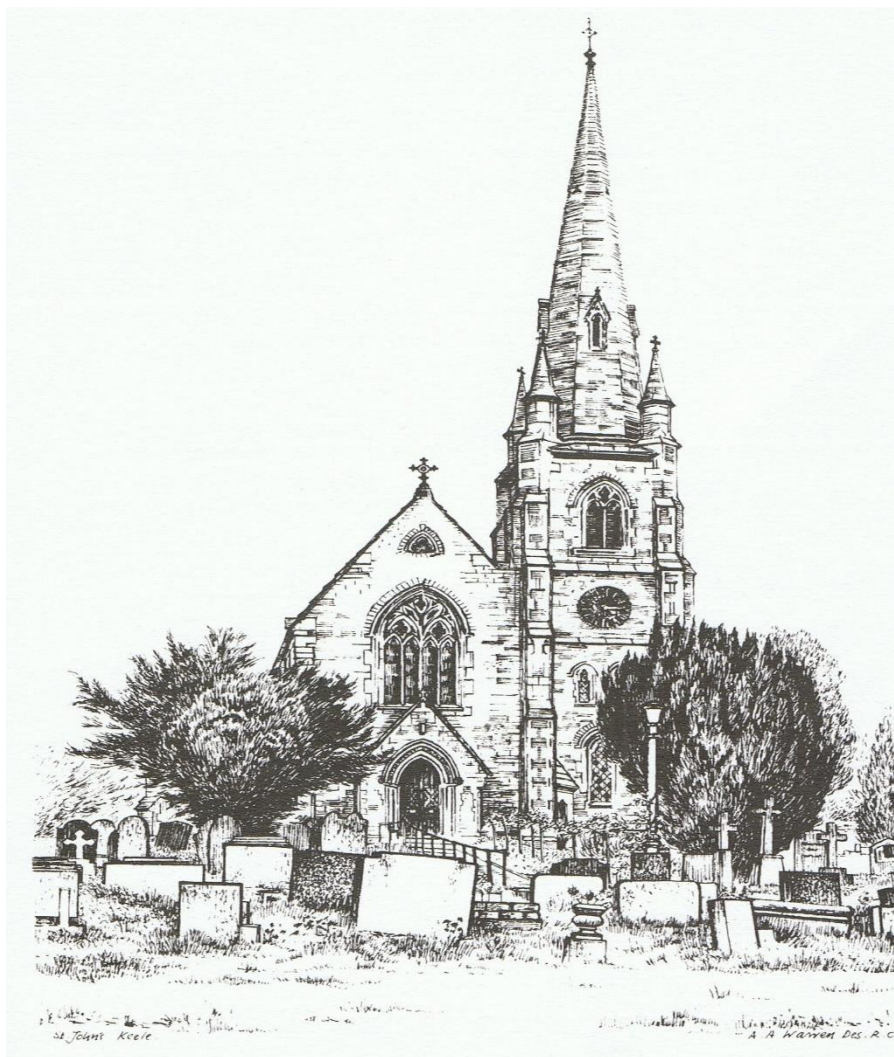


PARISH MAGAZINE



St. John the Baptist Church Keele

February 2019

50p

Worship at St John's February - March

February

Sunday 3 rd	Presentation of Christ in the Temple	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 10 th	Fourth Sunday before Lent	8.00am Said Eucharist 11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 17 th	Third Sunday before Lent	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 24 th	Second Sunday before Lent	11.15am Sung Eucharist

March

Sunday 3 rd	Sunday next before Lent	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Wednesday 6 th	Ash Wednesday Morning Prayer and Imposition of Ash (We shall be joined by pupils and staff of years 5 and 6 of St John's School)	10.00am
Sunday 10 th	First Sunday of Lent	8.00am Said Eucharist 11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 17 th	Second Sunday of Lent	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 24 th	Third Sunday of Lent	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 31 st	Mothering Sunday	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

St John's Gospel tells us (1: 43-51) of Jesus' *calling* (as we like to put it) of Philip and Nathanael - typical of John (but not so of the 'Synoptics'), John knows a great deal about the people and the places involved in what he speaks of. Here, he even tells us where Philip is from (*now Philip was from Bethsaida*) and he observes that this was the city of Andrew and Peter too.

