

Open Space

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

KNOWING JESUS... MAKING JESUS KNOWN!



A life of Prayer

ON May 9th, we will be celebrating Ascension Day and at our Ascension Day service, we often have different prayer activities and at the end of it we hand out **Thy Kingdom Come** booklets.

THESE booklets encourage us to pray for 5 people to come to know Jesus from the time of Ascension to Pentecost.

As this is a great time of prayer, I will share with you some of my thoughts on prayer, explained under the following three headings.

The importance of prayer

There are many reasons why prayer is important and vital to our lives.

To begin with, prayer connects us with God. Throughout the bible, God tries to connect with His people and have a relationship with them. Through prayer, we can speak to God and bring our concerns and fears to him. We can also bring our celebrations to God as we give thanks for the good things that happen to us. Therefore, when we pray, we are staying connected to God and we are also building our relationship with him.

Secondly, prayer is important because it helps us to focus on God. Our lives often become extremely busy for many different reasons.

When we take time to stop and pray, we are getting away from the business of life and focusing on God.

When life becomes busy, stressful, or even difficult, it can be easy to focus on all the negative things around us.

By doing so, we often lose track of who we are and who God is. However, through prayer, we turn our focus to God, the one who created all things and as we focus on him, we are reminded that we are his creation and that he loves us with an everlasting love.

Finally, prayer is important because it brings us inner peace. Throughout my life, I have found that there are moments when I cannot control what is happening around me. I remember when I was struggling to get my visa to remain in England. At that point in my life I felt no control over the situation, and this was a frightening feeling. However, in the midst of this fear and uncertainty, I found peace in prayer.

Each time I prayed, I handed over to God all that I was feeling and experiencing which felt like a huge weight off my shoulders. At the end of each prayer, I felt at peace because I knew that regardless of my visa outcome, God still loved me, and He was with me.

These are a few reasons why prayer is important and each one of us will have our own experiences with prayer which I would encourage us to share with each other. By doing so, we can all learn about how important and vital prayer is.

The challenges of prayer

Although prayer is important and has many benefits, it can be challenging at times to pray.

Firstly, prayer can be challenging because we may feel like we do not have the right words to say, or we might not know what the proper way to pray is.

Continued on Page 2>

MAY 2024

Mission Partners with St Stephens:

Beloved
Bristol City Centre Soup Run
Bristol Schools Connection
Bristol/Uganda Link
Christian Aid
Community of the Sisters of the Church
Emmaus
Harvest for The Hungry
One25 Project

St Stephens

Church Road
Soundwell
Bristol BS16 4RH
0117 956 6257

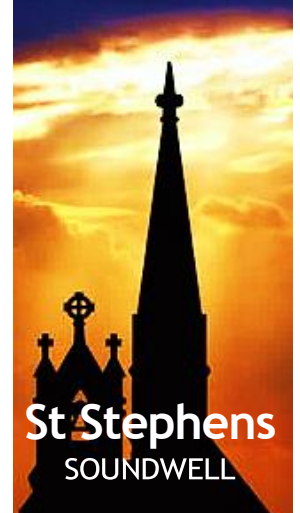
visionatststephens@gmail.com

www.saintstephen-soundwell.org

 saintstephen-soundwell

 @SoundwellChurch

CHARITY NUMBER
1131503



St Stephens
SOUNDWELL

Readings & Collects

SUNDAY 05 MAY

6th Sunday of Easter

Acts 10:44–end; Psalm 98
1 John 5:1–6; John 15:9–17

RISEN CHRIST, by the lakeside you renewed your call to your disciples: help your Church to obey your command and draw the nations to the fire of your love, to the glory of God the Father. Amen

SUNDAY 12 MAY

7th Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:15–17, 21–end; Psalm 1
1 John 5:9–13; John 17:6–19

RISEN ASCENDED LORD, as we rejoice at your triumph, fill your Church on earth with power and compassion, that all who are estranged by sin may find forgiveness and know your peace, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

SUNDAY 19 MAY

Pentecost

Acts 2:1–21; Psalm 104:26–end
Romans 8:22–27;
John 15:26–27, & 16:4b–15

HOLY SPIRIT, sent by the Father, ignite in us your holy fire; strengthen your children with the gift of faith, revive your Church with the breath of love, and renew the face of the earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 26 MAY

