

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

and also for Steeple Parish

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

StL



**“Let us pursue all that makes for peace
and builds up our common life.”**

APRIL 2026

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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!)

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

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:
*Articles for the May magazine should be with Kath Dunstan by, at the latest, **Sunday 19th April** New contributors are welcome.*

Reflection from Norman Pratt

At the time of writing this article we are into the third week of the war between the United States and Israel against Iran. Such events might seem to be way out of our control, and they are. All the more reason to acknowledge the God who created and controls this world and add 'peace' to our prayer list. We will of course carry on as normal, but we would be wise to remember there is an international crisis going on quite possibly as serious as the Munich Crisis.

So it was, on the whole, a good thing for Jenny and me to have chosen to have our annual holiday in early February before all this blew up, so to speak. It was good to hop on a train to Southend Airport, enjoy the airport's general lack of bustle, and take a three hour flight to Tunisia. The Good News was that our hotel booking was changed and we were transferred to a luxury hotel at no extra cost. The Bad News was that no-one had prepared us for the difficulties of not being able to acquire local cash. It was a major blow especially to the one of us whose holidays go much better when shopping is a major ingredient.

But the temperature was up on the one we left in England, and the skies somewhat bluer, and for me at any rate there was the prospect of outings booked to places of historical interest. This included the ruins of the city of Carthage. The Carthaginians came originally from Lebanon hundreds of years BC. They brought their own Phoenician religious customs with them, and this included the custom of child sacrifice that is mentioned in the Old Testament. The Carthaginians sacrificed their firstborn sons, and we saw hundreds of their small graves in their special cemetery.

When the Romans took over the city of Carthage after winning the Third Punic War, they razed it to the ground. But they later rebuilt the city and it became the third biggest city in

the Roman Empire. We visited the huge public Roman baths there. Unfortunately, apart from a few stone columns, only the basement floors had survived. So no chance of that swim Jenny is always promising me when we go on holiday. We also visited the museum which held dozens of brilliant mosaic floors and walls, a collection made up of mosaics taken from their original sites. So we didn't have time to go to the amphitheatre. Mind you, when you've seen one collection of concentric stone seats round a central arena (which we had already seen at Verona in Italy) you've seen them all! The amphitheatre at Carthage is an important site in the history of the church.

As we approach Easter, this would seem to be a suitable time to tell the story of Perpetua, who was martyred in this amphitheatre in 203 AD. By this time the Christian faith had reached the Roman province of Africa - or Tunisia as we now call it. According to Roman law practising the Christian faith was illegal. The authorities did not at this time hunt Christians down. However, if anyone brought a complaint against them, they would be brought before the Procurator (i.e. Governor) to be interrogated and made to renounce their faith and sacrifice to the pagan gods.

This is exactly what happened to a group of men and two young women, Perpetua and her slave Felicitas. Perpetua's father, apparently not a Christian, tried to persuade her to give it up. She refused. She announced she could not deny being a Christian any more than a jug could cease being a jug. While waiting in prison she had several visions, the first of which confirmed to her that she and her companions would be martyred. She was overjoyed when she was allowed to have her infant child with her in prison, and she supported Felicitas who actually gave birth in the prison. (Felicitas had been concerned she would miss the main martyrdom because it was against the rules to send a pregnant woman into the arena.)

When the day arrived the Christians marched joyfully and defiantly into the arena at Carthage before a rowdy and excited crowd waiting to see the 'wicked' Christians humiliated, tortured and killed. Perpetua sang a Psalm, and the three men with them warned the Procurator that God would judge him. Irritated by this, and also perhaps by the failure of the victims to show suitable humiliation, the crowd demanded that the Christians should be flogged. This was received by the Christians with joy, because it meant they were receiving one of their Lord's 'passions'.

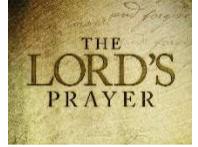
They were then stripped, covered with netting, and exposed to wild animals, a boar a bear and a leopard for the men, and a wild cow for Perpetua and Felicitas. At this point the crowd's mood changed, seeing the two young, slight, and obviously nursing mothers. They were led away, and the netting removed. Gripped by religious ecstasy Perpetua had to be told by her companions that she had survived a goading. The crowd demanded their execution. The Christians shared the kiss of peace, and walked out willingly to the place of execution by the sword. Either to deliberately give Perpetua more pain, or possibly because he bungled it, the young gladiator assigned to Perpetua failed to deal a fatal blow. Perpetua took charge and guided the sword herself.

We know Perpetua's story because it is based on her prison diaries and the account by an unknown editor of her death. This makes 'The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas' one of the earliest Christian documents written by a woman. It shows how Christians were turning the world upside down: a young woman prepared to disobey her father, equality between a mistress and her slave, and a woman taking the lead in battle (against the devil) as she encouraged her fellow martyrs both in prison and in the arena.

As we experience this season, perhaps we should remember Christians living under persecution all over the world today.

The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is a very special prayer and I would imagine the most well known one. It incorporates all we need to pray for in Kingdom living doesn't it.



How did it come about? We read in Luke 11 v1 that after Jesus had finished praying in a certain place one of his disciples said to him “Lord teach us how to pray” and he taught them the ‘Lord’s Prayer’. Luke’s version is recorded as a short version. An elongated version is in Matthew 6: 9-13 as part of the Sermon on the Mount.

What prompted the disciples to ask this I wonder? They would have been familiar with the formal, ritualistic Jewish prayers but Jesus warned them not to pray as the hypocrites did who stood on the streets and in the synagogues so as to be seen by others; He warned them not to be seen as self-righteous and better than others with their elongated prayers. Jesus told them to go into a quiet place and pray to their Father God as Jesus’ teaching on prayer centred on humility and inner righteousness rather than outward religious rituals.

I wonder if the disciples asked because they saw Jesus go so often to quietly to pray to His Father, they witnessed the profound intimacy, authority and power in his personal prayer life which possibly differed from their own experiences and after watching him for a length of time they too recognised that they needed a deeper, personal connection with God the Father as they saw Jesus had.

The Lord's Prayer is so much a part of our Christian worship but I have to admit that I do have one great problem with it! My problem is that I always want to put the word "Please" before I ask for my daily bread, for my forgiveness and my deliverance from evil! I'm sure our Lord won't take that as complete heresy in me in wanting to add to His Word, I really do hope not!!



Brenda Sheppard

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.

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.

Mothering Sunday was celebrated on March 15th

The mothers present at the service received potted primulas. Some mothers/ grandmothers were unable to be present so their friends took plants for them at home. We were reminded of the caring that happens from mothers and other people in similar roles today.

Yvonne Thurbon has shared her particular thoughts:

Miss you Mum

I could not buy you a special card

Or take you to lunch.

I cannot talk to you on the phone

Or buy you flowers by the bunch.

I cannot visit you at home or sit with you a while.

I cannot hear your sweet voice; I cannot see you smile.

I cannot have special chats; I cannot have a cup of tea,

I cannot cuddle you in my arms

and tell you how much you mean to me.

The world is a different place.

Since you passed away it's hard

losing your mother every year on Mothers' Day.

But I have lovely memories in my heart

And I know that deep inside we are never really apart.

I hope heaven celebrates Mothers' Day.

I really hope they do.

That angels will pick some beautiful flowers

And say they are from me to you.

So Happy Mothers' Day in heaven.

Sending all my love

From the child that misses you

Every day to heaven up above.

Yvonne

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.

A Report about the event will be in the May magazine

Other St Leonard's Church activities

We have set up a monthly Youth group for Secondary age children. It meets in the church at 6.30 pm on the last Friday of each month.

Those who have attended so far have enjoyed their time together so we hope that this will continue. Detailed reports may be available at some stage soon.

Similarly details of this year's Holiday Club in August will be published soon.

Bible Study Groups (Monday at 10am and Thursdays at 8pm)

The course during Lent has been based on THE CREED.

By going through the words we say in every service of worship by small sections, we have actually been able to understand the original meanings of words that Jesus said and words that apply to the history of His life, death and resurrection

Sunday 5th April

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/President/Preacher
Romans 4 : 1 – 5, 13 -17
John 3 : 1 - 17
Sidesperson

Easter Sunday

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 & Yvonne Thurbon
Christine Morgan
Kathy Carnell
Frances Hatfield & Sandra Bradford

Sunday 12th April

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/President/Preacher
Romans 5 : 1 – 11
John 4 : 5 - 42
Sidesperson

2nd Sunday of Easter

Rev'd Ken Dunstan
Celebrant
Celebrant
Leon Flack

11.00 Family Celebration

Leaders
Prayer Ministry
Audio-visuals
Sidesperson
Refreshments

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

Sunday 19th April
08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/President/Preacher

Colossians 3 : 12 - 17

Luke 2: 33 - 35

Sidesperson

3rd Sunday of Easter

Rev'd Ken/ Jenny Pratt &
Brenda Sheppard

Celebrant

Celebrant

Paul Lucas

11.00 Morning Worship

Leader

Readings

Intercessions

Audio-visuals

Prayer ministry

Sidesperson

Refreshments

Jenny Pratt / Brenda Sheppard

Christine Luccas

Fiona Begley

Christine Morgan

Christine Lucas & Sylvia Adams

Paul Lucas

Dee Byford & Jenni Blomfield

Sunday 26th April

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/Preacher

Romans 8 : 6 - 11

John 11 : 1 - 45

Sidesperson

4th Sunday of Easter

Rev'd Peter/Norman Pratt

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/Norman Pratt

Gwyneth Iffland

Frances Hatfield

Fiona Begley & Sarah Prendergast

Sylvia Adams

Gwyneth Iffland

Kathy Carnell & Yvonne Thurbon

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



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 April Services in brief

(Service titles and leaders only)

3rd 10.15 Shared service at Southminster URC

5th 09.15 Easter Sunday Service Rev'd Peter

12th 09.15 Holy Communion Rev'd Ken Dunstan

19th 09.15 Family Service Rev'd Peter / Brenda Sheppard

26th 09.15 Holy Communion Rev'd Peter

The Easter weekend highlights two events that are fundamental to the Christian faith, Good Friday followed by Easter Sunday.

At 10.15am on Good Friday, 3rd April, the Steeple congregation will join our colleagues in Southminster at the URC Hub in North Street and walk in procession the short distance to St Leonard's for a Benefice service at 10.30. There's no Good Friday service at Steeple but we'll celebrate Easter Sunday with Holy Communion, at our normal time of 9.15am.

Framing the Victorian Tithe Map of Steeple Parish has been progressing well and it's hoped it will be returned to the church in time for a dedication ceremony after the Easter Sunday service. From then on, it will remain on display and be easily inspected on any Saturday or Sunday when the church is normally unlocked between 9am and 4pm.

Present day residents will see that The Street, Batts Road and Stansgate Road are little changed but Maldon Road follows what's now a service road around South Green. The map predates the current Steeple Church but it clearly shows the earlier church and its now overgrown churchyard just to the South of Hall Farm.

As an extra thought, let's prepare for all the events coming up in Steeple, and those in other places where Steeple church plays an important role. The church diary will have that information available.

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.

May 2026	3	10	17	24	31
June 2026	7	14	21	28	

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.

Please remember
That in May there will be the normal
CHRISTIAN AID WEEK.
It begins on 10th May.



We can respond to requests for funds as individuals or as Church Family members. Details of any activities which will support the charity this year will be available very soon.

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.

April dates are: Fri. 10th & 24th

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

The Hive (Southminster Community Hub)

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.

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!

DENGIE HUNDRED LADIES GROUP

Tuesday 28th April

Speaker: Lynne Creasey (Harpist)

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.

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

For the National Church
For our Home Diocese of Chelmsford
For the Maldon & Dengie Deanery

For our local parishes of Southminster and Steeple

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
(and all the children being educated)

For local farmers and all their workers as the weather
changes unexpectedly at times

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.

*P.S. The present situation in the wider world has not been
forgotten, so we pray for an end to war and the reign of peace.*

PRAY FOR SOUTHMINSTER:

w/b	5 April	Central - North-West
w/b	12 April	Central - East
w/b	19 April	Central - South
w/b	26 April	South - 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

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.