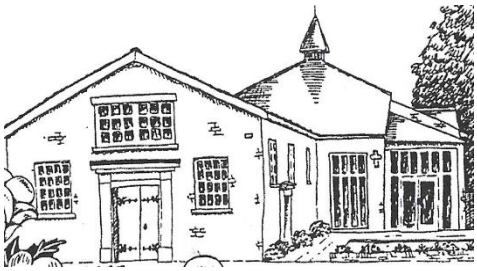
Stepping Stones

Newsletter for

EPPING UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH





ONGAR UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH

November 2026

Minister:
Revd Karen Knight

The United Reformed Church

Minister's Message

November is a funny time of year (apart from my birthday that is!). Holidays are long gone, nights are drawing in and it's not yet Christmas, even though the shops have been full of stuff since September. There's a T/V channel called Great Christmas which has been showing movies since August Bank Holiday. I must admit I watched one when the temperature was 35 degrees in the hope it would make me feel cooler - it didn't.

I know our Elder's and church meetings have already been discussing Christmas plans and my diary is filling up but the months of November and December gives us an opportunity not only to prepare practically but also spiritually for the coming celebrations.

Being prepared spiritually will help us as in the weeks leading up to Christmas several opportunities to share our faith may open up. People who would not normally come to church are happy to come to our activities, all we have to do is invite them and share why Christmas is so important to us.

Everyone knows the first verse of O Come All Ye Faithful but the carol ends with:
'Word of the Father
now in flesh appearing.'

As things get more hectic remember in the weeks to come that the most important thing is that Jesus is the embodiment of God's promise and the fulfilment of God's love for us. Now that is something to celebrate.

God Bless

Karen

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Epping URC News

Email: urcepping@gmail.com
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November Preaching Plan

All services start at 11am unless stated

1st Rev Karen Knight *Holy Communion*
8th Arthur Revels *Remembrance Sunday – Service starts at 10:55am*
15th Rev Marcia Tull
22nd Graham Watson
29th Rev Karen Knight
6th December Joan Smith *Holy Communion*

Christmas Services

13th Christingle service at 4pm – no 11am service on this day
20th Carol service 11am
25th Christmas Morning service time tbc
27th No Service – Joint at Ongar URC, 11am

November Birthdays

Happy Birthday this month to Rev Karen, Pam and Graeme.

Coffee Mornings

£160 was raised at our October coffee morning for Macmillan, thanks to all who came and baked lovely cakes. On our coffee morning Facebook post, Macmillan commented: "*Thank you so much for doing the Coffee Morning and raising the total of £160 for Macmillan. We 'doughnut' know what we'd do without incredible supporters like you all!"*

Our next coffee morning is on **Saturday 14th November, 10:30 – 12pm.** We will be having a speaker from the charity Age Well East to talk about helping over 60s with their digital skills.

Christmas Pantomime

Saturday 19th December at 9:45am.

We are once again delighted to hosting another LolBear Pantomime show after last year's very successful show. This year they will be performing a different show "Seven Prays to save Christmas."

Seven Prays to Save Christmas

The laugh-out-loud pantomime with a big heart and an even bigger Christmas message!

When a spoilt boy discovers he's landed on Santa's Naughty List, there's only one way to fix it — he must learn seven important lessons before Christmas morning!

But this isn't just any lesson-learning — it's a whirlwind of comedy, chaos, and Christmas mayhem. Along the way, he discovers the teachings of Jesus — lessons about kindness, generosity, forgiveness, and love — each told through hilarious pantomime fun.

Expect wacky stunts, silly skits, and plenty of audience participation. One moment you'll be doing ninja karate chops, the next you'll be dodging jumping snakes or shouting out that there is a giant fluffy rabbit on stage!

Full of laughter, music, and mayhem, "Seven Prays to Save Christmas" brings the joy of the season together with a message that truly matters — that Christmas isn't about getting more, but about giving, loving, and sharing the light of Jesus.

A fast, funny, and faith-filled festive adventure for the whole family!

With an all professional cast from top West End musicals, comedy clubs and BAFTA nominated TV shows.

Followed by refreshments.

There will be a retiring collection for Crisis at Christmas

Free admission – tickets available here:
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/seven-prays-to-save-christmas-tickets-2003988614893?aff=oddtdtcreator
There will also be a sign up sheet in the church or let Jeremy know.



Brian Fletcher

Brian sadly passed away in October. Brian was a much-loved member of our congregation who was always very welcoming to all and supported and enjoyed attending all our social and charitable events. Our thoughts and prayers go to Barbara at this time. Brian will be greatly missed by all. His funeral is still to be arranged at the time of writing.

Toddler Group

We recently celebrated harvest at Toddler Group when had harvest themed crafts and a short service in the sanctuary with a puppet story of the feeding of the five thousand. It was lovely to have Rev Karen with us for the session and she got to know our new families. We collected gifts for the Epping Forest Foodbank. This month we will be raising money for Children in Need.

Christmas Cards

If anyone is planning to write their Christmas cards early then this year as we have done in recent years, instead of sending cards to everyone individually in the church, why not hang just one card on our special Christmas Card line (which will be up in early December) to everyone in the church. The money you save not buying everyone a card, you could put in the donation pot for charity (to be decided).

Epping for Peace Workshop: Alternatives to Violence

St. John's Church and Epping Quakers are working together to create opportunities for promoting promote peace and understanding in Epping. This workshop is delivered by the Alternatives to Violence Project, who are committed to a world where everyone has the courage and capacity to manage conflict non-violently. The workshop will explore the themes of conflict resolution and transformation alongside empathy and trust. The workshop is taking place in November at an Epping location. Members of our congregation are invited to attend, please speak to the elders for more information or contact Rev Liz Gloyn on curate@eppinganglicans.org.uk .

