



***Hello Everyone,***

Have you noticed it yet? I have. Every morning and every evening there is a little more daylight. We start February with over an hour more daylight and it closes with almost three hours more daylight than the shortest day of the year!

After the dark days of winter February brings us hints of spring, some plants are starting to bud, soon we will see snowdrops and daffodils everywhere. I remember from my childhood in Yorkshire that February used to mean snow, quite often lots of snow. The seas around us have been cooling all winter and that sometimes allows icy weather to dominate. But with the increased daylight, snow doesn't stay on the ground as long and it can't stop the new growth of the plants. We might also get to see the first lambs of the year being born. This is always a sign that spring is definitely on the way.

The month of February is full of traditional Christian festivals, some of which have fallen out of fashion. On the 2nd of February is the festival of Candlemas, the celebration of Christ being presented in the Temple by his parents. Traditionally, this was the time when church and household candles were blessed, a reminder that Jesus is the light of the world. John, one of the disciples of Jesus wrote "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5). Most of the world now has electric lights and this festival has been forgotten by many. As we emerge from the dark days of winter it's reassuring to remind ourselves that God's light is not dependent on our circumstances; it shines faithfully, forever, even when life and hope feel fragile.

Depending on the timing of Easter, the next festival in February is Pancake Day or Shrove Tuesday. This was a day to use up flour and eggs to prepare for fasting and prayer during Lent. Followed the next day by Ash Wednesday when people would go to church to ask for their sins to be forgiven and be marked on the forehead with a cross. The cross paste being a mix of olive oil and ash from the previous year's palm crosses from Palm Sunday (the Sunday before Easter when Jesus was welcomed triumphantly into Jerusalem). In modern times we love the pancakes, there are even pancake races at Canterbury Cathedral, in Scarborough they skip over long fishing lines on the sea front and in Ashbourne in Derbyshire they play "football" with a ball made of cork and goals three miles apart! Pancake day is a big deal, but how many of us forget about Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent? How many of us give something up for Lent? How many of us use it to look at our lives?

*Continued over*

We can't think about February without mentioning Valentine's Day. The real historic Valentine is shrouded in myth, but it is believed that Valentine was a 3rd century Roman priest. He married couples in secret at a time when Emperor Claudius had forbidden marriage for Roman soldiers. The emperor wanted them to be focused on fighting not on settling down with wives. When this was discovered, Valentine was put to death – on February 14th. Valentine was a very common boys name in Roman times – it comes from a word that means worthy, strong or powerful. In modern times Valentine's Day has become a day dedicated to romantic love. A day when someone might make a secret declaration of love.

The disciple John invites us to a deeper understanding of love. "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Love, as described by John, by being with others, in telling the truth, in being honourable, in service to others and ultimately as self-sacrifice.

As a church community, February provides an opportunity for us to reflect on how we love each other - in kindness to visitors, to neighbours, having patience with one another, and showing care for those in need. In all these traditions and moments, Christian faith is not only found in the dramatic or the obvious. It is found in lights shining in the darkness, in love and kindness, in being curious about others, making time and making space for others. As the days of February pass, let's take time to notice the light, share the love, and walk faithfully in the way of Christ, who comes to meet us where we are. I'll leave the last words to the disciple John, known as the beloved, [At the last supper with his disciples] Jesus said "I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love one another" (John 13:34)

**Peter**



Free Bees half term break is Thursday 19th February

## **Welcome Rota - February**

**Sunday 1st – Clive and Lynne**

**Sunday 8th - Paul & Sally**

**Sunday 15th - Alan and John**

**Sunday 22nd - Alan & Amanda**

## **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



The next meeting of  
**Friends Together**  
will be

**Tuesday 10th February**  
10am to midday - ***All welcome***

## **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 4th & 18th February**  
between 1:30 and 2:30 pm.

## Church Meeting Sunday 1st February

There will be a short church meeting after a shortened Sunday service on **1st February**. If you are a member or regular Sunday attendee you will have already been sent a meeting agenda.



After short refreshments and comfort break we are aiming to start the meeting at about **11:45am**. Whether or not you are a church member, you are invited to come along and learn more about the life and work of the church.

Over Christmas I was going through my late father's papers and came across a number of copies of his church's magazine. He seems to have primarily kept them because they included articles either he or other members of the family had written. However, there was one that I think he kept just because one article made him smile, which I have included below.

**To:** Jesus, son of Joseph  
Woodcrafter Carpenter shop  
Nazareth

**From:** Jordan Management Consultants,  
Jerusalem  
PO Box 26

Dear Sir,

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the 12 men you have picked for management positions in your new organisation. All of them have now taken our battery of tests; we have not only run the results through our computer but have also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant.

It is the staff's opinion that most of your nominees are lacking background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for more suitable persons. They should have experience of management with the requisite skills and ability, and a proven background of high personal achievement.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no leadership qualities whatsoever. The two brothers James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. We feel it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus definitely have radical leanings and they both registered a high score on the manic depressive scale.

