

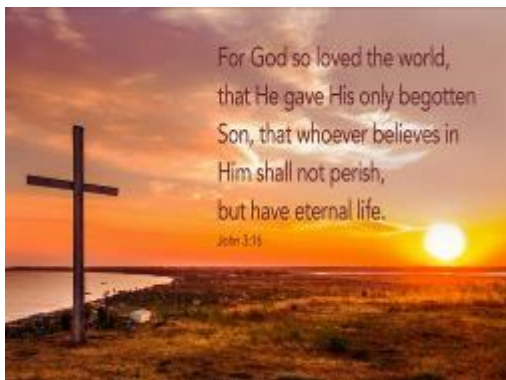


St Mary's Church
Stotfold & Fairfield Parish Church
Church Road
Stotfold SG5 4NE

www.stotfoldchurch.org.uk
Charity No: 1131275

Spring
2025

Parish Magazine



There is a lot happening in our Church and so to be aware of special services and upcoming events please subscribe to our Weekly Messenger which arrives in your inbox each week.

**Here is the link to subscribe:
<http://eepurl.com/gYMiBf>
or email**

stotfoldparishchurch@gmail.com

Stotfold & Fairfield Parish Church is open for:

a time of quiet, personal prayer, reflection or to light a candle.

There is also a Prayer Box where you can ask the vicar to pray for a person or situation.

Mon - Sat: 9.30am to 4.30pm

Morning Prayer is also held in our Church every day at 9am.

A short approximately 20 minute service where everyone is welcome to join us.

For details of our special and regular services see page 11 & 23

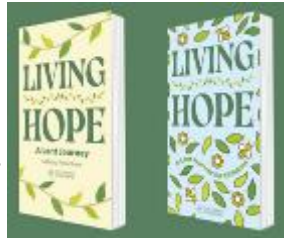


For me Spring is such a hopeful season. After the long, cold, dark winter months, we're beginning to see the stirrings of the new season in our gardens and green spaces. We have some lovely giant snowdrops flowering in our garden, many of our shrubs are starting to show signs of early spring growth and a whole host of other plants are beginning to poke through the soil.



In the half-term holidays, Sara and I visited the lovely National Trust property of Anglesey Abbey. The gardens there are home to over 500 different varieties of snowdrop. All that beauty and abundance (although I wonder why God decided to create quite so many varieties of snowdrop!) remind me of God's generosity and goodness to us all. The book of Genesis tells that 'God planted a garden in Eden ... and ... out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.'

This year the Church of England has chosen 'Living Hope' as its Lent theme. The accompanying booklet of daily reflections for Lent begins with these words: 'In a world where it can sometimes feel hard to be optimistic, God offers us something deeper – hope. This Lent is an opportunity to put down deep roots of hope, discovering God's promises for the future and his presence with us now.'



The forty days of Lent, which beginning this year with Ash Wednesday on 5th March and ending on Easter Eve - Saturday 19th April, are a time when we as Christians traditionally reflect on our lives and on our relationship with God. For each day of Lent there is a Bible reading, a short reflection and a challenge to help us reflect on the challenges of life and upon how we might be encouraged to live lives filled with hope.

Take a look at cofe.io/LivingHope or the Everyday Faith app which will have the 40 days of reflections and can also be downloaded for iOS or Android from your usual app store.

With my warmest wishes for a hope filled Lent.

Revd Graham





MONTHLY YOUTH GATHERINGS

Our monthly youth gatherings take place in the Vicarage, Church Hall or Roecroft Centre from 5.30 to 7pm on the 3rd Sunday of each month. We welcome young people from the end of Year 4 upwards. Our aim is to provide a relaxed and safe place for young people to have fun, explore faith, enjoy the company of others and of course to have something to eat and drink together.

For our first gathering of the new year in January, we met in the Church Hall. After a short act of worship, we enjoyed a games evening playing darts, tabletop curling, bagatelle, giant Jenga and some card games. We also shared some sausage rolls and other food and drink together.



