

Open Space

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

KNOWING JESUS... MAKING JESUS KNOWN!

THE SPECIAL TIME of Easter

THIS YEAR we will celebrate Easter Day on the 20th of April.

LEADING up to Easter, we will have different services going on in our church during Holy week, including Maundy Thursday and Last Hour at the Cross on Good Friday. The events of Holy Week and Easter day have played a big part in my faith journey.

Before Holy Week begins, we celebrate Palm Sunday which is the time Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. As he did so, the crowds began to cheer and shout out, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

Though Jesus's entrance into Jerusalem looks cheerful and exciting, He is a few days away from being falsely accused and arrested.

Jesus understands the accomplishing of his mission is close at hand however this does not make it any easier.

I take inspiration from reading about Palm Sunday as it highlights the fact that following Jesus is no easy task. Knowing that his time to return to the Father was close, Jesus continues to push forward.

Just before his arrest, he shared the last supper with his disciples and then he went to the Garden of Gethsemane. Whilst at the Garden, Jesus became troubled within his spirit and even though he asked his disciples to stay awake and pray, they fell asleep.

Throughout our faith journeys, we often face situations in which we feel helpless and sometimes those around us may not be as supportive as we expect them to be.

During these times, we can take comfort in the fact that Jesus knows our feelings because he too faced situations which felt helpless, and he too felt abandoned and alone.

After Jesus is arrested, he is led away and throughout Holy Week we follow the last days of his mission. When I first started attending church, I struggled with the idea that God loved me.

People would tell me that I was loved by God, but I simply could not accept what they said. After a chat with one of the lay ministers, I went home and began to read about the death of Christ. I read about his arrest and all the things that took place around his crucifixion.

It was at this point that I believe my life changed. I began to realize just how much Jesus did for me. I realized that through Jesus's death on the cross I am forgiven for all my sin and set free from any guilt I felt because of past mistakes. Through reading my bible, I also began to realise that as Christians we have been granted eternal life through Jesus. Alongside this, God loves us with a love that is everlasting. After gaining the knowledge of all the amazing things that Jesus has done for each one of us, I made a decision to respond to the love of God whichever way I could. At this point in my faith journey, I was not yet confirmed so I used to go up to the altar to receive a blessing.

Each time, I went up to the altar, I would pray to God saying, 'I give my life to you, let your will be done.' I began to say 'Yes' to being on the reading rota and on the intercession rota.

Continued Overleaf >

APRIL
2025

Mission
Partners with
St Stephens:

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

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St Stephens
SOUNDWELL

The Special time of Easter

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In those days, public speaking completely terrified me, but I thought to myself, 'If Jesus could go through all that suffering for me because he loves me then surely, I can stand up and speak in front of a room full of people even though I might embarrass myself.'

This way of thinking has continued throughout my faith journey and in the many different aspects of ministry which I am involved in.

I continue to be motivated by the actions and love of Jesus and look for ways in which I can respond to this love.

=====

ONE OF my hobbies is to watch a film either at home or at the cinema. One of the main features that makes a film brilliant is the way in which it ends.

The Easter story doesn't end on

Good Friday after the death of Jesus, no, the best part of the story comes at the end. Amid a hopeless situation, Jesus rises triumphant over death. By doing so, Christians can begin to have hope that no matter what situation they may be facing, Jesus has overcome it.

The Easter story is one of inspiration and hope which has always encouraged me to respond to the love of God, but it also motivates me to spread the word of God's love which will bring hope to many people. My prayer this Easter is that we may all be encouraged and motivated by the love and sacrifice of Jesus.

May God grant us the bravery to step out of our comfort zones and open ourselves up to whatever it is that God wants us to do. Amen.

Regan

Welcome Space

TUESDAY 8th APRIL
9 to 11:30am

Conversation,
free snacks & refreshments

ALL ARE WELCOME!*

WE also look forward to seeing you again on 22nd April!

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

*** IN OUR CHURCH ROOM**

LIGHTING

SADLY, some of the lights in both Church and the Church Hall are beginning to fail us on a regular basis.

