



A Season of Growth, A Refuge of Hope

It's the month of May! A glorious month. Having lived for extended periods in Yorkshire and London, and visited many countries in Europe and Asia, I still feel that May in the Weald of Kent is hard to beat, for the weather and the incredible beauty of the flowers, fruit blossoms and trees.

This time of year, also brings to mind "The Darling Buds of May". The TV adaptation of H.E Bates fabulous tales of Pop and Ma Larkin and their large family. I don't know if you remember but the stories are all rather farfetched and set in an absolute idyll of late 1950's rural Kent. Pop Larkin gets into the most ludicrous scrapes to earn money for his family – and is fairly successful in providing for their needs financially and staying just inside the law. The title is inspired by the third line of a Sonnet by William Shakespeare, (Sonnet 18). The full line is "Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, And summer's lease hath all too short a date."

As we start this month of May, it is impossible not to see and appreciate the incredible beauty all around us in Staplehurst. But, as Shakespeare reminds us in his Sonnet, "rough winds" are shaking those darling buds. While in the Weald all of nature is flourishing, the global landscape feels considerably more turbulent.

Finding Stability in Unstable Times

The recent events in the US-Iran conflict have generated a lot of turbulence in the global economy. We are already seeing the impact in Staplehurst on the price of petrol and diesel, and sadly this conflict is also starting to affect food prices and energy prices, it's also quite worrying to turn on the news each day and wonder "what's happened now?".

The UK economy has still not recovered from Putin's decision to invade Ukraine, in fact the economy still hasn't seen any significant recovery since the global crash of 2008 – keeping wages low and costs high. In these turbulent times, it can feel as though we are trying to build our lives and support our families on shifting sands. At Staplehurst Free Church, we believe in a hope that isn't tied to the oil price or to the decisions of governments. We anchor ourselves in the Christian faith, a faith that reminds us that even when the world feels chaotic, we are known, loved, and never on our own.

Stewardship and a Community heart

As a church community we don't just talk about hope; we try to put it into practice, with our daily lives and our decisions. For example, following the invasion of Ukraine our energy bills became ridiculously expensive. A decision was made to invest in solar and batteries and we had a system fitted in June of 2024. We are absolutely delighted with the impact this has had, literally saving us thousands of pounds per year. By harnessing energy from the sun, we have reduced our costs, and we can redirect those funds back into the heart of our village.

As a reminder:

The Community Fridge is open to everyone four times per week, helping to reduce food waste and support your kitchen cupboard. Why not stay for a free cup of tea and a chat?

On Monday we offer a confidential Debt Advice service to help you find a way forward if the current financial crisis has impacted your debts.

On Thursdays, our Free Bees sessions for parents, grandparents, toddlers, and babies continue to offer an opportunity to meet for mutual support and share delicious cakes and coffee.

For those looking to burn off a little excess cake or try a new hobby we have free Table tennis on Tuesday afternoons and free Badminton on Thursday evenings (mixed) and Friday mornings (Ladies only).

On Tuesday afternoon we also have our warm room which is for anyone needing a hot cup of tea, and a friendly chat.

On Sunday we meet at 10:30am each week to connect with one another and to connect with the source of all Hope at our weekly church celebration.

So, whether you are a regular face at our church or have never stepped through our doors, please know that you are welcome here. In a world of "rough winds," let this church be your shelter.

We may not be able to control international diplomacy, but we can control how we treat our neighbours. Let's make this May a month of kindness, resilience, and shared hope.

A Word of Hope

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

My prayer this month is that, even amongst the worry and turmoil of these times, you may find a "perpick" moment where you find joy, happiness, peace and rest.

Peter Brook

Church Leader



The next meeting of
Friends Together
will be

Tuesday 12th May

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 13th and 27th May

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



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

Dates for this month 1st and 15th May

Surface Deadline For inclusion in the June edition of Surface Magazine - Please send all copy to Kate by **Thursday 22nd May.** If you no longer wish to receive this magazine, please contact the church administrator to **unsubscribe.** Thank you

Staplehurst Interest Group



Dear Friends,

We usually meet in the café area of the Staplehurst Free Church, Station Road, ready to start at 10am until towards Noon on Fridays. We ask for a £1 donation whenever you come to cover all expenses, including the free refreshments.

May - Please email or lend to scan a hard copy of your pictures ready for....

1st - Beetle Drive We roll to draw, but rarely complete these six-legged monsters.

8th - What's your secret? Write a sentence to hand in about yourself. We'll guess who before the whole truth is revealed!

15th - English customs and traditions An illustrated talk.

22nd - Short stories Can you find the smuggled words as you listen to members' tales?

29th - Training an Assistance Dog Nicky Marchbank will talk about training her pet spaniel with the help of Infinity Dogs CIC. Joan and Malcolm Buller

Dear SFC,

Thank you, thank you, thank you, to everyone for the great love, kindness and many prayers I received following the sudden death of my very dear son, Joseph.

Also, a very big thank you to all who contributed to and/or attended Joe's funeral, helping me in so many ways. Your help and support kept me going, especially in the darkest of days.

I am very blessed to belong to the family which is Staplehurst Free Church.

