



st JOHN'S

*Living God's Love*

Parish Magazine

SUMMER 2019



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Living God's Love

*Summer 2019  
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# Churchwardens' Report 2018-2019

**A**s churchwardens we are required to provide a report to the APCM summarising the main activities which have occurred at St John's during the past year. We would like to begin by thanking our deputy wardens, Jane Donati and Bill Moore, for their support to us.

The past year has been marked by the news in May that Nicholas would be retiring, and that we would find ourselves in a vacancy once again. Nicholas left us at the end of September with our prayers, best wishes and thanks for his ministry shared over the four years he spent with us. We gave him and Anneke a send-off at the end of his last morning Eucharist with us, with a presentation after the service and drinks and canapés in the hall afterwards.

Preparations to find a new vicar started in earnest, and we are grateful for the assistance of Bishop Michael, our Rural Dean, Richard Banham, and Archdeacon Jonathan for their support in ensuring that we could move forward at pace in the recruitment process.

At such times, it is heart-warming and reassuring that the community at St John's pulls together with such strength and enthusiasm. We are grateful to the PCC for the time that they spent meeting with Bishop Michael to discuss our needs and priorities for our new incumbent, those who spent time putting together the excellent 'parish profile', and those who prepared for the interviews. Special thanks go to Tom Venner for taking on the role of one of the parish

representatives in this process.

Particular thanks must go to those who helped out on the interview day: the buddies who escorted the candidates around the parish; the study group who took the candidates through their paces; the ministry team; a catering team who kept everyone well fed and watered; and in particular a group of six Grove Primary School children, who quizzed each of our three candidates on matters of ethics, faith and ministry. The day showed what we are capable of when we all pull together, and the role of the parish representative was made so much easier knowing that such a bedrock of support is so firmly in place.

We were delighted to attract such talented candidates, and even more so that Revd Dr Berkeley Zych, Precentor at St Albans Abbey, accepted the post with us. Berkeley's institution service was on the evening of 16 May and we very much enjoyed welcoming him and Alex to St John's.

During our vacancy our ministry team, naturally, has had to work harder! We would like to record our thanks to each one of them for their additional work and enthusiasm during this time, and also to the many clergy (active and retired) from around the Diocese who have enhanced our worship during this time.

A particular word of thanks must go to James Brown for stepping up to all that he has done during our vacancy - within our church, the parish and the wider Southdown community. We have

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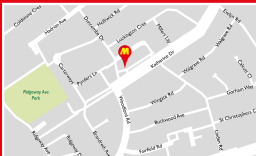
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been hugely blessed with his energy, his fresh outlook, and his reassuring presence over the period. Our programme of worship and events has not in any way been diminished either before or during our vacancy and there have been many notable areas that we would like to mention.

Our Patronal Festival in June coincided with the Cultivate Arts Festival, organised by Harpenden Churches Together. St John's contribution to this festival was a series of events in and around the church during the week, including musical and poetry evenings, and a stunning piece of installation art that hung through the church. With sections of the installation symbolising respectively God's bountiful creation, our wanton destruction of it, and Christ's sacrifice for us all, we welcomed over 1100 visitors to the church over the course of the week to view the work, which was inspired by Liz Sergeant. The gnarled cross centrepiece, fashioned from fallen branches found by the Junior Church in the woods on the common, was used again at our Remembrance Day service in November to mark the centenary of the end of the Great War.

A week later, many of us were delighted to attend a service in St Alban's Abbey to celebrate the ordination of James, our curate, as priest, and to join him, his family and friends, at our All-Age Service on 1 July where he presided at the Eucharist for the first time. On that same day, David Halsey, a long-standing member of our congregation, was ordained as deacon at the Abbey and left us with our best wishes and prayers to take up a post as curate at St

Luke's, St Albans.

James was also central to our contribution to the Southdown Festival in September, which we marked with musical events and a special 'Songs of Praise' service at the end of the week.

Our Christmas celebrations were typically memorable: St John's was represented at the Southdown Lights-up celebrations; an evening of beer and carols was held in The Engineer pub; a hardy band of carol singers also ventured out into a somewhat wet evening around Southdown; the Junior Church entertained us with their nativity play at the All-Age service in the middle of December; our carol service was admirably led by our choir and we were joined by members of our wider community to read some of the nine lessons; and on Christmas eve we had a large turnout for our annual children's 'Walking to Bethlehem' nativity from the green in Southdown to St John's. Particular thanks are due to Tony, the landlord of The Carpenter's Arms, who provided very generous and much-needed refreshment in preparation for the walk up the hill, and to Bishop Stephen Venner, who presided and preached at our morning Eucharist on Christmas Day.