At our February gathering, as we met shortly after Valentines Day, we focused on the theme of love. As part of our worship, we read the beautiful passage from 1 Corinthians 13.4-8a which is often read at a wedding. *Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.*

We then made our own biscuit dough, cutout heart shaped biscuits and baked them. We also iced some biscuits that had already been made and enjoyed them together with pizza and garlic bread.

On Sunday 16th March we will be meeting in the Church Hall for a Lent themed artistic evening with some food and drink of course.

We are still finalising the programme for the remainder of 2025 but here is what we have planned so far:

Sunday 20th is Easter Sunday so we will be meeting on Bank Holiday, Monday 21st April instead. We are planning to leave St Mary's Church at 11am and make a short Pilgrimage Walk to All Saint's Church, Radwell where we hope to have a picnic at the church and enjoy an Easter egg hunt.

Sun 18th May: details to follow.

Sun 15th June: Pentecost celebration evening.

Sun 20th July: (5.30-7.30) End of term Barbecue -Vicarage Garden.

If you would like to come along, please phone Rev Bill Britt on 01462 730218.



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"That's two t's in Matthew", said Osrice

GATHER US IN,
the lost and lonely
the broken and breaking,
the tired and the aching
who long for the nourishment
found at your feast.

GATHER US IN,
the done in and doubting,
the wishing and wondering,
the puzzled and pondering,
who long for the company
found at your feast.

GATHER US IN,
the proud and pretentious,
the sure and superior,
the never inferior,
who long for the levelling
found at your feast.

GATHER US IN,
the bright and the bustling,
the stirrers, the shakers,
the kind laughter makers
who long for the deeper joys
found at your feast.

GATHER US IN,
from corner or limelight,
from mansion or campsite,
from fears and obsession,
from tears and depression,
from treasured successes
to meet, to eat,
be given a seat,
be joined to the vine
be offered new wine,
become from the least,
be found at the feast.

GATHER US IN!

The Iona Community

Communion Wafers

In our booklet for the service of Holy Communion, each week the priest says these words. “Send the Holy Spirit on our people and gather into one in your kingdom all who share this one bread and one cup.”

Later in the service the priest has broken a small communion wafer saying these words: “We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.” To which the congregation replies: “Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.”

These words are based on St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians. Chapter 10 Verses 16-17, in which Paul asked this question:

“The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”

We receive Holy Communion both as individuals and a group. Receiving and sharing communion changes us as a group of Christians.

As the theologian Paula Gooder wrote. “The breaking of the bread symbolizes our individual participation in something that catches us up into a corporate experience. The modern wording reminds us every time that breaking and sharing the bread is a symbol of our participation in Christ’s body.”

One of the things that has been lost in our local church as a result of Covid is that a majority of people don’t share from a single cup of wine like we have traditionally done for centuries. As an alternative to drinking from the shared cup, most people indicate that they want the priest to dip an individual wafer into the wine and hand it to them.

To recover the symbolism of communally sharing in communion, we are now using a large wafer, that the priest breaks into smaller pieces. That way we reflect the words we actually say. “Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.”



Beautiful

The English test had only one question: ‘Write an essay on “The Most Beautiful Thing I Ever Saw.”’ One of the students finished his essay in less than a minute. It read in its entirety: “The most beautiful thing I ever saw was just too beautiful for words.” He got the only A in the class.



The following article entitled 'Dinosaur' is an item from a blog (www.50ccpilgrim.uk) that I follow which is written by Revd Chris Webb and is reproduced here with his permission. Chris is a Benedictine Anglican priest, author, speaker and teacher dedicated to helping people experience a richer walk with God by growing in prayer and the spiritual life. He has degrees in Planetary and Space Physics from the University of Wales, and in Theology from Trinity College, Bristol.

