

Your Monthly Update from Earley St Peter's – February 2025

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

Last month I took the opportunity to give an overview of the priorities for the parish's next Mission Action Plan, and focused on the importance of Safeguarding, which is the key thread that will be woven into all sections of the plan. This month, it feels relevant to reflect on one of the other aspects of parish life that will be a focus of the plan, and that is looking at communication and marketing.

The reason I am writing about this is because we are excited to launch My ChurchSuite this month. My ChurchSuite is an app, for smartphone, laptop or tablets, that congregation members and parishioners can use to engage with parish life. Mary, our parish administrator, has worked hard to make the app clear and user-friendly, and has organised for a couple of smaller groups to try the app before we launch it to everyone. I am very grateful for her hard work and I am delighted with the result.

One important thing to say is that using the app will not be compulsory! However, for those who are comfortable using technology, My ChurchSuite has many benefits. You can see your own rota dates in a simple list, without having to look at an entire rota to find your name. You can search with key words in the calendar to find events, such as 'training', 'study' or 'social'. You can book places at events and in 'My events' you can see a list of all your upcoming activities. These are just three of aspects of the app that I think are very useful, but there are lots more.

The other important thing to mention is that you can choose in your own data settings on the app, such as whether your email address or telephone number are visible to others. Sharing of data is a concern with technology but My ChurchSuite makes it simple for people to set their data-sharing preferences.

On Sunday 9th February, and in the following weekly bulletin, I will give more information about how to sign up and then Mary will send out emails inviting you to download the app. Mary – who is now our resident expert – will be in the hall after the 10am service on Sunday 16th February to give a demonstration and give help to anyone who needs it. As I said earlier, this isn't compulsory, but many people are so used to using apps for things such as communication with schools, work, booking events, emails and calendars, that this will be a helpful tool. It will be one of a number of ways we communicate information and advertise aspects of church life, along with posters in church, monthly newsletters, weekly bulletins, email and social media.

In this newsletter you'll also read about 'Life in all its fullness', which is my hope and vision for us as a parish this year, and the events advertised are different ways for people to grow in fullness of life; through learning, praying or being with others. My ChurchSuite is another way that we can share opportunities with people and for people to feel they are connected to church life.

I want to finish by saying a genuine thank you (again) to the many people who make up our church life. When exploring the app myself, I was blown away by the amount of things in the calendar! I think that seeing it all in front of me reminded me once again just how many people contribute in so many different ways. Thank you!

'Life in all its fullness'

I am an ideas person (which I am sure you've noticed by now!) and 'Life in all its fullness' came about when a few of my smaller ideas joined together into one, and enabled by the enthusiasm and support of John, our hall manager and youth/children's worker. 'Life in all its fullness 2025' is my hope for us as a parish and is in three parts: studying/learning, training opportunities and social/pastoral groups. This is an overview:

- 1. *Life in all its fullness: learning and growing.***
Our upcoming study courses at Earley St Peter's.
- 2. *Life in all its fullness: spending time with one another.***
Our social and pastoral groups and events at Earley St Peter's.
- 3. *Life in all its fullness: developing as a community.***
Our upcoming training opportunities at Earley St Peter's.

The first of my ideas was to put together a programme of training that anyone in the congregation could sign up to. John shared my enthusiasm and has been the one who has taken the lead on booking speakers and securing dates. Those in formal ministry, whether lay or ordained, have access to a number of training opportunities and I wanted to offer something similar to the whole community. Where places are limited but a session is popular, we will try to rebook a second session and keep a waiting list. I am very grateful to Helen our treasurer for helping me to set a budget for training as ultimately it benefits the whole community as more people develop useful skills.

The second and third parts of 'Life in all its fullness' are simply putting together all the things that we already do, but planning ahead for the whole year and giving a detailed overview of church life. It also categorises our activities so that they are easy to search for in our church calendar, which can be viewed on My ChurchSuite and the website. Using the search bar and typing in the words 'training', 'study' or 'social', will bring up a list of the entire programme.

It is only the training that requires people to book a place and you can do this by emailing Kate or John, or signing up on My ChurchSuite. This is the programme so far but we will be adding to it as more dates are booked, hopefully including bereavement training, dementia awareness, public-speaking skills and neurodiversity awareness.

8th March - Active Listening Skills

15th March - Fire Awareness Training

5th April - First Aid Training

3rd May - 'Leading Prayers of Intercession' workshop

28th June - Messy Church Leader Training (for those who would like to be part of our Messy Church team - more details to follow)

There are posters at the back of church, as well as on Facebook and the website, which have details of specific events and dates, but I wanted to give an overview as I am very excited to have seen this come together over the past few weeks. Kate.

Services and Events in February

We meet every weekday morning at 8.45am (Fridays at 8.30am) in the church for Morning Prayer. All welcome.

