

**PARISH OF SOUTHMINSTER**  
**MAGAZINE OF THE**  
**CHURCH OF ST LEONARD**  
and also for Steeple Parish  
**The Church of**  
**St Lawrence & All Saints**

**STL**



The tomb of St Leonard in France

**FEBRUARY 2026**

To all God's beloved .... who are called to be saints.

**Romans 1 : 7**

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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!)

### ***NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:***

*Articles for the March magazine  
should be with  
Kath Dunstan by, at the latest,  
Sunday 15th February  
New contributors are welcome.*

If you receive this printed version please tell your deliverer whether you want to continue from January 2026.



## Rev'd Ken Dunstan's Reflections

“What’s in a name?”  
(Shakespeare), Romeo & Juliet



When I left teacher training, my tutor’s final report said that I was “inclined to be pedantic”. Those who know me may smile. I have a pedantry gene, and it is dominant! One of my constant niggles is the habit of most parishes to stick to the name of the saint commemorated in the building.

One day I may reflect on St Leonard, a French sixth century hermit, noting that apart from using the name to identify us, we don’t celebrate him regularly. His tomb, in the town of St Léonard de Noblat in central France, is decorated with shackles to honour the Patron saint of prisoners (usually prisoners of war awaiting ransom). Reverend Pedant would prefer that we always refer to our building as Southminster Parish Church, as it is for everyone in Southminster for worship, evangelism and care. Similarly I once, as a school governor, insisted to the Bishop that the school should be called Southminster Church of England Primary School because it is part of the Church’s service to all of Southminster’s children. (At the time, he agreed.) I was disappointed to see the Diocesan Vine Schools Trust instruction that all Church schools should carry the name of the parish church’s patron saint.

Locally, the one place where saint and village bear the same name is St Lawrence. Right next door, Steeple Parish Church is dedicated to “St Lawrence and All Saints.” There’s a

dozen churches in Essex dedicated to St Lawrence, a third Century martyr. I wondered what we might learn from his story. It turns out that he is the patron saint of “the poor, cooks and deacons.” Well, Lawrence was a deacon, and Peter and I, although we are priests, were first ordained deacon. The first deacons were selected to care for people in need. (Acts 6:1-4)

The ordination service calls deacons “heralds of Christ’s kingdom.” They are “to proclaim the gospel, to serve the community in which they are set, searching out the poor and weak, the sick and lonely and those who are oppressed and powerless.” Deacons share in the pastoral ministry of the Church and in leading God’s people in worship. They preach and lead prayer, bringing to baptism those searching for faith. They assist in administering the sacraments. There’s more!

This returns us to Steeple’s saint – and notice that in Steeple’s case, St Lawrence **and all saints**. All of us are included. We are called to be saints (Romans 1:7). And all of us, clergy and lay people alike, are called to proclaim the gospel and to serve the community in which we are set.

When the emperor Valerian sentenced all Christian clergy to death, Lawrence was told to hand over the treasures of the Church. He asked for three days to collect the treasures, and spent the time distributing all the Church’s valuables to poor people. On the third day, he brought the poorest, crippled and blind people and said, “Behold in these poor persons the treasures which I promised to show you; to which I will add pearls and precious stones, those widows and consecrated virgins, which are the Church’s crown.” Like

## A Rocha's ECO Tips

This Lent, take part in Climate Steward's Carbon Fast. Lent is a time when Christians traditionally fast and focus on God. The Carbon Fast will help you consider ways to live more simply, give you new ideas to cut your carbon footprint and invite you to focus on God and consider the whole of his creation.



Beginning on 5 March, you'll receive a weekly email containing key facts, suggestions for how you could reduce your carbon footprint and a prayer to lead you through this Lenten season. Each week features a different theme designed to help us take climate action in manageable ways that bear witness to a God who has promised to restore all of his creation. Find out more and sign up at [climatestewards.org/resources/carbon-fast/](http://climatestewards.org/resources/carbon-fast/)

Visit [arocha.org.uk](http://arocha.org.uk) for more information.

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the first martyr, Stephen, Lawrence faced death clinging to the Gospel.

Faith, vision, generosity and courage, celebrated in the name of one of our two parish churches, and ordained or not, we saints are called to serve the community in Jesus' name. What a challenge! What an opportunity!

*Blessings,*

*Ken*

# Heaven our Forever Home

Brenda Sheppard

Have you ever looked around and thought “There has to be more to life than this”. My father-in-law often used to say to my husband “We’re only passing through boy, only passing through.” So where are we passing through to on our journey through this world that we know and often cling on to, and what is this place the Bible tells us we are going to when we leave and what are the glories that lie ahead?



As Jesus said in John 14 v 3 to His disciples of His forthcoming death, “Do not let your hearts be troubled, my Father’s house has many mansions and I go to prepare a place for you.” This promise is for all who believe in Him. His promise of our heavenly home is our inheritance and the consummation of our saying “Yes” to our beloved Jesus culminating in our wonderful inheritance of eternal life with Him in Heaven.