Trinity Sunday

Isaiah 6:1–8; Psalm 29
Romans 8:12–17; John 3:1–17

HOLY GOD, faithful and unchanging: enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth, and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love, that we may truly worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A life of prayer *Continued from Page 1*

I have found that the key to overcoming this challenge is in the way that we view God and the way we view Jesus. Not only do I view Jesus as the Saviour, the High Priest and the Messiah, I also view Jesus as my best friend who knows everything about me. One of the most famous scriptures that describes the way God knows us is found in the Gospel of Luke. Chapter 12 verse 7 reads, *‘But even the hairs of your head are all counted.’*

Therefore, when I pray, I speak to Him as a close friend who I respect and love. On those days when I have no words, I take comfort in the fact that He knows my feelings and everything else I may be facing on that day.

Another reason prayer can be challenging is simply because of the mistakes we make throughout our lives. Sometimes, the wrong things that we do and the mistakes we make carry with them the feelings of guilt and unworthiness. This issue is something I have managed to become better at after struggling with it for a few years.

In the past, when I made mistakes, I often would not pray for days due to feelings of unworthiness and guilt.

As I began studying the bible and finding out about the power of God’s love, I realised that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God.

This helped me to realise that even past mistakes are small when it comes to the greatness of God’s love.

Indeed, none of us are perfect and we have made and will continue to make mistakes, but God still desires to hear from us.

The journey of prayer

As we celebrate Ascension Day and as we focus on prayer, my hope for us is that we may begin to see prayer as a journey which lasts for a lifetime. Often on a journey, we may feel tired, or we may go through sudden unexpected turns and corners, but our focus is to continue travelling.

I believe that this is like prayer – though we may feel like we do not have the right words to say at times and though we may feel unworthy at times, our focus is to continue praying.

In the Gospel of Luke chapter 18, Jesus tells the parable of the persistent widow. The reason He tells this parable is explained in the scripture which states: *‘Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not lose heart.’*

This parable and these words encourage us to keep praying even when things are tough.

So, whatever life throws at us and whatever the future holds, may we strive to find time to talk to God and may the Holy Spirit grant us strength to keep on travelling along our prayer journey.

Regan

· St Stephens Church Soundwell ·



7.30PM
THURSDAY
9th MAY

In Church



Welcome Space

9 to 11am
TUESDAY 14th MAY

Conversation,
free snacks & refreshments
ALL ARE WELCOME!*

WE also look forward to seeing you again on 28th May!

Please note that under 17s must be accompanied by an adult).

* IN OUR CHURCH ROOM

FORGING FRIENDSHIPS

WE ARE a friendly and welcoming bunch of people at St Stephens Church, Soundwell, but friendships and welcome don't have to stop at the church door.



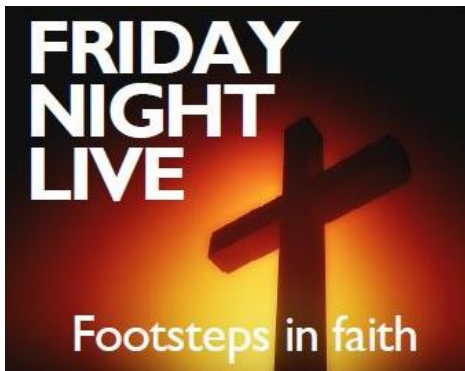
Would you like to forge a friendship and visit someone in their home? Or would you like to welcome a new friend, someone you might already know from your church, to spend a bit of time with you in your home?

If either of these ideas spark something in you, take your fancy, or it's for you... whatever it is please be in touch!

Every blessing!

Jenny Bishop 07 801 989 490 or jenannb75@hotmail.com

Rev Lisa Wigmore 0117 9574 297 or lisawigmore66@gmail.com



17th MAY 6.30PM

EXPLORING what life with faith is all about in an hour of getting to know others, through informal song, prayer, and discussions, followed by refreshments afterwards in the Church Room.

Come if you know Jesus, come if you don't, let's grow in footsteps of faith together!

