



The Curate writes...

Parishes across the Church of England are invited to take part in 'Thy Kingdom Come', a nine-day prayer initiative between Ascension and Pentecost. The Archbishop of Canterbury invites us to pray 'Come Holy Spirit'.

After the very first Ascension Day, the disciples gathered with Mary, the mother of our Lord, constantly devoting themselves to prayer while they waited for the out pouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Like them our reliance on the gift of the Holy Spirit is total – on our own we can do nothing. This is why through the centuries Christians have gathered at this time of year to pray for the coming Holy Spirit. St Stephen's congregation is invited to dedicate some time over this season to pray for the renewing and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit in our community. May we be inspired and equipped to reach out to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with our families and friends, our communities and networks.

Our Vicar Revd Graham Buckle is on sabbatical until the end of August. The parish continues to flourish. St Stephen's Week publicity is now circulating with some exciting events planned between 16th -23rd June. Thank you to everyone who is assisting at this time in extra and unseen ways.

Rev'd Catherine Duce

Dates For Your Diary

Pentecost Parish Picnic in Vincent Square – Sunday 9th June 12pm to 2pm

Community Gardening – Sunday 16th June 12pm to 2pm

St Stephen's Week – 16th to 23rd June, see details inside

Parish Seaside Trip to Brighton – Saturday 17th of August



Baby and Toddler Group

It's been a busy time since I took over the running of Toddler group from Mark in September of last year! We've seen many different Grandparents, parents, nannies, and friends spending their Thursday afternoons with us. I've been so blessed with the support of two fantastic volunteers from Westminster school who give the group an hour and a half of their busy lives every week. With their help we have slightly changed the way the group works, which has provided so much more opportunity for quality conversation and to put into practice the gift of hospitality that is so enjoyed within this group. Summer term is a notoriously quiet time for toddler groups, so I am planning and organising some new toys and equipment for the group in time for the busy autumn term.

Almost Friday Club

AFC was set up as a club for those in years 5,6,7, and 8 has now run for 8 sessions over the last few months on a Thursday 4:45pm to 6pm in Napier Hall. As well as time for homework and friendship development, we have been busy with a range of activities. From pizza and cheese scone baking, to making Resurrection Gardens, to celebrating the end of SATs week with cupcake decorating, to slime making (thank you, Instagram!). Feedback from the group suggests these times are being enjoyed! Ying has now joined the AFC team and we are looking forward to growing the group.

Jen Adam

Mothering Sunday



It was my lucky day when the Vicar asked me to create an Altar Piece for Mothering Sunday with the Church Group. What fun as I love working with children. The idea of calligraphy was not hard to come up with as something pictorial might have been too complicated.

My key helpers were Katy, from Lambeth Palace, and Andrew, the Verger. The team of Calligraphers from Burdett Coutts included Hannah, Jemimah, Mary, Shahira, Tahirah, Azim, Esmail, and Fain.

The idea was primarily to celebrate mothers by displaying the qualities and attributes that they have in the form of a prayer of thanks to God. Also to ask for His help regarding all the anxieties and stresses that mothers encounter.

The young people were able to come up with the best words -- some of the words showed great insight (not to forget the 'forever unfinished' work words!). They were a lovely group to work with; we had very little time and they respected this by industriously writing non-stop without revealing boredom or rebellion!

The Altar Piece took on the form of a banner: it was made of sheeting; each word was written on torn cloth and glued onto the sheeting background. Our trendy Vicar suggested highlighting 'God for Mothers' onto a heart which added to the banner effect. This theme was followed through with the words 'love' on applied hearts, and the heart balloons.

It was a wall of meaningful words but we sincerely hope that it was also a pleasurable work of art. The idea of older people working with the young is a great one. Thank you, Graham.

Sally Ricketts

The Children's Epiphany Party

After the Christmas rush and parents' efforts to keep their kids amused over the Christmas holidays, Tony-the-Verger's idea to throw a party came at a good time. Everyone came on board and did their bit. There were energised kids bouncing up and down and singing along to the pop music in the Ark Vestry, whilst the sound of soft tinkling on the piano came from the church – was it Neil Sedaka or Abba? or possibly one of the parents? – “Thank you for the music....”



What would the Magi have brought along?

Silver and gold balloons and feather decorations, a Disney movie with hot Domino's pizzas and popcorn, delicious jellies, cupcakes, fruit, fondant mice with sultana eyes, toffee apple disasters, a tonne of crisps and Christmas leftover sweets - what's not to like?

The Curate's pre-party spring-clean, children helping to ice the fairy cakes, parents finally getting the heating to work, the Vicar rocking along to the beat, the feast, the dancing, the piggy-back fun, and the big clear-up – our thanks to one and all, and especially to Tony for his inspiration. Encore!

Terry Harper

Questions Group

The Questions Group gets together once a month to take a more in-depth look at our doubts and questions about faith. Topics are usually decided at the prior meeting. 'Anyone who would be interested in finding out more please just come to a meeting or speak to Annie Power after church, or email anne.power@gmail.com'

Twelve Months, Twelve Curry Houses and Twelve Apostles: A Match Made in Heaven.



And so it was, on 21st October, that a dozen St Stephen's parishioners gathered at Pimlico Spice in Lupus Street, to explore and discuss the apostle Jude, over a drink and a splendid set of choices from the restaurant's menu. The intention is to complete the full apostolic set spread throughout the year whilst learning more about Jesus' closest followers but also more about each other, about our parish and about curry of his day? We are now more than half way through the adventure and already key theological questions are beginning to be addressed.

Was Jude a vegetarian? Could John have been the Lady Gaga of his day? Why do we know a great deal about James the Less and only a little about James the Great (perhaps Less really is more)?

Which apostle is the patron saint of hatmakers? And where can you get the best Peshwari Naan in the parish? Please join us and the curry themed apostles (Madras Matthew, Poppadom Pete, Samosa Simon and the rest), for this informal but informative monthly gathering.

To book your place at the table next month contact tony.sewell@yahoo.co.uk or kevin.walsh@westminster.org.uk

Kevin Walsh

St Stephen's Week

SUNDAY 16th JUNE

- 10.00am** Parish Community Eucharist celebrating Music Sunday
Preacher: from the Royal School of Church Music.
- 12.00pm** Community Gardening
Come and help to make our church grounds look more beautiful, followed by a sandwich
- 2:30pm** Peal Attempt by St Stephen's Bell Ringers
- 6.00pm** Evensong celebrating the life of St Stephen
Preacher: Andrew Crawford, our weekday verger.

MONDAY 17th JUNE

- 12.30pm** Cherishing our Church
A walking tour with John Turpin, veteran member of St Stephen's congregation
- 3.00pm** Special Cream Teas at Tea@3
- 7.00pm** Sing with the English Baroque Choir!
St Stephen's is home to EBC on a Monday evening, when the choir regularly rehearses in the church. Come and join us and have some fun singing together. Never sung with other people before? Never mind! Can't read music? So what? Jeremy Jackman will lead the singing till 7.45, then we'll have a cuppa together - a different sort of Happy Hour!

TUESDAY 18th JUNE

- 7.30am** Begin the day with a Community Yoga Class (donations only) led by our Charlie Smith.
This is followed by a cuppa and fellowship. All abilities welcome.
- 1.00pm** A concert by pupils from Burdett-Coutts Primary School

WEDNESDAY 19th JUNE

- 12.30pm** Holy Communion (BCP) in Church
- 7.00pm** Artificial Intelligence & Faith in Today's World: A taster
All are welcome to a discussion on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) impacts our faith as Christians and our lives in the world. No prior knowledge required. We will explore topics which relate to the life of St Stephen's such as our 'Slow Art' sessions and consider some of the ethical concerns, social impact and promises of AI.
The presenters will be Kevin Walsh (physics teacher); Jeremy Cavanagh (engineer and systems designer) and Matt Harbage (priest).

THURSDAY 20th JUNE

- 1.00pm** A lunchtime recital by Westminster Boys' Choir
Directed by Jeremy Walker, the boys' choir from Westminster Under School will perform a selection of anthems from the programme for their forthcoming tour of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.
- 6.30pm** Corpus Christi Eucharist with The Civil Service Choir
Ola Gjeilo's Sunrise Mass
Preacher: Revd Richard Carter, Associate Vicar for Mission, St Martin-in-the-Fields
Followed by light buffet at the back of church.

FRIDAY 21st JUNE

- 1.00pm** Songs of the Heart and Spirit
Vaughan Williams' 'Five Mystical Songs' in a programme that will also include works by JS Bach and Mendelssohn on sacred themes. Ashley Holt, bass baritone and Jodie Schloss, piano.

SATURDAY 22nd JUNE

- 12.00pm** Burdett-Coutts & Townsend Foundation CE Primary School Summer Fair
St Stephen's is proud of its strong association with our church school. All our welcome to visit the school between 12pm to 3pm to take part in activities to help raise money for the Friends of Burdett-Coutts.

