

Registered Charity Number: 1134149

## WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

**SUNDAY 7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025**

**ADVENT 2**



## Scaffolding in St Martin's:

As of last Sunday, the dais and chancel will be out of use so the altar will again be at the crossing with seating in the pews. The north aisle scaffolding now is just immediately outside the Lady Chapel. There is still access to both the Lady Chapel and the north door. However, anyone using the north door will need to negotiate a wooden plank on the floor. We know this is not ideal and we apologise for the inconvenience. If you think you will need assistance to use the north door at the weekend, please contact us and we will ensure that someone is on hand. **Sarah:** [wardens@stmartinsepsom.org](mailto:wardens@stmartinsepsom.org) or **Rob:** [rob@stmartinsepsom.org](mailto:rob@stmartinsepsom.org)



**(Not St Martin's! This is Notre-Dame in Paris during its restoration).**

## DIARY

### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December ADVENT 2**

**9.30am** Morning Prayer service at St Stephen's  
**10.00am** Holy Communion service at St Martin's  
**6.30pm** Evening Prayer at St Martin's

### **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December**

**9.30am** St Martin's School service  
**4.00pm** Centering Prayer  
**'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. Tea and biscuits from 3.45pm.

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 10<sup>th</sup> December**

**10.00am** Holy Communion (in the Wisley Room)  
**11.00am** Advent study group (in the WisleyRoom)  
**7.30pm** Advent study group (in the Lady Chapel), finishing with Compline.

## **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December**

**7.30pm Standing and Finance Committee  
40 Bramble Walk**

## **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December ADVENT 3**

**8.30am Holy Communion service at St Martin's**

**9.30am Holy Communion service at St Stephen's**

**10.00am Choral Mattins service at St Martin's**

**3.00pm Christmas Tea with Carols at St Martin's**

Last Christmas we had record numbers, so please do come and make the occasion even more of a success. Everyone is welcome; the tea is free, though donations are welcome!

In order to enable us to cater more effectively it would be helpful if you would sign up on the list at the back of the church if you think you might be coming. This won't be binding of course but it would be useful! Thank you. ***Mary Gilbert and Elaine Snook***

## **EVENING OF LIGHTS, MONDAY 15 DECEMBER 2025**

This will be held from 6.00 pm – 8 pm in St Martin's Church when the church will be lit by candles and the Christmas tree lights.



This is *not* a service, nor is it a community event, but aims to provide a peaceful place in which individuals may come to remember someone they have lost. A hot drink – tea, coffee or hot chocolate – will be available at the back of the church.

***Mary Gilbert and Elaine Snook***

## **Carols in Epsom Hospital: Thursday Dec 11: 4:30-6:30pm**

CTiE and the Hospital Chaplaincy, together, have organised to sing carols around Epsom Hospital wards again this year. We will meet at 4.15pm outside the Chaplaincy Office, located on the left as you enter Epsom Hospital foyer from Dorking Road. Carol sheets will be provided. Come and give some Christmas peace and joy to staff and patients!

If you can come, please

email Handley: [handleyhammond@gmail.com](mailto:handleyhammond@gmail.com)

so he can plan to have enough carol sheets.

Thank you. David Williams [admin@ctie.org.uk](mailto:admin@ctie.org.uk)

## **Christmas Jumpers - Sunday 21 December:**

It's become something of a tradition at St Martin's to invite you to wear a festive jumper (or a festive anything else!) to Church on a Sunday in December. This year it's Sunday 21st. The charity **Save The Children** always have a Christmas Jumper Day in December so you may like to send a donation in their direction. The donation page on their website is here [Save The Children](#)  
**Sarah**

## **Test of faith – Reviving religion**

This 19 minute video from Green Christian is a useful encouragement for this time of climate crisis, I think, highlighting the role and relevance of the Church and its people in offering a space for seeing beyond the current worldly situation and finding a 'home' which looks to more than this. It talks about the climate crisis as a spiritual crisis.

