

All the latest news for our communities for January 2023



be, belong, encounter, grow

Keep up to date on our websites:

www.ststephens-colchester.org.uk

www.stmargaretscolchester.org.uk

Regular Weekly Services and Meetings

**St Stephen's—Sunday mornings at 11:00 am
together with our Wednesday morning Holy Communion or
Morning Prayer services at 10:30 am.**

2nd and 4th Sundays from 9:30—10:00 am (before Sunday Service) a time of Christian meditation

Messy Church on the first Sunday of the month, on the second Sunday of the month we have Morning Worship, including Holy Communion and Kids Club. The third Sunday we have Café Church in the morning including Breakfast Club and a short service of Holy Communion at 6 pm. On the fourth Sunday of the month we meet for All Age Communion (with activities for the children).

**St Margaret's—Sunday mornings at 9:30 am
and Morning Prayer on Wednesdays at 9:30 am**

1st Sunday of the month is All Aged Worship, 2nd and 4th Holy Communion and Morning Prayer on the 3rd.

5th Sunday of the month (if there is one) joint worship at either St Stephen's or St Margaret's—see notices for further details

**Three Together; St Stephen's, Wimpole Road and
St Margaret's Worship & Meetings**

Weekly Sunday Evening On Line Worship on Facebook at 6:30 pm. This will stream into our Facebook pages. You are able to join us live at the time or take part at an alternative time that better suits you.

Weekly Prayer Meeting at 10:00 on Tuesday via Zoom

[Click here](#) to access Zoom on the internet or Meeting ID: 195 594 506 & Passcode: 011904



You can also access Zoom Meetings via the telephone; please contact Andrew Tople for further information.

Pause for thought with Rev Lorraine for Christmastide

As I write this, we have just had the last of the schools visiting us for their Christmas Services and Nativities. I am always awestruck by how each time I hear the children sing or act out the Christmas story it fills my heart with Joy.

One of the schools this year told the story of Christmas through using bible readings and learning about some of our older carols.

One of the carols the children talked about was 'Silent Night'

Silent Night, Holy Night,

All is calm, All is bright,

Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child

Holy infant so tender and mild,

Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

The children talked about the writer, a young Austrian priest Father Joseph Mohr. The children talked about how the priest looked out over a very quiet, winter-laden town and he was inspired to write the carol as he just saw the whole town at peace.

I decided to look a bit more into the history and learnt that this carol was written at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, in 1816. Twelve years of war had decimated the country's political and social infrastructure and the previous year had been catastrophically cold. It had been dubbed by one historian as 'the year without a summer'. Mohr's congregation was poverty-stricken, hungry and traumatized. I imagine Mohr had been ministering to many who were in great need.

I can't help but feel a familiar sense of sadness as I look around at the people I encounter this Christmastide; poverty, the winter fuel crisis, the amount of homelessness, when I see refugees fleeing, wars raging and people suffering.

So, Mohr crafted the carol to convey HOPE that there was still a God who cared. The German version states 'today all the power of fatherly love is poured out, and Jesus as brother embraces the peoples of the world. How relevant is this for us to hold onto to?

On Christmas Eve two years later in 1818, Fr Joseph took the Carol to a friend, a schoolmaster and organist Franz Xaver Gruber, to compose a

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melody and guitar accompaniment. The church had been damaged including the organ from flooding. Eventually the whole church was destroyed. Franz managed to compose the melody in a few hours so that they could play it at that evening's midnight mass.

I love the image of a young, inspired Priest who had so much hope in the message of Christmas that despite the difficulties he saw around, he could see how much Jesus' love transforms. The image of looking out over a town that he loved, suffering and in hardship and then witnessing the clear, clean, brightness of night and most importantly the vision of peace for all.

I wonder if this is why we also love singing this carol and why it has become a national treasure in many countries. This faith of Mohr's is the same as ours now. That even in the depths of winter God's love transforms, in and through us all.