We are also grateful to members of the Standing Committee: Emma Bresslaw retired as PCC secretary during the year and we welcomed Jacky Dodd to this position; Steve Creasy, our treasurer, has once again this year carried out the duties and responsibilities of Treasurer efficiently and professionally, managing our budgets, accounts and finances and dealing with our day-to-day accounting procedures.

On the topic of finances, we remain in a healthy financial position, but the pressure remains significant and the current economic and political uncertainty no doubt cause additional difficulty. It continues to be a priority that we pay our parish share in full, although our income has reduced over the year whilst our outgoings have increased; we need to continue to be imaginative and energetic in the way in which we approach our stewardship in order that we may maintain and grow our ministry.

We are pleased that we have been able to maintain our outside giving at 10% of our income and this year we have supported Embrace, Mencap, and the St Albans and District Food Bank. Additional contributions have been given to the Mothers' Union, Harpenden Citizens Advice Bureau, Azalea and Mildmay. Cash collections over the year have gone to the Bishop's Harvest Appeal and our Christmas collections were given, as usual, to Crisis. Our thanks to all who continue to contribute items to the Food Bank and to those who deliver them on a regular basis.

Stewardship of our church and God's creation of course goes beyond our financial contribution, and the PCC agreed at our October meeting to join the 'Eco Church' scheme and to work towards the initial bronze level certification. A small team of committed 'eco warriors' is undertaking the audit as a first important step to understanding how we might be able to take action.

We have always considered it important to maintain the delivery of our parish magazine free of charge to all in the parish, reaching about 4,000 households.

Our thanks go to Anthony Armstrong for his efforts as our editor, and to Steve Whiting, who ensures the magazine is distributed to the team of co-ordinators and then to those who deliver. We are grateful to you all.

We are grateful to the group of parents who are running of Junior Church, for the time that they have taken to plan, teach, look after, and entertain the younger members of our congregation over the year. The nativity play is always a highlight, and this year it was not only performed, but also written, by members of the Junior Church.

Our worship continues to be enhanced by the music at St John's. The more regular attendance of an 'augmented choir' at certain of our All-Age Eucharists has shown off the musical talents of additional members of our congregation.

The very popular Tea at Three, which takes place in the hall once a month, continues to provide companionship, refreshment and entertainment to older members of the wider community. At the pre-Christmas event, children from the Grove School choir provided after-tee musical entertainment which was much appreciated by all. Again, we are grateful to the volunteers who collect and bring people each month, bake cakes, entertain, and wash up, all under the leadership of Margaret Creighton.

Over the course of the year we have continued our work towards developing a new parish centre. Plans have been submitted for approval and we await the results of this application. We have also taken advice on fundraising during the year, involving a number of the



congregation who shared their views on this project. The work continues to be taken forward by a small but dedicated steering group. The challenge associated with fundraising will be a key focus over the next year. We continue to seek God's guidance on how we can use our facilities to further our mission in the parish.

Alongside the exciting, future-focused activities, the day-to-day work of the parish continues. We are extremely grateful to all those who do so much work behind the scenes in decorating, cleaning and otherwise caring for the church and ensuring it is made to look beautiful and welcoming. In addition, the church and the existing hall require ongoing maintenance, whether that relates to heating, leaks, light bulbs in need of replacement etc; we are fortunate to have a team of dedicated individuals who take pride in our splendid building and in the maintenance and repair of our hall and grounds. We are particularly grateful to David Christian and the members of the Fabric Committee. Julie in the parish office also deserves our thanks for all that she does to keep us on track, dealing with the hire of the hall, managing rotas

and ensuring that there is a sufficient coffee supply!

2018 was difficult for us as we lost a number of dear friends at St John's over the course of the year, those who have been longstanding members of the congregation and past and present members of the PCC. This is, perhaps, an appropriate time to remember them and to record our grateful thanks for their lasting influence and respective contributions to the life and ministry of St John's over many decades.

