

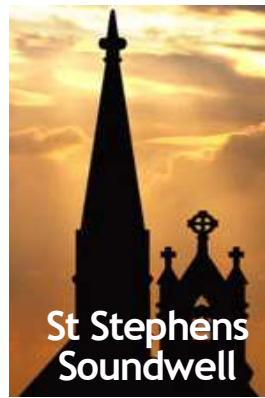
DATE 21 APRIL 2021



via Zoom!!

Why not join in with St Stephen's Afternoon Tea & Talk online? **Sundays at 4pm!!**

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77487137556?pwd=akFGSm12SHliZWFXMkZhcUttMaUxKUT09>
Meeting ID: 774 8713 7556 Passcode: Tea&Talk



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Hello again my sisters and brothers in Christ

Church has been open again for services since Easter Day – yay – and I have been delighted and blessed and overjoyed to see so many of you during the last few weeks returning to Church. We are continuing with social distancing and the wearing of masks whilst in Church, and although we are not permitted to sing yet, we are including songs & hymns to enhance our worship and praise of God together.

Booking places for track and trace purposes is still essential, so please call **07903 763 420** to do that to attend on Sunday or Wednesday at 10am. These services are identical and we have both so that as many people as want to can worship in Church each week. Dial-a-Sermon still continues, so please do phone in to listen to the current weeks' Sermon, or go to our website and click on the link to hear it that way. The Church website address is:

<https://www.saintstephensoundwell.org>



Dial-a-Sermon

To listen to this week's sermon from Rev Lisa Wigmore, Rev Sandy Cooper or Peter Robbins (L.M.), just call this number (cost is the same as a local call)

0117 456 2090

St Stephen's Church, Soundwell

Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting took place on Sunday 25th April, during the morning service – which is the only way we were permitted to hold it at this time. Thank you to all those that attended. If you would like to see a copy of the reports, then please go to the 'More' page on the website, to the 'Legal and Admin' in the drop-down menu. If you would prefer a physical copy, please be in touch with me and I will ensure you receive a copy.

With this letter you will also find a copy of Open Space and some things to use for the season of Thy Kingdom Come. These include:

- A Prayer Journal for the time from The Ascension (Thursday 13th May) to Pentecost (Sunday 23rd May). Please do use it as you wish, but perhaps make a note of the things that come to you in prayer on those days.
- A bookmark, which you might like to give to someone else, to let them know you are praying for them, and include a brief message or a line of Scripture on it. You may prefer to keep it yourself and write the names of 5 friends or family that you would love to come to know Jesus, as a reminder to pray for them during this season and beyond.
- A Digital Family Prayer Adventure Map. If you won't use this yourself, why not give it to a family you know who might?

'Thy Kingdom Come' is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus. Since its start in May 2016 God has grown Thy Kingdom Come from a dream of possibility into a movement. Christians from 172 countries have taken part in praying 'Come Holy Spirit', so that friends and family, neighbours and colleagues might come to faith in Jesus Christ.

During the 11 days of Thy Kingdom Come, it is hoped that everyone who takes part will:

- *Deepen their own relationship with Jesus Christ*
- *Pray for 5 friends or family to come to faith in Jesus*
- *Pray for the empowerment of the Spirit that we would be effective in our witness*

After the very first Ascension Day the disciples gathered with Mary, constantly devoting themselves to prayer while they waited for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Like them, our reliance on the gift of the Holy Spirit is total – on our own we can do nothing. Through the centuries Christians have gathered at that time to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. 'Thy Kingdom Come' picks up this tradition. Over the years more and more worshipping communities have dedicated the days between Ascension and Pentecost to pray 'Come Holy Spirit'.

We will be praying for the Spirit to inspire and equip us to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with our friends and families, our communities and networks. We begin **in Church on Ascension Day at 7.30pm** and continue in our own prayer and worship until Pentecost. May we all be praying that those who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and his love for the world will hear it for themselves, and respond and follow Him – specifically that God's Spirit might work in the lives of those 5 friends or family we know.

Whether you have joined in 'Thy Kingdom Come' before or not, you are invited to take part – along with churches from over 80 different denominations & traditions in nearly 90% of countries (172) around the world.

"In praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' we all commit to playing our part in the renewal of the nations and the transformation of communities." Archbishop Justin Welby.

In other news... please do look out for 2 people who will be joining us at St Stephen's in the near future. Cathie Watson is currently studying at Trinity College as an Ordinand, which means she is preparing to be Ordained. She will be with us for 4 weeks (5 Sundays) beginning on 6th June, to get a flavour of Parish life in Soundwell as part of her training. Her husband, Aidan, is the Curate in Christ Church, Downend, and with their toddler, Reuben, they live in the old Vicarage on Sweets Road. Please welcome Cathie when she arrives and hold her and her family in your prayers.

Secondly, I am delighted to finally be able to announce that Regan Meares will be joining us as a Curate following his Ordination as Deacon on Sunday 4th July. A Curate is placed in a training parish for two reasons:

1) There is a minister suitable to be a Training Incumbent and 2) The Parish itself is healthy and able to provide a variety and range of opportunities for the Curate. So, take heart that we are deemed suitable, as I am sure Regan (pronounced Ree-gan) will be a delight, a joy and a blessing to us all – may we be likewise to him! It is planned that Regan will be completing his 'on the job training' with us for a minimum of 3 or maximum of 4 years, when he will move on to wherever God is calling him next. We hope to find Regan suitable rental accommodation somewhere in our parish that he can make his home while he is with us. Please do pray for him as he completes assignments and his dissertation; that he may finish well at Trinity College and look forward to the next step along his pathway with us.

Lastly, although we are still awaiting Government and Church of England Guidance about what and how Churches might move forward with the roadmap out of lockdown, we are planning ahead with Hope in our hearts. This means welcoming in Church couples to be married, children and adults to be Baptised, and **Youth Church** on Sunday mornings. If you might like to support a **Baptism** family by attending their **Baptism** in Church, OR be part of supporting our families in **Youth Church** – please be in touch with me ASAP. Thank you!

Also, if there is anything in your heart or on your mind you would like to talk and pray through, or if you simply have a question about something, please feel free to contact me.

May God Bless you, and all those who you love and pray for, today and every day. And may this be constantly and continually true... We Follow Jesus!

Lisa x

Rev Lisa Wigmore, Priest in Charge

St Stephens Soundwell

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