

Open Space

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

APRIL 2023

HOPE and CHOICE

SOMETIME in March (not, I hasten to add, on the first of April), I came across an Ikea ad for a 'Self Assembly **Chocolate Bunny**'.

I've sadly yet to track down one, but it's not yet Easter and so I still remain hopeful that I can!!



UNLIKE most of Ikea's offerings, this one won't leave you swearing at a large booklet of instructions whilst desperately searching for the right length screw – you just have to slot the 3 pieces of chocolate together and there you have it.

The idea of '**building your own Easter**' struck me as quite apt.

I recently told a clergy friend to stop panicking about Easter because it would still happen with or without her and of course it will; with or without any of us.

What we remember at Easter is something that took place over two thousand years ago and the day in the calendar that we have decided to use to mark that event is just that, a day in the calendar.

It arrives, and we mutter about Easter being either late or early, never just on time for some reason, and then, after a blissfully long weekend off it's over for another year.

Even those of us for whom it has great meaning will admit that memories of past Holy Weeks and Easter Sundays can blur into each other.

But that is just the day.

Easter really only happens for any of us when we make it so, when we build it for ourselves, when we accept that it requires us to do something too.

God's gift in Jesus requires nothing from us, it's completely free but it isn't something that's forced on us either.

I believe God knows and loves every one of us just as we are and holds out all we need to get to know him too but we have to accept the gift and say yes.

A relationship with anyone requires both people to be involved; for each to play a part.

So, whether you're reading this before or after the Easter weekend, I hope that you will choose to explore the story and join in with all that it offers not just on the big day but on any and every day.

With love and prayers.

LISA x

PS: Please do bring flowers to church on Easter Sunday to add to and to decorate the Easter Cross as we usually do. The cross will be located outside of the Church before the 10am Service and then once decorated will be brought into church for everyone to see.

Open Space

APRIL 2023



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
Fair Trade
One25 Project
The Bristol Noise

St Stephens

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CHARITY NUMBER
1131503



St Stephens
SOUNDWELL

Readings & Collects

FOR APRIL 2023

SUNDAY 02 APRIL

Palm Sunday

Psalm 118:19–24; Matthew 21:1–11

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 09 APRIL

EASTER

Acts 10:34–43; Psalm 118:1–2, 14–24

Colossians 3:1–4; Matthew 28:1–10

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 16 APRIL

Easter 2: Service of the Word

Acts 2:14a, 22–32; Psalm 16

1 Peter 1:3–9; 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.

SUNDAY 23 APRIL

Easter 3

Acts 2:14a, 36–41;

Psalm 116:1–3, 10–end

1 Peter 1:17–23 Luke 24:13–35

RISEN CHRIST, you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope: strengthen us to proclaim your risen life and fill us with your peace, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

SUNDAY 30 APRIL

Easter 4

Acts 2:42–end; Psalm 23

1 Peter 2:19–end; John 10:1–10

RISEN CHRIST faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep: teach us to hear your voice and to follow your command, that all your people may be gathered into one flock, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Remember Holy Week

I KNOW that as I write this, it isn't going to be quite Easter when you read Open Space, but let me say it anyway...

Happy Easter! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

BUT before we have Easter, we have to have Holy Saturday, Good Friday, Maundy Thursday, and we have to have Palm Sunday. Without those preceding days, there is no Easter Sunday.

Without the procession of arriving in Jerusalem, the last supper, the arrest, the mocking, the beating, the Cross, the tomb... there is no resurrection.

So, we have to go through Holy Week to get to Easter Sunday.

This Easter time, don't jump from Palm Sunday (2nd April) with our celebration of Jesus arrival in Jerusalem on a donkey, straight to Easter Sunday (9th April), with our celebration of his resurrection... remember also Holy Week (the week inbetween). **Ponder, pray and reflect.**

Perhaps you may wish to come to meander through the **Experience Easter Trail**, which will be in the grounds of the church throughout Holy Week.

Why not be part of the 'foot washing' as we remember and relive some of the events of the Last Supper – in Church, 7.30pm on Maundy Thursday (6th April).

Although many places sell them all year round, hot cross buns are traditionally eaten on Good Friday (7th April). The cross on the top is a reminder of the cross on which Jesus died, and the spices are a reminder of the spices used in his burial.

In Church, we will be remembering this most Holy of days, with '**Quiet reflection**' in church from 1–2pm.

Then a service of prayer, scripture, space and song, as we remember **The Last Hour** of our Lord's life, given for us upon a cross of wood.

While you are in church on Good Friday, why not look around the church building and see how many crosses you can find.

