



St John's, Stoneleigh Weekly Newsletter

15th December 2024 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

A MESSAGE FROM REV. GEOFF ANDREW

What a busy weekend! On Friday night we welcomed a very big audience for our penultimate Season of Music & Comedy event – the annual Rock Choir concert, preceded by carols around the tree. The concert also raised money for RUSH Academy, our mission partners in Kenya. On Saturday, St John's will host its first wedding for about 10 years as we celebrate the marriage of David Coppin and Glory Rahman-Turner. You may remember that it was Glory who was baptised a couple of weeks ago so it's been a wonderful time of joyful commitment for her! If you are reading this before 1pm on Saturday then do come down to the church to participate – you will be most welcome. On Sunday, in addition to our normal services at 9.30am and 11am, our Carol Service takes place at 6.30pm. This is sure to be a lovely service of word and music as we reflect on the Christmas story led by a full choir. Please pray that all these activities and services will enable our friends and neighbours to hear the Good News of Jesus!

Rev. Geoff Andrew

ZOOM

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

Tim Rogers

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Please see below service times for the Christmas period:

15th December – Carol Service at 6.30pm

24th December – Christingle Services at 3pm and 5pm

24th December – Midnight Communion – 11.30pm

25th December – Family Worship with Holy Communion – 10am.

Rev. Geoff Andrew

MINCE PIES AND MULLED WINE

We are planning to serve Mulled Wine and Mince Pies after the Carol Service on 15th 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 Sunday 15th Thanking you in anticipation.

Social Committee

CHURCHES 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 – 4.15 at a local church. This offer is open to all Ewell residents. Transport can be arranged. **No charge.** To join us call: 07999 80475 or email:

Christmas.dinner@dsl.pipex.com. Please pick up a flyer at the Welcome Desk at the front of Church.

PRAYER INITIATIVE FROM EWELL CHURCHES TOGETHER

Do you feel a call to pray blessing on your local area? Would you like to pray with local Christians from other churches?

If you would like to explore the possibility of gathering with others for inter-church prayer - either in person or over zoom, please feel free to contact me.

I would love to hear from you! *Paula Smith*
paula.smith@mybroadbandmail.com

CHRISTINGLE SERVICES –TUESDAY 24TH DECEMBER AT 3.00pm AND 5.00pm

We will be holding our Christingle Services in aid of the Children's Society. We will be making the candles on Monday 23rd 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 150 candles to put together so any help would be gratefully received.

Social Committee

THURSDAY AFTERNOON PRAYER MEETING

There will be no Thursday afternoon Prayer Meeting during the month of December.

Steve Simper

SEASON OF MUSIC & COMEDY 2024

December 21, 5.30pm: Movie Night: It's a Wonderful Life (£5/ticket)

A sign-up sheet for each show can be found in the welcome area.

Rev. Geoff Andrew

DIGGING FOR TREASURE

In Mathew 13:44 a man finds treasure in a field and then sells everything he has to buy the field. I then imagine he still has to dig out the treasure, and that as he finds treasure he realises there is even more treasure than he thought. The more I have read the bible, the more I have come to realise that there are treasures hidden both on the lines and between the lines. I only find that treasure if I take the time to look and the Holy Spirit to shine a light on the hidden gems within. This year I have read through the bible in a year on the Bible App using a plan put together by the Bible Project. The Bible Project provide short videos from which I have learned new things that brought what I was reading to life. Next year, I plan to read through the New Testament in a year. That will allow me to dig even deeper.

Would you like to join me on a treasure hunt every day next year? If you are interested, let me know, and I can point out a field to buy and which shovel to use. Contact me on WhatsApp (07990 560 363) or email (willporter2167@gmail.com).

Will Porter

UKRAINE CRISIS APPEAL

Thanks to everyone at St John's who donated chocolates and biscuits etc for the Christmas appeal. We were overwhelmed with your generosity! It is all on its way to Ukraine now. The White Eagle Club will continue to collect donations for:

Plasters, bandages, Pasta, rice, baby food, nappies and wipes, batteries, detergent, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, shower gel, hand wash and soaps, deodorant, sanitary pads, hand wipes, hand sanitizer, hand cream.

