

Old Malden News



The Parish Magazine of
St John the Baptist, Malden

March 2021

50p

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Old Malden News

**The Parish Magazine of
St John the Baptist Parish Church Malden**
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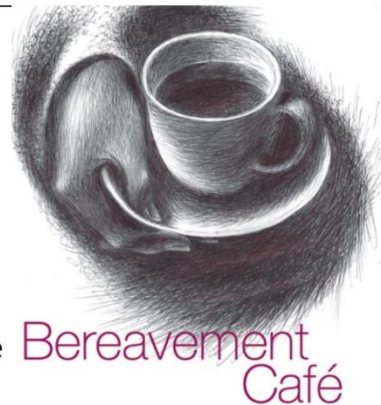
Services for January

Due to the new restrictions, it is with regret that St John's will once again have to put-on hold services. Please make sure you are signed up to our mailing list to get up to date information regarding the services.

<http://eepurl.com/gNz4Tf> or scan the QR Code



Our Bereavement Cafe project has been accepted as one of the Co-op's local charities for the next 12 months. Co-op members are able to nominate the Bereavement Cafe as their charity and we will receive 2% of every purchase. I would like to encourage you to nominate us and to become a member if you aren't already one. It costs £1 to become a member and anyone can join in-store or online at <https://www.coop.co.uk/membership>



We are still in the planning stage looking for volunteers to help with refreshments and anyone who would also like to take part in the training provided by our sponsor the Princess Alice Hospice. Until we are up and running, support is available from me or any member of the Ministry Team for anyone who has lost a loved one. If you might be interested in taking part, please speak to Michael. Thank you!

March OMN Letter

As we begin Lent this year we are all too aware that we have been here before. What is usually a shared pilgrimage as we wend our way through the season to the joy of Easter Day, is again a journey in isolation. We will miss enjoying one another's company Sunday by Sunday, the simple joy in abeyance for the time-being. This doesn't mean that Easter won't come, nor does it follow that Lent isn't worth keeping. In many ways the lessons of these forty days are even more accessible and poignant while the usual way of doing Lent has been set aside. As I said on Ash Wednesday, everyone has their own way of keeping a holy Lent. Some give up something, others take on something. Whatever you do is up to you, but don't beat yourselves up for not sticking to the letter of your intentions. We are already going without, what good are further privations when all we really want is to see the people we love and care about?

Connection is important. And while we can't see each other in person connection continues thanks to the telephone and technology. Even the Queen, in her 94th year, has mastered Zoom so she can "see" the family. And we at St. John's have returned to the internet with our Sunday services and we now have two Lent courses running thanks to Zoom. It isn't the same, but it does keep us in touch. Necessity is the mother of invention and the times have forced us to do old things in new ways. Some of these new things are with us to stay, live-streaming our worship being a prime example. It is our connectedness that will see us through this crisis.

As we wait for the Prime Minister's announcement about the plan to lift lockdown, we take heart in the news that the vaccination programme is ahead of schedule and that all adults will be offered the first jab by the end of July. Children returning to school will happen soon, a relief to many parents having to work and home-school their children.

As infections fall and the vaccines make a difference, we will be proceeding cautiously to reopen Church as soon as we can. I sincerely hope that we can celebrate our patronal festival in June together. We also are planning how to reopen our activities. Given how long it has been, we are reviewing all the required DBS checks and renewing those so that our children's ministry,

outreach, and care can resume as soon as we are allowed. So don't be surprised if you are contacted by our Safeguarding team in due course if you already hold or perhaps need a DBS check.

All of us have experienced first-hand the isolation that comes with not being able to attend Church. There are a few members of our congregation who won't be physically able to return to Church so we are working on a project called "Home Church" as a way to ensure that everyone who would like may have our worship materials, the Old Malden News, and personal visits with Communion offered so that we all can participate in the life of our Church. It is too easy to feel a bit out of the loop and we want to sort this. Already we have seen that many, many people follow us online who haven't been members of our congregation. This has reminded us that we can do more to stay connected as a congregation and make room for others to join us too.

Prayer is what keeps us connected to God. I hope the Night Prayer is useful and appreciate the positive feedback we've had so far. I will issue new readings and psalms to use with it to keep your prayer fresh. The important thing is for us to come to God in a bit of personal space for reflection and to ask for guidance and strength in the days and weeks ahead. Please do let me know if you get stuck or just would like someone to talk to about a care or concern. Lockdown has raised all sorts of issues and challenges, but it has also made time for God in a way we aren't used to. Do make the most of it and all that Lent offers.

Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness discerning what it was the Father was calling him to do and what shape his ministry was to take. The same is true for St. John's and for us individually. The new dawn is coming and things will improve for all of us. Let's be ready for whatever God calls us to do and be!

Michael

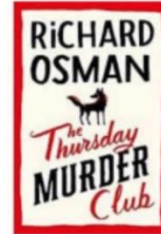


St John's Reading Group March 2021

Lockdown continues As does our Reading Group.

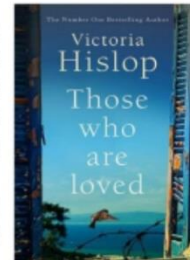
At our February meeting (on Skype)

we discussed **Richard Osman's** bestseller: **The Thursday Murder Club**. It has received many very positive reviews and has been on the best-seller lists for weeks and weeks. So why is it so popular? Well, it is different! Four retired professionals, living in a retirement 'village' come together every Thursday to review unsolved crimes – hence the title. Suddenly they are faced with two murders on their doorstep and take up the challenge much to the frustration of the two designated police officers. In between cups of tea and cake and various other little tipples, the four sleuths carry out their own investigations. It is a cleverly constructed book and keeps you guessing until the end. A good read during lockdown – There were a couple of 10/10s but the average was 7/10.

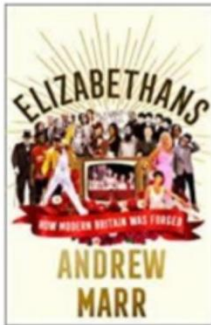


At our March meeting (which will probably be on zoom as some members are encountering difficulties with Skype) we shall discuss a light-hearted crime novel entitled '**The Windsor Knot**' by **S J Bennett**. Well, we have no doubt heard about Her Majesty's preferred aperitif of gin and Dubonnet but we shall now discover what keeps the Queen busy when not on official duties. I would love to know whether the Queen has read this novel herself and has recognised this very astute and wise person portrayed here. An enjoyable book.

We have a second book for March for those who would like something different to crime novels. This is '**Those who are loved**' by **Victoria Hislop**. Set against the background of the Occupation in 1941 and subsequently the civil war, it follows the story of a young woman whose life is inextricably affected by the politics of the day. Very much a case of survival. Ms Hislop knows Greece well and her historical research provides an interesting resource for learning more about the Greek way of life and its history.



[For those of you who have read Ms Hislop's *The Island*, which we read in the Reading Group many years ago now, you may like to read her sequel to this memorable novel entitled 'One August Night'.]



Our choice for April is a departure from the novels which usually feature in our selection: we have chosen **Andrew Marr's 'Elizabethans – how modern Britain was forged'**. The book was serialised recently on TV and it raises some interesting issues which will be good for discussion. I wonder how posterity will see us as the new Elizabethans? Amongst some of the questions asked are 'Who made modern Britain the country it is today? How do we sum up the kind of people we are? What does it mean to be the new Elizabethans?' I suppose one could say that this is living history through which we are living!

If you are interested in historical fiction, the fifth novel in the six Tudor Queens series has just been published in paperback: **Katheryn Howard, The Tainted Queen** by **Alison Weir**. I have really enjoyed this series and Ms Weir always does brilliant research for her books. If you like combining historical fiction with crime then the Giordano Bruni thriller series by **S J Parris** will interest you: books 1-5 are already in paperback, entitled **Treachery, Heresy, Prophecy, Sacrilege and Conspiracy**. The sixth in the series, **Execution**, has just been published in paperback. So lots of reading here.

Details of the zoom links for the next meeting will be in the pew leaflet & parish mailing.

Take care and keep safe – and make some extra time for your reading.
Marilyn

Review of 2020 Financial Outcome

Last year was an unprecedented and turbulent one posing significant problems for every one of us in so many different ways. For St John's too it was difficult with the closure of the church, suspension of services, and the urgent need to find new ways of continuing parish life. From a financial point of view it was also difficult, and at some stages we were predicting a year end deficit of possibly up to £15,000. However, the overall picture that has now emerged for 2020 is quite remarkable: it currently appears that the deficit for the whole year will be about £2,000. There are clearly some very big negative and positive financial forces which have contributed to this:

- Closure of the church led to a loss of £4,200 in plate collections
- Cancellation of the Maeldune and Christmas Fairs resulted in a loss of about £5,500.
- Planned/Regular Giving (Free Will Offering) in 2020 was about £5,500 under budget, about £1,000 up on last year, but £4,000 down on 2018. We should be extremely thankful that Planned/Regular Giving remained as stable as it has, and not suffered a significant reduction as was at one time feared. However, almost inevitably, we have lost a few significant donors.
- Income was very significantly reinforced by £3,000 of legacies and a number of one-off donations totalling £7,800; these are clearly very welcome, have made a major impact, and we should be very thankful for them.
- Fundraising and the new on-line shop have contributed well to income.
- Considering expenditure, there have been savings totalling £5,500 with reductions from Maintenance, Utilities, Music and savings made by the Ministry Team.

We should clearly say a very big "thank-you" to those who made significant donations, and also to all of those in Free Will Offering who have sustained their regular giving, possibly in trying circumstances: this has formed a significant foundation on which St John's income critically depends.

Whilst this outcome is surprisingly good and extremely welcome, it does hide the fact that Giving has been too low for a few years. Last year, 2019, had a surplus of £5,600, but this was only assured by one generous and anonymous donation of £10,000. Had this not been received, there would have been a loss of about £4,400. This issue of low income needs to be addressed at the appropriate time in the future.

It is also worth saying that St John's has raised a significant amount of money for a number of good causes in 2020, principally the wonderful Angel Project, £2,200, Harvest Festival Gifts, Bibles for school children, and others. Whilst this money is raised, it is passed on directly to these good causes, and so does not represent real income for St John's even though it may appear as "income" in the final end of year accounts. →

If any of you have any questions about finance or would like to join the Free Will Offering scheme, or to change the amount you currently give, then do not hesitate to contact myself, the Treasurer, Churchwardens or Free Will Offering Secretary for help. Other ways to contribute are to make a donation, purchase from the on-line shop, or use the Easyfundraising scheme when making on-line purchases from a wide variety of retailers: for any of these, please see the St John's website for further details.

This year will bring its own many issues and challenges. We all hope that St John's can soon re-open its doors for services, when safe to do so, and that we can all appreciate being part of a community and meeting each other once again. In the meantime, we should be thankful for where we have got to, for those who have generously given, urge us all to give continuing support for the future, and look forward to the re-opening.

Richard J. Burkett

DEREK CORDLE

It is with great sadness that we heard of the passing of Derek Cordle, who recently died at the age of 89 in Nottingham. He was a lovely sensitive man who touched and influenced the lives of many at St. John's with his strong Christian faith. He is remembered warmly and dearly, and our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Celia, daughter Elizabeth and sons David and Daniel. His funeral was at the end of January in Nottingham where Derek lived his last years. A longer appreciation of his life and times at St. John's will appear in the next edition of OMN.

Richard Burkett & Roger Jeal

Thank you, St John's

Two particular items caught my eye in the OMN which arrived a few days ago. One was the appeal for contributions to the magazine. That was timely because I was already thinking of writing something expressing our appreciation of the warm fellowship we have experienced at St. John's. Although we have lived here for over fifty years we have only come regularly to worship at St. John's in the last few years since failing health made it impossible to continue in the central London Baptist church which had been our spiritual home for many years. Our non-conformist background has never been a problem here, and we have appreciated the fact that, when 'lockdown' rules permit, the people of St. John's sing meaningful hymns with enthusiasm, which has not always been our experience when visiting other churches.



In the same OMN we are reminded that almost every news bulletin these days begins with a mass of statistics about the coronavirus pandemic, but there have been other epidemics in living memory which have faded away and are now almost forgotten. The one I remember in particular is the polio pandemic in the mid twentieth century, when my sister caught polio and my family were in 'lockdown'. That term was not used then, but I remember a long period off school



and not being allowed to play with friends along the road. The only 'home schooling' I can recall now is my father teaching me to spell 'quarantine', but I don't think my education suffered.

Faith, Richard and I will be moving shortly to a new property in a development now being built in Kent, just across the road from our elder son and his family. It will be good to be near them, but we shall miss Old Malden and St. John's, though we hope to keep in touch through the electronic contacts that have been developed in response to Covid.

Brian Bowers

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Covid in The Manor Drive.

