



*Patronal
Festival
inside*

st JOHN'S

Living God's Love

Parish Magazine

SUMMER 2023

*What's going on in
St John's and Southdown*

an infant's cry
the bishops's sermon
unrattled

Haiku by Susan Lee Kerr, 2023. Haiku in English are based on a Japanese form of poetry, briefly conveying a moment of awareness of nature or human life.

Thoughtful, quietly spiritual, this page in the magazine is intended as a space for reflection. St John's Church is open every day from 10.00am to 5.00pm for anyone who wants a quiet place for personal reflection.

st JOHN'S

Living God's Love

*Summer 2023
in this issue*

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ADDRESS

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Our magazine is published four times a year and is delivered free to all homes and businesses in the parish.

We are very grateful to those who write contributions and the many volunteers who distribute and deliver the magazines, come rain or shine, to everyone in the parish.

We welcome advertisements and are delighted to be able to provide full colour.

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Welcome from the Vicar

Hello fellow parishioner of St John's Harpenden. Welcome to the Summer issue of the St John's Church Parish Magazine. Our main focus this issue is celebrating our Patron Saint, St John, but you'll also find information about our new curate and going to church whilst on holiday, as well as other community activities. If you want to let us know what you are doing in Southdown for the next edition, please get in touch.

Tim

*Rev'd Tim Vickers
Vicar of St Johns Harpenden*

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The art of stitching

New altar frontal

A striking new hanging adorns the altar of the Lady Chapel in St John's. It is a swirling abstract of Mother and Child in blues and reds that echo the chapel's stained glass windows, red railings and patterned blue-grey ceiling. Bugle beads glitter on two bright red flame-shapes, representing Pentecost.

'It is applique, not embroidery, due to the thickness and heaviness a frontal requires,' explains Helen Davies, leader of Dorcas. This is the St John's group that designs and makes vestments, hangings, banners and altar frontals in both modern and classical styles for the church. To their delight, Helen's design — in colours painted by Liz Sergeant — received rapid approval from St Albans Cathedral, a process required for any new permanent item at St John's.

Six people worked on the frontal for some six years (interrupted by Covid lockdowns), meeting on Fridays in the chapel or St John's Church Hall. Both men and women take part in Dorcas and new members are very welcome. 'A varied knowledge of stitching is needed, as we don't teach, but we do help each other out,' says Helen. Prospective projects include adapting vestments for St John's new curate and the replacement of a chasuble made of sari silk now beyond repair, says Helen. She adds, 'We are a friendly group. Do come along if you are interested and prepared to laugh!'

For information contact parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk Tel 01582 712776





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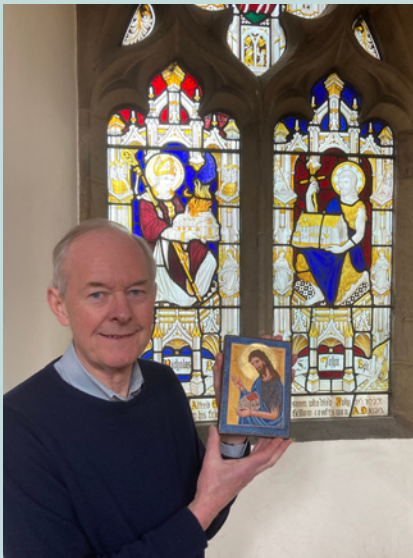
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Patronal Festival

On 25th June we celebrate our Patronal Festival. This is the Sunday nearest to the feast day of our patronal saint, John the Baptist, on 24th June. A patronal saint is regarded as a heavenly advocate, or supporter, and every church in the Church of England has a patron saint. The nations of the United Kingdom have their patron saints too (St George, St Andrew, St David, St Patrick). St John the Baptist is known for being a prophet, the forerunner of Christ and the man who baptized Jesus in the River Jordan. He was chosen as our Patron because in 1907, 115 years ago, our church's foundation stone was laid on 24th June.



We will celebrate our patron saint with a special Eucharist service at 11.00am on Sunday 25th June instead of the usual 9.30am Sunday service. A BBQ in the Vicarage Garden and rounders on the Common follow – do come!



St John the Baptist, our patron saint, features in a stained glass window in the north aisle of the church. He holds our church building. His rough garment represents camel hair, from the time he lived and preached in the desert. There's also a painted icon of St John the Baptist in the church on a nearby pillar. A smaller framed icon was presented to David Nye on his 40th anniversary as a Reader.

