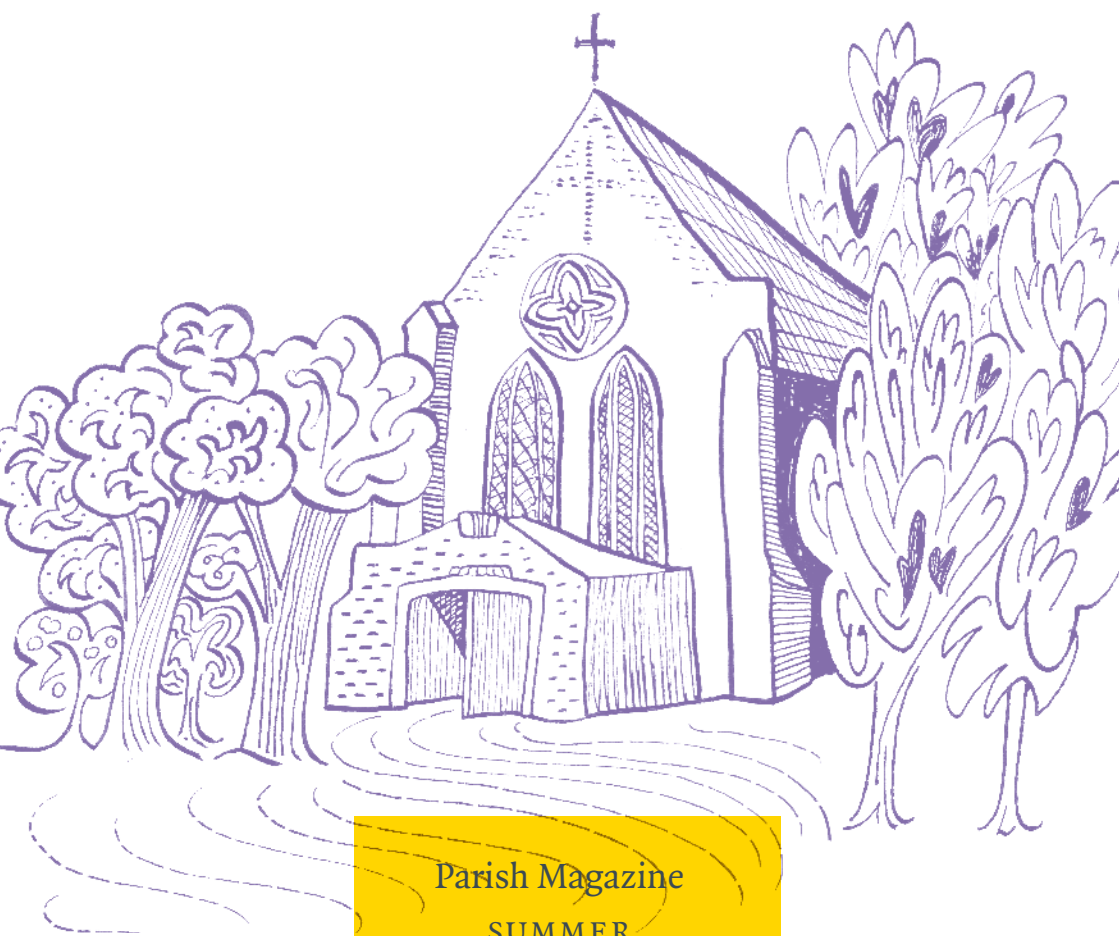


st JOHN'S



Parish Magazine

SUMMER

2017

st JOHN'S

Living God's Love

Summer 2017
in this issue

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Our magazine is published four times a year and is delivered free to all homes and businesses in the parish.

We are very grateful to those who write contributions and the many volunteers who distribute and deliver the magazines, come rain or shine, to everyone in the parish.

We welcome advertisements and are delighted to be able to provide full colour.

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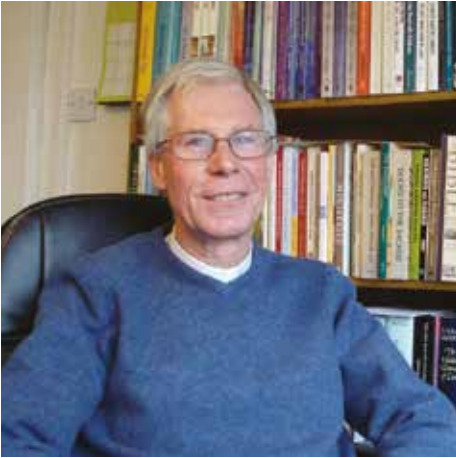
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Letter from the Vicarage by the Reverend Nicholas Anderson

The Ecumenical Patriarch, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, is the primary spiritual leader of the Orthodox Christian world, and although not particularly well known in the West, has been a pioneer in engaging in dialogue with the modern world. He has focused on the role of science and technology in contemporary society, the theological imperative of tackling climate change, the plight and prospects of children today, the importance of countering human trafficking and modern slavery, and the need for all Christians to engage those issues in practical ways.

In 1989, his predecessor Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios wrote an encyclical letter on the issue of climate change, establishing the first day of September as a day of prayer for the protection of the natural environment. Many participating members of the World Council of Churches (WCC) have followed the patriarchate's example, not only by implementing this annual day of prayer, but also in taking seriously the commitment of the Churches in resolving the environmental crisis. Patriarch Bartholomew is clear: 'a sin against creation is a sin against God. As for any sin, we must likewise repent for the sin committed against creation.... the approach to the ecological problem on the basis of the principles of the Christian tradition demands not only repentance for the sin of the exploitation of the natural resources of the planet, namely, a radical change in mentality and behaviour, but also asceticism as an antidote to consumerism, the deification of needs and the acquisitive attitude'. True repentance implies a conversion, which means a radical change in our attitude. The environmental crisis calls for concrete actions from each one of us.

In line with Orthodox theology, the patriarch is clear that the Church cannot be solely interested in the salvation of the soul, but must also be deeply concerned with the transformation of God's entire creation. Therefore, 'Churches and believers need to understand clearly the relationship between today's ecological crisis and

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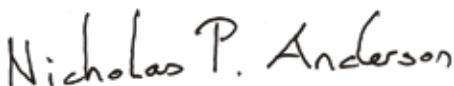
our human passions of greed, materialism, self-centeredness and rapacity, which result in and lead to the current crisis that we face.' As the creation is intimately interconnected, 'a threat to nature is also a threat to humankind.'

Among several environmental issues he raises, the Patriarch has important things to say about the resource of water. He states that water is a common good. It does not belong to any individual or any industry, but is the inviolable and non-negotiable right of every human being. He considers the economic exploitation of water by industries selling water to people who have money to buy it an ethical issue. The patriarch goes on to argue that the water industry is actually polluting the environment because of the plastic bottles it sells. Ecologists today are saying that by 2050, the oceans will contain, by weight, more plastic than fish. Plastic pollution is an environmental and social justice issue. Therefore, he argues, we should be avoiding plastic by using alternatives in our everyday life. In the light of the patriarch's call perhaps we too should shun bottled water as a small but significant step toward water justice, and encourage others to join with us.

In the mind of the patriarch, plastic pollution of water, air pollution and climate change are parallel global emergencies. They are the consequence of forgetting about the sacredness of creation. They are the disastrous results of industrialisation and our human greed. It is obvious that the environmental crisis cannot be solved without a genuine conversion of human actions. In this sense, ecology is linked with the economy. A society that does not care about the well-being of all human beings is a society that maltreats God's creation, which is blasphemy. For this reason, 'the ecological challenge of our Churches is to awake the world to the irreversible destruction of God's creation because of human sinful actions. The necessity of ecological education is not only a problem for our states, but should also be the problem of our Churches.'

Here in England, Patriarch Bartholomew does not receive as much media coverage as the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Pope, who at least receive some media coverage. Yet his is a prophetic voice, whose ministry has been devoted to raising significant issues that pertain to the common good. It is not too surprising that this was reiterated in a recent visit to the WCC's offices in Geneva, when once again he invited member churches of the WCC 'to work together in a common quest, renewing the true vocation of the church through collaborative engagement with the most important issues of justice and peace, healing a world filled with conflict, injustice and pain.' The issues he speaks of with such lucidity and passion also deserve a hearing in the public square; who knows, that may lead to the real possibility of change within governmental policies that affect all our lives.

With best wishes to you all,



Nicholas Anderson



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Annual report 2016–17

From the Churchwardens

Our annual report sets out the major activities and developments over the past year. We would like to begin by thanking our deputy wardens, Margaret Creighton and Jane Donati. Margaret offered to stay on as an ex officio member of the PCC for one year to ensure the smooth transition of the churchwardens' team; she has given many years of faithful service on the PCC and in more than one term as churchwarden, and we have benefited enormously from her experience, her pastoral skills and good humour.

We are also grateful to the other members of the Standing Committee, Emma Bresslaw, our secretary, and Steve Creasy, our treasurer. Emma keeps meticulous records of all the essential administration of the PCC, takes minutes and ensures that our meetings are run according to the often-complex rules of the Church of England.

Steve has once again this year efficiently and professionally managed our budgets, accounts and finances. It is a considerable task and he undertakes it willingly and with characteristic attention to detail and utter competence. The way in which he presents the accounts is always clear and understandable. We must also thank Tony Armstrong, who is our Stewardship Recorder, as well as counting, recording and banking our collections each week.

Nicholas has continued to lead us tirelessly and quietly, supporting all that we do as churchwardens and ensuring that all the work of the parish is underpinned

by prayer. He takes almost all our services, and has continued a tradition of holding morning and evening prayer on weekdays (open to all the congregation). He also introduced night prayer during Advent and Lent. We are delighted that James Brown will be joining Nicholas as curate in July and look forward to supporting James in his ministry.

We were pleased to learn that David Halsey, one of our Readers, had been accepted to train for the ministry; we are actively supporting David during his training, though, understandably, the demands of training on top of a full-time job mean that he has had to step back from his commitments in the parish. The other Readers, David Nye and Lauryn Awbrey, continue to offer support to Nicholas. Our worship is also enhanced by the music at St John's. Roger Carter has directed the music for more than 40 years, ably supported by the choir, who particularly excel on occasions such as our community carol service. The now well-established Junior Choir also continues to flourish and has delighted us with some beautifully sung anthems at the monthly all-age services. Grateful thanks go to Terry Charlston, who generously gave of his time to cover Madeleine Venner's maternity leave, thus ensuring the continuity of the Junior Choir.

On a gloriously sunny weekend in May we opened our doors to the parish and local community when we held an Open Day on the Saturday, followed by a special service of Songs of Praise, hosted by the BBC's Pam Rhodes, on the Sunday. On the

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Saturday, visitors were treated to guided tours round the church, flower-arranging demonstrations, and organ recitals and in the church hall there was a barbeque and various displays from our church groups. Our Songs of Praise was led by a larger-than-usual choir and ensemble of musicians drawn from the congregation.

Continuing on the theme of parish outreach, one of the biggest developments in the past year has been our exploration of what to do with the current hall, which has reached the end of its useful life. We have been very fortunate to have had a small, dedicated steering group who have consulted carefully with existing hall users, the local community, and representatives from the local council and the church advisory body and have carried out extensive research into the experiences of other churches who have redeveloped their hall. In November, the steering group presented a detailed report on their findings, outlining several options for the hall. After careful consideration, the PCC agreed to commission a feasibility study to establish what might be possible for a new Parish Centre. A firm of architects has been appointed to produce this study, and we will look forward to exploring their findings, and continue to seek God's guidance on how we can use our facilities to further our mission in the parish.

Alongside the exciting, future-focused activities, the day-to-day work of the parish continues. The church and the existing hall require ongoing maintenance, whether that is to do with the heating, leaks, light bulbs needing replacement, we are fortunate to have a team of dedicated individuals who take pride in our splendid building and in the maintenance and repair of our hall and grounds. We are

particularly grateful to David Christian and the members of the Fabric Committee and to John Jones, who responds to many emergency calls in relation to the hall.

Thanks also go to Lynn Dolby, who has stepped down after many years of quietly ensuring the supplies of coffee, tea and biscuits were kept topped up for our Sunday morning coffee time. The volunteers who make and serve the coffee are among the unsung heroes and heroines of the congregation; we are aware that some churches aren't able to offer coffee every week as help is not forthcoming, so we don't take that help for granted.