WE HAVE mended and made do for several years, but now is the time to upgrade.

There are distinct benefits in doing this:

- We have a dreadful Eco-footprint and using our existing lights is VERY expensive. So, upgrading our lights will not only make us more energy efficient and cost-effective to run, but will be much more environmentally friendly.

We are confident of securing a grant of £10,000 to meet the vast majority of that cost, but if you feel you can make a contribution towards the deficit we face, then please can I ask you NOT to put them in the offertory plate, but instead to give them to Lorraine, our Treasurer, letting her know it is to support the Lighting Project.

Upgrading work could start at any time, so we will work around bookings in the Church Hall and Church Room, plus of course any services taking place in Church.

Please do pray for us as a team, and those carrying out the upgrade work for us, so that all might go well. *Thank you and bless you.*

Lisa x

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE

PLEASE NOTE:

There will NOT be a meeting in April, due to Good Friday services. See you in MAY.

COFFEE/CHAT & COMPANY

WEDNESDAY
2nd APRIL
At 11am

at the **Turnpike Pub**
on **Soundwell Road**



*A time to be,
be known,
and be together*

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!

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

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

Hello Church Family!

I AM excited to share that I will be participating in a special trip that holds great significance for me.

As part of this journey, I am organising a fundraiser to help cover the costs involved. I will be doing a sponsored walk up PEN-Y-FAN in Wales on the 23rd April 2025.

I will be truly grateful for any support you can provide, whether through donations or spreading the word about this opportunity.

Your generosity will not only help make this trip possible but it will also allow me to grow spiritually. Thank you for considering sowing into this journey! Every contribution, no matter how small, makes a difference and is deeply appreciated.

There will be a Sponsorship Form at the back of church each week, so please do add your name to that if you are able to... and when I am not away working, I will be there to let you know about this myself.

So, a little bit about the trip: I will be going on 31st July, for a fortnight with a small group of people from different churches around Bristol. The purpose of our trip is to deepen local friendships between people and churches in Bristol and Uganda.

This is a taster visit to get to know and make friendships.

We will be staying in the homes of local Christians, sharing their lives for a few days and we will visit and spend time with young mothers who live in the slum in Katanga, Kampala, through the work of Hope for Life Katanga.

Then in the North of Uganda we will have the opportunity to worship with local congregations, visit health programmes, a refugee camp, and local development programmes.

We will also meet with local young people and lay ministers and to share alongside them in MISSION.

The most important learning for everyone comes from living alongside people in their homes which is where we will be staying for half of our time in the country.

In addition, we will have the opportunity to enjoy some of the variety of the geography and wildlife.

I believe that this is something I'm being called to do and I want to step out in faith and see where Jesus is leading me.

Love + Blessings **Lauren Joyce**

CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL

AS part of the preparation for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) the church Electoral Roll is either revised or a new one created.

THE Church Representation Rules require that every six years a completely new electoral roll be prepared for each parish, and for us at St Stephens, that needs to happen this year.

The preparation of a new roll is an opportunity to encourage those new to church life, or to the community, to join the roll, as a practical symbol of commitment to the church.

It is also the time for every person on the existing roll to make a fresh application to be entered on the new roll.

Most importantly, by being on the roll it means that you are able to take part in decisions which affect the church and parish, to take part in the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), and to stand for the Parochial Church Council (PCC).

This year the **APCM** is going to be included as part of the 10am Sunday Community Worship (as it was last year), on 18th May, by which time the new electoral roll needs to be completed.

Electoral roll application forms will be available in church from 16th March until 20th April. Verbal reminders about this will be given out as part of the notices on Sunday mornings during this time.

I will endeavour to hand out forms to everyone, but please feel free to request a form should I not approach you.

Also, if you have any questions about the electoral roll, then do come and speak to me!

