

Open Space

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

FEBRUARY 2024

The Great Love of God

VALENTINE'S DAY takes place on Wednesday the 14th of February. God is the creator of all things, so he is the one responsible for the emotional love that we feel in any relationship.

THE love of God, however, goes so much deeper than the emotional love that we think of on Valentine's Day.

I would therefore like to share my thoughts on *The Great Love Of God*, after all 'God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.'

To understand and to know the way in which God loves us has been a blessing to me and this knowledge has sustained me through the toughest times of ministry and life. I will focus on the love of God under three different headings.

These three headings are:

- **God's Love as a Foundation,**
- **God's Commandment of Love**
- **God's Everlasting Love.**

Each heading will be attached to a scripture which will give us insight into God's love. Looking at God's love from these three perspectives will help us to see the gift of God's love to us, and will also help us to understand the responsibility that we have been given to share this love with those around us.

God's Love as a Foundation

JOHN 3:16-17

'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever

believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.'

This scripture speaks to us about the way in which God showed his love to us by sending his Son down to earth.

These words also explain Jesus' purpose, he came so that we may not perish but have eternal life and he came to earth so that we may be saved from all sin and guilt. Perhaps the greatest thing we can take from this passage from John is the fact that Jesus came to earth to die for us.

The death of Christ is the ultimate display of how deep God loves each one of us. Early into ministry, as I began to read my bible, and as I began to understand what Jesus went through on the cross, I realised the true depth of God's love.

This love became my foundation and the driving force in everything I did afterwards.

I believe that once we make the love of God our foundation then all our actions will flow out of his love for us.

God's Commandment of Love

MATTHEW 22:37-40

'Jesus replied, *'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'*

This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it:

'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.'

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Open Space

FEBRUARY 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

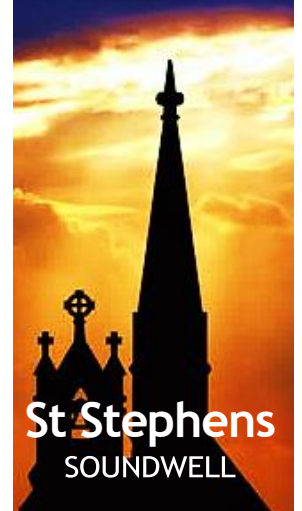
visionatststephens@gmail.com

www.saintstephen
soundwell.org

f saintstephen
soundwell

@SoundwellChurch

CHARITY NUMBER
1131503



St Stephens
SOUNDWELL

Readings & Collects

FOR FEBRUARY 2024

FOR THOSE OF US who are not able to attend services or who wish to use the Sunday readings and Collect Prayer to worship at home, here they are:

SUNDAY 04 FEBRUARY 2nd Sunday before Lent

Proverbs 8:1, 22–31;
Psalms 104:26–end
Colossians 1:15–20; John 1:1–14

ALMIGHTY GOD, give us reverence for all creation and respect for every person, that we may mirror your likeness in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 11 FEBRUARY Sunday before Lent

2 Kings 2:1–12; Psalm 50:1–6
2 Corinthians 4:3–6; Mark 9:2–9

HOLY GOD, you know the disorder of our sinful lives: set straight our crooked hearts, and bend our wills to love your goodness and your glory in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 18 FEBRUARY 1st Sunday of Lent

Genesis 9:8–17; Psalm 25:1–9
1 Peter 3:18–end; Mark 1:9–15

HEAVENLY FATHER, your Son battled with the powers of darkness, and grew closer to you in the desert: help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer that we may witness to your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2nd Sunday of Lent

Genesis 17:1–7, 15–16;
Psalms 22:23–end
Romans 4:13–end; Mark 8:31–end

ALMIGHTY GOD, by the prayer and discipline of Lent may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings, and by following in his Way come to share in his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Great Love of God

< Continued from Page 1

Under this second heading, we see Jesus talking about the greatest commandment and the one which follows it, both of them are about love.

Jesus does this to highlight how important it is to carry love in our hearts firstly for God and then for those around us.

Once we realise the great love that God has for us and make it our foundation, we are then given the challenges of firstly loving God with all that we are and then sharing God's love with those around us.

When I read these words of Jesus, I recognise that I have struggled and continue to struggle with both commandments.

Indeed, I say that I love God but, at certain points in my life, my actions have not corresponded with my words.

Often, I have done things which I know are not the right things to do.

When it comes to loving those around me, I struggle with this too.

I find it easy to love people when everything is going well but when things happen which cause hurt then I struggle to love.

Even though we may face these struggles when it comes to love, I think it is our duty as Christians to continue to strive to walk in the ways of God and to love those around us as best as we can.

Alongside this, we can pray to God asking him to help us especially when it is difficult to love.

