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## Your monthly update from Earley St Peter's church: May 2026

1 message

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1 May 2026 at 08:06



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## Your Monthly Update from Earley St Peter's – May 2026



### **Thought for the month** *from Clive Tillin*

Well here we are in May already. It's a very busy time of the year. We are still in the Easter season and it's all hands on deck in the garden, too. So very busy. I must admit I love May for many reasons .

I can get my vegetable garden really going.

Most importantly it's MAY! Mary's month of May. For me this involves attending and sometimes taking part in two very important services.

The first one is simply called May Devotion.

As some will know I am a member of the Society of Mary. The May Devotion is formed of two services: a procession and an AGM. A full day.

The day starts at St Silas the Martyr Kentish Town at 12 noon with Solemn Pontifical Concelebrated Mass. The principal Celebrant this year is The Rt Revd Luke Irvine-Capel, Bishop of Richborough. A very colourful event indeed. At the end of Mass we form up and go in Procession taking our Lady through the streets of Kentish Town to Holy Trinity Church singing and children scattering petals in front as we go. There is normally approaching 80 of us. It is quite a sight and I must say it's privilege to take part in this witness. It's important to and great to be there in the local community. People in the area come to their doors, and walking up the high street singing on a busy Saturday can be an experience. We then break for lunch. Thankfully there are some nice local hostelrys to be found. We are back at 3:30 for the AGM, followed by Solemn Vespers, Sermon and Pontifical Benediction.

It really is a lovely day colourful, yes, lovely worship, yes. But I say again that being a witness in the local community, being seen, is so important.



The second is the National Pilgrimage.

This is held at the end of May in the Abbey ruins in Walsingham village. Attending can be many hundreds of people. We pray for good weather!

The day starts again at 12 noon with the image of Our Lady of Walsingham being brought into the Abbey accompanied by many clergy, bishops and the Guardians of the Shrine. Concelebrated Mass is held. Then it's time for lunch. Picnics are the order of the day. 2:30 is Sermon, Procession and Benediction. This year the preacher is The Rt Revd John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark. The procession takes us out of Abbey grounds and round the outskirts of village accompanied by the Image of our Lady of Walsingham. Having served at these a few times, great

strength is needed as candles and cross are very heavy and the pace is slow.

The beauty of Walsingham is the divisions of Anglican and Catholic are less prevalent. A lot is done for joint worship. As Monseigneur Augustine Hoey said on the occasion of his 100th birthday when he preached in a voice that did not show his age, 'We must all be one! Our Lady of Walsingham helps us to do just that'.



### Services and Events in May

*(the information below is also available via My ChurchSuite and our web site)*

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

Saturday 2 May	10am-3pm	Church open
	2pm	Training: Fire Awareness
Sunday 3 May	8am	Holy Communion
	10am	Bread and Wine
	11.30am	Christmas Fayre team meeting

	6.30pm	Evening Worship Questions and Cake
Monday 4 May	2pm	Sunshine Social
Tuesday 5 May	9am	Drop-in morning
	11am	Holy Communion
	7.30pm	Study: 'Listening' (see below)
Wednesday 6 May	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots and Teddies
Friday 8 May	9.30am	Church cleaning
Saturday 9 May	10am- 3pm	Church open
	6pm	Social: wine tasting and auction of promises
Sunday 10 May	10am	Parish Communion Children's Church Inspiration Group
	11.15am	Annual meetings
	6.30pm	Choral Evensong
Monday 11 May	9am	Church open

Tuesday 12 May	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
	7.30pm	Study: 'Listening'
Wednesday 13 May	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
Thursday 14 May	10am	Social: Thursday@10 - Coffee and chat
	7.30pm	Festal Communion for Ascension Day with Song School
Saturday 16 May	10am-3pm	Church open
Sunday 17 May	10am	Parish Communion Children's Church Inspiration Group
	11.30am	Meeting of Eco team
	6.30pm	Reflective Communion Questions & Cake
Monday 18 May	9am	Church open

Tuesday 19 May	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
	7.30pm	Study: 'Listening'
Wednesday 20 May	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
Saturday 23 May	10am-3pm	Church open
Sunday 24 May	10am	Parish Communion Children's Church
	4pm	Messy Church
	6.30pm	Choral Evensong (Come and Sing event)
Tuesday 26 May	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
	7.30pm	Study: 'Listening'
Wednesday 27 May	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots & Teddies

Thursday 28 May	10am	Social: Thursday@10 - Marlene Prior, 'The Newark Woodhouse'
Saturday 30 May	10am-3pm	Church open
Sunday 31 May	10am	Parish Communion Children's Church
	11.30am	Social/hospitality team meeting
	6.30pm	Compline

**2 May, 2pm: Fire Awareness Training.** This free event is part of our *Life in all its Fullness* programme, and everyone is welcome to attend. You can register by [signing up here](#), or by contacting the parish office.

