

Looking Ahead

Summer Socials We still have the 2nd Sep available. It can be almost anything you like! Please contact Gina in the Parish Office. Please do come along to the following:

Games in the garden (if dry) - Wed 12th Aug, 7.30-9.30pm @ the Griffiths. Please bring a drink and/or nibbles. If wet, we will be inside!

Another Evening in China - if you missed this last year, or even if you came, here's another opportunity to spend an evening "in China" - pics, music, snacks, stories (different from last year's!) Wed 19th Aug, 7.30 for 8pm at the Devases.

Pudding evening – Wed 26th Aug, 7.45pm for dessert and coffee at the Twiss' house

25 – 28 Aug 'Wild Wild West' Holiday Bible Club is getting closer! Forms are coming in, but if you're still considering it and haven't yet filled in a form, please do so and give it to Helen as soon as possible. We'd love to see you there.

Wed 9 Sep Vision Evening 7.00-9.30pm at St Wulstan's. For the whole church family. 7.00pm Meal (7.30pm Dessert and Coffee), 8.00pm Vision and Prayer. Meal £4 adults/£2 under 18s (Dessert and Coffee only £2/£1). Please sign up on the Information Table.

News and Requests

Building for the Future The carpet tiles are being laid, the lights work, and the new chairs are on order. It's flat out for completion now! **Help needed** to empty the container at St. Stephens, Sat 22nd Aug, 10.00am - 12.30pm. Details from Richard Phillips.

Loans provided Again we give thanks to God for the amazing generosity of his people: we have loans of £85,000 promised to cover the cashflow shortfall for Building for the Future.

equip. Our new in-house one-year training course designed 'to equip the saints for the work of ministry'. For anyone wanting to teach the Bible better in whatever setting. Starts Wed 16 Sept. Flyers on the Information Table.

If you'd like to send your thoughts to **Steve McCabe on the 'Assisted Dying Bill'**, you can send the form to: Steve McCabe MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA or by writing to him at Stephen.mccabe.mp@parliament.uk or calling his office on 0121 4433878.

All Sunday Club leaders/helpers look in pigeon holes to collect next term's material.

Anita and Jonathan Riley will be in Romania from Wed with other volunteers running evangelistic holiday clubs for children. Please pray for their preparation, safety, boxes to arrive, teams to work well together and lots of children to be transformed by the Gospel.

The office is open tomorrow, and then **closed** until Tues 25th Aug.

Cleaner required We are looking for someone to clean the new St Stephen's site from early September, 6 hours/week at £7.85/hour. Please speak to Chris Hobbs if you are interested.

Christian male, 27, looking for house share, moving to B'ham (from St Ebbe's in Oxford) in Sep to do post-doc.

Senior Minister (Vicar) Chris Hobbs **Assistant Minister** Andy Martin
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ST STEPHENS AND ST WULSTANS SELLY PARK

taking Jesus seriously, taking the Bible seriously



Welcome

9th August 2015

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 Morning Service

'Know your God: The Lord is loving' (Psalm 36) – Andy Martin

Children and young people will go to their activities part way through the service:

0-3s Crèche is in the back room, please collect your child during the last song.

3-11s Are taken across the road and brought back during the last song.

Toilets are in the foyer, baby-changing facilities are in the disabled toilet.

Coffee, tea and biscuits are served after the service.

6.00pm Evening Service

'Songs of Praise: Moses and Miriam's song' (Exodus 15:1-21) – Tom Lovatt

Coffee, tea and cakes are served after the service.

Is God my Friend?

If we belong to Christ, we enjoy a wonderful intimacy with God. Through Christ, we know God as "Father" and he calls us his "sons"; Jesus himself calls us "friends" and "brothers" (Romans 8:15, Galatians 3:26, John 15:15, John 20:17). So, what could be more natural than to think of God as our friend? God himself even suggests that his people may call him "My Father, my friend" (Jeremiah 3:4). And yet such references are extremely rare: there is a strange reticence in the Bible around calling God "friend."

Is that because it is just too vague? It is possible to be someone's 'Facebook Friend' without having any meaningful relationship with them. Similarly, it is possible to think of God as "friend" without it meaning very much. It is certainly all too easy to take God too lightly. When I was a student, the Christian Union received a letter from Helen Roseveare who was one of the honorary vice presidents. She warned us against being too familiar with God, urging us not to forget how holy he is – a warning we needed to hear.

It is not that God is unfriendly. It is rather that he is far more than a friend, and his friendship cost him the blood of his own Son. So let us not speak lightly of God's amazing friendship, but confess: "I have frequently taken carelessly upon my tongue a name never pronounced above without reverence and humility" (*The Valley of Vision*).

Chris Hobbs, Senior Minister (Vicar)

The wicked:

- don't fear God
- deceive themselves and others
- choose evil

The love of the Lord is:

- boundless
- priceless
- life-giving

So what?

Missed a sermon recently? Please visit www.sssw.org.uk to hear or download an audio version.

OPENING PRAYER

HYMN Immortal, invisible
SONG The Lord's my shepherd

THANKSGIVING

We thank you, our Father, that your love reaches to the heavens, and your faithfulness to the skies; that your justice is like the deep sea. Your unfailing mercies cannot be bought; we feast on your goodness and drink from the river of your blessing; thank you, through Jesus, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

CONFESSION and ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent. Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin. Renew a right spirit within us and restore us to the joy of your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SONG You know everything about me

NEWS *after which children and young people leave for their activities*

HYMN O King you are most worthy

THE APOSTLES' CREED

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.

BIBLE READINGS Psalm 36 (page 563); Romans 3:9-26(page 1130)
(This is the word of the Lord; **Thanks be to God**)

SERMON The Lord is loving

SONG All my days

CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God, we thank you that you have brought us safely to the beginning of this day. Keep us from falling into sin or running into danger, order us in all our doings and guide us to do always what is righteous in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COLLECTION *Gifts may be placed in the Gifts box at the back*

God is powerful

OPENING PRAYER

HYMN Sing to God new songs of worship
SONGS He wraps himself in light
Strength will rise

ACCLAMATION

Who is like you, Lord our God – majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? In your unfailing love you will lead your redeemed; in your strength you will guide us. To you we sing, for you are highly exalted; you will reign for ever and ever. Amen.

CONFESSION and ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Almighty God, Creator of all. You marvellously made us in your image; but we have rebelled against you, by rejecting your love and hurting our neighbours. We have done wrong and neglected to do right. We are sincerely sorry and truly repent of our sins. Cleanse us and forgive us by the death of your Son; remake us and lead us by your Spirit, the Comforter. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God is holy

OPEN PRAYER 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.

God is loving

NEWS

BIBLE READING Exodus 14:1-31 (page 71) (This is the word of the Lord; **Thanks be to God**)

SONGS Who has held the oceans in his hands?
O great God

BIBLE READING Exodus 15:1-21 (page 72) (This is the word of the Lord; **Thanks be to God**)

SERMON Songs of Praise: Moses and Miriam's song

INSIGHTS AND QUESTIONS

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

HYMN Guide me O thou great Redeemer

CLOSING PRAYER

To Him who is able to keep us from falling and to present us before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and for evermore. Amen.