



St Stephen
with St Julian

THE PARISH MAGAZINE

of St Stephen with St Julian, St Albans

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PRAYER NOTES

You might like to pray for

Calmness: time to reflect and think things through

Tolerance: understanding and sympathy between different cultures and faiths

Students revising and practising for their imminent examinations

Our precious resources, that we learn to use them wisely and justly

Continue to pray for

Those who are dying, those who have died recently and those who mourn

True freedom of speech and expression where we are able to debate and discuss differing views with compassion and curiosity

Peace – an end to wars and interfaith conflicts

And give thanks for

The PCC and other Lay members of our congregations who give freely of their time and talents and enable such a vibrant Parish community

JP

FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms

*Shine as a light in the world
to the glory of God the Father*

17th March

Gabriel Jolly
Joseph Ingrams

24th March

Cara Bicknell Cox

Weddings

*God is love and those who
live in love live in God
and God lives in them*

None this Month

Funerals

*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man conceived,
what God has prepared
for those who love Him*

12th April

Betty Scammell

19th April

May Magowan

BECKY WRITES

This month brings to a close the great 50 days celebration of Easter marked by two important festivals. First, **Ascension Day** on Thursday 9th May, 40 days after Easter, celebrates the culmination of Christ's work on earth and his return to his Father in the heavenly realms. Ascension Day is a day of rejoicing because of the completion of Jesus' salvation work through his ministry, his death and his resurrection. It is a day of celebration as we focus on His continuing reign from heaven as our Lord and King, and as our constant intercessor and advocate. But Ascension Day is also a reminder to us that Christ's mission and the growth of His Kingdom still continues, and that we are called to be active in working to bring this about. This festival is therefore something of a transition between the age of Christ and the age of the Church. It is a moment of transference, rather like the passing on of the baton in a relay race. Christ having done his earthly work now commissions us, his modern-day disciples, to continue to be his witnesses in spreading the good news of the Gospel. The words for The Great Commission at the end of Matthew's Gospel were not just spoken to the disciples gathered around him on the mountain top: they are still spoken to us today:

Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28: 16-20)

That last sentence, his promise to be with us always, his last words recorded by St Matthew, is true and utterly essential if we are to live as his witnesses today. Christ is with us as our Guide and strength to equip us for all he calls us to.

Which leads us to the second of the great festivals that mark the end of the Easter season: **Pentecost**. Ten days after the Ascension and fifty days on from Easter Sunday, this year on Sunday 19th May, we will gather to celebrate the sending of the Holy Spirit and the birthday of the Church. The baton passing and the responsibility to go to all nations teaching and baptising, is not done without regard for the help we need. God comes to our aid as he sends his Spirit to live in us, to transform us, to equip us, to give us the boldness, courage, the words and the wisdom we need to follow where he leads.

So, do come along to celebrate these two great festivals this month (see the Parish Diary section of the magazine for details of the services).

And there is a third occasion too this month, not just a day but a period of days, in which we remember and bring to mind the events of the early church. Because we also mark those **ten days of waiting** which the disciples had to face between Jesus' ascension and the coming of the Spirit. For those first disciples this was a period of prayer, of expectant waiting in hope and trust. We will join with millions of others around the globe who will also mark this time in a wave of prayer called '**Thy Kingdom Come**'. We are encouraged to pray for people to come to know Christ, to pray for the growth of His Church and for his kingdom to spread. There will be resources in both churches to help us do that between 9th and 19th May.

Part of what it means to live as Christ's witnesses today is to care for the world and its peoples. One way of doing that which this month offers us is to join in with **Christian Aid Week** (12th to 18th May) and to give generously to support their work (see page XXXX for further details of events and services in this parish in Christian Aid Week).

Finally, I offer you a couple of poems for this season written by the Priest Poet Malcolm Guite.

Ascension Day Sonnet, Malcolm Guite

*We saw his light break through the cloud of glory
Whilst we were rooted still in time and place
As earth became a part of Heaven's story
And heaven opened to his human face.
We saw him go and yet we were not parted
He took us with him to the heart of things
The heart that broke for all the broken-hearted
Is whole and Heaven-centred now, and sings,
Sings in the strength that rises out of weakness,
Sings through the clouds that veil him from our sight,
Whilst we ourselves become his clouds of witness
And sing the waning darkness into light,
His light in us, and ours in him concealed,
Which all creation waits to see revealed.*

Pentecost Sonnet, Malcolm Guite

*Today we feel the wind beneath our wings
Today the hidden fountain flows and plays
Today the church draws breath at last and sings
As every flame becomes a Tongue of praise.
This is the feast of fire, air, and water
Poured out and breathed and kindled into earth.
The earth herself awakens to her maker
And is translated out of death to birth.
The right words come today in their right order
And every word spells freedom and release
Today the gospel crosses every border
All tongues are loosened by the Prince of Peace
Today the lost are found in His translation.
Whose mother-tongue is Love, in every nation.*

Becky Leach

May Magowan

Please accept our sincere thanks for all the kindness and sympathy shown in the lovely cards, notes and letters received following our recent bereavement.

