

THE MONTH

Something For The Family p2
Intern Update p4

St Anselm p3
Staff News p5

Go Team! p3
Would Like To Meet p5

HOLDING FAST AND HOLDING OUT

BY JEZ BARNES , VICAR

In various ways it's been a sobering time in the country in recent months (despite a very welcome outbreak of fantastic summer weather in June and all the fun things that summer brings along).

Terror attacks in Manchester and London have devastated lives and families, and reminded us of the uncomfortable reality of the indiscriminate threat we live with. The result of the General Election has reflected back to us the reality of our divided society and created a more uncertain political climate in the UK just as the process of negotiating our exit from the European Union gets underway. And last month brought the horrific image of a tower block of flats going up in smoke just a few miles away in West London, with all the tragic loss of life that ensued. We are shocked by such an event and wonder how it can happen in our modern, sophisticated and prosperous (in global terms) capital city.

Of course, there have also been all the moving, hopeful and heart-warming responses in the midst of these events too. The stories of bravery, courage and compassion that were part of how people in London and Manchester responded to those terror attacks.

The immediate and widespread outpouring of practical support and provisions for those made homeless by the Grenfell Tower fire. The increased engagement of young people in the General Election, coming out to vote in numbers that hadn't been seen in a long time.

There's a verse in the New Testament letter to the Philippians which urges followers of Jesus to 'hold fast' to the 'word of life' throughout all the challenges, traumas and uncertainties that every generation in human history has faced (Philippians 2:16). In fact, there are different translations of that verse – some translations suggesting that Christians are more being urged to 'hold out' that 'word of life' to others. Whatever the best translation may be, followers of Jesus are called to both. Both to 'hold fast' to the 'word of life' and to 'hold out' that 'word of life' to others. The 'word of life' is the promise we live with as we respond to who Jesus is and what he has done. Jesus' life, death and resurrection have marked a turning point in the history of the world, in which God's plan to remake lovingly all that has gone wrong in our world and wrong in our lives begins to move forward in a whole new way.



It's obvious that this plan of God to 'make all things new in Christ' is far from complete. At times it can feel hard to hold on to the hope that there is any such plan at all. And that is precisely why the letter to the Philippians is needed to urge us to 'hold fast' to this 'word of life', in the midst of events and circumstances that are heart-breaking and depressing. And to 'hold out' this 'word of life' to others, so that they too might discover the hope we have found in it.

With love, Jez



MONTH OF SUNDAYS: JULY/AUGUST

BY JEZ BARNES

During July our 6pm evening service teaching series 'Be Like Jesus' continues and concludes. This series comes from the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel, and calls us to radical ways of living with God's help and in God's grace.

In our morning services during July we have a series of 'one off talks'. Some of these talks will be given by our regular lay preachers and teachers at St Stephen's. Some are videos from the recent Leadership Conference at the Royal Albert Hall featuring some of the most moving testimonies and challenging teaching I have heard in a long time. Keep an eye on the front page of our website for further details each week.

As August comes around we will be doing a six-part teaching series from the life of Joseph in the Old Testament (the book of Genesis). This series will run across both our morning and evening services.

Please note that for the four Sundays in August we move to our 'summer pattern' of services in which there is no 9am service for those four Sundays. Sunday 3 September marks the return to our regular pattern of three Sunday services at 9am, 10.30am and 6pm.