Our annual report gives us the opportunity to thank everyone for their support in sharing with us the work of caring for and maintaining the continuing work of St John's. During this year we have called, more than usual, on your time and talents. Please be assured that we are most appreciative of all the support we have received over this past year from everyone; whether or not we have mentioned you by name in this report, we know who you are and we thank you!

*Mary Jean Pritchard*

*James Hillman*

Churchwardens

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## Parish registers

### Baptisms

*Welcome to the family of God*

31 March 2019

Willow May Marsh

28 April 2019

William Hector Sanders

19 May 2019

Jonathan George Wansbury

### Marriages

*Joined by God*

David Swinscoe and Rachel Boothroyd

### Funerals in Church

*May they rest in peace*

25 March 2019

Margaret Gander

9 May 2019

Tony Stephen

# In pursuit of Paradise

The Revd Dr Berkeley Zych, Vicar

If 'the Englishman's home is his castle' in the sense of being a refuge, then perhaps in the Englishman's (or woman's) garden is built a corner of Paradise. The coming months are often those of the year where we are finally able to spend a lot of time outdoors and enjoying our gardens. Or for those of us without gardens, there are supermarkets and garden centres bursting with plants and flowers, enabling us to bring the outdoors indoors. Of course, in Harpenden itself we're blessed with some very good public green space.

Indeed the sense of the English country garden being a refuge for all sorts of fauna and flora is captured quite successfully in the children's song of the same name by Jimmie Rodgers, set to the old English folk tune collected by Cecil Sharp.

But what is this pursuit of Paradise, of refuge, about? When I was in Edinburgh a couple of years ago, I visited an excellent exhibition from the Royal Collection at Holyrood Palace called *Painting Paradise*, which collected together art through the centuries that depicts the development of the garden: from Paradise and the Sacred garden, the Renaissance, Botanic and Baroque gardens, through to the Landscape, Horticultural and finally the Country Cottage gardens.

The first recorded gardens grew in Persia, many centuries before the tradition of cultivating gardens was



Picture 1 - *Seven Couples in a Garden*, c. 1510 / Mir 'Sir Nava'i' / Image courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust © / Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2015

established in Western Europe. Cyrus the Great (d. 530 BC and of biblical fame – he was the one who allowed the Israelites to return to Judah from captivity in Babylon, e.g. *Isaiah* 45) transformed the dry Persian plateau into a hunting garden. His desert garden captured imaginations and came to define many of the features of 'Paradise'. Its high walls enclosed shady orchards of fruit trees, cool pavilions and flowing water channelled from distant sources (such as that depicted



Picture 2 - *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, 1615*  
/ Jan Brueghel the Elder / Image courtesy of the Royal  
Collection Trust © / Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014

in *Seven Couples in a Garden*). The Greek writer Xenophon (c. 430-354 BC) is credited as the first to use the word 'Paradise', which literally means in Greek 'to form or mould around in'. He uses the word to describe the Persian garden, and this term came to have great resonance throughout the succeeding centuries, not least in the description of the garden of Eden as a Paradise (Genesis 2.4-25; see *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden*).

These spaces were literally a refuge from the toil of the world outside. In Genesis 3 we are confronted with the tale of the fall of humankind and our expulsion from Paradise by God into the world of toil. And, indeed, one particular way of describing the Christian story is as God's work, in Jesus, to undo the damage we have done to ourselves through that fall, in order to be able to regain Paradise. But it is not the old garden of Paradise, in Eden, to which we are to return, but to be part of a new Creation (e.g. 2 Corinthians 5.17), where our relationship with God has been perfected and we no longer fail to

live with and love each other as God asks of us.

This concept is reinforced by the imagery Jesus uses of God as the gardener, or vine grower (e.g. John 15.1-17), and indeed it is no coincidence that Mary Magdalene mistakes the risen Christ for the gardener when she first sees him outside the Tomb on the Easter morn (e.g. John 20.11-18; see *Christ and St Mary Magdalene at the Tomb*).

So as you sit in your garden, in your corner of paradise, this summer, reflect on all God has given you. Don't allow your refuge to be a place of isolation, but a place which equips and refreshes you to share God's love with others, so that you might play your part in bringing others to share in that true refuge, that true Paradise, of a life lived with God. ●



Picture 3 - *Christ and St Mary Magdalene at the Tomb, 1638*  
/ Rembrandt van Rijn / Image courtesy of the Royal  
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# Don't you bet on it!

