

**PARISH OF SOUTHMINSTER
MAGAZINE OF THE
CHURCH OF ST LEONARD**

and also for Steeple Parish

**The Church of
St Lawrence & All Saints**



**ALL HAVE
SINNED**



AND FALL SHORT

**OF THE GLORY OF GOD BUT
THEY ARE NOW JUSTIFIED**



**BY GOD'S GRACE AS A
GIFT THROUGH THE
REDEMPTION THAT IS**

IN CHRIST JESUS.



Romans 3:23-24

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

*I hope you will receive this issue
before 30th August. Our
deliverers always make an effort
to do this.*

*Articles for the October magazine
should be with
Kath Dunstan by, at the latest,
Sunday 20th September*

To cover our costs we have
to charge for this magazine.
The charge per issue is £1
but if you pay for the
whole year in advance the
charge will be £10 -
(obviously a bit saved!)

If you receive this printed
version please tell your
deliverer whether you
want to continue from
January 2027.

Reflection from Norman Pratt

As an ex-teacher I don't find it difficult to think of September as a time for new beginnings. Especially so because it is of course when those who were Year 6's earlier this year now become Year 7's. For the children there's the panic of having to find a new classroom to go to after each lesson. There's the enture of finding old friends in the playground during the break, and realising at the end of the day that new friends have been acquired. For most children by the end of the week things have worked out without too many problems.

After a few weeks children seem to be working well and have got used to the new routines. What is however still true, as far as I know, is that the quality of the children's work in Year 7, to begin with, is not as good as it was in Year 6. I hasten to add this is not the children's or for that matter the teachers' fault. It is just what happens. I remember our school once having an experiment where all the Year 7 children had a display of work they had done in Year 6: handwriting superb, illustrations stunning, quality of work very high indeed! But this exercise still just highlighted the problem without providing any solutions. And that problem too irons itself out in the end.

I wonder if the work we do for our Lord is like that? Are there times when our enthusiasm, our energy, or maybe even our faith tails off a bit without our realising this has happened? Can we even 'mark our own homework' in this regard? How can we judge how we are doing as Christians?

As an ex-examiner (in GCSE History!) I remember the basic principles of marking: you look at the basic criteria for assessing your subject. So I suppose this would be, for a Christian, following, say, the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), carrying out the Beatitudes (Matthew 5), or maybe following

Jesus' two commandments (Mark 12). Fortunately following our Lord isn't like an exam or driving test. In any case another basic principle of assessment comes in: how am I doing in relation to other people's performance? As Christians we probably do this quite a lot. In all sorts of Christian activity we unconsciously look at how generous or hardworking other Christians are. This probably works quite well. As we look around our own Christian fellowship we can often find others who impress us by their actions, and we find ourselves trying to mirror their behaviour.

However, this approach will take us only so far. As Jesus so often reminded his disciples - 'Follow me'. 'Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ ...' (Romans 12:14). This brings us back to what we mentioned before, the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes and the two most important Commandments according to Jesus. But to follow Jesus sometimes seems overwhelming, and we're tempted to just compare ourselves with other Christians and do just what seems to be 'normal'.

There is one very good reason why we shouldn't feel overwhelmed when we are trying to follow and imitate Jesus. We can talk it out with the Chief Examiner! Our Lord invites us to pray to Him about everything, including how we can do better in his service.

However, it is worth bearing in mind that there appear to be two distinct ways of being a good Christian, illustrated by a story in Luke 10:38-42: Martha who fussed round Jesus and tried to be the perfect host - the doer; and Mary, the one who just wanted to sit at Jesus' feet and take in his teaching - the thinker. Jenny and I witnessed the clash of these two principles whilst on holiday in Cyprus. We did a short coach trip to visit the Monastery of St Neophytos the Recluse. In the 12th century this man left the sinful world to live on his own.

He carved a cave for himself out of a mountainside and while devoting his life to prayer he painted beautiful religious artwork - which thousands of people then came to see, and listen to his godly wisdom. One of the Englishmen on our coach party kept pressing the tour guide about what actual GOOD the Saint had done. I must admit to similar feelings whilst travelling through Malta, which positively drips with traditional Christian statues and symbols. But we really mustn't judge.

