

Open Space

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

KNOWING JESUS... MAKING JESUS KNOWN!

LENT

LENT begins on the 6th of March following Ash Wednesday services in church at 10am and 6.30pm on the 5th of March.

IT IS a time for Christians to take stock of themselves and their faith. Historically Lent was a solemn time when Christians fasted and gave up things they enjoyed in order to help them concentrate and prepare to remember the death of Jesus on the Cross during Holy Week... and then to prepare to celebrate Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday.

In more modern times, people have chosen to give up things they like to eat or do, as a way of focussing on God.

There was a time when everyone would be discussing what they would be giving up for Lent... anything from chocolate to wine, caffeine, sugar...etc; I wonder if perhaps it's because it's not understood.

Instead of giving something up or fasting, many people chose to take something up instead... something good. Again – all for the purpose of focusing more on Jesus as you do.

So, no matter how you choose to live through Lent; every time you decide not to eat that bit of chocolate or to do that good deed; it is an opportunity to think of how you want to behave or change things in your life, or in your relationship with God. It is thus the season of reflection and preparation.

In this age of mindfulness, Lent gives us a perfect opportunity to pause to take time to reflect on life and how we're journeying through it.

Jesus said that He came that we might have abundant life... full and overflowing (JOHN 10:10).

Lives lived like that, come out of knowing who we are and who we're designed to be! There's also a wonderful peace and quiet joy that comes out of knowing that we are truly loved and loved just as we are.

We are known and loved by Jesus! How do we know that? Well he chose to die on the cross so that all that holds us apart from Him and others is wiped clean, if we open our hearts to Him and change some of the things in our lives that aren't God's best for us. And I believe that is what Jesus did for us that first Easter.

By dying on the cross so that all our sins might be forgiven He opened up for us a new way of being: a new way of living and the possibility of a new way of life.

I'm hoping to spend lots of time pausing and reflecting this Lent... as I will be on sabbatical from the 1st of March until the 10th of June. During that time, I will be seeking to hear what God has to say about 'what next' for us in Soundwell. What are His plans and purposes for us – for good.

This good will be for us as individuals, for us as a worshipping community and for us as the wider community of all God's people in the Parish of Soundwell.

Our God is the God of all people, and this is his church, which is therefore the beating heart of His love and hope for everyone in this area.

Like me, this season of Lent, you might like to take time to pause and reflect on the love that God has for each one of us, and the promises that God makes to us.

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MARCH
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

St Stephens

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soundwell.org

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soundwell

@SoundwellChurch

CHARITY NUMBER
1131503



St Stephens
SOUNDWELL

You might like to read and think through the bible passages in Mark's gospel chapters 14, 15 and 16 to see all that Jesus did to declare that love to us.

Why not join in the following:

- the weekly **Lent Course** on Saturday mornings; 8th, 15th & 22nd March, and 5th & 12th April, starting at 10am (refreshments at 9.30am).

- the twice monthly **Bible Chats** on Wednesday 12th and 26th March at 2pm in the Church Room.

- come listen to our fabulous variety of **Lent Speakers** in our 10am Sunday Services:

- Revd **James Cannon**, Vicar of Mangotsfield, on **9th March**;

- **Bishop Viv+** on **16th March**;

- Revd **Becky Waring**, Archdeacon of Bristol, on **23rd March**;

- our **Church Team** helping us celebrate Mothering Sunday on **30th March**;

- Revd **Jo Jennings**, Anglican Chaplain at HMP Horfield, on **6th April**.

Then there's **Holy Week** and our **Easter Day** Services... but details of those to follow next month... as we celebrate Jesus' victory and His rising from the dead and all that that new life could mean to us.

Jesus had the ultimate position of privilege – he is God and he could have come to earth as a Superhero – and yet he chose to become a Jewish man of no particular wealth or status in a time and place under Roman occupation.

He did so in order to understand how it is to be one of us and to also show us how God wants us to respond to and care for others.

Superheroes are few and far between, but the rest of us can choose to show the undeserved and extravagant love and care for others that Jesus came to show us in our normal everyday lives.