God's Everlasting Love ROMANS 8:37~39

'No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

These verses under the heading **The Everlasting Love of God** are some of the best verses that have stuck with me throughout my faith journey.

In this passage, the words of Paul speak of the true depth in which God loves us. Paul shows us that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God which is found in Christ Jesus our Lord.

To follow God has been the greatest thing that I have ever done in my life but at the same time, it has been the most difficult thing that I have done. I struggled when I was at theological college, I felt like giving up on ministry often and I continue to struggle with stepping out of my comfort zones. Through all these challenges, this scripture has stuck in my mind.

At my lowest points when I felt like giving up, and when I felt like I could not carry on, these words would always come to mind.

It is an amazing source of strength and joy to know that whatever we may face, nothing in the world or beyond can ever separate us from God's love for us.

THEREFORE, on Valentine's Day as we think about that emotional love that we have for those who are close to us, or as we think of the love that we receive from family and friends, may we be reminded of the deeper love that God has for each one of us.

This love of God is not the type of love that we should celebrate once a year, but is the type of love that we should celebrate daily.

Knowing that we are deeply loved and having the foundation of God's love in our lives is the key to the growth of the Kingdom of Heaven. No matter what we face in life and no matter what is ahead of us, may we always remember the scripture from Romans chapter 8 verse 31, which states, **'If God is for us, who can be against us?'**

Regan

Ways of giving to God

THROUGH HIS 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, can become **Generous** people.

Generous with our time; **Generous** with our love; **Generous** in our speaking; **Generous** in our thinking; **Generous** in our ways; **Generous** in sharing what we have.

In other words, we *become Generous*, just as God is Generous with us. Our gratitude to God overflows into Generosity.

Your Church, which is not just me or the ministry team, but all of us as the Body of Christ in this place, are called to make Christ known and loved.

To do that, here in Soundwell, in all the places we spend time, and also in reaching out to support others in need wherever that might be... that work does cost money. Some of the costs are obvious to see, like heat and light in Church and the maintenance of the buildings. Other costs like paying our 'Parish Share', means clergy are recruited, trained and provided to parishes, along with essential on-going training and resources that our Church needs to keep itself fresh, relevant – and growing.

This building was paid for by our forebears many years ago.

It is only still 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 the Holy Spirit enables us to do in the Lord's name here, and further afield.

There are many ways to Give to God through your Church.

You can put money into the **collection plates** in Church or use the **QR code** displayed on the stands to give using a smart phone, or use the donations **paypoint**

machine near the Font to give from a bank card or credit card or from your phone.

But, to enable us as a church to be able to budget and be secure in the knowledge we can pay our bills, we highly commend the first of the following two options:

Parish Giving Scheme (PGS)



THIS is a direct debit scheme from your bank account each month which enables you to give regularly and review annually and also means no scrabbling for cash or needing to remember!

The majority of us choose to give in this way, as it helps us as individuals and it is a huge help to your church – less time spent counting, having to carry less cash is safer for our treasurer, and also the church receives the 'gift aid' income monthly.

PGS also prompts us to review our giving each year, which many of us welcome as otherwise we might forget.

In this way, we can think this through with God in prayer each year – about our response to God's goodness through his church – and it's a joy in thinking all things through with God in prayer at any time!

Collection Envelopes

YOU can enclose your donation every week and just take them all to Church when you can. It's also important to review what you give.

But there is no reminder with envelopes, so you have to manage that yourself – so why not do this annually when you receive your new set of envelopes?

FOR more details regarding the above, please contact:

Lorraine Sanderson 0117 940 1829 or
Lin Cooper 0117 967 2621.

WHEN we give the first and the best to God, He honours that with abundant blessings. It is true in every aspect of our lives, as well as with our finances.

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

Please think about giving to God by regularly giving financially to your Church.

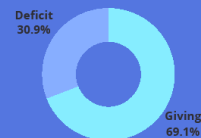
We are a charity that needs your support in many ways, your financial gifts are just one of those ways.

Thank you and bless you.

Lisa x

OUR CHURCH FINANCE UPDATE

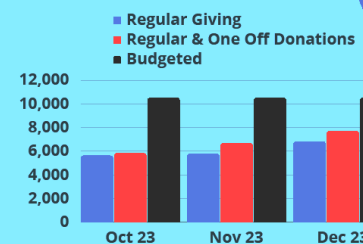
GIVING FOR DECEMBER



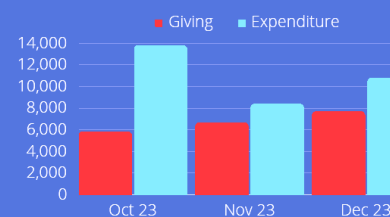
WHAT OUR GIVING NEEDS TO BE £10,500

GIVING RECEIVED £7675

Giving Last 3 Months



Giving v Church Expenses Last 3 Months



Welcome Space

9 to 11am
TUESDAY 13 FEBRUARY

Conversation,
free snacks & refreshments
ALL ARE WELCOME!*

WE also look forward to seeing
you again on **27th February!**

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

* In our Church Room

JOIN US FOR



**afternoon tea
and music!**

**SATURDAY 2nd MARCH
2-4PM**

IN ST STEPHENS CHURCH HALL
Entry by pre-purchased ticket only

ADULT £5 CHILD £2.50

Available from Jan Brookshaw
telephone: 07 854 041 046 or
Ruth Crosby: 07 548 907 359

