



**The Parish of
St. Martin's, Chipping
Ongar with St. Peter's,
Shelley**

Charity No. 1214524.

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OCTOBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

To be a growing church, God's gift to the community

Letter from The Rectory ...

950th Anniversary

Thanks be to God that the new secretary of the Ongar Millenium History Society, Michael, lives in Castle Street and is really keen to help us with our 950th celebrations, as are the rest of the committee. They are working on a portable exhibition of our church history and also an article for the next edition of Ongar News, so watch that space as well as this one.

A first draft of the exhibition will be available to view at our 10th October quiz in the Church Rooms. Some of the OMHS members will be there too, and they would love to have your feedback so they can amend and complete in time for All Souls, which is when we hope to have it on display in the church for the first time – and it will be there until the end of the year. If you haven't already got your tickets, book them now via Ticketsource online, or from Rita Osborne (07843 879525).



Come to the Water

If you weren't able to join us on the evening of Tuesday 22nd November, you missed a real treat. It was lovely to have musicians from St Mary's Loughton lead us in a mixture of old and new songs with guitar and flute. We also spent time in prayer and prayed blessings on our church building and its worshipping community. The hour was intended as a time when as Jesus himself said:

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and let he who believes in me drink." He said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. (John 7:37-39)

Those who came not only received the living water that is Jesus, but were able to have hot chocolate with marshmallows afterwards too. Many stayed to chat, and it was clear the evening had been much appreciated. By popular demand, we'll be arranging another such evening, but I'm also planning other evenings to explore other spiritualities. Taize and Celtic

services are on the way, and in February we have invited a charismatic Anglo-Catholic priest to lead us in a charismatic mass. I'm particularly looking forward to that one, as I've only ever been to one such mass before. It will be taken by Fr Mund, formerly of Barkingside, whom I've invited to help us explore the discernment and use of spiritual gifts.

Stewardship Review

Right at the end of September, I met with Andrew Bowtle (PCC Treasurer) and David Irving (St Peter's treasurer and churchwarden representative) and Jill Bowtle (St Martin's churchwarden representative) to consider the state of our finances. The problem that we've got is that for the last 7 years, the costs of running our parish have been greater than the income we have received and we are running out of reserves. Although it varies, the yearly shortfall has averaged £3,500. That sounds a lot, but we have 42 church members so that's an extra £1.70 per person per week – which sounds a lot more achievable.

Maintaining our church buildings (excluding major repairs) and funding our ministry costs about £65,000 each year. The fact that we can cover most of it is wonderful and a cause for rejoicing. Longer term we hope to rent out the Church Rooms, which should mean we make a small surplus each year (and can repay the outstanding loan used for rebuilding its end wall). However, that is taking longer to achieve than we thought, so in the meantime, we have to look to ourselves to plug the gap.

I'm well aware this is a rubbish time to ask, given spiralling costs of living and the cold weather approaching, but I'm going to ask anyway. Would you have a look at your budget and see if there's a way you can save an extra pound or two a week for our parish please? Giving up a cup of coffee is the example most usually given, browsing the special offer shelves in the supermarkets is another, buying fresh produce only in season is a third. Anyone got any more suggestions? I'm sure our newsletter editor will happily print them



Monies can go in the wooden box at St Peter's, or the green boxes or card reader in St Martin's, or via QR codes on display in both churches or via an increase to your regular giving – either standing order or Parish Giving Scheme (see leaflets in St Martin's about this.)

Mission Sunday

Something else that the PCC and its Standing Committee have been reflecting on is which mission societies we should support. Jesus' teaching is clear: we should follow the old testament guidelines in giving not only to fund the ministry of the church, but also to support those in need, both those who are our fellow Christians and those who aren't. We don't have the resources to do this directly, but we can contribute to other organisations that do.

When I arrived, I discovered ongoing support for Compassion's Sponsor-A-Child project and The Leprosy Mission, but the people who were acting as the links between those charities and St Martin's were no longer able to do so. Sally O'Gara has generously agreed to take on the Compassion role, as her son Matthew is almost the same age as Josias, the boy we've been supporting in Burkino Faso (his photo and latest letter are on the tardis noticeboard). We also have a group of volunteers who donate annually to cover the £32 monthly sponsorship cost.

I was already a supporter of both these charities, so am now the contact for The Leprosy Mission. We've not only held occasional collections for them but also pray every Wednesday at our mid-week communion following the cycle of prayer they send out.

