



# Pews News

United Benefice of Shenstone & Stonnall



**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter – 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

As we all learn to work with the lifting of some restrictions, I pray we keep safe and well.

With all Blessings  
Rev Liz

**He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!**

## **A Prayer**

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy.  
Sustain and support the anxious,  
be with those who care for the  
sick,  
and lift up all who are brought  
low;  
that we may find comfort  
knowing that nothing can  
separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## **Collect Prayer – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

Risen Christ,  
by the lakeside you renewed your  
call to your disciples:  
help your Church to obey your  
command  
and draw the nations to the fire of  
your love,  
to the glory of God the Father.



## News from the Church of England – current as at 16<sup>th</sup> May 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 all our Government, our Bishops and Clergy. We pray especially for the Prime Minister and our Government as decisions continue to be made.
- We pray for areas of the world where violence continues. We think particularly about those in Kabul.
- We pray for our country as we cope with the lifting of some restrictions. Protect and guide us.
- Many known to us have had much needed surgery and treatment postponed, be with them all.
- We hold before you those in our Community affected by Covid-19, and those who need to isolate
- We think about the Poxon and Ross families as they prepare for funerals in the next week.
- We give thanks for those who have been healed
- We hold before the Lord our schools, teachers, support workers and those pupils preparing to return to school
- 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. Both foodbank projects can only take gifts of non perishable items, so please no fresh goods.

## **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.

## 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 and those who have posted donations through the Vicarage door. If you do 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/pccofstpetersstonall>

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.

## Care for the family – The Marriage Sessions, started 10<sup>th</sup> May

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.

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>

## **Our readings for this Sunday are;**

### **Acts 17: 22-31**

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God<sup>[b]</sup> and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.'

Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

### **John 14:15-21**

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

## **zSongs for today**

I lift my hands to the coming King, There is a Redeemer

## **Thought for today**

(sermon posted on FaceBook 17<sup>th</sup> May)

In our gospel reading for today we hear about promises that Jesus makes to his disciples. Can you imagine what it must have been like for those first disciples? After leaving their livelihood and families behind and following Jesus for three years, they hear he is now leaving them! I wonder if they felt they had been promised the moon and now it looked like it was going to be taken away from them. They don't feel they have the expertise to continue on. They don't really want to carry on without him if they were really honest. What will they do without him? How will they go on. Jesus' words here are meant to encourage and comfort his disciples, who are a bit afraid of what might happen to them.

Remember the setting of this part of John's gospel, it's the 'farewell speech' for want of a better description. Coming to the close of his earthly ministry, Jesus can only speak to the disciples of love and the assurance that the God he knows so intimately as Father will continue to accompany them. Last week we heard how he reassured Thomas that he really does know what's happening, and challenged Philip by asking him 'don't you know me Philip, even after I have been among you for such a long time? To reassure them he makes these promises to them, and the others, to give them comfort and to help them. This is exactly what the disciples needed to hear. And not only them, its something we need to hear too. Because you see, in this passage we heard from John this morning, Jesus promises to send us his own spirit, his own breath, his own inner life. And the word translated as "Counselor.

Jesus knew what his disciples were feeling as they gathered together in the Upper Room. Jesus knows that his disciples are going to face many challenges, and many claims to truth. He knew that life would be overwhelming and complicated. In his day, the primary challenge to the people came from the Roman Empire. Jesus knew that they would be surrounded by many forces that would seek to separate them from God the Father, and so as he prepared to leave this earth, he gave the Holy Spirit to keep them united with God and God's love. Think about all that means. It wasn't just for the disciples, the HS wasn't just left for that time, but for all time until Jesus himself returns. The promise Jesus made

then is still good for us today. Like the disciples we too are not left as orphans with no one to care for us, we don't need to feel overpowered by life, hopeless or helpless. In his great love for us, Jesus promises us help. He promises us the Holy Spirit. He promises us one whose presence will comfort us. We too have a counsellor, a helper, a comforter, and an advocate.

What other promises then surround us all. We hear promises made at weddings & baptisms, of course. We hear promises made by our Rainbow, Cubs and scouts. But let's jump back to those promises made at Baptisms. Those of you who are Godparents to someone, will have made certain promises at that time. You made your own vows of turning Christ, repenting and renouncing. You also made promises to pray for your godchildren, to enable them to meet with Christ. As a church we also make those promises corporately when someone is baptised. If you are a godparent I'm sure you do pray for your god children.

If you are in the group of people that need to be shielded you've probably made promises to your family and loved ones that you will stay in and keep safe. Promises are hard to make and keep sometimes aren't they. No promise should be made lightly or without thought. Promises often come at a cost as well, staying in for instance, not seeing family and friends, relying on others for shopping and collecting medicine etc.

Today though I'd like you to make another promise – and that's a promise to pray. In these times more than ever we need to pray and to offer prayers for all sorts of things. You may be a praying type of person, you may not, but could I ask you to pray now more than ever and to pray specifically for things.

1 We heard in the week about some relaxation of lockdown restrictions. All of us are very keen for the restrictions to be lifted but they must be done so safely. Pray for that safety for all concerned. 2

Pray for our school, teachers, staff and pupils as they work out how to manage the phased reopening of school.

3 Pray for those returning to work. That they can travel safely and their work places are suitably equipped.

4 Pray for those who have been affected by Covid – 19, either through contracting the virus, seeing family members with the virus or affected physically, mentally, financially or any other way

5 Pray for our churches that they may be opened soon, so that we can worship and prayer together.

Can you promise to do this? I pray that you can.

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](mailto: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](mailto:admin@shenstoneandstonnall.co.uk)

St John's Hall Bookings & Administration: - 480286 [admin@shenstoneandstonnall.co.uk](mailto:admin@shenstoneandstonnall.co.uk) Website:  
[www.stjohnthebaptistshenstone.org.uk](http://www.stjohnthebaptistshenstone.org.uk) Facebook: *St John the Baptist Shenstone and St Peters Church Stonnall*