

From Catherine, our Vicar

PCC Away Day on Saturday 25th April

We had a very enjoyable and fruitful day together as a PCC last Saturday in Longworth Church, and in the sunshine outside. Anne Perry, our Parish Development Adviser facilitated the day and she writes:

It was such a joy to spend the day with your PCC last week. Thank you all for the warmth, openness, and wholehearted engagement you brought. As I've reflected on our conversations, what really stands out is the strong and consistent sense of who you are as a church: a genuinely welcoming, caring, and inclusive community where people feel they belong. I noticed a beautiful sense of shared ownership and resilience, especially in recent times of change, with a real sense that this is "our church." It was so encouraging to hear about signs of life, with new people joining, children's ministry growing, and worship and fellowship experienced as nourishing and uplifting. Many of you spoke about seeing God at work, not in dramatic moments, but in steady growth, deepening faith, and strengthening relationships. Alongside this, there was a thoughtful awareness of those not yet well represented among us, and a gentle sense of calling to be more intentionally outward-facing, building on your existing strengths rather than changing who you are, and reviewing and refining the ways in which you reach out to your community. The themes from our time dwelling in Luke 10.1-11 and the creative responses both echoed this: an invitation to dwell more deeply in God, to pray, to trust, and to share the love and community you already embody with others. It feels like a hopeful and affirming place to be, with God already at work among you and leading you onward – it was a pleasure to be part of it for a day!



Does this resonate with your experience of being part of the church community of St John the Baptist, or of being part of the village community we seek to serve? Please share your thoughts with a member of the PCC, to inform our ongoing discussions about vision and direction.

If you're wondering how to discern where God might be calling you, or calling us as a church, there will be a series of services focusing on different types of prayer in June which will aim to give some ideas about this. In the meantime please take a look at the role descriptions for Children's church and Messy church helpers (towards the end of this month's Pews News) and ponder whether God might be nudging you to be more involved in this area of our church life.

With love and prayers, this beautiful month of May, as always,
Catherine

LaunchPad

I've recently taken part in the Launchpad programme offered by the diocesan discipleship enablers. **Launchpad is a practical initiative designed to help churches reimagine how they connect with young people in their communities.** Through a mix of training, reflection, and real-life experimentation, Launchpad encourages leaders to move beyond assumptions and listen carefully to the lives, questions, and rhythms of local young people, understanding what matters to them. As a result, I am now prayerfully exploring new possibilities for our parish—seeking ways to build authentic relationships, create welcoming spaces, and share faith in ways that are both relevant and rooted. This is an ongoing journey, and I look forward to seeing how these insights might shape fresh opportunities for younger generations to belong and grow within our church community.

I would welcome fellow-travellers on this journey, with no prior experience or commitment to future involvement necessary – just the willingness to share ideas (and ignorance) and to pray for young people in our community.

If you are free and would like an outing and a free lunch there is the opportunity to find out more on Tuesday 12th May 12-2pm. Please let me know if you would like a place in my car.

Many thanks,
Catherine

Our Organ

Photos from Peter Rivers:



St John the Baptist Church – May 2026

Sun	3 May	9.00	Holy Communion	Speaker – Catherine
		10.30	Morning Worship	Speaker – Catherine
		10.30	Children’s Church	
Sun	10 May	9.00	Holy Communion	Speaker – Phil Sutton
		10.30	All Age Service	Speaker – Catherine
Thu	14 May	19.30	Ascension Service	Speaker – Phil Sutton
Sun	17 May	9.00	Holy Communion	Speaker – Catherine
		10.30	Morning Worship	Speaker – Catherine
		10.30	Children’s Church	
Sun	24 May [1]	9.00	Holy Communion	Speaker – Catherine
		10.30	Family Communion	Speaker – Catherine
		10.30	Children’s Church	
Sun	31 May	9.00	Holy Communion	Speaker – Phil Sutton
		10.30	Café Church [2]	Speaker – Phil Sutton

