



# St John's, Stoneleigh Weekly Newsletter

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May

## Collect

Risen Christ, your wounds declare your love for the world and the wonder of your risen life: give us compassion and courage to risk ourselves for those we serve, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

## A MESSAGE FROM REV. KEN HOBBS

As we move on through this difficult time I want to give thanks, as I did last week, for the way that amid our social distancing the St John's church family continue to encourage and support each other. We had a "Zoom PCC" this week which I found really encouraging. I hope you like the new banner outside the church! I read this quote this week. "Prayer can turn a kitchen into an altar, a quarantine into a Lent pilgrimage and a hospital room into an upper room. We can find God in unexpected places! God bless you. Ken

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

Don't forget you can keep in touch by joining the WhatsApp group, visiting our website and following us on Facebook. All your contributions to these groups during this time provide great encouragement to us all. For details of the website and where to find us on Facebook, please see the bottom of this page. To join the WhatsApp group, you will need a smartphone and to have installed WhatsApp. Please contact the office if you have any questions.

*Rev. Ken Hobbs*

## KEEPING IN TOUCH AND PRAYERS

Please don't forget to call if you need some help during this time or if you would like to add something to the prayer board.

*Jean Tutton 020 8393 3687*

## APCM

As you will be aware, all churches were asked to postpone their APCM. St John's APCM has been rescheduled and is currently due to take place on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October after the 10am service. More details will follow nearer the time.

*Rev. Ken Hobbs*

## SUNDAY SERVICES

Don't forget you can join us live on Sunday at 10am using this link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86852818063>

For those of you who do not have access to the internet you can now join our Sunday Worship by phone.

Dial this phone number: 0203 051 2874

You will be asked to enter the meeting ID followed by # (hash).

Key in: 868 5281 8063#

You will be asked for a personal ID, just press # again and you will be connected to the Service.

If you want help with this speak to John Simon (phone 0775 187 4807).

*John Simon*

## NEWSLETTER

Please don't forget to get in touch with the office if you'd like to add anything to the newsletter. We would welcome any good news stories that you may have. Whilst the newsletter is emailed out each week to those on our emailing list, the emails are sometimes delayed or for some unknown reason, do not arrive. If this is the case, you can always go straight to the website and you'll find all the newsletters online. If you'd like to forward the St John's newsletter on to friends and family, please do so. If you do not have access to email but people you know do, then please let them know they can also be added to our emailing list.

*Kerrie Winter*

## OPENING CHURCH – UPDATE

**The Diocese of Guildford** will decide the best way forward for our churches following the Prime Minister's announcement this coming Sunday. In the meantime, St John's remains closed but an update will be sent when more information is available.

*Rev. Ken Hobbs*

## PUBLICITY

If you get an opportunity to walk by St John's, you will see a new banner up along the Lady Chapel wall. It has information about what St John's are doing during this uncertain time. Thank you to those who made the arrangements for the banner to be made and put up.



*Rev. Ken Hobbs*

## FINANCE UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who continues to give by standing order. Your monthly giving is even more vital at this time as St John's is no longer receiving income from letting the hall. If you normally give using numbered envelopes and can afford to do so, please continue putting money in your envelopes each week. These can be put in the collection once services resume. Envelope givers can switch over to paying by monthly standing order if they wish. This would be particularly helpful for St John's cashflow, as we do not know how long the lockdown will last. Please email your contact details to [office@stjohnsstoneleigh.org.uk](mailto:office@stjohnsstoneleigh.org.uk) and Kerrie will arrange for the Treasurer to provide a calculation of your monthly giving

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amount based on your previous weekly envelope giving, and help you set up a standing order.

**Tim Rogers**

### TRAIDCRAFT STOCK FOR SALE

We still have some food stock which we need to sell as the "sell by" dates approach.

Vanilla Fudge: 8 @ £1.55 each, best before end of August  
Double Chocolate Chip Cookies: 4 @ £2.00 each, best before 17<sup>th</sup> June

Dry Pineapple: 2 @ £2.50 each, best before 11<sup>th</sup> June

Ginger Cookies: 8 @ £2.00 each, best before 6<sup>th</sup> June

Zingy Lemon and Ginger Tea: 1 @ £2.20, best before 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022

We look forward to hearing from you and arranging contactless deliveries.  
**Veronica and Michael Gittins**

### Project Highlight: RUSH Kenya

The Amukowa family have a very full household! Many of you may have met Andrew and Lucy Amukowa on their visit to the UK last year. They run RUSH (Reaching the Unreached Through Self-Help) Kenya, an organisation running two schools and a women's empowerment programme. In this time when schools are closed, they are at



home, but they are not alone. Many of the children who board at their schools do not have homes or parents to go back to, so they are staying with the Amukowas. The house currently has 42 kids staying with them!

**Claire Cornell**

### 'Thy Kingdom Come' - a prayer initiative led by the Church of England

This invites us to unite with Christians across the globe in praying for people to know Jesus. It will be held between Ascension and Pentecost, from 21st May to 31st May, with denominations in 85 countries praying at the same time, using the Lord's Prayer with the intention of evangelisation.

