

TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading: 1 Kings 3:5-12

Offered anything he desires by God, Solomon chooses the wisdom to do right by his people over personal gain, securing the nation for God.

Second Reading: Romans 8: 26-39

Nothing in heaven and earth can separate us from God's love. Paul's wonderful and powerful words assure us that we are, for ever, part of Christ's family, citizens of the kingdom.

Gospel: Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52

Jesus' teaching tells us of the kingdom of heaven, and makes clear the kingdom is as much the beginning of our faith journey as its fulfilment.

FIRST READING 1 Kings 3.5–12

A reading from the first book of Kings.

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, 'Ask what I should give you.'

⁶ And Solomon said, 'You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart towards you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today.

⁷ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted.

⁹ Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?'

¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this.

¹¹ God said to him, 'Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right,

¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you.'

SECOND READING Romans 8. 26–39

²⁶ The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.

²⁷ And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.

³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

³² He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?

³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

³⁶ As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height,

³⁹ nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOSPEL Matthew 13. 31–33, 44–52

³¹ Jesus put before the crowd another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;

³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

³³ He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.

⁴⁴ The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls;

⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind;

⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad.

⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous

⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.'

⁵² And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.'

COLLECT

Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands that have taken holy things; may the ears which have heard your word be deaf to clamour and dispute; may the tongues which have sung your praise be free from deceit; may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love shine with the light of hope; and may the bodies which have been fed with your body be refreshed with the fullness of your life; glory to you for ever. **Amen.**

For Prayer:

As the school holidays begin, pray for all families who find this time challenging with the need to ensure that everyone is cared for during this time.

Remember in your prayers, all areas of the world where there is continuing conflict and changes to any diplomatic agreements which make a conclusion to the fighting more challenging to achieve.

Pray for the countries of Europe where there are wildfires due to the excessive heat. Remember in your prayers all those who have lost their homes and businesses.

Those who are acutely sick: George Baumer, Claire Colman, Tim Fletcher, Vera Foster, Owen Goodwin, Roger Gray, Ricardo Hoyte, Jan Price, Joan Thornton, Carole Sharp, John Sharp, Peter Viccars, Lindsey Westcott, Debbie Whitehead, Jill Williams.

Those with chronic or long-term illness: Margaret Coles, Pat Elves, Jennifer Harbridge, Harry Henderson,

Anna Johns, Vicky Johnston, Carol Muller, Roy Ray, Julia Sherlock, Bob Whitehead, Jim Wild.

Those who have died: Paul Bardell, Jackie Briggs, Dorothy Duncanson, Stephanie Morris.

DURING THE WEEK

MONDAY	9.15am	Morning Prayer via Zoom
TUESDAY	9.15am	Morning Prayer at St Stephen's
WEDNESDAY	9.15am	Morning Prayer at St Stephen's
	10.30am	Summer Tots & Teddies at St Julian's
	4.30pm	Organ Practice at St Stephen's
THURSDAY	9.15am	Morning Prayer at St Julian's
	10.30am	Community Café open at St Julian's
	2.00pm	Memorial Service for t/l Stephanie Morris followed by Burial of Ashes
FRIDAY	10.30am	Community Shed meets at St Stephen's
	10.30am	Holy Communion at Fonthill House N / H
	2.15pm	Memorial Service for t/l Jackie Briggs
SATURDAY	9.00am – 12noon	Churchyard tidy up at St Stephen's
	9.45am	Visiting ringers to St Stephen's
	2.00pm	Memorial Service for Hiroshima



St Stephen
with St Julian

Eighth Sunday after Trinity

26 July 2026

Welcome to St Stephen's and St Julian's. Whoever you are, wherever you've come from, you are welcome! If this is your first visit, please do introduce yourselves to the clergy and stay for coffee after the service to meet others.

SERVICES TODAY

8.00am	Holy Communion at St Stephens President: Sherine Angus Preacher: Hamish Hamilton
9.30am	Holy Communion at St Julian's President & Preacher: Geoff Lackey
10.00am	Café Church at St Stephen's Leaders: Sherine Angus & Laura Craggs
11.30am	Dedication of Ann Heartfield's bench in the churchyard at St Stephen's
2.30pm	Songs of Praise at Vesta Lodge

Next Sunday –Ninth Sunday after Trinity

8.00am	Holy Communion at St Stephen's
9.30am	Holy Communion at St Julian's
10.00am	Parish Communion at St Stephen's No Sunday Explorers today

Link for 9.30am Holy Communion service at St Julian's Church

<https://youtube.com/live/ROhZe9SP0-4?feature=share>

The pedestal arrangement in St Stephen's is in memory of Sarah Louise Hawkes' birthday