



January 2026

LINK-up

Keeping Churches in Touch

www.godalmingchurches.org

facebook.com/ChurchesTogetherinGodalmingandDistrict

Message from the Chair

A friend commented on Facebook that it would be much more sensible to have New Year at a different time from the depths of winter. As an accountant, this friend knows that indeed it used to be: until the reform of the calendar in 1752, New Year's Day in Britain was 25 March, the Feast of the Annunciation, or Lady Day, and that the only remaining relic of this is the oddity of the tax year beginning on 5 April. Well that's not 25 March, you will say, which is true, except that part of the reform of 1752 was to shift the calendar forward by ten days to bring it back into line with the seasons, hence 5 April.

The new arrangement was known as the Gregorian calendar because it had been put into effect in Roman Catholic countries by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. Although several Protestant countries had adopted it earlier, it took Britain another century and a half to admit reality and concede that the Pope had got it right, and action was needed to stop the calendar slipping gradually out of alignment with what was happening in nature. There were people who protested against the 'theft' of those ten days, and blamed the Pope for it.

The sole general lesson I draw from this (as even our Roman Catholic brethren only regard the Pope as always right when he speaks *ex cathedra*, which he very, very rarely does) is how prone we human beings are to allow prejudices and customary habits to get in the way of what is obviously sensible. We are sometimes so committed to pre-established ways of thinking that we can come up with all kinds of reasons for not relinquishing them even when holding onto them starts to do us harm. The irony is that Christians of all people should be most open to the idea that we might have got things wrong. A Lord who continually answered questions with more questions, laid out ideas in open-ended stories and vignettes, and always compelled his listeners to do the hard work of thinking for themselves, is not content to let us remain where we are.

Rev James Rattue, Chair of Churches Together in Godalming and District
jamesrattue@hotmail.com

Churches Together news and events

United Service, Sunday 18 January

The United Church is hosting the United Service on Sunday 18 January at 10.30am. Many of our member churches will not be holding mid-morning services so worshippers can join together in this joyful annual event.

Forthcoming Prayer Breakfasts

These take place at 8.30am on Saturday mornings.

- 24 January – Farncombe
- 28 February - St Mark's
- 28 March – Cellar Cafe
- 25 April - Elstead Barn

News of the Churches and organisations

Godalming Minster

Alpha and Bible courses

This Spring term, Revs Mike Moritz and Lesley Mason will be hosting the Alpha Course alongside the Bible Course at Godalming Minster Franklyn Road, GU7 2LD, starting with introductory sessions on Thursday 22 Jan 2026 at 7.30pm. Participants of both courses will eat together before splitting off for their intro session. The courses will continue at 7.30pm on Thursday evenings for those who continue. Both courses are suitable for non-Christians, and those who have been part of a church family for years, to revisit the fundamentals of the Christian Faith and the big picture of the Bible. Please share and use the links to find out more and sign up. We welcome participants from all churches and denominations.

godalmingminster.org

St John's Parish Church, Farncombe

We are hoping to run our five-session course of conversations for anyone interested in thinking about faith from the middle of January – it worked well last year so we are aiming to make it a recurring feature of our church life. We're carrying on thinking about the future direction of our church community and working towards settling the new iteration of the Church Development Plan which will shape our actions and approach for the next couple of years.

www.farncombe.org.uk

Godalming Baptist Church

Life Issue: *Boundaries*, Saturday 24 January

Led by Revd Peter Jackson from 10.00am to 12.30pm (coffee from 9.30am). Peter will focus on questions such as Do people take advantage of you? Do you have trouble saying no? Why is it important to establish physical, mental and spiritual boundaries and how do we do this?

There is no charge, but donations much appreciated towards the charity *Your Sanctuary*, supporting those suffering from domestic abuse.

To book a place, please contact Sally Pollard on 01483 428646 or pollard3@hotmail.co.uk

Book review: *How to Set Boundaries*, by Andy Gardner

Master the art of saying no, stop people-pleasing, and command respect without feeling guilty. Everything you need to know how to set boundaries and have healthy relationships. Do you want to set boundaries without feeling guilty? Do you want to have a healthy work-life balance? Do you want to have the courage to say 'No'? Are you fed up with people trying to manipulate you? Then this book is precisely what you need!