### **Weekly study group on listening**

This study group will focus on the subject of listening. We will look at what listening is and where and how it takes place, as well as other aspects.

It will be based on the Ignatian Spirituality, and time will be spent in small groups for discussion. Imaginative contemplation on a biblical passage will be a main feature of each session. The aim of the group is to gain a greater knowledge and experience of listening, thus hopefully leading to a deeper relationship with God.

The group will meet in the Lady Chapel on Tuesdays from 7.30pm to 9.00pm, and consist of five sessions. The first session will be on Tuesday 5 May. Please email Martin Lijinsky if you would like to sign up for this course. [martin.lijinsky@gmail.com](mailto:martin.lijinsky@gmail.com)

**9 May, 6pm: Wine Tasting and Auction of Promises.** Kajsa's husband Matthieu Longuère MS is a Master Sommelier and member of the Court of Master Sommeliers. He will introduce us to six different wines, followed by a wine-related quiz and an Auction of Promises with David Eversham as auctioneer and quizmaster. Please think about the promises you may

be able to give. Anything from babysitting and gardening to cakes or a car wash and beyond would be likely to attract bids. All proceeds will go to Earley St Peter's church. Tickets will cost £25 per person, but pre-auction bids are also welcome if you are unable to attend. There is a list at the back of church. Please contact Kajsa if you would like a bid to be included in the auction: [curate@earleystpeters.org.uk](mailto:curate@earleystpeters.org.uk).

**10 May, 11.15am: Annual Meetings.** 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 there are up to seven vacancies on PCC. There are also up to three vacancies on the Deanery Synod. Anyone who has been on the Electoral Roll for six months or longer is eligible to stand. Nomination forms for all the roles are in folders at the back of the church. Completed forms should be returned to the relevant folder any time before the meetings.

10 May will also be the **first service for our new organist, John Cobb**. John writes:



I grew up in a village near Gloucester, where my dad was the church organist. He got me started on the organ and I've been playing ever since! After singing in a church choir in Gloucester and playing the organ at another church in the city, I went to Exeter University to study Computer Science. At Exeter, I was Organ Scholar of the University Chapel for a year, then Music Director. I also sang in the University Singers and played french horn in the University

Symphony Orchestra. My career in software development took me to California for 5 years, where I was organist of an Episcopal church in Foster City, about 20 miles south of San Francisco. Back in the UK, I lived in Canterbury and then Reading, where I became a founder member of Tamesis Chamber Choir, an auditioned choir that sings a wide range of music in concerts around the Reading area and beyond. I'm also organist for Tamesis Cathedral Singers, which sings services at cathedrals within a couple of hours' drive of Reading. Recently, I've been

involved in the music at St Andrew's in Sonning, singing in the Senior Choir and accompanying the Junior Choir, which my son, Arthur (10), joined in 2024. I'm married to Astrid, and also have a daughter, Freya (14). We live in Wokingham with no pets at the moment, but guinea pigs could be on the horizon as they're Freya's current obsession! I also have two grown-up daughters who live in Shropshire, and have a 16-month-old granddaughter. Another grandchild is due in June. After a break of 37 years, I've started playing the horn again as a member of the newly formed Wokingham Philharmonic Orchestra. It's been a bit of a challenge, but I'm slowly getting there! I'm very much looking forward to starting as your organist and contributing to the music at St Peter's, as well as meeting you all.

