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PARISH MAGAZINE
January 2025



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The Revd Tim Clifford Hill
Rector



Georgie Gregson
Youth Worker

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. Warm Space in the Centre Foyer 10am to 2pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday during the winter months.

Sunday services are listed on Page 2.

Services during the week:

Morning Prayer Monday to Thursday at 9.00am in Church.

Holy Communion on Wednesdays at 10.30am in the Merrow Hall, St John's Centre. (But not on 1st January 2025)

Evening Prayer on Fridays at 5.00pm in Church.

All are welcome.

January 2025 Sunday Services (Year C)

Sunday 5th January Epiphany, White

Ephesians 3.1-12, Matthew 2.1-12

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am All Age Worship for Epiphany

Sunday 12th January Baptism of Christ, White

Acts 8.14-17, Luke 3.15-17, 21-22

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

6pm Sing a New Song

Sunday 19th January 2nd Sunday of Epiphany, White

1 Corinthians 12.1-11, John 2.1-11

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

Sunday 26th January 3rd Sunday of Epiphany, White

1 Corinthians 12.12-31a, Luke 4.14-21

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

Sunday 2nd February

Presentation of Christ in the Temple, White

Hebrews 2.14-end, Luke 2.22-40

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am All Age Worship



NOTICE



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From the Rectory - January 2025

Welcome to 2025! I hope you have had a good start to this new calendar year. Here at St. John's, and in every church, the new church calendar year began on Advent Sunday (1st December) so we are well and truly into 2025 at St. John's. And it is still Christmas! For the Christian church, Christmas goes on until the feast of Candlemass on 2nd February. So don't worry if you don't manage to take your Christmas decorations down before Twelfth Night. You can leave them up for a bit longer if you want, to keep the Christmas spirit going in your own home.

Right at the start of this month we will be celebrating the Epiphany. The moment when the Magi (aka Three Kings/Wise Men) visited the baby Jesus. Many poets and composers have composed poems and music about their journey, including T S Eliott and Benjamin Britten. The contemporary priest and poet, Malcolm Guite, wrote the below poem a few years ago. I leave it here for you to think upon as 2025 begins.

I hope you have a great start to 2025.

With good wishes, Tim

The Magi – Malcolm Guite.

*It might have been just someone else's story,
Some chosen people get a special king.
We leave them to their own peculiar glory,
We don't belong, it doesn't mean a thing.
But when these three arrive they bring us with them,
Gentiles like us, their wisdom might be ours;
A steady step that finds an inner rhythm,
A pilgrim's eye that sees beyond the stars.
They did not know his name but still they sought him,
They came from elsewhere but still they found;
In temples they found those who sold and bought him,
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground.
Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice
To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.*

St John's Electoral Roll – preparation of a new Roll in 2025

Every church in the Church of England is obliged to have an Electoral Roll which is a register of people who can elect other people in the church. This is reviewed every year and the updated Roll published before the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) which will be in May 2025.

Every six years a completely new roll is prepared where every person who wishes to have his or her name entered on the new Roll, **whether it is entered on the present Roll or not**, is requested to apply for enrolment.

I will be contacting current members with a form to fill in and information on how and when to return it.

If you are not currently on the Electoral Roll and would like to join you can do so at anytime by filling in your details on the form that is on the website <https://www.saintjohns.org.uk/community-growing-faith/electoral-roll> or e-mail me, Carole Burtonwood, at carole.burtonwood@saintjohns.org.uk and I will gladly send you a form and answer any questions you may have.

Thank you very much to Chantries & Pewleys for sponsoring our colour cover and to Jane Stevenson for taking the photograph which shows the baptism last August of Louis Rice by the Revd Diana Matthews. Louis is the son of Dan and Rachael Rice - and great-grandson of Don Kelly.