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Who, how and why is a curate?

In July we welcome Ritah Namakula as our new curate at St John's. We look forward to a fuller introduction to her in our next edition of the magazine but for now it might be useful to explain some of the terminology! She is currently part of the congregation at Christ Church in Radlett. She will be ordained Deacon at St Albans Cathedral at 4pm on Saturday 1st July.

Why is she here? Ritah is coming to St John's and Southdown to continue her training to be a Vicar in the Church of England and will be with us for the next three years.

What is curacy? A curacy is three years' worth of 'on the job' training for those who are going into position of leadership in the church. She will learn how to conduct funerals and baptisms, continue to preach and lead worship and get involved in the life of the parish and community.

What is ordination? This is when you are 'made' a deacon or priest by the intercession of the Holy Spirit. Only a bishop can ordain and it normally takes place in a cathedral.

What is a deacon? A deacon is one of the three 'orders of ministry' in the Church of England for those in leadership. It literally means a servant and follows the example of Jesus who was a servant and washed his disciples' feet. The other types of ministers are: priest (like Revd Tim) and bishop (the current Bishop of Hertford is Rt Revd Dr Jane Mainwaring).

All are welcome to join us at 9.30am on Sunday 2nd July as we welcome Ritah to St John's.

CURATE

Going to church on holiday

Wherever you go in the world, visiting churches can be an enriching holiday experience. You can appreciate the outside, you can wander through the inside. And to really connect, you can attend a service, like some St John's people do.

California: Lauryn Awbrey went to St Michael's in Corona del Mar. All the priests were on holiday so, as a St John's Reader, she was delighted that the service was led by one of the very few Readers in TEC (The Episcopal Church). 'A good sermon and communion from reserved sacrament,' she reports, 'and a HUGE church hall and gardens.'



Norfolk: Jenny Morris and family attended St Peter's Easter service in the village of Hedenham. 'Earlier, we joined the Easter pilgrim walk on the Saturday, walking over 12 miles and stopping for short services at four of the parish churches. Thankfully it was dry!'



Edinburgh: David and Heather Nye stayed near the Royal Mile and attended a Sunday service at St Giles Cathedral. 'Although the service was a bit different from ours (St Giles is a Church of Scotland Cathedral) there was a good congregation, the singing was enthusiastic, and the sermon was uplifting.'

But how to locate a C of E church and its services in an unknown place? Just look around? Find the tallest building? The oldest? Study its notice board? Google? All of the above, perhaps, but even easier, use one of the links here.



Diocese of Europe

<https://europe.anglican.org/where-we-are/church-locations>

TEC

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/find-a-church/>

The Scottish Episcopal Church

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/church-finder/>

Church in Wales

<https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/life-events-2022/find-church/>

Church of Ireland

<https://www.ireland.anglican.org/find-a-church>

Church of England

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>

Happy holidays! Come back and share the experience – send some photos and a short description of your experience to magazine@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk or drop off a note at the Parish Office or talk to Editor Susan in church. Near or far, was it the same as St John's or very different? What did you learn?

Wondering... what impression does St John's give to visitors?

‘Mind the Gap’

Those of you who commute into London will be familiar with the phrase ‘Mind the Gap’ as you board trains. Sometimes gaps can be dangerous – like at a train station platform. At other times gaps are places we ignore, normally dark and not often seeing the light of day.

As Christians we believe that everyone is loved by God as everyone is made in the image of God. Sometimes (too many times) the church has ignored or labelled as sinful parts of humanity we don’t understand. It’s all too easy to focus on issues our culture affirms, or on people who are ‘like us’. St John’s wants to be a place of radical inclusion where everyone is free to be who God has called them to be.

In an effort to more intentionally ‘mind these gaps’ we had a sermon series in February between Candlemass (29th Jan) and the start of Lent (22nd February). There are so many topics we could have chosen, but we looked at: The Environment, Racial Justice and Mental Health.

To find what was said, why not look at our [You Tube channel](#).

[The Environment](#). St John’s Ecochurch group gives a thoughtful reflection on recycling.

[Racial Justice](#). Reader Lauryn Awbrey addresses the point that the church is rarely as diverse culturally as its surrounding communities, and where fewer people of colour are in positions of leadership and authority.

[Mental Health](#). For many, faith has been a great support and comfort journeying through difficult times yet we still find it hard to talk about. Revd Tim explores what he thinks God says about mental health.

Are there some issues you think we as a church should focus on, gaps where we don’t pay enough attention? Let us know.