Alison Collis

Dinosaur

I was ordained nearly thirty years ago, and was training for ministry for three years before that. In the last millennium. Most vicars still wore frocks in church, even though they were all men then. Most churches still had their own vicar. Lots of churches still used the Prayer Book brought in under Henry VIII and his kids. Some churches were considered avant garde because, alongside the pipe organ and robed choir, they also had a guitar. The real pioneers were embracing the new technology: Roneo duplicators, OHPs, Amstrad word processors, faxes and a pager for the vicar.



Sometimes this is how I feel

Now, in the age of Zoom church, surfing church, Insta influencing, TikTok, online worship, cafe church, forest church, new monasticism, vision and strategy, minster communities and more, all that stuff I started with looks so quaint and archaic. I still wear a frock and like a good liturgy, and I feel like a dinosaur.

So am I against all the new ways, wishing I could turn back the clock? Not in the least. We keep moving forward: of course we do. In the end it's mostly froth anyway - in another thirty years all this new brilliance will look quaint and archaic too. But in amongst all this we're still pursuing what really matters: loving God, loving others, seeking the kingdom of God, practicing peace and radical hospitality to friends, enemies and strangers alike, praying and living as though the God we talk about was actually real.

We all become dinosaurs in the end. It's ok. But unless the asteroid comes, I'll still be turning up week by week, day by day (even in my frock) because the stuff we do matters. No matter how we do it.



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St Mary's Men's Breakfast

As many of you are already aware the "Box of Cakes" is closing and therefore we have arranged with 'The Stag' in Brook Street to have our breakfast there starting at 9.00am on Saturday the 29 March. Interestingly "The Stag" is where we started the men's breakfasts at least 10years ago!

The booking system will remain the same as usual. Please let me know no later than the Wednesday before the last Saturday of the month, the size of breakfast, the type of hot drink and whether you prefer brown or white toast. You can check The Stag's website to see what's included in the breakfasts and let me know if you require any extras (or items omitted). New members are always welcome and you can contact me at rbillson42@gmail.com or of course in person in church.

Roger Billson

St Mary's Friendship Lunch at The Stag

All are welcome to join us when we meet at 12 for 12.30 on the last Tuesday of the month for our friendship lunch at The Stag.

2 Courses £8.50 3 Courses £9.95

Contact:

carolyn.bleach@sky.com for any enquiries and to pre-order your lunch



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Retirement of the Bishop of St Albans.

At the beginning of January Bishop Alan announced that he would be retiring on the 31st May this year.

The following are a couple of excerpts from his announcement.

.. It has been the privilege of my life to serve as the Bishop of St Albans. However, next month I will be 68 and the time has come for me to lay down my responsibilities and to hand the baton of leadership on to whomever the Lord calls to succeed me...

.. The past sixteen years have been full of challenges, opportunities and surprises. With God's help, I have encouraged us to 'Live God's Love' among the people of Herts, Beds and Luton and parts of Barnet, and to do so with generosity and joy, with imagination and courage. In that endeavour, I have been grateful for my colleagues on the senior staff and for the support of so many clergy and lay people across the Diocese. I never cease to give thanks to God for the warmth of your friendship. You have enriched my life and ministry in countless ways..

If you would like to understand the process of appointing a new Bishop of St Albans there is a short 10 minute video which gives an overview of the process available on the Diocesan website:

<https://www.stalbansdiocese.org/about-us/vacancy-in-see/>

Local observances of VE Day 8 May & VJ Day 15 August



To mark the 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day there will be a Remembrance Service on the 8th May at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church in Stotfold. Music will be provided by the Salvation Army Band. Last year on 6 June more than 125 people attended the D-Day service and we welcome everyone to attend the VE Day Service, which marks the formal acceptance by the Allies of Germany's surrender.

