St Martin of Tours
Epsom

St Stephen on the Downs
Langley Vale

Registered Charity Number: 1134149

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

SUNDAY 30th MARCH 2025
MOTHERING SUNDAY

Peter Brathwaite by the Brathwaite Memorial after last Tuesday's service commemorating those who suffered through slavery. If you couldn't be there, the service, including Peter's talk and the Bishop's insightful sermon, are on our YouTube channel.

DIARY

Sunday 30th March Mothering Sunday

9.30am Family Service at Langley Vale Village Hall
10.00am Holy Communion at St Martin's
4.00pm Lent Group in the Headley Room
6.30pm Evening Prayer at St Martin's

Reminder that the clocks go forward on Sunday 30th March

Tuesday 1st April

Contemplative Prayer Group

The Group meets on Tuesday 1st April at 11am in the Lady Chapel at St Martin's for an hour of prayer. Our starting point will be Jeremiah18.6 '*Just as clay in the hands of the potter, so are you in my hands'.* All are welcome. The same material will be used on zoom at 8 pm on Thursday 24th April at 8 pm. Please note the change of date and the link for zoom can be obtained from me. ***Adrian Esdaile***

4.00pm Centering Prayer (tea and biscuits from 3.45pm)
'Be still and know that I am God"
Psalm 46:10

A small group of us meet every other Tuesday at 4pm, at the back of church, to pray together in silence.
If you would enjoy some time for silent prayer with others, please come along.
We begin with something to reflect on - perhaps a biblical passage or Psalm. After our 20 minutes of silence, we might share something that we have noticed during our time together.

Wednesday 2nd April
10.00am Holy Communion
11.00am Ministry Team meeting with our Mission enabler

Sunday 6th April Lent 5 / Passion Sunday
9.30am Holy Communion at Langley Vale Village Hall
10.00am Holy Communion at St Martin's
4.00pm Lent Group in the Headley Room
6.30pm Evening Prayer at St Martin's

Second Thoughts
For Second Thoughts on Sunday 13th April at 6.30pm there will be a service of Sung Compline with an introduction to Holy Week. Also included will be a musical reflection from Erin on the harp. ***Adrian Esdaile***

Lost Property
Over the last 6 months or so we've amassed a good collection of items including hats, gloves, scarves, coats, glasses, etc. which have been left behind in church. These need now to be cleared and anything left unclaimed by Easter will be removed and, where possible, taken to a charity shop. So, please do check on the shelf/coat rack by the west door to see if anything belongs to you. Thanks. ***Sarah***

Electoral Roll 2025

This year the Parish electoral roll has to be re-done, this is your opportunity to be part of it!

What is the Electoral Roll?

It is a list of the names and addresses of all the members of the church. It allows you to be a part of and vote in the APCM. It also makes you eligible to be on the PCC and represent the views and opinions of the church congregation

Why should I sign up?

To be part of your church - having lots of people signed up the Electoral Roll allows us to show that we have a strong and vibrant community of people here at St Martin's & St Stephen's.

Key Dates

The Electoral Roll is open now for enrolment and will close on 23rd April 2025
The Roll will re-open after the APCM on the 12th May 2025

How to sign up

Check your email - if we already have your contact details we have sent the link directly to your inbox

Use the QR code to sign up to the Electoral Roll

Speak to somebody if you can't get online and we will help

St Martin of Tours
Church Street
Epsom, KT17 4PX

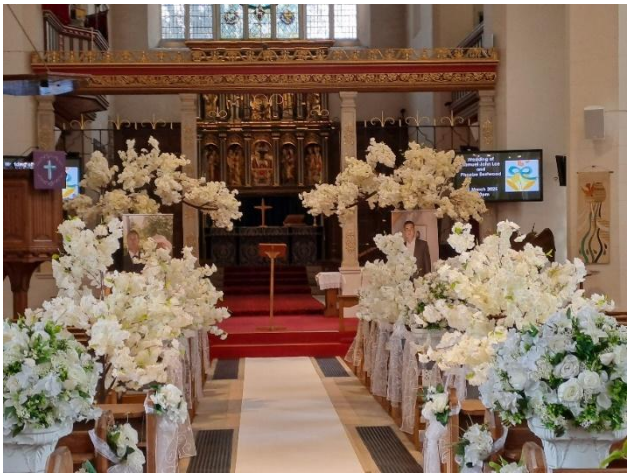
St Stephen on the Downs
Rosebery Road
Langley Vale, KT18 6AF

