Changing season, changing church

Many of us are affected by something like Seasonal Affective Disorder – a general feeling of lethargy or even depression associated with the onset of autumn and winter. Bearing in mind the focus on mental health that there has been recently, one wonders whether it’s possible to stave off the oncoming gloom? Many writers are currently pointing to the positive approach, of naming and cherishing those things which we most enjoy about this time of year. Whether it’s the changing leaves on the trees, glowing in the evening light (see above) or the thought of a hot mug of cocoa at the end of the day, this season brings its own joys unlike any other.

Strange as it may seem, this simple approach has been proven
to be effective in helping people avoid the worst effects of SAD. Thinking positively about what the season brings – whether it’s ripe fruit, comfort food, or autumn colours – seems to rewire our brains to see the bright side. By naming the positives and embracing them, we can get the most out of what might seem like a dull time of year.

Accentuating the positive is something that’s very biblical – “Rejoice in the Lord always” says St Paul. There is always enough bad news to swamp any positive feelings, so everyone of us needs to be able to focus on something good. If we are the praying kind, then our faith might be important to us. Many Christians will testify to the power of prayer and to the comfort of having a relationship with God. But even then, we need to make sure that we don’t forget to be thankful.

Church life is not immune to change – in fact, we need to embrace it. Whilst we can’t yet use the church building for regular worship gatherings as we once knew them, we are looking forward to being able to have some form of public worship which will be inclusive not only of those who can gain access to church in person, but those who are still self isolating. Worship online has become essential for helping maintain some sense of church community whilst we can’t meet in person. It’s inconceivable that we should lose this online outreach once we do get back into our building safely. Church has changed. We are delighted that a number of people are accessing our worship in this way – some we may never meet, but others have expressed an interest in joining the physical church community here in Shenley Green.

So, as we see the colours change around us, we call out to the God who is constant through all change and all ages. To our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer we give thanks and praise.

Mark Bennett
Vicar of St David’s
APCM

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting and election of Churchwardens at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners is normally required to held before the end of April. However, due to Covid-19, that deadline has been extended until the end of October. As such, the APCM for St David’s will take place on **Sunday 25th October at 11am**.

Bishop David of Birmingham has granted permission for meetings to be held in a form suitable for each parish and coinciding with social distancing measures. We will be using a ‘hybrid’ format with a restricted number of places available to attend in person while simultaneously hosting a ‘Zoom’ meeting, so people can attend and interact online. Places are limited, so if you’d like to attend in person contact us by email

**hello@stdavidsshenleygreen.org**

or by phoning the vicarage on **0121 475 1979**. Places will be issued on a first come first served basis, and subject to change in line with imposed restrictions.

It would be helpful for us to know if you are intending to join by Zoom. If you could do so, by emailing us before **lunchtime**, the link for the meeting is on the website **stdavidsshenleygreen.org/news**

The Annual report and Electoral roll are available on request. Please email us or call the vicarage to request either a digital or hard copy.

**Vacancies and current nominations (as of 14.10.20):**

- **2 Churchwardens:**
  2 nominations – Pat Kendrick and Pauline Pallavicini.

- **3 Deanery Synod Reps:**
  2 nominations – Keith Mason and Jenny Shardlow

- **7 PCC members:**
  4 nominations – Lou Bayliss, Maria Farr, Kathryn Groombridge and Simon Nicholls.

If you would like to nominate someone for any of these roles, you will need their agreement, the nomination to be seconded and have completed the relevant form. They must be on the electoral roll and a communicant at St David’s. For more information on nominations or to request a form please email us or contact me on **07989261940**.

*Lou Bayliss*
Harvest with a difference

As with many things this year, the way we celebrate or mark events in the church calendar have or will look different, with this year’s harvest celebrations no exception.

A harvest trail was set up around the outside of church following the parable of ‘The Rich Fool’, with different stations offering a time for reflection and prayer. People were invited to reflect and ‘fill a barn’ with all the things they are thankful for. Here are a selection of completed barns, which are still displayed in the church windows.

Jenny, Kathryn and Clare made socially distanced doorstep visits to those who are currently staying home, offering prayer, a barn and small gift. The visits were an opportunity to give much needed human contact and fellowship- something many were thankful for.

We continued to support our regular charities of SIFA Fireside and The Project Birmingham, who both requested monetary donations this year. In total, we raised over £700, which will be split between the two charities.

As has become the ‘new norm’ we gathered for virtual worship via our live 10am Sunday service on our YouTube channel. This is available on the website if you missed it.

It can be hard to feel thankful when we are weary and anxious, missing loved ones, losing jobs and facing financial strains. But, there is usually always something to value and give thanks to God for, however small. It may be a smile from a stranger, getting a grocery delivery slot, the ability to video call friends and family or just having the energy to get up in the morning. My guess is many of us are rethinking the things we value in life, perhaps realising we have more to give thanks for than we realised… especially the small things.

Lou Bayliss
My daughter & my husband
My friends. My church family.
Your love. The sacrifice of your son.
Food to eat. Somewhere safe to live.
A beautiful world to live in.
Opportunities to love and help others.

Thank you, God, for you have given me...

A roof over my head and a
lovely garden to sit in.
Food to eat daily.
For living in England U.K.
Plenty of lovely friends

Thank you, God, for you have given me...

At 90, I am grateful for being senior,

to avoid the coronavirus, with my family,

Thank you, God.

Grateful to be able to cope at home.

Grateful for family phone calls, although masks are

Grateful that friends, neighbors help with shopping.

Grateful I can walk a little way up my road.

Thank you, God.

Dear God,
Help me thank for all of the things in life that I
should thank.
Help me thank for a good education, a kind loving
family. Mom and Dad taking me to fun clubs and fun
places, nice, cozy clothes, nice things, lovely toys, exquisite, tasty,
good, helpful medications, a beautiful house, a healthy
environment, kind friends, yummy juice, things to do and
everyone keeping me safe. I will thank for these things
everyday.

Kennedy
Emerging mission and fellowship

St David’s Small World Toy Library

When we realised that reopening as a toddler group was still a long way off, prayer and planning paid off. September saw the launch of the Toy Library. Past, present and future families can check in with us once a week. We have a Covid-safe procedure in the lobby of the church hall. A brief chat and catch-up, swapping a toy, and books, taking a craft activity, being provided with breakfast items for the whole family, and finding out that we are still very much there for people – all these happen one family at a time, three mornings a week.

For now, it is the new normal, and it seems to be working. As leaders, we have benefitted too, regaining a sense of worth and rejoicing in being able to share God’s love face-to-face, even if the faces are covered with masks.

We are helped and encouraged by Amelia, who has been fantastic and of course, Bob is in attendance, wearing his mask, though he does look a bit shy in this photo! If you haven’t popped in yet, do come and see us between 9 and 10am on Monday, Wednesday or Friday in term-time. And if you know a young family who might benefit, please let them know.
Care Library

The Toy Library was opened as a can-do alternative to our usual Small World sessions. It has been good to make just a little contact with people we hadn’t seen for months. And then God showed us that we could offer a similar service for the more senior members of our congregation. We can offer a place to head to once week for a short chat, to offer prayer, borrow a book, to give a little care bag with some treats, prayers and useful phone numbers. If someone would like this, but can’t get to us, we can take the care bag to them, and pray with them at their front door, at a safe distance.

We can’t meet as a full congregation yet, and the Covid road ahead looks long. All of us are at risk of adverse mental health, but we believe that people who have been isolated, many of whom live alone, are at greater risk. So, we are doing what we can. We don’t want anyone to feel forgotten or abandoned. We are united by the greatest love there is. May we all feel God’s love wherever we are and share it however we can.

10.30-11.30am Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Prayer Library

Beginning Sunday 18th October, there will be a Prayer library running from the church hall foyer. Between 12.30-1pm every Sunday, until church reopens for services, we will be there to read the Gospel, light a candle and pray with/for you. If you would like to come for a 5min slot please contact Kathryn on 07817167690 to book.

Clare Gladstone & Kathryn Groombridge
Digital church

The building may be closed at the moment but we are working on the practicalities for opening up for a limited form of regular in-person worship service by mid November. Until then, links and liturgy for the live **Sunday service at 10am** can be found on our website-

www.stdavidsshenleygreen.org

As well as a Zoom link for an after service catch up, you’ll also find previous services, audio of sermons, **Night Prayer** (updated Tuesdays 7.30pm) and **Morning Prayer** (updated Thursdays 10.30am).

If you don’t have internet access, audio of the Sunday sermon (updated 12pm), Night and Morning Prayer can be accessed through our Prayer phone line - **0121 22 77 095** at the cost of a local call.

Would you like to have a DVD of the Sunday service each week? We are working on a way of recording our live worship onto a DVD which can be delivered to your door. The following week, we would collect your DVD and swap it for the latest service! Let us know if you would be interested in this new service by email hello@stdavidsshenleygreen.org or call the vicarage on 0121 475 1979.

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Future ‘Lockdown’ Lanterns

If you would prefer to receive future editions of the ‘Lockdown’ Lantern electronically, please let us know by emailing us hello@stdavidsshenleygreen.org