

THE MONTH

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JEZ BARNES , VICAR

Last month Emma and I were guests at one of the most joyful and fun wedding celebrations we have ever experienced. Beth Ellison (Youth Pastor at St Stephen's) got married to Luke Resch (who will be working part time at St Stephen's as a worship leader in the coming months) in a service that was filled with creativity, laughter, joy and love for Jesus (as well as love for each other!).

It was inspiring to see two people who are so passionate and unashamed about their desire to follow Jesus beginning a new life together and inviting Jesus to be at the centre of



where that life together will lead them. The whole occasion was a fabulous 'witness' to those present – especially those who don't usually go to a church - of how full of life, energy, passion and laughter followers of Jesus can be. It was one of those occasions where Emma and I looked on from the back of the church, feeling so grateful for and proud of (in a good way!) the amazing young people who are part of St Stephen's. The affection in which Beth (and Josh - our Associate Youth Pastor) are held by the

teenagers they oversee couldn't have been more clear to see.

It reminded me of the key theme expressed in various ways at Focus (a summer Christian festival) back in July. Namely, the vital importance of encouraging, supporting and making room for the younger generation coming through and doing everything we can to help them discover and enjoy the 'life in all its fullness' that Jesus wants for them (as he does too for those of us who are a bit older!).

A fascinating survey earlier this year 'shocked' the Church of England with responses from young people suggesting they were far more open to the person of Jesus and open to following him in their lives than had been imagined or expected. Reading the bible, going to a Christian school, having a spiritual experience and going into church buildings were some of the most common reasons given by the teenagers surveyed for their openness to Jesus. This research chimes with the far more 'anecdotal' reflection offered by Richard Fothergill (a former Curate at St Stephen's) who recently walked the length of Britain talking and praying with people as he did so. Richard's

experience was that there was an openness to the person of Jesus – especially amongst younger people – that was in contrast to the more negative perspective of the church / Christian faith as a whole, that seems to have become an accepted part of our national outlook.

The psalmist prays in Psalm 145 that one generation will find ways to commend the mighty works and acts of God to the next generation. And both that national survey and that more anecdotal reflection from Richard inspire hope that the future could see more young people revelling in Jesus' love for them, which was so much in evidence at Beth and Luke's wedding.

With love, Jez



MONTH OF SUNDAYS: OCTOBER

BY JEZ BARNES, VICAR

SUNDAY 1 OCTOBER

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

SUNDAY 8 OCTOBER

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

SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER

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

SUNDAY 22 OCTOBER

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

SUNDAY 29 OCTOBER

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

WHAT A JOURNEY!

BY CLAIRE CLARKE

Well what a journey it's been so far! My family and I arrived at St Stephen's when I was 9 years old - mum and dad (Ray & Gena Smith) decided sacrificially to leave the church family we had been at until then, and at which they played a leading part, in order to move to a church that had other young people. Thank the Lord they did as since then me, my sister Sarah (now Revd Sarah Pix) and brother Jonathan have all been on the staff at St Stephen's, and mum continues to serve in many ways including being a Licensed Lay Minister with you.

Fast forward to the present day, and after many years in leadership at St Saviour's, Sunbury (a church plant from St Stephen's), I will be licensed this month as vicar of St Paul's, Hounslow West (another church plant from St Stephen's) and the Church of the Good Shepherd, following Libby Etherington's departure earlier this year.

I am excited to be called to serve in the diverse parish of Hounslow West, as well as a bit daunted at leading two churches with very different feels to them into the next season, so your prayers would be very much appreciated. During the past year of not knowing what was coming next for us, the Lord reminded me over and over again of Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with ALL your heart and lean not on your own understanding but in all your ways acknowledge him and he WILL make your paths straight". He is faithful. We look forward to our continued connection with you all and thank you for your prayers and support.