Browse our library

Do call into GBC and browse our library. There is a great selection of books to borrow on many different life issues and books to encourage and challenge us on our faith journey. The library is open weekday mornings from 9.00am to 12.00pm, term-time only. Do ring Reception on 01483 414544 as let fortnightly on Wednesdays.

www.godalmingbaptistchurch.org.uk

Godalming United Church

Online services: <https://guc.online.church>.

Service recordings: www.guc.org.uk, <https://bit.ly/GUCYouTube>.

Covenant Service and dedication of Church Officers, Sunday 4 January, 10.30am

A reaffirmation of our faith marked by Methodist churches worldwide since the time of John Wesley. We contemplate the direction our lives will follow in 2026: New Year - a good time for spiritual renewal.

Godalming and District Churches Together annual New Year Service, Sunday 18 January, 10:30am

Hosted by GUC. A chance for all Christians in the town to worship together. NB limited parking at church. Borough Hall carpark or Busy Bees carpark recommended.

Annual pantomime, Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 February

Four performances of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. For tickets, contact beckylkeene@gmail.com or see church website.

Special four-week Bible study

From 14 January to 4 February, Wednesdays, 7.30pm. The story, structure and beliefs of the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church – our two “parent” churches in our Local Ecumenical Partnership

- 14 January – Methodist Beliefs, led by Rev Dr Paul Glass, Superintendent Wey Valley Circuit
- 21 January – Methodist History and Polity
- 28 January – URC History and Polity
- 4 February – URC beliefs – led by Rev Michael Hopkins, Moderator of Wessex URC Synod

www.guc.org.uk

Roman Catholic Parish of St Edmund, King & Martyr, Godalming with St Joseph's Milford

Pope Francis' prayer intention for January

Pope Francis' prayer intention for January is for prayer with the Word of God; that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us to build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

The Feast of the Epiphany

The Feast of the Epiphany is on Tuesday 6 January, with Mass at 9.15am at St Edmund's School and 7.30pm at St Joseph's, Milford.

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Sunday 11 January brings the Christmas season to an end, and our nativity cribs remain in our churches until then; our crib offerings raise funds to support the Catholic Children's Society's A&B Crisis Fund, which provides immediate help for local families in the diocese who are facing real hardship and have nowhere else to turn.

Peace Sunday 2026

Peace Sunday 2026 is on Sunday 18 January, and Pope Leo has announced the theme *Peace be with you all: towards an 'unarmed and disarming peace'*, continuing the exhortation of Pope Francis that the call to live non-violent 'disarmed' lives is core to Catholic Social Teaching and the key to peace in a world scarred by violent conflict. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity runs from 18 to 25 January.

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School Admissions 2026

The closing date for applications is 16 January 2026. Please contact the school office or for more information visit: www.stedmundschool.co.uk

Bumps & Babes

The first session of the year is on Monday 5 January at St John's Farncombe from 10.30am to 12.00pm. The group welcomes all mums to be as well as mums (or grandparents!) with

newborns and toddlers.

Weekend Masses

Weekend Masses are celebrated at St Edmund's Godalming (6.00pm Vigil Mass) on Saturday evenings; and on Sundays at St John's Farncombe at 8.45am, with children's liturgy (and with coffee after Mass on 4 & 18 January); and at St Joseph's Milford at 10.30am.

Weekday Masses

The dates, times and venues of these vary so please check the calendar on the home page of our website: www.stedsgod.com

St Edmund's church remains open every day usually between 10.00am and 4.00pm (19 Croft Road, Godalming GU7 1DB).