Why not ponder that as you reflect and prepare this Lent.

Jesus said that he came to earth that we might have life, and have it abundantly – all of us, without exception.

So that is my challenge to you all this Lent – be a **superhero** in Jesus' image.

Wishing you a thoughtful Lent and a joyous Easter! Lisa xx

Easter Eggs



IF you are able to help spread a bit of Easter Joy, by donating an Easter Egg or two (or more), then please do bring them to church before or on Sunday **30th March** (Mothering Sunday) so that

The Sisters of the Church can distribute them in time for Easter Day. Thank you!

Welcome Space

TUESDAY
11th MARCH
9 to 11.30am

Conversation,
free snacks & refreshments
ALL ARE WELCOME!*

WE also look forward to seeing you again on 25th March!

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.

- There are Grants available that we should easily qualify for, to help us afford the changes.

However, it is going to cost us around £14,000 to upgrade across our premises. We are confident of securing a grant of £10,000 to meet the vast majority of that cost.

The grant may be time limited, so it is really important for us to make a start down this route soon.

All of which is being actioned, and so I just thought I'd let you know what is going on.

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

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 you would like to support the Lighting Project with your donation.

This will be a great help with the expense as we hope to finance this project without dipping into the general income of the 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

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 02 MARCH Sunday before Lent

Exodus 34:29–end; Psalm 99
2 Corinthians 3:12–4:2; Luke 9:28–43a
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 09 MARCH 1st Sunday of Lent

Deuteronomy 26:1–11; Psalm 91:1–11
Romans 10:8b–13; Luke 4:1–13
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 16 MARCH 2nd Sunday of Lent

Genesis 15:1–12, 17&18; Psalm 27
Philippians 3:17–4:1; Luke 13:31–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.

SUNDAY 23 MARCH 3rd Sunday of Lent

Isaiah 55:1–9; Psalm 63:1–9
1 Corinthians 10:1–13; Luke 13:1–9
ETERNAL GOD, give us insight to discern your will for us, to give up what harms us, and to seek the perfection we are promised in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 30 MARCH Mothering Sunday

Joshua 5:9–12; Psalm 32
2 Corinthians 5:16–end;
Luke 15:1–3, 11b–end
GOD OF LOVE, passionate and strong, tender and careful: watch over us and hold us all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS!

DO YOU have any questions?? Big ones, small ones, and the ones in-between?? We'd 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 people to takeover this essential Safeguarding work.

One role is for a **Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)** plus 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.

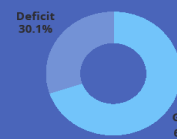
The roles will start as soon as possible and Peter will be around to help during the transition period.

For further information and Role Descriptions please contact Peter or Lisa.

Our Church Financial Health



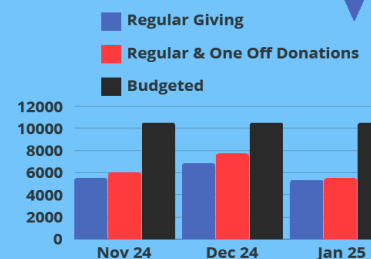
GIVING FOR JANUARY



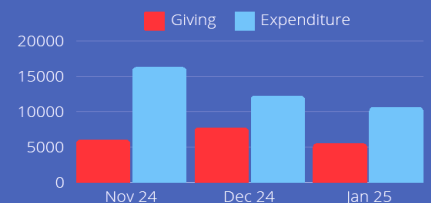
WHAT OUR GIVING NEEDS TO BE £10,500

GIVING RECEIVED £5472

Giving Last 3 Months



Giving v Church Expenses Last 3 Months



LENT COURSE 2025

5-WEEKS
starting **8th March**
on **Saturdays at 10am**

Featuring a study of **Les Misérables**

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.

OUR LENT COURSE this year will feature the hugely popular and star-studded 2012 film of **LES MISÉRABLES**, based on Victor Hugo's epic 1862 novel which was set in nineteenth-century France and the French Revolution.

Through discussion and bible study, we will explore the Grace of God alongside our fallen state and opportunities for redemption.