Covid brought to an end to the annual Children's Society Christingle collection, though it did start the Porch Pantry. Again, the volunteer who managed that is no longer able to do so, though we send harvest collections from both churches to 3Food4U - still operating over the Thursday lunchtime period but from Budworth Hall.

We also used to support St Clare's Hospice with an advent 'Light Up a Life' service but those who used to organise it have had to step down after many years of faithful service. Instead, Linda Wright has organised occasional coffee mornings for us in the Church Rooms. And thankfully we can at least now support them through their charity shop in one of the Joseph King Trust buildings near Budworth Hall.

It does however seem appropriate to review how we should best support such external mission work both locally and abroad, and we've decided consulting with the church membership should definitely be an important part of this. To that end, I've produced a booklet of our short list of 10 charities that includes a summary of the criteria we are using. It is being distributed with this newsletter, and will be available in hard copy from Harvest Sunday 4th October onwards in the church.

We've designated 18th October as our 'Mission Sunday' when we will reflect on the five marks of mission, reviewing the shortlisted charities and inviting those present to select their top five. We'll do the same the following Sunday so if you attend both services you get twice as many votes! The PCC will make the final decision at their November meeting, ready for me to share with you in the December newsletter.

In Memoriam

Don't forget to complete one of the 'Anniversary of Death' forms for every person you would like to see remembered on the anniversary of their death in 2027 and beyond. They are on the prayer tree table at the back of the central pews and the information table in St Peter's/. Alternatively, electronic copies are available from shirleydudeney@btinternet.com. You can also contact Shirley on 01277 364143 if you would like further information.

With blessings for an outstanding October.



Revd Hazel



What a beautiful hour I spent on the 22nd September. Julie and Martin Huff generously came from St. Mary's, Loughton to lead those present with singing, guitar and a beautiful sound from Julie's flute. We sang some known, and not so well known, songs which really lifted my spirits on a Tuesday evening in September. Our spirits were raised further by the extemporaneous prayer that swirled through the church. I envy those who can do that but it's out of my comfort zone, and others I expect, but it doesn't stop the prayers having meaning and becoming personal especially when so many people are worshipping at the same time. I look forward to the other experimental evenings of worship that Hazel has in mind, spiritual variety being the spice of life.

Sue



CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER

All Services are in St. Martin's unless otherwise stated

Sun 4	8.00 am	Holy Communion
	10.30 am	One Big Family Service – Harvest
	11.00 am	Church@Home *
Wed 7	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
	10.00 am	Holy Communion in the Chancel
Sun 11	10.30 am	Holy Communion
	11.00 am	Church@Home *
Wed 14	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
	10.00 am	Holy Communion in the Chancel
Thurs 15	1.00 pm	SmartyCraft meets in The Church Rooms
	2.30 pm	Julian Meeting today at St. Peter's
Sun 18	8.00 am	Holy Communion
	10.30 am	One Big Family Service
	11.00 am	Church@Home *
Tues 20	8.30 pm	The Third Tuesday Club meet at The Cock
Wed 21	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
	10.00 am	Holy Communion in the Chancel
Sun 25	10.30 am	Holy Communion – Bible Sunday
	11.00 am	Church@Home *
Wed 28	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
	10.00 am	Holy Communion in the Chancel

**If you haven't attended Church@Home before and would like to attend, please contact Shirley Dudeney (shirleydudeney@btinternet.com) for the necessary link.*

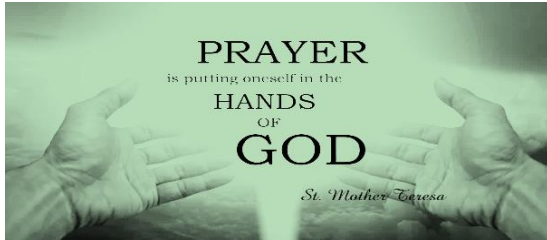
Are you holding an event?

*If you don't tell **Sue King** it won't appear in the Calendar. My contact details are:- email: susan.roger.king@ntlworld.com - Mobile: 07887 996278*



A REMINDER THAT ...

