



St John's, Stoneleigh Weekly Newsletter 3rd December 2023

A MESSAGE FROM REV. GEOFF ANDREW

Happy New Year! This Sunday we celebrate the beginning of the Advent season, the beginning of a new church year. As it says in our service booklets, this is a season of 'expectation and preparation' as we celebrate the coming of Christ in his incarnation - Emmanuel, God With Us – and anticipate his return. It is a time of light among the darkness marked by the annual lighting of the first Advent candle. On a practical note, I'm pleased to say the new chairs have arrived in time for our Advent and Christmas services. But the first opportunity to sing carols is actually not in the church but in the Station pub! Please do join us on December 5th at 6.30pm and let's bring the glad tidings to the folk on the Broadway.

Rev. Geoff Andrew

PAT TANNER

The funeral for Pat Tanner will take place at St John's on Saturday December 16 at 10.30am. There will be a reception to follow in the parish centre. We are expecting Pat's sister, Kristien and Pat's nephew and niece, Jeremy and Diana, to be in attendance. We also plan to make the service available on Zoom. Please continue to pray for the family.

RICHARD DENYER – 60 YEARS A SERVER!

This Advent Sunday marks Richard's 60 year anniversary as a Server, one who prepares and assists at Holy Communion. At St John's, he is both Server and Sacristan, the important role within a church that oversees all Communion-related issues, including making sure we have sufficient stocks of everything. Richard is also our resident expert on church seasons and liturgical colours, overseeing the changing of the altar frontals each season. Richard has decided now would be an appropriate time to retire from this role and he will be handing over in the next few weeks to Graham Derbyshire. This Sunday we will celebrate Richard's ministry after the 9.30am service.

Rev. Geoff Andrew

ADVENT SERMON SERIES

The Advent sermons are based on the book, 'The Whole Christmas Story' by Jo Swinney. If anyone wishes to follow along, the book includes reflections for every day of Advent. You can find it on Amazon (and no doubt other reputable booksellers!).

Rev. Geoff Andrew

CHURCH 'WHO'S WHO'

With us having two well-established congregations now, it is not always easy to match a face with a name. So we plan to produce a church 'Who's Who' booklet with names and photographs so we can get to know each other better. This is only for the use of church members and will not go further afield. John Martin has kindly agreed to lead the project and he will be approaching you sometime in the next few weeks to ask

if he can take your photograph and a few details. I encourage everyone to participate. Thank you!
Rev. Geoff Andrew

CAROLS IN THE STATION PUB

St John's and Stoneleigh Baptist will be combining forces to lead carols in the pub next Friday Dec 5th at 6.30pm. Do come along and support us as we bring a taste of the true Christmas story into Broadway. There will be craft activities for children and the pub is hosting a family party immediately afterwards until 9pm.

Rev. Geoff Andrew

ST JOHN'S REFLECTIONS

We have set up a new WhatsApp group dedicated to sharing Christian reflections, meditations and bible verses. Called St John's Reflections, its purpose is to build one another in the faith. That doesn't mean that such things can't be shared on the main St John's WhatsApp group, but it makes sense to have a place set apart from the general admin and chat. The new group is open to all. Just let myself or Will Porter know if you would like to join. And I should add that joining does not mean you have to contribute...it's perfectly fine to just receive!

Rev. Geoff Andrew

PRAYER VIGIL

During the second World War MI5 used many thousands of carrier pigeons to deliver and bring back information from overseas. To ensure this line of communication worked well, the handlers needed to feed and nurture the birds. In the same way, if we are to nurture our relationship with God, we need to have a good line of communication.

Please sign up to our 24-hour prayer vigil starting at 9am on Saturday 9th December. By praying together we can ask for God's voice to fill our church with His Word.

Please see the paper schedule at the front of the church or speak with Lizanne Matthew or Steve Simper. A Prayer Vigil Booklet will be available next week.