'Mozart of Merrow' to perform with Guildford Symphony Orchestra



“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything,” (Plato). A sentiment shared by everyone fortunate enough to hear 14 year old Damian Kok perform at St John’s Centre last summer. Damian’s phenomenal talent has now been recognised by Guildford Symphony Orchestra (GSO). He has been selected as one of five young soloists to perform at the GSO Una Clark Young Artists Concert, conducted by Darrell Davison at 3.30pm on 25th January at Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Guildford.

This will be Damian’s debut performance playing with a symphony orchestra in Guildford. He will be performing the first movement of Mozart’s Violin concerto No. 5, which is particularly apt as Damian has been called ‘the Mozart of Merrow’!

The programme will also include performances from four other young soloists including two pianists, one violinist and one tubist, who were selected at an audition for shortlisted finalists. To be considered, musicians needed to be under 25 and live within a 50 mile radius of Guildford. Wendy Ratcliffe, a cellist with GSO and competition organiser explains “we were not just looking for technical ability, but young musicians who brought something extra to their music. Damian who was one of the youngest to audition, had a flair for performance and stood out as an exceptional musician very quickly.”

According to Damian: "once I started playing at the audition I just became immersed in the music. It's what I do and what I love. Guildford is my beloved home town which makes this amazing opportunity to perform with the GSO even more exciting."

The GSO is Surrey's most established symphony orchestra and has been playing and performing concerts for over 100 years. Tickets are available at:

<https://thelittleboxoffice.com/gso/>

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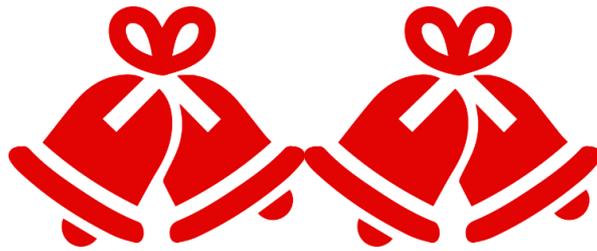
Our St. John's "Tools for Africa" initiative links with TWAM's larger collection, triage, preparation and shipping tools in the form of affordable kits to many developing nations. The link, if you want more information about our partner TWAM, is www.twam.uk

This year we have sent 2 significant collections to TWAM, including 5 sewing machines and many garden and engineering tools. Thanks to all our Merrow contributors. If you want to find out more, or need help with clearance, please let me know.

Thank you, and I wish you a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Gordon Farquharson, St. John's "Tools for Africa" collector. Tel 07785 265 909, email gj.farquharson@gmail.com

From the Merrow Bell Ringers



We hope that you have had a lovely Christmas and enjoyed hearing the church bells ringing over the festive season.

Over the year we have rung for services and weddings,
and tolled for Remembrance.

We thoroughly enjoy our ringing.

The Merrow band is a friendly team and we are always looking to swell our numbers, so do let us know if you fancy having a go, or just coming to find out what it is all about.

We enjoy social events as well as ringing.

We would like to wish you all

A very happy and healthy new year.

Jane (tower captain)

[farquharson@ntlworld.com 07765620017]

Children's Society House Boxes.

It's that time in the calendar where I'm asking for those of you that have house boxes to let me have them for opening. Could you please either bring the boxes to the church centre and hand them in at the office for me to pick them up from there, or contact me direct if you would like me to collect the box from your home. Either is fine it's what works best for you. My contact details if you want to arrange collection from your home are 01483 571847. If you have any queries regarding this then please ring me on the number given.

Many thanks for your help with this.

Judith Sampson

On a quiet conscience.

Close thine eyes, and sleep secure:
Thy soul is safe, thy body pure.
He that guards thee, He that keeps,
Never slumbers, never sleeps.
A quiet conscience in a quiet breast
Has only peace, has only rest.
The wisest and the mirth of kings
Are out of tune unless she sings.
Then close thine eyes in peace, and sleep secure,
No sleep so sweet as thine, no rest so sure.