Sunday 2nd February

8am Holy Communion

Readings: Hebrews 2.14-end; Luke 2.22-40

10am Bread & Wine

Reading: Luke 2.22-40

6.30pm Evening Worship

Readings: Haggai 2.1-9; John 2.18-22

Questions and Cake

Monday 3rd February	9am	Church open
Tuesday 4th February	9am 11am 12.30pm	Church drop-in Midweek Communion Board Games and Chat
Wednesday 5th February	9am 10.15am	Church open Tots and Teddies
Sunday 9th February	10am 6.30pm	Parish Communion <i>Readings: Isaiah 6.1-13; 1 Corinthians 15.1-11; Luke 5.1-11</i> Children's Church Inspiration Group Choral Evensong with Song School <i>Readings: Hosea 1; Colossians 3.1-22</i>
Monday 10th February	9am	Church open
Tuesday 11th February	9am 11am	Church drop-in Holy Communion
Wednesday 12th February	9am 10.15am	Church open Tots & Teddies
Thursday 13th February	10am	Thursday@10: Coffee and chat
Friday 14th February	9.30am	Church cleaning
Sunday 16th February	10am 11.30am 6.30pm	Parish Communion <i>Readings: Jeremiah 17.5-10; 1 Corinthians 15.12-20; Luke 6.17-26</i> Children's Church My ChurchSuite helpdesk Reflective Communion <i>Reading: Matthew 5.21-37</i> Questions and Cake
Monday 17th February	9am	Church open
Tuesday 18th February	9am 11am	Church drop-in Holy Communion
Wednesday 19th February	9am	Church open
Sunday 23rd February	10am 6.30pm	Parish Communion <i>Readings: Genesis 2.4b-9, 15-25; Revelation 4; Luke 8.22-25</i> Children's Church Inspiration Group Choral Evensong <i>Readings: Genesis 1.1-2.3; Matthew 6.25-34</i>
Monday 24th February	9am	Church open
Tuesday 25th February	9am 11am	Church drop-in Holy Communion
Wednesday 26th February	9am	Church open

	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
Thursday 27th February	10am	Thursday@10: Art talk by Richard Miller: 'The Prodigal Son'
Friday 28th February	2pm	Craft Afternoon (see below)

Electoral Roll revision: We are required to undertake a full revision of the Electoral Roll before the Annual Meetings on 11th May. This means that everybody who is on the current Electoral Roll will be taken off and will have to re-apply to be listed on the new Electoral Roll. **Nobody will be automatically added to the new Electoral Roll, so you must apply if you want to be on it.** You can apply by:

- filling in the form on paper: the form is available at the back of church and you can return the form to the Electoral Roll folder there.
- filling in the form online at this link: <https://earleystpeters.churchsuite.com/forms/lpxfmsqn> - link also in the email to which this newsletter is attached.
- filling in the form by scanning this QR code:



Please check when filling in the form that you are eligible to be on the Electoral Roll. People who are not on the current Electoral Roll are welcome to apply to be listed on the new one if they meet the criteria given on the form. **The deadline for applications is 17th April 2025.** If you have any questions, please speak to Niran Perera, our Electoral Roll Officer.

Do you fancy being crafty? In February we will have the first of a few craft afternoons planned for the year ahead. The first session, on Friday 28th February from 1-3pm, doesn't have a particular theme but there will be a number of different craft activities, as well as the opportunity to be creative and make your own creation if you wish. There will be tea and coffee available, as well as cake and biscuits. There is no cost to attend, but if you would like to make an optional donation to help cover the costs, then there will be the opportunity to do so.

You are very welcome to turn up on the day and booking isn't necessary, but if you know you will definitely be coming, please could you sign up on My ChurchSuite or let Kate know so she can plan refreshments and resources.

Confirmation course and service: It has now been confirmed that Bishop Mary, the new bishop of Reading, will be taking the confirmation service on 18th May. Dates for the classes will be announced very soon but they will start in April and there will be 5 classes for the young people's group and 6 for the adult group, including a session on the afternoon of Saturday 17th May for a rehearsal.

We already have the names of a number of people who would like to be confirmed but it isn't too late to add your name. Could you email Kate if you are an adult wanting to be confirmed, and John if the candidate is a child (school year 6 and upwards).

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. Please donate if you are able in the box at the back of church. Our continued support is still very much needed.
More information here: www.woodleyfoodbank.org

Dates for your diary

5 March, 7.30pm: Ash Wednesday service

8 March, 2pm: Training course – Active Listening skills

11 March, 11am or 7.30pm (morning session repeated in the evening): Study course: Journeying through Lent with Luke 1 (service and discussion group)

15 March, 2pm: Training course – Fire Awareness

18 March, 11am or 7.30pm (morning session repeated in the evening): Study course: Journeying through Lent with Luke 2 (service and discussion group)

25 March, 11am or 7.30pm (morning session repeated in the evening): Study course: Journeying through Lent with Luke 3 (service and discussion group)

1 April, 11am or 7.30pm (morning session repeated in the evening): Study course: Journeying through Lent with Luke 4 (service and discussion group)

5 April, 2pm: Training course – First Aid

8 April, 11am or 7.30pm (morning session repeated in the evening): Study course: Journeying through Lent with Luke 5 (service and discussion group)