APRIL SHOWERS

AS I write this just after Easter 2024, I have no idea what the weather will be doing when you read this, so, please cast your mind back to March and April... and try to remember how much rain we had?

Reflecting on the events of Good Friday and the Cross on which Jesus died, I began to ponder the weather. A few days later, having woken in the early hours and not able to get back to sleep, some thoughts came to me:

DID IT RAIN?

WE don't know what the weather was like, as Jesus carried his cross to the place of execution.

Was the ground dry, so that each footstep cast dust into the air which choked him as he stooped under the weight and gasped for breath?

Or was there a light drizzle, making the wood slippery and harder to hold onto, forcing splinters into those kind hands as the heavy timber shifted in his grasp?

Perhaps the ground was muddy, each step a struggle to gain traction, hampering progress as his feet sank in thick puddles.

When Simon of Cyrene stepped in to help bear the load, was the sun shining?

Sunbeams peeping through the clouds to light the way, or a relentless heat?

Did the women weep and wail in a downpour of rain as though heaven wept with them?

Was the wind behind him helping him along but whipping hair into his face?

Or perhaps against him pushing him back so he had to be all the more determined to walk the road to death.

Oh, we know about the darkness and the earthquake that came later...

But did it rain?

LISA



See & Know



THEY would love grown-up help at their parent and toddler group: to continue helping young families in our Parish to know and follow Jesus ... could you spare half an hour or so on Thursday mornings, to help in school term-time only??

It would include setting up the play equipment in the church hall at 9am, if not every week, then perhaps now and again.

AND/OR could you be part of the See & Know **Team**? If not every week, then perhaps now and again?

This would mean:

- Welcoming children & their carers,
- Chatting with them during the session
- Helping the children do a simple craft.

Sessions run from 10am – 11.45am.

We don't want this fabulous Mission Outreach Group to close, because it does so much good in our community.

SO PLEASE CAN YOU HELP??

For more details please chat with: Sue Humphrey (07 929 404 272) or Lisa (0117 9574 297).

CAN YOU DONATE:
Household appliances
(But not cookers)
Furniture
Kitchenware
(plates/cutlery/glassware)
Bedding & towels
Clothes and Toys...

...so that we can help people who need such items in the Bristol area.

IF SO: PLEASE CONTACT KEVIN
 Call or text 07972 00 99 26

or email:

sunsetmissionofhope@yahoo.com

FOOD donations can be made at collection baskets (by the checkouts) at any of the following stores:

Aldi Fishponds Road, Bristol

Lidl Bishopsworth, Bristol

Or direct to Kevin.



THANK YOU!

Sunset Mission of Hope

www.sunsetmissionofhope.org.uk

HOLY WEEK in review

HOLY WEEK began as it always does with Palm Sunday, and this year was no exception to our celebrations and once again we had a four legged guest named Romeo the donkey, who visited us during our 10am Service!

Romeo was fortunately well behaved *inside* church but less so after wards outside but we won't go there, but here he is in more conciliatory mood pictured with some of many of his admiring onlookers!



Palm Sunday also marked the opening of the **EASTER TRAIL**, which was set up in and around the Church grounds. The Easter Trail started at one gate, the one near the Church Hall car park and finished at the gate furthest away, the one by the Church Room pathway.

Various displays were dotted along the route, with explanations illustrating the original Holy Week events and drama that played out leading up to the Crucifixion and the empty tomb.

Our thanks for all those involved in creating the cameos and gathering and presenting the information for the Easter Trail.



TO top the week, we also had **RUBY** take her first communion on Easter Sunday as well, so all in all it was quite a busy time for all concerned! Here she is, standing by the Cross laden with flowers.



ON EASTER SUNDAY, the Church looked fabulously decorated with the **Easter Flowers** and our thanks go to the Flower Team who raised the funds for, then bought and artfully displayed, the beautiful flowers for us all to enjoy.



WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON
Bible Study

WHY not join a friendly gathering to look at a different passage of Scripture and mull it over together!

We will bring our own thoughts and insights and be able to share them and hear the thought and insights from others.

AND, of course, hear what God might be saying to us as we gather in His name.