*About **our** Cathedral.....*

Day after day, alone on a hill, the Cathedral with the golden angel's standing perfectly still. And nobody seems to like it and they say it's too ugly too but the Cathedral stands triumphant and always has a view of the sun going down and the eyes in its head sees the earth spinning round. Once on a high and windy hill in the morning mist battered by wind and slashed by rain our Cathedral stands like a sentinel watching over us. Imagine what it's like being inside on a gale wracked day. Listen, and the battle outside ragin' will soon shake its windows and rattle its walls as the wind, like a whetted knife, whistles and howls round and round threatening to break through entrances or find a chink in the walls. Like a giant invisible hand, the wind pushes and shoves and pulls and tugs at the huge glass doors but never quite opens them. Moaning and groaning goes the wind searching for another way in and tries with all its might to push St. Ursula's portals open but they withstand unflinching, solidly defiant. You laugh as you're warm and safe inside in the knowledge that the wind and rain will never break through into our Cathedral. And in Summertime, well, throw open all those huge openings and let the sunshine in and the cool breeze through and let it explore and chase round the pillars and along the passages and up and down the stairs and peep into the chapels and chase its tail, meet a stone wall and turn back on itself, laughing. Way up there the Summer sun is a big yellow duster polishing the blue sky with white fluffy clouds in a cluster hanging on a breeze to dry. If you stood on the top of our Cathedral how far could you see? Could you see a rainbow? The sun after the rain? Could you see for miles and miles? Would you leap and catch the wind? If it was a foggy day, could you see London town? Would you try to touch the sky? And on a clear day, could you see the sea? I imagine our Cathedral as a ship in full sail cleaving the deep blue ocean, majestic, steadfast, surging ever onward. On its bow the cross of HMS Ganges and its stern of glass catching the light; dazzling and sparkling in the pureness of its wake.

Dear Readers

We hope that you have enjoyed reading the magazine each month and would like to renew your subscription for 2025. The amount due remains unchanged at £7.

You can pay in the following ways

- in cash
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If your magazine is delivered, please wait until you are asked by your deliverer for your subscription.

If you receive your magazine by post please send £16-25 to cover the cost of the postage and envelope to the Magazine Treasurer c/o Parish Office, St John's Centre, 222 Epsom Road, Guildford GU4 7AA. Please complete the form below and enclose it with your payment.

If you collect the magazine from the church please hand in your payment and the form in an envelope to the Parish Office for the attention of the Magazine Treasurer.

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I enclose a cheque/cash for £

Friends of St. John' s December Wine Tasting Evening.

It was not the Wedding at Cana, but the wines tasted at the Friends of St John's Christmas Wine Tasting evening were more than a good try. Some 35 wine lovers joined Shaun Parr, our expert vintner who led us through the mysteries of wine growing and the tasting of five lovely wines specially selected for Christmas and all priced within reach of the most parsimonious pocket. First came a Loire Cremant bubbly rivalling any decent champagne followed by an Italian Prosecco with equally interesting bubbles. Then followed two wines which would match any Christmas turkey, one a red and the other a white (so you could pair them with whichever turkey trimmings you serve). We finished the evening with a delicious Madeira, sumptuously tasted with delicious mince pies.

The "piece de resistance" is that out of all this pleasure came a delicious profit of more than £500 which the Friends will put towards the essential repairs to the roof of the porch of our splendid parish church. Thank you, wine lovers everywhere.



Friends of St. John's
Merrow

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. We would love you to become a member.

YPMF
YOUNG PERSON'S MINISTRY FUND.
£49,850

****A THIRD OF THE WAY TO OUR TARGET****

Thanks be to God; we start 2025 with £49,850 promised to our ministry to young people. How generous people are and how much this helps to guarantee we can spread the news of Christ to young people in the next five years. Thank you to all who have donated so generously to date.

