

St John's

Prayers:

O God, from living stones you prepare an everlasting dwelling - a place for your majesty. Grant that in the power of the Holy Spirit those who serve you here may always be kept within your presence.

We pray for all those who are sick, especially:

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

May we your people be may be temples of your presence and signs of your peace in the world. 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

Pew Sheet

19th July 2020

Welcome!

The Government has allowed places of worship to open for individual prayer and services.

St John's Church is open for prayer:
10.30am-12.30pm each day

St John's Church is open for services:
9.30am Sundays
10.30am Wednesdays

Our online services will continue for the time being.

**"How awesome is this place!
This is none other than the house of God,
and this is the gate of heaven."
Genesis 28:17**

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

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Dedication Festival of St John's Church

Collect

Almighty God, to whose glory we celebrate the dedication of this house of prayer: we praise you for the many blessings you have given to those who worship you here: and we pray that all who seek you in this place may find you, and, being filled with the Holy Spirit, may become a living temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Bible Readings (click on links to access passages):

[Genesis 28:10-19a](#)

[Matthew 21:12-16](#)

Short Sermon by the Rector, the Revd Matthew Stone

With any reading of the Bible it is important to try to understand where a particular story fits in to the overall narrative. The passage preceding today's Gospel is the Triumphal Entry, a reading we have on Palm Sunday, when we remember the crowd reacting with such excitement as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.

Can you picture the scene described in the Gospel? Jesus, having been welcomed like a returning conquering hero, behaving as he did in the temple? It must have been quite a scene. The cleansing or purging of the temple is a tremendous turning point in his ministry. Having often been discrete and urging discretion on those he ministered to up to now, Jesus is here deliberately drawing attention to who he really is.

He openly condemns the system of Judaism in the way it carries on its religious work in the temple. Jesus demonstrates what the temple is really for and how it should minister to others. Jesus tells them "my house shall be called a house of prayer" – a place where the blind and the lame can come and be healed. Did you notice his claim – MY house: his words must have been as shocking as his actions!

Today we are celebrating the dedication of this church; St John's is 170 years old. We give thanks for those who had the vision to build in the first place and we remember earlier congregations who have faithfully worshipped here in previous generations.

At this time of year in our church's life, I always think of what this building has seen during its life: two world wars with men from this community, some were probably members of this church, giving their lives in the service of others. There was also the IRA bomb which exploded next door on the RAF base in June 1990 along with many others. And now, of course, lockdown, which has closed this church to public worship for almost certainly the longest period of time since it was built.

Jesus said "My house is to be a house of prayer for all nations." God intends for his people to meet together and pray. This is the most important usage of a church: to connect with God through our prayers and worship. Thank goodness lockdown has eased sufficiently for the church to be opened again for prayer, that spiritual communication we have with God in which we should not only talk, but also listen. I am grateful to the stewards who are freely giving of their time to ensure we are able to open this church each day.

That said, lockdown has been an important reminder that, much as we love our building and may well find it helpful in focusing our thoughts, we do not need to be in church to pray. Indeed, I feel that God has used this time to show us that all our houses are His house, and all are themselves to be houses of prayer: places where we, and those who visit us now, that they again can find the presence of God and connect with Him.

Stanmore has changed beyond recognition since 1850, but God has not, nor has our job as members and stewards of this wonderful church has not, nor our call to pray both together and separately. We, like our forebears, should continue to ask God to teach us his paths and direct us in his way as we seek to serve, to keep His house, and our houses, as houses of prayer for all nations. Amen.