PARISH OF SOUTHMINSTER MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF ST LEONARD





and also for Steeple Parish

The Church of

St Lawrence & All Saints

2022 . . .

Happy
New
Mear
...2023

JANUARY 2023
God is "making all things new". Revelation 21:5

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

Articles for the February magazine should be with Kath Dunstan by, at the latest, **Sunday 22nd January**New contributors are welcome.

To cover our costs we have to charge for this magazine. This is now **80p per issue** or £3 for Every 4 months paid in advance in January. There may be changes ahead, so we have removed the annual subscription..

Vicar's Reflection for January 2023

It may seem like the Christmas season is over and another year is in front of us. When I worked for the marketing company, the thought of another year ahead to build upon sometimes seemed overwhelming yet, as we entered the year, exciting things happened and the sense of moving onwards and upwards inspired our first few weeks of the new year. We have not yet left the Christmas season for we have Epiphany season, revealing the promises to come and helping us to have a forward focus into the year. It is a time for new beginnings and a fresh start for each of us.

I enjoy looking at the book of Genesis when new things are starting, for the first few words reveal to me the essence of God's purpose. Genesis 1: I says "In the beginning God....." and in John 1:1 we read the words of John saying "In the beginning was the Word (Christ)....." both occasions make us look to God for all of our beginnings- the start of all things new. What does the book of Revelation say to us? God reveals to John those things that are to come "I am making all things new" (Rev.21:5). This indicates, to me, that God is continually making things change for the good of the kingdom, those things include you and I, and those around us who do not yet see God at work in their lives. There will be a time, in God's grace, where we will see many who recognise God at work around them and through them, and they will enjoy the presence of God in their lives.

Just before Christmas Jacqui, Jenny and I went into the school for assemblies and for their Nativity plays. Every time I see a nativity play it speaks to me differently, for the children perform it differently – in a fresh and new way. The message is the same but it is received as if for the first time and everyone is spoken to by the gospel – whether through action, song or scene. During one of the assemblies we reflected on 'loy', this being the third candle of Advent, (Hope, Love, Joy and Faith). What is Joy? The young students at Southminster school suggested "happiness, gladness and being joyful" but very good though these words are, they don't capture the fullest extent of the word. In Vines expository dictionary it says that joy is "caused by the knowledge of God's presence". Thus - not something that we have for a moment but an unending gladness that God is with us always and for eternity. What a wonderful thought! No matter what comes. God is with us and for us.

We are entering a New Year reflecting on those carols of 'Emmanuel – God with us' and 'O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel'. Let us do so in the joy of the knowledge that God has come and will abide with us forever. No matter what 'new beginning' you are facing; God is with you even to the end of the age. Let us start the New year with the phrase in our minds "In the beginning – God…! And, as we dwell on those words, may His will be done. May His Peace be with you all. Amen.

Peter

A message from Bishop Guli

This message is for the season of Christmas to Epiphany.

One of my favourite books of all time is by an American author, Henry van Dyke, who was writing around the turn of the 19th to the 20th centuries. It's a short book, called "The Other Wise Man", which you could easily read in one sitting. It tells the tale of a fourth and unknown wise man who sets out along with his three colleagues, but they get separated and he gets lost along the way to Bethlehem. The fourth wise man spends a lifetime searching for the Christ child, arriving eventually in Jerusalem 33 years later where he finally finds Jesus hanging on the cross. It's a profound and poignant tale about the significance of faith as a journey and it's a vivid reminder that the stories we hear around Christmas and Epiphany are inextricably bound up with the stories of Lent and beyond, to Holy Week and Easter.

As we begin another year with all the uncertainty that continues raging around us, and with continued worries about the cost of living and the changing nature of the church, it's perhaps worth remembering that the same Christ child who drew kings and magi to his crib, is the one who invites us to follow him still today. We have no idea where the journey may take us, possibly to the foot of the cross. But regardless of the destination, the way we travel shapes and forms us. Along the way, we catch glimpses of God's presence in smaller and larger ways, and we are held by the everlasting arms of the one who goes before us.

May God bless you during 2023 and may you know the love of God which surrounds and strengthens us each step of the way.

Through a Glass Darkly

On looking at Facebook one day I came across the following story written by Paolo Coelho that really spoke to me and I thought it would be good to share it:

'Dirty Laundry'

A young couple moved into a new house. The next morning while eating breakfast, the young woman saw her neighbour hanging the washing outside. She commented: "The laundry is not very clean, she doesn't know how to wash correctly, perhaps she needs better soap powder."

Her husband looked on silently.

Every time her neighbour hung her washing out to dry, the young woman made the same comments.

A month later the young woman was surprised to see a nice clean wash on the line and said to her husband, "Look, she's finally learned how to wash correctly, I wonder who taught her?"

The husband replied "No-one taught her, I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows!!"

And so it is with life, what we see when watching others depends on the clarity of the window through which we look. Through a glass darkly is to have an obscure or imperfect vision of reality.

St Paul wrote in I Corinthians 13: 12 that at present we do not now see clearly but at the end of time we will do so when we shall see the Lord face to face. The judge of all.

So, we mustn't be too quick to judge others especially if our perspective on life is clouded by jealousy, negativity, or unfulfilled dreams. A quotation I read which really resonated with me is: 'Judging a person does not define who they are, it defines who you are.'

Perhaps when I fall into the trap of being judgemental and critical of others. I, too, need to stop, think on the teachings of the Bible, and then also go and clean my windows!!



Brenda Sheppard

A piece of advice from Jeanne McLeay

It is so easy to respond to situations, whether in judgment or in approval, that we need to be aware of problems that might arrive. Jeanne says:

"Always think before you speak!"

LOOKING BACK - LOOKING FORWARD

2022 was the year we "came out of Covid" inasmuch as restrictions were eased, but the pandemic seems to have left a legacy. People, especially some of us older ones, seem to be out of the habit of socialising perhaps as much as we did before. 2022 was a strange year as we each decided how careful we need to be and how we would take care of our health whilst trying to get back to a normal way of living – whatever normal is to each of us!

I'm sure I'm by no means the only one who has lost dear friends in 2022, not necessarily anything to do with Covid, but due to illness and age. It's nature, but it's hard when we lose friends and relatives, especially if they pass away over the Christmas period. I'll be looking back remembering those who have gone from my life last year but also I've met some new people and hope made some new friends too.

It's my hope that like me you can look back on the year and find reasons to feel that despite the difficult times, it's been a good year on the whole. If it's been a particularly bad year for you, then I hope that now that we're into a new year your fortune will change.

Life is full of events over which we have no control, but there's also a lot of truth in "life is what you make it" so I think we should each do our best to form the lifestyle that suits us. The good company and good times don't necessarily happen by themselves; sometimes we have to make an effort. We'll reap what we sow in 2023!

2023 is the year in which we hope the new Community Hub will be up and running, and I'm sure that will be a benefit to us all.

Happy New Year!

Chris Martin

Southminster Community Hub

The proposal to work closely with the United Reformed Church to open a Community Hub in Christ Church's building continues to gain momentum. The first meeting of a wide range of different agencies was held last September and a follow-up meeting took place in November to hone our thinking.

We are excited about our plan to open a community space in partnership with other organisations, so we can offer a variety of support to individuals and groups. Our next meeting is a bring-your-own lunch on the 23rd of January. To find out more, or if you'd like to get involved, contact Rev Jacqui.

Prayer Ministry on Sundays

From January we are resuming regular Prayer Ministry after Holy Communion. Please come to the area outside the Chapel if you have a particular need for prayer, where there should be two people available to pray with you. We hope to extend this to other services in the near future. Informal prayer ministry continues to be available at other times, as always!

Christine Lucas

Unexpected death: We were sorry to hear that John Hedges, former churchwarden and Church servant for many years, died after a heart attack in early December so we pray for Lynda and her family in these difficult times. At least we know that John is now at peace with the Lord.

SHOEBOX APPEAL

We were pleased to be able to send 98 shoeboxes this year for the Operation Christmas Child Appeal. This includes the number provided by the local Primary School as usual. We still are unaware of exactly where they will go, but we know that some children somewhere will be able to enjoy the Christmas period when they would not normally have been able to do so because of their terrible circumstances.

WARM & TOASTIE

As part of the Community Hub plans for providing a warm space for people in these difficult times, Karen and Leon have agreed to lead the "Warm & Toastie" time (12.30pm - 2.30pm) each Sunday in church. Obviously other Church folk will be available to help but we are very grateful to Karen and Leon for their leadership. Do join us for a chat as well as the lovely food and drink. This will continue in 2023.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

This was on Saturday 10th December from 2 pm to 4 pm Sponsors made this an excellent and enjoyable event again. Lots of families came and the children enjoyed meeting 'Santa'. Some of the school children sang carols for everyone. The volunteers serving refreshments were kept busy so we thank them and all the other volunteers who made this event happen this year. The trees will stay on display until early January.

