



Surface

July 2025

Dear Friends,

Growing Season

July is a month of growth. Gardens blossom, fields are full, and long evenings invite us to venture outdoors. See how sunflowers stretch toward the sun - confident, rooted, alive.

At SFC we are so grateful for all who have worked to make our church garden so beautiful. It is a wonderful place whether filled with children's laughter on a Thursday or a place of silence and prayer at other times – it is a delightful space to appreciate the beauty of our world and to see the growth in the grass, trees and shrubs.

All are welcome to enjoy our garden during our projects showcase and Garden Party on **Saturday 12th July from 12-2pm**. If you want to attend you must book a place by 6th July – for more details see page 4 & 6.

And as we move through this warmest part of the year, it's a chance to reflect on our own spiritual growth. Are we flourishing in our faith - or feeling a bit parched under the weight of the daily routine?

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians about the kind of growth the Spirit brings:

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:22–23)

It's a beautiful list - but not always an easy one to live out. Just as a garden needs care and attention - watering, pruning, weeding, grass cutting - so too does our inner life. Growth doesn't happen by accident. It takes personal commitment, time, and God's grace.

What might "spiritual gardening" look like this July?

1. Make space for God

The longer days offer natural pauses and spaces—morning light, evening stillness. Take a few minutes to read Scripture, sit in silence, or pray. You might use Psalm 1 as a guide, where the one who delights in God's Word is "like a tree planted by streams of water."

2. Look outwards

Summer often brings community events, fêtes, barbecues, garden parties, and more. These are simple but meaningful opportunities to share our life and faith with others. You don't need a platform or a plan - just a listening ear, a welcoming heart, and a readiness to love your neighbour.

Even small acts - offering a cold drink, extending an invitation, checking in on someone who may feel forgotten - can bear fruit. In these everyday interactions, we often meet Christ in the face of the stranger.

3. Trust the slow work of God

Not all growth is visible. Just as seeds germinate underground, God is often at work in ways we cannot see or measure. If you're in a season of waiting, or feeling spiritually dry, take heart. The farmer must plant then wait many months for harvest. The Lord is always faithful.

As it says in **James 5:7**:

"Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it..."

We are all growing "in season," even if our season is one of resting, healing, or simply holding on.

Whatever this month holds - whether it's full of activity or calm and quiet - may it be a time when you draw nearer to God, find joy in your community, and continue growing into the person God has called you to be.

A Prayer for July:

Lord of the harvest,
In this season of warmth and life,
Help me grow in grace,
Bear fruit in love,
And trust your work in me -
Even when I cannot see it.
Amen.

Peter



Each month Kenward Trust host a coffee morning specifically to raise funds to equip the new chapel at Kenward Trust. The next one is **Wednesday 2nd July 10:30am–3:00pm** and takes place at the Kenward café, Kenward Place, Kenward Road, Yalding, Kent, ME18 6AH. Why not make a day of it and take a stroll through their woodland walk or even meet their friendly alpacas? If you can't make the 2nd there will be another one on the **30th July**.

Surface Deadline For inclusion in the August edition of Surface Magazine - Please send all copy to Kate M by **Thursday 25th July**. If you no longer wish to receive this magazine, please contact the church administrator to **unsubscribe**. *Thank you*

Dhenis Stafford



We were saddened to hear of the death of one of our previous pastors, Dhenis Stafford. Dhenis died on Friday 27th June from an aggressive form of cancer.

Please pray for his wife Emma, and their children , Rohan and Adehle, as well as their daughter, son in law and grandchild (ren) in South Africa, as they grieve the loss of their loved one. We understand all the family were with him when he died.

May “the God of all comfort .who comforts us in all our troubles” (2 Corinthians 1 v3 - 4) give them His peace and comfort at this difficult time for them Maggie

Garden Party Information and Booking

I hope you are able to attend and are looking forward to the upcoming Garden Party and Activities Showcase which will be held on the **12th July at SFC**. The time suggested is **from 12noon until around 2pm** but you are certainly welcome to linger longer in the afternoon until the last keyholder wants to go home!

The Garden Party is an opportunity to celebrate the completion of the garden refurbishment and we hope on the day that the weather will allow us to fully enjoy this lovely space. If it is raining the event will still go ahead and will be held mostly inside but we can still enjoy the outlook! Some craft activities for children will also be available.

