



St John's, Stoneleigh Weekly Newsletter

Sunday 21st June

Collect

Faithful Creator, whose mercy never fails: deepen our faithfulness to you and to your living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

A MESSAGE FROM REV. KEN HOBBS

Last Monday we had a PCC meeting via Zoom. Arising from that meeting can I report 3 items.

Firstly, thank you for the continuing financial support being given to St John's. A number of you have switched to direct giving rather than using the envelopes. Do talk confidentially with our treasurer, Tim Rogers if you would like to review your giving, bearing in mind that we have no rental income from the Parish Centre.

Secondly, we are preparing to open the Side Chapel for private prayer from July 1st. The churchwardens will give all the guidance and advice we need for us to make use of this sacred space.

Thirdly we began to dream dreams about what a post Covid church community will look like, particularly in the context of gathered public worship. We await Government and Diocesan advice and we will keep you posted.

Do continue to pray about these matters as we travel this uncertain road together.

God bless,
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

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

THURSDAY COFFEE MORNING

Each Thursday, St John's will be hosting a coffee morning via Zoom. Please join us at 10:30am using this link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83134817320>

The link will be the same each week.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

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

OPENING OF CHURCH

We are pleased to be able to say that it has been agreed with effect from 1st July, the Side Chapel will be open for private prayer during the week between the hours of 10am and 3pm. There will be strict measures in place to ensure St John's is a safe place to visit and all those making use of the Side Chapel should adhere to the following:

- Do not go into the main church area.
- Use the hand sanitiser on the wall when entering by the glass doors.
- Ensure no more than 6 people are in the chapel at any one time and observe the 2 metre social distancing rule at all times.
- Bibles and all papers have been removed to prevent the spread of Covid-19.
- Bring and use your own bibles if you wish.
- When leaving please use the provided wipes provided on the table at the entrance to clean anything you may have touched, including your seat and the door handles on the glass front doors.

Please do not enter the Parish Centre, this will remain closed for the foreseeable future.

Janis Forder and Ken Mussell

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FOODBANK

As I write it has been announced that the footballer Marcus Rashford's appeal to extend over the summer the food vouchers for free school meals has been successful. Thank goodness, this will help the Foodbanks a little but I suspect that there will be a great demand for help for quite a long time yet. It is good that St John's has been able to maintain it's support, this is part of the email I've received this week.

"An enormous thank you to you from all of us at Epsom & Ewell Foodbank. In May 2019 we fed 361 people. This jumped to 1,169 people fed in May 2020. A huge increase. Your donation will be so helpful for us as our numbers are growing daily and we face the challenge of making sure we can support those who need us. We are really grateful for all of your support."

They have limited storage space and are currently overstocked with the following items and have no room to store them this time - baby wipes, porridge, tinned soup, long life milk, pasta sauces and pulses. However, there is no doubt that they will be asking for these items in another month or so. Meanwhile they do need the following items please - Tinned potatoes, Custard, Fruit squash, Tins of pasta/beans with sausages, Packets of dried pasta in sauce, Washing up liquid, Noodles, Sugar - small bags if possible, Shaving Gel/foam, Bar soap, Cereal, Cooking sauces, Tinned fruit, Packet soup, Powdered milk, Chocolate/treats, Hair conditioner, Microwave rice, Long life fruit juice, Peanut butter.

Please continue to donate food in the supermarket collect boxes; monetary gifts can be made via the website <https://epsomewell.foodbank.org.uk> and cash, in an envelope please, can be put through my door at 59 Highfield Drive and I will forward it. Thank you

Polly Elder

Worship at Home

"How many are your works O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures" (Psalm 104.24)

We have come to worship God our Father; to acknowledge his power and authority; to give thanks for his care and keeping, and to offer ourselves in the service of Christ.

He is the Creator of the World. **He gives us life and breath**
He is the Preserver of all life. **He sustains us day by day**
He is the Redeemer of his people. **He shows us his love in Christ**
He is Lord of Lords. **He controls all things**

O God our Father, we bring you our love and praise and give you thanks for all your goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn Jesus is Lord creation's voice proclaims it

Confession

Almighty God, we confess that we have often misused and ill treated your creation; hear us and in your mercy **save us and help us.**

For every act of carelessness that has treated the world merely as a play ground Father forgive us. **Save us and help us**
For every act of wastefulness that forgets the crying of the needy Father forgive us. **Save us and help us**
For every act of selfishness that defies your just rule over our lives Father forgive us. **Save us and help us**
Cleanse us from our sins through the love of Christ and set us free for his service through the power of the Spirit and for the glory of your name. Amen

Collect

Lord, you have taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth: send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the true bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you. Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

1st Reading Psalm 104. 1-9 read by Lynda White

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honour and majesty,
wrapped in light as with a garment.
You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
you set the beams of your² chambers on the waters,
you make the clouds your² chariot,
you ride on the wings of the wind,
you make the winds your² messengers,
fire and flame your² ministers.

You set the earth on its foundations,
so that it shall never be shaken.
You cover it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
At your rebuke they flee;
at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.
They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys
to the place that you appointed for them.
You set a boundary that they may not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.

Song from Sarah

2nd Reading John 1. 1-14 read by Lynda White

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life,² and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.²

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his

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own,² and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,³ full of grace and truth.

