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#### PARISH MAGAZINE

#### **November 2025**



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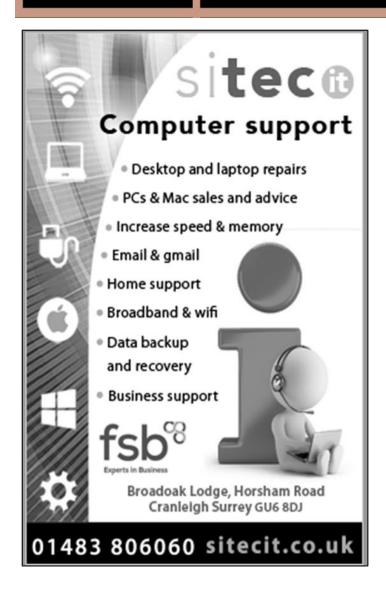
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The Revd Tim Clifford Hill Rector



Georgie Gregson Youth & Families Minister

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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.

Evening Prayer on Fridays at 5.00pm in Church.

All are welcome.

#### NOVEMBER 2025 SUNDAY SERVICES (Year C)

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November All Saints' Day, White *Ephesians 1.11-end, Luke 6.20-31* 

8am BCP Holy Communion 10am All Age Worship 4pm All Souls

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November Remembrance Sunday, Red *2 Thessalonians 2.1-5, 13-end* 

9am CW Holy Communion10.45 Act of Remembrance11.15 Uniformed Organizations

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Advent, Green

2 Thessalonians 3.6-13, Luke 21.5-19

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November Christ the King, Red/White Colossians 1.11-20, Luke 23.33-43 8am BCP Holy Communion 10am CW Holy Communion

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, Purple
Romans 13.11-end, Matthew 24.36-44

### 8am BCP Holy Communion 10am CW Holy Communion

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent, Purple

\*\*Romans 15.4-13, Matthew 3.1-12\*

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am All Age Worship

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

#### LETTER FROM THE YOUTH WORKER'S OFFICE

Welcome to the November edition of the Parish Magazine!

As I write this, I have to be honest, it is early October and I am midway through a week of School Harvest Celebrations which have been fantastic! Following our Church Harvest service and lunch, this week the children have been challenging us to think about sharing what we have, caring for our world and giving thanks.

So, now I need to cast my mind forward to where I find you, lovely reader, in November! The days are getting shorter, the jumpers are out, and Advent is somehow just around the corner (how did that happen so fast?) There's <u>SO</u> much happening in church life this month, so here's a quick round-up before things get too busy, there's plenty to look forward to.

November marks an exciting time when some of our young people are going to be taking the next steps in their faith journey. With one being baptised early on in the month and then on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November a group of them will be taking their first communion at our 10:00 service.

We also have our Parish Quiz Night on Thursday 7th November. (Details on page 15) We are raising money for the Church and it promises to be a great evening — expect laughter, snacks, and a bit of friendly rivalry! So, why not gather a few friends, form a team, and come along? All are welcome!

Midway through the month, on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November, we'll take time to pause and reflect at our Remembrance Day services, as we remember those who gave so much for others and pray for peace in our world today. Details of service timings on page 3

And towards the end of the month, we'll be stepping into Advent – the beginning of the church year- a season of waiting and preparation in the run up to Christmas. Being the start of the church year, it also brings to an end our "Year of Discipleship" at St John's but begins our "Year of Diversity"! On Advent Sunday we will also being launching our Vision and Values as we think about the future of our church and its mission.

In keeping with our "Year of Diversity" we're especially excited about hosting our very first St John's Nativity Festival, running from Friday 12th to Sunday 14th December right here in church. The plan is to fill the building with Nativity scenes of different shape, colour, design and size — from traditional scenes passed down through families to creative home-made versions built from Lego, wool, cardboard, metal, or even flowers! Please check out page 5 for more details on how to enter and share it with anyone you think might like to join in!

So, as we move from the thankfulness of harvest into the reflection of remembrance and the hope of Advent, may we

keep looking for moments of joy, generosity, and light — signs of God's love shining in our community. Georgie x



#### Our first Nativity Festival!

Friday 12th to Sunday 14th December at St John's Church, Merrow.