We also thought this we would be a good time mid-year to continue to acknowledge all the activities that go on in the Building for the benefit of the local community and all that goes on behind the scenes to keep the Church as an organisation and charity running professionally and sustainably. All of our activity leaders will have displays that will represent the vibrant and supportive projects that go on every week and month. This may be of particular interest to those only more recently attending the Church or on the fringe of Church life who hear the different activities mentioned from time to time but do not perhaps know exactly what takes place and how they could get involved. Even if we are already involved in something or have been at SFC many years, I am sure we will all enjoy sharing and seeing these displays and probably will learn something new too!

A simple lunch of hot dogs and burgers with vegetarian alternatives will be provided at no cost along with the likes of crisps, popcorn and hot and cold drinks. If you would like something different to meet your dietary preferences or want to add to what is being provided to create more of a ‘picnic’, then please bring such produce along yourself.

To help with catering and set up we do ask that everyone uses the Churchsuite online booking system at this link <https://staplehurstfreechurch.churchsuite.com/events/0k7oceyv>. This will let the organising team know how many from your household will be attending and we look forward to hopefully seeing you at the event. Alternatively you can also sign up via the My Church Suite App on your phone by selecting My Events from the menu and then searching with the criteria **Garden Party**. **For catering purposes please sign up by 6th July** Roy



Fortnightly Fridays 6 - 7:30pm

Join us for fun, food, laughter and a chance to wind down at the end of a school week.

Key stages 3 & 4

Term time only

Dates this month:

4th & 18th July

You are invited to our...

SFC Garden Party

and Community Projects Showcase

An opportunity to enjoy our redesigned garden and find out a little more about what we do

12

DAY

07

MONTH

25

YEAR

12 - 2 pm

and linger longer

To assist us with catering arrangements, please book your **free tickets which includes a burger or hotdog and soft drinks** using the QR code below by Sunday 6th July



Station Rd, Staplehurst, TN12 0QQ
01580 893993
contactus@staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk



Registered Charity No. 1127205



**STAPLEHURST
FREE CHURCH**
A heart for our community



Enabling Everyone to Know Jesus



THE SHEPHERD'S
PANTRY

COMMUNITY
FRIDGE

&



| | |
|-----------|---|
| Monday | Closed |
| Tuesday | Both Community Fridge & Warm Room Closed |
| Wednesday | 9 to 11am |
| Thursday | 9am to 1pm |
| Friday | Closed |
| Saturday | 9 to 11am <i>except Saturday 26th July when closed</i> |
| Sunday | Closed |



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Nat West Mobile Banking

The fortnightly visits of Nat West's mobile banking unit to our car park are due to take place on

Wednesday 9th & 23rd July

between **1:30 and 2:30 pm.**

Welcome Rota - July

Sunday 6th - Brenda and Graham

13th - Clive and Lynne

20th - Alan and Jo

27th - Amanda and John

Don Elliott

We were saddened to hear of the death of Don Elliott recently, who died peacefully in his sleep on the 20th June. Don was a long standing member of SFC. Don also served as a church elder for a number of years, including the transition times of both the move back from the school to our current building and also of the transfer of church leadership from Clive Jones to Ryan Ahern as our church pastor.

Joan has kindly written a lovely tribute to Don of her memories and friendship with him below.

Our son Andrew came to live with us as he was very unwell. One Sunday he asked me to go to church with him. There, Ryan and Don realised straight away that he needed their support and love. Don became like a second father to Andrew, becoming part of our extended family. We shared his love of sport and gardening. In July 2014 Andrew was the first person to be baptised since the Free Church's rebuild, but outside in the garden in a paddling pool as the baptistry had not yet been completed. Of course, Don was with Andrew as his supporter. Having been helped to reduce his problems, Andrew returned to his home near Canterbury and in 2019 married Hannah. Don was a delighted invited guest. Ever since, whenever they visited Staplehurst, they visited Don, enjoying that close bond that the years had cemented.

I too became very close to Don at the Wednesday Prayer meetings, especially when some of us shared lunch together afterwards. One morning, when it was his turn to lead the meeting, Don talked about baptism and I felt that God was telling me to obey this and so I was baptised in 2016.

Don was a very special and caring man. His gentle kindness shone a strong light as he exemplified Jesus' instructions in Matthew 5 v16, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."



The month of June has been saddened by the news of three deaths of those known to SFC including June Izbicki on the 28th June.

June Izbicki: A Tribute by Joan and Malcolm Buller



Having recently moved into the village, June and John Izbicki walked into a meeting of Staplehurst Interest Group in 2015 and a great friendship was formed. June was a keen tennis player so used to play most weeks while John entertained us with his charm and wit and tales of life in Fleet Street and beyond.

They met at a dinner party and married in 1986, living in London and Paris for a few years. June had a young son and daughter and John a son from previous marriages.

