

Open Space

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

KNOWING JESUS... MAKING JESUS KNOWN!



I LOVE sweets! Chocolate is good, whether it is Cadbury's Dairy Milk, Whole Nut or Bournville.

I even enjoy chocolate when it finds itself melted into a hot drink, served in a mug with lashings of whipped cream on top. But I do love sweets – Cola Bottles (*especially Lidl's own*), Haribo Star Mix, Maoam chewy sweets (especially the cola, orange, and lemon flavours) and Skittles.

However, I am not a fan of liquorice, so I really do **not** like Liquorice Allsorts! Yet today, they are on my mind.

Because it seems that God has put them on my mind, even though there is no chance that I will want to go out and buy a packet to eat, I thought he might want me find out about these sweets and share my findings and musings about them and faith with you.

Liquorice Allsorts have been around since 1899 and the story goes that one day, Bassetts sent one of their salesmen, Charlie Thompson, from their factory in Sheffield to Leicester to demonstrate their newly manufactured liquorice sweets to a potential buyer.

During the demonstration the salesman accidentally knocked over his box of sweet samples on to and all over the floor in front of the buyer.

Seeing all the wonderful, colourful mix of sweets on the floor, the buyer asked that Bassetts produce just such an assortment for him to sell. What this became was the mix of sweets we now know as Liquorice Allsorts.

IN the aftermath of Easter, the disciples were left a bit like the box of liquorice samples upended on the floor. They were a bit of a 'hotch-potch' of people – fishermen, a tax collector, activists and others who we know little about, each with their own colourful personalities, good and bad traits, each with their complex layers of failures and doubts... just like the diverse 'allsorts' in the box.

While Jesus had been alive they had stayed in reasonable order because Jesus had made it so (*like the box of sample sweets the salesman carried*).

But when Jesus was arrested and crucified the disciples were scattered, and although after the Resurrection on Easter Day they regrouped in the upper room for a while, (*like the liquorice sweets being replaced in their sample box for the journey back to Bassetts*), here they were after the ascension of Jesus back to heaven, left feeling as if they too had been poured out onto the floor all over again in a mess and a mix up.

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MAY
2026

Mission
Partners with
St Stephens:

Beloved
Bristol Churches
City Fund
Bristol City Centre
Soup Run
Bristol Schools
Connection
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

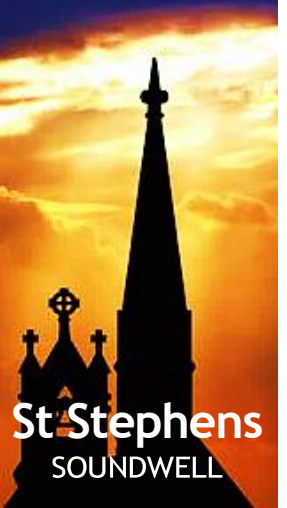
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www.saintstephen
soundwell.org

f saintstephen
soundwell

@SoundwellChurch

CHARITY NUMBER
1131503



St Stephens
SOUNDWELL



Allsorts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

But sometimes from what looks like chaos something wonderful begins. The 'happy accident' of the salesman and his liquorice sweets became the well-loved Liquorice Allsorts that are still popular today, nearly 130 years later.

And the disciples?

Well, they went on to be filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (this year celebrated in our churches on 24 May) and started the Christian Church which shared the Good News of Jesus with all the world.

The Christian Church is still sharing that Good News now, over 2000 years later and encouraging people, whoever they are, to follow

in the way of life that Jesus demonstrated and to share God's love in the world.

Just like Jesus called a bunch of 'all sorts' to follow him and to build something wonderful to share God's love, God still calls all sorts of people to be part of the Church today, in their local churches, in villages, in towns and cities all over the world.

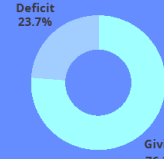
Whoever you are, whatever your past holds, whatever you look like, whatever age you are, you are welcome in God's Church, here in Soundwell or wherever you are, because God loves all sorts!