A blessed Christmastide to one and all.

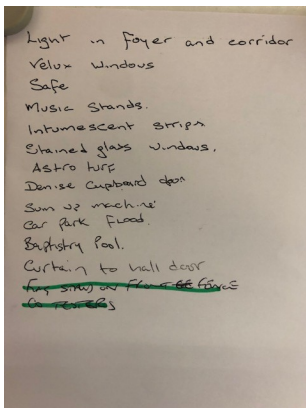
Rev Lorraine

Letter from the Churchwardens

Dear friends,

Contemplation and action in 2023

If you go into the church office and look to your left, there is a noticeboard with this list pinned to it:



This is Martin's TO DO list for minor church repairs.

I imagine that Martin has another TO DO list for all the other things he needs to do as well. I certainly have such a list and WRITING CHURCH MAG PIECE appears on it!

Do you have TO DO lists as well?

This year, which has seen our emergence from the grip of COVID, has been a time of regrouping and in many ways a time of growth and new possibility. But it has been so so busy with worthwhile things

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to do that some of us have felt a bit oppressed by our own expectations and those that we ascribe to others. When things get really out of balance, we can find ourselves treating other people and indeed ourselves in an instrumental sort of way. I know Martin has taken some time out to go on a retreat to get some balance and perspective back.

As we approach the new year I am also very aware that I focus much more on my TO DO list than I do on the point of it all which can only be appreciated when we contemplate God. Thomas Merton put it this way:

“Contemplation, by which we know and love God as He is in Himself, apprehending Him in a deep and vital experience, which is beyond the reach of natural understanding, is the reason for our creation by God.”

Merton reflects:

“Action is charity looking outward to others and contemplation is charity drawn inward to its own divine source.”

What links the two and holds them in balance? Merton suggests that love is the hinge that unites action and contemplation. As we approach 2023, I pray that we will each find ways of integrating our experiences of contemplation and action, of aligning our prayer life with what we do every day.

‘St Stephens Building into the Future’

And what follows is to update you on an exciting and challenging project which will feature in 2023.

After some delay, things are now moving towards a detailed proposed plan to repair and to make sure our buildings continue to support worship and mission and offer a much needed resource to the New Town community.

There are two main issues with the building. If you have been a St Stephens worshipper for any length of time you will know that the newer parts of the centre sometimes leak water and show signs of damage. The leaks are not easily fixed because they are caused by significant structural issues. If not addressed, permanent and perhaps irreversible damage to the building may follow. There are some other repairs that must be done too.

The other issue is our energy use and carbon footprint. We have calculated that we emit some 20 tonnes of CO₂ annually. A CoE analysis of parish returns suggests that we emit around double the average CO₂ emissions for parish

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churches. But then we are blessed with more facilities than many churches. Our energy profile reflects how well used the centre is throughout the week. For sure, this is a success story in terms of our varied offer of services and activities to the community and also our ability to support the church's mission through rental income.

Yes, but...our present carbon footprint also shows that although we have done quite a bit to reduce the energy we use in modest ways (such as replacing conventional bulbs with LEDs), we still provide our heating using ageing inefficient gas boilers near the end of their useful lives and have no means of generating some of our own electricity.

Care for God's creation is vital and we should be working towards carbon neutrality for that reason alone. But the rise in energy prices is a factor too. Many churches renewing their energy contracts are facing unprecedented fuel costs. Our treasurer Chris Poole negotiated a very reasonable fixed gas deal which will take us into 2024 which has bought some time for us. In the meantime, the challenge is to bring down our carbon emissions dramatically and make our future fuel costs affordable.

So, the ***St Stephens Building for the Future project*** is about both making our buildings leak free and structurally sound and ambitious action to improve our carbon footprint. The plan is for our structural engineer to come up with a 'schedule of works' (a detailed account of what repairs are needed) and a cost estimate which will enable us to put work out to builders for tender. We have also commissioned an Energy Audit to show us where our energy is going, suggest and cost improvements and developments which will help us achieve carbon neutrality by reducing waste and perhaps generating some of our own power.