So very fitting topics for Lent!

It will take place on five Saturday mornings with refreshments from 9.30 and the sessions running from 10-11.30am.

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

The five week course will include 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.

- **SESSION 1: MARCH 8th**
Fantine: *responding to poverty and those in need*
- **SESSION 2: MARCH 15th**
The Bishop of Digne: *how our Graceful actions can positively affect others*
- **SESSION 3: MARCH 22nd**
Jean Valjean: *how can the freely given Grace of God transform lives?*
- **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, tel: 0117 967 9576 or email:

peter-robbins@outlook.com

We are very much looking forward to sharing this with you as our 2025 Lenten project.

COFFEE/ CHAT & COMPANY

**WEDNESDAY
5th MARCH**

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



WORLD DAY of PRAYER 2025

FRIDAY 7th MARCH

10AM at

Frenchay Parish Church

Details from Revd Judith Lee
jrplee@btinternet.com
Telephone: 07 702 247 689.

OR 2.30PM at

Salvation Army Citadel

21 Broad Street, Staple Hill,
Bristol, BS16 5LN.

'I made you wonderful'

Prepared by the women of the Cook Islands
I Made You Wonderful based on
PSALM 139:1-18.

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE

21st MARCH

6.30PM

In Church

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

Bible Chat

2.30PM in the Church Room

(2pm for a cuppa!)

FORTNIGHTLY:

12 & 26 MARCH

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.

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

Youth Church

I HELP out and have just become a leader at St Stephens Youth Church and I'm often asked 'What's that!?' So, I explain that Youth Church is a friendly welcoming space for younger people to explore their Christian faith, learn about God and the Bible, in a way that suits their age, and to grow knowing Jesus.

We do this by telling and showing videos of Bible stories, making craft items, playing games and lots of other activities, which help the children and young adults grow spiritually.

They often ask questions about their faith... and while we don't always have the right answers – if there is a right answer to questions on faith – I do believe since helping out at Youth Church, I've become more confident in myself, and strengthened my own beliefs and faith in God and given me the courage to ask my own questions.

If anyone reading this article thinks they can help out occasionally and make a difference in the lives of our young people by supporting what we do, then please come and join us.

You'll be helping to plant seeds of faith and encourage our young people to enjoy church and grow in faith, love and purpose.

Feel free to come along any Sunday to see what we do. To find out more, please ask me, or Peter, Regan or Lisa.

Thank you. Dawn xx

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

Witness statements

1. God's Promise of Hope

BILL BISHOP

When I was 12, I was living in Cyprus with my parents – my Dad was in the Army.

While attending the army school I qualified to go to a grammar school.

So a suitable school that took boarders was found in England and I went to that school for 3 years, my parents returned to England a year later. While at Heversham Grammar School, I felt drawn to the hope that God would support me while I was without my parents.

I felt great sustenance from the church which the boarders attended every Sunday and I went to instruction for confirmation. I was confirmed in the local church, St Peter's.

During my time at boarding school, I frequently went to traditional Holy Communion at 8 o'clock on my own which reinforced my hope of protection and support from God.

I left school at 16 to take up an apprenticeship as a printer in Wells, living in Shepton Mallet with my parents.

I joined dancing classes run under the auspices of the evening institute and there met Jenny. We were often paired together by the instructor because of height issues.

Jenny and I were regular churchgoers at St Peter & St Paul church. I maintained a relationship with God through Jesus all this time. And held hope that he would guide and help me. Jenny and I started going out together and when my parents went abroad again – without me. Jenny's parents kept an eye on me although I moved into 'digs'.

We got engaged and were married just weeks after my parents again returned to England.

My most important memory from the wedding was after being pronounced 'man & wife' our first steps together were towards the altar and symbolically towards God and the hope that we would be blessed with a good marriage – which we were and are still.

2. God's plans of Hope for us

TONYWEARE

The theme of this evening's Carol Service is Hope. As a child at Christmas I was probably hoping for some presents – perhaps a new bike!