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Need a prayer?

St Luke's Cell Prayer Group are always happy to pray for you (confidentially if needed). The group is named after the disciple and physician Luke, who is the patron saint of doctors. A request can be as simple as a name, if preferred. We don't need to know details in order to pray. Members from St John's and from Southdown Methodist churches pray individually and also meet monthly to pray for anyone in the parish who asks for prayers for themselves or for their loved ones.

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



Meet Ilias Poulakis

Southdown Police Community Support Officer

‘No day is the same, anything can happen,’ says Southdown’s Police Community Support Officer Ilias Poulakis. Like the time recently when he popped in to St John’s Parish Hall and gave pre-schoolers a thrilling visit to his patrol car. You might recognise him from his distinctive dark beard as he’s often in the area, keeping an eye out for trouble and providing a reassuring presence.

‘I’d like Southdown people to know who I am and feel comfortable talking to me. By just being present and available – like the village bobbies of the past – we aim to fight crime.’ Neighbourhood problems he might deal with include anti-social behaviour, vehicle nuisance, someone acting suspicious, vandalism, shoplifting, house burglaries, non-stop alarms and cars blocking driveways or pavements.

Ilias likes face to face contact and is always happy to have a chat. ‘If you have a worry, tell me, or call. Don’t think you are wasting police time. If an issue is not our department, I’ll signpost you to the right direction.’ He’s also glad to arrange visits to schools, scouts, clubs, even care homes, to talk about crime prevention.

If you don’t happen to bump into Ilias, the best way to reach him is by email ilias.poulakis@herts.police.uk Or call the central number 101 and ask to speak to your local officer. He strongly recommends joining OWL (Online Watch Link, <https://www.owl.co.uk/>) which sends regular emails about current neighbourhood risks and crimes, and positive advice.



DID YOU KNOW?

We have just celebrated the Coronation of King Charles III. Did you know that in St John's there is something to commemorate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953? Next time you are visiting, if you look up at the organ loft you will notice four shields, bearing representations of St Cecilia (patron saint of musicians), St Mark, St Alban and St John the Baptist. New hangings were made for the altar in coronation cloth of gold, bearing emblems of kingship.

Can you tell which shield is for which saint?

What might we do to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles?



St John's Eco Church



Creation Care at St John's

Some of the things we do at St John's to care for our amazing natural environment are easy for everyone to do at home:

- **No-mow May.** St John's locks up the lawnmower in May, 'doing nothing for nature' to let the wildflowers in the grass bloom. This effortlessly provides nectar for bees, butterflies and other pollinators, which all need our help. If every lawn and verge in the UK was uncut for May, this would be a huge benefit for wildlife. Too extreme? At least try raising the lawnmower cutter bar to leave the daisies and clover flowers. See wildlife conservationists [Plantlife](#) online for more ideas.
- We now have **recycling bins** in church and the hall, for paper, card, cans and plastic bottles to encourage our congregation and church hall users to recycle where possible.
- We are changing to more 'eco friendly' **cleaning products** (Ecover, Bio D, Method, etc) and use white vinegar and water for cleaning glass, and a duster/damp cloth, rather than spray polishes. This cuts down on harsh chemicals which can damage both the environment and human health.



Stitchwort and buttercups at St John's.

Some recycling facts:

- recycling one drinks can saves enough energy to power a TV for up to three hours
- each tonne of recycled paper can save 17 trees
- it takes 50 times more energy to make a battery than the energy it stores – rechargeable batteries can be used time and again, saving resources and reducing pollution
- an empty cola can thrown away will look the same in 100 years; recycled it will be ready to use again in six weeks
- food waste from Harpenden is used to generate electricity – six teabags make enough electricity to boil a kettle



Margaret Charlston

eco.church@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

YOU'RE INVITED



Junior Church – In Junior Church, the second Sunday of each month, we learn about God in a fun and inclusive way for the younger members of church. We do this by exploring arts and crafts and playing games for greater understanding. We also have Mini Church for the even younger members of the congregation aged 0-5.

Junior Music – Junior Music allows us to develop our singing and to sing as a choir. This also gives us an opportunity to make new friends with people who have the same interests as we do. It helps us to feel more confident performing in front of a lot of people and we enjoy playing a part in the worship with our singing. We meet to rehearse a piece that we perform in the All-Age service, normally on the first Sunday of the month.



First Holy Communion – Holy Communion gives us an opportunity to be close to God at a young age and it lets us feel a part of the congregation. We had lots of fun lessons leading up to our big day. We also got to meet new people who share the same faith as us.

Sophie Bygrave, age 9

Emily Macdonald, age 9

A church for all: other ways to find welcome in the St John's community include T@3 for those of wiser years and Faith and Light for adults with learning difficulties, their families and carers. For more information see www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk or call Lauryn Awbrey on 01582 624823 lauryn.awbrey@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

First Communion for anyone aged 7 and upwards happens this year on Sunday 9th July. Please contact Revd Tim if interested vicar@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk



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Ring in the new

St John's APCM (Annual Parish Council Meeting) met at the end of March to look back on the achievements of the previous year and forward to hopes and aspirations for the future.

Several members of the PCC (Parochial Church Council) stood down after six years of service. The council thanked Naomi Burnett, Dawn Mason, Liz Sergeant and Bill Moore for all the many tasks they have done for St John's. Jacky Dodd retired as PCC Secretary along with churchwarden Jane Donati, both having done a huge amount for the church for which St John's is very grateful. Jane will continue as deputy warden.

For the new church year, St John's welcomed on to the PCC Alison Bygrave, Sophie Crowley, Alastair Meldrum and Andrew Ballard, and looks forward to their contribution to the life of the church.

St John's has much in store for the coming year including the appointment of a new Director of Music and the arrival of curate Ritah Namakula in July. Along with the Patronal Festival on 25th June, ongoing church life means babies will be baptised, couples married, youngsters will receive Communion for the first time and visits made to those who are housebound. And much more besides. Do come and join us. For up-to-date information see www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Heather Nye, Churchwarden



St John's Podcast

with Revd Tim and Iain



St John's Podcast

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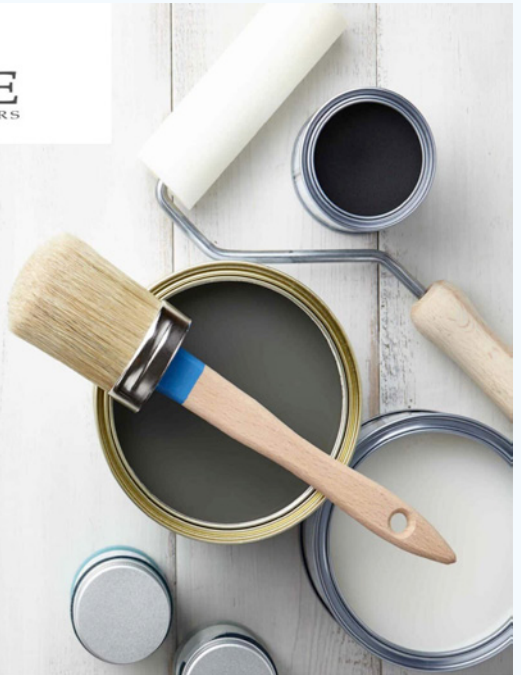


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St John's in bloom

Have you noticed St John's flower bed? Maybe you even go out of your way to see what's happening there on the north border of the forecourt. Spring and early summer is the focus, with chartreuse and dusky pink hellebores blooming from January to Easter. Daffodils appear, and then tulips join the parade with wallflowers chiming in. Summer promises new pleasures.

Masterminding and maintaining the display, Steve Howard has been tending the garden for twelve years. 'It's a naturalistic style, not a managed bed,' he explains. With his own garden to manage at home, he looks for things that can survive without close attention, especially robust plants that spread or self-seed, like those named above. This is a model that new (or easy-going!) gardeners can follow.

An unmistakable feature of the border is not a plant at all. The tree posts drilled with holes are bee hotels for solitary bees. Unlike honeybees, they nest individually. This summer, look for bees hovering near the holes. Depending on the cycle they might be males, hoping for young females to emerge. Or females looking for a home to lay their fertilised eggs. Later you'll notice the holes are plugged with



dried matter to keep the brood safe. An annual job is to drill and put up a new post before the flight season. But Steve leaves the old posts in place: 'They add height and curiosity to the border, giving a sculptural effect.'

You can stop and smell the roses as you watch for bees. Three years ago Steve planted a half dozen climbing roses along the back of the bed to fill in long gaps looking through to not-much-of-a-view. His vision became roses, destined to join up and to provide seasonal interest. The climbers come in goldfinch yellow, creamy white and magenta. And ten *Rosa rugosa* set into the bed for mid-height interest offer their simple open blooms in white and magenta. Garden pleasures continue – in autumn the rose hips will be sparks of colour brightening the bed right through to December.