**Please purchase your tickets by
26th February**

PROCEEDS IN AID OF
THE CHURCH FLOWER FUND

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE



Footsteps in faith

**FRIDAY 6.30PM
9 FEBRUARY**

**INFORMAL WORSHIP FOR
ALL AGES**

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

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

Contact: 0117 957 4297.

PLEASE NOTE that for this month,
Friday Night Live is on the second Friday
of the month instead of the usual third.

Altar Flowers

THE Flower Ladies would like to
thank all those who pay for Altar
flowers each week and for any extra
donations they receive. There are still
spaces available on both the Altar and
Lectern list.

If anyone would like to be added to
either list please contact Joyce Harris,
telephone 0117 956 4847.

• St Stephens Church Soundwell •

LENT COURSE 2024

**Let's talk...
Jesus!**

**A 6-WEEK COURSE
starts 17th February
on Saturdays at 10am**

BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW!*

* Please put your name down
on the sign-up sheet at the back of church
to express your interest in attending.

THIS LENT, we will be taking
part in the Church of England's
programme 'Let's talk... Jesus!'

It is a six-week course with a
mixture of video clips, Bible
study and discussion around the
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.

We will meet up on Saturday
mornings during Lent at 10am
with the course then starting at
10.20am.

This special 20 minutes will
provide time for us to catch up
with one another, have a drink,
and a croissant (or the like) and
be ready to start 'Talking Jesus!'

Some of the work will be in
the larger group and some will
be done in smaller discussion
groups.

The purpose is to share our
ideas on these important topics
for us as a community of Christ-
ians at St Stephens and in the
wider church.

● Session 1: February 17th
Everyone talking Jesus
Who exactly? And what?

● Session 2: February 24th
What motivates us?
We're all different.

● Session 3: March 2nd
Living Distinctively
*What kind of relationships does
God call us to?*

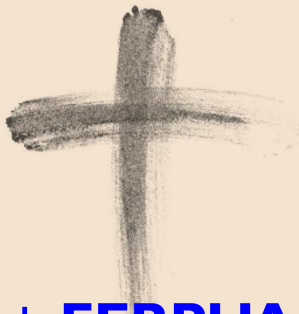
● Session 4: March 9th
Our story
Who WE are.

● Session 5: March 16th
God's story
Who GOD is.

● Session 6: March 23rd
Go on talking Jesus
*The importance of personal
invitations.*

DO contact Lisa if you have
any questions,
telephone: 0117 957 4297
or email
lisawigmore66@gmail.com

ASH WEDNESDAY



14th FEBRUARY
10AM & 6.30PM

BOTH services, the 10am one and the other, at the earlier than usual time of 6.30pm, will include the **'Imposition of Ashes'**, a tradition reminding us of the need of repentance, and for God's forgiveness, during which each person is signed with the cross on their forehead, using ash from the burning of the previous year's Palm Crosses.

As this is done, a minister will say, *'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.'*

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.



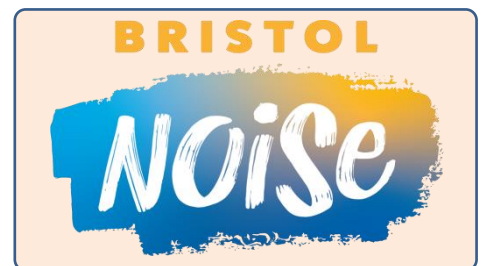
For more information, speak to your Vicar, Lisa.
lisawigmore66@gmail.com or 0117 9574297



Christmas Cards!

HERE IS the list of the people who chose to write just **ONE** card to our 'Church family' which was then displayed in church.

