

St Stephen's Ealing

Once in royal David's city,
Stood a lowly cattle shed;
Where a mother laid her baby,
In a manger for His bed.
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little Child.

Once in Royal David's City - Carol Frances Humphreys Alexander Henry John Gault
Public Domain

St Stephen's
News
Dec 2025

A note from the Vicar

In the legendary words of 70s rock sensation Noddy Holder, 'IT'S CHRISTMAS!!!'

Well, not quite. As this issue of St Stephen's News comes out, there's still the best part of a month before the big day. And as this issue highlight, there's still plenty to be enjoyed before then.

You'll know, I'm sure, the chorus of Noddy Holder's hit 'Merry Xmas Everybody':

So here it is, Merry Christmas.

Everybody's having fun.

Look to the future now,

It's only just begun. (Or should it say begu-u-un?)

Reminiscing on the song 40 years after its initial release, Holder explained that the Christmas chart-topper was written to lift the spirits of the British people during a time of great economic hardship. He suggested that Christmas was a time to forget about the difficulties and to start looking to a brighter future instead.

Whilst I hate to spoil a Christmas classic, there's a problem with that message. When emotional highs are whipped up in an effort to forget about the difficulties we face, the come down hurts. Hence the January blues, as the reality of the daily grind kicks back in. But it's also not true to say everybody's having fun at Christmas. Last year Age UK did some research which said that 1 million older people feel more isolated at Christmas than at any other time of the year¹. This year is surely set to be the same.



When Christmas festivity is whipped up, the come down is hard. But the festivity doesn't have to be whipped up, because at the heart of the Christmas message is a God who comes to us, who embraces every difficulty we face in life, and who promises to be with us in those difficulties not just in the future but right now. That's what we see in the baby laid in a manger: God with us. God with us now.

In a funny way, that means the future has indeed only just begun. But it's not for the reason Holder offered. It's because in Jesus, the eternal God, the Creator of all things, the One who holds the future and the past has come to be with us in our present. And that is good news of great joy, good news worth sharing.

There will be plenty going on at St Stephen's over the coming weeks. Do join with as much as you want or can. And may you know the joy of Christ Jesus with you now and ever more.

¹ <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/articles/2024/loneliness-research-christmas-campaign/> Published 4th December 2024. Accessed 30th November 2025.

Weekly Services

Monday & Friday	9:00am	Morning Prayer in Meeting Room
Tuesday & Thursday	9:00am	Morning Prayer on Zoom (email admin@ststephens-ealing.org for details)
Wednesday	10:00am	Midweek Communion
Sunday	9:00am	Traditional Holy Communion
	10:30am	Informal Service (with children & youth groups)

Monthly Calendar

December

Tuesday 2nd	8:00pm	Monthly Prayer Gathering
Sunday 7th	1:45pm 3:30pm	Carols of Praise at St David's Christian Aid event with the Bishop of London
Wednesday 10th	8:00pm	Book Club
Friday 12th	3:30-5:30pm	Christmas Tea for over 70s
Sunday 14th	6:00pm	Carol Service
Wednesday 24th	2:00pm 4:30pm 11:30pm	Christingle and Nativity Service Christingle and Nativity Service Midnight Communion
Thursday 25th	10:30am	Whole Church Communion Celebration
Sunday 28th	10:00am	Whole Church Communion

January

Saturday 17th	6:00pm	Curry Night
Wednesday 21st	8:00pm	Alpha

Notices

Monthly Prayer Meeting

Tuesday 2nd December 2025 at 8pm. Our monthly meeting to pray for the life of St Stephen's, our local community and the wider world. Open to all, we also spend time listening for God's voice and in praise.

St David's Care Home Services

Our St Stephen's team will be running a Carols of Praise service on **Sunday 7th December at 1:45pm** and a Communion Service on **Monday 15th December at 11:30am**. If you can join us, it's a good opportunity to meet the residents and support the Church's work at St David's. For more details, contact Sally Horattides or Pete Devereux, details on the back page.

A service of Challenge and Hope

As Christian Aid celebrates 80 years please join us on **Sunday 7th December at 3:30pm** for worship and a sermon from the Chair of Christian Aid, Bishop Sarah Mullally. We will hear how the unstoppable power of hope continues to inspire and challenge us to unite in the fight against poverty and injustice. No need to book.

