

The Essington **Connection**

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August 2020

50p

Free to read on-line

ST JOHN'S CHURCH DIARY - AUGUST 2020

Sat 1 st	10.00 - 12 Noon	Church Open for Private Prayer
Sun 2nd	10.00 am	Morning Praise at St. John's (No Service at Shareshill this week)
Mon 3 rd	10.30 am	WEB Meeting
Sat 8 th	10.00 - 12 Noon	Church Open for Private Prayer
Sun 9th	10.00 am	Morning Praise at St. John's Holy Communion at Shareshill
Sat 15 th	10.00 - 12 Noon	Church Open for Private Prayer
Sun 16th	10.00 am	Holy Communion at St. John's (No Service at Shareshill this week)
Sat 22 nd	10.00 - 12 Noon	Church Open for Private Prayer
Sun 23rd	10.00 am	Morning Praise at St. John's Holy Communion at Shareshill
Sat 29 th	10.00 - 12 Noon	Church Open for Private Prayer
Sun 30th	10.00 am	Holy Communion at St. John's (No Service at Shareshill this week)

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

Facebook: St Johns Church Essington

Website: stjohnsessington.co.uk

Parish Letter

Dear Friends,

A wise lady once told me (well, she said she was wise) that I should never assume anything. I assume she thought she was right. Experience of life has told me that getting by without making some assumptions is just about impossible. I assume you have had similar experiences.

And that's it. In order to get on with other people we do make some assumptions. I do my best to be open to changing my opinions. I'd like to believe that what I think of people is based on what they say and do, not what other people say about them or on prejudices connected with their race or speech or gender. I'd like to believe that, but I'm sure that time and again I fall short.

Where I know I can rely on being right is my trust in what Jesus said. He went out of his way to show that, no matter what public opinion said of a person, their value to Him was as great as any other individual. The leper, the crooked tax-gatherer, the woman caught in adultery, sinners of all sorts were invited by Jesus to listen, apologise, make it up to the people they had wronged and be forgiven. To do this, he socialised with them and lots of those around Him were shocked.

Now I am not as good as that. I want a bit of space between myself and an obvious crook. I don't have faith in myself to be able to sway them from their chosen path. I have enough to do avoiding temptation when it appears to me. I'm scared to mix with the modern equivalent of the leper, perhaps that's the person with Covid 19 symptoms. Jesus trusted God to keep him safe from the various diseases he came across and cured. I don't have the same degree of trust.

And here is the point of all this.

If God wants us to be good and to love one another, why do so many good people in the NHS, care workers and others with important roles who are dedicating themselves to look after

continued.....

those affected by Covid, get it themselves and sometimes die?
Does God not care?
Does God not have the power to save?
Is there such a thing as God at all?

Families and friends of those taken before they have had a full life often come up against these questions, even when they have a history of faith and are regular church goers. It is not an unnatural thing. It is a questioning of assumptions. I love a quote from one of Terry Pratchett's characters. He's a minister of the dwarf religion and he berates someone saying Tak (their name for God) does not require that we always think of him but that we think!

Jesus was sent to open out the word of God to the world at the same time as helping to reinterpret some of the inward-looking practices that the Jews had developed.

Of course, God looked after him, but we are expected to look after each other. God never promised to intervene to make things better by changing the odd rule of physics, or to reward good behaviour with an immunity that defies medical science.

No, he gave us the world as it is, as we are making it. Jesus reminded us of the best advice for making it all work. Love others as you love yourself. Love God.

The truth of this has been shown around this parish, around the country and around the world. Where people have shown love and kindness, communities are flourishing.

Where God does intervene is in the character and spirit of the individual. Ask for strength to do the right thing and He will give it. Ask for courage in the face of life's difficulties, He will send it. Ask for forgiveness when we realise we have done wrong, He will listen.

Do you need to come to church to do the asking? No. Ask it in your head, ask it out loud while walking the dog, ask it quietly

continued.....

when settling down to sleep. God does not care when or how you ask, just that you ask.

If, like me, you find it easier to think about all this in church and sometimes want to say, "Thank you" for the help, then you are very welcome to come to the socially distanced services that are now on at St John's every Sunday at 10:00 am.

See you there!

Love,

John.

ST. JOHN'S MINISTRY TEAM

Wardens: John Peterken
Tel. 01902 723157
Phil Thomas
Tel. 01902 739745

Children, Mrs Janette Thomas
Youth & Tel. 07828 213595
Families: E-mail:
janettethomas129@live.co.uk

CHURCH OFFICERS

Readers: Mrs Delphine Hipkiss
Tel. 01902 828064
Mrs Mary White
Tel. 01922 478853

Secretary: Mrs Hilary Southern
Tel. 01922 445265
Vergers: Mrs Joy Burrows
Tel. 01922 407698

In addition to the names in the St John's Ministry Team, 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



Services are Back!

As you read this, we are preparing for our first church service in a long time.

A lot of things have happened to lead up to this point.

Hand sanitizer stations have been set up at the church entrance, and pews have been cordoned off and re-spaced to allow for social distancing. We are doing everything we can to ensure that we have a safe place to worship.

