



ST JOHN'S HOLLINGTON WITH ST PETER & ST PAUL

Hello,

I hope this finds you enjoying the sunshine, and if like me - as a parent of young children - that you're also managing the summer holiday juggle with ease; I for one have had quite a productive day so far... I've barely managed to get any work done, but I have built a cardboard castle with my 5-year-old (a pretty epic one at that!).

Here's what's coming up in this month's newsletter:

- **Ark Alexandra Academy Ofsted Update**
- **Resources for the Book of Acts sermon series**
- **The Wedding of David Farrell & Lisa Knust**
- **United Service - Sunday 30th August**
- **Parish Prayer Requests**
- **Upcoming dates**



ARK ALEXANDRA ACADEMY UPDATE

Ark Alexandra Academy is the largest Church of England secondary school in the area, split across two sites - the Helenswood Campus, opposite Conquest Hospital on the Ridge, and the William Parker campus which is close to St Peter & St Paul - both of which lie within the geographical boundaries of this parish. As the parish priest, I have served on the governing body of the school since last year, and am in the school on a regular basis leading their daily collective worship and working to help implement the school's Christian vision and ethos with the senior

leadership team - this is easily one of the more rewarding and joyful parts of my vocation as a Church of England priest.

As you might recall from the 'Prayer Requests' section of the last newsletter, the school were awaiting the final results of a recent Ofsted inspection. **I am delighted to announce that Ark Alexandra Academy - under the new Ofsted framework introduced last year - secured a 'Strong' judgement across all areas (which is roughly equivalent to somewhere between 'Good' and 'Outstanding' in the previous framework).**

[Click here to read the full report.](#)

Many in the local community will know of the school's tumultuous past and poor performance in previous Ofsted inspections. Those tensions only heightened when, back in 2019, the school became a part of the Ark Academy Schools Trust, who introduced wholesale reforms which were met with some not insignificant pushback from many in the local community. However, I believe these results show that these changes have effected a significantly positive improvement for secondary education opportunities in our local community, with Ark Alexandra Academy now being the highest performing secondary school in the area, especially, as the report details, with regard to pupils with special educational needs (something very close to my own heart as a parent of a SEN child).

As well as being a part of the inspection in my capacity as governor, I had the privilege of attending the concluding debrief on the final day of the inspection, and was in the room with the school's senior leaders and teaching team when His Majesty's inspector gave their provisional grades (prior to the final report being published) - the feeling of relief was palpable, as well as a great feeling of pride, love, and joy - there was not a dry eye in the room, proving just how much hard work these excellent teachers have put in over the last few years to make Ark Alexandra Academy a 'strong' school that our town can be proud of and which cares deeply about its students.

Here's a few personal highlights I've picked out from the report:

"The school's Christian ethos and its central values of 'faith, kindness and excellence' make a real difference to pupils' experiences at school. They regularly reflect spiritually, developing insights into their own beliefs and those of others. This supports a culture within which pupils respect each other and the staff that they work with."

"Pupils take great pride in their work and reach the high standards set by the school. **Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils make particularly positive progress through the curriculum.**"

"Overall, pupils' attendance is currently above [national] average and on an upward trajectory. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has halved. Significantly, the greatest gains have been made in the rates of attendance of the specific groups of pupils mentioned above [, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils]."

"Vulnerable pupils are at the front and centre of the school's work. This is clearly evident in all aspects of the school, whatever additional barriers pupils might have. Whether they are pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils or pupils known to social care, leaders and staff prioritise them highly."

"The support that the school provides for pupils' pastoral needs is a significant strength. The dedicated team of staff provides high-quality guidance for pupils. Pupils are very confident that they will get the right help if they have any concerns, worries or problems."

"Pupils' wide range of needs are met extremely well by this highly inclusive school. **Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or with other barriers to their learning are at the very heart of the school's work.**"

Do please continue to pray for the school as they build on this fantastic achievement and continue the highly effective work taking place there.



THE BOOK OF ACTS

As a parish, since Easter, we have taken a months-long deviation from the prescribed lectionary readings for Sunday services (churches that follow the lectionary - which are many across several denominations - are prescribed 4 readings every day of the year, which across a 3 year cycle, effectively covers the whole of the Bible) to focus exclusively on one single book in our Holy Scriptures - the New Testament book of Acts which was written by Luke the Evangelist (who of the four Gospels, also penned the one bearing his name). The lectionary offers a broad and varied diet of Scripture, but it doesn't allow for much more than a surface level opportunity to engage with specific texts, which is why we're in the midst of this "deep-dive" into the book of Acts that will take us right up until Advent, when we shall return to the texts prescribed by the lectionary.

I really hope this 'sermon series' is proving beneficial for you in your walk with Christ. I wanted to offer a couple of extra resources for those wishing to delve even deeper into the book of Acts:

- **The Bible Project guide to the Book of Acts** - Working with a team of professional animators, the Bible Project produces some excellent explanatory videos and guides for every book of the Bible and various theological motifs - for free!
[You can find a whole series of videos on Acts by clicking here.](#)
- **Catch up with sermons** - missed a Sunday? Or do you want to read through a transcript of the sermon you heard at church? I upload all of my sermons (and one or two other thoughts and reflections) to the online platform, *Substack*.
Visit <https://amidfragments.substack.com/> to catch up.
- **Book recommendations** - for those wanting to take their biblical nerdery to the next level!

