

Giving to St Nicholas Church in 2021

Please contact Jane on 01249 657532 or woodman_jane@yahoo.co.uk if you would like:

- a box of weekly giving envelopes, or
- a bundle of yellow envelopes which can be completed for Gift Aid or left blank for non Gift Aid, or
- a standing order form for regular payments straight to the bank account, or
- details of the bank account for other direct payments.

A reminder that if your donations cannot qualify for Gift Aid we might still be able to claim an equivalent amount from HMRC provided that the payment is **in cash** (not cheque, standing order or direct to the bank) and each single identifiable payment is £30 or less. 'Catch up' donations which follow a regular pattern are OK if each payment can be identified, even if the total exceeds £30.

**Thank you,
Jane Woodman
Treasurer**

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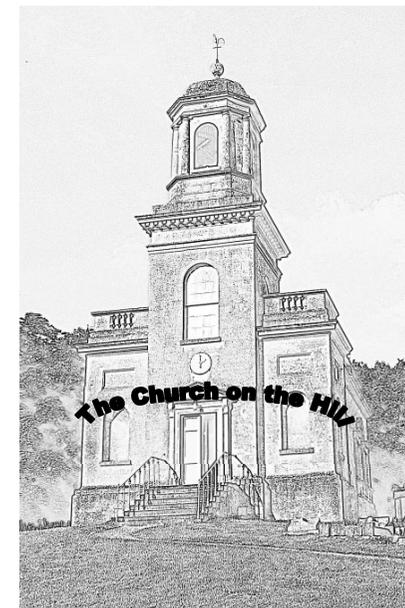
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Greenways Group of Churches

St. Nicholas News January 2021

*The Rt Rev Maurice Wood (1916-2007)
Bishop Maurice Wood prayer seems appropriate for Hardenhuish:
"Make us like a city set on a hill whose light cannot be hidden; so that men and women and children may find Christ as the light of the world, and his church as the family of the redeemed, and eternal life as the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord"*



Sunday	3rd January	10.30am	St. Nicholas - Come and Worship
Sunday	10th January	4.00pm	St. Nicholas - Holy Communion
Sunday	24th January	4.00pm	St. Nicholas - Come & Worship

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Ministry Musings

Have you made any New Year's resolutions for 2021? Perhaps it's to eat less crisps, cake or chocolate! Perhaps it's to do more exercise. Or maybe you've decided not to bother. Many New Year's resolutions often don't last very long anyway!

Today, I'm thinking of a New Year's resolution that we all could find very beneficial.

2020 was a very challenging, difficult year for us all. Now we are at the beginning of a new year – 2021, and, at the moment, we are still battling with Covid 19. But, in spite of all the uncertainties around us, can I suggest that, at the beginning of this new year, we make a New Year's resolution to approach it with hope and positivity.

Psalm 121 is a wonderful psalm, full of promises and encouragement. Take time to read it through slowly, letting each verse soak in. Our Lord is the Maker of heaven and earth. He created the hills, the sky, the sea and, because He is God, everything he made was perfect. Not only that, He took dust from the ground and created a man! He caused the man to sleep while he removed one of the man's ribs and made a woman! The Psalm says that God never sleeps, He doesn't even slumber - He is constantly watching over us, day and night and will continue to do so forever.

If we have a God who is able to do all of that, and far more than I could write about, and as we allow that thought to soak into our very being, it alters our perception of life. Politicians and leaders across the world may think they have power and scientists are striving to gain power over Covid 19. But our God is far more powerful and it is He who holds the future for us all.

So, we can look to the future with confidence knowing that our Father has everything under His control and He is a God who never changes. As we trust Him we will find Him to be an all sufficient God. He goes before us to prepare the way and He walks beside us, sometimes carrying us, as we travel into the unknown.

Only He knows what the future holds for us and only He can give us the strength and the wisdom we will need to meet it's challenges.

Let's ask our Father to guide us and give us the grace to follow Him more closely every day. The more we do, the more certain we will be of His unchanging love in the midst of life's uncertainties.

I would like to share this well known poem with you – it was suggested by the young princess Elizabeth to her father, King George VI in 1939 when he was about to give a Christmas broadcast to the nation.

“Gate of the Year” (*original title – God Knows*)

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
"Give me a light, that I may tread safely into the unknown!"

And he replied:
"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

So, I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night
And He led me toward the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.
Minnie Louise Haskins

A blessed and happy New Year to you all

Veronica

Diocesan Synod November 2020 Update

First published on: 26th November 2020

Diocesan Synod met on Saturday 14 November 2020 to review the impact of Creating connections, approve the 2021 budget and prepare for the future.

National news

Synod heard about:

- the way Church of England through the Archbishops had responded to the current Covid impact, making public their representation to government to continue public worship and calling the nation to prayer.
- the response to the IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse) report into the Church of England and the action being taken follow its recommendations.
- the launch of Living in love and faith, a new process of discernment and decision-making on questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage, starting with the publication of resources which draw together theology, science and history with people's experiences and stories. The aim is to listen and learn together and there will be a programme in the Diocese to support this in 2021.
- the November General Synod being introduced for the first time to the work on a national vision for the Church of England in the 2020s led by the Archbishop of York.

Environmental progress

In response to the declaration of a climate emergency a year ago, Clare Fussell, Diocesan Environment Adviser, reported on a range of steps forward in support of the Environment and Climate Justice policy and towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030. As well as lots of examples of local church action, the Diocese has been awarded a bronze EcoDiocese award.

Evangelism and social action in lockdown

Synod was encouraged and inspired by stories of people coming to faith and churches serving those in need during lockdown. As part of a report on the two years since they were planted, St Nicholas, Bristol and Pattern Church, Swindon, shared how the churches had sought to respond to spiritual and practical needs by running Alpha online and partnering with others to support those struggling in communities.

Clergy at the churches expressed their gratitude to those across the Diocese for supporting them in getting started, the impact that was now having and how they were now giving, partnering with and resourcing the wider Diocese as a result.

Where are we now? Reviewing Creating connections

The Synod received a report on the implementation, outcomes, impact and learning from the Diocesan Strategic Plan 2016-20 to support Creating connections. The report shows growth in vocations to ordained ministry, stipendiary clergy deployment, indicators of Christian commitment, including giving, and parish finances. Prayer, focused attention and targeted supported have enabled this. Despite local examples of numerical growth, however, attendance has continued to decline and age overall prior to Covid-19.

Oliver Home, Diocesan Secretary, set this against similar trends and initiatives to address them across the Church of England. He explained the early impact of initiatives that form part of Renewal and Reform like everyday faith, growing faith, growing vocations, funding to support new mission and churches in low income communities and the high levels of contribution to the common good through the life of the Church and church schools.

Having considered what was going on from a national and diocesan perspective, Synod members met in groups to share and feedback the change they had seen in their local contexts over recent years and what had enabled it.

All the learning is being fed into the Transforming Church work

Transforming church: discovering how to be a better church for everyone

Bishop Viv is inviting the whole Diocese to participate in Transforming Church, a one year process that will set the vision, priorities and plans for the years ahead. The Synod helped shape the listening and engagement that would be happening across and beyond the Church on the diocese in the first few months of 2021.