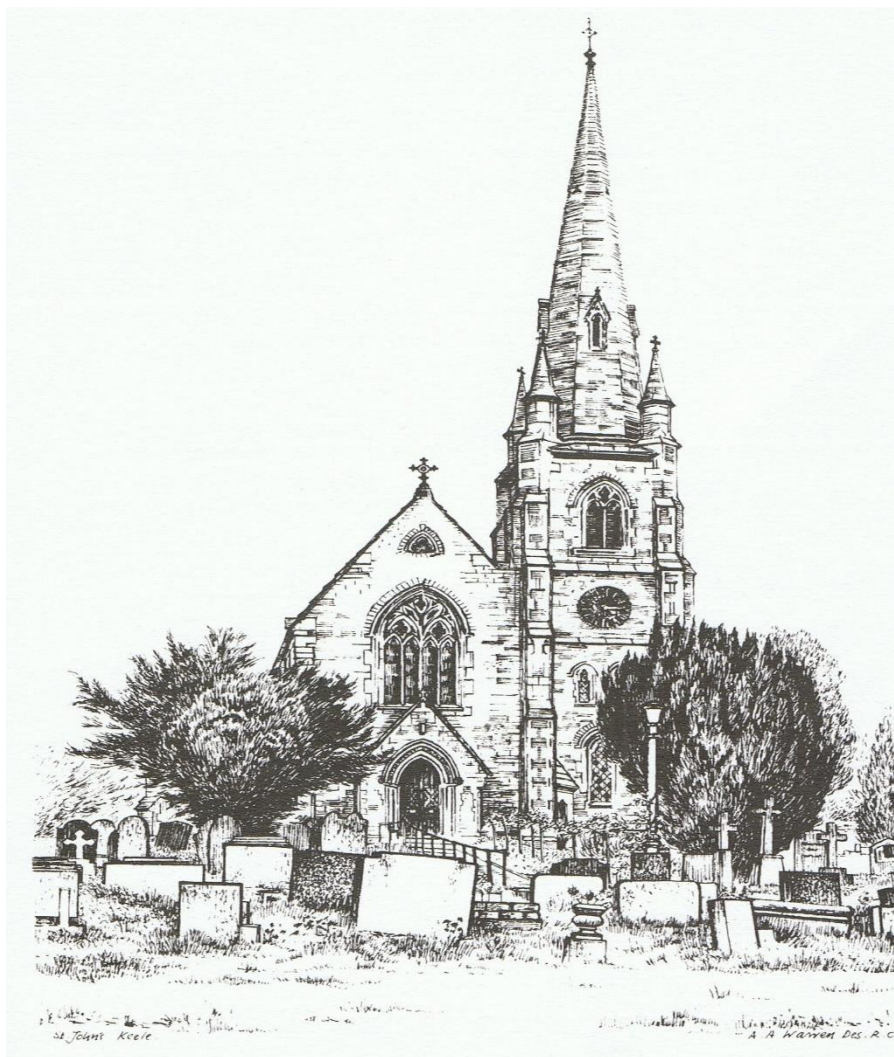


PARISH MAGAZINE



St. John the Baptist Church Keele

November 2020

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

November

Sunday 8th **Remembrance Sunday**

As of Thursday 5th November, when England entered the second lockdown period and church services have been suspended, details of what will be allowed regarding laying of wreaths etc., remain unclear.

Meanwhile, six people, as arranged by Keele Parish Council, will be laying wreaths at the war memorial.

December

Sunday 6 th	Second Sunday of Advent	11.00am Eucharist
Sunday 20 th	Fourth Sunday of Advent	11.00am Eucharist
Thursday 24 th	First Mass of Christmas	7.00pm 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

The Bishop's Pastoral Letter

The long and winding road

A keen walker, I have ascended a fair few peaks over the years and am only too familiar with the 'false summit'; the peak that you are sure is your destination, only to find, as you approach it, that it isn't the summit at all. There's a further, usually arduous, stretch to cover before you actually reach the top.

Psychologically, rather like a mirage in the desert, the false summit can be hard to cope with. Especially if you are being battered by wind and rain at the time. But the only thing for it is to dig deep and carry on...

I imagine that many of us had imagined during those relatively restriction free days of July and August when cases of Covid were low and deaths rare, that we had passed through our toughest challenge and were on the descent from our peak of adversity. There was confident talk of life returning to 'normal' by Christmas. But now it is clear that we are still slogging uphill, the weather is closing in and we have no idea where the summit is or when we shall get there.

Psychologically, emotionally and spiritually this is tough for us all. It's only a question of degree as to how much we are struggling.

As Christians we have rich resources to draw on to sustain and strengthen us. We are part of a much bigger picture and a much longer story. The bigger picture is God's book of creation, of

which we are just a chapter. Much of the natural world is thriving just as we struggle. Less economic activity is good for air and water quality and for the protection of animal habitats and the flourishing of species. Accessing a cleaner, quieter natural world as we venture outdoors to sit, walk, run or cycle is part of God's provision for us in these times.

The much longer story is revealed through our Scriptures and tradition. We draw particular inspiration from the faith journeys of individuals and nations (in the case of Israel) who had to endure those seasons when God's purpose was unclear and conditions were adverse. Faith journeys are always long and winding roads, and what the wisdom of our tradition teaches us is that it is precisely at those times when the going is toughest that unexpected blessings occur; food for the journey, manna from heaven. In these times, spiritual attentiveness is key. A posture of openness, hands outstretched to receive whatever blessings the day may bring.

Above all, we bring a conviction that God remains alive and active in this world, sustaining individuals, families and communities through endless manifestations of love and care.

And we bring the gift of hope, that in these times God is bringing about a new thing, reshaping ourselves, our church and our world, in line with his sovereign purposes.

+Clive Wulfrun
Bishop of Wolverhampton

From the Church Warden

Friends,

We have eventually held our ACPM under Covid distancing rules and delayed from April. I appreciate that these are very strange times for us all and the ongoing pandemic has constrained the activities of the Church and also constrained our activities as individuals. Current rules limit the congregation to 28 people and have meant that we only celebrate Communion in Keele every other week, the second Sunday is celebrated in our sister church of the plurality, St Luke's in Silverdale. I worry though that as our numbers are limited and attendance is forced down that the responsibility for maintaining and running the Church falls increasingly on a small number of stalwarts who, in the words of Churchill are, "by their prowess and their devotion" keeping the Church running. Without these people, and I do not count myself among them, we would be unable to function. I hope and will strive towards trying to improve attendance as, and I pray that it will be soon, Covid is dealt with.

The first national lockdown has meant that the attempts to rectify the leak in the Lady Chapel roof have not been completed I will endeavour to get that back on track this autumn. The hedge that borders the houses on the edge of the churchyard has been brought under control, to a level that I am hoping will make it easier and less costly to maintain in the future.

We have made the difficult and regretful decision to cancel special services in the lead up to Christmas including the Carol Service and Christingle. In these circumstances with limited numbers, social distancing and no singing I am sure that you will all understand.