We will give thanks for the sacrifice of those who during the Second World War gave of themselves and also to pray for peace today. One of the greatest architect of victory, Sir Winston Churchill said: "In war, resolution; in defeat, defiance; in victory, magnanimity; and in peace, goodwill." The last of these is predominant in our minds today.

This service will be followed a lighting of a special beacon at The Green at 9.30pm when we will join with the rest of the nation to sing the hymn "I vow to Thee my Country."

There will also be a service at St Mary's Church with the Salvation Army Band to mark the 80th Anniversary of Victory in the Far East at 7.30pm on Friday 15 August.



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**Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lutheran pastor and martyr
is now remembered by us all on 9th April each year.**

Standing up to tyrants, no matter what the cost. That kind of courage has been in the headlines especially over the last few years.

Bonhoeffer grew up with no thought of ever defying the leader of Germany. Nothing could have been further from his mind or background. Born at Breslau in Silesia (now the Polish city of Wroclaw) in 1906, Bonhoeffer was the son of an academic. In 1912, his father was appointed to be Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology at Berlin university, and so the family moved to Berlin.

Bonhoeffer never even considered going into politics. Instead, he studied theology in Tübingen, Berlin and New York, before returning to Berlin as a lecturer in theology in 1931. But though Bonhoeffer did not chase political trouble, it soon came to him. For on 30th January 1933 Adolf Hitler, leader of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, had come to power. His totalitarian approach left no room for anyone in public life to disagree with him. Including anyone in the two major churches - Lutheran and Catholic.

But Bonhoeffer refused to be compliant, and joined the Confessing Church, which had formed in opposition to the takeover of the Lutheran Church. The Confessing Church also opposed Hitler's attempts to force antisemitism on the church and society.

Bonhoeffer was in America when war broke out in 1939, but he returned to Germany. He said: "I shall have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war, if I do not share the trials of this time with my people."

Back in Germany, he joined the underground anti-Nazi opposition and worked hard to oppose Hitler. In 1943 he was arrested and imprisoned at Tegel prison in Berlin. The involvement of many of his contacts in the July 1944 plot to kill Hitler may well have sealed his fate. He was finally moved on to Flossenberg concentration camp.

In April 1945, as American troops were approaching the camp, Bonhoeffer was hanged. The last words of this brilliant and courageous 39-year-old opponent of Nazism were: "This is the end - for me, the beginning of life."

Bonhoeffer left a great legacy behind him. His writings, and especially his *Letters and Papers from Prison*, have inspired many trying to make sense of persecution and needless suffering. His 1937 book *The Cost of Discipleship* is described as a modern classic.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer quote: **the ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children.**

Special Holy Week & Easter Services

13 April Palm Sunday

10am Parish Communion Service

4pm Families at Four Service. This service is open to all.

6pm Stations of the Cross

14 April Monday 7.30pm, Holy Week reflection and Compline

15 April Tuesday 7.30pm, Holy Week reflection and Compline

16 April Wednesday 7.30pm Tenebrae service. Tenebrae is Latin for shadows. Reflecting on the emotional aspects of the passion story this music-rich service begins with a candlelit church & ends in darkness with the people leaving in silence.

17 April Maundy Thursday Last Supper meal 6.30pm. We welcome all to our Last Supper meal. Please sign the list in Church if you are joining us. Immediately after the meal there is a short service of Stripping of the Altars and prayer at the Garden of Repose.

18 April Good Friday

2pm Hour before the Cross. Bible readings, reflection and music.

4pm Families at Four DIY Easter Gardens

19 April Saturday 7.30pm Easter Eve. Service of Light and Renewal of Baptism Vows

20 April Easter Day

6.30am Churches Together Sunrise Service at the Beacon in Stotfold Cemetery

9am Easter Day Communion Service Radwell

10am Easter Day Communion Service Stotfold

Good Friday

I was standing in line at the bank when there was a commotion at the counter. A woman was very distressed, exclaiming, "Where will I put my money?! I have all my money and my mortgage here!! What will happen to my mortgage?! You can't do this to us!"

