



# St John's, Stoneleigh Weekly Newsletter 24th December 2023 Fourth Sunday of Advent

## A MESSAGE FROM REV. GEOFF ANDREW

Christmas is finally upon us, and so I wish a very Happy Christmas to you all! It feels like the celebrations are already in full swing after last week's carol singing around the tree (followed by Rock Choir) and the Carol Service. It was really wonderful to see the church full on both occasions. On Christmas Eve we will hold our traditional Crib & Christingle service (4pm) and Midnight Communion (11.30pm). And because Christmas Eve is on a Sunday this year, we will also be having a worship service with Communion at 10am (not 9.30am and 11am). I am delighted that on Christmas Day (10am) we will be joined by All Nations Korean church and Pastor JB will be preaching. If you are going away for the Christmas period then I wish you safe travels and God's blessings as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus.

*Rev. Geoff Andrew*

## 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*

## PEACE LIGHT

The Peace Light has been travelling around the World from Bethlehem for the last 10 days, with members of the scouting movement helping its progress. In Europe it has been to Ukraine with a ceremony held in front of St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv. The Peace Light came to Surrey Scouts at a ceremony at the county Campsite in Shere, where it was distributed at a moving service on 20th December 2023. It has now arrived at various churches in the diocese, including St John's where it was used to light the Aumbry candle in the chapel. It is planned that the Candles will be lit from it at Services during this Christmas time.

*Richard Denyer*

## CAFÉ BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Please note there will **NO** Café on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> December.

## 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 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024. The normal pattern of services will resume from January 4<sup>th</sup> with a service of Holy Communion at 9.30am

*Rev. Geoff Andrew*

## CHRISTINGLE SERVICE – SUNDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER AT 4.00pm

We will be holding our Christingle Service in aid of the Children's Society.

## 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 demand 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. 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.

*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**

## 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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**

## Christmas Eve Services

### 10am Holy Communion

The fourth and final instalment of our Advent journey with Jo Swinney's book, *The Whole Christmas Story*, is appropriately entitled 'God Among Us'. After all those years of waiting for a Messiah, Jesus the Light of the World makes a decisive arrival into world history and God 'dwells among us'. In the midst of our celebrations of Jesus' birth, we need to ask ourselves what the Incarnation means for us now as we journey on in faith 2,000 years later.

### Readings

Hebrews 4:14-16

John 1:14-18

**Janis Forder**

### Collect

Almighty God, as we prepare with joy to celebrate the gift of the Christ-child, embrace the earth with your glory and be for us a living hope in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Intercessor

**Chris Redrup**

### Music

1. O little town of Bethlehem
2. See amid the winter's snow
3. God rest you merry, gentlemen
4. During communion: The angel Gabriel
5. Joy to the world

### 4pm Crib & Christingle Service

This service comes complete with a live nativity (people not animals!), the model nativity under the high altar and that lovely moment of peace when the lights go down and the darkness is pierced by 100 Christingle candles. The narrative this year includes the repeated question 'who changed someone's life at Christmas?' The answer, of course, is Jesus!

### Readings

Luke 2:4-7

Luke 2:8-14

Luke 2:15-18

Matthew 2:1-2,9-11

### Intercessor

**Chris Redrup**

## Music

1. O come, all ye faithful
2. Angels from the realms of glory
3. While shepherds watched
4. Calypso carol
5. Away in a manger
6. Hark, the herald angels sing

## 11.30pm Midnight Communion

We light the white Christ candle at the centre of our Advent Wreath and celebrate the birth of the Saviour. And we finally get to sing 'that' last verse: 'Yea Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning!'

## Readings

Colossians 3:12-17

Luke 2:1-20

## Collect

Eternal God, in the stillness of this night you sent your almighty Word to pierce the world's darkness with the light of salvation; give to the earth the peace that we long for and fill our hearts with the joy of heaven through our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## Intercessor

**Ian Hargrave**

## Music

1. Hark, the herald angels sing
2. Silent night, holy night
3. O little town of Bethlehem
4. *During Communion:* Noel sung by Sarah Tutton
5. O come, all ye faithful

## Christmas Day Service

### 10am Family worship with Communion

The Incarnation of God in Jesus is the most astonishing event in human history. It tells us everything about God's love for us and is also an incredible affirmation of humanity; that God is able to be fully God even in human form.

## Reading

Philippians 2:6-8

## Intercessor

**Chris Redrup**

## Music

1. O come, all ye faithful
2. O little town of Bethlehem
3. The first noel
4. Hark, the herald angels sing

## Book of Remembrance

Edwin Mowforth

Jullia Daphne Mazzola

Derek George Patman