Open Space

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

KNOWING JESUS... MAKING JESUS KNOWN!

Remember
And give thanks

AS WE ENTER November and the season of Remembrance, our hearts are heavy with sadness for the conflicts and struggles that persist in and across the world.

We are prompted to reflect on the sacrifices made by countless individuals in the past and to hold onto the hope for a more peaceful and just future.

The act of remembrance is a powerful and enduring tradition that binds us together as a community.

It reminds us of the bravery and selflessness of those who have served and continue to serve in the armed forces, often in far-off and dangerous lands. We honour their dedication to preserving peace and safeguarding our freedoms, and we recognize the hardships they endure.

Remembrance is not just about the past; it is also about the present and the future. In our prayers and reflections, we consider the men, women and children whose lives are shaped by war, whether as victims, displaced people, humanitarian workers or armed forces. Their sacrifices, physical and emotional burdens, and the toll that war takes on them and their families weigh heavily on our hearts.

In these times of uncertainty and conflict, it is essential for us to maintain hope.

We hope for an end to violence and division, for the safe return of those who are far from home, and for the healing of wounds, both seen and unseen.

We hope for a world where the lessons of the past guide us towards lasting peace.

As people of faith, we know that hope is not a passive act but an active one. We are called to work towards peace, justice, and reconciliation in our own lives and within our community. Our faith teaches us that even in the face of despair; hope can be a powerful force for change.

When we are facing challenges, we are prompted to reach out to those who have helped us in the past – those we can rely on to be there for us today.

As people of faith, we turn to The Bible and to Prayer, to connect with the God who is constantly trying to connect to us.

Visual reminder of God's Faithfulness

On a battlefield, where years ago they had suffered defeat, Israel pleaded with God for help, and he granted them a miraculous victory. Their priest and leader, Samuel, set up a monument to remind them of God's strong hand in their triumph, and Samuel named the pillar Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far the LORD has helped us' (1 SAM 7:12).

This stone pillar called God's people to recall, and recall often, the time when God turned events from bad to blessed.

Each time an Israelite saw the Ebenezer stone, they remembered God's help in the past, each day, and God's help assured for tomorrow. The Ebenezer was a 'picture' of the Lord's readiness to hear their cries and save them.

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NOVEMBER 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

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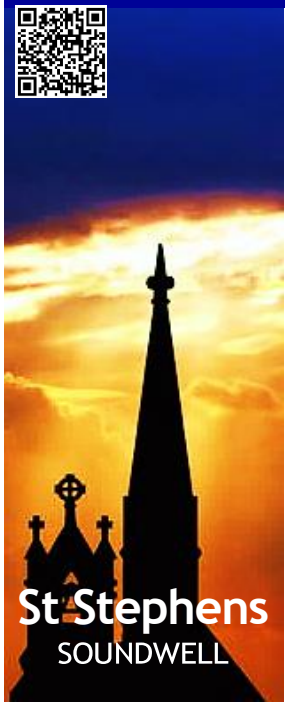
CHARITY NUMBER 1131503



Remember. And give thanks

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It served to remind them where to turn for their strength and power—and whom to thank for their deliverance.

A written reminder of God's Faithfulness

Just as the Ebenezer stone called God's people to remember, the psalmists built a similar monument with words. They reached back into the history of God's people and named the marvellous things God had done, the many ways God had delivered them from their enemies, and all the times he forgave their disobedience.

The reminders are specific: Didn't God lead you out of bondage in Egypt? Didn't he feed you in the desert and keep doing so, even though you grumbled and complained? Didn't he forgive your repeated idolatry and rampant rebelliousness? Didn't God give your army victory after victory over your enemies?

And if he did so much for you in times past, can't you depend on him to do as much, if not more, for you today? And why are you worrying about tomorrow? Won't he still be there for you, hearing your pleas for help, acting on your behalf?

'I will utter hidden things, things from of old,' the psalmist said, *'things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us'* (PSALM 78:2-3) to help you remember ... to remind you of God's power... to give you trust and confidence in him... to teach you to lean on him, to be your Ebenezer for as long as you live this side of heaven.

Your Personal Ebenezer

Unlike the commemorative pillar erected by Samuel, your Ebenezer—your stone of help—requires neither hammer nor chisel. You don't need to sit down and pen eloquent songs, as the psalmists did, either.

To create your personal Ebenezer, all you need to do is mentally page through your spiritual memory album and recall the many and varied victories God has given you.

You might begin by remembering the gifts of life, of parents, of home, health, education, and family.

Your memories could include the blessings of friends, community, nation, livelihood. But, especially, remember certain events in your life – the times when God turned what appeared to be disaster into an unexpected opportunity, or when he took you through hardship so you could gain the gifts of maturity and wisdom. Your personal Ebenezer turns you away from fear, doubt, and disbelief today, because you realise once again how many times in the past God has forgiven, protected, and healed you.

In the form of a cross, your Ebenezer stands as a constant reminder that God has given you the victory of all victories!

Through Jesus Christ, he has made you victorious over the eternal effects of sin, winning for you the promise of eternal life with him. His cross —his stone of help for you —assures you that just as sins of the past have been forgiven completely, so sins of today and tomorrow will be forgiven in the same way.

Begin setting up your personal Ebenezer stone, and in your mind, write the record of your spiritual history. By naming specific people and recalling certain events of your life, you will see God's hand at work and recognise his compassionate love that has brought you through to this day.

REMEMBER:

- WHEN loving adults sheltered, nurtured, protected, and taught you as you were growing up. **Who were they?**
- WHEN devastating circumstances shattered your world, and you learned first-hand of people's compassion and generosity. **What happened?**
- WHEN a hard-earned lesson left you older and wiser, with the experience you need to sympathize with and guide others. **Who have you been able to help?**
- WHEN serious health problems brought you to a heightened appreciation of life. **How has your outlook changed for the better?**
- WHEN the loss of a loved one made you realise how important friends and family are to you. **What have you said and done to show them how much they mean?**
- WHEN your hopes were dashed, but a new and better opportunity presented itself. **Which door closed, and which door opened?**
- WHEN times were tough, but you survived them. **How has this given you perspective on the ups and downs of life?**
- WHEN you were in danger, but found a way out. **Where was God in this?**
- WHEN you found yourself on the wrong spiritual path, but someone guided you back to the way God would have you go. **What did you learn?**
- WHEN you repented, and God brought his peace to your mind and heart. **How did this draw you closer to God?**

YOUR Ebenezer, your historical record, is your present-day monument to all God has done for you in the past. Your memories reveal his presence, even if you did not realise it at the time. They highlight his hand in so much of what may have looked like a coincidence or 'happy accident.' Let these things remind you! Let these memories free you to rely on him today and through every tomorrow. Just as God has been with you in the past, he will remain with you to help you, strengthen you, and bless you now and in the future.

Remember and give thanks, for God has brought you to this day!

COFFEE/ CHAT & COMPANY

11AM WEDNESDAY 4th NOVEMBER

at the ***Turnpike*** *on Soundwell Road.*

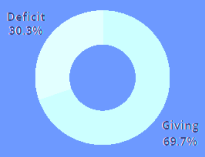
A time to be, be known, and be together.

Our Church Financial Health

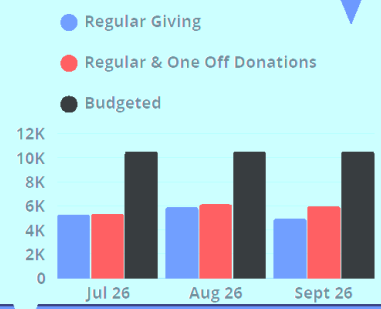
GIVING FOR SEPTEMBER

WHAT OUR GIVING NEEDS TO BE £10,500

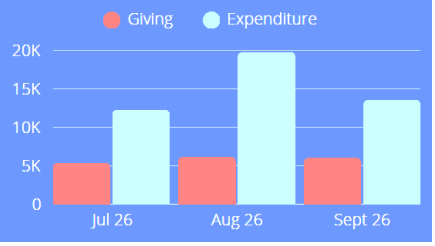
GIVING RECEIVED £5942



Giving Last 3 Months



Giving v Church Expenses Last 3 Months



WEDNESDAY Bible Chat

in the Church Room

2.30PM (**2**PM for a cuppa)

NOVEMBER 11th & 25th

Discussion of the week's Bible readings

BRING your Bible!

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

7.15pm to **8.15**pm

Tuesday 9 to 11.30am

10 & 24 November

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

IN OUR CHURCH ROOM

Foundation Governor

FOUNDATION GOVERNORS have a particular responsibility within Church Schools to preserve and develop the Christian character and ethos of the school.

OUR Church School, St Stephen's Junior School, is in need of another Foundation Governor.

Without Foundation Governors, we, as St Stephens Church, are not supporting our Church School in its Christian character and ethos. Foundation Governors are normally practising Christians, but as a school governor, a Foundation Governor is more than just a Church representative. They are a full governor, with an equal say and input into the life of the school in all areas. Being a school governor is a way to serve in our Church community.

I am already a Governor at St Stephen's Junior School, but we really need a second person to fulfil our commitment as a Church.

Not only that, but I would also be glad of some support!

If you are interested or would like further information please come and speak to me. I am usually in Church on a Sunday, and often attend Bible Chat and Friday Night Live. Or you can give me a call on 07 376 185 876. **Linda Krause**

READINGS & COLLECTS

SUNDAY 01 NOVEMBER
All Saints Day

Revelation 7:9–end; Psalm 34:1–10
1 John 3:1–3; Matthew 5:1–12

GOD OF HOLINESS, your glory is proclaimed in every age: as we rejoice in the faith of your saints, inspire us to follow their example with boldness and joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 08 NOVEMBER
Remembrance Sunday

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 15 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 22 NOVEMBER
Christ the King

Ezekial 34:11–16, 20–24; Psalm 95:1–7
Ephesians 1:15–end;
Matthew 25:31–end

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.

SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER
1st Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1–9; Psalm80:1–8, 18–20
1 Corinthians 1:3–9; Mark 13:24–end

ALMIGHTY GOD, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Soon be Christmas...!

YES! We eventually have to mention it, and now is the time to do so, with several Christmas related events to prepare for and to let you know about in advance, before it all gets too late!

THE very first item to let you know about is the Gift Service, see below, followed swiftly by our annual Christmas Fayre.

Christmas Gift Service

SUNDAY 29 November, is when we collect financial gifts to help the **Sisters of the Church** in Bristol.

The Sisters feed and give Christmas cheer to many of the poorest families in our city.

They usually give out some Argos Vouchers to each child they know who is in need, plus they give out toiletry sets,or hats and gloves, warm scarves, hats and socks to the adults who need them, especially any 'rough sleepers' they know of who will be on the streets in cold weather.

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

Special envelopes will be made available solely for donations to the Sister's work, from mid-November, which can then be handed in at the Special Service. *Thank you!*

20 NOVEMBER

6.30PM IN CHURCH

Informal worship through song prayer and discussion

YO HO HO! IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!

STALLS, bric-a-brac, food, drink, cakes, books, CD's, boardgames, puzzles, crafts, cards, etc.
Also fun & games, children's entertainment, something for everyone!
Or just bring a friend and enjoy an afternoon together!

AS USUAL,volunteers are needed to assist with preparations on the Friday before the Fayre,
and then on the day in the afternoon to assist in putting stuff away afterwards, clearing up, putting the pews back together and the like.
If you can lend a hand for an hour or two then it would be much appreciated!
Please see Sue Humphrey or email: suehumphrey11@yahoo.co.uk to register your offer of help.

Additionally if you wish to have a stall then please book a space.
And if you have items for raffles, such as prizes and items for sales contributions then bring them to church for storage till the day.
Thank you!

ADOPTING A STAR!

SOMETHING which proved very popular last year, was the sponsoring of one or more of the new hanging stars that were produced as part of the Christmas decorations!!

There are likely to be around **120** such stars hanging from the ceiling again this year which will decorate church and make it shine for Jesus.

A **£3** per star donation should be a suitable bequest!

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.

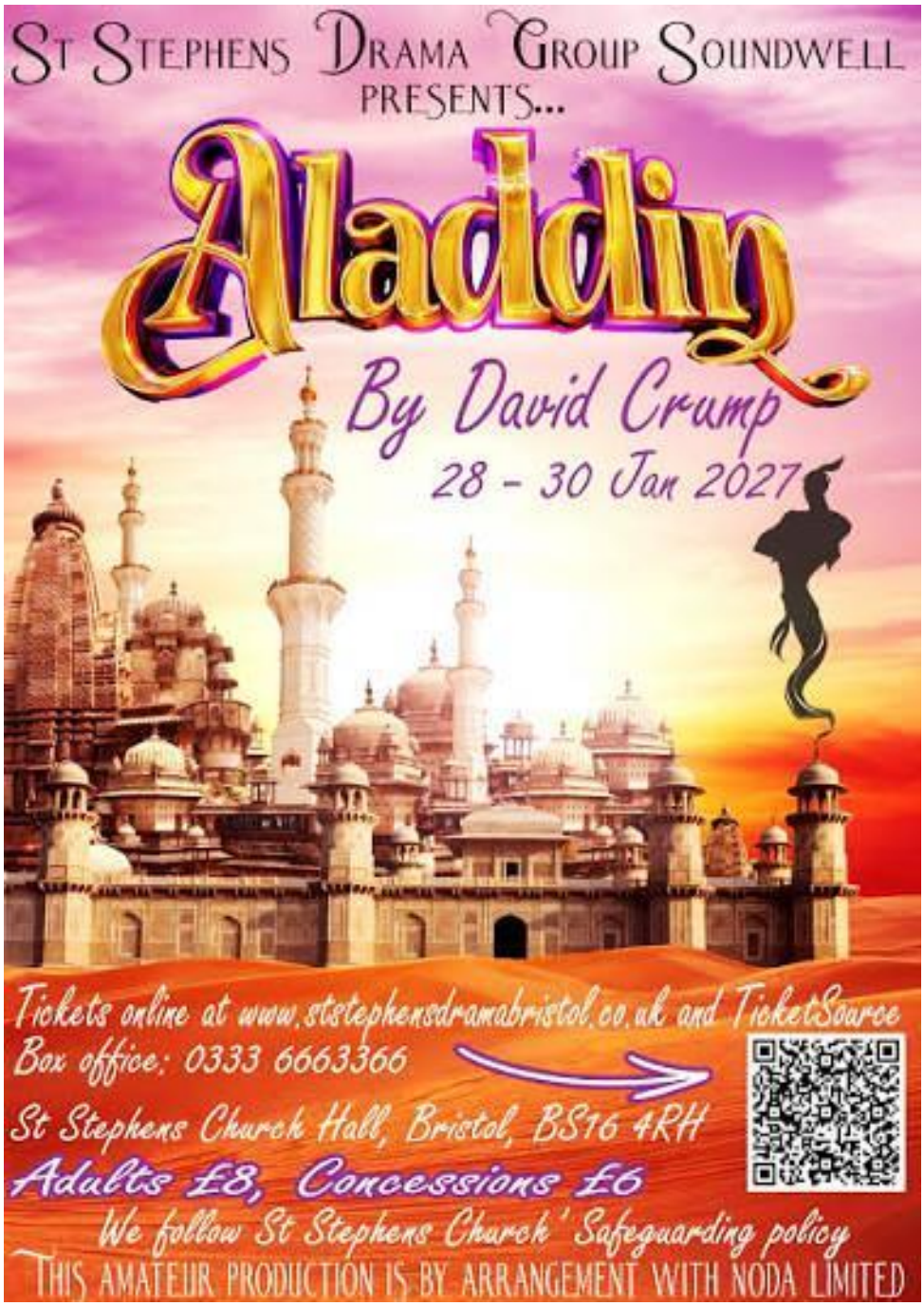
Simply enclose your donation in an envelope marked as a 'Star Sponsor' and hand it in on any Sunday up till Christmas. *Thank you!*

Exchanging your greetings cards

PLEASE consider the idea of sending just the ONE Christmas card, to your 'Church Family' instead of lots of individual ones to everyone!

An internal mail exchange system will be running again located at the back of church to put in cards *from* you, and to take out cards *to* you.

You could donate any savings to a favourite charity.



NOVEMBER CYCLE OF PRAYER *BEGINNING SUNDAY OF EACH WEEK*

01	The PCC: Church Hall Team	Carol Murphy, Dave Newton Katy, Tom, George & Theo North Gill Ogborne, David Packe	Tyndale Road Verde Close Wesley Close
08	The PCC: Re-ordering Team	Jan Parker, Suzanne Parker Tim, Olivia & Sophie Parker Stephanie, Jacob, Tommy & Finley Pascoe	Wesley Hill Whitfield Close Willis Road
15	Administration: Church Office Volunteers	Wayne, Rosie, Annie-Mae & Joseph Pearce Trish Phipps, Shirley Potts Christine Priddis, Dot Randall	Wiltshire Place Witcombe Close Woodchester
22	Administration assistant: David Packe	Nicola, Andy, Amelia & Erin Read Sarah, Mark, Damien & Lauren Reid Colin and Tessa Rice	Woodland Ave Woodland Way Yew Tree Drive
29	Bubble Church	Maria and Ethan Ridler, Monica Robinson Kerrie, Kevin, Kaiden, Kester & Kolby Rowland Lorraine and Paul Sanderson	Acacia Ave Acacia Close Acacia Road

SUNDAYS: 10.30am **Community Worship Service** weekly.
Youth Church in the Church Hall 10.30am weekly.

Bubble Church 9.15am *on the 2nd Sunday of the month*, ie: 8th November.

Prayer Ministry is offered after the 10.30am 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** *on the 1st and 3rd week each month*, ie: November 4th & 18th.

NOVEMBER DIARY

03 Tuesday	1.30pm	**Knit & Natter** *in the Church Room* (then weekly)
04 Wednesday	11am	**Coffee/Chat/Company** *at the Turnpike Pub*
	7.15pm	**BRING YOUR BIBLE** *in the Church Room*
05 Thursday	10am	**See & Know Toddler's Group** *in the Church Hall (then weekly)*
	1.30pm	**Men's Group** *in the Church Room* (then fortnightly)
06 Friday	1.45pm	**Pensioner's Group** *in the Church Hall*
08 Sunday	10.30am	**REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY** All Age Service
09 Monday	10.15am	**Retreat Memory Café** *in the Church Hall* for Dementia sufferers and their carers
10 Tuesday	9~11.30am	**WELCOME SPACE** *in the Church Room*
11 Wednesday	2pm	**BIBLE CHAT** *in the Church Room* (then fortnightly)
	7.15pm	**BRING YOUR BIBLE** *in the Church Room*
12 Thursday	2pm	**Ladies Group** *in the Church Hall* (then fortnightly)
17 Tuesday	7.30pm	**PCC** *in the Church Room*
18 Wednesday	7.15pm	**BRING YOUR BIBLE** *in the Church Room*
19 Thursday	1.30pm	**Men's Group** *in the Church Room* (then fortnightly)
20 Friday	1.45pm	**Pensioner's Group** *in the Church Hall*
	6.30pm	**FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE** *in Church*
23 Monday	10.15am	**Retreat Memory Café** *in the Church Hall* for Dementia sufferers and their carers
24 Tuesday	9~11.30am	**WELCOME SPACE** *in the Church Room*
25 Wednesday	2pm	**BIBLE CHAT** *in the Church Room*
	7.15pm	**BRING YOUR BIBLE** *in the Church Room*
26 Thursday	9.30am	**Ladies Group** *Christmas Outing* (To Bath!)

DECEMBER DIARY

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

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptism:

- October 4; **Hugo Michael Westlake.** *Please hold Hugo's parents Mike and Molly: his Godparents Claire, Jay and Kobi and all the family and their friends in your prayers.*
- October 11; **Penelope Lily Hancock.** *Please hold Penelope's parents, Thomas and Laura: her Godparents Matylda and James; and all the family and their friends in your prayers.*

Funeral:

- October 8: **Arthur Harris**

The celebration of Arthur's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.

Please hold Arthur's sons Kevin, Ivor and Wayne with partner Nick, and all the wider family and friends in your prayers.

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

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