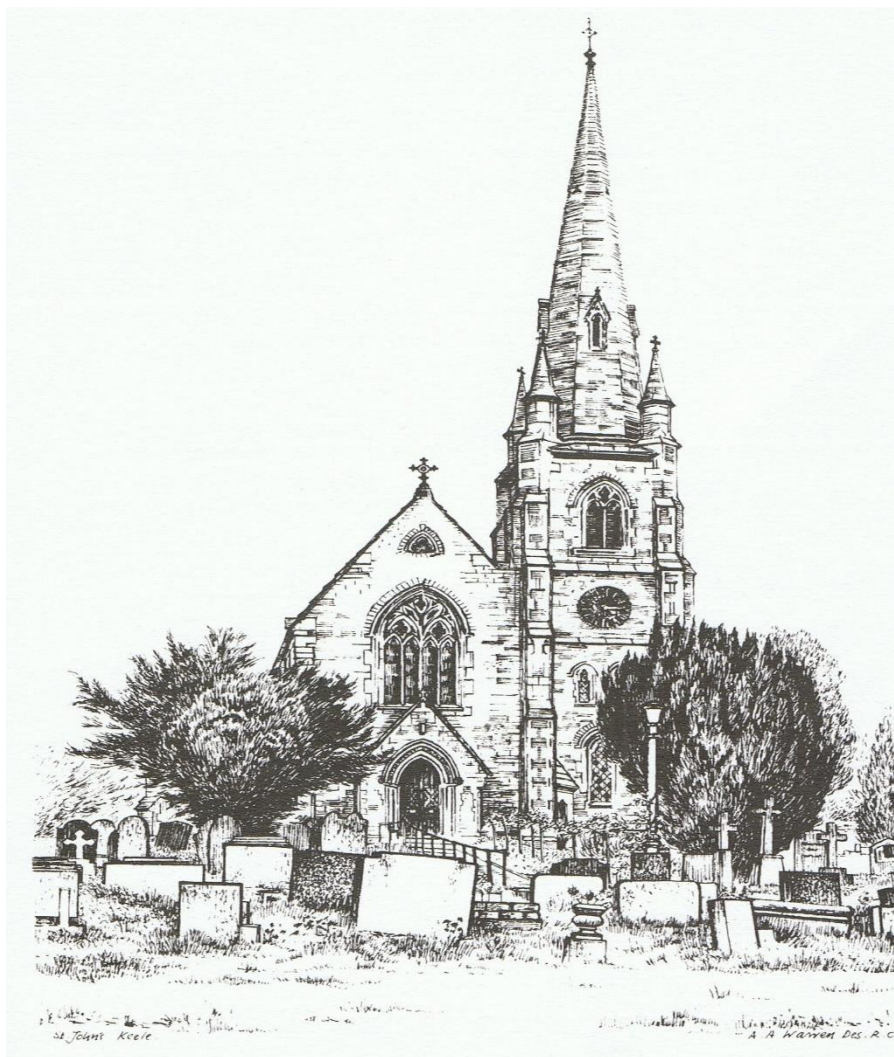


PARISH MAGAZINE



St. John the Baptist Church Keele

July 2020

50p

Worship at St John's

Public worship in St John's Church is currently suspended until further notice. Check our website for Sunday Worship prayers and readings etc. that Fr Peter is sending out by email.

Please consult the Church of England website or the website of the Diocese of Lichfield for up-to-date information.



We are in this together

Our prayers are with you all

The Bishop's Pastoral Letter

I was glad...

Bishop Michael's pastoral letter for July 2020

I was glad when they said unto me, 'We will go into the house of the Lord'.

The Psalmist's words have rung poignantly in my ears over the last weeks, as we have been unable to enter our churches to worship together. At the time I am writing, the timetable for our re-entry into church buildings is not yet clear, as it will be dependent on the government's gradual easing of restrictions, which in turn is contingent upon the effectiveness of those restrictions in containing the spread of the coronavirus. We do know, though, that we will have to move through different phases in taking up again the use of our churches, that many precautions will need to be taken to ensure that our churches are safe and clean, and that some limitations (on singing, on numbers, on distancing) will remain in place.

Nevertheless, there will be a time when 'our feet shall stand within the gates' of our churches together, and I look forward to that with eager anticipation. The closure of our buildings has been the right decision to help protect the common good of our society's health, but it has not been easy: we have been missing these places we love, hallowed by the prayers of generations; we have been missing the real fellowship of one another, fellow members of the body of Christ; and we have been missing sharing

together in that body and blood in communion. When we meet again we will indeed be glad; and it will be for our churches collectively a time of restoration, a return from exile.

