

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

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

Church Services in February

2nd February:

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

9th February:

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

16th February:

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

23rd February:

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

BCP - Book of Common Prayer

CW - Common Worship (Modern Language)

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Contact Us

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St John's Café

Join us on Thursday, 20th February, 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 meet up, with and have a chat (or play!) with friends.



View from the Vicarage

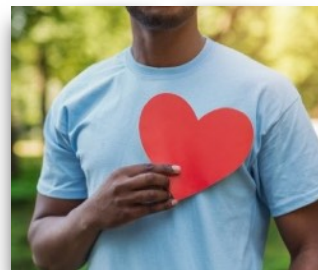
Valentines Day takes place this month, that annual celebration of romantic love. According to a recent survey, two-thirds of us celebrate the occasion and over £1.5 billion was spent in the UK last year on cards, chocolates, flowers and other Valentines gifts for our loved ones.

But what is true love? In 1 Corinthians chapter 13 the Bible provides us with a famous definition of love. Loving qualities that we should always aspire to, not just on Valentines Day! The apostle Paul writes: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Cor 13:4-7).

How do you and I measure up against that list? It's a probably a mixed picture, if we're honest! Sometimes we're guilty of pride rather than humility, of impatience rather than patience, of selfishness rather than generosity. In truth, there is only one person in history whose love never faltered. Because as we look at the life of Jesus, we see a man who was the perfect embodiment of the loving properties described in 1 Corinthians 13. When God's Son walked on earth he was humble, not proud. When Christ healed the sick he was supremely compassionate. And, above all, Jesus was self-sacrificial, not selfish, when he laid down his life on the cross for our salvation.

As we look to Christ's cross we see the ultimate loving gesture, for no one has shown "greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). Jesus' great act of love should touch our hearts, and move us to love and trust him in return.

God bless,
Phil Weston



News

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

— The date for our next APCM (equivalent to an AGM in the secular world) has been set for Sunday, 23rd March and will be held in church following the morning service — everyone who lives in the parish is invited. In addition to receiving reports about church activities and finances, the churchwardens and members of the PCC will be elected. In addition we are required to completely renew the content of our Electoral Roll this year which means that if you want to remain on the roll, or join it, in order to register as a church member, you will need to pick up a form from the church sometime during the next few weeks. When the forms have been completed they should then be returned to the vicar or to the electoral roll officer (Diane Eldridge).

4pm, Sunday 16th February
With crafts, Bible story, songs & children's tea
FREE ENTRY!

St JOHN THE EVANGELIST
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Preached on Christ, united in faith, serving our community.

You are invited to a...
Wine tasting evening
...hosted by Chester Beer & Wine
7.30pm, Saturday 8th March 2025

Tickets £25 per person, available from Phil Weston
via vicar@ashtonhayes.church or 01829 752272
All proceeds will go towards Church funds.

Pause for Thought

by Alan Downen



"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled." Luke 6:20-21

As I write, we have peace in Gaza although it all feels very unstable and there are threats that hostilities may recommence in six-weeks time — not a particularly good way to foster trust. But, for now, that fragile peace seems to be holding and the highest priority, other than the return of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, would appear to be the provision of food and humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza.

The food trucks are now flowing again and are hopefully managing to reach those in need — previously, the few trucks managing to cross the border were being violently looted and their contents were being diverted on to a black market. But food is such a fundamental requirement for life, that people actively seek it out and are willing to fight their way through a crowd to get it.

Luke records that Jesus said, 'those who are hungry are blessed and will be fed until they are full', but he wasn't referring to physical hunger, instead, he was suggesting that their 'spiritual hunger' would be satisfied. Rather like the people of Gaza's struggle to obtain physical food, we are invited to actively seek out the 'spiritual food' that is on offer, and to consume it until we are satisfied, but it doesn't stop there. For food to be of any use to anyone it must be digested.

Here at St John's, we try to help that process of digestion by the teaching provided each week in church but, more importantly I feel, we explore the contents of God's word in more depth and rather more informally in our study groups. These groups offer opportunities to discuss wider theological topics and to ask questions about those things which may be troubling you — and no question is off-limits as we seek to grow together.

So, if you are feeling hungry, or if your spiritual blood sugar level is running low why not consider joining one of our groups. This invitation is open to everyone and you do not need a theological or academic background to play a full part in our discussions ... just a willingness to be blessed.

Social Events at St John's



Folk music, quiz nights, afternoon tea and cakes — it all seems to be happening at St John's. Our most recent event was a quiz night organised by the Meara Family with topics ranging from Ed Sheeran albums to Mr Men book titles and from Harry Potter to Roman Emperors. There was much fun and laughter in addition to the quizzical looks and the evening raised almost £400 towards church funds.



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

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