



# Pews News

United Benefice of Shenstone & Stonnall



**9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity – 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

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

We live in an ever-changing world at the moment with guidelines changing along with it. Following very recent changes to comply with the latest guidelines it is mandatory for you to wear a mask while you attend public worship. You will of course be already used to wearing a mask while you shop so wearing a mask in church may not cause you any issues, but please speak to me or one of the wardens if you are exempt from wearing a face mask.

With all Blessings

Rev Liz

01543 480286



**Collect Prayer –  
9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity**

Gracious Father,  
revive your Church in our day,  
and make her holy, strong and  
faithful,  
for your glory's sake  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Please note  
Rev Liz and Ray are on  
holiday from 15<sup>th</sup> August to  
25<sup>th</sup> August.**

## **Opening Times and Services - St John the Baptist, Shenstone**

Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> August	10.30 am to noon	Church Open Morning Worship led by Di Proctor
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> August	10.30 am to noon	Church Open Morning Worship led by Carol Law
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> August	10.30 am to noon	Church Open Communion led by Rev John
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> August	10.30 am to noon	Church Open Morning Worship led by Curate Graham Wigley

## **Opening Times and Services - St Peter's Church Stonnall**

Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> August	10.00 – Noon 10.30 – 11.00	Church Open Communion led by Rev Liz
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> August	10.00 – Noon 10.30 – 11.00	Church Open Morning Worship led by Patsy Toulouse
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> August	10.00 – Noon 10.30 – 11.00	Church Open Morning Worship led by Alan Bateman
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> August	10.00 – Noon 10.30 – 11.00	Church open Communion led by Rev Liz and Rdr Ray Chamberlain

## **Communion in our churches**

We have now been given permission to celebrate Communion in our churches as long as we follow the guidelines about these services. The documentation for this is quite detailed and some careful thought and preparation has been undertaken to enable Communion to be offered from 2<sup>nd</sup> August. The Communion services will look and feel very different to the services you have been used too.

Whenever possible Communion will be offered at our churches on alternate weeks. In line with guidelines only Communion wafers will be distributed, the priest leading the Communion service will take both wine and wafer.

Due to the restrictions on space and to ensure the safety of all concerned it is not possible for Communion to be taken at the Communion Rail in Stonnall, Communion will be brought to you while you remain in your pew. Communion will take place during the half hour led worship times.

### **St Peter's Church – booking in**

If you've attended worship at St Peter's Church Stonnall this week (9<sup>th</sup> August) and intend to come next week (16<sup>th</sup> August) please 'book your place for next week' before you leave church today. If you forget to do this please call or email Curate Graham Wigley on

Telephone 0121 352 0899 or

Email; [curate@shenstoneandstonnall.co.uk](mailto:curate@shenstoneandstonnall.co.uk)

At the risk of sounding like a theatre box office 'the booking line will close Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August'.

Joyfully, we are at capacity at St Peter's Church. We want to be able to welcome all who would like to worship with us, and we are very willing to run a second service if this is required.

### **Midweek Church Opening.**

During July both our churches have been opened for a few hours each Wednesday. Both churches have had stewards on duty during these hours however very few people have visited either church, and some sessions no visitors have come to the churches. Our PCCs have prayerfully considered mid week church opening and have made the decision to cease this from August onwards.



## News from the Church of England – current as at 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020

- Public acts of worship within church are now allowed to take place, subject to certain conditions.
- It is mandatory that worshippers wear a mask while inside the building.
- Weddings, funerals and baptisms are now permitted to take place within churches, subject to certain conditions.
- <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>
- APCMs need to be held by 31<sup>st</sup> October, more details and dates will follow shortly.

### 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 thank you for the Queen and the Royal Family
- We pray for our country as we cope with the lifting of some restrictions. Protect us and help us to make the right choices.
- Many couples who expected to get married this year have moved their weddings till next year. Ian and Lisa are still planning for their wedding to take place in August and we hold them in prayer.
- We hold our clergy, Church Wardens and PCC members in prayer as they continue to work through the guidance and changes required to enable our churches to open.
- We thank you for all key and frontline workers. Protect them Lord
- We give thanks that Jean Tidman is now back at home.
- We hold families recently bereaved in prayer and ask for comfort and strength for them in their time of need. In particular we think of Jean Bishop's family. We hold Pauline Tipton in prayer following the death of her daughter in law.\*
- We ask for healing for Joan Terry falling a fall, and continued healing for Kylan.