I'm generally an optimistic person and, as a Christian, I do have hope. My occupation was in the Ambulance Service and we were often dealing with people in difficult circumstances, suffering from illness or injury – and they may have felt quite hopeless.

In life it's easy to be hopeful when things are going well, but perhaps not so much when things have gone wrong. In my own family this year we lost a dearly loved member of our family and there was, and still is, a deep sense of loss. But I am always hopeful for the future.

My wife Carol and I help to care for two of our grandchildren, and they stay with us for a few nights each week. We were going through a very difficult time with them. On some Sundays there is prayer ministry here in church after the main service. I felt I needed this prayer ministry and two of the prayer ministers prayed with me. Well, the next day (Monday) the children were reformed characters! Carol and I were both coping well. I'm sure it was an intervention of the Holy Spirit. Hope indeed! We still have our ups and downs, but we really needed that oasis of calm.

I pray this Christmas that the birth, the life, the death and resurrection of Jesus may give us all hope. Amen

3. Is Hope lost?

LORRAINE SANDERSON

I lost all hope on 2nd August 2013 with the unexpected death of my youngest son, he was 39. I sank into a very dark place, my whole body weighed down by grief and despair.

I was going through the motions of living. Then one day I felt as though I was being encouraged to return to St Stephens. It was as if I was being held by the hand and led.

My welcome at Church was overwhelming. For a long time I chose to sit by myself on the pews of the Lady Chapel.

Slowly, very slowly, with encouragement, love and patience by the Church family, I started to become more involved with the Church.

I already knew the Bible stories, but it was as if I was hearing them for the first time, with a whole new understanding, the messages of love and hope ringing loudly in my ears.

The weight I had been carrying for so long was lifting and I was able to raise my eyes to heaven. With hope comes a new life and acceptance. I still grieve for the loss of my beautiful boy and miss him every day, but I know that one day we will be together again.

More often than not when I visit my son's memorial tree for our weekly catch up of the family news and the football scores, I am greeted with a rainbow. It's as if God and my son are sending a message, letting me know he is ok and I'm not to worry.

I now feel I am able to pass on my new found hope in Jesus to all who love him.

4. Seeds of Hope

LAUREN JOYCE

As I navigate the challenges of my LIVE IN care placement, I've found that nurturing seeds of hope through my faith in Jesus, brings light to even the toughest days.

One night as I was feeling exhausted, caring for an elderly woman who was very unwell, I found myself in a moment of desperation, I prayed to God as my eyes began to feel heavy and asked him 'God, it's late and I'm tired, wake me up when the Ambulance arrives'. Miraculously, he did just that!

When I woke up, I felt a renewed sense of hope and readiness to assist my client, the paramedics came in and, in that moment, they were able to stabilise her and put things in place with the GP ready to help the woman I care for. I never do this, but in that moment, I asked the lead paramedic who was so helpful, her name, I don't know what led me to ask but I did. She told me it was 'Aniela'.

Soon after they left, I looked up the Hebrew meaning of her name and I was just sat in complete awe when I found out that it meant 'Angel, Messenger of God'. In that moment, I just had a peace that filled my heart knowing that God was in this helping me, He showed me his faithfulness and he gave me hope that still flourishes even in challenging times, Jesus really is my HOPE.

5. Transformed by Hope

CLIVE MILKINS

My job often starts with a potential human catastrophe. And yet, I believe Hope evolves from despair. I believe something good can always emerge. Hope transforms my life. Transformed from pain, loneliness anger and shock. A belief coming from God that things will get better.

Being a therapeutic riding coach is all about HOPE, helping others to an improved future.

My faith is about hoping that the challenge of changing from an existing situation, into something new will allow me to find an inner strength.

I HOPE and pray that I will never feel pain, fear or loss, or sit at the hospital bedside of a loved one. I hope I will never see the inside of a prison. To know either, is to know life changing tragedy and suffering.

Hope through Jesus and faith makes my current situation bearable, enables me to breathe, rest and reflect, regroup and transform. Hope can overcome existing tragedy and pain. A belief and trust that is the future and overpowers the question. 'Why me?'