John sadly had a stroke just before Covid struck and spent many months in a local care home. June found the friends they had made at Interest Group very supportive and attended almost every week after our re-start in the Free Church. June felt the warm welcome of members of the church and attended Sunday services. She also really enjoyed the fellowship of being a member of Clive and Lynne's Home Group.



HAVE YOUR SAY ON STAPLEHURST'S FUTURE!

*The New Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan consultation has been extended—you now have until **1st August 2025** to share your views on the draft policies that will shape our village for years to come.*

**A public meeting will be held on
Tuesday 22nd July
Staplehurst Community Centre
South Hall 7.30pm – 9.00pm**



Key issue: Local homes for local people

Come along and discuss how the plan addresses housing needs — local homes for local people (*Rural Exemption Sites*).



Where to find the plan:

- Online at the Staplehurst Parish Council website.
- Hard copies available at Staplehurst Library or Parish Office



How to respond:

- Complete the online survey or hard copies are available from the Parish Office



Parish Office
Staplehurst Community Centre,
High Street
Staplehurst
Kent
TN12 0BJ

Tel: 01580 891761 Email: clerk@staplehurst-pc.gov.uk



Survey Parish Council Website

Staplehurst Free Church Summer Specials



You are invited to join us as we explore the stories of a master story teller this summer

**Sundays: 27th July – 31st August
at 10:30am**



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**STAPLEHURST
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Enabling Everyone to Know Jesus

The next meeting of
Friends Together
will be
Tuesday 8th July
10am to midday - All welcome



Peter & Maggie will both be unavailable at different times this month. If you need to speak with someone urgently please either contact the leadership support team or send a message via the church website and someone will be in touch if necessary.

Filling Station

Filling Station will meet on Wednesday 16th July. 7pm for pizza before a 7:30pm start.

Venue TBC



Church Suite

If you are new to the church and would like to make us your spiritual home and/or join our mailing lists, please use this QR code with your device to provide your details and grant us permission to contact you. This link takes you to our cloud-based system on Church Suite. If you have any questions or concerns please speak or email me (my contact details are on the back page of Surface). Thank you Maggie



This year's Ride & Stride will be taking place on
Saturday 13th September



This is an annual event organised by Friends of Kent Churches who use the monies raised to give building grants to help churches like us! Any sponsorship money raised on the day is shared equally between the sponsor's nominated church and the Friends of Kent Church's. Whilst most people undertake this as a cycle ride visiting as many participating churches as possible, some do a circuit of churches on foot not necessarily starting in their own locality!

If you would like to participate please speak to Maggie

**Why not use this as an opportunity for exercise?
Perhaps take the family with you and raise funds for
a worthwhile cause at the same time!**

As the church has been offered a grant for our front doors from the Friends of Kent Churches, it would be lovely if we could support them this year. Perhaps we can put together some cyclists and/or walkers?



Congratulations to Beni & Maria!

Beni and Maria will be getting married on **Saturday 26th July at midday at SFC**. For the ceremony, they have asked that you attend in an all-black outfit. This doesn't have to be a black suit or dress, a casual smart aesthetic; for example, a plain black shirt and trousers will be just as effective. They are aware that this is untraditional, but they want to try and do something a little bit different. They have asked that we "Please trust us on this one....." The evening celebration will begin at 6pm. If you would like to give them a gift, as they don't yet have a home to put anything in, they would really appreciate a financial gift rather than a specific item. Cheques can be made payable to B Phipps or if you prefer to do it online please use the QR code.



Staplehurst Interest Group






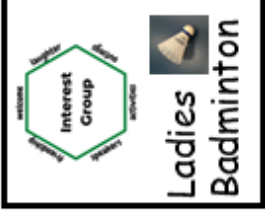





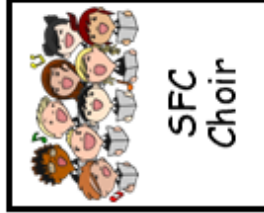





Our July programme begins on Independence Day, Friday 4th, with a visit to "New York – Garden City" in the safe hands of Jane Scotchmer whose pictures and talks are always entertaining and informative. We try "Beetlemania" on 11th by chasing the illusive spots on the dice to draw our beetle masterpieces. The Beatles may feature in our popular "Music of the 60s" quiz a week later when snatches of the number one hits defy identification to many of us. As the summer season closes for our annual break, "Planning" ideas for the autumn fill our thoughts on the 25th. What new speakers and activities will members suggest?

Come along and join in the fun and laughter that we always generate. We meet just before 10am in the café area of Staplehurst Free Church in Station Road each Friday morning. Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided and we suggest a £1 donation to cover all expenses. For more details give us a call on 892746 or just turn up.

Joan and Malcolm Buller

WHAT'S ON AT SFC

At-a-glance activities schedule

| | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A.M. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| P.M. | | |  |  |  | | |
| Eve |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

All activities are weekly unless otherwise stated. Some activities are seasonal or may pause if volunteers are unavailable.

Detailed information at www.staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk and updates on Facebook  & Instagram 

In future we will be including the monthly and weekly **PRAY** prayer in Surface, so that it is readily available for everyone.

Week 1 (1st July to 6th July) - Theme: Rest in God's Presence

Pause:

Lord, in the stillness of this moment, I slow down and breathe deeply.

I welcome Your presence. Help me to be here fully present before You.

Rejoice:

Thank You for the gift of rest and rhythm.

You are my refuge and strength, my place of safety and peace in a noisy world.

Ask:

Teach me to rest, Lord—not just physically, but spiritually.

Restore my soul where it is weary. Give wisdom to all who feel burdened or overworked.

Yield:

I lay down my striving and hurry.

Your yoke is easy; Your burden is light. Lead me in Your gentle pace today.

Week 2 (7th July to 13th July) - Theme: The God Who Provides

Pause:

Lord, I quieten my heart before You.

You are here, faithful and near. I let go of distractions and turn my eyes to You.

Rejoice:

You are Jehovah Jireh - my provider!

You meet my needs with grace and generosity. Thank You for your daily bread, seen and unseen.

Ask:

Provide, Lord, for those in financial need. Sustain those who feel forgotten.

For those who would love a holiday or a few days break but can't see how it can happen, open doors of provision and give me a generous heart toward others.

Yield:

I surrender my plans, my budgets, and my control.

I trust You to lead and provide, even when I can't yet see the way.

Week 3 (14th July to 20th July) -Theme: Healing and Wholeness

Pause:

Holy Spirit, I pause in Your presence.

You are the breath of life, closer than a brother, deeper than my thoughts.

Rejoice:

I praise You, Lord, for being the God who heals.

You bind up wounds and mend broken hearts. You never grow tired of restoring us.

Continued over

Ask:

Bring healing, Lord to those who are sick, hurting, or grieving.

Let Your touch be upon hospitals, homes, care homes and hidden places of pain.

Heal divisions in families, communities, and the Church.

Yield:

I offer You my hurts and questions.

Your ways are higher, and Your love is sure. Have Your way in me, even in the mystery of my suffering.

Week 4 (21st July to 27th July)

Theme: Walking in the Spirit

Pause:

Lord, I take this moment to be still.

Let my thoughts settle and my heart be open. Come, Holy Spirit lead in me again.

Rejoice:

Thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit.

You guide, comfort, and empower me. In You I live and move and have my being.

Ask:

Fill me afresh today.

Help me to live not by my own strength, but by Yours. Guide my words, my actions, and my choices.

Yield:

I surrender control.

Holy Spirit, have Your way in my life, in every step, every conversation, every breath.

Week 5 (28th July to 31st July) - Theme: Gratitude and New Beginnings

Pause:

As this month draws to a close, I pause to reflect.

Thank You for carrying me through each day. I acknowledge Your hand in all things.

Rejoice:

You are the God of new mercies, every morning.

Thank You for the joys, lessons, and even the struggles of July. You are good, Your love endures forever.

Ask:

Prepare my heart for the month ahead.

Give me eyes to see where You're working. Bless those I will meet and guide my thoughts and actions.

Yield:

I place the coming days into Your hands.

I will trust and not be afraid. Let Your will be done in me, through me, and around me.

Staplehurst Free Church Leader

Peter Brook

Church Administrator - Maggie Whalan

Office Tel No.: 01580 893993

www.staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk



Sunday Connections in July

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------|---|
| Sunday 6th | 10:30am | Sunday Connection - Worship, Word and Communion Speaker: Peter Brook |
| Sunday 13th | 10:30am | All Age Connection - Family Church Led by: Corinne and Roy |
| Sunday 20th | 10.30am | Sunday Connection - Worship, Word and Communion Speaker: Clive Jones |
| Sunday 27th | 10.30am | Summer Special Theme: The Mustard Seed Matthew 13: 31-32 Led by: Alison Brook |

Bright Alpha Soft Touch Pen with Stylus



We have some of these pens which use blue ink, available with our SFC logo and contact details available in the hall way by the card machine. You might like to give one to a non-church friend to invite them to a service or church activity or just use it yourself! If you would like to make a donation to the church towards the cost, that is up to you!

**Enabling everyone to know Jesus
and grow in a personal relationship with Him**