At the APCM last year, Jonathan Holt stepped down from his role as editor of the magazine, with particular responsibility for the production and control of print; the magazine is an important tool for us in our outreach, being delivered free to every home in the parish. Jonathan's contribution was invaluable. Rob Newby has relinquished his role of ensuring the magazine is distributed to the team of coordinators and then to those who deliver; we are grateful to you all. We are delighted that Steve Whiting has stepped forward to take over the distribution.

Our children and young people are an important and valued part of our community. Junior Church has been run for the past five years by Celia Halsey, but with changes to her family and work commitments, Celia decided to step down at the end of 2016. Her final nativity service was a brilliant way to end her time, and a tribute to Celia's dedication and creativity. A new group of parents led by Naomi Burnett has now taken over the running of Junior Church and we look forward to seeing how they will grow and develop in this new phase.

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At the other end of our age spectrum, the very popular *Tea at Three*, which takes place in the hall once a month, continues to provide companionship, refreshment and entertainment to older members of the wider community. Again, we are grateful to the volunteers who collect and bring people each month, bake cakes, entertain, wash up, etc, all under the leadership of Margaret Creighton.

Our policy of charitable giving has been maintained and our financial commitment to Embrace, the Church Urban Fund, Christian Aid and the St Albans and District Food Bank has continued. A cash collection at Harvest

went to the Bishop's Harvest Appeal and collections at our Christmas services went to Crisis at Christmas. Our thanks to all who continue to contribute items to the Food Bank and to those who deliver them on a regular basis.

And finally, please be assured that we are most appreciative of all the support we have received over this past year from everyone who gives of their time and talents to support the work of St John's. Whether or not we have mentioned you by name in this report, we know who you are and we thank you.

Mary Jean Pritchard
James Hillman

Parish registers

Baptisms

Welcome to the family of God

26 February 2017

Martha Ella Sanders

26 February 2017

Benjamin Harry John Berg

26 March 2017

Georgia Lucy Kennedy

Funerals in Church

May they rest in peace

6 February 2017

Alan Aubrey Leon Turner

16 February 2017

Peter Walters

9 March 2017

Joyce Alma Owen

Marriages

Joined by God

8 April 2017

David Tree to Laura Dixon

St Luke's Cell

St Luke's Cell meets monthly to pray for those in any kind of need, including the long-term sick.

A prayer for healing

We give thanks that you are a God who heals and restores, that you care for our whole being – body, mind and spirit. We remember in your presence all who have been injured in accidents or through acts of violence, all who have taken ill suddenly, and those whose illness has no cure. We pray for their well-being and the knowledge of your love. Lord, bless all who share in healing.

David Adam, in *Prayers for Healing*, Kevin Mayhew Ltd, 2013

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The journey continues

During last Lent, David Halsey, who's been one of our Readers for more than ten years, has been on placement in Luton, as part of the training for ordination he began last August. We recently caught up with him to find out more about this and how it's all been going. (Ed)

Since last August I've had a variety of new experiences, which have been nerve-wracking, inspiring, challenging and humbling. So it was good to be re-invigorated at the Easter Monday pilgrimage service at the Abbey with a refreshed call to live God's love with 'generosity, joy, imagination and courage'.

I am training part-time, for two years, with the Eastern Regional Ministry Course, which takes students from such dioceses as St Albans and Norwich, and even from Europe, with one member of my support group flying in from Norway! As to be expected, we are a diverse bunch of people from different styles of Church and with different life experiences and perspectives. This adds significantly to the process, as we listen, understand and grow together.

The training works on an academic-year basis, starting with a week's summer school in August (aka 'Vicar Boot Camp' in my house). There are then six further residential weekends a year, an evening a week in St Albans during term time, plus study time for essays and other written assignments.

I've been learning about pastoral care, which includes bereavement and funeral ministry, seeking to deepen my spirituality, exploring the meaning and significance of baptism, marriage

and communion and developing my appreciation of other faiths. The latter involved spending several days in Leicester eating at a langar (the communal kitchen) at a Sikh Gurdwara (to the delight of one of my colleagues at work), visiting a mosque and a Hindu Temple, as well as spending time in several churches.

This last Lent, I've also had the chance to spend some time 'on placement' with the vicar of another church, which has given me the opportunity to share in the life of a very different parish from St John's – All Saints, Luton – and to appreciate the wonderfully challenging diversity of God's people and different ways of worshipping (such as the vibrant Ghanaian Church which meets at All Saints).

My time in Luton has also opened my eyes to the Church of England's 'presence and engagement' approach to ministry, which aims to equip us to be authentically present in multi-religious areas and to engage positively with communities of other faiths. This has offered me a range of inspiring and challenging personal encounters, including attending a meeting of the Luton Council of Faiths and going as part of a group to visit a very hospitable mosque, which was having an open day.

So, as well as learning academically, I've been experiencing a lot, and generally being kept very busy as I continue to find time for my full-time job in central London and to keep up with all the things my family are doing, too! Alongside that, it's really good to be experiencing some different things at St John's, including giving the address at a baptism, but it

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has been very helpful simply to come and worship with you all when I can.

In all this, and our ongoing transition as a family, your prayers for Celia, Hugh and Giles as well as for me are greatly appreciated, as we pray for you all and for

James and his family as he comes to begin his curacy here in July.

Thank you all for being what makes St John's what it is, and may God's blessing be with you.

David Halsey

Visit to the Holy Land

Wednesday 7 – Friday 16 February 2018

A pilgrimage to the Holy Land is a very special event in the lives of many Christians. An Embrace the Middle East Encounter Tour will give you the opportunity to visit places that would have been familiar to Jesus, as well as those that have developed since as a result of His life and ministry. You will meet the 'Living Stones' – Christians who live and work in this beautiful but divided land and learn how they act as 'salt and light' in their communities. There will also be plenty of opportunity for worship and reflection and time for fun and relaxation too.

The tour will be led by the regional managers of Embrace, a charity which we support as a parish. The managers are Su McClellan and Neil Graham, who are both very familiar with the land and its people as well as the projects that Embrace supports in both Israel and Palestine.

Wednesday: we fly from Luton to Tel Aviv and transfer to Bethlehem.

Thursday: a day in Bethlehem visiting the Shepherd's Fields, the Church of the Nativity, and meeting Embrace's partner the Bethlehem Arab Society.

Friday: visit the Separation Barrier and some of the people affected by it. Then travel to the Negev to visit Herod's winter palace, the Masada Fortress and then onto

the ancient city of Jericho.

Saturday: our first trip to Jerusalem, beginning at the Mount of Olives and finishing up at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Western Wall.

Sunday: join a local Palestinian congregation for worship. After lunch return to Jerusalem visiting the beautiful church of St Anne and finishing up at the Cenacle.

Monday: back to Jerusalem to visit Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum. In the afternoon we will visit an Israeli settlement.

Tuesday: we leave Bethlehem, head up the Jordan Valley to Galilee, take a boat on the Sea of Galilee and go onto Nazareth

Wednesday: up early to visit Mount Tabor, then on to the Jezreel Valley and Megiddo before returning to Nazareth.

Thursday: visit the Church of the Annunciation and in the afternoon the Sepphoris National Park to see the amazing Roman ruins and mosaics.

Friday: travel along the coast road to visit the Roman ruins of Caesarea before going on to the ancient port of Jaffa, and then returning to Tel Aviv for the flight home.

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To register an interest please contact

Julie in the Parish Office.

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From our new curate

I am very excited as I begin to serve as curate at St John's, looking forward to not only joining the church but also the wider community in Harpenden. I hope I will get to meet many of you in the coming months, but for now let me briefly introduce myself.

After graduating with a psychology degree, I worked for a couple of churches in France and Belgium. From this experience I not only grew in my love of good food, wine and beer but also started to think about what I might be here for. The idea that I might be ordained in the Church of England came as a little bit of a surprise but also made great sense. And so with a little suspicion and reluctance, along with a good dollop of hope, I pursued that thought.

I eventually ended up in Cambridge, where I studied theology and underwent ordination training at Ridley Hall. Via a couple of years working in London, at St Marylebone Parish Church, I now arrive

very happily in Harpenden. My wife, Lan, and I are very much looking forward to being here.