\*\* This was previously noted as 'daughter' in error. Apologies have been made to Pauline Tipton

## **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.

## **Morning Prayer times on FaceBook**

During the week, Tuesday 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.

**UCB Bible Study Notes** – are available from Rev John, please collect from 4 Fotherley Road, Shenstone.

**Our readings for this Sunday are;**

### **Romans 10:5-15**

<sup>5</sup>Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that "the person who does these things will live by them." <sup>6</sup> But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) <sup>7</sup> "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). <sup>8</sup> But what does it say?

"The word is near you,  
on your lips and in your heart"

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); <sup>9</sup> because<sup>[a]</sup> if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. <sup>11</sup> The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

<sup>14</sup> But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? <sup>15</sup> And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

### **Matthew 14:22-33**

<sup>22</sup> Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. <sup>23</sup> And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup> but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land,<sup>[d]</sup> for the wind was against them. <sup>25</sup> And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. <sup>26</sup> But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were

terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

<sup>28</sup> Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." <sup>29</sup> He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he noticed the strong wind,<sup>[e]</sup> he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" <sup>31</sup> Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" <sup>32</sup> When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup> And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

### **Songs for today**

I will offer up my life, Even though I walk through the vally

### **Thoughts for today – by Rev Liz**

Peter is for many, me included, a bible hero. This man who got so many things wrong, so many things not quite right but Jesus stilled called him to follow him and despite Peter's many failings the Lord loved him. And Peter failed many times didn't he? He tried so hard to 'get it right' but often just fell a bit short of the mark. But it didn't make any difference to the way Jesus' felt about him did it? And so here in our reading today we have another piece in Peter's story. We pick up the story in Matthew's gospel, just after the feeding of the five thousand. Can you imagine what the crowd must be like after that event, perhaps they can't believe what they have just witnessed. The disciples themselves are probably more than a bit perplexed. Jesus sends the disciples out in a boat to go to the other side of the lake, while Jesus himself was to stay behind and dismiss the crowds. It's a bit stronger than sending the disciples though isn't it – Jesus made the disciples go, I'm told the original Greek word was compelled. Maybe some of the disciples wanted to stay with Jesus rather than be separated from him. However Jesus was on his own and when the crowds had gone, he went up to the mountain to pray. The boat by this time, early evening, was far from shore, well on the way to the other side of the lake, some time later 'early in the morning' Jesus came walking on top of the water to meet with them. The disciples don't recognise him and think he's a ghost. This next bit really amuses me – Jesus tells them, not to be scared it's him and then we have one of Peter's brahmers 'Well if it really is you –tell me to come out of the boat'

Who else might it be walking on the water in the early hours of the morning? Anyway out Peter gets, walks on the waves and all is fine, until he takes his eyes off Jesus, notices the waves and starts to sink. He cries out 'Save me save me!' Jesus, of course does save him and asks him why he doubted anything. They both go back to the boat and the rest of the disciples realise who he really is and worship him.

Walking on water? Not probably the most sensible thing to do and it would take a lot of courage to get out of a boat in the middle of storm and step on to the water. I have been scared on many occasions but the one of the most scariest things I've done is... well you might not think its scary... but for me it was, going on a roller coaster twirly whirly thing at Drayton Manor Park. We were there on a corporate day out, supposedly fun, the whole company were there, along with wives husbands and children. Some bright spark thought it would be good to get a company photo of us 'all having a good time' on this roller coaster. Let me tell you friends, peer pressure is a terrible thing, there was not a chance that I would be able to get out of going on that.... That..... thing without appearing a right proper wuss. Anyway on this thing I go, I spend what feels like an eternity on it, really only 2-3 mins. I have my eyes shut the whole time; I'm praying oh boy am I praying. The photo shows the whole company, arms up, grinning madly, and then there's me; clearly not having a good time. After wards I sat with a colleague, do you remember Ann Marie who came on placement here, well I sat with her, she was still a smoker at that point, I was shaking, she was having a cigarette – I don't smoke but I was sorely tempted to start then I don't mind telling you. I did it though, I clearly remember stepping on it and there was a point when I thought 'now or never', a moment of no turning back and having to trust that the mechanics of the things wouldn't break down and that I would get to the end of the ride in one piece.