Regular Events

Weekday mornings	08.00	Morning Prayer on Zoom	
Wednesdays *	11.00	Petypher House Bible Study Group	* 1 st Wednesday in month
Wednesdays **	14.30	Wednesday Afternoon Fellowship	** 6 & 20 May
Wednesdays	20.00	Wednesday Fellowship Group	
Thursdays	09.00	KBS Café at the Village Hall	
Fridays	10.30	Fizzy Coffee	

Special Events

Fri	8 May	19.00	Film Club – see below
Sun	10 May		Christian Aid Week starts
Mon	11 May	15.00	Village Tea
Tue	12 May	12.00	Celebration for Launchpad at St Agatha’s, Brightwell cum Sotwell;

[1] **Pentecost.**

[2] **Café Church** will be in ***Church***. Coffee/tea & pastries will be served.

For your Diaries

Sat 27 Jun **Village Fete**



Film and Music Night



Our next film will be on **Friday 8th May** in the Church Room, 7pm for a 7.15 start when we will be showing **H is for Hawk**. It is a fairly new release based on a true story which follows Helen (Claire Foy), who, after the sudden death of her father (Brendan Gleeson), loses herself in the memories of their time birding and exploring the natural world together. She turns to falconry, training a wild goshawk, named Mabel, to help her in her loss. But, as she teaches Mabel to hunt and fly free, Helen discovers how deeply she has neglected her own emotions and life. What begins as an act of endurance transforms into an intimate journey of resilience and healing. The photography is wonderful!

This is a free evening organised by members of St John the Baptist Church and tea, coffee, chocolates and popcorn will be provided from 7pm with the film beginning at 7.15pm. We have limited capacity in the room, so we do ask you to **let either Peter Beer or Margo Evans know if you will be joining us**. We would hate to have to turn anyone away on the night.

Many thanks, Peter 01865 820805 and Margo 01865 820900
margoevans@mac.com

Village Fete – Saturday 27th June, 1-4pm

Margo Evans writes:

Our annual Summer Fete is fast approaching and it is such a happy, village occasion. It always seems to make it more exciting if you are involved in some way, so, if you are able to **help set up on Friday 26th** (late afternoon), or on the **morning of the Fete**, or on a **Church stall** during the afternoon that would be wonderful.

Please let Hazel Brennan 01865 821358 or Margo Evans 01865 820900 know if you can be involved in any way. We would really appreciate it and you would be part of a great team!



Jenny Weaving writes:

In previous years we have run the **Auction of Promises** for which people have offered an exciting range of “services” and treats, including the following:

- a tip run
- an hour of ironing
- a stamping/stencilling workshop – 2 hours
- a trip to Birmingham or Heathrow Airports
- rides in classic cars
- 2 hours manual labour
- an Oxford Bus Tour
- chocolate brownies
- a homemade chicken pie
- a general revision skills session for 1 hour
- Pindy’s famous samosas.



Other ideas might include: a session of “advice” on how to prune/care for plants/grow veg; weeding; something homemade (food or not); CV writing skills; proofreading; a “taxi” to and from a pub in a local town one evening ... the list goes on. Be as creative as you like!

We’d welcome your offers and hope we can create an exciting selection in order to boost our church funds. We do understand that, for whatever reason, some people will be unable to help this year – so please, just offer what you’re able.

Please let me know if you feel able to help! jennyweaving@yahoo.com or phone 07799121472.

Very best wishes, Jenny

My Journey of Faith

Stephen Haywood writes:

My dislike of church started at an early age: on Sundays, our parents dragged my brother and myself to church about once a month. One time a visiting preacher leaned out of the pulpit and said “You boy! How do you spell JOY.” I hadn’t a clue and burst into tears – I was 18 at the time ... just kidding ... I was probably about 6. As a child I was sent to Sunday School. I found it fairly uninspiring and so at the mature age of 10, I resigned. Mum used to attend church reasonably frequently, although her engagement didn’t go much beyond arranging the flowers once a month.

At secondary school, I hated Religious Education. For some reason we spent a term studying China from some ancient books. Similarly, the chaplain hated me. He considered I was a lost cause because I couldn’t spell ... an essential requirement for any follower of Jesus (refer to earlier failure). Although I was a very studious pupil in all other subjects, I felt RE was a complete waste of time. My homework would always come back with red ink all over it, and each week the chaplain would give me a special spelling test at the start of the lesson. I used to struggle with the spelling of that sacrificial table: Althar? Altah? Ahltar? Wherever I put the “h” I was always wrong. Things got so bad with the chaplain that he threatened me with detention and told me I wouldn’t pass my O Levels nor go to university. He insisted I redid my homework on “Jesus’s reappearances after the Crucifixion”. I couldn’t make head or tale of this and I had to delay going away to Scout Camp. I was very upset and so my mother told me to go to camp ... she did my homework while I was away and I just had to copy it into my book when I got home. I was done with RE, and anyway at the age of 12, I had decided to become a nuclear physicist, and everyone knows scientists don’t believe in God.

Fortunately, God did believe in me, and there were a number of critical things he showed me. Firstly, I found being forced to go to School Chapel several times a week was not so bad – a period of calm before lessons started. Secondly, being forced to go on the Boxing Day Church Walk revealed to me that Christians are so often kind and caring, not two headed monsters or boring as pants. Thirdly my Maths Teacher, Mr Pritchard, whom I liked, was a very committed Christian man, as was the head of department. More significantly, when I was 16, I was asked to become a Godparent. On the way to Helen’s baptism, I proclaimed in the car that I was not convinced by religious stuff. Mum pointed out I was about to become a Godparent in two hours time, so I better sort it out pretty quickly. And then I saw the film

“Jesus Christ, Superstar”. I wasn’t into pop music, but the film really affected me. I was struck by the anguish Jesus felt in the Garden of Gethsemane before the Crucifixion, and I was stunned by the fact that someone so good should die because I was imperfect.

I attended an adult confirmation group when I was in the Upper Sixth Form ... not a great time because of my studying. When I was confirmed, I certainly hadn’t got it all sussed; I was very much an “explorer”, but I did want to find out more; to push on an open door. At college, I went to chapel – this was quite formal but everyone was really nice. After our communal breakfast, several of us would go off to St Aldate’s or St Ebbe’s, and I found these services more inspiring.

When I moved to Geneva as a graduate student, I assumed I would have to attend a French Roman Catholic church. But the next weekend, I was pointed to the Anglican Church of Holy Trinity. The church was very much an ex-pat church, but I joined the Thursday Group – a wonderful fellowship group. We alternated each week between bible study and fun activities; every Saturday we hiked in the mountains in the summer, and skied in the winter. In this group, I made some wonderful friends and met my first wife. In Geneva, there were about 8 English-speaking churches, and they collaborated to run a regular spiritual renewal weekend called Cursillo ... coming out of the Roman Catholic Church. On my first Cursillo, I was initially quite sceptical of what I was hearing, but then on the Saturday evening I was dramatically challenged in a way I hadn’t expected and I invited the Holy Spirit into my life.

I felt I needed more than the Anglican church could offer, so I moved to a non-denominational evangelical church. This was an incredible three years, in which I was given new opportunities to grow. Coming back to the UK was very hard for several reasons, and looking at St John the Baptist Church in 1993, we felt it was not the right place for us as a family, so we joined St Leonard’s in Eynsham. Subsequently, because of a fellowship group we set up in KBS, I started to engage increasingly with StJtB. I also alternated with going to Oxford Community Church in Didcot. But good things were happening in StJtB through the efforts of Rosemary Jackson, Peter & Fiona Beer, Martin & Cesca Cavender. The Pickerings brought further change, along with Gary Long. It was clear that the Lord was at work at StJtB and I wanted to be part of this.

For many of us, our journey of faith is not straightforward. It can have ups and downs, various diversions and jerky progress. I have benefitted massively from the support and encouragement I have received from various church leaders, the opportunity to grow through weekly bible study groups, and the love of many amazing Christian friends.

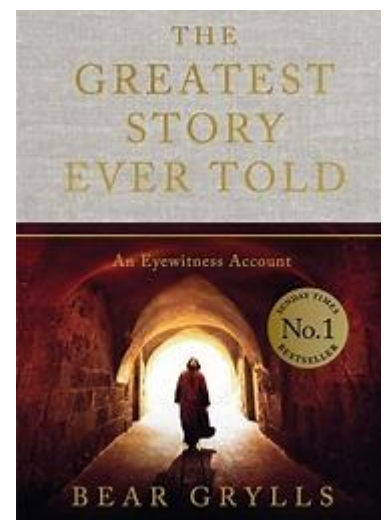
We will all have different stories as to how we started on our journey and the challenges we have encountered en route. There are no right or wrong paths; and in this lifetime, it is not an adventure where we reach the final destination, but rather we travel together, hopefully drawing closer to God each year.

It would be great to hear from you about your faith journey. Please speak to the Editor.

Book Review

Maria Haywood writes:

I’ve just finished reading “**The Greatest Story Ever Told**” by Bear Grylls. I was given it for Christmas and to be honest it didn’t appeal much as I’m a slow reader, so I am quite picky about what I read, and I was pretty sure that I knew the story anyway. And of course, I did – it is the story of Jesus’s life, death and resurrection. But the story is told so refreshingly differently, from the angle of some eyewitnesses, that everything comes to life, draws one in and is very moving. I was surprised at both how well written it is and how it became such a compelling read given that I knew “who dunnit” and the thrilling twist at the end! Highly recommend to everyone.



Church Coordinators

At the last PCC Meeting (immediately after the APCM), the PCC designated the following people to be Coordinators or Activity Leaders for the various activities in the Church:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Charities Fund Raising | Celeste Loots |
| • Children's Church | Leon Bisset |
| • Churchyard Mowing | Hazel Brennan |
| • Church Room Bookings | Hazel Brennan |
| • Cleaning Team | Margo Evans |
| • Flower Team | Hazel Brennan |
| • KBS Cafe Liaison | Stephen Haywood |
| • Open The Book | Susan Green |
| • Prayer | Vicar & Sue Wales |
| • Service Rotas | Susan Green |
| • Village Fete Team Chair | Ian Blelloch |
| • Village Hall Church Representative | Hazel Brennan |
| • Village Lunch | Hazel Brennan |

Thanks

Thanks to all these people for taking on the **responsibilities** listed above!

Thanks again for all those who supported **Music for Malawi**. The total collected was £1269.40 and then we hope to get some additional money through Gift Aid. Brilliant !

Ho Ho

Thursday at 5pm, there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers' Club. All wishing to become little mothers please see the minister in his study.

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

From "The Ultimate Christmas Cracker" by John Julius Norwich.

Write an Article for Pews News

The Editor (Stephen) would welcome articles from the congregation which relate to our Church Family or our Christian Faith. If you have something which you think would be suitable, please speak to me (StephenJHaywood@outlook.com).

In particular, I would like to receive input from you as to:

What I love about the Village Fete

Copy date for June edition is **Sunday 24 May**.

Sunday School – Children’s Church

We’d love more Children’s Church Helpers:

Leaders and helpers

At St John the Baptist, KBS, everyone is welcome - including children and young people of all ages. We are further developing (and hoping to increase) activities for children and young people which will make them feel safe and loved and will complement and enhance the faith development which takes place at home. We are a church seeking to know Jesus more and more and to become more Christlike, sharing our faith through fun and friendship, and that is also our aim for Children's church.

We are committed to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults and follow the Church of England Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance.

Responsibility

Reverend Catherine Schneider has responsibility for appointing the leaders and helpers.

Role Description

The Children’s Church Leader will organise and oversee the session. It will be held three times a month at present, though it may run more often depending on volunteers. It is held during the Sunday Service in the Church Room. Leaders are encouraged to use online resources, for example those from Diddy Disciples which is very helpful in providing ideas and a good time saver. [Diddy Disciples | Sharon Moughtin-Mumby](#)

Traditionally the group has been for primary school aged children, but younger children can come with a parent. This has been a popular addition.

The Sunday School Helper will assist the leader which could include bringing a craft or game to the session.

Volunteers may also help with other events such as Messy Church or Christmas events if they are willing.

Leaders and helpers will be aware of and follow the Parish Safeguarding Policy. They will complete the required safeguarding training and hold the appropriate level of DBS. They will follow the code for safer working practice which can be found in the volunteers’ pack.

Once a volunteer has been appointed to a role, training will be provided and there will be a preliminary review after 3-6 months (depending on the role) and then annual reviews. Volunteers are invited to share ideas about how we might develop areas of ministry.

Person Specifications

The volunteer will have good interpersonal skills, be friendly and approachable and be able to safely manage the children’s activities. They will have completed Basic and Foundation Safeguarding training and be available Sunday mornings at least alternate months (helpers). They will have some previous experience with children and if possible, experience of children’s work. They will have a Christian faith.

Leaders will be available monthly or more often if possible.

Parish Role: Messy Church Helper

We'd love more Messy Church Helpers:

The Church takes the safety of everyone within the church very seriously and expects that everyone will work within the Church safeguarding policy. In particular, the Church expects anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding risk or of actual abuse, to immediately raise this with your Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) or Assistant DSA.

Those who work with children, young people and/or adults who are vulnerable should have a commitment to:

- Treat individuals with respect
- Recognise and respect their abilities and potential for development
- Working in ways that meet and develop the personal, spiritual, social and pastoral needs
- Promote their rights to make their own decisions and choices, unless it is unsafe
- Ensure their welfare and safety
- The promotion of social justice, social responsibility and respect for others
- Confidentiality, never passing on personal information, except to the person you are responsible to, unless there are safeguarding issues of concern which **must always** be reported to the person named above or to the Police or Social Services in an emergency.

Role	Messy Church Helper
Responsible to	Rev Catherine Schneider
Key Responsibilities of the Role (tasks to be undertaken)	
As a volunteer: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be timely• Set up craft materials• Set up food and drink• Create space for children and adults to talk, both formally and informally• Be aware of any health and safety matters that may affect the group and take appropriate action• Be responsible for one activity/group• Help clear away at the end of the session• Attend quarterly team planning meetings• Work under the leadership and supervision of the activity co-ordinator• Read the parish's safeguarding policy and know how to respond to, report and record any concerns you may have about a child• Read and implement any other PCC policies or guidelines relevant to your work with children• Undertake diocesan safeguarding training every three years	
Any arrangements for induction, training & support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding training every three years• Attend a session of training with Messy Church Leader• Meet with other Messy Church helpers to plan sessions together• Attend one-to-one meeting with Messy Church Leader for review	

Any practical arrangements relevant to the role (e.g. process for paying expenses, times role should be carried out, provision of equipment)

- Receipts for resources to be submitted to Treasurer via Messy Church Leader for reimbursement
- Messy Church may be in the Village Hall at 10.30am (on 5th Sundays) or on the Millennium Green in the summer.

Role to be reviewed

Initially after 3-6 months and then annually

The role is eligible for a criminal record (DBS) check which is renewable every three years

Yes

Safeguarding Training Level

Basic and Foundation

Level of criminal record (DBS) check which is required for this role

Enhanced – child workforce