Claire, Carlos, Amy & JJ x



SOMETHING FOR THE FAMILY - PARENTING FOR FAITH WEBSITE

BY EMMA DOBSON, CHILDREN'S PASTOR

At St Stephen's we believe that parents are perfectly positioned to disciple their children and we want to partner with you as you navigate and nurture your child's growing faith. We want you to know that you are not alone; and as a church family we seek to surround and uphold you and your family as you live out the Christian faith. We don't want parenting for faith to feel like a burden, instead we pray you'd find freedom as you integrate it into your everyday. In fact, you are almost certainly already doing it way better than you think you are!

'Parenting for Faith' is an awesome organisation that exists to support and equip parents in this task. They have recently launched their new website and I can't stop singing its praise!

www.parentingforfaith.org

On the website you'll find videos, articles, testimonies and stories covering a wide range of topics from worship with toddlers through to decision making with teens. You can search the



site for the kind of thing you are looking for and it is constantly being updated with new topical material.

Perhaps start by watching the 3-minute intro video on the homepage and then have a rummage around the site. If you find something interesting or useful, you might like to share it. Let your friends have the link, or post it on social media – that way you will begin to form a valuable network of friends who are also parenting for faith.

As a church, we plan to work with the Parenting for Faith organisation over the coming years, perhaps running one-off events or launching their Parenting Course – who knows! As we figure out what this will look like we don't want you to miss out, so in the meantime do checkout the website – it is totally worth a look!



A SMALL THOUGHT - “I LOVE POPPIES”

BY TINA COOKE

I love poppies. It doesn't matter how barren, polluted or churned up a piece of land might be, poppy seeds will fall to the ground, take root and bloom into a carpet of flowers.

On 30 July, I watched the BBC's coverage of the commemorations to mark the following day's Centenary of the start of the Battle of Passchendaele near Ypres, in Belgium. Royalty and Leaders had gathered to lay wreaths at the Menin Gate, along with descendants of those who fought in that Battle. At the end of the service, the Last Post was played and thousands of Poppies were released from the roof of the gate, to represent those who died on that Battlefield and whose names are engraved upon its walls. I didn't know that volunteer Buglers have played the Last Post at the gate, every evening at 8pm since 1928, except for the occupation years. No dignitaries, no pomp or ceremony, no poppies. Their playing, simply an expression of daily gratitude to those who paid such a high price (with others, subsequently), for our freedom.

The following day dawned. With a grateful heart, I walked into my garden and there, catching the light of the early morning sunshine, were two Poppies. I did not sow the seeds and had not seen them growing, tucked under the Star Jasmin. The appearance of their delicate flowers timed to perfection and a poignant reminder that where one sows, another reaps.

We are living in very uncertain times, where fear encourages a retreat into protecting our own borders, in many ways. Yet, seeds do not recognise borders and they take root and flourish, for good or ill, wherever they fall. Our prayers and acts of kindness will be like good seeds sown into people's hearts and minds, if we do not give up.

With this in mind, now read Psalm 126.



AUTUMN PATTERN OF PRAYER



As we start this new term we will be entering a different pattern of corporate prayer. The first thing to note is our monthly midweek prayer meetings, Central Prayer, will be taking a pause during the Autumn term as we turn our focus to this different pattern. At the beginning of November we will be holding a focused week of prayer, kicking things off with a night of prayer and worship on Friday 3 November. The week of prayer will run until the following Friday - Friday 10 November. Keep an eye out for further details in the coming weeks.

On **Wednesday 15 November** we will be joining churches from across Richmond for an evening of prayer. These evenings are a great opportunity to come together with the wider church community in our area and to help us pray on a broader scale. We hope to confirm the venue for the evening very soon.

Finally, on **Wednesday 29 November**, as we come to the time of Advent, we will be hosting an Advent Reflection evening led by Gena Smith, one of our Licensed Lay Ministers. Please do save each of these dates in your diary and consider joining us as we continue to pray for friends, family, our community, the nation and the world.