The Farleigh Hospice Service "LIGHT UP A LIFE" was at 7pm on Wednesday 7th December. The cold weather proved to be a problem in that numbers attending were lower than usual, but all who came said that it was an appropriate and 'enjoyable' evening.

FAMILY CHRISTMAS CRAFT MORNING

Saturday 3rd December 9.30am - 11.30am

Responding to apparent needs from parents and children, Karen and Jenny ran this practical morning. It had been noticed that at all our Holiday Club gatherings over the years the children really enjoy making things, and this was a chance for them to work with their parents too. At Christmas most families try to decorate their homes, either on the Christmas tree or round the house. It was hoped that this craft morning would inspire children and adults together to try something new this year. Well, it did just that. Several families were present and they left with products which would give an extra layer of joy to Christmas 2022.

The **TOY SERVICE** was well supported on December I Ith and so a large number of toys and toiletries were transported to a Women's Refuge. The recipients were very grateful, as their Christmas was made much happier.

Our regular support for the **Dengie Food Pantry**, which meets in ChristChurch every week, is vitally important in these difficult times. Please keep up the support.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

There are many ways in which we can wish other people "Happy Christmas", one of which is through a printed card. The design for our church card this year was by a Year 2 pupil at Southminster Primary School. We thank all the people who delivered these cards (2000+) in Southminster and Steeple.

We have received greetings from previous Southminster family members, including Shirley Chesterton, Pat & Keith Duncan, Heather & John Thain, Paul & Kathrine Haworth and Martin & Dot Cleeve. Lots of cards are on a church notice board.

Sunday 1st January

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/President/Preacher

Galatians 4 : 4 - 7 Luke 2 : 15 - 21

Sidesperson

2nd Sunday of Christmas

Rev'd Peter/Brenda Sheppard

Celebrant

Celebrant

Gordon Baker

10.45 Family Holy Communion

Leader/President/Preacher

Readings as above Intercessions

Prayer Ministry

Audio-visuals

Sidesperson

Refreshments

Rev'd Peter/Brenda Sheppard

Kath Dunstan

Norman Pratt

Brenda Sheppard & Christine Lucas

Sylvia Adams

Paul Lucas

Sally Culff & Maureen Smith

Sunday 8th January 08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/President/Preacher

Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12

Sidesperson

The Baptism of Christ

Rev'd Ken Dunstan

Celebrant

Celebrant

Paul Lucas

10.45 Family Celebration

Leaders

Readings & Prayers

Audio-visuals Sidesperson

Refreshments

Rev'd Jacqui, Jenny Pratt, Karen Flack

Rev'd Jacqui, Jenny Pratt, Karen Flack

Christine Morgan Brenda Sheppard

t.b.a.

^{**} See the details on page 9 about the regular provision of Prayer Ministry.



Sunday 15th January 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

President/Preacher Rev'd Peter
I Corinthians I : I - 9 Celebrant
John I : 29 - 42 Celebrant
Sidesperson Leon Flack

10.45 Morning Worship

Leader/preacher Rev'd Peter
Readings as above Christine Morgan
Intercessions Gwyneth Iffland

Audio-visuals Christine Lucas
Sidespersons Gwyneth Iffland

Refreshments Eira Hagger & Frances Hatfield

3rd Sunday of Epiphany

Sunday 22nd January 08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/Preacher Rev'd Jacqui/Jenny Pratt

I Corinthians I : 10- 18 Celebrant
Matthew 4 : 12 - 23 Celebrant
Sidesperson Pete Adams

10.45 Morning Worship (Hackblock Service)

Leader/Preacher Rev'd Jacqui/Jenny Pratt

Readings as above Linda Payne

Intercessions Brenda Sheppard
Audio-Visuals Christine Morgan

Sidesperson Sylvia Adams

Refreshments t.b.a.

Services continue overleaf - on page 14.

