

**All the latest news for our
communities for
January 2026**



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

(these may vary from time to time)

St Stephen's—Sunday mornings at 10:15 am together with our Wednesday morning Holy Communion or Morning Prayer services at 10:30 am.

Every Sundays 9:00—9:30 am in the Chapel (before Sunday Service) a time of silent Christian meditation. Please can an effort be made to be quiet if arriving at Church before 9:30 to avoid disturbing the meditation in the Chapel.

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.

St Margaret's—Sunday mornings at 10:15 am and Morning Prayer on Wednesdays at 9:30 am

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

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

Weekly Prayer Meetings at 9:00 on Monday & 10:00 on Tuesday via Zoom

Please email Andrew on office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk for access details for these meetings



Clergy Reflection

Going forwards in God's light and peace

I am writing this in Advent 2025, the start of the Christian New Year for the January magazine 2026, the start of the Calendar New Year, so I guess going forwards into the New Year is my theme.

The last reflection I wrote in September was about being inspired by Jacquie Parkinson's huge textile art on the Bible. Part of my inspiration led me to book a creative craft sewing day where we 'had a go' at making a small Christmas themed picture. This is where I give all of you a laugh if you haven't seen it already. I went knowing I was thinking about Christ as the light and knowing I simply wanted to stitch a picture of a candle. My skills though never match my enthusiasm. (I am slightly better at glueing stuff). So, as usual, it ended up looking like a child had made it. Though Jesus always tells us we are to be like little children, so I enjoyed making it as his beloved child. Anyway, here it is!

One friend remarked though that it also looked like a child walking forwards wrapped up warm as well as being a candle -how clever would that have been if deliberate- but I can see what she meant and God can use that. It's easy to be overwhelmed by darkness great and small as we see so much bad news, and experience setbacks and hard times, but John's gospel, Jn1: 5 reminds us that Jesus' light is not overcome by darkness. We can always have the light of life in him. Jn 8:12.



We can choose to go forwards into January with all the uncertainties of our world, wrapped up in the light and warmth of Christ, knowing he is guiding us forwards in our daily walk with him as we look to him to light our way. So, let's keep finding ways to embrace the warmth of Christ's light and love and seek his guidance.

I have also been thinking about peace. The theme of our joint Christmas service card 2025 has been peace—'pray for peace at your local Churches this Christmas.' So many of us would like to see peace in our world when we see so many worldwide examples of war, terrorist, anger or hatred attacks on the news. And they are only a fraction of the ongoing wars and persecution crimes that go unreported.

It is a privilege to be able to come to God in prayer and invite others to pray with us for peace and it is right and good to bring those situations to God. It is even more amazing though that we can go into the New Year knowing that Jesus defeated the enemy of peace-by his cross and resurrection so that we can know peace with God and one another through Jesus, our prince of peace. He never promised that there wouldn't continue to be difficulties. But he does promise us that he will be with us through them and will win the final battle against everything that destroys this peaceful world

Clergy Reflection cont....

when he brings about his New Kingdom where the lamb lies with the lamb unharmed. The other evening, I went to a special Christmas event with Graham Kendrick, Patrick Reagan and Restored. Patrick told us about someone who was commissioned to paint peace. His first picture was chocolate box country scene with nothing disturbing anything, the second was of mother gazing lovingly at a sleeping baby. The commissioner said that neither was peace, so the artist tried again. This time he produced a picture of steep cliffs, stormy skies, rain pelting down and windblown trees, but underneath them all in a tiny clef was a sleeping white dove. That's the peace we can know in Christ in our lives as we grow in trust in him.

I have been increasingly more dismayed by politicians, from whatever party who fight their cause by disparaging the people in the other party and calling for resignations at every opportunity or sign of a mistake. If we are not careful, we are affected by such worldly ways.

Every Communion service, we celebrate that Jesus has made peace possible between us and Father God and with each other -whoever we are -wherever we come from. But so often, what people see if they go to any church before long, is those who want power, or feel offended, or disagree with decisions, or hold grudges or dislikes, criticising and demeaning others. That might not apply to us, but we all have a choice as we go into the Year. If we want peace in our world we must ask Jesus to show us individually the way of peace and be prepared to be peacemakers, to learn to bless and not curse others. Maybe there is an unintended double meaning in our card invitation, as well as being at Church to pray for peace, we must pray for peace AT our Churches. It's not that we must pretend there are no disagreements or difficulties but that we learn to go first with encouragement and then with our queries or concerns to the person concerned rather than grumble and moan behind the scenes.

I pray that God will bless us as we choose to walk forwards into 2026 with God's help to walk in his light and peace, knowing how much each of us is loved by our Lord.