DATES TO NOTE: Friday 3 November to Friday 10 November

October/ November/ December

No Central Prayer

Friday 3 November

A Night of Prayer & Worship

A focused week of prayer

Wednesday 15 November

Joint Richmond Churches Prayer Event

Wednesday 29 November

Advent Reflection Evening

PARENT'S NIGHT: HALLOWEEN

BY EMMA DOBSON

Here at St Stephen's we are continually exploring what it looks like for us to be spirit-filled disciples on a mission outside the walls of our church building. We'd love to see whole families on fire for God, children and adults alike connecting with him during the week and looking to play their part in revealing God's Kingdom – making earth a little bit more like heaven.

We want to use Halloween this year as an opportunity to practise what we preach and give it a try! We understand that people have different thoughts on how we, as Christians, should respond to Halloween and aim to empower you to do what you think is best

for your family. We also want to challenge ourselves this year to consider how, whatever we choose to do, might be an opportunity to bring God's light to people around us.

From a gathering in your home, to responding to trick-or-treaters with love; we think there are many ways both big and small that you could highlight God's light and love on Halloween. We will be holding a Parent's Night on Monday 16 October to explore together different ideas and ways we could approach Halloween as families. Parents - come and join us for wine and cheese and join the conversation! It will be a relaxed, informal evening with worship and thoughts as well as plenty of time to chat and reflect with those around

you. Sign up on the St Stephen's website – www.st-stephens.org.uk

We are freeing ourselves up to be available on Halloween and therefore will not be running an alternative event at church this year. If you

decide that going to one of these events, either alone or with invited friends, would be the best thing for your family please check out the light party being run at Holy Trinity Richmond, or the Saturday event at St John's Hampton Wick.



CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH – POSITION OPEN...

In recent years on Christmas Day, something really special has happened at our church, we've run a Christmas Day lunch and celebrated with people who would have otherwise been on their own. There's always a lovely atmosphere; people enjoy the company and the roast turkey and trimmings. People help in various ways: some bring in a batch of cranberry sauce; some are there to lay tables the day before, chop the carrots or cook a turkey at home; offer lifts, host a table and encourage the conversation or entertain. Christmas plans can work out differently for people each year. From a helper's point of view, it can be an escape from the commercialism to give Christmas to others.

We value hospitality here at St Stephen's and would love to offer a Christmas Day Lunch once again this year, if God is inspiring someone new to head it up on a voluntary basis. How about you? Have you an inkling that you could organise a lunch? Perhaps you're a couple (or a couple of friends) who could task and encourage other people to make it happen.

You wouldn't have to start from scratch, previous organisers are happy to walk you through previous years' plans and provide a template. Guests pay a modest amount for the tickets, which covers the cost.

If you'd like to explore this idea further – no assumptions made - please contact the Church Office as soon as possible on 020 8892 5258 and we'll support you all the way.





GO TEAM! — DROP-IN

BY HUGO FOXWOOD, ORDINAND

The Thursday evening Drop-In is one of St Stephen's longest-standing ministries. For over 20 years we have been providing a service to the homeless, vulnerable, and marginalised in our local community.

Who are you and what's your role on this team?

I'm Steve Notman, married to Annie and dad to Lucy. We have been members of the St Stephen's community for 15 years. In my day-job I work for international humanitarian charity, Action Against Hunger. My role at the Drop-In is to manage the kitchen every second Thursday. This involves working with a small group of volunteers to prepare a meal for 30 to 40 guests. As part of the meal I also make a hearty vegan soup every week.

Why did you join the Drop-in?

A few years ago I heard that the Drop-In was looking for more volunteers. The idea of local community action sounded great, so I signed up. I am better at cooking than chatting so I ended up in the kitchen!

What is the best thing about it?

The team is great - everyone loves being there and we all help each other out on different tasks, whatever needs to be done. But the best thing is knowing that you are giving a small blessing to the lives of the guests who come, whether through the provision of food, having someone to chat to, giving prayer, providing advice about their benefits or debts, etc.