Book Club

This month we meet on **10th December at 8:00pm**. Due to illness last month we will be discussing two books, Gabriel's Moon by William Boyd and The Hike by Lucy Clarke. And as is our tradition we will be meeting at The Drayton Court Pub. The group is open to all. No need to book, just turn up or speak to [Morgen Edwards](#) for more information.

The Grumpy Owl and the Joy of Christmas

The Artless Theatre Company will be putting on a show at St Paul's, Ealing on **Saturday 6th December**. There will be two showings at 2:00pm and 4:00pm. Ticket are £5 each. A tale of joy, friendship, and the true meaning of the nativity based on the children's book The Grumpy Owl and the Joy of Christmas. [Click here for the poster and to book tickets.](#)

Generosity in Giving - Pledges

Many of you have returned your pledges - do please make any changes now! If you have not yet decided what to do or how to start giving if you are new to all this or have any questions, do contact our Treasurer Jane Maffett or the vicar for a confidential chat. Details on the back cover.

Harvest

Just a quick note to say as well as the food donations we sent £808.00 to Ealing Foodbank. Thank you!

Curry Night

Monday 19th January has been dubbed 'Blue Monday', supposedly the saddest day of the year when it is dark outside, people feel at their most low and their mental health is struggling. In a bid to shine some light in the darkness we are holding a Curry Night on **Saturday 17th January at 6:00pm**. Morgen Edwards, our Comms Manager & Children's worker, is looking for anyone who would be willing to join the team, make a dish, be it a main, a side/rice dish or something else yummy. If you would be up for cooking please speak to Morgen on Sunday or email admin@ststephens-ealing.org. The event is for the whole family so children are welcome. Why not invite a friend along to join us.

Christmas Notices

Christmas Fair

Thanks to everyone who contributed in any way to this event last month or indeed just came. The atmosphere was great, we saw many of our friends and neighbours. We raised £3,750.00 for the work of Gurnell Grove Community Church, helping launch their new Community Grocery.

Christmas Fliers

From **Sunday 7th December** we will have a number of labelled bundles of fliers for our Christmas services. Please take a bundle and deliver them to our local roads.

Christmas Collections

As usual we will be taking exit collections at all of our Christmas services. These will be divided equally between Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter and Tearfund. Please come prepared to give and if possible gift aid your donation if you can.

Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter

This has now begun in the first few churches. We will be hosting WNS again in the new year. Recruitment of volunteers will start in January. In the meantime please pray for the guests, host churches and volunteers.

Christians Against Poverty

At our service on **Sunday 14th December** we will be receiving food hampers put together by various groups in Church. They will be delivered to clients of Ealing CAP. For more information please see overleaf.

Christmas Tea for over 70s

We will be holding our annual Christmas Tea for over 70s on **Friday 12th December 3:30-5:30pm**. If you have not yet received an invitation or not yet replied please email jane@ststephens-ealing.org.

Holly and Ivy

Sally Lamond will be decorating the church on **Saturday 13th December**. She is looking for long lengths of Ivy and branches of Holly, preferably with berries. If you are able to harvest either of the above please drop them to church on 11th, 12th or the morning of 13th. If you would like further details please speak to Sally directly.

Christmas Tree Decorating

We will be decorating our Christmas Tree on **Thursday 11th December** from 10:00am. It's lots of fun and we would welcome a team of people to help us. If you are able to come along please do let Morgen Edwards know via email admin@ststephens-ealing.org. No need to bring anything other than enthusiasm.

Christmas Book Trolley

During Advent please feel free to take a look at the book trolley during cafe time each Sunday. There are Advent and Christmas books available. All books are free to borrow. If you need a help or a suggestion please speak to Sally Horattides.

Mission Partner

Update

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is another of our mission partners.

How did CAP begin?

CAP was started by a man called John Kirkby in 1996. He believed God was calling him to sacrifice his career in finance and use his knowledge of the industry to help those in need. Starting in his home town of Bradford, John helped families facing eviction, those who couldn't feed their children and those without help. Using his expertise he negotiated with creditors and set up systems to offer a life line to those trapped in debt.

Who are they today?

Although CAP is a Christian charity they will actively help anyone who needs their assistance. Working across all four nations of the UK, CAP has rapidly grown its Debt Centre network to tackle the causes of debt and poverty. As well as Debt Help they offer practical advice on living on a low income through Life Skills groups as well as supporting people stepping into employment through Job Clubs. Their training for staff is approved by the Money and Pensions Service

and their services are award winning.

"We're on a mission to release people across the UK from poverty, to enable churches to help end poverty through their communities, and to encourage people to live with faith, actively served by their church."

Since 2010 over 33,000 have become debt free

How do we support them?

As well as tithing to them, every Christmas our Connect and Children's Groups each take on one family or individual to provide with a luxury hamper. Some of the items we would usually include: a toy for any children, cupboard staples, or treats. Household items are often well received as well as festive items like Christmas crackers.

If you are not part of a Connect Group but would like to provide something for one of the hampers please speak to Morgen Edwards or email admin@ststephens-ealing.org.



**St Stephen's
Ealing**



**Christmas
Stories**

A welcome from our Staff Team



We are so glad to have you join us during this festive season. Whether you are a regular, are visiting from another church or are new to church altogether you are so welcome.

St Stephen's is a warm, welcoming church and we believe God has called us to be a 'Community growing in the love of Jesus' and for us to share that love with our local community and beyond.

As well as a range of different services, over the last year, we have been involved in various activities like the Ealing Half Marathon. We've held quizzes, a Women's Clothes Swap, parties like the Light Party and bring-and-share lunches. We continue to support Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter by hosting up to 14 guests each February/March as well as our other Mission Partners.

2025 has been a year of new beginnings with the arrival of our new Vicar, David Baylor, and his family.

Now we come together to celebrate Christmas and the birth of Jesus who was foretold and came to give us unconditional love and joy. Jesus taught us how to love God, ourselves and our neighbours. Ultimately Jesus gave his life for each of us so that we can live hope filled lives.

In this booklet you will find stories of faith from three members of our congregation.

We would love to welcome you to any of our friendly services on Wednesdays or Sundays or to one of our upcoming events. Please see details overleaf.



Lucy's Story

Church has been part of my life always, and St Stephen's was a big part of my childhood. I sang in the choir, volunteered at coffee mornings and helped run the sound system at services. It gave me a real sense of belonging. My favourite evening in the week was Thursday when I could forget my worries and sing at Choir Practice. When I moved back to Ealing in 2016, it felt natural to return to St Stephen's, and it has been especially meaningful to me that Thea was baptised here.

St Stephen's is also where I met one of my best friends when we were about ten years old. That friendship has lasted through everything. It was she who introduced me to the choir which I am forever thankful for. When we were living in Hampton, we attended church together every week with our children. I am godmother to her daughter, and she is my oldest son's godmother—roles that are very special to me and reflect the enduring bonds that church helps create.

For me, the heart of church life is the people and the sense of community, but it's the music and singing that bring me closest to my faith. Joining the choir at Christmas and encouraging the boys to help with music for the children's Christmas service are ways I try to contribute and stay connected.

Being part of St Stephen's continues to inspire me, not just on Sundays, but in how I try to live out my faith day to day—through kindness, compassion, and looking out for others, both at church and in my work.



Michael's Story

I was born in Leeds, Yorkshire, to Ghanaian parents and grew up in a lively, close-knit family where Sunday school with my brothers and sisters was a regular part of life. I was confirmed at St Peter's Church in Wakefield, where my faith took root and has guided me ever since.

Fifteen years ago, when my father passed

away, accompanying my mother to church helped rekindle that faith and deepen my sense of purpose.

In St Stephen's I found a welcoming community that encourages everyone to worship in a way that feels authentic and heartfelt. I'm continually inspired by the church's work supporting local causes such as the Ealing Soup Kitchen, Ealing Foodbank, the Winter Night Shelter and the Ealing Debt Centre. It's a church that's full of life and activity, making a real difference in Ealing.

For our children Ella, Mimi and Joseph, St Stephen's provides a nurturing space to grow and learn about kindness and compassion, especially in a world full of distractions and influences that can so easily pull our focus away from caring for others and living with love at the centre of all we do.



Jack's Story

I grew up in a Christian household to the North of London in the much-loved St Albans, Hertfordshire, to an Irish Catholic Dad, and Swiss Protestant Mum. Church and faith were always a big part of my family upbringing, but for me growing up, it was a disappointing consequence of not having a football match to play that Sunday. Fast forward to now and I work for this wonderful church, St Stephen's; our God is really full of surprises.

