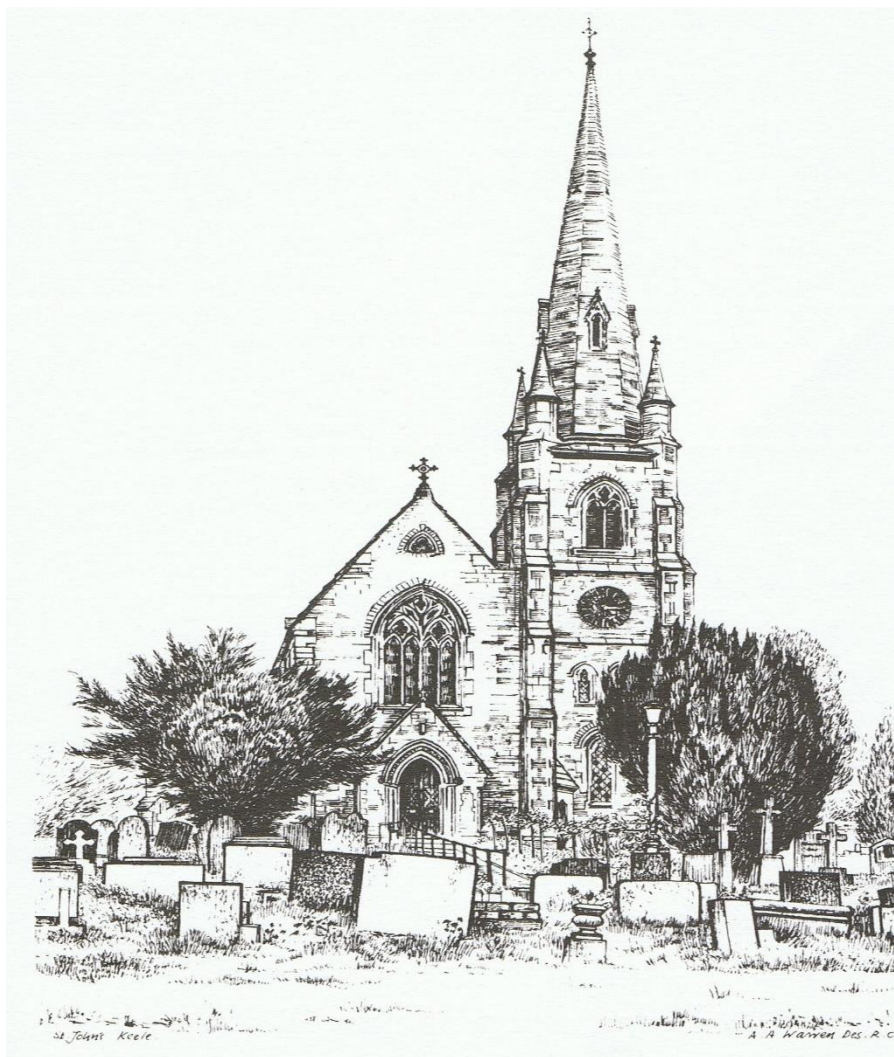


PARISH MAGAZINE



St. John the Baptist Church Keele

January 2021

50p

Worship at St John's

An important note on the resumption of public worship

St John's is now open for public worship on alternate Sundays only and with certain restrictions as listed below.

- The church can only accommodate 28 people at any service. People who share a household/social bubble may sit together but otherwise a distance of two metres between seats must be adhered to.
- Hand sanitizer will be available near the entry for your use or you may bring your own.
- Please bring your own pen/pencil in order to leave your contact details as required by NHS England in case of a local outbreak occurring.
- You will be required to wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth at all times with the exception of when receiving Holy Communion.
- Holy Communion will be administered in one kind only (Host). Instead of kneeling/standing at the sanctuary rail, please queue one behind the other, observing social distancing. When in front of the priest, offer your outstretched hand (palm up) to receive the sacrament. Move to one side, lift your mask and place the host in your mouth. Replace your mask and return to your seat, again observing social distancing.
- Unfortunately, singing will not be permitted so hymn books will not be available. You will be given a service sheet. Please take these home with you at the end of the service. Also, no physical sharing of the peace.

Continued

- The collection plates will not be brought round but please leave your donations of money on the plate provided at the entrance.
- We are unable to offer refreshments for the time being and neither can we provide toilet facilities.
- Please remember the need for social distancing at the end of worship and as you leave the church.

Our Fortnightly Services Continue as Follows

January

Sunday 3 rd	Second Sunday of Christmas	11.00am Eucharist
Sunday 17 th	Second Sunday of Epiphany	11.00am Eucharist
Sunday 31 st	Fourth Sunday of Epiphany	11.00am Eucharist

February

Sunday 7 th	Second Sunday before Lent	11.00am Eucharist
Wednesday 17 th	Ash Wednesday	To be arranged
Sunday 21 st	First Sunday in Lent	11.00am Eucharist

We look forward to the time when we will all be able to worship together as before. Meanwhile, we hold you in our prayers always.

