

# St John's

## Prayers:

Ever-living God, we thank you for revealing yourself through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us to seek to you, the way, the truth and the life, in everything that we do. May we encounter you in our lives so that we may be changed through your grace, mercy and love.

We lift to you all who are sick among them: Peggy Aris, Scott Bradley, Susan Khazoom, Ruth Gillespie, Brenda Hunt, Susan Jones, Hanna Lebrato, Bridie O'Shea and Jane Prentice. Also, those who have died recently, among them Kathleen Atwell and Joan Fearn. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Jesus, Lord of the Church, you have called us into fellowship with all your saints. We unite our prayers with theirs and ask for grace to serve you with joy where you live and reign forever. Amen.

## Contacts

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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

### 17th January 2021

We are in the middle of a third national lockdown.

Whilst places of worship are allowed to remain open this time, the PCC had taken the decision to close the church for physical services during the month of January.

This is to play our part in ensuring we are not contributing to the spread of Covid-19 and adding any pressure to the NHS.

**He said to him,  
"Very truly, I tell you,  
you will see heaven opened and the angels of God  
ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."  
(John 1:51)**

## **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 Second Sunday of Epiphany

### **Collect:**

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

### **Readings:**

[1 Samuel 3:1-10](#)

[Revelation 5:1-10](#)

[John 1:43-51](#)

### **Short Sermon from Jonny Rapson**

At the start of any book or literary work, the author is wanting to introduce key themes and concepts early on, whether that be the main character or particular theory for non-fiction. The writer may not wish to reveal everything in the first few lines or chapters, but they will be striving to bring forward the aspects of important significance that will only increase page by page. It is no surprise that in the opening chapter of John's gospel there are many things the Evangelist chooses to include to establish who Jesus is and even foreshadow what will become of him in the coming chapters.

Firstly we witness the call of Philip & Nathaniel. These encounters are only briefly described. First, we have Philip who is approached by Jesus and simply says 'follow me.' Second, we have Nathaniel, who as he approaches, Jesus says that this new disciple is a man of no deceit.

It becomes clear that Jesus and Nathaniel haven't met before - Nathaniel is perplexed by Christ's understanding of him having never met. 'How do you know me' he asks. To which Jesus responds that he saw him under the fig tree. There is almost an air of something unwritten by the Evangelist in this meeting of Jesus and Nathaniel. Because with this simple response of Christ, Nathaniel is compelled to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Israel.

It is impossible to say exactly what brought Nathaniel to this revelation, but Christ's acknowledgement of Nathaniel under the fig

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tree has untold significance to him. So significant, that Christ recognising his experience changes his life forever and he follows him as one of his disciples.

The chapter ends with something of great significance in John the Evangelist's understanding of who Jesus is. Jesus says: "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'" Jesus begins with saying 'very truly I tell you,' or 'amen amen lego hymin (Ἀμήν ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν)' in Greek, which appears 25 times in John's gospel. The use of 'amen' twice has one very simple purpose, it shows that what is about to be said is of great theological and spiritual significance.

Jesus says that they will see heaven open and see the angels of God descending and ascending upon the Son of Man. Not only does this show that Jesus is much more than a prophet, but it teaches us something vital about the Christian faith. This verse alludes to Jacob's dream of a ladder adjoining heaven and earth (Genesis 28:10-17), God is found at the top of the ladder with angels descending and ascending upon it. When Jacob awakes from this dream, he proclaims that 'the Lord is in this place - and I did not know it!' (Genesis 28:16). For Jacob, that was the place where he encountered God and learnt about his plans for him.

Yet Jesus' words show us that He is now the ladder with angels of God ascending and descending upon him. Jesus is how we are to encounter the ever-living God and establish his plans for us. There is nothing on heaven or earth that can bring us closer to God except the Son of God. Jesus is establishing that He is the way, the truth and the life before He has even uttered those words.

We do not have to travel hundreds or thousands of miles to encounter God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Even in lockdown, when we cannot go very far, not even to church, we can still encounter the living God through Jesus. We must simply invite Jesus to change our lives. This can be done under a fig tree, or it can happen in our very own homes. So I encourage you this week to see each day as an opportunity to encounter the ever-living and unchanging God who welcomes us into his arms. Amen.