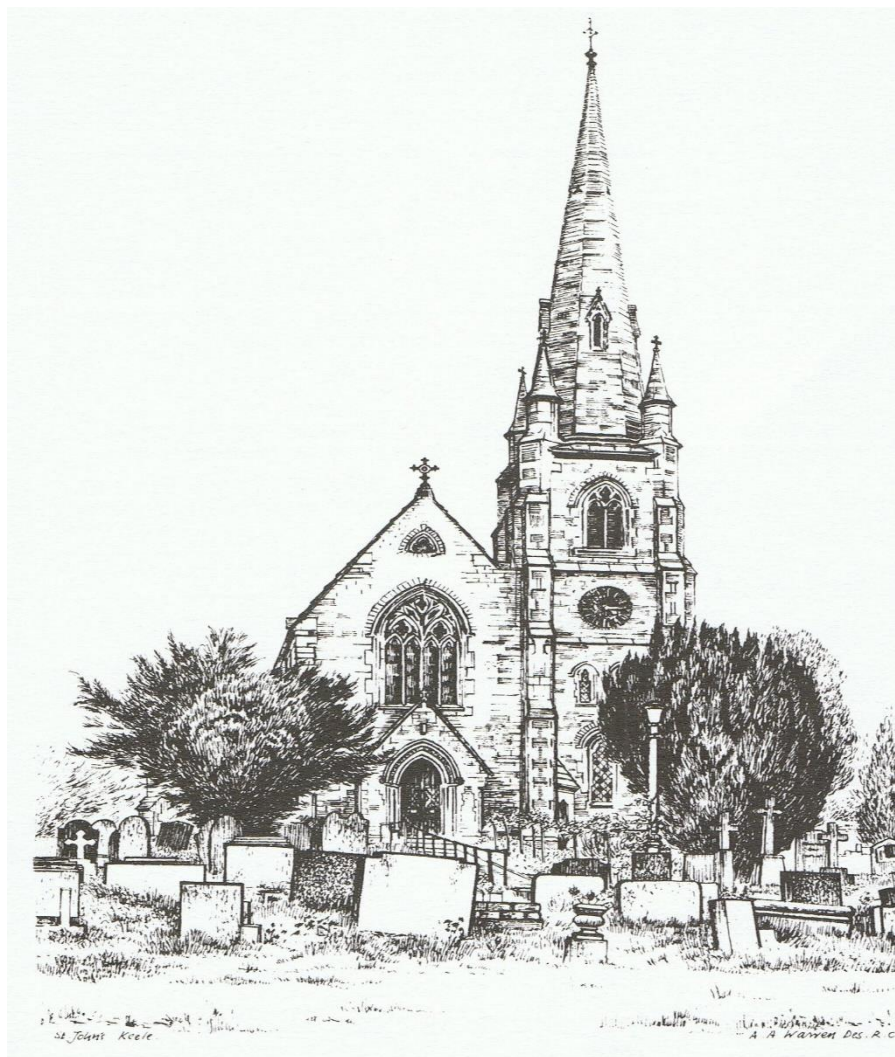


# PARISH MAGAZINE



## St. John the Baptist Church Keele

December 2019/January 2020

50p

# **Worship at St John's December - January**

## **December**

Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup>	First Sunday of Advent <b>Advent Carol Service</b>	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Second Sunday of Advent	08.00am Said Eucharist 11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Third Sunday of Advent Carols & Readings for Christmas	11.15am Sung Eucharist 3.30pm
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Fourth Sunday of Advent	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Family Worship (with Christingle) First Mass of Christmas	4.00pm 10.00pm Sung Eucharist
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup>	Mass of the Day <b>At St John's</b>	10.00am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup>	First Sunday of Christmas <b>At St Luke's, Silverdale</b>	10.00am Sung Eucharist

## **January**

Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup>	The Epiphany of the Lord <b>At St John's</b>	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup>	The Baptism of Christ	8.00am Said Eucharist 11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Second Sunday of Epiphany	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Third Sunday of Epiphany	11.15am Sung Eucharist

**The Eucharist is celebrated at St Luke's Church, Silverdale  
Sundays at 9.45am and Wednesdays at 4pm**

# From the Vicar's Desk

## *The Vicar writes ...*

I must voice our thanks to the Keele Scout Group, members of which helped with our Remembrance Sunday Act of Worship. Their contribution to this community Act of Worship was very touching and I'm only too pleased to thank them on your behalf. We still skirt around the kind of thing Remembrance Sunday ought to be about; and it was particularly poignant that the bidding prayer inviting us to remember the likes of Auschwitz, Babi Yar, and Treblinka, was voiced by a very brave girl who, in all probability, had no idea of the significance of these places.

It's quite staggering how our contemporary society prefers to stifle any sustained mention of real horror – witness the shocking treatment dealt out by 'cyber trolls' to victims of the Grenfell Tower fire. We're quite content to 'Celebrate the life of ...' (an escapist ruse if ever there was one) but shrink from bringing to mind the sheer terror we're capable of unleashing. Remembrance Sunday is the opportunity to be reminded of such things. But now our attention turns to Advent.

Advent is perhaps best thought of, not as a 'run-up to Christmas', but as the season of voices: 'Calling out in the wilderness', 'Speak, though no-one listens', 'Speaking truth to power', 'The voice of the Woman': these themes are obvious in Advent. But we like to put tinsel on them and, in any case, move them on quickly. This is a mistake. Voices will be heard. Will God's people listen to them?

Fr Peter Jones

# **The Bishop's Pastoral Letter**

## **A vapour trail through Advent**

### **Stillness and the Patron Saint of Preparation?**

Like a seasonal affliction, it is hard for regular churchgoers to avoid John the Baptist at this time of year. He bestrides the Advent landscape like a particularly fierce colossus, his presence disruptive, abrasive, unsettling; his call to repentance an invitation to internal combustion. Oh, that we could airbrush him out of our build up to Christmas and highlight other figures less likely to frighten the children – or their parents!

And yet as we follow John the Baptist's vapour trail through Advent, we can see among the smoke and debris a message for ourselves and for our society that is both very simple and potentially explosive.

It is for good reason that countless sermons will be preached in the coming weeks on the themes of 'preparation' and 'waiting', themes that are at the heart of John's ministry and also that resonate powerfully with most peoples' experience of the build up to Christmas i.e. a mixture of anticipation and task-driven preparation. There will also be numerous exhortations from the pulpit encouraging worshippers to try and find some stillness and space to counteract the hyper frenzy and focus on what it is we are preparing for. But while John the Baptist is the Patron Saint of Preparation, it is difficult to imagine, from what we know of him, that he was an icon of stillness. He was in far too much of a hurry, his mission much too urgent. What we see in John's ministry is the truth that waiting for the future involves transforming the present.

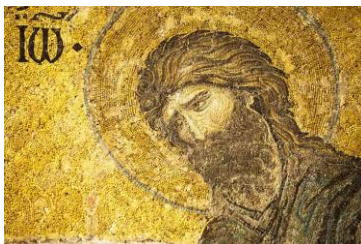
I remember seeing a production of ‘Godspell’ in London when I was young and the song ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord’ is still burned into my memory. It also serves as a reminder that this is our calling too and Advent presents us with so many opportunities to transform the present as we actively wait for the future. There are evangelistic opportunities presented by full churches at Christingles and Carol services and of course there are endless opportunities to witness to our faith through acts of generosity and service.

John was a prophet, calling people to a radically different way of life. Perhaps our prophetic calling this Christmas, may be to demonstrate that our way of celebrating is based on simplicity, generosity and sustainability?

There is mounting evidence that the climate emergency is prompting a widespread questioning of western lifestyles, with our excessive materialism and culture of instant disposability increasingly under the microscope. Does all this stuff really make us happy? And how can we tolerate the impact on the planet of all that we waste and dispose of so irresponsibly?

So this Advent, after the example of John the Baptist, let us be alive to all the possibilities the season brings, from personal renewal to societal transformation, and to play whatever part we can in helping to bring them about through prayer and action.

+ *Clive Wulfrun*



# From the Church Wardens

Dear Friends,

It was lovely to see so many of you at the Remembrance Service in November and I am sure you will agree that the inclusion of the Scouts, Guides and Cubs made the occasion even more poignant. Advent is nearly upon and as usual there is the full range of services in the run up to Christmas, so we hope that we will see you all at least once.

