

Your Monthly Update from Earley St Peter's – May 2024

Thought for the Month *from the Revd Kate Wakeman-Toogood*

Happy Birthday to all who have a birthday in May! According to my research on Google, this includes Princess Charlotte of Wales, singers Kylie Minogue and Adele, actors Clint Eastwood and George Clooney, and footballer David Beckham.

This year it is also the month where many Christians will wish 'Happy Birthday' to the Church, as the day of Pentecost, which is on 19th May this year, is widely seen as the birth day of the Church. Unlike the other birthdays I listed above, the date of Pentecost changes as its date is dependent on when Easter falls; Ascension Day, which is always a Thursday, marks 40 days from Easter Sunday, and Pentecost is 10 days after Ascension, meaning it is always on a Sunday. It is always either in May or June.

You'll notice that I have said that *many* Christians see Pentecost as the birth of the Church, rather than *all* Christians. This isn't to say that these Christians don't acknowledge the importance of Pentecost, but rather that for some, the Church was born earlier. For many this is believed to be when Jesus died on the Cross and for others, the origins of the Church date as far back as the Old Testament.

So, what happened on that first day of Pentecost, nearly 2000 years ago? It was the day when Jesus' followers received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus, before his death, had promised that when he was no longer around, he would send the Spirit – the comforter, the advocate – which would lead them in the way of truth. What we see on the day of Pentecost is the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of the disciples, perhaps none more so than our very own Peter. Strengthened and enabled by the Spirit, Peter preaches his now famous, and quite frankly epic, sermon which results in around 3000 people being baptised. On this day people started to speak in different languages so all who were there could understand the Good News in their own language. It was a life-changing day for all who were present and for all Christians since. As the Church today, we are also to look for strength and guidance from the Holy Spirit. St Paul writes extensively about the Spirit in his various letters. The image of many different gifts which are all from the same Spirit is one which ties in with the image of the Body of Christ which I have written about before. Many parts, many gifts, which are different but all valued in the sight of God.

As a community of faith, it is so important to recognise that we need the Holy Spirit in our lives, as individuals and as a church, as we serve God in our world today. In the Ordination Liturgy it says, 'pray earnestly for the gift of the Holy Spirit'. I can honestly say I have never prayed so hard as I did in that moment as I was faced with the enormity of what I was about to take! But the truth is that this prayer is for all of us. I encourage all of us to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen us in our service, to guide us and to deepen our faith, and whether or not you see Pentecost as the Church's birthday, I hope it is a day of great joy for us as a Church!

Services and Events in May

We meet every weekday morning at 8.45am in the church for Morning Prayer. All welcome.

Wednesday 1st May	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
Sunday 5th May	8am	Holy Communion <i>Readings: Acts 10: 44-end; John 15: 9-17</i>
	10am	Bread & Wine <i>Readings: Acts 10: 44-end; John 15: 9-17</i>
	6.30pm	Evening Worship Questions and cake with Kate
Tuesday 7th May	9am	Church drop-in
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 8th May	9am	Church drop-in
	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
Thursday 9th May	10am	Thursday@10 – coffee and chat
	7.30pm	Ascension Day service (with Senior Song school)
Friday 10th May	9.30am	Church cleaning
Saturday 11th May	7pm	Concert (see below)
Sunday 12th May	10am	Parish Communion <i>Readings: Ezekiel 36: 24-28; Acts 1: 15-17, 21-end; John 17: 6-19</i>
		Children's Church Inspiration Group
	11.15am	Annual Meetings (see below)
	6.30pm	Choral Evensong <i>Readings: Psalm 147: 1-12; Isaiah 61; John 15: 1-9</i>
Tuesday 14th May	9am	Church drop-in
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 15th May	9am	Church drop-in
	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
Sunday 19th May	10am	Parish Communion <i>Readings: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Acts 2: 1-21; John 15: 26-27; 16: 4b-15</i>
		Children's Church
	6.30pm	Reflective Communion <i>Reading: John 20: 19-23</i>
Tuesday 21st May	9am	Church drop-in
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 22nd May	9am	Church drop-in
	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
Thursday 23rd May	10am	Thursday@10 – Jim Nelson: 'Growing up on a country estate'
Saturday 25th May	1pm	Wedding of Victoria Netherwood and Jonathan Edwards

Sunday 26th May	10am	Parish Communion (including Junior and Senior Song School)
		<i>Readings: Isaiah 6: 1-8; Romans 8: 12-17; John 3: 1-17</i>
		Children's Church
		Inspiration Group
	12pm	Baptism of Alfred Barker
	6.30pm	Choral Evensong
		<i>Readings: Psalm 104: 1-10; Ezekiel 1: 4-10, 22-28a; John 6: 25-59</i>
Tuesday 28th May	9am	Church drop-in
	11am	Holy Communion

Children's and Youth Worker: I am excited to introduce myself to the whole church congregation as the new Children's and Youth Worker. I have been a member of the congregation, together with my family, for the past few years and recently have been helping with Children's Church. This means that though my face may not be new to you, you might not know my background experience or my future role in the church. I have more years of experience of working with children and young people than I'm ready to admit; I have a professional youth work qualification and have run council-run youth centres and worked as a children's and youth worker in many churches, which is why my family and I haven't been able to be a more regular part of the Earley St Peter's congregation, despite it being our parish church for the last 12 years.



The church has asked that I increase my responsibilities with children's and youth work, and after prayer and reflection it felt that this was the right time. Going forward, I will be helping Kate run 'Questions and Cake', continuing to lead some of the Children's Church sessions and add to the Inspiration group sessions, leading Bread & Wine services occasionally and I will be organising a team to run a bible holiday club in the summer. I am sure this list will be added to around my studying for a Master's degree and being a full-time Dad.

I look forward to supporting the amazing children and youth at Earley St Peter's and to seeing God develop them into the amazing young people he wants them to be. The volunteers who together make up the Children's and Youth Team are amazingly dedicated and have given many years of brilliant work to develop and maintain all the groups, especially during the vacancy, and I look forward to working with them and supporting them even more.

Please pray for our work with children and young people and should like to join us on this journey, your input would be very welcome, as we need as many people to share the responsibilities of serving snacks, organising craft, being involved in drama, helping lead discussions, plus many other roles. I look forward to getting to know more of you as my role develops.

God Bless. *John Collins* john@earleystpeters.org.uk

'Questions and Cake with Kate' continues on the first Sunday of each month from 6.30-8pm in the church hall and is for young people in year 6 and above.

The dates for the next sessions are:

5th May

2nd June

7th July

4th August

Please note this group will still take place on Bank Holiday weekends and school holidays.

Sermon series for Choral Evensong in May:

12th May - 'I am the Vine'

26th May - 'I am the Bread of Life'

Each service will have an optional discussion and drink afterwards.

Church is open 9-11am on Tuesdays and 9-10am on Wednesdays. There are prayer stations for private prayer, along with a prayer guide, a small library and a chance to have a hot drink in our coffee area. We have had visitors to church every day since it's been open, both church regulars and some who have never been before. If you'd like to commit to one morning a month to help set up and be a friendly face to greet any visitors, please speak to Kate.

Assistant Churchwardens: We wish to recruit more people to join our team of Assistant Churchwardens. To find out more about this role, please speak to Ann Sheen or Clive Nunn.

Annual Meetings: The Annual Meetings will take place in the Church Hall on 12th May at 11.15am. At the Annual Meeting of Parishioners we elect the two Churchwardens, and this is followed immediately by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) at which we elect the Deanery Synod reps and PCC members. This year we will be electing one Deanery Synod rep and four PCC members. Anyone who has been on the Electoral Roll for six months is eligible to stand for these posts. Nomination forms for all the roles are in folders at the back of church. Completed forms should be returned to the folder before the meetings. The annual reports for the meetings are attached to this email or available from our website [here](#).

