
Your monthly update from Earley St Peter's church: December 2025

1 message

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



Thought for the month from the Revd Kate Wakeman-Toogood

Good news! Read all about it!

I was leading a study group at church a couple of weeks ago and, unsurprisingly, the conversation took some unexpected turns. Someone in the group started to talk about watching the news and how the amount of bad news feels overwhelming at times. Locally and worldwide, there are constant news reports about violence, corruption, death, financial crises, injustice and other issues that cause us to feel a combination of anger, sadness, despair and fear. The group conversation turned towards the importance of sharing good news and people shared stories they had heard recently which were filled with hope.

I decided that sharing good news should be something we do more often and so this December, at the start of a new Church year, I am launching our 'monthly good news story'. My hope is that each of our parish newsletters will conclude with some good news! This may be highlighting something from the media (as I am doing this month) or sharing some local good news. It will only be a short article but it would be great if other people began to contribute to this, particularly if members of our congregation have their own good news stories.

Of course, as Christmas approaches, the Church focusses on the greatest news of all; the birth of Jesus. This Good News is not something historical or something that is only for church-goers, but rather it is something that is still relevant today and brings hope to all people. Jesus' birth was a gift and that gift keeps on giving. It is the gift of God's love, peace, joy and hope to all humankind. It is the gift of salvation and the door to eternal life. Receiving this gift does not take away from the reality of the struggles we face, either personally or in the wider world, but it can strengthen us and renew our hope. We are able to channel our anger, fear and sadness into prayer and action, and, whilst we cannot fix all the bad news we hear about, we can dedicate ourselves to ensuring we are instruments of love and hope in our own lives and communities. The Good News of Jesus is something we should not be keeping to ourselves and something we can share with others daily, in both word and action.

Messy Church is coming to Earley St Peter's in 2026!

This is an exciting new chapter and there are lots of ways that people can get involved, whether helping on the day or with preparation.



One important aspect of Messy Church is sharing a meal together and we are looking for volunteers for our '**kitchen team**'. The meals will be simple but will need a small, committed team to prepare the food whilst the craft activities are taking place.

The other main teams are the '**craft team**' and the '**planning team**'. The craft team will be there on the day and will run a preprepared activity, based on the month's theme. The planning team will help Kate to put

together the resources for the activities and will have the opportunity to plan activities if they wish.

We will also need story tellers and people to lead the singing, but it is likely that they will also be part of one of the other teams so we can share the roles.

Please let Kate know if you are interested in being a part of any of these teams.

We are hoping to have a team of adult leaders but also some young leaders (from year 9 upwards or year 7/8 with parent/carers supervision on the day).

There will be a briefing and demonstration for anyone interested in becoming a young leader on Sunday 7 December at 6pm (followed by the Questions & Cake Christmas party at 6.30pm). Please let John or Kate know if your child will be attending.

Messy Church will be held on the 4th Sunday of each month at 4pm and the first session is on Sunday 25 January.

Services and Events in December

(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 December	9am	Church open
	2pm	Sunshine Social cafe: for people living with dementia and their carers. We will be joined by school children from Earley St Peter's School who will sing a few carols,

		and there will be mince pies to mark the occasion.
Tuesday 2 December	9am	Drop-in morning
	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 3 December	9am	Church open
	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
	6.30pm	Praying through Advent (see below)
Sunday 7 December	8am	Holy Communion
	10am	Bread & Wine
	6.30pm	Evening Worship Questions & Cake
Tuesday 9 December	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 10 December	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
	6.30pm	Praying Through Advent
Thursday 11 December	10am	Thursday@10: Mince pies and music

Friday 12 December	9.30am	Church cleaning (see below)
	1pm	Advent Crafts (see below)
Sunday 14 December	10am	Parish Communion Children's Church Inspiration Group
	3pm	Christingle crafts and service (see below)
Tuesday 16 December	11am	Holy Communion
Wednesday 17 December	10.15am	Tots & Teddies
	6.30pm	Praying through Advent
Sunday 21 December	10am	Parish Communion Children's Church Inspiration Group
	6.30pm	Nine Lessons and Carols
Monday 22 December	10am	Crib Service rehearsal
Tuesday 23 December	9am	Church open
	11am	Holy Communion

Wednesday 24 December	9am	Church open
	3pm	Crib Service
	10.30pm	Carols from the choir followed by Midnight Communion
Wednesday 24 December - Friday 2 January inclusive		Parish office closed
Thursday 25 December	10am	Festal Communion for Christmas Day. We will discuss the ultimate Christmas gift – Jesus! Children are welcome to bring an unwrapped gift to the service, though ideally not very large or expensive ones!
Sunday 28 December	10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 30 December	11am	Holy Communion

New log-in option for ChurchSuite and My ChurchSuite:

You can now log into ChurchSuite (authorised users) and My ChurchSuite (open to all) from the link in the footer on every page of our web site: <https://www.earleystpeters.org.uk/>.

