

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

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

Church Services in January

5th January:

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

12th January:

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

19th January:

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

26th January:

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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Fbook: facebook.com/stjohnashton

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A Date for your Diary



There will be another of our popular wine tasting events in the church at 7.30 pm on Saturday, 8th March.

Tickets will cost £25

each and will be available from the vicar. Further details will be available soon but for now, to avoid disappointment, make sure the date is in your diary.



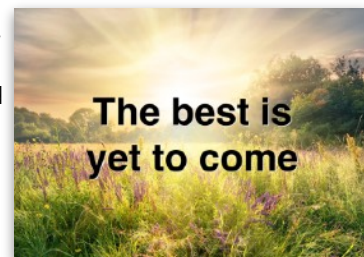
View from the Vicarage

"The Best Is Yet To Come" – or so reads a magnet on my parents' fridge! As we begin a new year I'm sure that's what we all hope for. But in a world of economic uncertainty, armed conflict and climate change - plus personal problems like ill-health, bereavement or a relationship breakdown - many find it hard to remain optimistic about the future. Yet the Bible teaches that the fridge magnet is spot on! Because the New Testament promises every Christian believer that the Lord will one day eliminate evil, raise us to new life and renew the whole of creation.

This hope is not wishful thinking nor 'pie in the sky', but a confident expectation founded on the resurrection of Jesus Christ two thousand years ago. What's more, this hope gives Christians no excuse for apathy or inactivity in the present. As CS Lewis wrote in his book *Mere Christianity*; "If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next." Individuals like William Wilberforce (who abolished the British slave trade), "all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven."

So if we trust in Christ, the best IS yet to come - he gives us hope for the future and motivates us to action in the present. That's just one reason why our own church's new vision is to be 'Focused on Christ, united in faith and serving our community' - and we'd love you to join us during 2025.

Happy New Year!
Phil Weston



News

Christmas Fair — November 30th saw the church buzzing with activity when the 2024 St John's Christmas Craft Fair was in full swing. The wide range of craft stalls encouraged visitors to purchase gifts, and together with stalls run by church friends, they raised £1270 for church funds. A big thank you to the team who made it happen and to everyone who supported this event.



Study Groups — Our study groups will be restarting on 6th January at 8 pm (via Zoom) and at 7.30 pm on 15th January (in person at the Vicarage). Our Monday group will begin a journey through the Book of Acts whilst the Wednesday group will be looking at Paul's letter to the Roman's. If you would like more details or joining instructions for either of these sessions please contact Phil Weston (vicar) or Alan Downen.

In Memory

The funeral of George Gerrard of Hallowgate Court, Kelsall was held in church on 5th December. Until recent years, George was a regular member of our congregation and our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends at this sad time.

Family Quiz Night

An evening of fun for the whole family
at St John's Church
24th January at 7 pm

Tickets are £10 for Adults
but children are free

The ticket price includes
a cheese and biscuit snack

Tickets are available from the church
or you can pay on the door but please
email Natalie to confirm
numbers for catering:
natalie.meara@nhs.net

Come as a team or
join a team on the
night!



Pause for Thought

by Alan Downen



"An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.'" Matthew 2:13

Since Brexit, disputes about illegal immigration seem to have increased in intensity — one has to wonder why when the number of people entering the UK illegally is actually dwarfed by the number who have been issued visas to come to the UK legally to study, work in our health service or generally support the economy. However, putting politics and the legality of journeys to one side, one has to ask, "Why do people risk their lives, and the lives of their children, to cross the Channel in those flimsy, underpowered boats?" Surely no-one would make that journey out of choice? But the fact of the matter is that while many make the crossing with an ill-judged hope of reaching a Promised Land flowing with milk and honey, for some ... the trip is a matter of life and death.

In the UK we feel relatively safe and secure, but we have all seen or heard of conflicts and atrocities occurring in many other areas around the world. People flee from those places to escape wars, torture or even death - and who can blame them.

As we criticise and grumble about those who travel to seek asylum, we tend to forget that Jesus was once a refugee. Herod wanted to get rid of him and he didn't care how many children had to suffer to achieve this evil end. He issued a decree, "All boys who were two years old or younger were to be slaughtered."

Joseph and Mary were guided by an angel to leave Israel in order to avoid the wrath of Herod's men. However, their trip to Egypt, across the Sinai Desert, would have been just as difficult and dangerous as crossing the Channel in a small boat ... but those same dangers would have offered protection from those who hesitated to follow, and the Holy Family were able to stay in their new home until Herod had died and they could safely return to Nazareth.

As Christians we are also called to show hospitality and to share what we have. So perhaps, before we shout "Go away!", we should place ourselves in the shoes of those who are fleeing in fear for their lives and show them the kindness Jesus would have offered.



Join us at 4pm
on Sunday
12th January
when we'll be
holding our
next "Messy
Church" at St.

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

A Message from Save the Family

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks for the generous donation of Christmas gifts that you collected for Save the Family recently. We are very grateful for your support as it enables us to care for the families we serve and continue our important work. Your contribution will make a significant difference to their lives, especially at this time of the year. Thank you to everyone involved.

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St John's Café

Join us on Thursday, 23rd January, 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.

Tel: 07842 890141

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