If you have asked me a few years ago what I knew about gambling in this country, you would have received a short reply: virtually nothing. Yet everything changed in the summer of 2015 when two people came to see me separately and shared their family's story.

Both had tales of addiction, loss and grief. I knew that I had to find out what was happening in our society and since those encounters, I have met dozens of victims of the gambling industry.

Since then, I have dedicated much of my time in the House of Lords to holding the government to account and seeking to reform our current gambling legislation.

Today, we live in a country which has seemingly accepted the fact that we have 55,000 young people classed as problem gamblers. We have seemingly accepted the hundreds of suicides recorded annually linked with gambling-related harm. And we have also seemingly accepted gambling as a part of normal life.

For generations, however, this was not the case. The Gambling Act of 2005 liberalised an industry that requires in-built safeguards for the most vulnerable in our society.

When speaking with medical experts who help those with gambling problems, they describe an industry with limited ability to self-regulate and which is doing the bare minimum to stop its products being addictive.

When speaking with academics who work on gambling, they describe an addiction that is so damaging that problem

gamblers are 15 times more likely to kill themselves than the general population.

When speaking with families who have lost children to gambling addiction, they describe a way of thinking that furthers only the interests of firms who cumulatively rake in more than £14bn a year, whilst letting the public pick up the tab for the consequences of their business.

Currently, the estimated cost to the NHS of the gambling industry stands between £240m and £1.2bn every year. At a time when our public services are at breaking point, it feels insulting to read of the decadent actions of companies who make limited contributions towards this eye-watering cost.

Yet it doesn't stop there. Violence around betting shops is reportedly higher than in other parts of towns, and a cursory glance at the frequency with which problem gambling is cited in court cases reveals the cost to the criminal justice system as well.

As Christians, however, it is not right for us to view things purely through the prism of economic costs. Our concern for the societal impacts of problem gambling is much wider – a result of valuing every human life and respecting what everyone brings to our lives.

While, of course, it is important to remember the economic costs of gambling on society, this is never to demonise problem gamblers. Delivering safeguards for them is not to save the taxpayer a burden but rather to protect more people from ever facing difficulties around addiction and all that it so tragically entails.

Last year, we saw a reduction in the maximum stakes for one of the most dangerous and harmful gambling products – Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs).

Whilst I, and many of the campaigners who had personal stories involving problem gambling, were pleased, we knew it wasn't the last fight that needed to be fought.

Today, high streets are chock-a-block with bookies, wall-to-wall advertising dominates every sports match, and the online world seems to be turning into a Wild West casino-style platform.

Current laws are a legacy of an analogue era in a digital age. Betting firms are deserting the traditional, public, and somewhat more tightly regulated town centres and moving online.

Online games, played almost exclu-

sively by the young, can be undisputedly linked with problem gambling. At the same time, 'dark nudges' encourage problem gamblers to start betting online if they try to quit, through a process of push notifications, emails and targeted ads.

The remaining physical shops are focussed in areas of deprivation, in a worrying phenomenon repeated abroad and recently exposed as a deliberate decision by a Danish whistle-blower.

As Christians, we are called to protect the most vulnerable in our society and to offer loving care to those in need. When you chat with people who understand gambling, you begin to realise that victims of the industry are exactly the people we should be supporting.

In February, a motion which origi-

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+Alan St Albans / photo: Arun Kataria

nated in the Diocese of St Albans was passed at General Synod. This called for the Church to do more to help combat the scourge of problem gambling.

When you look at the enormity of the gambling sector, it might seem fanciful that the faithful few could have a significant impact on the direction of this industry.

Yet ahead of the Synod motion, I helped produce a very simple three-point plan that I believe all of us should be aware of when discussing gambling-related harms.

Firstly, every one of us can reach out to our local politician by sending them an email to express concerns around gambling. Working in Parliament, I know that politicians appreciate knowing exactly what those they represent care about and, when speaking to people outside Westminster, gambling comes up more frequently than some appreciate.

Using the website [www. WriteToThem.com](http://www.WriteToThem.com) you can easily find out who your local MP is and how to contact them with ease.

