



October 2026

Minister's Letter

I hope that this letter finds you well. You should have received your membership ticket from your pastoral visitor. What do you do with your membership ticket? What does it mean to you? Some people keep their membership ticket in their Bible, some on the mantelpiece, or in a drawer never to be looked at again. If you are a reader, I find using it as a bookmark helpful. I know that many also receive the Methodist Prayer handbook which reminds us that we are part of a bigger Methodist family.

What does being a member of Surbiton Hill Methodist Church mean to you? We will probably all answer that question differently, but as the profile of the church changes to an older congregation with rental income from community usage now significantly higher than giving, we find ourselves as a leadership team asking difficult questions about moving forward. I am sure many people have ideas but that is not really the problem. The problem is seeking a God-inspired vision that includes members who are on the edge of church, who can benefit from the wisdom of an older congregation but yet move the church to meet the needs of seekers of God today. It is wonderful to have an idea, but if it is not from God and prayerfully discerned, it is just an idea. Even if prayerfully discerned, if people do not offer their gifts and talents to make it a reality, then the moment passes.

As members of the church, we are trusting God to guide us in every area of our lives, seeking him in our day-to-day living. God calls us all to lives of worship and service. We are his angels here on earth. Being a member means that we not only support the church financially, but we worship together and use our gifts and talents to serve the church and the community. Some members have done this and are no longer able to attend church due to ill health, frailty or having moved away. We now support them with

prayers and through the ministry of pastoral visitors, who pray and encourage but may not be able to help practically for lots of different reasons.

What does membership mean to you? How is your membership impacting the sharing of the good news with others and growing God's kingdom? I recently asked Chat GPT what the qualities are that growing churches all have in common. I received an extensive answer:

- ***A clear sense of purpose and identity, who they are and why they exist and who they are trying to serve.***
- ***A warm culture of welcome and belonging.***
- ***A strong focus on discipleship, prayer, Bible study, small groups, serving, spiritual mentoring.***
- ***Members who invite and share their faith.***
- ***Ministry that connects with the local community.***
- ***Worship that helps people encounter God.***
- ***A culture of prayer.***
- ***Openness to change whilst keeping core beliefs.***

As you read this letter, I encourage you to reflect on these questions and ask God's guidance as to what part you must play as a member of Surbiton Hill Methodist Church. Are we doing all the things above, are you a part of them? The Bible assures us that when we seek God, we will find him and when we ask, he will give us good gifts.

We are grateful for the faithful who support this church and pray that we will all journey together to ensure that we continue to be a place where the transforming love of God is experienced and that we serve our community and God's world.

So, I end as I began; what does your membership at Surbiton Hill Methodist Church mean to you?

Blessings,

Vindra

Network Fellowship

This is a friendly group which meets fortnightly on Monday afternoons and is open to all. The programme includes talks, photography, music, games and members' afternoons.

The afternoon starts with a time of devotions and ends with tea and biscuits (and cake if someone has a birthday!), when there is time to chat to those around you.

Monday 5 October *Having a Riot at Surbiton Assembly Rooms* with Tim Harrison, who edits the Good Life magazine.

Monday 19 October *Travels around the National Trust* with Pat Lavers.

For more information, speak to Marina Golding or Maggie Turner.

Bible Study and Fellowship

It is so essential to a growing church both as individuals and corporately that we come together to have fellowship and to study God's word. There are two main opportunities for Bible study as part of our regular church life.

Firstly, a group of people meet together most Wednesday mornings from 10 - 11.30am at David and Carol Fullbrook's house, 21 Waverley Avenue, Surbiton to reflect on the previous Sunday's service and study the Bible passages used in the service, but in more depth than the service time allows. Reading and understanding the Bible is central to our faith, and we would love it if you would like to join us. This month these studies will take place on **Wednesday 7 and 21 October**.

Secondly, we will be meeting every other Wednesday from 7.30pm at the Tennis Club to study the Book of Acts. These studies are led by Denis Vernon and are wonderful opportunities to really understand God's word. We will be meeting on **7 and 21 October**.

These meetings are open to ALL. You need only have a desire to understand the Bible better and what it says for you and your life.

David Fullbrook

Mid-week Communion followed by Coffee

Wednesday 14 October at 10.30am. Communion will be followed by coffee and a time to talk together. This month Rev Alana Lawrence will lead our devotions.