We were also very grateful to all who turned out for the Church service which gave us support during a very difficult time.

God bless.

Cameron, Lucy and Family

REPORTS FROM RECENT EVENTS

WALKING GROUP – BLUEBELL WALK

On Friday 5th April a group of hardened walkers from both our churches set off at 12 pm for Heartwood Forest prepared for inclement weather and praying for a sign of a Bluebell or two. We arrived at 12.30 and all gathered for the beginning of our hour and a half walk.

The route towards the Bluebell Woods is a winding path suitable for Child Buggies and scooters. It starts with an uphill climb but you are rewarded at the

top with fantastic views across the village of Sandridge and beautiful countryside full of Spring colour.

We arrived at the Bluebell Woods to find a wonderful display of a carpet of Bluebells spreading through the woods in all directions and a gorgeous flower scent a perfume from Mother nature. (Eau de Spring.)

We followed a circular route around the woods taking time for photos opportunities and soaking up the wonderful sight of Spring. After an hour our lovely group then made our way slowly downhill to finish off the afternoon with a tasty late lunch at the Queens Head in Sandridge.

We were so blessed as the sun shone throughout the afternoon and we had the woods to ourselves. Everyone had a great time and were rewarded with an amazing Springtime display.

Anne Bowyer



Some members of the Walking Group at the Bluebell Woods on 5th April

MEN'S BREAKFAST – 23rd MARCH 2024

We meet at 09.00 on a Saturday, alternating between St. Stephen's and St. Julian's halls. The breakfast is followed by a discussion until 11.00, usually on a topic of current interest.

The discussion on 23rd March, at St. Stephen's, was led by Michal Elves on the subject of Faith and Science. Michael led us through an overview of the history of science and the Christian Church, informed by his research as part of a project for the bishop. What emerged from this was how science and its relation with the church has varied and changed over the centuries. Science as we know it today only really came into being in the 18th century. Before that it was often seen as study of how God worked and many clerics were involved in what we might think of as scientific study, notably the Jesuits. The well-known conflicts between the Church and science (Galileo and heliocentric astronomy, Darwin and evolution) were often with the church hierarchy rather than theologians or the church as a whole and were often about power and authority.

We were fuelled by an excellent breakfast cooked by Hamish Hamilton, which probably did nothing good for our waistlines or cholesterol levels.

Keep an eye on the Notice Sheets for future dates.

Randal ffrench

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

PARISH WALKING GROUP

Dates and places for our next two walks (NB no walk planned in May).

Saturday 15 th June	walk around College Lake near Tring
Saturday 20 th July	walk around Leavesden Park

We will meet in St Stephen's Car Park at 12.00noon with lifts provided. There will be a refreshment break after each of the walks.

Please contact Anne Bowyer if you are interested. (See Parish Directory).



Thy Kingdom Come: 10 Days of Prayer - 9th to 19th May

Thy Kingdom Come is a global ecumenical prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. What started in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer.

Each year it runs from Ascension Day to Pentecost.

Every person, household and church are encouraged to pray during the 11 days in their own way.

It is our hope & prayer, that those who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and His love for the world, will hear it for themselves and respond and follow Him.

Specifically, we again invite each and every Christian across the globe to pray that God's Spirit might work in the lives of 5 people who have not responded with their 'Yes' to God's call.

Whether you have joined in 'Thy Kingdom Come' before or not, we invite you to take part & join in.

"In praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' we all commit to playing our part in the renewal of the nations and the transformation of communities."

Archbishop Justin Welby

I encourage you to join in with this initiative and look out for special resources and activities in our churches that will help you do so. **Becky Leach**

FRIENDS OF ST STEPHEN'S - NOTICE OF AGM

The Annual General Meeting will be on Sunday, 9 June, at 2.30 p.m. in the Hall (immediately before the Bee Talk). The Agenda will be circulated nearer the time, but meanwhile please do to consider whether you would like to nominate candidates for election to the Committee.

Tim Vellacott

ST STEPHEN'S JUMBLE SALE

Saturday 8th June 2-4pm 2024

Jumble Sale with a cake stall and raffle in aid of church funds

You can help by donating

- * new and second-hand items of clothing and household textiles
- * small items of bric-à-brac, jewellery
- * toys and games
- * give a prize for the raffle
- * bring a homemade cake on the day
- * help sorting and selling on the day

NB: We are NOT collecting books, CD's, DVD's or vinyl records.

Please bring your donations to either church from Sunday 2nd June or on the morning of the Sale. Do encourage your friends and neighbours to come and have a rummage.