Or you might wish to add one you have made to be part of the Easter Trail. Even if you're not in church,

learn to spot crosses everywhere: window frames, aeroplane trails... there will be crosses everywhere! Many people wear a cross as jewellery (I have them in my ears and round my neck), some people carry a small cross in their pocket or bag.

At a Christening, the priest will draw the sign of the cross on the child's forehead – the cross is a sign of belonging to God, and of the love that God has for us.

One of the most famous bible verses says, '*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son*' (JOHN 3:16). New parents probably understand this sort of love better than anyone: the love that means you would do anything and everything for the sake of your child.

We can pray 'Our Father', because God loves us like that – Jesus' death on the cross was God being willing to do anything and everything for our sake, because he loves us.

Another way to mark Good Friday might be to make an Easter Garden. There will be one in our Experience Easter Trail, but why not make one for yourself? This can be anything from a simple plant pot 'garden' to something much more ambitious. Usually an Easter garden includes a hill with three crosses on it, and a cave/tomb (often a smaller plant pot laid on its side) with a stone against it. Some gardens also add a path made of gravel, and spring flowers such as primroses.

You can even make an Easter garden picture instead if you don't have the materials to make a 3D one from natural objects.

When you make the garden, put the stone in front of the cave. On Easter Sunday, roll the stone to one side (or peel it off if you made a picture) to help tell the Easter story.

*So, this Easter time, don't jump from Palm Sunday, straight to Easter Sunday... **ponder, pray and reflect.***

And in doing so, let us remember what Jesus did for us on the cross.

And let us know in our hearts and minds that while we have to go through the pain of Holy Week, Easter Sunday will always follow!

God Bless Lisa x

Youth Church Giving Event

THE members and leaders of our fabulous Youth Church have been thinking about 'generosity' and 'giving' over the first part of this year.

This has led them to think about ways to be kind to one another, about the need to share what we have, and to think about how we can support people who are struggling in all sorts of ways. From this came the idea to have a fun time making cakes, serving them in the café after church, all to work together and to raise some money to 'give' to a charity of their choice. Much thought went into the right charity for this group and they all decided upon Young Carers.

Young Carers – Bristol & South Glos is a charity that supports children and young people, aged 8–18, who provide substantial care for someone in their family who has a disability, a long-term illness, or is affected by mental ill health or substance misuse.

They are often the 'hidden' carers and can themselves suffer from bullying, isolation and tiredness, as well as a whole host of other issues, because of all they do for others. Many people don't know of this charity and all the great work they do to support the 'Young Carers', so why not mention it to your friends, drop it into your conversations to raise awareness of and for them.



I don't know about you, but I benefited from some really tasty cake on the day, a cup of tea served with a smile and polite and caring young people who helped clear everything away. 'The leaders of Youth Church did a fabulous job to make this happen. *So, thank you to all of you.*

Special thanks too, to Lauren, who spoke from her heart and of her own experience of being a young carer for her Mum.

Thank you to her Mum, Sarah, for liaising with the 'Young Carers' charity for us and ensuring they received all your donations.

Sarah said, 'It was so lovely doing the cake sale today for young carers. Lauren and I had a wonderful time and it looks like everyone else did too! *And I think we all did!!*

Thank you also to YOU, for giving as generously as you did.

Together we raised £321.31

Thank you!



Youth Church is a great and fun place to be on Sundays, if you'd like to join the team as a 'helper' please do ask Peter, Teresa, Katy, Regan or myself about it!

Every blessing. Lisa x xx





SCRIPTURE teaches us that God loves us with a never-ending love and nothing can ever separate us from the love of God.

It is important for us to outwardly show this love in caring and walking beside people.

Bristol Noise is an opportunity to take part in an event which enables us to display the love of God. In the past we have painted things, done gardening, cleared 'fly-tipping', and enabled free community events to take place—all to serve others and to spread the love of God.

So if this is for you, then please keep **Saturday 29th April** free.

Registering for this event began on the **5th of March** and I am planning to register us as a group so that we can all be together as a team. In order for me to do this, I would need details from each person so please do contact me or have a chat if you are interested.

There will also be a signing up sheet at the back of church in the upcoming weeks.

Telephone me 07 769 704 270 or email: r.meares_85@hotmail.com

Rev **Regan Meares** Curate

Join us for some
**COFFEE/
 CHAT &
 COMPANY**
 Every first Wednesday
 of the month at 11AM
 in the Turnpike
 on Soundwell Road.
 A time to be, be known,
 and be together!

TUESDAYS

9AM~12NOON

**Warm
 AND
 Welcome
 SPACE!**

WHILE the daytime temperatures are low, and until **4th April** any and everyone* who wants a **warm space** to get out of the cold, have a hot drink and some friendly chat will be welcome to meet in the Church Room, Tuesday mornings.

We look forward to seeing you! Free Wi-Fi is available during your time with us.