Which brings me to Saints in general. Just before Morning Prayer on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (everyone welcome!) we often do a quick squint at the 'Saint for the day'. It's interesting, sometimes inspiring, as we also have a book which tells all their stories. But Saints with a capital 'S' suggests, returning to our theme of assessing our Christian lives, that Christians are graded - and we will never reach the top tier. We are not graded. The Saints were sometimes bigger sinners than most of us are - 'for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.' (Romans 3:23,24) And if we want to know how we're doing in His eyes, we simply need to ask Him.

Blessings,

Norman

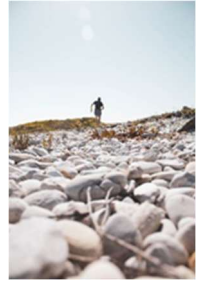
KINGDOM BUILDERS 2026 HOLIDAY CLUB

As we go to print the Holiday Club is just beginning.
Days 1 and 2 on Thursday 20th August and
Days 3 and 4 on Thursday 27th August.
Special service Sunday 30th August
Full report will be here next month.

Walking through the Rubble

by Brenda Sheppard

I expect most of us have had to walk through really difficult times; times when we had to manoeuvre bumpy terrain and overcome obstacles to get where we are today. Maybe we are still trying to put one foot before the other, picking our way through the debris and looking for the light at the end of the tunnel.



So often when we see disasters in the world and buildings and homes are destroyed, there is always so much rubble consisting of rough, broken fragments of brick, concrete and stone and sifting through it is a major task

During a prayer meeting in June whilst we were praying about the devastating earthquake in Venezuela, I saw in my mind Jesus walking among the rubble searching for people with all the other aid workers and this reinforced the knowledge that Jesus is always searching for people who will commit themselves to follow Him to bring in His Kingdom and that He will go in to all different situations to find us.

2 Chronicles 16:9 tells us that the eyes of the Lord search back and forth across the whole earth looking for people whose hearts are committed to Him so He can show His great power in helping them even though when God calls us, we are a bit rough around the edges! Maybe broken but re-buildable!

Thinking again of rubble, in the book of Nehemiah 4:2 we read that Nehemiah returned from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem to rebuild the city walls, the walls destroyed by the Babylonians many years before. He, along with his helpers, were ridiculed and mocked: They said, “Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble?” But rebuild it they did against much opposition.

Are we feeling a bit broken down by circumstances? Does it seem we will never get to where we aim to be? Take heart. We, too, can rebuild our lives if we ask God to help us. We know our Lord Jesus has walked this earth before us through all the rubble and He sends His Holy Spirit to guide us and equip us. He helps us to grow and continue to build our lives again stronger than ever!!



Happy Bricklaying!!

Brenda

Some recent local shared times

As you will be aware, during August there has been an evening service at St Peter's Chapel, Bradwell at 6 pm. Some of Southminster's family have attended regularly and have appreciated the opportunities to enjoy different types of worship and hear important talks from visiting people.

On 16th we shared Sung Compline led by Rev'd Matt Simkins from Clacton-on-Sea who reflected on "You rule the raging of the seas" reminding us that we all face uncertainty but have the hope of Christ. Jesus is always with us.

On 9th the service was led by Colin Hodgetts who leads the Othona Community. They are celebrating the 80th Anniversary of the Community and always appreciate their links with the Bradwell Chapel. We heard lots about St Cedd who founded the chapel.

On 2nd, the Archdeacon of West Ham, the Venerable Mike Power led the service. He is a member of the Board of trustees of the Mission to Seafarers, and what he shared was really helpful to everyone, even if we have no seafaring experience.

The basic Bible text was Matthew 8:23-27, the story of how Jesus' disciples had to wake him up because of their fear when a storm was attacking their boat. He calmed the storm.

This is the heart of Christian mission: God does not love us from a distance, In Jesus Christ, God comes aboard our ship of life and reacts to our honest cry for help "Lord, save us."

