

# Pastor's Patch



Dear Friends

This Sunday we will be looking at Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts 6:8 – 7:80). We may only be aware of this man on Boxing Day and even then, only if we sing Good King Wenceslas who looked out on the feast of Stephen. Please read the whole story if you get time before Sunday.

There are three things we need to note about Stephen:

Firstly, he was a man full of the Spirit and wisdom. He'd been chosen by the church and ordained by the apostles to deal with a problem that had arisen with the daily distribution of food. But there is much more to this man (Acts 6:8).

Secondly, he was a man well-schooled in the faith. He was a Jew who knew the story of the Hebrew scriptures from Abraham to Moses. He had received the teaching of the Apostles which had been given by Jesus. These scriptures pointed to the coming of Jesus whom the present generation, like their forebears, had rejected.

Thirdly, he was prepared to face death without fear, confident in Christ whom he saw at the right hand of God. (Acts 7:55)

I am inspired by this man. Inspired to keep seeking the infilling power the Holy Spirit because it is through him that we gain wisdom, courage and the ability to work the works of God. Inspired to look at the scriptures and see the working of God through history, rejoicing in its fulfilment in Jesus. Inspired not to be afraid of death even if my death is not at the hand of the mob.

An Active and Healthy Church is one which is full of the Holy Spirit, rooted in the bible and rejoicing in its future hope.

Yours in Christ

**Geoff Andrews**