Sunday 29th January 08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/Preacher

Hebrews 2:14 - end

Luke 2:22 - 40

Sidesperson

Presentation of Christ

Rev'd Peter, Norman Pratt

Celebrant

Celebrant

Paul Lucas

10.45 United Morning Worship (no 9.15 service at Steeple)

Leader/Preacher Rev'ds Peter/Anne Sardeson

Readings as above Susan Gendreau Intercessions Rupert Killick

Audio-visuals Christine Morgan

Sidesperson Nigel Winger

Refreshments Christine Lucas & Sandra Billinghurst

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 children's service on the third



Sunday and Holy Communion on second and fourth.

An on-line service for those preferring to worship from home is available each week on

www.stleonardsouthminster.org.uk

Everyone passing Steeple Church must have been pleased when the scaffolding that had been surrounding the church tower since mid-September was finally removed at the end of November.

With the work completed, the bills became due in December but, thanks to the diligence of Architect Hilary Brightman, we were pleased to find that the project came in within budget. That meant we had just enough funds in hand although it left our coffers very much depleted. These monies had been accumulated from a large bequest a couple of years ago, some substantial donations and the surpluses from several years of Steeple Historic Gathering.

We applied for three grants relating to the belfry timber project. Unfortunately, two of these seem to have failed but, thankfully, the third was successful meaning that we go into 2023 with enough funds to allow continuing monthly payments to the Dengie Food Pantry and occasional donations to charities such as The Children's Society.

The present Steeple Church building is 140 years old so it requires lots of maintenance. Architect Hilary has just completed the Quinquennial (five yearly) report for the building, identifying a long list of defects that need to be addressed by the Parochial Church Council. No major items are rated 'urgent' but there are plenty of smaller items, some of which should be dealt with during 2023. A few are straightforward enough to be handled by church volunteers but others need a more formal approach involving contractors.

Our tree surgeon has declared that the horse chestnut (conker) tree by the church entrance is diseased and should be taken down. This is unwelcome news when Steeple has recently lost the line of trees that were in front

of the old Sun & Anchor. Such recommendations cannot be ignored because there could be a safety issue if the tree shed a limb during stormy weather. That's what happened a couple of years ago to the poplar tree that used to be at the back of the churchyard. Fortunately, there was no one nearby at the time but the conker tree is in a much more risky location.

Essential fund-raising continues in 2023. Steeple will be working with Althorne and Creeksea churches for the **Wheels & Hooves** show at Elmwood Equestrian, Burnham-on-Crouch on **Saturday 29**th **July**. Three weeks later, we hope to run another **Steeple Historic Gathering on 20**th **August**. Although these events need to generate surpluses, their greatest value is in bringing communities together. Happily, the Mayland Car Show that clashed with us in 2022 has been moved to a new date in early July.

Although the Burnham and Steeple events are somewhat similar, we are trying to give them distinctive characteristics. Horses are an important feature at Burnham and this year there will be more emphasis on children's entertainment. Steeple gives greater prominence to agricultural history, in the form of stationary engines and scale replicas of steam traction engines.

DON'T FORGET

that there will be no service at 9.15 on January 29th because on that day there will be a United Service at St Leonard's Southminster at 10.45.

SOUTHMINSTER MEMORIAL HALL

Depending on how the Omicron Virus Regulations are, we hope that the following gatherings will take place.

LUNCH CLUB meets on Mondays (except first of month).

If you would like any information please phone

Dave Christie 07775 758118.

CHATTERBOX

meets on Thursday mornings 10 am- 12 noon. Everybody is welcome – come along for a chat, activities if you would like to join them and a cuppa and a biscuit for £1.00. No entry charge.

There are other groups too. If you have any spare time and would like to volunteer to help us in running this valuable community organisation, please just attend and think about it. It's a way to enjoy village life and make new friends!

DENGIE HUNDRED LADIES GROUP

will meet in the hall on Jan 24th

Speaker: James Kehoe
Subject: Online Safety & Tips
Competition – Prettiest Calendar
For further details contact Paula Neall 01621 773243

All these groups were represented by providing a reader in the Community Service of Lessons and Carols on December 18th. alongside the Parish Council, the School, Little Lions, FOSCOS, SOCS and Knightswood. The service was enjoyed by all.



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.

CHESS

As the curtains draw to a close on another extremely challenging year we reflect upon some successes and achievements of our service users, team, volunteers and trustees. During the last financial year CHESS helped over 180 people through our support and accommodation services. There were also over 200 people that we relieved of potential homelessness with our partners - none of which would have been possible without the continued support of people like you, the below gives an idea of how your donations can be used.