Please put them in the box marked Ukraine at the front of the church.

I also take cheques made payable to Shelly Wierczorek or you can donate money online at the "White Eagle Club Ukraine Appeal" on Facebook, Instagram or X.

Thank you again. **Shelly Wierczorek, Coordinator, White Eagle Ukraine Appeal**

FOODBANK

Taking a sneak peek at the notes for the very end of this year in New Daylight, the BRF Bible notes, the readings focus on the story of Bethlehem. The plight of two ladies seemed to stand out as examples of community care. Naomi, having fallen on hard times decided to return to her family home in Bethlehem and Ruth, her daughter in law went with her. Naomi admitted to her old friends and neighbours that her circumstances had changed, she is welcomed back and is assisted. Many years later a pregnant teenager travelled with her husband to his family home for a census and whilst there Mary must have needed community support as she gave birth to her baby. Jeremiah prophesied that God would enable the communities in the towns of Judah (including Bethlehem) to 'refresh those who are weary and satisfy with food everyone who is weak from hunger'. We, in Stoneleigh, are invited to become part of the Bethlehem community and maintain our support of the needy. The new year will be bleak for some, please help the Foodbank to be ready for them.

This week they **urgently** need:- Beans/Pasta with Meat, Packet Soup, Powdered Milk, Brown Sauce/Mayonnaise, Sugar (500gr).

To maintain stocks they also need: - Tinned Meat, Tinned Vegetables, Cooking Sauces, Noodles, Instant Mash, Long life Juice, Honey/Chocolate Spread, Rice Pudding, Custard, Chocolate Biscuit Bars, Savoury Biscuits, Long life Sponge puddings, Deodorant (Male/Female), Hair Conditioner, Children's Toothpaste, Adult Toothbrushes, Shaving Foam, Sanitary Towels/Tampons, Loo Roll, Washing Up Liquid, Washing Powder

There will be no list on next weeks' notice sheet as John deserves a week off from delivering our contributions and the Foodbank Reception hours will be limited over the holiday period so the volunteers that are available can focus on making sure that everyone who needs them gets help. Happy Christmas and thank you everyone for all your generous support.
The Foodbank Team

Today's Services

This week our Advent series continues with 'A Time for Justice'. Once again, we will be looking at one of Jesus' parables, the Parable of the Tenants, which is the last one that speaks to the events that would soon take place in Jerusalem prior to his arrest and crucifixion. In this parable, Jesus sums up in a nutshell the history of Israel and its rejection of God and His appointed messengers. Even the vineyard owner's son will be shown no mercy by the rebellious and evil tenants. But the owner's son, Jesus, is the Cornerstone who would soon be vindicated. As we look around the world today, and especially at the recent events in Syria, the parable is a warning to those who continue to oppress and subjugate their own people that one day God's justice will bring freedom and release for the captives.

Readings

Isaiah 5:1-7

Janis Forder

I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: my loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. ²He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. ³Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? ⁵Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. ⁶I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it. ⁷The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed: for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

Luke 20:9-19

⁹He went on to tell the people this parable: 'A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. ¹⁰At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. ¹²He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out. ¹³Then the owner of the vineyard said, "What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him." ¹⁴'But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. "This is the heir," they said. "Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours." ¹⁵So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 'What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.' When the people heard this, they said, 'God forbid! ¹⁷Jesus looked directly at them and asked, 'Then what is the meaning of that which is written:

"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone"

¹⁸Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.' ¹⁹The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.

Collect

God for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son: give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice, and to suffer for the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Intercessor

Janis Forder

Music 9.30am

1. O Come, O Come Immanuel (MP 493)
2. Angels from the realms of glory (MP 35)
3. The First Noel (MP 644)
4. *During communion:* As the Deer (MP 37)
5. It came upon a midnight clear (MP 345)

Music 11am

1. Light of the World (Here I am to Worship)
2. Once in Royal David's City
3. I Lift my Hands
4. O Come All Ye Faithful

Book of Remembrance

Terry Allen