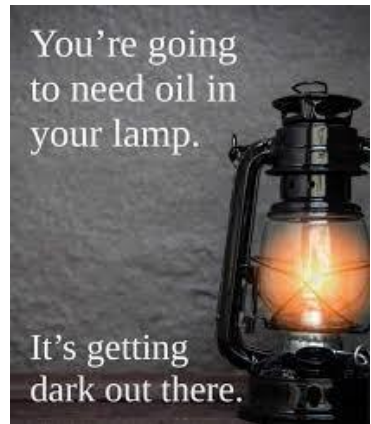
<https://youtu.be/z4MpHw-r7tg>

**Helen Williams**

## Advent Reflections

Each week of Advent I will be putting up an Advent Reflection on the Eco Church board at the west end of church. The reflections arise from the document 'Stop Crucifying Creation' which was published in September. It's Time to Wake Up!

***Helen Williams***



## Christmas Fair



Thank you to everybody who helped to make the Christmas Fair a happy and successful occasion.

***Sarah, Nancy and Maureen***



# Our Church Development Plan

Asked by the Diocese to prioritize our plans for growth, these are our top 3:



## Growing children & families

*Develop Ark and help Ark families become part of our family*



## Spiritual growth

*Develop a curiosity about our faith*



## Grow our community outreach

*Build on our musical tradition & on our racial justice work*

All parishes are asked to produce a Development Plan and ours was approved by the Archdeacon in the summer. In addition to the 3 priorities above our plan also includes:

- 4: Identify how best we can improve our buildings
- 5: Increase regular giving
- 6: Improve and increase our visibility in the community.

You can find the plan with full details by clicking on the link:

[Church Development Plan](#)

## **Church of England Racial Justice Unit approves funding for St Martin's project to create a Memorial for the Enslaved of Barbados**

I am delighted to announce the wonderful news that the Church of England's Racial Justice Triennium Funding Approval Panel met on 21 November to consider our application and approved its funding. The letter sent to us states that, "The panel commended the timely nature of the work and were encouraged to see a proposal coming in from a parish. They recognised a thoughtful project that addressed the subject matter holistically."

As you know, our project involves the commission of Bajan artist Christina Peake to lead four three-hour creative workshops in February and March 2026, in order to engage with and listen to those affected by the Brathwaite memorial and past enslavement. Participants will come from the following groups: the congregation; the Brathwaite Family group; the Sutton-based African Caribbean Heritage Association (ACHA); and a Barbadian diaspora group, hopefully recruited through the Barbados High Commission.

The workshops will feed into the creative process and, after a period of reflection, into the final memorial which Christina will create. We hope that the memorial will be completed by August 2026, but, of course, the exact timeline will depend on fitting into the meetings' schedule of the DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches and Churchyards) and their approval.

***Rev Judith***



## **Foodbank donations for Christmas**

Please do look at those items listed in the newsletter that are urgently needed and consider making donations. If you leave them in the box at the back of Church I will ensure that they get to the foodbank for distribution.

***Sarah***

## **CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

**Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> 6.30pm Nine Lessons and Carols at St Martin's**  
**Xmas Eve 3.00pm Carol Service at St Stephen's**  
**(Langley Vale Hall)**  
**4.00pm Crib Service at St Martin's**  
**6.00pm First Communion of Christmas**  
**at St Martin's**  
**11.00pm 'Midnight Mass' at Epsom College**  
**(see below)**

### **Midnight Mass in St Luke's Chapel, Epsom College**

Whether you are part of the Epsom College community or a friend from further afield, you will be most warmly welcomed

To reserve your place, please click here:

**<https://forms.office.com/e/GmMx2B40Uu>**

**Christmas 8.30am Holy Communion at St Martin's**  
**Day 10.00am Christmas Day Praise followed by a**  
**Short Communion service**

## **Lumos Candlelight concerts in St Martin's** **Saturday 17th January 5pm & 8pm**

Lumos candlelight concerts take place countrywide. The organisation chooses beautiful buildings and spaces for their performances, so we are delighted that they want to hold two concerts in our own beautiful building! There will be two opportunities to enjoy the 'Vivaldi & Mozart Candlelight Experience'. Details of the concerts and booking are on their website - here's a link: [Lumos concert in St Martins](#)



### **‘O Come, O come Emmanuel! Who are YOU expecting?’**

Four sessions to talk about Advent and the One for whom we are waiting. Wednesdays 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December and Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

11am each week, repeated at 7.30pm (the evening sessions will finish with compline in the Lady Chapel).

Full details soon, but for now please note the dates. Note also, we hope to broadcast the evening sessions on zoom.

