

# Open Space

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

JANUARY 2024

## MAY YOUR YEAR be filled with joy!

AS IF from nowhere, **2024** has well and truly arrived. It's got nothing to do with perfect vision, although wouldn't it be fascinating to see the year ahead in all its technicolour glory.

Again, I have to say, 'Where did 2023 go?' It feels like I blinked in March and then found myself preparing for Christmas and then trying to find a New Year's resolution, that I hadn't previously attempted and failed at.

Maybe, you are the determined type, and after all the indulging at Christmas, you name your New Year's resolution and will take yourself off to the gym or join the 'Couch to 5K' running program or maybe choose to join a slimming group.

Maybe, you plan to buy some healthy eating cookbooks, and plan to drag your family along as, 'it will be good for them'!

Perhaps you will stop smoking, cut down on how much you drink, eat less meat, use less single use plastic, drive less and walk more, watch less telly and talk more, have a physical conversation rather than an *emoji* conversation on social media. The resolution list is endless, and would you believe, there are even Apps to help you achieve them.

We choose to take up a New Year's resolution because it will benefit us, they are positive steps in improving our life in one way or another, physically or mentally. We might not find joy in them per se... but we often find joy in the planning of them. But when, in our looking ahead to the new and improved us, do we consider our spirituality?

That part of us that constantly searches for the meaning in life, the purpose for our existence, the 'more and beyond' than the present world can offer us, that connection with God... creator of the physical world we experience.

The sort of thing that, trust me, is guaranteed to bring you joy! Remember December's Open Space that encouraged us to read our Bibles?? If you didn't start then... why not start now!??!!

**Advent** maybe behind us but we should try to hang onto the periods of stillness and quiet that we tried to create in our waiting.

Moments of pausing and reflecting on where we have seen God throughout the day, learning to recognise God's actions in ourselves and others as well as how we are being blessed.

**Spirituality** is beyond our physical or material needs, it is a lifestyle that feeds our connectedness with God.

A simple and effective way of engaging our spirituality is by praying *the Daily Examen*. Saint Ignatius of Loyola developed the practice of stopping and reflecting on the day, noticing where God has been, praising God and looking forward to tomorrow.

He believed that this was a gift from God that everyone should experience.

IF YOU would like to unwrap this gift of post-Christmas, here is a brief guide...

Find a quiet place and sit comfortably.

### 1. Become aware of God's presence.

*Look back on the events of the day.*

The day may seem confusing to you – a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

### 2. Review the day with gratitude.

*Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God.* Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them?

Pay attention to small things – God is in the details.

*Continued on page 2 >*

Open Space

JANUARY 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

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gmail.com

www.saintstephen  
soundwell.org

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soundwell

@SoundwellChurch

CHARITY NUMBER  
1131503



# Readings & Collects



## SUNDAY 07 JANUARY

### Epiphany/Baptism of Christ

Genesis 1:1–5; Psalm 29

Acts 19:1–7; Mark 1:4–11

HEAVENLY FATHER, at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son: may we recognize him as our Lord and know ourselves to be your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

## SUNDAY 14 JANUARY

### 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

1 Samuel 3:1–20; Psalm 139:1–9

Revelations 5:1–10; John 1:43–end

ETERNAL LORD, our beginning and our end: bring us with the whole creation to your glory, hidden through past ages and made known in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## SUNDAY 21 JANUARY

### 3rd Sunday of Epiphany and Service of the Word

Genesis 14:17–20; Psalm 128

Revelation 19:6–10; John 2:1–11

GOD OF ALL MERCY, your Son proclaimed good news to the poor, release to the captives, and freedom to the oppressed: anoint us with your Holy Spirit and set all your people free to praise you in Christ our Lord. Amen

## SUNDAY 28 JANUARY

### 4th Sunday of Epiphany

Deuteronomy 18:15–20; Psalm 111

Revelation 12:1–5a; Mark 1:21–28

GOD OF HEAVEN, you send the gospel to the ends of the earth and your messengers to every nation: send your Holy Spirit to transform us by the good news of everlasting life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# MAY YOUR YEAR be filled with joy!

< Continued from page 1

### 3. Pay attention to your emotions.

One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

### 4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.

*Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important.*

It may involve a feeling—positive or negative.

It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace.

Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it, pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

### 5. Look toward tomorrow.

*Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges.*

Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance.

Ask God for help and understanding. Pray for hope. Pray for the joy of the Lord to fill you to overflowing. St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend.

End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus.

Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God.'

[www.ignatianspirituality.com](http://www.ignatianspirituality.com)

DON'T be shy, if you need help just ask. Equally, let me know your experiences of praying the Examen. If you prefer to be guided through the Daily Examen then there are several Apps available to download. Praying is simply 'talking to God.'