It will be some time into the new year before we get a clearer idea of how much all this will cost. It is a big project comparable to the steps of faith taken in the late 90's and early 2000s when the new church was built. Going ahead with it will need the support of all of us by prayer, donation and fund raising and applications for grant support. If you have questions or comments about it please talk to Lorraine, the churchwardens or PCC members.

Wishing you a blessed New Year in which we experience God in new and vital ways,

John Clifton; for Martin Kerins and John Clifton, Churchwardens

Over 60's Lunch Club at St Stephen's on

9 January 2023

from midday for 12:30 lunch

If you are interested in coming along please give Jill a ring on 01206 572 605. Booking is essential for catering purposes. Two courses will be served with tea or coffee to follow for a charge of £5.

Dietary needs can be catered for if known in advance.

Many thanks from **The Lunch Club Team**



Youthy is Back!

on Thursday evenings during time

6:30—8:00 pm for ages 10—13

8:00—9:00 pm for ages 13—17

Simply come along and have a great time

**For further information or if you would like to volunteer to help
email or message Sarah at**

sarah.daniels@ymcachelmsford.org.uk or 07508 151 225

KIDS' CLUB

**Kids' Club now meets in the hall on
the second and fourth Sundays.**

COME AND JOIN US

on the 8th and 22nd January at 11am.

PRAYER FOR ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES



Please pray for the people living in
the following roads across out
two parishes:

Week 1. From 2nd to 8th January Roberts Road, Eagle Drive, Brigade Grove, Holt Drive, Sexton Close and Maraschino Crescent

Week 2. From 9th to 15th January Hyderabad Close, Battalion Walk, Nathan Court, Chancery Grove and Ash Grove

Week 3. From 16th to 22nd January, Camp Folly, Mersea Road, Monkwick Avenue, Bevan Close and Bardfield Road

Week 4. From 23rd to 29th January Lisle Road, Military Road, Queensland Drive, Brisbane Way and Melbourne Chase

Anybody who wants to Prayer Walk these roads please do.



Your chance to get to know your Local Community Policing Team over a coffee. Ask questions, voice concerns – tell us how we can help you.

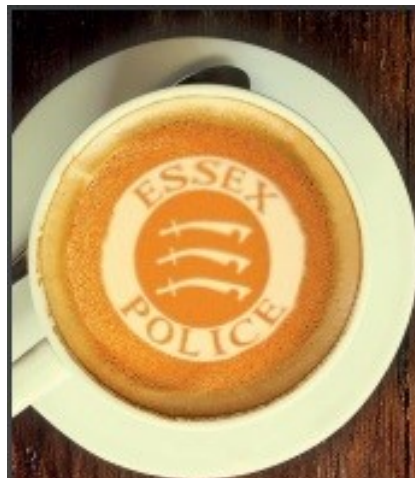
Location:

Wimpole Road Methodist Church, Colchester, CO1 2DL

Date / Time:

Wednesday 11th January 2023 09:30 - 11:30





coffee with cops



Your chance to get to know your Local Community Policing Team over a coffee. Ask questions, voice concerns – tell us how we can help you.

Location:

St Stephens Church, Canterbury Road, Colchester, CO2 7RY

Date / Time:

Wednesday 18th January 2023 12pm - 1pm



Silver Threads at St Margaret's



- January 4th No meeting
- January 11th Knit and Natter
- January 18th Fun and games
- January 25th Food for thought

A warm welcome awaits you

Transport to St Stephen's Church

If you'd like to come to Church, but you are struggling and a lift would help, please speak to Belinda and she will see if she can start up a lift rota.

If you could help with proving lifts to people, please also speak to Belinda.



Worship Song Suggestions

You may have spotted the box at the back of Church asking for suggestions for worship songs.