Stay safe

From Lichfield Diocese

Post-Christmas money worries? An article from Revd Cassius Francis of our Transforming Communities Together partnership.

Do you ever make new year resolutions? I have to admit that I rarely do either, but when it comes to thinking about money for 2021 I am willing to make an exception. Given the last year that we have all had to endure, making some decisions about how to take care of our finances would be a good way to start this new year. Here are some ideas to help you make the most of your money and use it for the things you truly value.

1. **Take some time to think about your spending habits** – How can you use your money for things you really appreciate, rather than finding you’ve spent lots on impulse buys or hype? It’s good to pause and reflect: ”Do I really want this”, “Can I afford it or will I worry about what I’ve spent?”, “If I spend this, what does that mean for my other plans?”.
2. **Review your subscriptions** - Grab a pen and dig out your bank statements for the last six months and have a look at the subscriptions and direct debits you have going out. Ask yourself where you can cut back, what you could stop, what have you forgotten about, and what would you love to keep. This might also be a time to review your charitable giving – which giving will you sustain, and which might change?
3. **Consider the [50/30/20](#) rule for budgeting** - the 50/30/20 approach can help you manage your spending by focusing on three main areas: aim to spend no more than 50% of your income on Must-Haves (the stuff you need, e.g., rent/mortgage, bills, food, transport); aim for no more than 30% of your income to go on Wants (just for fun, e.g., dining out, hobbies, Netflix, travel); and try to set aside 20% of your income on Savings [and Giving] (e.g., emergency fund, retirement, debt repayments, charitable donations, tithing).

4. **Do a yearly costs budgeting exercise** – We all know that there are regular events that still manage to creep up on us. So why not think ahead - print off a blank calendar and mark the important days and events (the fun ones like birthdays, and the less fun ones like the car MOT). Write down how much each important item will cost, and try to save a small amount each month to reach your goal. There are tools like [Christmas Money Planner](#) that can help with some of the big events so they can be affordable and enjoyable.
5. **What tips can help you to make the best use of your money?** – Sign up to get regular updates from a website like [MoneySavingExpert](#) or [Citizens Advice](#). If you prefer to listen instead of read why not try a podcast? Tune in to BBC Radio 4's [Money Box](#) or Spotify's [Cash Chats with Andy Webb](#).
6. **Have conversations about money early** – Talking about money challenges and debt can be difficult, but it's best not to ignore it. You may find our resource [Jesus Money cards](#) helpful. If you feel as if your debts are out of control charities like [National Debtline](#), [Money Advice Service](#) and [Christians Against Poverty](#) are great places to get help.
7. **Consider opening a savings account** – your [local credit union](#) can be a great place to start – even saving a little can make a real difference!
8. **Talk to children early about managing money** – you could start the year doing an exercise with your children or grandchildren to get them to think about money and saving – maybe have a fun challenge to save up for something special.

Wishing you a blessed New Year.

Revd Cassius Francis is the Just Finance Development Worker for the Black Country with Transforming Communities Together and he is a minister with the Wesleyan Holiness Church. Jon Miles is the Covid Cash Recovery Development Worker with TCT.

Please see more at www.tctogether.org.uk

From the Church Warden

Dear Friends,

As Covid still has its invidious influence on our lives we must strive to stay safe whilst endeavouring to keep a sense of community worship together as well. That has not been aided by our boiler, as those of you who were in Church on Christmas Eve can testify. We have discovered that there is a fault with the gauge displaying the oil level in the tank, which possibly contributed to the original failure of the boiler. Oil was delivered on Christmas Eve but the boiler, in its own interpretation of the spirit of Christmas, refused to fire. It also added a leak of fuel oil to the water that was already deeply puddled in the boiler room meaning that an almost unbearable smell of oil greeted us at the start of the Christmas Eve service. As if it was not cold enough already this meant we had to keep the doors open to try and vent the smell! Subsequently the oil has been skimmed from the boiler room, so I am hoping that will alleviate the smell and after extensive work an engineer has isolated and fixed a number of problems and we are just waiting for an injector to be delivered and fitted and we should be back up and running. The lack of heating and the weather did mean we had to cancel the service on 03 Jan in the interest of safety.

As we enter this new lockdown, we will strictly adhere to the rules governing worship to ensure the safety of us all. We will look to the future, which we pray will not be too far away, when worship will return to normal.