**24 May: Come and Sing Evensong for Pentecost.** We welcome singers to join us for this special free event supported by the Cathedral Music Trust. We will rehearse from 4-4.45pm and the service will be at 6.30pm. [Sign up here.](#)

### **Start! Course: explore life and faith in fellowship**

We are running the Start! course, which is a 6-session course that explores life and faith that is as suitable to those new to Christianity as to those who have more experience of a life in faith. It is a gentle course that is undertaken in fellowship with others, within a home environment. You can either chose to do it on Monday evenings starting at 8pm, or in the daytime on Wednesdays, starting at 1pm. One of the Wednesday sessions will run on a Tuesday instead (23 June). Our Curate Kajsa will lead the courses with the help of Emiko Murakami (Mondays) and Mary Ellaby (Wednesdays). The sessions take place in Kajsa's home in Lower Earley. For questions about the course, please email Kajsa directly: [curate@earleystpeters.org.uk](mailto:curate@earleystpeters.org.uk)

If you wish to attend, please book in using ChurchSuite by selecting Monday or Wednesday below:

[Mondays: 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 June, 6 July.](#)

[Wednesdays: 3, 10, 17, 23 June \(note that it is a Tuesday\), 1 and 8 July.](#)

**Support for Anthan:** Last month in church, I shared part of Anthan Ilyas's story and with Anthan's permission, I am now sharing it in our

newsletter. Anthan is a Catholic Priest from Pakistan who was ordained 17 years ago and has spent all of his adult life either in theological training or ordained ministry. Due to a series of challenging circumstances, Anthan came to the UK 18 months ago and first worshipped at St Peter's just a few days after arriving in the country. Since then he has become a regular congregation member on Sundays and Tuesdays, and regularly volunteers in the church hall. More recently, he has been on the rota for reading and prayers in church, and his prayerful presence has been a blessing to many in our church community.

Sadly, Anthan's initial asylum claim was rejected on the grounds that the Home Office did not believe he was a priest, This was very disappointing as Anthan has a significant online presence from his time ministering in Pakistan and further to this, there is an official record of his ordination which can be easily accessed. Alongside my letter to support his appeal, the Bishop of Oxford also wrote in support of Anthan and he is still awaiting the appeal decision. Just before Easter, Anthan received notification that he was being re-housed to the East Midlands with only 15 days' notice, which was distressing news. Not only does he have friends and support through our church, he is also part way through a college course and has a voluntary job in a local charity shop. The first few months in Reading were incredibly challenging as Anthan did not know anyone and to suddenly be moved, after working so hard to build his life back up here, would be very detrimental to Anthan's wellbeing.

The good news is that, again with Diocesan support, Anthan is allowed to stay in the area but no longer has accommodation provided by the Home Office. We have found a room for him which is safe and comfortable, but this is a temporary measure which we had to organise quickly, as Anthan would have been homeless after his previous accommodation ended. We are asking whether anyone would be able to offer Anthan a longer term room to stay in while his appeal is being processed. The allowance he receives would mean he is not able to pay a large amount of rent but he would have enough money to contribute towards food etc and will be looking for paid employment once his course has finished. Please could I encourage everyone to pray that accommodation is found for Anthan that is close enough to church that he can continue to volunteer and attend regularly.

To end on a positive note, Anthan will be formally admitted into the Church of England by the Bishop of Reading in June when she visits for our Patronal Festival. It is slightly more complicated for Anthan to be licensed as a priest because he was not ordained in the Anglican Church, but he is also taking steps towards that transition, which is excellent news for both Anthan and the parish. *Kate*

**Tots & Teddies:** Our thriving toddler group needs more helpers! Could you join us? The group meets at 10.15am on Wednesdays during term time, but you would not necessarily need to come every week. We'd love to have more people to help with setting up, supporting the short service in church, preparing craft activities and chatting



to the parents/carers. If you could spare some time, please contact the parish office, or come along and visit us on a Wednesday to see what we do.

### **Pentecost Art Exhibition and Installation**

I'm delighted that one half of my art project for Pentecost has just been installed at St Nicolas church's Art Space. It will hang from 1 to 31 May. It is mainly abstract art, on canvas, paper and fabric. I hope to hold a 'Come and Meet' session at St Nicolas (date and time TBC), where I will go deeper into the theme theologically too.

The second part of the project will be installed at Earley St Peter's for Pentecost. If you have not already done so, I'd be delighted if you could add to my installation by sending me the word for Spirit in your native language (if it isn't English) by using [this ChurchSuite form](#). So far, I've got it in 12 languages including Welsh, Hindi, Cantonese, Tagalog, and Japanese. *Kajsa*

**Upcoming team meetings:** There are some important dates coming up for open meetings for anyone interested in being part of the social/hospitality committee, Christmas Fayre team and/or Eco team. If you cannot attend the meeting, please email Kate and let her know you are interested and give any detail of how you could like to be involved.