Last year was a dreadful time for so many people and we remain concerned for those who have become ill and those, including neighbours, who have lost members of family and friends, not to mention the wonderful people who daily work in the front line services - we are eternally grateful to them all.

Covid 19 has brought out sometimes the worst in some individuals but more often the best in very many.

The Manor Drive, partly because of its unusual width and easy travel between two areas, has, over the years, become more of a main road than when my family first arrived here in 1973. Its length and character have seemed to discourage the sort of neighbourliness that shorter and more contained streets preserve. For many years, most of us have known only immediate neighbours in a polite, reserved sort of way.

All that has changed! During the first lockdown, with many of the older people having to isolate, the imaginative Nasir family, at an early stage, kindly took the initiative to put notices through the nearby doors offering to organise, shop and collect prescriptions for vulnerable people and suggested forming a WhatsApp group so that people could call for help if they needed to.

The whole thing snowballed and reached both ends of the road which has resulted in the sort of community which is so valuable, people with many and various ages, faiths, health, interests, sizes of family - quite extraordinary in this day and age of 'the individual'!

It's a fluctuating process - some have left, some have joined, people warn one another of scams and suspicious characters. Many have joined together to help the hard pressed NHS, making scrub bags, masks and ear protectors when PPE was in short supply.

Along with the regular clapping, people have put rainbows and things for children to count in windows, and lights to cheer up Christmas.

Neighbours give one another household items, plants, books, toys and food. We exchange information, goods and recommendations and, back in summer last year, actually met with some families (outdoors of course)!

We look forward to the time when we can put names to faces properly and be physically introduced. I know that this is not the only supportive community as St John's have a strong pastoral response to this pandemic situation so it's great to know that among the news of dire predictions, sociopathic leaders and antagonistic judgements of anyone who is 'other', there is some hope for the future.

Ann Fellowes.



A true travel story, from several years ago

'It's foolish to sleep rough on the streets - there is room at the airport, which is free, warm and has toilets. There are always people sleeping there and no one disturbs you.' The speaker was Eric, a homeless man with whom I was chatting in central London. He explained that he liked to spend his days in the city where several churches offered free coffee, and sometimes food as well. In the evenings he jumped on a tube to Heathrow for the night. (I didn't ask about his fare, since I was sure the ticket barriers would be no problem to him.)

I recalled that conversation later when I was waiting at a small European airport for the last flight to London. Just after checking in it was announced that there had been an accident and all flights were cancelled. I had a simple choice: either I could join the long queue of people seeking a night's accommodation a taxi-ride away, or I could sleep rough. Looking around there were plenty of seats so I adopted one for the night and when the airport re-opened the next morning it was easy to find a flight home.

So I was grateful to my homeless friend for his advice.

Brian Bowers
12 February 2021



WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE

Moisture damage in our church's walls has increased in recent years. Damp is even rising up the central column between the two aisles. There was always said to be a spring of water flowing under our church. Seeping through porous layers in the clay, it may be gathering water from a wide catchment area. It could be seeping across Church Path from the broad plateau that used to be the Manor's farmyard. The place it is making for is the low-point, the sump in the church's boiler house, marked on the plan by this ● target. It's down the cellar steps.

The average annual rainfall on the Borough of Kingston is on record as 690mm, 27 inches, just over two thirds of a metre. So if the churchyard was waterproof (concreted or tarmacked) - we could expect a flood every year, more than knee-deep, and getting deeper every year.

Luckily, lots of water must be weeping out too, through the steeper clay slopes down to the Hogsmill River. Because the puddles we love to hate along Church Path dry up in summer, you can tell that tons of water also evaporate through millions of leaves on trees and blades of grass.



Outside the extension door you sometimes hear the swoosh when the pump in the boiler house starts to work. Long, long silences follow. It is hard to believe that significant amounts of water are pumped out through its 12.5mm copper pipe. Using a garden hose with a similar hole-size, an experiment was done. Water was siphoned down a metre of hosepipe from a two litre jug. In 28 seconds it was empty. In a minute, that pipe could clear over four litres; in an hour at that speed, 240 litres. The most powerful pump Screwfix sells for clearing water out of your flooded cellar or garden pond is claimed to drain 570 litres per hour - not much more than twice the amount siphoned by our hosepipe.

Stuttering or not, our pump may be guzzling one litre of our rainfall-flood per minute. Even that would build up to 525,600 litres in a year. In cubic metres of water that is 525.6 (1000 litres make a cubic metre). The squares drawn in rows round the church on the plan show cubic-metre-sized-tanks to illustrate how big a flood we are dealing with. Our annual rainfall is only 690mm deep, so the tanks are only two-thirds full. 525 tanks were not enough, 762 had to be drawn to show the area of the total annual 'flood' emptied by the pump realistically on the plan.

The area of water removed reaches out 7 metres on all sides. Its effect extends beyond the flint wall into Church Path. Yet the pump fails to empty our puddles in winter. Damaging water seeps in beneath the church, but not nearly enough is being removed yet to prevent the damp rising up the walls or up the centre column of the church. Repairs in the Saxon stonework probably show that water weakened the clay under its foundations.

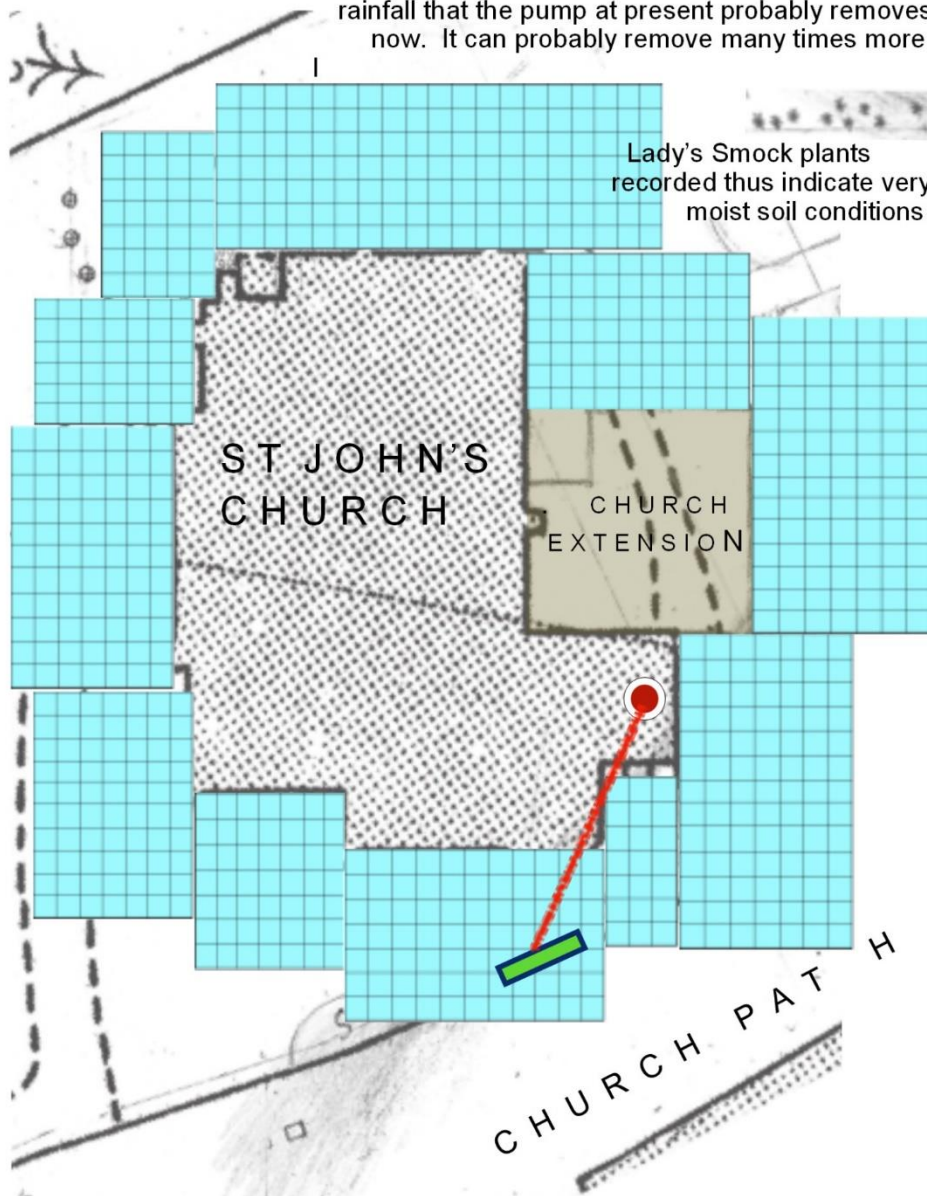
We know how rapidly taps fill a bath. They are fed by 12.5mm pipes. Our pump itself is confirmed as 'man' enough for the job. Why isn't our pump as efficient as bathwater? The hunt is on to find out why.