One of the candidates however shows great potential. He is a man of ability and great resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious and responsible. We fully recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right-hand man. We feel all the other profiles are self-explanatory. We wish you well in your new adventure.

Yours sincerely,

Jordan Management Consultants

It is so easy to think we that we don't have the requisite skills for a task or role but the well-known phrase, "God does not call the equipped but equips the called" should give us pause to think! Or put another way, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" Philippians 4:13. **Maggie**

## Furniture in need of a new home!

Peter Sanders is in the process of clearing his late mother's flat and has the following items available. If anyone is interested, please speak with him directly.



The next meeting of Filling Station will be **Wednesday February 18th**

At: Benenden Primary School, postcode for your satnav is TN17 4EH

The speaker this month will be our very own **Peter Brook!**

Come at 7pm for free pizza and refreshments before a 7:30pm start.



## Warm Welcome Hub

**Tuesdays 12:30pm and 4pm**



Until 24th February free **homemade soup with rolls is served between 1 and 2pm** with free hot drinks and biscuits provided throughout the session. These free facilities are provided as part of our commitment to providing a safe, warm and friendly environment each week, for anyone in our community who wishes to join us.

Our Hub is designed to be part of the national Warm Welcome Spaces initiative, so the URC offer a "**Book swap and Beverages**" each **Monday** until the end of March between **10am & noon**, so why not pop along and share some additional reading material over a cuppa?



## Fortnightly Fridays 6 - 7:30pm

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

Year 6 and above

*Term time only*

Due to half term the only date for this month is February 6th



THE SHEPHERD'S PANTRY

## COMMUNITY FRIDGE

A selection of shop surplus food is available to be shared by the local community who in turn, share garden produce or larder excess.

All private donations gratefully received



Located at:  
Staplehurst Free Church  
Station Road  
TN12 0QQ

|            |                |
|------------|----------------|
| Wednesdays | 9:00 to 11:00  |
| Thursdays  | 9:00 to 15:00  |
| Fridays    | 16:00 to 18:00 |
| Saturdays  | 9:00 to 11:00  |




 01580 893993  
 Station Rd, Staplehurst, TN12 0QQ  
 contactus@staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk  
 Registered Charity No. 1127205



### Staplehurst Interest Group

Our February programme is as follows:

**6th** *Would I lie to you? Make a lie sound true or persuade us to doubt the truth.*

**13th** *MBC's Environmental Services Graham Gosden will explain what happens to our waste & recycling.*

**20th** *Countdown Use the random letters chosen to find words (in 60 seconds).*

**27th** *Weaving the way through working life Staplehurst resident, Keith Herbert, shares his story.*

We start with refreshments just before **10am** each Friday morning so come along and join this social gathering, anytime.

Joan and Malcolm



**Surface Deadline** For inclusion in the February edition of Surface Magazine - Please send all copy to Kate M by **Thursday 19th February**. If you no longer wish to receive this magazine, please contact the church administrator to **unsubscribe** Thank you

# WHAT'S ON AT SFC

## At-a-glance activities schedule

|             | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|-------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| <b>A.M.</b> |        |        |         |           |          |        |          |
| <b>P.M.</b> |        |        |         |           |          |        |          |
| <b>Eve</b>  |        |        |         |           |          |        |          |

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](http://www.staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk) and updates on Facebook & Instagram

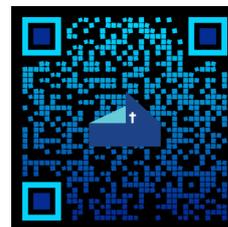
## [Staplehurst Free Church](#)

Church Leader - Peter Brook

Church Administrator - Maggie Whalan

Office Tel No.: 01580 893993

[www.staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk)



If you are unable to join us in person for any of our services, with the exception of family church on the 2nd Sunday of the month which is not streamed, you can watch the service live via our **YouTube channel**

<https://www.youtube.com/@staplehurstfreechurch1163/streams>

## Sunday Connections in February

|             |                        |  |
|-------------|------------------------|--|
| Sunday 1st  | 10:30am<br><br>11:45am | <b>Sunday Connection</b><br><b>Worship, Word and Communion</b><br><b>Speaker: Peter Brook</b><br><br><b>Followed by a short Church Meeting</b> |
| Sunday 8th  | 10:30am                | <b>All Age Connection - Family Church</b><br><i>Theme: Dress to Impress!</i><br><b>Led by Ali Brook</b>  |
| Sunday 15th | 10.30am                | <b>Sunday Connection</b><br><b>Worship, Word and Communion</b><br><b>Speaker Paul Martin</b>   |
| Sunday 25th | 10.30am                | <b>Sunday Connection</b><br><b>Worship, Word and Communion</b><br><b>Speaker: Clive Jones</b>  |

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