Once again, thank you all, from Susie with love.



Welcome Rota - May

Sunday 3rd - Clive and Lynne

Sunday 10th - Alan and Amanda

Sunday 17th - Jo and John

Sunday 24th - Graham and Brenda

Sunday 31st - Alan and Amanda

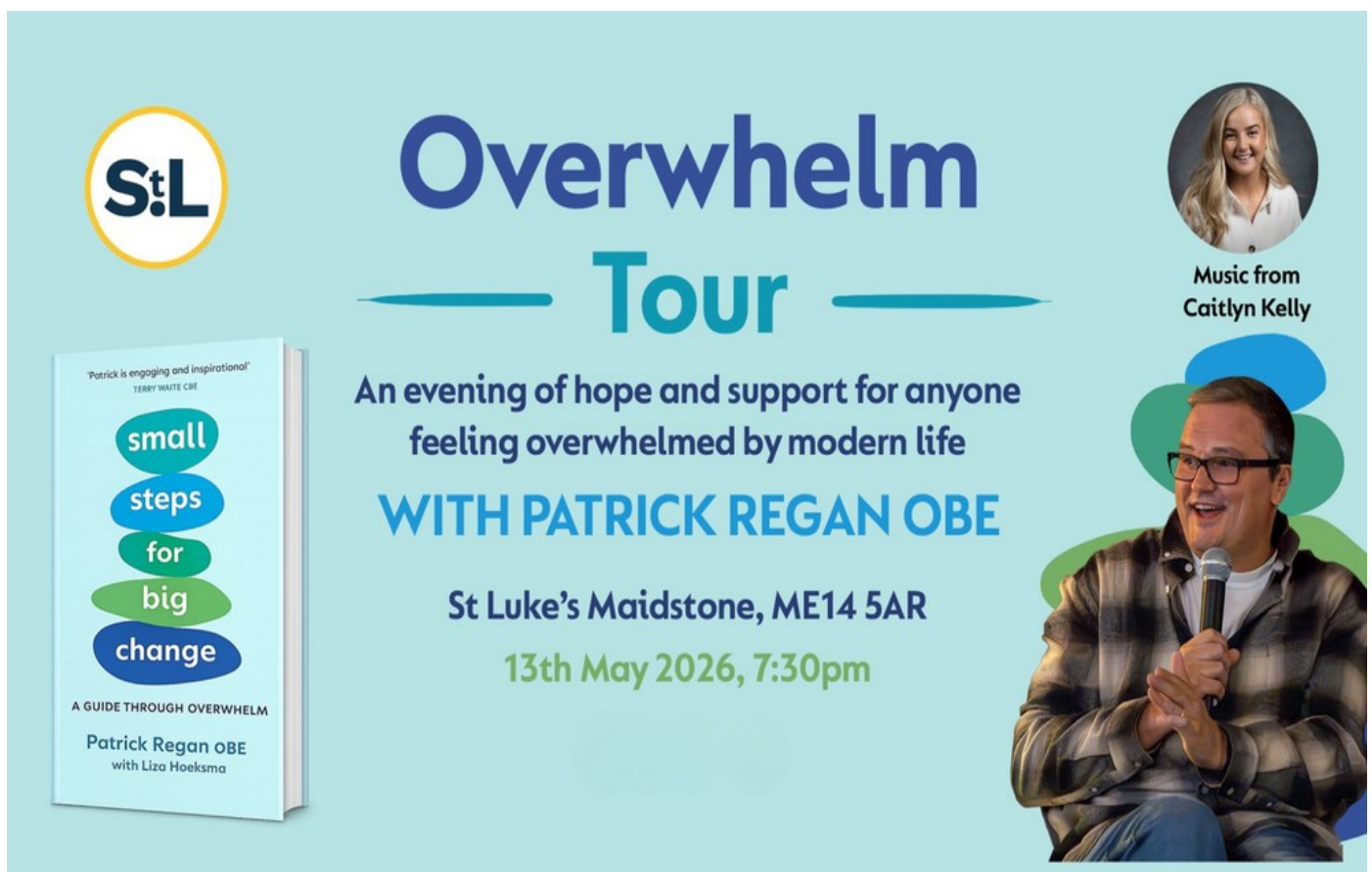
Filling Station

The next Filling Station is **20th May**. Come at 7pm for pizza before a **7.30pm start**. This month's speaker is the excellent James Nickols who is part of Filling Station's leadership team. There is plenty of parking available in Benenden Primary School car park. The address for your satnav is TN17 4EH.

Lift

Hopefully by now you will all have noticed that our lift is now back in action, with grateful thanks to Roy for all his work in making this possible. 😊 Please note that for **health and safety reasons** there are some **sensible restrictions on the lift's use** as follows:

- **The limit for the lift is two persons** or one person in a wheelchair with a carer, as indicated on the lift panel.
- **Furniture should never be transported** in the lift.
- **Mobility scooters cannot be used in the lift** and anyone not mobile enough to walk in and out of the lift should be transferred to the wheelchair that normally lives at the bottom of the stairs.