Philip tells Nathanael that he's met the One of whom Moses and the prophets wrote - he's Jesus of Nazareth, Philip tells him. Nathanael's response is a cynical *can anything good come out of Nazareth!* (an assertion, not a question!). Nazareth was not the place from which to come. Everyone knew it. You think of that street, or that area in which you wouldn't want to be at night, and Nazareth was like that during the hours of daylight! Nathanael's *Can anything good come out of Nazareth* really meant '*Nothing* good ever comes out of Nazareth.'

Everyone knew it but Nathanael said it. Three cheers for Nathanael, and for the Nathanaels of our day: the ones who munch on their bacon sarnies after a certain manner and have a jaunty way of holding pints of beer, saying what others won't. And our cheering of them, exalts all those who want to put up walls between us and our 'Nazareths' ... what is it for you: Keele? Silverdale? Parkside? Mexico? the village? the campus? those snobs who live in such and so? or between us and those spongers?

But after Nathanael the cynic, the speaker of common sense (Duw, is that what it is?), meets Jesus, the wall is down and the cynicism is gone. Jesus is the one who shatters our snide and our divisive 'common sense' attitude to life - the attitude that feeds into, and feeds off our wizened mentalities. Can anything good come out of you? Can anything good come out of me?

A good and practical question to ask of Christianity is to ask what difference it ever makes. So, you ask, what practical difference did Christ ever make to the world? And I show you Nathanael: the one who from then on would not build walls that divide. Look out for people wanting to divide off people from people, cultures from cultures. And when you hear them and see them, remember Nathanael. That way you will see the heavens open and the movement of glory.

Enjoy what remains of Epiphany before it and with it the wider celebration of Christmas ends with the Solemnity of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple!

Fr Peter Jones

The Bishop's Pastoral Letter

Extra Ordinary Presence

As we await the appointment of a new Bishop of Shrewsbury, the Archdeacon of Stoke writes this month's Pastoral Letter.

Though it was many years ago, it has stayed with me as a memory. Because my school was a Church of England school, we had termly evening Communion services to which parents were also invited. On this occasion there was an eminent speaker and the hall was full. After the service, I found myself, aged 16, in conversation with the speaker. I cannot recall anything of what he said to me but to this day I remember that, despite all the other people milling around us, he gave me his full and undivided attention. It was more than flattering. I sensed a real interest in me as a person and a genuine regard and encouragement.

This is in contrast to those times when we feel that the person we are with would rather be talking to someone more interesting or important elsewhere in the room. We may have been guilty of it ourselves – looking over the shoulder of the person before us, eyes flicking back and forth, scanning the crowd for the next, more rewarding (we think), encounter.

February this year is an “in-between” month. The great cycle of Christmas and Epiphany concludes at the beginning of the month with Candlemas and Lent and Easter are yet to come in March and April. This February, we return briefly in the church calendar to what is called “ordinary time”, to those humble Sundays that are “before” or “after” some great celebration. It may be that we are tempted this month – and whenever we find ourselves in those “in between” times in life – to “look over the shoulder” of the present moment to what we imagine are more exciting times ahead. It's great to be able to look forward to the future but there is the danger that we stop expecting to meet God in the present, especially if the present feels to be one of those “in between” times. The fact is God wants to bless us *now*, speak to us *now*, call us to service *now* and not just in the future.

It's a temptation to rush on to whatever is next. This month we are invited to practice the presence of God; to give the present moment our full regard and listen out for God's word to us now. So we learn, as Rob Bell puts it, “how to be here”.

Matthew

*The Ven Matthew Parker
Archdeacon of Stoke-upon-Trent*

From the Church Wardens

Dear Friends,

As this is the first edition of the New Year, I feel we can still wish you all the best for 2019! It was a busy season for the Church, as you can imagine, from the success of the Christmas Fair to seeing nearly 100 of you at the Christmas Eve service, which was a wonderful start to Christmas.

We mentioned in our last article that the first tranche of works from the quinquennial inspection have been completed, along with the repairs to the ceiling inside the church. We have recently undertaken an inspection of the lightning conductors which resulted in the addition of extra ground rods to ensure that they met the required safety standards. So it has been an expensive time for us in maintaining the upkeep and safety of the church. As we move into spring we will be looking to conduct another couple of mandated inspections; a tree survey, and any associated work and a check of the gravestones. Thanks to the generous work of James Summerfield in cutting back the briars, we can now see the whole of the churchyard and also see the snowdrops springing through. That means we will be able to have all the stones checked and it has already revealed to us that we have a former Director General of Public Instruction of Bengal and a Former Mayor of Newcastle who was knighted for his services to the town, buried in our churchyard. As always we will of course keep you updated as we continue our work.

"For behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land." Song of Solomon 2:11-12

Kindest Regards

Diane & Nigel

Belfry Bat

There was no service at St John's on December 2nd, and we decided to have a day off rather than ring for the Advent Carol Service at St Luke's, as some of the band have other commitments at the earlier time. December 5th was the first Wednesday of the month, so we welcomed Betley ringers to our practice. In the afternoon of December 8th I went to Stoke Minster for the AGM of the North Staffs Association. I was re-elected to the two posts I have held this year – education officer and mobile belfry trustee, and Steve Mellor was re-elected as independent examiner.

I did my annual Santa performance on December 11th, for the International Relations postgraduate students Christmas party. December 12th was the Christmas lunch day for our Wednesday ringing group. The current regulars were joined by some who have rung with us in the past, and we had enough ringers to ring two peals, one at Woodlands and the other at Whitmore. Lunch too was at Whitmore, at the Mainwaring Arms, which we had not visited previously but will almost certainly visit again – it was good. There were only five at the practice that evening, which was about what I expected, so I had decided to leave the silencers on so that we could use the simulator in individual practice mode. So although you didn't hear us, we did practise.

On the following weekend we travelled to Suffolk for our pre-Christmas visit to Ro's father. We had expected to be going for Christmas, but he is being taken to a grand-daughter, which enables us to spend Christmas at home for the first time for several years. In spite of our absence, there were enough to ring for the carol service.

Instead of the practice at St John's on December 19th we invited everyone who rings with us on Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays to a party. In the event, a number of people cried off through illness, but fifteen of us spent a very pleasant evening.

It is increasingly the case that people regard the late-night service on Christmas Eve as the one to go to, and over the last few years this is the one we have tried to ring for, which suited our band – no competition with the turkey! We were pleased to see Lyndsey Mellor, who made seven, and we enjoyed the mince pies and mulled wine provided by the Mellor family. We spent a very quiet Christmas with one guest for Christmas lunch, and the holiday was notable in that our car remained unused for two days.

On December 30th we were pleased to be able to ring for the shared service at St Luke's, assisted by my son and daughter-in-law who were visiting. On the previous evening we had been to the New Vic production of *The Wind in the Willows*, using complimentary tickets given us as thanks for the loan of our hand-bells.

Hot news on December 29th was that Neil Baldwin has been awarded the British Empire Medal "for services to the community in Newcastle under Lyme". My first memory of him was when he knocked on my door when I was a student and asked me what I thought about God, over fifty-five years ago.

On Sunday December 30th my handbells were thoroughly tested by ringing a quarter peal on them. Actually, almost two quarter peals, as the first attempt failed close to the end when part of a clapper came unscrewed. *1260 Plain Bob Minor*: Phil Gay 1-2, Tina Stoecklin 3-4, Simon Gay (conductor) 5-6.

When ringing restarted at Keele in 1963, the band was composed entirely of students, so unlike many towers we have no tradition of ringing in the New Year, and we were safely asleep well before midnight. Slightly to my surprise, we were not woken by fireworks.

On January 2nd four of the Keele band, assisted by two friends from Stoke Minster, rang a quarter peal: *1260 Plain Bob Minor*: Rowena Gay 1, Wendy Daw 2, Roland Wakefield 3, Ray Daw 4, Steve Mellor 5, Phil Gay (conductor) 6. Rung in celebration of Jennie, late wife of Roland Wakefield (ringer of the 3rd) on what would have been her 71st Birthday.

I visited Bev Stringer on Thursday January 3rd – he had invited me to go and see the latest developments in his model railway, which features a very realistic model of Newcastle station, a building which is probably not remembered by very many of our readers. Bev has assembled a very impressive archive of plans and built an excellent model. Two days later there was more ringing at St John's when the North Staffs Association visited us for its first meeting of the year. There was a good turnout – twenty is more than the belfry can accommodate, so I spent quite a lot of time listening in the churchyard.

Phil Gay



W.I REPORT

On Monday 4th January we were treated to a very interesting talk by Peggy Chaplin, entitled “The King’s Kitchen Garden”. The King mentioned is Louis XIV of France, no less, (whose reputation one would not normally link with an interest in vegetables) but apparently the king instigated the potager as part of his vision for the palace and garden of Versailles. He took an enormous interest in the project, requesting a raised terrace around the garden on which he could walk and watch the daily work of the thirty trained and experienced gardeners. The designer and director of the garden’s construction was Jean de la Quintinye who had been inspired by the gardens he had seen while touring Italy.

