

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

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

Church Services in May

Our Sunday services are now being held in church but the 10.30 service will continue to be live streamed on our Facebook page. Join us here:

www.facebook.com/stjohnashton/

Services in May

2nd May:

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

9th May:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Morning Worship (CW)
& Sunday Club (4-10yrs)

16th May:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Morning Worship (CW)
& Sunday Club (11+ yrs)

23rd May: Pentecost

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

30th May: Trinity Sunday

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Morning Worship (CW)

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

Contacts

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100 Club

The winning numbers in
March's draw were
12 37 7 18
and the winners in
April's draw were
53 47 49 39



A View from the Vicarage

What's in a name? My own name, Phillip, means "a lover of horses" - and indeed I am! During the long winter lockdown it was a delight to befriend a pair of horses in the field opposite the Vicarage and feed them the occasional carrot! My family and I have also enjoyed our regular walks through Peel Hall stables, seeing the magnificent racing horses and lovely young foals.

My name is also shared with one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. The apostle Philip's first encounter with Jesus is described in the opening chapter of John's Gospel:

"Finding Philip, Jesus said to him, 'Follow me.' Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' 'Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?' Nathanael asked. 'Come and see,' said Philip. When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, 'Here is a true Israelite.' 'How do you know me?' Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, 'I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Then Nathanael declared, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God, the King of Israel!'"

Just as Philip invited Nathanael to 'come and see', I would love to invite you to 'come and see' too! Come and see our fantastic new church interior and its modern facilities. Come and see the all age fellowship we enjoy together as a church family on Sunday mornings. And most of all, come and 'see' Jesus with us in the pages of Scripture - the most remarkable man the world has ever seen. The one man who truly lived up to the meaning of his name: "Saviour"!

God bless,
Phil Weston

News

Dates for your Diary

- **Gift Day** will be held on Sunday 9th May. This is an annual opportunity to make a donation towards the ministry and day to day running costs of our church. Further details are in the letter from our Church Wardens accompanying this edition of News from the Pews. Thank you for your support!
- Our children's **Sunday Club** will resume on Sunday, 9th May at 10.30am. Children will gather in church before heading over to the Village Hall for crafts, games and Bible stories.
- **Romans sermon series** — Our new Sunday sermon series at St. John's looks at the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans, where he explains the wonderful, life-changing news of the Christian Gospel. Romans has been hugely influential over the past 2,000 years, bringing many people to a living faith in Jesus - including such famous figures as St. Augustine, Martin Luther and John Wesley. Do join us as we delve into Paul's great letter together this Spring.
- **Foodbank Donations** — Lesley Groves, our West Cheshire Foodbank representative, is happy to report that during the first three months of 2021 she delivered over 300 items to the depot. Please keep up the good work and remember there are drop-off points for your donations in the church and in the community shop.
- **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.



Pause for Thought by Philip Goodall



I read this story recently:

'His face was gaunt, he walked with a stoop and he carried an old suitcase. He was too late for a food-bank parcel, but they managed to get some fresh veg and a few tins together for him. I shook his hand and wished him all the best.

He looked me up and down and said, "I hope things get better for you too."

I was confused. Then I realised I was wearing old paint and plaster-splattered clothes, ones I keep for doing messy work in.

I had been doing some tiling in the church but of course, he didn't know what I'd been doing, or that I had other clothes at home. Likewise, I had no idea what had brought him to this point in life. Judge not!

The Bible tells us not to judge, with Jesus saying in Matthew 7: *'Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged.'*

But we do need to make judgements in our everyday life. Many are quite unimportant but when we are called upon to decide on issues which affect relationships I suggest we weigh up the facts, apply any laws which may apply fairly, and show kindness. I am also convinced that prayer helps, but I will let you be the judge of that!

A Prayer

Lord God, you are always with me. You are with me in the day and in the night. You are with me when I'm happy and when I'm sad. You are with me when I'm healthy and when I am ill. You are with me when I am peaceful and when I am worried. Help me to remember that you love me and are with me in everything today. Amen

A Review of Last Year St John's and Plans for 2021

2020 was a very memorable year in the life of St. John's. After a decade of planning and fundraising, work finally began on the building renovations. Our last Sunday service in Church was on 16th February 2020, and construction work, including the removal of pews and the installation of a new oak floor with under-floor heating began the following day.

Initially our Sunday services moved to the Village Hall but, with the onset of the pandemic and the first lockdown our 10.30am services moved to being broadcast on our Facebook page and other meetings, including PCCs, Bible studies and services of Compline were held via Zoom. Church members contributed towards the village's 'Bridging the Gap' initiative by offering phone-based pastoral support and assisting with the delivery of food parcels from the community shop to those who were housebound, self-isolating or shielding.

As the lockdown rules fluctuated we were able to resume services in the re-ordered building during September and October but with coronavirus restrictions still in place the number of attendees was limited. Our Service of Remembrance was held outside by the War Memorial and whilst some Christmas services were able to take place in church our Carol service was broadcast via Zoom and Facebook. But the year ended with a popular Nativity Trail organised by St. John's, with 18 venues around the village displaying attractive nativity scenes.

During the lockdown periods we attempted to reduce our expenditure to a minimum but our outgoings still outstripped our reduced income by some £6,000 over the year. We hope that the coming Gift Day and the re-opening of the church will allow us to redress this balance.

On Sunday 18th July, when lockdown has eased, we intend to hold an Open House event between 3-5pm to which members of the community will be invited to view the new interior of the church building. There will be a cafe, crafts, computer games and a creche — entry will be completely free. It is also intended to hold an Alpha Course for those who would like to know more about the Christian faith later in the year. Further details will follow.

A Note from Joan Rydings

Joan, who used to live in Pentre Close before moving to become a resident of Deewater Grange, Huntington, writes:

'I would very much like, through the columns of this monthly newsletter, to take the opportunity to thank all those very kind people who took the trouble to send their best wishes for my speedy recovery after my period in hospital. I was also very touched at the volume of good wishes that I received. Unfortunately I have had to leave the village but hope to see some of you as things progress. Meantime my thanks and best wishes to all'.

In Memory of Ron Salisbury

Ron and his wife Jean moved to Ashton Hayes in 2005 and, even though Ron had been a lay preacher on a Methodist circuit in Wales, they immediately joined in with church life here in the village. Sadly, Jean passed away in 2015 but Ron's loyal support of the church never wavered. He was a member of the choir and the 'Outward Giving Committee' and he acted as Church Treasurer for many years.

But now, Ron too has left us. Following his death on 8th April, his funeral, followed by burial in the churchyard, was held on 19th April and along with Ron's sons, Adam and Liam, and their families we mourn the loss of a true friend and brother in Christ.

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