

17th December 2023: Third Sunday of Advent. Season: Advent is a season of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas and the return of Christ at the Second Coming. **Liturgical Rose Why?** The Church uses the colour rose to indicate a joyful feast day or holiday. The third Sunday of Advent (or Gaudete Sunday – meaning rejoice) is a break in the Advent fast to rejoice in hope and anticipation as we approach Christmas.

8am **Holy Communion** in the Lady Chapel followed by refreshments

9.30am **All Age Parish Eucharist**

President: Vicar

Deacon: David Nye

Sermon: Nativity Presentation

Music Setting: Mass of St Thomas (Thorne)

Hymns: 41, 108, 38, 51, 75

10.30am **Parish Coffee** in the Church Hall

5pm **Nine Lessons and Carols** followed by refreshments in the Church Hall

CHILDREN AT ST JOHN'S

All children are very welcome at St John's, and this might help:

- Please don't be afraid to sit at the front if your children would like a better view of what is going on.
- There are books, toys and colouring at the back of church.
- Please make use of the church in whatever way you need and please feel free to go outside if you need to.
- Join us in the hall for refreshments after the service.

The next Mini and Junior Church is 14th January

If you would like to help out with either Junior Church or Mini Church please get in touch – junior.church@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk.

GIVING AT ST JOHN'S

At St John's we rely on the enormous generosity of our congregation to support our ministry so that we might live God's love to our Parish. If you are in a position to support us there are a number of ways you can do so either as a one-off or on a regular basis:

- Collection plate
- Set up a direct debit
- Join our Parish Giving Scheme

Envelopes to donate to the collection, where gift aid can be claimed, are available. For more information contact Alison Bygrave on alison.bygrave@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

SUNDAY READINGS AND PRAYERS

THE COLLECT

God for whom we watch and wait,
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son:
give us courage to speak the truth,
to hunger for justice,
and to suffer for the cause of right,
with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

OLD TESTAMENT READING - Isaiah 61.1-4,8-end

61 The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
3 to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,

the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
4 They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
8 For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
9 Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
11 For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

GOSPEL READING: John 1.6-8, 19-28

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' 20He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' 21And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' 22Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' 23He said,

'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

“Make straight the way of the Lord”’,
as the prophet Isaiah said.

24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25 They asked him, ‘Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?’ 26 John answered them, ‘I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, 27 the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.’ 28 This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
that when your Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face;
who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

Amen

IMPORTANT PARISH CONTACTS

Revd Tim Vickers, Vicar of St John’s (usual day off Friday)
vicar@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk 01582 469343

Revd Ritah Namakula, Assistant Curate (usual day off Monday)
ritah@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Churchwarden: Heather Nye
wardens@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Parish Office: Amanda Knights
parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk 01582 712776

Director of Music: Craig Greene
music@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Safeguarding: Jane Donati safeguarding@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

IN OUR PRAYERS

In our Parish for the sick: Margaret Mulhearn, Alan Tree, Philippa Pride, Shaheda Quium, Annie Glyn-Davies, Daniel Buckberry-Biran and all those

who are prayed for by our St Luke's Prayer Cell.

For the dearly departed: Mary Monk, Piers Slinn

On the anniversary of their death: Archer Cooper (17th), Janet Gander (20th), William Eden (Bill), Heather Gray (21st), Elizabeth Brown (22nd)

For the homes and families in:

Sunday	Rowan Way, St John's Road
Monday	St Michael's Close, St Paul's Close
Tuesday	Sandhurst Court, Sherwoods Rise
Wednesday	Sibley Avenue, Southdown Road
Thursday	Stonehurst Court, Tarrant Drive
Friday	Tiverton Court, Topstreet Way
Saturday	The Uplands, Vallance Place

If you know anyone who might like a visit from the church please speak with a member of the Pastoral Visiting Team, which includes Anne Edwards, Bryan Coventry, David and Heather Nye, and the Vicar. Or contact via the Parish Office.

** deadline for news items midday on Wednesday via
newsletter@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk*

Don't miss out on everything taking place this Week. Please check out the website for all our Christmas services and events

<https://www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk/christmas>

Christmas Appeal: This year we are supporting 'Crisis at Christmas' for our Christmas Appeal. The retiring collection at Community Carol Singing



outside the Co-op, Nine Lessons and Carols, Carols at the Crib, Midnight Mass and Christmas Day will go towards this special cause. Please use this QR code if you would like to make an online donation.