Nige Bostock

“You, LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.” Psalm 18:28

The Belfry Bat

You may find it surprising to be told that we are planning to extend our house. What's more, it's an upstairs room! But not a bedroom. When our pair of houses was built in 1922, the other house was built with a room above the garage, to be used as a schoolroom by the governess who was employed. Over the years both garages have been incorporated into the house, ours as a utility room, the flat roof of which can be accessed by a door from the landing. This makes the construction of an extension relatively easy, to be used not as an extra bedroom, but as a shared office. The architect calls it a hobby room, and it will be almost the biggest room in the house. And a room with a view, with windows on three sides. Planning permission was granted in October, and we heard on November 10th that the working drawings have been approved, so we were able to go ahead with finding a builder, which didn't take long as we had already been visited by one who was sent by the architect to help assess our walls and foundations. Construction won't begin until the spring, so that the rendering of the walls can be done in favourable weather.

We rang in the garage on Sunday November 22nd for the first time for three weeks. Ro's wrists are getting more robust, and I remembered to put the heater on first thing in the morning, which removes the stiffness from the ropes. Small bells are impossible to ring one-handed with stiff ropes, as we discovered two weeks ago. This weekend should have been the annual peal weekend of the Cumberland Youths, the ancient ringing society we both belong to, and we would have arranged to ring one in the garage. The substitute was a zoom quiz on Saturday evening which I took part in. One peal was rung on Saturday, by a trio consisting of my son Simon, his wife and a friend of theirs. Simon has been part of a group which has developed, and is now selling, dummy handbells which enable ringers to ring remotely using computer-generated sound. The bells, which are produced on a 3-D printer, contain motion-sensing electronics to replicate the movement of the clapper. Two of the ringers were in Glasgow, in different rooms, and the other was in Penrith.

On Saturday November 28th we were visited by Matt Perry, our builder, and we were able to sort out a lot of details of the project. On Sunday we did our usual ringing in the garage. On Saturday December 5th the North Staffs Association AGM was held on zoom, which worked very well. I

have not sat on the committee for a while but was re-elected as a trustee of the mobile belfry, which has now been operating for twenty years.

Early December is the sixtieth anniversary of my first visit to Keele, when I came for an interview for admission as a student at what was then the University College of North Staffordshire. My interview was scheduled for 9.30, so I had to travel the previous day and stay the night. It was a long journey – bus from my school at Crewkerne in Somerset to Yeovil, then train to Bristol and another train to Crewe, and finally the C84 Crosville bus, which in those days did not go through the campus. It had snowed, and the steam-hauled journey through the Welsh Marches was beautiful, something which you would have to pay a lot of money for today, as evidenced by a flyer I received in the post promoting a steam-hauled trip from Crewe to Cardiff.

Services at St John's began again on December 6th, but the guidance for ringing allows ringing only in tier 1, so we will have to wait, although it is possible that there will be a dispensation for Christmas. We did our usual ringing in the garage, once again one of the very few places in England where tower bells were rung.

On December 9th we had the announcement we had been waiting for – over the Christmas period bells can be rung more flexibly than normal, which means that we can probably ring all six bells at St John's on Christmas Eve. We had already decided that the three members of the Mellor family would be able to ring, but this is a big advance, and will be the first time all six bells have rung since early March.

Our Wednesday ringing group usually goes out for a Christmas meal at about this time, and December 9th was the chosen date this year. We have known for a long time that a meal would not be possible, but provisionally agreed that our regular visit to The Bush in Silverdale might be able to take place. In the event, that too was cancelled, but at 12 noon I sat down with a bottle of beer and shared a bowl of chips with Ro.

Phil Gay





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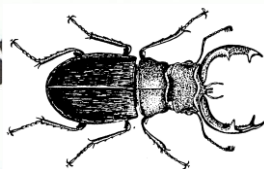
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Five Ways to Welcome Wildlife

January is the time for new starts so why not try to make your churchyard more wildlife friendly in 2021? Here are five simple things to try, start with one or two.

1 Create a meadow - choose an area of grass in full sun, currently mown short. Leave it uncut for about 14 weeks over the spring and summer. See how many wildflowers come up naturally, you will probably be surprised. Scythe or strim the long grass, rake it up and remove it to a compost heap or use it to make hay.

2 Help your veteran trees - churchyards are fantastic for veteran trees, particularly yews. Gently clear below veteran and ancient trees, removing young saplings, piles of grass cuttings, sheds, grave spoil, old bottles and anything else that is there! Always remove ivy from yew trees but no need to do so from other trees unless advised to by an arboriculture expert.

3 Give wildlife a home - great fun for community events, how about making bird and bat boxes, bug hotels, deadwood piles and compost bays. Swift boxes can fit behind the church tower louvres. Try a range of different sized bird boxes, including open fronted ones for Spotted Flycatcher and Robin. Place a deadwood pile in a shady spot for frogs, newts, slow worm and hedgehogs to feast on the invertebrates there.

