

Current arrangements at SJB

We have moved into the new Tier 4 but this **still allows us to meet** for communal worship. Therefore here at SJB we will continue to meet at 10:30am each Sunday. The church has been properly prepared and places are socially distanced. Hand sanitiser and anti- bacterial spray are readily available. Face coverings must be worn in church except by those under 11 years old.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has however advised worshippers in vulnerable groups who are “more at risk” from Covid-19 to stay away from church services and watch them online. An online service from the benefice is available today. The link to it can be found on the next page.

For those of us meeting in church it is more important than ever that we adhere to the regulations in order to keep everyone safe.

- Please note that we can no longer meet to socialise outside the church after the service so please make sure you disperse straight away.
- We must also remember that only two people are allowed in the porch at any time so do not stop there to chat.
- Sadly we still cannot sing in church but you are welcome to bring your own Bible if you wish.
- We can still praise God though for his being with us through all of this !
- We can, and must, continue to pray for one another, and for those around us.

New beginnings

We all know it is customary at this time of year to make resolutions that we will start or stop doing something each day. We also know that however sincerely these intentions are meant, in many cases they do not last for very long.

There is nothing wrong with making resolutions at the start of the year but the good news is that with God you do not have to wait until next January to start again if you think you have already ‘failed’!

Every Sunday is the first day of the week – a new beginning. Every day is also a new beginning - an opportunity to renew our relationship with God our Heavenly Father.

So our resolution should just be to spend time with God each day knowing he will always welcome us to himself – and if we fail to meet with him one day he will be waiting to greet us tomorrow.

BELONG - BELIEVE - BUILD - WITH CHRIST AS THE CORNERSTONE



Wychert Vale Benefice
www.wychertvale.org



Parish of Stone, Dinton and Hartwell

Churches of: St. John Baptist, STONE; Ss Peter & Paul, DINTON; Assumption of St. Mary the Virgin, HARTWELL
www.stonedintonhartwell.com

St. John the Baptist STONE Sunday 3rd January CHRISTMAS 2

10:30am MORNING WORSHIP
led by David Pickup

Readings: Psalm 87
Zechariah 8.1-8
Luke 2.41-52



“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”
Luke 2:49

NEXT WEEK: 10:30am MORNING WORSHIP led by Revd Sue Smith

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Online Benefice service

Our first online service of the year comes from Haddenham St Mary's church and is led by David Robinson from Stone.

The reading is John 1:1-18 but David draws our particular attention to verse 18:

'No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known'

From this David discusses why no-one has ever seen God as well as considering other ways in which he has revealed himself to us.

The link to the service is <https://youtu.be/YBJgcy63RWQ>



A special Church of England service for Epiphany

A special Epiphany service premieres on the Church of England [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) at 9am today.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/national-epiphany-service-land-where-it-all-happened-hears>

The service will include prayers from Bethlehem and the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke. It will also bring together a parish in Birmingham; singing from King's College, London, and Christian leaders from the Diocese of Jerusalem.

The sermon, delivered from the "land where it all happened," is from the Bishop of Jerusalem, the Rt Rev Hosam Naoum. Bishop Hosam will also encourage worshippers to pray for the "Little Town of Bethlehem" and for peace in the region.

Prayer of intercession will be led by a parishioner in a Bethlehem garden underneath an olive tree.

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New Year message from the Archbishop of Canterbury

In his New Year message to us Justin Welby shares his experience of working as a volunteer chaplain at St. Thomas's hospital. He has been working there since the first wave of the pandemic last year. This is a summary of his message:

'This year has seen tremendous pain and sadness. Many of us have lost family members or friends, often without being able to say goodbye. It is at St Thomas' that, alongside acknowledging this darkness, I find reasons to be hopeful for the year ahead. Because what I see here teaches me something about human beings - and about God.'

.....'One evening, I might be with a young child, praying with him and his mother. On another I could be sharing a joke with someone - finding a moment of warmth and connection in a frightening time. Sometimes the most important thing we do is just sit with people, letting them know they are not alone.'

.....'This crisis has shown us how fragile we are. It has also shown us how to face this fragility. Here at the hospital, hope is there in every hand that's held, and every comforting word that's spoken. Up and down the country, it's there in every phone call. Every food parcel or thoughtful card. Every time we wear our masks.'

.....'For anyone who is on the dark and difficult journey of grief - a path I know myself - I want to assure you that I am praying for you.'

.....'The Bible tells us that God rejoices in these small acts of love - because they reveal who we truly are: human beings made in God's image, deeply connected to one another.'

.....'Such gestures speak to me of Jesus - the one who shows us what God's love looks like. And for this reason, we can have hope for each and every month ahead. May God bless you, and all those you love, in this coming year.'

(Note - obviously we cannot all volunteer as hospital chaplains but we can all show small acts of love or kindness to those in need of human connection)



Dear God we pray for your Spirit to lead us each step of this new year. We ask for your wisdom and that you would make us strong and courageous for the road ahead. Let your gifts flow freely through us, so that you would be honoured in our lives, and others served by us in your name.
Amen

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