



All the latest news for our communities for February 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

A Happy and Healthy New Year to you all.

When I was asked to write a letter for this February magazine I immediately looked at the 2026 Lectionary (Church Calendar) to see if anything caught my eye. And, of course, two days immediately did, primarily because they were printed in red indicating these were special Holy days.

Number one was right at the beginning of February – “The Feast of the presentation of Christ in the Temple” – sometimes known as Candlemas, and number two was Ash Wednesday (18 February). The first one marks the end of the Epiphany season and the second marks the beginning of Lent.

The first is the end of the joyful celebrations of Christmas and the second marks the beginning of the solemn season of Lent in preparation for Christ’s sufferings and his death on the cross. As with all major festivals the Lectionary, once again is useful because not only does it give us all the chosen readings for the year but it gives us the colour we use (like a visual aid) to mark the seasonal emphasis. So for ‘Candlemas’ we have white or gold vestments and banners to mark out joy whilst Lent is marked by purple – always a colour to denote a solemn, penitential season.

As with important Holy days we use further visual aids to aid our devotions. As you might guess for Candlemas we have lots of candles to remind us of the God fearing Simeon who realised that Jesus was going to be a “Light to the Gentiles” i.e. the whole world (Not just the Jews). This is why some churches have a Christingle service on this day for the same reason. And again you might guess on Ash Wednesday we use an anointing of ash on our foreheads – as an ancient sign of sorrow/penitence.

So put together in these two February Holy days we see how Christ’s earthly life embraced the breadth of all human life with all its joys and sorrows.

However, as we all know, life is never that black and white. We are much more complex creatures. Our joy can often have elements of sorrow and vice versa.

So within the joy of Christ’s birth there’s the sorrow of Herod’s command to slaughter all under two years of age boys and Jesus’ family forced to live as refugees until the death of the paranoid King Herod.

Likewise within the sorrow of Christ’s suffering and death we know that a great victory was won for all humanity over sin and death, winning for us the promised resurrection to eternal life.

Our lives are full of paradox [putting together two seemingly contradictory things but both true]. This Christmas we have heard of several unexpected deaths. We are sad for the loss of life and the bereavement of relatives and friends – but are glad that they are now with their Heavenly Father and freed from illness and pain.

Clergy Reflection cont....

I saw a play over Christmas called "Goodbye June" on BBC1. The play covers the way four grown up children struggle with the news of their mother's imminent death. But out of their struggles came reconciliation between the two daughter's fractured relationship over many years. A son found new self-understanding and a new life; and the mother was able to die free of her long held anxieties about her dysfunctional family.

So in this coming year, if we are faced with difficulties in our lives, both personally or within our Church, let us try and learn not to get angry with God or with those we live amongst (and that includes our Church family). Whilst acknowledging our hurt and anger "take it to the Lord in prayer" trusting that God can and does use this pain to draw us into a deeper, firmer relationship with himself (although he can't if we hang on to the anger).

Life's a paradox...a most ingenious paradox (Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera The Pirates of Penzance).

So I wish you all a paradox filled New Year. Hooray for paradox!

God Bless, **Christine**

Word from the Wardens

2026 started with some excellent news regarding funding for the Building Project at St Stephen's. Well done to those in the Building Project Sub-Committee who regularly complete application forms for potential funding. All credit to John Clifton and Andrew Topples for painstakingly completing this particular detailed application. Their perseverance has been rewarded via a grant of £66k towards the roof works, with the chance of additional funds in future.

After the water leak problem under the building last year, and ongoing issues with badly-designed pipe work near the ladies' loos, this is extremely welcome news. To our brothers and sisters at St Margaret's, we feel your pain and hope and pray that your current building work issues will soon be resolved. We are often reminded that 'the church' is made up of people and is not just a building, but it doesn't half help if our buildings are functioning properly!

A large group made up of family and church friends took a trip to Lancashire recently to be with Revd Belinda as she was installed as vicar of St Peter's Laneside, Haslingden, in the diocese of Blackburn. Although we'd had the heads-up to wear an extra layer of clothing (as the church's heating had failed!), we were met with a lovely warm welcome from the congregation.



Word from the Wardens cont...

In his sermon, the Bishop reminded us that God seeks us and invites us in. We don't need to go searching for Him. 'Words of Commendation' came from Revd Emma Barr who trained with Belinda and they described perfectly the person we know and love.



We continue to pray for Belinda as she begins this new era of her ministry.

Sheila Poole, Churchwarden at St Stephen's

As we are in the week of prayer for Christian Unity; let us pray

Heavenly Father,
you have called us in the Body of your Son Jesus Christ
to continue his work of reconciliation
and reveal you to the world:
forgive us the sins which tear us apart;
give us the courage to overcome our fears
and to seek that unity which is your gift and your will;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

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

PRAYER FOR ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES

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

Week 1. From 1st February—Lisle Road, Claudius Road, Campion Road, Barrington Road. Bober Court, Merton Court and Prunus Court.

