

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

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

Church Services in March

3rd March:

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

10th March:

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

17th March:

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

24th March: Palm Sunday

9.00am Matins (BCP)
10.30am Holy Communion (CW)
4.00pm Light up a Life

28th March: Maundy Thursday

7.30pm Holy Communion (CW)

29th March: Good Friday

10.00am Walk of Witness
2.00pm An Hour by the Cross

31st March: Easter Day

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

BCP - Book of Common Prayer

CW - Common Worship (Modern Language)

Contacts

Vicar:

Phil Weston 01829 752272
vicar@ashtonhayes.church

Reader:

Alan Downen 01829 751174
alan@ashtonhayes.church

Reader Emeritus:

Philip Goodall 01829 752130
philip@ashtonhayes.church

Pastoral Worker:

Margaret Papworth 01829 759086
margaret@ashtonhayes.church

Churchwardens:

Hilary Clegg 01829 458453
Diane Eldridge 01829 751282

Church Bookings:

Linda Morley 01829 759029
bookings@ashtonhayes.church

Safeguarding Issues:

Phil Weston 01829 752272
Margaret Papworth 01829 759086
safeguarding@ashtonhayes.church

Contact Us

Website: www.ashtonhayes.church

Fbook: facebook.com/stjohnashton

Email: contact@ashtonhayes.church

View from the Vicarage

Myth or reality? Did Jesus really rise? At the heart of our Easter celebrations this month is the conviction that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the first Easter morning. But is it true, and what difference does it make?

The New Testament gospels are eyewitness accounts that provide us with historical evidence that Jesus really did rise on that first Easter Sunday. Firstly, they make it clear that Jesus' tomb was empty. All sides involved agreed that his body really had gone missing. Even Jesus' staunchest opponents had to explain the empty tomb. The second piece of evidence cited by the gospel authors is that the risen Jesus appeared repeatedly to his followers - initially to the women who discovered his empty tomb, and later to his disciples in Jerusalem and Galilee. Fact number three is that these appearances of the risen Jesus totally transformed those who met him. The grief of the women at the tomb turned to joy, while the fear of his first disciples was replaced by faith. As historians such as NT Wright have noted, the Church's emergence and explosive growth is almost impossible to explain unless a momentous, miraculous event inspired and energised its first members.

Confronted by these facts, we can be confident that Christ really rose from the dead. The New Testament texts give us good reason to believe that Jesus is alive. But so what? The answer is that it gives us hope in the face of death. The resurrection of Christ is no mere historical curiosity, rather it is decisive evidence of the ability of God to give human beings life beyond the grave. In the face of bereavement, and confronted with our own mortality, the events of the first Easter morning give us great hope and offer real comfort. To find out more, why not join us for our Light up a Life service on 24th March, or for our Hope Explored course in April - full details of both events can be found in this edition of NftP.

Happy Easter!

Phil Weston



In Memory

The funeral of the late Dorothy Pointon, formerly of Mouldsworth, took place at St John's on 26th February. Our condolences to her family and friends.

Notices



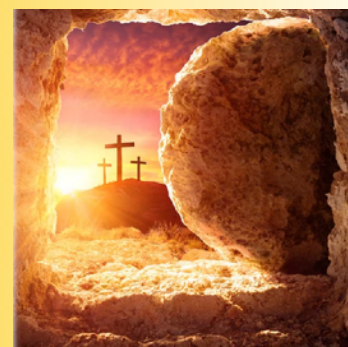
• **Hope Explored** explains how Christianity offers us real hope and a joyful expectation for the future, based on true events in the past,

which can change everything about our present. This 3-session course includes video clips, time for discussion and brief Bible studies. We'll be running **Hope Explored** at St. John's on 3 consecutive Sundays after Easter, starting at 4pm on Sunday 14th April, in a café style format with light refreshments. Email

contact@ashtonhayes.church

for more information, or simply turn up on the day. All welcome, whether you consider yourself a committed Christian or a curious enquirer.

Easter Services at St John's



Maundy Thursday, 28th March
7.30pm Holy Communion

Good Friday, 29th March

10am Walk of Witness
(starts at St Cuthbert's, Mouldsworth)
2pm 'An Hour by the Cross'
(a time of prayer, meditation and music)

Easter Sunday, 31st March

9am Holy Communion
10.30am All Age Communion

Pause for Thought

by Alan Downen



"For by one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy."

Hebrews 10:14

Over the years, I feel that we may have watered down the true meaning of the word 'Sacrifice'. Today, if we give up an hour of tele-watching to go and help a friend, particularly if it is one of our favourite programmes, we may feel that we have made a great sacrifice but that was not how it was defined, or what it must have felt like, two millennia ago.

The practise of sacrificing animals seems very foreign to us now but to a first century Jew, sacrifices not only acted as a sign of repentance, they could actually put your life, and the lives of your family, on the line and acted as a sign that you were putting your trust in God.

Sacrifices weren't just any old animals, they had to be chosen from the best of the best. The prophet Malachi wrote: *"When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?"*

However, even though sacrifices were being made to acknowledge sin and as a sign of repentance, in the Book of Isaiah the LORD says: *"I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats."* Obviously, God has a preference for true and honest living rather than lives which continually require apologies and requests for forgiveness ... and so God offered his own Son.

Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice made on the cross for all sin and for all time - *"He has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy."* That is why we celebrate his death and resurrection at Easter — because he is the Saviour of the world and the source of all forgiveness.

HAPPY EASTER ...



Kintsugi, the Japanese Art of mending broken pots with golden thread making it more beautiful. We all have treasures in our scars.

With the times we are living through it is so important to know how to maintain positive mental health and emotional wellbeing. St John's is a Kintsugi Hope Partner Church and share the vision of a world where mental and emotional health is understood and accepted, and there is a safe and supportive community for everyone to grow and flourish.

Our next Wellbeing programme starts on Monday 8th April at 4:45pm, over twelve sessions in St John's Church. Meetings last an hour and a quarter and are friendly, relaxed and mutually supportive. Topics we explore include honesty, confidence, self-worth, anxiety and resilience. Booking is essential and expressions of interest invited. For more information contact Margaret Papworth on 07803242783 or email: margaretpapworth@icloud.com.

Kintsugi Hope is a charity committed to people's wellbeing working with communities, through local churches.

St John's Café

Join us on Thursday, 21st March, between 2.30-4.30pm for our **All-Age Café**. Everyone is welcome to join us for a free cup of tea, coffee or glass of squash and a slice of cake whilst you have a chance to have a chat with friends (or play!)

Light Up A Life

Remember ... Honour ... Celebrate

In Church

Sunday 24th March

at 4:00pm

You are invited to join us for a special service at which we shall commemorate the memory of those whom we have loved but are no longer with us as we light candles in their names.

A traditional country pub offering home cooked food, CAMRA accredited real ales, quality wines, a warm welcome and fantastic service.

We can cater for all kinds of special occasions, be it birthdays, christenings, celebrations of life or weddings, with flexibility to accommodate parties of all sizes, be it cosy and intimate dinners in a private room, or larger parties with buffets, privates spaces on our terrace or the entire venue if required.

Celebrate with us and get in touch today to see how we can make your day, event or occasion extra special.

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