



NEWS FROM THE PEWS

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

Church Services in December

1st December:

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

8th December:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Morning Worship (CW)
4.00pm Messy Church (CW)

15th December:

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

22nd December:

9.00am Matins (BCP)
10.30am Holy Communion (CW)
6.30pm Carol Service (CW)

24th December: Christmas Eve

4.00pm Children's Carol Service (CW)

25th December: Christmas Day

10.00am Holy Communion (CW)

29th December:

10.30am Holy Communion (CW)

BCP - Book of Common Prayer

CW - Common Worship (Modern Language)

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View from the Vicarage

It's the start of December and, for many of us, preparations for Christmas are well underway. Near the top of my 'To Do' list is buying this year's Christmas tree, before handing it over to my children to decorate. As well as looking pretty, Christmas tree decorations can point us to the true meaning of the festive season.

In my home, for example, a star always goes on top of our tree. It's tempting to think that the biggest star this Christmas will be winner of "I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!" or "Strictly Come Dancing", but the Bible tells us that the real star of the show is Jesus Christ. He is the true hero of Christmas – God's "Word made flesh", whose birth we celebrate every festive season. As well as having a star on top, our family Christmas tree is always encircled by lights and sparkling tinsel, two things that can remind us that Jesus is the "Light of the World". For Jesus was born to show the world what God is really like and to reveal the extent of his love for us. And finally, at the bottom of our Christmas tree we place gifts for one another – a reminder that Jesus was God's Christmas present to the world. A present that is permanent, precious and personal. A wonderful gift we're all invited to receive with faith and gratitude.

So when you decorate your tree this December, remember that Jesus is the true star of the season, he is the Light of the World – and he is the best Christmas present ever.

Merry Christmas!
Phil Weston



News

Home Groups — As the year comes to an end, our study groups are about to begin their Christmas break. However, there will be further opportunities to join in with our discussions in the New Year. Watch this space for further information next month.

Thank You! — A special thank you to all those who provided Christmas gifts for "Save the Family". They were gratefully received and will make a big difference on Christmas Day for all of the families who are currently resident at Cotton Hall. This year's task of providing gifts for older children and their parents was very different, but you certainly rose to the challenge. ❤️

Christmas at St. John's

Sunday 22nd December

6.30pm A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve, 24th December

4pm Children's Carol Service

Christmas Day, 25th December

10am All Age Communion



ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST
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Focused on Christ, united in faith, serving our community.

FAMILY QUIZ NIGHT

24th January
St John's Church, Ashton Hayes
7pm

Come and join us for a night of fun for all ages

Tickets £10 adults, children free, including cheese and biscuits

Tickets available from the church or on the door

Please email natalie.meara@nhs.net to confirm numbers



Pause for Thought

by Alan Dowen



"Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles."

Hebrews 12:1a

Did you know that a chaplain in the Royal Navy assumes the rank of the person they are talking to? So, one minute they could be a Junior Midshipman and the next they become a Rear Admiral!

I love that, and I'm pretty sure Jesus, our ultimate servant leader, would too. But, if you've ever led anything — from a coffee morning to a multi-million pound project — you'll know how difficult real equality is to achieve! We tend to crave recognition and praise. Many of us want to be in control, and yet, as Christians, we all need to accept our co-workers and those whom we meet as the precious equals which they are in the sight of God. Think about it — that puts the homeless person you may meet on the street, on the same level as the person who make the tea in church or the Lord Mayor of Chester. Yet it is so easy to get caught up with feelings of superiority and our own self-importance whilst, conversely, it seems so difficult to assume the role of the humble and obedient servant in the same way that Jesus did.

However, Paul reminds us that we are surrounded and supported by a cloud of witnesses, many of whom may have gone before us — parents, teachers, guides, friends: people who have done their very best to pass the important elements of the Christian faith on to us — and he urges us to take note and reject all of the other things which may get in the way. Pride, greed, anger and envy are just four of the sins recorded as being 'deadly' in a very old list which has developed over time — parts of which may even have come from the monastic tradition. These are the failings which hinder and entangle, and need to be thrown off ... but each of these imperfections come into play all too often when we interact with others. It is only when we assume the 'rank' of the person we are talking to, whilst discarding any feeling of superiority (or inferiority), that we can really connect with others and begin to make a difference.

It is an important lesson for us all but, if we want to follow Christ, one that we must learn to live by in our daily lives.

A Bit of a
(Slightly Christmassy)
Do
with
Ashton Folk

**Venue: St John The Evangelist
Ashton Hayes**
30th December at 7.30 pm
**Tickets £10 from Alan Dowen
or The Community Shop**

Proceeds To St John's and Lupus NW

**St JOHN THE EVANGELIST
ASHTON HAYES** **NORTH WEST
LUPUS
GROUP**

Bring your own drinks and Nibbles

Messy Church

Join us at 4pm on
Sunday 8th
December
when we'll be
holding our
second "Messy
Church" at St.
John's.

Designed for
children and their parents. Messy
Church will include Christingle
making, a short talk, some
songs – plus food. It promises to
be plenty of fun, so do come
along!

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Don't Forget!

West Cheshire foodbank Suddenly the weather has become much colder so, as we prepare for our Christmas festivities, please don't forget those who are struggling to keep warm and put food on the table. Donations for our local foodbank can still be made at the church or in the Community Shop.

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

Tel: 07842 890141

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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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