



St John's News

St John's Methodist Church, Baker Street, Potters Bar EN6 2DZ
www: stjohns.pb.org.uk email: sjnews@stjohns.pb.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1130633

SERVICES

Families are welcome to all our 10.30am services. Under 3s are welcome in church and in the adjoining crèche. Other children can join our Creative, Junior Johns or Praise & Play group.

Sunday 2nd February

10.30am Morning Worship

with Rev Vindra Maraj-Ogden

PLUS Praise & Play for under 7s

Duty Steward - Dave Best

Sunday 9th February

10.30am Morning Worship

with Mrs Ros Hancock

PLUS Junior Johns

Duty Steward - Robin Burns

7.00pm Café Worship informal service

with music, readings & prayers

plus coffee and cake

Duty Steward - Chris Humphreys

Sunday 16th Feb - CREATIVE CHURCH

10.30am Informal Service with

Mr Graham Phillips plus Crafts

in Rainbow Room followed by

Celebration for all in church

Duty Steward - Dave Best

Sunday 23rd February

10.30am Holy Communion

with Rev Rosemary Fletcher

PLUS Junior Johns

Duty Steward - Robin Burns

February 2020

Wisdom at Westminster

February is a bit of a 'bridging month'. On the 2nd, Candlemas, we say a final goodbye to Christmas, and then we have St Valentine's Day. Only 12 days after that, and we will be into Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday and Lent. So where to begin?

I thought I would share a recent letter with you (as we did not have a newsletter in January) which has come to us from Methodist Church House.

In December 2019 the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference wrote to the new Prime Minister, assuring him of their prayers and asking for clarification on key issues including climate change, poverty and social cohesion.

The letter says:

We wish to congratulate you on being given the responsibility by the British electorate to form a government, and assure you of our prayers and the prayers of the Methodist people as you take on that responsibility.

Churches are rooted in communities around Britain. It is our task to emphasise, from our ground level experience of British society, issues which we believe must be seen as key priorities.

Creation does not belong to us. Our task is to nurture and recognise our place within it. Many of our members see climate change and environmental degradation as the most pressing issues of our day. Can you tell us what steps you will be taking internationally and domestically to help the UK to reach its climate change targets? What kind of lead will you be taking at the 2020 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow?

Many of our churches and church members

are involved in running foodbanks and offering support for people caught up in poverty. Foodbanks should not have to exist. Can you clarify for us what steps your new government will take to address the

scandalous levels of poverty, and particularly child poverty?

The church is an inter-generational, multi-ethnic, socially diverse collection of communities. It is far from perfect. But we have seen in our communities growing forms of hostility, divisiveness and hatred, and have sought to support people who have experienced such discord. What active steps will your government now take to work towards healing and greater concord in society?

We wrote to you, Prime Minister, in July 2019 to express our concern that a No Deal Brexit was likely to impact the poorest communities very hard indeed. We wish to reaffirm our concern that the poorest in society face huge risks as our trading relations with EU are rewritten. We seek your reassurance that needs of families facing poverty will be central to the proposed trade deal and that should it not be in place before the transition period expires that comprehensive measures are put in place to protect them from the ensuing upheaval.

*Revd Dr Barbara Glasson,
President of the Methodist Conference
Professor Clive Marsh,*

Vice-President of the Methodist Conference

I share these words with you and ask that we all pray for those we have elected to serve us at local and national government. Maybe we could use these words to write to our MPs. These are crucial times for our nation and our world.