Have a blessed May. Lisa x

Our Church Financial Health



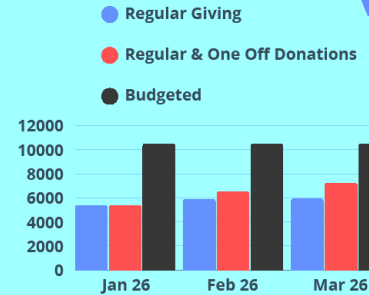
GIVING FOR MARCH



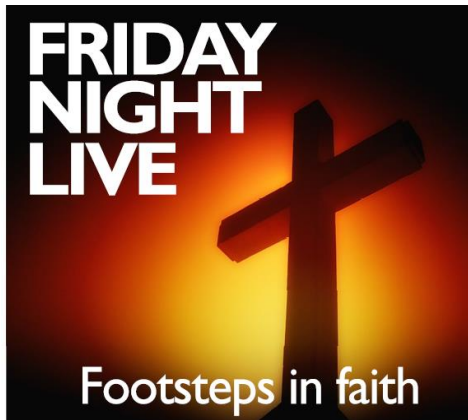
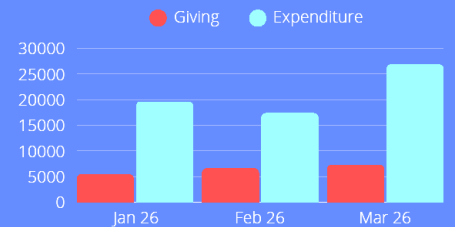
WHAT OUR GIVING NEEDS TO BE £10,500

GIVING RECEIVED £7231

Giving Last 3 Months



Giving v Church Expenses Last 3 Months



FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE

Footsteps in faith

15th MAY
6.30PM in Church



Welcome Space!

Tuesday 9 to 11.30am
12th & 26th MAY

Please note that under 17s must be accompanied by an adult).
IN OUR CHURCH ROOM

WEDNESDAY Bible Chat

in the Church Room

2.30PM
(2PM for a cuppa)

MAY 6th & 20th
JUNE 10th & 24th
JULY 8th & 22nd

BRING your Bible!

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS
7.15pm to 8.15pm

WE meet in the Church Room for anyone who wants to join in with simply reading the Bible! Though the scriptures in the Bible are thousands of years old, they still hold immense power, wisdom and guidance for us today!

There is no set structure or any course work to worry about and everyone is welcome!

Join us for COFFEE/CHAT & COMPANY



11AM WEDNESDAY 6th MAY

at the **Turnpike** on Soundwell Road.
A time to be, be known, and be together.

HOLY WEEK

in review!

PALM SUNDAY

St Stephens Church was delighted to host a special guest on/for Palm Sunday, by the name of Toby the donkey!

HE proved popular with Youth Church especially, after having made his hesitant but grand entrance into the main 10 am all-age service.

Toby was extremely well behaved, thankfully, and his handler answered questions about Toby in particular and also donkeys in general during the opening session of the church service.

After his exit, Toby was spoilt for an hour or more outside; by children from Youth Church.

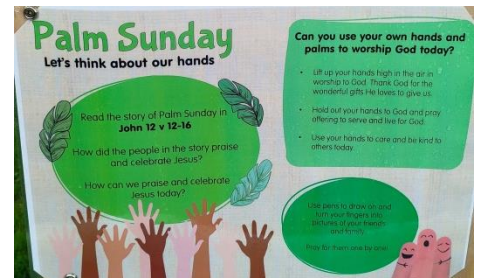
Numerous photos were taken and some are reproduced here!



EASTER TRAIL

THE displays change on a cyclical basis and so varies slightly each year but the emphasis remains the same.

There were clues to be solved and questions to answer to make the theme interactive.



EASTER SUNDAY FLOWERS

Absolutely magnificent!

The pictures speak for themselves.

Displays greeted us any which way we looked, in the entrance hall and the lobby and in the window sills and on the alter, by the pulpit and elsewhere.

Funds for the flowers were raised at the Tea & Music event held in late March, so our thanks to all involved.



EASTER SUNDAY SERMON

The central feature was a 'Transformation Station'...

