



*Patronal  
Festival  
inside*

# st JOHN'S

*Living God's Love*

Parish Magazine

SUMMER 2024

*What's going on in  
St John's and Southdown*

a blue eye  
in the sky –  
parting clouds

Haiku by Susan Lee Kerr, 2023. First published in Presence haiku journal, July 2022. Haiku in English are based on a Japanese form of poetry, briefly conveying a moment of awareness of nature or human life.

Thoughtful, quietly spiritual, this page in the magazine is intended as a space for reflection. St John's Church and its Remembrance Garden is open every day from 10.00am to 5.00pm for anyone who wants a quiet place for personal reflection.

# st JOHN'S

Living God's Love

SUMMER 2024

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# Vicar's Welcome

**W**elcome to the summer edition of the St John's Parish Magazine. There is a high chance that as you read this you are either planning, or have been on, a holiday somewhere. I recently had a trip to Seattle and Vancouver to visit my brother. It was a wonderful journey, discovering new places and enjoying time with family.

When I prepare a family for baptism I sometimes ask about the best place they have ever visited. I then ask about their best journey. They are not always the same thing! As Christians, we believe the best journey of all is life itself – full of discovery, ups and downs, and hopefully growth. One in which we know God is always with us.

I hope wherever you end up going – whether it is a break abroad, in the UK, a staycation, or even if you can't manage a holiday this year, you'll find a time and a place to give yourself some space and enjoy the journey of life. St John's is always open and it's a place of peace and tranquillity.

With blessings,

Tim

*Rev'd Tim Vickers*

*Vicar of St John's Harpenden*



In the photo I'm with my younger brother Aidan in the Cascade Mountains in the American Pacific Northwest.



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## Maundy money for Dorothea

'Thank you very much, your Majesty,'  
said Dorothea Elliott.

'And thank you for doing so much,'  
replied Queen Camilla.

On the Thursday before Easter at Worcester Cathedral, St John's parishioner Dorothea Elliott received two purses of coins in an ancient royal tradition. Age 95, she was among 150 men and women chosen to receive the Maundy Money as wonderful examples of giving so much of their lives to the service of others in their communities.

It was a blustery day, and police provided a pathway through crowds awaiting the royal arrival. But Dorothea found calm and order inside the cathedral. She was extremely impressed by the splendour and order of the ceremonial procession, from Beefeaters to the Bishop and, of course, Her Majesty the Queen, acting for the King.

Each year the sovereign distributes the gifts of money to the same number as his age. So, this year 75 men and 75 women each received two leather purses of silver coins. 'Maundy' comes from the Latin word meaning 'Commandment'. On the day before Good Friday, Jesus commanded his disciples to 'Love one another'.



'Why me?' was Dorothea's first reaction to the invitation letter early this year. And even now she says, 'Why me? I've done so little! Many people have done so much more.' She was a Brownie guide for many years, active in Mothers' Union, has served tea for the elderly at St John's T@3, she's cleaned the church, she welcomes people as they enter for Sunday 9.30 service, and she worked for many years at Southdown's Grove School. 'I just do lots of little things, but so do other people!'


Many littles make a lot in 95 years. Has she words of wisdom to share? Dorothea beams and laughs, 'Just enjoy life!'



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# St John's Church and Foodbank Donations

St John's Church collects for the St Albans and District Foodbank, which was established in 2014 to help local people in crisis.

Have you noticed the collection point in the porch under the left-hand side bench as you go out? I'm pleased plenty of us have, as I took four bulging bags of biscuits, tins and dried foods donated by St John's over Christmas to the warehouse in Redbourn at the beginning of January.

The Foodbank is hugely busy. On average it reaches over 1100 households locally per year. Alongside food items, the Foodbank provides people with shopping trolleys, hot water bottles and, last year, 55 slow cookers! Across the year the wonderful congregation at St John's make a significant contribution to this vital work, including the bumper haul donated at Harvest Festival – 207kg – described by the warehouse manager Oliver as an 'impressive amount'.



The need for food donations is ongoing and families in crisis continue to need support. Over 9,000 3-day emergency food parcels were given out in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. As a result, the Foodbank now opens six days a week across eight centres in St Albans and District. And new for 2024 are two Wellbeing Co-ordinators, and seven advisors from Citizens Advice and the mental health charity MIND, in an effort to address the causes of poverty locally.

We invite you to bring along non-perishable foods as often as you can and leave them in the church porch. Of course, it's difficult to remember to bring items into the church on a Sunday but the church is open daily until 5.00pm so you can drop off at any time. Your contributions will be immediately allocated to people in need in this area. Thank you.

*Sarah McKie, Foodbank Coordinator*

Please go to the website for the food items most needed each week  
[St Albans and District Foodbank](#)



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# A model centre

## Our New Parish Centre – a transformational project for our church and the community

Reality brings a vision closer. This spring St John's project for a new parish centre commissioned a scale model to celebrate the good progress so far and to focus on next steps. The 3D model was unveiled to invited guests in April and commended by The Rt Revd Dr Jane Mainwaring, Bishop of Hertford.



Our Church Hall currently provides essential facilities for both the church and the wider community to run activities, hold meetings and host events.

- It hosts Fusion Pre-school and our weekly Toddler group Little Acorns to support young families;
- It hosts community groups such as Brownies & Rainbows, Slimming World, the Dance Studio, and also acts as a polling station.
- The hall also hosts our monthly Faith & Light group for folk with learning difficulties, and a very popular T@3 which provides fun and fellowship for our older friends.

It is now over 50 years old and is in continual need of repair. Replacing it with a newly designed building would enable us to do so much more for our community. Planning permission has been granted and the cost would be not much more than a simple re-build of the old hall.

Our new Parish Centre will be a flexible, sustainable and welcoming space.

- Flexibility of different rooms and their layout would enable us to offer more activities and outreach events, particularly for children, young people and the elderly.



*Bishop Jane blesses the vision and the mini-reality version of St John's new Parish Centre. Scale model crafted by Neil Maclure.*

- A sustainable building will reduce operating costs and our carbon emissions; offer better soundproofing, and be more accessible.
- A new building would be welcoming – a local space which would support us through our life events – where we can hold gatherings after a wedding, baptism, or funeral.

The new Parish Centre will be a dynamic and relevant part of the Southdown community not only now, but for generations to come. For your own close-up view, the model will be (occasionally) at the back of church after the 9:30 service on Sundays and an encore event in future.

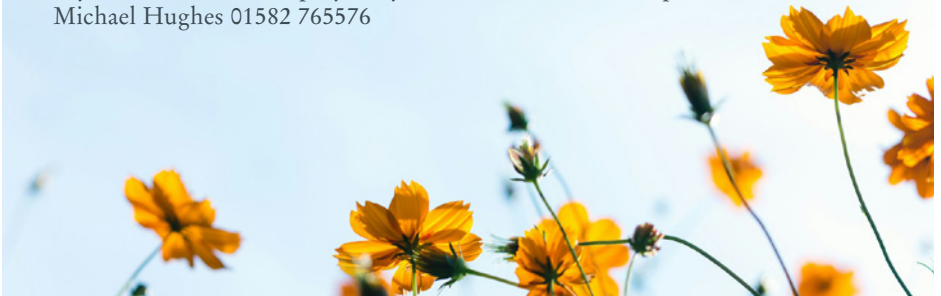


*Iain Pritchard for St John's invites hands-on exploration of the new Parish Centre. One wall of it is the exterior south wall of the main church building. There will be a cafe and rooms of several sizes for meetings and gatherings.*

## Need a prayer?

St Luke's Cell Prayer Group are always happy to pray for you (confidentially if needed). The group is named after the disciple and physician Luke, who is the patron saint of doctors. A request can be as simple as a name, if preferred. We don't need to know details in order to pray. Members pray individually and also meet monthly to pray for anyone in the parish who asks for prayers for themselves or for their loved ones.