There will be refreshments and cake and a warm welcome for all.

You don't need to book in, or even come to every session—just come along as we will be delighted if you do.

*We will meet in the Church Room
 2.30 til 4 pm
 on the following Wednesdays:*

- 15 May ● 29 May ● 12 June
- 26 June ● 10 July

We look forward to seeing you there!
Jenny, Lisa & Regan



TABLE for THIRTEEN



ON 6th April, at a Service of the Word we were treated to a marvellously entertaining Play presentation which was entitled 'Table for Thirteen', the title of which took its cue from events of the original Last Supper, in the Upper Room, based on the idea of what might have happened AFTER Jesus and his disciples had left.

Thus we were witness to a possible dialogue between staff clearing the table in the Upper Room, but placed into a contemporary setting.

Just two actors were involved, in the 20 minute drama, namely Joe Wilson and Nick Stott from the St Stephens Drama Group.

APCM Sunday 19 May 10am

THIS year we are incorporating our Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) into the Sunday Pentecost Service.

The service will still be very much the same as usual and will include Holy Communion.

This is also the day we celebrate the coming of The Holy Spirit, called the day of Pentecost, so as red symbolises The Holy Spirit, please wear something **RED** to the service.

APCM will receive nominations for:

- Two Church Wardens for the year ahead,
- Parochial Church Council (PCC) members for a 3-year term – this year we have space for 4.
- Deanery Synod Representatives – we have space for 2 more.

We will **also** receive nominations for those who wish to continue, or to become Assistant Church Wardens.

TO know more about, or to volunteer for any of these positions, please ask me (Lisa) for an application form by phone, email or in person.

The APCM report will be available about a week or 2 before the meeting, and on the day, a special order of service/agenda will also be available.

Please do prayerfully consider being one of these active members of your Church. Thank you. **Lisa**

PS: Don't forget to wear something **RED** to the service on 19th May!

Ministry Experience Scheme

DO you want to explore if God is calling you to ministry in the Church of England by gaining experience of what it is really like?

You will:

- Be supported as you explore God's calling on your life.
- Serve across the life of the church: from supporting outreach initiatives and running groups for children, to leading worship and exploring the Christian faith with others.
- Benefit from the opportunity to grow in your ministry and discipleship through theological training and mentoring.
- Experience ministry on the inside as part of a lay and ordained team in a mission focused context.
- Receive a living wage at 30 hours per week on a 10-month contract.

TO find out more about the Ministry Experience Scheme in the Diocese of Bristol, and to download an application pack, visit:

[Ministry Experience Scheme—Diocese of Bristol \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org)

THE Diocese of Bristol is committed to being a fair, respectful and inclusive organisation. We believe that diversity enables us to thrive and develop and are committed to race equality, welcoming applications from all under-represented groups.

Young adults are currently under-represented in church leadership so we particularly welcome applications from those aged 18–30.

If you'd like to have a no-commitment chat with me about this, then please do be in touch. **Lisa**

Diocesan Synod

THE Diocesan Synod considers the affairs of the Diocese as they arise, (a) nationally, from General Synod; (b) locally, from parishes and deaneries; and (c) internally, regarding policy and finance.

It consists of elected, nominated, co-opted and ex-officio members of three houses: Bishops, Clergy and Laity.

The Bishop presides and shares the chair with the Vice-Presidents, ie: the Chair of the House of Clergy and the Chair of the House of Laity.

Diocesan Synod has the following statutory functions:

- To consider matters concerning the Church of England and to make provision for such matters in relation to the Diocese, and to consider and express their opinion on any other matters of religious or public interest (not including doctrinal matters);
- To advise the Bishop on any matters on which they may consult Synod; and
- To consider and express their opinion on any matters referred to them by the General Synod, and in particular to approve or disapprove provisions referred to them by the General Synod under Article 8 of the Constitution.

If you would like to be considered for Diocesan Synod, please speak to Lisa by 15th May.

Following this, a formal application will have to be made, then there is an election of 14 members of the House of Clergy and 12 members of the House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod which will be held in Kingswood and South Gloucestershire Deanery between 7–24 June 2024.