Secondly, we can all report gambling adverts that seem to prey on the vulnerable and children. The advertising

regulator, the ASA, encourages complaints to be made at [www.ASA.org.uk/make-a-complaint.html](http://www.ASA.org.uk/make-a-complaint.html)

Thirdly, and most simply, being aware of the issue is a huge step forward. If just a few people in your church were aware of how to identify problem gamblers, a caring and kind word might make all the difference in their lives, especially if at the same time we point them in the direction of those who can offer them professional help.

Breaking down the stigma associated with problem gambling is part of this step and encouraging people to get help in a non-stigmatised manner is crucial. The NHS has plenty of information, including a tick-box quiz which suggests whether or not you might be a problem gambler, on their website [www.NHS.uk/live-well](http://www.NHS.uk/live-well)

As I approach almost four years of involvement in campaigns around gambling-related harm, I have spent time reflecting on the nature of making effective change.

What I have discovered is that grassroots action, led by individuals chatting to a friend, or a family discussing issues around a dinner table, is so often the most effective way of achieving progress.

In this case, the problem is half a million problem gamblers, with an industry making little attempt to limit the impacts of its product. A step change is needed so we can make sure no family ever suffers from the pain caused by problem gambling again.

I believe that, with your help, we can make that difference together. ●

+Alan St Albans  
April 2019



# Cultivate

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*'Thought provoking and powerful'* – J Smith

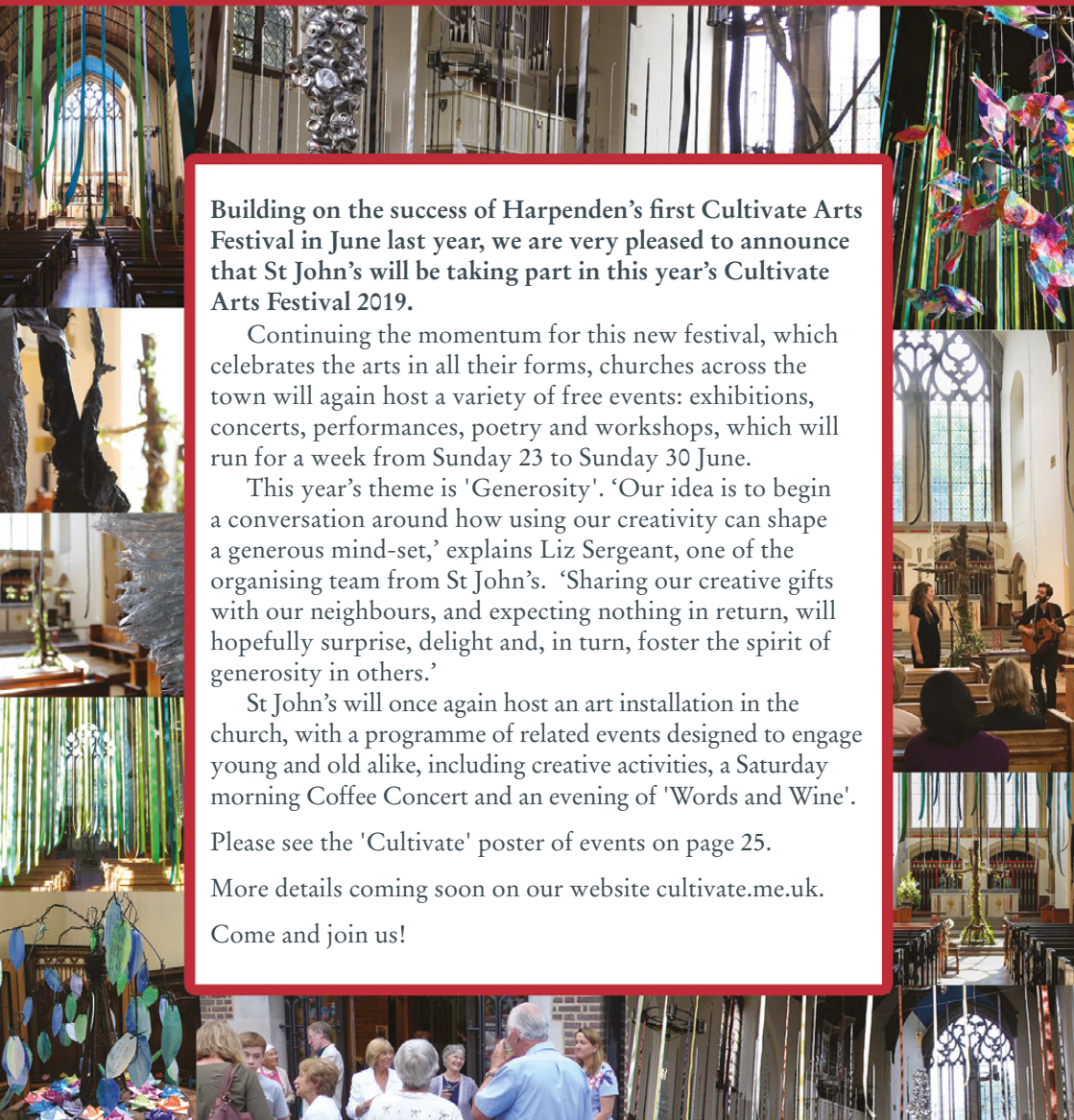
*'An amazing, sobering yet uplifting experience'* – J Warner

