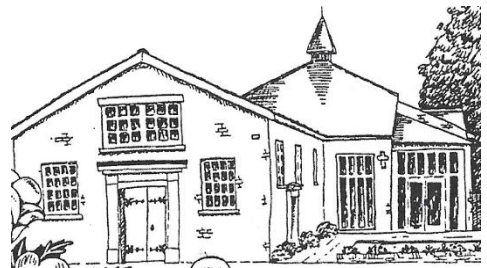


Stepping Stones

Newsletter for

EPPING UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH



ONGAR UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH

February 2026

Minister: Revd Karen Knight



Minister's Message

I started this message being all ministerial and writing about Lent however, I changed my mind. Let me tell you about Rebecca (Becca), she is 9yrs old and has served 7 years as a guide dog.

As some of you know my Labrador Benson died very suddenly aged 9 at the beginning of November, I had had him since he was 8 weeks old. I knew at some point I would get another dog and probably not a puppy but not for some time. However a friend got in touch, her neighbours worked for Guide Dogs for The Blind and told her the charity were looking to rehome a guide dog who was now going blind (the irony). She had lost one eye and the other wasn't too good, so they needed to rehome her quickly for her to get used to a new environment before she went totally blind. They wanted an experienced Labrador person who wouldn't be fazed by her medical issues and my friend said: 'I know just the person!'

I was not sure, it was so soon after losing Benson but there was no harm in finding out more. However, the rehoming officer told me there were three other families interested in Becca so I thought that was the end of the matter. Nevertheless, I could not get her out of my thoughts but why with so many other people offering to have her. At this point I did what I always do when I can't work something out, I discussed it with God and said: 'if this is of you God then the rehoming officer will call.' A short time later the phone rang.

Becca arrived on December 10th and has settled really well, she even attended one of the Bible studies. But that's not the end of the story a few days later I spoke to the lady who had been looking after her whilst she was waiting to be adopted and she said Becca was used to going to church with her and she had been praying that she would be adopted by a Christian.

Why am I telling you this? To show that God is at work in our everyday lives and answers prayers no matter how mundane they may seem and while

studying the Bible is important sharing our experiences of God in our own lives speaks to people in a way that nothing else can.

God Bless you all.

Karen

P.S. Back to being ministerial, Lent starts on February 18th.



Epping URC News

Website: eppingurc.org

Email: urcepping@gmail.com

Facebook: @EppingURC

Preaching Plan, all 11am

1st Rev Karen Knight *Holy Communion*

8th Len Ward

15th Efua Koi-Larbi

22nd Ruzive Mhirbidi

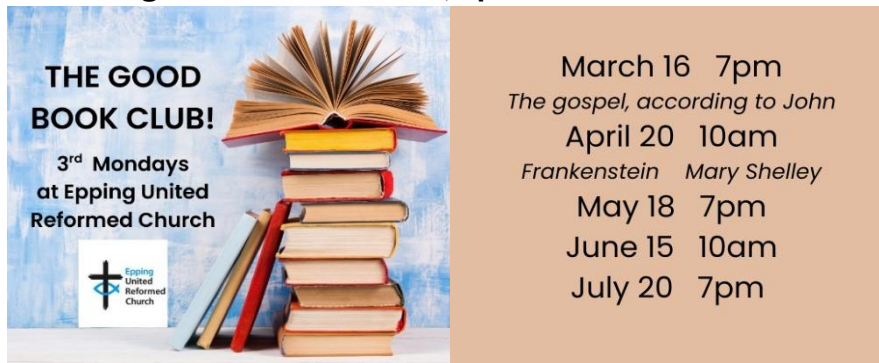
1st March TBA

Birthdays

We wish a very happy birthday this month to Karin and Nathan.

Dates for your Diary

- **Churches together Lent Lunches:** Each church will once again be hosting a Lent lunch each Saturday during lent starting from the 22nd February. At the time of writing, we do not have dates and locations yet- we will share when we have them.
- **Saturday 7th March, 10:30am-Noon:** Fairtrade 'Big Brew' Coffee Morning in aid of Transform Trade. Please use fairtrade ingredients where possible in any bakes. Raffle prizes welcome- please bring fairtrade gifts. Oxfam, M&S and Coop have many fairtrade items including tea, coffee, chocolate, sugar, bananas.
- **Book Club starting from the 16th March, 7pm.**

A promotional graphic for the 'The Good Book Club'. On the left, a stack of books with one open on top, set against a blue background. Text on the left reads: 'THE GOOD BOOK CLUB!', '3rd Mondays at Epping United Reformed Church', and the church's logo. On the right, an orange background contains the following schedule:

March 16	7pm
<i>The gospel, according to John</i>	
April 20	10am
<i>Frankenstein Mary Shelley</i>	
May 18	7pm
June 15	10am
July 20	7pm

Building works

In the next few weeks some building works will be occurring in the church as follows:

- Redecoration of the building interior
- Replacement of all lighting with LEDs
- Installing new electric hand dryers in the toilets
- Installing new guttering

We don't anticipate the works affecting Sunday services or any church events.