My ChurchSuite gives access to rotas, church emails, the calendar and contact information, and is an easy way to sign up for and track events. If you haven't taken a look yet and would like to do so, please contact admin@earleystpeters.org.uk





Church cleaning: Our team who clean the church once a month would warmly welcome new members. They meet at 9.30am on the second Friday in the month for around one hour, but there is no need to come for the whole time, or every month. If you can help, please speak to Margaret Thomas or contact the parish office. The next session is on 12 December.



12 December, 1pm: Advent craft session in the church hall. All welcome to join us for a wide range of activities to suit everybody. You can turn up on the day, but it would be helpful if you could let us know in advance if you will be attending. [Sign up here](#) or contact admin@earleystpeters.org.uk

14 December, 3pm: Christingle crafts and service. We warmly invite everybody to join us in the church hall for Christmas crafts, Christingle-making and refreshments, followed by a service in church at 4pm. Relaxed and family-friendly!



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 966 8575) or Mary Brooke (0118 926 2153)

Good News from Woodley Food Bank donations: They have a new cabin donated and delivered by Balfour Beatty to replace their old one which was showing signs of its



age. Much better working conditions for their volunteers. Despite the huge amount of donations at Harvest Festival, all stocks are now low (except pasta), so they would be very grateful for our continued support as we enter the Winter months 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 the church. Finally, a massive thank you. Every last item donated is very much appreciated as they continue to provide to those who need it within our community. *Anne and Ken Richardson*

More information here: www.woodleyfoodbank.org

News from Friends of Amani Tanzania: So far, FOAT has raised funds for a total of 30 of the 74 bikes needed to help evangelists reach families of children with disabilities. Read more details here:

2025.11 Shinyanga FOAT news.pdf

Each bike costs £80. If you would like to donate towards the purchase of more bikes, please use FOAT bank details:

Account Name: Friends of Amani Tanzania, Account No: 00036740,
Sort Code: 40-52-40, marking your donation: *Bikes*

Life in all its fullness

These are the most recent details of our upcoming study groups and training sessions. Check our notice boards, social media and website for more details and updates.



Praying through Advent

3 December, 6.30pm: Praying the Jesus Prayer. The prayer will be chanted in English and Ukrainian. It is a spiritual service that focuses on prayer and includes influences from the Eastern

Orthodox Church.

10 December, 6.30pm: Reflecting
on the Magnificat

17 December, 6.30pm: Exploring
the Advent O Antiphons

Dates for your diary

24 January 2026, 6pm in the church hall: International Food Evening

25 January 2026, 4pm in the church hall: Messy Church. A time of stories, puzzles, singing, celebration and a shared meal.

28 February 2026, 3pm: Concert by Cantemus Chamber Choir in aid of Earley St Peter's and Alexander Devine Children's Hospice Service.

6 June 2026, 7pm: Concert by Erleigh Cantors in aid of Earley St Peter's and Alexander Devine Children's Hospice Service.

Our monthly good news story.....

One recent piece of inspiring news, which could easily be lost in the midst of the many worrying and heartbreaking news broadcasts, is the fundraising efforts of DJ Sara Cox. Sara undertook her Great Northern Marathon Challenge, which involved a combination of running, jogging and walking 135 miles across 4 counties (the distance of 5 marathons). In doing this, Sara has raised over £11 million for the Children in Need charity campaign. As well as her dedication to the cause, what is also inspiring are Sara's honest and frank comments about the fundraising event and the particular challenges she faced. Sara was bullied as a child because of the way she walked and had always been self-conscious about running in front of people. She also highlighted some of the realities of the physical challenges that come with age and, although Sara is only 50, training for this sort of event was harder for her than it would have been when she was younger.

I chose this piece of good news as it was the one that someone brought up in the study group I mentioned in my reflection. In the midst of the seemingly endless bad news on the radio and television, this story stood out to them and so it seemed fitting to share it. I'd encourage all of us to

listen out for stories of hope, both in the news and in our own lives, and to share them, where possible, to spread some much-needed hope.

Earley St Peter's



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