

# All the latest news for our communities for December 2023



be, belong, encounter, grow

Keep up to date on our websites:

**[www.ststephens-colchester.org.uk](http://www.ststephens-colchester.org.uk)**

**[www.stmargaretscolchester.org.uk](http://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 & fourth 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.

**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 Topple for further information.

## Pause for thought with Rev Dan...

A quote from the movie 'Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street' from the character Kris Kringle (*Father Christmas*):

*'Oh, Christmas isn't just a day, it's a frame of mind... and that's what's been changing. That's why I'm glad I'm here, maybe I can do something about it.'*

On the run up to this Advent and Christmas, I have given much thought and prayer towards an Advent course. After reviewing a variety of courses, I finally felt the Holy Spirit direct me to a course written by a local author living in Halstead; Shelia Jacobs wrote a four-week study based upon a Christmas movie: 'Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street.' The course is titled, *'Someone to Believe In.'*

The course aims to help us focus upon the meaning of Christmas, by aiding us to inhabit Advent, the season for reflecting and anticipation. The course challenges us living in a modern consumer context, where the emphasis on the meaning of life, is to live 'a life to the fullness'. Why? Well, as L'Oreal Paris assert it, 'Because your worth it.' But the course takes a more discerning review of a traditional Christmas movie. It uses the original movie from 1947 and with some clips from the remake in 1997; and challenges the modern consumer context from a biblical view. Like the opening quote above from Kris Kringle (*Father Christmas*) where he explains why *he* is here, if we replace Kris' quote with Jesus' response to Pontius Pilate on why *he* has come, we get this response:

*<sup>37</sup> '...I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.'* John 18:37 NLT

Both quotes illuminating that there is something "wrong" or "false" in the world. To live life to the fullness, is to know and inhabit truth. L'Oreal Paris, 'because you're worth it.' You are worth it, indeed! A full life is about ticking of as many physical experiences as one can, for example: holidays, visiting shows and landmarks, engaging with literature, song, and poetry, gaining knowledge. But there is another level too, it's about exploring the spiritual, discovering where to place one's faith. It's asking the big questions in life and the journeying to find answers, rather than relying upon what you might hear from others, or past experiences, it is about *carpe diem* (*Seizing the day*). With every journey there is knowledge and adventure to be gained. There are only two things that stop us from experiencing the fullness of life, they are our busyness and willingness.

So why is it important for each of us to engage with Advent and Christmas, especially when we already have some many demands on our time? Advent and Christmas are significant seasons for us as Christians, these two seasons provided opportunities to reflect upon the birth of Jesus Christ and the **hope and joy that He brings.**

When we make the effort and place Jesus at the centre of all things, something quite mysterious and spiritual happens. We draw nearer to God and therefore

## Cont...

develop a closeness with our relationship with him; in these moments of closeness his voice becomes clearer, and our spirit aligns with his will, allowing us to see the miraculous around us – *anyone able to recall my recent words on the coincidences and how these are God's way of remaining anonymous?* Words spoken by Albert Einstein.

If you are unable to attend the Advent Course, here are five short activities you can do over Advent that will have a positive effect on you.

1. **Reflect on the significance:** Take time to read and meditate on the biblical accounts of Jesus' birth, such as the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2:1-20) and the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 2:1-12). Discuss the miracles, prophecies, and fulfilled promises surrounding Jesus' birth with those around you. This reflection can deepen one's understanding of God's love and purpose in sending His Son into the world.
2. **Advent candle lighting:** Each week leading up to Christmas, light a specific candle while saying a prayer or reading a scripture that focuses on different themes like hope, peace, joy, and love. This is a good activity for all the family or as an individual to do at a mealtime. This practice can help cultivate a sense of anticipation and reflection.
3. **Advent devotional:** Try to engage with a short Advent devotional or reading plan that offers daily scripture readings and reflections specific to the season. Many resources are available online. This practice can help to ponder the deeper meaning of Christmas and grow closer to God during this time.
4. **Prayer and worship:** Try to attend regular worship during Advent. This can include personal prayer time, attending church services, or even joining virtual worship gatherings like the Tuesday morning prayer meeting or the Sunday evening Three Together service. Focusing one's thoughts on gratitude for God's gift of Jesus and praying for a deeper understanding of His love.
5. **Acts of kindness and service:** Reflect upon the importance of spreading love and generosity during this season. Be engaged to offer at least one act of kindness such as volunteering, donating to charitable causes, or reaching out to those in need at least once a day. Remember to smile at the strange. Christmas is not just about receiving, but also about giving and imitating Jesus' example of selflessness and compassion.