It turned out that she had misunderstood a small sign on the counter. The sign read: WE WILL BE CLOSED FOR GOOD FRIDAY.

What if this Lent
you do more than
give stuff up?



As I write this, we are approaching Ash Wednesday and the period of Lent where traditionally people give something up in recognition of Jesus' forty days spent in the wilderness being tempted. And perhaps as you are reading this, you are considering what you will give up this year - chocolate or Haribo, wine or beer, scrolling on social media or gossiping - for example?

But this year, I want to challenge you to join me in doing something rather different. Rather than giving up something, I am encouraging us to take up something, something which could make a big difference to the world, and that something is generosity. Just think what a difference we could make to our own lives and to society if we all decided to live this Lent generously.

All we can ever learn about generosity, we learn from God. Right at the beginning in the book of Genesis we read that God gave – He created the Heavens and the Earth. The earth was empty, but God filled it with creative abundance. You've only got to wander around a zoo, watch a sunset or look at each other to see this world that God created is overflowing with colour, variety, beauty, intricate detail and incredible harmony. If we look at the stars in the sky, they are an awesome example of God's generosity. Scientists vary in their estimates of how many stars exist – some talk about trillions. In a throwaway line in Genesis, we are told God also made the stars. That is our generous God. But it doesn't end there, because we know that God's greatest gift of generosity was the giving of his only Son who he sent into the world to die for us, to show just how much he loved us, something which we celebrate at the end of Lent when we remember that Jesus die and rose again so that we can fully experience God's love for us all.

When Jesus was on the earth, he too showed great generosity, take for example when he healed the woman who touched the hem of his garment. He didn't give her money, but he gave her something perhaps even more powerful: kindness, his time, being seen, respect and dignity in her community and her physical health, showing us that God's generosity to us is unexpected, extravagant and bold. And the good news is, that it still overflows to us today as he blesses us as individuals and as a community.

The bible suggests that God not only wants to be generous to us but wants us to be generous to others so that the blessings that we have received we can pass on to others. And surely, because of his generosity, he is worthy of us giving extravagantly of our time, talent and treasure particularly during the period of Lent.

This Lent, I invite you to join with churches, schools, small groups and individuals across the UK and around the world, to take part in the **40acts generosity challenge**. More information is available here: <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/40acts>

When you sign up, you receive daily generosity challenges and a short reflection, sent by email for days from Ash Wednesday. These challenges are also available as a wall chart from the website. Challenges include such things as:

- Send someone a message of encouragement to let them know that you think they're the best
- Learn a phrase in another language and use it in your next conversation with someone who speaks it
- Leave uplifting post-it notes on mirrors, fridges, or other surfaces to tell someone how wonderful you think they are
- Create a 'bag of blessings' with small joyful items and gift it with a bright bow!
- Build a bug hotel or bird table and observe the visiting wildlife
- Send a card to your local school to thank the staff for educating and supporting children

In a recent survey, 100% of those surveyed felt that practicing generosity is an important part of Christian discipleship journey, whilst 57% of them believed that the more you practice generosity, the easier it becomes. So wouldn't it be wonderful, if this Lent we joined with thousands of people from across the UK and beyond and began a lifetime journey of big-heartedness with small acts of generosity becoming a habit so that we make a difference in our homes, our community, our workplaces, our church and ultimately, our world.

As we enter Lent, I invite you to take up this challenge and to pray this prayer of Saint Ignatius:

Lord, teach me to be generous; Teach me to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed to the wounds, to tell and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for a reward, save that of knowing that I do your will.

Amen

Rev'd Emma

Join in



As always there is a crate in St Mary's Church where you can leave your donations to The Need Project.



Throughout the year we deliver your gifts weekly to their offices where every item is so gratefully received.

Afternoon for couples planning a church wedding

Are you interested in getting married in your parish church this year or next?

