

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, TIMBERHILL with ST JULIAN, NORWICH

February 2021



PARISH PEOPLE

Parish Priest

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Liz Kilshaw

PCC Treasurer

Chris Bushnell

Gift Aid Secretary

Michael Watson

Organist

Keith Buxton

Head Server

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Electoral Roll Secretary

Elizabeth Sutherland

Safeguarding Officer

Shirley Buxton

Deanery Synod representatives

Liz Kilshaw, Rhys Lewis

Parochial Church Council

Mary Barnes-Clay, Fr Peter Barnes-Clay, Andrew Knights, Susan Snasdell, Elizabeth Sutherland, Melissa Symes, Nigel Waller

Sidespeople

Garret Cronin, Barbara Donnelly, Andrew Knights (*Senior Sidesman*), Michael Rayner, Wendy Rayner, Nichola Rose, Diane Sheen, Susan Snasdell, Dorothy Tinkler, Richard Tinkler, Stuart Tinkler, John Woodrow

The Julian Centre Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1QT
01603 767380 • www.julianofnorwich.org

The Centre is currently closed for refurbishment

Looking to Lent

Dear Friends,

I'm writing on Sexagesima, the Second Sunday before Lent, having delayed this February Newsletter by a few days while your PCC considered our next steps in response to the circumstances of the pandemic. The alarmingly high case rates in Norwich at the New Year caused the Bishop of Norwich to write to all his clergy and churchwardens and strongly encourage us to discontinue 'in person' worship for 'the next few weeks'.

We agreed to follow his encouragement, and the last public Mass was celebrated in St John's on Saturday 16 January, although since then I have continued our daily Eucharistic offering at the altar (and, each day, I commend in the intercessions 'all members of the Church Family uniting themselves in heart and mind with this Mass now, that they may have a share in its graces and fruits'). We have been able to broadcast the Mass live from St John's each Sunday (and on the Feast of Candlemas) to a dispersed congregation: a number of appreciative messages have testified to the value of this provision. 'Beautiful and inspiring,' said one person; 'I look forward to these events and believe that I truly receive the spiritual gift of Our Lord's Body and Blood.'



The approach of Lent, and the gradually improving picture in the city centre, prompted us to discuss the way forward and the PCC has agreed (by a majority) to **resume public worship in our parish**, as permitted by law, **from Sunday 14 February**, the Sunday before Lent. The full schedule of Masses and other acts of worship will recommence from that day. I think we are the first parish in the city centre to resume services; Norwich Cathedral resumes its regular three public daily services a few days later, Thursday 18 February.

You are welcome to come and worship, but **I ask you to be scrupulous in following all the Coronavirus precautions which we have put in place and in particular to resist the temptation to mingle with other households before and after services**, which is a particularly 'risky' time. We also encourage you to an appropriate degree of caution, especially if you live at a distance from the parish, and to avoid unnecessary travel. We all need to exercise a responsible care for one another, and to protect our own health as well.

One of the few cheerful pieces of news over the past few weeks has been the apparently tremendous success of the Coronavirus vaccination programme; one of the first 'mass vaccination centres' in the country was opened in our own parish, in the Castle Quarter, on Monday 18 January, and since then we have prayed daily at Mass for the centre, the staff who work there, and all those receiving vaccinations there on that particular day – a good example of the way in which we try, in our daily worship, to fulfil the Church's role of intercession for the many people, causes and concerns of our parish. It has been good to hear of many members of the Church Family receiving your 'jabs' and you are all at the cutting edge of medical science!

In the Parish Newsletter for last March, I wrote: 'A temptation is to see Lent primarily as an individual exercise – what am *I* giving up, what will *I* do (or even, *I* don't need to bother) – but in truth we need to live Lent *with* the rest of the Church, in prayer, fasting and works of charity, in reading and meditating on the Scriptures, and in our celebration of the sacraments. We share together in the communal, corporate exercise of Lent so that together we can rediscover and be renewed in the light of Christ which the whole Church, his Body and Family, exists to reveal in the world.'