Rev Jackie

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



ADVENT 2025



We have had an extremely busy and exciting advent this year!

The arrival of the giant green Christmas tree securing ready for the congregation to decorate during Messy Church service, we had a festive Singing For Fun, taken part in the New Town Community Facebook Advent Windows and a huge Foodbank donation from the Girlguide Rainbow and Brownie units too!

The Over 60's Lunch Club three course Christmas dinner complete with a class from St George's school singing and gifting each patron a card. A group of church members and Jesters Theatre Academy braved the cold for carol singing around the area raising money for Beacon House. We were also treated to an afternoon of festive music by the Abbeygate Concert raising money towards our Building Project fund and being supported by a donation from the Co Op East of England with food for the refreshments.



St George's Infant & Junior school have held festive concerts for the children and their families, there has been visits into Kendall C of E Primary and St George's schools to visit and talk about advent with them.

The Hub has had three festive Saturday mornings with decorations being made, writing letters to Father Christmas and finishing with over 60 children having breakfast and a visit from Father Christmas himself with thanks to the Foodbank donating presents.

There have been festive Lego club decorations made, Rainbow Tots party with lots of fun! A mens walking group trip around Mersea Island too.



A truly magical evening with a retelling of Charles Dickens A Christmas Carol by candle light, a festive Cafe Church which was linked with a full emersion baptism and a celebration as we said goodbye and good luck to Reverend Belinda as she leaves to take charge of her own church.

Christingles were made for a Christingle Christmas Eve service in the afternoon followed with midnight mass, and a joint service Christmas Day Morning with shared breakfast at St Margaret's.





There maybe somethings that I have missed off of this list of amazing time of preparation for Jesus' birth; the events taking place in the church to welcome the community in or whether that's going out into the community has been truly amazing.

Thank you to all of those who have taken the time to help behind the scenes, at the time of the events, saying prayers, being present and enjoying this time of advent with us. We are truly lucky to have had support from local counsellors, the Co-Op, Tesco's to help us to make some of these events possible.

As we are ready to start the new year I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a heartfelt thank you for being part of this busy December and I pray that the new year is kind to us all, that you can find time to pause, reflect and breath ready to start 2026.

Louise Brown x

Word from the Wardens

Happy New Year...

New year new you.....NEW US!

Whilst we look forward to this year I'd like to take a minute to ask you about what are your visions for our churches this year? I honestly want to know what you think we should focus on or do. What's good what's bad and what's just Ok...?



Now it's not always an easy task to look in upon ourselves and determine what's wrong but sometimes it's just necessary to take that time before embarking out into the world because if we can't recognise our own faults and learn to change them how can we help others to do similar.

The Wardens.

PRAYER FOR ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES

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

Week 1. From 4 January Roberts Road, Eagle Drive, Brigade Grove, Holt Drive, Sexton Close and Maraschino Crescent

Week 2. From 11 January Hyderabad Close, Battalion Walk, Nathan Court, Chancery Grove and Ash Grove

Week 3. From 18 January, Camp Folly, Mersea Road, Monkwick Avenue, Bevan Close and Bardfield Road

Week 4. From 25 January Lisle Road, Military Road, Queensland Drive, Brisbane Way and Melbourne Chase

Anybody who wants to Prayer Walk these roads please do.



Appeal for Soup Run Volunteers

You may remember that we put out a request last year for extra volunteers for the Soup Run, and I am delighted to say that we have welcomed some new members to the team. However, as a couple of volunteers are no longer able to help, we once again **urgently need male volunteers** to join our Soup Run team.

Our volunteers meet at Eld Lane Baptist Church car park and help to distribute food and drinks and provide support to some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Our Soup Run team is on the rota for the 4th Saturday every other month from 6:45 pm to 7:30 pm, so we cover just six evenings a year. Ideally, we aim to have at least two male volunteers on the team each time, but at present we do not have enough regular male volunteers to provide cover in the event of sickness or unforeseen absence.

Unfortunately, if we are unable to find sufficient volunteers, we may have to consider withdrawing from the Soup Run rota.

Please note, while this appeal is primarily looking for men to join the team, it would also be good to have more sandwich makers and female volunteers!

If you are interested, willing to help, or would like to find out more, please do let me know. Even helping once or twice a year would make a big difference.

Thank you for considering this valued and rewarding outreach.

Juliet Balls

Wimpole Road

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



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-colchester.org.uk .

