

Open Space

Open Space
JANUARY 2019

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

JANUARY 2019



ISAIAH foretold that nations would gather to follow the light from a star and offer gifts. The story of the Magi has glamour, danger, and courage.

IT IS A STORY of accepting a journey to an unknown place; following the star because of faith.

And it is a story of Gentiles coming to visit Jews, bringing gifts, and being welcomed.

In the story of the Magi we are dealing with an extraordinary child.

The star is so brilliant that astrologers follow it in faith – not knowing who they will find, but still needing to make the journey.

'Following a star' has become a metaphor for following your dream, pursuing your calling, or making an ideal that you believe in become a reality.

What star have you followed?

What dream might you still be pursuing?

What ideal do you believe in and work toward?

What gives you the energy to keep going? How do you know it is worth it?

Those who had faith and followed the star to worship the new-born Messiah were not Jews but Gentiles!

It was unheard of for Jews and Gentiles to mix, but these Gentiles came, brought gifts, and were welcomed into the home.

What do you think is the significance of Gentiles rather than Jews being featured in the Epiphany story?

Think of a group you never thought you would mix with, a group toward whom you now feel tolerant, accepting, and understanding. What is it like reflecting on your change of heart? How did it come about?

Think of a group you still have difficulty accepting. What might it take for you to have a change of heart? Is it possible?

THE GIFTS

The gifts brought to Jesus by the Magi have much significance.

Gold is a symbol of wealth and fidelity.

Frankincense is burned to purify the atmosphere by releasing an aromatic and pleasing smell.

For centuries, incense has been burned in Churches to bless and purify, and the ascending incense rising to the sky is a symbol of prayers ascending to God.

Myrrh is a kind of resin or oil used for anointing and embalming. It is a symbol of comfort and soothing (who doesn't enjoy a good rubdown?) but it is also a foreshadowing of death.

How were these gifts symbolic for Jesus?

What three gifts would be symbolic of you and your life so far? Think about the symbolism.

Jesus, the true 'star' is born... do we follow Him as our shining star, our guiding light, our Saviour and for-giving friend every day of our lives?

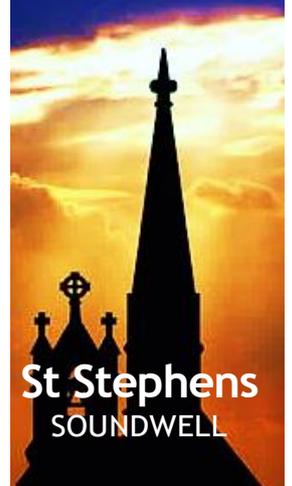
Continued on page 2 >

Mission Partners with St Stephens:

Bristol City Centre Soup Run
Bristol/Uganda Link
Christian Aid
Community of the Sisters of the Church
Emmaus
Fair Trade
One25 Project
The Bristol Noise

St Stephens

Church Road
Soundwell
Bristol BS16 4RH
0117 956 6257
visionatststephens@gmail.com
www.saintstephen-soundwell.org
f saintstephen-soundwell
t @SoundwellChurch
CHARITY NUMBER
131503



LentPilgrim and EasterPilgrim

LENTPIILGRIM and EasterPilgrim are the Church of England's 2019 next main campaigns.

Wherever you are, these resources should help mark these important seasons in the Church calendar.

The following will be available for you to use:

LentPilgrim

- 40 daily reflections based on the Beatitudes – which will run from Ash Wednesday until Palm Sunday.
- Full-colour booklet published by Church House Publishing.
- App for Android and iOS, based on the award-winning 2018 #LiveLent app.
- E-mail sign-up for daily content.
- Social media campaign.
- Daily audio content for smart speakers, in the app and on the Church of England website.
- Enhanced interactive content for uses in pilot dioceses preparing for baptism/confirmation.

EasterPilgrim

- Explainer graphics throughout Holy Week to share the key elements in the journey to Easter Day: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Day.
 - A bridge to EasterPilgrim – with weekly content shared from Church of England from Easter Day until Ascension based on the Lord's Prayer, making it a great way to prepare for Thy Kingdom Come.
 - The reflections have been written by Bishop Steven Croft, co-author of the Pilgrim Course.
- More information about Lent and Easter will be available in the weeks to come. Do watch out for news about our campaign on our social media channels and regular emails to A Church Near You editors.

