

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

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

Church Services in August

6th August:

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

13th August:

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

20th August:

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

27th August:

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

BCP - Book of Common Prayer

CW - Common Worship (Modern Language)

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A View from the Vicarage

Over the past month I've enjoyed watching the 2023 Tour de France. The strength, stamina and bravery of the riders is amazing as they endure long hours in the saddle, steep mountain climbs and some terrifying high-speed crashes!

But it's one category of riders who particularly impress me. They're known as the 'domestiques' (or 'servants'), and they are the riders who work selflessly for the benefit of their team leader. These domestiques sacrifice their own ambitions of winning the Tour de France to help one of their teammates get hold of the famous Yellow Jersey. This year it was the domestiques of Team Jumbo-Visma who helped their leader Jonas Vingegaard to victory.

The duties of a domestique include supplying their team leader with drinks and food, so he doesn't have to carry them himself. They also provide verbal encouragement and slipstream support to their leader if he is struggling to keep pace, or if he takes a tumble. Domestiques may even sacrifice their own bike if their leader's one breaks down! In short, cycling domestiques are a great example of self-sacrifice. For the good of their team-mate, they endure personal hardship and occupy a humble position.

From a Christian perspective, the work of 'domestiques' is a reminder of the work of Jesus Christ. The Bible describes him as the ultimate 'Suffering Servant'. He didn't suffer on a cycle to help a teammate – instead he died on a cross to save everyone who trusts in him. Christ lovingly shouldered the guilt of the world so that we might experience a victory over sin and death. We are all invited to join Christ's team by faith, and so benefit from the great self-sacrifice that he – the ultimate 'domestique' – made for us.

God bless,
Phil Weston



In Memory

The funeral of the late Alice Chrimes (of Brookside) took place on 4th July at St. John's. Our sympathies go to all her family and friends.

Notices

Bible Study — Our study groups will be taking a break over the summer period but they will be back in September. Please keep an eye open for further information.

Christian Aid Week – thank you to everyone who contributed towards our Christian Aid Week collection in May, including our organiser Allison John and all who delivered envelopes. A total of £563 (plus Gift Aid) was raised to help some of the world's poorest communities.

Contact Us

Website: www.ashtonhayes.church
FBook: facebook.com/stjohnashton
E-mail: contact@ashtonhayes.church

Dates for your Diary

Gift Day — On Sunday 10th September we will be holding our annual Gift Day at St. John's to raise much-needed funds towards our church's running costs and day to day ministry. Full details of how you can support us will appear in the next edition of News from the Pews.

Quiz Night — On the evening of Friday 22nd September we will be hosting a Quiz Night at St. John's. Tickets will be available on the door, and all proceeds will go towards church funds.

Pause for Thought by Alan Downen



“If God is for us, who can be against us?”
Romans 8:31

I've just been re-reading the familiar story of David and Goliath — all about a young boy facing up to a fully armed 'giant' with nothing more than a slingshot. He was weak and totally 'out gunned' and yet, miraculously, David still triumphed even though King Saul, and all of the other Israelites, had been too terrified to face their enemy.

There are several stories in the Bible where young people step forward to take the lead or ask questions, take the 'Feeding of the 5000' for example, stories in which the members of the adult population seem to be too afraid, reserved, or constrained by the limits of their own comfort zones. The truth is, we seem to get more risk averse as we get older: we just want quieter lives with less stress but life isn't always that easy.

As a parent, I always felt that my job wasn't to stop my children getting hurt, but rather, to stop them getting seriously hurt, both physically and emotionally after it had become clear that failure was part of their learning process and it didn't always come pain-free.

That means of learning doesn't go away as we get older but we tend to find excuses to avoid putting it into practice because, experience has already shown us that our efforts may fail or we are perhaps fearful that our input may not be welcomed by others. But sometimes it is right to 'raise one's head above the parapet' and accept the risk.

For people of faith, you would assume that this would be easy because 'God is with us' ... but it isn't, we still have the same human failings and hangups as everyone else. But God calls us to take risks and to offer help to those in need or have lost their way so, let's try to be more child-like and at least make an effort to step out and make a difference without fear.



The Bold (or not so bold) Gendarmes.

The Summer Concert raised £800 towards church funds. Thank you to everyone who bought a ticket and came along to our evening of music.

Will you help to support our church?

Like almost all other charities, churches have been hit hard by the double whammy of Covid and inflation - particularly by the increased cost of heating. If you would like to help to support the ongoing maintenance, work and ministry of the church in our community you please consider making a donation, to St John's. Your donation, no matter how small, will help us to make ends meet so, please scan this QR code with your phone or visit :



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Christmas Craft Fair

Invitation to Craft Makers - St Johns Church are planning a Christmas Craft Fair on Saturday 25th November 11am – 3pm. We are inviting local crafts people to bring goods to sell that day. It is £15 to book a table or shared tables will be available. If you are a stitcher, knitter, jam or chutney maker, cards, jewellery or decorations creator, or have one of many other talents, you wish to share, we would love to hear from you. Contact Margaret Papworth on 07803242783 or Hilary Clegg on 01829458453 for more information or enquire about a table.



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