

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

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

Church Services in March

Our 10.30 Sunday morning service will continue to be live streamed on our Facebook page for those who cannot, or do not wish to, be with us in person during what remains of this continuing pandemic. Join us here:

www.facebook.com/stjohnashton/

Services in March

7th March:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.30am All-Age Communion (CW)

14th March: Mothering Sunday

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.30am Morning Worship (CW)

21st March:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.30am Morning Worship (CW)

28th March: Palm Sunday

9.00am Matins (BCP)

10.30am Holy Communion (CW)

BCP - Book of Common Prayer

CW - Common Worship (Modern Language)

Contacts

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A Prayer

Lord God,

You have called your servants
to ventures of which we
cannot see the ending,
by paths as yet untrodden,
through perils unknown.

Give us faith to go out
with good courage,

not knowing where we go,
but only that your hand is leading us
and your love supporting us,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A View from the Vicarage

It all began with some sausages! The Reformation in Switzerland took off in March 1522, after Ulrich Zwingli and other leading Protestants in the city of Zurich were discovered to have unlawfully eaten sausages. At that time, citizens of the city were required to observe a strict fast for Lent, which included a ban on sausage consumption. Their small act of rebellion began a religious revolution that would eventually sweep across Switzerland and beyond.

Zwingli and his companions didn't break this ban simply because they had a taste for pork, however! Their sausage-eating was a principled stand, designed to show that our relationship with God isn't based on our observance of manmade religious rules or rituals. It doesn't even rest on our good works and charitable giving (great things though they are). Zwingli and his fellow reformers were convinced from the Bible that people become God's forgiven children simply through repentance and faith in Christ. All the 'work' required for us to be reconciled to God has been done by Jesus on the first Easter weekend, when he died and rose again for us. Any good works we do, or rituals we observe, are a grateful response to God's grace - they don't earn it.

As we enter our third month of the latest coronavirus lockdown, we all face a Spring with more rules and regulations over our lives than many of us have ever known. And this Lent season many Christians' capacity for fruitful work and good deeds is constrained as we remain confined to our homes. Rather than an excuse to grumble, however, these circumstances provide us with ample opportunity to give thanks for the grace of God. A grace that means we were objects of his unconditional love long before we did any good deeds. A grace that means we can receive his forgiveness through Christ, whatever rules we may have broken in the past. And a grace that was shown most vividly on the first Easter Day, when Christ defeated death to offer us life to the full forever!

With every blessing,

Phil Weston

News

- **Welcome Back** — We are pleased to announce that from Sunday 7th March we intend to resume in-person services at St. John's. Our 10.30am service will also continue to be live-streamed on this Facebook page for those unable to join us in person. **Please note:** COVID-secure measures will be in place when we return to our building, including face coverings, hand sanitising, social distancing and a register for Track & Trace purposes.
- **Prayer** - if you would like someone to pray for yourself or others, please email your request to pleasepray@ashtonhayes.church and a few members of our ministry team will be happy to pray for you. Any information you share will be treated in confidence.



Easter Services

Provided no further Covid restrictions are introduced our Easter services will be held in church. The times and dates are listed below.

- **Maundy Thursday — 1st April**
7.30pm Holy Communion
- **Good Friday — 2nd April**
2pm Hour at Cross
- **Easter Day — 4th April**
9am BCP Communion
10.30am All Age Communion

Sadly, we are unable to hold our annual *Walk of Witness* this year.

Pause for Thought by Yvonne Downen**DO THE LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE**

Be joyful, keep your faith and your creed. Do the little things that you have seen me do and heard about. I will walk the path that our fathers have trod before us. *St David of Wales*

The 1st March is a very important day for the people of Wales because it is the day set aside for their patron saint, St David.

Here in our parish we are so close to Wales that we can see the Welsh hills stretched out along the horizon as we gaze across the fields to the west.

David was born in the mid-sixth century: his mother, St Non, gave birth to him on a Pembrokeshire clifftop during a storm. He became a renowned preacher and he founded monastic settlements and churches in Wales and Brittany, and some even believe he may have founded the Abbey at Glastonbury.

He died on 1st March 589 AD and it is said the monastery 'filled with angels as Christ received his soul.' The site of his burial became a place of pilgrimage and is where St David's Cathedral now stands.

His last sermon before his death included, the now famous words, 'Do the little things you have seen me do,' and our former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, himself a Welshman, believes that 'doing the little things' is as important now as ever.

The phrase reminds us that the primary things for us are our relationships with others and the need to work with what is available close at hand. It is vital to show love and care in small everyday ways, not just to members of our immediate family or friends.

So, if you pass someone in the street, give them a smile or a nod and a kind word — remember your's may be the only voice they hear that day. Make March the month to 'do the little things' because it may just make a difference.

St John's Nativity Figures

Pam Holland, known to many around the village, has kindly cleaned, restored and, where necessary, repainted our Nativity Figures for us — she even made the models of the Three Wise Men (not shown here) back in 1996.

Having now had an opportunity to

inspect them more closely that usual we have found that some of the figures carry the stamp 'CSMV 1929 Copyright'. 1929 is the probable year of manufacture and may even be the year when they first arrived in Ashton Hayes but the CSMV stamp is a bit more problematic. Googling those initials returns 'The Community of St Mary the Virgin', a convent in Wantage. We have enquired about the possibility of a link with that convent but we have yet to receive a reply. Is there anyone in the village who has knowledge about the origin of the figures? And we offer grateful thanks to Pam for restoring them for us and unearthing this quandary.

**100 Club**

The winning numbers in January's draw were
30 38 37 36 11

100 Club memberships run from March or September allowing people to join for 6 or 12 months. There are still numbers available: if you would like to join and help our church financially contact Margaret Papworth.

**'Twin My Vaccine'**

Have you ever stopped to think how lucky we are to be living in the relatively affluent West with access to healthcare and a Covid Vaccine? But there are countries who can't afford to vaccinate their people and whose infrastructure may not even include basic refrigeration in places. Unicef have vast experience in delivering vaccines worldwide and so will be major partners in distributing vaccines to the

very poorest in the world through their association with the COVAX programme.

Your two doses of vaccine (depending on which kind you had) might be worth between £4 and £30, plus the time and expertise needed to administer it. If you could have afforded to buy it for yourself, please celebrate your vaccination by donating to Unicef to help others. There is a 'Twin My Vaccine' *Just Giving* page which was set up by the Revd Scott Patterson — take a look — <http://bit.ly/TwinMyVaccine>

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