There is something so enriching, so positive and exciting about my faith, mistakes will be forgiven, peace, serenity and calm will be found.

Hope changes me. It points me beyond the current situation to an acknowledgement that there is something good out there to come, in spite of the current tears, sadness and suffering.

Hope is faith knowing I have someone beside me. Knowing Jesus walks with me, is Hope for a better future with God. A personal growth. And journey that through knowing Him. Transforms me. I may not win a medal, but I will heal, things will change. ALL WILL BE WELL.

6. Hope through the years

BRIAN BROWN

Just one or two of the many moments of 'Hope Realised' I have experienced down the years as a follower of Jesus.

Going back to the 60's, the Lord blessed me with a most wonderful partner – Joan. We met in February and married in December 1961.

As our children arrived, life started to become financially challenging. Eventually, with four children, it became difficult. With no solution in sight, the stress and arguments which ensued became threatening.

Together, we worked and prayed for an end to this situation.

The Lord's answer was revealed by my being made redundant. However, I soon found other employment and the redundancy payment more than met our needs, enabling us to move forward in happiness, with 'Hope Realised'.

Fast forward to the 1980's. Joan was diagnosed with breast cancer while only in her mid 50's. Miraculously, she made a full recovery and life which had seemed so threatened became full of joy once again! 'Hope Realised'.

Sadly, Joan left us in 2022 but, as I look back, especially on the latest of our great grandchildren, born just a few weeks ago, I do so with thanks for the Lord's many blessings. As Simeon experienced: 'Hope Realised' in full.

Jesus is our Lord and Saviour and my ongoing hope is that one day I will meet Him face to face and, with Joan, remain in His loving presence for all eternity.

7. Jesus our Hope, now and forever

LISA WIGMORE

In the beginning was God – Creator of all things. He made everything to love, to work together, using a more recent term – to be sustainable – with Him... to evolve and be part of all his creating and re-creating.

He was the Hope and Creator of the world, the universe, the galaxy, of everything!

In the beginning of my life, I was loved – by my parents and family, by God himself. I know I was loved into being because I was encompassed by it. There was hope for the future, for a life of flourishing and all good things. And God was the foundation of that hope as He was an accepted part of my life. In the beginning of my life, there was hope for a future of plans and purposes that were good, and there was love. All was well.

Then as a teenager, I had lots of questions. The life questions we all have I believe.

Why aren't people nice to one another? In both individual relationships and in state ones. Why is there war? Why do people kill or exploit others? Why is their harm and abuse? Why am I struggling with life, when everyone else seems to be sailing through. Why God?

Are you there? I can't hear you? If there is a God, why is the world you created in such a mess??

The questions continued, in fact they got more real and personal.

On the outside, I was a party girl – life was fun and frivolous, but the dark times got worse, invaded every part of my being, until life was, as Amy Winehouse described it, 'black.' On the surface I was living well, good job, own home, I even laughed and had fun. But those plans and purposes for good and for a future with hope... that eluded me. Not the outer stuff I just mentioned, the stuff we all see... I mean the plans and purposes for who Lisa is, my character, my soul, my hope, disintegrated.

The problem, was, I was asking myself those questions... I wasn't seeking answers in a safe place – and I'd firmly closed my ears off to God. For me life became hopeless. There was a void in my life that nothing; a nice home, a good job, new clothes, a drink, loving husband, even having our son... there was nothing in my life that truly filled that void inside. And that void meant I didn't fully grasp who I was anymore. Yes, I knew I was a daughter, wife, mother and sales office manager... but who was Lisa, and where had my hope in a future of deep flourishing gone?

Then Jesus found a way to get my attention... and I wondered if all the hype about him could be true? God emptying himself if his divinity to be born in a stable... chose to die for me on a cross... all because he loved me sooo much, that he was willing to pay the price for me to be free and accept his love, his peace and his hope into my life.

Hope was born. I let Jesus in.

The void in my life was filled.

Stuff still happens, the rough and tough of life still goes on – but He is the hope within. The Hope for me, the Hope for you, the Hope for the world. A relationship with Jesus transforms everything – now and forever!

