

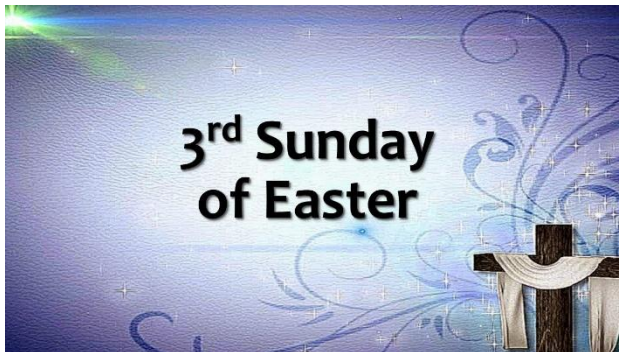
St Martin of Tours
Epsom

St Stephen on the Downs
Langley Vale

Registered Charity Number: 1134149

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

SUNDAY 19th APRIL 2026
EASTER 3



DIARY

Saturday 18th April

4.30pm Music @ St Martin's - Women of English Song
With Soprano Christine Cunnold and pianist Richard Harker.
Admission free - donations welcomed from those who can.

Sunday 19th April Easter 3

9.30am Morning Prayer service at St Stephen's

10.00am Holy Communion service at St Martin's

6.30pm Choral Evensong service at St Martin's

Wednesday 22nd April

10.00am Holy Communion service at St Martin's

Sunday 26th April Easter 4

9.30am Holy Communion service at St Stephen's

10.00am Morning Prayer and baptism service at St Martin's

6.30pm Compline service at St Martin's

Howard Bluett

Howard has decided not to seek renewal of his permission to officiate as Licenced Lay Minister and retire. 2026 marks the 50th year of his being a 'Lay Reader.' We thank God for his ministry in our parish in recent years, especially the work he has put in at St Stephen's, and all that went before.

Icons

Following the session with the Dean of Guildford on Icons, I have a set of the photographs if anyone would like to see them or make copies. In due course I may have a copy of what he had to say.

Adrian Esdaile

ELECTORAL ROLL REVISION

The Electoral Roll is due to be revised on 23rd April 2026 and a notice to this effect has been displayed outside both our churches since 10th March 2026. Please check that your name is entered in the current Roll (at the back of St Martin's), or with me by email

(aronson_john@hotmail.com). If you are on the Roll and there have been changes to your address or contact details please inform me or the Parish Office. Your full details can be checked in the office. If you are not a member and would like to join please complete an application form available at the back of St Martin's and hand it in to the Parish Office. The Roll will be closed for any new entries from 22nd April 2026 until after the Parish AGM on 10th May 2026. ***John Aronson, Electoral Roll Officer***

Ukraine Music Evening, Saturday 9th May from 6.00pm at Epsom Methodist Church

This is the 15th such event showcasing the talents of Ukrainian musicians who are currently living in the UK. The evening begins with a buffet meal and is followed by a lovely selection of music which includes a performance by a young violin prodigy. A collection at the end is for the benefit of the musicians. Our Music @ St Martin's concert by the scholars of Epsom College ends at 5.30pm on that day, so you could wander over to the Methodist Church after that to enjoy yet more music!

People's Emergency Briefing screenings last weekend

Thank you to all those who shared in watching the film last weekend (11th and 12th April) - to Rob, Sarah and Will with their tech support, and Maureen orchestrating the catering, and to the 75 people over the two events who saw the film in St Martin's (56 on Saturday, 19 extra on Sunday, with delicious bring-and-share lunch including the best samosas I've ever eaten). It was good to watch the film together. It wasn't, on the face of it, an easy watch, but I hope you gained from it, not least the desire to get this information more widely known, so that MPs see the magnitude of the support for action from the Government. As some of the

Going green with our church flowers

It's easy to think that we're automatically being green when we decorate the church with flowers, but awareness is growing that there are some very un-eco-friendly options regarding the choice of flowers and how we use them. Some flowers rack up the airmiles to reach the UK, some are grown in developing countries using land and water that would better be used for crop production. There's also oasis, a green foam which has long been the friend of flower arrangers but which is far from being green because its disposal is problematic. So, spurred on by Helen, our eco-rep and by Yvonne attending a seminar on sustainable church flowers, the flower team have taken a close look at the eco-friendly things we are already doing and where we can improve. Sometimes the eco-option is a little more challenging and takes more creative thinking to make arrangements work, but the team made a really good start with our Easter flower decorations. We chose only seasonal flowers, avoided the use of oasis and used greenery either from our gardens or from the churchyard.