SUNDAY 2 JULY

9am Holy Communion
10.30am All Age Service w/
Baptisms
6pm Informal Service

SUNDAY 9 JULY

9am Morning Worship
10.30am Holy Communion
6pm Informal Service

SUNDAY 16 JULY

9am Holy Communion
10.30am Informal Service
6pm Informal Service

SUNDAY 23 JULY

9am Morning Worship
10.30am Informal Service
6pm Holy Communion

SUNDAY 30 JULY

9am Holy Communion
10.30am All Age Service
6pm Informal Service

SUNDAY 6 AUGUST

10.30am Combined Service
6pm Informal Service

SUNDAY 13 AUGUST

10.30am All Age Service
11:30am Said Communion
6pm Informal Service

SUNDAY 20 AUGUST

10.30am Combined Service
6pm Informal Service

SUNDAY 27 AUGUST

10.30am All Age Service
6pm Holy Communion

SUNDAY 3 SEPTEMBER

9am Holy Communion
10.30am All Age Service
6pm Informal Service

SOMETHING FOR THE FAMILY SUMMER SOUNDTRACK

BY EMMA DOBSON, CHILDREN'S PASTOR

Summer is often a time of travelling; long car journeys and time spent moving from one place to another. I have wonderful childhood memories of driving along singing worship songs almost everywhere we went and, although it probably drove my parents crazy at times, it certainly impacted my faith.

When you're out and about this summer why not play some worship music as you travel. To the right are a few suggestions you might like to try - but it is by no means an exhaustive list. The great thing is that since there are so many worship artists, you should be able to find something that suits you. If you have any kind of music subscription - for example Spotify or Apple Music - there are lots of good worship playlists that contain a mix of songs. Try not to worry too much about 'adult' and 'children' songs. We want to give children chances to see us connect with God so choosing songs you enjoy is important too. Let us know if you find an album that works well for your family - we love hearing suggestions. **Happy Holidays!**



'We are Young and Free' and 'Youth Revival' by Hillsong Young & Free - Both these CDs are bright and lively with a pop feel

'Mercy Road' by Worship Central - We recommend all their CDs but particularly their latest release for easy listening worship songs

'As family we go' by Rend Collective - This is upbeat and energetic but lots of the songs have simple words



'Big Family of God' by Nick and Becky Drake - These tunes are perfect for younger listeners





COMMUNITY OF ST ANSELM APPLICATIONS FOR SEPTEMBER STILL OPEN!

For the third consecutive year, the Archbishop of Canterbury is inviting Christians aged 20-35 from around the world to spend one year in a radical Jesus-centred community of prayer, study and serving local communities, based at Lambeth Palace in London.

Applications for non-resident membership – where members participate alongside their current day job or study – are still open for September 2017.

Two current members of St Stephens – Richard Dinsdale and David Sandford – have been members of the community. David says, “It’s been a profound and enriching experience, especially in terms of prayer, community and practicing unity across many parts of the church.

We’ve shared and learned with Christians of all kinds and explored how we can bring lessons from across the church and through the centuries into life in the 21st century. It’s been a commitment but thoroughly worthwhile.”

Imagine yourself praying with Anglicans from around the world, some charismatic Catholic nuns, a German Lutheran, a few Pentecostals, a couple of Methodists and a Coptic Orthodox Christian, being inspired by a piece of scripture, using a bit of Anglican liturgy, discussing ethics in the workplace whilst preparing for a week of Ignatian spiritual exercises, and you’re starting to get the idea. Applications for Non-Residential Membership from September 2017 to June 2018 are currently still open – for further details please see: www.stanselm.org.uk/apply/

GO TEAM! WORSHIP

Sung worship is a key way we engage with God at St Stephen's. Each Sunday, across our three services, we have a team of musicians and singers that help lead us in our worship. We interviewed one of the team to give you a taster of what it's like to be part of the Worship Team.

Who are you and how long have you been at St. Stephen's?

I'm Fi. I've been a member of St Stephen's Church for about 15 years.

What made you want to join the Worship Team?

To be honest, when I first started coming to church I thought the worship

songs were pretty cheesy, but as my relationship with God began to grow I was surprised to find myself singing them in the car and actually listening to worship music by choice. I found that praising God through sung worship helped me draw closer to him and to experience the Holy Spirit.

Having played the Trombone and Tuba at school I had an ear for the bass line and a penchant for playing large, noisy instruments, I would miss hearing the bass if no one was playing. So, having spotted there was an opportunity I set to work to learn the bass and pretty much taught myself. I was probably awful at first and always prayed that God would block any wrong notes from being heard (and it's still not uncommon to find I'm sometimes playing in the wrong key!) However, I've learnt a massive amount since I've been part of the Worship Team, playing alongside such talented but humble, amazing and dedicated team of musicians.