There's a certain irony in rereading these words knowing that, before we were halfway through that Lent, we were plunged into the world of separation and restrictions in which we are still living. The last hymn we sang together in St John's was nearly a year ago, at the end of the High Mass on the Third Sunday of Lent (it was 'Maker of earth, to thee alone', with its prescient

verse giving thanks that 'exiles on an alien shore may sing their country's strain'). Our Lent programme was discontinued, public worship suspended, our churches were closed, and my words about Lent being not individualistic but corporate seemed, perhaps, suddenly hollow against the new reality of atomised, scattered lives. For the second half of Lent and that very strange Holy Week, I suggested as the basis for our reflection on the mystery of the Lord's Passion those words from St John: **'Jesus was to die to gather together in unity the scattered children of God'** (*St John 11.52*).

Our unity, of course, is not founded on physical proximity, occupying the same space as one another (much as many of us have learned afresh how much we value that); it is rooted in something deeper, which is the mystery of the Cross. Drawn together in the Spirit's tether, the union and fellowship which we share with one another as baptised brothers and sisters of Christ is unrestricted by time, space, sickness or pain, and unbroken even by death. Holy Week, the summit of the Christian year to which the days of Lent lead us, recapitulates the totality of Christ's saving work, what he has done not merely *for* us but *in* us and *to* us: he died, said St John, to gather together in unity the scattered children of God, to overcome the barriers between us and to draw into one family those who were far off and those who were near, so that together we might all be faithful witnesses of the Resurrection.



I call all of us, then, to a generous keeping of this Lent, united in the Spirit even if we continue to be separated in the body for much of it. Lent is a wonderful season of opportunity and promise, a time of fresh beginnings and new resolve, a grace-filled season in which we can recover the beauty of our baptism and prepare ourselves to celebrate the Lord's Death and Resurrection 'with mind and heart renewed'. Let us make of it the season of hope and renewal which we all so greatly need. I pray that your prayer, your fasting, your works of charity, your study, your self-sacrifice, your service of others will be a means of blessing not just for yourself, but for all of us, and that we will share together in the Resurrection joy to which it will bring us.

Have a blessed and holy Lent.

Your friend and parish priest,

R. Richard

Lent 2021

'that we may triumph over evil and grow in grace as we prepare to celebrate the Easter mystery with mind and heart renewed'

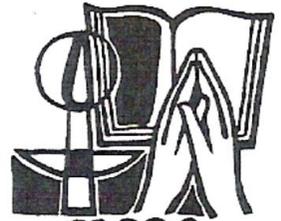
Lent is a time of grace and hope, and we have tried to plan a programme for this year which combines 'in-person' and online offerings, so that each of us, in our different circumstances, can participate in the growth and transformation which characterises a faithful Lent. In order to take on some of the riches of the season, though, we need to make space by giving other things up, lest we end up overburdening ourselves and resenting the very things that are meant to be our gift and offering to God. Our full programme of opportunities is available in church and is being sent to each member of the Church Family, but here's a summary:

Confessions before Lent: A Priest will be available in St John's for the Sacrament of Reconciliation on **Sunday 14 February** from 5pm to 6pm, on **Shrove Tuesday**, 16 February, from 11am to 12 noon and from 5pm to 6pm, and by appointment. *Make me a clean heart, O God: renew a right spirit within me.*

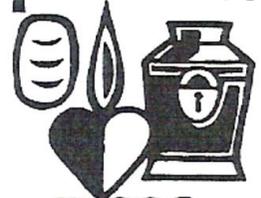
Ash Wednesday, 17 February: Low Mass at 10am (*St Julian's*); Low Mass at 12 noon (*St John's*); Solemn Mass at 7.30pm (*St John's*). The Imposition of Ashes will be given at each Mass: this year, the ashes will be sprinkled on our heads, in line with an ancient penitential practice of the Church, so that the priest doesn't touch our foreheads.

