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

1 message

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

Thought for the month *from Clive Tillin*

Like so many things, my life falls into recurring seasons and events. As I sit here I am preparing to go to Walsingham for the Solemnity of our Lady of Walsingham. It is also the Richeldis Partnership get-together. So I must admit I am looking forward to this.

As I was thinking about what to write, I thought I have mentioned a lot about various events in Walsingham and my life, but not given you a brief history. Here goes:

Richeldis de Faverches was a Saxon noblewoman, married to the Lord of the Manor of Walsingham, Parva. He died leaving her a young widow with a son, Geoffrey. We know that Richeldis had a deep faith in God and devotion to Mary.

We know, too, of her reputation for good works in care and hospitality towards those around her.

1061 - The Vision

For Richeldis, however, the life of prayer and good works was rewarded by a vision in the year 1061. In this vision she was taken by Mary to be shown the house in Nazareth where Gabriel had announced the news of the birth of Jesus. Mary asked Richeldis to build an exact replica of that house in Walsingham. This is how Walsingham became known as England's Nazareth. The materials given by Richeldis were finally constructed miraculously one night into the Holy House, where she kept a vigil of prayer.

Walsingham Priory

We do know that in passing on his guardianship of the Holy House, Geoffrey de Faverches left instructions for the building of a Priory in Walsingham. The Priory passed into the care of Augustinian Canons somewhere between 1146 and 1174. It was this Priory, housing the simple wooden structure Richeldis had been asked to build, which became the focus of pilgrimage to Walsingham. Royal patronage helped the Shrine to grow in wealth and popularity, receiving visits from Henry III, Edward II, Edward III, Henry IV, Edward IV, Henry VII and Henry VIII, who finally brought about its destruction in 1538.

The Shrine Restored

After nearly 400 years, the 20th century saw the restoration of pilgrimage to Walsingham as a regular feature of Christian life. In 1897, there was a Roman Catholic pilgrimage to the restored 14th-century Slipper Chapel, now at the centre of the Roman Catholic National Shrine. Fr Hope Patten, appointed as Vicar of Walsingham in 1921, ignited Anglican interest in the pre-Reformation pilgrimage. It was his idea to base a new statue of Our Lady of Walsingham on the image depicted on the seal of the medieval Priory. In 1922, this statue was set up in the parish church of St Mary, and regular pilgrimage devotion followed. From the first night that the statue was placed there, people gathered around it to pray, asking Mary to join her powerful prayer with theirs. This work of intercession continues to this day.

The Shrine Hospice and Church

Throughout the 1920s, the trickle of pilgrims became a flood of large numbers, for whom eventually a Pilgrim Hospice was opened (a hospice is technically the name of a place of hospitality for pilgrims) and in 1931 a new Holy House encased in a small pilgrimage church was dedicated. The statue was translated

there with great solemnity. In 1938 that church was enlarged to form the Anglican Shrine, more or less as we know it today. Fr Patten combined the posts of Vicar and Priest Administrator of the Shrine until his death in 1958.

I thank the Shrine for some of the dates and history.

They say a picture is better than words, so here are a few I have gathered.



The Shrine Church



Parish Church



Statue moved to the Shrine



Fr Hope Patten



News for October

(see also the full calendar at the bottom of this newsletter)

Harvest Festival service and Pet Blessing service: 4 October

Our Harvest Festival this year falls on Saint Francis' day, which is 4 October. This year is the 800th anniversary of the death of Saint Francis and so as well as our usual harvest festival and meal, we are having a special pet blessing service in the afternoon at 4pm to commemorate Francis, who is the patron Saint of animals. This will replace our usual evening service and will only be about 30 minutes in length. I do encourage people to bring their well-behaved pets to the service (I will be bringing at least one of mine!) but you are more than welcome to come along if you don't have a pet, or bring a photograph of your pet, if bringing the real thing would be too difficult.

Our morning service will be the usual harvest festival parish communion service, with choir and Song School, as well as activities and interaction for children, making it a service suitable for all ages.

As usual, we will be collecting for Woodley Food Bank and we invite people to bring along non-perishable food items, as well as other household goods and toiletries, as donations. After the service we will have our usual refreshments as well as some optional activities with a harvest theme, which will be followed by a bring and share lunch.

Harvest is a time of gratitude and I am very thankful to all who have been a part in organising the services and food for this special day. *Kate*

Compassion Cafe: We all know that grief is something which affects many people in different ways, and it can be a lonely experience. We have started a new group called the Compassion Cafe, which is a drop-in group held on the second Friday of each month from 10.30am-12pm. This month we meet on 9 October.

Deanery Confirmation service: Earley St Peter's is hosting the Deanery Confirmation service on Sunday 11 October at 6pm. As well as our own candidate, there will be another 6 candidates from across the deanery, and it will be a lovely opportunity to worship together and celebrate as the candidates take this next step in their faith journeys. We are delighted to welcome back Bishop

Mary to lead the service and there will be refreshments in church after the service. Our choir and song school have some fantastic music planned and I encourage people to come along to the service, if they are able. *Kate*

Christmas Fayre planning meeting: There will be a planning team meeting on 11 October at 12pm in the church hall. This is a useful and important time to see how things are developing and to plan the next steps.

Prayer ministry: We will be offering prayer ministry in the Lady Chapel after our 10am morning services from 18 October. More details will be announced closer to the time. Thank you to Kajsa for organising this.