Booklets accompanying both **LentPilgrim** and **EasterPilgrim** will be available from Church House Publishing, as part of a new Pilgrim Journeys series, by early January 2019, priced at £2.99 per copy, with bulk discounts on packs of 10 and 50.

THE CHURCH YEAR

DURING Ordinary Time (Winter), ie: up to Lent, we are asked to pray for these intentions:

- * Peace on Earth. * Christian Unity. The Sick and those who care for them. * Victims of trafficking and those who work to combat it.
- * The unemployed.

* Peace Day Sunday 20 January [2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time].

Octave of Prayer 18–25 January for Christian Unity.

Day for Victims of Trafficking Friday 8 February [St Josephine Bakhita].

World Day for the Sick Monday 11 February.

Racial Justice Day Sunday 17 February [3 Sundays before 1st Sunday of Lent].

Day for the unemployed Sunday 3 March [Sunday before 1st Sunday of Lent].

LENT

6 March: **Ash Wednesday.**

10 March: **1st Sunday of Lent.**

Tuesday 19 March: **St Joseph.**

Monday 25 March **Annunciation of the Lord.**

During Lent we are asked to pray for these intentions:

- * Candidates for the Sacraments.
- * Penitents and Wanderers.
- * Women; the needy and hungry of the world.

#Follow the star..

<Continued from page 1

I came across these words some years ago, but sadly I can't tell you who wrote them and give credit where credit is due. But I'd like to share them with you.

May you follow 'the star' into 2019 and beyond.

ONCE they saw a star that pointed to a promised land, to a land of peace. Peacemakers set out to follow that star.

It is both a joyful and arduous journey. Sometimes the star shines brightly, the promise seems certain, and the pilgrims can sing, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring God's peace.' Often the star disappears, clouded over, hidden from view, and the pilgrims grope blindly, grow discouraged, get weary, give thought to settling down, to forgetting the promise of peace.

One thing is certain: all pilgrims need nourishment to sustain the journey. An occasional oasis for the spirit is essential, a time to feast on the refreshing waters, the rich food of the spirit in order to get strength to continue the pilgrimage through darkness, star-shine or not.

LISA

A contemporary prayer

LORD God. IN our World where money, property, prestige, corruption and violence divert us from sitting on top of the mountain with you and knowing the Absolute truth which is to live by Honesty, Humility, Unselfishness, Purity and Love.

Please help us to live more fully with these in mind and to practise them in all our affairs.

Blessed be thy name. Amen.

Sandra Rosser

Lent Course 2019

YOUR Church, St Stephens, Soundwell, will be holding a Lent Course again in 2019.

Previous Lent courses have proved very popular and so we plan to repeat the experience.

The dates and times will follow but will begin sometime week commencing 11 March.

If there are days or times you would like to suggest, please do let me know.

It is all currently being planned, and it is proposed we watch a film together as our main focus to help lead us on our journey through Lent together.

Which film..?

Why not guess and let Lisa or Peter know your thoughts??

And all will be revealed in good time.

Lisa

New Year–New Challenges

AS LIN reported in last month's Open Space, there has been a fantastic response to the Parish Giving Scheme. If this is something you are unaware of... it is a way to give regularly to your Church, which removes the worry and stress of finding change or even of remembering to give to God through your Church.

As I expect you are aware by now, your Church is a charity and only operates through the generosity of those who give. Giving regularly, through the Parish Giving Scheme, makes it easier for you to be generous, and it helps your Church in caring for those who look after the finances and for them to be aware of what is being given and when – so we can balance the books.

Seems like a win-win situation to me!

Talking of Finances, I have two further things to let you know:

- First, the nice one... it's a thank you to those of you who, because you feel you are able to meet your own heating bills without government help, have kindly donated your Winter Fuel Payment to St Stephens Church, to help us keep you and

everyone who visits your Church, as warm as possible.

