

# NEWS FROM THE PEWS

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

## Church Services in March

### 2nd March:

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

### 5th March: Ash Wednesday

7.30pm Holy Communion (CW)

### 9th March:

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

### 16th March:

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

### 23rd March:

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

### 30th March: Mothering Sunday

10.30am Holy 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

### Pastoral Worker:

Margaret Papworth 01829 759086  
margaret@ashtonhayes.church

### Churchwardens:

Hilary Clegg 01829 290190  
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](http://www.ashtonhayes.church)

**Fbook:** [facebook.com/stjohnnashton](https://facebook.com/stjohnnashton)

**Email:** [contact@ashtonhayes.church](mailto:contact@ashtonhayes.church)

## Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

Our APCM (equivalent to an AGM in the secular world) will be held on Sunday, 23rd March in church at approximately 12 noon (after the Morning Service) during which the Churchwardens and 1/3 of our PCC will be elected and annual reports will be received.

## View from the Vicarage

This year the start of March coincides with the start of Lent. From Ash Wednesday onwards, Christians observe forty days of prayer, self-examination and self-denial. These forty days mirror the forty days Jesus himself spent in the wilderness at the start of his public ministry. Forty days in which he too denied himself food, spent time in prayer to his Father, and resisted the temptations of the devil.

Many churches have a special service on Ash Wednesday, in which the minister puts a mark of ash on the forehead of each member of the congregation, saying "You are dust, and to dust you shall return". Sombre words, which not only remind us of our mortality, but also of our guilt before God. Because they echo words spoken by God in Genesis chapter 3, when he condemned the first humans for their sin. But thankfully that is not the end of the story - there is hope! Read these famous words from Job chapter 19 (immortalised in the lyrics of Handel's Messiah): "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes - I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"

Like all of us, Job was well aware of his mortality. He knew his earthly body would not endure. But he also knew God. He had confidence in the Lord's capacity to give life to the dead and make all things new. Job just didn't know how and when these things would take place. But Christians do know! We know that after Lent comes Easter. We can look to the events of the first Easter Sunday, when Christ rose from the dead to open the way to everlasting life for all who follow him. Our present mortal frame will one day fail, but every Christian believer can be confident that resurrected, glorified bodies will one day be theirs. So, like Job, we can say with confidence: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and I myself will see him with my own eyes!" Lent is here, but Easter is coming!

God bless,  
Phil Weston



## News

**Mothering Sunday** — please take note that our annual Mothering Sunday Service will be held on 30th March at 10.30am. This will be a celebration of all aspects of motherhood at which posies will be distributed (and cake will be eaten). Why not come and join us with your whole family as we thank God for our mothers and spend time together in worship. This is a **5th Sunday**, there will be **no 9am Service**.

**Supporting the Pub** — Ashton Sings and Kelsborrow Choir, together with a guest appearance from Ashton Folk, are joining together in a concert in St John's Church on 29 March. Proceeds will be donated to the Golden Lion Refurbishment Fund. Tickets cost £10 and they are on sale in the Village Shop.

**4pm, Sunday 16th March**  
With crafts, Bible story, songs and children's tea

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](mailto:vicar@ashtonhayes.church) or 01829 752272

All proceeds will go towards Church funds.

## Pause for Thought

by Alan Downen



"Many people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians, because these Christians are talking where they should be listening. But he who can no longer listen to his brother [or sister] will soon be no longer listening to God either; he will be doing nothing but prattle in the presence of God too." *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

Having recently returned from five days at General Synod, I am very aware that listening, with our full attention, is both necessary and tiring — something that has previously been commented upon by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor who actively resisted the Nazi dictatorship during the 1930s and 40s and opposed Adolf Hitler's genocidal persecution of Jews. Possibly because of his reputation, he was accused of being associated with a plot to assassinate Hitler, he was therefore imprisoned and later executed as the Nazi regime was collapsing.

Bonhoeffer asserted that there is a way of listening with just half an ear, which presumes that we already know what the other person has to say, but this is also a sign of an impatient and inattentive form of listening which shows little regard for the speaker — we are formulating our thoughts and waiting for a chance to interrupt so that we can express our own views without due regard for the other person. This impatient unwillingness to listen to our brothers or sisters is often reflected in our relationship with God — is it little wonder that often we seem no longer capable of hearing his still, small voice or offering the greatest service that he has committed to us, that of listening attentively to those who are in need.

Often a person can be helped merely by having someone who will listen to them seriously. Sometimes it is just a matter of enabling the other person to vocalise their concerns to enable them to discover their own solutions. This is a ministry which has been committed to all Christian people by the God whose work we share — but it isn't easy! As we listen, all sorts of personal examples and experiences gather in our minds, bursting to be vocalised and set free. But hold fast! Listen patiently with the open ears and concentrate so that we may respond when the time is right or when it is necessary.



**Ashton Hayes and Mouldsworth Community Shop are seeking a flexible and enthusiastic individual to join their small management team.**

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*Please note that from 29th March 2025 the shop will close at 3pm on Saturdays.*

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## St John's Café



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

### Opening Hours

Monday - Saturday  
10am - 5pm

Late night Thursday  
until 8pm.

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