Howard Bluett, one of our Lay Ministers, will lead the course.

## **FOLLOW UP TO '6 Steps to the Bible.'**

You may remember we ran this course during Advent and the new year a couple of years ago. The author, Peter Sills, has developed a retreat based on the course. If anyone would be interested in this, called 'Stepping into the Bible', then two opportunities are planned for the new year:

1. At Ashburnham Place, near Battle.

10<sup>th</sup> – 13th February

Booking:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/stepping-into-the-bible-tickets-1345429639269?aff=ebdsshcopyurl&utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=>

2. Rydal Hall, Rydal, Cumbria

9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March.

See Peter's website for further details, and booking for Rydal Hall:

[www.peter-sills.co.uk/retreats](http://www.peter-sills.co.uk/retreats)

## CHRISTMAS CARDS AND ADVENT CALENDARS

While I have had Christmas cards on display for a few weeks, now that we are in Advent I have added Advent

Calendars, Advent Candles and some small votive candles to the display. There are a wide variety of cards both in design, size and cost, in packets of 10 or 20 cards. There are also lots of Advent Calendars which come with their own envelopes in case you wish to post them.



Please support St Martin's when buying your Christmas supplies as any profit from the sale of these supplies goes to the church. All the cards are sourced from a variety of charities, therefore you will be helping them as well.

Payment may be made in a variety of ways:

- Cheque: made payable to "The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epsom" (please either hand in to the office or place in the wall safe in church)
- Donation Station: contactless payments – please use the "Christmas Cards or Cards" button
- Cash: via the wall safe in church – marked "Cards"

I will keep all items topped up but once a design has sold out I may not be able to get any further stock. Please ask me if you are looking for something in particular or more packets than are on display. *Thank you for your custom.* **Mary Holloway-Neville**

## **Lay Pastoral Care**

Our ministry team at present includes Elaine and Mary as Pastoral Visitors. We would like more people to assist in this work of keeping in touch with people in need, not only the elderly the housebound and those now in Nursing Homes who can no longer get to church.

The 2026 Lay Pastoral Visitors' Training Course will be running over 4 Saturdays in the Spring: 28 February, 21 March, 18 April and 16 May, 9.30am - 4pm. This course is for lay leaders who feel called to serve as Lay Pastoral Visitors in their parish. The role is locally authorised, so those interested need the support of their vicar and PCC. The course is led by Ruth Cornish (Pastoral Care Lead at St Paul's Dorking) with a team of trained pastoral tutors. Lay Pastoral Visitors have an important role to play in visiting newcomers to a church, visiting those who are sick, and praying with those who are visited.

The sessions will cover a variety of topics, including developing listening skills, exploring judgement and prejudice in our response to others, and learning from Jesus' ministry.

Please consider if you sense a call to pastoral ministry. This course may help you decide but should in any case be worthwhile. Please speak to the Vicar or one of us.

Beth Perkins, who oversees our occasional courses [beth.perkins@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:beth.perkins@cofeguildford.org.uk) - is also available to answer questions.



## **PRAYER GROUPS**

**St Martin's offers these options for praying together:**

### **Evening Prayer on Zoom, weekdays 5pm-5.30pm**

This follows the Common Worship rite and is led by one of the regular members of the group.

See <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer> All are warmly invited to join on an occasional or regular basis. Find us at:

<https://zoom.us/j/91650281049?pwd=dLiB4iY8FRRdtFcbGBRjaVtMJ9K2Ar.1> or, if you prefer typing details directly into Zoom, use Meeting ID is 916 5028 1049 and passcode 960460.

There is an additional zoom prayer session on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 8pm.

### **Centering Prayer: Every other Tuesday, 4pm in Church (Tea & biscuits from 3.45pm)**

"Be still and know that I am God" *Psalms 46:10*. A small group of us meet to pray together in silence. 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.

### **Contemplative Prayer: 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month, 11am in the Lady Chapel**

A time for focussing on God's presence and allowing oneself to be filled with God's grace. It's a time of stillness and quietness. We listen to the words of God or of Jesus in contemplation.

## **PRAYING FOR OUR CHURCH AND OUR COMMUNITY**

Please remember in your daily prayers this week:

### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>**

Our Parish staff: all baptised in our churches, and their families, godparents and sponsors. Residents of Swail House and all who are sight impaired. People who are hearing impaired. All living and working in Chantry Hurst, Chartwell Place, Church Road and Church Street.

