

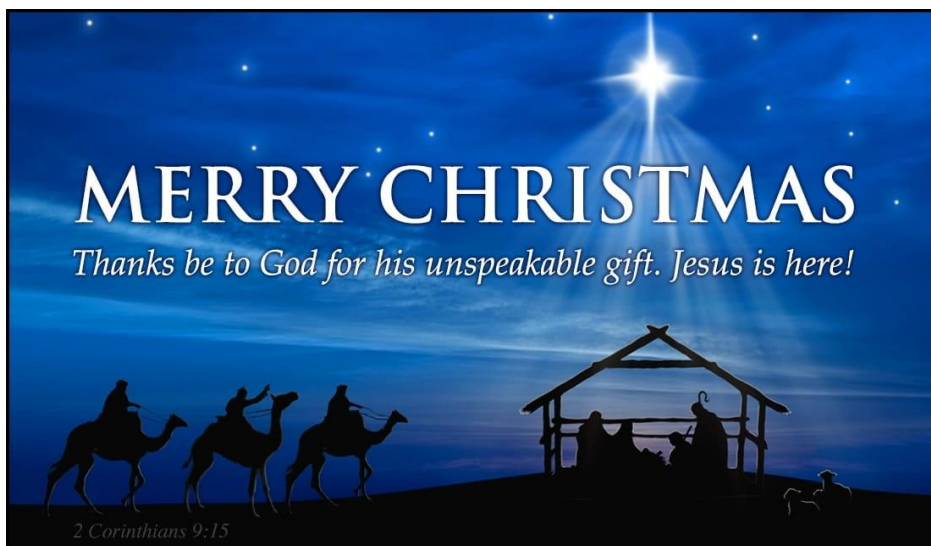


Registered Charity Number: 1134149

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

SUNDAY 24th December 2023

**4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT /
CHRISTMAS EVE**



With thanks for all your cards and good wishes.
You are all precious in God's eyes and ours.

Clergy and staff

Sunday 24th Fourth Sunday of Advent /Christmas Eve

- 9.30am Holy Communion at St Stephen's
- 10.00am Morning Prayer at St Martin's
- 3.00pm Christingle at St Stephen's
- 4.00pm Crib Service at St Martin's
- 6.00pm Sung Communion at St Martin's

Monday 25th December Christmas Day

- 8.30am Holy Communion
- 10.00am Morning Prayer with Holy Communion at St Martin's

Sunday 31st December Christmas 1

- 9.30am Holy Communion at St Stephen's
- 10.00am Morning Prayer at St Martin's
- No 6.30pm Service at St Martin's*

Tuesday 2nd January

- 11.00am Contemplative Prayer group
- Our starting point will be from Isaiah 30.21 –
'This is the way; walk in it'.

It is a good place at which to start the New Year. All are very welcome.

Adrian Esdaile

Wednesday 3rd January

- 10.00am Holy Communion

Thursday 4th January

- 5.00pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 7th January EPIPHANY

- 9.30am Morning Prayer at Stephen's
- 10.00am Sung Communion at St Martin's
- 6.30pm Evening Prayer at St Martin's

OFFICE COVER

Please note that this week's newsletter will be the last one until 7th January. The office telephone and email will be monitored intermittently between 27th – 31st December. Normal service resumes on January 2nd.

Nativity sets in St Martin's

As many of you will have seen, there are 3 sets this Christmas in church. The wonderful knitted figures on the font who greet you when you come in the West Door, a small set in the south aisle and the large set under the High Altar. If you are in church during the week and you spot that the baby Jesus is absent from the sets, please don't be alarmed. The figures of Jesus are being locked away for safekeeping except for when there are services. The reason for doing this is that over the past couple of years the figure of Jesus has been taken from all our previous Nativity sets and hasn't been returned. We want to ensure as far as possible that this doesn't happen again.

Joan Leist's Funeral

As some of you may be aware, Joan Leist, longstanding member of our congregation, died at the age of 102 at the end of November. Her funeral will take place on Tuesday 9 January at 11.15 am at St Martin's followed by committal at Northeast Surrey Crematorium at 12.40 pm.

Revd Judith

Second Thoughts

Sunday 14th January, 6.30pm

'Prison. A waste of time?' Jean Watson

The media and statistics paint a dismal picture of what goes on in prison. To be a Minister of Justice or Minister of Prisons can be a poison chalice. To be Inspector of Prisons is not a job for the faint hearted. For most of the electorate, spending money on those convicted of a criminal act is not a vote winner.

