

**2021-12-26 ... 10am Service Sermon ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt**

**Acts 7: 51 – end**

**‘St Stephen’s Day and Mothers’**

Over the years, I’ve occasionally been present when 2 women in their 50’s have met – thinking that they didn’t know each other – and then realised that they had been in the same ante-natal group – or NCT group. The conversation then almost automatically turns to what those “babies” are now doing ...

The juxtaposition of Christmas Day and Boxing Day being St Stephen’s Day brought those types of conversation to my mind.

We hear – relatively at any rate – quite a lot about Jesus’ mother ... and a little about John-the-Baptist’s mother ... and indeed their Fathers too before and around the birth of their babies ... but what about the mother of Stephen ... or of Judas ... or Barabbas or Mary Magdalene?

Whilst Mary and Joseph, Zechariah and Elizabeth did have some inkling of what was to come for their children ... not so, as far as we know, for any of the other main characters, in the early Christian movement.

It’s very unlikely that Stephen’s parents – when chatting about what and who their son would become – had martyrdom in mind.

Yet what must have seemed to them, at the time – disaster ... and nothing but disaster ... God worked with to bring about something amazing ... and we are the beneficiaries. It was the death of Stephen that sparked off a great persecution of Christians – again not a good thing in itself – which led to Christians fleeing to the surrounding regions – thus spreading the news of Jesus.

And so for us ... whatever plans have gone awry, whatever disasters strike – be these personal, national or international – the Christmas Good News continues to be real and relevant ... not limited to one occasion or one day of the year.

**Amen.**