Thank you to everybody who has already made suggestions. We would like more ideas and suggestions, so if you have songs that you would like the

worship teams to consider using please don't hold back! Pop your suggestions in the box which remain in Church.



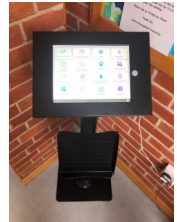
John Weston

It is with deep sadness that we share with you that after a short period of illness John passed away at the beginning of December. He will be greatly missed by us all as he was such a loyal member of our Church and community. We ask for your prayers for John and all those who mourn his passing.

John's funeral will be at the Colchester Crematorium on Wednesday 11 January at 2 pm. All are invited and welcome to join us as we celebrate John's life and what he meant to so many of us.

Fixed Access Data Point

This can be found in the Foyer and is for all to us to use to access key sites on the internet . Thank you to the Digital Access Support Team at Colchester Borough Council for providing this.



KEEP UP TO DATE WITH WHAT'S GOING ON AT CHURCH AND AROUND THE LOCAL AREA



Watch our Facebook pages for all sorts of information about what is going and as well as the “Events” page on our web site.



FAIRTRADE



We hope you were able to have a break over Christmas and enjoy time with family and friends.

Thank you for supporting our stall and buying Christmas goodies

as well as the usual items.

Our next stall will be on the fourth Sunday,
after the service on 22nd January.

WE WISH EVERYONE A HAPPY AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR.

Beryl and Alison

Used Candles

We have a selection of used Church candles in the office. If you could make use of some of these please speak to Andrew



It's YOUR Newsletter

Please don't forget, if you have stories or items that they would like to contribute to future Newsletters please contact me at: office@ststephens-colchaser.org.uk .

Andrew Topple



Rainbow Tots

WEDNESDAYS

@St Stephens Church Centre

1.15pm start

£1.50 per child (+50p per sibling)

**Snack Time for Tots
Coffee & Tea for Adults**

**Fun Play Sessions with Rhyme
Time Included**




St Stephen's
CHURCH CENTRE

be
belong
encounter
grow



Little Lambs

parent and pre-school group



Last session
this term -
18th July.

Starting
again 5th
September

Mondays in term time 9.30-11am

Everyone welcome

£1.50 per family

He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. Isaiah 40 v.11



Contact:
Carolyn
07748795926



Baby & Toddler Group

Coffee morning

**Mondays 9 – 11 am
(term time)**

**Toys, singing,
fun and refreshments**



Contact us at: wimpoleroadmc@gmail.com /
Facebook message / 07847 846292

A free **Community Café**
in conjunction with
Colchester Foodbank
at
St Margaret's Church Hall

Stansted Road, Colchester, CO2 8RA
Every Friday from 11:00am to 1:00pm

The café will offer free refreshments and everyone is welcome. We will also have different community groups and charities from week to week providing support and care to the local community. So come along for a chat and a cuppa.

Every Friday

the following partners will be available this week



 **mind** Mid and North East Essex

Contact Information

St Stephen's Church Centre, Canterbury Road, Colchester CO2 7RY

Rector: Rev Lorraine Badger-Watts

Curate: Rev Dan Cant

Curate: Rev Belinda Kerins

Administrator: Andrew Topple

The Church Office is open on:

Tuesday 12 noon - 3 pm

Wednesday 12 noon - 3 pm

Thursday 9 am - 12 noon

Tel: 01206 869091

Email: office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk

Website: www.ststephens-colchester.org.uk

Facebook: [St Stephen's Church Members -Colchester](#)

Church Wardens: John Clifton and Martin Kerins

For Centre bookings contact: Andrew Topple in the Church Office

For **urgent** prayer requests (Prayer Tree) contact Andrew in the office or Rev Lorraine

The February newsletter should be available by Sunday 29 January. Please send any items to Andrew for inclusion as early as possible, and no later than

Monday 23 January to:

office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk