

Open Space

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

KNOWING JESUS... MAKING JESUS KNOWN!

ASCENSION DAY

ON the 29th of May we celebrate Ascension Day which is the time when Jesus ascended into heaven.

ACTS 1:6-11: SO WHEN they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom of Israel?"

He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.

They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven?"

This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

AS I think of Jesus leaving the earth and entering into heaven, I am faced with challenging thoughts as well as thoughts of love and hope.

Firstly, to know that Jesus is in heaven and seated at the right hand of the father is comforting but it sometimes makes the faith journey difficult because often we feel alone.

When hardships and emotional events happen to me, I turn to God in prayer and choose to rely on him.

But often, it seems as if God is distant, he is in heaven and I am down here on earth, how could he possibly understand what I am going through or what I am feeling?

Through reading my bible, especially the gospels, I am reminded of struggles that Jesus faced during his time on the earth. Jesus faced opposition, ridicule and embarrassment, emotions of heartbreak and sadness.

Through this understanding, I am comforted because it teaches me that Jesus understands everything I am feeling because he went through all of it himself and he felt every emotion therefore he is not distant but close to me because he knows how I feel.

My second thought of Jesus's ascension is one of comfort and hope.

As Jesus has ascended into heaven and now sits at the right hand of the father, we as followers of Christ can enjoy all the blessings and favour that come from the completion of Jesus's mission and his ascension. Jesus's entrance into heaven reminds us that he has conquered sin and through him, we are forgiven from all our mistakes.

As someone who only started attending church at the age of 24, I have not always lived the way God wanted me to live.

I have made many mistakes in my past and I continue to make mistakes today.

The fact that Jesus is in heaven now and has conquered sin gives me hope and comfort that I am forgiven and God loves me with an everlasting love.

Continued overleaf >

MAY 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

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St Stephens
SOUNDWELL

ASCENSION DAY

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Alongside the fact that my sins are forgiven, Jesus did something amazing as he ascended into heaven and that is the fact that he opened the way to eternal life for all those who believe in him.

It is a comfort and a joy to know that God has prepared a place in heaven for each one of us once our earthly lives have come to an end.

The Book of Revelation, chapter 21, talks about a new heaven and a new earth. These scriptures state:

THEN I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

THOUGH we live in a world that often feels unfair and dark at times, the scriptures help us to understand and to know that through Jesus all things will be made right in the end.

And finally, the ascension of Jesus leaves each one of us with a special challenge.

As we read about Jesus's life in the bible, we learn about how he went around doing ministry and how he taught people about the love of God.

**FRIDAY
NIGHT LIVE
16th MAY 6.30PM**

Back again as usual
after our Easter break!

We also learn, that after Jesus ascended into heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes to us, he brings a unique gift which we can use to build up the church and build up God's kingdom here on earth.

The challenge that is set before us is to firstly find out what that gift is and then secondly use it as we travel on our faith journeys.

This is by no means an easy task as it requires bravery.

To find out what gift the Holy Spirit brings to us requires us to step out of our comfort zones and to try new things.

This may seem uncomfortable and something we may be reluctant to do however, just as the Holy Spirit brings the gift, he will also provide us with the bravery to carry out the use of our gifts.

My prayer as we celebrate the Day of Ascension is that each one of us may strive to discover what gifts we have and then look for opportunities to use them.

By doing so, we will be displaying the love of God to a world that is so in need of it.

Regan

**COFFEE/
CHAT &
COMPANY**

**WEDNESDAY
5th MAY
At 11am**

at the **Turnpike Pub**
on **Soundwell Road**



*A time to be,
be known,
and be together*

Welcome Space

**TUESDAY 13th MAY
9 to 11.30am**

**Conversation,
free snacks & refreshments
ALL ARE WELCOME!***

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

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

*** IN OUR CHURCH ROOM**

LIGHTING UPGRADE

IF YOU FEEL YOU can make a contribution towards the cost we face, then please can I ask you to give donations to Lorraine, our Treasurer, letting her know it is to support the Lighting Project.

Upgrading work has been done in the Church Hall and further work will be taking place in the Church Room, plus of course any eventually in 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

A thank you FROM TONY WEARE

TO: My dear brothers and sisters at St Stephens,

I would like to thank you all for the prayers and thoughts during my recent heart attack and subsequent cardiac surgery.

I had a few tough moments, but I was greatly sustained by the thought that you were thinking and praying for me. Many thanks.

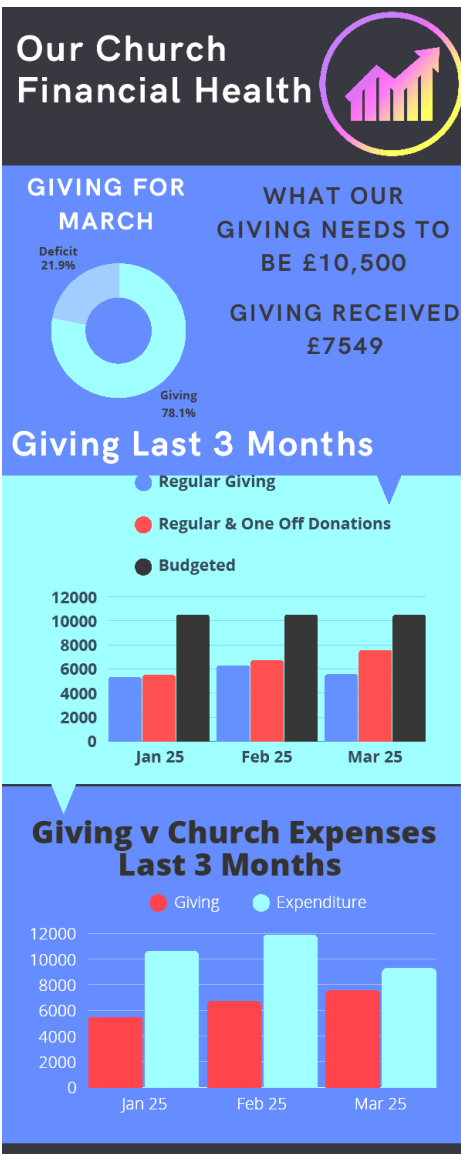
God's blessings be with you all.

Tony Weare



MEMORIAL SERVICE

6.30PM SUNDAY 11th MAY
A service and time to remember loved ones



APCM SUNDAY 18th MAY 10am

WE ARE again incorporating our Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) into a Communion service.

APCM will receive nominations for several positions, such as:

- a) Two Church Wardens for the year ahead,
 - b) Parochial Church Council (PCC) members for a 3-year term – this year we have space for 4.
 - c) Deanery Synod Representatives
- We will also receive nominations for those who wish to continue or become Assistant Church Wardens.

The Annual Church Financial report will also be presented during the meeting.

To know more about, or to volunteer for any of the positions available, please ask for an application form by phone, email or in person.

The APCM report will be available about a week or two before the actual meeting, and on the day, a special order of service/agenda will also be available.

Please do prayerfully consider being one of these active members of your Church.

Thank you! **Regan**



THURSDAY 29th MAY 7.30PM in Church

READINGS & COLLECTS



SUNDAY 04 MAY 3rd Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:1–20; Psalm 30
 Revelation 5:11–end; John 21:1–19
 RISEN CHRIST, you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope: strengthen us to proclaim your risen life and fill us with your peace, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

SUNDAY 11 MAY 4th Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:36–end; Psalm 23
 Revelation 7:9–end; John 10:22–30
 RISEN CHRIST, faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep: teach us to hear your voice and to follow your command, that all your people may be gathered into one flock, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

SUNDAY 18 MAY 5th Sunday of Easter/APCM

John 13:31–35
 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 25 MAY 6th Sunday of Easter

Acts 16:9–15; Psalm 67
 Revelation 21:10, 22–22.5; John 14:23–29
 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.

PALM SUNDAY

Easter flowers

WE can all surely agree that the flowers in church over Easter were magnificent and served as a wonderful backdrop for the Baptism held on the Sunday.

The flower ladies were rightly praised for their efforts, and shown below is but a small selection of the many displays seen around the church.



OUR celebrity guest, Flash the donkey made a grand entrance to our Palm Sunday service!

Flash was interviewed by members of Youth Church, via the handler; and then once duty done, Flash retired outside where he could be heard commenting on Regan's sermon, in-between munching on some well-earned carrots.



EASTER TRAIL *in review*

THE Annual Easter Trail was set up again this year, for the week before Easter Sunday and there was the usual quiz to solve by visiting each display set up around the Church grounds. Did you take part? Did you solve the clues? There were also QR codes to access via smart phones, for further details of the Easter Story.



Do you have green fingers?

CALLING ALL GARDENERS!

NOW that Spring has sprung, the church gardens are now in need of regular maintenance.

VERY kindly and diligently, Tim keeps the grassy areas mowed, and a huge thank you to him for that.

BUT, the flower beds etc, are also in need of some TLC. If you can spare a bit of time to do some weeding, dead-heading and general tidying up then please think about helping.

Top tip from me – if you go along when **Welcome Space** or **Knit and Natter** are taking place, then you are virtually guaranteed to qualify for a refreshing cuppa to spur you on – which is what I usually do!!

Thank you! **Julia Merrifield**





VE 80th ANNIVERSARY

Garden Party!

on **Sunday 4TH May**
12noon~2.30PM



AT ST STEPHENS

in our Church Grounds

Featuring: VE DAY Memories

GAMES • QUIZ • FILMS

BRING AND SHARE A PICNIC



VE or **Victory in Europe** was declared at the end the Second World War on 8th May 1945 after 6 long years of fighting on the European continent.

It was a celebration to mark the end of hostilities and a time of immense relief and gratitude at the end of war.

ON this the 80th Anniversary, few of the original survivors of the combat are still alive from those years ago but their sacrifice of service, and the memory of the fallen, live on in annual commemorations and in this special year of celebration we invite you to join in a **Garden Party** to be held at **St Stephens** on **4th May**, the Sunday before the **VE Day**.

● Before the party, why not attend the 10am Community Communion service in the morning, and stay on afterwards, spend time in the church hall, where the café will be running as usual.

For the outdoors, please bring your own picnic lunch and perhaps something to share. Tea, coffee, squash etc will be available.

Please bring your own chairs/blankets or something to sit on outside.

If the weather isn't good we will gather indoors in the church buildings.

NB: If you have any VE-Day mementos, wartime photos or artifacts, ration books, telegrams, souvenirs, etc, please would you contribute them to our 'VE-Day Memories' exhibition to be held in the Church Room.

Please inform Peter or one of the Ministers so we can arrange for the items to be displayed safely.

If you could be there to tell us about what you have brought or write an explanation for folk to read that would be even better!

PS: Had you realised: the dots and dashes that are used at the top of the opposite page: ●●●— ● is Morse code for VE!

Church Giving

THE FINANCIAL commitments of St Stephens are considerable but also growing. This short paragraph is firstly to say thank you to everyone who gives towards the running of our church, and to also highlight the need to review and perhaps increase our giving in the light of rising costs.

There are various ways to give. Most members of the congregation give directly and generously through their bank (via Parish Giving Scheme), and we are extremely grateful for this.

If you would like to sign up to give online please speak to one of our ministers. Alongside our online giving, we also have a contactless machine at the back of our church. If neither of these two ways of giving works for you then a collection plate is passed round during the offertory hymn in the Sunday service or you can donate through our envelopes scheme.

Once again, I would like to thank all those who give, we are extremely grateful. **Regan.**



HOPE IS NOT A CALCULATION, not a tally of gains or losses, but the ache of a heart stretched toward the horizon, a whisper of light breaking through the veil of the now.

IT does not linger in stillness, passive as shadows gather, nor wither into wishing, an empty hand grasping at air. Hope breathes—and in its breath, a spark becomes a flame, warming the coldest night.

HOPE refuses to yield, to let evil speak the final word. It stands defiant against despair, a protest against what-is, a midwife to the not-yet-born.

THERE is restlessness in this hope, a holy disquiet, a stirring revolution that will not let us sleep. It has seen the dawn, and in its light, the future world shimmers, not with the dull hues of habit, nor the dark chimes of business as usual, but with the effervescence of the possible.

HOPE is not a calculation, not a tally of gains or losses, but the ache of the heart, peering through a veil, longing for the day—face to face, when every tear will be wiped away.

Hope is Jesus – thanks be to God!

Lisa – JANUARY 2025

MAY CYCLE OF PRAYER *BEGINNING SUNDAY OF EACH WEEK*

04 John Cabot Academy	Annabelle, Shaun & Reuben Bignell Bill and Jenny Bishop, Edward Bishop William, Jess & Beatrice Bishop	Acacia Avenue Acacia Close Acacia Road
11 Downend School	Grace Blackburn, Jackie Blackwell Geoff Blowfield, Rosemary Boulton June Brain	Alexandra Close Alexandra Gardens Alexandra Place
18 Mangotsfield School	Karen Brasier, Mary Britton Bill and Jan Brookshaw Thomas Brown, Lynn Burton	Anchor Road Baglyn Avenue Barrington Close
25 Soundwell Academy	Emma, Ian, Riley & Morgan Clarke Sue Clements, Jackie Clench Sandra Conway, Maggie Cook	Barrington Court Beazer Close Birch Road

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**

MAY DIARY

01 Thursday	10am 2pm	See & Know in Church Hall (weekly in term time) Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)
02 Friday	7pm	OUTBURST Youth Club in Church Hall
04 Sunday	12noon	• VE Garden Party in the Church Grounds (See details on pages 6&7)
06 Tuesday	1.30pm	Knit & Natter Church Room (then weekly)
07 Wednesday	11am 7pm	Coffee/Chat/Company at Turnpike Pub DISCIPLESHIP COURSE in Church Room
08 Thursday	1.30-3.30pm	Men's Group in Church Room
09 Friday	2pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall
11 Sunday	6.30pm	• MEMORIAL SERVICE in Church
12 Monday	10.15am	Retreat Memory Café in Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers
13 Tuesday	9-11.30am 7.30pm	WELCOME SPACE in Church Room PCC Meeting in Church Room
14 Wednesday	2pm 7pm	BIBLE CHAT in Church Room DISCIPLESHIP COURSE in Church Room
15 Thursday	2pm	Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly)
16 Friday	6.30pm	• FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE in Church
18 Sunday	10am	• APCM in Church
21 Wednesday	7pm	DISCIPLESHIP COURSE in Church Room
22 Thursday	1.30-3.30pm	Men's Group in Church Room
23 Friday	2pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall
24 Saturday	9am	LITTLE Church by invitation
27 Tuesday	9-11.30am	WELCOME SPACE in Church Room
28 Wednesday	2pm 7pm	BIBLE CHAT in Church Room DISCIPLESHIP COURSE in Church Room
29 Thursday	7.30pm	ASCENSION DAY Service in Church

JUNE DIARY

03 Tuesday	1.30pm	Knit & Natter Church Room (then weekly)
04 Wednesday	11am	Coffee/Chat/Company at Turnpike Pub

FROM THE REGISTERS

SINCE MARCH

Funerals:

• APRIL 1: **Patricia Alder** (91).
A service of thanksgiving for the life of Patricia Alder was held at Canford Crematorium.

Please hold Julie and Clare, as well as Patricia's wider family and friends in your prayers.

• APRIL 4:
Patricia Alice Pullin, (Pat) (87).

A service of celebration for Pat's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.

Please hold her husband, Malcolm, their daughter Allison, as well as Pat's wider family and her many friends in your prayers.

Baptism:

• April 20: **Patsy Stocker**

The Baptism of Patsy Stocker took place at St Stephens Church Soundwell.

Please will you hold Patsy in your prayers as she continues her journey with God.

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL



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• **Revd Regan Mearns**
Curate
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• **Revd Sandy Cooper**
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• **Peter Robbins**
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• **Gill Mayo**
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• **Lorraine Sanderson** Treasurer
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