

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



and also for Steeple Parish
**The Church of
St Lawrence & All Saints**



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**“You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”
Matthew 22 verse 39**

- 3 December Reflection Rev'd Ken Dunstan
- 5 Education in Southminster
- 6 One Day at a Time Brenda Sheppard
- 7 Alpha Course for the new year
- 8 Men and Mental Health Workshop
- 9 Particular calls to prayer
- 10-11 **Services at St. Leonard's during January**
- 12 Steeple Church News Peter Marshall
- 13 2024 details about baptisms, weddings and funerals in church
- 14 Henry Cleaning Team update Brenda Sheppard
- Saturday Club Details
- 15 Southminster Memorial Hall programme including Chatterbox,
Little Lions and Dengie Hundred Ladies' Group information
- 16 Rotas (Paul Lucas),
Bereavement Course continues
- 17 How to keep in touch with the church regularly.
Notice about how to contribute offerings to our two churches
- 18 Christmas Tree Festival at Southminster : Report
Prayer for Southminster
- 19 Who's Who at St Leonard's Church
- 20 Who are we?

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

*Articles for the February
magazine should be with
Kath Dunstan by, at the latest,
Sunday 19th January
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!)

New Year Reflection

Rev'd Ken Dunstan

As a boy I learned that in Scotland, Christmas wasn't very important. The real celebrations were for Hogmanay. This, translated into English, is New Year's Eve – the last day of the year. Celebrations include gift-giving and visiting the homes of friends and neighbours, with particular attention given to the first-foot, the first guest of the New Year. Kath's and my first-foot tended to be the late Allan Pye, complete with kilt and sporran. The name Hogmanay itself seems to have been Gaelic or Norse in origin. Even in Sassenach ("Saxon") England people sing verse one of "Auld Lang Syne". The complete song is about good friends who once had "run about the slopes and picked the daisies fine" but had "wandered many a weary foot since auld lang syne." The words were put together from traditional songs by Robert Burns. The "cup of kindness" was drunk by people oceans apart, so "surely you'll buy your pint cup, and surely I'll buy mine" as memories are celebrated.

Even in the home of the East Saxons, Hogmanay has found a place. But memories of "old long since", or "long, long ago" are part of what makes us Christians tick. A quarter-century ago I had to remind my parishioners that people weren't "trying to drag religion into the Millennium". Rather, the Millennium was a Christian festival, when we remembered and celebrated the Birth of Jesus – as we still do, annually, and remember that His death on a Roman gallows and His Resurrection dealt with our all-too-human sinfulness. Sunday by Sunday, we drink from a cup of more than kindness. We drink from the shared cup of gratitude to remember Jesus' gift of Himself, just as He told us to.

That said, there have to be consequences to our actions. We share bread and wine; we remember Jesus – and then what? St Paul, the persecutor turned preacher, tried always to imitate the One who had confronted him on the road to Damascus. He wrote to the Christians in Corinth, “Be imitators of me as I am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1) This, Paul expanded, particularly in Chapter 12 where he reminded his readers that the Church is one body – we need one another – and chapter 13, where he lists all sorts of good activities including generous giving and even self-sacrifice with the warning that these actions “that I may boast” (verse 3) are useless, irrelevant, without love.

Bishop Guli has written recently of her prayers for the victims of abuse by church members following the resignation of Archbishop Justin. She said, “I have prayed also for the church which, as a human institution, is fallible, flawed and imperfect but remains still, the body of Christ.” The second-century North African writer Tertullian wrote, “see how these Christians love one another,” as a way of showing how even with human failure as a permanent accusation, if we love God, our neighbour and one another – and yes, even our enemies – 2025 will be a better year.

Remember: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” Matthew 22.37-39

Every blessing

Ken

Education in Southminster

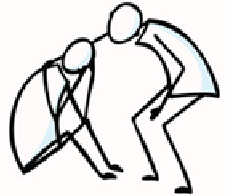


All schools in England are inspected regularly by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) to ensure that their standards are acceptable. Church schools like Southminster St Leonard's Primary school are also inspected by Statutory Inspections of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). They are to see how a school achieves how each school's theologically rooted Christian vision drives its work and enables the school to live up to its foundation as a Church school. These inspections cover Collective Worship, Relationships Education and Religious Education, which includes, but isn't limited to teaching the Christian faith.

