

St Stephen's Ealing



Community growing
in the love of Jesus

St Stephen's
News
January 2026

The Vicar remembers

by David Baylor



On 14th January it will be a year since I officially became the vicar of St Stephen's. I speak on behalf of Hannah and our children in saying that we feel so blessed to be among you. We hope and trust that the feeling is mutual!

I'm excited to see where God leads us in 2026. We already know some of what's coming up. Later this month, we'll be starting an Alpha Course to help people on their journey of faith whatever stage they may be at. Before too long we'll be preparing for Lent and Easter, reflecting on our own journey with Jesus. Then as the Summer comes around, we'll be welcoming a new curate whom we will have the privilege of blessing and encouraging, even as she blesses and encourages us.

We begin 2026 with some challenges though. While work to find new churchwardens has been ongoing, these key roles in the life of our community remain vacant. And whilst we give thanks for a stable financial position, our projected income doesn't allow us to grow in some of the ways that we might have liked. I say this not to guilt trip, but rather to call us to prayer.

Many of us will have a personal pattern of prayer to sustain our relationship with Jesus. As 2026 begins, I invite us all to delve a little deeper into a shared pattern of prayer.

Join me in a little experiment. Every day in January, take just 5 minutes to make yourself present to God at 1pm (or as close as you can if that time doesn't quite work for you). Ask God to speak to you, and take those 5 minutes to rest. What comes to mind as you do this? What do you feel? And what do

you think God might be saying through those thoughts and feelings? Why not make a note so you don't forget?

If you're not sure that God is saying anything at first, don't be discouraged. Like strengthening any muscle, we all need to learn and develop our prayer muscle over time. Faithfully showing up is the key to growth, not the instant impact.

Let me flag up our current shared pattern of prayer too, mindful that finding suitable times for everyone is tricky:

- Morning prayer (in person) – 9am on Mondays and Fridays at church.
- Morning prayer (on Zoom) – 9am on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Contact Morgen for details.
- Whole church prayer gathering at 8pm on the first Tuesday of every month. This month it falls on 6th January at the church.

As we begin this year in prayer, let's wait expectantly to see how God speaks. May God surprise us, and may he help us to listen not just individually but together.

Returning to Alpha quickly, if you've got questions about life and faith, Alpha is for you. Join if you're considering faith; join if you're new to faith and want to learn more; join for a refresher which we all need from time to time; or why not invite someone along? Contact admin@ststephens-ealing.org for more details.

With every blessing,

David

Weekly Services

Monday & Friday	9:00am	Morning Prayer in Meeting Room
Tuesday & Thursday	9:00am	Morning Prayer on Zoom <i>(email admin@ststephens-ealing.org for details)</i>
Wednesday	10:00am	Midweek Communion
Sunday	9:00am	Traditional Holy Communion
	10:30am	Informal Service <i>(with children & youth groups)</i>

Monthly Calendar

January

Tuesday 6th	8:00pm	Monthly Prayer Meeting
Wednesday 14th	8:00pm	Book Club
Saturday 17th	6:00pm	Curry Night
Wednesday 21st	8:00pm	Alpha
Wednesday 28th	8:00pm	Alpha

February

Tuesday 3rd	8:00pm	Monthly Prayer Gathering
Wednesday 8th	8:00pm	Alpha
Wednesday 11th	8:00pm	Book Club

Notices

Monthly Prayer Meeting

Tuesday 6th January at 8pm. Our monthly meeting to pray for the life of St Stephen's, our local community and the wider world. Open to all, we also spend time listening for God's voice and in praise.

Curry Night

Monday 19th January has been dubbed 'Blue Monday', supposedly the saddest day of the year when it is dark outside, people feel at their most low and their mental health is struggling. In a bid to shine some light in the darkness we are holding a Curry Night on **Saturday 17th January at 6:00pm.** Morgen Edwards, our Comms Manager & Children's worker, is looking for anyone who would be willing to join the team or make a dish, be it a main, a side/rice dish or something else yummy. If you would be up for cooking please speak to Morgen on Sunday or email admin@ststephens-ealing.org. The event is for the whole family so children are welcome. Why not invite a friend along to join us.

Book Club

Our monthly book club meets on the second Wednesday of each month. This month we meet on 14th January at 8:00pm. Our book for discussion is Host by Peter James. The group is open to all. No need to book, just turn up or speak to Morgen Edwards for more information.

