

Open Space

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

NOVEMBER 2023



Turn back time



ALTHOUGH this is the November newsletter, its issue date is 29 October, and it is that time of the year again when we 'turn back time'... as Cher once sung!

I'm thinking as I'm sitting at my desk – Oh I wish I could turn back time to this summer... because Paul and I had a very special holiday, where we were able to snorkel in clear waters every day, see fish of a magnitude of bright colours and swim alongside turtles, sting-rays, eagle-rays and barracuda. We also picked up starfish and marvelled at humming birds, it was a very special time indeed. And along with a few days with my parents in Lyme Regis, there were some very, very special memories made this year. If only we could go back there again to relive it all once more.

Time travel has been a theme of many a book, TV programme and film.

Thinking about my favourite in each category I would say Audrey Niffenegger's *The Time traveller's wife*, *Quantum Leap* (an American TV series shown in the early 90s) and of course my favourite time travelling film has to be *Back to the Future* (the first one!) – I was a real Michael J Fox fan when I was young!!! So, if you had a DeLorean car or perhaps even a Police Box like Doctor Who, where in the world and what year would you go back to?

I have stopped and thought about this myself and realised how hard this question is! There are a number of events I would like to go back to in my own life, but there are also other times around my family history as well as world history that happened before I was born that I would LOVE to go back to and be a metaphorical 'fly on the wall'.

Who wouldn't want to be in Houston's mission control room when Neil Armstrong stepped onto the moon, or in the Cardiff Arms Park stadium in 1976 when Wales won their seventh Five Nations Championship title, with a Grand Slam, and the Triple Crown (yes I'm proud of my Welsh roots), or in the carriage with Kate Middleton as she was on her way to marry her prince... oh I could go on and on! Have a think: what would be your top three events in history that you would want to be at?

You may be surprised that I didn't list Jerusalem on my 'places to go', to witness Jesus doing his ministry. But to be honest with you I wouldn't want to be there – I would hate to see his crucifixion (even though I know the end is a joyous one!) but there was also so much suspicion and misunderstanding at the time, and so many people didn't truly 'get' who Jesus was. We, in the UK in 2023, are in such a fortunate position with regards to God and Jesus inasmuch as we have the Bible with all the stories gathered together, written in our language and not living under any dictatorship or regime which forbids us to have a faith. Sadly, even now, this is not the case for many, many people around the world. No, Jerusalem AD30 is not on my list.

Sometimes it takes me days to write the 'lead' article for our Open Space newsletter... but today the words have been flowing out of my fingers.

Paul has just popped in singing the Queen song '*These are the days of our life*', which he heard on the radio earlier in the day. Goodness me, this is too much of a God-incident!

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Open Space
NOVEMBER 2023



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

Church Road
Soundwell
Bristol BS16 4RH
0117 956 6257

[visionatststephens@
gmail.com](mailto:visionatststephens@gmail.com)

[www.saintstephen
soundwell.org](http://www.saintstephen
soundwell.org)

[f saintstephen
soundwell](https://www.facebook.com/saintstephen
soundwell)

[@SoundwellChurch](https://www.instagram.com/SoundwellChurch)

CHARITY NUMBER
1131503



St Stephens
SOUNDWELL

Readings & Collects

SUNDAY 05 NOVEMBER 4th Sunday before Advent

Micah 3:5–end; Psalm 43
1 Thessalonians 2:9–13;
Matthew 24:1–14

GOD OF GLORY, touch our lips with the fire of your Spirit, that we with all creation may rejoice to sing your praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER Remembrance

Amos 5:18–24; Psalm 70
1 Thessalonians 4:13–end;
Matthew 25:1–13

GOD, our refuge and strength, bring near the day when wars shall cease and poverty and pain shall end, that earth may know the peace of heaven through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2nd Sunday before Advent

Zephaniah 1:7, 12–end;
Psalm 90:1–8
1 Thessalonians 5:1–11;
Matthew 25:14–30

HEAVENLY LORD, you long for the world's salvation: stir us from apathy, restrain us from excess and revive in us new hope that all creation will one day be healed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 26 NOVEMBER Sunday before Advent (Christ the King)

Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24;
Psalm 95:1–7
Ephesians 1:15–23;
Matthew 25:31–46

GOD, the Father, help us to hear the call of Christ the King and to follow in his service, whose kingdom has no end; for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, one glory. Amen.

Turn back time < Continued from page 1

I have just Googled the lyrics and they include:

YOU can't turn back the clock,
you can't turn back the tide.
Ain't that a shame?
Ooh, I'd like to go back one time on
a roller coaster ride,
when life was just a game.
NO use in sitting and thinkin' on
what you did,
when you can lay back and enjoy it
through your kids.
Sometimes it seems like lately,
I just don't know,
better sit back and go, with the flow

Wise words from Freddie et al. Currently there is no such thing as a time-machine. We may dream of going back to when we were young, had hair (for some), a good set of knees, less wrinkles, a larger bank balance and a smaller waist, but currently there is no possibility.

So perhaps we should do as Freddie said and 'go with the flow' or as Jesus to his followers said, 'Do not worry about your life?'

We no longer have control of what has happened in the past, and we can't go back to how it was... no matter how much we'd like to at times.

But... we can influence the future, our future and also that of the people around you.

Whilst it may be hard with the days drawing in I would encourage you to think as positively as you can, remember how lucky we are to live on this lovely island in the peace and quiet, remember all that you have – family and friends as well as the comforts around you. Try not to waste energy reflecting on the 'good old days' or 'better times' because in your looking back you may miss out on what is happening around you in the present. Rejoice in the here and now, think positively about the future and make your lives as fulfilling as you can. Because that is what Jesus would want.

Wishing you a blessed month!

Lisa x

GETTING TO KNOW JESUS MORE – Discipleship Groups

AS THE people of God, we consistently strive to get closer to God. One of the ways in which we do this is by getting to know Him more and by doing so we become closer to Him.

To assist with this, St Stephens Soundwell is planning on holding Discipleship groups called 'Getting to know Jesus more.'

Many of you would have done something like this before, such as Home Groups.

Our Discipleship Groups will probably be held in the Church Room and in these groups, we will pray, look at scripture and have discussions to get to know more about Jesus. We plan on starting these groups on the week beginning the 23rd October and for 5 weeks. Following this we plan on keeping these sessions going at intervals throughout the year.

Please know it is perfectly OK to join in any of these groups at any time!!

To do this successfully and to make sure we provide for everyone; we are gathering information to find out what works best for each person.

This information includes:

- Would you be interested in attending our Discipleship Groups?
- When would be the right time to hold the group morning, afternoon or evening?
- Would you be able to attend the group if it was held on a Saturday?

IN church there will be a sign-up sheet containing these questions.

Alternatively, you can contact me with your response on 07769704270 or email me

r.meares_85@hotmail.com

Hope to hear from you soon!

Regan

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE: SEPTEMBER REVIEW

God's light in the world

OUR scriptural exploration for the September meeting was centred on Psalm 119: verses 9–16 & 105, taken from two sources, the NRSV bible version and also that of the Message Bible.

A key verse was the final one:

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (NRSV).

By your words I can see where I'm going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path. (THE MESSAGE).

One of the songs we sang during the opening period, had the title: *My Lighthouse*, which turned out to be an inspiration for one of the study groups later.

In the activity period, there was a choice of several pursuits, and as it happened, a two way split, with one group electing to study and discuss scripture in more detail, resulting in a lively exchange of ideas.

The other group elected to do some 'Blue Peter' style craftwork, and using the song, as inspiration, produced some mini lighthouses from very simple basic materials!

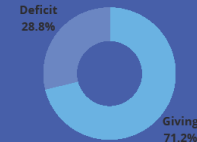
See if you can guess what was used from the photos!

Our refreshments after the conclusion of our evening, included an amazing choice of several cheeses and biscuits! *Yummy!*



OUR CHURCH FINANCIAL HEALTH

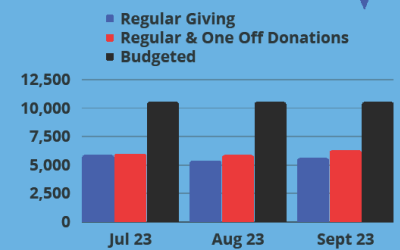
GIVING FOR SEPTEMBER



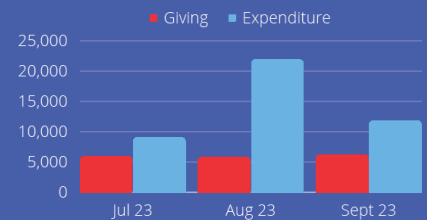
WHAT OUR GIVING NEEDS TO BE £10,500

GIVING RECEIVED £6252

Giving Last 3 Months



Giving v Church Expenses Last 3 Months



Lest we forget...

REMEMBRANCE DAY is held each year and 2 minutes silence observed at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. This commemorates the moment hostilities ceased; bringing WWI to an end in 1918, when the guns finally fell silent after years of warfare.

Here in Britain, many families had a son, brother or father or uncle whose life had been lost, or suffered injury serving in the army, nearly every hamlet, village, town or city was affected.

Even today, 100+ years later, war memorials still exist in most places.

The commemoration of those who died is marked by the wearing of a poppy—a ubiquitous flower that grew

on battlefields, especially in France where the main battles were fought.

Poppies were common, flourishing in the soil churned up by the fighting and shelling, and provided Canadian doctor John McCrae with inspiration for his poem: *'In Flanders Fields'*, which he wrote in Ypres in 1915.

In 1918, in response to McCrae's poem, American humanitarian Moina Michael wrote: *'And now the Torch and Poppy Red, we wear in honour of our dead'*.

She campaigned to make the poppy a symbol of remembrance of those who had died in the war.

Artificial poppies were first sold in Britain in 1921 to raise money for the

Earl Haig Fund in support of former servicemen and the families of those who had died in the conflict.

They were supplied by Anna Guérin, who had been manufacturing the flowers in France to raise money for war orphans. Selling poppies proved so popular that in 1922 the British Legion founded a factory, staffed by disabled ex-servicemen, to produce its own.

It continues to do so today.

World War I was meant to be the war that ended all wars, but sadly it hasn't worked out that way.

David Packe



Confirmation Service

———YAY!———

Members of St Stephens are being **Confirmed**, on Wednesday 8th November, at the All Saints Church in Fishponds, Bristol at 7.30pm!

So if you can, please *come along to support them!*

OUR PARISH CHRISTMAS CARDS

WE send these out every year and our Christmas Cards are intended for every home in the parish and they will be ready by Remembrance Sunday for delivery by 1st December.

If you can help in any way with the distribution of these, even if only one particular street, then please do take some cards and deliver them as soon as you can to as many of our neighbours, friends and those we are yet to know, in the parish.

The reverse of the card contains information about our various Christmas Services which is crucial for people to know as they plan their Christmas Diary and decide which of our services they will attend...

So on behalf of the Parish,
Thank you so much!

Church-Key Log

SOME while ago I gave out forms to complete to people who held various Church keys. I have thankfully received most forms back, but now need the remainder returned to me ASAP! This is in order to complete a required and much needed, updated Key Log for insurance purposes.

Your help in enabling me to complete this difficult task will very much be appreciated.

Gill Mayo Church Warden
Telephone: 01179 569796.

STARS IN CHURCH

FOR A good number of years we have been hanging stars in church for the season of Advent and Christmas... so that we remember that **'We Follow Jesus'**, just as our forebears followed the star to find Jesus!

OVER time the number of stars has reduced due to disrepair.

Julia, Wayne and I thought we'd do something about it!

We plan to brighten the church with many more stars, and, learning from what has gone before, make the new ones more robust to hang and for storage throughout the rest of the year.

Thus, we would like your help to make flat wooden stars shine for Jesus with tinsel and stuff!



Why not come along on Saturday 11th November to the Church Hall to have some fun and laughter together as we do this??

We will start at 9am and are likely to be there for a few hours, so please do come when you can and help us for as long as is right for you!!

Julia, Regan and I will be bringing a packed lunch, so we can stay and work right through, so if you can help to do this too, then you will be more than welcome!

Or, just come when you can.



ADOPT A STAR!

Why not think about sponsoring one or more of the new stars!!!!

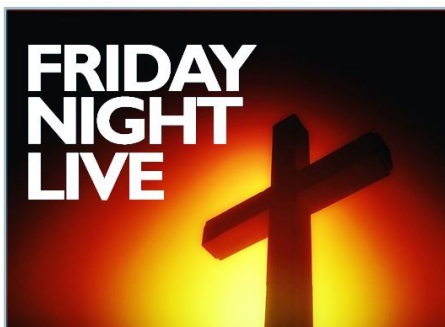
There are likely to be around 120 stars hanging from the ceiling to decorate our church and to make it shine for Jesus.

A £2 per star donation should cover the costs of all the materials required!

When they are hanging in church, you can choose 'your star' and then tell your family and friends it sparkle's Jesus' love for them.

Or, it might be a way of remembering a loved one, and by sponsoring a chosen star remember and celebrate Jesus' eternal love for them.

Thank you! Every blessing.
Lisa xx



INFORMAL WORSHIP FOR ALL AGES!

An hour of exploring what life with faith is all about and an hour of getting to know others, plus refreshments.

Come if you know Jesus, or come if you don't, let's grow in footsteps of faith together! Our next meeting is 6.30pm November 17th.

Israel and Gaza

WHAT we are witnessing today in the hostilities between Israel and Hamas is the worst since the conflict began and is devastating. Thousands have already died and been injured, hostages are being held, homes destroyed, communities flattened.

Watching on with horror, we want to respond with prayer but perhaps are unsure about what we should be praying for in this difficult situation. As someone from the region I offer the following suggestions which I hope will help guide you.

Pray for yourself

When you come to prayer, pray first for yourself. Pray that your heart won't separate Israel and Palestine, Palestine and Israel, so that you enter before God totally wanting God's love and goodness to be released in the situation.

Pray against fear and blame

This conflict has been going on for the last 76 years. Pray that people will begin to see one another as fellow human beings and will not fear or blame each other. Pray against the spirit of fear and blame.

Pray for the families

Pray for the families and loved ones of those who have been taken hostage and those who have lost their lives or been injured, on both sides. Pray for those who are worried, anxious and grieving.

Pray for an end to the conflict

Pray for an immediate end to the hostility. Pray for people to stop using words of hatred, which undermine each other and make the other side seem less than human. The end of hostility is not just about stopping the firing of bullets, rockets and army incursion – it starts first with the heart and then the mind and the way we speak about each other.

Pray for the peace-makers

Pray for all those who are working for peace, on both sides. Pray that they will take their call to be peace-makers very seriously. Within that, pray for the local churches, Jewish and Arabic.

Pray for faithful Muslims and for Jewish leaders who will talk the conversation of peace and of justice. This conflict needs to come to an end and you need peace-makers to begin that conversation.

Pray for those under siege

Pray that the siege in Gaza will be short, especially in lack of essential amenities: food, water, and utilities.

Gaza has suffered for so long and cannot sustain further suffering. Pray too for the Israeli populations, especially around Gaza, that they will not continue to live in fear, staying in protected areas of their buildings and bomb shelters, but they will be able to move in freedom.

Pray for the children

Remember always the children, who cannot articulate what is going on. Pray for those being held hostage and those living with great fear of bombardment on both sides.

Pray for clarity

This is a complex and difficult conflict. But the complexity can be dealt with if we stop saying it is complex and just begin to say it is difficult because when we say 'complex' we cannot deal with it.

So, pray for clarity for how to move forward for both sides. Lisa

WELCOME SPACE

FOLLOWING on from last year's trial of a 'Warm Space' initiative, a new round of dates has been issued for this year.

We will be holding 'Welcome Space' in November on Tuesday 14th at a new time of 9am–11am and then again on Tuesday 28 November.

This event will be taking place in the Church Room off St Stephens Road (between the main Church and Soundwell Academy car park).

Anyone and everyone* is invited! As life consists of ups and downs, it is important that we stay in contact to support, help and encourage each other through these different stages.

'Welcome Space' is a chance to meet up for friendly chat with people, while having snacks and refreshments.

Hope to see you there!

Free Wi-Fi is available on site.

*Under 17s must be accompanied by an adult

We'd love some grown-up help at **See & Know** parent & toddler group:

... so that we can continue to help the young families in our Parish to get to know and follow Jesus.

COULD you spare about half an hour on Thursday mornings in school term-time only??

Getting out the play equipment and setting up 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?

- Welcoming children and their carers
- Chatting to them during the session
- Helping them do a simple craft.

Sessions run from 10am–11.45am on Thursdays in school term-time only.

If not every week,
then perhaps now and again?

PLEASE CHAT WITH:

Sue Humphrey (07929 404272) or
Lisa (01179574297) to find out more

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

St Stephen's Church, Soundwell

Sat 2nd December

2.00 - 4.00 pm

Bric-a-Brac Refreshments Books
Raffles Cakes Games
Mulled Wine

Come along and see Father Christmas

May Jesus be your Joy

St Stephens Soundwell

Charity No. 1131503

Christmas Gift Service

OUR Christmas Gift Service on **Sunday 3rd December** is when we will collect financial gifts to help the **Sisters of the Church** in Bristol feed and give some Christmas cheer to some of the poorest families in our city.

This will enable them to give £15 of Argos Vouchers to each child they know is in need and toiletry sets, or gloves, warm scarves, hats and socks to the adults.

Please give generously if you can to The Sisters appeal this Christmas.

Special envelopes will be made available solely for this purpose from the middle of November.

Thank you!

NOVEMBER CYCLE OF PRAYER BEGINNING SUNDAY OF EACH

| | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 05 | Those sharing in Home Communion | Wayne and Nick Topps, Stuart Tucker Lisa & Jamie Vural & Amira Mohammed Kevin and Lin Vicker | Blackthorn Walk Bridge Road Caddick Close |
| 12 | Cleaning volunteers | Jean Wadsworth, Mark Walker Tony Weare, Pauline Webb Lisa, Paul & Tom Wigmore, Joan Williams | Canon's Walk Champion Road Chedworth |
| 19 | Welcomers & sidepersons | Becky and Joe Wilson, Mary Winrow Keith Winter, Susan Woodey Gladys Woolford | Chestnut Road Chestnut Way Chiphouse Road |
| 26 | Prayer Ministry Team | See and Know children: Eddie Andrews Florrie Batstone, Ella Bennett, Jack Booth, Oliver Crane, Harry Flannery | Church Road Cogan Road Colston Close |

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

NOVEMBER DIARY

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------|--|
| 01 Wednesday | 12noon 7-9pm | Coffee/Chat/Company Turnpike Pub Safeguarding Awareness Course for all in Church |
| 02 Thursday(s) | 10-11.45am 2-4pm | See & Know in Church Hall Ladies Group in Church Hall (then fortnightly) |
| 03 Friday | 7-9pm | Outburst Youth Club in Church Hall |
| 05 Sunday | 6.30pm | Memorial Service in Church |
| 06 Monday | 9.30am | Retreat Memory Café in Church Hall for Dementia sufferers and their carers (fortnightly) |
| 07 Tuesday(s) | 1.30-3.30pm | Knit & Natter weekly in the Church Room |
| 08 Wednesday | 7.30pm | Confirmation Service at All Saints, Fishponds |
| 09 Thursday | 2-4pm | Men's Group in Church Room then fortnightly |
| 10 Friday | 2-4pm | Pensioner's Group in Church Hall then fortnightly |
| 11 Saturday | 9am-4pm | Star decorating in the Church Hall-join in for as much time as suits you |
| 12 SUNDAY | 10am | REMEMBRANCE SERVICE in Church: |
| 14 Tuesday | 9-11am | Welcome Space in Church Room (then fortnightly) |
| 17 Friday | 6.30pm | FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE in Church: informal song, prayer, discussions with refreshments at 7.30pm in the Church Room |
| 21 Tuesday | 7pm | Christingle Service Planning Church Room |

DECEMBER DIARY

| | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|--|
| 02 Saturday | 2-4pm | CHRISTMAS FAYRE in Church & Church Hall |
| 03 Sunday | 10am | GIFT SERVICE-collecting gifts for the Sisters of the Church for their Christmas Gifting |
| 09 Saturday | 4-6.30pm | FAMILY FILM everyone welcome in Church Hall |
| 14 Thursday | 2pm | Ladies Group & Pensioner's Group Carol Service in Church |
| 17 Sunday | 6.30pm | Carols by Candlelight in Church |
| 24 Sunday | 2.30pm 4pm 11pm | Family Fun Christingle Service 1 in Church Family Fun Christingle Service 2 in Church Midnight Communion in Church |
| 25 Monday | 10am | Family Communion in Church |

JOIN US FOR
**COFFEE/CHAT
& COMPANY**

Every first Wednesday
of the month at 12noon
in the Turnpike
on Soundwell Road.

FROM THE REGISTERS

SINCE SEPTEMBER 2023

Baptisms:

● OCTOBER 01:
Poppy-Alice Georgia Ryan.
Please hold Poppy-Alice, her family and her Godparents in your prayers.

● OCTOBER 15:
Luca Herbert, Bella Herbert, Scott Herbert.
Please hold the Herbert family, the Godparents, their wider family and friends in your prayers.

● OCTOBER 15:
Rory James Hawkins.
Please hold Rory's parents, Emily-Jane and Matt, his Godparents and all the family and their friends in your prayers.

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>

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL



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Telephone 0117 967 2621



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



● **Peter Robbins**
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● **Gill Mayo**
Church Warden
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