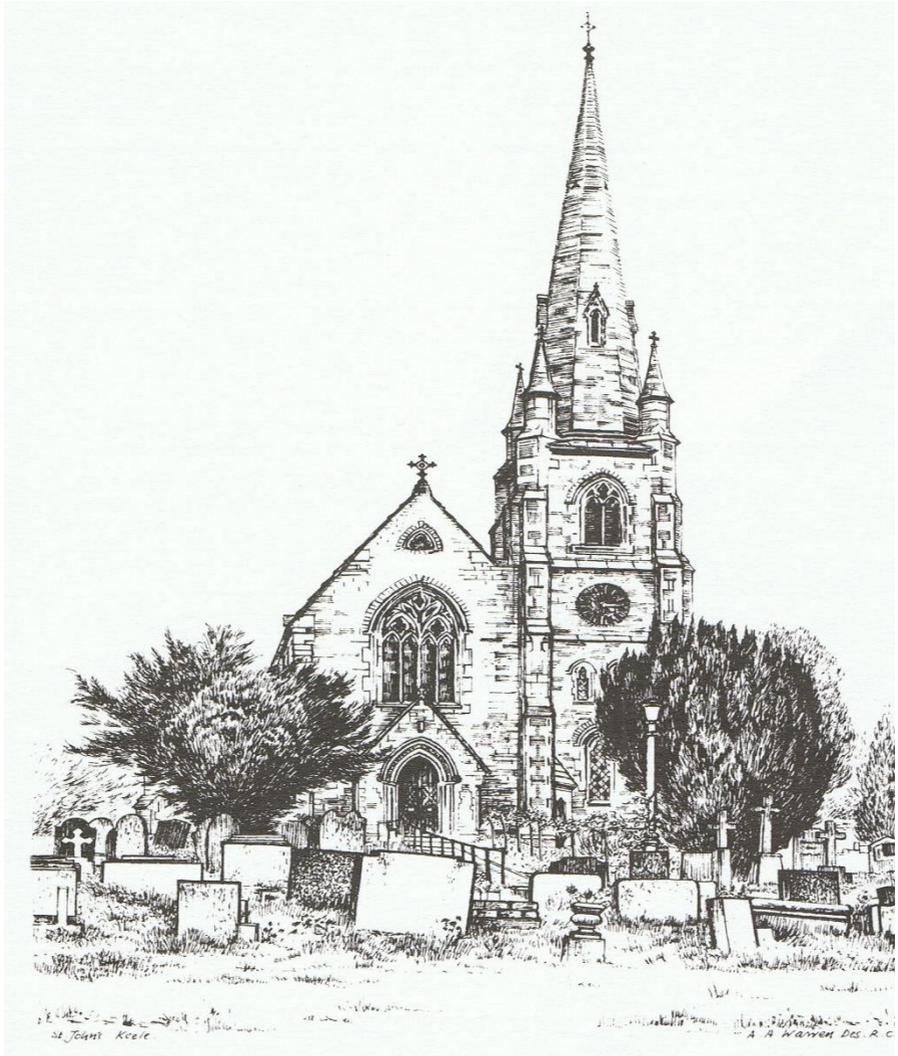


# PARISH MAGAZINE



## St. John the Baptist Church Keele

February 2020

50p

# Worship at St John's February - March

## February

Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Presentation of Christ in the Temple	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Third Sunday before Lent	8.00am Said Eucharist 11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Second Sunday before Lent	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Sunday next before Lent	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Ash Wednesday</b> Morning Prayer and Imposition of Ash <b>10.00am</b> (We shall be joined by pupils and staff of years 5 and 6 of St John's School) Eucharist and The Imposition of Ash <b>11.30am</b>	

## March

Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup>	First Sunday of Lent	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Second Sunday of Lent	8.00am Said Eucharist 11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Third Sunday of Lent	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Mothering Sunday	11.15am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup>	Fifth Sunday of Lent	11.15am Sung Eucharist

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

## From the Vicar's Desk

The secular 'Christmas' ended either with the chimes of midnight on 25<sup>th</sup> December, or (more vaguely) with the celebrations of new year. For the Christian community, however, Christmas (a mighty span of a feast that *begins* with the vigil mass on Christmas (geddit: 'Christ-Mass') eve and ends, *via* the feast of the Epiphany, with the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple on 2<sup>nd</sup> February. That's a huge amount of feasting – much more-so than the secular version.

