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He leads me
beside peaceful waters,
He restores my soul. Ps 23:2

July 2020

Free to read on-line!

ST JOHN'S CHURCH DIARY - JULY 2020

There are still currently NO regular Church Services, but from 23rd June we WILL be opening the Church for private prayer, as follows:

Tuesdays, 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm

Saturdays, 10.00 am - 12 Noon

The Church has been rearranged to follow Government and Diocesan guidelines to ensure this can be done safely. The Church will be manned and you will be very welcome to come into the Church during these times.

Please ensure you maintain 2-metre social distancing during your visit.

Please check the Notice Board in Church or go online to check our web site on <http://stjohnsessington.co.uk> for any updates to this information.

Remember, St. John's Church can be found on:

Twitter: @StEssington, @StTots

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Website: stjohnsessington.co.uk

Parish Letter

Dear Friends in the Parish,

As I write, the restrictions of the lockdown are beginning to be lifted. Let's hope that this process is still happening as you read.

There are no keyworkers in my family and so the weeks have really been a time of online meetings and exchanges. Who would have thought that the internet and mobile phones, often moaned at for intruding on our "normal" day to day social lives, those terrible things that give young people the opportunity to waste their time playing games and sending messages, have become the very things we rely on so very much?

Spending all this time at home has also been an opportunity for a great deal of thinking and reflection. What will the future be like? Will we continue to phone, text, message, Zoom and email as our way of keeping in touch? Well, maybe, but I have also made a resolution to get to meet up with lots of people who I know but have rarely made the effort to contact directly. Some neighbours I have been speaking to on the phone and messaging are people I have never invited to my house since I moved in 30 years ago. Some friends at church the same. And as for my family, well they may live around the country but I am definitely going to make the effort to travel to see them when we are allowed to. In fact, we have booked our caravan into a site near one of my sisters in July when the camps reopen.

But this is a personal perspective; what about the way our lives will be conducted? Will online shopping continue to take over from actual retail shops? Will some businesses continue to have much of their work done by employees working from home? Will my hair get so long before the hairdressers reopen that I have to book a whole morning session?

continued.....

Some of the changes that will inevitably happen are going to mean slight adjustments, some will have knock-on effects that are difficult to predict and others will have quite dramatic effects.

And I am sure that changes will come to the church as well. Here in the parish of Essington we are very fortunate. The community has shown that, under the pressure of the corona emergency, it has a heart that is big enough to cope with the worst. I have heard so many stories of people who have been helped, people who have been made to feel wanted and valued despite being marooned in their own home. It is a privilege to feel a part of something like that.

Perhaps it is that community spirit that the church needs to tap into. God's spirit is one of the elements of the Trinity that causes us so much trouble when we try to explain it. How can God be "Three in one" Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Well the Son bit is easy, that's Jesus, but the Spirit, well that just seems to complicate matters.

But I'm sure that when I referred to "community spirit" it didn't sound difficult. I don't think it was for Jesus either. In Luke Ch. 4 it describes Jesus going back to his home town and he is in the local synagogue. He reads to the congregation from the book of Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor; he has sent me to heal the broken-hearted and to announce that captives shall be released and the blind shall see, that the downtrodden shall be freed from their oppressors, and that God is ready to give blessings to all who come to him."

It is a power that gives the ability to get things done. It is there for all of us. We just have to want to do something good or worthwhile and that spirit will sustain us. You don't have to be a regular churchgoer, you don't have to have been confirmed or christened. You don't even have to ask. Just put yourself out to do good to someone and He will know. His spirit will be there for you. Ask for it and it will be easier to access and more

continued.....

sustaining because you will be aware of it.

So how does that relate to the future of the church? Well, we now have a completed church annex that is for community activities. Increased online worship and ways of sharing ideas may mean that our traditional pattern of worship will change, or at very least be added to, so that good things that surround us can be acknowledged, celebrated and encouraged.

It all comes down to “Love one another as I have loved you.” We are already showing that so well. What an amazing starting point for the new post-lockdown world!

Keep safe!
God be with you.