Come and be a part of our Nativity Festival 2025!

We hope to fill the church with Nativity sets and then to invite the community to vote for their favourite.

Entries open to everyone; families, individuals, local groups, schools and businesses.

Your Nativity can be traditional, maybe one you have had for many years, a set that you bought on holiday that represents another country, or you can make your own interpretation of the nativity scene.

They can be made in any material - recyclable, plastic, wood, embroidery, fabric, wool, flowers, cardboard, Lego, metal and more. We encourage you to get crafty and have a go at creating something fun and different- let your imagination run wild!

It costs £5 to enter your Nativity scenes can be big or small, as long as they can fit on our display boards which are 40cm deep.

#### **DATES AND TIMINGS**

Set Up: Thursday 11th December from 12:00 Festival Open to the Public for voting: Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December 9:00-18:00

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December 9:00-14:00 and 16:00 to 18:00 (14:00-16:00 closed for a Wedding)

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December 11:00-16:00

Closing Carols and prize giving: Sunday 14th December at 16:00

Take down: Monday 15th from 9:00-13:00



To register for the festival simply scan the QR code and complete your details to make payment of £5 or visit our website to sign up www.saintjohns.org.uk

Completed entry forms to be returned by 30th November.

We look forward to you participating and hope this will be something that the whole village will enjoy!



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

This month's photo features St John's War Memorial. Thank you to Jane Stevenson for providing this lovely photo.

#### 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.

Friends of St. John's If you would like to help in our endeavours in any way and keep up with our news, please visit <a href="www.fostj.org">www.fostj.org</a>. We would love you to become a member.

#### FORTHCOMING MAGAZINE INFORMATION

Issue	Copy date	Editor	Editor's email address
December	16 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Helen Chambers	helen.chambers@saintjohns.org.uk
January	14 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Chris Starr	chrisstarr10@btinternet.com
February	11 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Frances Jewson	frances.jewson@ntlworld.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.)



## VIEW FROM THE PEWS YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRY FUND Target £150,000. Raised to date £95,800

Here's how we are doing since June when we held our Gift Sunday Appeal. Do you recall the film

illustrating how we are engaging young people in the Christian message? And since then, we've had the adventurous Starship Discovery Holiday Club. That was a fully booked journey of Christian discovery for the young people attending.

The YPMF aims to secure long-term funding for our young people's activities. In the last couple of months we have received, in addition to some generous donations, an amazing £10,000 legacy from the estate of a long time faithful member of our congregation. This, along with the £423 that you all contributed to our October Bring and Buy Sale, brings the total raised and promised to an amazing £95,800

That is just about two thirds of the way to our target of £150,000. Thank you all for your generosity

If you feel moved to help with the work with our young people and would consider a donation, details of how to do so are set out in the LET'S HELP THE GREEN SHOOTS GROW booklet available at the back of church or from the office.

Thank you

Tim and the Stewardship and Giving Team

#### REFLECTION FOR THE AUTUMN

From a bible study group a few years ago



Imagine a piece of jigsaw puzzle. It makes no sense on its own.

Now imagine the biggest jigsaw puzzle in the world, if only one tiny piece is missing, it's incomplete.

Now imagine you are that missing piece.

You may feel very small and very unimportant. You may not understand who

you are or where you fit in. You may feel that you don't matter – but without you, the world is incomplete.

You do matter. There is a space in the world that only you can fill.

And when you fill that space, who you are suddenly makes sense.

#### **GAZA PEACE PRAYER**

God of goodness and love

We lift before you the people of Gaza,

Each one made in your image

God of hope

We pray for a softening of hearts and minds that will allow

A flow of aid, food and medicines to reach the people of Gaza.

God, whose son Jesus called the little children to him,

We pray for Gaza's children and young people.

We pray for all those involved in the fighting

That they might be given eyes to see as you see.

Long may peace last, allowing war and suffering to end x

#### **GUILDFORD FOOD BANK**

From 1 October, we will become Guildford Food Bank. I have provided some background this decision below.