If so do contact Revd. Bill on 01462 730218 as you might like to come along to a Wedding Preparation afternoon for couples on Saturday 26 April from 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

We are getting an unusually large number of wedding bookings for 2026 so we do suggest contacting us now.



EASTER BASKET

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

- 2 TIMOTHY 1:12 NIV

Women's Fellowship programme March to June 2025.

March 19 - Church Hall 2.30pm

Peta will be speaking about how she started her flower growing and its development to Saxon Gate Flowers. Her speciality is dahlias.

April 16 - Church Hall 2.30pm

We had the pleasure of David Langman's company in 2024 when he spoke about churches in Bedfordshire and their links to historical figures. This time the title of the talk is "Miracles and the Wonder of Poor Nell" and he will tell more of his stories about his travels around the churches with his camera.

May 21 - Church Hall 2.30pm

Richard Cuthbert works for Hertfordshire County Council and will be talking about "Rights of Way".

June 18 -

We will be visiting Hitchin Garden Centre at 2.30p.m. to enjoy an afternoon tea.

For enquiries contact: Jean Poulton on 01462 735555.

The Whist Group at St Mary's Church Hall

Do think about joining our friendly group on alternate Tuesdays
Refreshments served.

Details: Elaine Drury 07925 192007

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If you would like an arrangement to be placed in Church in celebration of a special occasion or in remembrance of a loved one please contact

Ann Scarr
01462 834844

The following short story entitled Driven is from a book of short stories entitled 'And Then She Said' which is written by John L Bell and reproduced here with his permission. John is member of the Iona Community, for which he has worked for most of his life in the areas of liturgy, spirituality and social justice. For over 40 years he has been a contributor to religious broadcasting. Songs produced in association with his colleagues are published in English-speaking nations, and in translation in several European countries. And of course in association with Graham Maule wrote 'Will you come and follow me if I but call your name'.

Driven

The voice at the other end of the phone was female, but the name was not one I recognised. She said she had heard that we were trying to encourage music-making in churches in Scotland. I agreed that was one of our pursuits.

She then went on to say that she was coming to Scotland in a car which she wanted to get rid of, as there was a new one soon coming her way. And she wanted to give her old car to us to help with our work.

It all seemed too good to be true, and I remember doubting whether this was an authentic offer. As we had a number of friends, male and female, who were convincing mimics. But I said that if that was what she wanted to do, we would be very happy to accept her gift. Accordingly I gave our address and she suggested that she might come to our house the following Thursday morning around eleven o'clock.

Neither Graham, my colleague, nor I thought any more of it. I don't think we even spoke about it again. It was such an unlikely thing; indeed it would be a bit of a joke. Especially if the woman knew anything about us.

But on the stated day. And at the stated time, she arrived. She was a slender blonde-haired young woman with the most charming manner, coming from a presumably more comfortable residence in London than our rather battered rented caretaker's cottage next to a highly polluted arterial road in Glasgow. We invited her in, made some coffee and conversed for a while, and then she handed over the keys and some documents relating to a well-preserved Honda Accord.

The awkward thing was that neither Graham or I could drive. Nor did either of us have the faintest desire to take lessons. But there were other people we worked with who did drive, and the car became a very helpful asset in the early stages of our work.

And the young woman? She was completely unknown to us. Bernadette Farrell, one of the most widely-respected Roman Catholic liturgical composers, was not a household name at that time in Protestant Scotland. But now those who sing concur that her setting of Psalm 139, *O God you search me and you know me*, is one of the most beautifully crafted and meaningful texts that Christians of all persuasions in Britain are glad to sing.

Our new Electoral Roll for the Parish of Stotfold & Fairfield 2025

Electoral Roll Every six years, we are required to prepare a new Church Electoral Roll from scratch, rather than simply revise the existing one. The Church Electoral Roll is your parish church's register of electors. It is the list of those qualified to attend and to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in the elections for the Parochial Church Council and the parish representatives on the Deanery Synod. In a year of renewal, no names are carried over from the old roll, and everyone must apply for inclusion in the new roll.

