

FEBRUARY 2021

Welcome

Welcome to St John's Locks Heath. While we are not meeting in person, we continue to connect with each other and grow in our faith through the tools available to us at this time.

Church Services

We are thankful for the technology that allows us to continue to be an active church, despite the restrictions of this time.

We hold two short services on Sundays with a focus on being in God's presence wherever we are, reading his written Word and hearing a talk or sermon, both include music to help us frame our thoughts through worship.

Join us online at 9am (for a more structured, liturgical service), or 11am (for a more informal service) either service on our YouTube channel (details inside).

Monday to Saturday

The Church is not only about Sunday services. We have a lot going on through the week! There's Messy Church, Toddlers, prayer meetings, small groups and Alpha - all online at this time of course - and we're launching our **Lent Course** this month in the lead up to our Easter services.

We invite you to take advantage of all that is offered. Stay connected, be encouraged and see what God will do as he is certainly not in lockdown.

You have a part to play too. You can reach out and be a blessing and encouragement to those around you in whatever ways you can - a phone call, a text, a video chat, a walk together for exercise, or just a friendly smile.

GET IN TOUCH

Sunday Services

Each week you can view the service live on our YouTube channel at 9am or 11am
<https://bit.ly/SJLHYouTube>

You can always catch up with weeks you've missed too, as there have been some great and encouraging messages over the previous months.

Our services continue to live stream at **9am & 11am.**

We now include a Zoom session as part 11am service. It's an opportunity to make the service more interactive. Just have a device handy and use the QR code or link that is displayed to join the session.

Don't forget to join the 'social' ZOOM at 10.15am on Sunday – at
<https://bit.ly/CoffeewithZOOM>

Sunday Evening Service Visits

As part of a consultation started for the parish profile, and as a result of feedback we have received over the last few months, we invite you to join with us for some service 'visits' (online) at 7.30pm on a Sunday evening.

We want to explore services from other churches and see what we can learn from them.

On the 21st Feb, we will meet together over ZOOM call to discuss the services. For full details and links to the services, please click

<http://bit.ly/SJLHEveningServices>



Not techy? Don't worry

If you don't have the tech, or aren't able to use it, you can still dial-in and listen to the reading and talk from the comfort of your home. They will be available from Monday by lunchtime.

Simply dial 01489 665885; the cost is whatever you would normally pay for a local call.

Archbishop's call to prayer

Starting on 1 February the Archbishop of Canterbury invites you to set aside time every evening to pray, particularly at 6pm each day.

More than ever, this is a time when we need to love each other. Prayer is an expression of love.

A number of resources will be made available at

www.ChurchofEngland.org/PrayerForTheNation.



Children & Young People

Children's Sunday morning groups will continue to meet via Zoom during lockdown.

Connect Groups are running Sunday evenings on Zoom from 7pm (1st & 3rd Sundays)

Weekday Activities

Messy Church is still running. Collect an activity pack from church then join the Zoom call at 4pm, second Wednesday of each month.

Toddler group has a video story and singing available on <https://bit.ly/SJLHYouTube> each week or you can join a 30 min live session on a Thurs morning on Zoom.

For all children's groups and activities contact Hazel Foster for links or for more information email. (hazel@sjlh.org.uk)



Pancakes and Planning

We are planning ahead for Easter, so watch out next month for full details, but before that we will have Lent.

We plan to have Chef John making pancakes live with us online on 16th Feb at 5pm.

We'll send out the list of ingredients and equipment you'll need and other details via the weekly email beforehand to join in at home with this foodie fun. It will also be good for children and adults to learn about the symbolism and origins of pancake day.

On the 17th we will have an Ash Wednesday Service (online only) details to follow.

Thursday 18th will begin our Lent Course - see next page for details

Live Lent

Churches in the far west of Portsmouth diocese as part of 'The Big Church Read' are teaming up to read together as one! We invite you to join us we move through Lent towards our Easter celebrations.

Together we will journey through the Archbishops' Lent book '*Living His Story*' by Hannah Steele, unpacking liberating and practical ways of sharing the gospel story afresh. We will be discovering how we can live Jesus' story in our own lives simply by being the people God made us and allowing people to be drawn to him through our natural gifts.

We encourage you to access the accompanying literature for yourselves in order to get the most out of our Lent course and activities.

You can purchase a copy of this book for under £10 from:
<https://www.eden.co.uk/living-his-story-lent-book-hannah-steele/>

There's also the #live lent booklet available via a free app, on your smart speaker or via daily email here:
<http://bit.ly/CofELentStudy>

If you want a paper copy you can purchase here for just £1.97 order here

This booklet has a small daily reflection around a weekly theme and action point.



Every Thursday night from 8-9pm during Lent, join us on zoom. Each week someone from around our cluster of churches will be invited to lead us through the week's themes with a short reflection before we discuss in smaller 'breakout rooms.'

If you are part of homegroup or small group you may choose to use these materials and some other resources that will be available.

If you don't have access to, or aren't comfortable with, technology, you can still order paper copies of the material. Why not pair up with a friend and plan to call each other once a week to discuss the material and pray together. If you need help with this please contact the office.

For more details and links to resources visit
www.sjlh.org.uk/Lent2021

Reaching Out

Feeling Down about being Locked Down?