SUNDAY 23rd JUNE

- 10.00am** Parish Community Eucharist
Preacher: The Most Revd Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion
- 6.00pm** Evensong
Preacher: Revd John Hicks, Priest-in-Charge, St Barnabas, Pimlico

All these events are free of charge with a retiring collection for the work of our church

All these events take place in the Church at St. Stephen's Church, Rochester Row, SW1P 1LE

For more information contact the Parish Office at

parishoffice@sswsj.org or call 020 7834 0950

RSCM

Our church is a member of the Royal School of Church Music; all of us are able to connect to the benefits on offer. One of these is Church Music Quarterly, a high-quality magazine with content of interest why the congregation and not just musicians. A display stand in church gives guidance on accessing the electronic copy of magazine, or visit www.rscm.org.uk/magazines and use the password 'access'.

Sabbatical

I am sure many of you are wondering what I am doing taking this time off from the parish. And I also expect an equal number of you are perplexed at the whole concept of 'sabbatical'. So I thought I would put a few things in this Gazette to clarify a few things and perhaps even help me understand too!

If you look up the word online, the definition of "sabbatical" is "a period of paid leave granted to a university teacher or other worker for study or travel, traditionally one year for every seven years worked".

The word actually comes from the Hebrew - *Shabbat* (שבת), a sabbath if you like - a rest or break from work. Its biblical roots are seen in the practice of 'shmita', which is surprisingly, related to agriculture. In Leviticus 25, Jews who work the land must take a year-long break from working the fields every seven years. Therefore, a "sabbatical", has come to mean an extended absence in the career of an individual to fulfil some goal or extensive research.

Clergy, theoretically, can take a sabbatical for three months, for every ten years of their ministry, which is not, in fact, as long as the Levitical Law requires! Today, through various reasons, the church states that we are not to call them "sabbaticals", but "study leave". Clergy have to submit a proposal for a piece of study in mind, to help focus one's time. It is necessary to get permission from the diocese and the Bishop, something that takes a great deal of planning.

As someone who gives 110%, I have always felt the need to take my sabbaticals in order to have some space to reflect, give back to myself and my family, in order to reconfirm the path I have chosen and to provide a balanced support to the parish and the community as a whole. So, after 30 years of ministry (over 5 years with you at St Stephen's), I am taking mine and do so with the understanding that we have Cath, our excellent curate, at hand to take the reins. This will also enable Cath to further her own development as a parish priest, at a time when she is thinking about what she is to do next.

"What am I doing?", you may well ask. Well primarily, I am looking at various 'Parkruns' (cf. www.parkrun.com) across the country, particularly the concept of volunteering at Parkrun and seeing if there is any correlation between them and the local churches where they might be situated. I shall be visiting Denmark, the biggest growth in Parkrun outside the UK, running two Parkruns in Copenhagen and visiting local churches. I hope to make a podcast of my visits, and I might even make a radio program. I have a designated tutor from St Melitius College (Revd Lincoln Harvey cf. [A Brief Theology of Sport](#)) to help direct me. At the end of the sabbatical I shall be hopefully cycling to Geneva and attempting to swim the length of Lake Geneva with the same team who swam the Channel - we might even try and get some sponsorship going for the church...watch this space!



I shall be around in the community occasionally and you can of course converse with me - I hope you will say hello but I shall also be away from the church and parochial duties. I will be coming back, there is no ulterior motive for my taking time for myself. I shall miss you all, and look forward to seeing you at the end of August, refreshed, full of ideas and raring to go! So please remember me and my family in your prayers, as I will continue to remember St Stephen's in mine.

Rev'd Graham Buckle

Slow Art with Holy Trinity, New York



Two groups from St Stephen's and Holy Trinity had the opportunity to spend time together, electronically, on Sunday the 7th of April for one of St Stephen's Slow Art get-togethers, despite being separated by 5,000 miles. It was led by Marc Woodhead from the National Gallery, and a good friend to us at St Stephen's, using Bellini's painting, *The Agony in the Garden*. One group from St Stephen's gathered before a video projector with Marc in the parish meeting room in the afternoon, while the other group from Holy Trinity gathered together in their big hall for morning

coffee before their morning service and the two groups linked together via Skype. The whole thing worked extremely well with everyone excited to take part and everyone enjoying seeing who was who across the distance. For the St Stephen's group we were able to see faces from Holy Trinity familiar to us such as John, Joe and Yvonne (Joe is a regular visitor while Yvonne had been with us only a few weeks prior).



