

All the latest news for our communities for April 2026



Cover picture kindly taken by Steven Harper

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



Easter Weekend Services and Events

Maundy Thursday 2nd April

St Margaret's - Last Supper Meal 6-8pm (booking preferred for catering purposes)

Wimpole Road - Service with Holy Communion, 6.30pm

Good Friday 3rd April

St Stephen's - All Age Service, 10.15am

Wimpole Road - Time For Reflection. 10am

St Margaret's - Last Hour At The Cross, 2pm

Easter Saturday 4th April

St Stephen's - Easter Fun Day, 10-3pm

St Stephen's - Easter Vigil, 7pm

Easter Sunday 5th April

St Margaret's - Easter Day All Age Holy Communion, 10.15am

St Stephen's - Messy Church with Holy Communion, 10.15am

Wimpole Road Church - Easter Day Morning Worship, 11am



Clergy Reflection

Jackie's Jottings—Palm Sunday and Easter

This year Easter falls at the beginning of April, so as I am writing this, I am also preparing for Palm Sunday.

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of that fateful week that led up to the crucifixion and the Resurrection.

There is no doubt in my mind that Jesus knew that openly proclaiming who he was in this way would lead to his arrest and painful crucifixion, yet with the hope of glorious resurrection. Only in this way could he bring rescue, enabling those who believed and trusted in his saving work to come close to God and be part of his heavenly kingdom here and for eternity.

Before this day Jesus had been careful to hide himself away at the right times, and only let some people speak about their healing, to stop the crowds forcing the issue and making him something he wasn't. Both the disciples and Jesus knew that Jerusalem would be a hostile and dangerous place for him. The Jewish authorities were already plotting to kill him. But on this day, at the right time, as John would say, he publicly declares himself to be the Christ, the King, the Messiah, the Saviour of the nation, by deliberately riding into the crowded streets of Jerusalem where there were probably 20,000 pilgrims congregating for the Passover festival.

He has prepared the way ahead, he tells the disciples where to find the young donkey, with an adult, probably it's mum, in Matthews' gospel. He tells them what to say if questioned, simply that 'the master has need' - was that a password! And he joyfully accepts the crowds praise and adulation, as he rides humbly but majestically into the city while they lay down cloaks and palms and branches before him.

In our British culture we are more likely to think of the donkey as a beast of burden or a poor relation to the horse. But in Israel's culture, the army general, a war lord, would ride a horse, but kings in peace time often rode white colts - young donkeys. Matthew shows us that Jesus was acting out the prophecies about him from Zechariah about the gentle peaceful King coming to you. And the crowds at that moment recognise him as the son of David, the heir to their great king, the one who would come and save them. Jesus is making a deliberate Messianic claim in his actions. The crowds' cries, although voiced as blessings and praise, were also ancient cries to the king or ancient of days 'Hosanna -save us,' a cry to a Saviour and King.

Jesus may also have been making another claim as the anointed one who came to cleanse the temple. In Maccabean times, in about 175 BC, Antiochus IV Epiphanes had desecrated the temple offering pigs flesh on the altar, making sacrifices to Zeus, and turning the temple rooms into brothels, until the Maccabees fought him, rescued Israel and cleansed and purified the temple. In Matthews gospel the cleansing of the temple comes straight after the procession into Jerusalem. But this time Jesus is saying



Clergy Reflection cont....

that the Jewish people themselves and the religious authorities have profaned the temple by turning it from a house of prayer into a den of thieves and then bringing healing instead to those who needed it.

The cross loomed even on Palm Sunday. The huge crowds would have troubled the Romans, but this group did not have weapons or sound rebellious and were not making a declaration of war on a donkey. But the chief priests and teachers of the law, though they saw the wonderful things he did, were indignant when the crowds hailed Jesus as the Son of David, and they shouted out 'save us' praise. And what offense they would feel when accused of profaning the temple. Even the crowd was partially sighted. The whole city was stirred or troubled by Jesus' entrance, but the witnessing crowd, when questioned about Jesus, would only say, he is Jesus, a prophet from Nazareth in Galilee. Though they had initially cried out to Jesus as the Son of David to save them, they now seem partially sighted. No wonder then that they could be so easily manipulated 5 days later to cry out 'Crucify him.' Once the leaders arrested Jesus, I expect the crowd ruled out any hope that he could rescue them in any way. They may have thought he would save them from the Romans or make their nation great again.