Everyone's personal journey and connection with their faith varies. Be confident in sharing experiences with others, sharing is a great way of encouraging others and celebrating the works of the Holy Spirit.

I look forward to journeying with you all, over this Advent and Christmas and in the sharing of stories. May we be prepared at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the bearing of truth and hope. Amen.

Revd Dan 

## **Churchwardens' letter December 2023**

As we prepare for advent and Christmas is within sight, plans for services are now complete and our shared Christmas card for delivery in the parishes is nearly ready. In the meantime, here are a few updates on what else is going on behind the scenes during the vacancy.

The PCCs of St Margaret's and St Stephen's met for a second time with Archdeacon Ruth and Area Dean Erwin in November to check on progress during the vacancy, where the shared parish profile has got to, and deal with questions from the PCCs. We were able to say that the profile writing was progressing well. Contributions about various aspects of church life are more or less complete, the two parishes had consulted their congregations about the important question of what we were each looking for in a new incumbent and Peter Butler was standing by to bring the contributions into a unified design. Archdeacon Ruth had helpfully prepared a summary of what the PCCs had said at the first meeting about the what we wanted from a new incumbent and that short paper has gone into the mix too.

Since then, there has been a meeting of the authors from each parish to combine our contributions. We hear that the plan is to have separate sections for each parish and a section dealing with shared activities. The aim is to produce a draft which the PCCs can sign off and send to the archdeacon before Christmas. Thanks for your contributions!

Regarding the PCCs' questions, Archdeacon Ruth acknowledged that the PCCs need to address changing circumstances as they happen rather than attempting to avoid any change but to think carefully and avoid embarking on any big new changes in direction before a new incumbent arrives. A St Margaret, PCC member's comment on this was that they are used to making decisions without an effective incumbent so the situation is unchanged for them!

Questions were also raised about the legal status of the new incumbent and what significance this had for their day to day ministry. Also, whether a change was proposed in the relationship of the two churches. The approach put forward by the archdeacon is that the new incumbent should be appointed as priest in charge for both parishes. Archdeacon Ruth said that the churches would notice little or no practical difference from the previous title of Rector. She went on to say that there were no immediate plans to change the relationship between the two churches, for example, by forming a shared benefice.

## Cont....

The relationship between the parishes should develop at its own pace over time. She promised continued consultation with both PCCs about all aspects of the appointment and the other matters discussed.

October and November have seen some heavy rain and once again you will have noticed bowls to catch drips in corners of the worship area. We have sought advice from the DAC (the diocesan department that deals with church buildings) about how to unblock delays in the process of getting the repair project underway and by the time you read this, the PCC will have considered our options. On the energy front, we are close to obtaining quotations to install PV panels to generate our own electricity. Once costs are known and tenders are in, we will be able to seek agreement from the archdeacon to proceed. That, in turn, allows us to start fundraising in earnest. Regarding the heat pump project (to replace the gas boilers) we have some possible bidders to do the work but the process will be longer before we can seek DAC permission to go ahead.

At St Stephen's, the PCC has decided to meet monthly which is more than previously and, to keep on top of business in between PCC meetings, the standing committee is meeting. Revs Belinda and Dan, the churchwardens and Denise as PCC secretary comprise the standing committee. There is a new notice just inside the entrance hall on the left with the names and photos of the church staff, ministry team and PCC members. The PCC is there to represent you. So, if you have a question or comment about the vacancy or anything else, we want to hear from you. We will do our best to keep you up to speed on the appointment process.

