



Pews News

United Benefice of Shenstone & Stonnall



Sunday 9th May 2021 The Sixth Sunday of Easter

**Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

We've all been living in a time of certain and I think we're all used to plans being changed and moved, sometimes at very short notice.

You will have noticed that the time of St Peter's APCM has been changed and will now take place within the church service, starting at 10.45 am. We pray for all those who have been nominated for posts and give thanks for willing servants hearts.

We do look forward to seeing you at the APCM or any of our service, but we do ask that if you are feeling unwell or showing any symptoms of Corona virus, then please do stay at home and keep yourselves and others safe.

Rev Liz
01543 480286

Collect for Sunday 9th May

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.

Amen

May Services

St John the Baptist, Shenstone

Sunday 9th May	10.45 am	Communion Service led by Rev John A
Sunday 16 th May	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Ray Chamberlain
Sunday 23 rd May	10.45 am	Communion service led by Rev Graham and Rev Liz
Sunday 30 th May	10.45 am	Communion service led by Rev Liz and Ray Chamberlain

St Peter's Church Stonnall

Sunday 9th May	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Rev Liz The APCM will be part of this service
Sunday 16 th May	10.45 am	Communion service led by Rev Liz
Sunday 23 rd May	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Patsy Toulouse
Sunday 30 th May	10.45 am	Communion service led by Rev Graham and Rev John A

These dates and times are subject to change at short notice should government guidance change. If that should be the case every effort will be made to communicate changes to you as quickly as possible.

APCM- St Peter's APCM takes place today. St John the Baptist APCM will take place 20th May. Here is a handy timetable with all the dates and deadlines:

APCM timetable	Shenstone
APCM date	20/05/2021
Notice of meeting on door by	02/05/2021
Nominations for PCC members to be received by	20/05/2021
Nominations for Wardens to be received by	19/05/2021
TAR circulated by	01/05/2021
Accounts to be approved	30/04/2021
Notice of ER	16/04/2020
Electoral Roll on Board for review	05/05/2021
ER taken down as complete	
Revised Roll displayed	12/05/2021

PCC, Deanery Synod Members and Church Warden – St John the Baptist

The PCC is the group that manages the day to day running of the church. There are three posts that are coming vacant

The Deanery Synod is the group that is involved in the running of the Lichfield Deanery, there is one vacant post.

A Church Warden is appointed by the PCC to be the Bishops' Officer and assists the Incumbent in the day to day running of the church. Bill Whitney's term of office has ended and so we need to appoint a new warden. Miranda Bonnielauri has offered to be re-nominated as Church Warden.

If any of these roles are something you would like to know more about, then please speak with either Rev Liz or one of the Church Wardens.

Morning Prayer

Rev Liz and Rev Graham say Morning Prayer together, in our churches at 9.30 am Tuesday to Friday. This short 15 mins service is live streamed to both FaceBook pages. You are very welcome to join them at this time – you won't be on screen although your voice might be heard! The services start to be livestreamed promptly at 9.30 am if you happen to join after 9.30 am you're still very welcome but 'cheery hellos' need to wait till the livestream ends.

Morning Prayer is at St John the Baptist church Tuesday and Thursday and at St Peters Church Wednesday and Friday.

Communion in church - We are really happy to be able to celebrate Communion once more. Communion will be in 'one kind' only, so that means only wafers will be distributed. This is to comply with Church of England instructions still in place. Masks must be worn inside church, singing of hymns is not yet permitted and social distancing restrictions should be complied with. Please be aware that Stage 1 restrictions are still in place until 17th May.

Our Prayers

- We pray for all our Government, our Bishops and Clergy.
- We thank you for the Queen and the Royal Family.
- We pray for St Peter's Church as they hold their APCM today.
- We pray for safety for all as we prepare to enter the next stage of the roadmap out of lockdown.
- We thank you Lord that we live in country where elections can be held without fear. We pray that the right people have been elected to the right posts. We ask for Christian voices to heard in places where decisions are made.
- We thank you Lord for all those who are assisting with recording and distributing of recorded services.
- We hold in prayer countries and areas where there is turmoil; we think of India Mexico, Myanmar and Jerusalem
- We pray for both schools in our benefice Greysbrooke School and St Peter's School. We thank for all teaching and support staff.

- We pray for the roll out of the vaccine and all who are involved in the administration of this. Thank you for large venues such as the cathedral being made available for this.
- We pray for all of those mourning the recent loss of Joan Norton, especially her husband David.
- We thank you Lord for Tim Cox and pray that the move to his new home went well.
- We pray for all those known to us in need of the Lord's comfort and strength we pray for all those known to us in need of comfort.
- We have some weddings taking place this year that were postponed from last year. Please pray for Stephen and Susan as they prepare for their wedding in June, at St Johns Church.

Rev Graham Priesting Service

Rev Graham will be Priested 23rd June 2021 at St Matthews Church, Walsall. Rev Graham has not been told yet if guests can attend this service, but as soon as this is known it will be announced.

There will be a joint Communion Service 27th June, at St John the Baptist Church starting at 10.45 am (there won't be a service at St Peter's on that day). Rev Graham will be presiding over Communion for the first time so please do join us if you are able. More details to follow.

Tim Cox

Many of you will know Tim Cox who lived in Shenstone and used to worship at St Johns Church till his health deteriorated so much getting up the hill to St Johns was proving difficult. Tim, as many of you know, continued to worship with our friends at Trinity Methodist Church. Tim's health is now at the point where he has decided he needs more care and so he's moved into residential care. A card has been sent from church, but if you would like to send an individual card to Tim, Rev Liz has his new address.

Songs for Sunday – All who are thirsty, There is a Redeemer

Bible Readings for Sunday:

Acts 10: 44-end

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

John 15:9-17

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

¹² “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I do not call you servants^[a] any longer, because the servant^[b] does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶ You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷ I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Thoughts for today by Rev Graham Wigley

We use the word ‘love’ a lot in modern society. Our songs are mostly about love, some people decide to have “live, laugh love” in huge foot high letters on their walls at home. We have a TV show called ‘Love Island’. I might even say that I love my car, I love my home, I love my

friends, I love my family...I love Star Wars. Love is a word that we use a lot.

You will know that I love those things that I have just listed in different ways. I will love my family in a different way to how I love Star Wars. The problem, however, with saying that I love my family and that I love a science fiction film is that I'm using the same word in English to describe two quite different feelings. We only have one word to describe different kinds of love...which is the word love.

Ancient Greek, however, doesn't have this problem. The original language that our Gospels were written in, as you may know, was Ancient Greek, and some of our English words often don't do justice to the original Greek.

The Greeks had multiple words for 'Love', whereas we have only one. Firstly, we have '*Eros*'. Now, this word describes the erotic and sexual kind of love that we see between two people in a romantic relationship. It's where we get the word 'Erotic' from.

Next, we have '*Philia*'. This word describes an affectionate, familiar kind of love. The love we have for fellow humans. It's more like the love between family or siblings.

Finally, we have '*Agape*'. This is the Ancient Greek word for a completely self-giving and sacrificial kind of Love. It is a deeply divine kind of love. In our reading from John's Gospel today we see the word 'love' used nine times. Nine times in nine verses. In this text today Jesus is giving a commandment to his disciples and the commandment is to love another as Jesus has loved them. But our English word doesn't tell us about the kind of love that Jesus is talking about. This is where we need to understand the original language, and in the original Greek when Jesus commands his disciples to love one another as he loves them, he uses the word Agape. Jesus is talking about a deeply divine, sacrificial, and self-giving love. This is, without a doubt, the most terrifying form of love that there is.

In verse nine Jesus says, "as my Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love." Again, the word that Jesus uses here is Agape. This is a divine and self-giving love. Just as God the Father gave all of himself over to Jesus, so too does Jesus sacrifice and give all of himself over to us, and in turn, he commands us to do the same to others. But what is the difference between an agape kind of love and philia or Eros in practice? Well, unlike Philia and Eros, agape is not something that you feel, it is something that you decide to do. Agape isn't something that we

always feel like doing, but it is something that we chose to do because we know that it is right.

Understanding Agape, this radical and self-giving love that bears little logical sense, is key in trying to understand the character of God, and how much God loves humanity and that despite our willingness to turn away, to sin, to choose to do what is wrong, God still shows us agape, because God loves that which is good and just and right.

This is the mammoth task that is given to us as Christians, to show the same love, that agape, which God gives to us, and to choose to love those we don't like and to forgive those who wrong us not because we feel like it, but because we decide and choose to do what is right over what we feel. In a way this gives me a sense of relief. We don't need to like all other people, remember Jesus never said that we need to like everyone, but we do need to love them, and by that, I mean we need choose to do what is right for all people, for their sake as well as our own. Sadly, this is where our English falls down, whenever we talk about love we think of what we feel. Agape is a love that we do not because we feel like it, but because it is the right thing to do.

So, remember Jesus' command to all of us. Love because it is right, not because it's easy.

Amen.

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Associate Minister: Revd John Aston, 01543 480388, bradston@btinternet.com

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