with a systemic insecticide to control Blackspot and Greenfly.

Sweet Peas should be tied to supports, as they climb.

Winter flowering Heathers should be clipped after flowering.

Support tall perennials such as Delphiniums and Lupins with stakes.

Remove the dead-bloom Daffodils, Hyacinths and Tulips once they have finished flowering, leaving the leaves to die back, and feed the bulbs for next year's flowers.

Hostas can be divided as they come into growth.

Fuchsia cuttings, which have been rooted indoors, should have their growing tips pinched out, to encourage bushy growth.

Increase the rate of watering, and start to feed Houseplants.

Evergreen hedges should be clipped.

Keep newly planted trees and shrubs well-watered, especially during dry spells.



There is still time to sow Courgettes and Squash (two seeds to a pot) for planting out later. The seed should be standing on its edge for better germination.

French and Runner beans can now be sown outdoors.

Kale, Leeks and Purple Sprouting Broccoli should be sown for harvesting next winter.

Pinch out the tips of Broad Beans to control Blackfly.

Plant out Tomatoes towards the end of the month, and as they grow, remove side shoots from all types (except Bush and small fruited varieties).

Make small successional sowings of Salad Crops.

Continue to mow the lawn regularly, applying a Spring and Summer dressing just before rain is forecast.

*John Boon*

**PARISH MAGAZINE** – Could you consider being a 'guest editor' for one magazine per year – any month of your choosing?

We are looking for more people to get involved with producing the Parish Magazine.

The magazine is a focal point for information about St John's activities and makes a healthy profit for church funds. We currently need two additional guest editors.

Guest editors receive a document template with the magazine cover, adverts and regular pages already inserted. They then insert articles from both regular and occasional contributors and are free to add anything of particular interest to them. After proof-reading they send the completed copy to the printers.

Please contact Cathy Thompson ([cathy.thompson@saintjohns.org.uk](mailto:cathy.thompson@saintjohns.org.uk) or ring 07518 202920) if you would like more information.

Thank you for considering this.



GUILDFORD  
CATHEDRAL

## ABOUT OUR CATHEDRAL

Did you know that below the serenity of our Cathedral, there is a world of tunnels, crypts and sealed rooms, not accessible to the average visitor?

The cathedral is founded on 778 piles, which were driven into the hill and took about 11 months to complete, resulting in a building of real structural integrity.

Within the foundations, there is about 5,500 tonnes of concrete and about 700 tonnes of steelwork. That robustness extends to the original underground strongroom, which is where the town valuables and items of significance were stored during the second World War, including the town clock.

There are approximately 20 or 30 miles of pipework under the cathedral, including a long service tunnel running almost the full length of the nave, which sits alongside a series of crypt areas beneath the Lady Chapel, and served as the main worship space from 1947 until the cathedral was completed and consecrated in 1961. There is one point underneath the cathedral itself where a person can stop and see the entirety of the site, which is probably 250ft long. In addition, running through it are all the main heating supply pipes, all the secondary pipes, and the main electrical cables. It is possible to walk the entire length of the cathedral along a passage that runs through the nave.

A year or two ago, I was fortunate enough to be invited down below the marble floor into the somewhat claustrophobic area beneath. It was a rather unnerving feeling, knowing



that there were 5,500 tonnes of concrete over my head. Nevertheless,

I put that from my mind as soon as I could in the knowledge that the Cathedral had stood safely on that same spot since 1961! Eventually, I emerged from my tunnelling back up into the Nave. Sunlight poured through the windows onto that familiar honey coloured stone. Interesting though my tunnelling experience had been, it was quite a relief to be up and into the light!

Nick Bond

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## ST JOHN'S PRE-SCHOOL

Are you looking for a nursery place for your little ones?  
We have St John's Pre-School, here at the St John's Centre.  
Contact Amanda Bazley on 01483 454625 for more details.

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AT ST JOHN'S CENTRE, MERROW

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**JOIN NOW!**

For more information visit our Facebook page (search for St John's Pre-school Merrow) or contact Amanda Bazley on 01483 454625 or email [amanda.bazley@saintjohnspreschool.org.uk](mailto:amanda.bazley@saintjohnspreschool.org.uk)

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES!**

(in the Centre unless mentioned otherwise)

### **MAY**

Sat 2nd May	Churchyard Tidy Up 9.30am
Sun 10th May	Sparks 5-11s group (during 10am service in church)
Sun 10th May	Annual Parochial Church Meeting at 11am Please save the date.
Tues 12th May	Green Team 4pm
Sun 17th May	Inter-Church 4pm in Church
Sun 24th May	Sparks 5-11s group (during 10am service in church)
Tues 26th May	Green Team 4pm
Sat 30th May	Men and Women-in-Fellowship – Tour of Guildford Cathedral

### **JUNE**

Tues 2nd June	Sewing Group 10.30am
Sat 6th June	Churchyard Tidy Up 9.30am
Tues 9th June	Green Team 4pm
Sun 14th June	Sparks 5-11s group (during 10am service in church)
Fri 19th June	Men-in-Fellowship – Walk in local area
Sun 21st June	Inter-Church 4pm in Church
Tues 23rd June	Green Team 4pm
Sun 28th Jun	Sparks 5-11s group (during 10am service in church)

## WHO'S WHO

Rector	The Revd Tim Clifford Hill (Day off: Friday and Sat am)	951649
Youth & Families Minister	Georgie Gregson (Days off: Friday & Saturday)	07974 494504
Churchwardens	Jane Farquharson	07765 620017
	Cathy Thompson	07518 202920
Deputy Churchwarden	Michael Eagle	07850 000224
Verger	Helen Chambers	846574
St Johns Centre Office	9am – 2pm, Mon, Wed and Fri 9.30am – 1pm, Tues and Thurs	01483 454621
- Parish Administrator	Sandra Rayner	office@saintjohns.org.uk
- Centre Manager	Barry Dickinson	centremanager@saintjohns.org.uk

Web site: [www.saintjohns.org.uk](http://www.saintjohns.org.uk)

Email: [office@saintjohns.org.uk](mailto:office@saintjohns.org.uk)

PCC Secretary	Tricia Tappin	579193
PCC Treasurer	Lindsay Dobson	07809 836896
Gift Aid, Legacies and Parish Giving Scheme	Martin Thompson	578923
Organist and Choir Director	Micky Clare	538306
Babies and Toddlers Group	Jane Farquharson	07765 620017
Baby Basics	babybasics@saintjohns.org.uk	458128
Bell Ringers	Jane Farquharson	07765 620017
Bible Reading Fellowship	Jenny Welbourn	825541
Cathedral Link	Nick Bond	579462
Children's Society representative	Judith Sampson	571847
Christian Aid Organiser	Cathy Thompson	578923
Electoral Roll	Carole Burtonwood	
	carole.burtonwood@saintjohns.org.uk	
Flower coordinator	Helen Chambers	846574
Magazine Advertisements	Alan Thorn	advert@saintjohns.org.uk
Merrow C of E Infant School	Louisa Dormer (Executive Headteacher)	
	Emma Hooper (Deputy Head)	561501
Church Governors	Michael Eagle	07850 000224
	Lindsay Dobson	07809 836896
Safeguarding Officer	Rosanne Bond	579462
St John's Merrow, Pre-School	Amanda Bazley (Manager)	454625
Diocesan Lay Pastoral Assistant	Helen Chambers	846574
Readings and Intercessions Rota	Joe Bullock	07521 960480
Weekly News Sheet		office@saintjohns.org.uk
Wednesday Coffee Mornings	Gerald Hunt	07545 256114
Transport	Rosanne Bond	579462
Website contact	Parish Office (as above)	

For any changes to Who's Who, please email [cathy.thompson@saintjohns.org.uk](mailto:cathy.thompson@saintjohns.org.uk)

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