We pray that we may work and pray for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

Every Blessing, Rosemary



Rev Rosemary Fletcher
Circuit Superintendent

ANNUAL MEMORIAL AND THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Sunday 23rd February at 3pm
Rev Rosemary Fletcher
Followed by refreshments

If you would like the name of a loved one read out and a candle lit in their memory then please arrive before 2:45pm so that their name can be recorded or let Helen Barlow or one of the stewards know

Scout Christmas Quiz Winners

Many thanks to everyone who bought or sold the quiz sheets or who made generous donations. As a result we raised over £500 for Scout Group funds for which we are very grateful. The winners are: 1st – Ms J. Stevens from New Milton Hampshire
2nd – Bob Evans from Welham Green Hertfordshire
3rd – Ms M. Walker from Banstead in Surrey

Derek Smith, Assistant Scout Leader

Christmas Charities thanks

Thank you to all who supported and gave so generously to our charities this year. The amounts raised, including Gift Aid were: Noah's Ark Hospice £2119.13 and Action for Children £1154.13

Rob Ward, Church Treasurer

The new year brings us Festivals and events that we can celebrate...

Candlemas - Sunday 2nd February

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2 February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself.

In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child – to 'present Him to the Lord'. At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day - hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis (Lord now let your servant depart in peace) was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.

Shrove Tuesday - 25th February

Article by David Winter, former Head of Religious Broadcasting at the BBC.

Why do we have pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, or Pancake Day, as we call it today? And what is Shrove Tuesday? And why do thousands of people feel it rewarding to race along a street somewhere tossing pancakes from their frying pans as they go?

(Rosemary adds: there is always a Pancake Race in St Peter's Street in St Albans and the City Centre Churches have been known to take part!)

Well, the answer to the first question is that it is the day before Lent begins and for well over a thousand years that has meant it was the last chance to enjoy meat, fat and other tasty dishes until Easter Day. The 'Lent Fast' was widely and strictly observed. The food in the larder wouldn't keep for six weeks so it had to be eaten. With all these rich foods no wonder the French call it 'Fatty Tuesday' – Mardi Gras.

So, what have pancake races got to do

with all this solemnity? 'Shrove' is an old word for 'forgiven' and in those days to prepare for the rigours of Lent people would want to confess and seek forgiveness – not quite what you want at a party. The answer is quite simply enjoying yourself while you can! So, on Shrove Tuesday this year let's have some fun and make it last as long as possible.

The most convincing (and amusing) of the explanations of pancake races is of outwitting the Sexton who rang the curfew bell that marked the start of Lent. He was reluctant to do it while the race was unfinished. So, the revelry caused by dropped pancakes, postponed the inevitable.

Since the Reformation it has not been so rigorously observed in Britain, but still people will resolve to 'give up something for Lent'. Six weeks is about right as a duration and Sunday has always been exempt but make the most of those pancakes. They may well not reappear until April 12th!

The world celebrates Valentine's Day on 14th February. We pray for all we know who have been married recently, and all those preparing for marriage, including Sarah Phillips and Joshua Stares who are to be married on 5th Sep at St John's

A Treasured Heart

*A pearl beyond all human measure
Your heart is such a golden treasure
Too valuable to tell!
Through times of toil and of leisure
Times of sorrow and of pleasure
I shall guard it well!*

*Love and trust, once they are woken
Are more than just a heart-shaped token
This gift from God above
Not a treasure to be broken
By careless deeds or phrases spoken
This precious gift of love!*

*Love is patient, love is kind
Love leaves selfishness behind
Forgiving from the start
Truthful, trusting, never blind
Such are the beauties I can find
If I just guard your heart!*

By Nigel Beeton

The Leap Year

*The calendar, one year in four
Gives February a little more
An extra day! We must be sure!
To wisely use these hours
The weather, not as bitter cold;
The garden weeds have gained no hold;
The early bulbs start to unfold
We welcome crocus flowers!*

*The sun bestows a little warmth
The winds turn from the bitter north
It is the time to sally forth
From winter sanctuary!
Tis early spring, season sublime
So hearken to my little rhyme –
Enjoy the little extra time
You have in February!*

By Nigel Beeton

World Day of Prayer

Friday 6th March, 10am at the Baptist Church, Barnet Road.
"Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk" is the theme this year which has been prepared by the women of Zimbabwe.
All are welcome.

More details from Heather Crichton 01707 652426

Come along...

John Wainwright has been invited to give an illustrated talk at the Monday Fellowship group which meets at Shenley Methodist Church about his visit to Kenya in 2017, part of which was with Mission Direct. If anyone is interested this will be on Monday 10th February at 2pm.



Family Nativity play with Carols

Christmas Services



Christingle Parade Service

Prayer Focus - This month we pray as a church for...

- ✠ Sunday Children's Work - Praise & Play, Junior Johns, Creative
- ✠ Communications Group ✠ Church Annual General Meeting

Heavenly Father, we pray for all the leaders and helpers of our children's work and Praise and Play who undertake their tasks on a weekly basis, constantly striving to find an accessible way of conveying the Christian faith.

We also pray for our Communications Group and the editors of SJ News who keep us informed of events taking place at St Johns, update us with family news of our members and challenge us with interesting articles.

Finally, we pray for our church AGM in March when we will be thinking about the future outreach of St John's. Please pray for wisdom and inspiration as we form a new Outreach Committee and discuss ideas for the way ahead. Amen

FAMILY NEWS

Many congratulations to **Pat Merrill** who celebrated her 90th birthday on 6th January. **Angela Paren** is very happy to announce the December engagement of her granddaughter Hannah to Tom. We look forward to hearing of plans for the wedding. **Valerie Vessey** would like to *thank everyone at St John's for all their love and support during my rather prolonged recovery from my hip replacement surgery in October. It has been very much appreciated and makes me realise what a wonderful community I am so fortunate to be part of.*

Barbara Thompson also appreciated all the get well cards, kind thoughts and prayers expressed at the time of her operation in December, which was successful and she is now fully recovered.

Our thoughts are with **Pam Moutoussi** and her family after the passing of Pam's mother in early January. Also **Pam Harrison**, who moved into Coppers Croft Care Home recently, sadly died at the end of January. Her funeral will take place on Friday 21st February at 2pm at West Herts Crematorium.

We are holding our **Annual Memorial Service** at St John's on February 23rd at 3pm. The service conducted by Rev Rosemary Fletcher will be a chance to remember and give thanks for the lives of friends and loved ones. Everyone is welcome to come to the service. If you would like the name of someone read out please let Helen Barlow know by Monday 17th February (see also page 1). We pray also for those struggling over the winter months either because they are unable to get outside or because mental health becomes more challenging at this time of year.

If you would like to include anyone else who needs to be supported or mentioned please contact

*Helen Barlow on 662254 or
foodtech16@hotmail.co.uk*

Minister: Rev Ali Facey 01707 652978 (minister@stjohnspb.org.uk) - days off Fri & Sat
Senior Steward: Chris Humphreys 01707 851320 (seniorsteward@stjohnspb.org.uk)
Treasurer: Rob Ward (treasurer@stjohnspb.org.uk)
Lettings: Chris and Lesley Humphreys 01707 851320 (bookings@stjohnspb.org.uk)
Nursery Playgroup: Celia Mills 07969 924482

Copy deadline for next issue is Sunday 23rd February

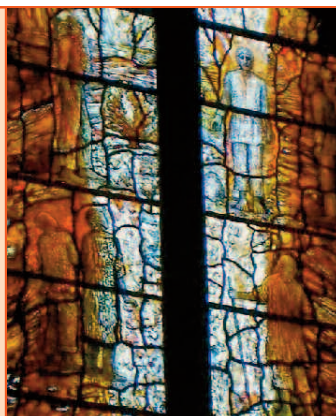
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Wilderness, Transfiguration and beyond - A Quiet Day

as we approach Lent we take this opportunity to 'step aside' and listen to God

Saturday 22nd February, 10am-4pm
St Stephen's Church, Watling St, St Albans
Led by the Revd Liz Wills

Cost £5 includes drinks but please bring a packed lunch, bible and wear weather appropriate clothing as we may be walking outside!



