

St John's Church Barnack

Worship

It's been another challenging 12 months for St John's, due to the pandemic. We've had to balance the desire to worship together, with an eye for safety and the latest laws and guidance. And some people continue to conclude it's safer to worship at home than to venture into the church building.

On Easter Sunday 2021, we started worshipping outdoors, the Wardens having rightly though regretfully closed it at the end of 2020. We then subsequently moved inside a few weeks later.

The Remembrance Day parades and service were likewise more restricted than normal for numbers. But still very powerful occasions.

We then enjoyed a nearly normal Christmas and Easter programme of services, albeit with generally lower congregations than before the lockdowns. But I think the outdoors Crib Service was a special favourite, as everyone braved the winter cold for our outside celebrations – including seeing the crib scene (which was also the 24th Advent window) which had been created by the Messy Church.

On Easter Sunday 2022, I'm pleased to say we had quite a large congregation .

We are now meeting every week, though with most people wearing masks, and still not sharing the chalice. I hope we can move forward with relaxation of these precautions over the summer months, anticipating a reduction in the Covid rates in the UK.

Special thanks to Mike Mills who has led worship for us so well on 4th Sundays, to David Laycock and all that have sung or played as we have adjusted to a more varied routine of music since Elizabeth Snowball's retirement. We all wish Elizabeth a long and happy retirement.

People

Thanks to John Ward and David Laycock, our faithful Church Wardens. John has been a stalwart and a great support to me, and I wish him well on his retirement from the role. Also to Val and to Liz, and Jose for all they do in setting up – and to all who are sidespeople, lead prayers, and read (and to June who organises the rota!) The church is, as St Paul says, a body that requires many parts, each with their own roles. I've thanked Mike once already but will do so for his close attention to finance in his role as treasurer.

Thanks to Carol Summer who is an excellent Secretary.

The Flower Club have given us such beautiful arrangements at various times of the year, and this enhances the beauty of our wonderful church.

Messy Church has met a few times with mixed numbers of people, but the Christmas and Good Friday activities were extremely successful – well done to all who took part.

And thanks to all those who unlock and lock up, keeping the church open every day during the day. I know this is a great service to all those who need somewhere quiet to drop in, to pray or just enjoy the silence. As well as being an encouragement to visitors to the village who wish to see our beautiful building.

Activities

We had a successful fund raising concert with the Stamford Singers just before Christmas. Such is their diary, that we've only been able to re-book for Christmas 2023! Though we are hoping they will. It's been great to be able to join us for a Sung Evensong in October.

It's been great to be able to collaborate with various village entities over the last twelve months, and the aim is for this to continue:

- The Carol Singing was warmly supported on a wet night. Thanks to Barnack Community Association for making this happen.
- Wildlife activities in the churchyard, in association with the Parish Council, have included planting a Wild Service Tree (Adam Frost did the honours) and planting wildflowers in designated areas.
- The former Men's Breakfast, having been a virtual Happy Hour, then became a physical Friday evening get-together in the Millstone. And the former Coffee Morning has likewise now moved itself into the Millstone – all welcome – between 10.30 and noon on Wednesday's. Thanks to Paul and Laura and all at the Millstone for their welcome and support.

Through the year we have continued to make Food Bank collections.

Barnack Primary

Thanks to Mrs Jones and Mrs Firth for co-operating so much with us this year and welcoming us to the school when it has been possible! It has been great to join with the children in online and in-person assemblies, and welcoming them to church for Christingle, Easter Assembly, and the Leavers' Assembly.

Ufford

Peter and Sally Hudson continue to do a marvellous job in looking after St Andrew's. It is a lovely church, and my intention is that we continue to use it several times a year as part of our mission in a sizeable part of the parish. The visit of the Greenwood Quire for our combined St Andrew's and Advent Sunday service was very well supported, and we enjoyed a wonderful time worshipping there on Easter Eve. We shall ensure we hold a Harvest Festival and another St Andrew's service there in 2022.

The Building

We're grateful for the support we've received from the Parish Council in maintaining the churchyard, and supporting us with the replacement of the bird mesh in the bell tower. We hope that cleaning of the tower will allow bell ringing to resume (and the clock to be on time) very soon.

Revd Gary Alderson