Julia Merrifield –
Electoral Roll Officer

Readings & Collects

SUNDAY 06 APRIL 5th Sunday of Lent

Isaiah 43:16–21; Psalm 126
Philippians 3:4b–14; John 12:1–8
GRACIOUS FATHER, you gave up your Son out of love for the world: lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion, that we may know eternal peace through the shedding of our Saviour's blood, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



SUNDAY 13 APRIL Palm Sunday Luke 19:28–40

Psalm 118:1–2, 19–end
TRUE AND HUMBLE KING, hailed by the crowd as Messiah: grant us the faith to know you and love you, that we may be found beside you on the way of the cross, which is the path of glory. Amen.

SUNDAY 20 APRIL Easter Sunday Acts 10:34–43;

Psalm 118:1–2, 14–24 Luke 24:1–12
GOD OF GLORY, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

SUNDAY 27 APRIL (Service of the Word)

Acts 5:27–32; Psalm 118:14–end,
Revelation 1:4–8; John 20:19–end
RISEN CHRIST, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred: open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace, to the praise of God the Father. Amen.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS!

DO YOU have any questions?? Big ones, small ones, and the ones in-between??

IF so, then we would love to hear them!!!

A SUGGESTION BOX to collect your thoughts, ideas or questions, is in situ at the back of church for: **'Thoughts, Ideas or Questions'**.

Please write down anything you would like to share, and we will respond, either in Open Space, or to you personally, whichever you prefer.

You can make your request anonymously or leave your name and preferred contact details, the choice will be yours!

However, if you'd rather not write your thoughts down on paper, but prefer to email, then my email address is lisawigmore66@gmail.com or you can telephone me on 0117 957 4297.

During my sabbatical which spans March, April and May, please email [Regan R.meares_85@hotmail.com](mailto:Regan.R.meares_85@hotmail.com) or phone him on 07769 704270.

Thank you. **Lisa**

Parish Safeguarding Officers

PETER Robbins is stepping down from his role of Parish Safeguarding Officer, having given long service, but also to take a sabbatical starting in June, so we are looking for two volunteers to takeover this essential Safeguarding work.

One of the positions is for a **Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)** and the second role is for an **Assistant Safeguarding Officer (APSO)**.

Between them they involve dealing with administrative and other tasks associated with making sure we are doing the very best we can to look after each other, especially children and vulnerable adults in our community.

There is some computer and paper work involved for which full training is available.

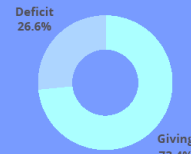
The roles will start as soon as possible and Peter will be around to help during the transition period.

For further information and Role Descriptions please contact Peter.

Our Church Financial Health



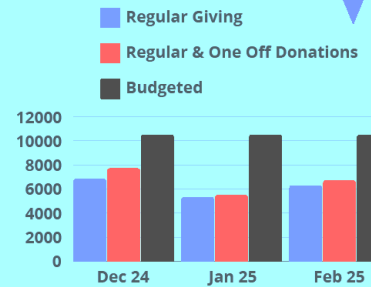
GIVING FOR FEBRUARY



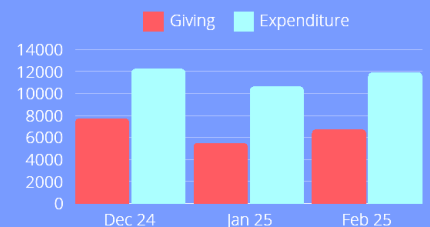
WHAT OUR GIVING NEEDS TO BE **£10,500**

GIVING RECEIVED **£6698**

Giving Last 3 Months



Giving v Church Expenses Last 3 Months



LENT COURSE 2025

Saturdays at 10am

Just 5th & 12th APRIL sessions remaining

Features a study of **Les Misérables**

If possible, please add your name in advance to the sign-up sheet at the back of church to express your interest in attending but otherwise turn up anyway!

OUR LENT COURSE this year has featured the popular 2012 film of **LES MISÉRABLES**, based on Victor Hugo's epic 1862 novel set in 19th-century France during the period of the French Revolution.

Through discussion and bible study, we have been exploring the Grace of God alongside our fallen state and opportunities for redemption, very fitting topics for Lent!