Alpha

Beginning on Wednesday 21st January at 8:00pm. Alpha is a 10-week course that provides a safe space to meet new people, unpack the basics of the Christian faith, and share your experiences. [Register here on our website](#) or email admin@ststephens-ealing.org.

St David's Care Home Services

Our St Stephen's team will be running a Communion Service on **Monday 19th January at 11:00am** and a Candlemas Hymns of Praise on **Sunday 1st February at 1:45pm.** If you can

join us, it's a good opportunity to meet the residents and support the Church's work at St David's. For more details, contact Sally Horattides or Pete Devereux, details on the back page.

Christian Aid Service

Our Bishop and retiring Chair of Christian Aid, Dame Sarah Mullally, was guest speaker at a service at St Stephen's, on Sunday 7th December. A good number of representatives from other local churches were with us to hear her inspiring address and learn more about the Christmas Appeal for communities in DRC, affected by political unrest and the affects of Climate Change. Over £900.00 was raised for the appeal. Thanks to all who came and stayed to enjoy light refreshments and chat afterwards.



Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter

Other churches began hosting 14 homeless people in November. We'll be hosting Friday nights from **20th February to 27th March.** We'll need volunteers to help set up beds, cook meals, be on duty overnight, help with breakfasts and to drive beds and bedding to the next church on Saturday mornings for those 6 weeks. Every little helps a lot. A meal, a breakfast shift etc will all be really great. Do talk to me any Sunday, call or email if you'd like to know more. Sue Charlton 0708 840 954.

Connect Group Update

Who are the the Film Group?

We are a group of about 12 people from all sorts of places and backgrounds who enjoy watching and thinking about films from a Christian perspective. The group has been running for 15 years and most of the members attend SSE but not everyone does.

When and where do you meet?

We meet on the 3rd Thursday of each month, usually at church but sometimes at a member's home, to discuss the film we have watched. Most of the films we choose are available on online streaming services.

What do you value as a group?

In addition to sharing our faith, we enjoy watching the same film and comparing reactions as well the opportunity to watch something that we wouldn't necessarily choose ourselves and comparing responses in an open and non-confrontational setting. We often get new insights into situations through open discussion. We do get to know one another well and tend to have a social catch-up at the beginning of each meeting.

Tell us about something you have found challenging as a group. What did you learn?

We watched a semi-documentary about a priest called Jean Varnier. We were moved by his devotion to setting up communities for disabled people. We were then shocked, when after he died, it came to light that he was a serial abuser. It instigated a discussion amongst us and reinforced that it is essential to have robust safeguarding processes in place.

What is coming up this term?

We usually organise a Christmas meal together at a local restaurant and in the past have enjoyed the pantomime season at Questors or Richmond Theatre. In the spring we will probably arrange a visit to Kew Gardens in the spring. Our January film hasn't been selected yet.

We joined in the CAP Christmas Hamper initiative that St Stephen's traditionally organises and have collected and delivered a festive hamper to a local client in need of Christmas cheer.

Describe the Tuesday Group in three words.

Fun, interesting, friendly.

Can I join, and if so, who do I contact?

Yes anyone can join us. Join for one session to see if you find it interesting or just have a chat about it. Contact Chris Nicholson by email at ninanet@btinternet.com



SSE Supported Charity

Whilst Tearfund isn't one of our core Mission Partners we have a long standing relationship with them and often support them at Christmas time.

We are one of many churches who partner with Tearfund to support some of the poorest countries in the world. Tearfund works tirelessly to tackle poverty and injustice. They do this through supporting sustainable development and responding to disasters and challenging injustice.

They do this in three main ways:

- **Humanitarian response:** quickly supporting those in greatest need throughout the recovery process.
- **Community Development:** partnering with local churches and other organisations to mobilise resources and empowering communities to lift themselves from poverty.
- **Advocacy and influencing:** helping churches and individuals to speak out on

issues of poverty and injustice on a global and national level.

Tearfund's vision is to '*see people freed from extreme poverty, living transformed lives, and fulfilling their God-given potential*'.

Two of the ways St Stephen's has supported Tearfund is through running events for their annual quiz as well as splitting our Christmas service collections between them and one of our Mission Partners.

If you have not donated over Christmas but would still like to support this fantastic charity you can do so via our [website](#), in a yellow donation envelope in church or via this QR code.