Zimbabwe

We recently celebrated our link with our twinned church in Mbare, Harare, Zimbabwe with a special service and our now traditional Zimbabwean meal of chicken/sweet potato stew afterwards. We heard news from Mbare including about the work of the Mbare Presbyterian school which has been progressing well with over 100 students (mostly of primary age). They are facing some challenges such as requiring extra space, a lack of teaching aids, a lack of support for teachers and wishing to support more vulnerable children. We also heard news that Blantina will soon be starting her training for the ministry.

Ongar URC News

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

Email: mail@ongarurc.org.uk

Church Meeting

Please note that our next Church Meeting will now be on **Sunday, 22nd February** after the morning service. It has been changed due to there being a Mission Partnership meeting at Hatfield Heath on Saturday, 21st February from 10-12.

Twinkles

We have now met two times since the start of the year and the mums, grans and carers have been very helpful in sorting the toys out onto chairs after Rhyme Time so that I can then put them into the boxes. The weather was not good to us the first week back which put some people off coming. We have still welcomed some new mums and their children, one coming from Doddinghurst having found us through Facebook who was looking for something different to do and not have to go into Brentwood. We also had a dad come along in place of his wife. being told where to come and what to do by his daughter, who comes regularly; he thoroughly enjoyed his morning with us, even though he was the only man there, and said that he wished he could come more often. I would still appreciate offers of help but need to know that these would be on a regular basis and the days that could be offered.

Joan

Pause For Prayer

The Church is open the first Saturday of each month from 10 to 12 noon for anyone who wants to come in for prayer or just to sit quietly in the presence of God. I occasionally welcome visitors who have come to Ongar on the railway, as well as Ongar residents who see that the church is open and decide to have a look inside. They may not come to our services but can be made to feel welcome and shown God's love even during a short visit.

Joan

Open House

Open House is still a popular place for friends to meet for a chat over coffee and biscuits. Birthdays are celebrated with cake and the 'Birthday Song'. There is usually a puzzle for you to try and find a few pieces before going back to your coffee!

The week beginning 19th January was 'Week of Prayer for Christian Unity'. Friends from other Churches in Ongar came to our service on 21st January and joined us for coffee before the service which started at 12noon. It was a very enjoyable Service, led by Joan. Also, it was nice. to be able to chat with people from other Churches in our area.

Pam

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

Services For February All At 11am

1st Graham Watson
8th Elizabeth Stockdale
15th Joan Smith
22nd Rev. Karen Knight Sacrament of Holy Communion. Coffee in hall after the service.
1st March To be arranged

Future Dates for Your Diary

4th February	7pm	Elders Meeting
7th February	10am-12 noon	Pause for Prayer
14th February	5- 6:30pm	Saturday Social Group
21st February	10am-12 noon	Mission Partnership meeting Hatfield Heath URC
22nd February	12pm	Church meeting in Hall after service
28th February	10:30am-12 noon	Coffee morning and sale

Herts and Essex Border Mission Partnership

Partnership Meeting



Herts and Essex Border Mission Partnership

Partnership Meeting

Saturday 21st February

10am- Midday

At Hatfield Heath URC

Chelmsford Road, Hatfield Heath, Essex, CM22 7BH



Open to all who attend our 7 member churches:

Church Langley LEP, Epping URC, Hatfield Heath URC, Leaside LEP, Ongar URC, Roydon URC & Stansted Free Church

New Website

A new website for the Mission Partnership has been created, the address is hebmp.org.uk. On the website you can find up to date information about all 7 churches and the latest news and events. Note the URC churches will no longer have a presence on the methodist circuit website (the former HAEBEA website). You can send news and events for the website to the new mission partnership email address at hertsessexbordermp@gmail.com.

URC Eastern Synod

Discipleship & Theology Day

Come to our next discussion event on Discipleship – **Thursday February 26th, 11-2pm**
at Abbey Lane URC, Saffron Walden

Led by Revd Alex Jacobs, the synods Transitional minister. Discipleship is where the

rubber hits the road in our faith. We will pre read Alex Jacobs latest book and meet with Alex to discuss discipleship in this complex time.

To register and to find out more information email: admin@urceastern.org.uk

Copies of his book are available from the URC Bookshop as well as national bookshops
<https://urcshop.co.uk/discipleship-biblical-contemporary-and-personal-reflections-on-christian-discipleship/>

February's Eco Tip from Eco Church



This Lent, take part in Climate Steward's Carbon Fast. Lent is a time when Christians traditionally fast and focus on God. The Carbon Fast will help you consider ways to live more simply, give you new ideas to cut your carbon footprint and invite you to focus on God and consider the whole of his creation. You will receive a weekly email containing key facts, suggestions for how you could reduce your carbon footprint and a prayer to lead you through this Lenten season. Each week features a different theme designed to help us take climate action in manageable ways that bear witness to a God who has promised to restore all his creation. Find out more and sign up at climatestewards.org/resources/carbon-fast/

