

# NEWS FROM THE PEWS

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

## Church Services in October

Services resumed in church on 13th September but whilst Coronavirus measures are still in place, we must continue to observe social distancing within the building. This means that the size of the congregation at each service will be limited to approximately 30 people.

Within the building, chairs will be set out to enable social distancing although family groups will obviously be allowed to sit together. We further request that all attendees sanitise their hands on entry using the gel provided and wear face coverings whilst in the building. In addition a register will be kept of those who attend for the purposes of "Track and Trace" should the need arise. Please help us to keep you safe.

Our 10.30am services will continue to be streamed live on Facebook.

### 4th October:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.30am All-Age Harvest Thanksgiving

### 11th October:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.30am Morning Worship (CW)

### 18th October:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.30am Morning Worship (CW)

### 25th September:

9.00am Matins (BCP)

10.30am Holy Communion (CW)

BCP - Book of Common Prayer

CW - Common Worship (Modern Language)

## Contacts

### Vicar:

Phil Weston 01829 752272

### Readers:

Alan Downen 01829 751174

Philip Goodall 01829 752130

### Pastoral Worker:

Margaret Papworth 01829 759086

### Churchwardens:

Hilary Clegg 01829 458453

Alan Goodall 01829 752130

## Congratulations!

Chris Dytor and Alan Goodall announced their engagement on 13th September (Alan's birthday) following our morning service. We would like to express our very best wishes to the happy couple.

## A View from the Vicarage

"Emmanuel" is a Hebrew word which means "God with us". It is also the name of a brand new theological college for the North West of England, announced last month. In an exciting development, the Bishop of Chester and his fellow northern bishops have decided to launch Emmanuel Theological College next September as a single venue for the training of all clergy and lay ministers in our region. This will mean a big change for me personally, as my present employer, St Mellitus College (North West) will be incorporated into the new institution.

But "Emmanuel" is a word with wider relevance for us all. We face an uncertain Autumn and Winter, with the threat of COVID-19 hanging over us and various coronavirus restrictions imposed upon our daily lives. Yet the Christian faith assures us that God is with us, whatever the future holds. In the person of Jesus Christ, God physically lived among us and became personally acquainted with the full range of human experiences and emotions. Jesus experienced apprehension and anxiety and came face-to-face with disease and death. Yet they did not overwhelm him – even the grave could not hold onto him. And since his resurrection and ascension, Christ has remained with his people by his Holy Spirit.

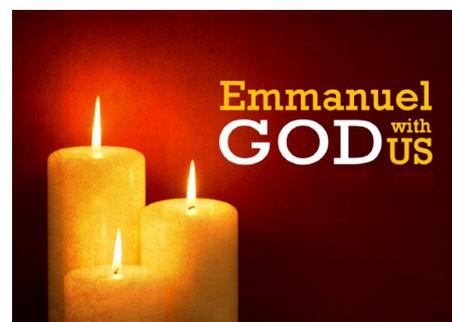
So we do not journey alone. We do not face an anxious Autumn unaccompanied. If we turn to Christ in faith and in prayer, we can enter a relationship that will sustain and strengthen us through whatever this Winter holds. A relationship that is unaffected by social distancing or shielding. A relationship that even gives hope for eternity.

Christmas may well look rather different this year, but it can never be cancelled. Because Christmas proclaims a historic event and a timeless truth. The truth that Jesus is "Emmanuel" – God with us.

God bless,  
Phil Weston

## News

- **Harvest Thanksgiving and Gift Day** — On Sunday 4th October at 10.30am we will be having our annual all-age Harvest thanksgiving service at St. John's. We will be accepting donations of non-perishable food, which will be passed to West Cheshire Foodbank to help individuals and families in need. This service will also coincide with our annual Gift Day, when we invite members of our parish to make a one-off contribution towards the ongoing running costs of our church. A letter explaining how you can support our Gift Day accompanies this edition of News from the Pews. Thank you!
- **Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)** — Normally, the Annual Meeting of Parishioners (at which the churchwardens are elected) and the APCM (at which the members of the Parochial Church Council are elected) are both held before 31st May. This year, because of Coronavirus, that didn't happen but all churches in the diocese were given dispensation to delay their meetings until October if necessary. Our current plan is that this year's meetings will be held in church following the morning service on 11th October at 12 noon.
- **Christian Aid** — We are very pleased to announce that Allison John (9 Peel Hall Lane) has offered to coordinate the Christian Aid collections for Ashton and Mouldsworth. Allison has had previous experience of organising our collections and it is a pleasure to welcome her back into the role.
- **Bible Study** — There are just a couple of weeks left of our current study of Peter's first letter but after a short break, our study sessions will continue via Zoom. The next topic will be announced shortly but for more information, or to register your interest, please drop an e-mail to alan@ashtonhayes.church.



## Pause for Thought by Alan Downen



**‘When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’ John 8:12**

The clocks will go back by an hour on 25th October and we will again move into that time of year when daylight begins to fade in the middle of the afternoon and the nights seem to last for ever. Having worked in places around the world where the hours of daylight never seem to change from one month to the next, I have to admit that I am one of those strange people who likes the longer, dark nights because when spring returns it helps me to appreciate the light even more.

Light is necessary for most of the life on earth to exist but light also guides. It is no accident that light houses have been erected around our coast to warn mariners of impending danger and it is no coincidence that each of us probably use hand-held torches to help us to avoid trips and falls during hours of darkness.

At the outset, God provided the sun to be our source of light by day and the moon by night but he also sent his Son to illuminate our ‘spiritual paths’. Through his life, his work and his teaching, Jesus demonstrated to his disciples how life should be lived; in awe and in the love of God and of God’s people ... and what was true for them then is still true for us today especially in the face of so many worldly challenges. But to receive the ‘Light’ you must read about it, ask questions and come to understand it. Perhaps those longer evenings will provide welcome space for reflection?

So, even during the extended hours of winter’s darkness, we need never be without Christ’s light — in our hearts and in our minds.

## Church Building Project

Seven months after work began, and almost ten years after the project was initiated, we have now completed phase one of our church building project, including a new oak floor, kitchenette, toilets, underfloor heating and audio-visual system. The results are impressive and have been welcomed by many of our congregation! Phase two of our scheme will now take place during the weekdays of the next few months but this will not interfere with our Sunday services. The work will include installation of a new glass screen to provide separation for the chapel and an internal glass front door, plus refurbishment of the vestry and a new set of chairs. God willing, we hope to have the whole scheme complete in time for Christmas! Provided the pandemic and building works allow, the building may soon be available for bookings by village organisations.



## St John’s 100 Club Draw

St John’s 100 Club will be back in action on Sunday 27th September. The draw has been on hold whilst the Church has been closed but now we are open there will be 4 or 5 numbers (depending on the number of Sunday’s in the month) drawn on the last Sunday of each month following the 10:30am Service.

We welcome new members to our 100 Club we would love to hear from you. Membership is £26 for a year or £13 for six months. Half the money is shared between the lucky winners and half donated to Church funds. Winning numbers will be published in the next NFTP’s.

For more information contact Margaret Papworth.



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

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Are you in need of some daily hope during this lockdown?

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St John’s Website  
[www.ashtonhayes.church](http://www.ashtonhayes.church)

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