4 Be a little untidy – leave an area of tussocky grassland or scrub, perhaps against a wall or round the back. Cut and clear this every two or three years, doing a section each year. This will be fantastic shelter and great for overwintering invertebrates as well as amphibians and reptiles. Hedgehogs love places like this too.

5 Plant for pollinators – fill your flowerbeds or planters with species that are useful to insects. Include native plants and grasses as well as early and late flowering plants. How about some herbs which people can enjoy too? The wildflower Viper's Bugloss is outstanding for pollinators and very attractive too.

Enjoy watching the wildlife which will take advantage of these features and please tell us what you see.

All the best, Harriet Carty

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor,

harriet@cfga.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

Results of the Christmas Draw

Thank you so much for taking part. We have raised £650 so there are 16 prizes -

- | | | |
|------|-----------------|---|
| 1st | Kathleen Davies | Christmas hamper |
| 2nd | Rick Marshall | 2 bottles wine |
| 3rd | Chris Harrison | Famous Grouse Whiskey |
| 4th | Eileen Cope | Royal Worcester bone china mug with William Morris design |
| 5th | Gault Pickin | 2 Dartington glass Gin glasses |
| 6th | Wenslie Naylor | Christmas cake |
| 7th | Watson Fuller | Preserves hamper including Keele Damson Gin |
| 8th | Jane Besley | Box Chocolates |
| 9th | Jean Latham | Box Shortbread |
| 10th | Bev Stringer | Box sweets |
| 11th | Dorothy Breeze | British Wild life calendar and family diary |
| 12th | Beth Haslam | Christmas cushion and sweetie bag |
| 13th | Phil Gay | Keele Damson Vodka |
| 14th | Dorothy Conroy | Shortbread and sweetie bag |
| 15th | Jane Tillier | Wine |
| 16th | Rob Richards | Wine |

Greetings from Arizona

Dear All,

Phew what a year! It was just before Christmas 2019 that I was last at a service at St John's. I spent time with my family that Christmas and beyond, then boarded a plane on new year's eve, heading back here. Because of the time difference of 7 hours, I was still able to see the new year in with Chet, even after an 11 hour flight!

Well, who knew what was in store for us throughout 2020!

We'd pre booked a trip to the UK for the following March. The plan was to spend my birthday and Easter with my family, visit friends and do a bit of sightseeing before returning to the US in June. That, of course, didn't happen, and it rapidly became too dangerous for us even to contemplate a journey overseas, even if the airlines were operating.

Chet had hoped to be properly introduced to my family and to be assured of their approval before he took the next step. But that wasn't to happen, so, on a Friday morning in April, he asked me to marry him. I agreed of course and by midday he'd whisked me off to the courthouse in the next town to obtain a licence. Three days later we were married in the church we had been attending before lockdown. Our vicar opened the church for us and the ceremony went ahead, minus music, and minus family and friends (apart from our two witnesses) but it was beautiful! Most of you will have heard this story by now but I thought I'd just mention it again in case I'd missed anyone!

My husband is always full of surprises. This latest one has had me in a whirlwind for the past month! He put the house up for sale,

which sold almost immediately and has bought a 40ft long motorhome, in which he plans to show me around America. It's oh so luxurious and I shan't mind at all living life on the move for a while. We leave here on January 13th!

We will initially overwinter in Yuma, where our 'snowbird' friends from Washington State can be found at this time of year, then head to Florida in spring where we hope to find a house in St Augustine. We'd spent a month there in November 2019 and I loved the area and Chet's sister and family recently settled nearby. Once all that is settled, we'll take off again in the RV, unless of course we are able to visit Great Britain. Who knows? Watch this space!!

Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy 2021

Diane



Our new home!

A Prayer for New Year

The New Year can often bring a mixed bag of emotions and memories for many of us. The events of 2020 including a pandemic, racial tensions, joblessness, and political battles created an unprecedented time of unrest and anxiety. While some may have just experienced the best year ever and look forward to an even greater one looming ahead, others may have just trudged through one deep struggle after another. The fresh calendar year brings desperate hope for things to be better, with an ache for the still-fresh wounds to slowly begin their process of healing. Praying at the start of the New Year doesn't always bring immediate change at the stroke of midnight, but it begins the opening of our hearts to God's Words of hope and peace.

Whether you've just walked through the greatest year of your life, or are incredibly glad to see this one finally over, one truth still rings clear amidst it all. You are not alone. Not ever. Scripture is filled with prayers of men and women who reached out to God for a fresh start. Praying is the main source of connection to the one who created you and the one who wants you to experience blessings and promises in the future.

Our God is a "with us" God. On the heels of the celebration of the birth of our King, that reminder has the power to carry us right into a fresh, new start. He is Emmanuel, God with us. And though things and people around us shift and change, our God never changes. May these New Year prayers fill your heart and mind with powerful proclamations as you step into 2021.

Church Officers

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