Revelation 21 tells us that heaven is a place where we will walk on golden streets with a whole new body and mind and we will work with purpose and pleasure. We will be enveloped in an atmosphere of indescribable love and will worship our Lord who has welcomed us home.

Life takes on a new meaning once we’ve realised that there is more to life than what we know now. Even in the most difficult times we know that something far better is ahead and by accepting Jesus as our Lord and Saviour who died to take away all our sins and then rose again shows us that death is not the end only the new beginning.



I wrote this poem after listening and being inspired by the beautiful song by Eva Cassidy called: “**Fields of Gold**”

Thankyou Lord for the times  
You give me insight into Your Heaven.  
Today You showed me Fields of Gold  
    That I could walk through,  
    The Gold bending and swaying  
        With such brilliance,  
    The purity washing my soul  
        With such peace and beauty.

Oh, how I long for the riches of Heaven  
    but thankyou Lord that today  
    You gave me just a glimpse of  
        the time that is to come  
    when I will walk with You  
        in Fields of Gold.

The Gold parting before You  
Your brilliance all surpassing,  
Your purity so indescribable,  
That even the finest of riches  
Makes way for the King of Kings,  
    My Saviour and my Lord.

.....  
**Brenda Sheppard**

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.

# **The Hive**

The Southminster Community Hub known as The Hive is located in the URC Church building in North Street and has become a resource centre to serve the needs of the Dengie Peninsula. A lot of renovation work in the church has taken place and is ongoing with funding being sought for the upkeep of the outside gardens. The management committee is a partnership between the United Reformed Church and St. Leonard's and they meet monthly to update progress.

At present some of the ongoing projects that are happening are:

**Dengie Food Bank** – Wednesdays 10 am-12 noon  
Donations to be received from 9am

**Lulu's Café** – Fridays 11-2pm

**Mid Essex Recovery College** – ongoing free courses to help with mental well being

**Cooking on a Budget** – ongoing free courses

**Art Classes** run by MOAT

**MIND Welcome Café** to which people are referred  
starts in January

**Social Supermarket**

Details of the courses and how to book are on the notice board outside the URC Church and at the back of the Church in St. Leonard's.

# A Tribute to Marion

By: Brenda Sheppard

Marion Eldret was a much loved member of our congregation at St. Leonard's. She first came with one of the special needs people she cared for who enjoyed coming to church. Marion was bubbly and chatty and full of faith for her Lord. I immediately gelled with Marion as we had both worked in the role of caring for people with special needs for many years and so we could swap experiences and understand the highs and occasional lows of the role.

Marion battled through physical and emotional difficulties over the years and then after a stroke went to live in a Care Home in Chelmsford where members of the church visited her on a regular basis.

Marion's funeral service on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January was a wonderful tribute to her. I couldn't believe it when I saw she had chosen the song "Fields of Gold" as I had just sent an article to Kath for the February magazine which included a reference to the same song! That's when the tears came!!

What a beautiful lady Marion was; a lady who crept in to my heart and I'm sure the hearts of many others. It's a real comfort to know she is now with her Lord who she loved and served until He took her home.



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## Prayer Ministry on Sundays after the 11am 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.

## **Sunday 1st February**

### **08.00 Holy Communion BCP**

Leader/President/Preacher  
Hebrews 2 : 14 –end  
Luke 2 : 22 - 40  
Sidesperson

## **Presentation of Christ**

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  
Brenda Sheppard  
Jenni Blomfield & Christine Lucas  
Christine Morgan  
Kath Dunstan  
Kathy Carnell & Frances Hatfield

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## **Sunday 8th February**

### **08.00 Holy Communion BCP**

Leader/President/Preacher  
Romans 8 : 18 – 25  
Matthew 6 : 25 - end  
Sidesperson

## **2nd Sunday before Lent**

Rev'd Ken Dunstan  
Celebrant  
Celebrant  
Leon Flack

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### **11.00 Family Celebration**

Leaders  
Prayer Ministry  
Audio-visuals  
Sidesperson  
Refreshments

Team: Karen, Jenny, Dawn  
Sylvia Adams & Frances Hatfield  
Christine Lucas  
Brenda Sheppard  
Sally Culff & Maureen Smith

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See page 13 for details of **Ash Wednesday service**

**Next week—18th Feb. 8 pm**

## **Sunday 15th February**

### **08.00 Holy Communion BCP**

Leader/President/Preacher

2 Peter 1 : 16 - end

Matthew 17: 1 - 9

Sidesperson

## **Sunday next before Lent**

Rev'd Peter/ Brenda Sheppard

Celebrant

Celebrant

Paul Lucas

### **11.00 Morning Worship**

Leader

Readings

Intercessions

Audio-visuals

Prayer ministry

Sidesperson

Refreshments

Rev'd Peter/ Brenda Sheppard

Linda Payne

Fiona Begley

Christine Morgan

Yvonne Thurbon & Kathy Carnell

Paul Lucas

Dee Byford & Jenni Blomfield

## **Sunday 22nd February**

## **1st Sunday of Lent**

### **08.00 Holy Communion BCP**

Leader/Preacher

Romans 5 : 12 - 19

Matthew 4 : 1 - 11

Sidesperson

Rev'd Peter

Celebrant

Celebrant

Keith Hatfield

### **10.15 Café Church**

### **Morning worship**

Leader/Preacher

Readings as above

Intercessions

Prayer Ministry

Audio-visuals

Sidesperson

Refreshments

Rev'd Peter

Christine Morgan

Frances Hatfield

Fiona Begley & Sarah Prendergast

Sylvia Adams

Kathy Carnell

Yvonne Thurbon & Sandra Bradford

# 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.

An on-line service for those preferring to worship from home is available each week on [www.stleonardsouthminster.org.uk](http://www.stleonardsouthminster.org.uk)



## Steeple Church contacts:

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

Fiona Ashworth, Churchwarden, [01621 742 137](tel:01621742137)

Rhona Leech, Assistant Churchwarden  
& PCC Secretary

Teresa Julien, Assistant Warden,  
Peter Marshall, PCC Treasurer & Verger,

## Steeple's February Services in brief

(Service titles and leaders only)

1st 09.15 Morning Worship Rev'd Peter

8th 09.15 Holy Communion Rev'd Ken Dunstan

15th 09.15 Family Service Rev'd Peter / Brenda Sheppard

18th 20.00 Ash Wednesday service at Southminster

22nd 09.15 Holy Communion Rev'd Peter

Steeple Church is just over 140 years old but has many records going back much further. As well as registers of Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals we have a Tithe Map for the whole of Steeple Parish.

This map shows every house and barn as well as the boundary of every field, as they would have been in the 1830's. It was created to facilitate the collection of tithes, the local tax that was used to finance rural churches. It pre-dates the current church but shows the earlier church in the field to the South of Hall Farm.

The map is about two metres square, drawn on cotton backed paper and a bit tatty around the edges so it has never been on public display.

A recent meeting of Steeple's Parochial Church Council resolved to have the map mounted and framed at a workshop in Southminster. When it comes back, it will be fixed to the wall in the Vestry at a point where it will not be damaged by sunlight. It will then be accessible for public study when the Church is open on Saturdays and Sundays.

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**Everyone is welcome to our  
Ash Wednesday service at 8 pm in  
St Leonard's church Southminster**

**Leader / Preacher  
Readings**

**Rev'd Peter / Norman Pratt  
2 Corinthians 5 : 20b—6:10  
Matthew 6 : 1—6, 16—21**

**Other duties to be arranged.**

## **POSSIBLE ROTA DETAILS: YOUR AVAILABILITY FOR 2 MONTHS**

We can worship regularly in church again, 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.

March 2026            1        8        15        22        29

April 2026            5        12        19        26

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

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### **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.

Keep praying for everyone who has recently lost a loved one, and for others who are in need of healing and general care. Pray for all medical personnel, local and wider afield, and all the regular carers. Don't forget all the local farmers who are struggling with effects of recent weather problems. And also remember people who have become unemployed for various reasons - and the people who are trying to help 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.

## **February dates are: Fri. 13th & 27th**

If you would like to give it a try and would like a rota please speak to me, Brenda Sheppard, or contact me by phone.

Your involvement in clearing up after the Christmas trees were removed was thoroughly appreciated.

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

For the National Church - particularly following the  
Appointment of Archbishop of Canterbury,  
The Most Rev'd & Rt Hon. Dame Sarah Mullally DBE

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 local farmers and all their workers in winter 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** meets on most Mondays.  
If you would like any information please phone  
Dave Christie 07775 758118.

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**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 February 24th**

**Karen Butler: DeCafe & Men's Shed**

For further details contact Paula Neall 01621 773243



**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.

## **Important upcoming event**

We are pleased that we have been able to arrange the return of the Sid Bolan Big Band to St Leonard's. At their previous concerts the audience expressed really grateful thanks and enjoyment, so we hope that this year will prove to be as well-supported again.

### **SID BOLAN BIG BAND CONCERT**

**On Saturday 28th March 2026  
at 7.30 pm**

The concert is one of Big Band Music of  
Glenn Miller, Count Basie, Frank Sinatra,  
Michael Buble and many others.

Tickets will be available from the church  
or by calling Kath Dunstan  
Also several local shops will have tickets for you.  
Main posters will show the details.  
Money raised will go to Knightswood Day Care Centre

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### **PRAY FOR SOUTHSUMISTER:**

w/b	1 February	South - West
w/b	8 February	Central - West
w/b	15 February	North - East
w/b	22 February	Central - North-West





## 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](http://www.stleonardsouthminster.org.uk)

**Contact:** [vicar@stleonardsouthminster.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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.