CENTREPIECE

October-November 2026

Free but donations are helpful



Remembering Steve Turner

Cometh the Hour: Cometh the Man

A time to remember and reflect

The Collegiate Church of Saint Mary in Stafford

StaffordChurches
Saint Chad : Collegiate Church of Saint Mary : Saint Leonard

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For Baptisms and Weddings:
Please contact the Parish Administrator

SERVICES IN STAFFORD CHURCHES

Usual weekly services
The three Parishes Eucharist on Sundays
8.30am at Saint Chads
10.00am at Saint Mary's

Tuesdays at noon in St Mary's: suspended for the time being

Wednesdays at 11.00am in St Chad's Fridays at noon in St Chad's

First Sunday of the month at 10.00: a service at Saint Leonard's, Marston

There is a weekly newssheet sent out by email. If you are not receiving this and would like to, please contact the Parish Office.

Steve Turner RIP



We were all very saddened at the news that Steve Turner had passed away. Steve was a well-known and much-loved member of our congregation at St Mary's, along with his wife Dee. They co-edited our centrepiece magazine and were involved in the Friends of St Mary's, Dee as Secretary and Treasurer and Steve as a committee member.

Steve had suffered with Parkinson's Disease for many years but that never stopped him leading a very full life. Steve was a Geography teacher by profession and became a headteacher but had to step away from teaching after his Parkinson's diagnosis, but he was determined to involve himself in as many activities as he could. He was a lifelong Stoke City FC supporter and continued to attend the matches until recently, along with his three sons and his grandchildren, who are carrying on the tradition.

He was also an American Football fan, supporting the Pittsburgh Stealers and went to watch them play several times, and co-owner of local American Football teams. A very keen and accomplished bowls player, starting up a local team. A member of Probus, and Chairman on one occasion, a member of the Rotary Club of Stafford and the President in 2018/19, raising much needed money in his presidential year to support local, national and international charities. For his commitment to Rotary he was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship, the highest international honour Rotary can award.



Steve loved travel, and together with Dee travelled literally all over the world, and he was a music addict, playing the guitar, owning vinyl records and CD's and even buying a 'juke box' to play them. He was also a councillor for Hagley ward on Cannock Chase District Council for 8 years from 1979.

Steve was a man of many parts, devoting his life to service to his community as well as the Parkinson's Disease community. A brave, courageous man, respected by everyone who knew him, and determined to ensure his Parkinson's Disease did not define him.

Rest in Peace Steve.

Fr John

From

The Musing Ministers

Dear Friends,

"It's Harvest Festival next week. Be careful what you say!"
This was the advice given to me 51 years ago. A previous curate had begun his harvest sermon with these words, "I don't know why you lot bother with a Harvest Festival! We produce nothing in this parish except babies." It caused an uproar but in truth he was right. There were no factories in the parish and few farms and play groups and schools were full to overflowing but this was not really the reason why he took such a dim view of harvest celebrations.

In the 1960s and 1970s "The Feast of St Pumpkin and All Marrows", as harvest was often called by its detractors, had, it was said seen its day. According to Harold Wilson, the Prime-minister, we were about to enter an age characterised by "the white heat of technology." Amongst the chattering classes Harvest Festivals were becoming increasingly irrelevant. Plenty would disagree but this was the prevailing spirit of the time.

It may come as a surprise to learn that the Church of England had in previous centuries been sniffy about celebrating the harvest with special services. The Book of Common Prayer allowed for prayers when the harvest was good and prayers in times of bad weather but little more. This seems strange in what was largely a rural society. The problem was that the "Harvest Home", as celebrated on farms, often turned into a riotous affair with excessive drinking and lewd behaviour. A graphic

description of such an event can be found in Thomas Hardy's novel, Far from the Madding Crowd. Our own Harvest Bring and Share Lunch will be an entirely respectable gathering.

Despite such objections Harvest Festivals in church became hugely popular towards the latter part of the 19th century and in the first half of the last century but things have changed. Where were the harvest gifts of fruit and vegetables to be sent? I remember seeing harvest produce piled in the church porch of a Herefordshire village for people to take if they wished. Nursing homes and hospitals rely now on mass catering and there are also health and safety issues to consider but people still have a desire to give thanks for the good things of life and a conscience about those who are less fortunate.

Today we are righty concerned about food poverty at home and overseas and this summer with its excessive heat has made us all aware of the perils of climate change. As God's people our fundamental calling is to honour God's generosity to us by being generous to others. This is most often done now through harvest appeals. At St Mary's we are asking for donations to support the work of House of Bread locally and the international medical work done through Mercy Ships operating off the coast of Africa.

