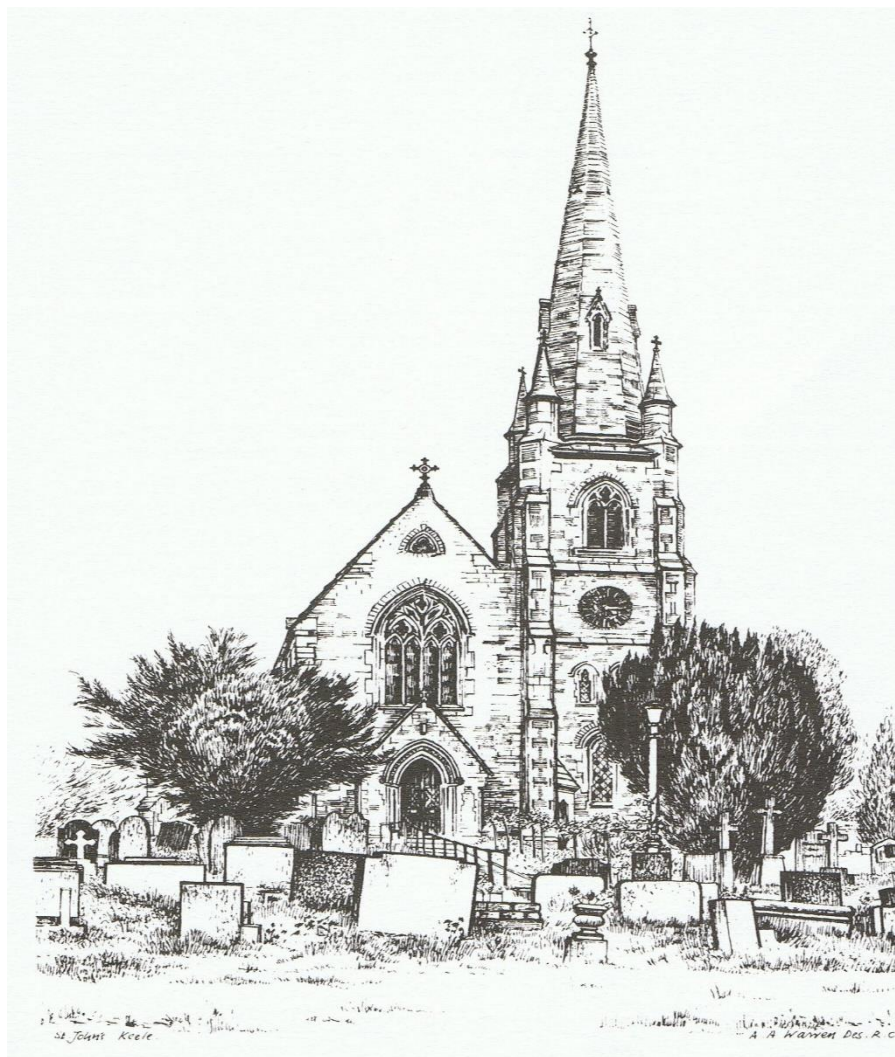


# PARISH MAGAZINE



**St. John the Baptist Church  
Keele**

**August 2020**

**50p**

# **Worship at St John's**

## **THE PLURALITY OF THE PARISHES OF KEELE & SILVERDALE**

### **An important note on the resumption of public worship**

- Our parish churches have been closed to public worship for many months. Although there is much uncertainty concerning the 'status' of the covid-19 version of coronavirus, the Government has advised that, from early June, parishes that were able to do so, were free to open for public worship where (and only where) they were able to do so.
- You would have heard that no more than 30 people are permitted to attend public worship in a church building. Please understand that this is a MAXIMUM and that the actual number of people permitted will depend upon the space available for social distancing in each building.
- For various reasons, neither parish church in our plurality was able to re-open for public worship. This position seems now to have changed. Consequently, from next Sunday and for the foreseeable future, we shall be offering the Eucharist each Sunday according to the rota set out below – and according to the following provisions which will hold for the foreseeable future. Please note that (a) we shall NOT be able to provide toilet facilities nor refreshments; (b) we cannot facilitate floral displays in the building; (c) we are not able to provide a stoup for Holy Water on entry/exit; (d) votive candles cannot be permitted at present.