Sunday 3 May, 11.30am: Christmas Fayre team (either planning or helping on the day).

Sunday 17 May, 11.30am: Eco team.

Sunday 31 May, 11.30am: follow-up social/hospitality meeting, if required.

Sunday 7 June, 11.30am: follow-up Eco team meeting, if required.

Sunday 14 June, 11.30am: first official Christmas Fayre planning meeting.

Sunday 26 July, 11.30am: second official Christmas Fayre planning meeting.

**Ordinations:** Kajsa and Madhuri, do not read this notice!!

This summer we have two ordinations of much-loved members of our ministry team. On Saturday 27 June our Curate Kajsa will be ordained priest and on Saturday 4 July, Madhuri, our ordinand in training, will be ordained Deacon and will move to her curacy in Caversham. Both Madhuri and Kajsa are valued members of our ministry team and church community, and I want to organise a gift for each of them for their ordination (Madhuri's will also be a goodbye gift).

I thought the easiest way to do this would be to organise a collection which we will then split between them equally. Similarly to David's collection when he retired as organist, you can either give the money in a labelled envelope to the parish office or a Warden at the back of church, or transfer it directly to our PCC bank account and use the reference 'ordination'.

Details of attendance at the ordinations, which are in Oxford, will follow in next month's newsletter, but do save the dates as I am sure Kajsa and Madhuri would appreciate some familiar faces in the congregation. *Kate*

**Church theatre trip, 3 October:** After a few conversations with various groups and individuals, I realise that not only are people interested in a church day out, but there are also a lot of people who love a good old-fashioned 'whodunnit?' mystery!

My proposal is a theatre trip to The Mill in Sonning on Saturday October 3 to watch the Agatha Christie play 'The Mirror Crack'd', which is a Miss Marple mystery. The matinee show we are watching is at 2 pm and it is the show only, not including a meal. This significantly reduces the price of the ticket to around £28. We can organise lifts and car sharing closer to the time, but it is important that we book the tickets quite soon to ensure places and so I propose that I book the tickets at the end of May. If you would like a ticket, please email Kate at vicar@earleystpeters.org.uk and

I will email you back to confirm that I've received your message and that I will book you a ticket. When I checked with the theatre last week, the availability for that date was very good and so I am hoping that if we book at the end of May there won't be a limit to how many people can go. I am definitely buying a ticket and have seen a couple of Agatha Christie plays at The Mill before, which have been excellent.

If you would like to go, but are worried that you cannot afford it, please do have a chat with me as we don't have significant financial resources to help, but in extenuating circumstances we may be able to subsidise tickets. *Kate*

**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 office (0118 966 8575) or Mary Brooke (0118 926 2153)

**Woodley 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 the ever important personal hygiene items. Please donate if you are able in the box at the back of the church. Our continued support is still very much needed. *Anne and Ken Richardson*



More information here: [www.woodleyfoodbank.org](http://www.woodleyfoodbank.org)

### **Life in all its fullness**

There are exciting social, training and study events coming this year. We look forward to welcoming everyone. Check the dates below and sign up, either via My ChurchSuite or by contacting the parish office. More dates are likely to be added, so [check the church calendar](#) and newsletters for latest information.

2 May: Training - Fire Awareness

9 May: Social - Auction of Promises

20 June: Training - Deaf Awareness

20 September: Social - MacMillan Coffee Morning

7 November: Training - Neurodiversity Awareness

28 November: Study - Gospel of Mark

11 December: Social - Christmas Fair

### Dates for your diary

**6 June, 7pm: Concert of Sacred Music for Choir, Oboe and Cor Anglais by Erleigh Cantors** in aid of Earley St Peter's and Alexander Devine Children's Hospice. Including music by Vaughan Williams, Rutter, Monteverdi, Gabrieli, Gesualdo and Lasso, and Ronald Corp - *Misa San Marco*. Suggested donation £12 for adults, £8 for students, under-18s free. For more information, contact Maggie Nunn on 07946 620 560 or [maggie.nunn@btinternet.com](mailto:maggie.nunn@btinternet.com)

**3 October:** Church theatre trip (see above)

Earley St Peter's



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