

GRAPEVINE

AUGUST 2024



ST. JOHN'S TRANSFORMED INTO 'A BUILDING FOR ALL'

The reordering project to transform the interior of our church is very near to completion and we are grateful to many people who have brought this to fruition; our benefactors, architect, contractor and his workforce, the team of dedicated church members committed to monitoring the transformation from the beginning, and an equally committed group of mostly non-church people, the Village Heart Group, who have worked tirelessly to realise the potential benefits the facility will bring to the locality.

So we get our church back in early to mid-August and St. John's will begin a new life, as a place of Christian Worship and as a Community Space 'A Building for All'; providing a much needed facility, 'Village Heart @ St. John's' where people of the Parish can meet socially, celebrate special family occasions, where clubs can meet and pursue their respective activities and interests in comfortable surroundings; and a venue for concerts, recitals, plays, virtually anything is possible.

It's a special time for the church and the community so special events are planned to mark the occasion.

A Grand Opening and Family Fun Day starts the weekend of celebrations on Saturday 31st August when you can come along and give the transformed church interior 'the once over' and enjoy the Family Fun Day event from 12 noon to 6.00pm

GRAND OPENING & FAMILY FUN DAY
 Saturday 31st August 2024
 12noon- 6pm
 The Village Heart @St John's, Church Street, Donisthorpe

BAR - BBO - LIVE MUSIC - STALLS - GAMES - BOUNCY CASTLE - FACE PAINTING - RAFFLE
 BEAN BAG TOSS - HOOK A DUCK - ICE CREAM - TEAS AND COFFEES - EXHIBITORS - FUN & MORE

FREE ADMISSION

Bishop Sayju will lead us in a Special Eucharist Service of Celebration, Thanksgiving and Rededication on Sunday 1st September at 10.30am which will be followed by a social occasion and hog roast in the church grounds. All are welcome.

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

LUNCH LIGHT our group that supports those who are bereaved takes its summer break this month and so the next meeting will be in September and hopefully will be in our newly transformed church.



COFFEEANDCHAT@CHURCH will meet, on Tuesday 6th August at Winnie Meadow's home between 9.30 and 11.00am.

AUGUST – SERVICES & EVENTS ACROSS THE WOODFIELD TEAM of CHURCHES.

Saturday August 3 rd	St John's Prayer Group at Winnie Meadow's home at 10am
Tuesday August 6 th	Coffee & Chat at 9.30am at Winnie Meadow's home
Sunday August 4 th	Measham & Snarestone (HC), Normanton & Swepstone (MP),
Sunday August 11 th	Donisthorpe (HC) at the Halfway House , Appleby, (HC), Measham (Lay Led MP)
Sunday August 18 th	Donisthorpe (Lay Led Worship at the Halfway House) Measham (Breakfast Church), Normanton & Norton (HC), Swepstone (HC + Baptism at 11.30am)
Wednesday August 28 th	Mid-week Holy Communion at Edwina Wallace's home.
Sunday August 25 th	Donisthorpe (MP) at the Halfway House , Packington (HC) Measham & Appleby (MP)
Saturday August 31 st	GRAND OPENING & FAMILY FUN DAY
Sunday September 1st	Special Eucharist Service of Celebration, Thanksgiving and Re-dedication 10.30am

(all starting at 10am unless otherwise stated).

PRAYERS OF LOVE AND FAITH

The Church of England's General Synod has agreed in principle to take forward the outlined proposals for the wider use of prayers asking for God's blessing for same-sex couples in church services.

On Monday 8 July, Synod members supported a motion signalling approval for a broad package of proposals, including possible arrangements for the use of **Prayers of Love and Faith** in special or standalone services, alongside delegated episcopal ministry and work to provide a timetable towards a decision on clergy in same-sex civil marriages. The Bishop of Leicester, Martyn Snow, is the lead bishop for the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith (LLF) process. During the debate, he addressed General Synod members, recognising that people on opposing sides of the argument "want the best" for the Church.



You can read Bishop Martyn's Address in full below.

"Priests share with the Bishop in the oversight of the church, delighting in its beauty and its well-being." These are the words that I said last weekend as I ordained new presbyters in God's church.

In the next few minutes, I want to explore with you what it means for all of us, lay and ordained, to delight in the beauty of the church.

Many of us struggle to think of ourselves as beautiful, both individually and collectively.

Indeed, society often tells us that we are anything but beautiful. And we spend a lot of time at Synod telling each other just how ugly we are as a church, how much we get wrong, and how we are responsible for all the failings of the institution.

But what if we dared to believe that God looks on us and smiles? What if we dared to believe that God delights in us and invites us to delight in one another, and the beauty of the church. What if we stopped beating ourselves up about numbers and money and focused instead on the beauty of moments such as that we saw in the LLF presentation when Kenson and Mark spoke of their friendship across deep theological disagreement, the beauty of hearing people say that through the conversations in Leicester they came to the point of being willing to give up something really important to them, in order to enable others to flourish in the church.

The International Commission for Anglican Orthodox Dialogue 2006, spoke of the church in these terms: “By the indwelling grace of the Holy Spirit, the church is created to be an image of the life in communion of the Triune God.” It's a profound statement of our purpose, and it suggests that the model for our common life within the body of Christ is based not on any organisational structure, or hierarchy, but rather the communion that exists between the three persons of the Holy Trinity. And as with Rublev's icon, we are invited to sit and enjoy the communion table with the three persons of the Trinity, each of them sat, heads slightly bowed, expressions of love on their faces. And as we sit, we wonder at the fact that we have been called to join them at that table. And not just us, but all humanity, in all our diversity.

Synod, I think we are united in believing that all humanity is invited to the table. I think we are united in believing that we are called to come as we are, to be ourselves and not worry about whether we are wearing the right clothes. I believe we are united in our experience of being changed simply through being sat at the table with the Triune God and listening in to the conversation between the three persons, recorded for us in Holy Scripture. I think we are united in our hope of one day being sat at the table in heaven – and that will be a beautiful sight – “a great multitude that no one can count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” as John says in his vision. Sisters and brothers in Christ, I think we can delight in all that unites us.

And now the question is: what are we to do about our divisions – our temporary and fleeting divisions here on earth?

I know that there are some in this chamber and in the wider church who believe that they can't be in communion with others who have a different view of marriage and sexual ethics. I get it – I've heard you – I know just how important this is for you – and I don't blame you for wanting the best for God's church. And I want to say to you: you have a place in the Church of England. You are loved by God, and we want you to be sat at the table. And specifically, I say to those who are part of the Alliance, I know you want to remain in the church, and I'm grateful for your commitment to continue in conversation with us. Thank you.

Others are willing to stay in communion, but only so long as we don't enshrine injustice in our structures. I get it – I've heard you – I know how important this is for you – and I don't blame you for wanting the best for God's church. And I say to you too: you have a place in the Church of England. You are loved by God, and we want you to be sat at the table. And specifically, I say to those who are part of the Together network, I know you want to remain in the church, and I'm grateful for your commitment to continue in conversation with us. Thank you.

We all want the best – and yet we profoundly disagree. So what now?

Well, just maybe, for a short period, we all have to settle for second best, and trust that, though this might grieve God, God still delights in the church. Just maybe we have to accept that there are different degrees of communion, and God doesn't force anyone to sit at the same table.

Synod what we are offering you today is second best – it's not the perfection that we long for - none of us gets what we want, and all of us have to trust each other regarding the implementation of what's being proposed. So, we are asking for agreement in principle for the Prayers of Love and Faith to be used at any time, in a service of the word or Holy Communion. A sign that all are welcome and all are loved – by us as well as God. I sincerely believe that these prayers do not change our understanding of marriage or imply that we are teaching that sex outside marriage is good. They are intended as simple prayers which send out a strong message of welcome. And these prayers will not start before we have put in place Pastoral Guidance for the use of the prayers, and a Bishops' Statement and Code of Practice which enable pastoral reassurance for those who will and will not use the prayers. That pastoral reassurance will allow ministers to receive support from another bishop – delegated episcopal ministry. We've not yet worked out all the detail of what that will mean in terms of vocations, training, licensing, finance and all the many other practicalities of ministry – but we will return to Synod in February with those details. So nothing changes this Autumn – the earliest any of this starts is next February.

And Synod, that really is the heart of what we are asking of you today. Are you content for us to continue working on the detail of these proposals? There's further theological work to do, there's a lot of practical planning to do – everything from writing the Code of Practice, through to resources for archdeacons and DDOs, and then, we hope, agreement in the House of Bishops about what can be said in the Bishops Statement. So to those fearful that we are asking you to sign a blank cheque, I say that is absolutely not what we are asking. We will be coming back to consult Synod on the detail in February 2025. But for now, we are appealing to everyone to continue to engage with the process and help us reach agreement on all the details – an agreement which is proportionate, realistic and implementable – one which keeps as many people as possible with the Church of England.

Synod, we are not trying to pretend that this is perfect – as if we have all the answers to your questions. I get that some of you are angry about the process, some of you feel we are not being transparent or honest. I get it, and I can only apologise. This is absolutely not my intention. And I know that some have been in tears at this Synod – feeling you are being forced out of the church. But I genuinely don't believe that is the case. We want you to stay and we want you to help shape the future of the church. Please believe me.

We all want the best for this beautiful Church of England, yet we are going to have to settle for second best, knowing that, this side of heaven, the church will never be perfect, never be pure, never have true justice. This side of heaven, we must live with second best – but always with the longing that one day, one day we will sit at the table in heaven.

I believe that the vast majority within the Church of England will support this – most people simply want to get on with serving their communities and this nation in the name of Jesus Christ.

So my final plea to you, brothers and sisters – many of you will have speeches already prepared – I look forward to hearing them. But my plea is that you pause for a moment to ask – does this speech reflect my calling to delight in the beauty of the church. Is it kind and compassionate, designed to build up the body of Christ? And is it realistic, accepting our disagreements and the need to find a way to move forward as one church.

Synod I ask you to support this motion – not because it's perfect but because it reflects the reality of our calling, and the reality of our disagreements.

First published on: 11th July 2024.

PPC will be considering our position in respect of Prayers in Love and Faith in the coming months.