Zoom Prayers

'Where do our tracks take us?'

Watchman Nee, a famous Chinese evangelist, wrote that our prayers lay down the track along which God's power can come. Like a mighty locomotive, his power is irresistible, but it cannot reach us without rails.

A praying church is a Godly church and one which openly seeks God's will for it both in individual lives and also as a corporate body. We have to offer all we are doing to him to understand the way that the tracks will take us. Only then can we really experience God's incredible power.

Surbiton Hill needs to continue to grow into that praying church and so we have started a Church Prayer time **every Monday evening from 7.00 -7.30pm**.

The prayer time is open to all and we will be using the zoom conference calls. The number each week is <https://zoom.us/j/98681008326?pwd=awHFFb8dd0LXtOVsQekPQBHh1vN18K.1>

Meeting ID: 986 8100 8326

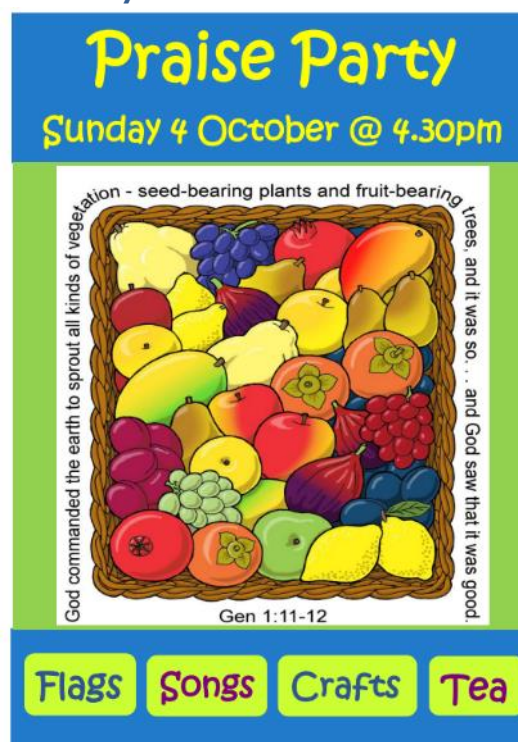
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You do not have to be there every week and indeed you do not have to be there for all the time that the call is open (just dip in and out). If we are able to do this, God's power will be like that mighty locomotive running to and through us on the right tracks and in the right direction.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

David Fullbrook

Praise Party



Thanks

After five months' absence from SHMC services recovering from a broken ankle in April I was delighted to return to church on 30 August and to be greeted by hugs and warm greetings by friends including Stan Brown. I was grateful to increase my confidence in my ability to move and stand about during my duty as a Communion Steward. Doctors and nurses have advised me to "Use the Leg!" once the plaster was removed; they have looked after me well. Although the healing process is well under way, it takes time and patience for the ankle to completely mend as Vindra knows well. As I have recently passed my 90th Birthday elderly bones are more fragile, but my medication is designed to help prevent future breakage.

I have been thankful for prayers, and I have been superbly supported by my wonderful drivers, Mike Bibby and Cathy Goring who normally drive me to church, and who have given me sterling service in accompanying me to hospital appointments and shopping and have kindly resumed normal Sunday service. I am greatly in debt to them.

I am surrounded by neighbours who have shown me great love and concern and have also helped in various ways. Like Mike and Cathy, they have been absolute treasures. I have always had three emails a week from my colleagues at St. Paul's Cathedral keeping me in touch. In this troubled world there is considerable good around us and we thank God for his influence.

Mark Lunt

Ladies Badminton

Ladies badminton meet on Wednesdays throughout the year in the Upper hall at 1.30pm. We are a small group of players of mixed ability and would welcome some new players to join us. During the year we meet up socially for meals out, BBQs and birthday celebrations.

If you are interested, please speak to me or pay us a visit one Wednesday afternoon. Alternatively speak to the Church Administrator for contact details. You will be made very welcome.

Margaret Hines



Books urgently needed

Paperback books for the book swap shelves.

For the past 12/18 months the books on the book swap shelves have mainly been kindly donated by Graham and Ruth Harding from Betty's vast book stock. This supply has now ended.

If, like me, you have read paperback books during the long hot summer, perhaps you could donate them to the church book swap shelves in the lower corridor by the doors to the lower hall. Either give them to me or leave them on the top of the shelves. All books are available on a take one and donate one principle. The discarded books are taken to charity shops.