To return to the early days of my ministry. We had a verger who rejoiced in the name of Enoch. He was blessed with many of the characteristics of the verger in Dad's Army. He delighted in reminding the junior clergy that Harvest "was not a festival of the church." Historically speaking he was right but Harvest Festival continues to be an important occasion in the year. Just as our gratitude to God should know no bounds we continue to search for new ways of sharing the good things of this life with those less fortunate than ourselves.



With best wishes,

Michael

Festival Chasuble
and Cope Covers and Hangers

Last year the Friends of St Mary's kindly donated a liturgical set of Chasubles for use in St Mary's. The church didn't have a complimentary set and the ones we were using were of different patterns, which was rather a mismatch.

The new liturgical set were purchased for the church from a clerical clothing supplier in India, which helped to support workers over in that country. The clergy have been wearing those chasubles every Sunday since.



What we didn't have was a Gold Chasuble for major festivals such as Easter and Christmas, to complement the others. The Friends of St Mary's kindly offered to purchase a Gold Chasuble for us and also to purchase a set of Cope Covers and Hangers to protect the various Copes the church owns.

We now have a complete set of chasubles and our copes are properly cared for on new hangers and covers.

Thank you, the Friends of St Mary's, for your continuing support to our beautiful church.

Father John

Dates for next
QUIET MONDAYS
at Shallowford House

14 September, 12 October
10.00 am to 3.30 pm

a gentle day of devotion, quiet time and worship

£28 including lunch
To book call 01785 760233

Further information about these Quiet Days from Sheila Young

St Mary's One World Group
More about Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships is a faith-based international organisation with a headquarters in the UK. There are two hospital ships: Africa Mercy and Global Mercy; these ships are sent to some of the poorest countries in the world, delivering vital, free healthcare to people in desperate need.

This report, in their own words, gives a flavour of the scope of the work of Mercy Ships:

"Act Justly, Love Mercy" – Micah 6:8

Two out of three people in our world don't have access to safe, affordable surgery. Children who live in poverty are most at risk. Many are in pain and suffer needlessly from completely treatable conditions, such as life-threatening facial tumours, bowed legs, curable blindness and burns that fuse fingers and contract limbs. We don't often see these diseases of poverty in the UK today, because we can visit the doctor or get an operation in hospital at no cost to us. But in sub-Saharan Africa, 95% of people are living without access to medical care and surgery. Every day they are forced to endure rejection and humiliation, year after year. Lack of medical help turns treatable conditions into diseases that cause misery and even kill.

That's why Mercy Ships follows the 2000-year-old model of Jesus, bringing hope and healing to the world's forgotten poor. Mercy Ships believes everyone should be able to get the surgery they need. They operate the world's largest charity hospital ship, bringing free medical care to West Africa. This life-changing surgery is made possible by a diverse crew of volunteers, who serve in over 200 skilled roles, from mechanics and teachers, to physios and chefs.

The hospital itself is only one deck of eight. Mercy Ships also train local surgeons, run medical courses and renovate local operating theatres. So, after the ship leaves a port, hope and healing remain.

The global surgery crisis is a tragedy the Church can change. Together we can eradicate the diseases of poverty. Whoever you are, find out how you can join in with this exciting mission."

How can we help?

Saint Mary's One World Group will be co-ordinating support for Mercy Ships for the next couple of years. During that time any money we raise will be sent to the charity to help them to provide free, safe surgery and medical care.



Harvest Collection

The harvest collection will be dedicated to Mercy Ships. For details of how you can become involved see the harvest flier elsewhere in this copy of Centrepiece.

To find out more about Mercy Ships, see the website www.mercyships.org.uk

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Celebrating Harvest at
StaffordChurches
Saint Chad : Collegiate Church of Saint Mary : Saint Leonard
Harvest Festival Services
Sunday 4th October at St Leonard's
10.00 am Parish Eucharist
The service at St Leonard's will be followed by an auction of local produce. Tea and cake available.
Sunday 18th October
8.30am at St Chad's
Parish Eucharist
10.00am at St Mary's
Family Eucharist


ST LEONARDS CHURCH
Christmas Beetle Drive
Saturday 21st November 2026
7.30PM
AT NORTHEND COMMUNITY CENTRE, HOLMCROFT ROAD, STAFFORD,ST16 1JG
Evening includes Beetle Drive Game and light refreshments
Tickets: Adults £6 Children £4
Tickets available on the door
Enquires: stleonardmarston@outlook.com
Christmas Raffle tickets will be on sale with the raffle being drawn on the night, 1st prize £100 and lots of other wonderful prizes

StaffordChurches **Harvest Appeal 2026**

Mercy Ships is a faith-based international organisation which sponsors two hospital ships: *Africa Mercy* and *Global Mercy*. These ships are sent to developing countries in Africa delivering vital, free healthcare to people in desperate need.