It highlighted how God is in the business of 'transformation' and there is no darkness too dark, no situation too hopeless for God to transform and bring beauty from it. All we have to do?... be willing and follow Jesus! Easter is God's Transformation Station!

The reading was from Matthew chapter 28: verses 1-10.



Take an egg, pop it in the machine:



And 'just like that'...

 **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>



...and a hen appears, and chocolate eggs. Amazing and totally uneggspected...a really eggcellent sermon, etc.

READINGS & COLLECTS

SUNDAY 03 MAY 5th Sunday of Easter

Acts 7:55–end; Psalm 31:1–5
1 Peter 2:2–10; John 14:1–14

RISEN CHRIST, your wounds declare your love for the world and the wonder of your risen life: give us compassion and courage to risk ourselves for those we serve, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

SUNDAY 10 MAY 6th Sunday of Easter

Acts 17:22–31; Psalm 66:7–end
1 Peter 3:13–end; John 14:15–21

RISEN CHRIST, by the lakeside you renewed your call to your disciples: help your Church to obey your command and draw the nations to the fire of your love, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

SUNDAY 17 MAY 7th Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:6–14; Psalm 68:1–10, 32–end
1 Peter 4:12–14, 5:6–11; John 17:1–11

RISEN ASCENDED LORD, as we rejoice at your triumph, fill your Church on earth with power and compassion, that all who are estranged by sin may find forgiveness and know your peace, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

SUNDAY 24 MAY Pentecost

Acts 2:1–21; Psalm 104:26–end
1 Corinthians 12:3b–13; John 7:37–39

HOLY SPIRIT, sent by the Father, ignite in us your holy fire; strengthen your children with the gift of faith, revive your Church with the breath of love, and renew the face of the earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 31 MAY Trinity Sunday

Isaiah 40:12–17, 27–end; Psalm 8
2 Corinthians 12:11–end
Matthew 28:16–20;

HOLY GOD, faithful and unchanging: enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth, and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love, that we may truly worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

My St Stephens journey

I HAD never been a frequent Church goer, but due to my wife's involvement I attended various special services, such as Memorial and Remembrance.

Just over 5 years ago I took on the role of cleaner/handy man at the Church Hall and in doing so I have become more involved with the Church and aware of what was needed for the future.

About 18 months ago the Diocese was suggesting each Church had its own Eco Champions, to look at ways of reducing the Churches carbon footprint. This idea appealed to me, and I and Mike became Eco Champions for St Stephens.

The Diocese commissioned a report for each Church providing ideas and suggestions for energy saving projects.

To that end they were offering a £10,000 grant for any improvements to our Carbon footprint. I and Mike Hudd set about putting the wheels in motion. Our first task was to upgrade the lighting to LED in the Church and Hall. 95% of this has been achieved, paid for by the grant and also generous donations from the congregation,

Unfortunately, Mike was unable to continue any further, but I was determined to carry on and try and implement as many ideas suggested by the Diocese report.

Solar panels and Air source heating were suggested, and the West Of England Combined Authority were offering grants for 30% and 40% respectively, so it seemed an opportunity not to be missed.

To that end both items have been installed in February and March.

We have 22 Solar panels on the south facing lower Church roof with a 12kW battery for storage.

There are 3 Air to Air heating units installed in the Hall, which will provide energy efficient heating in winter and air conditioning in the summer.

Approval from the Diocese and planning permission was a long and laborious process, but with the help of Lisa and Sandy's knowledge both were obtained.

Whilst everything was in process I received a Newsletter from A Rocha UK, an Eco Church organisation we had been invited to join. In that edition there was an article about a song called 'Renovation' which I played. I was so moved by the song as it seemed to echo the journey I was taking at St Stephens, so I chose to have it played at my Baptism.

Something has changed in me and I have felt that God was calling me and encouraging me to improve his Church.

I now attend Church more often, and am part of several committees and also have recently become Co-Church Warden.

I wait eagerly to see what God has planned for me in the future.