Cheryl Bonnington

CHARITABLE PROJECTS & COLLECTIONS

FRIENDS OF ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH

Half Term Fun – Scarecrow Trail Round the Parish! Can you or your family build a scarecrow / stuffed body to represent a children's book? We hope to have a trail in place that you can follow via a pre-purchased map during the May half term. You will be able to walk, run, cycle or spot a scarecrow from the car as you drive by. So far, we



only have a few scarecrows which will form a short hop, skip and a jump, rather than a longer walk around the area.

We have a list of suggested books -- a mixture of old and new - to choose from and we'd be grateful

if you would join in with this venture. There will be a prize for the most popular!

Please email friendsofststephen@gmail.com if you would like more information or to take part.



All about Bees and Honey

A Friends' fundraising event

Sunday 9 June 2024

3.00pm - 5.00pm

St Stephen's Church Hall
Watling Street

Tickets: £10.00 non members

£ 7.50 members

Available from friendsofststephen@gmail.com or
office@ststephenandstjulian.org

NEWS FROM ST JULIAN'S CHURCH

It is beginning to be a busy time of the year again, with meetings, gardening to be done, windows being replaced and fund raising to organise. Here are a few updates on the life at St Julian's.

The Replacement of the windows throughout has been delayed for a bit due to the manufacturers taking longer than expected to supply them. Phase I of the project, replacing the hall windows with double-glazed units, might well be completed by the time you read this. The timing of Phase II, the Church and Vestry work, is dependent on the completion of the hall windows and so isn't certain. We look forward to our Worship being enhanced by the clearer glass, and warmer winters with the double glazing.

The work was initiated due to the deterioration of the present diamond lead glass. But this also helps towards reducing our carbon footprint, reducing our heating bills (hopefully) and our goals as an Eco-Church. The main stumbling block to achieving the silver award here is our lack of a cycle rack. We hope to install one in the not-too-distant future, not only for the award, but because we want to encourage the use of and improve the facilities for Bicycles.

There is also a venture locally called the Sopwell Jigsaw Meadow. Here locals are asked to put aside a space for sowing wildflowers with the aim of creating a corridor through the estate for various species to feed and breed more easily. St Julian's folk are looking at an area we could utilize in this way. Last year we paid a local gardener who lives adjacent to the church to help in the grounds, and we hope to continue to improve the garden as time goes by. Many people have helped in the garden over the years and we hope to build on the work already achieved.

Fundraising has been on our minds as a large portion of our monies will be going on the work on the windows. A car park badly in need of repairs, and numerous smaller issues in the building will need to be funded in the near future. The next project after replacing the shed roof is to paint it, preserving it for the future.

Our plans for events this year will include Summer and Autumn Fairs, Desert Island Discs where Revd Geoff Lackey will be choosing music and telling us

about himself, interviewed by Revd Martin Banister, a Book Sale with cream teas and a Games Evening.

The first fundraising event we had planned was our Christian Aid coffee morning with plant sale on Saturday 18th May. We have had to postpone this due to the delays with the double-glazing installation. Please keep an eye on the Notice Sheet for revised date.

If you have any cuttings or plants, indoor or outdoor, that you are able to donate for the plant sale, please keep hold of them for now.

The second fundraising event we had planned was our Summer Fair on Saturday 15th June. As it falls on Becky's last weekend in the Parish, the DCC has decided to postpone this. A new date will be announced soon. We will be asking for items we could use for prizes, bric-a-brac in good condition, books or CDs for sale at the upcoming Fairs. Nearer the time we will invite offers of cakes to sell and helpers at these events if you are able to join us.

Also please note – we too have a Crab Apple Tree at St Julian's. It was originally to be planted for the Late Queen's Jubilee but it didn't get done. It was later decided to plant it for the Coronation – thus becoming a 'Jubilation' tree combining the two. When we planned our Coronation clean-up of the garden we intended to plant it. When I went to find it, someone had taken it along with a Christmas Tree we were keeping. After a mad rush around garden centres one was acquired from Aylett Nurseries, subsidized by a generous donation from the Vicar (many thanks) and duly planted. Maybe we should compare height, breadth and fruiting of the 2 trees?

Meanwhile thank you as always for your continued support at our fund-raising, special services, and generally in the life of St Julian's.

Joanna Field

ST. STEPHEN'S TREASURER'S REPORT FOR MARCH 2024

Normal income in March was £15,261 which is £261 more than the planned income of £15,000 per month as shown in the table below. In addition, £3,439 was received as the final payment from Barbara Evans' legacy. The income included £2,835 from hall rental and £911 in fees for funerals and burials. The cumulative income is £989 less than that planned for three months.

	Including Legacies & Major Works		Before Legacies & Major Works		Difference
	Income	Expenditure	Income	Expenditure	
Actual for month	18,700	- 14,811	15,261	- 14,811	+ 450
Planned for month			15,000	- 14,950	+ 50
Year to Date	47,450	- 45,854	44,011	- 45,854	- 1,843
Planned for 3 months			45,000	- 44,850	+ 150

Normal expenditure was £14,811 which is £139 less than planned. The cumulative expenditure is £1,004 more than that planned for three months. The expenditure included £335 for Easter leaflets distributed around the parish, £740 to the Saltmine Trust to sponsor drama productions in schools and £643 hall expenses including a new fridge.