Thank you! **Lisa**





SO why should we care for God's creation?

WHY INDEED!

• Because he asks us to.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He made us to be part of his creation to serve and protect it.

• Because we are called to love our neighbour.

Especially, those who are weak and vulnerable. We all depend on the land, sea, and sky. So, caring for those things means caring for our neighbours.

• Because Jesus is Lord.

We can share and show his Lordship by caring for this world that he created.

Our brokenness is also the brokenness of the earth and it is for God's love of the whole world that he sent his Son.

God is sustaining and redeeming all of creation and we can come alongside him.

IN 2019 The Diocese of Bristol declared a climate emergency and set a target to achieve Net Zero by 2030.

THE ECO CHURCH scheme provides a framework to support our church and its leaders in taking practical action in caring for God's earth.

Here at St Stephens, we are passionate about looking after God's creation but need your help to do so.

Are you interested in looking after God's creation?

Would you like St Stephens to become an Eco-friendly church?

If you answered yes to the previous questions, you could be just the person we are looking for!

We need to make St Stephens an Eco-friendly church, but in order to do this, we would like to find someone/likeminded people to become our Eco Champion/s who can help us look after God's creation and work our way through the Eco Church Scheme with the support of the church community.

If you are interested in becoming an Eco Champion please speak to Lisa, 0117 957 4297.

The PCC of St Stephens

YOUNG PREACHERS

Do you know a young adult aged 16-25 who

- Is living and growing as a Christian?
- Shows leadership or teaching potential?

Could they become a Young Preacher?

Young Preachers are discerned, accountable and trained.

They must be supported by their vicar/minister and will receive the Bishop's permission to preach up to 4 times per year in their local church.



For more information, speak to your Vicar, Lisa, lisawigmore66@gmail.com or 0117 9574297



Listen to this week's Sermon on your phone:

0117 456 2090

(Cost is the same as a local call)

OR

Click-a-SERMON



Visit our website and use the audio link to listen on-line

<http://saintstephensoundwell.org>

PLANT SALE

11 MAY 2024



COUNTDOWN to the Plant Sale 2~4pm **Saturday 11th May** to include CREAM TEAS!

As with previous Plant Sales, your goodwill is appreciated for donations of plants to sell on the day with proceeds going towards St Stephens Church funds.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED:

Lots of planning and preparation goes into making this annual fund raising event a success, so this is to ask for volunteers please to assist as follows:

ON THE DAY:

- **Kitchen helpers:** to help with teas etc,
- **Sellers** of Raffle tickets
- **Helpers** in general.

WANTED BEFORE THE DAY:

- Plants, *of course!*
- Garden tools & anything to do with gardening, eg: books, seeds, etc,
- Pot holders
- Prizes for Raffle
- Plastic boxes, the grape and fruit type sizes from Super-market purchases.

Thank you! **Gill Mayo**

05	Mangotsfield School	Tim, Olivia & Sophie Parker Stephanie, Jacob, Tommy & Finley Pascoe Wayne, Rosie, Annie-Mae & Joseph Pearce	Sherbourne Close Soundwell Road Spring Hill
12	Bristol Brunel Academy	Trish Phipps Ollie, Jaime, Ottilie & Rupert Phipps Shirley Potts, Christine Priddis	St Clements Court St Martins Court St Stephens Close
19	SGS College Filton	Malcolm & Pat Pullin, Dot Randall Nicola, Andy, Amelia & Erin Read Ruth Redler	St Stephens Road Stanley Park Road Stanton Close
26	Soundwell Academy	Sarah, Mark, Layla & Lauren Reid Colin and Tessa Rice, Peter Robbins Monica Robinson, Sandra Rosser	Station Road Sweets Close Sweets Road

SUNDAYS: 8am BCP Holy Communion on the 1st and 3rd Sundays.
10am Community Worship Service

Prayer Ministry is offered after the 10am Service on the 1st and 3rd Sundays or at any other time by request, so do please ask as necessary.

