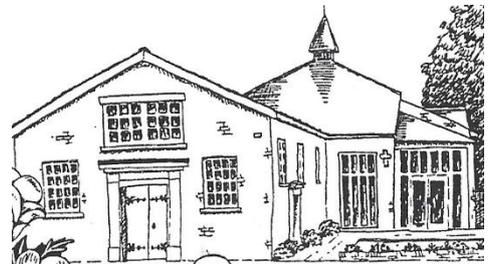


# Stepping Stones

*Newsletter for*

EPPING UNITED  
REFORMED CHURCH



ONGAR UNITED  
REFORMED CHURCH

April 2026

Minister:  
Revd Karen Knight



## Minister's Message

I love Easter it is much less commercialised than Christmas even though the Easter eggs appeared in the supermarkets on Boxing Day and most Easter cards have bunnies, daffodils and eggs on them. Even when Easter comes early it does herald spring, lighter evenings, and new growth. We see this in nature, flowers appearing, trees in bud, bird's nest building and the lawn mower needs dusting off.

For Christians Easter is a celebration of our new life in Christ. However it is very easy to go from the joyful tone of Palm Sunday and Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem to shouts of acclamation from the crowd (John 12:12-13) to the glorious resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday but if we are truly to understand God's gift of His Son and the depth of His love for us we need to journey through Holy Week.

On Wednesday 1st April at 7pm there will be a short service of prayer and reflection at Hatfield Heath URC. On Good Friday there will be a March of Witness at Ongar, starting at St James' at 10.00 and at Epping starting at 10.45 at the former Methodist Church in the High Street. Even if you can't get to join us, please take some time at home to reflect on the Easter story.

Easter is the fulfilment of God's promise to us.

From:

God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16) To: Remember I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:20)

May God Bless you this Easter

Karen



# **Epping URC News**

**Email:** [urcepping@gmail.com](mailto:urcepping@gmail.com)

**Facebook:** @EppingURC

**Website:** [eppingurc.org](http://eppingurc.org)

## **April Services, all 11am**

5<sup>th</sup> Elizabeth Stockdale *Easter Sunday*

12<sup>th</sup> Joan Smith *Holy Communion*

19<sup>th</sup> Arthur Revels

26<sup>th</sup> Rev Karen Knight

3<sup>rd</sup> May Rev Tim Swindell *Holy Communion*

## **Events Roundup**

- **Epping Churches Together Good Friday Walk of Witness**, 10:45 for 11am start outside the former Methodist Church, Epping High street. Followed by refreshments at the Catholic Church
- **Easter Sunday Sunrise Service**, 6:20am at Stonards Hill recreation ground, followed by breakfast at Epping URC.
- **Coffee Mornings:** £128 was raised at our 'Big Brew' coffee morning in aid of Transform Trade. The next coffee morning will be on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May, 10:30am to Midday as part of Christian Aid week.
- **Lent Lunch:** Many thanks to all who helped and attended our Lent Lunch, £232 was made in aid of Epping Forest Foodbank.
- **Book Club:** Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April, 10am, looking at Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*.

## **Toddler Group**

In March we enjoyed a Red Nose Day Party when we raised £65 for Comic Relief.

On our last day of term before the Easter holidays, the children with the help of their adult made Easter baskets. We then all enjoyed a mid-morning snack of hot cross buns followed by an Easter service in the sanctuary. The Bible story with the help of puppets and props was a retelling of the first Easter morning when Mary mistakes Jesus for the gardener and then realised that he his the risen Christ. This was followed by songs and action

rhymes. Afterwards with great excitement we all went into the hall to hunt for easter eggs which the Easter bunny had hidden in there (unfortunately the Easter Bunny couldn't hide them in the garden as it was raining heavily!).

## **Thank you from Synod**

EPPING URC

THANK YOU!

Your gift of £13,716 to the United Reformed Church Ministry and Mission Fund in 2025 has helped to support churches and congregations through funding ministers' stipends and training as well as supporting mission initiatives. Your steadfast financial support during the financial challenges we are all facing is greatly appreciated.

*"All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above, then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all his love"*

Revd Lythan Nevard - Moderator (Eastern Synod)



## **Epping Forest Foodbank**

### **Latest most required:**

- Long life juice
- Squash/cordial
- Tinned Tomatoes
- Tinned Meat
- Rice Pudding
- Custard
- UHT Milk
- Toiletries

### **The foodbank currently has plenty of:**

- Tinned fish
- Cereal
- Rice
- Pasta
- Biscuits



There is donation point in the lobby of the church.

## **Birthdays**

A very happy birthday this month to Robin, Masie and Janet!

# **Ongar URC News**

**Website:** <https://www.ongarurc.org.uk/>

**Email:** [mail@ongarurc.org.uk](mailto:mail@ongarurc.org.uk)

## **Twinkles**

This has been a very short term, and the time has really flown by! On 19<sup>th</sup> March we had a charity morning for Red Nose Day and raised £87, which Brenda has kindly suggested the church would add to so that £100 would be sent. Thanks to all who attended and gave so generously. Everyone who was there had a raffle prize and the cakes were eaten and taken home. The following week, 26<sup>th</sup> March, we went into the church for an Easter egg hunt before a short service of Easter songs to nursery rhyme tunes. Many of the carers joined in, especially with the action songs. Surprisingly, I didn't seem to lose any of the eggs this time, so sorry to disappoint those of the congregation who were hoping to find some the following Sunday!

