



All the latest news for our communities for March 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

How time flies! After only several ordinary time weeks after Christmas and Epiphany season, we are now going into Lent!

Lent is supposed to be a time for us to deepen our understanding and walk with God, - making time to draw closer to him, so that when we come to Easter we ponder anew and celebrate the wonder of the new life we have in Christ through the Crucifixion and Resurrection. This preparation invites us to a period of self-examination where we consider if there are attitudes, habits or thoughts that get in the way of deepening our relationship with God, saying sorry and asking God to help us turn from them. Sometimes that involves some self-discipline, fasting or giving up certain foods, limiting tele or social media or phone games etc. That might not sound like good news, but it is if it helps is to make time to enjoy God's presence and love, strengthens us in our trust in our faithful God and our understanding of how much he loves to be in our presence. It is exciting when we take time to hear him through the Bible and Worship and God speaks to us in a new way. The other good news about Lent is that it is named after the lengthening of days which we will greatly appreciate after so many rainy grey ones.

While I write this I am also preparing to lead an individual retreat at Pleshey Diocesan Retreat House. This year as the retreat falls in Lent we will look at some of the ways we can hear and respond to God through the Bible and everyday living. Another word we use for that is praying!

So often we think that praying or reading the Bible is about getting it right, saying the right words or being intellectual enough to study, and we forget Jesus words that complicated words and lengthy prayers do not impress him and shouldn't impress us either. What he wants is simple honest relationship, each of us being ourselves before him and no one saying they aren't good enough. God wants to speak to and hear from each one of us.

These are some of the ways of prayer we are going to encourage on retreat, and I'd like to suggest you use Lent to try some of them too. I have encouraged some of these ideas before at St Margaret's and I know John is talking to St Stephen's about some of them so let's take time to visit or revisit them and see how they help us.

So, on retreat, we encourage people to slow down and rest and recharge when they need to, because we hear God better when we do. and he has no problem in communicating with us when we sleep. We also encourage taking walks, not just stepping out for exercise but paying attention to nature and praising God for Creation, perhaps responding to God creatively in word or picture if that is helpful and even eating slower to appreciate the taste of the food more or remembering God is watching the tele with us or is happy to talk to us in ordinary actions like washing or gardening etc. We call this Practising the presence of God.

Clergy Reflection cont....

Sometimes we take short passages of the Bible, like promises, and put our name in them. It can be quite powerful to let them speak to us personally like that. Sometimes it helps to find ways to remember parts of God's word so that it penetrates from our heads to our hearts. I've always found memory verse hard until I discovered that if I put a tune to them or a picture or both I could then remember them. Why not try it?

Sometimes we use some of the psalms to remind ourselves how honest God wants us to be with him. David was not frightened to tell him his feelings but always addressed God rather than having a swearing fit, told him what he felt and how he wanted God to respond, but always with that reminder of who God was and what he had done for him. Why not try Psalm 13 for starters and have a try at writing your own psalm? This is called Lamenting prayer.

Another way of using the psalms or other short passages is to read through them several times, the first to get an overview, the second to see what speaks specifically to you, the third time to talk to God about it and then to simply rest in what he is saying to you. The posh name for this is Lectio Divina.

Sometimes we use imaginative bible reading prayer with story like passages. Instead of reading the passage like a spectator, we enter into the story, becoming one of the characters and experiencing what it would feel like to be that person. This can often give you added insight into the meaning behind the narrative and enable you to talk to God about your thoughts and feelings. Why not try to read some of the Gospel stories in this way?

Most evenings on these retreats we have a time of silent prayer or meditation. This is often simply a time to rest in the Lord's presence or bathe in God's love. Rowan Williams likens this to sunbathing- just as you might sit in the sun for a while, not striving to get a tan, but simply letting it shine on you, so simply sit in God the Father's presence or the Son's presence, letting his love shine on you. Others have expressed this as you gazing/looking at him and him gazing/ looking at you. Sometimes we use a phrase or a scripture like 'Be still and know I am God, to draw us back into God's presence when our minds get distracted as happens to us all. We do this together for twenty to thirty minutes but why not try for five to ten minutes as a starter?

I hope that some of these prayer ideas help you experience a meaningful Lent this year. Amy Boucher Pye has written a practical accessible book that explores these ways and others called 7 ways to pray. I would highly recommend it.

May God bless and draw close to you this Lent as you find ways to take the time to draw closer to him.

Jackie

Word from the Wardens

Welcome to another busy time of year. We are fully into Lent and looking forward to Easter arriving. Shortly after we will have APCM and a new year in the church starts.

But what's not new is our ever-evolving need to raise some funds towards running and improving both Churches. As many who attend St Stephens will know our building project is reaching a time to actually start work. With a few grants having been won and John's seemingly unending task of filling out forms and answering questions has really progressed us further. Roof work should hopefully commence soon and then heating and PV panels will be in the pipeline next! As always any little amounts you can give to help us cover these projects to future proof the building would be greatly appreciated! If any questions about donations or how to give regularly please speak to any warden or Chris Poole.

Ian Brown
Church Warden
St Stephens Church, Canterbury Rd

Save the Date!

Please note some dates for your diary for 2026 events and more will likely follow soon:



12 to 14 June—Annual Church Camping weekend

Sunday 5 July New Town Open Gardens

([click here](#) to register interest in taking part)

Do you come along to St Stephen's Messy Church services on the first Sunday of the month?

Whether you do...or you don't please could you take a few moments and fill out this questionnaire?

It would be wonderful to have it filled in by all ages - the younger members who have their own phones and can give feed back too! If you require a printed copy instead then please ask as there are some available.