A key theme for individual Christians who #pledgetoprayer (Twitter hashtag) is 'Pray for Five'. Christians are praying for five people they know that at least one might become a follower of Jesus. Thy Kingdom Come is not prescriptive as to how that might happen and individual churches and groups of churches are encouraged to pray for their own ways of outreach.

For suggestions for churches, follow the Link to the website <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>

There is a 'Light up the world in prayer' section with resources to equip churches to encourage others to pray and shine their light. One of these activities, is a map of the world, which it is suggested we could help to see filled with light; as each individual, family and church commit to pray, more lights will populate the map.

As members of St John's Church, we are asked by other churches throughout the world:

'Will you play your part, as we pray for the light of Christ to penetrate the darkness across the globe?'

What should be our response?

Rev. Ken and the Ministry Team will be discussing this, but we do not necessarily have all the ideas; **this is for us all as members of the church family to think about.** Let us think and pray about what we as individuals and as a church could contribute to this initiative. **Please do send any ideas to the office and/or Rev Ken and Joan Simon, and we'll look at how we might be able to implement and organise any suggestion.**  
**Joan Simon**

### DAILY HOPE

There is a free phone line 0800 804 8044, for hymns, reflections and prayers, provided by Guildford diocese, especially for people without access to the internet. It is called Daily Hope.  
**Janis Forder**

### NOTICE FOR CHURCH KEYHOLDERS

Just a reminder to all key holders that the church and parish centre are closed to everyone except Kerrie, for photocopying purposes and members of the leadership team that call in regularly to check both properties are safe and secure. This is because there could be a potential insurance issue in the event of there being a problem. While writing this notice may I please ask anyone that is holding keys for the church or parish centre and does not have a particular reason for keeping them, to return them to myself. Thank you

**Janis Forder**

### FOODBANK

The record of making 27 deliveries in a day is now the new norm. Fortunately food donations continue to be made and stocks are good. Having said that they do need the following items please if you are able to make a donation at the Foodbank HQ, in Sainsbury's dump bin, or at the Baptist church on Wednesdays.

**Urgently needed:-** Long life sponge puddings, Ketchup, Tinned meat, Adult toothbrushes, Adult toothpaste, Men's deodorant, Hand gel sanitiser, Shaving foam, Children's toothpaste and brushes 0-2 years, Children's toothpaste and brushes 6-8 years, Shampoo - unisex or for men. These items they are **running low** on:- Shower gel, Powdered milk, Tinned vegetables but not sweetcorn, Sugar 500g, Custard, Jam/honey/marmalade/peanut butter.

**Polly Elder**

### Worship at Home

**"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2.9)**

**Hymn** Tell out my Soul the greatness of the Lord

### Confession

**O Lord our Heavenly Father, we confess that we have sinned against you and done many things to grieve you. We have often been selfish and unforgiving. We have forgotten to pray to you and we have not loved you as we should. For these and the other things we have done wrong we ask for your forgiveness and we pray that you will cleanse and renew us and strengthen us in the days ahead. Help us to walk in the light of your presence. Amen**

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## Collect

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

## 1st Reading 1 Corinthians 15.1-11 read by Lynda White

Now I should remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to someone untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

## Praise Songs – Living Hope by Phil Wickham

## 2nd Reading Mark 15 33-39 read by Lynda White

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'

## Reflection

We began to look last week at the difficult questions of why Jesus died at Easter and in particular why was it **necessary** for Jesus to die. We looked at how it is possible for God to be both just and holy on the one side and yet gracious and loving on the other. How can He judge sin and yet love the sinner? The Christian understanding of this is that this tension or paradox is resolved at the Cross where Jesus gave his life as a sacrifice for sins and he died in our place. This is built into Biblical teaching, Christian doctrine, Christian history, Christian liturgy and Christian hymnology.

We find the notion of judgement and the wrath of God uncomfortable and difficult but if it is any consolation the NT

struggles also and to help us it provides four images. As with all illustrations or analogies none are perfect but collectively I believe that give us at least some understanding of what happened at Easter.

### 1. The Market Place

In the first century slave markets it was possible for a person to be redeemed by the payment of a ransom- the result was freedom The NT teaches that Jesus by his death on the cross paid the ransom price. "He gave his life as a ransom for many" I have an all age talk called "If we could go to heaven in a train!" One of the slides is a ticket office with a caption "the place where the price is paid!"

The slave market reminds us of the clearing of a spiritual debt that we can never ever repay! On the theme of spiritual slavery the NT puts it this way. "If the son sets you free you will be free indeed!" The POWER of sin is broken!

### 2. The Law Court

In the book of Romans (chapter 5 was our reading last week) we learn that through Christ's death we are **justified**. It is a legal term which means being counted as righteous. Imagine a court room and the prisoner is in the dock and found guilty. The judge, enforcing the law, passes sentence and for example issues the fine. The defendant is unable to pay. Then in a moment of courtroom drama, the judge then removes his robes, steps into the dock and writes the cheque and the prisoner goes free.