TODAY

Nativity Presentation: Thank you very much to Madeleine, Craig and everyone else who helped out with the Holiday Club yesterday and today's nativity, especially all the young people taking part in today's Nativity presentation.

Nine Lessons and Carols: Please join us at 5pm for our traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols as we start to look towards Christmas.

Loving Memory Tree: If you would like a loved one remembered at Christmas please add their names to the tree at the back of the Church, the names will be on the altar throughout our Christmas services.

THIS WEEK

Rev'd Mary Monk: All who knew Mary are invited to attend her funeral at St John's on 18th December at 2.30pm.

Hardynge Choir: Their "Christmas in Blue" concert is on Monday 18 December at 8pm. The evening includes festive jazz and Christmas close harmony along with festive readings and a selection of carols for choir and audience. There will be seasonal refreshments in the Church Hall after the concert. Further information can be found in the Parish Magazine or on the posters and flyers in the Church porch.

Beer & Carols: Wednesday 20th December please join us at 8pm in the Engineer Pub for an evening of carol singing and fun.

Sonorite Concert: Friday 22nd December at 3pm, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas' - Festive Family Concert, Christmas music played by a classical saxophone quartet. The programme will also feature some winter themed classical music. Further information can be found in the Parish Magazine or on the posters and flyers in the Church porch.

Christmas Parish Walk: 2pm 23rd December meeting at the Brocket Arms, Ayot St Lawrence and finished with mulled wine. All welcome but please let the vicar know you are coming, especially if you need a lift.

PARISH NEWS

Tutu for Tim Fundraising: Vivien Glass Sleek Ballet Bootcamp, is holding a New Year Charity Ballet Bootcamp at 9.30am on the 6th Jan 2024 at St. Johns Church in Harpenden. As Tim did ballet at a young age he agreed to join in, this has now progressed to a fund-raising event for CRISIS, Tim has agreed to wear a tutu and will even throw in a solo pirouette if £1,000 is raised for the event (photos will follow!). For more information, to book a place, or to make a donation please email Vivien at sleekballet@gmail.com

Music at St John's: After a short period at St John's Craig Greene has decided that due to the commute, and also his health, that this isn't the right post for him at this time. His last service with us will be Christmas Day. I'd like to say thank you for Craig for all he has given and sorry this isn't to be. Revd Tim

ECO CHURCH

Tip of the week: Reduce food waste this Christmas by planning ahead, checking your cupboards/freezer to see what you already have, and sticking to your list.

OUR COMMUNITY

The Harpenden Trust Christmas Appeal: Please look out for the posters and watch out for the envelope dropping through the door and give if you can. Thank you.

Saturday Soup lunch: Harpenden Village Inner Wheel club is holding a soup lunch on 13th January to mark the 100th anniversary of the foundation of Inner Wheel. It is being held in St. John's church hall from 12 - 2.30pm. Tickets are £10 for a bowl of soup, bread and a glass of wine (or alternative) and are available in advance from Elizabeth Curran, Alison Gardiner or email iwchvenquiries@emaildodo.com. The proceeds are going to the Isabel Hospice, Welwyn and Let The Children Hear, Uganda"

PARISH DIARY

Monday	2.30pm	Funeral of Rev'd Mary Monk
	5pm – 10pm	Hardynge Rehearsal & Concert
Tuesday	10am – 11.30am	Little Acorns Christmas Party in the Church Hall
Wednesday	9am – 12pm	Grove Junior School Carol Service (please note no Holy Communion service this morning)
	8pm – 9pm	Beers & Carols The Engineer Pub
Friday	10am – 11am	Timothy Ellis Horn Practice
	3pm	Carol Concert - Sonorite

NEXT SUNDAY

8am Parish Eucharist and 9.30am Parish Eucharist OT: 2 Samuel 7.1-11,16 ,
Gospel: Luke 1.26-38.

11.30pm Midnight Mass OT: Isaiah 52.7-10, Gospel: Luke 2.1-14

Weekday Morning and Evening Prayer

Morning and Evening Prayer: 9.30 am and 5pm Monday to Friday

Please note no Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel Wednesday 20th
December.

Parish Office Hours: 9.30am to 2.30pm Monday to Thursday

For arrangement of baptisms, weddings & funerals contact the Parish Office
or talk to the vicar after the service.

Want to receive all our Parish news straight to your inbox? Why not sign up
to our weekly newsletter: www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk/newsletter/



St John's Church, 5 St John's Road, Harpenden, Herts AL5 1DJ