The vegetable garden was built adjoining the palace gardens but on a very swampy area. However, by mixing enormous amounts of manure and straw from the royal stables, and other materials and with an intricate design of underground drainage tunnels and well-placed tanks, the 20 acre site became ideal for its purpose. High walls and terraces were constructed to create micro-climates for strawberries, melons and early peas. Sugnall Hall gardens, ten miles from Keele is a miniature version.

Espalier apricot, peaches, quinces and even figs were grown on south and west facing walls and in a hollowed area pear and apple trees abounded. Orange trees were grown in square pots such as can be seen in Trentham Gardens. Louis took a great interest in the care of the fruit trees and was particularly interested in pruning the fig trees himself. He wrote a 300 page book about pruning. The products of the garden were consumed by the almost 3000 people who were part of the court. In the central parts of the garden a range of root vegetables was grown, also cabbages, cauliflowers and beans. At the centre of this vast potager was a pond with a fountain pumping water up to the palace gardens by means of waterwheels located in the River Seine below.

After Louis XIV died in 1715 the court left Versailles but the pottager was maintained, in spite of cuts to the budget, experimenting with new varieties of plants from Africa and the New World; even coffee was grown so that Louis XV could drink the product of his own garden.

Today the garden is a UNESCO world heritage site.

Our next meeting takes place on Monday 4th February at 7.15 pm when Barbara Andrew will tell us about ‘Women in the early war years – Vera Brittain and her family’. All are very welcome.

Marion Roach



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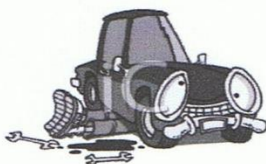
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The Children's Society

Elizabeth Leslie is pleased to announce that over £650 was collected for **The Children's Society** this Christmas – over £332 from the Family Act of Worship and Christingle on Christmas Eve, and over £355 from St John's School.

House Boxes will be collected in February.

Food Bank

A good amount of food items including some treats were put into our food collection box during the Christmas period. Do please continue bringing what you can.

Thank you everyone for your generous donations towards these two charities, and to those that give up their time to coordinate this work.

The Garden Guild

Peter Durnall got the Keele Garden Guild off to a flying start with three gold medal winning films he has made, each of which was greeted with a standing ovation.

1. Up close and personal with the birds in his own garden, and what a variety he attracts! Nuthatch, greater spotted woodpecker, siskin, chaffinch, goldfinch, bullfinch, long tailed tit, great tit. Blue tit. Coal tit, starling, song thrush, waxwing. The choice of nesting place proved crucial for a robin and a coal tit. The robin chose one of Peter's homemade boxes, the coal tit a hole in a neighbour's wall. We marvelled at the hard work of the robins, feeding and cleaning out their nestlings – and then came a thieving magpie and all the little ones perished. Peter said "Perhaps he'll build another". The coal tit was more fortunate, the hole in the wall well hidden and inaccessible, and we saw the chicks fledged. The expressions on the faces of the young blue tits about to leave the nest was a mixture of apprehension and defiant determination (anthropomorphic!)

2. Peter was brought up in Tunstall, and showed us pictures of Smokey Stoke in the 1950s to introduce the nearby beauties of the Staffordshire countryside: Knypersley Reservoir and the Serpentine, Green Bank country park, the Cauldon Canal and the Roches. Here was a great wealth of wildlife, a dipper feeding on caddis grubs in the infant river Trent, a great crested grebe carrying three infants on her back, a swan turning her eggs over every hour and guiding her cygnets to safety in the middle of the pool, badgers at dusk meeting with fox cubs and rabbits, a grebe and a coot sharing a watery home, a red deer stag driving off the younger bucks, a kestrel's nest in the magnificent rock formations of the Roaches. Peter filmed the young kestrels over a period of weeks before they left the nest. O the fierce piercing beauty of those fledglings faces! It is good to know that the fire which destroyed so much wildlife on the Roches last summer did not reach this nest.

3. Barra in the Outer Hebrides: the unspoilt beauty of sea and shore, flower meadows and sky, the eider ducks, the gulls and terns, the seals and sea otters, the ruined homes of those who perished in the potato famine or were deported at the clearances. Then the music of Sibelius brought the evening to a moving close.

Our next meeting is on February 11th at 7.30pm in Keele Village Hall, when Gwen Johnson will present “A Year in the Life of Stansley Wood”.