The Drop-In ministry has a role for everyone, and at the moment would love more regular volunteers. So, if you'd like to help with set up and set down, work in the kitchen, do the washing up or chat or pray with guests, do get in contact with me, Hugo, on hugofoxwood@st-stephens.org.uk or 020 8892 5258.

SERVICE OF LIGHT

The Service of Light is a service we hold annually at St Stephen's, to remember those we love who passed away. Whether you or your loved one have a faith or not, we warmly invite you to come and join us for a time of reflection and thanksgiving.

During the service there will be a time when we read aloud the names of those we have lost. Tea and coffee will be available after the service for any who would like to stay. This year's Service of Light takes place on Saturday 4 November at 3pm. We look forward to seeing you there.



Seniors Datalist October 2017

VENUE: CENTENARY ROOM FOR ALL EVENTS

Monday 2

12.30pm Monday Lunch Club

Wednesday 4

2pm Chairobics

Thursday 5

10.30am Seniors Life Group

Monday 9

2.30pm Monday Fellowship Sue Walton
talking about Hounslow Food Bank

Wednesday 11

2pm Chairobics

Thursday 12

10.30am Service of Healing and
Encouragement

Monday 16

12.30pm Monday Lunch Club

Wednesday 18

2pm Chairobics

Thursday 19

10.30am Seniors Life Group

Wednesday 25

= NO Chairobics =

Thursday 26

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

Monday 30

= No meeting =

PCC & STAFF DAY 2017 – REVIEW

On Saturday 16 September the PCC and Staff joined together for their annual meeting. Here is what a couple members of the team had to say about the day:

As a new PCC member I didn't know what to expect from the half day, but I really enjoyed it as it was great to get to know others better, and to see the church's unified purpose to grow.

The most glorious message in history is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for our rebellion against God and rose again, so that there is now no condemnation for those who believe, but instead the promise of eternal joy in knowing God himself.

It was fantastic to see the PCC and Staff team's unity in this, and I look forward to seeing what God will do in the coming year."

- Josh Kilpatrick, PCC Member

This was my fourth PCC & Staff Day in my five years at St Stephen's (I was kindly 'gifted' a pardon last year, which allowed me to attend my honeymoon). I find the anticipation of the day can often leave me

feeling that it's yet another work commitment to get over and done with and ticked off the list, but each time I come away feeling extremely encouraged and enthused for the year ahead.

I found the style of this year's meeting particularly encouraging. During our time together we were given an hour to 'dance' with a select few – I'm afraid no Salsas, Waltzes or Popping & Locking took place – instead, a PCC member would spend a few moments with a Staff member simply getting to know each other better and getting to know their heart for God's work. It was an incredibly life-giving hour meeting some members of the PCC for the first time and recognising the wonderful variety of personalities, passions and backgrounds that shape our PCC, very much a living image of the body of Christ spoken about in Ephesians.

As a staff member, I feel incredibly blessed to be led and commissioned by a PCC body that is completely inspired to see God's Kingdom reign in every life in this community and beyond.

- Jonny Newton, Media & Communications Manager



GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT, PARTNERS

CACOURIS FAMILY IN RIO

BY JANE CACOURIS

“A city on a hill can not be hidden...” (Matt 5:14).

This was the verse that God gave both us, and our CMS partners, Mark and Jess Simpson, before we began our Brazilian venture together. The four of us have gone back to this verse time and time again since we arrived almost 18 months ago, determined to shine God’s light in a place that can feel very dark at times, in spite of the bright sunshine and clear blue skies. Rio is in an even darker place now than when we arrived; violence is on the increase, and it feels like the police are losing control of the drug wars that rage in many of Rio’s favelas (informal communities). The sound of gunfire is becoming familiar. Rio needs God’s light to shine more than ever.