- *Belief: a Theological Commentary - Acts*, by Willie James Jennings.
- *Paul: An Apostle's Journey*, by Douglas A. Campbell
- *Acts*, by Beverly Roberts Gaventa.



THE WEDDING OF LISA KNUST & DAVID FARRELL

Saturday 29th August | St John the Evangelist,
Hollington | 2pm

David and Lisa are a part of the congregation at St John's, but many of you will remember David's baptism by full immersion at the united service at St Peter & St Paul last year, and his powerful testimony of how Jesus led him to faith.

The next logical step in his walk with Jesus..? Tying the knot of course!

After nearly two decades together, and two daughters later, Lisa and David are stepping into the sacred confines of Holy Matrimony and will be making their public declaration of love and commitment to one another before God, **at St John's on Saturday 29th August at 2pm.**

David, Lisa, and their beautiful family, are a constant source of inspiration and encouragement for me, and a helpful reminder that God is always at work despite my failings (and often in spite of my best efforts!), and they have had a big impact on this household of faith since joining last year, so this is an especially meaningful moment, not only for me, but for the parish too.

As such, please do keep them in your prayers as they prepare for the big day (whilst also managing the summer holidays juggle!), and **please do come and join us on the day for the wedding ceremony at St John's to support and celebrate David & Lisa**, and not only their love for one another but God's immeasurable love for them in Christ Jesus, and His joy at their marriage.



UNITED PARISH SERVICE

Sunday 30th August | St Peter & St Paul, Parkstone
Road | 10:30am

As per the 5th Sunday pattern in the parish, we'll all be gathering together as one for a united parish service hosted at St Peter & St Paul on Sunday 30th August at 10:30am.

These services are really important for fostering a sense of togetherness as two church communities united in vision and mission. Sometimes these services can put us a little out of our comfort zones - different church, different people, different tradition - which is precisely why they are vital to our wellbeing as a parish, reinforcing the notion that we are in this together, not because we like the particular "brand/style" of church that "this" or "that" church is "selling", but because we have been called together *by, in, and through* Christ Jesus. These services are a conscious choice to come together despite our differences (which are in fact one of the great strengths of our parish), because *He is worthy of our praise and adoration*. You can guarantee that we will "raise the roof" with some rousing hymns; we will celebrate the sacrament of Jesus' presence among us at the altar; we will pray together; and of course, we'll have a good ol' bit of lunch and a chinwag together after the service too.

If you would normally attend St John's and need some help getting to St Peter & St Paul, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

NB: *there will be no service at St John's on Sunday 30th August.*



PARISH PRAYER REQUESTS

If you're the praying type, please keep the following in your prayers:

- **For Ark Alexandra Academy** - that they might continue to build upon the success of their latest Ofsted inspection, growing in *faith, excellence, and kindness*, and for all our local schools.
- **For our Diocese of Chichester**
 - for the *Vacancy in See* committee as they discern who will become our next diocesan bishop after +Martin's recent retirement from the post,
 - for those recently ordained as Deacons in our diocese:
 - *Rev Harri England* (Rye),
 - *Rev Jacob Mayho* (Eastbourne),
 - *Rev Jacob Wigley* (Chichester),
 - *Rev Martin Draper* (Yapton, Climping, and Ford),
 - and for all those exploring the vocation to ordained ministry.
- **For our building projects** - that any barriers to progress would be removed, funds raised, and work begun soon.
 - St John's are now retrieving quotes from contractors before applying for the faculty for the internal reordering of the church (including the installation of much needed toilets!). And a small army of volunteers have begun some remedial works on the church room to make it suitable for children's work (volunteers needed for the latter!).
 - St Peter & St Paul have finally had a crucial drain survey completed after much toing and froing with the council. Plans can begin to move forward - please pray there won't be many more hoops to jump through!
- **For us and for our vision and values as a parish**
 - that we might all grow in grace, in love with God, and in fellowship with one another as we respond to the Good News about Jesus together,
 - for David & Lisa as they prepare to get hitched,
 - for those currently preparing for baptism,
 - for our upcoming united service - Sunday 30th August,
 - and for the next meeting of our PCC - Wednesday 5th August.



UPCOMING DATES

A few dates for your diary:

- **PCC Meeting** - Wednesday 5th August, 7:30pm, at St Peter & St Paul
- **Next Midweek Communion** - Wednesday 5th August, 12noon, at St Peter & St Paul
- **The Wedding of Lisa Knust & David Farrell** - Saturday 29th August, 2pm, at St John's, Hollington
- **United Service** - Sunday 30th August, 10:30am, at St Peter & St Paul
- **Harvest Services:**
 - St John's - Sunday Service, 27th September, 10:15am
 - St Peter & St Paul:
 - Accessible Service - Monday 28th September
 - Sunday Service - 4th October
- **Samara Levy & 'the Dr'** - from [Samara's Aid Appeal](#) (distributing vital aid to communities affected by the war in Syria), will be coming to speak at St Peter & St Paul's Sunday service on Sunday 25th October.



That's all for now in this month's newsletter. As always, thank you so much for the part you play - however great or small - in making this parish what it is and helping us live up to our vision *to build communities rooted in the grace of God, who respond to the good news of God's grace, by working, praying, and hoping with Jesus*. Grace & Peace, Toby

Rev Tobias J Lancaster

Priest-in-Charge

St John the Evangelist, Hollington, with St Peter & St Paul, Parkstone Road

NB: I will be on holiday from the 6th - 21st August.

www.stjohnswithpandp.org