

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

St John's: A place of worship where all are welcome

Covid Guidance

The national guidance regarding the wearing of masks has changed. However, as the number of cases of the Omicron variant in our area remains high, members of our congregation may still like to wear them for the comfort and safety of others even though mask wearing is no longer mandatory. Please see our website for further updates.

<https://ashtonhayes.church>

Church Services in February

6th February:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am All-age Service (CW)
6.30pm Evensong (CW)

13th February:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Morning Worship (CW)
& Sunday Club

20th February:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Morning Worship (CW)
& Youth Club

27th February:

9.00am Matins (BCP)
10.30am Holy Communion (CW)

2nd March: Ash Wednesday

7.30pm Holy Communion (CW)

BCP - Book of Common Prayer

CW - Common Worship (Modern Language)

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A View from the Vicarage

My son James has been lucky enough to be chosen to represent Chester District Scouts at the 25th World Scout Jamboree in South Korea. He will be among 3,240 young people from the UK who will be joining over 40,000 young people from 167 countries in August 2023.

The World Scout Jamboree is held every four years and offers young people the chance to meet fellow scouts from different cultures to learn from one another and experience adventurous activities together. The UK's Jamboree contingent have adopted a tiger logo called "Chingu", the Korean word for friendship – a name designed to express the spirit of the World Scout Jamboree.

Friends are something that we all value, even if our own scouting days are long behind us! Friendship has sustained many people over the difficult past two years, and is something that the Bible also esteems highly. For example, the biblical book of Proverbs says a good friend is someone who will stay with us in the bad times as well as good. A true friend is someone who "loves us at all times", even in the midst of adversity (Prov 17:17).

But who should be our best friend for life? Proverbs chapter 18 contains these intriguing words: "One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." The New Testament reveals who that ideal friend is – Jesus Christ. If we put our faith in him he promises to be with us always, whatever our circumstances (Matt 28:20). And Jesus famously said that there is "no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13). And that's exactly what he did for us on the first Good Friday, when he died to take away the sins of the world. Jesus truly personifies the word Chingu. He's the perfect friend for life - and for eternity.

God bless,
Phil Weston



Studies at St John's

In the church's calendar, Lent is a season set aside for personal reflection and seeking forgiveness. This year, starting on Monday, 7th March, we shall also be meeting via Zoom to look in more detail about what it means to have "A Passion for Christ". To help us, we shall be using a booklet written by Michael Baughen (Bishop of Chester 1982-1996) who writes:

"In today's world, personal comfort is king and queen. We like to have our coffee just the way we want it, we want our online shopping to be delivered the next day and we definitely don't want to have to wait in line for anything.

This Lent, let's stand together at the foot of the cross, gaze with our spiritual eyes on our Saviour and remember with amazement that 'we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ'.

We share? How can this be? What does it entail? What does it mean for us? Why should it be so? How should this affect our own attitudes?

In our studies, we shall see how Paul brings the Passion of Christ and his sufferings right into our Christian lives, into our motivation, into our servanthood and into the depths of our souls"

For more information or for joining instructions please e-mail alan@ashtonhayes.church.



Pause for Thought by Philip Goodall



THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING, AND A SEASON FOR EVERY ACTIVITY UNDER THE HEAVENS ...

So begins chapter 3 of the Book of Ecclesiastes: a whole chapter about TIME! So much more could be, and has been, written and here, early on in another new year, are a few thoughts on the subject.

A cricket umpire starts a match by calling PLAY and ends it by calling TIME — let's hope everyone enjoyed the contest! The late comedian Tom O'Connor would often finish his live act by saying, 'The greatest gift you can give anyone is TIME'. On our Church clock-case, and originally from Chester Cathedral, it says:

*When as a child,
I laughed and wept,
Time crept.*

*When as a youth,
I dreamt and talked,
Time walked.*

*When I became a full-grown man,
Time ran.*

*When older still I daily grew,
Time flew.*

*Soon I shall find,
on travelling on,
Time gone.*

O Christ! Wilt thou have saved me then?

Time is so very precious. We can either waste it or we can use it well to the benefit of others, ourselves, and the Glory of God. The choice is largely ours to make.

I end with one of my favourite prayers:

*Lord, give us the wisdom and grace
to use aright the time
that is left to us here on earth,
to turn to Christ and follow in his steps
in the way that leads to everlasting life. Amen*

Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Group



Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Groups committed to people's wellbeing – physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

Come and join us with this KHW programme. It will open the door to a flawsome world.

Following the positive response to St John's first Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing programme, a second series of meetings is planned to start the week beginning 25th April.

The programme provides a safe, non-judgemental and supportive space for people of all faiths or none, who are interested in supporting their mental and emotional wellbeing by exploring topics including, honesty, anxiety, confidence, and self-worth.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Margaret Papworth by text (07803 242783) or by email

margaretpapworth@icloud.com.

Feedback from our last group;

- I was intrigued to find out how my 'cracks', weaknesses could be turned into a positive and become treasures.
- One of the first valuable lessons I learnt was that "Its OK not to be OK ..." That was a lightbulb moment for me.
- The sessions were very relaxing and useful as they covered all aspects of life and made one feel normal and better about oneself.



100 Club

The winning numbers in December's draw were
33 39 51 72

Light up a life

Remember a loved one

**Sunday, 3rd April
at 4.00 pm**

During this special service we shall be remembering those people whom we have loved and lost and lighting a candle in their memory.

*Beautiful memories
silently kept
of those that we loved
and will never forget.*

Ash Wednesday

There will be a service of Holy Communion in church to mark the start of the season of Lent at 7.30pm on Wednesday, 2nd March. Please join us as we begin our journey towards Good Friday.



A prayer for those in our Community

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you.

Give us strength for our work and service, hope in our trouble and wisdom in our decision-making.

And give us grace to comfort the fearful and to assure the isolated of our love, and your love, for your name's sake. Amen.

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