John

THE ST. JOHN'S TEAM

Wardens:	John Peterken Tel. 01902 723157 Phil Thomas Tel. 01902 739745	Children, Youth & Families:	Mrs Janette Thomas Tel. 07828 213595 E-mail: janettethomas129@live.co.uk
<u>CHURCH OFFICERS</u>			
Readers:	Mrs Delphine Hipkiss Tel. 01902 828064 Mrs Mary White Tel. 01922 478853	Secretary:	Mrs Hilary Southern Tel. 01922 445265
		Verger:	Mrs Joy Burrows Tel. 01922 407698

In addition here are a couple of other numbers you can ring as a first point of contact;

Rev Rosemary Biddle	01922 419032
Sue Davenport	01922 495516
Sue Hinks-Caldwell	01922 516450

*(I'm leaving these details in the Magazine for future reference, although of course there will be no Office Hours until further notice. **Ed.**)*

Arrangements for weddings and baptisms at St. John's Church can be made during Office Hours at the Church on the first and third Saturdays of the month between 10.00 am and 11.30 am, to book dates or ask questions.

For enquiries regarding placing an entry in the Memorial Book in Church, please contact
Mrs Mavis Glennon, Tel. 01543 467675.

Essington Guild of Friends

There are no meetings of the Guild of Friends until further notice, but we wish to assure everyone that our meetings have only been postponed, and not cancelled!

Roy Davis
Secretary.

District & Parish Councillors

Warren Fisher & Christopher Steel

w.fisher@sstaffs.gov.uk Telephone No. 07908 853484
c.steel@sstaffs.gov.uk Telephone No. 07984 641361

Staffordshire County Councillors

Kath Perry Telephone No. 01922 412369

Bernard Williams Telephone No. 01922 410259,
e-mail bernard.williams@staffordshire.gov.uk

Friends of Essington



Social Events - FoE Pub Quiz

The FoE Virtual Quiz is still taking place on Facebook every Thursday evening to entertain and educate.

Date:	Every Thursday (until further notice)
Venue:	The Internet
Start time:	8.10 pm
Cost:	£ Free!

Invitation only, via the private group “Essington FoE Quiz”.

When the lockdown is over, and we return to a “normal” life, we intend to resume our normal Pub Quiz back in Essington Working Men’s Club. Some of our new virtual quizzers may wish to keep supporting us, so see you soon!

Environmental Activities

- **Fly Tipping** will continue to be a problem within the village and surrounding roads during these difficult times; so please keep up the good work of reporting issues as they occur.

Please use websites such as

Love Clean Streets www.lovecleanstreets.com

Fix My Street www.fixmystreet.com

South Staffs Council

www.staffs.gov.uk/environment/fly-tipping.cfm

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01922 711608

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Wardens' Letter

Hi all.

As you are reading this, we have opened the church for private prayer twice a week. This may seem to be the beginning of the end of the Coronavirus that has caused so much suffering and misery to so many people.

We must still be careful whilst going about with our newly gained freedom, masks on whilst on public transport, still keep our distance whilst shopping, hard to do when the sun is shining so much, calling us to the park or the beach.

The progress made to the outside of the church is a sight to behold, tarmac is finished and looking great.

Inside is a little different, with pews moved to keep people safely apart, background music playing and a prayerful PowerPoint on a loop for inspiration. There will also be volunteers in church to welcome you, and for you to have a “safe” chat with. All aspects for the safety of any visitors have been carefully worked out. All we need now are the visitors...

Things will be very different when we return to worship “normally”. It’s said that there may be no singing for a while (although anyone sitting next to me would say that it could be a blessing in disguise...).

The fact is that change has to happen, whether we like it or not, and we as a church family must embrace change if we are to prosper again as a family.

Nonetheless, opening the church is an exciting step forward, and we are looking forward to inviting old and new friends to join us.

Enjoy the sunshine safely while we have it.

Phil.

Thomas More, Reformation Martyr - died 6th July 1535

These days, lawyers and politicians are held in the lowest esteem by the public, along with tabloid journalists and estate agents! Thomas More was both a lawyer and politician, who is today much admired for holding steadfastly to his faith-based principles. He lived in dangerous times, when anyone, even queens, who displeased King Henry VIII could find themselves in a condemned cell in The Tower of London.