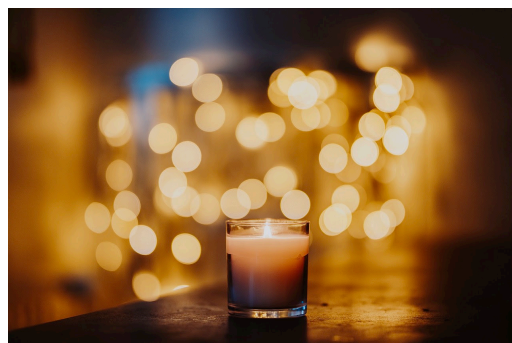
Song School



Do you know a young person in school years 5 to 8 who loves singing? We'd like to welcome more young people to join our Song School. We rehearse on Thursdays from 6-7.25pm in term time, and sing at six to seven Sunday services per term. Membership is free, and members receive payment for services and rehearsals, as well as free music tuition and individual singing lessons. To find out more, please contact music@earleystpeters.org.uk

1 November, 3pm: All Souls' service

We invite you to a service of music, reflection and silence to remember our loved ones. The names of those who have died in the last two years will be added automatically to this list. If there is anyone else you would like to be remembered, please fill in this form or email admin@earleystpeters.org.uk by 23 October.



Volunteers needed for Sunday refreshments



Gillian and her team work very hard to offer refreshments on Sundays after the main morning service and we are all very grateful for their commitment. Unfortunately, due to unexpected circumstances, the team could benefit from some new volunteers joining them. Hospitality is an important part of the life of St Peter's and the Sunday team are often the people who serve drinks to visitors or people who are new to the parish. If you are interested or have any queries, please email Gillian Gatehouse at gillygate@talktalk.net

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*



Could you volunteer with REinspired?

REinspired in a sentence – Church volunteers partnering with REinspired to show faith in action, with creative school RE lessons, enhanced by real, lived-out experiences of faith.

If you love story-telling, craft and wondering along with children on the big questions of life, this could be for you.

Come and Join the team - Sarah Godwin needs you! Her team at Newtown Primary School is passionate to see young people know more about Jesus. You will be trained and supported as part of a group and you'll gain new skills and confidence.

Ask Sarah for more information or email Julia.Jones@reinspired.org.uk

Minimum of four hours a term.

Warning: volunteering can become

addictive!

Support for Anthan: Anthan served as a Catholic priest in Pakistan for 17 years but due to a series of challenging circumstances, Anthan came to the UK nearly two years ago. Since then he has become a regular congregation member at St Peter's on Sundays and Tuesdays. He was formally admitted into the Church of England in June and he was recently appointed as the new caretaker for the church hall.

Anthan is currently in accommodation that is safe and comfortable but it is a temporary arrangement and he is seeking new accommodation in the near future.

We are asking whether anyone would be able to offer Anthan a longer-term room to stay in while his appeal to stay permanently in the UK is being processed. His part-time wage and the government allowance he receives mean he is not able to pay a large amount of rent but he would have enough money to contribute towards food and some household costs.

Please could I encourage everyone to pray that accommodation is found for Anthan that is close enough to church that he can continue to work and attend regularly. *Kate*

Christmas Fayre – it's time for action!

We hope that our Christmas Fayre on 11 December will be a warm, welcoming event. In order to ensure its success, we need plenty of people who are willing to help with setting up the rooms, running stalls, making refreshments, giving lifts to people who would like to attend and many other roles. You don't have to commit to attending for the whole time: even an hour would make a huge difference. **If you can help in any way, please sign up using this form.** Thank you!

If you would like a lift to the Christmas Fayre, please also sign up here.

If you feel you can contribute to the Hand-made stall, please do let Kate know as soon as possible. It would be helpful if you could let us know what you are making and how much you would like to charge for the items. So far, the contributions we have had are to be sold with all the profit going to the church. However, if you would like to sell your items with the profit split between the church and somewhere else, please do indicate this in your email. Unfortunately, we do not have the capacity for any small business sellers due to space restrictions.

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.

7 November: Training - Neurodiversity Awareness

28 November: Study - Gospel of Mark

11 December: Social - Christmas Fayre

Calendar for October

(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 3 October	10am-3pm	Church open
	1.30pm	Church theatre trip

Sunday 4 October	8am	Holy Communion
	10am	Harvest Festival with Song School
	12pm	Harvest Lunch
	4pm	Pet Blessing Service
	6.30pm	Questions and Cake
Monday 5 October	9am	Church open
	2pm	Sunshine Social
	6pm	Confirmation class
Tuesday 6 October	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 7 October	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots and Teddies
Thursday 8 October	10am	Thursday@10: coffee and chat
Friday 9 October	9.30am	Church cleaning
	10.30am	Compassion Cafe

Saturday 10 October	10am-3pm	Church open
Sunday 11 October	10am	Parish Communion Children's Church Inspiration Group
	12pm	Christmas Fayre planning meeting
	6pm	Confirmation service
Monday 12 October	9am	Church open
Tuesday 13 October	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 14 October	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots and Teddies
Saturday 17 October	10am-3pm	Church open
	10am	Parish Prayer Walk
Sunday 18 October	10am	Parish Communion Children's Church Inspiration Group

	6.30pm	Reflective Communion Questions and Cake
Monday 19 October	9am	Church open
Tuesday 20 October	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
	12pm	Holy Communion at The Birches
Wednesday 21 October	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots and Teddies
Thursday 22 October	10am	Thursday@10: Sheila Jordan, 'New Zealand'
Saturday 24 October	10am-3pm	Church open
Sunday 25 October	10am	Parish Communion Children's Church
	4pm	Messy Church

	6.30pm	Choral Evensong
Monday 26 October	9am	Church open
Tuesday 27 October	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 28 October	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots and Teddies
	11.30am	Holy Communion at Embrook Court
Saturday 31 October	10am-3pm	Church open

Earley St Peter's



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

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