It wasn't quite like this for Peter though, Jesus told him along with the others to get in the boat and go to the other side of the lake. Peter had been brought up around boats, I don't imagine boats or the sea instilled many thoughts of panic for him he would be very comfortable. But when the storm hit, well that was different wasn't it. He and the others were concentrating on staying alive, on keeping the boat sail side up and then they see something walking towards them. How on earth didn't they realise it was Jesus!!! Why didn't they recognise who he was? Maybe

that was it, they were so busy keeping their heads really above the water they didn't, or couldn't look for Jesus and recognise him. And that happens doesn't it, when you're in the middle of the.....mess of your own particular storm, you can't for the life of you see Jesus in the storm with you. He is simply hidden from your view, because you can't see passed the waves, you can't see for the spray and muck that's bashing you over the head, you can't see Jesus. That's what happened to the disciples too, they were so concerned with what they were doing, they couldn't see Jesus with them, well 11 of them couldn't one of them did. Peter, he got out of the boat, he saw Jesus, he recognised Jesus was with him and got out of the boat, out of the situation he found himself in. Peter recognised Jesus.

The next thing to happen, is that Peter gets out of the boat. He gets out of the boat. In a storm, in fear of his life he gets out of the boat!!!! But did you pick up from the reading, he gets out in response to Jesus' command, he is obedient to Jesus, even if it seems like the maddest, craziest thing to do at that particular point. Ok the boat was not the most comfortable place to be at that time, but it was at least familiar, it had a very good chance of staying on top of the water rather than underneath it. Seemed like a plan, stay in the boat sit it out, wait for the storm to pass by. We all have our boats you know, places where we feel comfortable and places where although we can see all the storm around us, all the mess and chaos around us, we prefer to stay in the boat. To stay surrounded by our place of safety, the familiar place, the place we know. Sometimes though this boat can be the thing that's stopping us from really stepping out in faith, something that stops us from say, sharing the gospel with our family, friends or neighbours, something that stops us living as we're challenged too. Peter felt his fear but was still obedient Peter was obedient.

"He's only gone and done it." I imagine that would be what the rest of the disciples were thinking – Have you seen what he's just done, over the side, he's gone over the side. Peter's gone over the side. You can almost taste the hysteria can't you. Peter on the other hand is as happy as Larry at that moment. He's recognised Jesus, he knows he's scared but he's done it anyway. He's walking on the water towards Jesus! Just feel that for a moment, the happiness, the joy.. and then it happens. He sees the waves, he sees the storm, he realises that his face is still wet

and that the sea is still all around him, nothing really has changed. The storm hasn't suddenly started, the storm hasn't suddenly started its always been, what has changed though is Peter has noticed them. He's taken his eyes away from Jesus and seen all around him, the chaos, the difficulty the sheer idiocy of what he's doing. You can almost see the speech bubble coming out of his head 'What am I doing?????' Peter was in trouble, he was sinking. Life is like that though isn't it? Following Christ, being a Christian doesn't protect us from the problems, the storms, the fear of life, they still happen. What it does do though, like for Peter, Jesus is there to save us, he is there to reach out his hand and grab us and keep us safe. I wonder how many times he says though, why did you doubt, Peter why did you doubt me, Liz why did you doubt me, *fill in your own name* why did you doubt me. Jesus is always there, we perhaps don't always see him, but he is. Peter was saved

Peter then for all his faults and flaws, all his short comings comes out really well here. He recognises Jesus, he was obedient despite his fears and lastly but certainly not least he was saved. We are in strange times but I wonder if despite of the times we're living in we can recognise Jesus in our lives, be obedient to him and acknowledge and know that we are saved.

Amen.

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