My faith journey hasn't been straightforward. I fell away from my faith during my teenage

years especially, and felt like I had messed up so many times that God wasn't happy with me anymore. Whenever I did feel at my lowest and reached out to God, I felt like He was present and leading me home. I started attending church on my own once I moved to London, and during COVID really found my own faith, and decided to live the rest of my life for God. Although it isn't always easy to follow, it truly has been the best decision I have ever made.

I love St Stephen's as it does feel like a big family, and is wonderfully multi-generational from under 1 years of age to over 80! It represents how wide and vast the family of God is, and where people are on there different walks of faith. I feel God's encouragement as to where we are going as a church, with David leading us and new people coming every week.

I encourage everyone reading this to do two things: one, look at the world around us, how beautifully and uniquely it was created for us, and think about what that means. And two, to come to a church service and hear how much that Creator, God of the universe, loves you.

Regular Services at St Stephen's

Morning Prayer

9:00am

Monday & Friday we meet in person in our Meeting Room.

Tuesday & Thursday we meet online via zoom.

Wednesday morning Communion

10:00am

A short service of Holy Communion from Common Worship.

Sundays

9:00am - Traditional Communion Service following Common Worship liturgy and hymns.

10:30am - Informal Service (Livestreamed)

This service also includes groups for Children and Young People (except for the first Sunday of each month) and sung Worship is lead by a vibrant band.

Coming up next year.

Curry Night

Saturday 17th January 2026 at 6:00pm

Monday 19th January has been named as the saddest day of the year aka Blue Monday. To chase away the blues why not come along and join us for our Curry Night. An evening of great home-made food and fellowship. So we have an idea of numbers please [sign up here](#). Alternatively please email Morgen Edwards admin@ststephens-ealing.org

Alpha

Wednesday 21st January at 7:45pm

We are excited to be offering an Alpha course starting in January. It will run for 10 weeks with one Saturday. If you are starting your faith journey or just have questions this could be the course for you. If you would like more information or to sign up please go to [our website](#).

Christmas Traditions

We asked some of our members what Christmas traditions they have or remember from growing up.

By Morgen Edwards

The German side of my family celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve. My mum's Tante und Onkel lived on a dairy farm with woods behind it. The house had very large rooms with tall ceilings so Onkel Jochen would go out into the woods and cut down a Christmas tree on the day before Christmas Eve. I have memories of the tree being so tall it curled over at the top! Then Tante Inge would decorate the room by herself. No one was allowed to enter the room!

Then on Christmas Eve, in a downstairs bathroom I would be playing with the really big fish that was swimming in the tub! We'd then go to church and when we'd come back, Tante Inge would cook dinner, and I would go to find the fish again, but the fish would be gone! We'd then have dinner. Can you guess what it was?

Once dinner was over a bell would ring. That would mean that Weihnachtsman aka Santa Claus had been and we could enter the living room. Our family tradition was that the first person to enter the room and welcome in the family was the youngest and for the longest time that was me! To be a small child opening up the door to a fully decorated room with a ginormous Christmas tree covered with real candles and chocolate wreaths that I could help myself to, with piles of presents underneath, was magical! There'd be a roaring fire, and my great aunt would always make me a homemade gingerbread house with sweets all over it.

Nowadays we celebrate in a more traditional British way but I remember the big trees, the candles, the gingerbread houses, and the fish, with fondness.



By Caroline Jonsson

I grew up in Sri Lanka, where Christmas looked wonderfully different from the classic wintry scenes we often imagine. Instead of frosty windows and log fires, my childhood Christmases were filled with warm, golden evenings, the scent of tropical flowers, and the sound of families gathering outdoors long after sunset. Lights were strung across palm trees, carols & Christmas songs drifted through open windows, and the whole season felt vibrant, colourful, and full of life.

Because I'm also half Scandinavian, we celebrated Christmas on Christmas Eve – a tradition that blended beautifully with the Sri Lankan and British custom of celebrating on Christmas Day. It meant we effectively enjoyed Christmas twice. The anticipation always built throughout the day, with cooking, visitors dropping by, and the whole house buzzing. In the evening, we'd sit down together for a celebratory meal that combined Sri Lankan flavours with Scandinavian touches, followed by exchanging gifts. Christmas Day was more relaxed, spent visiting extended family, sharing food, and welcoming friends who stopped in.

Having lived in the UK for many years now, my recent Christmases have been cosy, crisp, and wintry – lovely in their own right, but very different from the warmth and energy of my childhood. This year will be the first time in nearly a decade that I return to Sri Lanka for Christmas, and I'm excited for my children to experience both sides of their heritage: the tropical Christmases of my roots and the Scandinavian traditions woven through our family story. It truly feels like going home.

Christmas at St Stephen's

Christmas Tea for over 70s

Friday 12th December 3:30-5:30pm

We will be holding our annual Christmas Tea for over 70s on Friday 12th December. If you have not yet received an invitation or not yet replied please email jane@ststephens-ealing.org.

Carol Service

Sunday 14th December at 6:00pm

A traditional Carol Service with a choir and supported by a fabulous Brass section. This service will be livestreamed on our YouTube channel.

Christmas Eve

Christingle and Nativity Service 2:00 & 4:30pm

This year we are excited to be offering two Christingle and Nativity Services. Both services are suitable for the whole family, however, the earlier service will be aimed at pre-school aged children. There will be refreshments after both services.

Midnight Communion 11:30pm

A traditional Communion service to worship together as we welcome in Christmas Day.



Christmas Day

10:30am

A whole church Celebration with Communion to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Children of all ages are encouraged to bring a present with them to show the church.

Sunday 28th December

10:00am

We will be having one service this day at 10:00am. This service will be a mix of our traditional and informal services like our 'Summer Sundays' and will include Communion.

New Year

4th January 2026

Our usual format of two services, 9:00am and 10:30am will return. This Sunday we will be celebrating Epiphany.



Eco Note

What exactly is Fairtrade? And what goods are marked with the trade mark? The logo comes in many colours but all mean the same standard guaranteeing that a minimum price has been paid to cover the cost of sustainable production as has a Fairtrade Premium. The Premium is an additional sum of money which is paid to the co-operative for workers and farmers to improve their communities e.g. training in how to grow their crops sustainably; a communal seed bank; ovens to bake their bread; a Health Clinic or school or whatever that co-operative feels is most needed.

All Fairtrade items are grown in the equatorial belt – Central America, the Caribbean islands, Africa, India, China and Indonesia and they are the worst affected by Climate Change. So please buy FAIRTRADE.

An update from Ellie Maffett

Ellie is one of our Mission Partners with UFM and is based in Greece. [Click here](#) for her latest prayer letter and update.

To find out more about what Ellie is doing with UFM and her work in Athens please [click here](#).

Ealing Foodbank

Please [visit their website](#) for the latest list of food items they need. If you would like to make a large practical donation, please take it directly to the Foodbank at:

St Mellitus Church Hall,
1 Church Road,
Hanwell W7 3BB.

Donations are accepted at the following times:
Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 9:30-11:00am
Wednesday: 9:30am to 3:30pm

Church and Parish Prayer

[Please click here for our monthly prayer diary](#) for all who consider St Stephen's, Ealing to be their spiritual home.

These are the roads in our Parish we are praying for this month. Please pray for all those who live there and for people to know our Saviour, Jesus:

Ruislip Road East Argyle Close

Brentside Close Crossway

Peal Gardens

Reflections on a year at St Stephen's

by Hannah Baylor



I can't quite believe it's been a year since we arrived at St Stephen's!

Our daughter Clara is a good track of our journey here: I was pregnant with her at the Willesden Clergy Open Day where we first heard about a church called St Stephen's, Ealing; I was due the week of the application closing date; and I had a wrinkly, non-sleeping, two-week old when David abandoned me along with a toddler to go to interview. In a pique of hormones I may have told him to come back with a job or else! And now Clara's walking, talking, and taking people hostage each Sunday by falling asleep on them! What a year...

Let me offer some quick reflections on this past year as a mum, as a wife, and as a follower of Jesus:

As a mum, I am overwhelmed by how God has blessed us. POLO is a highlight of my month, I love how free and happy Josiah and Clara are at church, and I'm so grateful to everyone who plays with them, loves them, and allows them to be who God has made them to be. There's not an amazing faith-retention rate for clergy kids, but I feel hopeful that St Stephen's will nurture their faith and ameliorate some of

the challenges that come with having clergy parents.

