

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH DONISTHORPE

# GRAPEVINE

JANUARY 2025



## HAPPY NEW YEAR

Dear All,

I write these words with a profound sense of gratitude to each of you for your contribution to the successes of last year.

2024 has been a momentous one for St. Johns; our transformation project reached its conclusion towards the end of August, our 13 months of exile ended and we moved back into much changed and somewhat unfamiliar surroundings.

We look back on the worship times that we had at The Halfway House with fondness and gratitude. When we were in need of a temporary home, somewhere comfortable to worship, we were more fortunate than Mary and Joseph on that first Christmas to indeed find a place and welcome at an inn and thanks to Peter and Mich, The Halfway House became our home from home for the best part of 2023/24.

Vivien returned to 'cut the ribbon' when we reopened on the first week-end of September with a Grand Opening and Family Fun Day, which we followed on the next day by a Service of Re-Dedication and Thanksgiving. Remodelled to a dual-purpose function for both Church and Community Recreational facility St. John's embraced 'Village Heart @ St. John's' and became the 'Building for All' we anticipated it could be.

We are tremendously privileged as a congregation to have been given the opportunity to oversee such a transformation from the original designed by our Christian predecessors to meet the needs of the village community of 1838, to make it a place fit for purpose to meet the needs of the second millennia community that we serve today.

I hope in the 2024 transformation, the first major restructuring of our church building since its consecration, we have accomplished something that has done justice to the legacy our forebears passed down to us. Our church was created to be at the heart of community life and to serve God by building up his Kingdom. We hope now to have ensured St. John's will maintain its place at the 'heart of the community' for many years to come.

For many generations St. Johns has achieved that in varied ways and one of the things that delights me is that many of our 'new' ideas, activities, projects and events enabled through 'Village Heart @ St. John's' are actually deeply traditional.

At one time typical parish churches across the land, so often the oldest, largest and most substantial building in towns and villages would be a hub of cultural, social and economic life. Markets would gather inside the church to trade goods of all kinds, children would receive schooling, music would be heard, major decisions might be made, life's major moments, both joyful and sorrowful would be marked.

As an example of just how busy a church building would be, the old tradition, still observed in many churches today of ringing hand-bells at the consecration of Holy Communion, to draw attention to the precise moment when transubstantiation (the conversion of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ), takes place; began as an entirely practical way of getting everyone to be quiet for the holiest part of the masses said midweek - before they resumed the umpteen other activities that would be going on.

Clearly we mark our worship with a good deal more grace and dignity now and rightly so. Nevertheless, that image of a bustling church teeming with people up to all sorts of things is a powerful one and I am so very glad that we have been able to make this happen at St John's.

We have been provided a great opportunity for renewal and I think we have grasped our chance well. The signs of renewal are there to behold and are there to build on in the years ahead.

We have great challenges ahead not least to grow our church in its new guise as a Building for All ensuring as best we can that once again St. John's becomes the beating heart of village life as it has been in the past and as it was originally envisioned it could be.

We will be required to face other challenges too in the coming year, which we anticipate will see the Woodfield Team of Churches joining with others in NW Leicestershire District to begin life as a Minster Community, currently known as 'Group A' but which will in time hopefully be eventually given a more inspirational name.

We need also to be mindful of the precarious financial position we are in as a Diocese and need to think about what we can do in our parish and as a Minster Community to help mitigate that.

Next year just like last we will rely on and be deeply grateful for the leadership, support and guidance of our non-stipendiary clergy, keeping us on 'the narrow way' in our collective and personal journeys in Christ's footsteps; so particular thanks to Edwina, Brenda and Barry, who all have a long and close association with our church.

I know that they along with me would also acknowledge the contribution made by each and every one of you to the life and ministry of St. John's and Village Heart @ St. John's. Your participation and enthusiasm to take on new challenges is amazing.

We have many people to acknowledge and thank for their voluntary contribution to our church; Norma - resident organist and Lay Reader, Joan - Pastoral Assistant, Dawn and Alan our Churchwardens, Peter - PCC Secretary, Leigh - Treasurer and all PCC members who give up their time to 'run' the church in its dual context.

Such a busy year ahead of us so in all of this let's not forget our primary purpose of why we are here and do what we can to reflect Jesus to everyone we come into contact with and live out our faith every day.

All that we are as St John's is by God's providence and inspiration and thus it is to his glory that we do all we do.

My best wishes to you all for a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

**Derek Tomlin**

## WORSHIP/FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS



**LUNCH LIGHT** our group that supports folk who are bereaved, plan to meet on **Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 in Church**. If you have lost a loved one and would appreciate some company, a chat and a bite to eat, why not drop by? There is a charge of £3. Telephone Janet 01283 215000 if you would like to come along or help out.

**COFFEE ANDCHAT@CHURCH** meeting this month is planned for **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January between 9.30am and 11.00am in church**

### JANUARY EVENTS & SERVICES in THE WOODFIELD TEAM of CHURCHES.

(services start at 10am unless otherwise stated).

Saturday January 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>St Johns Prayer Group meeting at Winnie Meadows home at 10am</b>
Sunday January 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (MP)</b> , Measham (HC), Normanton, Packington, Swepstone (MP), Snarestone (HC)
Tuesday January 7th	<b>Coffee &amp; Chat in St. John's Church</b>
Sunday January 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (HC)</b> , Appleby (HC), Measham & Packington (MP)
Sunday January 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (Lay Led)</b> , Normanton, & Swepstone (HC) Norton (BCP – HC), Measham – Breakfast Church Lay led
Sunday January 28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (HC)</b> , Packington, Appleby (HC), Measham (MP)
Friday January 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Lunch Light Fellowship Group 12.30pm</b>
<b>MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICES</b>	
Wed. 8 <sup>th</sup> January	Appleby
Wed. 15 <sup>th</sup> January	Packington (BCP)
Wed. 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	Measham
Wed. 29 <sup>th</sup> January	<b>Donisthorpe (in Church)</b>

### CHRISTMAS TOY SERVICE – THANK YOU

Just to report that the toys that we collected at our Christmas Toy Service on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December were delivered to The Marlene Reid Centre in Coalville on the next day in good time to be given out to children in time for Christmas Day. Marlene Reid staff expressed their gratitude for our kind thoughts. **DT.**

### A NEW YEAR'S REFLECTION

Valerie Morse

“Before a word is on my tongue  
you know it completely, O Lord.” (Psalm 139:4)

“Lord, you know...”

It seems that for quite some time now, I have been starting my morning conversation with God with these words, sometimes in tears and sometimes chuckling, enjoying the silence that ensues.

He knows...

Like an old friend with whom one sits in knowing silence...words unnecessary.

Psalms 139 is so full of wisdom and truth...and comfort.

Our God knows when we sit and when we rise; our going out and our lying down; all of our thoughts and all of our ways.

Before a thought is in our mind or a word on our tongue, He knows it. He knows...

Comforting and concerning at the same time.

The only One who truly knows us...the real us.

No pretending. No outward show. Everything laid bare before the One who sees.

And after that silent time of being known by Him...of sensing His knowing...words come.

As He has instructed us to.

To lay it all out before Him.

Not just an outline of asking for our daily bread and forgiveness of sins, but our hearts.

Our needs.

Our worries.

Going to places that only we and God can go to.

We are told God created us in "the secret place." (Ps. 139:15)

And so, to the secret place we go, taking refuge in the only One who truly knows us, because he created us.

He knows our strengths and our frailties, our joys and our fears.

Our concerns about the future and our regrets of the past.

He knows our concern for our loved ones, concern over health issues, concern for provision, and even concern for our loneliness.

As we head into another new year, unique with its growing worries and problems...world-wide and within, may we remember that He knows...

As we sit in silence before Him, whether filled with sorrow or joy, may we wait in expectancy.

That He promised to bring all things to completion in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 1:6)

We don't know what that completion may look like in our lives, but we have a blessed assurance in the truth that God knows the end from the beginning...He knows...

"I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is none like me.

I make known the end from the beginning,  
from ancient times, what is still to come.

I say: 'My purpose will stand...'

(Isaiah 46:9-10)

**Happy 2025, everyone!**