Along with food and drink, two of my greatest loves are music and nature; I love losing myself in both. I write and record songs and I love to spend time wandering idly through beautiful outdoor spaces. You might well encounter me humming to myself as I stroll around the common! All of these pursuits are ways in which I encounter God, and I love to make connections between faith and normal life. In fact, strangely for someone working for the Church, I find that I experience a sense of the Divine outside of its walls far more than within. And so over the coming years in Harpenden I look forward to not only meeting with God but you too in the pubs and cafes, on the common and on the sports fields, and maybe even at church...

James Christie Brown



James will be ordained deacon in St Albans Cathedral on Sunday 2 July at 11.15am. We hope that as many people as possible will attend the ordination and so there will be a short service of Morning Prayer in place of Parish Communion in St John's at 9.30am that morning. On the following Sunday (9 July), the 9.30am service will be a special service of welcome for James followed by brunch in the hall.

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Parish Centre gains momentum

Appointment of our architects

We are delighted to report that we have taken another key step on the journey to building our new Parish Centre. After a rigorous selection process during the month of February, the PCC are very pleased to announce that the architectural practice MEB Design Ltd have been chosen to produce design options and undertake the feasibility study.

MEB Design Ltd is a medium-sized architectural practice, with three offices located in Oxford, London and Kent. The selection panel met MEB's Director, Mark Eddison, and Associate Des Hill, and were impressed with their extensive experience

of church building projects, which includes the parish centre for St Paul's church in St Albans. MEB describe their vision as 'building communities through creativity – one design at a time' and their mission as designing 'inspiring spaces that bring people together to live, work, learn and worship.'

MEB are currently working closely with our technical team, which includes David Christian, Matt Barter, James Hilman, Neil Maclure and Liz Sergeant. Once draft design options are sufficiently developed, the selection process will include consultations with key users of the church hall and the congregation.

Mothers' Union

Since my last report I have to tell you with sadness that our dear friend Maureen Lacey has died. She was our Honorary Treasurer until a few weeks before her death and had held several other posts in St John's Mothers' Union over the years. We shall miss her.

Over January, March and April we welcomed several speakers to our evening meetings. Susan Roberts shared with us her vision of 'Walking in God's Garden'; Janet McKinney explained how MU funds are shared and distributed, and Sue Oxlade showed slides and described her pilgrimage from Hertfordshire to Canterbury. We wish Sue 'bon voyage' as she completes her pilgrimage to Santiago di Compostela.

In February our AGM was chaired by the vicar and the 2016 committee was re-elected en bloc.

During National Marriage Week in February, we undertook many roles during the parish communion and sold produce and cakes afterwards in the hall to raise funds.

Several members enjoyed a Sharing Day at Watford and met other members from the diocese, and here at St John's we welcomed deanery members to the Lady Day Service during March.

We should also love to welcome you to one of our evening meetings at 7.30pm on the first Wednesday of the month and to Corporate Communion on the third Wednesday at 9.30am.

Contact me, Julia Smith, on 01582 763615

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Churches Together art festival

Harpenden Churches Together are planning an arts festival in May 2018. The theme of the festival is 'Beauty, Abundance and Order'. This is taken from the Book of Genesis, which says that God planted a garden for Adam and Eve, planting trees that were good to look at and good for food. Out of the chaos God had brought order, beauty and abundance.

Anyone may submit items or services in the following areas: art; ceramics; jewellery; music; drama; dance; poetry; workshops in any of these areas.

The aim is to have several church venues running events throughout the day,

with a celebration of the arts in one venue in the evening. If you would like to exhibit, run a workshop or be involved in one of the areas of performance, please contact:

John Swain
Bethany Community Church
Email: john.swain@bethanycc.org.uk
Phone: 01582 317181

Find out more at a public meeting at 8pm on 19 June at Wesley's coffee bar, Methodists Church, High Street, Harpenden.





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We now provide a breakfast club from 8:30 every day

We currently have vacancies and are adding to our waiting list for 2017

We offer a Forest School session once a week where the children are able to access the local woods for a unique learning experience.

These popular sessions help build up the children's confidence and give them an understanding of their environment.