Our food bank started in 2012 with a few dedicated volunteers and food stored on our founder's cellar. As the need for our services grew, our team and donations increased. In 2020 we became a charity and in 2022 recruited our first employee. We have grown in response to an ever-increasing demand for food and necessities for



individuals and families in crisis across Guildford and the surrounding villages. We now have the equivalent of 2 full-time employees, over 100 volunteers, 450 donors on our mailing list and 135 referring Organizations. We provide more than just food; giving our clients a listening ear, signposting support, referrals to other organizations and prayer.

From the start, the motivation of our founder and more recently the Trustees, has been to reach out in the spirit of Christian love and giving across the community of all faiths and none. To better reflect this growth and commitment to the need in our whole community, we have decided to change our name and brand identity. The result of this change is a visual identity which clearly states the mission of our charity and the area we serve.

North Guildford Food Bank has become GUILDFORD FOOD BANK supported by the strapline FOOD & HOPE FOR GUILDFORD.

Jessica (Manager)

#### **WEDNESDAY COFFEE CLUB**



Hi with Christmas just around the corner, the club is looking to go to Illuminate the Christmas Light Show around Guildford castle, on the evening of Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December and if anyone is interested in joining

us, then please contact me.

We also still have a few tickets left to see the musical Paddington where one of our members son's is playing Mr Curry .We are going on Thursday 2.30pm on  $21^{st}$  May 2026 with £80.00 tickets going for a group rate of £45.00, with an addition of £15.00 for transport and again let me know if you might want to join us.

Lastly the coffee club is still going well and we meet each Wednesday at 10.15am and if you have nothing better to do, then why not come and find out what we are all about.

For more information please give me a ring.

**Gerald Hunt** 

Should you have any queries, please contact me on my e-mail <a href="mailto:merrowcoffeemorning@hotmail.com">merrowcoffeemorning@hotmail.com</a> or ring me on 07545256114

#### **GARDENING HINTS FOR NOVEMBER**

#### Things to do in the garden in November

Here we are almost the end of October and no real rain. We just have to live in hope that it will appear soon, and then we will be truly British and hope that it will not stop The Planting of Tulips that should be completed by the end of this month.

Cut down faded perennials leaving Penstemon and other late flowering perennials to continue flowering.

If you do not want to risk frost damage to Dahlias and Cannas by overwintering them in the ground. they should be lifted, dried and stored in a frostfree place ready for planting next Spring, if they are being overwintered in the ground they should be covered with a mulch dressing.

Apply an application of mulch dressing to protect Agapanthus from the frost.

Stand pots and containers on feet to prevent waterlogging.

Half hardy Fuchsias and Pelargoniums should be cut back and brought undercover, watering should be reduced so that they remain dormant during the winter months.

Bare root Roses should be planted this month. The roots should be plunged into a bucket of water overnight and planted in a mixture containing Bonemeal, and compost.

Complete the pruning of Climbing Roses and reduce the height of Bush Roses to prevent wind rock during the Winter months.

Continue to sow Sweet Peas under glass or indoors, once they produce two pairs of leaves they should be pricked out into 3" pots and then placed into a cold frame or frost- free place to continue growing slowly.

Oriental grasses should be left until the Spring before being trimmed back.

This is a good month for taking hard wood cuttings of shrubs, they should be 6"-8" long with the top cut angled to shed water just below a pair of buds, the lower cut should be straight just above a pair of buds,

push the cuttings into a deep pot filled with compost, the cuttings should be pushed in around the edge of the pot with the angled cut uppermost. Water the compost and then place the pots in a frostfree place to overwinter.

Amaryllis bulbs should be potted up for Christmas flowering.

Bring potted Hyacinths into a light cool area once they begin to shoot.

Reduce the watering of Houseplants so that the soil surface is dry but the roots are slightly moist, give the plants plenty of light but do not leave them close to a window on frosty nights.

Now is a good time to plant Raspberry Canes, Fruit Trees and Bushes.

Start the winter pruning of Apple and Pear trees.

Aquadulce Broad Beans should be planted now to produce an early crop ahead of the Spring invasion of Blackfly.

Garlic cloves can still be planted.

The grass should be cut on warm dry days with mower blades set on a higher setting.

Try to keep off the lawn when it is frosty.