stmartinsepsom • office@stmartinsepsom.org • www.stmartinsepsom.org • 01372 722 567

St Stephen's Update

In the light of new estimates of around £100,000 to affect the repair, using the materials newly specified by the architect and recommended by the builder, the PCC wishes to explore our options going forward - what is the best way to secure our future ministry and mission in Langley Vale? We will talk with all the stakeholders - diocese, congregation, village hall trustees and the wider community - over the next few weeks to discern together the way ahead. This means that the building will remain in its current state longer than we hoped, but we are grateful we can worship in the hall. Please think and pray about this. If you have further questions, please do mail rob@stmartinsepsom.org.

Rob Jeffery, Chair of Fabric



St Martin's all dressed up for last weekend's wedding!

Music @ St Martin's – Saturday 12 April 4.30pm
Nigel Blomiley – cello,
Viv Mclean – piano

Cello sonatas by Beethoven & Brahms
The next concert in our series features the exceptional talents of cellist Nigel Blomiley and pianist Viv Mclean. The duo performs works by two of the 'greats' of the classical era - Beethoven's Sonata No.3 in A major, and Brahms' Sonata No.1 in E minor. The music is both beautiful and profound, so if you wanted to be lifted out of the ordinary for an hour or so, come along!
Free admission – donations welcomed from those who can.

FOOD BANK

This week we need the following:

Cooking Sauces
Tea bags, Instant Coffee **– Urgent,** Squash
Ketchup/Mayonnaise/Brown Sauce
Chocolate Spread/Peanut Butter - **Urgent we have none**
Crisps - **Urgent we have none**
Sugar (500gr), Custard **– Urgent,** Tinned Fruit
Long life Sponge puddings - **Urgent we have none**
Savoury Biscuits, Biscuits **– Urgent,** Chocolate Biscuit Bars
Deodorant (Male/Female) **- Urgent**
Shower Gel **- Urgent**
Adult Toothpaste, Kids Toothpaste
Shampoo & Conditioner **- Urgent we have none**
Sanitary Towels/Tampons, Shaving Foam
Washing Up Liquid **– Urgent,** Washing Powder **- Urgent**

PRAYING FOR OUR CHURCH AND OUR COMMUNITY

Please remember in your daily prayers this week:

Sunday 30th
Epsom College, staff and students: Chaplain Andrew Haviland. May all who enter our churches find peace and welcome. Epsom & Ewell Foodbank (Our Missions) and the Leprosy Mission. Those living and working in Wootton Close, Worple Road, Wyeths Mews, Wyeths Road, Yeomanry Close and Yew Tree Gardens.

Monday 31st
May the choirs who give concerts at St Martin's and their audiences feel God's presence in our church. Those in our church family who now live elsewhere. Our borough libraries: their librarians, volunteers and those who use them. All who attend our churches and live in roads outside the Parish boundary.

Tuesday 1st
Our Vicar: Nick Parish, Yvonne and their family. Our Bishops: Andrew Watson and Paul Davies. The Chaplaincy Team at Epsom & St Helier Hospitals. Those living and working in Adelphi Road, Albert Road, Alexandra Road and Andrews Close.

Wednesday 2nd
Our Curate: Judith Mitchell and her family. Our Archdeacon: Martin Breadmore and the Guildford Diocesan Staff. Our Missions: The Medaille Trust fighting against modern slavery. Those living and working in Ash Mews, Ashdown Road, Ashley Road, Aston Way, Avenue Road and Axwood.

