

**Collect**

Gracious Father,  
who gave the first martyr Stephen  
grace to pray for those who took up  
stones against him:  
grant that in all our sufferings for the  
truth  
we may learn to love even our  
enemies  
and to seek forgiveness for those who  
desire our hurt,  
looking up to heaven to him who was  
crucified for us,  
Jesus Christ, our mediator and  
advocate,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen****New Testament Reading.****Acts 7.51-end**

<sup>51</sup> 'You stiff-necked people,  
uncircumcised in heart and ears, you  
are for ever opposing the Holy Spirit,  
just as your ancestors used to  
do.<sup>52</sup> Which of the prophets did your  
ancestors not persecute? They killed  
those who foretold the coming of the  
Righteous One, and now you have  
become his betrayers and  
murderers.<sup>53</sup> You are the ones that  
received the law as ordained by  
angels, and yet you have not kept  
it.'<sup>54</sup> When they heard these things,  
they became enraged and ground their  
teeth at Stephen.<sup>55</sup> But filled with the  
Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and  
saw the glory of God and Jesus  
standing at the right hand of  
God.<sup>56</sup> 'Look,' he said, 'I see the  
heavens opened and the Son of Man  
standing at the right hand of  
God!'<sup>57</sup> But they covered their ears,  
and with a loud shout all rushed  
together against him.<sup>58</sup> Then they  
dragged him out of the city and began  
to stone him; and the witnesses laid  
their coats at the feet of a young man  
named Saul.<sup>59</sup> While they were stoning  
Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus,  
receive my spirit.'<sup>60</sup> Then he knelt  
down and cried out in a loud voice,  
'Lord, do not hold this sin against  
them.' When he had said this, he died.

**Gospel Reading.****Matthew 10.17-22**

<sup>17</sup> Beware of them, for they will hand  
you over to councils and flog you in  
their synagogues;<sup>18</sup> and you will be  
dragged before governors and kings  
because of me, as a testimony to them  
and the Gentiles.<sup>19</sup> When they hand  
you over, do not worry about how you  
are to speak or what you are to say;  
for what you are to say will be given to  
you at that time;<sup>20</sup> for it is not you  
who speak, but the Spirit of your  
Father speaking through  
you.<sup>21</sup> Brother will betray brother to  
death, and a father his child, and  
children will rise against parents and  
have them put to death;<sup>22</sup> and you will  
be hated by all because of my name.  
But the one who endures to the end  
will be saved.

**A prayer for us at this time:**

Almighty God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified, hear our prayer for our benefice and the congregations of St Michael and St John.

Give us discernment to recognise the gifts and ministries you have given to us together with the grace to exercise them in harmony with one another and for the good of all.

May we have patience in awaiting the appointment and arrival of a new leader for our parish, and give support to those responsible for choosing that person.

Finally, may we trust you, the God of faithfulness and generosity, to guide us through this time of transition and change, so that we are ready to enter a new chapter in the life of our parish for the glory of your Name and the furtherance of your kingdom. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Post Communion**

Merciful Lord,  
we thank you for the signs of your mercy  
revealed in birth and death:  
save us by the coming of your Son,  
and give us joy in honouring Stephen,  
first martyr of the new Israel;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

**FOR YOUR PRAYERS**

To have someone prayed for or remembered please contact the Benefice Office.  
A new list will start the first Sunday each month.

**ST MICHAEL*****Those newly in need of prayer***

Barbara Homewood

***Those in continuing special need of prayer:***

Alison Anketell, Steve Baker, Chelsea Begley, Mark Berry, Janet Broughall, Elizabeth Chapman, Jo Cobb, Dottie Collins, Marcus Davies-Friend, Martin Dewes, Chris Dickerson, Colin Eastwood, Phillip Goodwin, Robert Harris, David Kendrick, Chris Kirk, Alison Knight, Doug Little, Robert McAllester Jones, the Martel family, Marielouise Oliver, Viv Oliver, Norah Palin, David Rock, John Russon, Nick Rutter, Lyn Shiel, Anthony Staples aged 7, Alison Toplis, John Tipper, Sheila Vaughan, Judith Watson, Renee Wellings, Anne Whatson, Felicity Woodfield, Jamie.

***Those who have died******Years Mind***

Alan Mountford

**SERVICE DETAILS**

**26<sup>th</sup> December**

**St Stephen**

**ST MICHAEL**

**10:00am Said Holy Communion**

**President:** Revd Jeyan Anketell  
**Deacon:** Alan Toplis

**Intercessions**

God of grace and power:

**Show us your glory.**