Optional refreshments are available from 9.30 and sessions run from 10 – 11.30am.

You do not have to come to every session to benefit from this course!

The study time includes a mix of materials, such as video clips, Bible study, and discussions centred around the main and sub-set of themes.

There is not a lot of paperwork involved and the emphasis is on our discussions together as part of the family at St Stephens.

The last two session topics are:

- SESSION 4: APRIL 5th **Javert: How we respond to God's abundant Grace**

- SESSION 5: APRIL 12th **Redemption & Salvation: turning away from darkness as we experience Grace. The true meaning of forgiveness and of Easter.**

DO contact Peter if you have any questions, either by telephone: **0117 967 9576** or email: peter-robbins@outlook.com

Lisa's Sabbatical

LISA is away on Ministerial Development Leave (EMDL), or as is more commonly known: a '**Sabbatical**'.

IT finishes in May and while on the Sabbatical, Lisa intends to:

- Attend a guided retreat at the St Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre in North Wales;
- Visit other churches and gather ideas and whilst there, explore different expressions of Spirituality;
- Read various books on Spirituality;
- and have some rest!

It is a time and space to reflect, and seek God's guidance on where we are as a parish, and how and in what ways He is nudging us to move forward here in Soundwell.

While Lisa is away, the day to day business of leading St Stephens passes to Regan, which will provide him an opportunity to gain experience in his time of training.

He will have specific support from the Diocese during this time, as well as a nearby Vicar mentor, and of course the support of our wonderful Ministry Team and all of you!

Please do include Lisa, and Regan, in your prayers during this period!

VOLUNTEER(S) WANTED!

St Stephens have supported the Sisters of the Church for many years and in the church porch there is a large wooden box for donations of food and other items for them.

I am no longer able to take the donations to the Sisters, because of a change of their opening times: Monday to Wednesday, 10am – 12 noon, and so therefore I am asking for volunteers who would be able to check the box every 3 to 4 months and take the contents to the Sisters, in Ashley Road, St Paul's.

If you think you would be able to help with this, please let myself or Lisa know. *Thank you!* **Julie Fudge**

HOLY WEEK

AN **EASTER TRAIL** will be in the church grounds from Saturday 12th April onwards for you to explore the *Easter Story* at a time that suits you and your families.

- **Palm Sunday: 13th April**

We will be having a four-legged visitor to church that day, to recall Jesus' last journey into Jerusalem.

- **Maundy Thursday: 17th April**

7.30pm: Holy Communion with Feet Washing (optional).

- **Good Friday: 18th April**

11am: If you'd like company to walk the **Easter Trail** then other folk will be around to join in with you. There might even be a hot-cross bun or two on offer to sustain you!

1pm: Quiet Reflection – personal space in church for you to sit with God. Quiet music will be playing.

2pm: The Last Hour at the Cross – a service of scripture, reflection, prayer and song.

- **Easter Day: 20th April**

10am: a **Service of Celebration** for All Ages with Holy Communion and a Baptism (and chocolate!). *If you would like to, please bring a flower or two to help decorate the large wooden cross.*

We look forward to welcoming you to St Stephens to share the Easter Story.

ST STEPHENS CHURCH
SPRING CLEAN!
SATURDAY 26 APRIL
FROM
9.30AM to 12.30PM
COME and join in with cleaning our Church together and enjoy some fun and some laughter as we do...



Please bring any tools or items that you think might help you to do this, such as a mop, broom, brushes, cloths etc, and your marigolds as necessary!
Thank you!

Youth Church

YOUTH CHURCH is church for our younger members of congregation, and it takes place in our Church Room during our 10am Service on Sunday mornings.

We cover a variety of topics, and we also do crafts and watch videos about bible stories. During one of our recent Youth Church sessions, we covered the topic of 'The Transfiguration of Jesus.' Below is a letter written by Benjy Cooper, one of our Youth Church members. He was inspired by the letters of Paul and decided to write to the people of St Stephens Church Soundwell in the style of Paul.

Dear St Stephens:

I am Benjy a follower of Christ and a growing Christian.