- Please WEAR A COVERING OVER YOUR MOUTH AND NOSTRILS whilst in the building. You will be putting other people at risk by not doing so! Please carefully remove/turn aside your face covering in order to receive the Holy Communion as instructed below.
  - At present, neither parish church is in a position to be open for funerals or for weddings.
1. Please arrive in good time for worship to begin at 11am.
  2. Please DO NOT bring items for sale or purchase any items in Church
  3. You MUST bring your own pen/pencil with you to give your contact details for NHS England should a local outbreak occur. Your details will be kept for 25 days and then destroyed.
  4. Hand sanitizer will be available near the entry to the building. You MUST use it (or bring your own).
  5. Please adhere as strictly as possible to social distancing (2 metres) and PLEASE DO NOT SIT IN/GO TO areas marked off by security tape. People who share a household/'bubble' may sit with each other, but otherwise please sit 2 METRES away from the nearest person.
  6. You will be given an outline order of service and a sheet with the readings. If you want me to email this to you in advance for you to print off (which is preferable) please let me know as soon as possible. Some copies of these documents will be available in the pews. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE THESE IN

CHURCH but TAKE THEM HOME WITH YOU AND DESTROY AFTER USE

7. Singing will not be permitted during worship.
8. There will be no Sharing of the Peace and a collection will not be taken – please leave your donations of money on the plate provided at the entrance to the Chancel.
9. For the administration of the Holy Communion: (a) please keep 2 metres apart from the person in front of you; (b) Please DO NOT kneel/stand at the sanctuary rail as is customary, but queue (one behind the other – keeping socially-distanced) to receive the Sacrament in the palm of one hand. When you are in front of the priest, please remove/pull to one side your face covering to receive the Body of Christ. Once you have received the Holy Communion, please return to wearing your face covering.
10. Holy Communion will be administered in ONE KIND only (namely, the Host – the Body of Christ). This is legally and theologically sound.
11. Once you have received the Holy Communion, please return directly to your seat, being careful to maintain social distancing as much as it is possible.
12. At the end of worship, please remember the need for social distancing.
  - Our parish churches will be open for the Eucharist on a rota-basis as follows: Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August: 11am St Luke's, Silverdale; Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August: 11am St John's Keele. And so on for the foreseeable future.

# The Bishop's Pastoral Letter

## Treasured Possessions

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**Bishop Clive's pastoral letter for August 2020**

During this period of lockdown, with no evening meetings to attend, I have been watching more television than before – and have become acquainted with some wonderful programmes, such as The Repair Shop. For those of you who haven't discovered this gem, 'The Repair Shop' is a barn inhabited by the widest range of skilled craftspeople you could ever imagine; able to repair and restore every conceivable kind of object. Every week, four treasured possessions in a terrible state of malfunction or dereliction are brought by their respective owners. And every week four miraculous transformations occur, as the objects are skilfully and lovingly restored to the best possible version of themselves they can be.

What gives the programme its power is the story that is connected with each object, for invariably the possessions are treasured because of the memories associated with them, memories which often link family members from one generation to another.

So when the owner comes to the Repair Shop to collect their restored object and is astounded by the transformation that has been brought about, tears often flow, in the Shop and on the nation's sofas, because in repairing the treasured possession, a

treasured relationship has been honoured, strengthened, even brought back to life.

The Repair Shop has caused me to reflect on the way in which relationships can be expressed through inanimate objects, especially in the light of the recent debates about the place of statues and memorials in churches and in other public places.

In truth I have always had a problem with any kind of memorials in churches because all of them, whether commemorating an individual's faithful service to God or benefaction to the church, are in essence honouring '(wo)man' whereas the whole point and purpose of a church is to honour God. At best memorials are inappropriate distractions, at worst, in the case of the most ostentatious and self-regarding ones, they are surely blasphemous.

The difficulties that arise with statues in public places result from contested views as to who is worthy of honour and of our shared history. As we have seen with the debates sparked by Black Lives Matter, the more that we subject individual lives and past history to scrutiny, the more questions arise. And whoever we put on plinths, philanthropists or generals, nurses or clergy, there is always the possibility that they may one day be judged unworthy, for which of our lives would stand up to the closest examination?

As Jesus said, in response to the rich young man, 'only one is good' - i.e. only God. It is He alone that is worthy of unambiguous honour and praise. He alone who is impervious to

shifting moral, cultural and historical perspectives; for He represents absolute goodness, truth and love, which cannot be relativized in any way.