Please consider making a donation this harvest enabling Mercy Ships to reach more people in need of health care. Donation envelopes, available in St. Mary's, can be returned during October.

Cheques payable to **St. Mary's Church Stafford**
A card reader is available in St. Mary's
To pay direct to the bank use these details:
Account name: The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Stafford St. Mary
Ref: Mercy Ships Account No: 00032434 Sort Code: 40 52 40

Further details of the work of Mercy Ships can be found on the One World Group noticeboard in St. Mary's porch.
Or see the website: www.mercyships.org.uk

House of Bread and Christian Food Help Stafford

During this season of harvest we're making an increased effort to support these two local charities in their efforts to help homeless and vulnerable people and those struggling with the rising cost of living.

Please help if you can by donating any of these:

- **Tinned meals and puddings**
- **Tinned vegetables, including potatoes**
- **Toiletries, new underwear and socks**
- **Tea and coffee**

Please bring items for the harvest appeal to St. Mary's on 11th, 18th or 25th October

All donations will be sent to the charities.

StaffordChurches

Saint Chad : Collegiate Church of Saint Mary : Saint Leonard

Coffee Concerts



October 10th

Jill Crossland (Piano recital)

October 24th

Margaret Outen (Soprano)
& John Savage (Piano)

November 14th

Fourtissimo!

November 28th

VocaBella



Join us at St. Mary's Church, Stafford
Doors Open 10:30am. Free Admission.
Donations Gratefully Received

Cometh the Hour: Cometh the Man



This photograph has just been given to St Mary's of the Rev Lionel Lambert who was Rector of Stafford. from 1904 until 1944. He is dressed as clergy often were towards the end of the Victorian era. No dog collar just a clerical cravat with a withering look to match. Rector Lambert was often seen striding about the town in his top hat and frock coat. My own grandmother had this particular memory of him. In those days the clergy dressed to impress! He was a formidable figure.

In such times Bishops were respectful of the Rectors of Stafford but relationships became strained. Rector Lambert was an avid amateur historian. He was convinced that St Mary's was a Royal Free Chapel, a status that had been abolished in 1548, and that the Bishop had no jurisdiction in the parish. At his own expense he took the Bishop of Lichfield to the Chancery Court to free St Mary's from the shackles of the Diocese. He lost! Unlike many of his successors he was never made a Prebendary of the Cathedral.

As befitted his status Rector Lambert lived in a huge vicarage with a walled garden which stood on the site of the Broad Street car park. It was later demolished to build the first Sainsbury's in the area and is soon to be the site of the latest extension to Stafford College. Ever since the Rectory has never quite settled down and has moved from place to place.

To the folks in the town Rector Lambert was known as "Daddy Lambert." although obviously not to his face. Was this because he wished to be addressed as " Father"? It's unlikely. Such a title with its papist undertones would hardly be fitting for the Rector of Stafford's Civic Church! The more likely explanation is that Rector Lambert lost two sons in action during the Great War, Geoffrey killed in 1916 and Alistair killed just 17 days before the Armistice of 1918.

Would we welcome a reincarnation of Rector Lambert to fill the present vacancy? It comes as no surprise that that he had little time for lay leadership. After the passing of the Enabling Act in 1919 and when two years later St Mary's was compelled to elect a PCC, the Rector was accompanied by his solicitor to the first meeting to make sure that the laity didn't over step the mark. Rector Lambert would feel most uncomfortable in the present age and we would feel much the same about him.

How then is Rector Lambert best remembered? Some would point to the magnificent Harrison Organ as his legacy but in its present condition this is more of a liability. What should be celebrated is that Lionel Lambert had the strength of character to keep the faith alive in the years of the Great War, the Jarrow March, the General Strike and the rise of Fascism. The 1920s and 1930s were times of great turmoil. In an age of immense spiritual doubt Rector Lambert and clergy like him ministered to their parishioners and each year at personal cost stood dutifully at the local war memorial leading the people faithfully in worship.