Clocks go back on the last Sunday in October (25th)



*Morning Prayer each Wednesday
at 9 am in St. Martin's Church*

STREETS TO BE PRAYER FOR week beginning: -

27.09.2026	Bushey Lea
04.10.2026	Castle Street
11.10.2026	Chelmsford Road
18.10.2026	Churchill Close
25.10.2026	Clare Mews
01.11.2026	Coles Close, Abigail Court and Finch Court

The above is taken from a newly updated list and so you may notice some recent duplication

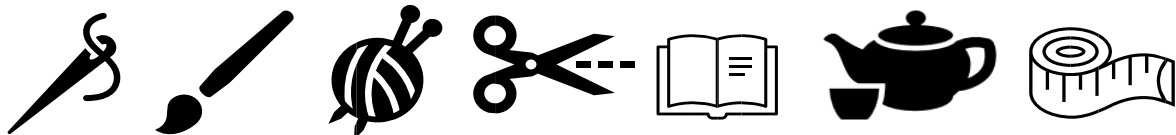
FROM THE REGISTERS:

Baptisms / Confirmations:

Weddings / Renewal of Weddings Vows:

Funerals:

Internment of Ashes / Memorial Services / Cremations:



SMARTYCRAFT

Why not join us at our SmartyCraft session on Thursday 15th October from 1 pm until 3 pm in St. Martin's Church.

Our projects for 2026 are:-

October 15 th -	Christmas Craft for Advent Fair
November 19 th -	Christmas Craft for Advent Fair

Please come and relax and chat with our latest craft project. Jill will provide a short Bible reflection for you to ponder on and Rita will provide refreshments.

Hope to see you there ... **Jill and Rita**

St Martin's Church
CHIPPING ONGAR

One Big
Family

HARVEST FESTIVAL

SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER
10:30AM

Join us for a One Big Family service
as we celebrate Harvest, give thanks
for God's creation, and think about
how we can share and care for others.

We will be collecting
non-perishable food items for

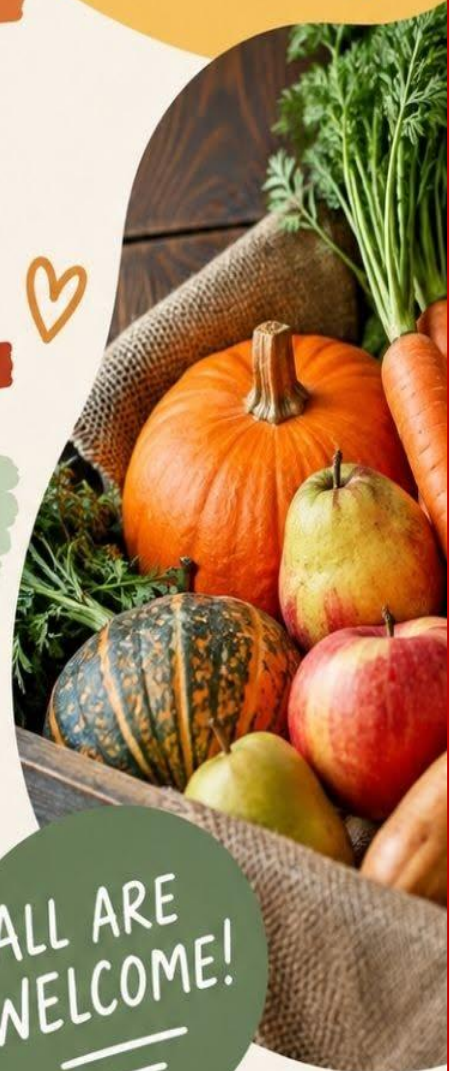

LOCAL FOOD CHARITY

Please bring any non-perishable
food items you can donate.

ALL ARE
WELCOME!



Refreshments
after the service



ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, ONGAR

QUIZ NIGHT



SATURDAY 10th OCTOBER 2026

in

**THE CHURCH ROOMS,
CASTLE STREET, ONGAR**

Advance Tickets available from:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-martins-church>

and from Jill or Rita in Church

7.00 pm - Tickets £10

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN FOOD AND DRINKS!

Please greet me in the street, as I often can't see your face!

Many of you will know that I have been struggling with my eyesight over the last two years and I thought it might be helpful for you to know my current position. The Eye Unit at PAH recently referred me to the Low Vision Unit and the outcome of that is I am now registered as visually impaired.