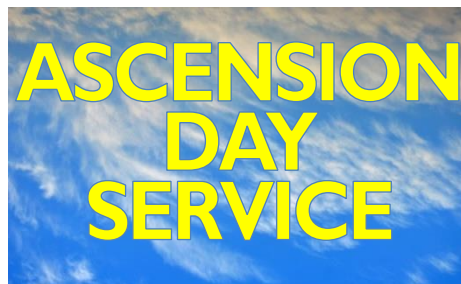
Paul Sanderson



MEMORIAL SERVICE

**6.30PM SUNDAY
10th MAY**

*A service and time
to remember loved ones*



**THURSDAY
14th MAY 10AM**
in Church

NEW CHURCH START TIME



FROM 7th JUNE



BUBBLE CHURCH is a Sunday church service especially for babies, toddlers, and young families.

ITS aim is to bring church to where people are; to allow young families to have a church for them, a space to engage with God and have a time of fellowship. The service includes action songs, a Bible story, puppets and a simple activity and even time to offer breakfast/a cup of tea.

Bubble Church is for families to be together, where everyone joins in!

It is best suited to children under seven years old in.

It is a service to worship, learn about Jesus and develop Christian faith. It follows a simple liturgy which is repeated each week to meet the children at the development level they are at.

This means there is confession and absolution, scripture, singing praise, a sermon, and prayer in every service.

It's not just a way into church; it IS church!

Having surveyed our community, and learned from the experience of over 80 other churches across the country that have already begun a Bubble Church Service, we know the best time of day for this is first thing in the morning on Sundays.

So, to enable us to hold a Bubble Church Service and be open and welcoming to the young families of our community, and also to continue all that we do on Sunday mornings, we need to move the start time of our service back, just half an hour, to 10.30 am.

We will do this every Sunday, as having differing weekly start times will be confusing for people.

This is what your Ministry Team and your PCC have agreed:

8.30am: Bubble Church Team set up things in the Church Hall.

9.15am: Families arrive for a croissant and fruit breakfast.

9.30am: Bubble Church Service starts (*plus access to the kitchen in the Church Hall for Café Central volunteers*).

10am: Bubble Church Service finishes.

10.30am: Regular Church Service and Youth Church starts.

Bubble Church will begin initially once a month, and hopefully move very soon to twice a month... or perhaps even weekly?? But let's not jump ahead of ourselves.

Help please!

WE would like some volunteers to help with two projects:

- **Paint the church doors.**

Weather permitting, we hope to do this on **Tuesday 26th**, and/or **27th** and/or **28th May** from 5.30pm onwards.

We would like to sand the doors and then paint.

If you have a power sander and/or a paint brush or two, please bring them along.

We have a form at the church to put your name and contact details on and which day you can help.

- **Gardening evening.**

on **Wednesday 3rd June** again 5.30pm onwards.

A bit of weeding and tidying up. Please bring any gardening tools. No need to sign up, just turn up.

THANK YOU!

from the Fabric Team

(Gill Mayo, Paul Sanderson, Tim Parker, Matt Gait, Lorraine Sanderson and Lisa)

I remember, as I am sure many of you do too, that for decades our service used to start at 10.30 am.

We have also begun our worship at 9.30 am and 11 am, before the change to 10 am around 9 years ago. So, we are used to change at St Stephens!

I pray we will embrace a change again, for the benefit of those who are yet to know Jesus and to enable us to share our love of God in Jesus with them. Please pray for Elaine, who has and continues to be doing a fabulous job, part of which is making Bubble Church a reality at St Stephen's.

Please pray for the team that is supporting her in this, and also for all of us as we navigate and get used to this slight change.

And please also remember:

'We Follow Jesus' and He is the one who tells us to '**Go, make disciples**' (MATTHEW 28:19). Which is precisely what we will be doing through Bubble Church.

Thank you. *In His service.* **Lisa x**

THE MOTHERING Characteristics of God

ON Mothering Sunday in March, our focus was on the Mothering Characteristics of God.

WE thought about Motherhood being a privilege. But, recognised it can also be very painful at times!

We pondered; what God thinks about all of this.

In Church, we are well used to speaking about God as a Father – we pray Our Father in Heaven, we bless folk in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

But the Biblical writers also use mothering images for God too, some very unexpected!