Michael Newman

Generosity Review

Many thanks to those who completed the Generosity Review questionnaire, either on-line or on paper. The results were collated, analysed and presented to us at a diocese-led workshop on 6th October. It allowed us to see what we do well and where there is more to be done. Particularly we could do better in emphasising to you the importance of your generosity to St. Mary's and generosity as part of faith. These are themes that the PCC, clergy and wardens will be pursuing in the coming weeks in the hope of initiating some helpful actions.

Paul Howard

A Time to Remember

Get your tickets before they all go.

The RBL Stafford poppy appeal launch 2026 is coming on Monday the 19th of October. This award-winning show is FREE and you can NOW book your seats online just by going to the Gatehouse Web page. I also now can reveal that Laura Stanyer, from the Local band The Naked Sundays, will be joining her Husband Martin Paul. Flight Sergeant Stefan Amison, from RAF High Wycombe, will provide narration. We will also enjoy the powerful voice of Maria Kelly, with Jim Milgate-Scarrott's music, and not forgetting the School children from Castle Church Primary school. It's going to be an amazing afternoon of Remembrance. Book Now. It's free and we have some very special VIP's coming along as well.

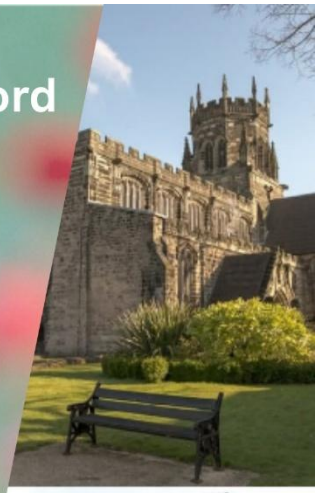
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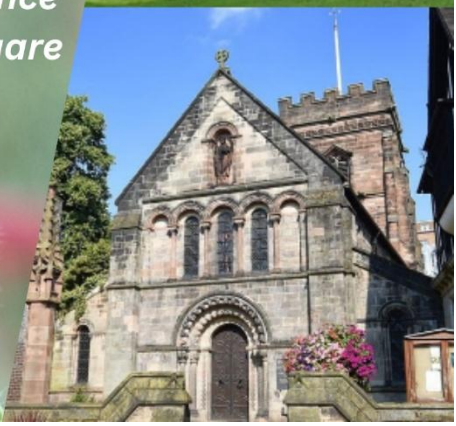
Remembrance in Stafford

Sunday 8th November
8.30am at Saint Chad's
9.45am at Saint Mary's
The Three Parishes Eucharist
11.00am at the
Borough War Memorial
Act of Remembrance

11th November
Armistice Day
11.00am
Act of Remembrance
in the Market Square







StaffordChurches.uk
@StaffordChurch
Saint Chad : Collegiate Church of Saint Mary : Saint Leonard


StaffordChurches.uk
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Saint Chad : Collegiate Church of Saint Mary : Saint Leonard
Requiem Eucharist
Remembering
our departed
Music by
Gabriel Faure
Saturday 7th November 2026
12 noon at the
Collegiate Church of St Mary in Stafford
The Choir of the Collegiate Church
Director of Music: Margaret Outen
Organist: Tim Sagar

R N Clarke

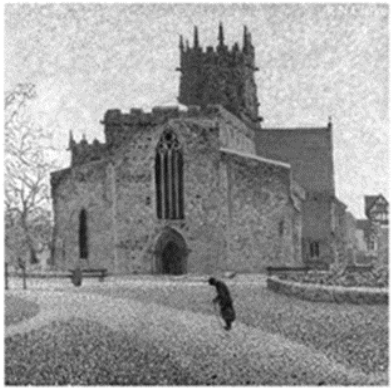
Paintings, drawings and watercolours of R N Clarke

Gallery address

R N Clarke Fine Art
Suite No1, St Mary's Mews,
St Mary's Place,
Stafford ST16 2AP

The Gallery is **Open by Appointment**
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richard.n.clarke@outlook.com

The Gallery also holds occasional
Open Days



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The Arts Society Stafford

We meet at the Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, usually on the third Tuesday in the month. Lectures start at 1.45pm.
Membership for the year from 1st April costs just £60 giving access to 10 lectures. Guest attendance fee for introductory lecture - £10

Next lectures:

October 20th 2026 Beauty in truth.
The past, present & future of Botanical Illustration
Lecturer Timothy Walker

November 17th 2026: AGM followed by Pantomime
When the Fairy's over 50 A revealing look at professional panto from someone who was born into it. The famous names, the greatest dames and the old routines.
Lecturer Tyler Butterworth

www.theartssocietystafford.org.uk



We join together every week day morning at 9 am online to say Morning Prayer and we would love you to join us!