In the Bible, times of exile are of course full of longing for restoration; but they are also times of re-imagination. God's people during their years in Babylon learned so much more about the purposes of their God that they were able to shape their life in a new way when they returned to Jerusalem. And our own, much shorter, exile has been a time of re-imagination for us too. We have learned new ways of being together in virtual reality; we have found new patterns of worship; we have discovered in a new way what it means to serve our communities. While our buildings have been closed, our churches have been very much alive and learning. And it is vital that we should take that new learning into our restored life together as we re-enter our churches.

Here are a few points of learning, taken from an evangelical website¹, which I have found helpful. The writer suggests that in our experience of this lockdown, God has been training us:

- as we are unable to gather physically as churches, to appreciate the vital importance of meeting together;
- as we feel our individual weakness and vulnerability, to repent of our self-dependence;
- as the vulnerable are in self-isolation for a long period, to care for others and put their needs ahead of our own; as we find ourselves restricted in our homes and communities, to gain a renewed evangelistic heart for our neighbours;
- if we find ourselves confined at home with family, to deepen our relationships;
- as we find ourselves unable to do many of the things we have taken for granted, to value what really matters in life; as we find ourselves threatened by something affecting the whole of society, to value good government;

- as we find ourselves with time on our hands, to regain a habit of daily prayer and bible reading;
- as we find ourselves in awe of healthcare workers and those performing essential jobs, to free us from our adulation of over-paid celebrities and sports stars;
- as we feel the fear of death and frailty of life, to appreciate the gospel hope of resurrection with joyful confidence in the future that awaits us;
- as we sense that the lock-down is going to last longer than we first imagined, to value the virtues of patience and long-suffering;
- as we begin to understand the devastating impact that the virus will have in less developed countries, to regain our passion for world mission and to care for our poorer brothers and sisters around the world.

These are things for us to take to heart in our own individual lives and in our local churches. We will also need to shape new ways of planning our mission and ministry at a diocesan and at a national level, and work is already beginning on that. In all that we do, as individuals or as churches, we will need to hold together the twin themes of restoration and re-imagination. So we pray, in the words of the eucharistic prayer for Lent that we were using at the beginning of all this, that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again.

+Michael
Bishop of Lichfield



Belfry Bat

This is the fiftieth Bat since it was resurrected about five years ago. From time to time when I buy something fairly durable, I say to myself *that will see me out*. So now I ask *will I manage another fifty?* I hope so. I am reminded of the story of the time the BBC went to a village to make a programme on rural life. The producer, looking for local colour, went to the pub and engaged in conversation with an aged local. When asked if he had spent all his life in the village, the local's reply was *not yet!* I have now spent more than three-quarters of my life in Staffordshire, most of it in Keele, but I think I am still regarded as an incomer. What proportion of our readers are in the same category?

Wednesday May 13th was our fortnightly Sainsbury's day. As usual, we had a trolley each, one for Lyndsey and one for us. On Thursday I was told that this year's Countryfile Live event has been cancelled. We already knew that the mobile belfry would not be there this year, but we hope to be there in 2021.

We did our usual Sunday ringing on May 17th, which was followed by a phone call from Suffolk to tell us that Ro's parents' house had sold within three days of viewing being restarted. On Monday I visited Garners for the first time for a while, and found it very well regulated and well behaved, just like Sainsbury's. As a result, we were able to plant out some of our French beans into tubs to be kept in a sheltered position on the patio, hoping there will be no more frosty nights.

On Wednesday morning we re-potted two trees, an acer and an olive, both of which were becoming pot-bound. The acer was inherited from our friend Flo Andrews, and is a lovely reminder

of her. We noticed that the olive had quite a lot of tiny olives on it, but we don't know if they are likely to become usable fruit. On Thursday we planted out the rest of our beans.

On Sunday morning we did our usual Sunday ringing in the garage, not quite as usual because we were late getting up, so that our ringing was at the time we would have been ringing at St John's. Wednesday was our Sainsbury's day – it didn't seem like a fortnight since our previous one – time flies....

How many goldfinches are required to make a charm? We saw three together on our bird feeders on May 29th, and they certainly charmed us. But they were heavily outnumbered by the dragon- and damsel-flies cavorting over the pond. On the following day we watched two long visits by a woodpecker, we suspected a female feeding her young. In the pond the newts have been breeding, quite a lot to see of various sizes.

Our Sunday ringing in the garage was once again at a time when we would normally be ringing at St John's. Later in the day we agreed with two of our Wednesday ringers that they would visit us on Wednesday, which was forecast to be dry. But by Monday the forecast had changed to more than 50% likelihood of rain, so a last-minute decision will be required. We decided it would be too wet to sit outside, although the rain was very light.

I am reading *A Wood of One's Own*, by Ruth Pavey, who in 1999 bought a four-acre plot of derelict orchard and woodland on the edge of the Somerset levels. The book tells the story of her restoration of the plot with the help of friendly neighbours. Although not located in my part of the county, I recognised a lot of the places described, and found it a fascinating book, and I realised that part of our plot is in fact semi-derelict orchard and woodland.