Parish gatherings

We offer a warm welcome to newcomers at our regular parish gatherings:

- *Bumps, Babes & Toddlers* on Monday mornings at St John's Farncombe from 10.30am to 12.00pm, term time only. The group welcomes parents, carers and grandparents and babies, toddlers and pre-school children. For more info: eileen.hudson@gmail.com
- *SVP Afternoon Tea* The January tea is on Wednesday 14 January at 2.00pm at Busbridge Village Hall. Our parish SVP group meets in person monthly. For more information phone SVP on 07379 108009.
- *Prayer Group on Monday evenings* (phone Richard for details on 01252 702230), 5.00pm in winter and 7.30pm in summer.
- *Youth Discipleship Group* Meets every other Friday from 7.00pm to 9.00pm for young people in Years 11 to 13. Check parish calendar for next session date. For info or sign up: DavidBeresford@franciscancentre.org.uk
- *Live Simply group* Our parish eco-group meets monthly online; the next meeting is on Thursday 8 January, 8.00pm. Joining details: jolewry@aol.com
- *Bereavement group* This group offers support and meets monthly, usually on Fridays at 10.30am. More information: bereavementatsteds@gmail.com
- *EdsKnitters* This group knits for charities. If you can knit hats, gloves, scarves or blankets for adults and/or baby clothes please get in touch via the parish office: Godalming@abdiocese.org.uk

www.stedsgod.com

The Franciscan Centre Ladywell

Step away from the noise and haste of your everyday life and into the quiet beauty of the Franciscan Centre Ladywell in the heart of Surrey. Set on expansive grounds which are peaceful and beautiful, with wonderful walks and a stunning woodland to explore, find God in the sacred book of nature and in the peaceful, prayerfulness of our wonderful house.

February 6-Day Individually Guided Retreat (IGR)

Date: 8 to 15 February, 15 to 22 March

Suggested offering: £550

Each day you will be accompanied by a trained spiritual director, who will listen attentively and offer suggestions for allowing you to go deeper into your relationship with God.

Arrival Sunday evening from 4.00pm and depart next Sunday morning after breakfast and Mass.

Lent Retreat

Date: 27 February to 1 March

Suggested offering: £210

The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness. (Mark 1:12)

During Lent we're invited to shed what is superfluous and enter into the desert with Christ.

A Way in the Wilderness – finding meaning Direction and Hope in Lent

Date: 6 to 8 March

Suggested Offering: £210

Where does the wilderness lie? Where might we find it? Not only in sand and rock. It stretches between ending and beginning; between loss of meaning and its recovery; between awareness of deep longing and finding that which we long for; between questioning and the start of understanding. In the Bible the wilderness is also a place of encounter with God, where we learn to understand ourselves afresh. Using insights from the Bible, poetry and the Christian spiritual tradition we will explore our own experiences of wilderness and the invitation of God within them.

<https://franciscancentre.org.uk>

Godalming Quakers

Sunday Meetings for Worship

The regular weekly worship session continues to be held on Sunday mornings, starting at 10.30am at the Quaker Meeting House in Mill Lane, and all are welcome.

www.quaker.org.uk/meetings/godalming

Milford Baptist Church

Alpha Course

Starts Monday 19 January, 6.30pm at Milford Baptist Church. Email rachel.mbc@aol.com, or see church website for more information.

Brick Church, Sunday 18 January, 3.00pm to 4.15pm

Join our adventure through Bible stories with Lego bricks, songs, videos and refreshments. Everyone welcome, no booking required. Activities are most suitable for ages 2 to 10, with parent participation. Contact milfordbaptistinfo@gmail.com if you require more information.

www.milfordbaptistchurch.org.uk

Prayer meeting for the persecuted church

If you are interested in praying for the persecuted church, there is a zoom meeting held monthly on a Sunday at 4.00pm. Further details from David at rymissionsnews@hotmail.com

Feba

Please pray for the work of Feba, a media organisation with partners in many of the world's most newsworthy places: you have an opportunity to hear what they have to say and pray for them at 7.00pm on Wednesday 4 February. Find the zoom link on www.feba.org.uk/prayer

Items for next month's *Link-up*

Please send items for the February 2026 edition of *Link-up* to Matt Farrow:

farrow.matt@gmail.com by **Friday 23 January**, for publication on Friday 30 January.