If you would like us to pray for you or someone else then please contact Michael Hughes 01582 765576



# Quiz time! Our New Parish Centre

St John's inimitable quiz master, Paul Bedding, put a hall full of brains to work at our Quiz Night & Fish & Chip supper on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February. Over eleven teams competed hotly for the St John's crown, which was won by The Banned, with the runners up, Four Corners, only half a mark behind.

The evening raised over £1,500 towards St John's new Parish Centre. A very successful raffle included over 30 generous items worth over £500 donated from the Southdown community. Huge thanks to Paul Bedding and Debbie Tyrell and family, and Liz Sergeant for all their hard work in creating an entertaining evening.



*Winners by half a point! The Banned was led by James Hilman (left) with team members Henrietta Hilman, Giles and Theo Croot, Dawn and Ian Mason and Marie and Tony Price.*

## Quiz puzzlers

St John's next Quiz Night

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September

SAVE THE DATE!

Warm up with these puzzlers.

Find the answers on page 25



AERIAL CITIES – Can you identify this city?

SKOBO -- Scrambled books! These anagrams are well-known books (not necessarily as two words), and they've been made into films.

1. SERIOUS NAP
2. DO ANOTHER





## DID YOU KNOW?



Southdown's skew bridge, with its cathedral-like ribbed arches, is a significant historical construction. The solution to crossing over a road (or river or valley) when it can't be a simple right angle goes back to Roman times. Early skew arches required expensive, skilled stonemasons to cut each stone to its own unique shape. The development of railways in the 1800s required many skew bridges, but how to afford them? It was a challenge that engineers and mathematicians eventually solved with fitted, purpose-made bricks. When the Midland Railway extended its line towards London it had to cross Southdown Road at the extreme skew angle of 65 degrees. People doubted... but it opened for rail traffic in 1868. At ground level our 'gateway to Southdown' remains notable as a ribbed skew arch. Could its height and style have influenced the architecture of St John's Church?

For more information see

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southdown\\_Road\\_Skew\\_Bridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southdown_Road_Skew_Bridge)

and [www.harpenden-history.org.uk](http://www.harpenden-history.org.uk)

# What's your footprint?

Have you ever measured your Carbon Footprint? We are in a climate crisis, and many of us feel powerless to help. Everything we do has a carbon footprint - the buildings we heat, the food we eat, the clothes we wear. Knowing the impact of what we are doing can help us start to think about what reasonable steps we might take to reduce our impact.

The Eco Church team encourage everyone to calculate their own carbon footprint, to see what parts of our lifestyle are having the biggest environmental impact, and to do what we can to reduce that impact. The WWF carbon calculator is straightforward and takes about five minutes to complete: [footprint.wwf.org.uk/](https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/)

It covers food, travel, clothing, housing and many other aspects of our lives. There are other calculators available, which go into more detail, for example Climate Stewards: [www.climatestewards.org/resources/lower-carbon-living/](https://www.climatestewards.org/resources/lower-carbon-living/)

Some members of our congregation have made changes to their lifestyle as a result of doing the survey:

- Become more mindful when food shopping, checking on fresh food and pre-cooking before anything goes off, to reduce food waste
- Changed light bulbs to low energy ones
- Reduced the temperature on the washing machine to 30 degrees
- Using re-usable wipes and nappies for a baby
- Changing from two cars to one, and asking lifts from friends when necessary
- Walking as much as possible, rather than taking the car
- Turning off the tap when cleaning teeth to save water

We encourage you to have a go. Once you know which areas of your life have the biggest impact, you can start to do something about it. We'd be delighted to hear if you make any changes. Thank you.

Margaret Charlston [eco.church@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk](mailto:eco.church@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk)



# The Venerable Philippa Pride

We report with great sadness that the Venerable Philippa Pride, vicar of St John's from 2009-2013, died after a battle with cancer on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024. After St John's she moved to Canada, rising to become a valued Executive Archdeacon in the Diocese of New Westminster in Vancouver.