*'Such a beautiful idea to cultivate and collaborate with an inter-faith festival'* –  
K & M Wallace



# Sunday 23 – Sunday 30 June 2019

## Harpenden



Building on the success of Harpenden's first Cultivate Arts Festival in June last year, we are very pleased to announce that St John's will be taking part in this year's Cultivate Arts Festival 2019.

Continuing the momentum for this new festival, which celebrates the arts in all their forms, churches across the town will again host a variety of free events: exhibitions, concerts, performances, poetry and workshops, which will run for a week from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 June.

This year's theme is 'Generosity'. 'Our idea is to begin a conversation around how using our creativity can shape a generous mind-set,' explains Liz Sergeant, one of the organising team from St John's. 'Sharing our creative gifts with our neighbours, and expecting nothing in return, will hopefully surprise, delight and, in turn, foster the spirit of generosity in others.'

St John's will once again host an art installation in the church, with a programme of related events designed to engage young and old alike, including creative activities, a Saturday morning Coffee Concert and an evening of 'Words and Wine'.

Please see the 'Cultivate' poster of events on page 25.

More details coming soon on our website [cultivate.me.uk](http://cultivate.me.uk).

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If you would like us to pray for you or someone else then please be in contact with Michael Hughes 01582 765576



**Lord Jesus Christ,**

by your death and resurrection at Easter you broke the power of all that threatens to diminish and overcome us. Continue now your work of healing begun in your ministry on earth – bring hope and healing to all who call on you in their time of need. May they know the love and power of Him who lives for ever and is present with us always.

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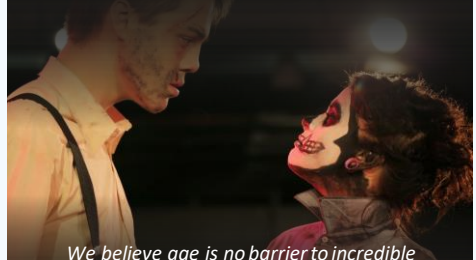
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# Getting to know the congregation

*An interview with Nic Connolly*

## **How long have you lived in the area?**

So, as a mother and a wife I've lived in the area since 2001. As a child we would come and go, as Harpenden was our base, but we lived abroad. We had it as a refuge, if you like, back in England. When I went to boarding school I always knew the house was there if I needed to go and visit. I've been in and around Harpenden for a very long time but it's only as an adult that I've got to really know the community and the people in it.

## **And what do you do now as part of that community?**

Well, as a mother I'm very much involved with the Grove school and with the parents and supporting my children in getting the most they out of the local area. That might be just at weekends, getting together with other families, having picnics together or going and doing rounders on the Common or something like that. I'm also a teacher in the same school my children go to, which is fabulous actually! I thought they would be really nervous and worried about having their mother there and perhaps they wouldn't like it, but they've embraced and loved it and it makes them feel sort of famous it seems! And it means that I get to know and understand quite deeply all about their groups of people that they hang out with and their community groups and things, which is wonderful. And then, on another level, I'm part of the church.

## **What do you do as part of the church at St Johns?**

Well, I'm part of the group of leaders who help run the Junior Church for the children. I think so often what is missing from society is just stopping to reflect, and I think that the church brilliantly allows you to stand back and question 'why?' and 'what?' about everything. The Bible is full of stories

and reasons and questioning about how and what we should be. It's not necessarily, I believe, telling you to follow exactly how it is written and what is said but rather it's an idea of God, and to float those ideas with children is fabulous! - to inject thought and questioning and understanding. And beyond Junior Church, I think being involved at St Johns is a continuation of my wanting to embed myself in the community and be a part of a community. Also it allows my children to feel this sense of who they are in relation to others and God but then also stopping and thinking about life and how their behaviour reflects on others.

