

St John's

Prayers:

O Lord you know we are often filled with fear and foreboding. Give us courage and deepen our trust. You are a rock which nothing can shatter. On you we can place the whole weight of our lives. With this confidence we pray for:

Sick: Lolita Alvira, Peggy Aris, Scott Bradley, Mavis Deluce, Ruth Gillespie, Sian Harries, Susan Jones, Hanna Lebrato, Alex Michael, Sue Ralfe and Baby Parker.

RIP: Mark Johnson.

Lord hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

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The Parish Office is closed.

Matthew and Jonny are continuing to say Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer at home. Join them [here](#).

St John's Church

Pew Sheet

8th November 2020

Lockdown 2

A new lockdown began on 5th November and included places of worship. Whilst the church building is closed until 2nd December, the church is very much alive and active.

A new online service will be available every Sunday. We will also have an Act of Remembrance recorded for Remembrance Day.

Please contact Matthew or Jonny if you are in need.

**'But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.'**
Amos 5:24

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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Remembrance Sunday

Collect:

God, our refuge and strength, bring near the day when wars shall cease and poverty and pain shall end, that earth may know the peace of heaven through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Readings:

[Amos 5:18-24](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)

[Matthew 25:1-13](#)

Short Sermon by the Rector, Matthew Stone

In our churchyard we have Stanmore's only war memorial. It was unveiled on 22nd July 1919. At the service of dedication these words, which are recorded on the memorial were spoken "1914-1918 - REMEMBER WITH THANKSGIVING THE TRUE AND FAITHFUL MEN WHO IN THESE YEARS OF WAR WENT FORTH FROM THIS PLACE FOR GOD AND THE RIGHT. THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO RETURNED NOT AGAIN ARE HERE INSCRIBED TO BE HONOURED FOR EVERMORE."

We can only try to imagine the love and grief that was expressed on that day in July, some 101 years ago, by the parents and friends of these young men. They wanted them to be remembered. And so we, year on year, remember. That is what this day is for. To remember is to re-member: to bring the past into the present. And we have to do this, because if we don't, people who have been too young to see world war will have no knowledge of what can happen. They will not understand the value of life and the freedom that they have.

The Kohima epitaph is carved on the memorial of the Second British Division in the cemetery of Kohima in northern India. It reads "When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today." The reading of names, happening in hundreds of places today, and the telling of their stories, is most important.

The Gospel we are given for today is about being ready. It tells of ten bridesmaids – young women, who have the whole of the rest of their lives ahead of them. They have oil lamps to keep alight when

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the bridegroom arrives. And although they are initially ready, as time goes by half of them become ill equipped and run out of oil. When the moment comes for them to stand up and welcome the bridegroom, their lamps go out. They ask the others for help, but are refused. So they run off to the shops to buy more oil, but they are too late. When the bridegroom arrives, they are nowhere to be found, but have gone to buy what they think they need.

Perhaps, though, the one they really need is the bridegroom himself. If they were to stay put and confess their lack, maybe they could put their hand in his and walk in his light. But they have missed him. One of the things this parable shows us is that, when we know we don't have what we need for salvation – when we are not ready to meet Christ – then, rather than running off in some other direction, we could swallow our pride, face our failure, and come to him. Christ has all we need. He took all our unreadiness to the cross, and made it possible for us to step into a new life.

"Keep awake," says Jesus. "Keep awake for you know neither the day nor the hour." It is as true now as it was for the bridesmaids, and as it was for all the young men whose names are recorded on the war memorial outside. And we will never have enough oil. We cannot do this waiting, this readiness, through our own strength. If this parable says anything to us, it says that how we live, and what we do, and who we are with – and even where we are looking are all important. And this time of year says that too.

So how can we honour those who like the 57 men, gave their lives for others? And how can we honour their parents, who would no doubt have visited the war memorial many times, hoping that generations to come would also remember? Most of all, we can do it by how we live: by living well; by loving one another, putting others first, making peace where peace is within our power to make. But there is a deeper question for today as well – how can we truly be ready to meet Christ? Perhaps today calls us to hold out our burnt-out lamps, and own up to our lack of oil, and then trust ourselves to the God who, in his infinite mercy, calls us, always and everywhere, to life in all its fullness. Amen.