



Sunday 10 January 2021  
First Sunday of Epiphany  
Baptism of Christ

## THE PARISH OF ST MARY & ST PAUL

New Parish Web Site [www.stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk](http://www.stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk)

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### Letter from the Rector to all parishioners

Dear Friends,

As we enter 2021 it is unfortunate that we are also starting another period of church closure for public worship and reliance on Zoom for our gatherings. We had hoped that life would be returning to normal as we came into this year but there were many predictions that things would still be very challenging through this winter and that has proved to be the case.

Last week the Churchwardens, Deputy Churchwardens and I, took the very difficult decision to close our churches for the next couple of weeks pending advice from the National Church and the Diocese of St Albans as well as possible discussion at our own Parochial Church Council (PCC).

We took this decision with a heavy heart but mindful of the fact that many of our volunteers and the members of our congregations are elderly and vulnerable to this virus. We felt it was important that we do all that we can to protect those we serve as well as supporting the local NHS.

The advice we received from the National church and the Bishop of St Albans was that we are allowed - with suitable risk assessment and appropriate care - to keep worship open, although it was recognised that we might decide to close public worship based upon local circumstances and concerns about risks to worshippers, volunteers and clergy. We could close for three Sundays with the Bishop's blessing before consulting the PCC and getting a resolution from them as to the way forward. On Monday, the 18th of January, our PCC meeting will make a decision about this and until then I believe - pending a discussion next Monday by the standing committee - that we will take up the Bishop's offer to remain closed for three Sundays. Fortunately, our halls remain in use (increasingly so St Paul's hall) and St Mary's is open for private prayer every day.

At this time, we certainly could remain open and make a stand but the risk to those attending - whilst general vaccination is still some way off and the incidence of infection in Dacorum remains on the rise - would make that a risky decision to take. Had we remained open for the whole of last year there is no doubt that I would have been keen to continue that even if we had smaller service attendance with many people rightly deciding to protect themselves and stay at home. Unfortunately, it became necessary for the government to compel us to shut for two periods during 2020 and, that precedence having been set, I found that it was easier for me to advise closure on this occasion. I think that those decisions last year meant that we really have very little choice at the moment and stand with many other churches in the Team Ministry, the Deanery and across the Diocese who have followed this course of action.

We will keep you informed as the decision making goes forward over the next two weeks and will continue to provide zoom links for the worship each Sunday.

I very much realise that this is limited by our equipment and technology (especially when I am presiding at the service and operating the camera at the same time) but I do hope you will bear with us and allow for the improvement of both technology and technician as we journey together through this year! There is no doubt that this technology is with us to stay and the PCC will need to look at the possibility of investing in equipment to allow us to deliver a better quality of picture and sound from both our churches.

In the meantime, can I take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and healthy 2021. Throughout this pandemic the support of the gathered and online worshipping community has been something to keep us all buoyed up and encouraged, and I do hope that that continues this year.

If you would like further contact from the Clergy or a member of the Pastoral Group, then please don't hesitate to email us. We gather monthly on the first Monday of each month to discuss how we can further meet the needs of those who are sick, on the margins and in need. Do send me an email at [teamrector@hotmail.com](mailto:teamrector@hotmail.com) for more information or if you require help.

With every prayer and blessing for you and your family at this time.

*John*

*The Revd Canon John Williams, Team Rector*



### 9.30am service from St Mary's

John Williams is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Parish Sunday Worship Zoom

Time: Jan 10, 2021 09:30 AM Universal Time UTC

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89985493408?pwd=WDh4ZzBObU9JMU5LY1VMaGFuK1k3QT09>

Meeting ID: 899 8549 3408

Passcode: 755893

**10.45 Parish Social** (note: you won't be able to join this meeting until the first one - the worship - has concluded)

John Williams is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Sunday Zoom Parish Social

Time: Jan 10, 2021 10:45 AM Universal Time UTC

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87811174873?pwd=cDlvWWZYdG5tUUU0RUZWaF0WmpkQT09>

Meeting ID: 878 1117 4873

Passcode: 483099

**DENS Foodbank** While there are no live services at either church, I am happy to come round to people's houses and collect from the doorstep anything you might want to donate to the foodbank. Just ring or text me on: 07763 932792 and I will fix a collection time. As of yesterday, the food bank would particularly welcome tinned potatoes, tinned ham and corned beef, tinned fruit, tinned fish, rice puddings, custard, long life fruit juices and hot chocolate.

*Norma*

**Thank you** to everyone for their ongoing prayers, kind messages and get well cards that I have received since my hospital stay. I was taken in as an emergency on December 10th with a suspected heart attack. This didn't prove to be the case and the cause of symptoms is still being investigated. I have a cardiac MRI at the end of January. Your prayers continue to be a great support.

*Revd Diana*

### **Children's Society Box Collection 2020**

In the Autumn I reminded our St.Mary's CS Box holders it was time to hand them in for counting & sending off to the Society. I mentioned it had been a difficult year, especially for charities too, and St.Mary's pulled out the stops! Not only did our box holders come forward with generous donations but others in our community added their donations to this worthy charity who support vulnerable children. Thanks to you all we raised £463.55. As we begin 2021 we hope for a more positive year. Please continue to help with raising funds; any new box holders would be very welcome.

Thank you

*Sheila Barton*

#### **St Mary's Churchwardens:**

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#### **St Paul's Churchwarden:**

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#### **Team Rector:**

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#### **Team Clergy:**

- St Albans, Warners End: The Revd Pete Stevenson  
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#### **Team Office:**

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#### **Bulletin deadline:**

Preceding Thursday

hello@stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk Tel 391923.

*Payments: Cheques should be made payable to "St Mary and St Paul PCC".*

*The Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mary and St Paul, Hemel Hempstead  
Reg. Charity 1130644*