We have cut back the overhanging trees from the pavement that runs out towards the bypass, so you can walk happy along it without having to duck or have water run down your neck! We are still struggling to find a Tree Surgeon to carry out the rest of the work in the Churchyard, who would have thought it was so difficult to get someone to do work and don't mention the still leaking roof to us! On the tree front I spoke to someone on Saturday whilst I was out running who is interested in doing the work, so I will arrange a time for them to come and have a look. As the roof contractor has not got back in touch we will have to contact some other companies and hope one of those will be able to do the work. On that note I would like to offer a special thanks to those people who give unstintingly of their time to be at the church when people need access to carry out work or surveys be it PAT testing or the boiler inspection or any number of the jobs that need doing to keep the church open and safe - please accept our thanks.

It is easy to get so wrapped up in the joys of Christmas that we forget the message and meaning, please join us to take a little time to think and reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.” – Isaiah 7:14

Kindest Regards

Diane & Nigel

# W.I. Report

At the November Meeting, members of Keele Women's Institute gathered round as our President, Sue Dean, a keen floral arranger, showed us how, and gave us tips, on making a door wreath for Christmas. With her model half-way through its arrangement, she handed over to the group the various items we would need to attempt our own version.

The basis was a double wire circle, with short wires of varying thickness to attach the foliage and decorations to the base. We were plentifully provided with a variety of evergreens, conifers, holly, green or variegated, with real, and artificial berries. Not forgetting reels of shining satin ribbon in red and green.

By the time we were ready to enjoy seasonal snacks of delicious mince-pies, tea or coffee or mulled wine (non-alcoholic), the air was reminiscent of a pine forest, and our hands were sticky with resin (not easy to remove - Hint: wear gloves!)

Most of us went home with a half- finished wreath. Still, we shall have some time to perfect our wreath-making skills before the finished product is required. (Another hint: if you have used dried apple-slices as an ornament, avoid putting them out where the rain will fall on them – they will dissolve – if the birds don't eat them first.)

We are most grateful to our very busy president for passing on her knowledge. Previous December meetings have involved the creation of decorations, and this latest one is much appreciated.

In December there will not be a meeting in the Village Hall, as we become "ladies who lunch".

In the New Year, we return with a meeting on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January at 7.15 p.m.  
with a light-hearted look at "Madame de Maintenon's Petticoat".

And a Merry Christmas to all our readers from Keele W.I.

Peggy Chaplin

# The Garden Guild

Gordon Malt gave us a colourful cornucopia of information about climbing and wall plants. Their various modes of climbing are hooks, thorns, roots, tendrils, twining stems, sucker, pads, twining leaf stalks.

Roses can be planted between November and March, the hole should be twice the size of the root ball, use bone meal or phosphorus, mulch with compost, winter flowering clematis; prune mid-February to one foot and space shoots out. Both plants on walls require horizontal and vertical wire support-spread out hand-shaped to prevent crossing.

We saw the wonderful new pergola at Bodnant Gardens and the iron structure for fruit trees at Rudyard Kipling's house in Sussex. Trellises need metal spikes to prevent rotting and should not come too close to the ground, also a capping piece on top. Plants may be protected in winter with netlon and fleece round the stem.

Gordon showed us a wonderful variety of plants, many from his own garden, including clematis Frances Ravis, a lovely blue, prune gently after flowering.

Knaphill Scarlet quince - consider background for colour contrast.

Clematis Montana Elizabeth.

Jasmine Beesianum, named after Woolworth's brand of seeds.

Azara from S America, the willow family with puff balls and stamens.

Everlasting sweet pea planted in a gravel path - a lovely flower and a bit of a spreader.

The Moroccan broom has a trifoliate leaf.

Various roses include: rambler New Dawn, shrub Snowgoose, Frances E Lester with blooms like apple blossom, Excelsa on trellis not wall, subject to mildew or blackspot, Gertrude Jekyll.

Clematis included: Minuet, prune mid-February, Etoile Rose, prune down to one foot., it is good as a cut flower, Perle D'azure, Golden Tiara, thick and waxy.

We also saw: Pyracantha, Passion Flower, Hydrangea, Aconite (poisonous), cotoneaster and virginia creeper.

Our next meeting will be on January 13<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm.

A speaker from the Blood Bank service will be giving a talk.

Peter Hough





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# Greetings from Florida

Dear All, our 2000-mile cross state drive from Arizona to Florida was fun. The first stop was an overnight stay in Fort Stockton, Texas and from there we met up with friends at Buckhorn Lake RV resort. We stayed for two nights there in a cabin. Great company and great food was enjoyed by all!