But God's way of saving through Jesus was more universal and thorough than temporary relief from circumstances. His death and resurrection would defeat the way sin and death separated everyone from God's presence and enable us to instead experience a full restored relationship with God, now and for eternity if we recognise who Jesus is and trust him to bring God's life in us. He brings us the possibility of a change of heart so that we experience his peace and are enabled to have peace with one another if we follow him, rather than seek our own self interests.

In a world that is in great turmoil and war at present, we are bound to want to pray for peace and relief from our present energy and cost of living crisis but we too, like the crowds could be blinkered to the salvation Jesus wants us to experience and bring to others. Yes, he wants us to bring relief and help to us and others in need but much more importantly he wants us to know him as the King of our lives, the Saviour who brings more than exterior comfort, who redeems our souls, who brings us the immeasurable treasure of peace and intimate relationship with God and wants us to bring that treasure to others. As Saviour and King, he wants to work in our interior lives – our body as temples of the Holy Spirit, to change our hearts from self-interested selfishness to living for him as we let him fill our lives with his costly love.

Like the crowds we can so easily pay lip service to the idea of worshipping Jesus as King and Saviour in our lives yet allow ourselves to be blindsided to his ongoing invitation and demand to follow him and instead inadvertently crucify his deepening influence in our lives.

So, as approach Easter this year, and beyond, may we joyfully cry out praise and thanks to God for his wonderful gift of salvation through the cross and resurrection,

Clergy Reflection cont....

but may we also remember to ask him to keep saving us from ourselves and allow him as the King of love to have full access to our lives in every way.

Rev Jackie x

Word from the Wardens

It has been a while since I provided a reflection piece for the newsletter. It is now coming up to a full year as being church warden and an opportunity to reflect on how the last 12 months has been. We have had highs and lows over the past 12 months.

The highs will always be a growing congregation of different races and backgrounds, coming together to join in worship. We have been blessed with newcomers to our church and bring fresh ideas and can help grow the church, physically and spiritually.

The obvious lows have been around our building works that have not gone to plan. However, with a new year and new enthusiasm we hope to complete these works by the summer.

Behind the scenes we have worked hard at maintaining the church site, improving the areas often out of reach to the community but this was important to do.

Today we have had a “workday” where we invite anyone to come and do deep cleaning and maintenance around the church site. I love these days personally, as when there is a group of people working hard to improve our church it fills my heart. Its exciting and pleasurable. Plus, we always have cake. Today we concentrated on getting the main church ready for the Easter. We have been worshipping in the hall over winter, and it is exciting to think about returning to the main church for Easter. Today we cleaned the alter, chairs, floors and general tidy of the space.

It feels fresh and inviting again. Altogether we had 11 people all working on different projects around the building.

Over the last year we have spent many a weekend clearing out “stuff” and it has been hard work, and, in the Autumn, we had 5 enormous skips filled. We often feel the weight of life’s burden either spiritual or the accumulation of being alive. I remember at this time that Jesus asks us to give this to him “my yoke is easy and burden is light” (Matthew 11. 30). What ever our highs and lows have been over the last year, giving this to Jesus can be liberating and spiritual rest.

Julie

St Margaret’s Church Warden

Thank you Marigolds!

Another huge “thank you” to Brian, Josh and the team at Marigolds for their help in getting a replacement dishwasher and new fridge for the St Stephen’s.

Once again they have been very generous and supportive in getting these new appliances installed.

Thanks also to the Diocese who have supported with a grant and also YMCA Essex who have assisted with a donation towards the cost of the new fridge.

If you are going to be using the dishwasher there is short instruction video which you can view by [clicking here](#).



**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

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



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 tippie. 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



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 5 April Lisle Road, Claudius Road, Campion Road, Barrington Road, Rockhampton Walk, Freemantle Road and Sydney Street.

Week 2. From 12 April, Gilbert Road. Sadler Close, Western Road, Beche Road, Mayberry Walk, Wych Elm and Willow End .

Week 3. From 19 April. Gladstone Road. Granville Road. Mytle Grove, Berechurch Hall Road, Lethe Grove and Friday Wood Green

Week 4. From 26 April. Morant Road. Harsnet Road, Kimberley Road, Camulodunum Way, Kohima Road and Arakan Close

Anybody who wants to Prayer Walk these roads please do.

*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



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)



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 13 April

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 12 & 26 April





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 27 April

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 May; newsletter should be available by Sunday 26 April Please send any items to

Andrew for inclusion as early as possible, and no later than

Tuesday 21 April to:

office@ststephens-colchester.org.uk