CHESS provides hot meals & drinks, provides an essentials box for anyone moving on into their own home & helps with Welfare Support and Assistance. To donate to any of the above or for ANY amount you are able please visit fundraising@chesshomeless.org

The St. Leonard's Together Apart Facebook Group

This was created as a way to keep in touch, encourage and support each other during the difficult time of lock-downs. Since then we have shared songs, daily devotions, prayers, church services, Bible studies, Alpha courses etc.

At the present time each weekday looks like this;

6am Daily Devotion including a worship song 11.30am Family Time (Tuesday and Thursday) including

Little Lions' singing time, Veggie Tales movies, virtual Sunday School etc.

3pm Bible Study / Reflection 8pm Prayer

Saturday is a quiet day and on Sunday we post the church service and weekly bulletin.

We welcome others to share encouraging posts on the page too.

Karen Flack

SOUTHMINSTER OPERATIC & CHORAL SOCIETY

It was wonderful to welcome SOCS to St Leonard's for their Christmas Celebration on Saturday 17th December.

The afternoon concert was so well-supported that we needed to find extra chairs for people. The Christmas trees had taken up some of the normal space but their presence was appreciated too. The atmosphere was wonderful and the audience joined in with the singing when invited to do so. The long-term, much appreciated pianist, Sue Lucas, was joined by teenage flautist Amaya Ekanayake (a pupil of Kerry Bassil who has entertained us in the past alongside the late David Felstead).

The evening concert was less crowded - possibly because people prefer to come out in daytime rather than on a cold and wet evening. There was also the 'clash' with the "Strictly Come Dancing" final on TV, although some people did record that and watched it later.

Overall, the musicians and the choir did a wonderful job and we hope that future concerts to be held in the church will be planned soon.

CHURCH BELLS RING

Many of you will have been aware of the wonderful bell-ringing that happened in 2022. Unfortunately some had to be cancelled but we look forward to more in coming months - mainly on fourth Saturday afternoons.

Be prepared to hear them monthly on Saturday afternoons.

The team need practices and could welcome new members too. Enquiries to me, the Magazine Editor, please.

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 2023	5	12	19	26	
April 2023	2	9	16	23	30

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

Henry Cleaning Team

A big thankyou to all who attended Henry Club in 2022. Henry Club of course is named after one of our trusty vacuum cleaners!! We have met once a fortnight for the last year and will continue to do so in 2023. We have been thrilled to have two new volunteers come on board which really lightens the load.

Most Henry days we are fortunate to have the organ being played by Graham whilst we work, to which some of us sing along, and this really enhances our time and we really appreciate it. We will continue to meet on Friday mornings fortnightly from 9.15 – 11am and do as much as we feel able. Please contact me if you would like to help at any time.

Brenda Sheppard

CORONAVIRUS 2022

We are pleased that most restrictions have been lifted but we do need to be sensible and continue cautiously during 2023. Any changes will be available on posters & on-line.

To keep aware of what is happening, and to participate on line with services, log into the website https://www.stleonardsouthminster.org.uk/ and https://www.facebook.com/groups/stleonardstogetherapart/

Also, we have a WhatsApp group entitled "Together Apart Our Church". Lots of people are involved in that.

These links have been greatly appreciated by regular Church family members and also by people who have not, to date, attended our church services. In difficult times, like this, we need 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.

An important date for your diary

ST LEONARD'S CHURCH SOUTHMINSTER PRESENTS

THE SID BOLAN BIG BAND 25TH FEBRUARY 2023

AN EVENING CONCERT OF THE BIG BAND MUSIC OF GLENN MILLER, FRANK SINATRA, PEGGY LEE AND MANY OTHERS

THE CONCERT WILL START AT 7.30pm

TICKETS ARE £10

and will be available at Church services in February or by phoning 01621 772199

Some of the raised funds will go to the Knightswood Day Care Centre.



PRAY FOR SOUTHMINSTER:

w/b	January	Central - West
w/b	8 January	North - East
w/b	15 January	Central - North-West
w/b	22 January	Central - East
w/b	29 January	Central - South



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

If you wish to contact the Church regarding a Safeguarding issue please contact the Church Office at 772300 or safeguarding@stleonardsouthminster.org.uk

See pages 12-13 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)

10:45 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 Prayers

'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 and details will be available soon.

Everyone is welcome to join. Details on board.

The new course details will be on the notice board and at the back of church.