Next we moved on to Mobil, Alabama and again stayed overnight. We continued from there to St Augustine, Florida, where we are staying in a beautiful condo right on the beach. The only 'wild animals' we've seen here are tortoises that amble about on the dunes. We'll be here for just over a month in all, then making our way down to Miami. We'll spend a couple of days there before I board a plane on December 7<sup>th</sup> arriving at Heathrow early on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

St Augustine is famed for being the oldest city in the US, founded in 1565 by the Spanish. It is absolutely delightful with old style houses in narrow streets, some beautiful architecture and lovely old cobbled lanes lined by interesting shops, reminiscent of The Lanes in Brighton.

The Cathedral is spectacular. We had a look around a couple of days ago and are intending to attend a service this evening (Sunday November 17<sup>th</sup>)

We have also visited an alligator farm. One of the inmates was over 15 feet long. Feeding time was a definite experience as the keeper fed rats etc to them and managed to jump out of the way as they rose up, trying to snatch them from his hand.

Several members of Chet's family will be arriving this coming weekend in good time for the Thanksgiving celebrations. His sister and her husband will be renting a condo here along with his brother and sister in law. Luckily they will be doing most of the cooking between them. It will certainly be yet another new experience for me.

Thinking of you all, Diane

# The Belfry Bat

Sunday October 13<sup>th</sup> gave us another chance to exploit our strength in depth, as three of the band were away. The other seven rang pleasingly well. On Tuesday Josie and I gave Val Quayle her first lesson, and she did very well. There were some absences on Wednesday too, but there were seven at the practice and we had a good ring. Also on this day it was agreed that we should hire the mobile belfry for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary weekend and erect it on the Sneyd Arms car park, which will bring the celebration into the village.

I went to the Checkley practice for the first time for several weeks on October 18<sup>th</sup>. There were six Checkley ringers there, and it was pleasing to be able to sit out while there was ringing by six ringers all taught by me. While there I was engaged to do a Santa appearance on a date to be decided, making two in all so far.

I apologise that we did not ring for the St Luke's Day service, but Silverdale bells are in need of attention and I am not yet able to do it. On Tuesday October 22<sup>nd</sup> they were inspected by bell-hanger Matthew Higby in order to get advice on more substantial work. The bells were installed in 1907 and have had no professional attention since then. Matthew's preliminary view was that only fairly major work would be worthwhile, so I think we will have to soldier on with do-it-ourselves. The most immediate requirement is repairs to the rim of the treble wheel, which is something I can do.

On Wednesday October 23<sup>rd</sup> we began with five, progressed to six and then seven for the final half hour. Not enough to try anything fancy, but a useful practice. On Saturday I went to Stafford to inspect the timber bell-frame which is about to be dismantled. You may remember that the ten bells from the former St John's church in Hanley are to be relocated to Stafford to replace the existing undistinguished ring of ten. Two additional bells will be cast to create a ring of twelve, to be hung in a new metal frame. I have asked if I can buy some of the timber from the old frame for re-use. The access to the belfry is rather indirect, beginning with a spiral staircase at the end of the south transept, and I was pleased to get all the way up to the bell chamber without difficulty, my highest tower climb for quite a while.

We adjusted the clock by stopping it before ringing and starting it again afterwards. In between the six ringers who were present rang nicely. We have started our Christmas shopping! Two mail order puzzles for grandchildren and great nieces, and on Tuesday morning we ordered a turkey, which we always buy locally from a farm at Dilhorne. Later in the day our parish magazine was delivered, containing a splendid pastoral letter from Bishop Geoff and news from the editor in the USA.

We had another useful practice on the last Wednesday of October, in spite of some regulars being absent. Earlier in the day I had received an email from Peter Jones asking if we could provide muffled ringing for the funeral next week of Graham Jackson, a former churchwarden and ringer, and it was pleasingly easy to arrange a band. On Saturday I went to a ringing meeting for the first time for several months. It was at Audley, and I managed the staircase with no trouble and rang without leaning on a wall – good progress.

There were eight in the tower on Sunday morning, and we rang quite well. After ringing I helped Steve fit the muffles ready for tomorrow's funeral. We do not ring for many funerals, and unlike weddings there is no standard format. We did half-muffled ringing on all the bells as the congregation was arriving, and when the coffin reached the lych gate we tolled the tenor until it reached the church door. Afterwards the tenor was tolled as the coffin was taken to the grave. Several regulars were absent on Wednesday, but with help from Denzil from Betley we had a good practice, and put the muffles on again afterwards.

We rang earlier than usual on Remembrance Sunday in order to finish well before eleven. There were nine of us, and we did pretty well. Half-muffled ringing isn't easy, as the muffled blows are harder to hear. Immediately afterwards Ro and I set off to Suffolk for family visiting, returning home on Tuesday and making me a day late submitting this.

Phil Gay



## **The Church Yard**

Many people have remarked with pleasure on the cutting back of brambles and undergrowth in the wildlife conservation at the east area of the churchyard. It has made the area both lighter and more accessible on these dark wintery days. We are extremely grateful to James Summerfield for his generosity of time and effort in undertaking this arduous task. It is very important that we manage this area in a way which encourages native wild plants to flourish and gives shelter to small mammals and our bird population. Being cut back judiciously once a year is the best way to achieve this. Thank you James for your hard work on a very damp day.

## **St John's Christmas Draw**

There are some fantastic prizes this year, the first prize being an extra large Christmas Hamper. Other prizes include an Electric Kettle, Champagne, Marble Cheese Board and Tea for 100 days. Tickets cost £1 and there are 5 tickets in a book. The draw will take place at the end of the morning service on Sunday 15th December. Please take some tickets to sell to your friends and neighbours.

## **Jam Jars**

Thank you very much to all those to kindly return empty jam jars. It is often difficult to thank people in person as assorted jars appear in little bags, carrier bags or boxes having been left on back pews, in the box by our front door and in our garage! I am very grateful for all of them wherever they appear and you know they will be put to good use. Angela

## **Flowers for Christmas**

Janet would very much welcome donations towards flowers this Christmas and extends a very big thank you to all who have contributed throughout the year.

A special thank you to Janet also for all the beautiful floral display she produces for us to enjoy during our time in church.

# From the Registers

## Funeral and Burial in the Church yard

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November – Graham Jackson

## Dates for your Diary

**Tuesday December 10<sup>th</sup> 6.30 pm** - St John's PCC meets at the school.

**Sunday December 15<sup>th</sup>** – Keele Village Christmas Party, from 4pm in the village hall. All residents and friends of the village are invited. This is being hosted by The Village Hall Committee and The Parish Council. As last year, this will include a light buffet, drinks, games and good cheer! This is a free event.

**Wednesday December 18<sup>th</sup> 6.30 for 7pm** – Yew Knight Supper in Keele Village Hall. Cost £12 pp. The speaker will be Dr Brian Andres, a paleontologist, who will be talking to us about dinosaurs and pterodactyls! To book your place please email me here ([r.m.bowler@keele.ac.uk](mailto:r.m.bowler@keele.ac.uk)) or phone me on 07864197321.

**Thursday December 19<sup>th</sup> 9.30am** – St John's school service in Church.

**Tuesday December 24<sup>th</sup> 4.00pm – Christingle Service.** Our Christingle Service supports the work of The Children's Society. The Children's Society works with the children in this country who feel scared, unloved and unable to cope. Through our services and campaigning, we listen, support and act to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children. **Donations from the Christingles help our project workers be there for children in this country who are:**

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**Please join us this Christmas Eve.**

# Church Officers

Clergy	Rev. Peter Jones The Vicarage, 21 Pepper Street, Silverdale ST5 6QJ Email tadjones@btinternet.com	01782 624455 (Day off Friday)
Church Wardens	Nigel Bostock Email nbbmjb@hotmail.com Diane Vogler	01782 663035  07702 361646
Asst Church Wardens	Watson Fuller Angela Studd Email astudd@btinternet.com Janet Thornhill	01782 627220 01782 626372  01782 618290
Organist& Choirmaster	Freddie Clitheroe	01782 750387
PCC Treasurer	Steve Mellor	
PCC Secretary	Rick Marshall	01782 627733
Captain of the Belfry	Phil Gay	01782 750038
Sacristan	Janet Thornhill	01782 618290
Gift Aid Secretary	Kevin Chawner	01782 644283
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**NB Articles for the magazine should be sent to the editor by the 12th of the preceding month.**