These donations go into our general fund to help us pay the bills and it is much appreciated, so thank you again!

- Second: at the November 2018 meeting, your Parochial Church Council agreed the budget for 2019.

Due to essential repairs to the Church building, which includes; ensuring no-one is injured from falling stonework, repairs to the roof before leaks or further damage, and a variety of other work, means that we are facing a shortfall of £17,913 this year: that is nearly £18,000 in the red!

But, thank you for the generous way in which so many of you give already to God through your Church. I have written this to you as I felt that we all needed to be aware of the financial situation – and also to encourage you that God is with us, and will honour our giving with His blessings.

If you would like to know more, then please do ask me... I am always happy to chat about things with you!

Yours, in Christ. **Lisa**

A STAR IS BORN

GOD created both earth and sky many thousands of years ago,

The earth was covered in beautiful plants fed by waters that flow.

Then he placed man upon the earth with a garden that he could till, and he gave him a wife, so together, God's plans they could fulfil,

It was in this garden of Eden that sin began, at such a great cost,

That perfect relationship they had with God, had now, it seems been lost.

As the centuries came and went there was darkness, famine and warfare.

Then Isaiah the prophet predicted an end to this time of despair.

He said the people who walked in darkness would see a shining light.

Israel would be great again and would never have need to fight.

He told there would be a child born, a Saviour, Prince of Peace,

And his expanding peaceful government would not ever cease.

As time passed by what Isaiah foretold was proven to be true.

The Virgin Mary was carrying a child and her time was almost due.

She and Joseph had journeyed to Bethlehem as a census was decreed.

Both dusty and tired a bed for the night was their greatest need.

'No room, No room' the landlord said, but there's a stable where you could lie.

So they slept in the straw with cattle and sheep and a donkey standing by.

During that night Mary's time had come and she gave birth to a son.

As the Angel Gabriel had told her she knew he was the Holy One.

She gently wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in the manger.

This fragile, perfect little child she would protect from any danger.

Now Shepherds in the nearby field were suddenly filled with fear...

When as they cast their eyes to heaven, a Holy Angel did appear.

'Do not be afraid', the Angel said, 'for I bring you news of great joy.

Tonight there was born in Bethlehem the Messiah, the Holy Boy.'

The shepherds went to the stable and marvelled at what they saw.

The on returning to the fields they spread news to one and all.

From far away three wise men had heard what was being told...

So, led by a Star they journeyed with myrrh, frankincense and gold.

After giving the gifts to the Baby they ALL went quickly on their way...

As they knew Herod's men would be coming by the break of day.

Each Christmas time we celebrate this very special birth...

This baby, this shining Star that God had sent to earth.

We decorate our houses, and the Christmas tree adorn.

Now we should raise our arms in joy and shout, SHOUT, A STAR IS BORN!

Gill Mayo

JANUARY CYCLE OF PRAYER BEGINNING SUNDAY OF EACH WEEK

06	Bereavement visitors	Stella Hoare, Mike and Jayne Hudd Cherilyn Hughes, Jean and Barry Hulbert Neil, Carey, Marin & Eliza Humphrey	The Elms The Gardens The Green
13	Home groups	Sue and Martyn Humphrey Beryl and Roger Hurkett Roccus, Rozina, Adan & Jereome Inayai	The Haven The Reddings The Ride
20	See & Know	Carole Jackson, Lou Jefferies Jan Johns, Grace Jones June Jones, Bronwen Kucharski	The Wickets Tyndale Road Wesley Close
27	Church Musicians	Kristine, Ian, Emily & Jack Lockwood Gerald Marshall, Gill Mayo, Julia Merrifield Ted Milkins, Carol Millard	Wesley Hill Whitfield Close Willis Road

JANUARY 2019 DIARY

REGULAR WEEKLY GROUPS:

TUESDAYS	01.30pm	Knit & Natter in Church Room
WEDNESDAYS	01.00pm	
THURSDAYS	09.00am 01.00pm	See & Know (For toddlers & carers) (Term time)

SERVICES AND OTHER GROUPS/MEETINGS/EVENTS:

03 THURSDAY	08.00pm	Ladies Group (Church Hall)
06 SUNDAY Epiphany	08.00am 10.00am 11.00am	Holy Communion (Prayer Book) Service of the Word Café Central ('til 12.15pm)
08 TUESDAY	07.30pm	PCC
09 WEDNESDAY	10.15am	Holy Communion
10 THURSDAY	07.30pm	Men's Group (Church room)
11 FRIDAY	07.00pm	Outburst Youth Group (Church Hall) 'til 9pm
13 SUNDAY First after Epiphany	08.00am 10.00am 11.00am	Holy Communion (Prayer Book) St Stephens Community Worship Café Central ('til 12.15pm)
14 MONDAY	09.30am	Retreat Memory Café
16 WEDNESDAY	10.15am	Holy Communion
17 THURSDAY	08.00pm	Ladies Group (Church Hall)
18 FRIDAY	06.30pm	FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE
19 SATURDAY	09.30am	Baptism Preparation (Church & Church Hall)
20 SUNDAY Second after Epiphany	08.00am 10.00am 11.00am 12.30pm	Holy Communion (Prayer Book) St Stephens Community Worship Café Central ('til 12.15pm) Baptism
23 WEDNESDAY	10.15am	Holy Communion
24 THURSDAY	07.30pm	Men's Group (Church room)
25 FRIDAY	07.00pm	Outburst Youth Group (Church Hall) 'til 9pm
27 SUNDAY Third after Epiphany	08.00am 10.00am 11.00am 02.00pm	Holy Communion (Prayer Book) St Stephens Community Worship Café Central ('til 12.15pm) Baptism
30 WEDNESDAY	10.15am	Holy Communion
31 THURSDAY	07.30pm	Drama Group Pantomime begins



FEBRUARY PREVIEW

01 FRIDAY	07.30pm	Drama Group Pantomime
02 SATURDAY	02.30pm 07.30pm	Drama Group Pantomime Matinee Drama Group Pantomime
03 SUNDAY Candlemas	08.00am 10.00am 11.00am 02.00pm	Holy Communion (Prayer Book) St Stephens Community Worship Café Central ('til 12.15pm) Baptism
08 FRIDAY	07.00pm	Outburst Youth Group (Church Hall) 'til 9pm

FROM THE REGISTERS

SINCE OCTOBER

Baptism:

DECEMBER 02: Willow Gillian Bowser.
Please hold mum and dad, Sandi and Daniel, and sister, Megan, in your prayers.

Funerals:

NOVEMBER 02: Terry Jefferies
The celebration of Terry's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.

Please hold Terry's wife Patricia and daughters Sarah and Helen and all the family in your prayers.

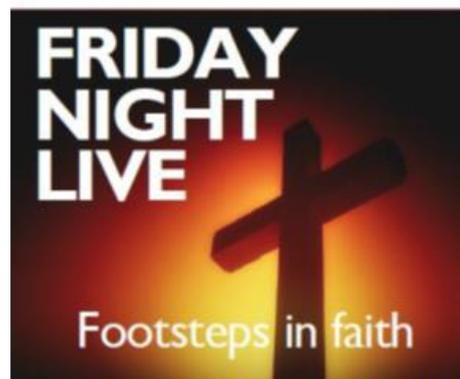
DECEMBER 11: Shirley Rosemary Biggs (83).
The celebration of Shirley's life was held at St Stephens Church, Soundwell, followed by Committal at Westerleigh Crematorium.

Please hold Shirley's husband Terry, and their four children, Karen, Alison, Helen and Nick and their families, along with Shirley's many friends in your prayers.

Marriage:

OCTOBER 27: NiK Keevil and Adèle Grace were married at St Stephens. We wish them every happiness in their new life together.

Please hold them in your prayers.



FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE returns for 18 January and will have something for you, no matter what your age... so why not try it!?

We start at 6.30pm in Church and afterwards we share food together at 7.30pm in the Church Hall and everyone is welcome to be there!

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL



• Revd Lisa Wigmore
Priest in Charge, 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



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

E&OE

OPEN SPACE

Send items for publishing to: waypastlate@gmail.com