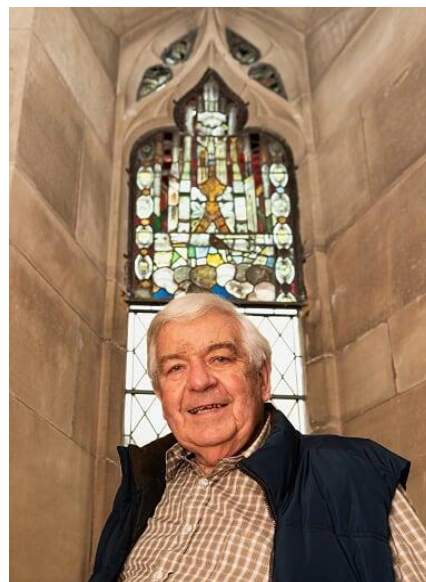
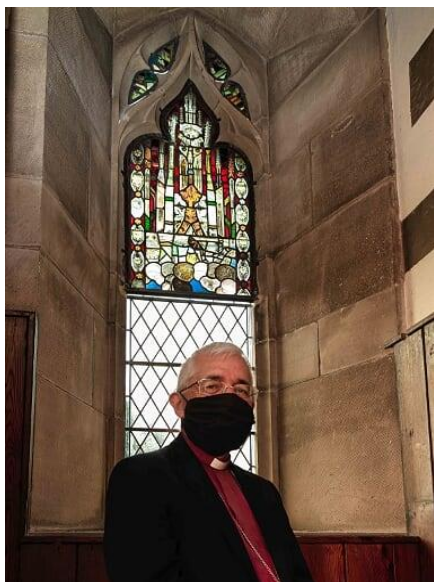
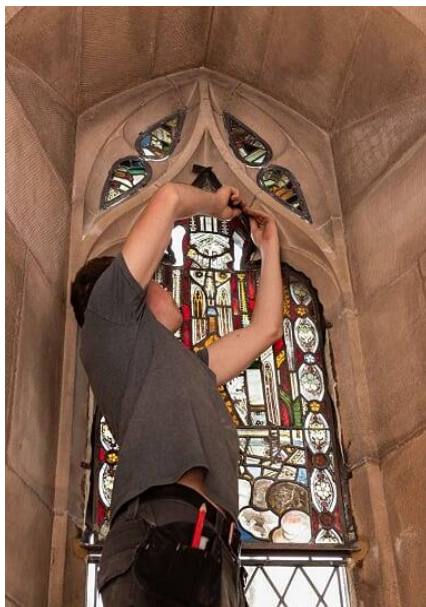
Kindest regards

Nigel Bostock

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

The Reinstallation of the Templar Window

Photography courtesy of Elizabeth Taylor from Madeley



Approving smiles from Bishop Michael during his recent visit to St John's and of course, from Robin Studd whose relentless hard work has made this possible.



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

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Take a look under an old log

In a natural woodland, there would be a great deal of deadwood to be found, both 'standing' in the form of dead branches within trees and entire dead trees as well as lying on the ground. Whilst churchyards usually contain trees, often mature and veteran ones, they rarely have much deadwood either standing or lying on the ground. Dead trees and branches need to be removed to prevent accidents and fallen branches are usually tidied away.

Scientists have estimated that an astonishing 13% of UK wildlife is dependent on deadwood for all or part of their lifecycles. This ranges from the woodpecker excavating a nesting hole in standing deadwood to the fungi, mosses, liverworts and lichens living on a fallen log. Some species are feeding on the wood, such as beetles which may lay eggs in deadwood so their larvae can feed, or fungi drawing nutrients from it. Other species need the damp conditions rotting wood provides. Do you have hedgehogs or toads in your churchyard? They like to feed on the worms, slugs and invertebrates to be found in and around deadwood.

Whilst you may not be able to keep standing deadwood, or leave a fallen branch where it lands, you can create deadwood habitat. How about a range of bat and bird boxes within your trees to replace those lost holes in rotting wood? Can you make a deadwood pile in a shady damp corner, topping it up whenever you have wood to dispose of? A variety of sizes of wood is best, including some with a substantial diameter. Corner posts will contain the pile, allow it to grow higher, (over 50cm is good) and show that this is intentional, not just a forgotten task. Don't forget to have a look in it, turn things over and see what you can discover, you'll find a fascinating world, great fun for children to discover.

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

Belfry Bat

On September 12th I helped two Madeley ringers ring for a wedding, only three bells but everyone was pleased. The following day was the first Sunday since March when I hadn't done any ringing. There were no services at Keele or Madeley, and we decided not to ring in the garage as Ro has a wobbly wrist. But it was quite an exciting morning, as we tried to remove a wardrobe from our bedroom. But it wouldn't go down the stairs, so we had to dismantle it.