And please pray for the PCC, the ministry team and us as churchwardens as we continue to work together to help bridge the church community through to our next chapter. Also for our friends and partners at St Margaret's and Wimpole Rd Methodists,

In Christ,

**John Clifton for John Clifton and Martin Kerins, churchwardens.**

## Carol Singing!

All are welcome to join our annual carol singing adventure to our local streets, raising money for Beacon House who work with homeless people in Colchester. We will meet at St. Stephen's at 4pm on Saturday 23rd December. We anticipate ending up at the Odd One Out pub for soup and rolls and more singing with the regulars! Please join us!

If you have any questions please speak to Michael Watkins or Andrew Topple in the office



**HAIKU BEATITUDES:**  
**10 SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD**

Blessed are the poor in spirit; in them shines the dawn of a new world.  
Blessed are those who mourn; in them will rise the warmth of spring , consol-  
ing.

Blessed are the meek; they amazed shall inherit the earth, common land.  
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for right; through them justice, clear  
rain.

Blessed are those full of mercy; from them flows love's healing, wide river.  
Blessed are the pure in heart; shone through clarity. They will see the Love.  
Blessed are the peace-makers; golden threads of light under brooding skies.

Blessed are the ones persecuted for goodness; night sky , pulsing stars.  
You are the salt of the earth; so become wild sea spray, sharp cleansing storm.  
You are the light of the world concealed; so step out from the tree-line, **shine**.

*Our Mission is to support  
and empower people to age well*



**Our Values**

 **Trust**    **Excellence**    **Community**

To every body who contributed pictures and / or jokes to support the AgeWell project  
at our Café Church in November.

Thank you so much for these, they are just wonderful . You will certainly help  
spread some Christmas cheer. Thank you once again. Kelly

# KIDS' CLUB IN DECEMBER

Join us on

**SUNDAY 10th DECEMBER**

**KIDS' CLUB will meet in the hall at**

**11am**

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**



## ADVENT CANDLES

We have a few Advent candles left from last year -

8 white and 3 red.

Let us know if you would like one.

They cost £3.20.

*Beryl and Alison*





### Dates for your diary:

**30 November**—Advent Course (first meeting at 7:30 pm at Wimpole Road)

**2, 9 & 16 December**—Christmas @ The Hub 10:00—14:00

**10 December**—Community Carol Singing, meeting at St Margaret's at 5 pm

DATE TO BE ADVISED—Christmas card packing and distribution

**17 December**—Carol Service at Wimpole Road, with the Boxted Methodist Silver Band at 6:30 pm

**23 December**—Community Carol Singing, meeting at St Stephen's at 4 pm

Full details of Christmas Services will be available shortly

Keep watching our Newsletter, web site & Facebook pages for more info.

## 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**

## HELP NEEDED PLEASE

Our kids Sunday Club is lacking a helper. This is just for the 4th Sunday of the month, where Anna has gone off to uni, so Emma has lost her helper. Please could anyone interested please speak to me.



Also our Saturday Cafe is looking for people to go on a rota - again for a once a month slot. Could anyone interested speak to myself or Denise.

**Rev Belinda**

## 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 on and as well as the “Events” page on our web site.



Please [click here](#) to see the Events page

## PRAYER FOR ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES

### PRAYER FOR ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES

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



Week 1. From 4 December - Winsley Road, Beehive Court, Worsnop House, New Town Road, Littlefield Road, Elmwood Ave and Lordswood Road .

Week 2. From 11 December - Cannon Street, Rebow Street, Victoria Place, Launceston Close and Canberra Close.

Week 3. From 18 December - Belmont Place, Scarlets Road, Recreation Road Parkland Court, Smith's Field, Hitherwood Road, Breachfield Road and Eight Acre Lane

Week 4. From 25 December - Brookside Close, Bourn Road, Dudley Close, Bourn Court, Rose Allen Avenue, John Hammond Close and John Mace Road

**Anybody who wants to Prayer Walk these roads please do.**

# Messy Church

## Christmas

**Sunday 3rd December 2023**

Story, Crafts, children's activities,  
with drink and snack included.

(£2 donation per family requested)

Start at 2.45pm to 4.30pm

in St. Margaret's Church  
hall.