Everyone has been very helpful to me since I have been running it on my own since Christmas and we have welcomed some new mums and their very young babies over the last two weeks. One of these had attended Twinkles with her first child and had brought a friend along with her baby, recommending us as a very warm and friendly group! There are still many people in Ongar who do not realise that the group is for babies and toddlers, even some of the new mothers who live in the immediate vicinity, so please, if you know of anyone with a young baby, tell them about us, how to contact me and even how to get into the hall from the High Street! After Easter we will be open again from Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> April.

**Joan**

## **Open House**

Open House and Saturday Coffee Mornings continue to be well attended. It is a pleasure to see how everyone enjoys meeting up with friends and sharing each other's news. Very often, there is lots of laughter going on, which is good for everyone.

We would like to wish "Happy Birthday" to those having a birthday in April.

## **Future Services. All at 11.00**

### **April**

5<sup>th</sup> Joan Smith *Sacrament of Holy Communion*  
12<sup>th</sup> Arthur Revels  
19<sup>th</sup> Rev Karen Knight *Coffee in hall after service*  
26<sup>th</sup> Efua Koi-Larbi

### **May**

3<sup>rd</sup> Joan Smith *Sacrament of Holy Communion*  
10<sup>th</sup> Elizabeth Stockdale

## **Future Diary Dates**

### **April**

4<sup>th</sup> 10am-12pm Pause for Prayer  
11<sup>th</sup> 5pm Saturday Social Group  
21<sup>st</sup> 6.30pm Churches together Committee Meeting

## **Herts and Essex Border Mission & Ecumenical Partnerships**

**Website:** [hebmp.org.uk](http://hebmp.org.uk)

**Email:** [hertssexbordermp@gmail.com](mailto:hertssexbordermp@gmail.com)

### **Spring Fair**

Roydon URC spring fair on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April, 10am – 1pm.  
Stalls and refreshments  
Free entry  
All Welcome

### **Craft 4 All**

Bank holiday Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May, 10:30am – 12:30pm at Leaside Church, Ware  
A range of free family focused craft activities including peg dolls, sand art, paper flowers, castles, beads, toddler craft and more!  
All materials supplied.  
Refreshments available  
No need to book- children and vulnerable adults must be accompanied by an appropriate adult

## **Job Vacancy at Bishops Stortford Methodist Church**

Bishops Stortford Methodist Church are seeking to appoint an Oasis lounge coordinator. This will be an enthusiastic individual to coordinate and grow the existing outreach work being undertaken in our Oasis lounge which is a warm and welcoming space open to the community six days per week and for Sunday services. They will oversee the existing volunteers in delivering the current range of activities and ensure smooth running for the benefit of the whole community. Please share with anyone who may be interested. View the full advert at <https://www.bsm-church.org.uk/> or email [manager.bsmc@gmail.com](mailto:manager.bsmc@gmail.com) or call 01279 501 745.

## **URC Eastern Synod**

### **Little Day Out**

It may be a little too far for us but if you fancy a day trip to the seaside then the following Synod event promises to be a pleasant day out!

**Synod Little  
Day Out at**

**Southwold**



**Visit the Adnams Brewery  
Sandcastle Competition  
Check out the Pier  
Worship Together  
Enjoy the Beach**

11am onwards arrive at Southwold URC  
Explore the town or take part in optional activities at the church  
(Including Craft, Bible study, Chat)  
3pm afternoon tea  
4pm Worship led by Southwold URC

There is a large car park on the common just behind the church, and more at the Pier  
register by emailing [admin@urceastern.org.uk](mailto:admin@urceastern.org.uk) (but last minute attendees always welcome!)

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May**

## **URC News**

### **Hundreds of faith leaders ask government to protect refugee family reunion**

Catriona Wheeler, Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly, has joined more than 720 faith leaders in writing to the Shabana Mahmood MP, the Home Secretary, to raise concerns for refugee families amidst major asylum policy overhaul.

In the letter, the faith leaders said that removing family reunion for refugees' risks pushing people into smugglers hands.

The letter, coordinated by the Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches, urges the Home Secretary to reconsider these plans, saying they will "deepen suffering and place Britain at odds with values long central to our national identity and to every major faith tradition in this land".

The religious leaders, representing a wide range of faith groups, who gathered outside Parliament, urged the Home Secretary, who has previously called for an expansion to family reunion, to "reconsider these proposals, to protect the right to family reunion, and to demonstrate the moral leadership that this moment demands."

To read the letter in full and for the full list of signatories, see [Refugee Family Reunion Letter – Joint Public Issues Team](#).

<https://jpit.uk/refugee-family-reunion-letter>

### **URC donates nearly £45,000 to help Jamaica rebuild after Hurricane Melissa**

A denomination wide appeal launched by the URC to help bring relief to Jamaican communities devastated by Hurricane Melissa has topped more than £44,610. The funds raised will be donated to the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands which is helping to repair more than 50 churches and responding to the needs of their respective communities.

Read more here: <https://urc.org.uk/urc-donates-nearly-45000-to-help-jamaica-rebuild-after-hurricane-melissa/>

## **April's Eco tip from Eco Church**



**Celebrate new life this Easter and have a go at growing something!** April is the perfect time to try to grow something edible or, if you are a seasoned gardener, to encourage someone else to try. Salad leaves or herbs are a great place to start and will reduce your reliance on those oh-so-convenient supermarket salad bags. For indoor space, try 'micro-greens' (vegetable leaves harvested soon after they open). For greenhouses, try sowing salad leaf seed mixes. For outdoors, beetroot, lettuce, onion and pea plants are frost-resistant so can all be planted outside in April. As you sow, thank God for the opportunity to grow food, and pray for those communities that are facing food shortages and famine.

