



St John's, Stoneleigh Weekly Newsletter 10th December 2023

A MESSAGE FROM REV. GEOFF ANDREW

I write this in anticipation of two events coming up this weekend before the Sunday services. Firstly, on Friday evening we will have been singing Carols in The Station pub. Although Carols have often been set to popular folk tunes, the practice of singing them in pubs is less common. There is a centuries old tradition in Sheffield of pub Carol singing so let's see if we can successfully transplant it to Stoneleigh! Saturday at 9am sees the start of our second 24hr prayer vigil. Thanks in advance to the many of you that have signed up to participate. Advent is a season of preparation and what better way to prepare than to pray for our church, our world and ourselves. May Jesus, the light of Advent, illuminate for you these dark days of December.

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.

RUSH ACADEMY CHILD SPONSORSHIP

RUSH is one of our primary mission partners. Based in Kakamega, Kenya, RUSH was set up by Andrew and Lucy Amukowa to provide education to local children and give them the tools to break out of the cycle of poverty. One of the ways we can support the work of RUSH is to sponsor a child. We have a number of children's profiles available at St John's and sponsorships cost £20 per month. Please speak to Claire Cornell or Rev. Geoff if you are interested. *Rev. Geoff Andrew*

MINCE PIES AND MULLED WINE

We are planning to serve Mulled Wine and Mince Pies before the Rock Choir on Friday 15th December and after the Carol Service on 17th December. Mulled wine is all taken care of but we would be most grateful for donations of Mince Pies for these events. Please bring your donations to Church on either Sunday 10th or Sunday 17th. Thanking you in anticipation.

Social Committee

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

CAFÉ BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Please note there will **NO** Café on Thursday 28th December.

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

We will be holding our Christmas Carol Service on **December 17th at 6.30pm** followed by Mulled Wine and Mince Pies.

Chris Webb

SERVICES BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

There will be no midweek Morning Prayer or Holy Communion between Christmas Day and New Year's Eve. On New Year's Eve, there will be one service at 10am. There will be no Morning Prayer on Monday 1st January 2024. The normal pattern of services will resume from January 4th with a service of Holy Communion at 9.30am

Rev. Geoff Andrew

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE – SUNDAY 24TH DECEMBER AT 4.00pm

We will be holding our Christingle Service in aid of the Children's Society. We will be making the candles on Thursday 21st December at 2.00pm in the Parish Centre and would be grateful for volunteers to help make the candles, you will be welcomed with coffee/tea and cake! We have 100 candles to put together so any help would be gratefully received.

Social Committee

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

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

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

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

There will be a choir rehearsal on Thursday 14th December 7.30pm until 9pm in church 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**

PRAYER GROUP

We are delighted that the monthly prayer group is gaining momentum. Having said that, due to the festivities in December there will not be a meeting this month. The next meeting will be at 3.30pm on Thursday 18th January 2024 in the Chapel. This will follow coffee café. **Steve Simper**

ZOOM

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

Today's Services

In the second in our Advent sermon series, The Whole Christmas Story, our attention turns to the state of the world and of humanity. 'Broken' sums things up rather well. Whilst we all want to enjoy the light and joy of Christmas, as Christians we have to acknowledge and give name to the suffering that continues to go on all around us, and often within us. As we said last week, Jesus represents God's great rescue mission

for the world, but we are faced with a darker reality until that day when he comes again. Our challenge is to be messengers of hope when faced with despair.

Readings

Psalm 6

Graham Waller

¹ LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. ² Have mercy on me, LORD, for I am faint; heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony. ³ My soul is in deep anguish. How long, LORD, how long? ⁴ Turn, LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love. ⁵ Among the dead no one proclaims your name. Who praises you from his grave? ⁶ I am worn out from my groaning. All night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears. ⁷ My eyes grow weak with sorrow; they fail because of all my foes. ⁸ Away from me, all you who do evil, for the LORD has heard my weeping. ⁹ The LORD has heard my cry for mercy; the LORD accepts my prayer. ¹⁰ All my enemies will be overwhelmed with shame and anguish; they will turn back and suddenly be put to shame.

John 15:18-25

¹⁸ If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember what I told you: "A servant is not greater than his master."^[a] If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹ They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. ²⁵ But this is to fulfil what is written in their Law: "They hated me without reason."

Collect

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.

Intercessor

Ken Mussell

Music at 9.30am

1. Joy to the World (MP 393)
2. Rejoice, the Lord is King! (MP 575)
3. Come, Thou long-expected Jesus (MP 102)
4. *During communion:* Father we love you (MP 142)
5. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation (MP 564)

Music at 11.00am

1. Open the Eyes of My Heart
2. Here I am to Worship
3. Joy to the World
4. Amazing Grace (my chains are gone)

Book of Remembrance

Hillary Jane Runnals