Today the Mission to Seafarers continues to act by meeting people where they are: on ships, in ports, in moments of need, across languages, cultures, nationalities and faiths. Today let us remember the seafarers, pray for them and then act: Let gratitude become generosity, let concern become support and let faith become welcome, advocacy and a willingness to notice those whom the world too easily overlooks.



Book Review Challenge!

Have you read a good book recently? Maybe one that made you laugh, cry, feel enthusiastic, or really think about an important subject or aspect of faith?

This is a challenge to members of St Leonard's family to choose, read and review a book, either from our Church Library, or any other book with a Christian subject or theme. Just a short positive review could be very encouraging for others. You can submit it to this magazine via Kath, or if you are feeling brave, read it out in church!!

Remember that we have many excellent books in our church library that are free to borrow and there's no need to record your loan because it's run on trust!

The Bible itself is a library, so you might even choose a book from there! Poetry, prayers, history, theology, letters, love stories, laws and parables are all included in God's Word.

We can enjoy and learn so much from each others' faith journeys, so please consider this challenge!

Yours in anticipation, with thanks,

Christine Lucas

Finally, remember that the disciples began their journey afraid; they ended it amazed. The storm became a moment of revelation. They discovered that the One in the boat was greater than everything that threatened them. May this be true for us all who serve Jesus.

When the waters rise, may we know Christ beside us.

When fear speaks loudly may faith find its voice.

When the storm is fierce, may the peace of Christ be our calm and when we come safely to harbour may our lives point to the Lord whom even the winds and waves obey.

Kath Dunstan

Sunday 6th September

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/President/Preacher
Romans 13 : 8 - end
Matthew 18 : 15 - 20
Sidesperson

14th Sunday after Trinity

Rev'd Peter
Celebrant
Celebrant
Gordon Baker

11.00 Family Holy Communion

President/Preacher
Readings as above
Intercessions
Prayer Ministry
Audio-visuals
Sidesperson
Refreshments

Rev'd Peter
Kath Dunstan
Fiona Begley
Frances Hatfield & Sylvia Adams
Christine Morgan
Kath Dunstan
Christine Lucas & Sandra Bradford

Sunday 13th September

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/President/Preacher
Romans 14 : 1 - 12
Matthew 18 : 21 - 35
Sidesperson

15th Sunday after Trinity

Rev'd Ken Dunstan
Celebrant
Celebrant
Leon Flack

11.00 Family Celebration

Leaders
Prayer Ministry
Audio-visuals
Sidesperson
Refreshments

Team: Karen, Jenny, Dawn
Jenni Blomfield & Kathy Carnell
Christine Lucas
Brenda Sheppard
Sally Culff & Maureen Smith

Sunday 20 th September
08.00 Ante-Communion BCP

President/Preacher
Philippians 1 : 21-end
Matthew 20 : 1 - 16
Sidesperson

16th Sunday after Trinity

Ken Dunstan /Norman Pratt
Celebrant
Celebrant
Paul Lucas

11.00 Morning Worship

Leader/Preacher
Readings as above
Intercessions
Audio-visuals
Prayer ministry
Sidesperson
Refreshments

Ken Dunstan /Norman Pratt
Pauline Siggers
Frances Hatfield
Christine Morgan
Fiona Begley & Sarah Prendergast
Kathy Carnell
Dee Byford & Jenni Blomfield

Sunday 27th September

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/Preacher
Philippians 2 : 1 - 13
Matthew 21 : 23 - 32
Sidesperson

17th Sunday after Trinity

Rev'd Peter
Celebrant
Celebrant
Keith Hatfield

10.15 Café Church Morning Worship

Leader/Preacher
Readings as at 8 am
Intercessions
Prayer Ministry
Audio-visuals
Sidesperson
Refreshments

Rev'd Peter/Jenny Pratt
Christine Morgan
Brenda Sheppard
Christine Luacs & Yvonne Thurbon
Sylvia Adams
Gwyneth Iffland
Kathy Carnell & Frances Hatfield

Steeple Church News

Steeple Church has services every Sunday morning at 9.15am unless otherwise advertised

We have Morning Prayer on the first Sunday each month, a Family Service on third Sunday and Holy Communion on the second and fourth Sundays.