Adverts and medics tell us that 'it's good to talk', well imagine how much more stupendously and wonderfully better it is to TALK TO GOD! What joy it is to sit, or walk, work or dance in his presence as you pray. It's possible anytime, anywhere, any way!! Talk AND listen, and through it, in the presence of God in Jesus, your JOY will grow and sustain you.

Yours, prayerfully and in joy,  
Lisa x

## SEE & KNOW: Christmas Party!



SEE & KNOW would also love some grown-up help at their parent and toddler group: to continue helping the young families in our Parish to get to know and follow Jesus...

... could you spare half an hour or so on Thursday mornings, to help in school term-time only??

It would include setting up the play equipment in the church hall at 9am, if not every week, then perhaps now and again.

**AND/OR** could you be part of the See & Know **Team**? If not every week, then perhaps now and again?

**This would mean:**

- Welcoming children & their carers,
- Chatting with them during the session
- Helping the children do a simple craft.

Sessions run from 10am–11.45am.

For more details please chat with: Sue Humphrey (07 929 404 272) or Lisa (0117 9574 297).

# 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.

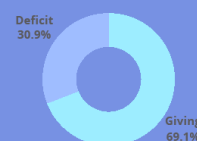
We are a charity that needs your support in many ways, your financial gifts are just one of those ways.

*Thank you and bless you.*

**Lisa x**

## OUR CHURCH FINANCE UPDATE

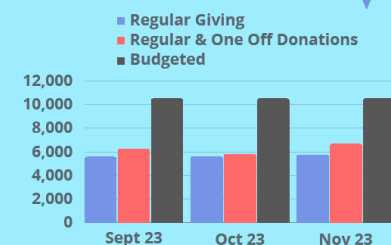
### GIVING FOR NOVEMBER



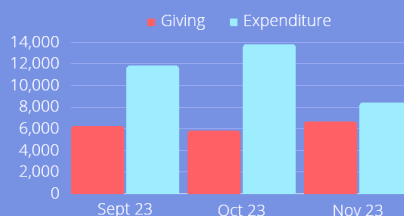
WHAT OUR  
GIVING NEEDS TO  
BE £10,500

GIVING RECEIVED  
£6663

### Giving Last 3 Months



### Giving v Church Expenses Last 3 Months





# St Stephens Stars



**GENTLY** turning way up on high  
Stars glittering, shiny and bright  
Just like that very special star  
One very dark Bethlehem night.

**STARS** that are shining for Jesus  
Stars that are shining for folk we  
know  
Stars that are shining for loved  
ones  
In our hearts, never to be let go.

**LOOK** above with awe and  
wonder  
At the delights before your eyes  
Look above and be reminded of  
Our Lord and Saviour,  
**Jesus Christ.**

LIKE ME, I am sure that you have all enjoyed the display of stars that has been a feast for the eyes over the Christmas season.

The original stars we started hanging for Christmas, came from an idea by Wayne Pearce, and some were created by many of us here, under his guidance, about 15 years ago. Over the years as stars were hung up and taken down, they became tangled and tattered, and the number of useable stars dwindled. In November 2022 as they emerged from storage again, Lisa decided it might be good to think about a new display of stars for Christmas 2023.

And so began a long period of planning –from last November until this November, yes, a whole year –to come up with a display design, create the base of the stars, source the materials needed to cover the stars, get folk together to decorate the stars and finally have a team in place to put the stars together, in their sequences, before finally hanging them in place, high up in the church!

We have to thank Wayne (for a second time) for creating the wooden star frames that we then covered with tinsel.



He had the use of a laser cutter to produce approximately 80 stars for us, with the burning wood causing quite a smell!

Many meetings took place and multiple emails were exchanged between the three of us to come up with the final designs and quantities we needed for the display.

While we have many new stars this year, we also were able to re-use some of the larger ones from previous years, and set about 'titivating' them with some extra tinsel.

*Continued on Page 5>*





<Continued from page 2

Talking of tinsel—I never realised how many different widths and thicknesses of tinsel there are!!

But of course we were very particular as to what width we wanted to cover the smaller stars!

This entailed quite a number of hours trawling the internet and searching through Christmas decorations at multiple shops to find just what we wanted!

I had a very serious case of tinselitis, while working out the best way to affix the tinsel onto the stars, in a way that will hopefully make them durable for many years to come!

How thankful am I that I have a craft room that I can make as much mess as I like in, because oh my goodness tinsel is messy!

Some of it did seem to follow me throughout the house though!!

While on a tinsel hunt, I found some perfect, very glittery stars to go in the display.

It seemed that the store (B&M) only ever put two or three of these stars on display at a time, so this meant multiple trips to the stores (Fishponds, Filton and Cribbs) to get the 16 that we have on display!!

I also managed to grab 7 large stars, half price, from Wilko before they closed their doors for good.

*All very time consuming!!*

I have been delighted (and at times frustrated) to have been part of this process throughout the last year, and it is a real joy and blessing to see the final result—over 100 stars shining brightly for Jesus.