One way or another, Christ-Mass (the feast of the birth of the Lord), Epiphany, and the feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (aka 'Candlemass') are shot through with the theme of light: Christ, the Light of the world, revealed to and in the world, and Christ, *a light to lighten the Gentiles*. That ought to tell us something about God. It ought also to tell us a great deal about what sort of people are those who belong to the Christian community. We are to 'illuminate'; to 'enlighten'; to bring light wherever there is darkness.

And without wishing to 'diss' our world and our life – it is, after all, as St John's Gospel tells us, the world that God loves so much, even as it is – there is yet a great deal that's dark about it. That will include us, of course, and our dull reflection of the light of Christ. Even so, we are to be lights – for at our Baptism, we were given the light of Christ. For as long as we think of belonging to the Christian community as a piece of social convention or membership of an interest group in which we are passive observers, then this light is going to struggle. But that light remains in our hands, and ours is the weighty duty of cherishing it and encouraging it to shine.

Fr Peter Jones

# The Bishop's Pastoral Letter

## *Making whole-ness and the wilderness*

*As we await the appointment of a new Bishop of Stafford, the Archdeacon of Walsall writes this month's Pastoral Letter.*

Lent is a time for self-examination. The absence of flowers in church, the more sombre tone of hymns and liturgy, changes in the colour of vestments and altar frontals, our commitments to pray, fast and read the bible more diligently, all serve to create a space for thoughtful consideration of what our faith is calling forth from us in these present times. In what ways are we seeking to share the good news more deliberately, to join hands with others and roll up our sleeves for the good of our communities and to be good neighbours in order that as a nation we may discover a deeper mutuality and common cause?

This year on the First Sunday of Lent the set gospel reading is the story of the testing in the wilderness in Matthew chapter 4 verses 1-11. Reading it, I am struck by the fact that the passage opens and closes with two strong pointers that we might want to take as 'bookends' to frame our Lenten journeying. The first is the role of the Holy Spirit and the second is the ministry of angels.

In verse 1 Matthew writes that Jesus was "led up by the Spirit" into the wilderness, that is, 'up' into the Judean hills. The suggestion is that his wilderness encounter is not only to be testing and demanding but 'a time of the Spirit'. What we witness is the Spirit empowering Jesus to deepen and refine his sense of calling and mission just at the point where he faces very sharp challenges from the wiles of the devil. In the same way, as we seek to turn aside from the pressures of day to day life and the challenges we may face, through the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit we can discover a space to think and ponder and wait upon God with renewed expectation and delight. Our Lenten reflections and activities are thus a time when the

insight, encouragement, empowerment and comfort of the Spirit can touch us and refresh us deeply. It is a time when ‘the still small voice’ can speak to us – remembering that when God spoke to Elijah in this way (1 Kings 19 v.12), it was at a time for him of great vulnerability and deep discouragement. The Spirit overshadows us not only when we have the wind in our sails, but when life is at its most problematic. Paul encouraged the Christian community in Rome when he wrote that ‘the Spirit intercedes (for the saints) with sighs too deep for words’ (Romans 8 v.26). This is nowhere more so than in this time of seeking a closer walk with Christ in the wilderness, stress and distress of our lives.

On Ash Wednesday we are invited into the ‘keeping of a holy Lent’ and Lent is indeed given as a time for ‘holiness’, thus for the making-whole of relationships, situations, our communities and nation and our own selves before God. This emphasis comes out in the closing words of the passage, for when the devil left Jesus, ‘angels came and ministered unto him’. The angels signify the wholeness or making-whole-ness of the wilderness journey. They remind us that something holy and whole-making is being undertaken and it will be blessed and honoured. My own instinct is that the angels were always there, ministering to our Lord – which is the strong impression gained in Mark’s account of the testing. The fact that Matthew marks their impact as being at the end, may indicate that only at the end of the testing does their presence become apparent. It is often only when we look back that we see how we have been upheld. Either way, that angels ministered to Jesus as he was being prepared for what was to come, points us to the fact that our own preparations for the joy of Eastertide are likewise times when God’s messengers and messages are pressing to wing their way into our hearts and lives. Ours is only that we should open our hearts! Lent is a time to receive the ministry of angels – some of whom may be nearer to us than we might suppose or have noticed.

I hope and pray that this season of Lent may indeed be a time for you and your communities of deepening wholeness through the power and refreshment of the Spirit and because of the ministry of angels.