Ash Wednesday is a day of fasting and abstinence and should be kept holy by all Christians, whether we're able to come to church or not.

The Mass will be celebrated every day during Lent, as always in our parish: it is the heartbeat of our parish life and an excellent help to keeping a good Lent.



**MORE
fervent in
PRAYER**



**MORE
generous
in WORKS of
CHARITY**



**MORE
eager in cele-
brating the
MYSTERIES
by which we
are reborn**

Wednesdays in Lent (*beginning 24 February*):

- (a) Mass at 12 noon at St John's each Wednesday in Lent, and no 10am Mass at St Julian's.
- (b) 9pm Cocoa and Compline (*on Zoom*): fifteen minutes of conversation, followed by the gentle praying of the Night Prayer of the Church at 9.15pm.

Thursdays in Lent (*beginning 18 February*): 11am Holy Hour (*St John's*): silent prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Benediction will be given at 11.50am before the Mass at noon.

Fridays in Lent:

- (a) *beginning 19 February*: 3.30 to 4.30pm Lent study series (*on Zoom*): details overleaf.
- (b) *beginning 26 February*: 12 noon Stations of the Cross (*St John's*). This year the congregation will remain in their places during the Way of the Cross, and only the officiant will walk from Station to Station.

Saturdays in Lent (*beginning 20 February*): The Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary will be prayed at 11.30am in St John's, prior to the 12 noon Mass.

Together in Unity: the Bishop's Lent Appeal

Lent offerings in the Diocese of Norwich will be given this year to the Archbishop of Canterbury's **'Together in Unity' appeal** to support churches and communities across the world during the pandemic. This initiative will work to provide income support, facilities for basic hygiene, equipment to slow the spread of the virus and food security to our sisters and brothers in some of the poorest communities around the world as they tackle with Covid-19 with few resources of their own.



The fund has already allocated over £180,000 to support churches in areas of need across the Anglican Communion as part of a special COVID-specific grant cycle. In Maridi, South Sudan, over 200 pastors and lay readers were provided with food relief, church leaders were trained in virus

prevention, and bicycles and hand microphones were provided for five pastors to carry virus prevention messages into remote areas. In Bangladesh, in the midst of job losses and economic pressures from lockdown, hundreds of vulnerable families, from both church and wider communities, have received support to enable them to buy food and daily necessities.

Envelopes for your offerings are included with each of our Lent packs, and are also available in both churches: please return them to church by Low Sunday (11 April) and we'll send off all our gifts together.

The Way of Julian of Norwich

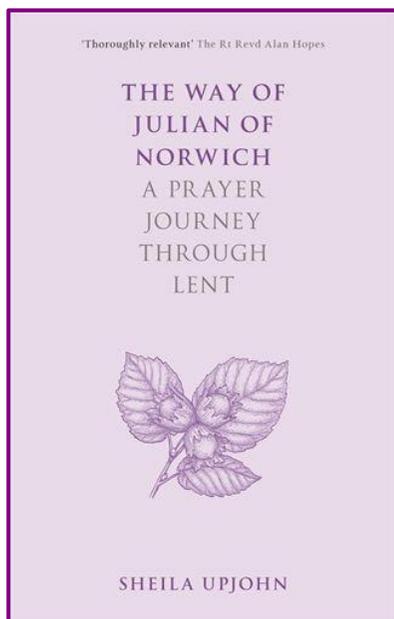
This Lent, the Friends of Julian of Norwich are uniting with Norwich Cathedral to offer a six-part online series of discussions based on the chapters of Sheila Upjohn's new book *The Way of Julian of Norwich*.

Described by the Bishop of Worcester as 'a "must-read" for Christians' and by Brian Thorne as 'a book that may prove for many readers to be literally life-changing', the book explores insights from Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love* alongside passages from Scripture in a superb Lenten preparation for celebrating the mysteries of Christ's love this Holy Week and Easter.

The series, which begins on **Friday 19 February** and takes place on Zoom **each Friday in Lent from 3.30 to 4.30pm**, will be led by the Dean and Canons of Norwich Cathedral and Fr Richard, and will also include weekly contributions from the author herself as well as the opportunity for discussion and reflection among participants.

We have some copies of the book available in church for £10, and it's also available from all good booksellers. Participants will benefit from having read the first chapter before the first session.

To register for the course, just send an email to Fr Richard.



To keep a true Lent

by Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

Is this a fast, to keep
 The larder lean?
 And clean
From fat of veals and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish
 Of flesh, yet still
 To fill
The platter high with fish?

Is it to fast an hour,
 Or ragg'd to go,
 Or show
A downcast look and sour?

No; 'tis a fast to dole
 Thy sheaf of wheat,
 And meat,
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,
 From old debate
 And hate;
To circumcise thy life.

To show a heart grief-rent;
 To starve thy sin,
 Not bin;
And that's to keep thy Lent.

For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee:
 but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings.
 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit:
a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.

Psalm 51.16-17

February 2021

- 1 Mon Feria (*Week IV of Ordinary Time*)
- 2 Tue **THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE:
CANDLEMAS** 10am Livestreamed Mass
- 3 Wed St Blaise
- 4 Thu Feria
- 5 Fri St Agatha
- 6 Sat St Paul Miki and the Martyrs of Japan
-
- 7 Sun **The Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Sexagesima)**
- 8 Mon Feria
- 9 Tue of Requiem
- 10 Wed St Scholastica
- 11 Thu Our Lady of Lourdes
- 12 Fri Feria
- 13 Sat Our Lady on Saturday
-
- 14 Sun **The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Quinquagesima)**
- 15 Mon Feria
- 16 Tue Feria
- 17 Wed **ASH WEDNESDAY** 10am and 12 noon LM; 7.30pm SM
- 18 Thu Feria of Lent
- 19 Fri Feria of Lent
- 20 Sat Feria of Lent
-
- 21 Sun **The First Sunday of Lent**
- 22 Mon The Chair of St Peter
- 23 Tue Feria of Lent (commem. St Polycarp)
- 24 Wed Feria of Lent (Ember Day)
- 25 Thu Feria of Lent
- 26 Fri Feria of Lent (Ember Day)
- 27 Sat Feria of Lent (Ember Day)
-
- 28 Sun **The Second Sunday of Lent**
- 1 Mon St David
- 2 Tue Feria of Lent
- 3 Wed Feria of Lent
- 4 Thu Feria of Lent

We pray for...

Our Diocesan links with Papua New Guinea	1
Thanksgiving for Jesus Christ, Light of the world	2
Norman and Graham our Bishops	3
University of East Anglia	4
Those with breast cancer	5
Persecuted Christians	6
Our Parish and People	7
The schools of our parish	8
Year's Minds for February	9
Vocations to the Religious Life	10
The sick and those who care for them (<i>World Day of the Sick</i>)	11
All suffering from Coronavirus or its effects	12
The Shrine of our Lady of Walsingham	13
Our Parish and People	14
A good keeping of Lent	15
Penitents and confessors	16
The grace of true contrition	17
Generosity in prayer	18
Generosity in fasting	19
Generosity in almsgiving	20
Our Parish and People	21
Pope Francis and the Roman Catholic Church	22
Friends of Julian of Norwich	23
Ordinands and seminarians	24
Those preparing for Baptism at Easter	25
Vocations to the Sacred Ministry	26
Theological colleges and courses	27
Our Parish and People	28
The people of Wales	1
Freedom from our own hypocrisy	2
Perseverance in our Lenten penance	3
The homeless in our city	4