Andrew Topple



Prayers for the New Year, shared by Christians Against Poverty (CAP)

The new year can bring mixed feelings. For some, it's a fresh start and a time to celebrate. For others, it can highlight worries or problems that have happened over the last year. Prayer can help us pause, reflect and draw close to God at all times. These new year prayers can be used at the start of the year, or returned to whenever you need them.



For New Years Eve;

God, as this year draws to an end, I look to you for guidance and rest. Thank you for getting me through this year and being with me through the difficult and stressful times, as well as the happiest ones. Help me to let go of what I can't change and find rest in you before the year ends. Amen.

For New Years Day;

Loving God, as this new year begins, I pray that you'll be with me. I don't know what lies ahead, but I know that your Son who brought light into the world can guide my steps. I pray that you'll bless my family and friends, being with them in their difficult times and the happy moments this year. Remind them that they can look to you for guidance and strength. Amen.

St Leonard at the Hythe

On the 5th Sunday in the month, we have agreed we will hold evening prayer worship at St Leonards at the Hythe.



*All
Welcome*


St Stephen's
CHURCH

The Hub

St. Stephen's cafe & community hubbub
Saturdays 10am - 12 noon

Coffee
and cake

Knit and
natter

Lego
club

Warhammer
club

BRICKS AND BEER



COME ALONG ON THE 4TH FRIDAY OF THE MONTH FOR AN GROWN UPS EVENING OF
BEING CREATIVE AND BUILDING LEGO!
BRING ALONG A FEW DRINKS OF YOUR CHOICE (DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ALCOHOLIC!)
AND SPEND SOME TIME WITH US!
7.30-9.30PM AT ST STEPHENS CHURCH.

citizens
advice

Colchester

Free, impartial and confidential advice for all

CONTACT US

Online:

www.colchestercitizensadvice.org.uk

Email: advice@colchestercab.org.uk

Freephone: 0808 278 7853

We can offer help with a wide range of issues including:

- Debt or money advice
- Energy bills, efficiency and budgeting
- Benefit checks or help to make a claim
- Family or personal
- Housing
- Employment
- and more!

WARHAMMER GAMES NIGHT



Come along with your army and
join us for a game's night - adults
only.

You are welcome to turn up or
get in touch us or the
Warhammer Club leaders for
more information.

8pm, 3rd Friday of the month at
St Stephens Church.



**THE CHURCHWARDENS AND THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
OF
ST. PETER LANESIDE**

Cordially invite you to the instillation of

THE REVEREND Belinda Kerins

as

Incumbent of St Peter Laneside, St Peter's Avenue,
Haslington, Rossendale, Lancaster BB4 6NZ

*Clergy are encouraged to robe

Sunday 18th January 2026 at 4 pm

RSVP to Denise & Michelle

E'mail; oncataylor@hotmail.com or bushberry@btinternet.com

Lunch served from 12.30pm



Second Monday of the month (unless
otherwise stated)

If you would like to come along, please
call Louise on 07598251180

Cost £6 per person

Next Lunch on Monday 12 January

everyday
faith



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Can we recommend the 'Everyday Faith' app which popped up on my FaceBook recently? It's developed by the Church of England and is a 5 minute read / listen which includes a bible reading, brief commentary, prayer and action point. Easy to download from the App store (easy as in I managed it). If you don't 'do' apps here is a link to use online which you might want to explore...

<https://everydayfaith.churchofengland.org/s/preview>

Hope you find this resource useful for taking your journey of faith into your weekly routine.

ST STEPHEN'S KIDS' CLUB

**Meeting in the hall or the back of the Church on
Sunday 11 & 25 January**





St Stephen's Youth Club



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

Thursdays
term-time only

6.30 - 8pm
School years 5 - 8

8 - 9.15pm
School years 8 - 12

FREE!



Sign up
here

- Meet new people
- Learn new skills
- Access support & advice
- Sports, baking, gardening, music, quizzes, craft & more!

Any questions, please contact:

becky.whitaker@ymcaessex.org.uk

YMCA

Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you


St Stephen's
CHURCH

Neurospicy

Support and information for the
neurodivergent and their families



Join us for a cuppa and a chat

Tuesday 10am - 12pm (term time)

St Stephen's Church, Canterbury Road, CO2 7RJ

Further details can be found about this group
by [clicking here](#)





St Stephen's
CHURCH



ST STEPHEN'S
BADMINTON CLUB
FOR ADULTS

Last Friday of Every Month
7:30 - 9:30pm

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



Join us for...

SINGING FOR FUN

Come along to St Stephen's Church, Canterbury Road
for an afternoon of musical singing fun!