Thursday 3rd
Our Priest-in-Retirement: Adrian Esdaile and his family. Andris Abakuks, priest in the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, and his family. Our local public houses, restaurants and shops, and the staff who work in them. The Street Pastors giving help on Friday nights in Epsom. Those living and working in Barn Close, Baron's Hurst, Beaconsfield Place, Beaconsfield Road, Beech Road and Beech Way.

Friday 4th
Our Lay Ministers: Clive Dougal (emeritus), Ruth Foxcroft, John Padwick, Howard Bluett, Graeme Lodge. Our Cathedral: Guildford Cathedral, the Dean and Chapter. Our Missions: The Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network. Those living and working in Birches Close, Bridge Road, Bridle End, Bridle Road and Burgh Heath Road.

Saturday 5th
Our Church Warden: Sarah Lutton and for someone to join her as the second Church Warden. All users of Church House. Those suffering from drug or alcohol addiction and their families and friends. Those living and working in Burghfield, Caithness Drive and Carter's Road.

THE POWER OF POETRY – APRIL

I was tempted by thoughts of daffodils at this season: perhaps Robert Herrick's '*Fair Daffodils we weep to see you fade away so soon*' or, of course, Wordsworth's famous '*I wandered lonely as a cloud…'.*

This month, however, I have selected a less well-known poem than either of these. It is quite short, and this month I am well within the space limits of the Newsletter. The poem is by Laurie Lee (1914-1997). He is known more for his prose, in particular *Cider with Rosie*, and *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning,* which tells of his journey on foot to London and then to Spain just before the upheaval of the Civil War.

Cider with Rosie is an autobiographical account of his childhood in the village of Slad in Gloucestershire, with its descriptions of a way of country life which had endured for a thousand years and is now gone. Much of it sounds delightful, although life for those with little money was sometimes harsh. He was brought up by his mother, siblings and half-sibling, his father having decided not to return to his family after the First World War and who set up home elsewhere. It says something for the education given in the local village school that Laurie Lee became a noted writer and also worked for the Ministry of Information in WW2, and one of his brothers, Jack Lee, became a film director (his films included *A Town Like Alice,* and *The Wooden Horse*).

Poetry was probably his preferred medium, and he published five volumes of poems. This poem, the title of which is apt for this time of year, was written in a rather gloomy London and it was then, in his self-imposed exile from the village, that images appeared in his mind of his childhood home – which he returned to later, buying the cottage in Slad where he had been brought up, and spending a lot of time in his local pub, The Woolpack. (I believe there is a plaque in the pub commemorating him.) It is perhaps true that our childhood memories often become sharper when we are far distant, in time and space, from those scenes, and in *April Rise* this is apparent.

It is a very descriptive piece, and I was struck by his use of colour (lemon-green, soapy green, emerald sun, white water, green hand) as if distance not only had lent enchantment but had clad the scenes in an intensity of bright hues. A writer in *The Guardian* once wrote that ‘He had a nightingale inside him, a capacity for sensuous, lyrical precision’.

April Rise:

If ever I saw blessing in the air
I see it now in this still early day
Where lemon-green the vaporous morning drips
Wet sunlight on the powder of my eye.

Blown bubble-film of blue, the sky wraps round
Weeds of warm light whose every root and rod
Splutters with soapy green, and all the world
Sweats with the bead of summer in its bud.

If ever I hear blessing it is there
Where birds in trees that shoals and shadows are
Splash with their hidden wings and drops of sound
Break on my ears their crests of throbbing air.

Pure in the hare the emerald sun dilates,
The lips of sparrows milk the mossy stones.
While white as water by the lake a girl
Swims her green hand among the gathered swans.

Now as the almond burns in smoking wick,
Dropping small flames to light the candled grass;
Now as my low blood scales its second chance,
If ever world were blessed, now it is.

Mary Gilbert

STEWARDSHIP – MAKING YOUR DONATION

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:

Epsom Good Friday

CHURCHES TOGETHER *in* Epsom

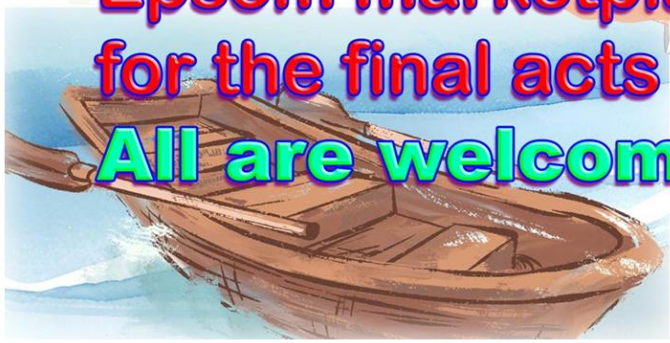
April 18th 2025

Join us 10:30 am in Rosebery Park, by the pond, as the

Jesus Drama

unfolds: moving to Epsom marketplace for the final acts

All are welcome



The Therapy of Watching Old Films Amy Mantravadi

T.S. Eliot told us that “humankind cannot bear very much reality.” Sometimes fantasy helps us with reality better than a newscast. Late in 2024, I made a resolution to watch more classic Hollywood films. Of course, everyone has their own idea of what constitutes a “classic.” Some might choose *Goonies*, others *Citizen Kane*, and still others the *Twilight* saga. (Judge not, lest ye be judged!) But I selected what is known as the Golden Age of Hollywood, from the introduction of “talkies” in the late 1920s to the end of the studio system in the 1950s.

I thought this might be a good way to discover films my husband and I would both enjoy, since our contemporary tastes are highly divergent. I also hoped to learn about filmmaking, trace the development of American popular culture, and simply have some fun. What I did not expect is that it would end up being a form of low-cost therapy in a time when the entire world seems on edge. Of late, not only social media and newscasts, but even private conversations have buried me under an avalanche of fear and bitterness. Regardless of where people live or what politicians they support, everyone seems racked by angst, dreading what is to come. In such times, everyone searches for an antidote, a distraction, a source of relief.

The first classic film I chose to watch was the musical *Meet Me in St. Louis*, which features the original appearance of the song “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.” The lyrics of this now standard Christmas tune have been sanitized multiple times over the years, always to make them less depressing. But there is no escaping the sadness when Judy Garland’s character sings them

to her little sister, who cries until the final bar and then departs to behead the snowmen in the front yard. In context, the song hits like a ton of bricks, speaking to the loss we feel at Christmas and the fears we hold for the future.

"Through the years we all will be together / If the fates allow / Until then we'll have to muddle through somehow." Those were Garland's original words, acknowledging the fact that sometimes our grief is so profound, we must simply muddle through life for a while and hope that things will one day be restored. This spoke a better word to me than Bing Crosby crooning, "*It's the most wonderful time of the year!"*

The following months brought more musicals (*Guys and Dolls*, *Kiss Me Kate*), epic quests (*The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *The African Queen*), some Hitchcock (*Vertigo*, *Psycho*), and adaptations of plays (*A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Twelve Angry Men*). I found a film scarier than *Psycho* in *The Night of the Hunter*, which features a corrupt clergyman manipulating and abusing people. And I fell completely in love with *All About Eve*, the finest hour of the incomparable Bette Davis.

As the weeks went by, I became far less interested in reading the news or my friend's social media posts and chose instead to watch the films of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s. It was then that I asked myself, "Am I doing this to escape? If so, why? What is it giving me?" I soon realized it is not mere escapism. After all, as bad as things may be in the world today, they were objectively worse during the time of the Hollywood Golden Age. The Great Depression, World War II, the outbreak of the Cold War with its

threat of mutually assured destruction — these were the major events happening during this period.