Steeple Church contacts:

Rev'd Canon Peter Begley, Vicar, 01621 772 300

Fiona Ashworth, Churchwarden,

Rhona Leech, Assistant Churchwarden
& PCC Secretary

Peter Marshall, PCC Treasurer & Verger,

Steeple's September Services in brief

(Service titles and leaders only)

6th 09.15 Family Service Rev'd Peter

13th 09.15 Holy Communion Rev'd Ken Dunstan

20th 09.15 Family Service Rev'd Ken / Norman Pratt

27th 09.15 Holy Communion Rev'd Peter/Jenny Pratt

Do read the item opposite which will tell you about a very important October service to celebrate Harvest. We will need to have put our plans in action before the end of September.

The Steeple Gathering in Grange Farm Meadow was on Sunday 23rd August,

It was a great success in terms of the number and variety of vehicles and engines on display and the number of visitors who came to admire them.

A 25 pounds Field Gun called Albert was a new attraction. Albert certainly commanded attention each time he was fired during the afternoon.

Visitors had an excellent choice of refreshments. As well as the selection of cakes and drinks offered by the PCC ladies and the burgers provided by our Gate Farm hosts we also had a stall selling beer produced locally by the Blackwater Brewing Company. Busy all day, as was the ice cream van.

As Summer draws to a close, we look back at the harvest. Gardeners and farmers are reporting lower than expected yields because of insufficient rain. The wheat, barley and linseed crops matured early and were harvested in favourable weather so the cost of drying before storage was minimised.

For our **Harvest Festival at 4pm on Sunday 4th October** please help decorate Steeple Church with fresh produce and other provisions. Donated goods will be shared between the Dengie Food Bank and a woman's refuge.

After the service, we'll move to the barn at West Newlands where Steeple Church and St Lawrence church will hold a joint **Harvest Supper at 5.30pm.**

POSSIBLE ROTA DETAILS: YOUR AVAILABILITY FOR 2 MONTHS

We can worship regularly in church as usual, but with appropriate safety limitations, so we need to be well-prepared. Please let Paul Lucas know if you are willing to be part of his volunteer team but cannot be available on any of the following dates.

October 2026	4	11	18	25	
November 2026	1	8	15	22	29

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO FULFIL YOUR DUTY YOU SHOULD CHANGE WITH SOMEONE AND INFORM THE WARDENS OF THE ARRANGEMENT.

SATURDAY CLUB

for Primary School children

Saturday morning (monthly) in church

9.30 am - 11.30 am £1 per child

Children can join in craft, music, games etc.
or just spend time chatting with their friends.

As usual, the day after Saturday Club is our
Family Celebration in the church at 11 am.

Lots of books are available on the shelves at the back of church for you to borrow and enjoy, and then - of course - return. If you have books that you don't need any more, speak with Christine Lucas about donating them to church.

There are books for all ages and with varied contents, so even if you don't see yourself as a reader, you can enjoy them.

Who are we?

We are part of God's Family --- the Church.

Everyone is invited to be part of this family.

To keep aware of what is happening, and to participate on line with services, log into the website

<https://www.stleonardsouthminster.org.uk/>

Also, we have a WhatsApp group entitled

"Together Apart Our Church". Lots of people are involved in this.

These links have been greatly appreciated by regular Church family members and also by people who have not, to date, attended our church services. It is good to 'allow' God to point us in possible new directions and then to respond.

God has a plan with hope for future.

If you would like specific prayer, please contact the vicar. preferably by email but otherwise on 01621 772300

A notice about our offerings to God.

Many of us use the facility of the offering plate to give our gifts to God. Whether we are attending in person, or not, it is always a good time to think about a standing order to the church so that we are still bringing our gift. Many of us are doing this already – Thank you, but those who may be wondering how they can continue their giving through Standing Order the details of the church bank are here:

Barclays Bank

Sort code: **20.54.30**

A/c No. **80825107**

A/c Name: Southminster Parochial Church Council.

For Steeple use: Sort code: **20.54.30**

A/c No. **60842494**

A/c Name: Steeple Parochial Church Council.