### **Monday 8<sup>th</sup>**

Our PCC. Our Children's Church: *The Ark* – leaders Sarah and Rob, the children and their parents/ carers. The Mission to Seafarers and Mission Aviation Fellowship. All in Chuters Grove, Clayton Road, College Avenue and College Road.

### **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>**

Our Organist: Iain Macfarlane. Our Welcome Team. The well-being of the people of Epsom and Langley Vale; local mental health units and the charity 'Love Me, Love My Mind'). Those living and working in Copse Edge Avenue, Delaporte Close, Denham Road and Depot Road.

### **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>**

St Stephen's Church: its life, worship and mission to Langley Vale. Safeguarding in our churches: our Safeguarding Officers Revd Judith and Peter Christie; the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. The Bible Society, Spinnaker Education Trust; all who teach RE. Those living and working in Digdens Rise, Dirdene Close, Dirdene Gardens, Dirdene Grove and Dorking Road.

### **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>**

Our Bell-ringing Team and Tower Captain Mike Bale. Our Ministry Team. All local young families. Those living and working in Downs Avenue, Downs Hill Road, Downs Road and Downs Way.

### **Friday 12<sup>th</sup>**

Our Prayer and Healing Ministry: Contemplative and Centering Prayer. Those who work on our Website, Facebook and YouTube channel. Through the Roof Wheelchairs for the World (Our Missions) and the Sunnybank Trust (based in Epsom). Those living and working in Downside, East Street and Elmslie Close.

### **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>**

Our Church Development Plan: for Renewal and Growth. Those who read the Bible through the Bible Reading Fellowship notes: Didi Steck. Those living locally who are housebound and their carers. Those living and working in Farriers Road, Fyfield Close, Grosvenor Road, Grove Avenue and Grove Road.

## **THE POWER OF POETRY – DECEMBER**

I've chosen a poem by Thomas Hardy (1840-1928). He is known as a poet and novelist and wrote *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and many others.

His last novel was *Jude the Obscure*, a singularly depressing novel (though some of the others aren't exactly jolly!). It received a terrible reception and at that point Hardy gave up novel-writing



and concentrated on his poetry. Hardy had considered becoming a clergyman but abandoned the idea and became an architect and then eventually gave that up to concentrate on his writing. He also seems to have lost his faith and became agnostic, possibly even an atheist.

### *The Oxen*

*Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.  
"Now they are all on their knees,"  
An elder said as we sat in a flock  
By the embers in hearthside ease.*

*We pictured the meek mild creatures where  
They dwelt in their strawy pen,  
Nor did it occur to one of us there  
To doubt they were kneeling then.*

*So fair a fancy few would weave  
In these years! Yet, I feel,  
If someone said on Christmas Eve,  
"Come; see the oxen kneel,  
"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb  
Our childhood used to know,"  
I should go with him in the gloom,  
Hoping it might be so.*



The poem has a quiet, nostalgic feel to it, and a certainty induced by the rhythm and the metre. It is, I think, set in an inn with a dying fire, and sitting around the fire is a group of men, some old, others, including the narrator, probably much younger. I imagine them puffing away ruminatively on pipes. The elder says they (oxen) “are all on their knees”. This was an old legend which said that the oxen (cattle) would kneel on Christmas Eve in homage to the birth of Christ. Maybe this arose because of the undoubted fact that cattle rise by bending their front knees to then get up. Most other animals, including farm animals – sheep, pigs, horses – do not.

The second half of the poem does not have the same certainty: “So fair a fancy few would weave...” has a more jaunty air and the word *weave* (we weave, for instance, webs of deceit) shows that Hardy’s views have changed since he was young. The poem was written in 1915, and nothing was the same again after the First World War, so the poem, a charming fancy if taken at face value, may also be a lament for the changes that were brewing. It is as though Hardy, often accused of pessimism, could foresee that the way of life that he was born into – peaceful, rustic and revolving around the seasons – was to disappear. Yet he seems to regret his more sceptic self in this instance and in recalling the memory of this gathering in the inn and the story of the kneeling oxen is “hoping it might be so”.