What is your favourite thing about serving on the Worship Team?

The 'Twickers' awards! Once a year all the musicians are invited to gather together for a BBQ and the Worship Pastors present various awards for the team's most notable achievements and most hilarious blunders!

If you are a singer or musician and want to explore joining the Worship Team, do please be in touch with Sam White, our Worship Ministry Leader, who will happily meet with to discuss the ways you can get involved. Contact him on samwhite@st-stephens.org.uk or 020 8843 7160



INTERN UPDATE

Our three interns, Aleah, Jon and Megan, come to the end of their internships this July, and we couldn't let them finish without asking them 'what's next?'



ALEAH

My time at St Stephen's as the Worship Intern over the last two years has been an incredibly impactful experience that has helped me grow in my faith and as a leader. Although it's bittersweet to see it come to an end, I know I am a different and better person because of the friendships I have made and the growing opportunities I have had.

I have gained invaluable experience in leading the congregation in worship and have loved being a part of a church that celebrates different styles of music and worship services. My understanding of the role of the church has also grown as I've been a part of a church that so lovingly reaches out to people in the community and wider world.

As my internship finishes in July I will be returning to the US, where I hope to find a job in worship ministry. Even though I don't know exactly what's next, I am excited and feel prepared to step into a new role, wherever God leads me.

Thank you to everyone who has been a friend, played a part in my learning and growth, or helped me feel so at home! While it is hard to leave, I'm so grateful for the privilege it has been to be a part of the St Stephen's family.



JON

I came to St Stephen's in 2015 hoping to gain experience of working in a large church and be invested in as a young leader, and I have gained exactly that and much more! Over the course of my two years here I've been fortunate enough to have been involved in several different ministry areas including; youth, children, worship and students, and I've loved each one of them.

I've learnt some very practical skills over my time here, such as how to work well as a member of multiple teams, improve my communication skills, and organise my own time effectively. I've also grown in my faith in many ways; I've been stretched in my understanding of theology through study this year at St Mellitus College and encouraged to step out and exercise spiritual gifts.

Most importantly though, I've had the best time just being a part of the community of St Stephen's Church. I have been so welcomed, valued and loved and I'm so glad that I will be able to continue worshipping here next year as I start my new job in September as an Assistant Chaplain at Dulwich College.



MEGAN

So, we've reached the end of two absolutely fab years. Although I'm gutted to be leaving, I've had the most amazing time getting to know people, growing in my leadership and faith, and discerning God's call on my life.

It's been such a fun journey, arriving in Twickenham as a quiet 18-year-old to now being the girl that doesn't stop talking (sorry everyone!). I think the biggest thing I've learnt is that God has an amazing call on my life, even if it's not what I originally had planned. He has shaped and moulded me in ways I hadn't thought would be possible. From planning and running kids and youth events to getting ready to co-host the Younger Youth venue at Focus this year - all things that I would never have seen myself being able to do. Interning is by far the best decision I've ever made and it's changed where my life is going next.

In September, I'll be moving to High Wycombe to start as the Youth Pastor at St Andrew's Church; I couldn't be more excited. Thank you for being a part of my time here. I've felt so loved and at home and I will miss you all a lot, but I'm sure I'll be back to visit from time to time.

STAFF NEWS

OPERATIONS UPDATE

BY JULES MORGAN, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & DEVELOPMENT



Many, but possibly not all of you, will know the church operations team who work diligently to ensure that numerous ministry activities and events run smoothly and safely week in week out. It is a joy to manage and work with this team of hard-working, committed individuals. The team currently consists of Sam Millard, Mandy Turner, Scott Naylor, Jonny Newton, Caryn Weber and Catherine Johnson.