St John's Patronal Festival

Sunday 25th June
11am

Service followed by lunch and
games

Help us to celebrate the birthday of our
Patron Saint and our church being part of
the Southdown community for 115 years.

Mothers' Union



Mothers' Union at St John's is a very friendly group and we are delighted when visitors join us to hear one of our guest speakers. Recently Julia White spoke with slides on 'A Life in Art', introducing a world of creativity and talent. In June, Andrew Ballard, retired Archdeacon, gives 'An Archdeacon's Story.' Do come to hear his insight into clerical life and an understanding of his life's experiences.

Sue Ashton, one of our members, organised the programme for 2023 providing excellent speakers who broaden and deepen our view of the world. Andrew, our newest member, is programme organiser for 2024 and is already starting to schedule speakers.

Find the Mothers' Union programme of meetings on the notice board in the church porch. We meet in the Committee Room of the church hall at 2.30pm on the first Thursday of the month. Just turn up, you will be very welcome.

Carol Cooke, Branch Leader. Contact parish.office@stjohnsbapenden.org.uk



On a Saturday afternoon in March the church hall was a hive of activity as members worked together happily using daffodils and garden greenery to make 150 posies for Mothering Sunday. A label on each posy said, 'Made with love by members of Mothers' Union'. We were rewarded by the smiles on the faces of the children as they handed them out at the morning service.

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Parish registers

Baptisms

Welcome to the family of God

22nd January 2023

Leo Cantor

29th January 2023

Sebastian Allen

Funerals in Church

May they rest in peace

16th January 2023

Patricia Helen Slobom



Christening at St John's

Are you interested in having
your child christened?

If you live in Southdown you can have
your child christened at St John's (even
if you're not a regular church goer)

If you'd like to have a chat about what's
involved please email
parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk





Regular Services at St John's

Sundays

- 8.00am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel
- 9.30am Parish Eucharist (*also live streamed*) followed by coffee in the hall.
All-Age Eucharist, *normally 1st Sunday of the month*

Wednesday

- 10.30am Holy Eucharist is celebrated in the Lady Chapel

Monday, Wednesday and Thursday

- 9.30am Morning prayer is said
- 5.00pm Evening Prayer is said

Tuesday

- 9.00am Morning prayer is said
- 5.00pm Evening Prayer is said

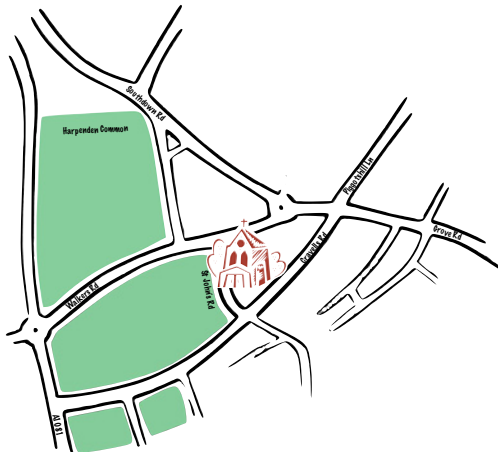
Church is open every day from 10.00am to 5.00pm.

Service times may change so please check the calendar on our website or sign up there to our weekly or monthly newsletter www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Watch our Parish Eucharist and other special services on our YouTube channel - search for "St John's Church, Harpenden" or visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/StJohnsChurchHarpenden>

The Parish Office is open Monday – Thursday 9.30am - 2.30pm



PARISH OFFICE

For enquiries, including marriages, baptisms, funerals and hall bookings, please contact the parish office.

Anna Chambers

Telephone: 01582 712776
parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

If you are in need of help or know anyone in need of support, please contact support@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Parish Directory

VICAR

Revd Tim Vickers

Telephone: 01582 469343
vicar@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

READERS

Laurn Awbrey

Telephone: 01582 624823
laurn.awbrey@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

David Nye

Telephone: 01582 762785
dandhnye@btinternet.com

Anne Edwards

Telephone: 01582 767449

WARDENS

Heather Nye

wardens@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

position vacant

TREASURER

Jon Pitman

treasurer@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

*Patronal
Festival
inside*

st JOHN'S
Living God's Love

What's going on in St John's and Southdown

www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

St John's Church, 5 St John's Road, Harpenden, Herts AL5 1DJ

Parish Office 01582 712776



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