But all is not bad. Behind the walls and barbed wire there is much good work going on by officers walking the landings 'on the front line', courageous Governors and staff and by a myriad of charities and organisations who have the welfare of prisoners at heart. The prison service would be in a worse state without them.

Prison Fellowship is one such organisation. Based on prayer it supports the work of prison chaplaincies, with pastoral support, Bible Studies, projects helping prisoners to stay connected with their families and helping prisoners to take responsibility for the damage caused by their crime. This particular initiative is known as The Sycamore Tree Project and deals with the harm caused by crime to victims, families and communities and aims to bring about reconciliation. This is known as Restorative Justice.

I am a member of Prison Fellowship and have been a volunteer delivering the Sycamore Tree project in several London Prisons. I have also been a member of the Chaplaincy Teams at HMP's Downview and High Down.

I have been a teacher of Religious Studies in local schools including Nonsuch High School and Glyn School where I spent many happy years.



 CHRISTMAS
2023 

As we approach Christmas, I can't help but reflect on what has been a very challenging year in Malawi. In March, the country experienced a devastating cyclone, the effects of which are sadly still being felt with food insecurity and the coming rainy season. A series of devaluations of the Kwacha contributed to steep price rises, making so much unaffordable to so many.

I believe though, that we should also reflect on the small differences AMECA continues to make, in spite of the challenges, due to you all and to your ongoing generosity of spirit.

From AMECA's Directors in the UK and in Malawi, we thank you for your enduring support and wish you a very Happy Christmas and all good wishes for 2024.

Ruthie Markus, CEO, AMEA



DECEMBER MISSION FOCUS

Home Mission



LOVE ME LOVE MY MIND—Is a Registered Charity based in Epsom which aims to promote better understanding of Mental Health and to support the wellbeing of everyone in the Community. It is run entirely by volunteers and Funded by Grants and Donations

Abroad Mission



MISSION AVIATION FELLOWSHIP
MAF uses light aircraft and technology to reach isolated places and as the only way to reach isolated people in need. MAF believe nothing should stop people from the love of God and the essentials of life . Their vision is to see isolated people physically and spiritually transformed in Christ's name.

Jill Chapman and Meg Topley – Mission

Giving to St Martin's and St Stephen on the Downs

For general and stewardship giving you can give online via the Charities Aid Foundation. Donations can be either a one-off donation or a regular donation using direct debit. To make a donation either:

1. Click on the following link:

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/13377>

OR

2. Use your Smart Phone and Scan the QR Code below.



3. You can give cash in church
(use the collection plate provided).



New year is a good time to reflect on our stewardship. If you are not a regular giver, please consider making a regular donation to the work of the Church. And provided you are a UK taxpayer, please Gift Aid your contributions.

Thank you.

FOOD BANK This week we need:

Tinned meat,
Beans with meat
Instant mash,
Instant coffee,
Mayonnaise
Ladies deodorant,
Shaving gel/foam,
Sanitary pads
Hair conditioner

Please use our supermarket donation points or bring donations directly to us at Epsom & Ewell Foodbank, Good Company Hub, behind West Ewell Primary School, Ruxley Lane, Ewell KT19 0JG

We are open for donations Monday - Friday, 9am-2pm (closed Bank Holidays)

We always welcome donations and promise to use them to provide help to people in need. Donations will be shared across [Epsom & Ewell Foodbank](#) and [Epsom Pantry](#). This ensures your donations go to help people who use our services wherever they are.

Explore the meaning of life **together**

Being With: *a course exploring Christian faith and life, developed by St Martin-in-the-Fields (being-with.org).*

If you are looking for an opportunity to discover more about Christianity – or to take another look, having been away for a while – you may like to join a group starting in March 2024 called **Being With**. This offers a chance to explore what Christianity is really about over ten sessions in a respectful and thoughtful setting. No special knowledge or religious language needed. Just what you have learned in life so far.

Being With is about sharing stories about our lives and hearing the stories of others. These stories are the small things that mean a lot to us and they can also be the most challenging and life-changing moments of our lives. **Being With** invites you to discover faith in the context of discovering friendship.

Starts Tuesday 12 March 7.30 – 9 pm at St Martin’s Church.
Ten sessions: 12, 19, 26 March. 2, 16, 30 April. 7, 14, 21, 28 May.

Contact revjudith@stmartinsepsom.org for more details.

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Website: www.stmartinsepsom.org

If you would like to be added to our mailing list so that you receive the newsletter and orders of service weekly, please email the parish office.

Please contact clergy and lay ministers via the office.