

News & Greetings
from Forest Hill Methodist Church
June to August 2026

Dear Friends

Over the past few weeks, I've discovered that there are two things guaranteed to capture my attention at 3:17 in the morning: the sound of our daughter crying, and the realisation that I am somehow still expected to function as a coherent human being on three hours of sleep.

As many of you know, our daughter, Iris Grace Gaffney, was born on Easter Saturday. She is tiny, beautiful, and already seems to have mastered the art of ensuring that every adult in the house revolves around her schedule.

Thank you so much for all your prayers, kind messages, cards, and the incredibly generous gift you gave us following Iris's birth. We have been deeply touched by your love and support. It means more to us than we can say.

One of the lovely things people keep telling us is that Iris is clearly beginning to recognise and respond to our voices. Apparently, even though she still looks at me with an expression that says, "I'm not entirely convinced about this beard," she already knows the sound of her mum and dad and searches for our voices.

That got me thinking about Jesus' words in John 10:1–10. In this passage, Jesus describes himself as the Good Shepherd and says, "His sheep follow him because they know his voice."

It is one of those wonderfully simple images that carries profound truth. Sheep don't gather around for a theological seminar. They don't compare notes or hold committee meetings. They simply know the voice of the Shepherd they trust.

That recognition doesn't happen overnight. Sheep learn their Shepherd's voice by hearing it again and again.

That recognition is built over time. Iris is learning our voices because she hears them every day. She hears them when she is fed, held, soothed, and loved. Our voices are becoming associated with comfort and safety. She does not understand our words yet, but she knows enough to trust the sound of them. Over time, our voices become familiar to her. They mean safety, love, and the promise that someone is near.

Isn't that a beautiful picture of the Christian life?

The same is true for us as Christians. Learning to hear the voice of God is not usually about dramatic moments or booming announcements from heaven. More often, it is about becoming so familiar with Jesus that we begin to recognise his voice above all the others. And, friends, this does not happen by accident. We cannot expect to know the voice of the Shepherd if we are not investing ourselves in learning it. It requires intentionality on our part.

We hear his voice when we read Scripture. We hear his voice in prayer. We hear his voice in worship and in the encouragement of fellow believers. The more time we spend with him, the more clearly we begin to recognise the tone of grace, the accent of truth, and the unmistakable sound of love.

Of course, there are plenty of other voices clamouring for our attention—voices of strangers (John 10:5), fear, comparison, doubt, and distraction. Some of them are loud, persuasive, and oddly convincing at two in the morning. But, as we continue to listen to the Shepherd, we learn to distinguish his words from all the noise around us.

Jesus says that his sheep know his voice. And what does the Shepherd's voice say? It calls us by name. It leads us to safety and is with us in any struggle and challenge we face along the way. It assures us that we are known and loved. And in this passage, Jesus reminds us that he has come so that we may have life, and have it to the full (10:10).

As Iris learns to recognise our voices, my prayer is that all of us would continue to grow in recognising the voice of Jesus—trusting his guidance, resting in his care, and following where he leads.

With every blessing,

Reverend Craig Gaffney



Just Joking?

In the early hours of April 29th 2026, a lorry, a crane and a team of people stopped in Waterloo Place, St Jame's, Westminster, central London, to erect a 25 foot resin sculpture on a plinth. The image depicted a man in a suit striding out, carrying a flag that had blown across his face blinding him to the probability that he was stepping close to the edge of the plinth and could plunge over into the darkness. This satirical art work was created by the Bristol-born, street artist, Banksy, who left his signature on the side of the plinth and confirmed later on Instagram that it was he who had made the art. (See photo below.)

I found the image very funny and clever pointing to the danger that can arise when human beings take themselves overly seriously, at times and in certain circumstances, including public protest, especially when 'blinded' by lack of vision.

I wondered whether the sculpture would be taken away by the authorities as it was a street-art installation placed without permission. I learned that the Banksy statue “remains in place and has not been removed” (Yahoo). In fact, Westminster City Council “despite the installation being unsanctioned, has decided to allow the statue to remain publicly accessible and has implemented protective measures around it”. Why? The Council has described the piece as a “striking addition” to the City’s public art scene and has not issued any plans for removal while its long-term future is considered.

Enjoy!

Pam Dowling



Happy Wedding Anniversary to

June Shayon and Adrian Desir on 2nd, Reverend Pam and Tony Clews on 8th, Lorna and Calvin Hayles on 25th.

August Jane and Roy Koranteng-Addo on 16th and Serena and Nana Buckman on 26th.

Happy Birthday to

June Iris Jacks on 3rd, Ato Taylor (Vicky’s son) on 5th, Joshua Bruce (Bernice’s son) and Colleen Creasey on 7th, Grai Henry on 10th, Jaydev Sutharsan (Mini’s son) on 11th, Alivia Jennings on 15th, Matthew Creasey on 24th, James Mills on 25th and Charissa King on 27th.

July Venetia Addo-Ansong (Bernice’s daughter) on 5th, Ariana Williams and Tony Clews on 12th, Bernice Adu-Gyamfi on 15th, Lafonsia Williams and Sylvie Warner on 21st, Shayon Desir and Brenda Renshaw on 26th, Reverend Pam Clews, Samuel Coker-Gibbs and Eugene Nkrumah on 27th.

August Sheila Cox on 1st, Augustine Shaw on 2nd, Reni Osibamowo on 9th, Brenda Onatade on 17th, Sylvester Coker-Gibbs on 27th, Scott Creasey, Jerrell Martey, Janet Bartley and Alex Johnson on 28th and Anaiya Davis-Emuh on 29th.

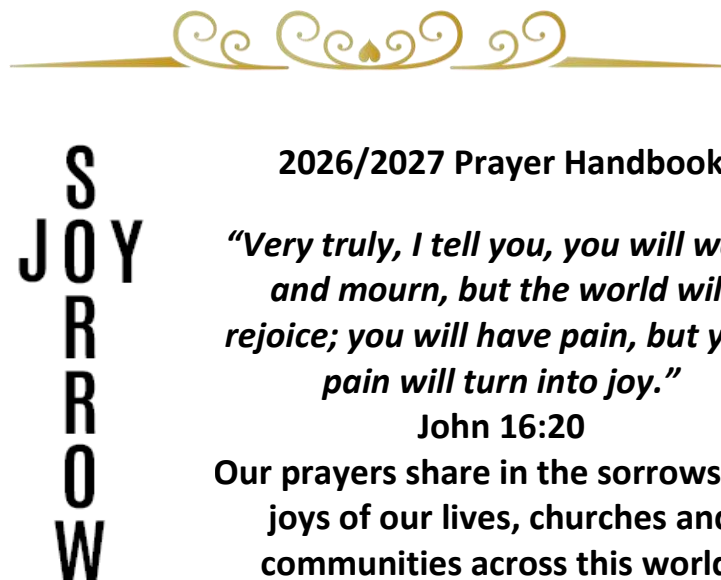


Saying "goodbye" to Heart & Soul

Heart & Soul magazine has been a valued part of Methodist Homes Association for many years, sharing stories of care, compassion and community across our services.

While the heart and soul of our organisation remain unchanged, we have retired the title to make way for '**Make it Matter**', a magazine that more clearly reflects the real-world impact of our work and the difference our supporters make every day.

You can read the April issue of Make it Matter and previous editions of Heart & Soul at this link: <https://mha.org.uk/support-us/make-it-matter>



For 2026/2027, the words **Sorrow** and **Joy** are chosen like grid references on a map, compass bearings. As with many paradoxical word phrases – faith and doubt, life and death, light and darkness, noise and silence – 'sorrow' and 'joy' are like ingredients mixed and baked in a batch of bread, blended and distilled, creating the unique flavours of our lives.

As a Church, we offer mission, ministry and worship in a world increasingly in conflict and divisions, bringing much sorrow. How we deal with conflict and divisions personally and together within the life of the Church matters.

We invite you to respond in prayer faithfully and fruitfully as peace-makers and reconcilers to each other and the world.

In our collective life of faith, we want to recognise and support Methodist people who may need a boost of joy in the Lord to keep being and doing what we are called to be and do.

We invite prayers for people who give freely of their time to serve the Church in a voluntary capacity and for people who minister in diverse and often challenging circumstances. May our prayers recognise that sorrow and joy run and flow through each other and through each one of us, because maybe one is the way to the other, because Jesus holds them both with us.

*Information from Methodist Church website
www.methodist.uk/fai th/methodist-prayer-handbook/*



Windrush Day is a commemoration in the United Kingdom held on 22 June to honour the contributions of migrants to the post-war economy. It celebrates African-Caribbeans who began arriving on the HMT Empire Windrush in 1948, later known as the "Windrush generation". Windrush Day is not a bank holiday and has grown in popularity since a campaign by Patrick Vernon led to its introduction in 2018. See the Lewisham Council website for more information about events in June to celebrate this special day <https://lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/events/windrush-day>



ST CHRISTOPHER'S
**OPEN
GARDENS**
Your guide to gardens
opening this summer
to raise money for
St Christopher's



Please visit our website for updates
and details of Pop Up Open Gardens
stchristophers.org.uk/opengardens

Registered charity 210067 registered with the Fundraising Regulator
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Open Gardens 2026

Visit one of our open gardens this summer. Explore some of the hidden gems in your area whilst raising money for the hospice! Whether you're an experienced or budding horticulturalist seeking inspiration or just looking for some lovely days out over the summer, then get ready for Open Gardens!

Between April and September, glorious gardens and amazing allotments from across south east London are opening to the public to raise money for St Christopher's.

Many Open Gardens hold plant sales and serve tea and homemade cakes so you can really make a day of it.

<https://www.stchristophers.org.uk/opengardens>



FOREST HILL ORGANIST/PIANIST ROTA
JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

Date	Preacher	Service	Organist/pianist
7 th June		Ordinary 10 Local Arrangement	John Collis
14 th	William Davis	Baptism	Catherine Chieng
21 st	Pam Clews	Father's Day Holy Communion	Ishani O'Connor
28 th	Milton Boothe		Sylvie Warner
5 th July	Craig Gaffney	Bible Month Week 1 Holy Communion Café General Church Meeting after the Service	John Collis Catherine Chieng Sylvie Warner
12 th	Raphael Ayanfejesu	Bible Month Week 2	Catherine Chieng
19 th	Taiwo Dayo-Payne	Bible Month Week 3	Ishani O'Connor
26 th	Lesley Murray	Bible Month Week 4	Sylvie Warner
2 nd August		Ordinary 18 <i>Joint at Burnt Ash or Wesley Hall</i>	----
9 th	Craig Gaffney	Ordinary 19 Holy Communion	Ishani O'Connor
16 th	Bernard Muah	Ordinary 20	Sylvie Warner
23 rd	Mary Sparkes	Ordinary 21	Catherine Chieng
30 th	Taiwo Dayo-Payne	Ordinary 22 <i>Joint at Wesley Hall</i>	----

Could I please have contributions for the September to November 2026 edition
of News and Greetings by no later than Tuesday 15th August 2026.
Thank you. Margaret Baker