



Pews News

United Benefice of Shenstone & Stonnall



4th Sunday of Easter – 3rd May 2020

**Alleluia, Alleluia, He is Risen!
He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!**

I pray you are all safe and well. Don't forget if you need help in any way please call me and I'll do my very best to find the right sort of help for you.

Our readings today help us remember what its like to walk with the risen Lord. Although at this moment we may feel separated and apart from him, we will one day be able to worship together and what a glorious day that will be.

With all Blessings
Rev Liz

He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

A Prayer of thanks for our times

We thank you for the technology available to use today and for how our churches are using it to share the gospel. We pray you would use this time of change to grow your church and bring many more to know you as their Lord and saviour.
Amen

Collect Prayer – 4th Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ,
faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep:
teach us to hear your voice
and to follow your command,
that all your people may be
gathered into one flock,
to the glory of God the Father.



News from the Church of England – current as at 30th April 2020

- All public acts of church activities, worship and private prayer opportunities within church are suspended until further notice.
- Guidance and ruling on conducting weddings and funerals is available on the websites of Lichfield Diocese and The Church of England.
- <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>
- <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/latest-coronavirus-information>

Our Prayers

- We pray for our world, and all in need at this time.
- We pray for our Queen and all the Royal Family, and in particular Prince Charles. We pray for all our Government, our Bishops and Clergy. We pray especially for the Prime Minister and give thanks for the safe arrival of a baby son.
- We pray for our country as we cope with the extended period of lockdown. Protect and guide us.
- Many known to us have had much needed surgery and treatment postponed, be with them all.
- We pray for Larry and Brenda Butler following Larry's fall, John and Di Gavan and for those caring for vulnerable relatives.
- We hold before you those in our Community affected by Covid-19, and those who need to isolate
- We think about those bereaved particularly the families of Ann Punch and Michael Scott, after the funerals held this week, the Clarke and Poxon families as they prepare for funerals in the next week or so.
- We give thanks for those who have been healed
- We thank you for all key and frontline workers. Protect them Lord

Help and Assistance

We want to make sure everyone in our church and our communities stay safe. If you have any need whatever please contact one of our care coordinators who will their best to find someone to help you.

Graham & Margaret Birt 01543 483138

Di Proctor 01543 480442

Val Neale 01543 374430

Contributions for our local foodbanks.

If you would like to make contribution to our food banks the following collection points are available;

For the Lichfield Food Bank (Shenstone Church) –

The Vicarage, St Johns Hill, a container is in the porchway
7 Church Close, Shenstone, a container is outside the door.

For the Thomas Project (Stonnall Church) –

1 Lazy Hill, a box is inside the porch

Thank you for your generous contributions.

Social Media

If you don't use social media and would prefer not to, the Archbishop of Canterbury has set up a free phone line of a service you can listen to. If you know someone who would like this, please pass this number on to them.



Morning Prayer times on FaceBook

During the week, Monday to Friday, there is a short time of Morning Prayer on both FaceBook pages. This time of prayer is based on the set liturgy for Morning Prayer for the day. You can access an app for this at <https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/apps/time-to-pray>. It's a free app and includes Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer for each day.

There will also be a short service posted on our FaceBook pages to commemorate VE day Thursday 8th May.

Church Finances

Although both our churches are closed for public worship and private prayer time our bills still need to be paid. Thank you to those of you who continue to give by standing order. If you usually give by envelope on the plate you will have received a letter with a supply of envelopes in to enable you to continue your donations during our shut down time. You can either save these up till we're able to reopen or contact one of the wardens and they'll arrange for it to be collected from you.

A justgiving page for each church has been set up should you or a family member wish to make a donation, the details are as follows;

For St John the Baptist

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/stjohnthebshenstone>

For St Peter's Church

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/pccofstpetersstonnall>

At the time of printing this newsletter, £340 has been donated on St Peters page with gift aid an additional £85 has been raised and £350 on St John the Baptist's page. Thank you to the donors.

VE Day – from Lichfield Diocese' website

Lichfield Cathedral and a growing number of other cathedrals are uniting this VE Day in a project to remember heroes of the past and present as part of the [Big Picnic for Hope](#).

The Big Picnic for Hope is an opportunity for households to be part of a virtual get together on 8 May. The project asks people to stay at home, to picnic indoors or in their gardens, and to join friends and families virtually. Churches across the diocese are encouraged to get involved in the initiative which will raise money for the Trussell Trust.

Care for the family – The Marriage Sessions

Have you ever considered that love isn't just a feeling? In a marriage love needs to go beyond feelings – sometimes our actions speak loudest of all. Nearly 3000 couples have already signed up for The Marriage Sessions, don't miss out! Care for the Family, are passionate about supporting couples in their relationships, and that's why they are streaming The Marriage Sessions, direct to your home – free of charge!

It's a four-part resource exploring how couples can build a lasting relationship. Whether you're newlyweds or have been married for years, these sessions will help your marriage blossom during these uncertain times – and all you need is an hour a week.

