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

1 message

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

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

This month I want to talk about wellbeing and the importance of self-care. It is not an explicitly Christian theme, but the Gospel message is one of love, compassion and justice. Whilst most people try hard to treat others with love and compassion, we do not always extend the same kindness to ourselves – something I know I have spoken about before. Many people would be quick to offer support to a friend or neighbour, or to point them in the direction of help, but I wonder whether fewer people would seek out that same help for themselves. Also, it isn't always easy to know where to look, and so we are introducing a new section of the noticeboard in church with a focus on wellbeing. It will be alongside the community support section as the two are interwoven.

Kajsa and I recently had the privilege of meeting a variety of people who work for local organisations and projects run by the local authority – we couldn't believe how many things were available! I am also pleased that we will be offering a couple of wellbeing-focused Saturday afternoon 'life in all its fullness' sessions in the near future, which will look at wellbeing more generally as well as other related issues such as keeping safe from scams and support with the rising cost of living.

One thing that is known to be good for our wellbeing is gratitude, and so I want to conclude this short reflection with a photo collage that I made of some of the events in June and July, either in the parish or related to the parish. They say a picture can say a thousand words and I think the picture below truly does.

Photos are from the parish bring and share party for Kajsa, Libby and Madhuri; Kajsa's ordination; Madhuri's ordination; Madhuri's celebration service; presentation of medals to choristers; Anthan's reception into the Church of England and our Patronal Festival.



Compassion cafe: We all know that grief is something which affects many people in different ways, and it can be a lonely experience. In September we are starting a new group called the Compassion Cafe, which is a drop-in group held on the second Friday of each month from 10.30pm-12pm, beginning on 11 September. Please do put this date in your diary and there will be more details in next month's newsletter. *Kate*

Services and Events in August

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

We meet every weekday morning at 8.55am (Fridays at 8.30am) in the church for Morning Prayer. All welcome.

Saturday 1 August	10am-3pm	Church open
Sunday 2 August	8am	Holy Communion
	10am	Bread and Wine
	6.30pm	Evening Worship
Monday 3 August	9am	Church open
Tuesday 4 August	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 5 August	9am	Church open
Saturday 8 August	10am-3pm	Church open

Sunday 9 August	10am	Parish Communion
	6.30pm	Evening Worship
Monday 10 August	9am	Church open
Tuesday 11 August	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 12 August	9am	Church open
Friday 14 August	9.30am	Church cleaning
Saturday 15 August	10am-3pm	Church open
Sunday 16 August	10am	Parish Communion
	6.30pm	Reflective Communion

Monday 17 August	9am	Church open
Tuesday 18 August	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
	12pm	Holy Communion at The Birches
Wednesday 19 August	9am	Church open
Friday 21 August	10am	Children's Activity: Games in the park
Saturday 22 August	10am-3pm	Church open
Sunday 23 August	10am	Parish Communion
	6.30pm	Evening Worship

Monday 24 August	9am	Church open
Tuesday 25 August	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 26 August	9am	Church open
	11.30am	Holy Communion at Embrook Court
Saturday 29 August	10am-3pm	Church open
Sunday 30 August	10am	Parish Communion
	6.30pm	Evening Worship



Summer Teddy Bear Hunt: The bears are back with our summer Teddy Bear Hunt. A fun, free activity which is ideal for families with children, but can be enjoyed by people of all ages. There are updated booklets in the porch with information about each bear and some fun puzzles and activities.

Generous Giving Update

I have spoken twice in church recently about our financial situation, something that our Treasurer Helen also spoke about at the APCM. With a large predicted deficit this year, we are faced with the reality that our income needs to increase significantly. Whilst we benefit from some generous one-off gifts and fundraising events, an increase in regular giving is what we most need.

Last year we did a full generous giving campaign, and we will do another one next year, but this year I have looked at some figures and want to present some hard facts (and we all know how much I love numbers!)

If 70 people gave £10 extra each month, our annual income would increase by £8400.

If 70 people gave £5 extra each week, our annual income would increase by £18200. That is significant percentage of the predicted deficit!

The reason I like these figures is that £5 a week is roughly the cost of a takeaway coffee and so it is something we can relate to.

Of course some people cannot afford to increase their giving this much but others may be able to increase theirs more – we all know our own financial situations. What I would ask is that people remember that whilst wages have increased nationally, as well as a large increase in heating costs, food prices and other aspects of daily life, these have all increased in our church too.

There are leaflets at the back of church and a 'giving' section on the notice board showing the different ways people can give. You can use a standing order, which is easy to set up and amend, or pay through the parish giving scheme.

If you want to talk about any of this or ask any questions, please do email me. A couple of people have asked me questions in the last couple of weeks and I have

had some honest and useful conversations.

Thank you for reading this – no vicar wants to talk about money constantly but I also see how much growth and activity there is at St Peter's and whilst I long for this to continue, the truth is that most of it has a financial implication and we need to be able to resource it. *Kate*

Parish Prayer Walks

Kajsa has developed Parish Prayer Walks – 1-10km walks around the parish with prayer stations and set prayers that may (or may not) be used. You will find the links to download maps on the flyer outside the hall or in church, and paper copies of the maps are to be found in the green folder in the church's library corner. We will do a joint walk (most likely the University walk) on the third Saturday of the month, at 10am, meeting by the church. The walk will be followed by a coffee/tea and biscuits in the church. Toilets and parking are available at the church hall. Please note that there will not be a joint walk in August.

From the Revd Libby Newman:

A big thank you to all at St Peter's for helping to mark my final retirement from Ministry on 28 June, with such warmth and kindness. It was a privilege to share Kajsa's and Madhuri's celebration of their developing Ministries, for which the Church is so much richer, and I thank them and Kate for that. Thank you so much too for the generous gift and lovely flowers. I've still to work out what to buy with the gift - possibly a digital photo frame - and have very much enjoyed the beauty of the flowers.

God bless you all. With love, *Libby*.

Confirmation service: There will be a confirmation service at St Peter's on Sunday 11 October at 6pm. We are delighted that Bishop Mary will be joining us again to lead this service. There will be candidates from a couple of other churches in the deanery and it will be a service of great celebration.

We will be running confirmation classes for adults and young people (school year 6 upwards from the start of September 2026). It would be great to have some St Peter's candidates, so if you are interested, or know someone who might be, please email me as soon as possible. If you would like information about what confirmation is, please also email me. If you have not been baptised or confirmed, then the Bishop can do both of these at the same service.

Theatre trip: If you did not book a ticket for our parish day out on 3 October but have changed your mind, we do have a small number of spare tickets. Please email Kate.

A gentle reminder for those who have already booked theatre tickets: please could you transfer the money to our PCC bank account or drop cash in a marked envelope into the office.

Visit to the Diocese of Shinyanga: Bridget and Leslie Green, Trustees of Friends of Amani Tanzania, recently visited the Diocese of Shinyanga. You can read about their visit here: [2026.07 Shinyanga visit report.pdf](#)

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

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.

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

Anthany 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 Anthany that is close enough to church that he can continue to volunteer and attend regularly. *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. 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 cone 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 Paddick 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. *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. 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.

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 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

3 October: Theatre trip

4 October, 10am: Harvest Festival

4 October, 4pm: Pet Blessing service for St Francis' Day

11 October, 6pm: Confirmation Service

1 November, 3pm: All Souls' service

11 December, 3pm: Christmas Fayre

Earley St Peter's



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