*Ven Julian Francis  
Archdeacon of Walsall*

# From the Church Wardens

Dear Friends,

Now that the Christmas festivities are over I can actually see the nights starting to get a little lighter! We hope you all had a good Christmas and we would like to wish you all the best for the New Year. There has been a lot going on for us, some of you may have noticed that we found someone to do the work on the trees in the Churchyard and at the same time we had some wider grounds maintenance undertaken. A visual inspection was carried out of all the trees in the Churchyard and where necessary some work was done, mainly on the Yews that were impinging onto the roof. We also had the borders of the back lane into the church, the edges around the top of the churchyard and the car park cut back and everything looks so much better now. We have also accepted a quote to repair the roof above the Lady Chapel where we have been worried about water ingress for some time. This is going to entail the removal and replacement of the flashings, the replacement of a number of broken tiles and the application of a specialist weather coating. By doing this we hope that we will be able to curtail these leaks. It seems appropriate to mention now that this year will see the celebration of 150 years of the consecration of our church, more details regarding this will follow, but by doing all of this work, with your support, we hope to preserve our fine building well into the next century.

“Therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’” Isaiah 28:16

Kindest Regards

Diane & Nigel

# The Garden Guild

Local hero Ian Bentley told us how Blood Bikes carry urgent material from one hospital to another free of charge. The group was set up in 1962 to provide a free voluntary service and improve the image of motorcyclists. There are over thirty separate groups- Shropshire Staffordshire Cheshire Blood Bikes is five years old.

A recent case was delivery of a parcel from Dumfries and Galloway to Oxford with several bikes involved in a relay. This saved the NHS £600 which is what a taxi or courier would have cost.

Departments helped are A&E, Pathology, Oncology, Maternity, Community nurses, Milk bank, Neo natal. A recent example: blood taken from cancer patient at Royal Stoke has to be tested over two or three days at Birmingham so medication can be adjusted. What is carried? As well as blood, platelets, placentas, bone marrow, transplants, faecal matter (healthy stools to combat C Diff - a practice begun in C4 China), frozen breast milk for premature babies.

Volunteer riders have to be advanced motorcyclists and have to be assessed before going on induction and blood handling courses. They undertake one to three shifts a month. A shift involves twelve hours on call (not all riding). An operation is called a shout, where the role of the controller is all important. The controller receives a call and dispatches the duty rider for the area, and stays in touch with the rider throughout via a series of text messages. The controller has a duty of care and sees the rider safely home.

The local fleet has fifteen bikes located all around the SSCBB area, eg Sandiford, Sandbach, Chester, Whitchurch. The bikes are named: Stoke is oatcake, Burton is brewer, and guess what Winnie the Pooh carries!

It costs £165,000 a year to maintain the fleet, and 18,436 jobs have been done. The ... do not have blues and twos and cannot break the speed limit or carry donor organs.

Why do they do it? Because of comments like "You guys saved my husband's life."

They received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2018.

Peter Hough

Our next meeting is on February 10 at 7.30pm in Keele Village Hall. Grant Donner will be telling us about breathing life into the gardens at Sandon Hall, where we are having a day out on June 16. All are welcome at our meetings.

# W.I. REPORT

*“Which Strictly professional has taken to writing novels about Ballroom?”*

We started 2020 with a rather depleted attendance at our January meeting due to the illness of several members. We were pleased to welcome one visitor. Nevertheless, eleven of us enjoyed a ‘Christmas Leftovers’ quiz devised by Peggy Chaplin. There were some ‘tip of the tongue’ frustrations.... name the group and lead singer of Merry Christmas everybody (1973) .....and groans of despair.....where *is* the festival of Up Helly Aa celebrated? This was not a competitive quiz and each member received a small prize. Apart from the round requiring knowledge of Christmas cracker jokes\*, one member at least got the correct answer to each of the questions and the average ‘score’ was around 50%. While we listened to the quizmaster we enjoyed mulled berry juice and some delicious non-seasonal cakes prepared by Arlene to celebrate the new year.

Our president, Sue Dean, and members are always pleased to welcome visitors to any meeting and there will be no pressure to join the WI.

‘Payment by Custard Creams’ is the title of the presentation at next month’s meeting on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February. Barbara Andrew is an experienced speaker to many different audiences and we anticipate a lively evening. Do come along!

Angela Studd

\* Answers to questions will be found elsewhere in this magazine.



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- We have 5 dedicated parking spaces, located in front of the chapel on the student's union car park.

We are in the row of shops in the Keele University Student's Union Building, next to Santander Bank. Our regular pharmacist is Simon Hall. Please call in or telephone **01782 633785** to find out about these and other services that we offer at your local pharmacy.

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# The Children's Society

Thank you for the support given to The Children's Society at Christmas. The collection at the Christingle Service raised £66 10p and the envelopes £136 30p, the total is £202 40p from church. St John's School gave £276 54p in their candle collecting boxes making a joint total of £478 94p. Our efforts will continue with the emptying of the collecting boxes in February.

