

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

St John's – Focused on Christ, united in faith, serving our community
and a place of worship where all are welcome

Church Services in February

1st February:

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

8th February:

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

15th February:

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

18th February: Ash Wednesday

7.30pm Holy Communion (CW)

22nd February:

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

A short service of **Morning Prayer** is held in church **every Wednesday morning at 9.00am**

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:

Diane Eldridge 01829 751282
Aiton Marr 07747 837669

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

Fbook: facebook.com/stjohnashton

Email: contact@ashtonhayes.church

In Memory

The late Jeremy Leamon of Smithy Lane, Mouldsworth was buried at St John's on Friday 23rd January following a funeral service at St Cuthbert's Catholic Church. Our condolences go out to his family and friends.

View from the Vicarage

This month sees the start of Lent, the forty-day run-up to Easter. The last day before Lent begins is, of course, Shrove Tuesday (17th February this year). But why 'Shrove' Tuesday? The word 'shrove' comes from the old English word 'shrive,' meaning to confess sins and receive absolution. Traditionally, Shrove Tuesday was a day when Christians examined their lives, sought forgiveness, and were reconciled with God and one another before entering Lent. In addition, foods rich in fat, sugar, eggs, and milk were eaten up before the Lenten fast – hence the tradition of eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. (Indeed, we will be enjoying our very own 'Pancake Party' in St. John's on the afternoon of Shrove Tuesday!)



Lent, therefore, is a season of penitence, self-examination and fasting. Jesus began his earthly ministry by fasting in the wilderness for forty days and taught his followers to fast too (Matt 6:17). Fasting for Lent might involve missing a meal, refraining from TV, chocolate or alcohol, or whatever else gets in the way of us fully focusing on God. At its best, fasting helps us remember that God alone is our deepest need - that knowing him is the essential ingredient in life and our only hope in the face of our mortality (John 17:3).

In the early Church, Lent was also a time when new Christians were instructed in the faith, in preparation for their baptism on Easter Day. Lent is therefore a good excuse to engage in Bible study. So why not dust off your Bible and begin reading it regularly this month? One of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) would be an obvious place to start, and we will be working our way through John's Gospel in our church's Sunday services this Lent too. Do join us at 9am or 10.30am each week, you are very welcome!

God bless,
Phil Weston

Canadian Pancake Party

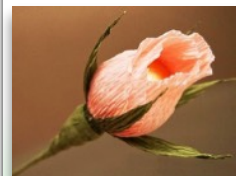


Tuesday 17th February

This Shrove Tuesday, why not try something a little bit different — Canadian pancakes with lashings of maple syrup.

There will be a "Pancake Party" in church at 2pm on 17th February. If you would like to come along, please contact Linda Morley on 01829 759029 so that she can cater for everyone. Attendance is free but donations towards church funds would be appreciated.

Craft Evening



There will be a
Craft Evening in
church on
Saturday 14th
March at 7.30pm.

We shall be making crêpe paper flowers (with secreted chocolates) in readiness for Mothering Sunday. Tickets are £10 each — light refreshments are included in the ticket price and all proceeds will be donated to church funds. Please contact Natalie Meara for further details or to book your ticket.

natalie@ashtonhayes.church

Pause for Thought

by Alan Downen



"At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him."

Mark 1:12-13

We all go through our desert moments, those times when life strips everything down to the bare essentials and tests what we're really made of. For Jesus, it was forty days in the actual wilderness, facing down his doubts and temptations. For me, it has happened twice: times when I have walked away from church entirely. The first time, I was distracted; the second, just disheartened. Both times I felt like I was wandering in circles with no clear direction, convinced I was better off alone. What I didn't expect was my return, not from guilt or obligation, but from something quieter: a conversation with an old friend and a moment of unexpected kindness, I had the strange sense that maybe I had not been as alone as I thought.

That's what the forty days before Easter are about for some of us. Not self-flagellation or giving up chocolate (though if that works for you, great). It's more about acknowledging that we all have our wilderness seasons. Times when we question everything, when the path forward isn't clear, when we're wrestling with our own versions of temptation, cynicism, despair, or the seductive belief that we don't need anyone.

Jesus went into the desert and came out stronger. I left twice and found my way back, not because church had all the answers, but because the desert gets lonely, and sometimes being part of something bigger than yourself is exactly what you need to give you strength.

Wherever you are right now, in or out, certain or doubting, remember, you are not walking alone.



Our next Messy Church will be held in church on **Sunday, 8th February** at 4pm. At that event, there



will be food, *Lego*, singing, Bible stories, and other fun activities. Open to children of all ages accompanied by an adult. Why not come along and join in?



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St John's Café



Our next afternoon café will take place on Thursday, 19th February, between 2.30 and 4.30pm for our for a free cup of tea, coffee or glass of squash, a slice of cake and a chance to meet up with neighbours and friends.

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

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Cross Lanes Farm,
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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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