

## Today

**Thanksgiving lunch** following the service, food served from 12noon, all welcome!

## This Week

- Mon 5 Oct** **Women's Book Group** 8.00-9.30pm. We will be discussing "When People are Big and God is Small" by Edward T Welch. All women welcome! If you have any questions, please speak to Linnet Harvey or Chris Stonehouse.
- Tues 6 Oct** **Prayer Gathering**, 10.00-11.30am in St Stephen's.
- Wed 7 Oct** **Prayer Gathering**, 8.00-9.30pm in St Stephen's – with coffee, tea and cakes 7.30-7.55pm.
- Thurs 8 Oct** **Christianity Explored starts**. A great place to ask the big questions of life in a relaxed, informal setting over seven evenings. 8.00-9.30pm. Details from Chris Hobbs.

## Looking Ahead

- Tues 13 Oct** **CAP prayer meeting**. In the Roseveare room at St Stephens, 7.45-9.15pm.
- Sat 17 Oct** **The West Midlands Women's Convention** 'FAITH like this – encouraging women to live for Christ' : Clare Heath-Whyte. Leaflets on the Information Table. Now in Solihull! Please email Helen Buckley.

## News and Requests

**Rooted** is our student group, it meets after the evening service at St Wulstans (but for this week we'll be at St Stephen's) Come along for food, fun, fellowship and Bible study.

**Musicians** - we're looking for more musicians to serve in church. If you're interested please speak to Oli Huggins or Allan Ooi.

**The Mason Family** would like to convey their sincere gratitude for the tangible and uplifting support - both prayerful and practical - that they have received from the wonderful church family here, following the passing of our beloved Linda.

**Samuel Thornhill** will be in respite 2-11 October. Visitors would be much appreciated.

We have some **office furniture** (mainly desks and chairs) that we no longer need after the move back to St. Stephen's - contact Richard Phillips if interested. You are also welcome to take any of the pallets by the front gate of St Stephen's.

**Vicar:** Chris Hobbs      **Assistant Minister:** Andy Martin  
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**ST STEPHENS AND ST WULSTANS SELLY PARK**



**4<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

## Welcome

*If you are new, you are especially welcome. Please help yourself to a Welcome Booklet and, if you have time, introduce yourself and ask any questions you may have.*

### 10.00am All Age Morning Service

'The love of God' (John 3:16) – Chris Hobbs

**Children and young people** stay in the service.

**Crèche** is available for under 3's, in the Cranmer Room, which can be found from the foyer.

**Toilets** are adjacent to the foyer and upstairs; baby-changing facilities are in the disabled toilets.

**Coffee, tea and biscuits** are served after the service in the foyer.

### 6.00pm Evening Service at St Stephens

'The power of God' (Romans 1:16) – Andy Martin

**Coffee, tea and cakes** are served after the service.

## God's love and our love

I have been thinking about the love of God, getting ready to speak on these famous words: "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son..." (John 3:16). When we think of God's love, it is natural to think that his love is like ours, although bigger and better. Indeed it is; but there is also a crucial difference between his love and ours.

This will sound somewhat nerdy, but I was listening to a lecture on Martin Luther in the car this week. The lecturer was recounting what happened at the so-called Heidelberg Disputation of 1518, when Martin Luther got to present his views in public debate. The last of his 28 theses says this: "The love of God does not find, but creates, that which is pleasing to it. The love of man comes into being through that which is pleasing to it." In other words, our human love is a response to finding something lovely – lover, a newborn baby, a delicious meal, a beautiful sunset, or whatever. God's love, on the other hand, does not discover that something is lovely; it *makes* things lovely. That is grace.

He further explains that "the love of God which lives in man loves sinners, evil persons, fools, and weaklings in order to make them righteous, good, wise, and strong. Rather than seeking its own good, the love of God flows forth and bestows good. Therefore sinners are 'attractive' because they are loved; they are not loved because they are 'attractive'". Now that really is good news.

*Chris Hobbs, Senior Minister (Vicar)*

OPENING PRAYER *led by Andy Martin*

HYMN We plough the fields and scatter  
*Please bring your harvest gifts to the front during this hymn*

THANKSGIVING

**Gracious God, our heavenly Father, we humbly thank you for all your gifts so freely given: for life and health and safety, for work and rest and friendship, and for the wonder of creation. Above all, we praise you for our Saviour, Jesus Christ, for his death and resurrection, for your life-giving Spirit and the hope of sharing in your glory. Fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SONG Clap your hands

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD

BIBLE READINGS Numbers 21:4-9 (page 158), John 3:1-21 (page 1065)  
(This is the word of the Lord; **Thanks be to God**)

TALK The love of God

SONG For God so loved the world

CONFESSION and ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

**If we confess our sin, God is faithful and just; he will forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from every kind of wrong.]**

God our Father, we come to you in sorrow for our sins.  
For turning away from you, and ignoring your will for our lives;

**All Father forgive us, save us and help us.**

For behaving just as we want to without thinking of you;

**All Father forgive us, save us and help us.**

For failing you by what we do and think and say;

**All Father forgive us, save us and help us.**

For living as if we were ashamed to belong to your Son;

**All Father forgive us, save us and help us.**

In your great love for us, and because Jesus died for our sins;

**All Father forgive us, save us and help us.**

PRAYERS ending with THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

NEWS *after which, children and young people go to their activities*

SONG Creation sings the Father's song  
*Please collect your child from crèche during this song*

BLESSING

OPENING PRAYER *led by Chris Hobbs*

SONGS Come people of the risen King  
Bless the Lord, O my soul

HYMN My hope is built on nothing less

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

BIBLE READINGS Habakkuk 1:12-2:4 (page 940); Romans 1:1-20 (page 1128)  
(This is the word of the Lord; **Thanks be to God**)

SERMON The power of God

INSIGHTS AND QUESTIONS

PRAYER

**Blessed are you, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for you have blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing. You chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world and destined us for adoption as your children. In Christ we have the forgiveness of sins, an inheritance in your kingdom, the seal of your Spirit, and in him we live for the praise of your glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

SONGS O to see the dawn  
There is no other name

CONFESSION and ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

**Heavenly Father, you have loved us with an everlasting love, but we have gone our own way and broken your laws. We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them. For the sake of your Son who died for us forgive us, cleanse us, and change us. By your Holy Spirit enable us to live for you and to please you more and more, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

PRAYERS ending with THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

NEWS

SONG And can it be

CLOSING PRAYER

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.**