Cynthia Jones

100th Birthday

Our longstanding and much-loved member of this church, Christine Griffiths, celebrated her 100th birthday on 5 September. She had a lovely celebration with her family and friends at the Foley Arms in Claygate, received a card from the King and attended a street party in her road as a guest of honour along with the Mayor. Many Congratulations, Christine!



Carol Fullbrook

Welcome Service for Alana

The Welcome Service for Rev Alana Lawrence, the new Minister for both Kingston and New Malden Methodist Churches, was held at Kingston Methodist Church on Sunday 13 September. The Worshipful the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Councillor Thay Thayalan and Mayoress, Mrs Lata Thayalan attended the service and are pictured here with Rev Alana Lawrence (second left), the Methodist London District Chair, Rev Dr Jonathan Dean, and Superintendent Minister for the Kingston upon Thames Methodist Circuit, Rev Vindra Maraj-Ogden.



.....and it was lovely to see Stan and Mary Brown again!

They were at Surbiton Hill at the end of August when Stan took the morning service. There was plenty of time to catch up with Stan and Mary who were quite pleased to be away from home for the weekend as their kitchen was being totally renovated!



The Leadership Team took them for lunch to Hart's Boatyard before they headed back to Gloucester.

Not the clearest photo but we all enjoyed our food!



Prayers for October

Gracious Father, we come to you in humble prayer asking for your help in our times of weakness and insecurity. We get lost in the bustle of our daily lives and noise which can overtake our day and push you to one side; grant us the wisdom to set aside a daily time for you and to look for you in the quiet moments that come after the storms as David did when in the desert after the storms had passed.

We commit to you those of our congregation needing support through illness, aging and recovery and may we as individuals find time to support those members of our Church family in whatever way we can using the gifts that you have granted us.

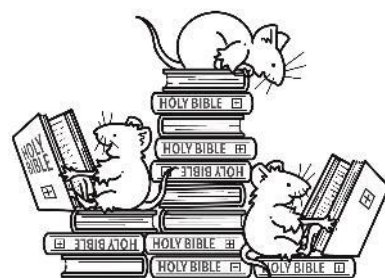
We pray for the church at Surbiton Hill and ask that you guide us in the way forward, that we as a church serve as a faithful witness to your love and kindness to our congregation and the community around us in the way that we live.

We commend to you those people around the world that do not have the freedoms that we enjoy in this country, whether it be through oppression or war-torn countries such as Ukraine and Iran. We remember the Christians in those places who are forced to worship you in fear and secret not able to profess their faith openly in public and proclaim your name.

We pray for the Church throughout the world and thank you that people are looking to you in many places as they find that the ways of the world do not provide the answers and leave that emptiness that only you can fill and give us life to the full.

Father, we commit all these things, ourselves and our time to you, ever thankful for the knowledge that you are there and the sacrifice that you made for us on the cross. May we continue to walk the path with you and be ever thankful for the faithful preaching of your word, that we may be challenged by it and as a result want to know and understand more. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

Graham Harding



Where are they now?

It is always interesting to hear about church members who have moved away for various reasons and where they are now. Over the next few months Prospect will feature some of the people who have moved away from Surbiton and this church.

Our second contributor is Mary Heathcote:

Three years ago I moved to Penkridge, a town between Stafford and Wolverhampton where Elizabeth I is known to have stayed at the White Hart Inn. It lies on the River Penk and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal. It has a twice-weekly market and a growing population with many new houses, including mine, but is usually referred to as the village by locals.



I moved to be nearer to my sister, two brothers and two nephews and their families, all of whom I see fairly regularly, and I have

settled in well. I go to a Knit and Natter group at the Cannock church (above) where we make baby blankets and clothes for the local hospital and for the Baby Bear project in South Africa.

I often enjoy walking by the canal, play badminton once a week and pétanque several times a week if the weather allows. I also joined the WI and Phoenix club both of which have a monthly meeting and arrange trips and entertainment. I now belong to a choir - the Chase Choral Society - and we have regular concerts of well-known songs.

I still pop up at Surbiton Hill from time to time and always feel welcome. If anyone cares to venture this way please let me know; it would be good to see you.

Mary Heathcote



Mary is on the right, her twin Ann in the middle and brother Richard.

You've got the wrong person!

Written by the Rev Roy Shaw, a retired but active priest in the diocese of York, where he is a spiritual director.

At church recently, we stood to sing Charles Wesley's hymn 'Come Holy Ghost our hearts inspire'. Except the organist was playing the tune which normally accompanies the Christmas carol 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night'. (No, not 'On Ilkley Moor bar t'aht' - the other one).

I had never sung Wesley's hymn to this tune before, and it took a bit of believing that it was possible, a bit of getting used to. Some hymn tunes are what I call 'portmanteau tunes' - we can sing a number of hymns to the same tune, and we are usually quite happy about it. But we mess with carols at our peril! Most people know them, and they have become identified with very particular hymn tunes. Give us what we expect, please, organist!

We can all be a bit fixed like this. The Bible is full of examples of 'Who me? You've made a mistake there, God!'. Or it comes down to 'Here I am, Lord, send him!' Perhaps the most well-known example is Jonah, who was so convinced that God had made a mistake in calling him to go and tell the citizens of Nineveh to turn from their wicked ways, that he set off in entirely the opposite direction, and took a ship going west, until he was ambushed by God and ended up in the belly of the great fish. But once Jonah realised God was serious, and that God would be with him, he set off as God had asked him to.

Moses is another example. 'Me, tell Pharaoh to let my people go? Me? You cannot be serious, Lord!' But again, once Moses was convinced that this was the way God wanted him to go, he submitted to God's plan, and became the great leader of his people, bringing them out of slavery in Egypt to the boundary of the Promised Land.

God's plans for us are always bigger than our horizons can presently accommodate. If you have a niggling feeling God is calling you to a particular task, or to abandon a particular something, it may take time to come round to God's point of view, but it will ultimately turn out to be a better way. When God calls, he does not leave us at that point; he will always resource us for the task, often in surprising ways.

'Who, me, Lord?' Yes, YOU!

This article is taken from a website called Parish Pump which contains items for those compiling church news sheets. The mouse pictures come from here also, as did the Wisden article in the September Prospect.



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Wednesday 9.30am – 1.30pm
Thursday 9.30am – 1.30pm
Friday 9.30am – 12.30pm

Circuit Coordinator: Michael Axton

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On Wednesday and Thursday Michael works from home.

Circuit Information

If you have any news or contributions which you would like to share with the Circuit, please email them to Michael Axton at: maxton@kingstoncircuit.org.uk by **Tuesday 20 October** for inclusion in the November newsletters.

November 2026 Prospect

Copy for the November 2026 issue should be sent by email to shmcprospect@gmail.com

If this mode of transmission is not possible, please give a hard copy to the editor, Linda Bridges.

The closing date is Sunday 18 October



October 2026 Diary

Sunday morning worship in church is livestreamed on our YouTube channel. These services stay on our YouTube channel as recordings – you can watch them at any time.

4 October 10.30am: Sunhee Han
4.30pm: Praise Party - David Fullbrook

11 October 10.30am: Local Arrangement
Speaker: Tony Miller, Director of the Whitechapel Mission

18 October 10.30am: Rev Denis Vernon
HOLY COMMUNION

25 October 10.30am: Jilly Bridges
4.30pm: Rev Vindra Maraj-Ogden
REMEMBERING SERVICE

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**MONDAY** 2.00pm: Network Fellowship  
**5 October**  
*Having a Riot at Surbiton Assembly Rooms with Tim Harrison*  
**19 October**  
*Travels around the National Trust with Pat Lavers*  
7.00pm: Zoom Prayers for all to attend

**TUESDAY** 10.00am: Oasis Toddler Group – every week during term time

**WEDNESDAY** 9.30am: Mixed Tennis  
10.00am: Bible Study and Fellowship  
**7 and 21 October**  
10.30am: Midweek Communion  
**14 October**  
1.30pm: Ladies Badminton  
7.30pm: Table Tennis Club  
7.30pm: Bible Study at the Tennis Club  
**7 and 21 October**

**THURSDAY** 9.30am: Mixed Tennis  
2.00pm: Craft and Chat  
**22 October**

**SATURDAY** 1.30pm: Mixed Tennis

### Church Meetings in October

|                              |                |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Thursday 8 October at 7.30pm | Finance        |
| Tuesday 13 October at 7.30pm | Leadership     |
| Tuesday 20 October at 8.00pm | Church Council |