I'm delighted that we have appointed two new members to the team, filling positions that have been vacant for a while. In July, Julie Haworth is joining us. She has previously worked as the Operations Manager at St James', Clerkenwell, and she comes highly recommended with a wealth of relevant experience. Julie will be managing all the financial administration and accounting as well as assisting me with general operations management. In early September, Renata Rust will also be joining us in a part-time role as Property Manager. Renata comes highly experienced to us from Hope Church, Islington, where she had oversight for a number of significant building projects.

Whilst we are waiting for these new arrivals to join us and get up to speed, we are also very grateful that the wonderful Annie Notman – a longstanding member of St Stephen's – has joined the office administrators to provide some much needed PA support for Sonja (our Associate Vicar) and additional administrative support for our Sunday services. Annie is initially with us on a short-term contract but she has already made a significant difference to the team.

As well as updating you on team arrivals, I'd love to ask you to remember to pray for the team members – current and new – as they faithfully serve this church week in week out. The people facing ministries from this church would not run as well without them and I, for one, am very grateful that God has called them into to this ministry of administration and operations.

WOULD LIKE TO MEET

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We continue our series meeting the newest members of the PCC.

How and when did you first come to St Stephen's?

I was initially on a four-month sabbatical (holiday) in London in 2014 and visited St Stephens regularly. I officially relocated here in January 2015 and have been a 'fully-fledged' member ever since and love being at St Stephens.

At what church service can you usually be found?

Usually the 6pm evening service.

Share one way God has been working in your life.

Since living in London, God has been strengthening my faith. I have met lovely Christian people and my relationship with him has grown from strength to strength. I gave up a lot in South Africa and

never expected to ever leave, but circumstances brought me here and God has been amazing and faithful in opening exciting new doors for me, especially in my journey of faith.

What did you dream of doing when you were a child?

I always wanted to be a school teacher, then a psychologist but ended up being an accountant, which was not what I ever envisioned myself to be!

What has your favourite job been?

I was Financial Director for a firm of commercial architects in SA for 10 years and travelled to India and Middle East for work and loved it.

What's the scariest thing you've ever done?

White river rafting in the Zambezi river and paragliding off a very high cliff in SA

Which famous person (dead or alive) would you most like to meet? Why?

Definitely Nelson Mandela, a true man of inspiration.

Favourite sports to play?

Cycling, swimming and hiking.

What was your favourite moment of 2016?

My sister and her family relocated to London in March 2016 from SA.

Seniors Datelist July - 1st week of Sept 2017

VENUE: CENTENARY ROOM FOR ALL EVENTS

JULY

Monday 3

12.30pm Monday Lunch Club with Barnabas Trust speaker

Wednesday 5

2pm Chairobics

Thursday 6

10.30am Seniors Life Group – 'Sowing Seeds'

Monday 10

2.30pm Monday Fellowship
Starfish charity on Malawi

Wednesday 12

2pm Chairobics

Thursday 13

10.30am Service of Healing and Encouragement

Monday 17

12.30pm Monday Lunch Club with Orleans Primary concert

Wednesday 19

2pm Chairobics

Thursday 20

10.30am Seniors Life Group – 'New Road'

Monday 24

No Monday Fellowship

Wednesday 26

No Chairobics

Thursday 28

10.30am Service of Healing and Encouragement
With Communion, followed by Bring and Share lunch

Monday 31

No Meeting

AUGUST

Wednesday 2

No Chairobics

Thursday 3

10.30am Seniors Life Group
'Openness & Hospitality'

Wednesday 9

2pm Chairobics

Thursday 10

10.30am Seniors Life Group extra
'What About Us?'

Wednesday 16

2pm Chairobics

Thursday 17

10.30am Seniors Life Group
'Coffee & Cake'

Wednesday 23

2pm Chairobics

Thursday 24

10.30am Service of Healing and Encouragement
With Communion, followed by Bring and Share lunch

Wednesday 30

No Chairobics

Thursday 31

No Meeting

SEPTEMBER

Monday 4

12.30am Monday Lunch Club

Wednesday 6

2pm Chairobics

Thursday 7

10.30am Seniors Life Group

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

BY LIZ THOMAS



KEN AND HEATHER RETURN TO DELHI FOR THIRD TEACHING MISSION

In September, Ken and Heather Brown will be returning to Delhi for six months to resume their education work with Asha, working in a different slum area but living in the same house as before.