*** PLEASE NOTE THAT UNDER 17s MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT IN ORDER TO ATTEND.**

**PLANT
 SALE
 20 MAY 2023**



COUNTDOWN to the Plant Sale at **10.30am** on **Saturday 20th May**.

Now is a good time to plant some seeds indoors, just keep them warm, damp and covered in polythene or cling film until they start to show.

Or perhaps think about taking cuttings from your house plants and hopefully they will all be ready for the sale.

I would also be grateful for items for prizes for the raffle: perhaps you have an unwanted Christmas gift or two?

Thank you! **Gill Mayo**

FLOWER ARRANGING at St Stephens

A **SMALL** group of ladies arrange the flowers weekly for our church and we would like to invite some more recruits to assist in our cause!

We meet up on Friday mornings at 9.30am for about 2 hours, in a rota of 3 persons per week, thus taking it in turns.

If you would like to join us then please contact Ruth, Jan Brookshaw or Joyce for more details!

The flowers on the altar and at the lectern are generously paid for by donations, and are often in memory of a loved one or special occasion.



There are some dates available for lectern flowers, so please speak to the flower team if you would like to have your name added to the list.

Thank you!

Ways of Giving to God, through Church

BEING 'Thankful and Grateful' to God for all that He has freely given to us, both in provision for all our needs AND in Jesus, means that we, like Him, become a Generous people.

WE are called to make Christ known and loved. To do that, costs money. Some costs are obvious, like heat and light in Church and maintenance of the building. Other costs include paying our 'Parish Share', which allows for clergy to be recruited, and training and resources needed to keep Church fresh, relevant – and growing.

Our building was paid for by our forebears many years ago. It is only here today, because it has been carefully maintained by generations of faithful Christians here in Soundwell. Without our Generosity, the Church collapses, and with it, all the amazing work we do in the Lord's name here, and further afield.

There are many ways to Give to God through Church. You can put money in weekly collection plates, or use the QR code displayed on the stands to give via smart phone, or use the donations machine near the Font to give via bank or credit card or from your phone.

To enable us to budget and forecast we can pay our bills, we highly commend the first of these 2 options:

1. Use the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), which is a regular direct debit from your bank each month which enables you to review annually and also avoids scrabbling for weekly cash or needing to remember!

2. Request Special Collection Envelopes, so you can enclose your donation every week and just take them all to Church when you can.

For more details regarding the above, please contact Lorraine Sanderson on 0117 940 1829 or Lin Cooper on 0117 967 2621.

Please think about giving to God by regularly giving financially to your Church. When we give the first and the best to God, He honours that with abundant blessings.

It is true in every aspect of our life, as well as with our finances.

He honours our giving by ensuring we end up having more than we believe possible.

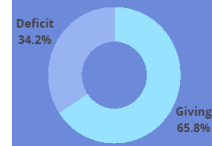
We are a charity that needs your support in many ways, your financial gifts are just one of those ways.

Thank you and bless you! Lisa x

Our Church Financial Health



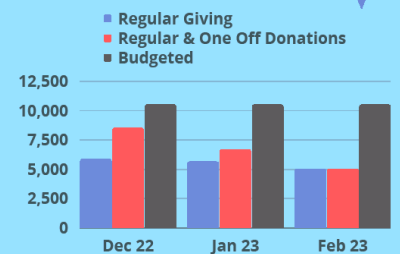
GIVING FOR FEBRUARY



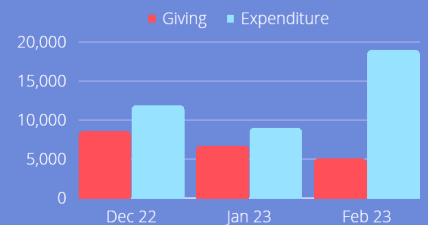
WHAT OUR GIVING NEEDS TO BE £10,500

GIVING RECEIVED £5032

Giving Last 3 Months



Giving v Church Expenses Last 3 Months



Everyday Faith. Together

Everyday Faith.Together is an opportunity to celebrate the faith of Christians living Sunday to Saturday. There will be workshops on a variety of topics followed by a service celebrating our calling.

Upcoming Services

Christ Church, Swindon

2.30pm - 5.00pm

Workshops (2.30pm - 3.30pm):

- Making a Difference Where You Are
- The Bible in 60 Minutes
- Skills for Making Peace

Followed by coffee & discussions, then the celebration service at 4:00pm.

Book here



April 23rd

Redland Parish Church

3:00pm - 5:30pm

Workshops (3:00pm - 4:00pm):

- Sharing Your Faith Without Losing Your Friends
- The Bible in 60 Minutes
- Skills for Making Peace

Followed by coffee & discussions, then the celebration service at 4:30pm.