**Sing along to lots of the old time favourite songs
from stage, screen and everything in between!**

4th Monday of the
month
12.30-2pm

**LIGHT REFRESHMENTS 12.30-1PM.
SINGING FROM 1PM -2PM.**



Next Meeting Monday 26 January

Come and have fun at SCOUTS



Scan for joining
contact details

Try new things. Make new friends.
Joining is just the beginning
of your big adventure.

We meet at -
St Stephen's Church Centre,
Canterbury Rd, CO2 7RY on Mondays

Ages - 10 ½ to 14
Meeting time: 7.15pm - 9pm

What do we do?

- Master new skills and try new things
- Have fun and go on adventures
- Go camping to lots of different places
- Are curious about the world around them
- Help others and make a difference, on their own and beyond.
- Do our best, be kind and helpful

Every week we gather and take part in lots of different games activities, with the young people achieving anything they set their mind to, and having lots of fun along the way.

Interested in Joining? Contact -
L.szmyr@colchesterestuaryscouts.org.uk
07840950114

**We have
spaces starting
January
2026**

Scouts 
9th Colchester Scout
Group

Come and have fun at **BEAVERS** or **cubs**

Try new things. Make new friends.
Joining is just the beginning
of your big adventure.

We meet at -
Wimpole Road, Methodist Church
on Mondays

**We have
spaces starting
January
2026**

Beavers
Ages 6-8

Meeting time: 5-6pm

Cubs
Ages 8-10 1/2

Meeting time: 6.30-8pm

What do we do?

- Master new skills and try new things
- Have fun and go on adventures
- Are curious about the world around them
- Help others and make a difference, on their own and beyond.
- Do our best, be kind and helpful

Every week we gather and take part in lots of different games activities, with the young people achieving anything they set their mind to, and having lots of fun along the way.

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L.szmyr@colchesterestuaryscouts.org.uk
07840950114

Scouts 
9th Colchester Scout
Group

St Margaret's Church

COMMUNITY CAFE

IN CONJUNCTION WITH COLCHESTER
FOODBANK

All are welcome to our weekly cafe for free refreshments in the church hall.

We also have various community support groups providing drop in sessions as well as the food bank volunteers who are able to issue food parcels for those in need, whatever the reason.

Come along for a cuppa and a chat!

EVERY FRIDAY

11-1PM



Colchester





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:

Wimpole Road Methodist Church, Colchester, CO1 2DL

Date / Time:

Every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 10am



Silver Threads at St. Margaret's



A warm welcome awaits
you every
Wednesday afternoon

Come along for refreshments &
company and a variety of activities
between 1:30 pm and 3:30 pm

On the 4th Wednesday of each month join
us for lunch with "Food for Thought"

12.30pm - 1.45pm

Booking essential for catering purposes.
Please book the week before.



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)**



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



Little Lambs –

Parent/Carer and preschool group

Monday mornings in term time 9.30 – 11am
£1.50 per family

Playdough



Crafts



Physical Play



Small world –
Cars and garage
Kitchen and food
Animals



Houses and people
Baby toys

10.30 am **Snack time**

followed by

Carpet time - story and rhymes

Starting again

on Monday 6th January 2025

**St. Margaret's Church
CO2 8RA**

**Contact:
Carolyn
07748795926**

Contact Information

Priest In Charge: Rev Anna Davis

Email: revannadavis@gmail.com

Curate: Rev Belinda Kerins

Community Worker : Louise Brown

Email: communityworker@ststephens-colchester.org.uk

Mobile: 07598 251 180

Administrator: Andrew Topple

The Church Office is normally open on:

Tuesday 9 am– 2 pm , Wednesday 12 noon - 4 pm & Thursday 9 am - 12 noon

Tel: 01206 869091

Email: office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk & office@stmargaretscolchester.org.uk

Safeguarding

If you have a Safeguarding concern please report this to our Safeguarding Offices:

St Stephen's—Michael Watkins safeguarding@ststephens-colchester.org.uk

St Margaret's—Kevin Reynolds safeguarding@stmargaretscolchester.org.uk

or phone 07934 486003

Website: ststephens-colchester.org.uk & stmargaretscolchester.org.uk

Facebook:

[St Stephen's Church, Colchester](#) & [St Margaret's Church, Colchester](#)

Church Wardens: Ian Brown & Sheila Poole—St Stephen's

Julie Reynolds—St Margaret's

For hiring / bookings contact: Andrew Topple in the Church Office

For urgent prayer requests contact Rev Anna, one of the Curates, our

Community Worker Louise or Andrew in the office

The January newsletter should be available by Sunday 25 January. Please send any items to Andrew for inclusion as early as possible, and no later than

Tuesday 20 January to:

office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk