

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

StL

and also for Steeple Parish

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



APRIL 2025

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient,
bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:2

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:
*Articles for the May magazine
 should be with
 Kath Dunstan by, at the latest,
 Sunday 20th April
 New contributors are welcome.*

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!)

Reflection for April

Norman Pratt

It's some while since I wrote a 'Reflections'. So 'Hi!' As I write, it happens to be the evening on the day of our Monday morning Bible Study where six of us sat around in the Chapel discussing the topic 'Hope in Politics', led by Jenny. One of the things we agreed upon, as Christians, was that Truth is important, so it is upsetting when politicians twist it. However, we were reminded of a very comforting Truth, that whatever happens in the world, however upsetting, God is always in charge.

It seems to me that in some ways it has become harder to get at the Truth. It's not that we can't get access to thousands of voices via TV, mobile, radio, or newspaper. But which ones can we trust? Sometimes it can be simply a misleading headline like 'Precise time 10" of snow expected': this turns out to a threat not to the daily commute to Chelmsford but just parts of the Cairngorms! More seriously even trusted media platforms like the BBC are constantly under attack for being biased even when they are trying hard to find a middle way.

Fairly recently I complained to BBC News when they failed to give the name or title of a bishop they were interviewing, and then gave his name and title on the screen a few minutes later to an apparently random bystander! As it happened the bishop was making a sensible and calming comment about a nasty incident that led later to a riot. I still wonder whether if the bishop's comments had been covered better the riot might have been prevented. Later, after thorough investigation of my complaint to the BBC, I received an acknowledgment that something had gone wrong with their system for providing written labels on the screen for their interviewees.

The BBC is of course light years ahead of the social media companies in taking responsibility for their content. Although something is at last being done about the sort of Internet content that can do immense harm to children, the net is otherwise regulated inadequately. Indeed some companies who control social media platforms claim they are acting in the interests of Free Speech by not keeping a watch on the stories they are spreading. Another issue is that most of these social media companies, like our newspapers, are owned by just three very influential 'media giants'. They influence a great deal of what we read. In the USA recently a well respected newspaper warned its well respected cartoonist not to criticise President Trump. To his immense credit he refused to have his own freedom of expression restricted and resigned.

The power of the media, and particularly the power of cartoons, once played an important part in Church History. In 1517 Martin Luther, a professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg in Germany, wrote a 95-point criticism of some of the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church, and sent it to the archbishop of Mainz.

But new media took over. That new media was printing, which had been invented only about fifty years before. Luther's ideas somehow got into the hands of a printer just down the road, and hundreds of copies of his 95 Theses were printed and distributed. Soon printed Protestant pamphlets were circulated to many people, and supporters of the authority of the Pope replied. Argument descended into name-calling. Woodcuts - the latest media - allowed cartoons to be circulated, showing the pope wearing his famous tiara, eagerly counting out the money taken through Indulgences. Papal supporters produced woodcuts depicting a dragon-like devil squeezing Luther's disembodied head as though it was the bag of a bagpipes, and blowing into Luther's ears whilst his fingers played the chanter coming out of Luther's

nose. I won't tell what some Protestant cartoons did with the Pope's tiara ... And it got much worse, on both sides.

The arguments within the Church grew increasingly bitter, and they degenerated into a vicious slanging match. Not surprisingly Luther had to flee for his life and find refuge with one of the many German princes. The Catholic Church of Europe split in two, the North generally becoming Protestant and Southern Europe generally Catholic. The pamphlet war did immense damage to the unity of the Church. Later in the 16th Century the Roman Catholic Church held their own Church Council of Trent, which resulted in its own Reformation, where they put right many of the criticisms of Martin Luther. But the Council failed to reunite Protestants and Catholics. The argument begun by Luther had become so divisive that Europe was torn apart in a series of religious wars between Catholics and Protestants which lasted over a hundred years.

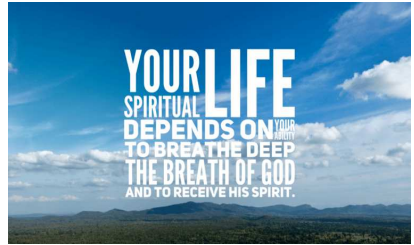
The split in the Church in the 16th century provides a warning about how churches should behave today, but also about how we ourselves as individuals should behave. Internet media provides tremendous opportunities to communicate with one another. But it also provides opportunities to upset a lot of other people. On a well-known Internet platform, I was carefully presenting an argument and backing it up with what I thought was overwhelming evidence. For a moment I ignored the fact that I was disagreeing with what twenty or so people had just written. For some reason, or possibly because it was after midnight and I wasn't really thinking, I wrote something like "... so if you think like this you must be bonkers." About ten minutes later when I looked at the platform to see if there was any reaction, I couldn't find my post. A moderator had spotted and removed it, and quite right too!

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:2

THE BREATH OF LIFE

Genesis 2:7 says “The Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being.”



We obviously know that to sustain life we need to breathe. We know that breathing is inhaling Oxygen from the air which is vital for sustaining life and all body systems rely on it. Also breathing involves exhaling the excess Carbon Dioxide which the body does not need.

Just as God breathed life into us, we should be conscious that our goal in life is to be the very essence of who we were created to be. What we take into our minds and bodies reflects on how our minds and body's function.

Like the air that we breathe let's look at all we need to sustain life and encompass, take in, the good and digest it, and then expel that which isn't helpful or needed.

I have been much more aware recently of the need to take time to be more conscious of my surroundings and especially to make time to sit and meditate on all God has created and especially looking at the amazing way we, as people, are fearfully and wonderfully made.

We are all unique and we need to embrace our personal experiences of how we think and feel and what we believe to be true for ourselves and then seek to change that which we are able to, or desire to, with the Holy Spirit's help of course!!!

The first lines of a lovely poem by William Henry Davies say “What is this life if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare”. Life can be very difficult at times, we all go through trials that can seek to overwhelm us, trials that fill our minds and can take away our peace and affect our physical wellbeing too. These are the times when we need to lean on our Lord so much and inhale His promise to be with us always and to walk with us through every trial that comes our way.

This Easter time let us remember the agony Jesus went through in the garden of Gethsemane before his painful death. He inhaled courage and exhaled fear and went obediently to the cross to die for us all.

Brenda Sheppard



Prayer Ministry on Sundays after the 11 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.

Our **Annual Parochial Church Meeting** will be held in church after the 11am service on Sunday 4th May. Everyone is welcome, but the only people able to vote are those who have registered on the new Electoral roll.

Community Hub update.



The Community Hub Management Committee meet each month at the URC Church building in North Street to discuss plans in progress for the refurbishment of the building and to discuss policies and procedures which need to be in place and also fees for hiring space within the building.

It is hoped that at the beginning of April the interior renovations inside the building will start in earnest. A new kitchen will be installed in the rear of the building as well as a small one in the front of the building. An extra toilet will also be installed in the front of the building, adding to the ones in the rear, so that both halves of the building can be used simultaneously as separate entities. The outside of the building will be landscaped and fenced off so the parking will be for building users only.

The URC building is already well used and our Community Development Worker is busy seeking out and working with many organisations to help make the Hub a hive of activity for people of all ages and abilities in this Dengie area.



DON'T FORGET the local **FOOD PANTRY**

which has been running for several years and still meets at the URC building every Wednesday morning.

Contributions can be placed in advance in the bin at the back of our church. Details are available there.

Jesus, People, Building ...

Ken Dunstan

In the process of reducing six decades-worth of clutter, Kath and I discovered a photocopy of a local paper from September 1943 describing the church building. It began, “To the casual passer by, the parish church of Southminster ... is just a large single building in which services are held on Sunday... the historian and antiquarian... is never tired of exploring it and endeavouring to wrest from it the secrets of bygone centuries.” At the same time, Christians would want to say, “The Church is people, not buildings.” How do we tie the two together?

Jesus never built a church. He called people to follow him. Eventually his first followers attracted thousands more.. Twenty years after the Holy Spirit’s coming, St Paul wrote to “the churches of Galatia” in one of the earliest writings of the New Testament. But to exist, let alone thrive, these disciples of Jesus needed to meet. As the church grew, houses became too small. Praying together and encouraging one another were vital (Hebrews 10:25).

Our building is around 900 years old. The Newspaper article suggests that prior to that a Saxon building stood on the same site, the centre of Southminster. It was expanded in the early 16th century by the Prior of St Osyth and again between 1818 and 1819 by Admiral Nelson’s secretary, Alexander Scott. The process was paid for chiefly by Parliament and Charterhouse, the Patrons who appoint our Vicars. This included free seating for “the lower orders” – the “upper” classes paid pew rent. Our building, the place where the church meets for prayer and encouragement, served the community then, and continued by Scott’s founding of the School. We try to, still. The building has other secrets – for another occasion.

Sunday 6th April

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/President/Preacher
Philippians 3 : 4b - 14
John 12 : 1 - 8
Sidesperson

5th Sunday of Lent

Rev'd Peter
Celebrant
Celebrant
Gordon Baker

11.00 Holy Communion

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

Rev'd Peter
Lauren Lomas
Brenda Sheppard
Christine Lucas & Jenni Blomfield
Christine Morgan
Gordon Baker
Kathy Carnell & Frances Hatfield

Sunday 13th April

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/President/Preacher
Psalm 118 : 19 - 24
Luke 19 : 28 - 40
Sidesperson

Palm Sunday

Rev'd Ken Dunstan
Celebrant
Celebrant
Paul Lucas

11.00 Family Celebration

Leaders
Prayer Ministry
Audio-visuals
Sidesperson
Refreshments

Team: Karen, Jenny, Dawn
Fiona Begley + Frances Hatfield
Christine Lucas
Kathy Carnell
Sally Culff & Maureen Smith

18.00 Maundy Thursday Service

Leader/preacher

I Corinthians 11 : 23 - 26 & John 13 : 1 - 17, 34b - 35

This will include an AGAPE meal. Please book in for the food.

17th April 6.00 pm

Rev'd Peter Begley

Friday 18th April

Leader/preacher

Readings: Hebrews 4 : 14 -16, 5 : 7 - 9 & John 18 : 1 - 19 : end

Good Friday Morning

Norman Pratt

Sunday 20th April

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/Preacher

Romans 6 : 3 - 11

Luke 24 : 1 - 12

Sidesperson

Easter Sunday

Rev'd Peter / Jenny Pratt

Celebrant

Celebrant

Leon Flack

11.00 Easter Sunday Morning Worship

Leader/Preacher

Readings as above

Intercessions

Prayer Ministry

Audio-Visuals

Sidesperson

Refreshments

Jenny Pratt

Kath Dunstan

Fiona Begley

Sylvia Adams & Keith Hatfield

Christine Morgan

Brenda Sheppard

Dee Byford & Jenni Blomfield

Sunday 27th April

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/Preacher

Acts 5 : 27 - 32 & John 20 : 19 - end

Sidesperson

2nd Sunday of Easter

Rev'd Peter / Norman Pratt

Celebrant

Keith Hatfield

11.00 Morning Worship

Leader/Preacher

Readings as above

Intercessions

Prayer Ministry

Audio-Visuals

Sidesperson

Refreshments

Rev'd Peter/Norman Pratt

Christine Morgan

Frances Hatfield

Yvonne Thurbon & Sarah Prendergast

Sylvia Adams

Gwyneth Iffland

Christine Lucas & Sandra Billingham

Steeple Church News

Steeple Church has services every Sunday morning at 9.15am unless otherwise advertised on the church door. 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



Steeple Church will be holding its Annual Parish Church Meeting (APCM) in the church on Monday 7th April, starting at 7pm. Anyone in the Steeple community who's interested in the running of Steeple Church is urged to come along and those who have put themselves on the recently completed 2025 Electoral Roll are entitled to vote.

The meeting will review and approve the Financial Report and Trustees' Report for 2024 before moving on to current year planning, including the appointment of Churchwardens, other officers and member of the Parochial Church Council.

Steeple Church contacts:

Rev'd Canon Peter Begley, Vicar, 01621 772 300
Rhona Leech, Churchwarden and PCC Secretary,
Teresa Julien, Assistant Churchwarden,
Fiona Ashworth, Assistant Churchwarden,
Peter Marshall, PCC Treasurer and Verger,

Planning is important too.

Make sure that this is in your diary.

**“Wheels, Hooves and Paws”
at Elmwood Equestrian, Burnham-on-Crouch
will be on Saturday 12th July.**

Also, for your diaries:

On **Sunday 11th May at 4 pm**
we shall be hosting the **Remedy Band** at Southminster
with a concert to **celebrate D-Day**.
Further details will be available nearer the date.

A new ALPHA course in
Southminster Vicarage started on
30th January 2025

and has 10 consecutive Thursday evenings.

The evening starts with a meal together followed by a
short talk and discussion in a small group.

No experience necessary; come as you are and get to
know others while learning about the Christian faith.

6.30 p.m. in the Vicarage
(sign-up sheet at the back of the church)

The final meeting will be on

3rd April Why and how should we tell others?



Henry Church Cleaning Club 2025



Another year ahead and the cleaning continues on in the Church! 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.

If you would like to give it a try and would like a rota please speak to me, Brenda Sheppard, or contact me directly. You will be made very welcome.

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.

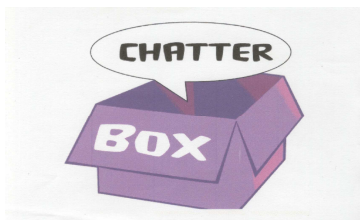
12th April is our next meeting, and this will be our annual **Easter Craft morning** for all the family, so children must be accompanied by an adult. Older and younger siblings are also very welcome on that day,

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

SOUTHMINSTER MEMORIAL HALL

LUNCH CLUB meets on most 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!



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. Monthly Saturday Club continues..

DENGIE HUNDRED LADIES GROUP

Tuesday 22nd April

Michael Farley: 20 years as Henry VII

For further details contact Paula Neall 01621 773243

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.

May 2025	4	11	18	25	
June 2025	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.

Althorne Church
will be holding on **26th April** a
ST GEORGE'S DAY EVENT 2pm - 4pm
Featuring the **BRANDY HOLE SHANTY MEN**
To which all are invited.
Tickets available from 01621 740481 or 741131
Tickets cost £10 and include tea and cake.
It is in aid of Burnham RNLI (Lifeboats).

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.

St Leonard's Church
will be hosting
The Music Festival of 2025
on **Saturday 26th April**

This is a Competitive Festival of Music
With prizes of £100, £75 and £50 to be won.

Certificates of Attendance and Adjudication will
be awarded to all who take part.

Young Musician	Junior Choir	Young Musician
Competition	Competition	Competition
11 years & under	11 years & under	12 - 18 years

Entry, with free admission
will be from 12.00 to 16.00

Further details are available from Southminster's
Parish Clerk at 01621 773868 or
clerk@southminsterparishcouncil.com

PRAY FOR SOUTHMINTER:

w/b	6 April	Central - South
w/b	13 April	South - West
w/b	20 April	Central - West
w/b	27 April	North - 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

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 usually meet in the
church on Mondays (10am) and Thursdays (8pm)

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