If you are still thinking of giving, don't forget you can give either by:

- A one -off donation now. If you feel you cannot commit just now, a promise for later in the year would be just as helpful.
- Or spreading the gift by a regular monthly donation over a five year period,

You can also consider leaving a legacy to St. John's in your will. This enables us to use current reserves for the young people's ministry with confidence that funds will be replenished in the long term.

Our YPMF Booklet describes our aims and how we can give. If you have lost your copy or haven't yet received one, ask at the Office or a sidesperson next Sunday. Please study it, perhaps pray the special prayer and respond as best you can.

From Tim, Robert and the PCC

GARDENING HINTS

Things to do in the garden in January.

If you cannot garden because the soil is rain sodden or frosted you can use your spare time studying plant catalogues which will have arrived in the post on a regular basis.

The same advice applies as when ordering spring flowering bulbs, the larger the plants you buy the better they will be when planted out in May. If you only need a few plants, it would probably be better to visit a local nursery such as Elm Nursery at Sutton Green in May where you can select your plants firsthand.

New seed varieties which are usually F1 Hybrids are expensive to buy and often difficult to germinate, so look on the back of the packet to see how many seeds you are buying for your money, remember that this year`s novelty seeds are likely to be next year`s ordinary seeds.

When sowing seed, the general rule is that finer seeds will germinate into small seedlings and so they should be sown on or close to the surface of the compost, larger seeds should be sown deeper as the shoots can reach the light before they exhaust their food reserves. The seed packet will suggest the depth required. Seeds should be sown evenly and sparingly to allow the seedlings space to develop once they have germinated, closely packed seedlings will be liable to "damping off" which is a fungal disease. Consider how many plants you will require before sowing the whole packet.

Sweet Peas can still be sown indoors, those sown in the autumn should be potted on, pinching out the tips at 2-3 inches.

Dahlias should be inspected, and any rotten tubers should be cut off, any shrivelled tubers should be placed in a bucket of tepid water overnight.

There is still time in mild conditions to plant bare rooted roses.

Keep the crowns of herbaceous plants and alpines free of dead leaves to avoid rot.

Start pruning Wisteria cutting back the current season's growth to within three buds of older wood.

Whilst the fruit buds are still dormant Apple and Pear trees can be pruned, cut out any congested growth to increase airflow which will improve the quality of next season's fruit, cut back to a fruit bud which is large and rounded on older growth, one year old shoots should be pruned back to a slender bud.

John Boon

Forthcoming magazine information

| Issue | Copy date | Editor | Editor's email address |
|--------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| February | 12 th Jan | Frances Jewson | frances.jewson@ntlworld.com |
| March | 9 th Feb | Helen Chambers | hmchambers@virginmedia.com |
| April | 16 th Mar | Sara England | saraengland@gmail.com |

(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.)



OPEN THE BOOK IN MERROW

When I arrived here in Merrow, back in January, I was so thrilled to hear that there was already an Open the Book team up and running!

“But what is Open the Book?”, I hear you ask!

Open the Book is an exciting storytelling project from the Bible Society, where Bible stories are shared with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable. As invited guests in schools, our teams use the [Open the Book programme](#) to prepare and present a 10–15-minute scripted Bible stories to a school assembly, involving the children as much as possible! Each session begins with an introduction and the Open the Book song to kick us off. Then after the story there is a pause for thought to help the children think about what the story might mean to them and then we round it all off with an invitational prayer.

This year we have seen the opportunities for our team expand, both by welcoming new members and by being welcomed by more schools in Merrow! Once every half term we now visit Merrow Infants, Boxgrove and St Thomas of Canterbury to share stories from the Bible and it is such a joy to see the children’s faces when we visit. This year we have had great fun telling the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, David and Goliath, the Wise Men, Palm Sunday, the Good Samaritan and the Unforgiving Servant.



We are proud to be an ecumenical team with members from St John’s Merrow and Merrow Methodist Church and would love to welcome more people from local churches to join us as we go into 2025. You don’t have to commit to all the dates, just what suits your schedule and there is training provided by the Bible Society. So, if you are passionate about

sharing the Bible with others (and you don't mind a bit of dressing up) please get in touch to find out more!