The graphic features the St.L logo on the left. The main title 'Overwhelm Tour' is centered in large blue font. Below it, the text reads 'An evening of hope and support for anyone feeling overwhelmed by modern life WITH PATRICK REGAN OBE'. The event details are 'St Luke's Maidstone, ME14 5AR' and '13th May 2026, 7:30pm'. On the right, there is a circular portrait of Caitlyn Kelly with the text 'Music from Caitlyn Kelly' and a photo of Patrick Regan OBE speaking into a microphone. On the left, there is an image of the book 'small steps for big change' by Patrick Regan OBE with Liza Hoeksma, featuring a quote from Terry Waite CBE: 'Patrick is engaging and inspirational!'.

Overwhelm Tour

Andy Frost will be hosting a national tour with Patrick Regan on **Wednesday 13th May at St. Luke's Church Maidstone**. The Tour will take the form of a magazine style event and is designed to help individuals, communities and organisations explore mental health, resilience and hope together. Events starts at **7:30pm** and tickets cost £6 each. Further information and booking details can be found at Overwhelm Tour

| [Mental Health & Resilience Event UK](#)

On Sunday 26th April Peter read this thought provoking poem as part his talk on Discipleship

I choose roots over leaves by Naomi Hutchinson

I choose roots over leaves
Deep growth over achieves
Inner work over outer approval
Authentically me not worst bits removals

I choose depth over display
Perseverance over praise
Stable in the storm
Too firm to fall

I want to be transformed by the renewing of my mind
Not just self-improvement and be a bit more kind
I want to be prepared in and out of season
when asked about my hope I want to know my reason

I want inwardly to be renewed day by day
Though outwardly we may be wasting away

I choose roots over leaves
Deep growth over achieves
Inner work over outer approval
Authentically me not worst bit removals
I choose quiet place work over public space applause
Don't mind me I'll be working on my flaws
Core strength over a crowd to please
It will always be roots over leaves

THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

Staplehurst Free Church

warmly invites you to:

A Day of Biblical Discovery

How Time, Space & Culture shape our understanding of The Bible

Saturday June 27th 10am to 4:30pm



Sessions will cover:

*Rebellion on a Cosmic Scale:
What Jesus Really Came to Deal With*

*The Land of the Book:
The Theology of Geography*

*To Hell and Back:
Why Easter Saturday Matters*

*Is God a Moral Monster?
Handling the Dark and Shady
Corners of the Old Testament*

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Mark Hendley from The Stones Cry Out

Tickets £15 per person & includes tea/coffee

Book via the QR code

Doors open at 9:30am



**STAPLEHURST
FREE CHURCH**

A heart for our community



Station Rd, Staplehurst, TN12 0QQ
01580 893993

contactus@staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1127205

Enabling Everyone to Know Jesus

Alternatively book via this link:

[Bible Discovery Day \(27-Jun-2026\) · ChurchSuite Events](#)



**STAPLEHURST
UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH**
Fun Quiz Evening



**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



Saturday 6th June 7:00 pm
for 7:30 pm start

Teams of 6

Suggested donation £5 per person

Please bring your own drinks & snacks

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

Contact Alison at the URC to book a table

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



Warm Welcome Hub

We offer free hot drinks and biscuits to all who attend on Tuesdays between 12.30 and 4pm. 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 other venues in the village will also be open which you might also like to support.

School Bangers! – 10th May 3pm at the URC. Sing along to your well-known favourite Assembly hymns. Tea and refreshments serviced afterwards. Donations received will go to Staplehurst Community Music Centre.



The Vault will be open on Sundays

3rd & 17th May

WHAT'S ON AT SFC

At-a-glance activities schedule

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
A.M.		Men's Walk (Starts at SFC) Debt Advice	Friends Together (2 nd Tuesday)	Prayer Meeting COMMUNITY FRIDGE	FREE bees COMMUNITY FRIDGE	Interest Group Ladies Badminton	COMMUNITY FRIDGE
P.M.			Warm Welcome Hub	Mobile Banking Facility (Fortnightly in Car Park)	FREE bees COMMUNITY FRIDGE	COMMUNITY FRIDGE	
Eve		SFC Choir	Home Group (off-site)	Home Group (on-site)	Mixed Badminton	Fortnightly (2 nd & 4 th Week) Worship Group Rehearsal	Ad-hoc Social Events

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

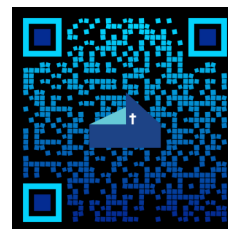
[Staplehurst Free Church](#)

Church Leader - Peter Brook

Church Administrator - Maggie Whalan

Office Tel No.: 01580 893993

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 May

Sunday 3rd	10:30am	Worship, Word and Communion Led by: Peter Brook
Sunday 10th	10:30am	Family Connection Theme: Heavenly Armour Led by: Mel and Toby Hughes
Sunday 17th	10.30am	Worship, Word and Communion Led by: Peter Brook
Sunday 24th	10.30am	Worship, Word and Communion Speaker: Roger Lumley
Sunday 31st	10:30am	Worship, Word and Communion Speaker: Clive Jones

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