Services will be a little different. We're all used to PowerPoints on screen replacing service sheets, but there can be no singing by the congregation indoors. We might sometimes have a soloist, but otherwise we can listen to music and think the praise!

(We are looking at the possibility of services on the car park in good weather, where the choir may sing, distanced of course.)

Things will undoubtedly change as time goes on, and we will constantly evolve to bring you the best service that we can.

Today is the first of August. It is hot, steamy and wet. It is raining. I am tempted to write a poem. But I remember what it said on one rejection slip: 'After a heavy rainfall, poems titled "Rain" pour in from across the nation.'

Sylvia Plath.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH SOCIAL EVENTS

Looking back, I see that the last item I put into the magazine was in March when I posted an advert for the concert by the very popular Ashmore Park Choir who were due to perform for us in April.

Little did we know at that time that not only would that event not go ahead as planned, but also all our other plans for this year would have to be shelved. Initially we hoped that the concert might be held later in the year, but even that now seems impossible.

A quiz night planned for June, and our Summer Festival in July, fell by the wayside. We had hoped to hold an evening of entertainment in September, followed by our well supported Barn Dance in October, now all postponed.

However, the enthusiasm of our dedicated committee has not waned. We met outdoors last week, socially distancing of course – how difficult that was, when we hadn't seen each other for so long! We all agreed that we must have something to look forward to and celebrate at the end of this difficult year, therefore we are tentatively beginning to plan our Christmas Tree Festival, to be held throughout December.

As in previous years, we hope that local businesses and Community Associations will be involved, but also perhaps there are other organisations or individuals who may like to take part. We are confident that, even if the current situation doesn't change, this is something that can be organised even if social distancing regulations are still in place. We thought that, rather than have a set theme for the trees, we would let everyone choose how they would

continued on page 16.....

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like to decorate their tree under the broad heading of ' A Christmas Celebration'. We're sure that everyone will have very different thoughts about that this year.

So – watch this space and get your thinking caps on! As has been stated elsewhere in the magazine, we hope that our September magazine will be printed as usual, and more details will appear then.

We look forward to seeing all our friends and supporters of our events very soon.

Kath Grantham.
(on behalf of St. John's Social Committee)

Dear Readers,

I do hope that I am not tempting fate by hoping that, for the September issue of "Connection", we might be able to resume "normal service" and print paper copies.

However, literally as I write this, the Foreign Office has changed its mind and is once again advising against travel to Spain - thus proving that the only certain thing in the world at the moment is uncertainty!

I would sincerely like to thank all Distributors who are preparing to collect subscriptions over the next few weeks - and to thank Subscribers who have their money ready for them. Every effort has been made to ensure that the collection procedures will be completely safe for everyone.

Best wishes to all,

Kate Rissbrook.

Friends of Essington



Social Events - FoE Pub Quiz

The FoE Virtual Quiz is still going strong, 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

GOV.UK www.gov.uk/report-flytipping

There is also a MyStaffs mobile app that can be used to report issues.

(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

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Bernard Williams Telephone No. 01922 410259,
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Dear Friends,



I was truly hoping this letter would be the one that announced our start back, particularly and especially for Messy Tots.

I am seeing photographs on Facebook every week of the children growing into wonderful little people and we miss them all very much. The good news is that children's groups are allowed to meet again, under strict guidelines of course, which I am confident we can meet and we are ready to get started - except our new base is not quite ready.

I hope you can bear with me for a few more weeks whilst the final adjustments to the WEB (our new building) are completed. Starting up in the new build will be worth the wait, with brand new clean and hygienic facilities fit for our little ones, and everything in place to ensure our activities and practices are as safe as possible for all of us.

In the meantime, pray for our children, this is such a strange and disruptive time for us all but especially for children and those anticipating starting school for the first time.

I hope to see you all again as soon as we are able, we are raring to go!

Best wishes,

Janette.
CYFAM

VILLAGE INFORMATION

<u>Doctors Libberton, Ram & Gulati</u> Essington Community Centre, Essington Medical Centre, Hobnock Road, WV11 2RF. Tel: 01922 470130 Open: Mon. - Fri. 8 a.m. - 6.30 p.m. Tuesday 8 a.m. - 7.30 p.m.	<u>Registration of Births & Deaths</u> Register Office: Cannock Chase Council Offices Beecroft Road, Cannock, WS11 1BG. Tel: 0300 111 8001 Visits by appointment only. Mon. to Fri. 9 a.m. — 5 p.m.
<u>Pharmacy</u> Hawthorne Chemist, Essington Community Centre. Tel: 01922 491249 Open times: Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs & Fri 8.30 am - 6.30 pm, Sat 9 am - 1 pm	<u>Playgroup</u> For details, ring: 01922 403255
<u>Essington Post Office</u> 69 Hill Street, Essington. Telephone: 01922 475379 Open Times: Mon - Fri 6.30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Saturday 6.30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	<u>Police contact number</u> Tel: 03001234455
	<u>Essington Medical Centre - Patient Participation Group</u> We are looking for new members. If you are a patient and would like to be involved, please contact the surgery.

DEADLINE DATE FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2020 MAGAZINE THURSDAY 20th AUGUST 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,
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