It is not the only poem of Hardy’s that ends with a ray of hope. One of my favourite poems of his is *The Darkling Thrush*. It begins on a raw winter’s day when “frost was spectre grey, and winter’s dregs made desolate the weakening eye of day” and there appeared to be no life in his surroundings.

But then “at once a voice arose among those bleak twigs overhead, in a full-hearted evensong of joy illimited. An aged thrust, frail, gaunt and small of blast-beruffled plume, had chosen thus to fling his soul upon the growing gloom.”

Hardy thought that in the thrush’s song he could discern “some blessed hope whereof he knew, and I was unaware.”

So with Christmas on the horizon, let us also hold on to the hope that was born with Jesus Christ. I wish you all a very happy Christmas-tide. ***Mary Gilbert***

## **FOODBANK REQUESTS**

**This week we need the following:**

Instant Mash - **Urgent**  
Squash - **Urgent**  
Long Life Juice - **Urgent**  
Chocolate - **Urgent**  
Sponge Pudding - **Urgent**  
Sugar - **Urgent**  
Crisps - **Urgent**  
Savoury Biscuits - **Urgent**  
Instant Coffee - **Urgent**  
Washing Powder - **Urgent**  
Washing up Liquid - **Urgent**  
Hair Conditioner - **Urgent**  
Male/Female Deodorant - **Urgent**  
Pasta/Beans with Meat  
Tinned Meat, Tinned Potatoes, Tinned Vegetables

Dried Pasta in Sauce, Cooking Sauce  
Milk UHT, Powdered Milk  
Honey  
Ketchup/Mayonnaise/Brown Sauce  
Hot Chocolate, Porridge  
Custard, Rice Pudding  
Shaving Foam, Adult Toothpaste and Toothbrushes  
Toilet Rolls, Nappies Size 6 ONLY

## **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:



# Christmas Services

**14 December, 3-5pm**

**Christmas Tea with carols**

Cake, company and carol singing  
around the tree

**Christmas Eve**

**Family Crib Service 4pm**

Perfect for all ages!

**21 December, 6.30pm**

**A Service of Nine  
Lessons & Carols**

A traditional service of readings,  
anthems & carols

**Holy Communion 6pm**

An early evening service as we wait to  
greet the Christ Child

**'Midnight' service 11pm**  
in the chapel at Epsom College

## Christmas Day

**Holy Communion 8.30am**

Using the traditional liturgy of the  
1662 Prayer Book

**Christmas Day Praise 10am**

An informal & joyful celebration  
(A short Communion follows)



**St Martin  
of Tours**

Church Street  
Epsom, KT17 4PX

**St Stephen  
on the Downs**

Rosebery Road  
Langley Vale, KT18 6AF

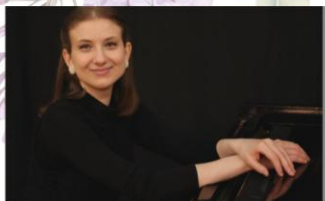
stmartinsepsom • office@stmartinsepsom.org • www.stmartinsepsom.org • 01372 722 567

**FREE!**

# Music @ St Martin's

## Spring 2026

### Saturday afternoons at 4.30



**Saturday 31 January**  
**Mariia Zhornikova - piano**  
*plays Debussy, Granados and works by  
her fellow Ukrainians*

**Saturday 21 February**  
**Redhouse Rhythm & Blues**  
*Entertaining and popular duo Chris  
Hollingshurst & Danny Wignall return  
to our series*



**Saturday 28 March**  
**Hammers & Pipes**  
*Peter Lutton shares his enjoyment of  
playing our fine piano and organ*

**Saturday 18 April**  
**Women of English Song**  
*Soprano Christine Cunnold and pianist  
Richard Harker explore some of the best  
music of female composers*



**St Martin  
of Tours**

Church Street  
Epsom, KT17 4PX

Admission to the recitals is free but we ask for donations  
to enable us to continue offering great music  
at St Martin's

You can also use our QR code to support  
the series at any time.

 [stmartinsepsom](https://www.facebook.com/stmartinsepsom) • [www.stmartinsepsom.org](http://www.stmartinsepsom.org) • [office@stmartinsepsom.org](mailto:office@stmartinsepsom.org) • 01372 722 567

Registered Charity No 1134149



**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](mailto:office@stmartinsepsom.org)  
Website: [www.stmartinsepsom.org](http://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.**