**Everyone Welcome - please book your places -  
children must be accompanied by an adult.**



Contact: Carolyn

Tel: 07748 795926

# CHRISTMAS @ THE HUB

Come along to The Hub for the usual fun weekly activities as well as:

**2nd December - letter writing to Santa**

**9th December - collect your reply from Santa**

**16th December - tree decoration crafts**

Hot lunch food and drinks available to purchase after 12, Christmas film, face painting, games and more available across the weeks!

So come along between 10 and 2pm and start of the festive season with us at St Stephens!







YOU ARE INVITED TO

# Rainbow Tots Christmas Party

6TH DECEMBER AT 1.15PM  
WITH A SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE!

PLEASE BOOK A SPACE AND LET US KNOW OF  
ANY DIETRY REQUIREMENTS.



**St Stephen's**  
CHURCH CENTRE

be  
belong  
encounter  
grow





# Advent Course

Someone to  
Believe In

The Three Together Churches are offering a four-week advent course, this is based upon the popular Christmas movie Miracle on 34<sup>TH</sup> Street.

First Session starting at Wimpole Road, Methodist Church on 30<sup>th</sup>  
November at 7:30pm

For further information see church websites and weekly church notices or  
email: [office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk](mailto:office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk)



# Concorde Singers

present

## "Aspects of Christmas"

*....from Beethoven to Brussels Sprouts*

Conducted by Margaret Notley  
Accompanied by Barbara Cutter

**Saturday December 9th 2023**

**St. Stephen's Church Centre  
Canterbury Rd, Colchester at 3.00 pm**

**Tickets £8.00 - Children £4.00**

**Tickets can be bought on the door or phone 01206 213065**

**Mulled Wine and Mince Pies are included**

***FREE CAR PARKING at  
St George's School, Canterbury Road***

Acknowledgement to  
**East of England Co-operative Society**





*St. Stephen's Church*

*Canterbury Road, Colchester CO2 7RY*

*Invites you to a*

***Free Christmas Concert***

*With*

*Abbeygate Concert Band*

*Musical Director*

*Stephen Watkins*

***Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023***

***2pm - 4pm***

***Refreshments and Raffle***

***Retiring Collection***





## GROWING THROUGH A VACANCY

WWW.GROW-VACANCY.ORG.UK

### A PRAYER TO USE DURING A VACANCY

This can be used in the intercessions at church services, by small groups and church prayer meetings, as well as by individual church members.

Heavenly Father we thank you for the ministry of X  
our previous vicar/rector/minister,  
and we pray your presence and blessing upon him/her.

We ask now that you will help us  
to share responsibility,  
grow in faith,  
love one another,  
care for those in need,  
reach out to others,  
and welcome newcomers.

Lord Jesus, guard and grow this church  
as we serve you together in this period without a vicar/rector/minister.  
Please guide those who are seeking the right minister for us,  
and those who are seeking the right church for their ministry,  
that together we may discover your way for the future and see your kingdom  
grow.

Amen.

## Parish Giving

Whether by phone, by post or online, you can set up a Direct Debit donation with PGS that will help our parish fund the mission and ministry, enriching the life of our church in our community.

Begin your giving journey in just a few clicks at [www.parishgiving.org.uk](http://www.parishgiving.org.uk)

# TOURETTES ACTION



Colchester

Support Group

**A support group for families  
living with tourettes or tic  
disorders**



**WHEN?**

**We aim to meet every 3rd Sunday of the month**



**WHAT TIME?**

**10:30am - 12pm**



**STANWAY LAKELANDS COMMUNITY CENTRE  
STANWAY  
COLCHESTER  
CO3 8WD**

## **Contact Information**

**Group leader Annie**

**07830260537**

**[tourettesactioncolchester@yahoo.com](mailto:tourettesactioncolchester@yahoo.com)**

**[facebook.com/groups/798970467446324](https://facebook.com/groups/798970467446324)**

**Or search Tourettes Action Colchester  
Support Group**

**YOUTH  
MUSIC**



CLIP Club Colchester is a FREE weekly meet up for young people 11 to 18 with an interest in sound and music.

Each week you will have the chance to experiment with synthesisers, microphones and musical technology in a fun and friendly environment.

Absolutely no musical experience, equipment or booking is required - just turn up!

Workshops take place every term-time  
Wednesday at Firstsite, 4pm – 5pm.