Although my macular degeneration has been stabilised for the time being, there has been a permanent and significant reduction in my central vision. This means that I can no longer see detail and am unable to read books or newspapers. When I cross the road, cars materialise when they are only a few yards away, so I use zebra crossings whenever I can. Faces on the television are a blur and, more to the point, I can't see faces in the street unless they are a couple of feet away – so if you see me in the High Street do please greet me as I am not intentionally ignoring you!

It is not all doom and gloom as modern technology and changing the ways I do things is a great help. And perhaps surprisingly, it is not unduly affecting my use of a camera. I have discussed this with my optician and it seems that when I look through the viewfinder my peripheral vision (which will remain unaffected by the macular degeneration) takes over.

Peter Dudeney

**God of Mission,
Who alone brings growth to your Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
Joy to our worship
And power to our witness.
Help our Church to grow in numbers,
in spiritual commitment to you, in financial resources
and in love and service in our local community.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord ... Amen**



**Service will be held at 4 pm on
Sunday 1st November 2026 in
St. Martin's Church**

Ongar & Shelley Ladies' Thursday Group

Home Instead



Linda introduced Maureen and Debbie who came to give our group a talk about Home Instead. The company was formed in the USA by a couple who looked after one of their parents so they could stay at home. It has now become a worldwide company with several bases in the UK, mostly divided into franchises. Maureen and Debbie have worked for them for many years.

Many people wish to stay in their own homes as they become older. Home Instead can provide nearly all care in the home including, help with mobility, personal and complex care, help around the home and completing forms such as applying for Attendance Allowance. There is always a 'care plan' set up beforehand and carers are matched to the need of the client if possible. Maureen said there are so many talks given in and around the Epping and Ongar area, including dementia talks, singing groups and meeting for refreshments and a chat.

Linda thanked Maureen and Debbie for a very interesting talk. Our next talk will be on Thursday 1st October at the URC. 2 pm for a 2.30 start. New members welcome and their first visit will be FREE.

Jan Turnbull - September 2026



October News from St. Peter's Church, Shelley

Autumn has arrived at St Peter's and, after such a busy summer, it feels as though the church is moving into a different, but no less active, season.

During September we continued our Shelley Loops programme with the Moreton Loop, taking walkers further out into the countryside around Shelley and Moreton. The idea behind Shelley Loops is very simple: to encourage people to get outdoors, discover the footpaths on our doorstep and enjoy some of the beautiful countryside that surrounds us.

Our next Shelley Loop will take place on **Saturday 10th October**, leaving St Peter's at **9.30 am**. Current thinking is to try a circular route to **St Nicholas' Church, Fyfield**, which will be around **10km**. This will be one of our longest walk yet, but as always the emphasis will be on enjoying the countryside rather than setting any speed records! All are very welcome.

Churchyard Working Party

There will be a working party in the churchyard on **Saturday 17th October from 9 am**, when we will be getting the churchyard ready for winter.

There is always plenty to do, so if you can spare an hour or two your help would be very gratefully received. Bring gardening gloves and suitable tools if you have them - or simply bring yourself. Every pair of hands makes a difference.

Julian Meeting

Our Julian Meetings continue on the second Thursday of each month at **2 pm**.

We begin with a short reflection and music, followed by a period of silent meditation, and finish - naturally - with tea, cake and conversation.
Newcomers are always very welcome.

We do not have any other services during October, but please put **Wednesday 11th November** in your diary for our **Act of Remembrance**, beginning at **10.45 am** ahead of the two-minute silence at 11 am.

If you would like to know more about life at St. Peter's, Shelley, join one of our walks or events, or get involved in any way, please contact **David Irving on 07950 267880**. New faces are always very welcome.



Eco Tip of the Month from St Peter's Church, Shelley

October – Don't Tidy Autumn Away

October is one of the most colourful months around Ongar and Shelley. The trees and hedgerows are changing, leaves are beginning to cover our gardens and footpaths, and the countryside is settling into autumn.

For many of us, that is also the signal to start tidying. We rake up the leaves, cut everything back, clear the borders and try to make the garden look neat before winter arrives.

But perhaps this October we could be a little less tidy.

Those fallen leaves that can look like a nuisance are actually an important part of the natural cycle. As they break down, they return nutrients to the soil. Piles of leaves and old vegetation also provide shelter for insects and other small creatures through the colder months.

And, of course, where there are insects there is food for birds and other wildlife.

Around Shelley and Ongar we are fortunate to be surrounded by mature trees, hedgerows, fields and gardens. They are not separate little islands of nature. Together they form habitats and corridors that allow wildlife to move through our villages and countryside.

Our own gardens are part of that network.

That doesn't mean abandoning the garden completely. Wet leaves certainly need clearing from paths and pavements where they can become slippery. But instead of putting every leaf into a bag, why not move some beneath a hedge, around established plants, or into a quiet corner of the garden?

A small pile of leaves can become a winter refuge. Leaves can also be composted or collected to make leaf mould - one of the simplest and most useful soil improvers you can produce at home, and completely free!

There is another good reason not to be too enthusiastic with the autumn clear-up. Hollow stems, seed heads and old plants can provide winter shelter and food. Birds will happily feed from some seed heads, while insects may spend the winter hidden inside stems or amongst dead vegetation.

Leaving just one corner alone until spring can make a difference. October is also a wonderful month simply to get outside and notice the change happening around us. Take one of the

footpaths around Shelley, walk across Shelley Common or wander through the lanes and hedgerows around Ongar. Look at what is falling, what is producing seeds and berries, and what is preparing for winter.

Nature can sometimes look untidy to human eyes, but it knows what it is doing.

At St Peter's, our Eco Church journey is teaching us that caring for creation does not always mean doing more. Sometimes it means **doing less**- resisting the urge to clear, cut and remove everything, and giving nature a little space to look after itself.

So this October, clear the leaves where you need to - but leave a few where you don't.

A slightly untidy corner of an Ongar or Shelley garden might be exactly the winter home that something needs.

David Irving

ECO PRAYER OF THE MONTH

October — A Season of Thankfulness

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

- Psalm 107:1 God of creation,

As October colours the trees
and autumn settles across our countryside,
we thank you for the beauty and abundance of your world.

For the harvest safely gathered,
for fruit in the hedgerows,
for fallen leaves returning goodness to the soil,
and for all the creatures preparing for the colder months.

Teach us to be thankful for what we have
and mindful of what we use.

Help us to remember that nothing in creation is wasted -
that fallen leaves nourish the earth,
seeds become new life,
and the turning seasons are part of your wonderful design.

Show us how we too can waste less,
reuse what we can,
share what we have,
and care for the places where we live.

As the days grow shorter,
give us grateful hearts
for the richness of the earth
and wisdom to protect it for generations to come.

In Jesus' name .. **Amen**

This month's eco action:

Don't throw autumn away! Leave some fallen leaves beneath hedges or in a quiet corner of the garden to provide shelter for insects and wildlife, and compost the rest to return their goodness to the soil.

Unable to get to church?

Well why not go to?

A Church @ Home



Want to know more?

Well, contact Shirley Dudeney

shirleydudeney@btinternet.com

**for more information
and the Zoom Link**

HOME COMMUNION ... Is there anyone who, for one reason or another, cannot be in Church as they used to be? For those of you who would like it, we can offer home communions. If this is something you would like, please contact either myself, Sue on 07887 996278 or Shirley on 01277 364143, and we can arrange a convenient time to bring the sacrament to you.



ST. MARTIN'S, CHIPPING ONGAR

Times of Services & Private Prayer



Sunday Services

First & Third Sundays - 8 am - Holy Communion

First & Third Sundays - 10.30 am - One Big Family for All
(non-Communion)

Second, Fourth & Fifth* Sunday - 10.30 am - Holy Communion
*With Healing

Wednesday

9 am - Morning Prayer

10 am - Holy Communion

St. Martin's Church is usually open for Private Prayer each day
between 9.30 am and 5 pm or until dusk whichever is the
earliest

Please adhere to any notices displayed

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU!

Please do remember to visit us on the 'A Church Near You'
website <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>

OUR 2026 / 2027 TEXT TO REMEMBER



For God so loved the world, he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not die but have eternal life.

John 3.16



THE TUESDAY CLUB



... meets at ...

The Cock
on the

Third Tuesday of the month at 8.30 pm

Come along and enjoy good conversation and banter

ALL WELCOME !

PARISH VISION

To be a growing Church, God's gift to the community.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

In the light of God's call and our situation here, our mission is:

to be a more evident presence in our community, witnessing to God's love for all;

**to be God's hands and feet within the Church and beyond through
worship and prayer;
listening and serving;
acceptance and welcome;**

**to be a people who are growing towards a closer relationship with God,
creation and each other.**