GWEN AND DEREK **BEEK**
 ROSEMARY **BOULTON**
 JAN AND BILL **BROOKSHAW**
 SUE **CLEMENTS**
 LIN AND SANDY **COOPER**
 RUTH **CROSBY**, MARGARET **DODGE**
 PAT **GARNER**
 JOYCE AND GEOFF **HARRIS**
 SUE AND MARTYN **HUMPHREY**
 JANET **JOHNS**, LINDA **KRAUSE**
 CAROL **MILLARD**
 JAN AND DAVE **PARKER**
 TIM, OLIVIA AND SOPHIE **PARKER**
 LISA, JAMIE, AMIRA, LEANNE AND AALIYAH
 LOR, JULIA AND JIM **MERRIFIELD**
 MICHELLE **FRANCIS**, M
 GILL AND GORD **OGBORNE**
 STEPH, RYAN, JACOB, TOMMY AND
 FINLEY **PASCO**
 TRISH **PHIPPS** AND KEITH **WINTER**
 TESS AND COLIN **RICE**
 ST STEPHENS INFANTS SCHOOL
 GILL AND KEN **TIZZARD**
 PAUL, TOM AND LISA **WIGMORE**



SATURDAY
4th MAY 9AM–5PM

Bristol Noise is all about mobilising churches and Christians to show God's love in practical ways within Bristol.

St Stephens Church, is intending to join in with the Bristol Noise again this year; where we go out together for the day, showing God's love in whatever practical ways are assigned to us.

There will be a **sign up sheet** in church or phone me on 07 769 704 270 or email: R.meares_85@hotmail.com.

There will be a small fee per person yet to be announced, and we would be delighted for anyone who can pay this to do so, but if not, then the fee will be covered by the church so that we can all be involved.

We look forward to seeing you at the Noise! Let me know by end of February.

Rev Regan Meares

FEBRUARY CYCLE OF PRAYER BEGINNING SUNDAY OF EACH WEEK

04	Sisters of the Church	Sandra Conway, Maggie Cook Sandy and Lin Cooper Teresa, Robert, Benjy & Jacob Cooper	Howard Road Irving Close James Close
11	Bristol Soup Run	Marlene Crew, Ruth Crosby Leigh Davey, Iris Davis Ros Davis, Margaret Dodge	James Road Jubilee Road Kerr Close
18	125 Project	Dawn Duffin, Jayne and Ian Durnett Bob and Nancy Emery Ken Fox, Maddie Fox	Lansdown Close Lansdown Road Larch Road
25	Beloved	Michelle Francis, Steve and Sarah Fry Julie, Shaun, Josh & Hollie Fudge Matt, Jenny & Lauren Gait	Lees Hill Leicester Square Middle Road

SUNDAYS: 8am BCP Holy Communion on 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

FEBRUARY DIARY

01	Thursday	2-4pm	Men's Group in Church Room (then fortnightly)
02	Friday	1.15-3.45pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)
		7-9pm	Outburst Youth Club in Church Hall
05	Monday	10.15am	Retreat Memory Café in Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers (fortnightly)
06	Tuesday(s)	1.30-3.30pm	Knit & Natter weekly in the Church Room
07	Wednesday	12noon	Coffee/Chat/Company Turnpike Pub
08	Thursday(s)	10-11.45am	See & Know in Church Hall (weekly in term time)
		2-4pm	Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)
09	Friday	6.30pm	FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE in Church: informal song, prayer, discussions followed by refreshments at 7.30pm in the Church Room
13	Tuesday	9-11am	WELCOME SPACE in the Church Room
14	Wednesday	10am & 6.30	ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES
15	Thursday	Evening	Men's Group: See you at the Gang Show!
16	Friday	1.15-3.45pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)

37th Kingswood Scout Group presents **Gang Show 2024!**

AT ST STEPHENS CHURCH HALL

Tuesday 13th February – Saturday 17th February
Show times: Tuesday–Friday 7.30pm, Saturday 7pm

Tickets £8 can be purchased by contacting Kristine Lockwood at kristine.lockwood@blueyonder.co.uk stating which night you require and how many tickets you require. Alternatively phone 0117 9096400 (please ring after 6pm).

If she is not there please leave a brief message on her answer machine with a land line number and she will get back to you.

17	Saturday	10am	LENT COURSE begins: Session 1 in Church
19	Monday	10.15am	Retreat Memory Café in Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers (fortnightly)
22	Thursday	2-4pm	Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)
24	Saturday	10am	LENT COURSE continues: Session 2 in Church
27	Tuesday	9-11am	WELCOME SPACE in the Church Room

MARCH DIARY

02	Saturday	2-4pm	Afternoon tea & music in Church Hall Pre-pay ticket booking (See advert on page 4)
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FROM THE REGISTERS

SINCE MID DECEMBER 2023

Funerals:

- DECEMBER 28:
June Christine Esme O'Donoghue (86)
The celebration of June's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.
Please will you hold June's children Nigel with Nicola and Tina with Darren, June's brother Robert and all June's other family and friends in your prayers.
- JANUARY 15: **Brenda Mary Dando (90)**. The celebration of Brenda's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.
Please hold her son Alistair with his family, the wider family, and Brenda's friends 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



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



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



● **Revd Regan Meares**
Priest
Telephone 07769 704270



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



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