Randal french

ST STEPHEN'S HALL BOOKINGS

Some users of St. Stephen's Hall have been confused by the new banking arrangements. There is now a separate account for the church hall and all payments for hire of St. Stephen's Hall should be made to this new account:

Account Name	St. Stephens PCC, St Albans, Church Hall
Sort Code	40 52 40
Account Number	00036579

NB This only applies to St. Stephen's; details for St. Julian's are unchanged.

DONATIONS TO YOUR CHURCH

About 60% of our income comes from voluntary giving; we do not get any financial support from the Church of England. Although the parish is running at a small surplus, costs are rising so donations are always welcome. There are many ways to give:

Regular Giving

- Parish Giving Scheme (PGS). Centrally run Church of England scheme, this is our preferred method. To register follow this link:
<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/home/> search for St Stephen or St Julian
- Standing Order. Account details are:
St. Stephen's PCC, St Stephen's Church
Sort Code 40-52-40 Account no. 00036577*
St Julian's Church Sort Code 60-18-11 Account no. 42175089

One-off Donations

- Bank Transfer. Details as above for standing orders
- Cheque. Please make payable to 'St. Stephens PCC, St Stephen's Church' or 'St. Julian's Church' and give to one of the Treasurers or Churchwardens or send to the Parish Office (see Parish Directory)
- Online (we pay a small commission (1-2%)). Links and QR codes are:

<p>St. Stephens https://givealittle.co/campaigns/fb509c55-b9f9-48fa-bcff-1db1fb5c7718</p> 	<p>St. Julians https://givealittle.co/campaigns/523d2fdc-9642-41ea-976d-2344a0ba2604</p> 
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If you are able, please make a declaration to apply Gift Aid to your donation as we then receive an additional 25%. This is part of the PGS registration process. For other methods, please ask Hamish Hamilton for a declaration form.

***NB Change to Bank Account details. Please update your Standing Order**
Randal ffrench

100 CLUB WINNERS

Prize numbers are announced in the magazine each month: winning numbers in April were as follows:

1 st Prize - £20	2 nd Prize - £7	Third Prize - £3
18	27	3

ANTS IN THEIR PANTS?

At the Parish Communion and Liturgy of the Passion service on Palm Sunday at St Stephen's, it looked to me that one of the clergy had ants in their pants. Whilst we all sang a hymn, they were wrestling with the position of their stole/microphone and I wondered what had gone wrong. After the service, at coffee, I asked said clergy member and learned they were trying to change the stole from being over the neck, each end hanging parallel (as worn by a priest (or bishop)) which is how they had worn it at the Liturgy of the Palms service at St Julian's to how a deacon would wear it, over their left shoulder and crossed diagonally over the body.

Well, I never knew there was more than one way to wear a stole – did you? My investigation has also enlightened me to the fact that the general word for what the clergy wear, 'vestments' is a Latin word for 'clothing'. Always learning, but can I remember all this? Anyway, do you have similar questions that we could ask the clergy/someone in the know to answer for us about church rituals in general? Questions on a postcard to the magazine editor please.

Keith Merridan

Qs from the Pews?

Dear Reader, this article prompted an exchange of emails between Keith and me about how to incorporate Questions & Answers (Qs & As) into the Magazine once in a while. The heading "Qs from the Pews" popped into my head and, if you would like, I will occasionally include such a section in future editions.

If you are curious about why things are done a certain way in services; who does what; why the Altar frontal changes colour; what all the hand gestures at the eucharist mean; or anything else church-related that you are curious about, please email magazine@ststephenandstjulian.org using the subject header Qs from the Pews.

Julia Pyburn

Holy Trinity Church, Frogmore

A Chapel of Ease.

The St. Stephen's Almanac tells us that in 1825 an appeal was made to the Residents, Landowners and others supposed to be interested in the spiritual well-being of the Parish of St. Stephens – it read:

“The Parish of St. Stephen contains a population of nearly two thousand souls – and extends over eight thousand acres – or a space of five miles long by four broad. The Parish Church, which is situate at its very extremity (within a stone's throw of the boundary) is most inconveniently remote from the People – there being but three Cottages of the Poor within a mile of it.

The bulk of the population is collected in two Villages – the one a mile and a half and the other two miles and a half distant – and midway between the two, it is now proposed to build and endow a Chapel of Ease and thus to place the House of God within easy reach of nearly all the Parishioners.”

£1,000 was granted from the Parish Rates and an appeal raised a sum sufficient to build and partially endow a Chapel of Ease having accommodation for 460 persons (400 in the body of the church and 60 in the gallery). The Chapel was consecrated by the Bishop of London in 1842.