All are welcome at our meetings.

Answers to last year’s Potteries quiz:

Wild Animals, Cheese and Pickles, Fire Lighters, Fifth Floor, False Teeth, Uttoxeter, Ounces, Council House, Measles, Morris Thousand, Speeding Fine, Street Guide, That young man over there, Beechams Powders, Sister-in-law, Eggs, Go slow, Liquorice allsorts, Knock his teeth in, Knife and fork’ Hole in my trousers, Pay and display, Puncture outfit, Rainbow trout, Once a week, Steering wheel, Stairway, Tortoise, Rhubarb, County Council

Peter Hough

Churchyard Birds

Churchyards are unique spaces in the hearts of our communities which appeal to many different people. They encapsulate a community’s history whilst offering sanctuary and refuge for our native wildlife. In some neighbourhoods, the churchyard may be the only locally accessible green space. As diocesan partner charity, Caring for God’s Acre, works to support groups and individuals to care for and enjoy these unique sites.

We have a vision for all burial grounds to be beautiful, accessible and connected to their communities. During the coming year, we look forward to continue supporting groups across the diocese caring for churchyards.

Winter time is a good time for reviewing how managing your churchyard has gone – were there enough people able to help with the tasks? Do we need more volunteers? Are there any local botanists that are happy to do a species list that we can display in the porch? Are the gravestones safe? How did our volunteer tree survey go? Reviewing then leads onto planning actions for the next season. We have a resource ‘The Five Steps to Churchyard and Burial Ground Care’ which can help you plan 2019 – simply e-mail us or find it on the website www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk.

Remember that we are only a phone call away so do contact if you have any questions, big or small!

Harriet Carty

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor - harriet@cfga.org.uk

(individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code Lich19)

Grand Draw 2018

Winners!

- 1st Large Hamper - Debra Smith
- 2nd Bottle of Whisky - Jane Andrews
- 3rd Pot of Crocus - Nigel Bostock
- 4th Roses Chocs (vintage tin) - Elizabeth Leslie
- 5th Cheese Board - Mark Deavall
- 6th Fox's Biscuits - Freddie Clitheroe
- 7th Bottle of Wine - Anna Loveridge
- 8th Planter of Violas - Bostock family
- 9th Set of Tea towels - Eileen Cope
- 10th Jam Selection - Sandra Bytheway

The Draw raised £250, so thank you to everyone who bought
Tickets

Thank you also to all of you who attended and helped at our
Christmas Market during which £1001.58p was raised.

St John's Christmas Card

Again our Christmas Card proved to be very popular and the original painting by John Dennison is to be offered for sale. Sealed bids, in the region of £200 - £300, to be sent to Angela Studd. Offers to be received by 25th May 2019.

Dates for your Diary

* **February 12th Keele PCC** meets in St John's School at 6.30pm

* **Pancake Fling! Tuesday March 5th**

I shall be hosting 'open house' from 11am to 3pm on Shrove Tuesday when pancakes (with a choice of fillings) plus tea and coffee, (sandwiches over the lunchtime period) will be available. There will be a raffle, a donations plate and gift aid envelopes, with proceeds going towards the fabric of the church. Do please come and 'Have a Fling' at 25 May Street, Silverdale. Any offers of help on the day would be really appreciated! Diane.

* **Lenten Reflections and Frugal Lunches** (all starting at 12 noon)

Tuesday March 12th Frugal Lunch at Dorothy Clifford's home

Tuesday March 19th Lenten Reflections at Rick & Ruth Marshall's home

Tuesday March 26th Lenten Reflections at Eunice & Colin Mortimer's home

Tuesday April 2nd Frugal Lunch at Wendy Harrison's home

Tuesday April 9th Lenten Reflections at Jane Andrews' home

Tuesday April 16th Frugal Lunch at Angela and Robin's home

NB Please contact Diane Vogler (01782 632997) for addresses etc.

* **Yew Knight Supper-Wednesday April 17th** in Keele Village Hall **7pm**
Further details will be given in the March magazine

Christmas Flowers

Janet would like to thank all those who made donations towards the cost of the flowers that so beautifully graced our church during the Christmas period.

And of course, our thanks goes to Janet, for her artistic creations as always!

If you'd like to have a special floral display to commemorate a special event in your lives or as a memorial to a loved one, please speak to Janet, who will be happy to discuss choice of blooms, and colour themes etc. with you.

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
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Captain of the Belfry	Phil Gay	01782 750038
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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.

