

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

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

Church Services in December

5th December:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Annual Toy Service (CW)
6.30pm Evensong (CW)

12th December:

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

19th December:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Holy Communion (CW)
& Youth Club
6.30pm Nine Lessons and Carols

24th December: Christmas Eve

25th December: Christmas Day

26th December: Boxing Day

For service the times and details of our Christmas services, please see the information panel overleaf.

2nd January:

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

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

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A View from the Vicarage

There are few emotions more powerful than hope. Indeed, we all need a degree of hope simply to get out of bed each morning!

The season of Advent is all about hope. It's the time of year when we look forward to the festive season and the celebration of Jesus' birth each Christmas. But it's also the season when Christians look further ahead to the second coming of Christ and the renewal of creation. Advent is when the Church anticipates a future world without sadness, sin and death - a hope well worth having!

Hope Explored is a brand new course which explains how Christianity offers us real hope - a joyful expectation for the future, based on true events in the past, which can change everything about our present. This three week course includes video clips, time for discussion and brief Bible studies. Hope Explored shows that Christian hope is a confident expectation of the future based on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is far from blind faith or mere wishful thinking.

We will be running Hope Explored at St. John's on three consecutive Wednesdays in the New Year, starting on 12th January. Participants can choose to attend either a 2pm afternoon session in our new Church café area, or an 8pm evening session on Zoom. We would love to welcome you! To book your place on either session, please email contact@ashtonhayes.church

With best wishes for a hope-filled Christmas and New Year,
Phil Weston



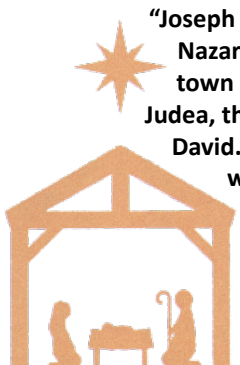
News

- **Safeguarding** — In Ashton Hayes' church we take the responsibilities of safeguarding very seriously. If you have any concerns regarding the treatment of children or vulnerable adults in our community, please speak to the Vicar or our Safeguarding Officer (Margaret Papworth). You can contact them by phone or by sending an e-mail to: safeguarding@ashtonhayes.church. Your comments will be treated in strictest confidence.
- **Thanksgiving Service** — After what seems like a long delay due to the pandemic, the Service of Thanksgiving and Rededication of our transformed building took place on Sunday, 28th November. Sadly, due to illness, Bishop Julie was unable to join us but that did not prevent the service going ahead with a congregation made up of members of our community and invited guests. We would like to thank everyone who helped to make these changes possible through their donations and hard work.



100 Club

The winning numbers in October's draw were
30 28 37 39 63

Pause for Thought by Alan Downen


"Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger — there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

Matthew 2:4-7

During the early Spring of 1967, I was crossing Dartmoor on foot with a friend, from North to South (as you do!), but we were only about half way across when it began to snow. It turned into a complete white-out! There was no GPS in those days and we couldn't see any landmarks more than 6 feet in front of us so we began to follow a stream knowing that this would eventually lead us down and off the moor — failing that, we would have to make camp until the storm passed.

We were both feeling cold, rather damp and very sorry for ourselves, but after another hour of walking, we came across a man who had earlier been fishing. He noticed our dilapidated state and offered to take us to his home where, he said, we could sleep in his woodshed. Needless to say, we gratefully accepted his offer, but when we got there he not only offered us a place to sleep, his wife fed us in the comfort of their home and we were able to have a shower and dry our clothes.

The woodshed was dry and offered adequate shelter, even if it was a bit draughty, and the following morning we thanked this stranger and his family for their hospitality and we moved on. Acts of kindness like this often go unnoticed but, 50+ years on I still remember this man and what he did for us that night.

2,000 years ago, if it had not been for the similar kindness and generosity of the inn keeper, Jesus may have been born on the

streets of Bethlehem or in the surrounding fields in which case, he may not have survived. But the stable gave him shelter and the animals helped to keep him warm.

Sometimes we forget the simplicity of the birth of Jesus. Joseph and Mary were away from home and found themselves in a situation very similar to that of the refugees whom we hear about on an almost daily basis, in the camps around Calais, and those who have now disappeared from the headlines but remain stranded along the border between Poland and Belarus. The sudden cold snap over the last couple of days may

not have been totally unexpected (it is Winter after all), but it has driven these thoughts and memories home, and the thoughts have turned to prayer.

What would we do if Jesus was about to be born on our streets today? Would we turn away or would we invite him into our 'wood shed' to take shelter? Better still, would we have the courage invite him into our hearts to dwell there? And what about those who lack shelter during these Winter months, especially at Christmas — the refugees and the homeless? Can we spare a thought, and maybe a few coppers to help them?

Christmas Services at St John's**6.30 pm — Sunday 19th December****Traditional service of 9 Lessons and Carols by candlelight — Come and hear the retelling of the story of our Saviour's birth.****4.00 pm — 24th December — Christmas Eve****A Carol Service for families and children.****The real start of a family Christmas.****10.00 am — 25th December — Christmas Day****An all age Family Communion Service and a chance to show your friends your favourite Christmas presents.****10.30 am — 26th December — Boxing Day****A shortened, 'said' service of Holy Communion
(There will be no 9 am service on this day)**

**At the heart
of Christmas**


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