Our churches should be the purest possible conduits for honouring God, and as for our instinctive desire to put people on pedestals... perhaps it is safer and healthier to let them be remembered through cherished objects that have meaning for those who knew them best, warts and all.

Often those who bring objects to the Repair Shop are not looking for a perfect restoration to mint condition, because they want to preserve the original authentic character of the object. They may wish to preserve some imperfections because particular memories are associated with them e.g. a shrapnel - dented helmet that saved the life of their soldier grandfather.

Perhaps that is why the Repair Shop feels a little like church, a place where imperfections are not erased but acknowledged, and worked with. A place where we, through God's grace, can be restored to the best possible versions of ourselves and honoured as God's treasured possessions.

*+Clive Wulfrun*



# Belfry Bat

On June 11<sup>th</sup> I trimmed my beard and hair – the first time it had been done since December. Beard looks fine, but I think I will go to the barber when he re-opens. We had planned to invite our young friend, Newcastle ringer Howard, to visit and help me with a bonfire, but once again the weather had the last word. Our car went for its MOT and 190,000 mile service. A rear spring needed to be replaced, but we were happy to settle for that. Not quite in the *it will see us out* category, but the next one probably will.

We did the bonfire on Friday, and on Saturday morning Ruth Eagle delivered the bird bath she had made for us. It is stoneware and sits on the top of a chimney pot. We like it very much, and hope the birds will be equally pleased. On Sunday we did our usual ringing in the garage.

The ringing community includes a large number of software engineers, and since lockdown began a number of packages have been developed to enable groups in different places to do virtual ringing. On Wednesday June 17<sup>th</sup> our regular ringing group had its first session using a package called Ringing Room in conjunction with Zoom. I'm happy with Zoom, but don't enjoy keyboard ringing, so my contribution was very limited. But it was good to see and hear everybody. The overnight rain had filled our pond to capacity – very pleasing. On Friday it was even more brimming, and I was able to do some real ringing, albeit on hand-bells. Two of our Wednesday regulars, Paul and Ruth Jopp, came over from Derbyshire, and we did some socially distanced ringing in the greenhouse, as it was too wet to sit outside. We rang a quarter peal, which took about half an hour. Paul is a very experienced hand-bell ringer, but I do it only occasionally, so I was very pleased with what we did.

On Sunday June 21<sup>st</sup> we did our Sunday ringing in the garage at exactly the right time – 10.30. We feel very privileged to be able to do some ringing on real bells, although we don't spend enough time on it to be able to do anything very smart. In the afternoon we were visited by our friends Ray and Ann Ballard. I have known Ray since we rang a peal together at St John's in January 1962, and I taught Ann to ring when she came to Keele as a student in 1969. Having inherited Ann's family home Cambridgeshire, they have decided to move there, and have put their house in Kidsgrove on the market. We will miss them, not least because Ray is a member of our



Woodlands peal band. While skimming the pond this afternoon, Ro thought she saw a fish, and later a newt which appeared to have a crest.

My daughter Sally, whose wedding on July 3<sup>rd</sup> was cancelled, told us this week that it has been re-arranged for June 18<sup>th</sup> next year. Let's hope lockdown is over by then! Our friend Anne Orme, a member of the Wednesday band, called on Monday morning on her way from Congleton to Bridgemere. After socially distanced coffee, she took away the last bundle of pea-sticks made from my hazel coppicing. On Tuesday afternoon Howard visited us, and we put out the hammock and swing seat which are suspended from trees in the orchard. In the morning I had cut the grass in the orchard, which is once again looking its best.

On Thursday we visited Cathy and Freddie Clitheroe, and spent a very pleasant hour with them in their amazing garden. On Friday morning I managed to cut the back lawn before it rained, and in the afternoon, we had a visit from Niall and Sarah Hammond. We did our usual Sunday ringing, and on Monday it was announced that limited ringing in churches may soon be possible.