As a wife, it gives me immense joy to see my best friend doing what he's called to do. I know I'm biased, but I'm continually in awe of David's prayerfulness, thoughtfulness, compassion, and creativity. You should know the time, care, and attention he pours into every word he writes, to ensure their integrity and how they may be perceived. I love the sound of him worshipping as the music carries from his study throughout the house. I love how his face lights up when he discovers something of Jesus afresh. And whilst I don't love that he's working very long hours, I do love that I'm able to watch my trashy TV choices without his judgment!

And as a Christian, I adore being part of St Stephen's! I love getting to worship amongst a body of different backgrounds, ages, and experiences. I love that the breadth of the Church of England is represented and celebrated rather than being perceived as a barrier. I really love it here. So my words to David in my current pique of hormones are: don't you dare get a new job for a long, long, long time or else!

Alpha

Next term we plan to host an Alpha Course at St Stephen's. But what is Alpha? David answers some key questions.

What is Alpha?

Alpha is a 10-week course that provides a safe space to meet new people, unpack the basics of the Christian faith, and share your experiences. Since the first ever Alpha Course in 1990, more than 30 million people in over 175 countries around the world have experienced Alpha.

Who is it for?

Alpha is for anyone who wants to explore the Christian faith, whatever your background or beliefs. If you've got questions and genuinely want to know how the Christian faith might answer them, Alpha is for you!

What happens at an Alpha session?

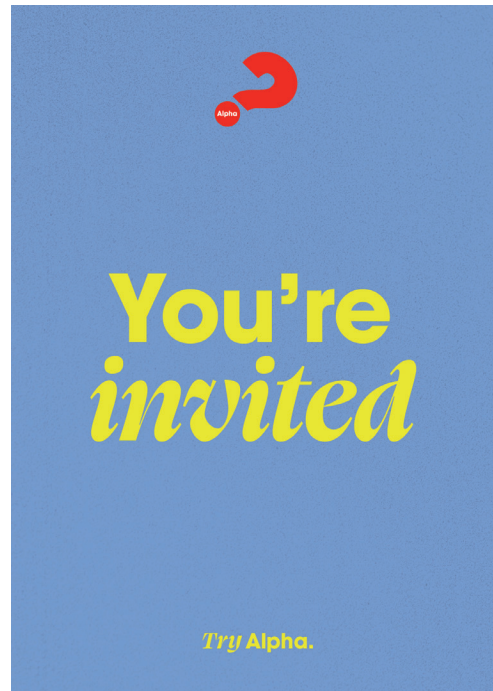
There are three key ingredients in each Alpha session: people, food and conversation. We start by talking with each other over tea, coffee and cake. We then watch a film about a big question in the Christian faith. Questions might include: Who is Jesus? Why did Jesus die? And how does God guide us? Finally, we spend time talking with each other about the things we've heard, learning from each person's unique perspective.

When does the course begin?

We are planning to start a new course running on Wednesday evenings from 21st January 2026 and taking us through to Easter. This assumes sufficient interest to make the course worthwhile for anyone who attends. There will also be one Saturday daytime session towards the middle of the course in late February / early March.

Do I have to come to the whole course?

The Alpha Course isn't designed for dipping in and out. The idea is that you commit to coming every week. Things crop up, of course they do, but you should plan to be there every week if at all possible. That said, there's no obligation to come to the whole course if you realise that it's not for



you. Come along for the first couple of weeks and try it out, and if you don't think you can continue, that's absolutely fine.

How much does it cost?

Alpha is completely free!

How can I register or find out more?

The easiest thing to do is email alpha@ststephens-ealing.org, or complete a details form by following this QR code.



Contact us

St Stephen's Church
St Stephen's Road
Ealing
London W13 8HD

Phone: 020 8991 0164

Email: admin@ststephens-ealing.org

Website: www.ststephens-ealing.org



Contact Details

David Baylor

Jack Cahill

Morgen Edwards

Stephen Turner

Jen Whadcoat

Jane Maffett

Chris and Helen
Irwin-Childs

Sally Horattides

Pete Devereux

Vicar

Premises Manager

Communications Manager &
Children's Worker

Worship and Youth Pastor

Safeguarding Officer

Treasurer

Giving Coordinators

St David's Communion

St David's Hymns of Praise

david@ststephens-ealing.org

bookings@ststephens-ealing.org

admin@ststephens-ealing.org

stephen@ststephens-ealing.org

safeguarding@ststephens-ealing.org

finance@ststephens-ealing.org

giving@ststephens-ealing.org

sallyhorattides@btopenworld.com

jandpdevereux@hotmail.co.uk