We did our usual Sunday ringing on June 7th, after which we tidied the greenhouse in readiness for a visit from my daughter, as it was too wet to sit outside. The gentle rain has replenished our water butts but made no significant difference to the pond. The greenhouse is big enough to be well distanced, and we spent a very pleasant hour with daughter and grand-daughter.

Steve Mellor visited us on Tuesday morning, and we had coffee together in the greenhouse. Wednesday was Sainsbury's day, which we did in the by now accustomed manner. A friend who rings elsewhere in the diocese told me that their incumbent has declared winding the church clock to be essential maintenance, A precedent?

Phil Gay





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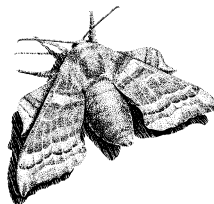
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The magic of moths

During lockdown we have been running a moth trap in our garden on fair weather nights. This has proved both rewarding and frustrating. Rewarding when you see how many nocturnal creatures use the garden and frustrating because there are over 2,500 different moths in the British Isles. This is an astonishing number, considering there are 59 butterfly species.

We have a good identification book, there are excellent websites and experienced moth enthusiasts are very helpful when sent photos, but we are beginners, looking at the big and beautiful rather than the 'small brown jobs'. Many moths have marvellous names; I yearn to see Satin Lutestring, Smoky Wainscot, Toadflax Brocade, Least Carpet, Cloaked Pug and Dark Spinach.

Species emerge in bursts, often in large numbers, we started seeing Hebrew Characters, moved on to Buff Ermines and Heart & Darts, then Elephant and Poplar Hawkmoths. The Peppered Moth was a thrill, this adapted to a blackened landscape, changing colour for camouflage in industrial areas during the nineteenth century. Thankfully, it is now pale again.

Our garden was created from scratch over the last twenty years, so it is amazing to glimpse the biodiversity that comes in when encouraged. We can help you to make churchyards more welcoming to wildlife too. If you would like a glimpse of the moths already using your churchyard, we may be able to arrange for someone (more experienced than me!) to visit.

All the best

Harriet Carty,

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor, harriet@cfqa.org.uk

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk - individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code Lich19

Templar Window – latest

Members of the congregation will be missing the Templar window which was taken away to Wells in January for restoration. The good news is that the window has been cleaned and repaired and is now ready for re-installation – complete with surprises. The Wells conservator to whom I spoke indicated that much greater detail has been revealed now that a thick layer of soot- almost certainly caused by the heavy coal stoves used for heating in the nineteenth century - has been removed. We look forward to seeing it back in Keele soon, but for the moment the window remains in Holywell Glass because of the covid situation.

Now that the campus book shop is closed copies of *Keele's Templar Window* are available either direct from me (01782 626372) or email- rstudd@BTinternet.com - £12.50 per copy, inc. p&p, or from The Potteries Museum bookshop, Hanley.

Robin Studd

Dear Worshipper at St John's

We are trying to make contact with everyone who gives to St John's through the weekly envelope scheme.

We last met for congregational worship on Sunday 15th March, and closed on Sunday 22nd March when printed service sheets were provided for use in the church or at home. At that time there were still some offering envelopes waiting to be picked up so we are aware that there are quite a few people who do not have their set of envelopes.

As you can imagine, with the closure of St John's and all places of worship across the UK there has been a considerable impact on church income. Although the church building has not been in use there are regular outgoings for example insurance, the Parish Share, lightning conductor inspection & maintenance [this all takes place outside], churchyard maintenance not covered by the churchyard fund and electricity. Incidentally, much of the bill for electricity is accounted for by our five security lights which switch on whenever its gloomy, and at night are triggered by foxes, badgers, late night dogwalkers and unwanted 'guests' in the lychgate. Regular maintenance required by our insurers, will be taking place as soon as we are properly open and so there will be an increased expenditure at that time.

We are extremely grateful to the people who have continued to give donations to cover their plate collections; Thank you very much. However, to everyone else, this is a gentle plea to say that the shortfall is nevertheless considerable.

You can donate in several ways. By cheque in the post to the treasurer, Steve Mellor, 32 Harrowby Drive, Newcastle Staffs ST5 3JW Enclosing one envelope or writing your number would be helpful but not essential because Steve forwards this information to Kevin Chawner in relation to gift aided donations.

By direct transfer online: Lloyds Bank plc, Newcastle under Lyme, 30 95 91 a/c 00907869 PCC St Johns Keele [please add Col] if possible.

Or if you are out and about you may leave cash or cheque in the plastic box at 3 Keele Farmhouse, or put it through the letter box, in a sealed envelope addressed to Steve Mellor and it will be taken to his house.

With Many thanks

Angela
on behalf of the churchwardens.

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