WEDNESDAYS: 10am Service of Holy Communion

MAY DIARY

01	Wednesday	11am-7-9pm	Coffee/Chat/Company Turnpike Pub Discipleship Course Group week 3 in Church Room
02	Thursday(s)	7am-10pm 10-11.45am 2-4pm	Polling Station in Church Room See & Know in Church Hall (weekly in term time) Ladies Group Birthday Celebration in Church & Church Hall (then fortnightly)
03	Friday	7-9pm	Outburst Youth Club in Church Hall
04	Saturday	9am-5pm	BRISTOL NOISE Community Project
07	Tuesday(s)	1.30-3.30pm	Knit & Natter, then weekly in Church Room
08	Wednesday	7-9pm	Discipleship Course Group week 4 in Church Room
09	Thursday	2-4pm 7.30pm	Men's Group in Church Room (then fortnightly) ASCENSION DAY Service in Church
10	Friday	1.15-3.45pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall (fortnightly)
11	Saturday	2-4pm	PLANT SALE & Cream Teas in Church Hall
12	Sunday	6.30pm	MEMORIAL SERVICE in Church
13	Monday	10.15am	Retreat Memory Café in Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers
14	Tuesday	9-11am 2.15pm 7.30pm	WELCOME SPACE in Church Room SERVICE at Deerhurst Care Home PCC meeting in Church Room
15	Wednesday	2.30-4pm 7-9pm	BIBLE STUDY! In the Church Room Discipleship Course Group week 5 in Church Room
16	Thursday(s)	2-4pm	Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)
17	Friday	6.30pm	FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE in Church: informal songs, prayers, discussions, followed by refreshments in the Church Room
18	Saturday	9.30am	BAPTISM PREP in Church
19	Sunday	10am	APCM in Service with Holy Communion
23	Thursday	2-4pm	Men's Group in Church Room (then fortnightly)
24	Friday	1.15-3.45pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall (fortnightly)
27	Monday	10.15am	Retreat Memory Café in Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers
28	Tuesday	9-11am	WELCOME SPACE in Church Room
29	Wednesday	2.30-4pm	BIBLE STUDY! In the Church Room
30	Thursday	2-4pm	Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)

JUNE DIARY

04	Tuesday(s)	1.30-3.30pm	Knit & Natter, then weekly in Church Room
05	Wednesday	11am	Coffee/Chat/Company Turnpike Pub
06	Thursday(s)	10-11.45am 2-4pm	See & Know in Church Hall (weekly in term time) Men's Group in Church Room (then fortnightly)

SINCE MARCH

Baptisms:

• APRIL 07:

Aziah Mason Whiting-Barry,
Shiloh Maurice Whiting-Barry,
Levi Mason Barry.

Please hold Aziah, Shiloh and Levi in your prayers. Please also pray for Aziah and Shiloh's Godparents; Mike, Aaron, Vicky and Tiannah, as well as all the family and friends.

• APRIL 21: Finley Francis Pasco.

Please hold Finley, his parents, Ryan and Steph and brothers, Jacob and Tommy, in your prayers. Please also pray for Finley's Godparents; Annabelle, Lily, Nancy, Beth, Georgia, Shaun and Daniel; as well as the whole family and all their many friends.

Funerals:

• APRIL 12: Julie Storrer (63).

The celebration of Julie's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.

Please hold Julie's husband, Kevin, their children, Becky and Josh, along with all of Julie's family and her many friends in your prayers.

• APRIL 12:

Norman Stanley Francis (92).

The celebration of Norman's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.

Please hold Norman's daughter Jackie and her husband Andy in your prayers, together with their children Tom and Laura. Also the many friends, family members and staff at Kift Lodge who remember him fondly.

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL



• **Revd Lisa Wigmore**
Vicar, 52 Gladstone Street
Soundwell, Bristol BS16 4RF
Telephone 0117 957 4297



• **Revd Regan Meares**
Curate
Telephone 07 769 704 270



• **Revd Sandy Cooper**
Associate Minister, 1 Deerhurst
Soundwell, Bristol BS15 1XH
Telephone 0117 967 2621



• **Peter Robbins**
Lay Minister, 13 Wood Road
Kingswood, Bristol BS15 8DT
Telephone 0117 967 9576



• **Gill Mayo**
Church Warden
Telephone
0117 956 9796