Ken will be teaching students English in their last year of school and first year at university, while Heather will be working with children's groups aged 4 -16, teaching English through craft, art, music, fun and games, doing baby massage and preschool preparation. When we met up, I had a few questions to ask them.

Why is teaching English so important?

Ken: Speaking English greatly enhances the student's chances of gaining internships and employment and opens the door to many opportunities.

What has been your greatest joy?

Heather: Seeing the delight on the children's faces as they participate in the activities, bringing fun into peoples' lives, and the great joy of giving out soft toys given by St Stephen's and books donated by the school I previously taught at.

Ken: Getting to know a few students really well, leading to lasting friendships.

What has been difficult?

Ken: The student's lack of organisation and time keeping can be a struggle.

Heather: Not being able to help everyone.

What would you like prayer for?

- Health
- Wisdom as we prepare before we go
- The slum we will go to
- Safety in travelling

How can St Stephen's help?

Prayer support is vital. Please email kabrown57@googlemail.com if you would like to be informed of prayer needs.

GORDON-SMITHS IN ARGENTINA

Richard and Trudy Gordon Smith, our partners in Argentina, send us their latest news:

Greetings from wintery Mendoza! We hope all is well with you back home. Here we are very well, continuing to work hard on a project to resettle 40 Syrian refugee families in Argentina, each being sponsored by a local church during their period of adaptation.

We hoped to have them all here by now. However, 10 months after making our first applications to the government, we are still waiting for the first visas to be issued. This bureaucratic delay is a motive of great anxiety for not only the families but also for the churches who committed to receiving them.

In the meantime, we have continued visiting churches in different provinces to help them prepare for the arrival of the families. Richard has also done a series of YouTube videos to help churches learn basic Arabic.

Aside from this project, Trudy has been involved in many youth camps, as well as looking after mission teams coming to serve in Mendoza. Most recently she has been overseeing a woman's group starting up in our new community centre in the local neighbourhood.

Richard has just returned from leading a team in the Middle East. The team served in four different schools for refugee children, took part in food distribution, family visits and gave Spanish classes to those families hoping to travel to Argentina.

In May we completed the purchase of a new car and finally said goodbye to our aged Ford Fiesta – may it rest in peace!

Thank you very much for all your love, prayers and support!



NOTICES AND EVENTS



Monday 24 to Sunday 30 July
FINAL CALL to join the 70 (or so) people going from St Stephen's. Book on at focus.htb.org

St. Stephen's			BBQ bring your own meat WIMBLEDON FINAL TABLE TENNIS
	SUMMER PARTY		
		SUN 16 JULY // 1PM The Crossway Car Park	

SUMMER SERVICE SCHEDULE

We will be moving to our summer schedule from...

Sunday 6 to Sunday 27 August
Services at 10.30am & 6pm only



Starts Tuesday 26 September 7.30pm in the church

To register contact office@st-stephens.org.uk or 020 8892 5258

ST STEPHEN'S WALKERS
On the first Saturday of every month
2 Sept • 7 Oct • 4 Nov
2 Dec • 6 Jan



gather
CHURCH PICNIC

Sunday 9 July after the 10.30am service
A picnic for the whole church, hosted by Gather

FAMILY SUMMER PICNICS

Join the Children's & Young Families team throughout August in Marble Hill Park (or the Spring, if wet) for lunch.

Thursdays 11am - 1pm

JUSTONE
Saturday 8 July

Book on at www.st-stephens.org.uk/justone



CENTRAL PRAYER
Tuesday 11 July
8pm in the church

AND FINALLY... WIT, IF NOT WISDOM

Escalators don't break down... they just turn into stairs

Anon