The recent OFSTED inspection rated Southminster's School as GOOD. More recently, the school's SIAMS inspectors said, that the Schools' Christian vision is "deeply embedded in all aspects of the school's work." There is "a clear culture of care and love that ensures that all are treated well." Collective worship is "highly valued." The staff are praised in the report as "collaborative and proactive" so that every pupil including the "SEND" pupils (with Special Education Needs and Disabilities) are properly provided for. The partnership with the Church is "strong". Canon Peter, Jenny Pratt (and until recently Rev. Jacqui) visit regularly for Collective Worship and more. Head Teacher Wendy Woods expressed delight that the school's vision, "Rooted in Love" has been recognised clearly. The Chief Executive of the Vine Schools Trust has congratulated the school for "this outstanding result."

One day at a Time

In our Church Calendar year and in our own personal calendars we have quite a few specific occasions of remembrance. Times when we look back and take stock. Looking back is something we all do from time to time and perhaps it's good to look back and see how much we have achieved. Perhaps 2024 was a time of new challenges and successes for us? If so what have we learned from them? Or had last year been for you a "Annus Horribilis", a year of physical and mental struggles and you really pray that this new year will be better.



Do we worry about what this new year will bring? of course, we all do to a certain extent, we all have concerns, but let's not forget the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:34 where He tells us not to worry about tomorrow as each day has worries of its own. He asks us to take one day at a time and He will walk with us and provide the strength we need through His Holy Spirit.

ONE DAY
AT A TIME

A really good example of God's provision of one day at a time is in Exodus 16 where we read that Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt towards a land God had promised them, a good and spacious land to call their own. On their way to the promised land the Israelites spent many years in the desert and God provided food for them day by day in the form of bread and quail. He said they were only to take enough for one day at a time and just enough for their

needs. God tested them through these instructions to see if they would be obedient and also for the people to see and believe that He would be true to His word and provide each day for them.

So, as we start this new year, we need to take from the past that which is good and helpful and positive and press on with God's work and with the new things God has for us taking one day at a time.

Brenda Sheppard

The ALPHA COURSE

Explore the meaning of life!

Alpha for the New Year

The new course will continue on Thursday evenings at the Vicarage, but not until January 2025, following consultation with the original people who supported and attended it.

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.

The evening starts at 6.30 pm

There is a new sign-up sheet at the back of the church.



Men and Mental Health Workshop

Rev'd Peter and I recently attended a workshop, run as part of the Mid Essex Provide Community, to listen and discuss how men cope with their mental health issues. It was felt that men are less likely to access help or psychological therapies than women and that men tend, in general, to suppress their emotions partly because they may feel that reaching out to get help can be seen as a sign of weakness.

We looked at some of the causes of anxiety men may struggle with which included: Work pressures and a failing to meet the 'norms' of male success; financial pressure; relationship breakdowns or health concerns.

We heard quite a bit about the suicide rate in men which statistically is quite high. Suicide is seen as a way out because of lack of hope and the future looks very bleak.

From childhood some men have been emotionally suppressed by being told that boys don't cry and so they feel embarrassed to share their anguish.

Thankfully there are good support networks in the community and connecting with men struggling is important to give them hope, identity, a purpose and meaning in life and empowerment. It's good to set goals, to focus on strengths, to believe in the possibility of recovering and to learn from the past.

With anyone with mental health concerns it is good to walk and journey with them and encourage them step by step to take control of their lives and to dream of a fulfilled life in

the future. It is especially important to get good support from professional help and from friends and family and feel respected and valued. It was pointed out that short term coping strategies often make the pain and anxiety worse, like excessive drinking, drug abuse, or anything to escape the anguish, so it's good to ask for help quickly. It's good to know that the Samaritans are always at the end of a telephone day and night (116 123). MIND too are available on (0300 123 3393) Also 111.