Here's a few things you can do.

Reach out to God. Remember that if you are a Christian, you are never alone.

Spending time reading God's word and praying for yourself, others and the world is a good way to start your day on the right foot.

The apostle Paul told us that he had learned to be content in whatever circumstance he found himself in. That's a big statement when you consider he was shipwrecked, beaten, imprisoned and left for dead at times!

Take time each morning to be thankful for what you have in Christ.

Gratitude also helps set our hearts in the right direction and is a great antidote for negativity.

Reach out to someone. Be the one to reach out to others. Sometimes we expect other people to do all the work, but there are so many people who would value a call and chat from you. Why not be the one to initiate that?

You *will* be encouraged in the process.

Reach out for help. We have Flu Friends to connect people that need some practical help or regular calls.

We have a prayer chain, willing to pray for your needs (if you have any requests contact prayerchain@sjlh.org.uk or call the office) and we have a Pastoral Care Team who can be contacted at pastoral.care@sjlh.org.uk



Scam Alert

There are always a lot of scams going around, but sadly, some people are capitalising on what's happening today to prey on unsuspecting people.

We've been asked to remind you that the NHS will never charge for the COVID vaccine, nor will they come to your property unannounced to give you a vaccination or take money.

If you experience this, please do call 101 and report it.

There are many other scams of course, but the main thing to remember is that genuine service providers won't contact you for money or payment details over the phone or by email.

If you are concerned by an email or phone call, hang up and contact your service provider independently (i.e. don't use numbers or links provided in the email or by a caller).

Changes to our Ghana Link

Amazingly it is now 16 years since we began to create our association with Sekondi diocese in Ghana which was linked to Fareham Deanery.

We were encouraged to form a friendship with St Matthew's parish in Awaso, and over many years this blossomed and flourished in so many ways.

When the Sekondi diocese divided, Awaso was included new diocese of Wiawso and so was no longer part of the diocese we were linked to.

Despite this, many visits have occurred with Fr Thomas, Fr John Ankrah, Bishop Abraham, and Fr Joseph along with several lay people visiting us here, and 3 different groups from St John's going to Ghana.

However over time other changes have occurred. Wiawso diocese is now associated with Bishops Waltham Deanery who are working on forming solid links.

There have been 5 different priests in St Matthew's parish and it has been increasingly difficult to keep up our contacts.

What has now evolved are links with Archdeaconries rather than with individual parishes, as some were being left out. Rev Susan Allman, the former Fareham area Dean, helped to establish this new and exciting policy.



The archdeacon of Essikado Diocese was very keen to establish a link under this new policy and our PCC have encouraged and agreed this change.

The added blessing is that the Essikado archdeacon is our old friend, Rev John Ankrah, previous priest at St Matthews, who has visited St John's twice.

The plan is that our link will now be one of 'friendship and prayer support', of equal partners. We want to move away from the feeling that we are simply a financial benefactor and move to better a two-way relationship by which we can learn from them and they from us.

Of course it is a wrench to sever our link with St Matthew's after this long time, but this seems the correct way forward to build the future.

We need to establish a new and younger group from St John's to do just that. If you would like to take part please let me know.
Howard Mowbray

Personal Announcements

The Bible reading plans produced by the Bible Reading Fellowship are used by a number of the congregation.

There are four different plans to suit different interests. Most pay an annual sub of £14.10 and the book comes every four months.

We are shortly to submit the annual order. If you are interested and would like to know more please contact the office.

Your notices here!

Do you have some good news! Please share it with us if you let Abi know by the 20th of the month we can include it.

office@sjlh.org.uk

I know that there has been a fair amount of national media coverage recently asking people to donate laptops to be used by pupils who are struggling to access IT at home while they are locked down.

As I am on the Board of Governors at St John's school, I am aware that there are families who are in need this way.

If anyone would be able to donate a laptop to be used by St John's School pupils please contact the church office.

(Obviously, they should be 'wiped' of previous programmes and data before being issued to the children.)

Thank you in advance, Jim Wood

Wise Words

God > Me!

Thank you!

Thank you for your responses to our item in last month's newsletter about Stewardship. As well as your generous financial responses, do continue to think and pray about giving of your "time and talents" both during and beyond this pandemic situation. Contact the office or speak with us if you can help.

Vacancy Update

Hopefully, those on our electoral roll who completed the consultation questionnaire will have read the summary of your responses which was sent out mid-January.

Work continues drafting the Parish Profile (the key document in our discernment process for appointing out next vicar); there will be several drafts including some input from the Diocese, but we hope to have the final document approved by mid-March. Please continue to keep everyone involved in this process in your prayers.

COVID, Collaboration & Caring

With the current situation, unless things dramatically change, we will be streaming our 9am and 11am Sunday services until at least 21st February. We will, of course, review things regularly.



One exciting 'positive' emerging is that we are investigating how we may be able to collaborate more with other churches in our area: this year's Ash Wednesday service will be based at St Peter's, Titchfield, with contributions from neighbouring churches; and our #LiveLent home group course will also involve other churches in the area. (see details on page 4)

These may be dark days, but we can still see light in what is happening around SJLH.

Mt 5: 14-16

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Trevor & Linda