I am planning to hold a "Bring Boxes Coffee Morning " at my home, Jasmine House, 34, Wilbraham's Walk, Audley, ST7 8HL.

Date to be decided. Telephone 720874. Hope to see you.

Elizabeth Leslie

## Food Bank

A good amount of food items including some treats and toiletries were put into our Food Bank collection box during the Christmas period. Do please continue bringing what you can. The demand on the Food Bank services shows no sign of levelling off.

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

---

### Answers to W.I. quiz:

Anton du Beke.

BandAid.

Shetland.

\*how does Santa deal with naughty elves: gives them the sack

# Belfry Bat

There were only seven at the practice on November 13<sup>th</sup>, and we made good use of the extra opportunities that provided by ringing everything twice. The third weekend in November is the annual peal weekend of the Cumberland Youths, the London ringing society I belong to, and this year it started on the Thursday with a peal at Sandon. We failed to ring one there last year, so it was pleasing to get it, particularly as it was my first peal on big bells for almost a year. I came home via Stafford, where the bells are now out of the tower, and had another look at the timber in the frame. I decided not to have as much as I originally planned, but came home with a couple of useful pieces.

On Saturday November 16<sup>th</sup> I went to Mavesyn Ridware for my second peal attempt of the weekend, but it was not successful. On Sunday however we did better, and rang a good peal in the garage. There were nine at ringing on Sunday, and eight on Wednesday. Our Thursday group of young learners has grown from two to three. We weren't in time to buy a cake at the Christmas Fair, but greatly enjoyed the shove-halfpenny. There were eight in the belfry on Sunday, and we were pleased with the ringing.

I think I have already revealed that bells are now being cast at Chesterton, and on Friday November 29<sup>th</sup> I was present at the casting of two new bells for Stafford, which will augment the ring of ten transferred from Hanley to a ring of twelve. In some ways I think I would rather be present when the new bell is broken out of the mould, but it was an interesting experience. The Westley foundry acquired all of the Whitechapel moulding patterns when that foundry closed, but they are not being used. Instead a pattern is made in foam which is used to create a mould in sand. The foundry does quite a lot of work for sculptors, and we were shown some work in progress for Tracey Emin.

There were eight in the belfry on Advent Sunday, and you may have noticed quite a lot of variation in the quality. But the curate might have said that some of it was very good. I did Santa for the first time on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at Checkley primary school. On Wednesday there were only seven at the practice, but as is often the case, it enabled us to try some things we wouldn't normally have time for.

For the last couple of weeks Rowena has been absent from ringing because of problems with a finger on both hands, but on December 8<sup>th</sup> she came to Sunday ringing, making eight in all, and was able to ring the tenor, which once

in motion can be rung without much effort. On Wednesday a number of the band were absent and we had only six at the practice, but as usual we exploited the situation and had a good ring.

On Sunday December 15<sup>th</sup> we rang for the carol service instead of in the morning. There were nine of us in the belfry, but Ro didn't ring as both of her hands are injured – she's lost her grip! The service included an interesting selection of readings and carols, some of which I had not previously heard.

Wednesday December 18<sup>th</sup> saw the Christmas lunch for our peal band. Twenty-five had booked in for lunch, and conveniently fourteen of them wanted to ring a peal. Eight rang a peal on our bells at Woodlands, and the other six went to Whitmore, chosen partly for its proximity to the lunch venue. This peal was also successful, but the lunch was much less successful – at three o'clock we were still waiting for our puddings, having been there since twelve. A discount was offered, but I don't think it will persuade us to go there again. We didn't practise in the evening, as there were only five available. Sunday was back to normal, with nine present and good ringing, after which we were entertained for lunch by Pauline and Steve Mellor. We noticed after ringing that there are no hibernating harlequin ladybirds in the belfry this winter – have they found a better place? On Monday I went to Dilhorne to pick up the turkey - nearly ready! In the afternoon we went to Eccleshall for the funeral of Tony Whittall, who had rung there since the 1940s.

Christmas is traditionally a time for ringing, and there are two towers where this has been particularly noteworthy for a long time. At Long Stratton, a village in Norfolk, a full peal has been rung on December 24<sup>th</sup> every year since 1955. The ten heavy bells at the Queen's Tower, Kensington, now part of Imperial College, are rung only a few times each year, one of which is a full peal on Christmas Eve. This is one of a small number of universities which has an official University Bellringer, who is responsible for organising the ringing on specific occasions, a job which used to be done by our friend the late Roger Bailey. Cambridge also has such a person, and in the past, when I ran a bell ringing summer school at Keele, I used to give myself that title for the duration of the course.