This is not a perfect analogy because the penalty in our case is not a fine but death. The Bible puts it this way "God did not spare his own son but delivered him up for us all" and that cost is greater than any fine, the life of Christ himself. This is what theologians call substitutionary atonement. As one old hymn puts it "in my place condemned he stood"

Can you see that **Justice is satisfied but love wins** and the PENALTY of sin is paid

### 3.The Home

A softer picture is provided in the story of the prodigal son. He went his own way, left home and squandered his inheritance. In the parable he firstly "comes to himself" and then he "comes to his father". He is reinstated and reconciled as his father welcomes him home! And we too are welcomed home. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself!"

### 4. The Temple

The Old Testament had a system of elaborate sacrifices and priests to enable a sinful people to approach a holy God. It began with the Tabernacle in the desert and then was extended in the OT with the Temple of Solomon; The Temple of Ezra after the Jewish exile and then the Temple of Herod which is the one which Jesus knew. All that remains of that is the Western or Wailing Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem

The Temples had a series of outer courts for the Gentiles; the women; the men and a central place called the Holy Place where the Priest's ministered and at the rear of the Holy Place was the Holy of Holies where once a year the High Priest entered on the Day of Atonement to make an atonement for the sins of the people It was separated by a veil or curtain The NT states that it was impossible for this system to really deal with the issue- even the High priest had to make atonement for his own sins. On Easter morning that temple curtain was torn down!

The letter to the Hebrews repeatedly emphasizes the repetition of the sacrificial system and its ineffectiveness!

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For example in Hebrews 10 we read **"It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"** and **"Day after day the priest stands and performs his religious duties and again he offers the same sacrifices which can never take away sin."**

The whole system of blood sacrifices is now obsolete! Jesus is described as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and he is also the **Great High Priest**- the one mediator between God and Man. Extraordinarily Jesus is both Priest and Victim.

The Berlin wall of sin that separates us from God has been removed. We do not need a deep theology of Jewish atonement systems to appreciate the notion of sacrifice. Remember the words on countless war memorials quoting Jesus "greater love has no man than this..."

John 3.16 is the most famous verse in the NT **"God so loved the World that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life"** It is a **FACT** God so loved the world an **ACT** That he gave his only son and It is a **PACT**- that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.

#### **Conclusion**

As Christians we can have a triple A rating!

- **Access**- The way into God's presence is open- the curtain referred to in Hebrews is torn down- the veil is removed.
- **Assurance**- We are encouraged to draw near with confidence in full assurance of faith
- **Application**- We are called to live the faith; encourage one another; stick together and persevere.

At the height of the COVID pandemic in Italy Father Giuseppe Berardelli was admitted to hospital with severe COVID systems. He had been placed on oxygen support and offered a ventilator purchased by his parish. He heard of a younger patient without one and he voluntarily gave up the ventilator for that younger patient. He died at the age of 72 so that someone else could live.

As we look back over these difficult Easter weeks, may we move from optimism to certainty as we place our trust in the Saviour who gave his life so that you and I might live.

#### **We Declare our Faith**

Do you believe in God?

**I believe in God the Father who made me and all the world.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came to this earth to be my Saviour. He died for my sins on the cross, rose again from the dead, ascended to the Father in heaven and will come again in his glory as the judge of all people.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, whom God gives to all who trust in Christ. He makes me more like Jesus, guides and strengthens me in my daily life and helps me serve God in the family of the Church**

**Hymn** There is a Redeemer

#### **The Prayers – Margaret Hobbs**

We pray for the needs of the world, our community and ourselves.

O Lord we are your people; in your Son you have redeemed us by your Spirit you have sealed us as your own.

May our hearts respond to your love. Lord receive our praise, **and hear our prayer**

May our lives bear witness to your mercy. Lord receive our praise, **and hear our prayer.**

Make our wills ready to obey. Lord receive our praise, **and hear our prayer**

**Show us your glory, that we may delight in your presence and walk with you faithfully all our days. Amen**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name**

**Your kingdom come, your will be done,**

**On earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread**

**And forgive us our sins**

**As we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, Now and for ever.**

#### **The Peace**

##### **A Thanksgiving Prayer**

**The Lord is here**

**His spirit is with us,**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to the Lord**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

On the night when He was betrayed, at supper with his friends, Jesus took bread and thanked you. He broke it and gave it to them saying "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me"

At the end of supper, taking a cup of wine, Jesus thanked you and said "Drink this all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins; do this in remembrance of me."

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory, send your Holy Spirit that the bread and wine we share may be for us by faith the body and blood of your dear son (do share some bread and wine if you feel that is appropriate)

**Hymn** Lord for the years

**Almighty God, we thank you for your mercy and your grace: Thank you for the wonder of your presence and power in Creation. You are our light in darkness, our strength in weakness and our comfort in sorrow. You heal our bodies and our minds; you ease our pain, you lift our anxieties; you give us hope and you set us free. So fill us with your Spirit's power that we may take your healing love to a world in need, with your strength rebuild broken lives, and bring glory to your name; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord. Amen.**

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