Week 2. From 8th February. Gilberd Road. Sadler Close, Western Road, Beche Road, Chestnut Avenue, Hetherington Close and Gosfield Road.

Week 3. 15th February. Gladstone Road. Granville Road. Mytle Grove, Adelaide Drive, Cairns Road and Armidale Walk

Week 4. From 22rd February. Morant Road. Harsnet Road, Kimberley Road, Berefield Way, Inworth Walk and Queen Elizabeth Way

Anybody who wants to Prayer Walk these roads please do.



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.

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



*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

St Stephen's Youth Club report: Sept – Dec 2025

Highlights from this term:

- St Stephens has welcomed some new young people this term, alongside their regular committed attendees. They have all settled in really well and staff are supporting them with various individual needs.



- Young people continue to build stronger relationships with staff this term.

- Young people are thriving in new activities being set out by staff. These activities aim for the young people to push themselves and try new things, giving them opportunities to learn new skills and discover new interests.

- Young people who were hesitant to try new activities before are now becoming more and more involved due to stronger trusting relationships that



have been built with staff.

We recently joined the Jack Petchey award scheme, meaning young people can nominate their peers for an award. The young person that wins is then granted £300 to spend within the youth club. One of the winners this term was Imogen, who attends St Stephen's youth club. She decided to spend the grant money on a Christmas party at youth club - this included hire of a silent disco, Dominos pizza and some Christmas art & craft activities.

Most common topics of discussion:

- Starting in new schools or year groups/transitioning from primary to secondary school.
- Subject options in school, considering what's right for the young person.
- Lots of talk around Christmas and the new year, as the young people were very excited for the holiday period.
- Family and friendships.
- Goals and aspirations

Specific support given to young people this term:

- Supporting a young person in the club, who has additional needs, to socialise with his peers rather than focusing solely on the adults within the session. Allowing him to do so slowly and as he feels comfortable.
 - Supporting young people with the transition from primary to secondary school, changing the perspective from it being scary to being exciting.
- Supporting a young person with communication skills; using full sentences and building conversation skills.

What does engagement look like here?

- The young people who attend St Stephens come on a very regular basis, proving what a safe space it is for those in the area.
- Young people arrive excited to see what youth workers have planned for the session, especially if it is challenge of the month day!
- There is a great community feel at St Stephens, the young people are always respectful of the staff and the space.
- Staff are committed to the young people here and their development which can be seen by the activities facilitated by staff. Young peoples resilience can be seen growing through their approach to club activities.

We still have multiple volunteers, which means there are always lots of activities on offer, as well as plenty of opportunity for support and discussion with a trusted adult.



Next term we are looking forward to:

- Building stronger relationships with current and new attendees
- Hearing about young peoples experiences in their new schools
- Encouraging further independence
- More monthly team challenges, co-designed with the young people

Continuing to upskill our fantastic volunteers so they can continue to develop their youth work skills.

Jack Petchey award winner:

Imogen has fantastic attendance at youth club and she is always keen to get involved with the activities on offer. Her engagement is brilliant and she is always keen to try new things and to put forwards her ideas. She has a positive attitude and is kind and caring towards her peers. Imogen loves to help others and is always polite and friendly to those around her.

Becky Whitaker
Youth Services Manager
YMCA Essex



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

YMCA

Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

- 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



God is Love

Story, Crafts, children's activities, followed by a sandwich lunch.

£2 donation per family please.

Monday 16th February '26

Start at 11am to 1pm
in St. Margaret's Church Hall

Everyone welcome

- booking essential please by **Friday 13th February**
- children must be accompanied by an adult.



Contact: Carolyn

Text: 07748795926

Tel: 07748795926

BRICKS AND BEER

St Stephen's
CHURCH

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



St Stephen's
CHURCH

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.



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.

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 Toppie



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 9 February

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 8 & 22 February





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 Meetings Monday 26 January & 23 February

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.

Interested in Joining? Contact -
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



Baby toys



Small world -

Cars and garage
Kitchen and food
Animals
Houses and people

10.30 am Snack time

followed by
Carpet time - story and rhymes

Everyone Welcome!



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

**Contact:
Carolyn
07748795926**

Contact Information

Priest In Charge: Rev Anna Davis

Email: revannadavis@gmail.com

Community Worker : Louise Brown

Email: communityworker@ststephens-colchester.org.uk

Mobile: 07598 251 180

Administrator: Andrew Topples

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 Topples in the Church Office

**For urgent prayer requests contact [Rev Anna](#), our
[Community Worker Louise](#) or [Andrew in the office](#)**

The March newsletter should be available by Sunday 22 February. Please send any items to Andrew for inclusion as early as possible, and no later than

Tuesday 17 February to:

office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk