

Prayers:

Dear Lord, we thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Helper, always with us to strengthen and support us when we feel alone.

We pray especially for:

Sick: Dawn Forey, Ruth Gillespie, Hanna Lebrato, Marion Mason and Sue Ralfe.

RIP: Inez Bennett, William Kearns, Ken Peters and Dennis Whitten.

May we always abide with you as you dwell in our hearts forever. Amen.

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The Parish Office is closed.

Matthew and Jonny are continuing to say Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer in their homes every day. Join them [here](#).

St John's Church

Alternative Pew Sheet

17th May 2020

Welcome!

The Church of England continues to follow Government advice. Sadly it is not possible for services, baptisms, weddings and funerals in church to take place. We also have to keep the church closed.

This is the ninth edition of our alternative pew sheet. We are committed to keeping in touch with everyone at St Johns and offer some resources: [here](#).

If you need any help or assistance from Matthew or Jonny, please be in touch (see opposite).

**May the God of hope fill you
with all joy and peace as you trust in him,
so that you may overflow with hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Romans 15.13 (NIV)**

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - MISSION STATEMENT

Drawn together by Christ's love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.

www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk

Please do check our website for future updates

St John's

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

Collect

Risen Christ, by the lakeside you renewed your call to your disciples: help your Church to obey your command and draw the nations to the fire of your love, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Bible Readings (click on links to access passages):

[Acts 17:22-31](#)

[Psalm 66:7-20](#)

[1 Peter 3:13-22](#)

[John 14:15-21](#)

Short Sermon (by Frances Westcott, Licensed Lay Minister)

We continue to live in extraordinary times – self-isolation has now been with us for weeks and there have been so many deaths that it is hard to see any pluses in our situation yet pollution is down and there have been many instances of kindness and goodwill; people are coming together through social media perhaps more than ever before - so there is comfort in the midst of sorrow.

Jesus's disciples were in a similar situation, sorrowful yet being offered comfort. Our Gospel reading takes place on the night of the Last Supper. Jesus has washed their feet and given them a new commandment – to love one another as he loved them. He has also told them that he will have to leave them which has saddened them. But now Jesus offers them consolation in their sorrow: he says, 'I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever...I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.'

His new commandment 'Love one another as I have loved you' is more personal than 'love your neighbour as yourself'. The disciples are going to have to cling to each other when Jesus has left them, but it is a big ask, to love one another as Jesus has loved us. He loved us so much that he died for us. Very few of us could do that. Jesus now repeats, 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments'. He knows that no one can keep his commandments in their own strength but the Holy Spirit will provide aid, giving the promise of light in darkness.

St John's

And that promise was for us, too. We shall shortly hear Matthew say, 'The Lord is here' and we shall respond, 'His Spirit is with us'. God is embodied in us today through his Holy Spirit, bringing us comfort and help, guidance and healing - for God is not just with us but in us. In v 17, Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit when he says, 'You know him, because he abides with you and he will be in you.' If we love someone, we want to please that person and Jesus says that those who love him will keep his commandments. We can do this through the power of the Holy Spirit, which will change us. In Galatians 5. 22-23 St Paul describes the growth which takes place through the Holy Spirit, which he calls the fruits of the Spirit. He names these fruits as: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, all of which will help us to love one another.

We are not designed to be alone, which is why in Genesis 2, God provides Adam with a companion, and because we are social beings, we are downcast at being isolated in these days of lockdown, so it is really uplifting to be reminded of Jesus' promise of the Comforter, to know that we are not in fact alone, because the Holy Spirit is with us to sustain us and offer us support and consolation in these difficult times. Amen.