Jesus is our light in the darkness. He is God with us. **Jesus is our Hope!**

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>

MARCH CYCLE OF PRAYER BEGINNING SUNDAY OF EACH WEEK

02 Beloved	Kevin and Lin Vicker Lisa & Jamie Vural & Amira Mohammed Jean Wadsworth, Mark Walker	St Stephens Road Stanley Park Road Stanton Close
09 Uganda Link	Tony Weare, Pauline Webb Lisa, Paul & Tom Wigmore Joan Williams	Station Road Sweets Close Sweets Road
16 St Stephen's Infant School	Becky and Joe Wilson, Mary Winrow Keith Winter, Susan Woodey Gladys Woolford	The Close The Crescent The Elms
23 St Stephen's Junior School	See & Know Children: Ella Bennett Eziah Bennett, Gus & Sylvie Bettersworth Jack & Olly Booth, Elvis Carmen	The Gardens The Green The Haven
30 Kings Forest Primary School	See & Know continued: Harry Flannery, Ellis & Jude Gervais Rory Hawkins, Jesse MacSorely	The Reddings The Ride The Wickets

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

MARCH DIARY

01 Saturday	2-4pm	Afternoon Tea & music in the Church Hall Entry by pre-booked ticket only
04 Tuesday	1.30pm	Knit & Natter Church Room (then weekly)
05 ASH WEDNESDAY	10am 11am 6.30pm	Ash Wednesday Service 1 Coffee/Chat/Company at Turnpike Pub Ash Wednesday Service 2
06 Thursday	10am 2pm	See & Know in Church Hall (weekly in term time) Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)
07 Friday	7pm	OUTBURST Youth Club in Church Hall
08 Saturday	9am	LENT COURSE begins
10 Monday	10.15am	Retreat Memory Café in Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers
11 Tuesday	9-11.30am 7.45pm	WELCOME SPACE in Church Room PCC meeting in Church Room
12 Wednesday	2pm	BIBLE CHAT in Church Room
13 Thursday	1.30-3.30pm	Men's Group in Church Room
14 Friday	2pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall
15 Saturday	9am	LENT COURSE week 2
17 Monday	2pm	Ministry Team meeting in Church Room
20 Thursday	2pm	Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)
21 Friday	6.30pm	FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE in Church
22 Saturday	9am	LENT COURSE week 3 (next session 5 April)
24 Monday	10.15am	Retreat Memory Café in Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers
25 Tuesday	9-11.30am	WELCOME SPACE in Church Room
26 Wednesday	2pm	BIBLE CHAT in Church Room
27 Thursday	1.30-3.30pm	Men's Group in Church Room
28 Friday	2pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall
29 Saturday	9am	Little Church in Church Hall (by invite only)
30 Sunday	10am	MOTHERING SUNDAY all-age service in Church

APRIL DIARY

01 Tuesday	1.30pm	Knit & Natter Church Room (then weekly)
05 Saturday	9am	LENT COURSE week 4

FROM THE REGISTERS

SINCE JANUARY

Funerals:

- **JANUARY 30: Valerie Sprake (88).** The Celebration of Valerie's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.
Please hold Valerie's daughters, Heather, Lynn and Donna; sister, Hilary; and all their families, as well as Valerie's many friends in your prayers.
- **FEBRUARY 05: Andrew Holbrook (73).** The Celebration of Andrew's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.
Please hold Andrew's wife, Fiona; their children, James, Ben & Lizzie, and their families; Andrew's sister and brother, Kathleen and Michael; as well as the wider family and Andrew and Fiona's many friends in your prayers.
- **FEBRUARY 11: Carole Baldwin (64).** The celebration of Carole's life was held at St Stephens Church, Soundwell, followed by 'the farewell' at Westerleigh Crematorium.
Please hold Carole's husband, Andy; their children, Emily, Carly Charlotte and Rob, and their families; Carole's sister, Bev and her family; as well as the wider family and Carole's many friends in your prayers.

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL



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Vicar, 52 Gladstone Street
Soundwell, Bristol BS16 4RF
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