

NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS

ST JOHN'S, MERROW



12-14 DECEMBER
NATIVITY FESTIVAL

21 DECEMBER 16:00
CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

22 DEC 18:00
CAROLS AT THE PUB - HORSE & GROOM

24 DEC 16:00
CRIB SERVICE WITH DONKEY!

24 DEC 23:00
MIDNIGHT MASS

25 DEC 08:00
BCP COMMUNION

25 DEC 10:00
ALL AGE COMMUNION

28 DEC 10:00
PARISH COMMUNION

4 JAN 16:00
CHRISTINGLE

Advent

Sunday 7th December

8am Holy Communion – Church
10am All Age Worship - Church (Livestreamed)
11.30am Singing Sparks – Centre

Monday 8th December

9.15am Glow Toddlers – Centre

Wednesday 10th December

10.15am Wednesday Coffee Club - Centre
10.30am Holy Communion Service – Centre
5pm Youth Café – Centre

Friday 12th December

6pm Choir Practice – Church

Friday 12th - Sunday 14th December

Nativity Festival - Church

Sunday 14th November – Nativity Festival

8am Holy Communion – Church
10am Parish Communion – Church (Livestreamed)
Bob Cooper the Dean of Guildford Cathedral will be Preaching
Sparks 5-11s group
Coffee in church after the 10am service
11.30am Singing Sparks – Centre

(Please take this news sheet home with you)

Regular Calendar Events

(in the Centre unless mentioned otherwise)

Sundays	8am Holy Communion - Church 10am Parish Communion - Church
Mondays	9.15am Glow Toddlers
Tuesdays	7.30-9pm Bell Ringing Practice
Wednesdays	10.15am Wednesday Coffee Club 10.30am Holy Communion Service 5pm Youth Café (term time only)
Fridays	3pm Choir Practice

Other Calendar Events

(in the Centre unless mentioned otherwise)

December

Tue 16 th Dec	Green Team 4pm
Sun 21 st Dec	Singing Sparks 11.30am
Sun 21 st Dec	Carol Service 4pm
Mon 22 nd Dec	Carols in the Pub 6pm
Wed 24 th Dec	Crib Service 4pm
Wed 24 th Dec	Midnight Mass 11pm

January

Sun 4 th Jan	Christingle Service 4pm
Sat 10 th Jan	Women in Fellowship Breakfast
Sun 18 th Jan	Inter Church 4pm
Sat 24 th Jan	Men in Fellowship Breakfast 8.30am

February

Sat 7 th Feb	Barn Dance 7pm
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Hymns

652 Guide me O thou great redeemer
39 Hills of the north rejoice
41 Lo, He comes with clouds descending
719 Lord the light of your love is shining

Collect

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power
and come among us,
and with great might succour us;
that whereas, through our sins and wickedness
we are grievously hindered
in running the race that is set before us,
your bountiful grace and mercy
may speedily help and deliver us;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

or

Almighty God,
purify our hearts and minds,
that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and saviour
we may be ready to receive him,
who is our Lord and our God.

Reading

Romans 15.4-13

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, 'Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name'; and again he says, 'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people'; and again, 'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him'; and again Isaiah says, 'The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.' May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Gospel

Matthew 3.1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight."

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

'I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

Readings next week:

James 5.7-10

Matthew 11.2-11

Post Communion

Father in heaven,
who sent your Son to redeem the world
and will send him again to be our judge:
give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming
that, when he comes again,
we may be ready to greet him
with joyful love and firm faith;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS THIS WEEK

Sick or in need - Dick Pyper, Ben, Michael Stoughton, Amelia Butler,

Departed - All whom we have known and loved but see no longer.

NEWS

Christmas Cards

Our St John's Christmas Cards are now available to buy!

Packs are available from the Parish Office at £5 for a pack of 10 cards (5 red & 5 Green cards in each pack).

Please pop in and pick up your supplies in good time! We have limited stock!



CHRISTMAS GIFTS: thank you so much for your generous donations which will be passed on with love from St John's Church.

I will need help with the distribution of cards and gifts so will be in church at the end of 8am and 10am service to find some helpers! Many thanks, Rosanne

Coffee after the 10am service on the 14th December will be in church, so that we can all enjoy the nativity sets in our Nativity Festival.

Parish Magazine - January

The copy date for the January Parish Magazine is next Sunday 14th December.

A thank you and update from (not so) baby Edward

Edward spent some time in neonatal care after he was born in May 2024, after arriving a bit earlier than expected and investigating some bladder complications. In November last year he was admitted to hospital as an emergency for a twisted bowel, he underwent two major bowel surgeries, the formation of a stoma and six surgeries altogether. He spent almost five months recovering in hospital afterwards. He came home in April and apart from a couple of small trips back into hospital he is doing brilliantly. Now 18 months old he's full of mischief, cheekiness and eager to keep up with his 3 year old brother Archie. Edward, his mum, brother and all his family and loved ones would like to thank you all for keeping him in your prayers as they faced a very long, worrying and turbulent time, it brought a lot of comfort to them all and appreciate all your kind thoughts. Angela Donnison

Home Visiting Team

In January 2026 we hope to start a 'home visiting team' - a team of people trained by Tim to occasionally visit members of our congregation who can't get to church. If you would like to know more about this please ask Tim.

Christmas Carol Service Choir Rehearsals - Fridays 6pm

The choir will be holding their Christmas Carol Service rehearsals on Fridays at 6pm this year.

The dates are:

Friday 12th December - Centre

Friday 19th December - Church



Singing Sparks!

This year, during Advent, we are going to be running "Singing Sparks" after the 10:00 service. For any Sparks aged children (5-16) who want to come and learn a few Christmas songs we will meet from 11:30- 12:30 in the Church centre. We will then take part in the Carol Service and Christingle Service by singing the pieces we have learnt! If you would be interested in coming to join please talk to Alexandra or Georgie.

Dates:

Sunday 7th, 14th, 21st December - Practice

Sunday 21st December - Carol Service 4pm

Sunday 4th January - Christingle 4pm



Nativity Festival - Friday 12th - Sunday 14th December

It's not too late to enter this year's St John's Nativity Festival.

We still have a few places left and would love few more entries. Please see our website for more information. You don't have to make a scene, you can bring along a nativity set from home for everyone else to enjoy.

For the Festival the church will be full of Nativity scenes, and we hope you will pop along and have a cup of tea while voting for your favourite!

Anyone can enter- individuals, families, businesses, local groups, schools - it cost just £5 per entry and then on Sunday 14th December at 4pm we will have the prize giving!



Nativity Festival 12-14th December - baking donations

Calling out to you all of you keen bakers - please can you bring your donations of mince pies, individual cakes, tray bakes & biscuits to the Church Centre kitchen, or bring into Church during the festival opening times. Many thanks

Friday 12th December: 12:00-18:00

Saturday 13th December 9:00-14:00 & 16:00-18:00

Sunday 14th December 11:00-16:00

Any queries please contact Carol Potter 07712 586167

Choir during Communion – Sunday 14th December 10am

On one Sunday in each month, we ask members of our congregation to gather in a choir of singers, to sing a hymn during communion. This choir consists of members of our church choir and anyone else who wishes to join in! If you wish to sing, please arrive at church at 9.30am on Sunday for a run-through before the 10am service if you can. Contact Micky or Tim for more information.

14th December: 464 Sweet sacrament divine

Time to Talk - Do you need a listening ear? – Thursday 18th December 2pm

We are trialling a new pastoral care initiative called 'Time to Talk.' This is a time for anyone to come and talk to Tim and one of our pastoral care team. You can come and talk to us if you have a pastoral issue, a theological question or even if you just want to chat. Time to Talk will initially be held in the parish office, where we will have access to coffee, tea and biscuits too.

IT Team

We have recently formed a new IT Team and are looking for people with an IT/ Software /Hardware background who might be interested in joining and supporting this work in our Church. Please speak to Martin Thompson or email him at martin.thompson@saintjohns.org.uk, many thanks.

Regular Giving at St John's

Do you give to St John's in the collection pouch on Sundays, or use the card machine at the back of church? If so, would you consider giving regularly by direct debit instead? Having the regularity of giving helps us considerably in terms of planning and budgeting, and it is easier for you too! If you are interested to find out more, please scan this QR code or speak with Tim, or Martin Thompson (giftaid@saintjohns.org.uk).



Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care in a church should be something we all share, even if some people take a lead on it through training and their personal gifts. We have a vision of Christ-centred pastoral care as a major element of the life of any church, along with worship and teaching. At St. John's, the whole church family aims to care for each other. If you know anyone who would like to be visited (at home or in hospital) or receive communion at home, please let Tim know.

Food Bank

The food bank would greatly appreciate donations of:

Tinned Spaghetti Hoops/Strands

Cereal

Long-Life Puddings

Cooking Oil

Gift Toiletries



Please put donations in the boxes in the Church Centre, thank you. The QR code can be used for monetary donations to the food bank.

Food Bank - Christmas Donations

In December we are expecting to support over 400 households, which is double the number we saw in December 2022! We are currently making plans to ensure we can support everyone.

Items we are in need of:

Tinned Meat

Tinned Fish

Dried Flavoured Noodles

Toothpaste

Laundry Detergent

Guildford Food Bank are delighted to have been accepted for match funding through the Big Give's Christmas campaign.

All donations they receive via Big Give Christmas challenge will be doubled up to a total £12,660! The campaign launches on 2nd December and runs until 9th December. Please help if you can!

Baby Basics

The donation point is closed until further notice.

This Newsletter - content

If you have anything to advertise, or news from the Church family or community for this newsletter, please email office@saintjohns.org.uk by Tuesday each week. Please be aware that anything you ask to be advertised in the newsletter may also appear on Facebook and our website. If you do not wish to have personal details advertised, then please make it clear when asking to have items advertised in the newsletter. Many Thanks, Sandra.

CONTACTS

Parish Office

Please note the following Parish Office opening times:

Barry: Tues, Thur, Fri (9am to 1pm) Wed (9am to 12noon)

Sandra: Mon, Wed, Fri (9am to 1pm)

Rector: Rev. Tim Clifford Hill
(days off: whole Fri, & Sat am) rector@saintjohns.org.uk
01483 951649

Youth & Families Minister:
Georgie Gregson (days off: Fri & Sat) youthworker@saintjohns.org.uk
07974 494504

Parish Administrator:
Sandra Rayner office@saintjohns.org.uk
01483 454621

Centre Manager:
Barry Dickinson centremanager@saintjohns.org.uk
01483 454621

Churchwarden:
Jane Farquharson jane.farquharson@saintjohns.org.uk
07765 620017

Churchwarden:
Cathy Thompson cathy.thompson@saintjohns.org.uk
07518 202920

Deputy Churchwarden:
Michael Eagle michael.eagle@saintjohns.org.uk
07850 000224

Treasurer:
Lindsay Dobson treasurer@saintjohns.org.uk
07809 836896

Safeguarding Officer:
Rosanne Bond safeguarding@saintjohns.org.uk
01483 579462

Organist & Choir Director:
Micky Clare mickyclare2@icloud.com
01483 538306

Coffee Club:
Gerald Hunt merrowcoffeemorning@hotmail.com
07545 256114

Bell Ringing:
Jane Farquharson jane.farquharson@saintjohns.org.uk
07765 620017

Christmas Tree Prayer

Holy God, creator of all, we pray to you that, at this Advent time, our Christmas tree can help us as we watch and wait. May its evergreen branches remind us of your never-fading promises. May the lights we place on our tree be a symbol of joy that fills our hearts with the light of Jesus, who is Emmanuel, God-with-us. As we prepare to celebrate His birth help us to remember the gifts we have received from the Tree of Christ's Cross, and may we live as a sign of His love in the world. May this tree remind us to share the blessings we have with those less fortunate, to live with joy and peace, and to be a light to others throughout the coming year.

Amen.