St John's collects used postage stamps from the UK and abroad to raise funds for Embrace, the Middle East Charity, to support the Helen Keller School for the Visually Impaired. In 2018 the fellowship raised £8,500. Stamps should remain on backing paper with a 1/4 of an inch border and placed in the box at the back of church.



Thinking Lunch

12.30pm to 1.30pm on Thursday
6th February 2020

At Marlborough Road Methodist Church, St Albans AL1 3XG

Holly Pitt MSc of the Charity Missing People
 Will talk to us on the subject of:

For "such as these": how can we best support Hertfordshire's Missing and Exploited Children?

Tea / Coffee / Squash provided, but bring your own sandwiches.

Half an hour talk and then discussion.

missing people
Registered charity in England and Wales (2200000)



The 2019 Methodist Conference referred the report 'God in Love Unites Us' to Circuits and Districts for consultation before the 2020 Methodist Conference. The Methodist Church has not fully reflected on the theology of marriage and relationships since 1992. The Marriage and Relationships Task Group set up in 2014 identified the need for an update and to revisit the 'definition' of marriage and the current Task Group, set up in 2016, have been looking at this. Synod reps will be voting at the Spring 2020 Synod and then refer it to Conference where another vote will take place. If the report is accepted then every Church Council will discuss the report. Your opinions matters so do read it online or a paper copy at your church: www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/marriage-and-relationships-2019 There are 2 more consultation events on Monday 3rd Feb, 7.30-9.30pm at Hemel Hempstead Methodist Church and Saturday 29th Feb, 2-5pm at High Street Methodist Church Harpenden

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

more details on website

Mondays	10.00am - 12.00pm 'Can We Fix It?' (Roger 01707 650438)
	10.00 - 11.45am Jumping Johns Toddlers (Margaret 01707 659845)
	2.30 - 4.00pm Women's Guild (Barbara 01707 656483)
	8.00pm Badminton Group - not Jan or Feb (Margaret 01707 659845)
Tuesdays	10.00 - 11.30am Yoga (Ann 01707 655244)
	6.30 - 8.00pm Junior Youth Club (Years 3-6, Liz 01707 659597)
Wednesdays	6.30 - 8.00pm Cubs (see www.4thpottersbar.scoutsonline.co.uk)
Thursdays	7.00 - 8.30pm Scouts (see www.4thpottersbar.scoutsonline.co.uk)
Fridays	10.30am - 12.00pm Morning Coffee in the Clifton Room
	10am - 11.45am Jumping Johns Toddlers (Margaret 01707 659845)
	6.00 - 7.00pm Beavers (see www.4thpottersbar.scoutsonline.co.uk)
Mon-Friday	8.55am - 2.55pm St John's Nursery Playgroups (07969 924482)
	Two settings - St John's Methodist Church, Baker Street (from 2.5 years) and Chace Avenue, within Oakmere School (from 2 years)

CHURCH GROUPS

Havercroft House Group - Tuesdays
 Contact Belinda Havercroft 01707 652540

Strafford Gate House Group - Weds
 Contact David Carter 01707 658297

Wednesday Evening Bible Study Group
 7.45 for 8pm start, in the Clifton Room - study, discussion, prayer and fellowship
 Contact Lesley Humphreys 01707 851320.

Men out Tonight (MOT) - Wednesdays
 Contact Dave Best 01707 643023

Worship Band - Thursday evenings
 Contact Paul Guppy 07931 858390

Byng Drive House Group - Fridays
 2nd & 4th Fridays, 1.30-3pm
 Contact Dawn Fenner 07969 924346

Women Connect - first Friday in month
 7.30 - 9.30pm in the Clifton Room
 Contact Tinu or Laetitia or church website

Junior Johns (for ages 3+) - Sundays
 Contact Jackie Hart 01707 642417

St John's Methodist Church is part of the St Albans and Welwyn Circuit
Superintendent - Revd Rosemary Fletcher. Circuit Office - 01727 854211
www.midhertsmethodists.org.uk Email - admin@midhertsmethodists.org.uk
Chris Hancock - Temp. Circuit Administrator