My Faith Journey

by Peter Charlton

Growing up in working-class Lancashire was a good time for church going, though perhaps not so good for the spiritual side of things.

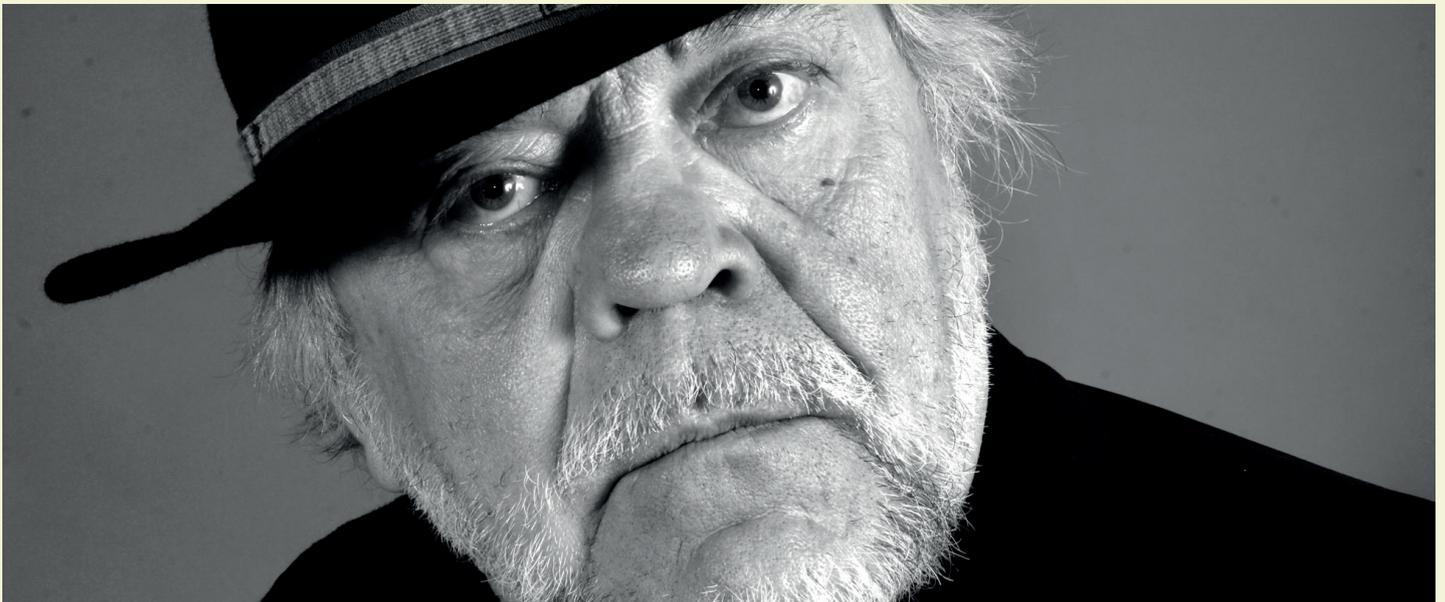
Once I had joined the choir my mother insisted, I went to all the church services, morning and evening, as well as Sunday School on Sunday afternoon. Boring times for a growing lad though it did leave me with a love for church music although I often couldn't understand the words (and often still can't).

Once I had embarked on my theatrical career, church going got more difficult. If I was touring Sunday was spent on a train, travelling to next-week's town. If I wasn't touring Sunday was the day you learnt your lines for next-week's play (and did your washing). Even when I changed from theatre to television it didn't get much better. Television is a 7-day a week business so I often found myself scheduled to work on a Sunday, Easter and Christmas not excluded. But once I had got married (Oh Happy Day) and had children (Oh

Happy Day x2) I did try to make church regular part of my life and deepened my faith thanks to some sizzling sermons and challenging house groups, now called connect groups.

I had a band for several years called 'Puppets and Praises', a mixture of Puppetry and Rock & Roll. I wrote all the songs and sketches and we played mainly to children so I guess that kept my feet on the ground and stopped me from getting too intellectual. I remember being introduced by a vicar in Buxton as "Please welcome Puppets and Praises who have their own take on reverence". He did invite us back so can't have been too offended.

Now I've retired from performing and I've moved up the age-classification list from middle to elderly, I do ponder a lot about what may lie ahead. One of my songs was "Death has no fear for me". I don't sing the song any more but I firmly believe the sentiment.



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