We were encouraged to act If we see signs of a different pattern of behaviour in someone we see in our daily lives. It's good to ask "Are you ok?" not just once but again ask "Are you really ok?" These questions could make the world of difference or even save someone's life if they then open up to us.



Brenda Sheppard

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

For the National Church - particularly following the
resignation of Archbishop Justin Welby

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."

Sunday 5th January

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/President/Preacher
Ephesians 3 : 1 - 12
Matthew 2 : 1 - 12
Sidesperson

2nd Sunday of Christmas

Rev'd Peter/Peter Begley
Celebrant
Celebrant
Gordon Baker

11.00 Holy Communion

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

Rev'd Peter/Rev'd Peter
Gwyneth Iffland
Brenda Sheppard
Christine Lucas & Keith Hatfield
Christine Morgan
Gwyneth Iffland
Kathy Carnell & Frances Hatfield

Sunday 12th January

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/President/Preacher
Acts 8 : 14 - 17
Luke 3 : 15 - 17, 21 - 22
Sidesperson

1st Sunday of Epiphany Baptism of Christ

Rev'd Ken Dunstan
Celebrant
Celebrant
Paul Lucas

11.00 Family Celebration

Leaders
Prayer Ministry
Audio-visuals
Sidesperson
Refreshments

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

Sunday 19th January 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/Preacher	Rev'd Peter/ Jenny Pratt
1 Corinthians 12 : 1 - 11	Celebrant
John 2 : 1 - 11	Celebrant
Sidesperson	Leon Flack

11.00 Morning Worship & Hackblock Service

Leader/Preacher	Rev'd Peter / Jenny Pratt
Readings	Kathy Carnell
Intercessions	Frances Hatfield
Prayer Ministry	Fiona Begley & Sylvia Adams
Audio-Visuals	Christine Morgan
Sidesperson	Kathy Carnell
Refreshments	Dee Byford & Jenni Blomfield

Sunday 26th January

3rd Sunday of Epiphany

08.00 Holy Communion BCP

Leader/Preacher	Rev'd Peter/Brenda Sheppard
1 Corinthians 12 : 12 - 31a	Celebrant
Luke 4 : 14 - 21	Celebrant
Sidesperson	Keith Hatfield

11.00 Morning Worship

Leader/Preacher	Rev'd Peter/Brenda Sheppard
Readings as above	Kath Dunstan
Intercessions	Fiona Begley
Prayer Ministry	Yvonne Thurbon & another
Audio-Visuals	Sylvia Adams
Sidesperson	Gordon Baker
Refreshments	Sandra Billingham & Christine Lucas

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

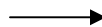


Looking back over 2024 we have many reasons to be thankful.

Our two summer fundraising events, Wheels, Hooves and Paws at Elmwood Equestrian and The Steeple Gathering, both enjoyed good weather and were well supported by exhibitors and visitors. Gate donations and sales in the refreshment marquee exceeded our expectations. Being able to return Steeple Gathering to its traditional location at Grange Farm was clearly popular.

Sharing our Harvest Supper with the congregation from neighbouring St Lawrence Church broadened its appeal and meant it could be held in the beautiful barn at West Newlands.

Best of all, we've seen a steady increase in attendance at Steeple's Sunday services. The congregation usually includes several young children engaging in handicrafts themed to reflect the church calendar.



We wish you a healthy and prosperous 2025

2024 RECORDS OF OCCASIONAL OFFICES

Funerals - Services at St Leonard's:

3 Jan. John Edward Anderson (wife June) Chelmsford Crem.
12 Jan. Norman De'ath (Daughter Margaret) Burial Steeple
12 Feb. Joyce Elizabeth Huxford (Daughter Christine) Chford
26 Feb. Nicholas Martin Stewart (Son Darren) Chford Crem
27 Mar. Anne Veronica Robertson (Daughter Jane Stinson) C
28 Aug Carole Ann Tookey (son Adam) C
18 Sep. Harper-Rose Anderson-Nice (stillborn) Burial St Len
18 Oct. Alfred Charles Saward (Kerry) Burial St Len

