



Drawing near to God

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety,
give us strength
to comfort the fearful,
to tend the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love. Amen.

Throughout “Lockdown” the life of St John’s has continued.

Although we can not meet together physically for Sunday services, we invite you to join us online as we pray together and worship God. Go to <https://www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk/> for details of services. You may want to sign up for our weekly newsletter; if so email us at parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Please take this leaflet home with you. (Or put it in the bin.)

You are welcome to contact the ministry team at St John’s, who will be pleased to provide a listening ear. May God bless you and all those for whom you pray. *The Ministry Team: David, Lauryn, Anne and Emma 01582 712776*

John 1:1-5

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.***

Prayer Guide

Please take a copy



A warm welcome to St John’s Church

St John’s has been a place of prayer in Southdown for over 100 years. Countless numbers have come through our doors for worship, celebration, commemoration, learning, and blessing.

2021 has brought us the hope of a new year and a vaccination being rolled out through the next few winter months. It has also brought a new lockdown, causing sadness and fear to some. We bring our hopes and fears before God. Whoever you are and whatever brings you here today, you are welcome. We hope that this leaflet will help guide you in prayer.

“Winter is the season of waiting. It requires great trust and a willingness to believe that this angst will not last forever. Even though all appears dead and void of movement, there is quiet growth taking place. In the frozen air branches with terminal buds secretly grow every day. In the unmoving soil, flower bulbs are strengthened for their future journey upward toward the sun. In the frozen human heart, the silent seeds of confidence are prepared for amazing new growth. While we are in our winter space, we may be tempted to give up, to lose hope, to stop believing in ourselves and in the presence of the Holy One because we cannot see our growth. Winter asks us only to be, to live with mystery, to wait patiently. We are required to keep a delicate balance between yielding to winters silence and keeping our eyes on a future springtime. Each day challenges us to carry hope in our hearts no matter how sparse our awareness of inner stirrings might be.”
(from a Winter Liturgy, Derby Methodist Circuit)



Take a moment to walk around the church. Is it a bright day, with sunlight streaming in? Is there grey sky visible through the large window? Let your breathing slow, and listen to the sounds around you. Hold the silence for a few moments and allow the words on this leaflet guide your prayers.

A Winter Blessing

Joyce Rupp & Macrina Wiederkehr

**Blessed are you, winter,
dark season of waiting,
you affirm the dark seasons of our lives,
forecasting the weather of waiting in hope.**

**Blessed are you, winter,
you faithfully guard a life unseen,
calling those who listen deeply
to discover winter rest.**

**Blessed are you, winter,
your bleak, barren trees
preach wordless sermons
about emptiness and solitude.**

**Blessed are you, winter,
you teach us valuable lessons
about waiting in darkness
with hope and trust.**

**Blessed are you, winter,
season of blood red sunsets
and star-filled, long, dark nights,
faithfully you pour out your beauty.**

Praying for others

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight,
and give Your angels and saints charge over those who sleep.
Tend Your sick ones, O Lord Christ.
Rest Your weary ones. Bless Your dying ones.
Soothe Your suffering ones.
Pity Your afflicted ones.
Shield Your joyous ones, and all for Your love's sake. Amen.