



Pews News

United Benefice of Shenstone & Stonnall



1st Sunday after Trinity – 14th June 2020

**The Lord be with you
And also with you**

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.

We are all very excited to hear the news that churches can open for private prayer from June 15th. Please do have a look at the section of this newsletter which explains the plan and process.

With all Blessings
Rev Liz

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 – 1st Sunday after Trinity

God of truth,
help us to keep your law of love
and to walk in ways of wisdom,
that we may find true life
in Jesus Christ your Son.
Amen



News from the Church of England – current as at 12th June 2020

- All public acts of worship within church are suspended until further notice.
- Clergy are however now allowed into church buildings for private prayer and to film morning prayer and services.
- From 15th June, when safe to do so, churches may open for private prayer time. Please see further information later in this newsletter
- Weddings are still not permitted to take place within churches, however there are plans to allow funerals, with restrictions to take place shortly.
- <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 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 our country as we cope with the lifting of some restrictions. Protect us and help us to make the right choices.
- We pray for peace across the world. As protests and demonstrations take place we pray for safety, calm and good order.
- We hold our clergy, Church Wardens and PCC members in prayer as they work through the guidance and changes required to enable our churches to open.
- We hold before the Lord our schools, teachers, support workers and those pupils who have returned to school. We ask for patience and strength for all families where children have not been able to return to school.
- We pray especially for Mike and Veronica Raybould, Bill and Di Proctor, Larry and Brenda Butler. Lord protect and heal, give with strength and energy.
- We think of those recently bereaved, especially the family of Mrs Gwen Smith, former resident of Stonnall and Coffee Club regular.
- We thank you for all key and frontline workers. Protect them Lord
- We pray for the ordinands (vicars in training) as they leave their colleges, move homes and prepare to take up their Curacy posts. We especially pray for Graham Wigley who will be joining us here in our United Benefice.

Church Opening

We are of course very excited to hear that permission has been given for our churches to open for private prayer from Monday 15th June. The opening of the churches is dependent on a number of things being in place, including amongst other things, a deep clean of the building, a risk assessment being completed, seating in line with social distancing and the church being 'staffed' during opening hours.

We (clergy, church wardens, PCCs), are working very hard to ensure all is in place as soon as possible. Its thought that both churches might open for one or two sessions a week and these dates and times will be publicised widely once they can be arranged and staff to steward in place. Our churches will not be ready to be open on Monday 15th June.

The Diocese/Church of England have suggested that funerals might also recommence from Monday, with strict protocols such as limited numbers, limited staff and no singing. However these protocols have not been issued at the time of preparing this newsletter, the morning of 12th June.

Its also thought (by Diocese/Church of England) that public worship **might** recommence from 4th July. Its envisaged there will be strict protocols as for funerals, such as limited numbers, limited staff, no singing, no communion, and no fellowship at the end of the services. Once instructions are received the relevant ministry teams and wardens will meet to plan how best to offer public worship.

If you need any further information or would like to talk this through please do call me (Rev Liz). All the information is updated regularly on the Church of England and Diocese websites should you wish to keep fully informed.

- <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>
- <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/latest-coronavirus-information>

Update – Graham Wigley

Graham will be joining us from 28th June and will initially be licensed as a Lay Curate. His ordination date has now been provisionally rearranged as 26th September. At this stage we're not sure how many guests, if any will be allowed in the Cathedral. Due to the current situation the purchase of the house in Stonnall has stalled. A date for exchange and completion of contracts couldn't be agreed before Graham needs to move into his new home, so Graham will live in the Streetley parish curate's house. Graham has now moved into his new home. This house is 3 miles away from Stonnall church, so not too inconvenient. His new address will be;

11 Icknield Close
Streetley
West Midlands
B74 3NN

Please feel free to send a 'welcome to your new home' card if you would like to. Graham's email address is curate@shenstoneandstonnall.co.uk, a phone number will follow shortly once the land line is set up.0

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 co-ordinators 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.

Our readings for this Sunday are;

Romans 5:1-8

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Matthew 9:35-10:8

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of

Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

Songs for today

Will you come and follow me, In Christ Alone

Thoughts for today

(from sermon posted on FaceBook 14th June)

I wonder if you've ever been given an instruction to go and do something? I'm sure many of you have. Our reading from Matthew today, starts with Jesus telling his disciples to pray that God would send labourers into his harvest. He had scarcely finished this command before he appointed the twelve disciples to preach the word. He gave them clear and precise instructions about what they could and couldn't do. He really wanted to build them up for the next part of their journey and walk with him. As you know we have Graham Wigley joining us as curate in a week or so, Graham too is starting out on a journey, new to him and new to us.

Our disciples in Matthews gospel must have felt quite overwhelmed with the task that Jesus had laid before them, to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and drive out demons. I wonder if any of them thought 'I'm not trained for this, this is way above my pay scale?'. I'm sure one or two of them would have done. I know that they'd been with Jesus for some and seen him perform all those miracles, but now they'd got to go and do it themselves. Jesus does however give them some don'ts as well though 'do not go among the gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel'. At that time the disciples are highly unlikely to go to the gentiles and Samaritans anyway, but with this instruction Jesus is giving Israel first chance if you like of hearing his message. The message that the kingdom of heaven is near. They are to go with the same authority and power that has characterised

Jesus' mission. If we continued further into this gospel reading we'd hear Jesus talk to them about perseverance and suffering. Paul in the Romans text tells us too about suffering and the effects suffering will have on us, by bringing us perseverance, which build character, with brings hope which results in love.

This story of the twelve going out is a story of great calling. These everyday people called out to do Jesus' work for him. They were called out of the hardship of the Roman occupation, and went on to fight a battle, not with swords and chariots but with the good news of Jesus. These ordinary people went on to be the foundation of the new emerging church.

When we follow Jesus, when we become Christians we too are called upon the advance Jesus' kingdom here on earth, and our calling, what it looks like will be as individual as each of us are. Graham's calling, like mine and John Aston's is to be ordained clergy in these parishes. But you don't have to be ordained to answer Jesus' call on you to advance the kingdom. Anyone can answer that call, you'll remember at the start of this reading today Jesus said 'Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore to send out workers into his harvest field.' At the moment we can't 'go out' as much as we would like to, although this is changing at a vast rate of knots. But we can still advance the kingdom. We can pray, we can read scripture, we can share stories of Jesus and the work he's done for us with others. We can contribute to food banks, call the lonely, write letters. We can persevere, build our character, build our hope and love each other. Will you answer Jesus' call on your life to work in his harvest field.

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*