For more information call or text Amanda on 07526789730 or email amanda@buzbymae.co.uk

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Forthcoming events

For regular services, see the back cover

May 2017

Friday 12	2.00 pm	Dorcas in the committee room
Monday 15	8.00 pm	Fellowship and Study Group in the committee room
Tuesday 16	7.30 pm	Fabric Committee Meeting
Friday 19	2.00 pm	Dorcas in the committee room
Saturday 20	10.30 am	Coffee Concert in church - Roger Carter (organ)
Saturday 20	10.00 am	Flower demonstration in the parish hall
Sunday 21	6.30 pm	Deanery Confirmations at Redbourn Parish Church
Monday 22	8.00 pm	Fellowship and Study Group in the committee room
Thursday 24	8.15 pm	PCC Meeting in the committee room
Friday 26	3.00 pm	Tea at Three in the parish hall
Sunday 28	11.30 am	Family baptism

June 2017

Friday 2	2.00 pm	Dorcas in the committee room
Sunday 4	11.30 am	Family baptism
Sunday 4	4.00 pm	Faith & Light in the parish hall
Monday 5	8.00 pm	Fellowship and Study Group in the committee room
Wednesday 7	7.30 pm	Mothers' Union Branch meeting Talk: an officer from Herts Police, 'Personal Safety'
Thursday 8	7.00 am	Parish hall is polling station all day for General Election
Friday 9	2.00 pm	Dorcas in the committee room
Monday 12	8.00 pm	Fellowship and Study Group in the committee room
Friday 16	2.00 pm	Dorcas in the committee room
Saturday 17	10.00 am	Mothers' Union Diocesan AGM – St Andrew's Church, Bedford
Friday 23	2.00 pm	Dorcas in the committee room

Friday 23	3.30 pm	Mothers' Union Deanery event – Wave of Prayer at St John's in Lady Chapel, followed by Strawberry Tea, 4 – 5 pm in the committee room For more details, please contact Julia Smith on 763615
Saturday 24	7.30 pm	Lea Singers concert in church
Sunday 25		Parish Patronal Festival
Friday 30	3.00 pm	Tea at Three in the parish hall

July 2017

Saturday 1	10.30 am	Organ students' concert party
Sunday 2	4.00 pm	Faith & Light in the parish hall
Wednesday 5		Mothers' Union Branch outing TBA
Thursday 6	8.15 pm	Standing committee in the vicarage
Friday 7	2.00 pm	Dorcas in the committee room
Sunday 9		Welcome of the Rev'd James and Mrs Brown to the Parish
Friday 14	2.00 pm	Dorcas in the committee room
Sunday 16	11.30 am	Family baptism
Thursday 20	8.15 pm	PCC Meeting in the committee room
Friday 21	2.00 pm	Dorcas in the committee room
Friday 28	3.00 pm	Tea at Three in the parish hall
Sunday 30	11.30 am	Family baptism

August 2017

Date and venue TBA		Mothers' Union 'Branch Garden Party'
Friday 25	3.00 pm	Tea at Three in the parish hall
Sunday 27	11.30 am	Family baptism

Parish Directory

VICAR

Revd Nicholas Anderson

vicar@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

5 St John's Road

Telephone 07983 561387

PERMISSION TO OFFICIATE

Revd Mary Monk

Telephone 01582 462057

Revd Julia White

READERS

Lauryn Awbrey

David Halsey

David Nye

Telephone 01582 762785

PERMISSION TO OFFICIATE

Anne Edwards

Telephone 01582 767449

WARDENS

James Hillman

Telephone 07788 567826

wardens@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Mary Jean Pritchard

Telephone 01582 712962

wardens@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Roger Carter

music@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

PARISH OFFICE

For enquiries, including marriages, baptisms, funerals and hall bookings, please contact the parish office open from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm Monday to Friday.

Telephone 01582 712776

parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk



Services at St John's

Sunday

- 8.00 am Said Eucharist
- 9.30 am Parish Eucharist followed by coffee time in the hall
All-Age Eucharist, *first Sunday of the month*
- 9.30 am Junior Church, *except first Sunday*, and Little Gems in the hall
- 11.30 am Holy Baptism, *last Sunday of the month*
- 6.30 pm Evening Worship, *see Forthcoming Events for details*

Wednesday

- 9.30 am Said Eucharist
Major festivals advertised when appropriate in the magazine



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