

Tomorrow

All Age Christmas Day Service with Communion. 10.00am at St Stephens

Looking Ahead

Sun 3 Jan The evening service will be at St Stephen's, 6.00pm.

Tues 5 Jan Prayer Gathering, 10.00-11.30am in St Stephen's.

Wed 6 Jan Prayer Gathering, 8.00-9.30pm in St Stephen's – with coffee, tea and cakes 7.30-7.55pm.

Tues 12 Jan CAP Prayer Meeting. 7.45pm at Selly Park Baptist Church. See Sarah Underwood for more details.

Sun 17 Jan Church Family Meal. Straight after the morning service. We are starting a monthly meal, exciting details to follow, but for now put this date in your diary!

Thu 21 Jan Identity course begins. Invitations are on the table at the back of church.

Mon 8 Feb Women's Book Group. "Seeking Allah, finding Jesus" by Nabeel Qureshi. All women welcome! See Chris Stonehouse or Elizabeth Barry to find out more.

Thurs 11 Feb Has God really said? Speaker: Kevin DeYoung. A day conference to renew our confidence in Scripture as God's word for all of life, with an evening meeting: "What does God say about homosexuality?" Flyers on the Information Table.

News and Requests

Updated Church Family Address Books now available. Let Jem Huggins know if you'd like one. You can email or phone her or leave a note in the Parish Office pigeon hole.

Building for the Future Gift Day Response. Praise God, that so far a wonderful £36,000 has been given or pledged (including tax relief) – enough to pay the final bills. Thank you to everyone who has given and prayed. It would still be brilliant to have another £18,000 to get other jobs done – we trust God to give us what we need.

Could gospel ministry be for you? Why not spend a year serving the church and learning Bible teaching and ministry skills as a Ministry Trainee, from Sept 2016? Speak to Chris Hobbs.

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

24 December 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.

4.00pm Starlight Service at St Stephen's

'A King for all the world?' (Matthew 2:1-11) – Andy Martin

Toilets are adjacent to the foyer and upstairs; baby-changing facilities are in the disabled toilet

Star biscuits are served after the service in the foyer.

11.30pm Midnight Communion at St Stephen's

'Christmas: just a story for children?' (John 1:1-18) – Andy Martin

The extraordinary God of the ordinary

God obviously didn't employ a PR consultant when he was planning the first Christmas. I mean, where were the journalists, the cameras, the lights and the fireworks? No-one posted anything on Facebook; there were no tweets, and not a flicker on Instagram. Yes, I know that none of those things had been invented in the first century, but it helps to make the point. God could have arranged the most spectacular show on earth – and he will do when his Son returns to judge the world – but at his first coming he totally bypassed the powers-that-be. The great ones of the day – Caesar, Herod and the like – knew nothing of this great event. Instead, the first to know were a virgin and her fiancé, then shepherds in the fields, and later unknown 'Magi' from a very long way away.

It was all very ordinary, and at the same time utterly extraordinary. After all, this child was the eternal Word become flesh, God with us, who would reign for ever, save his people from their sins, and bring peace with God – and those are just the headlines. The thing is, we don't need to be extraordinary for God to bother with us. We only need to be human, and God will be interested in us, very interested indeed. Mary speaks for every one of us when she says that "[God my Saviour] has been mindful of the humble state of his servant." What we mustn't do is miss the ordinary in the extraordinary – or the extraordinary in the ordinary... I wish you an (extra)ordinary Christmas.

Chris Hobbs, Senior Minister (Vicar)