Parish notes

Sylvia Aldis RIP

Our sister Sylvia Aldis fell asleep in Christ in the early morning of Friday 22 January after a long illness stoically borne. Her body will be received into St John's at 4pm on **Thursday 18 February**, followed by Vespers of the Dead (all welcome). Attendance at the Funeral Mass at 12 noon the next day, **Friday 19 February**, is restricted to 30 mourners by law, but as we go to press there are a few places available: speak to Fr Richard if you'd like to come. Sylvia's longstanding friend Fr Adrian Ling will preach the sermon at the Funeral Mass. There'll also be a simple Requiem Mass at 10am on the Friday morning for those who'd like to come and pray for Sylvia but can't come at noon. After the Funeral, Sylvia's body will be taken to Earlham Crematorium, with Fr Richard accompanying, and in due course her cremated remains will be buried in the churchyard garden at St Julian's.



Sylvia, as Churchwarden, joins Fr Michael Mountney (Rector) to examine 'Gabriel', the mediaeval bell of St Julian's, shortly before it is hoisted back to the tower after fifty years in the churchyard: January 1993

Born Sylvia Forder in 1930 in Alderson Street, near St John de Sepulchre, she had been part of our Church Family for as long as most of us can remember, serving as a Churchwarden under Fr Michael Mountney and Fr Martin Smith. After education at Cavell School and Lakenham Girls School on City Road, she went out to work at 14 years old. She met her husband Ronnie at a dance and her only child, Colin, was born in 1950; he was tragically killed in a motorbike accident just before his sixteenth birthday. After early work in catering, Sylvia nursed at Whitlingham for six years followed by a long stint at Eaton Grange until her retirement aged 62, though

she continued to help many people in their own homes after her retirement. She was a stalwart volunteer at the Theatre Royal and many happy memories have been shared in recent weeks.

In the August 1995 issue of *The Grapevine*, our former parish newspaper, her faith was described as 'solid, downright and living, the epitome of this truly Norwich personality.' Please pray for her, that with all the Saints she may enjoy the reward of her labours in the new Jerusalem and share the vision of Christ's glory.

Work around our buildings

Despite the latest lockdown, we were able to make progress during January with several projects in our two churches: it's our duty and joy to keep our churches and their contents in beautiful order, as befits the House of God.

We thank Gudrun who is painstakingly cleaning the **Stations of the Cross** in St John's, Bev who has just repainted the **throne** on which the monstrance is placed for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament (the latest of many projects she undertakes) and who also does the **sacristy laundry** at St John's (and Judy who does it at St Julian's), Lucy who is in the middle of very delicate restoration work on a set of **gold vestments**, as well as the small but faithful band who help with the **daily church cleaning** coordinated by Shirley.

The restoration of **Our Lady of Walsingham** was also completed during January with the return from Cambridge of her regilded sceptre, and we look forward to further improvements in the Lady Chapel in the coming months. Meanwhile, outdoors, a freezing day just after Epiphany saw a cheerful team of contractors clearing the **guttering and downpipes** at both churches.

On a larger scale, workmen from Dragon Security were on site for five days to upgrade our **security systems** in both churches, including a **new CCTV system** at St John's and **new alarms** to protect the chancel and Lady Chapel when the Parish Church is open during the week, as well as upgrades to the fire alarm at St Julian's and the installation of **new fire detection technology**.

The PCC has also approved **interior and exterior renovation work to the porch** at St John's, and on 1 February the Archdeacon granted permission

for the work to proceed, so we await the arrival of some warmer weather so that the contractor can proceed: there will be some exterior repairs to flint work, remedial work to the downpipes, and internal replastering and redecoration.

Progress at St Julian's

The Julian of Norwich Partnership, which brings together our parish, the Diocese of Norwich, Norwich Cathedral, the Friends of Julian of Norwich, the Community of All Hallows and other interested parties, has now been formally registered with the Charity Commission as a charity (no. 1192577). We're now in the process of seeking to fill two voluntary positions to assist the Trustees – a clerk and a treasurer. Our PCC's representative on the Trustees is Susan Snasdell. Work to refurbish All Hallows House is proceeding, though slowly because of the pandemic: we've completed some drainage works outdoors, replacement of windows begins later this month, and builders should be on site after Easter.

Coffee morning every Friday

We're having a Church Family coffee morning online **each Friday from 10.30am to 11.30am**. Alas, you have to bring your own coffee and biscuits, but it offers chance for a friendly catch-up with friends old and new while many of us are spending much longer at home than we'd choose! If you'd like to come, just let Fr Richard know and he'll send you the Zoom log in details.

From the Parish Registers

Communicants and collections

	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Weekday</i>	<i>Collection</i>
<i>Week beginning</i> 3 January	33	49	£714.60 †
10 January	37	39	£143.00

Public worship was discontinued on Sunday 17 January.

† *including New Year's Day*

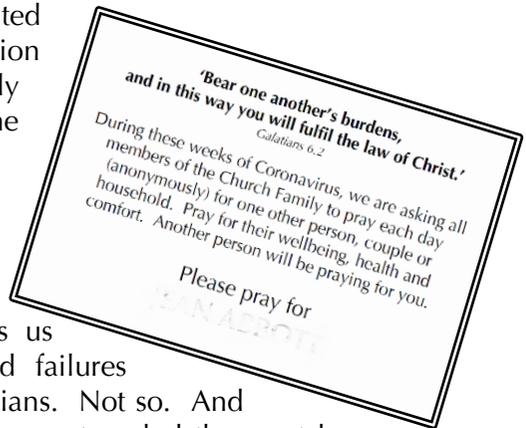
The collection figure above does not include the amount given by standing order, which averages £3,000 a month.

Praying in the Pandemic

On 20 January 1987, members of Islamic Jihad in Lebanon kidnapped Terry Waite, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Foreign Affairs Representative. It soon became clear that Waite's captivity was likely to be a long one, and possibly even fatal.

Fr Robert Llewelyn, at one time the Chaplain at the Julian Shrine, caused to be printed and widely distributed prayer cards asking people to pray for Waite and all prisoners of injustice. I found mine the other day tucked away in my commonplace book. Fr Llewelyn said that the horror of Waite's captivity could call us back to, and renew the life of, intercessory prayer. Remembering this, I was therefore delighted when at the start of this Pandemic Fr Richard distributed prayer cards to all the congregation inviting each one of us to pray daily for another member of the congregation by name.

I have never been a good intercessor. There is a fantasy that Holy Orders bestows a grace on the ordained which somehow exempts us from the struggles, difficulties and failures which mark the lives of other Christians. Not so. And the area of prayer where I have always struggled the most has been that of intercession. But this experience has been different. Almost without fail, three times a day I have remembered X in my prayers. Not someone previously known to me well, they have become as it were a daily companion. It helps that they have a Facebook profile so I have been able to hold a rather fuller picture of X than might otherwise have been the case. But even without that, it would have been an enlarging experience for me. And I have found my other intercessions have taken on a depth and relevance which they would almost certainly have lacked previously.



Fr Llewelyn's card contained a quotation from Fr Benson, the founder of the Cowley Fathers. God "desired, by forming in us the habit of prayer, to draw us to himself, the fountain of all goodness." Well, in the last few months I have rediscovered the truth of those words. So thank you to Fr Richard for

initiating and enabling the idea in the first place. Thank you to X, who unwittingly has been an enriching daily companion in prayer. And above all and as always, thanks be to God.

J.M.F.

Learning to listen

A Sermon preached by Fr Richard Stanton, Parish Priest,
at the livestreamed Mass on the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time:
17 January 2021

Lections I Samuel 3.3-10, 19: *It was the Lord who was calling the boy*
I Corinthians 6.13-15, 17-20: *Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit*
St John 1.35-42: *Look, there is the Lamb of God*

‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.’ (*I Samuel 3.10*)

Many of us over the past year have become all-too-familiar with some of the frustrations as well as the blessings of online communication – ‘You’re on mute’, surely, must be one of the most-uttered phrases of 2020, and contending with bandwidth and poor signals and a whole host of other ill-understood, ethereal, abstract technical problems which make us want to endorse the cry of St Paul in his letter to the Ephesians: ‘We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness!’ (*Ephesians 6.12*). When the situation isn’t too pressing we can, I hope, at least see the funny side of it, as we might also be struck by the comic element in the familiar story of the boy Samuel, resting in the temple of the Lord before the lamp of God had gone out, and rising repeatedly to go to Eli, the high priest of Shiloh, whom he thought was calling him. ‘I did not call you, my son,’ he said. He discerned eventually that the boy was hearing the call of the Lord, and gave him the words of acceptance to say in response: ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.’

For us who believe, there is a persistent challenge in this idea of listening for the voice of the Lord – a challenge which those who do *not* believe are not slow to exploit. Do we really expect to hear a booming voice descending from the heavens, with a Simpsons-esque hand bearing an extra digit appearing from a cloud to give an added pointer in the right direction? Is that what we want (or expect) when we pray that the Lord might speak? The

voice of the Lord is powerful, says the Psalmist: it is 'mighty in operation: the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedar-trees: yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Libanus... The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire; the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness' (*Psalm 29*).

But we do not, most of us, hear a voice like that. There is another faintly comic scene in the Old Testament where the prophet Elijah has a stand-off with the prophets of Baal to see which god is the true God – Baal or the Lord of Israel. It doesn't go too well for them, of course, and Elijah mocks them as they beseech their deity: 'Cry aloud! Surely he is a god; either he is meditating, or he has wandered away, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened' (*1 Kings 18.27*). So they cried all the more and cut themselves with swords and lances until the blood gushed out of them, and midday came and went and they 'raved on', says the text, 'until the time of the offering of the oblation' but 'there was no voice, no answer, and no response' (*1 Kings 18.28-29*).

'There was no voice, no answer, and no response.' A scenario which perhaps is familiar to those who wrestle with their faith in the God of Jesus Christ, the God who called Samuel in the temple so vividly that the boy ran to the nearest human being thinking the voice must be his... but that voice, often, seems to us to be silent. The poet R.S. Thomas speaks of our seeking the voice of the Lord in the opening lines of his poem *Kneeling*:

*Moments of great calm,
Kneeling before an altar
Of wood in a stone church*



The Epiphany Crib in St Julian's on the Eve of the Epiphany, 5 January 2021. The Crib is displayed in our churches as a focus for our prayer and devotion until Candlemas, 2 February.

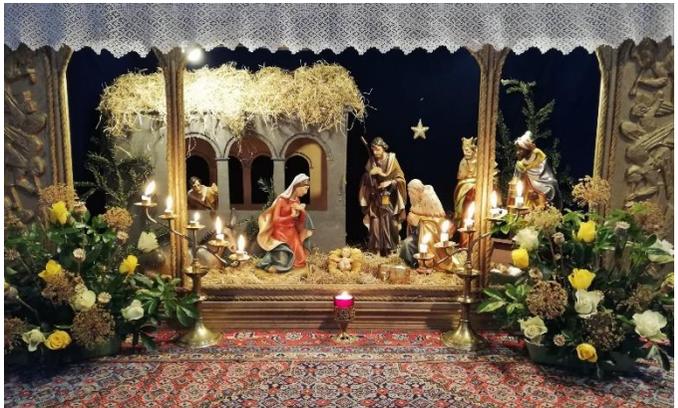
*In summer, waiting for the God
To speak; the air a staircase
For silence.*

Sometimes people give up what feels to them an unequal struggle and abandon prayer or the practice of their faith altogether, disappointed by the discovery that it is not at all like a slot machine, and that inserting a coin doesn't just produce the desired result, that our God is not a doll whose string we can pull so that it utters a word.

And yet, if our baptism has immersed us, as we believe it has, in a dynamic and living relationship with the God in whom we live and move and have our being, we want him to speak, don't we? We want to know what he would have us to do; we want to understand his purposes for us; we want our prayer to be a two-way conversation. We may want those things on one level, though perhaps on another we shrink from them, fearing the answers that we might get.

The encounter of Jesus the Lamb of God with some of his first disciples in today's Gospel points us to that patient abiding with Jesus by which we are able better to hear

what he would say and do what he would do. His first question, 'What do you want?', is the question he addresses to all of us who have been made for God, whose hearts are restless, says St Augustine, until they find their rest in him. When they asked where he lived, his answer was simply, 'Come and see', so, St John says, 'they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day' (*St John 1.39*).



The Epiphany Crib in St John's, Candlemas Day 2021.

To hear the voice of the Lord doesn't necessarily mean that a voice will speak from on high, or that we will 'hear' in the ordinary auditory sense a voice within us – though some people do indeed experience the voice of

the Lord like that. For others, when we speak of ‘hearing the voice of the Lord’ we’re talking about the fruit that comes from a patient, humble, hopeful dwelling with Jesus – spending time in his company, in the scriptures, in the sacramental life of the church, in a persistent prayer which does not seek results but prefers nothing else to the love of Christ and so makes room for the activity of the Holy Spirit in the world: ‘that I may love what thou dost love and do what thou wouldst do.’ For many people, discerning our vocation – our calling – is a process of quiet attentiveness to the inner pressures of the Spirit on our consciousness, our memory and our will, the things that time and again float gently to the surface, the connections and patterns of life and the suggestions of others which seem inexorably to point in a strange but alluring direction. We discern this not alone but in community and in company – in the praying fellowship of the Church, yes, but also with the aid of the saints and often through conversation with a spiritual director or a confessor.

In *Little Gidding*, T.S. Eliot, like R.S. Thomas, also situated himself in a church, ‘waiting for the God to speak’, and said,

*So, while the light fails
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
History is now and England.
With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

‘The drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling’ shook those disciples out of the familiar and into a new and unimagined future with the real and true Voice of the Lord – that is, the Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, the same Word which the Father addresses to you and me, Jesus Christ, who later would speak of the flesh and blood which we must eat and drink if we are to have life in us. ‘Because of this,’ says St John, ‘many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?”’ Simon, who was called *Cephas* in today’s Gospel, answered “‘Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life”’ (*St John 6.66-68*). Speak, then, Lord: your servants are listening.

Amen.

WORSHIP WITH US

We warmly welcome you.

Sundays	9am Low Mass	<i>St Julian's</i>
	11am Solemn Mass and Sermon	<i>St John's</i>
	6pm Low Mass	<i>St John's</i>

Weekdays

<i>The Mass</i>	Monday 10am	<i>St Julian's</i>
	Tuesday 12 noon	<i>St John's</i>
	Wednesday 10am	<i>St Julian's</i>
	(but at 12 noon at St John's during Lent)	
	Thursday 12 noon	<i>St John's</i>
	Friday 5pm	<i>St Julian's</i>
	Saturday 12 noon	<i>St John's</i>

<i>The Rosary</i>	Monday 10.30am	<i>St Julian's</i>
	Saturdays in Lent 11.30am	<i>St John's</i>

Morning and Evening Prayer

The Daily Office is currently said privately in church, before opening and after closing

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

Physically-distanced Confessions may be heard at any time by arrangement with the Parish Priest

St John's and St Julian's are both **open daily** for prayer, quiet and visiting (except St John's which is currently closed on Mondays). The Blessed Sacrament is reserved on the High Altar of both churches for the Communion of the Sick and the devotion of the faithful.

We warmly welcome enquiries about **baptisms and weddings**. We will be pleased to help you in any way we can.



stjohnstimberhill.org



[stjohnthebaptisttimberhill](https://www.instagram.com/stjohnthebaptisttimberhill)

On the cover: Light floods into St John's during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.