Book here



May 21st

◀ TWO services have been planned with the aim of recognising, affirming and equipping lay people and those who support them in living out their faith 'every day,' because, often it is helpful for people to come together in larger groups and celebrate with the wider community of Christians.

Each service will be preceded by three workshops to support everyday faith (which need to be booked, although the service does not need booking).

It is hoped that this will be an encouraging time together which will support individual Christians and also affirm the work of the church.

The archdeacons will be preaching and there will be a commissioning of people for their 'every day' roles.

Scan the QR code shown at left to book a place or if this is not possible then please ask Lisa Wigmore for the links to book a place via Eventbrite.

APRIL CYCLE OF PRAYER BEGINNING SUNDAY OF EACH WEEK

02	St Mary Redcliffe & Temple School	Tony Weare, Pauline Webb Lisa, Paul & Tom Wigmore Joan Williams, Raphael Wilson	Frys Hill Gilpin Close Gladstone Court
09	Kings Oak Academy	Mary Winrow, Keith Winter Susan Woodey, Gladys Woolford Aaliah & Ava Zane	Gladstone Drive Gladstone Street Gloucester Road
16	John Cabot Academy	See & Know children: Billy Amos, Henry Ball, Ruby Bray Grace Bullock, Joshua & Oliver Crane	Gorse Hill Hayward Road Highview Road
23	Downend School	Harry Flannery Ashton Fowler, Ellis Gervais Jude Gervais, Beatrix Greene	Hilltop Gardens Hilltop Road Hill View
30	Mangotsfield School	Arabella Harris, Max Harris Sapphire Hawkes, Austin Hawkins Charlie James, Patrick McNally	Howard Road Irving Close James Close

SUNDAY Community Worship Service at 10am.
Sunday 8am BCP Holy Communion on 1st and 3rd Sundays.
WEDNESDAY Service of Holy Communion at 10am.

APRIL DIARY

01	Saturday to 10 April	9-5pm	Experience Easter TRAIL in the Church Grounds
02	Sunday	10am	Special PALM SUNDAY Service in Church
03	Monday	10am	Funeral of Peggy Hill RIP in Church. All welcome
04	Tuesday	9am-12 noon 1.30-3.30pm	WARM SPACE in Church Room. Final meeting. Knit & Natter weekly in the Church Room
05	Wednesday	11am 7.30pm*	Coffee/Chat/Company Turnpike Pub LENT Course concludes in Church
06	Thursday(s)	2-4pm 7.30pm	Ladies Group in Church Hall then fortnightly Maudy Thursday Service in Church
07	Good Friday	11.30am-12.30 1pm 2pm	FREE Hot Cross Bun & a drink Church Room Quiet Reflection in Church LAST HOUR at the Cross Service in Church
09	Sunday	10am	EASTER SUNDAY: All Ages together Service with Holy Communion in Church
13	Thursday(s)	2-4pm	Men's Group in Church Room then fortnightly
14	Friday	2-4pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall
16	Sunday	10am	Service of the Word
20	Thursday	10-11.45am	See & Know resumes after Easter break
21	Friday	6.30pm	FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE in Church
29	Saturday	As assigned	The Noise: Showing God's love in practical ways

* Optional 7pm Refreshments in the Church Room

APCM: Sunday 14 May 11.45AM

IT WOULD be great to see you at our Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in May, which takes place following on after the end of the usual 10am Service.

AS we do every year, at the meeting we will receive nominations for:

- A) Two Church Wardens** for the year ahead.
- B) Parochial Church Council (PCC)** members for a 3-year term: *this year we have space for three.*
- C) Deanery Synod Representatives** (3 year term) *we hope to elect three.*

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

If you would like to know more details about any of these positions, then please do be in touch and discuss without any obligation.

If you would like to volunteer for any of these positions, please ask me for an application form by phone, email or in person.

The written APCM report will be available as a hard copy about a week or two before the meeting.

For those attending the APCM there will be an agenda available on the day.

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

FROM THE REGISTERS

SINCE FEBRUARY 2023

Baptism:

• FEBRUARY 26: Vienna Rose Westlake. Please hold Vienna's Mum and Dad, Molly and Mike, sisters, Florence and Matilda, her Godparents, Claire, Daniel, Jay, Sophie and Kobi, and all their family and friends in your prayers.

Wedding:

• MARCH 4th: Becky Vicker and Joe Wilson were married at St Stephen's Church.

Please hold them and all those who love and support them in your prayers.



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
<http://saintstephensoundwell.org>

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL



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Telephone 0117 957 4297



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



• **Revd Regan Meares**
Curate
Telephone 07769 704270



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



• **Gill Mayo**
Church Warden
Telephone
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