Continue to rake fallen leaves from the lawn.

John Boon

#### **MERROW HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY - Use it or lose it?**

Please do read this and let us know your views.

Your local gardening club (aka Merrow Horticultural Society) is finding it hard to continue, because no one is coming forward to share the organising of its activities, and therefore succession planning has not been possible. The committee has recently lost some valuable members, and those who are left are struggling to cope without enough help. 'Many hands make light work', and with a few more pairs, there would be no problem!

We have a good venue for meeting at St John's Centre and our financial situation is secure. Membership is stable, but we need some more input and fresh ideas to appeal to the next generation of gardeners in Merrow. Without this, the group will have to gradually reduce its activities and close – a shame after over 100 years!

What would you like to see from a gardening club? We already have monthly talks, and ran a fun quiz last spring. There are local Tree Walks with the tree wardens, and Summer and Autumn shows give a chance to display flowers, fruit, veg, cookery and handicraft. There's a local garden visit, and a discount plant week at a nursery.



#### For the future:

Would practical demonstrations appeal? Taking cuttings, seed saving, willow weaving? The possibility of attending meetings via Zoom for those who can't leave small kids in the evening? Allotment visits between members? A WhatsApp group to get growing advice from experienced gardeners?

What else can you suggest?

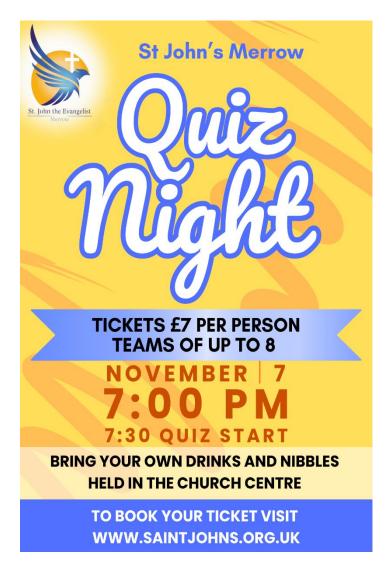
Please do read this and let us know your views: we need to know whether you're not bothered, in which case we go down quietly, or whether there's fresh blood out there and offers of practical help and new ideas to help shape the future of your local gardening club!

In the meanwhile, there's the Chilworth Tree Walk with the Wardens on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2pm.

The last talk of the season is on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November. Geoff Hawkins will be talking about ground cover plants, those useful and decorative low-growing plants that keep out the weeds and give a long display. This will take place at St John's Centre at 7.30pm. There will also be refreshments and discussion of the way forward and we hope to see you there.

Ms. Veronica Plested (01483 569498)

\_\_\_\_\_







#### **ABOUT OUR CATHEDRAL**

#### **Events this month:**

# Saturday 1 November Craft & Flea Makers Market a gathering of local artisans and crafters bringing together the best independent makers, collectors, designers, and creatives from your area. With a wide selection of ceramics, illustrations, candles, jewellery, vintage collections on sale!

### Thursday 6 November 7.30 pm. Fast Love - The Original Tribute to George Michael

We revisit the unforgettable classics of one of the world's most iconic musicians as we honour the soundtrack of your life with a respectful recreation of the greatest hits, spanning from Wham! to his illustrious solo journey.

### The Gatsby Ball in the Cathedral. 8 November afternoon & evening shows. Check for details.

The Glitz & Glamour of the Gatsby World!

Step into the opulence and glamour of the 1920s bringing the Roaring Twenties to life. Don your finest flapper dresses, dapper suits and pearls as we transport you back to the Jazz Age with a night filled with elegance, style, and sophistication. Enjoy a live swing band, playing the biggest hits with an old school Jazz twist! Guaranteed to get you dancing like it's 1925. The Gatsby Ball is the ultimate way to experience the golden age of jazz and glamour.

#### Wednesday 19 November 7.00pm.

#### Nadia Eide's Winter Light at Guildford Cathedral

Nadia is critically acclaimed on stage as an opera and musical theatre star, receiving standing ovations for her concert shows. This November and December she is touring her hugely successful Christmas concert tour **Winter Light.** 

#### **MORE this month at Our Cathedral:**

Step into the joy of Christmas at the Cathedral's ever-popular Christmas Fair 21 & 22 November from 10am to 4pm. A Christmas shopping extravaganza with over 50 stalls offering stunning bespoke gifts, decorations, spirits, jewellery, accessories, and more! Visit the Cathedral Shop for unique gifts, and recharge at Seasons Café for delicious drinks, snacks, and lunches.