**A HUGE THANK YOU TO EVERYONE THAT MADE THIS HAPPEN!**

To Lisa, Wayne (and myself) for getting the vision, that we had in January, to become reality.

To Matt Gait, metalworker extraordinaire, who made some fabulous new metal hooks to hang the stars from. They made life so very much easier!!



### Saturday 11th November

IT WAS wonderful to hear all the chatter, and to be part of the fun and witness faith in action as the stars were adorned with tinsel – I won't mention you all by name, in case I forget someone, you know who you are!

### Saturday 18th November

A SMALLER team who strung the stars together, and using a very long and extremely bendy pole (no mean feat) hung them on high, to sparkle and shine.

And last but by no means least, you the generous church family, coming up trumps once again enabling the costs involved in creating the stars to be covered, with many of you 'sponsoring'/or 'adopting and naming' a star.

### PSALM 147:4

He counts the number of the stars;  
He gives names to all of them.

**Julia Merrifield**





07 Young people's uniformed organisations	Derek and Gwen Beek Annabelle, Shaun & Reuben Bignell Bill and Jenny Bishop, Edward Bishop	Frys Hill Gilpin Close Gladstone Court
14 Trinity Theological College	William, Jess & Beatrice Bishop Grace Blackburn, Jackie Blackwell Geoff Blowfield, Rosemary Boulton	Gladstone Drive Gladstone Street Gloucester Road
21 Children's Society	June Brain, Karen Brasier Mary Britton, Bill and Jan Brookshaw Brian Brown, Thomas Brown	Gorse Hill Hayward Road Highview Road
28 Emmaus Bristol	Lynn Burton Emma, Ian, Riley & Morgan Clarke Sue Clements, Jackie Clench	Hilltop Gardens Hilltop Road Hill View

**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**

## JANUARY DIARY

03 Wednesday	12noon	Coffee/Chat/Company Turnpike Pub
04 Thursday	2-4pm	Men's Group in Church Room (then fortnightly)
05 Friday	7-9pm	Outburst Youth Club in Church Hall
08 Monday	9.30am	Retreat Memory Café in Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers (fortnightly)
09 Tuesday(s)	1.30-3.30pm	Knit & Natter weekly in the Church Room
09 Tuesday	9-11am	WELCOME SPACE in the Church Room
11 Thursday	2-4pm	Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)
13 Saturday	9-12am	Baptism Prep in Church
18 Thursday	2-4pm	Men's Group in Church Room (then fortnightly)
19 Friday	1.15-3.45pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)
	6.30pm	FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE in Church: informal song, prayer, discussions followed by refreshments at 7.30pm in the Church Room
22 Monday	9.30am	Retreat Memory Café in Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers (fortnightly)
23 Tuesday	9-11am	WELCOME SPACE in the Church Room
25 Thursday	2-4pm	Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)

----- ST STEPHENS DRAMA GROUP PRESENTS -----  
*their Pantomime production of:*

• **The RoundTable of Camelittle** •  
25-27 JANUARY in the Church Hall

7.30pm on Thursday & Friday or 2.30 & 7.30pm on Saturday

Tickets £8: prebook by telephone on 0333 6663366 (incurs £2 fee)  
or else online at: [www.ststephensdramabristol.co.uk](http://www.ststephensdramabristol.co.uk)



## 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>

## Welcome Space!



**Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday  
of the month**

**New time: 9 to 11am**

Meeting in the Church room for  
company and refreshments

SINCE MID NOVEMBER 2023

## Baptism:

- NOVEMBER 26: **Ivy-Mae Butler**.  
*Please hold Ivy-Mae's parents, Becca and Tom, her Godparents, Lauren and Lucy, and all the family and their friends in your prayers.*

## Funerals:

- NOVEMBER 30: **Olive Joyce Ellis (99)**.  
The celebration of Olive's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.  
*Please hold Terry, Derek & Jackie, their families, the wider family and all of Olive's friends in your prayers.*
- DECEMBER 05: **David John Monks (70)**. The celebration of David's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.  
*Please hold his wife, Anne, sister, Anne, brother, Clive, along with all of David's family and many friends in your prayers.*
- DECEMBER 11: **Andrew Charles Smith (70)**. The celebration of Andrew's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.  
*Please hold his wife, Sally, daughters, Becca and Lucy, along with all of Andrew's family and many friends in your prayers.*
- DECEMBER 20: **Roger Hurkett (83)**  
The celebration of Roger's life was held at St Stephens Church, Soundwell, followed by the committal at Westerleigh Crematorium.  
*Please hold his sons, Barry, Neil and Patrick, along with all of Roger's family and his many friends in your prayers.*

## SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL



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



• **Peter Robbins**  
Lay Minister, 13 Wood Road  
Kingswood, Bristol BS15 8DT  
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• **Gill Mayo**  
Church Warden  
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