The original plan was for St. Stephen's to be demolished. At the Vestry Meeting on 5th June 1840 this motion was carried by 39 votes to 17 but it was rescinded unanimously in the next meeting on 2nd July 1840. Despite this it was agreed to proceed with the building of a Chapel of Ease and George Gilbert Scott's design was approved in 1841. Land was provided by Francis Wigg of Frogmore House, although the first plot offered, close to The Black Boy pub, was deemed to be unsuitable. Tenders from Builders were sought. They ranged from £1,960 to £2,600 and the lowest, from Charles Couchman of Rickmansworth, was accepted. The final bill, which did not include fixtures and fittings, amounted to just over £2,450. When these were added in the total cost was almost £7,700.

In 1903 a new vestry was added and the north transept was altered to allow for a new organ. The Chapel remained as part of the parish of St. Stephen's until 1859 when it became the separate parish of Holy Trinity, Frogmore.

Neville Scott

Thanks are also due to The Civil Parsh of St. Stephen



Christian Aid Week 2024 – 12-18 May

Seven days, so many ways to make a difference

Every Christian Aid Week, people across Britain and Ireland raise funds, act and pray for their global neighbours in a celebration

of hope for a fairer world.

This year's appeal runs from 12–18 May and is focussing on the organisation's work in Burundi, one of the most densely populated and poorest countries in Africa. Heavily reliant on agriculture, it is also one of the least prepared to combat the effects of climate change, including droughts, floods and landslides. The global cost of living crisis has intensified the challenges: more than 70 per cent of the population live in poverty and more than half of children are chronically malnourished.

Christian Aid has been working in Burundi since 1995 when it first offered humanitarian assistance to people surviving the civil conflict. Now, alongside local partners, the organisation helps establish Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). These community-led groups mean people can save and borrow money, making small businesses possible, offering reliable and diverse incomes so families can eat regularly, get medicine when they need it, and build safer homes.

Thirty-five-year-old Aline Nibogora is the chairperson of a VSLA which supports some 25 families in a remote village, in Makamba Province. Aline escaped an abusive marriage only to find herself on the streets begging for a place to stay.

Her life changed when she went to a three-day, Christian Aid-funded community workshop. With a small start-up loan, Aline began trading avocados and peanuts locally. She is now a grocery wholesaler and living on her own plot of land where she's building a home for her family. In the next five years she hopes to expand, so one day she can buy a mill. This will provide a source of income without the need to transport heavy goods over long distances.

"I don't want my children to have a painful life like mine, remembering it makes me weep. I could never have dreamed I would one day have a brick house and be a successful businesswoman, able to feed and clothe my children. This is a plan and I will do it; I am a woman who is an achiever."

This Christian Aid Week – from 12-18 May – supporters are once more stepping up, knowing that every prayer, every gift, every action helps transform lives.

There are **seven days and so many ways** to make a difference – whether that's church services, special collections, Christian Aid Big Brekkies, or even a Bible readathon. For those who like a physical challenge there is a new option for 2024 with the chance to take part in 70k in May. You can cover the distance in any way you like, take part by yourself or with a group, and share your progress on a dedicated Facebook page. Find out all the ways you can support Christian Aid Week by visiting the Christian Aid [website](#).

In our Parish we are having a special service on Sunday 12th May at 6.30pm at St Stephen's Church. Do come along if you can.

St Julian's are also running a Coffee Morning and Plant Sale on Saturday 18th May to raise money for Christian Aid. Please do go along to support this event.

What could your donations buy?

£5 could buy a savings book for a member of a VSLA, setting them up to start their own small business and become financially independent.

£30 would help a family buy two Jerrycans to collect water from the river to carry back to their farm. Jerrycans provide irrigation to crops, especially during the dry season, maintaining food production for the family.

£50 would mean a vulnerable family can purchase a water storage tank. Water can then be stored for a few days rather than travelling to the communal water point, allowing instant access to water for washing, cleaning and cooking.

£100 could help a woman set up her own small business with a starter kit; including money to purchase her first few items to sell. This means she could supply local grocery shops or restaurants with vegetables, set up a roadside shop, or buy maize to sell in bigger markets like Bujumbura.

£100 could also help buy a family a bicycle meaning easier transport to school, quicker access to medical treatment in emergencies or support carrying produce from farm to market.

Becky Leach

EDITORIAL

Dear Reader

I hope you are enjoying the longer days and Spring flowers. The weather has not made its mind up which Season it is in, we live in hope that it chooses Spring quickly.

After all the activities and additional services through Lent and Holy Week leading up to Easter, things have quietened down a bit for this Edition. By the time you read this, the APCM will have taken place; we will have heard the reports from last year, plans for this coming year and have elected people to fill current vacancies. Our Parish is very lucky to have such a vibrant community with people volunteering their time and talents. The old adage “Many hands make light work” is very true, if you know of one which captures the spirit of friendship and support, please let me know.

You may have noticed my suggestion for a new, regular article “Qs from the Pews”. Regular on an ad hoc basis, I am not intending to include it in every edition. Keith Merridan’s article prompted the idea and we thought it might be interesting to provide a forum for asking about curiosities and things that downright puzzle us. I await your questions.