To the church of St Stephen:

Jesus has done amazing things and still continues to do amazing things. Jesus is God and he showed this through the transfiguration on the mountain when he was with Peter, James and John.

During the transfiguration, God said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!' Before God spoke these words, Jesus was seen talking to the prophets, Moses and Elijah.

People of St Stephens, we must continue to listen to the words of Jesus today. **Benjy Cooper.**

APRIL CYCLE OF PRAYER BEGINNING SUNDAY OF EACH WEEK

06 Tynings Primary Schools	See & Know Children: <i>Summer May, Caleb O'Hare Adeiyin and Adeara Odutola</i>	Tyndale Road Verde Close Wesley Close
13 St Mary Redcliffe School	See & Know Children: <i>Kester Rowland, Sophie and Lily Tarbuck Teddy Williams</i>	Wesley Hill Whitfield Close Willis Road
20 Temple School	Church Members: Margaret Archer Cheryl Ashwin; Levi, Sophie, Shiloh & Aziah Carly; Savannah & Sienna Baldwin	Wiltshire Place Witcombe Close Woodchester
27 Kings Oak Academy	Emily Baldwin & Jason & Billy Amos Hannah, Simon, Harrison & Oscar Bartlett Derek and Gwen Beek	Woodland Avenue Woodland Way Yew Tree Drive

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**

APRIL DIARY

01 Tuesday	1.30pm	Knit & Natter Church Room (then weekly)
02 Wednesday	11am	Coffee/Chat/Company at Turnpike Pub
03 Thursday	10am 2pm	See & Know in Church Hall (weekly in term time) Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)
04 Friday	7pm	OUTBURST Youth Club in Church Hall
05 Saturday	9am	LENT COURSE Week 4
08 Tuesday	9-11.30am	WELCOME SPACE in Church Room
09 Wednesday	2pm	BIBLE CHAT in Church Room
10 Thursday	1.30-3.30pm	Men's Group in Church Room
11 Friday	2pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall
12 Saturday	9am 9am	LENT COURSE week 5 Easter Trail Week begins in Church Grounds

HOLY WEEK BEGINS

13 Sunday	10am	PALM SUNDAY All Age special service
14 Monday	10.15am	Retreat Memory Café in Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers
17 Thursday	2pm 7.30pm	Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly) MAUNDY THURSDAY Service in Church

18 GOOD FRIDAY

11am	Hot Cross Buns & chat Church Room & outside
1pm	Quiet Hour reflection in Church
2pm	Last Hour at the Cross in Church

20 EASTER SUNDAY

	10am	ALL AGE Special Easter Service + Baptism in Church
22 Tuesday	9-11.30am	WELCOME SPACE in Church Room
23 Wednesday	2pm	BIBLE CHAT in Church Room
24 Thursday	1.30-3.30pm	Men's Group in Church Room
25 Friday	2pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall
26 Saturday	9.30am	CHURCH SPRING CLEAN! Everywhere
27 Sunday	10am	SERVICE OF THE WORD in Church
28 Monday	10.15am	Retreat Memory Café in Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers
30 Wednesday	7pm	DISCIPLESHIP COURSE in Church Room

MAY DIARY

01 Thursday	10am	See & Know in Church Hall (weekly in term time)
02 Friday	7pm	OUTBURST Youth Club in Church Hall

FROM THE REGISTERS

SINCE FEBRUARY

Funerals:

- **MARCH 7:** Edna Daniels (95). A service of thanksgiving for the life of Edna Daniels was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.
Please hold Julie, Hannah, Chris and Luke, as well as Edna's wider family and friends in your prayers.

Weddings:

- **MARCH 29:** The wedding of Amber Smith and Matthew White took place at St Stephens Church Soundwell.
Please hold Amber and Matthew in your prayers as they begin their married life together.

Dial-a-SERMON

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

www.saintstephensoundwell.org

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL



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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

● **Lin Cooper** Director of Music
Telephone 0117 967 2621

● **Lorraine Sanderson** Treasurer
Telephone 0117 940 1829