

The Beneficial

April 2024

News from the Benefice of St Mary's + St Stephen's

A Verse for April

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," . . . **Jeremiah 29.11–14**

Jeremiah, one of the major prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures, is often characterized as a doom-monger. The quotation above gives that the lie. Yes, he speaks of God's frustration and anger at the Israelites' behaviour, but is always reassuring and ready to bless. So how do we seek God with all our heart? Recently I've been looking deeper into Celtic Spirituality. Here the emphasis is not on words, but silence. Not on the head, but the heart. Finding God not just in the religious, but in all things. The core idea is that God is what is deepest in us. Our hope, our future, our prosperity rests with our seeing God in one another, in all people, in all creation. This is where we find God.

SPECIALLY for APRIL

Unfurling leaves and swelling flower buds are a hint that Spring is here, complete with April showers. The Benefice is similarly teetering on the edge of spring time.

JAZZ IN THE NAVE at St Stephen's: Friday 19 April, 7.00 pm. Relax and chill with Syncopation Station and an evening of jazz. £15 to include a glass of wine, cheese and nibbles. Booking via Parish Office or Eventbrite.

Friday 5 April & 3 May – Lansdown Friendship Club

A welcoming gathering for people with memory difficulties, their accompanying family and friends. Enjoy refreshments and a monthly theme at St Stephen's Church Centre, 2 – 3.30 pm.

Thursday 11 April & 9 May – Lansdown Neighbourhood Group

Meet friends old and new at this monthly coffee gathering at St Stephen's Church Centre, 10.30 am – 12.30 pm.

Saturday 6 April - Police Beat

10 am - noon in St Stephen's Foyer.

Sunday 28 April – St Stephen's Worship in the Round 10.45 am

The second of our more relaxed services on the 4th Sunday of every month. Join us for coffee and pastries before the service from 10 am. The non-communion service will be based on familiar liturgy but will include an intriguing interview with a congregation member when "Between Sundays" explores what they've been doing during their busy

week. The APCM follows after the service.

2024 ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS (APCM)

ST MARY'S: Sunday 21 April - 10 am

ST STEPHEN'S: Sunday 28th April - 11.45 am

This is the opportunity for everyone to hear more about the running of our Benefice churches. Church Wardens and PCC members are re-elected; there's a finance, building and gardens update and a report on 2023/4 activities. This year's APCMs will be especially important with an update on Diocesan changes and St Stephen's future plans.

HEADS UP ON WHAT'S HAPPENING IN 2024

- **ST STEPHEN'S TOWER ABSEIL FUNDRAISER:** Saturday 22 June, a combined fundraiser for St Stephen's and Genesis Trust. [Book](#) now,
- **ST MARY'S TEA AND TALK:** Saturday 18 May, 3.15 pm at St Stephen's Centre. A talk by John Green. Tickets £10 from Brenda Floyd. See [St Mary's website](#) and the weekly e-alert for full details.
- **GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK:** eco event 8 – 16 June! More details coming shortly.

DON'T FORGET . . .

Parent & Toddlers St Stephen's Church Centre, Monday (during termtime) 9.30 – 11.30 am

Service Rotas and Hangout helpers Volunteers are always needed at both Benefice churches. It's fun and a lovely way of joining our church families. Do get in touch to find out how you can get involved. [Office](#)

St Stephen's Centre A great place to hire for parties, meetings, community gatherings. Book via the [Office](#)

Giving Our need for everyone's financial support is greater than ever. We cannot say how hugely appreciative we are for any kind and generous giving of whatever nature. To find out more, please contact our Treasurers: St Stephen's [Mike King](#) | St Mary [Judith Pepler](#)

SERVICES IN THE BENEFICE – APRIL

Hangout, a themed activity time for children, operates every Sunday at St Stephen's.

April

Sunday 7th	2nd Sunday after Easter
	SM 9 am Eucharist
	SS 10.45 am Choral Communion + Hangout
Sunday 14th	3rd Sunday after Easter
	SM 9 am Eucharist
	SS 10.45 am Holy Communion + Hangout
Sunday 21st	4th Sunday after Easter
	SM 9 am Eucharist (BYO Coffee)
	SS 10.45 am Choral Communion + Hangout
Sunday 28th	5th Sunday after Easter
	SM 9 am Eucharist
	SS 10.45 am Worship in the Round
	SM 6.00 pm BCP Evensong and Reflection

May

Sunday 5th	6th Sunday after Easter
	SM 9 am Eucharist
	SS 10.45 am Choral Communion + Hangout
Sunday 12th	7th Sunday after Easter
	SM 9 am Eucharist
	SS 10.45 am Holy Communion + Hangout

PRAYER IN THE BENEFICE

Monday We gather on Zoom for prayer at 9 – 9.30 am. Please email to receive the code.

Thursday Meditation in the Christian Tradition - 6.30pm-7ish St Mary's, Charlcombe. A guiding thought, then 20 minutes of silence. Blankets and cushions provided.

CONTACT DETAILS

Rector: Revd Philip Hawthorn

Associate Priest: Revd Debbie Pow

Curate: Revd Andrew Avramenko

To email each by name: Philip/Debbie/andrew@ststephensbath.org.uk

For general information, or giving to our churches, please contact our Administrator:

Gabriela Longhurst - Church Office, Lansdown Road, Bath BA1 5SX

T: 01225 420946 e: office@ststephensbath.org.uk

Churchwardens, all contactable via the office:

St Stephen's: Carolyn Cowley, Penny Cracknell, Jude Dent and Hester Davies

St Mary's: Liz Thorne and Neil Latham

Treasurers: Mike King (SS) and Judith Pepler (SM)

www.ststephensbath.org.uk www.stmaryscharlcombe.org.uk