During the following week we had socially distanced visits from several friends, and I also made progress with trimming an overgrown willow and our roadside hedge. On Monday July 6<sup>th</sup> Naomi the Keele Chaplaincy Assistant visited us with Niall, and we spent a pleasant couple of hours in the greenhouse with wine and cake. On Tuesday Ro had her first haircut since March, another indication that things are beginning to return to normal. It wasn't desperately needed, but it's good to give them the business. On Wednesday we did our regular Sainsbury's trip, and in the afternoon I drove to Derbyshire to visit two of our regular Wednesday band to ring handbells and we rang a quarter peal. This was a practice for one I want to ring next month on the sixtieth anniversary of my first peal. Handbell ringing is something that needs to be done regularly and frequently to keep in practice. So of course, does tower bell ringing, but not to the same extent. It is often said that ringing a bell is like riding a bicycle.

Phil Gay





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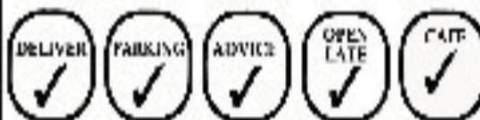
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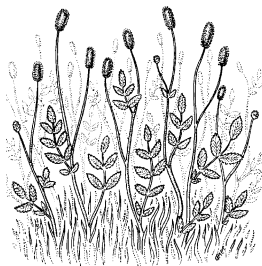
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## Time to Make Hay

For those of us who love wildflowers, painful decisions are needed in July and August as this is the time to cut our wildflower meadows, whether in the churchyard or elsewhere. Meadows are left to grow long for about 14 weeks during the spring and summer and then cut with scythe or strimmer and raked up. The difficulty arises in that there are always lovely flowers still there when the cut comes, and it is hard to cut them down.

To help with this dilemma, remember that we are copying traditional hay-making, which takes place when grass is still green, vigorous and full of nutrients for stock to eat, but also when the weather is likely to be dry enough to make hay successfully.

But what about the seeds, dropping to the ground for next year's flowers? If we cut down flowers, there won't be seeds? Actually, most species within a traditional meadow are perennial, so they continue to grow from year to year regardless of seeding. This explains why the wildflowers persist in short mown grass in churchyards, providing the grass cuttings are removed so the soil doesn't become too rich for them.

An exception to this is Yellow Rattle which is an annual so grows each year anew from seed. This flowers early and drops its seed in June or early July so won't be lost from the sward by cutting from mid-July onwards.

If you can't bear to cut down late flowering species such as scabious, then leave these patches for later, but do aim to have other meadow areas cut, raked and ready for the autumn fungi by mid-August if you can.

All the best

Harriet Carty,

*Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor, [harriet@cfga.org.uk](mailto:harriet@cfga.org.uk),*

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# DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

## Congratulations to Janet and Dennis Thornhill

Janet and Dennis celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Thursday July 23<sup>rd</sup> and would like to thank their friends for all the phone calls, cards and gifts they received on their special day.

Janet would particularly like to thank Angela and Robin Studd for arranging an 'Afternoon Tea' to be delivered from The Whitmore Tearooms and also to Kathleen Davis for the cake she made for them in the shape of a diamond.

As Janet said, the kindness shown to them meant so very much, especially during these difficult and trying times that we are all facing.



# Greetings from Arizona

Dear all, I thought Chet was joking when he said we were coming into the monsoon period that would last throughout July and August.

Well, he wasn't! And yes, it does rain in the desert and very heavily too. Luckily these downpours are sharp and short lived and great to watch (through the window of course!)

The rain was late coming this year and just a couple of weeks ago the temperature here got up to 107F (42C) for about four days. Not much fun if you have to spend a day out there doing necessary work with the tractor. The land here slopes downwards towards the house and Chet needed to re-build some berms to hold the water back. (My job was to keep him supplied with iced water and some energy bars!)

On the days that we did actually get some of the promised rain, we were rewarded with a 'frog serenade' whilst we sat outside for our evening meal. The frogs and toads must have felt so liberated for the short while that that they were able to break out from the rock-hard soil. I'm looking forward to the next frog chorus!

There has been only one day so far when we were forced to turn back from our morning walk due to a downpour. Other than that, we usually like to watch the sunrise in all its glory, down a quick coffee, then enjoy a walk before it gets too hot out there.

We manage to eat most of our meals outside, even when it rains heavily as there is a ten-foot overhang of the roof. It's only the very intense heat that keeps us inside.

On Sunday July 26<sup>th</sup> we celebrated in style as it was exactly 50 years since we had first met. There were just the two of us and therefore we were had to drink the champagne alone. This social distancing can be a good thing at times!!

Looking forward to the time we can all meet together again,

Diane

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