Weddings - Services at St Leonard's:

30 Mar. Celal Bozkurt & Katie Smith (Kings Rd Burnham)
14 Sep. Graham Bradford & Sandra Crowhurst (Ely Close Sm)

Baptisms - at St Leonard's

14 Jan. Edward Alexander John Russ (Alexander & Sophie)
24 Feb. Hunter Bleu Enzo Smith (Thanksgiving)
14 Apr. Amber Carol-Ann Lewis (Andrew & Amy)
7 May Freddie Douglas Wright (Lee & Nicola)
29 Jun. Laveyah-Rae Hope Smith (Thanksgiving)
1 Sept Georgia Carrigher (Adult)
29 Sep Chelsea Ella French (Adult)
6 Oct Aria Nicole Aldridge (Craig Stephen & Paige Nicole)
13 Oct Rosa Antonovna Maigre (Anton & Zara)
13 Oct Yuri Antonovitch Maigre (Anton & Zara)
13 Oct Maxim Antonovitch Maigre (Anton & Zara)

Confirmation Services are recorded separately.

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,

Henry Church Cleaning Club 2024

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. We have also been blessed by the addition of two new members who are a great asset and do a great job as do the faithful members who have been cleaning for many years. We meet fortnightly on a Friday morning from 9am to 11am. If you could spare just a little time during those 2 hours and would like a rota please speak to me, Brenda Sheppard, or contact me by phone. 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.

It was wonderful to have so many children taking part in the activities on 7th December. We trust that many will continue to attend during 2025,
starting on 11th January

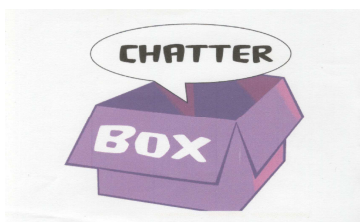
The day after every Saturday Club is our Family Celebration in the church at 11 am where there will be an opportunity for the children to share anything they have created at the club.

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 has started.

DENGIE HUNDRED LADIES GROUP

Tuesday 28th January

Doreen Levy

Quizzes and Games

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.

February 2025	2	9	16	23	
March 2025	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.

Continuing BEREAVEMENT COURSE

The people who attended in November and December 2024 have appreciated the course, so they are pleased that it will be continuing in 2025. If you haven't been involved yet, you are still welcome to join the meetings.

Meetings are in the church chapel

at 7 pm on Wednesdays and the January details are:

8th - Grief hurts, literally

15th - What Resilience actually looks like

22nd - Grief isn't Linear, but it Does Change

29th - Getting along with your Grief Monsters

Please sign up in church

Or contact Jenny Pratt

Or Brenda Sheppard

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.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL 2024

As you will have noticed from the front cover of this magazine, there were many trees decorated by different groups of people ready for the Festival on December 14th, 2pm - 4pm. The whole church was set alight and all the efforts that had been made in reaching the tops of tall trees with the lights were amazing. The trees will remain on show throughout the Christmas period. Several stalls were set up and their contents were appreciated by many shoppers. Refreshments were available as usual at the back of church and some children met “Santa” in the chapel. The Little Lions (and Saturday Club) staff enabled children to make many colourful items.

Some sponsors of the trees (in no particular order):
FISK hire Ltd., Paul J King (funeral directors), Parish Council
Southminster School, Hillside Day Care Nursery, Ettie’s,
Knightswood Day Care Centre, Dengie Food Pantry,
DK & Son (building contractors), A G Smith (funeral directors),
William Fisher Medical Centre, Southern Ecological Group,
Parlour Café, Dengie Hundred Ladies Group, Grandparents,
DJ Fisher (Farms) Ltd. Little Lions, Saturday Club.

The tree in the churchyard was sponsored by
the Kings Head and NISA.

We thank all these sponsors for their funds and practical efforts.
And we wish everyone a very Happy Christmas
and a truly blessed 2025

PRAY FOR SOUTHMINSTER:

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

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.