The people who originally attended these films were enduring far greater hardships than myself, and many films would have been preceded by newsreels showcasing the rise of the Nazis, the bombing of European cities, etc. (The comedy *Ninotchka*, set in late 1930s Paris and released in 1939, begins with the disclaimer that it was produced prior to the threat of bombs pulverizing the city.) So, were our ancestors trying to escape?
Yes and no. Unsurprisingly, they had grown as tired of bad news as us. They did not need films to alert them to the evils of their present existence. But clear efforts were made to address those events through the medium of film in two specific genres: film noirs and screwball comedies.

Film noirs are literally dark-toned films that often feature a grizzly detective facing off with a femme fatale to solve a mystery. Think of a man wandering around a city at night with steam rising from the sewer grates, lots of trench coats and fedora hats, and Humphrey Bogart interrogating someone. Although the films are dark (both literally and metaphorically), the stakes are often low. The conspiracies do not run to the very heart of the U.S. government, the Church, or other respected institutions.
This allowed filmmakers to explore the dark aspects of American society without violating the Hays Code (guidelines for morality in film) or offending people's political sensibilities. The '30s and '40s were dark years, even as our own time feels dark. Film noirs provided a way to process those feelings without wading into controversy. Screwball comedies are generally romantic comedies which derive humour from physical accidents, class

differences, witty banter, and a reversal of the usual sex dynamic, with a strong female pursuing and/or antagonizing a befuddled male. During the Great Depression, there was tremendous discontent over the economic inequalities in American society, so screwball tales often feature pampered and ridiculous rich Americans learning lessons from impoverished but earnest heroes. In a time before the full flowering of third-wave feminism, they also provided opportunities for women to triumph in their endeavours and earn respect from men.
Whether I am watching film noirs (*Sunset Boulevard*, *The Maltese Falcon, Double Indemnity*) or screwball comedies (*Adam's Rib*, *The Lady Eve*, *Ball of Fire*), I find myself connecting with the characters' concerns, for societal ills are not so different now. Many are eternal issues human beings must face. Seeing them handled in a humorous manner — whether slapstick or darkly comic — is good for the soul.

Thus, I found that for the price of $3.99 at the highest, I could spend a couple hours improving my mental and emotional health. More than that, I would reap spiritual benefits. Nothing makes me feel better about my own times than remembering that previous generations have experienced far greater trials and survived. As a Christian, I am particularly aware that it is God who is sovereign over history, directing it according to his will, leading it toward a final resolution in the person of Jesus Christ. This fills me with quiet confidence. If I thought everything was up to me or I could solve the world's problems if I just spoke up at the right time, I would be having far more trouble in this global moment, for the problems are many and the needs great. While modern technology brings greater awareness of evils committed on our planet, it does not necessarily bring us any closer to banishing

them. Rather, it can leave us with the impression that if we just post the right thing on Facebook and get enough people to view it, we will set off a societal movement that will change everything for the better. In fact, such things are exceedingly rare.
If I did not believe that God was in control and possessed the power to end evil and wipe our tears away, I would despair. If I thought it was up to me to save the world, I would be constantly afraid. But because I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will take his stand upon the earth, I can spend two hours laughing at a screwball comedy and know it is not simply escapism, but a thing that allows me to muddle through. For we are not conquerors in ourselves, but in the one who has won the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil.

We must work, yes, but we must also rest. The good things of this earth are reminders of the goodness of God. The happy endings to our stories point to our longing for the consummation of the ages. T. S. Eliot told us that “humankind cannot bear very much reality” (“Burnt Norton,” *Four Quartets*), and sometimes fantasy helps us deal with reality better than a newscast. For any perspective upon our present hour which ignores the existence of faith, hope, and love is a falsehood leading to despair. In difficult times, we must remember that virtue remains.

Submitting an item for the newsletter:
Please ensure that all items are emailed to the office marked 'For Newsletter' in the title by 12 noon on Wednesday, to be included for that week.

Parish Office:
The parish office is open from 9.30am – 12.30pm every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
Church House, Church Street, Epsom,
KT17 4PX Phone: 01372 722567
E-mail: office@stmartinsepsom.org
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.