

Church service following sex attack in Epsom

16 April 2026



A service held at Epsom Methodist Church has brought together faith leaders, politicians and residents in a symbolic call for unity following recent events that have unsettled the town.

The “Hope for Epsom” gathering, led by Superintendent Minister Reverend Catherine Hutton, was attended by community figures including Deputy Mayor Lucie McIntyre and Epsom and Ewell MP Helen Maguire, alongside members of the local congregation.

At the heart of the service was a simple but powerful act. Attendees were invited to build a “future of hope” by placing stones one by one, each contribution representing collective strength and resilience. Reverend Hutton urged those present to see the community as something shaped by every individual, with unity and compassion at its core.

She concluded by quoting Dr Martin Luther King Jr: “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

The gathering comes in the immediate aftermath of a serious sexual assault investigation and subsequent protests in the town centre, which saw a significant police presence and disruption to local life.

As reported by Surrey Live, Epsom’s MP Helen Maguire said she supported peaceful protest but warned that “those who are turning to disruption and intimidation cannot be allowed to do so.” She added that individuals coming from outside the area “to spread division and cause disruption” should “take it elsewhere.”

Police have confirmed that the victim is being supported by specialist officers, while urging the public not to speculate as investigations continue. East Surrey Chief Superintendent Mark Chapman said the case is complex and that officers are working to gather evidence and bring those responsible to justice.

Despite the message of hope inside the church, a sense of unease remains more widely. With national media attention and visible policing in the town centre, many residents are looking for reassurance that the incident is isolated and that Epsom remains a safe community.

The church service captured both strands of the town’s current mood: a determination to stand together, and a quiet but pressing call for answers.

Sam Jones and Romy Sustar

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