The key themes that are covered in the four sessions are:

CHERISH – the forgotten vow and how to keep your love alive

CONNECT – understanding each other and the art of communication

COLLABORATE – dealing with pressure points and handling conflict well

COMMIT – love is a choice when the going gets tough

Book your place now, book via Care for the Family FaceBook page or their website <https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/courses/marriage-courses-the-marriage-sessions>

UCB Bible Notes – message from Rev John and Ann

UCB Word for Today etc for May to July have arrived. John usually puts the booklets at the back of church and has no idea of who takes their copy from there. They will be available from outside John and Ann's front door in dry weather, otherwise ring the bell and stand back two metres!! If you are unable to collect your copy, please ring us and we will arrange delivery if possible. Stay safe!

Our readings for this Sunday are;

Acts 2:42-end

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds^[i] to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home^[k] and ate their food with glad and generous^[l] hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

John 10:1-10

'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ² The one who

enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Songs for today

Lord of all hopefulness, The Lord's my shepherd (Townend)

Thought for today

(bullet points of sermon posted on FaceBook 3rd May)

- I wonder how many of you that drive uses Sat Nav, or are you old school and stick with your paper map? SN users, do you argue with the voice? They say that SN voices are many female as male drivers will accept instructions from a woman. Perhaps in our season of lockdown, you married couples could discuss that in a grown up way? But we follow the voice of the SN to get you where you want to go.
- Reading today explores the thought of following a voice, following the true voice. Not a computer generated SN but the true voice, a voice that will uphold us with hope, salvation and promise.
- In John, says 'I am the gate for the sheep, one of the seven 'I am' statements that's Jesus makes in John's gospel. 'I am the gate', of the seven, this seems to be the least spiritual, doesn't seem to have same ring as 'I am the light of the world' or 'I am the resurrection' compare that with 'I am the gate'! Think about what a gate is used for, to keeps things in, to keep things out, to keep things private,

locked away. Easiest way through a gate is to walk through it, not to climb over it. Usually surrounded by a fence or a wall.

- Jesus explains in John, though who can or can't use the gate to enter the sheepfold. The shepherd has the right to come through the gate, and lead his sheep, the shepherd and only him. Do you notice tho, the point made about thieves and bandits, they will try and come over the wall, to get the sheep, to kill and destroy them. The sheep in the gospel tho only respond to the shepherds voice, they only follow the shepherd they know will take care of them.
- Ask you question, please don't answer out loud, a question for your heart. – do you always follow the voice of the shepherd? Adults, human we have the opportunity to come out of the sheepfold, we are exposed to many outside influences, outside voices – how do we make sure we are not being led astray by these outside voices. Although in our lockdown regime, we shouldn't be going through the door or the gate quite so readily.
- I have a weakness for trash, films, TV, books, magazines. Familiar with ladies mags, Bella, Chat Take a break – front pages devoted to all sorts of stories, all sorts of voices telling all. The back pages of these mags are full of puzzles, horoscopes and adverts. Discuss content of adverts – psychic healers. How does that work?? Also weight loss potions and pills, cosmetic surgery and so on. Folks false voices telling you they can heal, you're not perfect and you are unworthy. False voices
- Jesus is the only true voice, the only true voice that can lead us, guide us and protect us, from the outside elements the influences that could turn us from the true path. The sheep in the gospel follow without questioning, they know the voice that will do this. We have to choose to listen and to follow.
- Why should we, because Jesus loves us, enough that our sinfulness became his burden, enough that his perfect righteousness became ours, enough to suffer on the cross for us.
- Our early church in the Acts 2 reading, really took to heart listening to the one true voice. They knew what to do, they studied the apostles' teaching about Jesus, they shared bread together, they prayed, they shared their resources such as food and money, they praised God.
- It would be easy in our current situations to forget all these things, and perhaps become overwhelmed with the thought that we're not

together, so why bother. That's a false voice to listen to. We are sharing fellowship with each other using technology, a gift from God that we have taken to use for our purpose. We may not be able to meet together to share bread, but in our homes we can meet and share fellowship and God's word. Let's listen to the true voice of hope, salvation and promise to uphold us during these times, and not false voices of despair and destruction. Amen.

- Father God, in Jesus we have a true shepherd. We come together as the sheep of his fold to worship you and give thanks for this great gift. Help us to draw close to you that by your love and our attentive listening we may become so familiar with Christ's voice that we will not be deceived or led astray by any other. Nurture and equip us as faithful leaders and ministers of your gospel according to Christ's example, we pray. Amen

Amen

Please stay safe and well. If you need help please do not hesitate to contact Rev Liz. She will try to find the help you need.

Vicar: - Revd Liz Chamberlain 480286 vicar@shenstoneandstonnall.co.uk

St John the Baptist Church Wardens: - Bonnie 480278 & Bill Whitney 480652

St Peter's Church Wardens: - Peter & Patsy Toulouse 361778

Parish Administrator: - 480286 admin@shenstoneandstonnall.co.uk

St John's Hall Bookings & Administration: - 480286 admin@shenstoneandstonnall.co.uk Website: www.stjohnthebaptistshenstone.org.uk Facebook: St John the Baptist Shenstone and St Peters Church Stonnall