Erleigh Cantors Concert, 11th May at 7pm: The Erleigh Cantors have been delighting audiences with their choral singing for over 30 years, singing in cathedrals around the UK and locally to raise substantial funds for worthy causes. This year's concert is again in aid of Alexander Devine Children's Hospice and Earley St Peter's Church and we hope to beat last year's achievement of over £800.

The Cantors are directed by well-known local musician Ian Westley and our organist this year is Simon Dinsdale. There will be organ and flute solos (Clive Nunn - flute) and short readings by Merry Evans. The programme includes works by Holst, Bruckner, Howells, Vivanco, Schubert, Dubra, Grieg, Guerrero and Debussy, amongst others, so there should be something to suit everyone.

A range of Mama Nunn home-made preserves will be on sale in aid of the hospice and refreshments will be available.

Admission - suggested donation £10 for adults, £8 for students, under-18s free. For tickets or more information contact Maggie Nunn on 07946 620560, (email maggie.nunn@btinternet.com) or Ian Westley on 0118 947 8382. Maggie will be available in church and the hall afterwards on Sunday morning 5th May, with tickets.

'Board Games and Lunch' is a new weekday group and the clue is in the name! From June, on the first Tuesday of each month from 12-2.30pm there will be a range of board games in the church hall. We have classics such as ludo, snakes and ladders, and scrabble as well as newer games to try including dobbie and battle ships. There will also be a light lunch. If you'd like to come along, please sign up on the sheet at the back of church. For more information, speak to Mary Brooke.

Musicians wanted!

- The choir of Earley St Peter's is seeking singers in all voice parts. No previous experience necessary, although the ability to read music is preferred. Benefits include: singing for weekly Eucharist services and fortnightly Evensongs services, paid singing opportunities at weddings and funerals, annual cathedral visits (Tewkesbury Abbey 2024, Chichester 2025, Wells 2026), and regular choir socials. Rehearsals are Thursdays 7-8:30pm, and before some services.
- The Senior Song School (school years 5-9) is also welcoming new singers. Benefits include: singing in at least five services a term, financial reward for attendance at services and rehearsals, chorister and theory training through the Royal School of Music's *Voice for Life* scheme, annual cathedral visits, and paid singing opportunities at weddings and funerals. Rehearsals are Thursdays 6:30-7:25pm.

• Instrumentalists are also wanted to join the band for Bread & Wine services on the first Sunday morning of every month.

Anyone interested in any of these musical opportunities should email our Director of Music, Ben de Souza on music@earleystpeters.org.uk.

Holiday Bible Club! Wonder Zone! This amazing Faith and Science holiday club is from Scripture Union in conjunction with The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion. The dates are 30th July - 1st August from 9.30am-12.30pm. Details on how to book will follow but for now please save the date.

Packed with creative ways to explore and discover some of the wonders of the universe and the wonders of God. There will be experiments, construction (craft), games, drama, creative prayer and worship. Wonder Zone has a mixture of upfront presentation and small-group activities allowing children and leaders to build meaningful relationships with each other and with God.

Pastoral support: Our pastoral team will be happy to hear if you, or anybody you know, would welcome a phone call or visit. Please contact the parish of office (0118 9668575) or Mary Brooke (0118 926 2153)

Food Bank donations: Thank you for all your support to our local food bank with donations of tins, cartons, dried goods with a long shelf life and also personal hygiene items. Everything as always is received with thanks and appreciation. Our continued support is still very much needed.

More information here: www.woodleyfoodbank.org

Quiz night thanks: A huge thank you to all those who attended the quiz night on 13th April and helped organise the event. We raised £850! This will be shared between our church and Alexander Devine Children's Hospice. In addition, Mama Nunn's amazing jams and chutneys raised over £100. Our next quiz will be held on Saturday 23rd November.