



St John's, Stoneleigh

Weekly Newsletter

4th December 2022

A MESSAGE FROM REV. GEOFF ANDREW

Dear St John's family, today marks the beginning of week 2 of Advent and week 1 of SJPK (St John's post Ken!). As we bid a fond farewell to Ken and Margaret, we welcome in another new year for the church and a new period in the life of St John's. I am looking forward to journeying with you through this new season and, I pray, many seasons to come! A new year signals a time for change and those of you worshipping at the 9.30 service will notice that we are introducing new seasonal liturgy for Advent to replace the worship books that we have used since lockdown. Seasonal worship for Christmas & Epiphany, Ordinary Time, Lent, Easter and Kingdom will follow over the next 12 months. One thing that will never change is the love that God has for us in Jesus Christ. Our new sermon series - The Waiting Room - will guide us through Advent as we pray in patient expectation that the love, light and hope of the Christ-child will be made real in our lives and our communities in the days and weeks to come. God bless you! **Rev. Geoff Andrew**

MESSAGE FROM MARGARET AND KEN HOBBS

Thank you for your kindness, prayers, good wishes and generosity expressed last Sunday. We will treasure our memories of you all and we are not far away! God bless you all.
Love Ken and Margaret

ROCK CHOIR CONCERT AND CAROLS ROUND THE TREE, December 9th from 6.15pm

There is no charge for this event but there will be collection buckets available for anyone who would like to make a cash donation for the RUSH School, Kenya to provide a nutritious Christmas meal for orphan children and widows, in the village of Kakamega. Mulled wine and mince pies will be available.

WORSHIP BOOKLETS

The new 'Worship at St John's' booklets are available in church and on the website at:

<https://church.stjohnsstoneleigh.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Advent-Season-Service-Book-2022-11-29.pdf>

DISTRIBUTION OF CHRISTMAS CARDS

There are still a number of cards for delivery. At the front of the church there is a sign-up sheet, the Christmas cards are on a table in the blue carpeted area.

Rev. Geoff Andrew

CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT

We will be holding our Christmas Carol Concert on **Sunday December 18th at 6.30pm.**

Chris Webb

SUNDAY SERVICES

Our 9.30am service is streamed via <https://stoneleigh.tv>. Any problems, please let us know.

Tim Rogers

UKRAINE CRISIS APPEAL



With Christmas quickly approaching please can we add a few extra seasonal items to our list as follows:

Chocolate tubs – Celebrations, Heroes etc. Biscuit Selection boxes, Victoria, Foxe's etc, Marshmallows, Assorted Roasted Nuts. Hot Chocolate. Soup packets and tins.

Thank you so much for your support.

Shelly, Ukrainian Refugee Contact

UKRANIAN REFUGEE NETWORK

Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network urgently needs to find more sponsors and landlords for Ukrainian refugees. If you or anyone you know could consider taking in a refugee, please speak to Rev. Geoff.

Rev. Geoff Andrew

CRAFT CLUB

December Craft Club will be on Monday, 19th December 2022.

Veronica Gittins

FLOWERS FOR THE CHURCH

Please speak to Anne Andrew if you would like to donate flowers to be displayed in the church, perhaps in memory of a loved one or for a special occasion. We would be delighted to hear from you and write a dedication to go in the newsletter and be displayed in the church.

Anne Andrew

TOGETHER AT CHRISTMAS

Are you alone at Christmas this year? Come and join us for a traditional festive dinner!

Churches Together in Ewell is pleased to offer a Christmas dinner plus festive activities to all who would otherwise be on their own. Christmas Day 12.30 – 4.15pm at a local church. This offer is open to all Ewell residents. Transport can be arranged. There is no charge. To join us please call: 07999 805 475 or email: christmas.dinner@dsl.pipex.com

Sue Pennington

DONATING TO ST JOHN'S



If you would like to contribute financially to the work of St John's, you can donate using this QR code. Using your smartphone's camera will take you straight to a page where you can make a donation using a credit card. Thank you.

Rev. Geoff Andrew

FOODBANK

Thank you everyone for the great response to the Christmas Goodie Bag appeal. The volunteers told me this week that they had packed about 300 already and they guessed that they were a third of the way to their target. Of course we'll get some official figures eventually but it's great to think that that number of households were going to appreciate this generosity. We've now passed the deadline of December 2nd - I understand that if you still have items they'll be grateful for them but I think it may be quicker if it's possible to deliver them to The Ruxley Lane centre yourself or perhaps use the Sainsbury's collection box.

This week stocks of the following are very low - can you help out at all please:- Male deodorant, Kids Toothpaste (6years+), Adult Toothpaste, Sanitary Towels, Tampons, Sugar - 500g bags, Custard, Gravy granules, Instant coffee - 100g jars, Chocolate spread, Dog food.

Bless you all.

Polly Elder

Growth Groups

In the New Year, I will be launching and hosting a new discipleship program based on a housegroup format. The aim of the group is to help us grow in our faith and learn how to apply what we learn in the real world. To that end, the group will meet every week for 4 weeks, then have a month's break, then meet again for 4 weeks. Between January and July, the group will meet for 4 x 4 weekly sessions (16 sessions in all). The format will consist of worship, prayer and bible study with an added element of practical application. There will be two groups, one daytime and one evening, but run on the same day (Wednesdays). The dates are Jan 11 – Feb 2; Mar 8 – Mar 30; May 3 – May 24; Jun 21 – Jul 13. To take part, you must commit for the January sessions and attend as many times as possible thereafter. A sign-up sheet will shortly be available in church. Please speak to me if you are interested. *Rev. Geoff Andrew*

Church Planning Morning

On Saturday January 14, from 9.30 – 12.30, we will be holding an open meeting for all members of the church family to attend a Planning Day at which we will present a framework for our Parish Development Plan (something required of us by the diocese) for discussion and feedback. We would love as many people as possible to attend so please put it in your calendar now. I promise there'll be coffee and cakes!

Rev. Geoff Andrew

Sunday's Services

The Waiting Room: The Prophets: Waiting for a Promise

In our Old Testament reading from Isaiah, the prophet brings the people an incredible message: despite all the sins they have committed, despite all the suffering they've been through, God still cares for them and the message is one of comfort and hope. The promise is one of homecoming after years of exile hundreds of miles away from home. The exiles did indeed go home, yet the prophecy also looks further ahead to the promise of a saviour and we find Isaiah's words repeated for a new generation in Mark's gospel as John the Baptist prepares the way for Jesus. Jesus came, and He is coming again. What does it mean to wait for God's promise? How can we prepare ourselves and our community for the promise of Jesus' return?

Readings

1st Reading: Isaiah 40 vs 1-11

Janis Forder

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has

been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³ A voice of one calling: 'In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.' ⁶ A voice says, 'Cry out.' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' 'All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. ⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures for ever.' ⁹ You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God!' ¹⁰ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. ¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Gospel Reading: Mark 1: 1-8

Rev. Geoff Andrew

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, ² as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way' – ³ 'a voice of one calling in the wilderness, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" ⁴ And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the River Jordan. ⁶ John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt round his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And this was his message: 'After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

Collect

Rev. Geoff Andrew

Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and saviour we may be ready to receive him, who is our Lord and our God.

Hymns

1st Service

1. Joy to the World
2. Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
3. Glorify Thy Name
4. Praise My Soul the King of Heaven

2nd Service

1. Jesus Paid it All
2. Hosanna (Praise is Rising)
3. I Exalt Thee
4. Joy to the World

From Our Book of Remembrance

David Alan Taylor
Joanne Louise Goodman