Sir Thomas More held the office of Lord High Chancellor and, at one time, was the king's most trusted adviser. But when King Henry took personal control of the Church in England in order to divorce his first wife, More courageously opposed him. Thomas More was a social philosopher and the author of 'Utopia'. This book described an imaginary republic governed by an educated elite who employed reason rather than self-interest for the general good of everyone. He was himself one of the pre-eminent scholars of his age. As a Christian theologian he supported orthodox doctrine, vigorously opposed heresy and argued strongly against the new Protestant ideas taking hold in Europe. Although holding the highest political and legal office, he was far from being a pragmatic politician and opportunist lawyer. In every matter he was a man who held firmly to what he believed was right in God's eyes.

When Thomas More fell from favour with the king, as a result of his unflinching views, he was falsely accused of taking bribes. When this charge failed, his enemies accused him of supporting a celebrated seer of the times who was strongly critical of the king. This too failed. He was then required to swear to the Oath of Supremacy, acknowledging Henry's position as head of the Church of England. This he could not do in conscience. He was put on trial and condemned to be hanged, drawn and quartered for his treason, a punishment later changed to beheading. He died on 6th July 1535 and, on the scaffold, his final words were, 'I die the King's good servant, but God's first.' He has been officially declared a martyr saint by the Roman Catholic Church.

15th July St Swithun (or Swithin) - saint for a rainy day

(I do hope that I am not tempting fate by including this item - if it rains on 15th July, you will definitely be able to blame me! **Ed.**)

St Swithun is apparently the saint you can blame for rainy summers. It is said that if it rains on his special day, 15th July, it will then rain for 40 days after that. It all began when Swithun was made Bishop of Winchester in 852 by King Ethelwulf of Wessex. It was an important posting: Winchester was the capital of Wessex, and during the ten years Swithun was there, Wessex became the most important kingdom of England.

During his life, instead of washing out people's summer holidays, and damping down their spirits, Swithun seems to have done a lot of good. He was famous for his charitable gifts and for his energy in getting churches built. When he was dying in 862, he asked that he be buried in the cemetery of the Old Minster, just outside the west door.

If he had been left there in peace, who knows how many rainy summers the English may have been spared over the last 1,000 years? But, no, it was decided to move Swithun. By now, the 960s, Winchester had become the first monastic cathedral chapter in England, and the newly installed monks wanted Swithun in the cathedral with them. So finally, on 15 July 971, his bones were dug up and Swithun was translated into the cathedral.

That same day many people claimed to have had miraculous cures. Certainly everyone got wet, for the heavens opened. The unusually heavy rain that day, and on the days following, was attributed to the power of St Swithun. Swithun was moved again in 1093, into the new Winchester cathedral. His shrine was a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the middle ages.

The shrine was destroyed during the Reformation and restored in 1962. There are 58 ancient dedications to Swithun in England.

Birthday Greetings!

Arthur (Mac) Brazier will be celebrating his 90th Birthday on Sunday 5th July.

Please give him a wave if you are passing by 41 Wolverhampton Road, Essington.



Dear Readers,

Are we really at the beginning of the end?! The end of Lockdown, I mean. You will have read earlier in this issue that the Church is once again open for private prayer - and many other places in the country are similarly opening their doors, even if only in a limited way. Small steps.....

Meanwhile, what about all the road repairs and resurfacing in the village?? Finally!! Were they actually cleaning out the ditches one of the days when I drove along Bognop Road?? I nearly crashed my car, I was so surprised. Let's hope that drivers aren't tempted to break the speed limit, now that there is no danger of tumbling down a pothole.....

Best wishes to all,

Kate Rissbrook.

VILLAGE INFORMATION

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DEADLINE DATE FOR THE AUGUST 2020 MAGAZINE THURSDAY 23rd JULY 2020

Material received after this date may be held over to the next month. Also, some material may have to be held over if there is not enough space available to print it. All letters, notices of thanks, articles, poems etc. must be accompanied by the full name and address of the sender. *Material received by the Editor without this information will not be published.*

Material for publication in the next issue, please forward to :

Mrs Kate Rissbrook, Blackhalve Farm, Blackhalve Lane, Essington,
WV11 2BB Tel. 01902 732886

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