Georgie Gregson – youthworker@saintjohns.org.uk

Youth Worker @ St John's, Merrow.

A charity called Zero

I went to a presentation by a charity called Zero who are in the High Street opposite the 3 Pigeons Pub, this is an amazing charity and they offer a number of free services.

They offer a workspace where you can walk in and work from, or book a meeting space.

They get donated food from local businesses, Community Fridge is on a Tuesday & Thursday morning, they do not know what they are getting or when, but it is free to anyone coming in.

They offer free thermal imaging surveys for anyone with less than 100mm of loft insulation and also supply any insulation, draught strips etc. that is found to be needed, all at no cost. You just need to fit it (or get someone else to fit it for you.)

web site: energysurveys@zerocarbondguildford.org

Lastly they have set up at the Library a tool library, again free of charge, where you can take out a drill, lawnmower, Gazebo or whatever (there is a list of over 100 tools and how to book them from the web site: Guildfordlibraryofthings.org

For more information either e-mail info@zerocarbondguildford.org or phone 0300 123 3033

Altogether they seem to be doing an amazing job and well worth supporting

Thanks, Gerald

Men-in-Fellowship December Breakfast Meeting

Despite it being cold, dark and wintry, some twenty driven souls turned out for this breakfast meeting. Our guest was Peter Hancock, currently Assistant Bishop in the diocese, who retired as Bishop of Bath and Wells in 2021. He had been Bishop there since 2014, being the 78th person to step into the historic sandals of Athelm, who became the first bishop in 900AD.

Bishop Peter told us a moving story of his calling to the church, his travels around the curacies and vicarages of the Portsmouth Diocese before his elevation to the see of Basingstoke. In Bath and Wells, he majored on trying to keep connected in Christ with the parish churches, numbering over 500 in the diocese. This could prove, even with modern transport, as difficult as it did for Athelm 1100 years ago.



He regretted that the Anglican Church, like many secular institutions, struggled with today's issues such as safeguarding, although the current protections are now very sturdy as they should be in a Christian body.

His presentation was spiced with humour, but we promised not to report those arising from his long-term relationship with our Rector.

He showed us a simple crozier, or Bishop's crook, which a parishioner had made for him and explained it remained a symbol of his tasks to re-connect lost sheep to, and stir the lethargy of others with enthusiasm for, God. We agreed that was a very appropriate metaphor to leave with our Men-in-Fellowship breakfasters.

View from the Pews

The New Year is now here, meaning different things to different people. It may be to make resolutions, exercise more, eat less chocolate,(not one I would make) only to be broken by February. OR it can be a time for us to strengthen our Christian values and our way of being, in the face of wars in the Middle East, the mindless violence of stabbing and shootings on our streets. It's hard even to watch the news and can render us not only helpless but hopeless. However, The Resurrection is our Hope. Our new year resolution could be to practice daily our Christian values and the last thing to give up is HOPE. Trish xxx

At New Year we mean very well,
As Christians we're clear as a bell
With love, faith and hope,
We are nobody's dope
As we rush towards heaven, pell-mell.



Dear Friends,

A Happy New Year to you all and a welcome back to school for many. The Christmas holidays can be very exciting for most of our children but we are also aware that it is also quite overwhelming, lacks routines and may be less joyful than the glossy adverts portray. January is a great time to reset our routines and boundaries for our children. The Spring Term – as we will optimistically call it – is usually the term we see huge progress in the children’s work and understanding of just what school is about: they have settled into the expectations of the year group, understand the routines and have some good learning behaviours embedded and then they are ready to consolidate it all into their work.