Alex is working as the Associate Chaplain at Christ Church Rio, a church serving the English speaking population in Rio. Since we arrived we’ve seen the congregation grow and diversify – we now have South Africans, Nigerians, Chinese, Americans, British and a significant number of Brazilians, all who bring different ways of worshipping and celebrating church – it’s exciting to see the church evolve like this and the diversity of nationalities, ages and stages of life.

We’ve developed a new Social Action strategy for the church, which is now underway, and we are delighted to be supporting several local charities, financially, in-kind, and with time and skills. This includes Casa de Mary e Marta, a children’s charity in our most local favela, Santa Marta, that we regularly visit to teach English, and get alongside the staff and children, and have now recruited a church team to assist us there weekly.

But... we want to be bolder and shine a light more vividly and widely in Santa Marta. Together with Tearfund, we are planning to implement a community development tool (UMOJA), and are currently in conversation with key church leaders in the community, with the hope that this can be a multi-church, multi-denominational (no easy task in Brazil!) initiative.

Thank you so much St Stephen’s for all your support. Much love, Alex & Jane, Mylo, Maia and Louis.



RUPERT AND GENI JOHNSON IN KOSOVO

BY LIZ THOMAS

In September 2016 Rupe and Geni moved to Kosovo to join an OM team. During this past year they have had to cope with learning Albanian, extremes of temperature, and big changes in their roles. Rupe is now managing the vocational project with which he was originally helping. The project works with 90 young people referred by schools or social services as being in need and offers electronics, welding or barbering for the boys and sewing and tailoring for the girls. Geni’s role was originally as a fundraiser and support worker for the House of Joy, but as from the beginning of September 2017 she will be managing the House, and working with the

(very traumatised and disturbed) survivors of domestic violence and sex trafficking: some women and their children live in the project and others come in to receive daily support. Geni will also be leading fitness classes and art therapy classes to help with the women’s rehabilitation.

Rupe and Geni would love your prayers for the following:

- 1) For Geni as she takes on her challenging new role. She will be legally responsible for all the participants and will be managing the staff as well as each case.
- 2) For Rupe as he expands the vocation project and searches for a new building in order to take more students; new levels have been created in tailoring and welding, and there is a new action plan for visiting the families of the students.



We can’t do it alone! If you would like to be part of our team by receiving our updates, supporting us in prayer or supporting us financially, we would love to partner with you. Please get in touch – johnsons.in.kosovo@outlook.com. Also visit www.uk.om.org.

NOTICES **AND** EVENTS

THE POWER OF GOD'S PROMISES AND THE PROPHETIC

Wednesday 18 October
8pm Holy Trinity Richmond

A prayer ministry training evening with Barry & Mary Kissell

SAMARA'S AID...

...are in desperate need of unopened toiletries for refugee camps, especially for women (incl. sanitary products), and also nappies. If you can help please drop donations into the box at the back of church marked 'Samara's Aid'. Many thanks!

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT BREAKFAST

Saturday 4 November
8.30am in the Centenary Room

RSVP to globalengagement@st-stephens.org.uk

THE RECOVERY COURSE

Starts Monday 16 October
7pm at The Warehouse,
St John's Hampton Wick

To register visit
www.st-stephens.org.uk/courses

CROSSWAY PREGNANCY CRISIS CENTRE FUNDRAISING EVENTS

SWIMATHON

Saturday 7 October 5pm - 7.30pm
at Hampton Open Air Pool

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Saturday 25 November 12pm - 4pm
at Strawberry Hill Golf Club

For more details visit
www.crosswaypregnancy.org.uk/upcoming-events
or call 020 8892 8484

THE MARRIAGE COURSE

Starts Wednesday 4 October
7.45pm in the church

To sign-up go to
www.st-stephens.org.uk/courses
or call 020 8892 5258

AND FINALLY... WIT, IF NOT WISDOM

My partner and I often laugh about how competitive we are. But I laugh more.

Anon