To access, please [click here](#) or on the link below if you are reading the newsletter online, or use the QR code printed here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScDJJr-XFdjHHI9DV7WXbgAnildBaELy4diGiAAcsUZMoOcmg/viewform>



Many Thanks!
Louise Brown

New Town Open Gardens

Once again we will be organising this event supported by our friends at Wimpole Road Methodist Church on Sunday 5 July.

As last year we will be encouraging people to also open up their gardens for craft and information stalls and as appropriate offer them space at our Churches. We also plan to have entertainment at both Churches.

If you are able to help at either Church on the day with refreshments and stewarding, please speak to Louise or Andrew or email;

ntog2026@ststephens-colchester.org.uk Thanks



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.paritygiving.org.uk

PRAYER FOR ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES

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

Week 1. 1 March, Artillery Street, Victor Road, New Park Street, King Steven Road, Morella Court, Marasca End and Garrod Court.

Week 2. 8 March, Kendall Road, James Street. Charles Street, Goodey Close, Finchingfield Way, Thaxsted Walk and Felstead Close.

Week 3. 15 March, Winnock Road. Wimpole Road, Terling Close, Middlewick Close and Beeleigh Close.

Week 4. 22 March, Old Heath Road, Winsley Square, Onslow Crescent, Darwin close and Bathurst Close.

Week 5. 29 March, Artillery Street. Victor Road, New Park Street, King Stephen Road, Peerswood Road, Hornbeam Close and Fallowfield Road

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





NEW TOWN OPEN GARDENS

Save the date....

Sunday

5th July 2026

To register interest / get in contact

please email:

ntog2026@ststephens-

[colchester.org.uk](mailto:ntog2026@ststephens-colchester.org.uk)



*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

Camping at Thorrington Friday 12th June to Sunday 14th June 2026

We have booked a return to Thorrington for a camping extravaganza. I think this is our eleventh year of going. However, if you have not been we would love you to join us for all or part of our weekend away.



We have the indoor accommodation which can sleep 14 people (in bunk beds) and then the fallen log campsite which is a lovely big open camp site set in the woods. Thorrington is a lovely campsite on the way to Brightlingsea, it is the scout campsite, but they allow us to use it as a church group. The site is around 20-minute drive from our church.

The weekend is open to all ages, and some people come for two nights, one night, one day or just the Saturday evening. It is flexible it doesn't matter if you are on our own or in a family. Everyone is welcome.

The rough plan for the weekend is to arrive around 4.30pm on the Friday set up camping and then have some fish and chips which we normally order and collect to bring to the site. Nearer the time we will place an order.

We then relax around the fire while enjoying a sip of your favourite tipples. If we are lucky some people sing and play any instruments they bring.

The Saturday is relaxed, and we will probably book some of the onsite activities. We also set up some sport activities on our site. Some people sit and read; some people go for a walk. If we are lucky Chris Poole may arrange a nature walk. For tea we arrange a group BBQ and share food which people bring. This is sometimes where people join us for the evening. We sometimes then attend the large campfire for a sing song, run by the site wardens before returning to our site for a more relaxed fire. People can visit all day Saturday without camping if that is better for you.

On Sunday we may attend the "Scout's Own" 15 minutes outside act of worship before normally breaking camp after lunch. Last year we were blessed with Anna leading our own open-air service.

All the above is very relaxed there is never any pressure to do anything. People dip in and out of whatever they fancy. People bring their own food, and we find this works well. We have a fully working kitchen in the indoor accommodation. There are showers

and toilets on site. We have also booked an extra fridge for this year.

We are still finalising the prices per person per night but think this will be £8.50 per person if you are camping and over 5, under-fives are free. The indoor accommodation is likely to be £15.50 per person per night. This indoor accommodation has increased quite a lot over the last few years. These prices will hopefully include two activities we will book to do on the Saturday. We really want people to come and have a small fund set aside that people can access if you the cost is difficult.

If you haven't been before we hope to see you and please ask us if you have any questions. Thank you

Chris and Debbie Liddamore

07752369612



Christmas Carol singing

I just wanted to say a big thank you to everyone that helped and came Carol singing this year. I always wonder if anyone will turn up but we had amazing numbers.

We raised £309.22 for beacon house which is a super effort.

Special thanks must go to Debs, Sara and Janet for their marvellous soup and setting up and organising the soup.

Mike for getting the licence, collecting pots, bread and being a great guy. Andrew for his organisational help.

Annie from Jesters for bringing so many enthusiastic people.

Becky from the Odd One Out for letting us sing there.



Many thanks for supporting this event and bringing some cheer to the streets on Newtown.

Next year I might have a break if you fancy being involved let me know,

Thank you, Chris Liddamore

Cantus Firmus with Colchester Methodists invite you to ...

The Way of the Cross

A reflection in words and music

Palm Sunday
29 March 2026
6.30pm

Castle Methodist Church
Colchester CO1 1TT

Cantus Firmus Choir

Norman Eastbrook MBE, Conductor
Sharon Tidbury, piano
Clive Carrington, organ
Service led by Howard Gardner
Speaker: Revd Chris Preece

Retiring collection

Scan me



GF cantus firmus

Enriching Christian worship
through music and the arts

cantusfirmus.org.uk

Cantus Firmus Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1110862

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.



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 March

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 March





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 23 February & 23 March

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



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.



WEDNESDAYS
TERM TIME ONLY

1.15PM - 2.45PM

ADULT AND CHILD FRIENDLY PLAYGROUP

FOR AGES 0-4YRS

EVERYONE IS WELCOME



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

Tuesday 24 March to:

office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk