

# St John's

## Prayers:

Loving God, we thank that your love and grace is with us whether we feel strong or weak. Help us through the light and the dark to remain committed to the journey that you have laid out before us. We pray for healing and wholeness for the sick, especially:

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

**RIP:** Bibaa Henry, Nicole Smallman

We pray in the name of Jesus, our light and salvation. Amen.

## Contacts

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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 Lockdown Pew Sheet 5th July 2020

## Welcome!

The Government has allowed places of worship to open for individual prayer from 15th June

**St John's Church is open:  
3-5 July (10am-midday), 6-12 July (4pm-6pm).**

The Government has also said places of worship can reopen for services churches from 4th July.

We are holding a 9.30am service on 5th July and a 10.30am service on 8th July.  
Our online services will continue for the time being.

**'Come to me, all you that are weary  
and are carrying heavy burdens,  
and I will give you rest.'**

**Matthew 11:28**

## **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](http://www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk)**

Please do check our website for future updates

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## The Fourth Sunday After Trinity

### **Collect**

Gracious Father, by the obedience of Jesus you brought salvation to our wayward world: draw us into harmony with your will, that we may find all things restored in him, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **Bible Readings** (click on links to access passages):

[Zechariah 9:9-12](#)

[Psalm 145:8-15](#)

[Romans 7:15-25a](#)

[Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30](#)

### **Short Sermon by the Curate, the Revd Jonny Rapson**

In the Gospel reading from Matthew 11, we have the famous passage of Jesus saying: 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.' When Jesus talks of the weary and burdened, he is not necessarily talking of the burden of work or busyness as we might think - but those who had become so burdened by the struggles of walking the road of faith. In the passages before Jesus says this, he is talking about those who have fallen away from the faith and are no longer following the ways of God. There would have been many struggling to keep the faith and follow the laws God had placed before them, and the religious leaders of the day would not have been supportive of them in their struggles.

But instead of doing the same, Christ asks us to give our burdens to him. He recognises that we will all have times as we walk the road of faith when we will fail. Our Romans passage shows us is that we will often do wrong and make mistakes. Paul himself insists that he is a 'wretched man'.

This burden of not being perfect or struggling in our faith journey would not have been accepted by the religious leaders of the day. But Christ does accept this burden. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. Jesus offers us a new way of companionship, not ridicule. Jesus is with us when we fall. Jesus asks us to take his yoke upon ourselves. A yoke was often used to connect to two oxen as they pulled

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a cart to make them a team, to make them one. With this in mind, we might be able to understand Jesus' yoke as a welcoming in. Not discarding our problems on to him and forgetting about them, but Jesus welcoming us into his arms and pulling the cart forward, together. The weight of sin and our mistakes is unbearable for us to bear on our own, but Christ comes with us on that journey. He upholds us when we fall because his weight of glory outshines the weight of sin.

The last few months have seen the world go through one of its biggest struggles in the form of Covid-19. We have seen humanity at its best, and indeed at times, at its worst. But we are reminded in this passage that Jesus walks alongside us at our best, and our worst. Jesus does not simply rally around us when we feel great or are doing the best we can. He is there when we fall, every time.

Paul, in Romans, reminds us that to follow Christ we need not be perfect. Christ walks alongside all, however strong or weak we may feel. And he calls us to carry those burdens together, whatever we may face. Instead, God asks to pick up that yoke with what strength we have, and Christ will hold it with us.

In 'The Lord of the Rings' Frodo the Hobbit asks Gandalf the Wizard why he was chosen for the task of taking the one ring to the fires of Mount Doom in Mordor, as he feels ill-prepared for the journey ahead, to which Gandalf replies: 'Such questions cannot be answered,' said Gandalf. 'You may be sure that it was not for any merit that others do not possess: not for power or wisdom, at any rate. But you have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and heart and wits as you have.'" In Frodo's journey to Mordor, he falls short on several occasions - he is continually corrupted by the power of the ring he carries and pushes away his closest friend, Sam.

Along our journey in this life, we will also fall short, we will be corrupted by the power of sin, and we will push away Christ more times than we can count. Yet, as Sam stays with Frodo until the very end, Christ stays with us on our journey to the very end, supporting us no matter how much we might push him away. No matter how successful or unsuccessful we might be in all that we do, Christ walks with us every step of the way. Amen.