Just one day or five, and join just to listen or to take part.
It is a wonderful way to start the day!

Interested?

Contact Rev. Pam Merriott (pamamerriott@ gmail.com)
or Ruth Duffy. (r.m.duffy@me.com)

The Soup Kitchen



This beautiful 16th Century eating house offers the ideal place to meet your friends and is described in The Times as "Stafford's hidden gem". Visitors from all over the world regularly return and comment 'there is nowhere else that compares in atmosphere, traditional old-fashioned service and genuine warm welcome which is unique to Stafford's Soup Kitchen

Church Lane Antiques



A wide selection of antiques for sale, including furniture, pictures, pottery, glass, silver and jewellery.

We are always interested in buying; from single items to house clearance.

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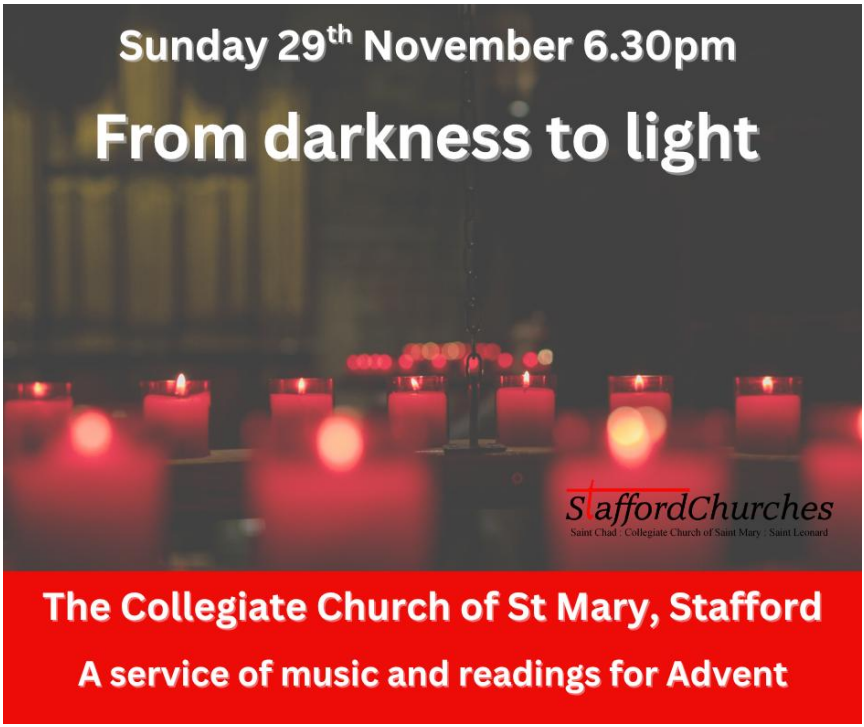


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Sunday 29th November 6.30pm
From darkness to light
StaffordChurches
Saint Chad | Collegiate Church of Saint Mary | Saint Leonard
The Collegiate Church of St Mary, Stafford
A service of music and readings for Advent


St Mary's Stafford
Christmas Tree
FESTIVAL 2026
Wednesday 2nd
to
Tuesday 8th
December
StaffordChurches.uk

CHURCH CONTACTS

St. Mary's

Churchwardens Sue Savage
Paul Howard

Bellringers Selwyn Jones 242116

One World Group Pauline Roycroft 244556

Julian Meeting Sheila Young 252023

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Email: margaretouten@hotmail.co.uk

Planned Giving Secretary…. Chris Bown…. 07804 595964
Email: chrisbown@btinternet.com

St. Chad's

Churchwardens Ian Carr……...07714913079
Carla Lewis

St. Leonard's

Churchwarden Gail Wray …..01889 271176

WEBSITES:

Website for StaffordChurches: www.staffordchurches.uk
St Mary's Website: www.stmarysstafford.org.uk
St. Chad's Website: www.stchadsstafford.co.uk
Why not follow us on Twitter? @staffordchurch
Facebook: staffordchurches.uk

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If you would like to advertise an event, comment on one you have attended or just share something interesting with us – then please do so.
Email us at: *parishoffice@stmarysstafford.org.uk*
Deadline for the next issue is November 15th 2026.