For details, click [HERE](#)

**Firstsite**



## FREE BOOKS THIS CHRISTMAS

For families struggling at this time of year, this will be our third year providing books to families or individuals struggling this Christmas.

No catches, just books.



Scan the QR code with the camera on  
your phone or email  
[Keepcolchesterreading@gmail.com](mailto:Keepcolchesterreading@gmail.com)

If you wish to donate books, please email [Keepcolchesterreading@gmail.com](mailto:Keepcolchesterreading@gmail.com)



[Facebook.com/Keepcolchesterreading](https://www.facebook.com/Keepcolchesterreading)





# Changing harmful relationships for positive futures

## Who is the service for?

The Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP) is for individuals who want to stop being abusive towards their (ex) partners and are motivated to change their behaviour. We accept both statutory and self-referrals for both males and females.

Click [HERE](#) for more info

# 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 Ben at

**ben.gibbons@ymcaessex.org.uk or 07940 543296**

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

**11 December 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**



# Emergency help with food, bills and other items



**If you find yourself in need of some help, the Essential Living Fund can help pay for heating, electricity, water and food. We can also help you get essential household items like a fridge, cooker or washing machine.**

**To get a grant you must:**

- ✓ Live in Essex
- ✓ Be aged over 16

**How to apply**

Check if this applies to you.

Visit [www.southend.gov.uk/elfforessex](http://www.southend.gov.uk/elfforessex)



 **St Stephen's**  
Church Centre



# ST STEPHEN'S BADMINTON CLUB FOR ADULTS

MEETING IN THE HALL ON  
THE LAST FRIDAY OF THE  
MONTH

---

7:30 - 9:30 pm



# Silver Threads at St Margaret's



## A warm welcome awaits you on Wednesday afternoon

Tea and company - 1st Wednesday of the month  
1.30pm to 3.00pm

Knit and Natter - 2nd Wednesday of month  
1.30 to 3.30pm

Fun and Games - 3rd Wednesday of the month  
1.30pm to 3.00pm

Food for Thought - 4th Wednesday of the month  
12.30pm - 1.45pm

**booking essential for catering reasons – to book call 07745 160 621**

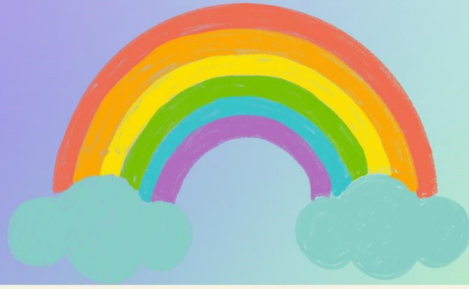
**Tea and Chat - 5th Wednesday (when there is one) 1.30-3 pm**

## 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.





# ***Rainbow Tots***

A warm and friendly group for you and your little one to meet and make friends in your local area.

**Wednesdays  
(term time)**

**Fun free play  
sessions with  
rhyme time to  
finish!**

**1.15pm-2.30pm**

**St Stephen's  
Church  
Canterbury Road  
CO2 7RY**

**Snacks for the tots  
& refreshments for  
the adults**

**£1.50 per child  
(+50p  
additional  
child)**

# *Little Lambs*

**parent and pre-school group**



**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



**St Margaret's  
Berechurch**  
WINDHOLM • ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH

**Contacts:**  
**Carolyn**  
**07748793926**



# **Baby & Toddler Group**

**Coffee morning**

**Mondays 9 – 11 am  
(term time)**

**Toys, singing,  
fun and refreshments**



Contact us at: [wimpoleroadmc@gmail.com](mailto: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**

**Curates: Rev Dan Cant & Rev Belinda Kerins**

**Community Worker : Louise Brown**

Email: [communityworker@ststephens-colchester.org.uk](mailto:communityworker@ststephens-colchester.org.uk)

Mobile: 07598 251 180

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](mailto:office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk)**

**Website: [www.ststephens-colchester.org.uk](http://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 one of the Curates

The December newsletter should be available by Sunday 24 December Please send any items to Andrew for inclusion as early as possible, and no later than

Monday 18 December to:

[office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk](mailto:office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk)