



City Parish Journal

No. 80

ADVENT 2020

Through the year with the church in the market-place



*The Nativity Scene outside the church
in the German Market. (See page 6)*

He came in great Humility but will come again in Glory.

**The Parish Magazine of
The City Parish of St John the Baptist, Cardiff**

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The Parish Magazine of The City Parish of
St John the Baptist, Cardiff.

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EDITORIAL

December is the darkest month of the year. It was into this darkness that our Saviour was born. But in His coming he brought God's Light into our world. We live in dark times at present, beset by many troubles, not least the covid pandemic, but also poverty, conflict and uncertainty in so many parts of the world. It may seem overwhelming. But if we open our eyes we can see light, maybe sometimes seeming distant, yet giving us direction and vision. In this magazine there is much about reflection. As Christians we are called to reflect God's light, so that it shines through us to illuminate all God's creation. The way may not be easy, but we have the strength of our Lord to help us. Through Him we must try and so succeed.

This is my last editorial for the Journal because, as I have announced, I am standing down as editor. It is time for someone younger to take up the work of keeping our community informed. There are many and varied ways of doing it today, so I hope someone will pick up the challenge, and continue this service to our people and to God. I offer my blessings to all at St John's.

From The Vicar

Welcome to the Advent and Christmas edition of St John's Journal.

Advent is a time of preparation and waiting for the arrival of Jesus into our world at Christmas. It is an opportunity to prepare our hearts and minds so that we may be ready to celebrate his birth amongst us 2,000 years ago.

In some ways, life itself can be something of an Advent. We have the possibility to use our lives as a time of preparation so that we may be made ready to join with God in God's heavenly courts at the end of our lives. That is our destiny. Through this most difficult of years, it has given me comfort that all that we are, is ultimately in God's hands. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. God is with us in good times and in bad and has promised that we will return to our rightful home at the end of our lives.

This year has been greatly affected by the Coronavirus pandemic but the principle stays the same; God is with us and the long night will give way to the dawn.

As we think of the Holy Family this year, we might be reminded that the people of St John's are in many ways a family, built by our shared community. It is a loving, caring and creative family where we are each known and loved.

The St John's Journal has been produced for 14 years. Richard has been the editor for all 14 of these years. Richard let us know some months ago that this was to be his last Journal as Editor. We owe him our thanks for his loving, caring and creative service in this role. The Journal is not simply a vehicle for news and notices or for entertainment; it is a social history of the life of the parish and the community who worship at St John's.

We will need to work out whether we continue with the Journal in its current form or what we shall do instead. May I invite you to let the churchwardens or myself know if you have thoughts on this.

... From the Vicar

Our Advent and our Christmas celebrations will be different this year. Many people will be separated from loved ones because of the need to isolate or the need to slow the spread of the Coronavirus. Let us pray for each other and for those who are most in need at this time. Let us give thanks for everyone who gives their time and energy to make St John's the community that it is and give thanks that Jesus came to be with us in this world.

Sarah

The Rev'd Canon Sarah Jones
Priest in Charge

Parish News

Coronavirus and Lockdown

Who at the beginning of the year would have thought of what would happen as a result of a virus spreading to affect the whole world and the way we lead our lives? But happened it has, and no one has not had their lives disrupted in some way. For some it has been inconvenience, for others real problems, and for a certain number a tragedy. We must pray for all those who suffer, in so many ways, be it financial or personal, and for the anxiety of an uncertain path to the future.

St John's church has not escaped from the effects. We have had to close our doors for many months, cutting people off from their regular pattern of worship, and preventing people from coming in to find peace, comfort, inspiration and refreshment.

With its doors closed, the running of the church has posed additional problems. The building even when not in use still has to be cared for. We are grateful for the continuing work of our churchwardens in keeping it in good order, and for their efforts in preparing it to reopen in line with the restrictions required. We are also thankful for all the effort put in by our vicar, canon Sarah, in setting up and running a new way of worshipping using modern technology, so we can continue as a worshipping community while in our own homes.

St John's also acts as host to outside groups and events throughout the year. Regrettably, all these have had to be cancelled, to the disappointment of the organisers, and to the church. This includes all of our regular monthly organ recitals, visits by the Cardiff Arms Park Male Choir & Friends, the embryo recital series by students of the Royal Welsh College and two band concerts.

Also cancelled are all the Christmas carol concerts by various charities and organisations, including Tenovus, Kidney Wales, Order of St John's, Ronald McDonald House and the Livery Company. As well as being acts of praise and fellowship, these also help to raise funds, for both the organisations and the church. The tea room has had to close. It has an important role in the mission of the church, not only raising much needed funds to sustain the church, but providing a meeting place for those who went there. Also lost are our group meetings including the Tuesday group, and Lenten and other study groups.

The vicar and churchwardens are grateful for the many other people who have helped to support the church during the closure, including the assistant clergy Lorna and Emma, our organist Philip, and several others who have helped in various ways. A church is not simply a building, it is a community.

At this time we have to look forward to the future. What is to come is very uncertain. Maybe soon there will be an effective vaccine and by this time next year life will be back to normal. But experience shows that even if the disease goes away, it will take time and perseverance to rebuild what was there before. So let us pray that the future of St John's will be sustained.

Even when the church is closed, the calendar continues and the times and seasons can be observed. Thanks to the online worship, important dates could be observed. Eucharist was celebrated to mark our Patronal Festival, even though it was only our vicar who was able to receive the elements, while others were watching online. The church had re-opened for morning worship in time for Harvest, but the usual offering of gifts at the altar wasn't possible. Shortly after, the church had to close again, so celebration of All Saints and All Souls was a remote affair. This was also true of Remembrance Sunday, with scenes of a lone piper by the National War Memorial, and the roll being read online. Normally, the Royal British Legion holds a service of remembrance in our churchyard, but this year it was not possible, and a few poppies on our 'poppy tree' had to suffice. We remember that all over the country, ceremonies have had to be cancelled, a sadness to those who have family and comrades to remember.

With current restrictions, even if the church can hold services, it is unable to hold concerts or similar events. But whatever the difficulties, the worship of the church goes on, and we find new ways to praise our Lord, whose love and compassion never fails.



Remembrance Poppies in the church.

Life around the church.

In the approach to Christmas, the streets around the church become busy. Cardiff has not cancelled its Christmas market, so the central area outside the church railings and into the Hayes is once again filled with the craft stalls and other attractions customary at this time of year. A lot of effort is put in by the mainly local stallholders to make the area seasonally attractive, so it is to be hoped their trade will not be too badly hit by the present restrictions. In particular, the 'German Village' is back in Working Street, providing warm hospitality in this cold season. They have always been well disposed towards our church, and they set up a small nativity scene to remind passers-by of the true meaning of Christmas, and it collects donations which they give to our church, for which we are very grateful. This year they have also set up flood-lights to light our east end so as to make our building stand out.

Because of restrictions we have been unable this year to host the 'Cards for Good Causes' so they have managed to find space in a nearby shop in St John's Square, just at the entrance to the High Street Arcade. Their efforts raise funds for many charities, and do much good work.

Outside and inside the castle the temporary outdoor eating area in Duke Street has been replaced by the city's winter attraction, 'Christmas at the Castle', which replaces the Winter Wonderland usually outside the City Hall. It does mean, though, that Castle Street has not fully re-opened to traffic, but is to be limited to buses, taxis and cyclists, which continues to make access to the church difficult.

This year, Christmas celebrations are bound to be different from usual, but we hope that everyone will be able to make the best of it, so that the meaning of the occasion is not lost.

Charitable Donations

It has always been the custom of St John's to make donations to selected charities. Recently it has been the policy to divide its giving between World, Welsh and Local causes. It had been intended to review this division, but because of the church closure this was deferred. Although the finances of St John's are under pressure it was decided to continue the established practice and to repeat the pattern of donations made in the last few years. At the November PCC the following donations were approved.

For the world, £400 to Christian Aid,
for Wales, £400 to the Archbishop's Fund for Children,
and for Cardiff, £200 each to the Huggard and the Street Pastors.

Cutting Down of Trees.

St John's churchyard is divided into two by the path which crosses it opposite the market. This path was provided by arrangement with the council at the time the market was opened over 100 years ago. Since then the council has taken responsibility for maintaining the half next to the Old Library, although it still remains church land. It contained a number of mature trees. About a month ago the council decided to fell all the large trees, which they did, without notifying the church of the proposed work. The area now looks very different without the trees. As to why they did it we don't know, nor how they intend to landscape the area. Whether it is an improvement or not is a matter for debate. A by-product of the work is that it disturbed the colony of rats living there, so we have had to take vigorous measures to counter them coming into our part of the churchyard. The rats have also disturbed the pigeons in the area, and there have been reports of pigeons and rats fighting each other. We hope that in not too long a time the problem can be eliminated.



South Churchyard with trees all gone.

Rachel Rose

It is with some sadness that we have had to lose the services of our Parish Administrator Rachel. Since the beginning of the lockdown at the end of March, with the church closed, there has been no work for her to do. It was decided to place her on Furlough, to make use of the government scheme to be able to continue to pay her. That scheme as originally set up tapered off from August and was to terminate at the end of October. In the light of that, it was necessary to review her position, and with little prospect of the things getting back to pre-covid normality, there was unlikely to be sufficient work to justify her remaining on her existing hours. After much careful consideration and consultation it was regretfully decided that there was no sensible option for her but redundancy.

During her four-and-a half years working for us she has provided useful service dealing with the routine administrative tasks of the church, and we thank her for what she has done. She parts with our best wishes, and we hope she will be able to find another position suitable to her. As a token of our appreciation, a bouquet of flowers was delivered to her house by Vanessa.

... Parish News

Quentin Sandifer

We are pleased to welcome to the PCC Dr. Quentin Sandifer, who has taken up the post of churchwarden following Evan Chapman's completion of the permitted six year term. Quentin recently retired as the Executive Director of Public Health Services and Medical Director at Public Health Wales. In this role he was responsible for all national screening programmes, health protection services and public health emergency planning for the population of Wales, and was the lead strategic director for the COVID-19 response led by Public Health Wales.

Quentin graduated in 1985 from the University of Wales, College of Medicine in Cardiff and first trained as a general practitioner. He has been married to Anne for almost 36 years and they have three children and one grandchild, with another on the way. Quentin and Anne live in Cardiff Bay and have regularly attended services at St Johns since they returned to Cardiff in 2012.



*Quentin Sandifer,
new Churchwarden*

Friends of St John's Church

Another casualty of the covid restrictions has been the Friends annual luncheon. It had been planned to hold this in November, but It became clear that it would not be possible. The luncheon is a chance for members to come together and meet, and is always a popular occasion. It may be that a luncheon can be arranged in the spring or early summer of next year if the restrictions are lifted. It is a matter of wait and see. It was possible to hold the Friends Annual General Meeting in a simplified form, confined to essential business only. The date fell into the brief time between the church re-opening and having to be closed again. Because of restrictions, voting by proxy was encouraged, a first for the Friends, so that the required quorum was obtained with only a very few members attending in person, who were already in church for worship, and observing distancing. The Annual Report and Accounts were adopted, and the President, officers and committee were all re-elected.

The support of the Friends is important to the church, and members are thanked for their continuing support.

Church Finances

The financial position of the church has come under a considerable strain in the last eighteen months, with the essential work on the heating and the tower, and in the last six months in particular with the enforced closure because of the pandemic. Its income has dropped substantially during the lockdown, with most of its regular sources having stopped. No Tearoom, no collections at services, and no concerts. Only the regular giving through stewardship and bank orders has kept it going. These amount to less than half of its outgoings, and the rest has to be made up by drawing on reserves. But reserves will not last for ever, and at some time within the next two years, if things continue unchanged, they will run out. We have been urging people willing to make regular donations to make use of the Church in Wales Gift Direct scheme, by which they can make donations by monthly direct debit. If you would like to use this way of supporting St John's, information is available.

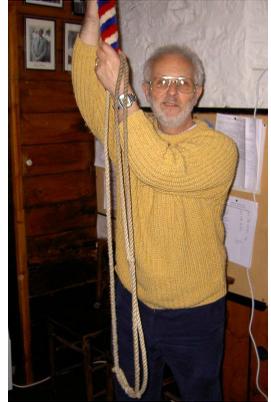
The church is being kept going by regular transfers from the Tearoom fund, £3,000 being paid over each month to the churchwardens. With no income from customers in the Tearoom this pool of money is steadily diminishing, and will run out round about the end of next year. The church does have a few other reserves in the form of deposits and investments, which at one time produced a decent amount of interest income, but rates are now almost zero. Meanwhile, our expenses are continuing, and although efforts are made to keep these to a minimum, they have to be paid whether our doors are open or closed.

The largest outgoing is the parish share, which is paid to the diocese to cover its expenses, the bulk of which is the salaries of the clergy. Churches do not pay directly for their priests; the money across parishes is pooled to provide the ministry to all parishes. The share is calculated annually in a way to be as fair as possible to all parishes. We have just been notified of the figure for next year, which is an increase, but less than might have been, as the diocese have made efforts not to overburden parishes. The reason it is higher is because our service attendance before lockdown was increasing. We are a growing church, and in that lies hope.

Other essential expenses include insurance, heating, maintenance of the building and churchyard, clergy and officers expenses. We are making efforts to increase our income by modern means. Cash is a problem in that it can carry these nasty viruses, and young people often do not carry it anyway. There is a donation page on the parish website, and we will soon be putting a contactless card terminal in the church for donations by card. We like to encourage people to support us in whatever way they can, because every little helps. Regular support will help secure the future of the church.

Tower News

For many years the bells of our church have rung out Sunday by Sunday, with the band of ringers under the able leadership of tower captain Bob Hardy. We have been lucky to have had such a capable ringer in charge. Bob is especially skilled both at ringing and at running the band, ranking among some of the most able ringers in the country. He has been diligent about his duties and always willing to encourage ringers of all abilities to develop their skills. With recent health problems, he has decided to retire. He is succeeded as tower captain by Evan Chapman, who in recent times has acted as his deputy. Both of them write below.



Bob Hardy

Words from Bob:

As many of you will already know, I decided to retire as tower captain earlier this year. I was already finding running the ringing a bit of a burden in 2019, not realising then that my health was the problem. My diagnosis was followed by treatment which required me to keep out of circulation, but just as I was about to be able to come back into the world, along came covid. At this point it dawned on me that I was now in my 15th year in the job. About time to go, I thought, especially with possible uncertainties about my future health. I'm very grateful to Evan for agreeing to step in, though I fear he may not have much to do for quite a while yet, until restrictions on close personal contact are eased.

It's job I was proud to be asked to take on and I have enjoyed doing it, though it was not without its challenges. In particular at the time, sadly now well in the past, when the Cardiff student society was in its heyday and we had upwards of 30 people in the tower on a practice night! Despite the lack of present day students Mary and I remain in touch with many from the past via the Welsh Colleges society. Indeed we had a Zoom meeting with a small group only recently.

I've served under four incumbents and am grateful for the support I've had from them all, even though some of us up the tower are not the most regular members of the congregation. I'm also very appreciative of much support over the years from both our own band and also many regular visitors.

Words from Evan:

‘The bells of waiting Advent don’t ring’ to paraphrase John Betjeman. As far as St John’s is concerned, and most churches, they have not rung since March and are not likely to do again for the foreseeable future, bellringing probably being among the last activities it will be feasible to restart. By its nature social

distancing by 2m being impossible, and being generally conducted in fairly enclosed spaces. It is quite possibly the longest the bells have been silent since the Second World War.

As Bob mentions in his section, during the break in ringing he has stepped down as tower captain and for want of any competition I appear to have acquired the role. All I can say is that I will endeavour to do by best, although I am a very poor replacement for Bob. As long as I can maintain the friendly and welcoming atmosphere Bob has engendered in the tower during his leadership, I will be on the right path. Thank you Bob.

Philip writes: ***Lunchtime Organ Concerts***

Here in St John's, the 2020 Series of Lunchtime Organ Concerts started well with good audience attendance figures for January, February and March. However, the national Lockdown that came into force at the end of March meant that the church, along with all other live music concert venues, had to close bringing our organ concerts to an abrupt halt.

The continuing Coronavirus restrictions mean that it is unlikely our lunchtime concerts will be able to resume until well into the New Year, possibly during the summer months – we shall see...

All is not entirely doom and gloom, because we received good news concerning one of our most popular and loyal concert performers, Thomas Trotter.

Some of you may recall that Thomas was one of the three Honorary Patrons of the Organ Restoration Project that was started way back in 2001.

The Organ Restoration was completed in 2005 and Thomas Trotter played the re-opening concert to a capacity audience exceeding 350 people. Since that time, he has returned every year since to play the special Anniversary Concert. Sadly, his unbroken run of concerts has been interrupted by the Coronavirus.

The good news is that the Queen has approved the award to him of Her Majesty's Medal for Music for the year 2020. Awarded every year to an outstanding individual or group of musicians, The Queen's Medal for Music was first presented to Sir Charles Mackerras on November 22nd 2005, the feast day of St Cecilia, Patron Saint of music.

Mr. Trotter is one of the world's most revered concert organists, and is the sixteenth recipient of the award. He has been the Birmingham City Organist since 1983, and is also Organist at St. Margaret's Church Westminster.



Thomas Trotter

Lorna Hanney Reflects

My year began so well. The anthem bouncing off the roof of the Principality Stadium, 'dragon's fire' as the Welsh rugby team swarmed onto the pitch. My first 'Six Nations' match - in our parish !

Like everyone in this beloved community of St John's, I was full of expectations for 2020.

As a trainee priest there was so much to learn, the privilege of absorbing how to lead - eucharists, funerals, weddings and baptisms. The training courses to teach me necessary skills. Professionally and personally the pandemic derailed most of my plans, as it has for us all.

We have hunkered down together and apart and dealt with difficulties ranging from the disappointment of opportunities and jobs lost, to the desolation of deep suffering and grief.

Some of us have been frustrated and fed up, food has been hard to access.

Some of us have been frantic and fearful, ill and isolated.

The virus has taken its toll on all of us, in different ways and at different times.

As life shrunk, poems became my lockdown liturgies and they brought me a gift ? A reminder to find - 'The glory in the grey'

Phone calls are not the same as presence, but as I contacted our community. As I listened to fears and faith, tales of hospitals and heartbreak. Your strong voices penetrating the mist.

As I prayed and wrote each sermon and we were invisible to each other.

I asked the playful Spirit of God, to be a bridge to you.

Even on 'Zoom' meetings and the wonderful 'Livestreams,' Rev Sarah has so beautifully created. The beam of someone's smile can come bursting through the screen and up pops God - 'The glory in the grey'

Where have you found a glint of God shimmering in the rubble and gloom of 2020?

Where have you found joy ? Captain Tom, 'Strictly Come Dancing,' the loyalty of a pet, the hope of a vaccine?

We have kept our humanity despite everything, and God has kept us.

There is always 'Glory in the grey,' for God will never leave us or forsake us.

Thank you for being yourselves in 2020 and this Advent may..

The kindness of the king of tenderness, be with you.

The love and affection of the angels and saints be with you.

God's regenerative presence be with you.

To guard you and to cherish you, to begin again.

Fourteen Years of the Journal

The Editor reflects on the parish magazine in this his last edition.

The City Parish Journal started life following the division of the former Central Cardiff parish into two parts, Cathays and the City Parish. The former parish magazine, The Bell, was produced by St Teilo's church, so when our part separated there was no parish magazine. I thought St John's should not be without a means of communication to its worshippers, so I approached the vicar Revd. Keith Kimber, who took up my offer to produce one. There was a period of discussion between me and him as to what form the new publication should take, and we pooled ideas as to the form and content. The City Parish Journal is a fusion of both our thoughts, for instance the name was suggested by Keith, the arrangement of structure for news, articles and information mainly mine.

The first issue was for Lent 2007, and was well received. It was actually good fun working out the format and how to best use my publishing software. I played around with ideas a while before the first issue, and so I called it 'my new toy'! Publishing it seasonally rather than the more usual monthly was Keith's idea, but I was happy as it gave me a break between issues. Publishing monthly means starting on the next one as soon as the previous one is finished, for which it is best if the editor has no other church work to do.

I have enjoyed producing the magazine over the years. I considered it important, to keep everyone up to date on church life, even if they did not attend regularly. There were really three objectives in my mind, first to keep everyone in the picture so as to strengthen the bonds of the community, then to be a showcase for the church life to outsiders by portraying St John's as a living active church, and then to be a historical record of its life for future record.

I have always felt a sense of satisfaction at a job done as each edition is completed and issued. Also, though, it is the case that production of each magazine entails a fair amount of work, particularly in the week before it comes out. When it started, the Internet and web were much less developed than they are now, and print was the dominant means of communication. Today it is different, with all sorts of communications in everyone's pockets. It is for these reasons, and for being that many years older than when I started, I decided it was time for me to stop. A fresh mind and fresh ideas can carry on the torch of spreading the life of our church to the eyes and ears of its members and supporters into the future.

Richard Hall

Reflections: 20-20 Hindsight

2020

What a year it has been for many of us!

Before we dived deeply into 2020, like everyone else I was filled with excitement and joy for the beginning of 2020. For all of us, 2020 was going to be the year of new adventures, sights and opportunities. However, these words are associated to 2020:

Fear

Loss

Shock

Anger

Anxiety

Division

Loneliness

Of all the years that have I lived on this earth, 2020 has been challenging in more ways than one. The pandemic shattered our ways of reality, we were separated from our loved ones, witnessed the cracks within our society but worst of all, we witnessed the murder of George Floyd (RIP). Brutality against my community has been ongoing for many centuries dating back to the slave trade, however it had taken the murder of an innocent man for all of us to WAKE UP. However, it was through this shocking moment that many people roared against the injustices of the world from all sides. It was through this shocking moment that all of us looked inwards for truth and searched for solutions. It was through this shocking moment that it revealed certain people's true natures and either broke relationships or brought us closer as a human race. It was through this shocking moment that inspired my friends and myself to perform in a music video called 'Freedom' by The V featuring L.E.A.M which expresses the struggles that many of my community have and continue to experience.

Despite the difficulties of 2020, these words are also associated to the current situation:

Hope

Faith

Gratitude

Healing

Courage

Love

Closeness

These words reflect Christ's true nature and I felt his presence during these challenging times, and it gave me the motivation to keep moving forward. 2020 has given each of the us the opportunity to reflect on what matters in life.

... Reflections

We've been able to slow down and truly rest. We've been able to reconnect with family and friends developing more stable relationships. We've been able to help those who required our services, especially the essential workers, Mark Rashford and Captain Sir Tom Moore who rose to the occasion. We've been able to still worship Christ wherever we are in the world, especially through technology and social media. We've been able to discover new interests. We've been able to find the courage to get help and move forward for healing. 2020 will be a year that none of us will ever forget, but these lessons are essential for us to grow and develop in our personal journeys through Christ. No matter what the future may bring us, Christ will always continue to live in us.

God bless and Amen.

Tayo Sanwo

Covid Rules in Church

We have to comply with all of the Covid-19 protocols, which are needed to keep us as safe as possible. When attending church please follow the guidance below.

- E-mail the vicar in advance if you wish to attend. We must record the contact details of everyone who attends so that they can be contacted should a case of Covid 19 occur. (We delete these details after 21 days).
- We have a limit of around 50 people. If you attend without pre-booking, we can only let you into St John's if there are seats available. We will need to take your details at the door.
- Please follow any guidance from 'welcomers'.
- Everyone must maintain a social distance of two metres unless you are with family or people you live with.
- Please sit only in seats which have a welcome sign.
- Only family groups can share a pew.
- Face coverings must be worn at all times in church.
- Hand sanitisers must be used on entering and exiting church.
- Admission is through the West Door, and exit through the South Door. There are steps at the West Door. Should you need to enter on a flat surface we will open the South Porch for you.
- The toilets are closed as they are not Covid secure.
- Please co-operate with all these rules, which are required by law.

Annual Vestry Meeting

Under normal circumstances the parish Annual Meeting must be held before the end of April each year. This year this was not possible due to the forced closure of churches at the end of March. This being so for all of Wales the Church in Wales allowed for it to be held before the end of November. When the end of the lockdown was known, a date was set. Alas, by the set date the second lockdown was in force and the church closed again. A new date was set, for after the church reopened, but the new regulations prohibited a meeting of more than 15 people, fewer than might like to attend. It was decided that the meeting was best held on line, using the Zoom meeting app or a phone link for people without computers. So it finally went ahead on the evening of Monday 23rd November by electronic link.

The meeting is of a formal nature so there was little discussion. The first item of business was approval of the Electoral Roll. Under normal circumstances this year as every five years a complete new roll is compiled. But because of the difficulty with church closures of getting people to sign the necessary forms, the Church in Wales has made a dispensation that a complete new list is not required this year, so all that was needed was amendment to the existing roll for new and departed persons. The roll thus amended was approved. The minutes of last year's Annual Meeting, which had been circulated in advance, were approved. There were no matters arising. The Vicar's report, which also had been circulated, was presented. It appears on the following pages of this magazine. The Annual Report and Accounts were approved, and the meeting then moved to election of PCC Members. Two new members were appointed to the PCC, Anne Botterill and Quentin Sandifer. Quentin was also elected as Churchwarden, replacing Evan Chapman who stood down having served the permitted term of six years. The last item of business was appointment of the Independent Examiner of Accounts, Julia Mortimer of Watts Gregory LLP continuing in the position.

Following the Vestry Meeting, members of the new PCC remained connected on line for a short PCC meeting, when they made the Declaration of Assent. The PCC approved the appointment of Evan Chapman and Richard Hall to continue as PCC Secretary and PCC Treasurer respectively.

Mission Report

Parish Mission Report for 2019, given by Revd. Canon Sarah Jones

During 2019 St John's has continued to seek to grow and develop and to play its part in the social, cultural and spiritual life of Cardiff.

During the year we made our commitment to inclusivity a little clearer through sermons, social media and established public media, Lent group courses, engagement with other inclusive organisations and the wider city of Cardiff. This year the Pride Cymru festival Parade passed by the East End of St John's. A number of parishioners were involved in giving out welcome leaflets to people attending the festival and greeting the parade and onlookers as it passed St John's. Members of St John's took part in the parade and I presided at the Faith Tent Eucharist.

For some years the PCC has been keen to grow the number of students who worship at St John's. The inclusive nature of St John's, our liberal but careful attention to scripture, combined with our commitment to classic Anglican Worship as evidenced by our Sung Communion and weekly Evensong is an attractive offering and could appeal to some students. This year we made a focussed effort to connect with the student community. We paid for customised pens and professionally printed flyers to display at Freshers' events at the start of the new academic year in September 2019. I also spoke to various student groups. The combination of outreach at Pride and amongst the student body has led to an increase of around 10 new regular worshipers and a growth in a younger-age section of our community.

This year we have continued to offer Morning Prayer on weekdays at 10am; midweek Eucharists on Wednesday and Friday and meditation sessions run by Norma Thomas at 12.45pm and 6pm on Tuesdays. The Rev'd Meg Underdown has also continued her valuable chaplaincy and listening ministry and from February to May, Sarah Harris (Llandaff Diocese Mental Health Chaplain) provided a drop-in session in St John's every Tuesday morning.

In January, we received Lorna Hanney on placement from St Padarn's Theological College. Lorna had previously trained for ministry at Westcott House and quickly settled into St John's. Before training for ministry, Lorna had previous experience with vulnerable groups in London and this helped her to contribute to the work of St John's. Lorna was ordained to the diaconate on 29th June 2019 and returned to us to serve a curacy. In September we welcomed Emma Ackland on placement from St Padarn's as she studies for ministry.

Mission Report ...

In May, the Governing Body of the Church in Wales held its meeting in Cardiff and St John's was used for a Eucharist and for Evening Prayer. We also hosted a service for the Welsh Guards Association, a display of Prisoners' Artwork during Prisons Week, and events or carol concerts for St John's Cymru Wales, the Worshipful Livery Company of Wales, Kidney Wales and The Mothers Union. The Lord Mayor's St David's Day National Civic Service was held in the Roman Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral Church of St. David this year as Lord Mayor Dianne Rees is a member of the congregation there. It is planned to return to St John's in 2020.

During 2019 we had 3 funerals associated with St John's conducted at the crematorium or other chapel, 1 baptism and 1 marriage. In February, St John's also held the funeral of The Rev'd Canon Mac Ellis, who was Rector at St John's until 2002. The Word for The City group continues to meet on Monday lunch-time. Rev'd Lorna has taken prime responsibility for the group during which they have covered topics such as Middle Eastern traditions, artwork, poetry, singing and prayer.

Our organist Philip Thomas continues to organise the monthly organ concerts which take place at St John's. We hosted the Cards for Good Causes shop in October, November and December. Our Partnership with German Lutheran Church continues, with Shoppers' Carols. We also continued our links with Street Pastors, Citizens UK, and Christian Aid. We gave to Christian Aid, the Archbishop's Children's Fund, Street Pastors and the Huggard Centre and continue to help people in need when possible.

Evan Chapman and Ruth Livingstone continue to serve as Churchwardens and we are grateful for their diligent and tireless work. Richard Hall continues to serve as Treasurer and continues to rationalise our accounts and accounting system as well as editing the St John's Journal. We are grateful to Vanessa Hall for her work with our choir and for chairing The Friends of St John's and to Rob Stogden who looks after our building so comprehensively. Rachel Rose has provided admin support in the office and Bob Hardy our Tower Captain has served us well. As ever, the volunteers who work in the Café@StJohn's have played a key role offering hospitality and refreshment to visitors as well as providing essential income and our PCC has served us very well indeed.

As planned, this year we refreshed our Social Media presence on Facebook and Twitter. We created a new website and are now hosting it at our

www.stjohnscardiff.wales address. We shall gradually empty and close our Google webpages which are now in a very old format. We made some progress towards becoming a more organised tourist destination but we were not yet able to achieve our goal completely and so this development work will continue into 2020. We replaced our boiler as planned, albeit at a higher cost than anticipated and we also conducted the necessary repairs to the Tower in the summer of 2019. We have held meetings to progress the internal reordering of the Pace Vestry block and have commissioned a Feasibility Study to determine the likelihood of us raising the £800,000 needed to develop it as planned.

In September I was made an Honorary Canon of Llandaff Cathedral which I feel is also partly a statement of the importance of St John's to our diocese and in November Ross Pilliner was selected for training for ordination. We are delighted for him but we shall miss him when he enters training in September 2020.

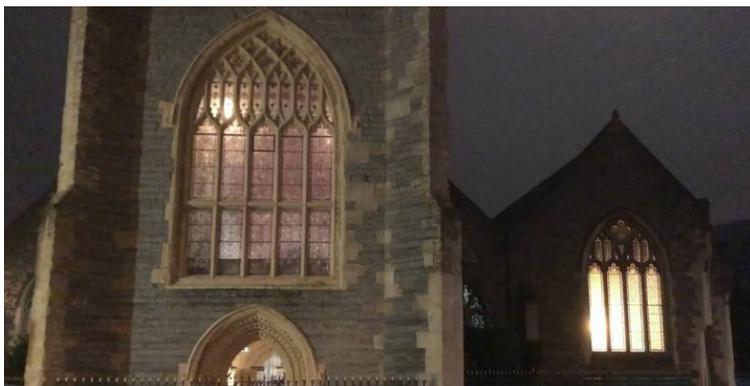
St John's has done much good work in 2019. Our profile has been raised and we have attracted new worshippers. We are still largely dependent on the income from our café in order to offset our annual deficit of income from regular giving. We have addressed this in sermons and we have encouraged people to sign up for Gift Direct. The results have been modest so far. Our building is in good condition but we are limited by our outdated facilities and so the redevelopment of our Vestry block is an urgent necessity. The members of our community are resourceful, warm, friendly and generous with their time. We will need to continue to harness their energy in order to progress in our mission and to serve the people of Cardiff in the years ahead.

The Rev'd Canon Sarah Jones
Priest-in-Charge,
The City Parish of St John The Baptist, Cardiff



Lighting up for Advent

All Church in Wales' cathedrals and greater churches were transformed into beacons of light on Advent Sunday, November 29th, as a symbol of Christ's light and love in our communities. At St John's the customary evening service for this day is Advent Carols by Candlelight, normally a popular occasion. Sadly this year this was not able to happen. Instead, in the evening, the church was lit by turning on all the lights, shining out to the city. The church fully lit represents the coming of God's light into the darkness of the world. All churches were invited to join in the light-up after dark and shine out on Advent Sunday, but St John's had been particularly asked to do so, together with the six cathedrals in Wales, and three other major churches, St Giles Wrexham, St Mary's Swansea and St Mary's Priory Church Abergavenny. Even if you are not in church, you can mark the start of Advent by lighting a candle at home.



The Light of Christ. St John's lit up for Advent Sunday.

On the Lighter Side

Supposedly genuine quotes from parish notices.

The sermon this morning: Jesus walks on the water

The sermon tonight: Searching for Jesus.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What is Hell?'

Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Bring and buy sale on Saturday. Help us to raise funds for the church by selling things that people don't want.

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs Lewis to come and lay an egg on the altar.

THE GOSPEL TREE

There once was a shining Christmas tree
Standing out where all could see.
Its brilliance captured every eye
And seemed to cheer each passerby.

"The lights are so bright," they would say
And hesitate to walk away.
The tree stood proud ablaze with light
For every light was burning bright.

Then one bulb was heard to say
"I'm tired of burning night and day;
I think I'll just go out and rest
For I'm too tired to do my best;
Besides, I am so very small
I doubt if I'd be missed at all."

Then a child lovingly touched the light
"Look, mother, this one shines so very bright.
I think of all the lights upon the tree
This one looks the best to me."

"Oh my goodness," said the light
"I almost dimmed right out of sight.
I thought perhaps no one would care
If I failed to shine my share."
With that a glorious brilliance came
For every light had felt the same.

Our Gospel, like this Christmas tree
With little lights which are you and me.
We each have a space that we must fill
With love, and lessons and good will.

Let's keep our tree ablaze with light
With testimonies burning bright.
For our Gospel is a living tree
That lights the way to eternity.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Around the Parish

Parish Office

at St John's Church.
(029) 2039 5231

Priest-in-Charge

Revd. Sarah Jones,
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(029) 2022 4956

Assistant Curate

Revd. Lorna Hanney

Church Wardens

Ruth Livingstone (029) 2045 4743
Quentin Sandifer (029) 2065 0446

P C C Secretary

Evan Chapman

P C C Treasurer

Richard Hall

Verger

Evan Chapman

Organist

Philip Thomas

Tower Captain

Evan Chapman

Sunday School

Norma Thomas

Website: <http://www.stjohnscardiff.wales>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnthebaptistcardiffcitycentre>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/stjohnscardiff>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOrcPof3-UBNzPfiZZ1m9bA>

Because of the restrictions, St John's church is currently open only at service times.
Weekday opening for visitors and private prayer will resume when possible.

Times of Services

(While Restrictions Apply)

Sundays

St John's

10.00 am Holy Eucharist
Note that numbers attending are limited and covid restrictions must be observed. (See page 15)

Online worship 4.00 pm (or 10 am if worship in church is not possible)
- Live on YouTube or Facebook -

Weekdays

Online Worship using Zoom

Daily (Mon. - Fri.) 5.00pm
Evening Prayer

Other services as on notices.

Diary Dates

(Because of the uncertainty over opening, only Sundays and Special Days are listed.)

November

Sun 29th **ADVENT SUNDAY**
Mon 30th **ST ANDREW**

December

Tue 1st World AIDS day.
Sun 6th Second Sunday in Advent
Sun 13th Third Sunday in Advent
Sun 20th Fourth Sunday in Advent
Thu 24th **Christmas Eve** Services to be announced
Fri 25th **CHRISTMAS DAY** Holy Eucharist 10.00am if possible.
Sat 26th ST STEPHEN
Sun 27th ST JOHN APOSTLE
Mon 28th HOLY INNOCENTS

January 2021

Fri 1st THE NAMING OF JESUS
Sun 3rd Second Sunday of Christmas.
Wed 6th **EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD**
Sun 10th THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST First Sunday of Epiphany
Sun 17th Second Sunday of Epiphany
Mon 18th Week of prayer for Christian Unity begins. (18th - 25th Jan.)
Sun 24th Third Sunday of Epiphany
Mon 25th THE CONVERSION OF ST PAUL
Wed 27th Holocaust Memorial Day
Sun 31st Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

February

Tue 2nd PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE (**Candlemas**)
Sun 7th Second Sunday before Lent - Creation Sunday
Sun 14th Sunday before Lent - Transfiguration Sunday
Tue 16th Shrove Tuesday
Wed 17th ASH WEDNESDAY
Sun 21st First Sunday of Lent
Sun 28th Second Sunday of Lent

March

Mon 1st ST DAVID
Sun 7th Third Sunday of Lent
Sun 14th Fourth Sunday of Lent - Mothering Sunday
Sun 21st Fifth Sunday of Lent - Passion Sunday
Thu 25th THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD
Sun 28th Sixth Sunday of Lent - Palm Sunday - **Holy Week** begins

Events at St John's, Cardiff.

Covid Restrictions

Due to covid restrictions it is not possible to arrange events in the church. Check the church website for announcements if the situation changes. Sunday morning 10am worship continues when possible. Because of limitations on numbers, please book your seat in advance by email to the vicar. (revsarahjones@icloud.com) Other services are held regularly online. See pages 22 & 15, or church website, for times and details.

Psalm 150

1 Praise the Lord!

Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament!

2 Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing greatness!

3 Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!

4 Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!

5 Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

6 Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

FOR TIMES OF SERVICES AND PARISH DIRECTORY SEE PAGE 22

Some of our team members



*Ruth Livingstone
Churchwarden*



*Rev Canon Sarah Jones
Priest-in-Charge*



*Quentin Sandifer
Churchwarden*