After the service, many people told me how much they had appreciated this... and that it really got them thinking in new ways about God. Some asked for the words we used, so this is why I am sharing this with you again.

1. A mother hen. In one of the Psalms, God is described as a mother hen sheltering and protecting her young. Sometimes facing danger herself in order to keep those chicks, those eggs safe.



In the Gospels, Jesus himself expresses his longing to gather up the people of Jerusalem like a mother hen gathers up her chicks under her wings. So here we have a wonderful image of God protecting us, keeping us safe and warm and snuggly.

2. A mother eagle. Now, did you know that an Eagle mummy, when she is teaching her young to fly, will actually carry her baby on her back, high above the clouds, and then while they are practicing flapping their wings, will then

swoop underneath them to catch them when they fall?



And then do that again and again until the baby gets the knack of flying! So, there's something there about fostering independence, but in a supportive, responsive way.

3. A Mama bear. If someone is described as a mama bear, then woe betide anyone who harms her babies. And who would want to get in the way of this Grizzly bear mummy and her triplets?



So, God's love is also described as a ferocious fierce love! And in the prophets God is described as a mother bear robbed of her cubs!

4. And there are human aspects of God's motherly love too!

God is sometimes described as a mother giving birth, and, more specifically, experiencing the pains of childbirth.

In the book of Job, it says that the sea was birthed from our God's womb! And when Genesis describes God as the Maker of all humanity, the Hebrew word used is the same one as when Eve gave birth!

In the book of Isaiah, God is described as panting, crying out in birth. And Jesus even uses this birthing imagery.

In the book of John, just before his arrest and crucifixion, Jesus says, "*The hour has come!*" which

was a phrase used frequently to refer to the moment when active labour starts for a woman in childbirth.

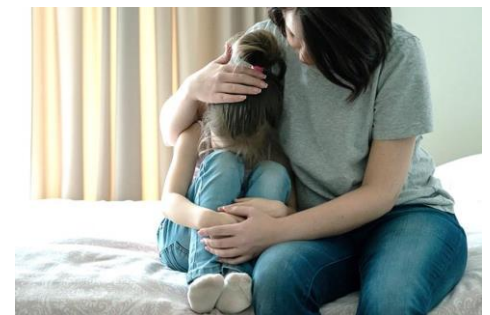
5. And we also have God being like a breastfeeding Mum.

The Hebrew words, *El Shaddai*, are literally translated, 'Breastfeeding One!' or God with breasts!

And the Prophet Isaiah describes God responding to the people's cry by reassuring them with the question, "*Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb?*"

6. In the book of Hosea, God says, God: "Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I who took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them." A wonderful tender mothering image.

7. And then we have the imagery of God the comforting Mum.



The book of Isaiah has many images of God as a mother:

"As a mother comforts her child, so will I [God] comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem."

(ISAIAH 66:13)

So have a look at these images that describe God as mother – and read all that has been said.

Which of them speaks to you?

MAY CYCLE OF PRAYER *BEGINNING SUNDAY OF EACH WEEK*

03 St Stephens Junior School	Carolyn, Martin & Jess Smith, Fin Sollars, Margaret Stawte, Marlene Stone Nick Stott, Debbie & family	Eastleigh Close Eastleigh Road Elmore
10 Kings Forest Primary School	George and Abbi Striplin Pat and Martyn Talbot, Roy Tanner Rita Thorne, Christine Tippet	Fairford Close Fairlyn Drive Florence Road
17 Tynings Primary School	Vanessa and Nick Tippet Ken and Gill Tizzard, Wayne and Nick Topps Patrick Duggan & Debbie Uren & families	Frys Hill Gilpin Close Gladstone Court
24 St Mary Redcliffe & Temple School	Jean Wadsworth, Mark Walker Tony Weare, Pauline Webb Bernice Webber-Brown	Gladstone Drive Gladstone Street Gloucester Road
31 Kings Oak Academy	Lisa, Paul & Tom Wigmore Chloe Wilkins, Becky and Joe Wilson Steve Wiltshire	Gorse Hill Hayward Road Highview Road

SUNDAYS: 8am BCP Holy Communion (on the 1st & 3rd Sunday).

10am Community Worship Service weekly.

10am Youth Church in the Church Hall weekly.

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 weekly – **except for** the 13th May service is cancelled because of Ascension Day 10am Service on 14th.

MAY DIARY

01 Friday	1.30pm 7pm	Pensioner's Group in the Church Hall Outburst Youth Club in the Church Hall
05 Tuesday	1.30pm	Knit & Natter in the Church Room (then weekly)
06 Wednesday	11am 2pm 7.15pm	Coffee/Chat/Company at the Turnpike Pub BIBLE CHAT in the Church Room BRING YOUR BIBLE in the Church Room
07 Thursday	10am 2pm	See & Know in the Church Hall (term-time weekly) Ladies Group in the Church & Church Hall
10 Sunday	6.30pm	MEMORIAL SERVICE in Church
11 Monday	10.15am	Retreat Memory Café in the Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers
12 Tuesday	9-11.30am 7.30pm	WELCOME SPACE in the Church Room PCC Meeting in the Church Room
13 Wednesday	7.15pm	BRING YOUR BIBLE in the Church Room
14 Thursday	10am 1.30pm 7.30pm	ASCENSION DAY SERVICE in Church Men's Group in the Church Room Regan's Licensing at St Nicolas Church, Yate
15 Friday	1.30pm 6.30pm	Pensioner's Group in the Church Hall FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE in Church
20 Wednesday	2pm 7.15pm	BIBLE CHAT in the Church Room BRING YOUR BIBLE in the Church Room
21 Thursday	1.30pm	Ladies Group in the Church Room
25 Monday	10.15am	Retreat Memory Café in the Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers
26 Tuesday	9-11.30am	WELCOME SPACE in the Church Room
27 Wednesday	7.15pm	BRING YOUR BIBLE in the Church Room
28 Thursday	2pm	Men's Group Film Show in the Church Room
29 Friday	1.30pm	Pensioner's Group in the Church Hall
31 Sunday	10am	Community worship with APCM in Church

JUNE DIARY

02 Tuesday	1.30pm	Knit & Natter in the Church Room (then weekly)
03 Wednesday	11am 7.15pm	Coffee/Chat/Company at the Turnpike Pub BRING YOUR BIBLE in the Church Room

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

● **APRIL 12:** **Ralphie Royston Veale**
Please hold Ralphie's parents, Chloe and Byron; his brother, Vinnie, his God-parents, Jessye, Heidi, Emma, Jack, Gareth and Katy; and all the family and their friends in your prayers.

Funerals

● **APRIL 01:** **Nellie Chilcott** (74).
The Celebration of Nellie's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium. *Please hold her children; Lara, Ben and Simon; the wider family and all Nellie's friends in your prayers.*

● **APRIL 15:** **Barbara Violet Sewell** (86).
The celebration of Barbara's life was held at St Stephens Church, Soundwell. *Please hold Peter, Beverly and Craig, Barbara's grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as well as the wider family and Barbara's many friends in your prayers.*

● **APRIL 16:** **Diane Elsie, Mary Middleton** (85).
The Celebration of Diane's life was held at Canford Crematorium. *Please hold Tim, Alastair, Louise, Suzanne and all the family as well as Diane's friends in your prayers.*

● **APRIL 17:** **Joan Williams** (91).
The Celebration of Joan's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium. *Please hold her children; Neil, Sian & Lynne, their families, the wider family and all Joan's friends and neighbours in your prayers.*

● **APRIL 20:** **Bob Fudge** (83).
The Celebration of Bob's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium. *Please hold Diane, Shaun with Julie, Jayne with Steve, Josh & Hollie with Ellis, as well as the wider family and Bob's many friends in your prayers.*

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL



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● **Revd Sandy Cooper**
Associate Minister, 1 Deerhurst
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Telephone 0117 967 2621



● **Elaine Brewster**
Community Chaplain
Telephone 07 902 095915



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

● **Lin Cooper** Director of Music
Telephone 0117 967 2621

● **Lorraine Sanderson** Treasurer
Telephone 0117 940 1829



● **Jenny Bishop**
Pastoral Co-ordinator
Telephone 0117 9575729