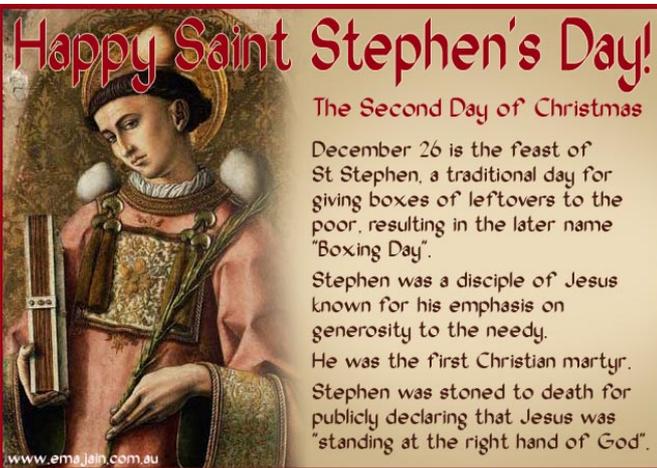


A VERY HAPPY FEAST OF ST. STEPHEN



The Second Day of Christmas

December 26 is the feast of St Stephen, a traditional day for giving boxes of leftovers to the poor, resulting in the later name "Boxing Day".
 Stephen was a disciple of Jesus known for his emphasis on generosity to the needy. He was the first Christian martyr. Stephen was stoned to death for publicly declaring that Jesus was "standing at the right hand of God".

A PRAYER ABOUT OMICRON

O God who holds us in the palm of your hand, be a nurse to us, we pray, in this time of distress and uncertainty. Heal us from this disease which we barely understand. We ask you to lift all who have been brought low, to sustain all who are fearful, and to protect those whose livelihoods are under threat. Make us wise in our decisions about what we should do and, when we should change our plans. Lead us on into a new year knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Jesus Christ, born among us. **Amen.**

A prayer from Uganda

Blessed are you, O Christ child, that your cradle was so low that shepherds, poorest and simplest of earthly people could kneel beside you and look, level-eyed, into the face of God. **Amen.**

CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2021

Date	Time	Service	Location
Thursday, 30th December	10.00am	Patronal Festival Mass	Holy Innocents
Friday, 31st December	11.00pm	Watchnight Mass	St. Mark

'NAME A STAR' AT CHRISTMASTIDE

Following the success of last year's 'Name a Star' fundraiser, **this year's Appeal** will run until Sunday 6th February at Candlemas (or the Presentation of Christ in the Temple which actually falls on Wednesday, 2nd February).

You're invited to purchase a star, at the cost of £5 in the name of a loved one who has been and/or still is a Star which brightens up your life.

You can of course, purchase as many stars as you would like and we will hang them on the Christmas tree. The only difference to last year is that there won't be a video of the Named Stars but that doesn't prohibit you from taking photos /videos of your Stars on the tree.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY.

Welcome to the United Benefice of South Norwood Holy Innocents and St. Mark

Sharing God's grace and love in our community



26th December 2021

Vicar: The Revd. Canon Roxanne F. Eversley
Asst. Priest: Mother Susan Wheeler-Kiley
Reader: Mrs. Cicelyn Hinds

St. Stephen's Day

10.00am Parish Mass

President and Preacher: Mother Roxanne

2Chronicles 24.20-22 * Psalm 119. 161-168 * Acts 7.51-60 * Matthew 10.17-22

Access online worship via

www.youtube.com/c/StMarksSouthNorwood

CHURCH NOTICES

Until further notice, both Parishes will continue to meet for worship at Saint Mark for the 8am & 10am Sunday Masses; and at Holy Innocents for the weekday Mass on Thursdays at 10am.

Pastoral Care: Mother Roxanne is available on Tel. 020 8916 1830 or 07723 038215 or mtrroxanne@gmail.com She is not available on Mondays or Mother Susan (07890 780572) on Fridays.

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We pray: for Archbishops Justin and Stephen; Bishops Christopher, Jonathan, Richard and Karowei in this Diocese; and the Bishops in our link Dioceses in Zimbabwe.

For the homeless, the hungry and the unloved, for broken families, for those in prison and for those separated from their families at this Christmastide. For the Church's solidarity with those who are persecuted.

For the Bishops, priests and people of the Diocese of North East India – The (united) Church of North India; and for the Bishops, priests and people of the Anglican Church of the Region of Central America.

For the sick: Richard, Helen, Jennifer & Reuben, Marie-Gabrielle, Amanda, Rose, Caroline, Sigi, Anecka, Lynn, Ronald, Tommy, Ena, Adeline, Akos, Peggy, Rudolph, Stephanie, Pamela, Barry, Dennis, Linda, Greta, David, Oslene, Anthony, Adrian, Barbara, Jacqueline, Jackie, Anton. **For the bereaved:** Ann and the Mulholland family. **For the recently departed:** Kenny Mulholland. **Years Mind.**

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 Thank you to members of both parishes for all your hard work during this unpredictable COVID-19 year as together we 'kept the show on the road'. Thank you for your presence at both online and in-person worship and for your good wishes at Christmas. As we look forward to a New Year full of peace, good health, we give thanks for God's grace and mercy during 2021.

COLLECT

Gracious Father,
who gave the first martyr Stephen,
grace to pray for those who took up
stones against him:
grant that in all our sufferings for the
truth
we may learn to love even our
enemies and
to seek forgiveness for those who
desire our hurt,
looking up to heaven to him who was
crucified for us,
Jesus Christ, our Mediator and
Advocate,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

2 Chronicles 24. 20-22

A reading from the Second Book of Chronicles

The spirit of God took possession of Zechariah son of the priest Jehoiada; he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus says God: Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, he has also forsaken you." But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the Lord. King Joash did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah's father, had shown him, but killed his son. As he was dying, he said, "May the Lord see and avenge!"

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

PSALM 119. 161-168

Refrain: Let my cry come before you, O Lord

Rulers have persecuted me without a cause,
but my heart stands in awe of your word.
I am as glad because of your promise
as one who finds great spoils. **R**

As for lies, I hate and abhor them,
but your law is my love.
Seven times a day do I praise you,
because of your righteous
judgements. **R**

Great peace have they who love your
law;
for them there is no stumbling block.
I have hoped for your salvation, O
Lord,
and I have fulfilled your
commandments. **R**

I have kept your decrees
and I have loved them deeply.
I have kept your commandments and
decrees,
for all my ways are before you. **R**

SECOND READING Acts 7.51-60

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Stephen said to the council, "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it." When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

GOSPEL

Matthew 10.17-22

Alleluia, alleluia.
I see the heavens opened
and the Son of Man standing at the
right hand of God.
Alleluia.

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus
Christ according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his apostles, "Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ.

POST COMMUNION

Merciful Lord,
we thank you for the signs of your
mercy
revealed in birth and death:
save us by the coming of your Son,
and give us joy in honouring your
servant Stephen,
first martyr of the new Israel;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.