We have received a generous offer from Llinos to wind the church clock on her regular visits to the churchyard, so we no longer need to speculate about the availability of honey. On Monday we made our most distant visit since lockdown, to my nephew who is in the process of moving to Shropshire, and is currently renting a house near Bishops Castle. On returning we were saddened to hear that Colin Mortimer had died. He was one of the last people who had taught me when I was an undergraduate. Only David Cohen and Peter Borrell now remain.

On Thursday when driving through the village I noticed that the clock was showing the correct time. Will anyone else notice? Ro's sister Ali arrived for a weekend visit, the first time we had seen her since February. On Friday she helped me make a start on building a large shelf in the bedroom as part of its refurbishment, and we were able to complete the job on Saturday.

On Sunday I rang at Madeley before going to St Johns, where we were able to ring four bells by virtue of having three members of the Mellor family in the band – they rang bells 1,2 and 3, and I rang the fifth, whose rope is just over two metres from the third's. This was Pauline and Lyndsey's first ring since lockdown, bringing to eight the number of our band who have taken part since ringing resumed. Before ringing Steve went into church and came out with two bottles of whisky, one for each of us, a thankyou from the PCC for the work on the garage roof. Thankyou PCC, I shall enjoy it!

On Tuesday I did some overdue grass cutting, but not everywhere that needed it. Will the remainder be delayed by rain? Yes it was – it rained in the night. But it didn't matter, as I spent most of Wednesday in Ikealand, assembling items we had bought for our bedroom. I am full of admiration for the ingenuity which goes into their design and manufacture.

On Thursday we went to Colin Mortimer's funeral in the Keele Chapel. We weren't sure in advance whether we would be among the thirty allowed to attend, and there were a small number who did not get in. In the evening I received a very surprising phone call, from the daughter of Ann Hodgkins, a ringer at Seighford who had died last week. She wanted to make a floral tribute which incorporated a bell rope, but didn't want a full size one. So I was asked if one could be borrowed from the mobile belfry, which has half-size ropes. As it turned out, I had in the house the ropes which were removed from the garage bells last year when a new set was fitted, and also found two even smaller ones which had been made for model bells. The following morning I delivered them to her husband who was working at Fenton.

Saturday saw the completion of the furniture assembly and I also found time to watch some of the Bob Willis Trophy final in which Somerset were playing Essex. There were no services to ring for on Sunday morning so we rang in the garage. Later I watched the final hour of the cricket, which was drawn, giving Essex the trophy by virtue of first innings lead. Disappointing! Will Somerset win the County Championship in my lifetime?


I tested the PCC's whisky on September 30th – very good. So good that I tested it again the following day. Our band for October 4th included two from the same household, John and Imelda Digan, and as a result we were able to ring four again, with them ringing 2 and 3 and Steve and me ringing 5 and 6. In the afternoon we were visited by my daughter Sally and her daughter Amber, who is currently a second-year student at Sheffield University.

Ro had her second cataract operation on Wednesday October 7th. Like the first one, it was done quickly, but she had a bit more discomfort afterwards. We had bought some off-the-shelf reading glasses, and they worked well. On Thursday I went to Seighford with two Eccleshall ringers to ring handbells at Ann Hodgkins' funeral. We stood outside the lychgate and rang her into church. We had a big audience, as those who would have been in church gathered outside.

On Saturday I completed an improvement to the bedroom shelf - all done now bar the tidying! There were no services to ring for on Sunday, and Ro's post-operative no-lifting regime meant that we did not ring in the garage. A bright sunny morning raised the possibility of grass cutting later.

Phil Gay





“November comes
And November goes,
With the last red berries
And the first white snows.

With night coming early,
And dawn coming late,
And ice in the bucket
And frost by the gate.

The fires burn
And the kettles sing,
And earth sinks to rest
Until next spring.”

-Clyde Watson

From the Registers

Funerals

9th October Trevor Pearson

12th October Neil Arnott



Church Officers

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