Hymn King of Kings Majesty God of Heaven living in me

Reflection

This is the second week of our journey "lessons from the dawn of time" and part 2 of our look at the first lesson "Creation"

I visited the eastern seaboard of the USA some years ago and the shoreline is dominated by a line of Light houses on what are known as the Outer Banks. They are fixed points of reference on a coastline, rather like science and faith, of shifting sands Here are six "lighthouses",

1.MAJESTY

We have had the privilege of visiting many beautiful areas of the world, from Newlands Corner in Surrey to the Grand Canyon of the Colorado and the fjords of New Zealand. The Psalms speaks of the grandeur of the created world

Look at a sunset! - God is an artist; look at the symmetry of the universe God is a mathematician; look at the superb balance of the human skeleton God is an engineer! The great scientist Kepler described science as "thinking God's thoughts after him"

Einstein described the creator of the universe as a Pure Mathematician

King David says in the psalms "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork." The Cosmos is a signpost in the search for God.

No wonder God said at the end of each period of creation "It was very good!"

2. METHOD

The Genesis account is not a scientific text. It does not describe the Mechanism of Creation **But there is profound description of Order-** the creation process, however we want to understand it, is **Supervised and Sequential!**

There are laws that govern the way the universe behaves- Laws demand a Lawgiver! Design demands a designer. The statistical chances of the spontaneous biogenesis of life is the same as that of the dumping 10000 white cards from a helicopter over Stoneleigh Broadway making the name Ken Hobbs!

There are phrases in psalm 104 for example like "The moon marks off the seasons; the sun knows when to go down. The psalm goes on to describe different kinds of supporting environments and ecosystems. **Enshrined in Scripture is the language of order.**

3.MIND

In Psalm 104 v14 we read "In wisdom you made them all" There is purpose and there is thought Some scientists have talked about the "Goldilocks" factor in creation. The environment is just right! If the solar distance and earth's inclination were out by just a fraction there would be no life as we know it.

No wonder Paul writes "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable his judgments and his paths beyond tracing out".

4 MANKIND

A prominent secularist said this "philosophy has not given up Christianity's cardinal error that humans are radically different from other animals" (John Grey Emeritus Prof of European thought at LSE). Nothing could be further from the truth. The current pandemic has exposed the moral and spiritual fractures in a humanity that believed there is nothing more to life than microbes!

The heavens declare the glory of God. There is no reference in Scripture to the heavens bearing the image of God- only mankind. Genesis speaks of us as being made of the dust of the ground- the common building blocks of matter. Yet into that dust is breathed the breath of life and man becomes a living soul.

Genesis affirms that life has a chemical base but it does not state that life is only a matter of chemistry Genesis implies a direct creation act rather than a natural process or God's selection of some pre existing hominoid or Neolithic farmer

The NT understanding of mankind as a special creation is based on

1. the genealogy of Jesus- Luke traces backwards to Adam the son of God

2.The discourse on marriage (Mark 10.6) "From the beginning of creation God made them male and female"

3.Paul in 1 Cor 15.47 The first man was from the earth a man of dust; the second man is from Heaven"

We are here for a reason and scripture makes it clear that the human race is not merely an animal that developed super intelligence and stood upright; but made in God's image and designed for a relationship with him.

The uniqueness about this moment is important. Dennis Alexander in his important book "Creation and Evolution Do we have to choose?" proposes that at some point in recent earth history hominoids appeared to develop a spiritual dimension to life by the use of sacred artifacts, places of sacrifice etc which were not there before. Lennox critiques this by questioning both the rationale and the timing of this and how this can equate to a single individual or tiny group. He argues that the evidence of the Human genome project may point us to a common ancestor who Genesis calls Adam!

That relationship was there at the beginning; broken by disobedience, and potentially restored through Christ The starting point in the salvation story is the need for restoration and rescue

I would suggest that what is clear from Scripture is **"the image of God in man was not produced as a result of blind matter fumbling its unguided way through a myriad different permutations"** (Lennox)

5. MYSTERY

We do not have all the answers! Read for example Bill Bryson's comments in his introduction to "A short History of nearly everything"

There is a profound danger of falling into the error of the "God of the gaps!" Slotting God in to explain the unexplained. The first astronaut Yuri Gagarin commented on God not being up there in space

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The Bible says "when you send your spirit they are created and you renew the face of the earth" God is portrayed as creator; provider and sustainer of the cosmos. Hebrews 11 tells us that God created the world "ex nihilo"- something out of nothing The Big Bang has no answer for what was there at T-1 In this realm of mystery, reason and faith to go hand in hand

6.MANAGEMENT

Later in this series we will explore the world of work. We are God's representatives, made in his image. God is a working God and we are therefore working models and the principles of stewardship, conservation ,trusteeship and management are built into the creation story.

Conclusion

God has spoken. We worship a talking God!- through creation; the cosmos ,our consciences but supremely in his son Jesus Christ As the NT puts it "God was in Christ, making all the world his friends"

Imagine a world without words? What a cold, dark, silent world it would be. One Christian philosopher Francis Schaeffer summed it up "He is there and he is not silent" and today we can rejoice in the word and witness of Creation! We have two books- a book of science and a book of Scripture- in different ways God has spoken!

Prayers - Margaret Hobbs

Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Hymn (listen to) "I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene.

Peace

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 "Make me a channel of your peace"

Blessing

Book of Remembrance: Alice Beatrice Crabb

From our Prayer Board: Rene Grace, Pat Tanner and Vera Mills.

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