Along the inside of the flint wall next to Church Path the strip of turf marked on the plan is saturated with water. Lady's Smock flowers grow beside it that you would expect to find in ditches. Under the turf there is black coalite, so wet that these slugs use it as a nursery.

To see if this porous coalite was put there as a water filter, a strip of turf, one metre wide is being lifted. On the plan it is marked by this rectangle:  We may learn the position, angle and depth of a French drain leading to the sump. 90 years after the clergy vestry was built, it is urgent for the route of the drain to  be re-discovered. One website recommends that filter / French drains should be de-clogged of mud every ten years.



Each square is a metre across, to show the area of rainfall that the pump at present probably removes now. It can probably remove many times more.



Lady's Smock plants recorded thus indicate very moist soil conditions.

If the wildflowers hide an ancient ditch, this could also be where the Malden spring originally came to the surface, the community's source of drinking water here for a thousand years, and the place of baptism that became a church dedicated to John the Baptist.

Chris Beales



Fair Trade Fortnight 22 Feb-7 March 2021

When you read this we will be 1/2 way through Fair Trade Fortnight. But it isn't too late to join in!

Go to Fairtrade Foundation on Facebook or their website to see many activities involved in 'Creating a Better World' through Climate Change with talks, art, cooking ideas and even a Festival.

This year, the focus of Fairtrade Fortnight is climate change, and the growing problems this poses to farmers and workers within the Fairtrade community. The two-week period will highlight the facts; climate change is a huge challenge for farmers and workers in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Honduras, yet these are the countries who have contributed least to the causes of climate change. Droughts, crop disease, floods, heatwaves and shrinking harvests are among the challenges they face.

We can help by being mindful when we shop. Look for the Fairtrade logo. I will be very happy to deliver any Traidcraft goods, safely, no matter how small an order. As we can't meet together to sample Fairtrade goodies this year how about baking a cake or biscuits yourself? You can buy dried fruit, nuts, sugar, cocoa, coffee, peanut butter. Or if you prefer savoury dishes there's Olive Oil, Maftoul (cous cous), Za'atar (thyme herb mix), Rice, Pasta, Curry Sauce, Red Lentils, Dhal, Chickpeas, Coconut Milk, Tomato and Basil Sauce. Biscuits, all varieties of Tea, instant and filter Coffee. Your favourite Chocolates, and now Easter Eggs. All available from St John's Traidcraft Stall See below for contact details.

Thank you for all your support, and your response to poverty. We will be making a donation to Traidcraft Exchange shortly. The government is doubling any donation made to Traidcraft Exchange this year. We are still supporting Junior in Zambia, and Afinato in Afghanistan from purchases made by you.

We now have the Traidcraft Spring catalogue which I will put in with your next delivery. Thank you!

Anne Beales 02083996955, anne.beales8@gmail.com

A PRAYER FOR PUTTING ON A FACE MASK .

Revd. Richard Boss, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

Creator God, as I prepare to go into the world help me to see the sacramental nature of wearing this cloth.

Let it be a tangible and visible way of living love for my neighbours as I love myself.

Christ Jesus, since my lips will be covered , uncover my heart, that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes. Since my voice may be muffled, help me to speak clearly not only with my words but with my actions. Holy Spirit, as the elastic touches my ears, remind me to listen carefully and caringly to all those I meet.

May this simple piece of cloth be shield and banner and may each breath that holds be filled with Your love.



About four years ago at the annual parish meeting the late Liz Sealy advocated Easyfundraising as a painless way to add to one's giving to St John's. She said her regular deliveries from Sainsburys brought 50p each week.

I went home and promptly looked into this. Many retailers are willing to give a small percentage from each sale to a charity nominated by the purchaser. So I duly signed up to give to St John's Old Malden - Repairs Fund. Doing so proved easy enough for my limited online skills. The individual amounts are tiny but I see that mine recently passed £200, without actually costing me a penny. How could I object to Sainsburys, John Lewis, and many other retailers helping St John's?

If you shop online, please consider whether you could add to your giving in this painless way.

Faith Bowers

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