

Dear Friends,

It is a tremendous privilege to welcome Bishop Ruth to preach and preside here at St John's this morning on the first Sunday of Lent. Of our two Bishop's, Bishop Ruth has particular responsibility for curates and so it is lovely for me to be able to share ministry with her today. Sometimes, during the vacancy, it has been difficult to remember that I am a training curate – much of what I do is the same as an incumbent and I am of course training to become one! Next week we have a reminder as I will be experiencing a block placement (Monday to Friday) in a school. I will be at Churchfield, just next door. Although I have continued to maintain our links with the school by joining the governing body, I am really looking forward to spending an intensive week alongside the teachers, staff and pupils of the school, but this does mean I may take a little longer to respond to your call or email in the coming week. Please bear with me!

*Rev Dan*



## Let's talk

'It's good to talk!' so the old BT advert (other telecommunications firms are available) used to say. I agree. Who doesn't feel better after having a good old chat with a friend, or even after having a quick chat with a stranger when stuck in a tedious queue? It may seem then, that this year's Lent Challenge from Bishop Peter and myself is no great challenge at all as we are simply suggesting that we have conversations with our neighbours, family and friends.

The challenge comes in what we might talk about. We are encouraging all of us, including Bishops, to step outside what may be our normal topics of conversation, and perhaps our comfort zones, and grapple with some simple questions about life, death and everything in between. The challenge is both to listen to someone else's viewpoint and to ask ourselves how our own answers connect to what we believe.

In order to help us have those conversations the Go Team and discipleship team have produced a handy pack of question cards, and by the time Lent begins, we hope that each church will have received at least one of these packs of 40 Everyday Questions. The questions are suitable for all ages so can be used in a whole host of ways – with friends, family, colleagues, in school, with a Lent group, at a 'bring and share' lunch, even in church on a Sunday.

We've already been out and about across the diocese asking people some of the questions on the cards. And you can bet that asking school children questions like 'Should all bad people be punished?' or 'How would you describe God?' has yielded some very interesting conversations. We will be sharing some of the conversations we've had with a range of people on Facebook and Twitter so if you are on social media then do keep an eye out for them during Lent, and by all means let our communications team know how you are getting on using the hashtag #40questions.

We really hope the 40 Everyday Questions cards generate some interesting, meaningful and indeed, Godly conversations that will help us hear the point of view of those around us and refresh and deepen our faith in God this Lent.

The Right Revd Ruth Worsley Bishop of Taunton

## COLLECTS AND READINGS

**1<sup>st</sup> March First Sunday of Lent** Genesis 2.15-17;3.1-7; Romans 5.12-19; Matthew 4.1-11

**Collect:** Heavenly Father, your Son battled with the powers of darkness, and grew closer to you in the desert: help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer that we may witness to your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Post Communion:** Lord God, you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven; by it you nourish our faith, increase our hope, and strengthen our love: teach us always to hunger for him who is the true and living bread, and enable us to live by every word that proceeds from out of your mouth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**8<sup>th</sup> March Second Sunday of Lent** Genesis 12.1-4a; Romans 4.1-5, 13-17; John 3.1-17

**Collect:** Almighty God, by the prayer and discipline of Lent may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings, and by following in his Way come to share in his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Post Communion:** Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Our Pastoral Prayers

*To include somebody on this prayer list please let Liz in the office know by 8am on Thursday, making sure the person you wish to be included wants their name in print.*

### Marriage

Couples preparing for marriage and those recently married, including Jamie Hayward and Emily Biddiscombe whose banns are published today.

### Baptisms:

We pray for all parents and godparents



### Those in need of our prayers:

Margaret Moyle, Hazel, Christine Marston, Val & George Crawford, Maureen & Ian Thompson, Gloria and Ken Vivash, Pete, Brenda, Olive, Victoria Yassenko, Martin Mitchell

### For those who have died:

We pray for those who have recently died and their loved ones who grieve their loss.

Peter Morris, Anne Mitchell, Karen Fisher, Geoff Young

### Those whose anniversary falls this week:

Marina Young, Valerie Cundall



Dan and Sarah would love to invite all at St John's to Phoebe's baptism on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March at 3pm (that's next Sunday). There will be cake afterwards in the hall. Please do join us.

## PRAYER FOCUS

### Sunday:

*Take a moment today to consider how you might engage in a different rhythm through Lent – do you want a book from Rev Dan, or to try the everyday questions?*

### Monday:

*For Rev Dan and his curate colleagues as they begin a block week of experience in schools across the diocese*

### Tuesday:

*For our Toddler group, for the families it connects with and for those who faithfully lead it*

### Wednesday:

*For all with leadership responsibility and additional tasks during the vacancy*

### Thursday:

*For the future of Little Angels, for the families it connects with, and for Liz as she leads it with support from Shirley.*

### Friday:

*For the person God is calling to be our next priest as our advert is published*

### Saturday:

*For all in our community who are struggling today*

Sadly, Geoff Young passed away last week who many of you knew. Geoff was a churchwarden here at St. John's during the nineties. His funeral is on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March at 1pm at Sedgemoor Crematorium. The service will be conducted by former vicar of Highbridge Reverend Mark Bond.

**Please do collect a copy of our Lent Signpost from the back of St John's if you have not already done so.**

## Everyday Questions

Here are seven questions from the Bishop's Lent Challenge resource (see Bishop Ruth's comment on page 1) that you could use to generate conversation this Lent. We have a pack of cards if you would like to borrow them for your event, or you can use the questions below over the course of your week. We will post seven in Signpost in each week of Lent. If you use them, let us know how you got on!

- 1. What would you like to be remembered for?**
- 2. If you could ask God one question what would it be?**
- 3. Will we ever see an end to poverty, and if so how?**
- 4. What is your favourite time of day and why?**
- 5. Is it easier to believe in things you can see or in things you can't see?**
- 6. Does it really matter what you believe in?**
- 7. Would the world be better if we all spoke the same language?**

## Vision

We have a new vision statement, developed through our activities and parish survey.

**We believe God is calling us to be people of courage 'sharing God's love across our community.'**

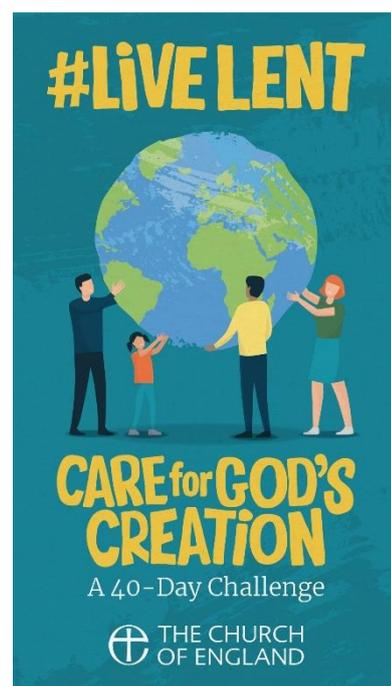
With this vision in mind six priorities emerge. These should enable us to grow together in worship, build up the body of Christ and bring newcomers to faith, help us to listen effectively, and share God's love across our community.

- Engaging effectively with our local community
- Shaping our worship to reflect the congregation and the community we serve
- Intentionally increasing our engagement with children and families, including links with Churchfield school.
- Building on our existing strengths and activities, to see our community of faith shaped by all ages, while enabling young and old to feel comfortable in the church space.
- Increasing the effectiveness of our communication both within the church and with the community, with a particular priority on consolidating our social media presence
- Exploring opportunities, in collaboration with others to meet the needs of the community as they are identified.

Rev Dan would love you to join him in reading this Lent book this year.

Copies are still available for **£2 each** from Rev Dan.

You are invited to meet with Rev Dan on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March at 7.45pm in the Church hall for a Lent Book discussion.



# CALENDAR

## Who's Who at St John's:

Vicar: Vacant

Curate: Rev'd Dan Crouch 325194

Churchwarden: Chris Perry 783753

## MARCH

**Sun 1<sup>st</sup> First Sunday of Lent 8am Communion 9.30am Communion with Bishop Ruth Worsley**

Tues 3<sup>rd</sup> 10am Toddlers in church hall

Wed 4<sup>th</sup> 9.30am Said Communion & 10.00am Foodbank Listening Place in church hall

Thurs 5<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Little Angels in church hall

7.45pm Lent book group in church hall

Fri 6<sup>th</sup> 5.30pm Prayer stations of the Cross in church

**Sun 8<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday of Lent 8am Communion 9.30am Family Communion 3pm Baptism**

Tues 10<sup>th</sup> 10am Toddlers in church hall

Wed 11<sup>th</sup> 9.30am Said Communion & 10.00am Foodbank Listening Place in church hall

7.30pm PCC meeting in church hall

Thurs 12<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Little Angels in church hall

Fri 13<sup>th</sup> 5.30pm Prayer stations of the Cross in church

Sat 14<sup>th</sup> 4pm Highbridge Festival in Church

**Sun 15<sup>th</sup> Third Sunday of Lent 9am Communion 3pm Communion & Tea**

Tues 17<sup>th</sup> 10am Toddlers in church hall

Wed 18<sup>th</sup> 9.30am Said Communion & 10.00am Foodbank Listening Place in church hall

Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Little Angels in church hall

Fri 20<sup>th</sup> 5.30pm Prayer stations of the Cross in church

**Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> Mothering Sunday 8am Communion 9.30am Family Communion**

Tues 24<sup>th</sup> 10am Toddlers in church hall

Wed 25<sup>th</sup> 9.30am Said Communion & 10.00am Foodbank Listening Place in church hall

Thurs 26<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Little Angels in church hall

Fri 27<sup>th</sup> 5.30pm Prayer stations of the Cross in church

An advance notice

Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting is on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April starting at 7pm with a light supper served from 6pm.

Please do put this date in your diaries and calendars

**To submit an article for the Signpost Weekly please e-mail:**

**[stjohnsofficehighbridge@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnsofficehighbridge@gmail.com) or leave a message on 01278 780633 by 8am on Thursday**

**Parish office opening hours**

**Wednesday 9.30am – 2.30pm, Thursday 12 noon – 2.30pm, Friday 9.30am – 12.30pm**

**Term time only**

***Please ring in advance***