Being part of our Electoral Roll is an important way of confirming your commitment and support to our St Mary's family and the vision and ministry of our church and therefore if you wish to be included in the new roll please pick up one of the simple application forms from the back of our church or you can download one from our website and then return the completed form by either popping under our vestry door or handing to either Maureen, a member of our clergy team or Alison Collis in her role as Secretary to the PCC. All applications must be received by Sunday 13th April 2025.

If you cannot come into church to collect a form or download one, telephone Maureen 07727 688877 or email maureen.winters5@gmail.com and a form



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Friends of St Mary's Church

St Mary's Church is the oldest church in this area and the present building dates from 1150 or even earlier. Friends of St. Mary's are a group of people who wish to preserve this building because it is ancient, fascinating and part of Stotfold's heritage.

Membership Forms are available at the rear of the church or contact Ann Scarr on 01462 834844.



Hymns for Fun (*This is not a service*)

Do come along on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 2pm and join us as we and many of our community sing hymns together purely for pleasure.

Everyone is welcome and there are refreshments to follow.



We look forward to seeing and hearing you all!

Date for your Diary: Our Plant Sale is on Saturday 17 May

Spring is now upon us and so please bear us in mind when in the garden whether splitting perennials, taking cuttings or planting seeds.

All items you give us that we can sell are gratefully received.

Contact Lyn on 01462 834165.

Community Coffee Morning

1st Wednesday of each month

10.30-12 noon in the Church

Everyone is welcome.



Science and a sense of the Transcendent

What is the difference between a cathedral and a physics lab? Are they not both saying: 'Hello'? - Annie Dillard

Scientists often speak of a reality beyond the objects they are studying, and for some this is encountered in powerful – if rare – episodes of wonder and awe. The Christian writer J.W. Sire quotes this line from Annie Dillard in his book *Echoes of a Voice*, which explores spiritual or ‘transcendent’ experiences.

In his analysis of these experiences Sire describes moments that are “emotional, intellectual, highly charged, usually sudden, unannounced, often odd, some weird, others glorious”, and places them on three different levels:

A material object that points beyond the material reality. For example, someone might develop a sense of what is good and evil, based on the actions of others.

Experience of “something personal...just behind the surface of what we are directly experiencing, often something with which one feels at peace or even at one, or, perhaps, as dangerous or threatening.”

A felt presence that has a specific character or presence, e.g., holiness, or inspiring humility, fearful awe or wonder.

According to Sire, level 1-2 experiences are fairly common but level 3 is rare. He gives a wide range of examples, including scientists. Some of these people are religious or interested in spirituality, others are atheists. Some of their moments of transcendence carried a particular meaning, others simply sparked curiosity.

The famous geneticist Francis Collins described several significant moments when he was young: “being transported by the experience of looking through a telescope”, or “a Christmas Eve where the descant on a particularly beautiful Christmas carol...left me with a sense of unexpected awe and a longing for something I could not name”.

These experiences meant that when Collins was faced with the question of belief in God, “all [his] arguments seemed very thin”. Now, as a fully-fledged scientist and a believer in God, he is able to say that “for a scientist who occasionally is given the remarkable privilege of discovering something not previously known by man, there is a special kind of joy associated with such flashes of insight.”

Most of us are not scientists, but we may well have had experiences like this in different contexts. How can we, in our engagement with scientifically minded individuals, make connections through our shared experience of the transcendent? Can we listen as well as explain, finding some common points of connection?

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz

#GenerationRestoration

We cannot turn back time, but we can grow forests, revive water sources, and bring back soils. We are the generation that can hopefully make peace with the land.

May the light of your presence, O Lord, fill us with a sense of your love and power, reveal to us the beauty of your creation, and inspire us to walk as people who are on holy ground.