Entry is just £3 per person at the door. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to kick-start your Christmas shopping in style!

Nick Bond

#### **MY MEMORIES**

"Come and see what it's like" said my mother one sunny Sunday morning. "Your sister's going, there'll be friends from your School and it'll be fun". I groaned inwardly. I'd been refusing to go to Sunday school for ages but had run out of excuses. "Oh all right, I'll come and see", I said. So, in my Sunday best we set off for church where I was welcomed by the teacher. "Hello Nicholas, bless I'm so glad to see you", she said. "Do have a look round and let's get you settled." I smiled sweetly, had a look round and promptly left. Well, I only agreed to "come and see." I didn't say anything about staying! Before anyone noticed I was outside in the warm sunshine. I can remember clearly what it was like being a country boy in those days. That morning I would have drunk in the delicious air filled with the sound of bird song, there would have been a light breeze rustling the leaves on the trees as the sun threw dappled shadows across my path. My Sunday clothes stifled me and I would have thrown them off and fallen into my shorts, t-shirt and plimsoll. Such a relief! We lived on a farm and I had complete freedom to roam! I would have headed to the farmyard and beyond to apple orchards, cherry orchards, hop fields, oast houses, rickety apple box forts that swayed in the breeze and friends whittling bows and arrows with their knives. Of course, I joined them. It seems unbelievable that I had such a childhood and yet it's all true. I would have seen the church spire in the distance and I knew I would 'cop it'

when I got home but I treasured those times when we played outside all day and every day come rain or shine.

The following is a true story from many decades gone and is about my visit to Sunday School. Nowadays Sunday School, or its equivalent especially at St. John's is, I believe, one heck of a lot of fun!

#### THE VENERABLE STUART BRAKE'S SERMON

[Editor's Note: Reverend Brake kindly visited us at St John's on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October. Here is his sermon for those who were unable to attend}

#### Merrow 12.10.25

Yr C Prop 23

And he was a Samaritan

As I have moved through my life I realize that I am left with a number of mysteries to which there seems to be no answer: why is it that when you put pairs of socks into a washing machine, you always end up with one odd one? When did the DFS Sale start? Why do we feel such an enormous sense of satisfaction when we have put together a piece of furniture from IKEA? Why does bindweed exist? Where are my glasses? Is the Hokey - Cokey really what it's all about?

Another and more appropriate mystery contained in our gospel story this morning is why people react so differently to the same set of circumstances. The gospel reading – can I remind you that it was about Jesus healing ten lepers, people ostracized from ordinary society and human contact, and only one of them returned to thank him – and he was a Samaritan. You might think that every single one of them would jump for joy and come running back to thank Jesus, but only one did and he was a Samaritan.

Now, there is clearly a simple sermon here about gratitude and not taking anyone, let alone God for granted, but I don't think that is why Luke included this account in his gospel.

This story of the healing of the ten lepers only appears in St Luke's gospel. It is not in any of the other three. There are a number of themes that run through Luke's gospel but one very clear one is that the gospel, the good news of Jesus was for absolutely everyone — non-Jews, Gentiles as we are called. Luke himself was a Gentile and was very keen to highlight the fact that God's promises to the people of Israel have been extended to everyone, no matter who they are.

And as the Samaritans were loathed and hated by the Jews of Jesus' day – the response of this particular Samaritan in contrast to the other lepers was utterly remarkable and confronted the stereotypical way in which the popular culture of the time thought of Samaritans.

So there are two more sermons available to me this morning – one is about the inclusive nature of God's love, and the other about treating people as individuals and not stereotypes.

I am reminded of an incident when I was Director of Ordinands in Coventry Diocese in the latter years of the last century.

I was sitting at my desk in the Vicarage one afternoon, quickly trying to read the papers I had been sent about someone who was coming to see me in five minutes time who wanted to be ordained.

There was a ring at the doorbell and, feeling irritated at being disturbed, I went to the door thinking how quickly can I get rid of whoever it is as I need to read the papers before the ordinand arrives.

Standing at the door was a young man in leathers – when I was young, we would have called him a skin head and he had an earring dangling from one of his ears. (In those days that was very novel – I was the first vicar I knew who had a girl in his church choir with a nose stud...).

"Oh no" I thought – "what on earth does he want, and how do I get rid of him?" He said "Canon Brake, I'm sorry but I'm rather early for our appointment, is there somewhere I can wait?"

He went on to be ordained, and the last I heard was that he was a very successful and highly regarded hospital chaplain. I have learnt that God calls all sorts and shapes and types of people to serve in the ordained ministry – as he does not only to other vocations and careers and ministry but also to join his church.

God's love, God's healing, God's care knows no boundaries. It is inclusive and all encompassing. That is clear in the Old Testament as well —the OT is insistent on the need to care for the stranger and the outcast. To care for those we find difficult or are frightened of. Confusingly, it includes all those involved in the complexity of the suffering of Gaza and Israel — even though we give thanks for the new hope of the past few days.

As a church, we often fall into the trap of trying to put boundaries on God's love and react badly to difference. I remember once someone told me that he thought you had to join the National Trust if you wanted to be a member of the Church of England – and I don't know to this day if he was being serious or just making a point.

Many churches and church communities risk becoming (or have become) a cosy club and are not keen on welcoming newcomers or strangers – odd when the Church exists for the benefit of those who are not its members – to quote William Temple.

As a church we are open to all – their gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, lifestyle are all irrelevant – even those we radically disagree with! Today's gospel reminds us that it is not up to us to limit God's limitless love – all are welcome.

There is, of course, another sermon lurking about here – and that is how we respond to the complex issues of immigration that figure so strongly in our news. I am not going to try to solve that now but as I reflect on my own life, I can recall how society has always stigmatized or scapegoated certain groups: the young; the elderly; unmarried mothers; aids victims; the rich; estate agents; politicians; bankers; the poor; northerners; southerners; Muslims; jews.; asylum seekers, illegal immigrants. And that is the way in which we depersonalize people – a convenient way of forgetting that all these groups contain individuals like you and me, with their own individual life story. Our gospel, our good

news is about a God who loves people individually – no matter what – and we have to find a way to do that in his name.

A brief gospel with some important reminders — about gratitude, about accepting people as they are, about the inclusive nature of God's love — another way of describing this and every Eucharist.



#### **WHO'S WHO**

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- Centre Manager	Barry Dickinson	centrem	anager@saintjohns.org.uk	
Web site: www.saintjohn	<u>ıs.org.uk</u>	Email: office@saintjohns.org.uk		
PCC Secretary PCC Treasurer Gift Aid, Legacies and Parish Giving Scheme Organist and Choir Director Babies and Toddlers Group Baby Basics Bell Ringers Bible Reading Fellowship Cathedral Link Children's Society representative Christian Aid Organiser Electoral Roll Flower coordinator		Micky Clare Jane Farquharson babybasics@saintj Jane Farquharson Jenny Welbourn Nick Bond Judith Sampson vacant Carole Burtonwood	538306 07765 620017 johns.org.uk 458128 07765 620017 825541 579462 571847	
Magazine Advertisements Merrow C of E Infant Sch		Alan Thorn adverts@saintjohns.org.uk Louisa Dormer (Executive Headteacher)		
Church Governors		Emma Hooper (De Michael Eagle Lindsay Dobson		
Safeguarding Officer St John's Merrow, Pre-Sc Diocesan Lay Pastoral As		Rosanne Bond 579462 Amanda Bazley (Manager) 454625 Helen Chambers 846574		
Readings and Intercession Weekly News Sheet TiC and Lay Parish represent Wednesday Coffee Morni Transport Website contact	sentative	Joe Bullock Isla Stables Gerald Hunt Rosanne Bond Parish Office (as a	07521 960480 office@saintjohns.org.uk 567599 07545 256114 579462 above)	

For any changes to Who's Who, please email cathy.thompson@saintjohns.org.uk

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