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

1 message

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29 May 2026 at 08:20



Your Monthly Update from Earley St Peter's – June 2026



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

I have recently spent rather more time than expected reorganising the church noticeboards, with the help of Mary, our parish administrator.

As you will see, I love labels. The boards are in categories and posters are mostly at right angles! It is all deeply satisfying.

Of course, maintaining church noticeboards is less an exact science, and feels like a cross between Tetris and pastoral ministry. Let me explain.... every time something comes down, three more things appear wanting space. You have a vicar and curate who collectively have 20 new ideas before breakfast each day! We also have lots of groups, services and events organised by a wide (and wonderful) range of people. Fitting everything in, in a way that is coherent and clear, can be challenging but

they are more important than people might think. As I stood there rearranging everything, I realised that the noticeboards tell a story about who we are as a church. These boards contain not just paper, but something much more precious.

There is a children and youth section full of creativity and energy. A mission partners notice directing us to our windowsills, reminding us that our church is connected to people and projects far beyond our parish. A safeguarding and community support area offering help, guidance, and reassurance. Information about giving, which quietly reflects both the generosity that keeps church life going and the desperate need for increased giving as we face a significant deficit. A general church section containing the usual mixture of worship, events, groups, and things that urgently need more drawing pins.

Then there is the library and learning section. This contains resources ranging from simple introductions to Christianity all the way through to books that may require a strong cup of coffee and several years of theological training. Somewhere on the shelf, Rowan Williams waits patiently for the brave.....

And nearby sits the visitor book — gently underused despite my increasingly enthusiastic encouragement that people actually sign it!

Together, all these boards and shelves and notices form a picture of a church community that is varied, busy, imperfect, thoughtful, caring, musical, prayerful, and gloriously human.

At Pentecost recently, we sang hymns during communion in several different languages. Small groups sang in their mother tongue while others listened or joined in where they could. It was a moving reminder that from the very beginning, Christianity has been multilingual, multicultural, and beautifully diverse. We express ourselves in different ways, engage with God in different ways, and enjoy different things. Hopefully our noticeboards reflect that reality too.

Behind every poster is a person. Behind every event is effort, planning and hope. Some notices disappear because events are over. Others come down because plans change, people become unwell, diaries shift, or life simply becomes complicated. That is not failure, that is humanity.

Churches are living communities made up of real people trying, as best they can, to follow Christ together, and I believe the notice boards reflect this.

(Of course, I still reserve the right to straighten slightly crooked posters when nobody is looking.)

Kate

Services and Events in June

(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.

Monday 1 June	2pm	Sunshine Social
	8pm	Start! course
Tuesday 2 June	9am	Drop-in morning
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 3 June	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots and Teddies
	1pm	Start! course
Saturday 6 June	10am-2pm	Church open

	7pm	Erleigh Cantors concert (see below)
Sunday 7 June	8am	Holy Communion
	10am	Bread and Wine
	11.30am	Eco team meeting
	6.30pm	Evening worship Questions and Cake
Monday 8 June	9am	Church open
	8pm	Start! course
Tuesday 9 June	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 10 June	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
	1pm	Start! course
Thursday 11 June	10am	Thursday@10 - Coffee and chat
Friday 12 June	9.30am	Church cleaning

Saturday 13 June	10am-3pm	Church open
Sunday 14 June	10am	Parish Communion Children's Church Inspiration Group
	11.30am	Christmas Fayre planning meeting
	6.30pm	Choral Evensong
Monday 15 June	9am	Church open
	8pm	Start! course
Tuesday 16 June	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 17 June	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
	1pm	Start! course
Friday 19 June	8am	Men's breakfast
Saturday 20 June	10am-3pm	Church open
	2pm	Training: Deaf Awareness (see below)

Sunday 21 June	10am	Parish Communion for St Peter's Day with Song School
	6.30pm	Reflective Communion Questions and Cake
Monday 22 June	9am	Church open
	8pm	Start! course
Tuesday 23 June	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
	1pm	Start! course
Wednesday 24 June	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
Thursday 25 June	10am	Thursday@10
Saturday 27 June	10am-3pm	Church open
Sunday 28 June	10am	Parish Communion Children's Church
	4pm	Messy Church
	6.30pm	Choral Evensong

Monday 29 June	9am	Church open
	8pm	Start! course
Tuesday 30 June	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion

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

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

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.](#)

19 June, 8am: Men's breakfast. All men are very welcome to join us -

please sign up at the back of church. The speaker will be Geraint Thomas on Victorian inventors.

20 June, 2pm: Deaf 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. As a deaf person and a mother of a deaf child, I am keen to spread awareness about deafness as broadly as possible. I am therefore offering this session that is specifically exploring deafness in the church context. It is useful to absolutely everyone, as we all know someone who is deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing. You'll be introduced to different perspectives of deafness and hearing loss, the cultural aspects of the D/deaf community, and explore what you can do to help your D/deaf/deafened friend or family member. I'm also going to specifically talk about deafness and hearing loss in the church setting and what we can do at St Peter's that would be helpful and inclusive. *Kajsa*

Church hall caretaker: We are recruiting a part-time caretaker for the church hall. [Full details here](#). The deadline for applying is 10 June.

