



St John the Evangelist – a beacon on the hill



St John's Newsletter for March 2025

Inspiring a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through prayer, sharing our faith, pastoral care, making disciples and by being the heart of the community

Verse of the Month

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us Hebrews 12:1

Services at St John's 10.00am unless otherwise stated

Date		
2 nd March	Next Sunday before Lent	Holy Communion
5 th March	Ash Wednesday	Parish Holy Communion
9 th March	First Sunday in Lent	Morning Worship
10 th March 7.30pm	Licensing of Revd Toby Lancaster as Priest-in-Charge	Holy Communion
16 th March	Second Sunday in Lent	Holy Communion
23 rd March	Third Sunday in Lent	Morning Worship
30 th March	Mothering Sunday	Holy Communion

Refreshments following Sunday Service

Do stay for refreshments after the Sunday Service. A great time for a chat and to get to know each other.



Licensing of Toby Lancaster as our Priest-in-Charge.

The Licensing of the Revd Tobias {Toby} Joseph Lancaster as Priest-in-Charge of our parish will take place on Monday 10th March 2025 at 7.30pm in St John's Church. Toby will be Licensed by the Right Reverend Will Hazlewood, Bishop of Lewes and Installed by the Revd Matthew Foy, Assistant Archdeacon of Hastings. The service will be in the context of the Eucharist and will be followed by refreshments. Please note this date in your diary and join in welcoming Toby and his family to the parish. Toby will commence duty on 10th March but will not be moving into the Vicarage until various works have been completed. This is not expected to be until May.

Luke and Toby meet together on 25th February 2025



at Common Grounds Coffee Café

Luke is at present back in England

still waiting for his Visa to be completed

WEEKLY EVENTS AT ST JOHN'S

Monday - Singing for Fun – Do come along and join this friendly group.

Opens at 10am for coffee/tea and biscuits and time for a meet up before the singing which starts at 11am. You will sing a variety of popular songs “*just for fun*” with Stephen Page.

Cost £5.00 per session which includes tea/coffee and a biscuit.

Tuesday and Thursday - Common Grounds Coffee Café - Open from 10am to 12noon



Café sells a variety of coffees (filter, latte, cappuccinos), teas and hot chocolate plus cakes and savouries. There are also cold drinks

There is a free top up of filter coffee and tea.

Come along and visit the café and perhaps bring a friend. There is always someone to chat to. Dogs and children welcome.

Tuesdays 10am to 12noon – The Chatty Craft Club – Takes place in the Church

Come along, have a chat and make new friends. Bring your own materials/crafts or use the materials which are already in the Church. Come and use your skills or learn new ones. Free to attend.

The Common Grounds Coffee Café is open at the same time for drinks and food.

Meetings in March

Wed 19th March at 7.30pm (please note time) in Church Room – PCC meeting

Advance Information

Electoral Roll. 2025 is the year when all parish Electoral Rolls are *renewed*. This means all existing Rolls are scrapped and new ones prepared. Those wishing to have their names on our parish Electoral Roll will have to complete an Application Form. Please look out for notices and announcements at the end of the month.

Annual Meetings. As previously advised, these are to be held on **Wednesday 21st May** commencing at 7.00pm in St John's church. The first meeting is for the election of Churchwardens. This will be followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting {APCM} when various reports for the year 2024 will be presented and Deputy Wardens, Deanery Synod representatives and PCC members elected. The first meeting is open to all those on the parish electoral roll and others who live in the parish. At the APCM, only those whose names are on the Electoral Roll are entitled to vote. *Please note this date in your diary.*

John Mercer, PCC Secretary



'St John's Holy DustBusters'

Many thanks for all those who came along in February. The date for the next "St John's Holy DustBusters" will be **Friday 28th March** from 10am to 12 noon. Come along and join in the fun of cleaning together. Look forward to seeing you there. *Maureen Hinkley*
Contact - by speaking with me 01424 754872 or by email hinkley872@btinternet.com

Article from Toby

Grace and peace and greetings to all of you at St Johns and P&P.

Ahead of my licensing in a couple of weeks' time, I have been granted access to the parish 'OneDrive' – the secure online storage/filing system set up by my predecessor Luke, which contains everything to do with church life – in other words, a veritable Pandora's box that I wasn't sure if I should open prior to starting. After some deliberation, I decided it might be helpful to login and have a quick scan through and familiarise myself with important documents like Sunday rotas. But the things that really piqued my interest were the photographs, and the historical treasures contained therein (such as the startling revelation that the vicarage garden used to be far bigger! We might have had more success getting the diocese to agree to installing a pool, hot tub, and sauna had we the same space!).

Looking at the parish of yesteryear and seeing the churches packed out with congregants dressed in their Sunday best, a youth choir, Sunday schools, garden parties and so on, served as a timely reminder that we stand on the shoulders of those who went before us in the faith. People have been praying and worshipping in this parish for the best part of two centuries. And as we are all of us wrapped up in the mystical body of Christ, our



lives coincide with theirs, we are – present and departed - a part of God's grand narrative, the story of ordinary lives lived in the extraordinary presence of God.

Obviously, times have changed a great deal since the parish was first established. Our current cultural climate is increasingly suspicious of religious institutions (often for good reason, as recent events in the CofE have made plain), more and more people grow up with a nominal Christian heritage at best, zero biblical literacy, and little grasp of Jesus or the Gospel about him. As churches up and down the country are 'ageing out', we can no longer assume, as our forebears had the luxury of doing, that the majority of folks will just habitually attend their local church each Sunday.

However, while all these factors may seem to pose an insurmountable challenge for the life of the Church, these are nevertheless exciting times. For God has never ceased working in the world. History is simply the stage on which the Church is struggling to catch up with the ever-expanding boundaries of God's love. I believe that the Church's vocation to the world, is to make room for this activity, to *make room for Jesus* no less.



This photo stood out among those I found. Not only is it a striking and beautiful composition, but I think it also serves us a wonderful image of this calling to make room for Jesus, which is precisely what

happened almost 60 years ago as the land was cleared to make room for P&P (it's notable that children were the first builders). The national Church – as with many other Christian denominations – is in a period of reckoning and decline for sure, but it's also been through a *fallow* period – one in which the land is cleared, and we let it lie so that it may be replenished, so that new life can take root. It feels fitting that my licensing should take place during the Church calendar's own 'fallow season', the great big purple ocean of sadness that we call "Lent", which prepares us to celebrate the mystery of Good Friday and Easter. Ahead of my licensing, and at the invitation of the Churchwardens, I will be taking the Ash Wednesday service next week (St John's, 10am)

– I would love to see you there, as we step into this season together praying and asking God how we can each make more room for Jesus in our lives.

Just before Christmas, another 'image' struck me when I accepted the Bishop's offer to become the next Priest-in-charge of the parish. In Luke 1, a pregnant Mary goes to visit her relative Elizabeth, who despite her old age also has a miraculous "bun in the oven." It was customary in this culture for pregnant relatives to get together, to share the joys and burdens of pregnancy, and to serve as midwives to one another. But what struck me was this:

*Elizabeth makes room in her home for Mary,
just as Mary makes room to give birth to Jesus.*

The Church has this vocation also, to make room for Jesus by acting as a midwife for the world. As your prospective parish priest, I feel like I am called to be an 'Elizabeth', making space for you through worship, community, and prayer so that Christ may be birthed in you (and I hasten to add, *vice versa*). The parish itself is a type of 'Elizabeth' too, a midwife of the Kingdom, who invites its neighbours in, creating a comfortable



space for them, so that Christ may be birthed in them, so that the Gospel come alive in them, and so that they might also experience His love, His grace, His peace, His freedom, His beauty, His goodness, and His truth, in and through their lives.

Hannah and I are so looking forward to getting to know you all in this next season of life. Truth be told, we are also nervous and apprehensive about what this next chapter holds for us as a family, but we are equally excited to see what God will do amongst us, in us, and through us as we join in God's adventure with you in the parish.

Unless I see you on Ash Wednesday I look forward to seeing you on 10th March.