May will be our last full month with Becky at the helm. Whilst I am determined to be positive about the future, I have to admit how sad I feel to be losing her. Change is inevitable, we do not have to like it.



As Joanna refers to the new Crab Apple at St Julian’s, their “Jubliation Tree”, I have included a picture of mine in full blossom. We could compete on height, blossom and number of fruits, however, I think my tree is well established so I would not want to embarrass an earnest young sapling!

Julia Pyburn

Now, let’s see what Peeps has been up to

DIARY OF PEEPS, CHURCH MOUSE

Extract from April 2024's Diary

On a beautiful sunny day in April I hitched a lift to Heartwood Forest, just outside the village of Sandridge. We walked up the path to the ancient woodland, to be greeted by the wonderful scent of thousands of bluebell flowers. The bluebells were a carpet of a deep violet blue, with their six petals turned-up at the tips and drooping on one side of the curved stems (some bluebells can be white or pink). The plants spend most of their time underground as bulbs, emerging in April as narrow leaves around 45 cm in length, strap shaped, smooth with a pointed top.

I have noticed that some bluebells grow upright, with lighter blue flowers all around the stem, with thicker leaves, and they are known as Spanish bluebells. There is a danger that they will outgrow the real English bluebell and that there is a real need to continue to protect our ancient bluebell woodlands.

Bluebells flower earlier than many other plants and so they are valuable for wildlife. Woodland butterflies, bees and hoverflies all feed on their nectar. Bees can 'steal' the nectar from bluebells by biting a hole in the bottom of the flower, reaching the nectar without the need to pollinate the flower.

There are many folklore tales surrounding bluebells, many of which involve dark fairy magic. Bluebell woods are said to be woven with fairy enchantments, used by fairies and imps to trap humans. Some believed that anyone who wandered into a ring of bluebells would fall under a fairy spell. It is also said that if you hear a bluebell ring, you will be visited by a bad fairy, and will die not long after. If you are to pick a bluebell, many believe you will be led astray by fairies, wandering lost forevermore.

In the language of flowers, the bluebell is a symbol of humility, gratitude and everlasting love. Some say that if you turn a bluebell flower inside-out without tearing it, you will win the one you love.

Bluebells have been used for a variety of different things throughout history. Their sticky sap was once used to bind the pages of books and glue the feathers onto arrows, and during the Elizabethan period, their bulbs were crushed to make starch for the ruffs of collars and sleeves.

There has been little use for bluebells in modern medicine because they are toxic. However, there is some on-going research focussed on how these flowers could potentially help fight cancer.

On Easter Sunday the church looked and smelled delightful with a great many beautiful flower arrangements. Then I had a huge surprise. From the window ledge near the pulpit I spotted Vicar Becky wielding a large wooden rolling pin! Not an item normally seen in church!

Then I observed several large chocolate Easter eggs on a table. (Yum!) The many children came forward to sit on the carpet to hear the talk and Becky referred to the Bible reading which described how Jesus was not found in the tomb on that first Easter morning.

Vicar Becky told the congregation that the chocolate eggs were like the tomb – dark and hollow. The Angel had said, ‘Do not be afraid’ but there was fear and confusion. The only way to deal with that was to smash the sadness of Good Friday – down came the rolling pin onto the first egg, the noise making the children and some of the adults jump – and pieces of chocolate flew in all directions! Then the other eggs, representing the women, the apostles, Thomas, the two men walking, and Peter, were also smashed – the chocolate pieces being heaped onto trays on the table.

Then the congregation was asked to shout the four messages from the angel: ‘Don’t be afraid’: ‘He is not here’: ‘He is risen’: ‘Go and tell’. I think that the loudest angels were from the choir and south aisle, closely followed by the angels on the lectern side of the church. The children then distributed the heaps of chocolate pieces to everyone. I had an orange flavoured piece – delicious. It was a joyous and happy Easter Service – ending with the children rushing outside with little carrier bags in which to put the Easter Eggs which the Easter Bunny had hidden around the outside of the church before the service started. It was certainly an Easter Day to remember! Thank you, Vicar Becky!

Peeps, Church Mouse



REGULAR PARISH CLUBS AND GROUPS

Some of these groups operate in Term Time only

Mondays

Home Group – 2.00 – 4.00pm Fortnightly at Vicarage Close

A chance to gather to share our faith and deepen our fellowship with one another as we learn from scripture and pray together. For more information, contact the Parish Office (see Parish Directory).

Tuesdays

Parish Lunch Club – 12.30–2pm in St Stephen’s Church Hall

For people living in the parish who are aged from their mid-70s upwards. Lunch Club volunteers cook and serve a two-course meal for a very small charge. This lovely social setting allows members to catch up with friends and make new ones. Lifts to and from are available. Like to know more? Contact the Parish Office (see Parish Directory).