Epping Forest Foodbank

The Foodbank thanks all for their harvest donations including ours from our harvest service and the Toddler group, they have now taken over 4.5tonnes of donations from local churches, schools and community groups – they say it has been incredible seeing it all come in!

The latest list of most needed items are as follows:

- Coffee
- Pasta Sauce
- Chocolate
- Tinned Soup
- Tinned Deserts
- Tinned Tomatoes
- Vegetarian Options
- All Toiletries

The Foodbank currently has plenty of rice, pasta and cereals.

A reminder there is a donation point for the Foodbank in the foyer of the church.

Ongar URC News

Email: mail@ongarurc.org.uk
Website: ongarurc.org.uk

From our church meeting discussion:

During the week after our meeting, I found the following prayer which I wanted to share with you all, especially as our conversation covered the congregation getting older and less able to do things. I pray it will inspire you as it did me.

Prayer from an older Companion

Loving Father,
carry us when the path gets too rough.
Give us the courage to continue to be available to you and to others,
ready to share our experience without arrogance.
Grant that the years that are left to us may be
the holiest,
the most loving
and the most creative.
Thank you for the past, and for leaving the best wine until now.

(Jay Gadsby in Celtic Daily Prayer, Book Two)
Joan

Twinkles

We are now in the Half Term week and will be back on 5th November. The following week we will have our coffee morning at Twinkles for Children in Need, when we will have a raffle and sell cakes to eat with our coffee or take home. Any donations for the raffle or of cakes will be welcome for the 12th November.

We have welcomed many new mothers and children since we started back in September, and have also welcomed back some grans (with other grandchildren, the ones we knew having started school), our childminders (with new children) and also one mum who had her baby during the holidays. Some babies have now grown quite a bit since we last saw them in July and are all smiles and eager to get at the toys to play. Some of the children miss the friends they made at the group who have started school in September, but they are starting to make new friends with newcomers of a similar age. We will be running now until the Christmas holidays and will finish this term with our Christmas service in the church on 10th December, followed by a small party for the children and mulled wine and mince pies for the adults.
Joan

Fresh From the Word

If anyone would like me to order them a copy of the 2027 edition, please let me know within the next couple of weeks before the Christmas post starts being disrupted! It is £18.99 plus postage and packing of approximately £4.75 for 1-2 copies. There is a 10% discount on the purchase price for an order of 3 or more copies.
Joan

Leprosy Mission

There are copies of the Christmas catalogue available in the Church and the Hall. I am quite happy to take orders from you, but please be aware that, again, postage and packing is extra. There is a small discount for the church but this does not always cover the cost of postage!
Joan

Open House

Open House is still running at this point in time. This month we celebrated Georgina and my birthdays. Lots of cake eaten and birthday celebrations.
Pam

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

Saturday Coffee Morning and Sale

Will be held on Saturday 31st October – 10.30 – 12

Future Services

1st November	11am	Graham Watson	Holy Communion
8th November	10:45am	Joan Smith	Remembrance Sunday
15th November	11am	Mike Shelbourne	
22nd November	11am	Rev Karen Knight	Coffee in hall after service
29th November	11am	Rev Marcia Tull	
6th December	11am	Rev Tim Swindell	Holy Communion

Future Diary Dates

Saturday 7th November	10am – 12pm	Pause for Prayer
Saturday 14th November	5pm	Saturday Social Group
Saturday 28th November	10:30am – 12pm	Christmas Coffee Morning and sale
Saturday 5th December	10am – 12pm	Pause for Prayer

Epping Methodist Church Archive

From the Herts & Essex Border Methodist Circuit:

These past two months have been a study in patience as more documents have been moved out of storage as I have been gradually working my way through different churches, decades and stories, overlapping with previously documented items.

However, a remarkable document has turned up from the Epping Methodist archive. This document is from July 1986 amid the growing international outrage against Apartheid South Africa. This document notes the letter dialogue between Barclays and Epping Methodist as the church was concerned over Barclay's involvement and investment in South Africa during the tumultuous time and considered withdrawing the accounts. This coincided with growing boycotts which helped culminate in the abolition of Apartheid in South Africa. This is one of many acts of solidarity which broke down international borders and reminds us to keep looking out for each other, whether they are next door or over 8,000 miles away.

- Amelia (Circuit Archivist) (haebeaoffice@gmail.com)

Local(ish) Events in the Eastern Synod

Nativity Festival

Christ Church URC, Buntingford 26th – 28th November 10am – 4pm. Exhibition of 100 nativity sets. Tea & coffee will be served.

Nativity Exhibition

St Augustine of Canterbury, Springfield Chelmsford 30th November – 5th December 2026. 1-4pm Monday to Friday, 6-8pm Friday and 10am- 4pm Saturday. Come visit our exhibition of over 100 nativities from around the world. Entry is free, Refreshments and lots of car parking available. There is disabled access.

A Christmas Carol By Candlelight

Kelvedon URC, Saturday 28th November, 6pm. Colchester Arts Centre Director Anthony Roberts' traditional rendition of the Dickens classic, with a musical accompaniment. Hear this wonderful timeless tale in the beautiful surroundings of Kelvedon United Reformed Church by candlelight. Guaranteed to get you in the Christmas spirit! The event is suitable for all ages and is a fundraising event in support of our new window project. Tickets £8, under 16s £4. Book here: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-christmas-carol-by-candlelight-at-kelvedon-urc-tickets-1999384311297