Our future plans include the aim to grow more flowers for cutting in the church yard, learning how to use wool instead of oasis and to seek further advice from the Diocesan advocate on sustainable church flowers. We're also going to regularly ask the congregation for donations from their own gardens or allotments for flowers and greenery, particularly at times such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

We'd also love to grow our flower team. No experience needed, just enthusiasm to have go! Speak to Yvonne or myself (who began as a real rookie at flower arranging!). ***Sarah Lutton***

Nature conservation and local government reform

We're all aware of the great efforts at St Martin's under the Eco Church initiative, but an army of volunteers is also working in the wider community to care for Epsom's extraordinarily rich green spaces and wildlife. This work now faces uncertain times due to the upheaval of local government reform. The Epsom and Ewell Times, our local news website, has recently reported on the drive to ensure nature isn't forgotten when the borough is abolished next year. To read the article please click here: <https://epsomandewelltimes.com/epsom-and-ewell-countryside-volunteers-face-uncertain-times>

From Loo to new HQ – Thank You from 3rd Epsom (St. Martin's) Scouts

Ten years ago, we set out with a simple goal, to upgrade the toilets in our Scout HQ. Today, we stand on the brink of a £400k+ redevelopment project, with planning secured, funding in place, and, most importantly, ownership of our site. We wanted to share this milestone with the St Martin's Church community and say a heartfelt thank you for your support.



Back in 2016, the aim was straightforward, to improve the toilets and add disabled access. However, that simple plan uncovered a much bigger issue. To secure grant funding, we needed a long lease on the site, but our lease was due to expire in 2025. St Martin's Church offered us a new 21-year lease, as they have

done since 1952, but only if the Forge was included in the agreement. The Forge, at the time, was owned by the District Scouts and was little used beyond the Scout Group's weekly meetings.

So, in 2018, the Group made a big decision, we took over the Forge completely. This meant paying for it and taking on all the responsibility for running and maintaining another building, a significant commitment for a volunteer-led organisation, but it also gave us control of our future.

By 2019, we had secured a long lease on the whole site and began thinking more ambitiously. Instead of just upgrading toilets, we started planning to improve and extend the Forge to create better space for our young people. Fundraising began in earnest, and the community responded brilliantly.

Progress was not straightforward. Planning permission was initially refused due to concerns about a protected tree. Rather than give up, we worked with specialist volunteers and advisers to redesign the project, protecting the tree while still meeting our needs. While planning stalled, fundraising grew. The incredible effort by volunteers, parents and supporters kept the vision alive, steadily building funds over the last seven years through events, donations, and local support, including many within St Martin's, even through the challenges of Covid. A wide range of activities took place, including cake sales, Asda and Sainsbury's bag packing, triathlons and other races, the Squirrel sewing service, sponsored swims, quizzes, making money boxes to collect small coins, cycle rides, clothes sales, wine tasting, second-hand

uniform donations, carol singing, book sales, and an Auction of Promises.

A key breakthrough came in June 2023 when planning permission was granted. Shortly afterwards, discussions with the Church opened up an even greater opportunity. Following the sale of St John Chandler Hall, we were able to secure the freehold of our part of the site. In November 2024, 3rd Epsom became the freehold owner, securing a permanent home for Scouting associated with St Martin's Church.

Alongside this development, a major programme of fire safety and compliance work was undertaken across both the HQ and the existing Forge meeting space. This included a new fire detection and alarm system, improved emergency lighting, upgraded fire doors, clearer escape routes, and enhanced safety procedures and risk management. In addition, significant investment has been made in the fabric of the existing HQ, including a new roof, replacement of the internal ceiling, and wider refurbishment works to ensure the building remains safe, watertight, and fit for continued use. These improvements are critical, not only to meet current regulations, but to ensure that the buildings are safe, resilient, and suitable for the large number of young people and volunteers who use them every week. This focus on safety and compliance, driven by our HQ Committee, has been central to safeguarding the Group's activities both now and into the future.

The confirmed planning permission allowed the Group to obtain formal quotations for the extended Forge and external areas of our site. Costs had increased, specialist piles were now required

to protect the sycamore tree, and formal ground surveys were needed. This transformed the initial £120k estimate into a £400k+ build. Recognising that this was beyond what we could raise alone, key members of the Committee submitted a number of applications to grant providers during 2025. Through a combination of hard work, expertise, and persistence, we were successful in securing grants for both the HQ fire safety works and the Forge development, ranging from £10k to £255k. Thanks to these major grants, alongside continued parent and community support, we now have the funding needed to move forward.

In early 2026, key steps have been completed, including knocking down the old Forge garage, finalising detailed designs, discharging planning conditions, and appointing a contractor. The contract has now been signed, and construction began on 13th April 2026. The build is expected to take around six months. During this time, our Explorer Scouts will become regular hirers of the Headley Room in Church House on Thursday evenings.

What started as a simple plan to improve the hall's toilets has grown into a once-in-a-generation transformation, securing the site, expanding facilities, and creating a sustainable home for Scouting associated with St Martin's Church for many years to come. This journey has only been possible because of the support, encouragement, and partnership of St Martin's Church and its community. From the early lease discussions to the freehold agreement, your support has been fundamental in helping us secure the future of Scouting on this site.

With thanks from all at 3rd Epsom (St Martin's) Scouts.

Public Lecture: The Man Who Built Surrey's Churches: the architect Henry Woodyer Revealed

On Saturday 23 May 2026, 10.30am –12 noon at St Andrew's Church, Grafham, Guildford GU5 0LJ, architectural historian Robin Stannard explores the life and legacy of Henry Woodyer (1816–1896), the prolific Victorian Gothic Revival architect responsible for around 300 buildings, including many of Surrey's finest churches. Held at Woodyer's own church ahead of its much needed restoration, the lecture will reveal the story behind its creation and the hidden splendour of its interior decoration. Tickets: £12 advance (£15 on the door), £8 SCPT members, £5 under 25s, or three for £30 in advance. Book via www.ticketsource.co.uk (search "Woodyer"). All proceeds support the Surrey Churches Preservation Trust. Click here to book: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/surrey/st-andrews-church/public-lecture-the-man-who-built-surrey-s-churches-the-architect-henry-woodyer-revealed/2026-05-23/10:30/t-mjjevma>

Parish Giving Scheme

We have introduced the Parish Giving Scheme in St Martin's and if you are on our mailing list you will have received details of how effective and simple this scheme is to donate regularly by direct debit. Follow this link to set up your regular giving:

[The Parish Giving Scheme Website](#) If you have any questions do please contact rob@stmartinsepsom.org or Sarah - wardens@stmartinsepsom.org

FALL IN LOVE WITH THE FUTURE

One-day workshop, 30th May 2026

10am – 4.30pm

St Martin's Church, Epsom KT17 4PX

£25 (Early bird £20)

After a recommendation from Lynne to read 'From What Is to What If', Rob Hopkins is coming to Epsom to lead a dynamic and hands-on workshop, which will guide us in how to 'fall in love with the future'. In a day of inspiring, playful and imaginative activities Rob will steer us towards imagining and discovering the thriving town of the future – Epsom, Ewell and further afield - we'd all love to live in.

This isn't your standard workshop – it will take you out of the 'daily grind' and beyond familiar workday discussions. The event is open to anyone: members of local sustainability groups, teachers/lecturers, town councils, local businesses. It's a day for people from all parts of the local community – the more 'cross-pollination' the better, so we do hope that you will come along and be part of it.

More details, and how to book, can be found at

<https://www.stmartinsepsom.org/imagine/>

Best wishes,

Helen, Eco Rep

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=dLiB4jY8FRRdtFcbGBRjaVtMJ9K2Ar.1> or, if you prefer typing details directly into Zoom, use Meeting ID is 916 5028 1049 and passcode 960460.

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

"Be still and know that I am God" *Psalm 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: 1st Tuesday of each month, 11am at 29 Hereford Close

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.

There is an additional zoom Contemplative Prayer session on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 8pm. Find us using the same Zoom details cited above for Evening Prayer.

PRAYING FOR OUR CHURCH AND OUR COMMUNITY

Please remember in your daily prayers this week:

Sunday 19th

Our Home Communion Team and those to whom they take Communion. Our Flower-Arranging Team: Yvonne Parish. Staff at local Citizens' Advice Bureau, Age Concern and Job Centre. All those seeking their help and/or in need of work. Those living and working in Longdown Lane South, Longdown Road, Lynwood Avenue, Lynwood Road, Mannamead, Mannamead Close, Middle Close and Middle Lane.

Monday 20th

Our Deanery Synod: Howard Bluett, Alexander Rennie and John Padwick. Our Eco Church Team: Helen Williams. Our Missions: Mission to Kenya. Those living and working in Milburn Walk, Mill Road, Millers Copse, Milton Gardens and Mospey Crescent.

Tuesday 21st

Our vision and work for Social and Racial Justice. Our Readers and Intercessors. Local schools and nursery schools. Those living and working in Oak Hill, Oakmead Green, Old Barn Road, Pikes Hill and Pine Hill.

Wednesday 22nd

All who offer welcome and hospitality and serve refreshments at our churches. Those to be married in our churches. Our Missions: Mercy Ships. Those living and working in Pitt Road, Portland Place, Prospect Place, Providence Place and Randolph Road.

Thursday 23rd

Our Electoral Roll Officer: John Aronson. Our Church Cleaners. Local doctors' surgeries. Those living and working in Richmond Close, Rosebery Avenue, Rosebery Road, Sadlers Way and South Street.

Friday 24th

Those recently confirmed and their growing relationship with God. Preparation for future baptism and confirmation. All who enter St Martin's in the week and pass through our garden. Church Army (supporting and empowering those most in need in UK and Ireland). Those living and working in Spencer Close, Squirrels Way, St George's Gardens, St James' Close, St Martin's Avenue and St Martin's Close.