Henry Church Cleaning Club 2026



The cleaning continues on in the Church and we are blessed to be part of a really faithful team but there is always plenty of room for new recruits as some of us are slowing down a bit!! We meet fortnightly on a Friday morning from 9am to 11am. If you could spare just a little time during those 2 hours or even if you could come monthly it would be a great help.

September dates are: Fri. 11th & 25th

If you would like to give it a try and would like a rota please speak to me, Brenda Sheppard,

**Let us all continue to pray to our loving Father
in these very difficult times.**

For the National Church - particularly because of
International political problems and on-going wars
Also devastation following wild fires
and other results of climate change to be dealt with

For family members - near and far - and neighbours

For people suffering loneliness, illness and/or bereavement

For people making decisions about treatment

For hospital staff, carers, front-line workers including teachers

For everyone affected by the School holidays

For local farmers and all their workers in the Summer months

For people suffering financially because of unemployment....

And let us remember "Father, your will be done."

We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

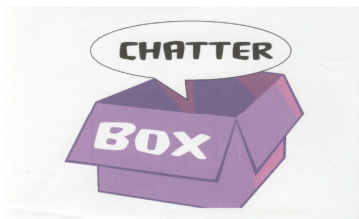
SOUTHMINSTER MEMORIAL HALL

LUNCH CLUB may be able to start again on Mondays.

If you would like any information please phone

Dave Christie 07775 758118.

Fancy a chat?



At the Memorial Hall

10.00 - 12.00 Thursday mornings

As well as chatting there's tea, coffee, biscuits (and sometimes cake) jigsaws, crafts, newspapers, board games - and chatting isn't compulsory!

DENGIE HUNDRED LADIES GROUP

Tuesday 22nd September

Lucy Shelbourne

Therapy Dog & Sign Language Interpreter

info@lucyjaneinterpreting.co.uk

'LITTLE LIONS' usually meet on Wednesday mornings in the



Memorial Hall but this is **during term-time only**. It is for babies, toddlers & their carers. The families join the main services, especially the Family Celebrations every second Sunday.

AN IMPORTANT SPECIAL EVENT

SID BOLAN BIG BAND CONCERT

Will be held at Southminster church

On SATURDAY 7th NOVEMBER

At 7.30 pm

Tickets (£10) will be available in advance as usual.

Prayer Ministry on Sundays after the I I am service

Please come to the area outside the Chapel if you have a particular need for prayer, (for yourself or someone close to you) where there should be two people available to pray with you. Pre-service prayer occurs too, so feel free to join them with your supporting prayers or your urgent requests.

Obviously church members will be available to pray with you at other times too, so do ask if necessary.

PRAY FOR SOUTHMINSTER:

w/b	6 September	Central -West
w/b	13 September	North – East
w/b	20 September	Central – North-West
w/b	27 September	Central - East





WHO ARE WE? Mission Statement



“To be a people offering praise and worship to God and serving him by being the Good News by our words and actions”

Web Site www.stleonardsouthminster.org.uk

Contact: vicar@stleonardsouthminster.org.uk

Telephone 01621 772300

If you wish to contact the Church regarding a Safeguarding issue
please contact us by telephone on 07745 688845
or via safeguarding@stleonardsouthminster.org.uk

See pages 10-11 for details during this season.

**Weekly notices, covering any changes, will be available to read
on the outside church notice-board.**

SUNDAY SERVICES

8:00 am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer 1662)

11.00 am Holy Communion or Morning Worship

10.15 am (approx.) Café Church begins on 4th Sundays

Steeple Services similarly continue at **9.15am**

Children and Young people are always welcomed
especially for the **Family Celebration Services.**

WEEKDAY SERVICES:

Monday. Wednesday & Friday at 8 am Morning Prayer

Tuesday at 8.30 am Just Prayer

‘LITTLE LIONS’ usually meet on Wednesday mornings

In the Memorial Hall but this is **during term-time only.**

It is for babies/toddlers & their carers.



BIBLE STUDY GROUPS meet in the church on
Mondays (10 am) and Thursdays (8 pm)

Details of the actual programme are available in church
and on the notice boards.