

News & Greetings  
from Forest Hill Methodist Church  
March to May 2026

Dear Friends

This year, the journey from Lent to Easter feels a little different in our house. As many of you know, we're expecting a baby — due on Easter Sunday of all days! There's something beautifully fitting about that timing (even if it is rather inconvenient for my work!!). As we prepare to celebrate new life in Christ, we're also preparing to welcome new life into our family.

Waiting is a strange and holy thing.

Lent is a season of waiting. We wait thoughtfully. We wait prayerfully. We wait with intention. It's not the kind of waiting you do in a queue or at a bus stop — it's the kind where something inside you is quietly growing and changing.

That's exactly what these past months have felt like for us. We've been clearing space in our home, shifting routines, assembling furniture (sometimes successfully!), and imagining how life is about to look very different. There's excitement, yes — but also trepidation, fear, surrender. Because when the baby arrives, life doesn't stay the same. It can't. Everything adjusts. Priorities will have to shift. Love stretches you. You are changed.

And I wonder if that's what Lent is really about.

We don't walk toward Easter just to remember something that happened long ago. We walk toward Easter because resurrection changes things. When Jesus rose, the disciples didn't simply go back to "normal." Their fear turned into courage. Their confusion into purpose. Their lives were re-shaped around hope.

Easter isn't meant to be a lovely service followed by business as usual.

So here's my gentle challenge to us all: as we wait through Lent, let's prepare as though something truly life-altering is coming — because it is. What might need clearing out in your life to make room for resurrection? What habits, hurts, or distractions need laying down? What new thing might God be growing in you, quietly, even now?

I know that when our baby arrives, I won't be the same person I am today. And I don't want to arrive at Easter unchanged either.

May we wait well. May we prepare room. And may we welcome both new life and new hope with open hearts — ready to be transformed.

***Reverend Craig Gaffney***



***'If the Lord does not build the house, the work of the builders is useless...'***

These are the familiar opening words of Psalm 127 (page 612 Old Testament, Good News Bible)..

I heard recorded comments of MPs early in February 2026 on Radio 4's Yesterday in Parliament Programme. These referred to British bricks. Many more are needed to fulfil this country's ambitious programme of home-building in the next few years, 1.5 million by the end of this current Parliament in 2029.

What is a 'home'? For the 'homeless' who have been sleeping on sofas of friends or surviving as 'rough' sleepers, a 'home' is probably a flat for rent with a key to the door that can be turned to secure a private safe space for the person and freedom from the pressures of the streets outside.

How do we provide 'affordable' appropriate housing across the nation. We can start with the vision of achieving this as well as investment in skills-training in all aspects of building, maybe in bricks made from local clay in regional factories by major manufacturers such as the London Brick Company established in 1877.

For centuries houses have been built of brick (or stone). Children drew pictures of houses with doors and windows and roofs with chimneys to allow the smoke from open grate fires or range-cookers to escape. Will children's drawings in future show houses with solar panels on the roof and electric cars parked outside recharging on the home-based electricity outlet.

The population in the 2020s lives in high-rise apartment blocks (built to replace bombed residential streets after World War 2), in two bed or larger terraced or semi-detached houses. There are newer dwellings too but not enough which may seem surprising given that there was a boom of babies born at the end of WW2. That baby-boom has been acknowledged for the past 80 years but the appropriate housing provision has been limited. The older generation tends to favour single storey building, spacious with room for wheelchairs to move, easy to run, electric sockets at waist-high level (no bending), but less than 1% of new builds has been of this type.

Now climate change is making its impact on us and our homes. Sudden extreme changes in temperature, repeated gale force wind storms or heatwaves need to be offset to protect health and safety and continuity of our daily lives including activities like going to school or work or shopping. Are kit-houses an answer – relatively quickly constructed equivalent to the old prefabs. More up-to-date design takes account of the need for sustainable use day-to-day of 'renewables'. These are sources of wind, wave and solar power to heat our homes or used to cook or wash. Double or even triple glazing with effective whole house insulation is available too so central heating could be needed less often.

Have we got the vision and sense of purpose to achieve the provision of safe and secure homes for our population? We face a major challenge. More British bricks could be the answer made from clay mixed with sand, water and additives like iron oxide, lime or magnesia. The clay mixture is shaped then kiln-fired to produce durable bricks for construction. We may already have the physical resources we need but to fulfil the vision, attitude and values matter as much.

***Pam Dowling***



## Happy Birthday to

March	Donell De Graft Johnson on 6 <sup>th</sup> , Vicky Hayford on 9 <sup>th</sup> , Avery James Benn on 16 <sup>th</sup> , Aaron Williams on 20 <sup>th</sup> and Jane Koranteng-Addo on 31 <sup>st</sup> .
April	Jordan Davis on 2 <sup>nd</sup> , Lily Herbert-Blankson on 10 <sup>th</sup> , Joshua Williams and Shacaz Welsh on 20 <sup>th</sup> , Taiwo Dayo-Payne on 23 <sup>rd</sup> and Natalie Bartley on 29 <sup>th</sup> .
May	Krystal Norris on 5 <sup>th</sup> , Herbert Blankson on 9 <sup>th</sup> , Sheila Martey on 10 <sup>th</sup> , Siphon Mnguni on 13 <sup>th</sup> , Pam Dowling on 15 <sup>th</sup> , John Collis on 16 <sup>th</sup> and Pat Bray on 18 <sup>th</sup> .



### World Piano Day on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Piano Day, an annual worldwide event founded by a group of like-minded people, takes place on the 88th day of the year because of the number of keys on the instrument being celebrated. Established in 2015, it is now well known across the globe. Every year it provokes special concerts, onstage and online, as well as radio shows, podcasts, and playlists. Eltham Park orchestra are celebrating this special day at their concert programme on 29<sup>th</sup> March – see <http://psaorchestra.uk>. For more information see the website <https://pianoday.org>.

### Circuit Easter Offering Service

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026, 4.30pm at Burnt Ash Methodist Church, refreshments from 4pm

Guest Preacher: Reverend Pam Clews

The Easter Offering 2026 service focuses on freedom. Jesus talks about God's kingdom as a place of release from captivity, and this year's Offering, ***Unbound: a gospel that breaks barriers***, tells stories of how this is true. People across the world might be trapped in many ways – by poverty, by violence, by the actions of others or by their own past. Sometimes the things that bind us are in our hearts. Through Bible study, worship and story, ***Unbound: a gospel that breaks barriers*** offers inspiration and prayer for all those struggling for liberation.

### Christian Aid Coffee Morning

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2026 10.30am to 12.30pm

Come and join us at the start of Christian Aid Week and help support their 2026 appeal 'God's Extravagant Love'.

### World Bee Day

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Bees play a pivotal role in food production. World Bee Day 2026 is a reminder that nearly 75% of our food crops rely to some extent on pollination, primarily by bees. A world without them could mean a world without fruits, nuts, and many vegetable varieties. For more information see

### Church Anniversary, Gift Day & Holy Communion

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026 at 11am

Service led by Reverend Craig Gaffney followed by a Bring-and-Share lunch.



## FOREST HILL ORGANIST/PIANIST ROTA

### MARCH TO MAY 2026

DATE	PREACHER	SERVICE	ORGANIST/PIANIST
1 <sup>st</sup> March	Raphael Ayanfejesu	Lent 2	John Collis
8 <sup>th</sup>	Chris Watkins	Lent 3 <i>Joint at Wesley Hall</i>	-----
15 <sup>th</sup>	Craig Gaffney	Mothering Sunday Holy Communion	Ishani O'Connor
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Valerie Tredinnick	Lent 5	Ishani O'Connor
29 <sup>th</sup>	Milton Boothe	Palm Sunday	Catherine Chieng
2 <sup>nd</sup> April at 7pm	Craig Gaffney	Maundy Thursday Holy Communion <b>Joint with Wesley Hall</b>	Sylvie Warner
3 <sup>rd</sup> at 10.30am	Craig Gaffney	Good Friday <b>Joint with Wesley Hall</b>	John Collis
5 <sup>th</sup>	Taiwo Dayo-Payne	Easter Day Love Feast	John Collis
12 <sup>th</sup>	Joe Koroma	Easter 2	Ishani O'Connor
19 <sup>th</sup>	Lesley Murray	Easter 3 <b>Joint with Wesley Hall</b>	Catherine Chieng
26 <sup>th</sup>	Hilary Waterhouse	Easter 4	Ishani O'Connor
3 <sup>rd</sup> May	Craig Gaffney	Easter 5 Holy Communion	John Collis
10 <sup>th</sup>	Raphael Ayanfejesu	Easter 6	Sylvie Warner
17 <sup>th</sup>	Beccie North	Ascension	Ishani O'Connor
24 <sup>th</sup>	William Davis	Pentecost <i>Joint at Wesley Hall</i>	-----
31 <sup>st</sup>	Craig Gaffney	Trinity Sunday Church Anniversary, Gift Day & Holy Communion	Ishani O'Connor

Could I please have contributions for the June to August 2026 edition  
of News and Greetings by no later than Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

Thank you. Margaret Baker