Steve Simper

ADVENT FOODBANK CALENDAR

We know that this year there will be extra demands on the Epsom and Ewell Foodbank as more and more people are struggling to make ends meet. We have devised a way to focus our shopping activities through Advent by identifying specific themes for the four weeks of Advent. We will launch it this weekend with an appeal for Christmas items so that the Christmas packages can be put together early in the month. Look out for a different coloured flyer each week with a new list. Let's help to open the doors for everyone in need this Advent! Additional urgent items have been posted on WhatsApp.

Rev. Geoff Andrew and Polly Elder

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORKER

Christ Church Epsom Common, KT19 8NE

There is a vacancy for someone to work with children and young people. The role is part time, 15 hours, flexible, per week including Sundays. For more information and application form please visit:

www.christchurchepsom.org.uk.

UKRAINE CRISIS APPEAL

Thank you so much to St John's who are still helping the people of Ukraine. If you can donate: shower gel, shampoo, soap, sanitary items, nappies, warm socks, protein bars, packet soups, first aid kits, toothbrushes, toothpaste, torches, bandages and warm gloves, or anything else listed on the donation box in the church, you will be helping people survive in Ukraine. If you wish to donate money, please either write a cheque made payable to Shelly Weiczorek, go to the whiteeagleappeal.org page or put cash in an envelope marked Ukraine. We can then buy chest drains and other medical equipment that is not easy to buy in shops. Thanks for all your support.

With Christmas quickly approaching please can we add a few extra seasonal food items:

Chocolate tubs - celebration, heroes etc. Biscuit Selection boxes - Victoria, Fox's etc. Marshmallow Assorted roasted nuts, seeds etc. Hot chocolate/Coffee/Tea Sugar Rice Pasta Soup packets and tins Custard Long life baked foods.

Shelly, Ukrainian Refugee Contact

UKRAINIAN REFUGEE CHRISTMAS APPEAL

This Christmas, Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network (EERN) is supporting refugee families in our area to buy Christmas gifts for their children, and to host a Christmas celebration so that the community has a space to come together. A donation of £20 will support one child to attend this Christmas party and a £15 voucher for each child so that their parents can choose a meaningful Christmas gift for them. The party will be organised by the Ukrainian community, with support from the EERN team. Please follow this link to donate:

<https://epsomandewellfoodbank.enthuse.com/cf/4a8d>

Rev. Geoff Andrew

CHRISTMAS CHOIR

It is that time of year when we start to think about Christmas and the Christmas carol service. This year's service takes place at 6.30pm on Sunday, 17th December. We are again putting together a St. John's choir to sing at this event. The first choir practice was held on Thursday, 23rd November from 7.30pm until 9pm in church and will be every Thursday thereafter at the same time. There will also be a choir practice on the afternoon of the carol service at 4pm. Do come along and join us and please encourage other family and friends to join our merry band of singers. Many thanks. **Chris Webb**

ZOOM

Our Sunday service is streamed via <https://stoneleigh.tv>. Any problems, please let us know. **Tim Rogers**

Book of Remembrance

Kathleen Margery Duthie
Anne Parker Neale

Today's Services

The story of the Nativity in the Bible comprises only a combined 120 verses of Matthew and Luke's gospels. But it would be a mistake to think that the meaning of Jesus' coming is confined to those few chapters. Right from the beginning, God's intention was to be in relationship with us and Jesus' incarnation is the astonishing culmination of God's desire to make right what humankind has spoiled. Our Advent sermon series, The Whole Christmas Story (based on a book by Jo Swinney), looks at the big picture of God's rescue mission. We start this week with 'Made Whole', describing how things were and how God intended them to be.

Readings

John 1:1-14

John Rogers

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^[a] it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Psalm 19:1-6

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. ² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. ³ They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. ⁴ Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. ⁵ It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. ⁶ It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth.

Collect

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ

Intercessor

Chris Redrup

Music at 9.30am

1. O Come, O Come Immanuel
2. Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord
3. There is a Redeemer
4. *During Communion:* Be Still
5. Jesus shall reign

Music at 11.00am

1. Praise the Name
2. Waymaker
3. O Come O Come Emmanuel
4. What a Beautiful Name