We wish Miss Sullivan well as she begins her maternity leave & look forward to hearing of the safe arrival of her son; we welcome Charlotte Weller to Marrow Infant School and to our local community too, we hope she and her family will be very happy in Marrow. Teaching at Marrow can bring quite exciting opportunities as our former colleague, Jane Tyson will be taking up the role of Deputy Mayor next year! Congratulations Jane! We have also made Guildford news as we have retained our 5-star Hygiene rating for our school kitchen. Annabelle and Sharon cook hot meals for all our children every day. Currently all infant children are given a hot free school meal and we are very pleased that we have such a great take up of this offer. Annabelle is very adept at remembering which child likes their sauce on their pasta and which prefers it next to it or not there at all and Sharon is our very own star baker!

We look forward to sharing more news of what we have been up to in the next month.

Warm regards,

Emma Hooper

Religious symbolism of the Twelve Days of Christmas

1 True love refers to God

2 Turtle doves – the Old and New Testaments

3 French hens – Faith, Hope and Charity, the theological virtues

4 Calling birds – the four Gospels and/or the four Evangelists

5 Golden rings – the first five books of the Old Testament, the “Pentateuch”, which gives the history of man’s fall from grace.

6 Geese a-laying – the six days of creation

7 Swans a-swimming – the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit – the seven sacraments

8 Maids a-milking – the eight beatitudes

9 Ladies dancing – the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit

10 Lords a-leaping – the ten commandments

11 Pipers piping – the eleven faithful apostles

12 Drummers drumming – the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostles’ Creed

Care for Guildford Needs More Volunteers

Award-winning local charity, Care for Guildford urgently needs more volunteers to drive people – mostly the elderly - to and from essential medical appointments or help with shopping for housebound clients. Volunteering is flexible, with no regular commitment needed.

Over the last year, volunteers collectively helped Guildford-based residents to attend around 300 appointments each month – appointments which they otherwise would have struggled to attend. Volunteers also completed over 45 shops per month for housebound clients.

With pressures on the NHS, an ageing population and a cost of living crisis, demand for Care for Guildford's service is at an all-time high. Without more volunteers, the charity will struggle to meet the needs of existing clients and to take on new clients.

If you have access to a car and can spare an hour or two each month, Care for Guildford would love you to join their team. Volunteering for Care for Guildford will genuinely enrich your life and will make a huge difference to people in our local community. For more information contact volunteer@careforguildford.org.uk or visit www.careforguildford.org.uk

Who's Who

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Rector | The Revd Tim Clifford Hill (Day off Friday and Sat am) | 951649 |
| Youth Worker | Georgie Gregson (Days off Friday & Saturday) | 07974 494504 |
| Churchwardens | Jane Farquharson | 07765 620017 |
| | Cathy Thompson | 07518 202920 |
| Deputy Churchwarden Verger | Michael Eagle | 07850 000224 |
| | Helen Chambers | 846574 |
| St Johns Centre Office | 9.00 – 2 Mon, Wed and Fri 9.30 – 1 Tues and Thurs | 01483 454621 |
| - Centre Manager | Barry Dickinson | centremanager@saintjohns.org.uk |
| - Parish Admin Assistant | Sandra Rayner | office@saintjohns.org.uk |

Web site: www.saintjohns.org.uk

Email: 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 | Sara England | 504205 |
| Electoral Roll | Carole Burtonwood | |
| | carole.burtonwood@saintjohns.org.uk | |
| Flower coordinator | Helen Chambers | 846574 |
| Magazine Advertisements | Sara England | merrowadverts@gmail.com |
| Merrow C of E Infant School | Louisa Dormer (Executive Head Teacher) | |
| | Emma Hooper (Deputy Head) | 561501 |
| | | |
| Church Governors | | |
| Safeguarding Officer | Michael Eagle | 07850 000224 |
| | 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 |
| Sunday Newssheet | | office@saintjohns.org.uk |
| TiC and Lay Parish representative | Isla Stables | 567599 |
| 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 Sara on merrowadverts@gmail.com

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