

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

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

Church Services in October

6th October:

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

13th October:

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

20th October:

6.30pm 175th Anniversary Celebration

27th October:

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

BCP - Book of Common Prayer

CW - Common Worship (Modern Language)

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In Memory

The funeral of Sylvia Russell, late of Station Road, Mouldsworth, took place on 4th September at St John's. Sylvia was a lifelong member of our church and served as Playgroup Leader in Manley and Mouldsworth for over 30 years. She was a friend to many and will be greatly missed. Our sympathies and prayers go out to her family members at this sad time.

View from the Vicarage

Both my sister and my uncle are aliens. No, they are not from another planet, and to the best of my knowledge neither of them owns a flying saucer either! But both are legally classified as 'aliens' in the countries where they now reside. During my recent sabbatical I visited my uncle in California, while my sister is currently employed at a hospital in Dubai. As resident aliens in the United States of America and the United Arab Emirates respectively, they both lack the rights of citizenship and are many miles from the UK, the country they call 'home'.



Foreigners are also described as 'aliens' in some translations of the Bible. Along with widows and orphans, aliens were categorised as some of the most needy people in the land of Israel, people with few rights or assets and very vulnerable to exploitation. Their equivalents today would be refugees and asylum seekers - people fleeing poverty, persecution or war in their homeland, seeking safety and security here in the UK. In contrast to the disgraceful rioting directed against immigrants on British streets this Summer, our actions and attitude should be shaped by the Old Testament injunctions to love needy foreigners amongst us. For example in Leviticus chapter 19, God says: "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not ill-treat them. Love them as yourself."

If we are Christians we have an additional motivation to care for foreigners, for we too are aliens in this world. As Paul writes in Philippians 3:20 our citizenship is in Heaven, and only in the coming Kingdom of God will we truly feel at home. In the meantime we are exiles on earth, with a mission to make Christ known and to show Christ-like love to all - including to any foreigner or 'alien' who may cross our path.

God Bless
Phil Weston

Notices

Harvest Thanksgiving — Our annual service will take place at 10.30am on Sunday, 6th October. Please bring along donations of non-perishable foods which we send to help the West Cheshire Foodbank.

The morning service will be followed by a "Bring and Share" lunch in the church - why not join us?

Zoom Group — Vicar Phil's home group has already started but, due to logistical reasons, the start of our Zoom Group has been delayed until Monday, October 14th, starting at 8pm.

This term we shall be taking a journey through Paul's letter to the Philippians but, as is often the case, this may turn out to be the catalyst for other 'deeper' discussions. Paul's own circumstances at the time of writing make this letter especially poignant, and it gives us a portrait of a man facing huge difficulties and hardships, but coming through these with his faith and hope unscathed. We will see what he has to say to this young church.

175
CELEBRATING
years

It was in March 1848 that a Mr. William Atkinson wrote to the Bishop of

Chester stating that:

"on account of the great increase of inhabitants in the township of Ashton an additional church for divine worship ... has become necessary."

He was granted permission to build St. John's church, which was consecrated by the Bishop of Chester himself the following year.

175 years later, we will be celebrating the anniversary of St. John's consecration by holding a special service of thanksgiving on **Sunday 20th October at 6.30pm**. Our VIP guest will be the current Bishop of Chester, Mark Tanner, who will preach and preside at the service. All are welcome to join us, and refreshments will be served afterwards.



Pause for Thought

by Alan Downen



"My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me..." John:10:27

The Bible often uses metaphors to great effect and those metaphors are often based on ancient, everyday practices in rural areas - things that the people of the time would have seen and understood. These days, we are still used to rural images where sheep are being gathered in and driven by sheep dogs who may even nip at their heels if they are being a bit stubborn. But in the regions around the Mediterranean it is often more common to see the sheep following their shepherd.

It's easy to think that those sheep are well behaved and are following willingly to obtain food or shelter, but that is not always the case. Rather, as you can see in the above picture, sheep often seem to want to do their own thing, even when they are reluctantly following. Here, there are sheep at the back of the flock which seem to be veering off, possibly distracted by a patch of better pasture, and some of those at the front look as though they are trying to take the lead to show their independence. Jesus didn't teach the Parable of the Lost Sheep because people are all well known rule followers. We are often the lost, the wilful and the obstinate. We know what we should be doing but, like sheep, we often become preoccupied and want to do our own thing.

Jesus calls us to follow him and create God's Kingdom here on earth but that means building communities where 'Loving one another' doesn't mean merely liking people who are like us: we are called to do something much more radical, much more attractive. We are designed to be a community of servants: serving and being served by each other across all the man-made barriers that so often divide and discriminate. We are called to follow the master shepherd, but sometimes that may lead us along difficult, stoney paths before we manage to reach the open spaces of fresh pasture with cooling streams where we can rest easy. Being a sheep doesn't necessarily mean following the rest, but it does need us to keep in touch with the shepherd who will offer protection and help us to live life to the full.

St. John the Evangelist, Ashton Hayes

Christmas Craft Fair

Saturday 30th November
11am to 3pm
FREE ENTRY

- Handmade Christmas decorations & cards
- Bracelets, fused glass pendants & other jewellery
- Children's tombola & re-gifted stall
- Homemade cakes & local honey
- Beeswax candles

Plus refreshments, a raffle and more!



On Sunday 8th November at 4pm we'll be holding our first "Messy Church" at St. John's.

Designed for children and their parents, Messy Church will include craft activities with a theme of 'Remembrance', a short talk, some songs - and food. It promises to be plenty of fun, so do come along!

A further session is also planned for 10th December at which we shall be making Christingles and having more fun.

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St John's Café

Join us on Thursday, 17th October, 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!)

Opening Hours
Monday - Saturday
10am - 5pm
Late night Thursday
until 8pm.

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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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