## **So how we interact other people seems really important to you?**

Yes, absolutely, but also our impact is not just on other people is it? I think for me what I didn't have as a child growing up in a boarding school was that community. There was no sense of who are you in a group of people. It was very much that you are sent abroad and this is where you go and you get on with it on your own. And I wanted for my children that sense of them and others around them, and I think that's a great holding thing and greatly supportive. And there have been a couple of times this year where I've thought that triangle of home, school and church has really come together, which has been quite powerful and hopefully not just for me but for other people as well. ●



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# All Greek to me

The New Testament was originally written in a form of ancient Greek called 'Koine'. The editor will take any opportunity to talk or write about this New Testament Greek and presents the following:

Below is the Greek alphabet and a selection of names from the New Testament. The vowels with the little lines above them (called macrons) designate those vowels as being long: ē is pronounced 'air' and ō as 'or', but do not worry about them too much. You may be surprised at how quickly you pick up the alphabet.

A	α	alpha	a
B	β	beta	b
Γ	γ	gamma	g
Δ	δ	delta	d
E	ε	epsilon	e
Z	ζ	zeta	z
H	η	eta	ē
Θ	θ	theta	th
I	ι	iota	i
K	κ	kappa	k
Λ	λ	lambda	l
M	μ	mu	m
N	ν	nu	n
Ξ	ξ	xi	ks
O	ο	omicron	o
Π	π	pi	p
P	ρ	rho	r
Σ	σ, ς	sigma	s
T	τ	tau	t
Υ	υ	upsilon	u
Φ	φ	phi	f
X	χ	chi	ch
Ψ	ψ	psi	ps
Ω	ω	omega	ō

1. Ἰησοῦς Χριστός

2. Πέτρος

3. Ἰάκωβος

4. Ἰωάννης

5. Θωμάς

6. Ματθαῖος

7. Μάρκος

8. Λουκᾶς



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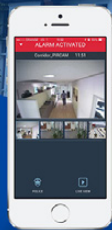
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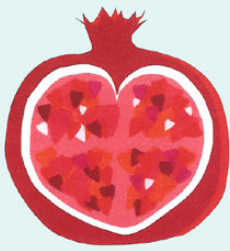
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## ARTS FESTIVAL

**Sunday 23rd - Sunday 30th June**

**Come and join us at St John's  
for free events on the theme of**

*Generosity*

**Art Installation in church - 'Flowing Free'**

**Open to visit all week Sunday to Sunday - 12pm - 5pm**

**Patronal Festival Service**

**celebrating our patron, John the Baptist, followed by a BBQ**

**Sunday 23rd June 9.30am - 10.30am**

**Words, Wine and Song**

**an evening of poetry, prose & music with complimentary drinks**

**Wednesday 26th June 8pm - 9pm**

**Coffee Concert**

**a selection of organ music followed by free coffee/tea**

**Saturday 29th June 10.30 - 11.15am**

**All-age Activity Afternoon**

**make your own art, music & stories inspired by the art installation**

**Saturday 29th June 2pm - 4pm**

For more information about the full programme visit: [cultivate.me.uk](http://cultivate.me.uk)



Cultivate Arts Festival



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cultivateartsfestival

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# News from the Mothers' Union

'Glory be to God for dappled things-  
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim'

These first lines from 'Pied Beauty' by Gerard Manley Hopkins went through my mind as I walked through Verulamium Park recently on a glorious sunny day with a spring in my step and a smile on my face. Families walked with me; dads helped young children steer a wobbly path on their bikes; mums pushed prams and pointed out the ducks and swans to fascinated babies; grandparents smiled indulgently at teenagers with icecream, and as I walked up the hill towards the Cathedral I gave thanks for families everywhere.

I took over recently as Leader of St John's Mothers' Union and I am so proud to be a member of this worldwide fellowship of prayer, worship, love and service.

Families have changed so much over the years and we celebrate their variety and mix. To be loved unconditionally by at least one person is surely every child's right and yet the media show us images which tell us that is not always the case.