Saturday 25th

The Vale School: children, parents, the Co-Heads, staff And Governors. Scouts (especially our 3rd Epsom (St Martin's) Scout Group), Cubs, Beavers, Guides, Brownies and their leaders. Local refuse collectors, those who deliver the post and other items. Those living and working in Station Approach Stevens Close, Strand Close, Sunnybank, and The Grove.

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:



THE POWER OF POETRY – APRIL

I have written of R S Thomas, 1913-2000, before (last August) so I shall not repeat the biographical notes but will concentrate on the poem. You may, though, remember that I mentioned his taciturnity and rather forbidding aspect in his daily life. Yet his spiritual life, often present in his poetry, gives a different slant. He has belief, but is also at times consumed with doubt and frustration.

The Absence

*It is this great absence
that is like a presence, that compels
me to address it without hope
of a reply. It is a room I enter*

*from which someone has just
gone, the vestibule for the arrival
of one who has not yet come.
I modernise the anachronism*

*of my language, but he is no more here
than before. Genes and molecules
have no more power to call
him up than the incense of the Hebrews*

*at their altars. My equations fail
as my words do. What resource have I
other than the emptiness without him of my whole
being, a vacuum he may not abhor?*

Here Thomas is exploring the difficulty of prayer. Some seem to find it easy, but I don't think it is: it is not I would say a shopping list

of our wants and it sometimes seems fruitless when we do not receive what we are asking. Very often our prayers may be unselfish of course – we pray habitually for the world, for peace, for the relief of suffering, and on a personal level we pray most desperately when someone close to us is ill that they may recover fully. Then when our prayers are not answered we are tempted to give up. Maybe we are not concentrating hard enough – very often our thoughts are on what we shall cook for lunch, or the weather, or the unforgiving nature of the pew. At other times our desperation makes us keep on. Practise or dogged perseverance, it is hoped, makes perfect! Maybe the answer is not what we expect or want.

Thomas was himself a priest, and no doubt exhorted his congregations to continue with their efforts. We expect perhaps that any priest we encounter must be doubt-free, and assured of God's presence at all times, but Thomas may not be exceptional in his fears. He seems aware of God's absence, even more aware of the lack of a response and of the fact that for many Christians prayer can be hard-going. But God's apparent absence is **not** the same as believing that there is no God. God is a "presence that compels me to address it without hope of a reply". He gives an image of an empty room, the guest recently gone, or awaiting someone's arrival. Thomas ultimately says that without God he and all humanity have no other resources. In the August poem, *The Bright Field*, Thomas is talking about those moments when we feel the Holy Spirit is with us and God is near. I also gave a second poem, *Kneeling*, and in that his belief in God is revealed when he waits for God's message. To keep going when there seems to be no response is hard, and this seems to be what *The Absence* is about. Sometimes persistence in the face of disappointment is needed. So, let us pray.....

Mary Gilbert

FOODBANK REQUESTS

Tinned Fish - **Urgent**
Rice Pudding - **Urgent**
Tinned Fruit - **Urgent**
Instant Coffee - **Urgent**
Sponge Pudding - **Urgent**
Male/Female Deodorant - **Urgent**
Powdered Milk - **Urgent we have none**
Savoury Biscuits - **Urgent we have none**
Custard - **Urgent we have none**
Hair Conditioner - **Urgent we have none**
Tinned Meat, Noodles, Sweetcorn
Packet Soup, Instant Mash
Tinned Spaghetti, Microwave Rice
Dried Pasta in Sauce
Tinned Peas
Pasta Sauce, Cooking Sauce
Milk UHT, Tea (bags), Biscuits
Squash, Sugar
Honey/Jam/Chocolate Spread/Peanut Butter/Marmalade
Ketchup/Mayonnaise/Brown Sauce
Washing Up Liquid, Washing Powder
Shampoo, Shaving Foam, Shower Gel
Children Toothpaste ONLY 0-2
Children Toothbrushes ONLY 0-2 and 6+
Adult Toothpaste
Toilet Rolls
Nappies Size 5, 6 & 6+

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

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.

FALL IN LOVE WITH THE FUTURE

Rob Hopkins Author of *From What is to What if*



How to Fall in Love
with the Future
A Time Traveller's Guide to Changing the World

A one day workshop led by author of 'From What is to What if' Rob Hopkins will guide us to think about how we can build a community of the future

Saturday 30th May, 10am - 4.30pm

Tickets £25 (£20 Earlybird)

For more information and to purchase tickets, scan the QR code or go to smartinsepsom.org/imagine



SUSTAINABLE
EPSOM & EWELL



St Martin
of Tours

Church Street
Epsom, KT17 4PX