Several years ago I bought a bell which was described as the (pre-Tannoy) station bell from Templecombe station on the Somerset and Dorset Railway. My original plan was to use it to make a model, but I've got plenty of other suitable bells, so I decided to give it to the S & D museum. Conveniently one of their staff was driving to Manchester on Boxing Day, so he called in to collect it.

We spent Christmas Day and Boxing Day alone, but then it got busier. Simon and his family arrived on December 27<sup>th</sup>, and Sally and her family visited on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup>. On Saturday January 28<sup>th</sup> we went to the New Vic production of *The Prince and the Pauper*, using the complimentary tickets we received as a thankyou for lending our handbells. Several of our regulars were away on January 1<sup>st</sup>, so we had another week off, but looking forward to resuming normal service. The same applied to our Wednesday morning band. We were family visiting in Suffolk on January 5<sup>th</sup>, but there was good ringing on five. On Wednesday January 8<sup>th</sup> we had seven at the practice, and on Sunday we had all eleven of our band and rang very well.



# Grand Christmas Draw 2019 Prize Winners!

1<sup>st</sup> Large Hamper – Stephen Thornhill

2<sup>nd</sup> Bottle of Champagne – Sarah Adams

3<sup>rd</sup> Electric Kettle – Karen

4<sup>th</sup> 2 bottles of wine – Enoch Lieu

5<sup>th</sup> Variegated Poinsettia – Betty Taylor

[Substitute for a Boiler Service donated by David Newton]

6<sup>th</sup> Marble Cheese Board – Pam and Ian

7<sup>th</sup> Celebrations Chocolates – Freddie Clitheroe

8<sup>th</sup> Home baked Biscuits – Jane Boone

9<sup>th</sup> Tea for 100 Days! and more - Joy Fuller

10<sup>th</sup> Christmas Rolling Pin – Robin Studd

The Draw raised £263 so thank you to everyone who took part.

Thank you also to all of you who attended and helped at our **Christmas Market** during which £864 was raised.

## St John's Christmas Card

The original watercolour is available for sale. The colours and detail are much enhanced on the original. It comes in a thick card mount. Please contact Angela.

# From the Registers

## Funerals

December 3<sup>rd</sup> Margaret Rose Dean

December 16<sup>th</sup> Ernest Jones

## Burial in the churchyard

Kenneth Lancaster Laird

## Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February **Keele PCC** meets in St John's School 6.30pm

### Lent Reflections:

*Each Tuesday during Lent, at venues to be announced, we come together to reflect on selected themes. This will be in the context of a short reflection delivered by Fr Peter. Please speak with him, or listen out for details at Sunday worship.*

## 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.

# Restoration of the Templar window

Finally, all the rigmarole to secure the removal of a heritage asset to Holywell Glass of Wells was met. The diocesan authorities and Historic England gave the go-ahead and the detailed plans for its removal submitted by the selected restorers were approved. It had taken the best part of eight months to get the project for the restoration and repair of Keele's Templar window under way. No surprise that there was much apprehension about the selected date for the work to begin. In fact, January 14<sup>th</sup> was a particularly stormy day at Keele. How far could the work proceed without endangering the glass or the glaziers who needed to work inside and outside the church building? Although weather conditions made it difficult to proceed after dusk, good progress was made in excavating the main window section which, it was discovered, had at some stage after 1870, been fixed in place by a concrete render! But the condition of the window, badly bowed in the century and a half since it was last worked on, and heavy rain and strong winds, meant that an early halt was called on the first day.

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> was a much brighter day and Jack, of Holywell Glass, and two colleagues made rapid progress cutting templates for Perspex as a temporary replacement of the glazing, lifting out the glass in the two mouchettes, removing the panels of plain glass in the lowest section of the window, and, finally manoeuvring the main, heavy panel of medieval glass through the window opening. There were several deep intakes of breath from onlookers at this point. Would it fall? The fragile, badly distorted fragment, covered in cobwebs and the debris of the past century and more, was quickly grasped by strong hands and carried away. The team of restorers was far too professional to allow anything unforeseen to happen. This precious load, including fragments of the original medieval lead flashing which was uncovered, was simply loaded into their van and taken off to Wells. There it is expected to remain for the next four months or so.

Readers may like to know that a complete photographic record was made of the entire fascinating process which it is hoped will be available to view shortly.

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**NB Articles for the magazine should be sent to the editor by the 12th of the preceding month.**