Her funeral was held in Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver on 8<sup>th</sup> April, and our current vicar was able to attend to represent St John's. It was a deeply moving service. Philippa was a much-loved person who will be missed by many, especially here at St John's.



*The Venerable Philippa Louise Pride, Priest  
7<sup>th</sup> July 1973 – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024*

## IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEEDS PRACTICAL HELP...

Good local sources of confidential practical support for food, school uniforms, furniture, energy costs, personal advice, funding, vouchers and more:

The Harpenden Trust. See online [www.theharpendentrust.org.uk](http://www.theharpendentrust.org.uk) Or ring 01582 460457, email [admin@theharpendentrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@theharpendentrust.org.uk) or come in person to the Trust's Centre, 90 Southdown Road, Harpenden AL5 1PS, 10am – 12noon Monday – Friday.

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# Little Acorns

Little Acorns is a friendly toddler group for babies, pre-school children and their carers.

We meet in St. John's Hall on Tuesdays, 10.00 – 11.30am. Come for a warm welcome, a cup of coffee and home-made cakes. The children enjoy a healthy snack, activities, a story and singing.



Term time dates:

No meeting 28<sup>th</sup> May. New term starts 4<sup>th</sup> June – 23<sup>rd</sup> July.  
Autumn term starts 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

No booking necessary. A voluntary donation is all that is asked.

For more information, please contact [parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk](mailto:parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk)  
Telephone 01582 712776

## Litter Pick Together!



Sunday June 9<sup>th</sup>

10.45am

All welcome.

Meet in front of St John's Church.

Please bring gloves.

Litter pickers and bags provided.

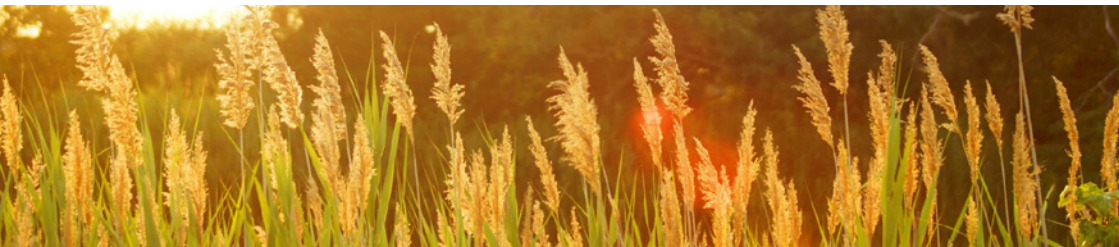
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5pm

Join us for this service of Sung Evensong using the Book of Common Prayer, including sung congregation Anglican chant. 30-40 minutes in the Lady Chapel.

Second Sunday of the  
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**St John the Baptist, Harpenden**

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024**

**11.00am**

————— with special guest preacher —————  
**The Ven Charles Hudson, Archdeacon of St Albans**  
 Followed by a BBQ in the Vicarage garden.

## Locusts and wild honey, really?

St John the Baptist was chosen as St John's patron saint because in 1907 on his feast day our church's foundation stone was laid. The actual saint day is 24<sup>th</sup> June, so we celebrate on the Sunday nearest – this year 23<sup>rd</sup> June. Every church in the Church of England has a patron saint as a supporter. St John the Baptist is known as the man who baptized Jesus in the River Jordan and recognised him. John chose an austere life of repentance and faith, foraging for natural food in the desert: locusts and wild honey. Television programmes today show contestants eating insects, many cultures around the world eat them as part of regular nutrition, and insect-based burgers are now available in the UK. So, yes, the prophet John, as reported by the Gospel writers, very likely consumed locusts and honey (see Matthew 3:4 and Mark 1:6). Can you imagine them on the menu at the barbecue in the vicarage garden after the special patronal service?



# Harpenden's latest Community Café

The Well Bean Café,  
run by the  
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at their new  
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# Curate's Corner

## What is prayer?

In a world often fraught with chaos and uncertainty, prayer provides a sanctuary of peace. In prayer, our words and thoughts become sacred offerings to God.

Prayer is a reminder that we're not alone in our struggles, that God, who is beyond our understanding listens, comforts, and responds in ways both seen and unseen. In the quiet moments of prayer, we find solace, strength, and clarity. It's not merely the recitation of words but our communication with our loving God.

During the Easter season we are made aware of God's love for us. Indeed, Jesus prayed for all of us just before he was killed. We too should call on God asking for healing of our world. We are surrounded by so many natural disasters and wars and we are in the middle of a war with global warming which we are struggling to win. We should all join forces and pray, pray for God's help, pray to God to show us how we can make this world a better place for us and all those who will come after us.

*Revd Ritah Namakula*  
*Curate of St John's Harpenden*

## Ordination

Our Curate Ritah, is being ordained priest at 2pm on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June at St Albans Cathedral.

Ritah will preside at the Eucharist for the first time at 9.30am on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Everyone is welcome to join us as we celebrate with Ritah this important moment in the life of the Church.



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## For the love of wood

There's lived experience in old furniture, says Geoffrey Warwick, and he loves to make it shine. A furniture restoration expert with over 35 years experience, he's been established in the Harpenden area for some ten years. His vocation takes him on travels through history and around the world. Large estates, individual collectors and people right here in Harpenden's Southdown are among his clients. He's restored Chippendale chairs and Regency clocks, Edwardian tables and Victorian sofas.



'Something of sentiment is as important as a fine antique to me,' says Geoffrey. 'I was once called to work on a bureau desk from the time of George II, 1760 – it was in perfect condition because it had never been used – but it had no life to it. I love to see what generations have done to furniture. A scratch is part of its history.'

Some pieces come to Geoffrey wobbly or broken in bits, some just need a new French polish. From the grandest to the simply domestic, his work can include a table from childhood that was always in next to the sofa, or a treasured clock from granny's house, or a chest found in the loft. Geoffrey's craftsmanship brings new life with training, skill and expertise that began quite simply with the passion for wood he discovered in his school woodwork class.

Tips from the expert thanks to the main culprits that come in for restoration: Don't put mayonnaise on water marks! Avoid putting plant pots on furniture. Watch out for lighted candles. And beware of nail varnish remover. Most of all, live with and enjoy your furniture!

[www.geoffrey-warwick.co.uk](http://www.geoffrey-warwick.co.uk)

*ANSWERS to Quiz puzzlers (p.14) Scrambled Books - 1. Persuasion 2. On the Road. Aerial Cities - Tokyo*



# Mothers' Union



Mothers' Union is an international charity working for the well-being of families and fighting for gender justice across the world. At St John's we work at the local level too, and we inform ourselves and enjoy each other's company as well. Do come join us.

On 6<sup>th</sup> June Canon Dr Dennis Stamps from St Nicholas church will speak of his commitment to Ecumenism and consider the question What is Spirituality?

On July 4<sup>th</sup> we gather in the delightful garden of a member for a summer party of fellowship, strawberries and delicious home baking.

The late summer outing for St John's Mothers' Union is to St Albans Abbey. Isn't it strange that when you live close by, you can miss so much. Few of our members have ever had a guided tour of the cathedral and we expect to be surprised by how many things we do not know about the building and its history. This will be followed by tea in the refectory and then we will attend Evensong.

Our members share a passion for the ideals of Mothers' Union and all that generates in action. Why not join us at one of our meetings? We meet on the first Thursday of each month at 2.30pm in the church Committee Room. You will be very welcome.

Carol Cooke, Branch Leader. Contact [parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk](mailto:parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk)



*Six Mothers' Union Branches from local churches paraded their banners on Lady Day at St John's on 8<sup>th</sup> April. This commemorates the archangel Gabriel's announcement to the Virgin Mary that she would give birth to the son of God. Following the special service there was coffee, cake and lively conversation*



*Spring Sharing Day – Our MU members delivered bags of new bedding, towels and toiletries for local refuges and the Azalea project in Luton. This Christian charity works to see an end to the social injustice of sex trafficking and offers support and refuge.*

# Toddler Toddle

## 11.00am Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June

**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families  
Diocese of St. Albans

Bring your little ones! Come along to St John's sponsored 'Toddler Toddle' on Saturday June 22<sup>nd</sup>. St John's Mothers' Union, along with similar groups in the St Albans Diocese, is encouraging toddlers – or anyone who feels they'd like to have a toddle – to do a circuit of the Common just in front of St John's church. As well as a sense of achievement for all 'toddlers', MU hope to raise funds for two local organisations that support family life. The Away From It All Project provides disadvantaged families with an otherwise unachievable week's holiday. And four refuges in the Diocese help victims of domestic abuse find safety.



Details are still being finalised but do keep the date free.

Email [parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk](mailto:parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk) if you wish to be updated as soon as more information is available.

## Toddler Service

Thursdays 10.15am

In the church and fun for all. No need to worry about noise or running around. This service is designed as worship with younger ones in mind. Suitable for babies upwards to those nearly ready for preschool. Starting with a beverage and snacks we gather round the altar, do some singing, hear a Bible story and respond with a craft.



No service 30<sup>th</sup> May. Toddler Service continues 6<sup>th</sup> June – 18<sup>th</sup> July. After the summer holiday Toddler Service resumes 5<sup>th</sup> September

All welcome or contact [parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk](mailto:parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk) if you'd like to join our WhatsApp group.

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## Parish registers

### Baptisms

*Welcome to the family of God*

14<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Emily Summer McGeown  
Cian John Steventon McGeown  
Summer Tracey Bates  
Keely Sylvia Barbara Bates

11<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Charlotte Rose Jarman

### Funerals in Church

*May they rest in peace*

12<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Brian Simmonds

13<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Sylvia Lowe

15<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Vanessa Gibson

## Weddings at St John's

If you're considering a church wedding and you live in the parish, or have a connection to the area, we invite you to consider St John's church for your marriage ceremony. Contact the church office to arrange a time to discuss your plans. We would love to be a part of your special day.

[parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk](mailto:parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk)  
Telephone 01582 712776

To find out about planning a wedding in a Church of England church, visit [www.churchofengland.org./life-events/your-church-wedding](http://www.churchofengland.org./life-events/your-church-wedding)







## Regular Services at St John's

### Sundays

- 8.00am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel
- 9.30am Parish Eucharist (*also live streamed*) followed by coffee in the hall.  
All Age Eucharist, *normally 1st Sunday of the month*
- 5.00pm Evening service, *see website for details*

### Wednesdays

- 10.30am Holy Eucharist is celebrated in the Lady Chapel

### Monday - Friday inclusive

- 9.30am Morning prayer is said
- 5.00pm Evening Prayer is said

Church is open every day from 10.00am to 5.00pm.

Service times may change so please check the calendar on our website or sign up there to our weekly or monthly newsletter [www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk](http://www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk)

Watch our Parish Eucharist and other special services on our YouTube channel - search for "St John's Church, Harpenden" or visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/StJohnsChurchHarpenden>

The Parish Office is open Monday – Thursday 10.00am - 2.00pm



PARISH OFFICE

*For enquiries, including marriages, baptisms, funerals and hall bookings, please contact the parish office.*

**Amanda Knights**

Telephone: 01582 712776  
parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

*If you are in need of help or know anyone in need of support, please contact support@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk*

*Parish Directory*

VICAR

**Revd Tim Vickers**

Telephone: 01582 469343  
vicar@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

CURATE

**Revd Ritah Namakula**

ritah@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

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WARDENS

**Heather Nye**

wardens@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

**Position vacant**

TREASURER

**Position vacant**

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.

St John's PCC takes no responsibility for statements made in advertisements or other content in this magazine nor linked websites, nor for any matter arising therefrom.

To protect privacy, personal email addresses do not appear in the web edition, unless requested.

*Patronal  
Festival  
inside*

stJOHN<sup>+</sup>s  
Living God's Love

*What's going on in St John's and Southdown*

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