

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

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



From all of us at St John's.

May we wish you peace and happiness throughout the coming year.

Services in January

5th January: Epiphany

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

12th January:

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

19th January:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Morning Worship (CW)
& Sunday Club
6.30pm Carol Service

26th January:

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

BCP - Book of Common Prayer
CW - Common Worship (Modern Language)

Contacts

Vicar:

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Readers:

Alan Downen 01829 751174
Philip Goodall 01829 752130

Churchwardens:

Hilary Clegg 01829 458453
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A View from the Vicarage

My eyesight is rather poor, I lack 20:20 vision. Without the aid of contact lenses or glasses, my short-sightedness means I would struggle to see things more than a few feet away. Without optical assistance, my life would be a bit of a blur!

The Bible says that, spiritually speaking, we all naturally lack 20:20 vision. We catch glimpses of God in the world around us, but need help to see him clearly. Thankfully Christ came to bring God into focus, to help sharpen our vision of his wonderful character and his will for our lives. "To see me is to see the Father" said Jesus. So do join us at St John's over the next few months as we look at Matthew's Gospel in our Sunday morning services. Matthew's account of the life and work of Jesus can provide us all with a 20:20 vision of God.

As we enter January, our church council has also come up with its own "2020 vision" for the new year ahead. A vision that includes:

- Going for growth – we are ambitious to grow the size of our congregation and to nurture the faith of our existing members.
- Reaching out in faith and love – our God-given mission is to share the good news about Jesus and show the love of God with our words and actions.
- Renewing our relevance – we want St. John's to be a blessing to our whole community, to continue being viewed as a valued part of village life.

A key part of this vision is the renovation of our church building. Modernising our seating, heating and audio-visual facilities (plus a new kitchenette and loos) will make St. John's a more comfortable, flexible space for Christian ministries and community events. We have just received quotes from contractors and hope to press "Go" on phase 1 of our scheme in the near future. We also have plans for a new youth group and an Alpha course over the coming year. Please pray with me that this 2020 vision will become a wonderful reality!

Happy New Year,
Phil Weston

News

- **Children's Sunday Club** — During January and February our children's Sunday Club will be following a series called "Kingdom Living" based on Matthew's Gospel. Sunday Club is at 10.30am every Sunday (apart from the 1st Sunday of each month) and starts in church before heading over to the Village Hall for Bible teaching, crafts and games. We also have a creche area in church for babies and toddlers.
- **Save the Family** — Save the Family have written to thank the people of the parish of Ashton Hayes and Mouldsworth, and our friends working for INOVYN in Runcorn for the Christmas gifts we collected for the children who are currently in their care. Your generosity is physical proof that someone still loves them and cares enough to make a personal sacrifice of both time and money.
- **Church Building Project** — The time that many of us thought would never happen is fast approaching. We have finally received tenders for the work involved reordering our church building and work should hopefully begin within the next 6-8 weeks. For the duration of the building work the church will become a construction site and visitors will not be permitted to enter although we are making special arrangements for access to the churchyard. During this period, Sunday morning services will continue as normal in the Village Hall.
- **Carol Singing** — Members of the church choir and friends from Ashton Sings and the Decibellas ladies choir raised £125 for the Hospice of the Good Shepherd thanks to generous donations from village residents.



100 Club

The winning numbers in November's draw were

1 45 17 10

Pause for Thought by Yvonne Downen



To most of us the 6th January means that it's time to take down the decorations and vacuum up the pine needles, if you don't, 'bad luck' will fall upon you ... or so my Mum told me!

But the 6th

January, also known as Epiphany, is the date when the Eastern Churches celebrate the birth of Jesus on this date as we once did here in England. So what happened?

During the 1st Century AD, Julius Caesar revised the annual calendar, basing it on the orbit of the sun rather than the moon: 365 and a quarter days, divided into 12 months — but there were still inaccuracies which were attended to by Pope Gregory XIII — hence the Gregorian calendar. Gregory, or his advisers, shortened the year by eleven minutes fifteen seconds (1 day every 128 years!) and re-zeroed the calendar by losing 10 days. But England wasn't keen about having their calendar messed about with and continued to use the Julian calendar (and accept a 10 day time difference between London and Paris) until the 18th Century, by which time the error had increased to 11 days. Those 11 days were eventually 'lost' in September 1752 and, as a result, Christmas Day moved to 25th December.

The people objected loudly to these changes and continued with their traditional celebrations on 5th January or 'Old Christmas Eve'. Wassailing was very common in rural areas. In some places the farmer and his hired hands would troop off into orchard with a wassail bowl full cider and floating roast apples where they would toast the trees!

In Herefordshire the farmers would light 12 bonfires in their field with one big one in the middle representing Jesus and his Twelve disciples, in other parts these were simply 12 candles in a ring with one large one in the middle for Jesus, Light of the World.

Continued >>

In Memory

This month we sadly have another three funerals to report for people who will have been well known in the parish.

The funeral of Viv Hunt (late of the Meadows) took place on Friday, 6th December. Viv was a member of our a number of years until her COPD literally took her breath away. Our thoughts are with Viv's son, Taku, her twin daughters, Michelle and Tanya, her three grandchildren and her extended family.

Sylvia Jenkins and her husband, Ted, lived in Willow Hayes for over 40 years. Sylvia's funeral took place on Thursday, 19th December. Sylvia is survived by her husband and their children, Diana and Andy and we offer our condolences at this sad time.

Finally, Mike Hills was a regular member of our 9am congregation for many years until just a couple of months ago when his illness meant that he couldn't travel. Mike lived with his wife Margaret (who died a few years ago) in Smithy Lane, Mouldsworth for nearly 50 years and died with his family around him. Our thoughts and prayers go out to daughter, Sarah, her husband Steve, and their children, Charlotte, Emma and Owen.

May the Lord grant them eternal rest and may his perpetual light shine upon them.

Pause for thought continued ...

But the church wanted 'Twelfth Night' to be more 'respectable' and choose it to signify the arrival of the Three Magi (Wise Men) in Bethlehem where they laid their gifts before infant Jesus, their own Light of the World.

Let's hope as we journey on into 2020 we all find our way in God's light with the three gifts Jesus gave us — Faith, Hope and Love. **Happy New Year.**

Christmas at St John's



Christmas and the run up to the day itself, was a busy time at St John's starting with the Toy Service on 1 December.

The children helped to carry the parcels up to the Sanctuary where they were gratefully received



by Tracy White, the General Manager of *Save the Family*.



The Carol Service took place on 15th December where Carols, Bible readings

and music by the choir combined to tell the real story of Christmas.



The Christingle Service on the afternoon of Christmas Eve turned out to be standing room only! Not only was it enjoyed by those who came, the collection also raised much needed funds for the Children's Society.

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