There was a real feeling of Christian fellowship and togetherness across the screens and everyone entered into the spirit of the occasion helped by identifying ourselves on screen and everyone being ready to join in. It felt as though we all connected bringing both congregations together giving us a shared experience around reflecting on this part of Christ's journey to the cross during Easter. This was a great way to help further the links between the two congregations and we must do it again sometime.

For those who want to have a closer look at Bellini's painting go to the National Gallery website:

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/giovanni-bellini-the-agonny-in-the-garden>.

Jeremy Cavanagh

Myanmar Swan Song 2019

The lovely Bishop John Wilme of Toungoo, whom we managed to look after briefly in 2017, and who then invited our vicar, Graham to visit, has finally retired after 25 years in the job. Bishop John has visited us often in the past and preached at St Stephen's on several occasions. His retirement, together with the Consecration and Enthronement of only the second Bishop of Toungoo, Bishop Samson Shee Sho was a rather special invitation that I and Mala Tu elected to accept.

We were also able to visit Pa'an, the diocese furthest south and Bishop Mark Maung Doe. The area was new to Mala and geologically quite unlike other areas we have seen. It is a Karen area which borders Thailand and there remains a legacy of intensive refugee and displacement problems. We went to Moulmein, to one of the War Grave cemeteries, and to the Death Railway, a museum and train dedicated to those who, as Japanese prisoners of war, died building it in WWII. From Pa'an we moved north west into the Delta area and Yangon Diocese, which were badly affected by Cyclone Nargis in 2008. Here we had the chance to see Bassein (now Pathein), and the seaside. Foreigners for many years visited Napoli (Naples), with its lovely stretches of unspoiled sand and straw houses on the beach. Pathein, developed later, remains the beach frequented by the Burmese. Please do have a look at the photos on display on our church notice board of our trip.

Joanna Smith

Directory

Regular Services	Sundays	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		10.00am	Parish Eucharist (with Sunday School)
		6.00pm	Evensong
	Monday - Friday	9.15am	Morning Prayer
		6.00pm	Evening Prayer
	Monday	5.35pm	Celebration of the Eucharist
	Wednesday	12.30pm	Holy Communion (BCP)

Staff	The Vicar	The Revd Graham Buckle	020 7834 1300 vicar@sswsj.org
	Assistant Curate	The Revd Catherine Duce	curate@sswsj.org
	Parish Administrator	Jessie Campbell	020 7834 0950 parishoffice@sswsj.org
	Bursar	Alison Neilson	020 7834 0950 bursar@sswsj.org
	Director of Music	Rosemary Field	07712 354 384 rosemaryfield@rmfield.co.uk
	Verger (weekdays) Verger (weekends)	Andrew Crawford Anthony Sewell	andrew@sswsj.org 020 7821 9254

Parish Officers	Churchwardens	Edward Barker Elizabeth Szewczyk	020 7233 9522 020 8800 3017
	Treasurer	Vacant	
	Stewardship Secretary	Steve Waldron	020 7828 5075

Other Contacts	Junior Church	Terry Harper	
	Safeguarding	Jen Adam	safeguarding@sswsj.org
	Evidence Checker	Linda Brandon	evidencechecker@sswsj.org
	Children's Champion	Terry Harper	020 7828 8077
	St Stephen's Toddlers	Jen Adam	020 7834 0950
	Myanmar Link	Joanna Smith	
	Catering Committee	Elizabeth Szewczyk	020 8800 3017
	Tower Secretary (bells)	David Holdridge	david.holdridge@ntlworld.com
	Burdett-Coutts School	Rosette Dyer (Head Teacher)	020 7828 6790
	House Groups	Veronica Morris	020 7932 0445

PCC Members Graham Buckle (Vicar), Elizabeth Szewczyk (Church Warden), Edward Barker (Church Warden), Catherine Duce (Assistant Curate), Pamela Ashley, Barbara Blum, Linda Brandon, Andrew Campbell (Deanery Synod), Jeremy Cavanagh, Michael Duggan (Deanery Synod), Comfort Fearon, Tamara Katzenbach, Anthony King, Anastassia Puttam, Suzanne Standring, Susan Taylor, Steve Waldron (Deanery Synod), Jacqueline Walsh, Susan Wates

Church opening times

Monday - Friday
9am - 2pm
and during services

The Parish Office

Mon/Wed/Fri, 9am - 3pm and Tues/Thurs 11:30am - 3pm
The Parish Office, St Stephen's House
Hide Place, SW1P 4NJ 020 7834 0950