Wednesdays

Coffee Morning – 10.00-11.00am in St Stephen’s Church

An informal time for a chat and light refreshments. Stay for as long as you like, no need to book.

Tot & Teddies – from 10.30am at St Julian’s

Suitable for babies to 4 year olds. We sing songs, listen to a bible story, play with toys or enjoy a craft activity. Refreshments afterwards. “Summer Tots” continue to meet on Wednesday mornings during the school summer holiday. Older children are welcome to come along with their younger siblings. Want to know more? Contact Becky (see Parish Directory).

Thursdays

Community Café – 10.30-12pm at St Julian’s

Tea, coffee, cakes (usually home-made) and friends to meet and make. Just bring yourself, no need to book.

Fridays

Community Shed – from 10.30 in St Stephen’s Hall

For people living on their own, a space for arts, crafts, board games, conversation and cake. Interested? Contact the Parish Office (see Parish Directory).

PARISH DIARY

MAY			
Thurs	9	7.30pm	Ascension Day Service at St Stephen's
Thursday 9th – Sunday 19th – Thy Kingdom Come: 10 Days of Prayers (see page 8)			
Sunday 12th – Saturday 18th – Christian Aid Week			
Sun	12	6.30pm	Christian Aid Service hosted by St Stephen's preceded by refreshments in the Hall from 6.00pm
Sat	18		Christian Aid Coffee Morning and Plant Sale at St Julian's – POSTPONED
Sun	19	10.00am	PENTECOST Whit Sunday special All Age Service at St Stephen's
		3.00-5.00pm	Greenwood URC Service & gathering at St Stephen's (Lady Chapel/Kentish Room)
Mon	20	11.00am	Vesta Lodge Communion Service
Sun	26	2.30pm	Vesta Lodge Songs of Praise
Half Term Fundraising Fun – Friends of St Stephen's Scarecrow Trail Fri 24th – Fri 31st May. Prize for the most popular! (see page 10)			
Fri	31	10.30am	Fonthill House Communion Service
JUNE			
Sat	8	2-4.00pm	Jumble Sale at St Stephen's (see Page 9)
Sun	9	10.00	All Age Service with the Admission of Children to Communion at St Stephen's
		2.30pm	Friends of St Stephen's AGM (see Page 9)
		3.00-5.00pm	Friends of St Stephen's "All About Bees & Honey" fundraising event (see Page 11)
<i>Sat</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>12.00pm</i>	<i>Parish Walking Group – College Lake, near Tring (see Page 8)</i>
Sat	15		Summer Fair at St Julian's POSTPONED – SEE NOTICES
Sun	16	10.00am	Joint Parish Service at St Stephen's followed by a farewell lunch party in the hall to say goodbye to Becky.
Sun	16	3.00-5.00pm	Greenwood URC Service & gathering at St Stephen's (Lady Chapel/Kentish Room)

Mon	17	11.00am	Vesta Lodge Communion Service
Wed	19	8.00pm	Pudding Club
Sat	22	ALL DAY	Alban Pilgrimage
Fri	28	10.30am	Fonthill House Communion Service
Sun	30	2.30pm	Vesta Lodge Songs of Praise
JULY			
Mon	15	11.00am	Vesta Lodge Communion Service
<i>Sat</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>12.00</i>	<i>Parish Walking Group – Leavesden Lake (see Page 8)</i>
Sun	21	10.00am	All Age Service at St Stephen's
		3.00- 5.00pm	Greenwood URC Service & gathering at St Stephen's (Lady Chapel/Kentish Room)
Fri	26	10.30am	Fonthill House Communion Service
Sat	27	4.30- 8.30pm	Games Evening & Supper at St Julian's Church
Sun	28	2.30pm	Vesta Lodge Songs of Praise

PARISH MEETINGS DIARY

MAY

Tuesday 14 8.00pm PCC Meeting

JUNE

Weds 5 7.30pm Deanery Synod at St Mark's, Colney Heath

Tues 18 8.00pm Standing Committee

JULY

Tues 2 8.00pm DCC Meeting

Tues 9 8.00pm PCC Meeting

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

Wednesdays 10.30am Tots & Teddies St Julian's Church

1st Sunday 10.00am Sunday Explorers St Stephen's Hall

3rd Saturday 5–6.30pm Saturday@5 St Stephen's Hall

Last Sunday 10.00am All-Age Service St Stephen's Church

NB Activities may change during School Holidays. Check the Weekly Notices for details.

Other Committees and Groups meet on an ad hoc basis through the year. If you want to find out more about a particular activity or club, please contact the Organiser for more details (see Parish Directory).

READINGS THIS MONTH

5th May – The 6th Sunday of Easter
Acts 10: 44-48 1 John 5: 1-6 John 15: 9-17
12th May – The 7th Sunday of Easter
Acts 1: 15-17, 21-26 1 John 5: 9-13 John 17: 6-19
19th May - Pentecost
Acts 2: 1-21 Romans 8: 22-27 John 15: 26-27; 16: 4b-15
26th May – Trinity Sunday
Isaiah 6: 1-8 Romans 8: 12-17 John 3: 1-17

ORDINARY SERVICES

Sunday	8.00am	St Stephen's	Book of Common Prayer
	9.30am	St Julian's	Holy Communion*
	10.00am	St Stephen's	Holy Communion*
	6.30pm	St Stephen's	Evening Prayer – Book of Common Prayer
	Week 1		
	Week 2	St Julian's	Evening Prayer – Common Worship
	Week 3	St Stephen's	Contemporary Worship
	Week 4	St Julian's	Sacred Space
	Week 5	St Stephen's	Prayers for Healing and Wholeness
Tuesday	9.15am	St Stephen's	Morning Prayer
Weds	9.15am	St Stephen's	Holy Communion
Thursday	9.15am	St Julian's	Morning Prayer
	12.15pm	first Thursday of the Month	
		St Julian's	said Holy Communion
Friday	9.15am	Zoom	Morning Prayer

*** Either the 9.30am or 10.00am services are live streamed each week and available to see on YouTube**



St Stephen
with St Julian

COURT CIRCULAR

May 2024

Buggingham Palace

King Bumble has been keeping a low profile after being caught by Queen Bee with his proboscis in the food stores. His apologies were humble but he does have a sweet tooth.

Sir Earwig Go and Mo the Grasshopper are well into their maintenance schedule. New insulation is due for delivery as well as interior fixtures. The cleaning rota is going well.

Yew Tree Manor

The 'Displaced Invertebrates' shelter has been taken down as residents have either returned to their homes in the stump of the Horse Chestnut tree or built new ones.

An impromptu party to thank everyone who provided temporary food and accommodation was enjoyed by all. Someone had kindly hidden Easter Eggs in the grounds so there was lots of chocolate for everybody to eat. A few of the youngsters (and some who are old enough to know better) over-indulged but have since recovered.

PC Magpie continues to keep a close watch on Jimmy the Jay in relation to Sybil Squirrel's complaint but there is insufficient evidence to lay charges at present.

Compost Court

The recent new planting and work in the area has not deterred the resident hedgehogs. Erina and Ceidae were lately spotted by Barney Owl emerging from their winter hibernation. Understandably Mr S Low-Worm and his wife, Aguida, are keeping a careful eye on their offspring.

Hill Hall

The Society of Wildflowers have expressed in interest in populating the area around the felled Horst Chestnut tree. Their patron, Dame Arachnid Web, is making enquiries.

PARISH DIRECTORY
The Vicarage and Parish Office
14 Watling Street, St Albans Hertfordshire. AL1 2PX

Vicar

Revd Becky Leach vicar@ststephenandstjulia.org 01727 862598

Parish Administrator

Alison Pether office@ststephenandstjulia.org 01727 862598

Hall Hire

St Stephen

Bob & Pam Roome hallbookingsststephen@gmail.com 01727 863425

St Julian

Anthony Coles hallbookingsstjulia@gmail.com 07749 677638

Media

Website

www.ststephenandstjulia.org

X (formerly Twitter)

@StStephenJulian

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/ststephenandstjulia>

Instagram

[st_stephens_church_st_albans](https://www.instagram.com/st_stephens_church_st_albans)

YouTube Channel

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq4_ZbloGXWz4cEfPdhAhg

Magazine Editor

Julia Pyburn magazine@ststephenandstjulia.org

Magazine Information

The copy deadline is the 15th of the previous month. Early submission of articles is always welcome. Articles are preferred via email if possible.

If you would like to subscribe, please contact the Editor.

REGULAR HALL USERS

St Julian's – hallbookingsstjulian@gmail.com

- Seated Chair Exercise
- Tai Chi
- Children's Dance
- Guides
- Pilates
- Yoga
- Salaam Ladies
- Sopwell Choir
- Trefoil Guild
- Rainbows
- Brownies
- Zumba

St Stephen's – hallbookingsststephen@gmail.com

- Early Dance
- RCSD Scottish Dancing
- Sets & Reps for new mums with babies
- Bridge
- Bums & Tums
- AA
- Fitness to Music
- Brownies
- Guides
- Pilates
- Pixie Studio – dance and drama for primary children
- Accordion & Fiddle
- Verulam Writers
- WI
- French for Fun
- Folk Dance
- Herts Textile Art & Sewing

Full details of dates and times are available in both Churches. If you want to find out more, please contact the relevant Hall Bookings person.

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Community Café at
St Julian's

Every Thursday

10:30 – noon

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Contact Anthony Coles
anthonycoles22@btopenworld.com
Competitive rates!

CHURCH HALL HIRE

St Stephen's

Bob & Pam Roome

01727 863425

hallbookingsststephen@gmail.com

St Julian's

Anthony Coles

07749 677638

hallbookingsstjulian@gmail.com