As part of our commitment to being good stewards of the environment Stotfold Parish Church has committed to purchasing electricity that is 100% generated from renewable sources as accredited by OFGEM through the Parish Buying Energy Basket.

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it
Psalm 24:1



World Environment Day: 5th June 2025

God of creation, who loves all he has made and all that has evolved, open the eyes of your people, that your love might be reflected in our care for the planet. Through Jesus Christ, who walked this earth and calls us by name. Amen.

Rt Revd Nicholas Baines Bishop of Leeds



St Mary's Church Hall

Hall dimensions are:
15.5m x 6.4m (51'x21')

The ceiling is 3m high and can accommodate some bouncy castles.

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THY KINGDOM COME

Light Up The World In Prayer

29th May – 8th June 2025

Will You Join Us?

Thy Kingdom Come (TKC) is a global ecumenical prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus.

2025 - The Year of the Lord's Prayer

As a team, we have been praying and discerning for months what God might be calling us to focus on for the 10th year. After much consideration, we sensed the focus should be on the very prayer our Lord and Saviour, Jesus, taught His disciples to pray - 'The Lord's Prayer.'

The 'Our Father' prayer transcends the ages - uniting people across different denominations, generations and nations and we believe now more than ever, we need to pray 'Thy Kingdom Come' - over our homes, communities, nations and our world.

Join the global wave of prayer 29th May—8th June 2025

[Thy Kingdom Come](#) | [Thy Kingdom Come](#)

Quotes

It is not the number of books you read, nor the variety of sermons you hear, nor the amount of religious conversation in which you mix, but it is the frequency and earnestness with which you meditate on these things, till the truth in them becomes your own and part of your being, that ensures your growth. – F W Robertson

OUR REGULAR WORSHIP SERVICES

**Mon - Sat 9am:
Morning Prayer**

Short service where we pray for our community and the wider world.

Wed 9.45am: Holy Communion.
A said service.

1st Sunday of the Month:

8am: Said Communion

9am: Morning Prayer (*exc April*)

10am: Parish Communion

4pm: Tea Time Praise

**2nd, 4th & 5th
Sunday of the Month:**

9am: Morning Prayer (*exc April*)

10am: Parish Communion

3rd Sunday of the Month:

9am: Holy Communion.

A said service.

10am: Parish Worship

A non-Eucharist service

Sunday School

In the Church Hall at 10am
2nd & 4th Sundays

Little Angels

A lively group
where parents or carers with
babies, toddlers and children not yet
at school are welcome.

We meet on
Thursday mornings during termtime
in either the Church or church hall

10.15 - 11.30am

Play, Music & Crafts
Refreshments

email :
littleangelsstofold@outlook.com



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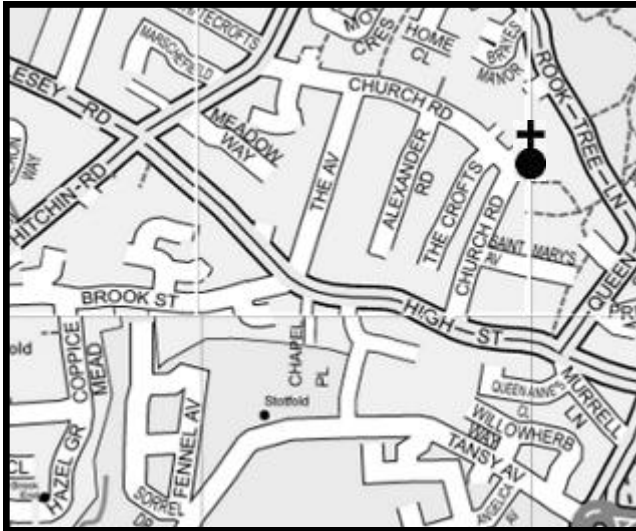
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stofoldchurch.org.uk

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