Mothers' Union works to promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children.

We welcome guests at our meetings held in the committee room of the church hall on the first Wednesday evening of each month at 7.30pm. Why not come along and see what the family of

Mothers' Union is all about?

On the Saturday before Mothering Sunday, the church hall resounded with laughter and raised voices as 20 members arrived with arms full of greenery and bunches of carnations and proceeded to work together to create 200 posies for distribution at the Sunday services. As I looked at the animated faces of members who had given up their Saturday morning I gave thanks for the friendship and support of our St John's Branch.

At the top of the hill, I stood with the Cathedral behind me and looked down across the grass to the lake beyond and gave thanks for the richness and variety of relationships and for love in all its forms.

Hopkins praises the variety of God's Creation, and before I turned to enter the Cathedral the last lines of the poem went through my mind:

'All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled ( who knows how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise him.'

*Carol Cooke*

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for further details.

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# Forthcoming events

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## June 2019

Sunday 2 June	4.00 pm	Faith and Light in the parish hall
Tuesday 4 June	8.15 pm	PCC meeting
Wednesday 5 June	7.30 pm	Mothers' Union meeting in the committee room
Friday 7 June		2 – 4 pm in the committee room
Saturday 15 June	10.15 am	Mothers' Union Diocesan AGM, Woolmer Green Village Hall, 10.15 am–2.30 pm

## Sunday 23 June – Sunday 30 June Cultivate Arts Festival

Friday 28 June	3.00 pm	Tea at Three in the parish hall
Saturday 29 June	10.30 am	Coffee Concert (Roger Carter - organ)

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## July 2019

Tuesday 2 July	8.15 pm	Standing Committee
Wednesday 3 July		Mothers' Union outing
Sunday 7 July	4.00 pm	Faith and Light in the parish hall
Thursday 18 July	8.15 pm	PCC meeting
Thursday 25 July	12.30 pm	Mothers' Union summer lunch – Deanery event
Friday 26 July	3.00 pm	Tea at Three in the parish hall
Sunday 28 July	11.30 am	Family baptism

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## August 2019

Wednesday 7 August		Mothers' Union garden party
Friday 30 August	3.00 pm	Tea at Three in the parish hall



## Services at St John's

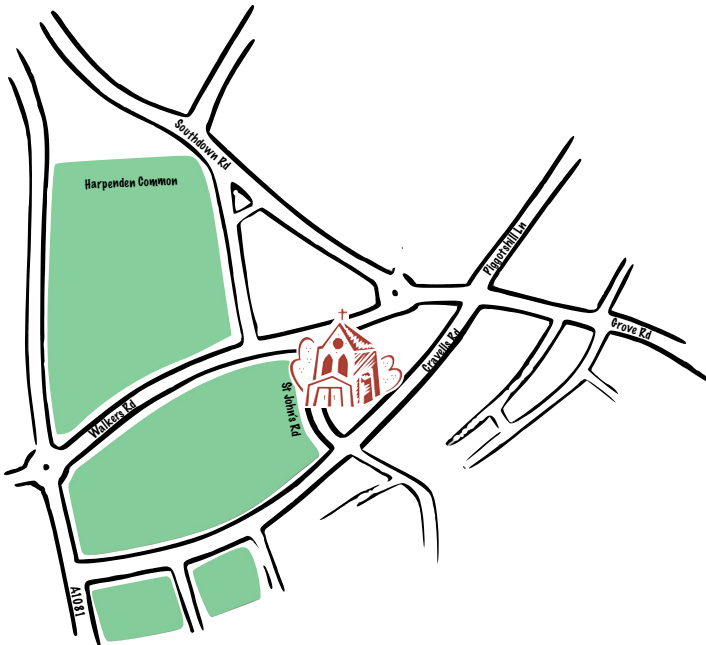
### Sunday

- 8.00 am Said Eucharist
- 9.30 am Parish Eucharist followed by coffee time in the hall  
All-Age Eucharist, *normally first Sunday of the month*
- 9.30 am Junior Church, *except for All-Age Eucharists,*  
and Little Gems in the hall
- 11.30 am Holy Baptism, *last Sunday of the month*
- 6.30 pm Evening Worship

### Wednesday

- 9.30 am Said Eucharist

Major festivals advertised when appropriate in the magazine



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