Much love,

Toby (and Hannah, Jesse, & Alma)

Diocesan Family Support Work

Extract from recent newsletter from Family Support Team

Dear Friends,

Our work continues to be hugely busy with many new referrals since the start of the year. There have been some very challenging situations, particularly regarding obtaining support for children with SEN where schools are reluctant to commit funding and resources. These cases take up a large amount of practitioners' time but when we are able to successfully secure support, make a lifechanging difference to the children in question. We are also finding financial hardship really striking many more families, and we are receiving requests to help with even essential items like winter coats and pyjamas as families simply cannot afford these.

Our foodbank remains very well-stocked after the influx of donations at Christmas, so for those who do collect for us please note that we are only really in need of household cleaning products at the moment (washing up liquid, antibac spray etc.)

Many events are now being planned over the coming months. Our Cuckmere Pilgrim path sponsored walk, which we did for the first time last year, will be returning on May 15th and we would love to have as many participants as possible. Please contact the fundraising team by email fundraising@familysupportwork.org.uk or 01273 041401 for further information. There are also a number of local events being organised by our deanery committees, so please take a look at our website to see what is happening near you.

Nikki Kerr, FSW Director of Fundraising and Marketing

Collection of food items for Diocesan Family Support



Very many thanks to those in the congregation and the Singing for Fun Songsters who generously donate items for the families supported by the Diocesan Family Support team. All items collected go to the Diocesan food bank where they are sorted and distributed to families in need.

Items requested are: Household Cleaning products ie antibac spray, washing up liquid etc

A Poem by Coffee Café member

PEOPLE

A poem about people,
Their feelings and their thoughts,
The human race is funny,
We're make up of all sorts.

There's them that have a lot of pride,
And them that have none at all.
And snobs and wimps and down-and-outs,
And those that like to brawl.

A village has an idiot,
Yuppies belong to the towns,
The parish has do-gooders,
And the Parliament has clowns!

Aggressive and the fearless,
The nervous and the weak
Will tolerate each other
In the kind of lives they seek.

The two things that we all will do,
Regardless of our ways;
Be born and die eventually,
Whatever role one plays.

By Marilyn Holdstock

Local Morning Prayer Group (Everyone Welcome)

Do join for Morning Prayer. Log in and try this small group meeting for Morning Prayer.
Takes place every **Tuesday and Friday at 8am on zoom**

Sessions are led by parishioners and open to anyone regardless of the church attended.
Morning Prayer takes the form of bible readings, followed by a very short reflection on one of the readings, thought for the Day, open prayers followed by the Lord's Prayer and closing with the Grace. Lasts for approx 20/25mins.

You can either log on *via the calendar on St John's website*
<http://stjohnshollington.co.uk/stjohns/> or use the zoom link below

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9055256447?pwd=aFn25c6K5prf9w4RJKlumWuiZILTL0.1>

The daily plan can be requested by emailing tommotompkins@aol.com or can be found via link on St John's calendar under morning prayer.

Please remember in your prayers

Unitarian Church; Quaker Meeting; Hastings Mosque; The Bible Society;
Greek Orthodox Church; St Mary & St Theodore Church;
St John's Worship and Pastoral Team; St Michael's Hospice;
Mission Aviation Fellowship; Warrior Square Baptist Church;
St Luke's United Reformed Church; Hastings Interfaith Forum;
All Saint's Anglican Church, Belmont NSW, Australia;
Church Together; Royal National Lifeboat Institution;
The ARK Academy Chain of Schools

Please also remember those who are named in the St John's Prayer Leaflet

SUPPORTING THE WORLDWIDE PERSECUTED CHURCH IN PRAYER



Seventy Christians have been found beheaded in a church in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in what's the latest devastating attack on believers in the north-east of the country. They were initially kidnapped by suspected militants with ties to Islamic State. This is the latest tragic incident which puts the lives of Christians in the DRC in such danger.

Let us pray for their protection.
Amen

For the moment please contact hinkley872@btinternet.com for Baptisms, Banns of Marriage, Weddings and Funerals – updated details will follow

The Diocesan website can be accessed via this link:- <https://www.chichester.anglican.org/>

You can subscribe to the Diocesan e-news via this link:-
<https://diochi.us4.listmanage.com/subscribe/post?u=7a86e90c11bd11bb3e7fe22e6&id=1b2e7005c3>

Deadline for the next Newsletter is Monday 24th March 2025. Please send Items via email to newsletter@stjohnshollington.co.uk