

# St John's

## Prayers:

Almighty God, help us to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may be drawn to you; through him who was lifted up on the cross, and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We pray for those who are sick in body, mind or spirit - all who need your healing love in their lives today: Merceditas Alvira, Peggy Aris, Ruth Gillespie, Bala Kompalli, Marion Mason and Chris Tatton-Brown.

We also remember with thanksgiving those who have died recently, including Joan Buttle, Farah Lungay and Derek Sanderson.

## Contacts

Rector	The Revd Matthew Stone	020 8954 3876
	Email: rector@stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk	
Assistant Curate	The Revd Jonny Rapson	07557 808527
	Email: jonny.rapson@london.anglican.org	
Safeguarding Officers	Mark Lynch	07982 906833
	Louise Gregory	07504 527118
Children's Champion	Sue Wright	07958 499682
Adults at Risk Champion	Sheila Oliver	020 8954 4976
Churchwardens	Mark Lynch	07982 906833
	Jane Prentice	07976 388958
Deputy Wardens	Susan Jones	07864 846148
	Graham Nicholson	01923 226969
Treasurer	Jenny Neve	07989 378840
	Email: jenny.neve@gmail.com	
Data Protection Compliance	The Rector	020 8954 3876

The Parish Office is closed.

**Matthew and Jonny are continuing to say Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer at home. Join them [here](#).**

# St John's Church

## Pew Sheet

### 29th August 2021

**Services this week:**  
**9.30am Sunday - Parish Communion**  
**10.30am Wednesday - Holy Communion**

The online service for 9.30am on Sunday will be available [here](#).

The church will be open for private prayer:  
**Sundays - Wednesdays (10.30am-4.30pm).**

**Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.**  
**James 1:17**

## **ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - MISSION STATEMENT**

Drawn together by Christ's love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.

**[www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk](http://www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk)**

Please do check our website for future updates

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## The Thirteenth Sunday After Trinity

### **Collect:**

Almighty God, you search us and know us: may we rely on you in strength and rest on you in weakness, now and in all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Readings:**

[Song of Solomon 2:8-13](#)

[James 1:17-27](#)

[Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23](#)

### **Short Sermon from Lydia McLean, Licensed Lay Minister**

Life is short – and we do not have endless time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us. When we are swift to love and quick to be kind, God's blessing is with us. Early in Genesis, God says to Abraham: 'I will bless you, that you may be a blessing to others'. How intimately these blessings act together; of our being blessed and blessing others.

What delight there is in the hugs that a young child first learns to give their parents. Little children are learning about showing affection, and to receive their hugs, especially in this time of pandemic, opens your heart. Unconditionally. Who is blessing whom in that exchange? Love received is love that is shared. It's as simple and profound as that.

Our first reading today speaks of giving and receiving of such love. The Song of Solomon has at its heart imagery as simple as the blush of first love, kindled by the holding of one lover's hand by the other for the first time. Love received is love to be shared. It is that simple and that profound.

The writer of the epistle of James builds on this theme. Religious practices can be as complicated as personal relationships. Over time, we become so concerned with about how we are 'performing' those practices, that we find ourselves distanced from our love for God. James reminds his hearers that we need to be 'doers of the word and not merely hearers'. They need to be reminded that 'every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift is from above'. It is a gift we are given; the urging of the Spirit to join God in the act of self-giving

love. It is not skill in ministering, but a natural response of one beloved to another.

Acts of kindness, patience, forgiveness are second nature when we are rooted in Jesus' teaching – we are in right relationship when we offer each other unconditional shared love as we simply seek to imitate God's love for us as shown in Jesus Christ. The offering of prayer that comes from terminal patients for people around them is a poignant altruistic example.

In today's gospel, Jesus is criticised by the Pharisees, who are concerned about the purity code of outward cleanliness. They care earnestly for tradition, but adhering to the letter of the Law, instead of the Spirit of the Law, is a fruitless loveless exercise.

What Jesus is calling us to remains far simpler; it is what comes from inside, from the centre of our hearts, that will transform our hearts and the lives of those we encounter. When our lives are truly transformed by God's Spirit, our relationship with God will show us how to act with love and compassion. St. Augustine of Hippo stated, 'Love God and do as you please'. If we are truly filled with love of God, what will please us will surely also please God!

Rumi, a Muslim mystic, spoke similarly when he wrote: 'Look inside and find where a person loves from. That's the reality, not what they say'.

What does God require of us? What spiritual practices will open the gates of heaven to us? It is the return of the spirit to the place where love of God is born, not where it is mastered, that right relationship with God and one another will be found. Our lives are short. We do not have unlimited time to show God's love to those who travel the way with us. Simply, very simply: let us be swift to love, and be kind to one another. And the blessing of God will be received and given, in our relationships with others and with God each day. Yes. It is that simple. Amen.