FINAL CALL! Church theatre trip, 3 October: The deadline for booking a ticket for the matinee theatre trip on 3 October is Tuesday 2 June. There is a step-free accessible entrance at The Mill and we can help organise transport to Sonning for those who need it.

If you have already booked a ticket, please can you transfer £27 to the PCC bank account ([details here](#)) as soon as possible as Kate has already booked these seats, or pay by cash in the parish office (no cheques, please). It will be a great afternoon and so far over 20 people have signed up! Full details are in May's newsletter.

Learning Hub

"The books transported her into new worlds..." (Matilda)

Learning is something we do throughout our lives and as Christians there is always more to learn, about God, the Bible and the Church. Study courses are great but sometimes it is good to learn at our own pace, and Oxford Diocese have a great platform for this called the Learning Hub. It is free to create an account and then you can access a range of courses, including some short 'bite size' courses which can be completed in just a couple of hours at your own pace (and you can spread the time

over a few days or weeks).

Please read this file [Learning hub.docx](#) which is a poster I have made showing you how to create your account and which courses might be a good starting point. If you'd like to chat about any of the courses or need help signing up then please do email me.

Kate

Song School concert with Newbury Chamber Choir

On Saturday 20 June the Earley St Peter's Song School will join Newbury Chamber Choir for a concert conducted by our Director of Music Ben de Souza. The choirs will sing lots of well-known anthems by composers such as Wesley, Wood, Ireland, Faure and Franck. The concert will be at St George's, Wash Common, Newbury, RG14 6NU and will start at 6pm. Tickets are £18 and can be purchased online here -

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/newburychamberchoir/2188271>.

Please do come and support the Song School if you are able!

Support for Anthan: 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 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*

Team meetings and Christmas Fayre

In May, we held several meetings on Sunday mornings, with the hope of creating or re-establishing some key teams within the church. I am delighted that the Hospitality meeting was a great success and a Hospitality Committee was formed, more details of which will follow. The Eco meeting was also productive, although we do need more people to join this committee, which will meet every 2 months. Sarah Godwin is our new 'Eco Officer', working with me, the Ministry Team and the PCC as we look at how we can work towards a Bronze 'Eco Church' award, which there will be more information about in our next newsletter and also at the back of church. If you would like to be part of this team, which is focussing on a key area of church life that the Diocese is strongly encouraging, please email me for more details. We would also welcome any young people to this committee and would make sure we met at times that were suitable.

We also had an initial Christmas Fayre meeting, which was also well

attended and where people offered some great ideas. The Fayre will be on Friday 11 December from 3-7pm. We don't want the timing/dark evenings to put people off, so we will be organising transport to and from the hall for anyone who needs it, and we will come off ample parking for those with limited mobility. Of the people present at the meeting, we had volunteers for various contributions to the Fayre, either in preparation or on the day, some stalls were decided, including

- Secondhand books
- Mulled wine
- Handmade stall (see separate notice below)
- Christmas card stall designed by Kajsa
- Tombola
- Guess weight of cake
- Traditional games such as 'splat a rat', 'guess how many sweets in the jar' and 'Guess name of the bear' on a table run by our young people
- Upstairs children's craft and activities, probably in the Fowler Room
- Santa's grotto in the Paddock Room

Kajsa has offered to decorate and we are very fortunate to benefit from her artistic skills and past experience in decorating for a Christmas Fayre.

There are some teams/roles that we need volunteers for including:

- Kitchen team
- hot drinks and cakes. On the day and baking!
- Santa's helpers
- wrapping in advance and helping on the day, in shifts
- on the door
- setting up team and tidying away team, who may or may not be there during the Fayre

Please can you let me know directly if you'd be happy to volunteer or take a lead in organising any of those. Our Hall Manager Sonja and I will soon be putting together a floor plan for the event and our next meeting is on Sunday 14 June at 11am. All are welcome. *Kate*

Hand-made stall

Are you crafty? Can you knit or crochet? Do you work with wood or clay? At our Christmas Fayre, we are having a 'Hand-made' stall which will hopefully contain a wide variety of items. Some ideas so far are hats, scarves, Christmas tree decorations and jewellery, but we know that people are very creative and we would welcome a range of items to sell. We ask that most items are £10 or below and small enough to be

taken home on the day. However, if you have any suggestions for larger or more expensive items, please speak to Kate as this might be possible. Rachel Knight will be overseeing this stall and in our next newsletter we will give information about how we will collect items. If you would like to contribute to this stall, please email Kate or come to the next meeting. We also ask that we don't have home-made Christmas cards contributed as Kajsa is designing some specifically for the church to sell from November onwards, and they will have their own small stall at the fayre.

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 will follow, but do save the dates as I am sure Kajsa and Madhuri would appreciate some familiar faces in the congregation. *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

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.

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 Fayre

Dates for your diary

16 August, 4-5.30pm: Messy Church Fundraiser. Solve our three adventures with puzzles, craft activities and snacks! £5 per person, with money raised to go towards resources for Messy Church. [Sign up here](#) or contact john@earleystpeters.org.uk

3 October: Church theatre trip (see above)

Earley St Peter's



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<https://www.earleystpeters.org.uk/>

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