



# About St John's

The parish  
magazine of  
St John's,  
Sevenoaks



November  
2016

Fr Matthew's Ordination  
to the Priesthood  
Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2016



<b>Services:</b>		
Sundays	8.00am	Said Mass
	10.00am	Sung Mass with Sunday School
	6.00pm	Benediction
Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays	9.30am	Mass
Wednesdays	7.00pm	Mass
Fridays	10.00am	Mass
Please refer to the weekly Sunday Pew Sheet for confirmation and timings of weekday services.		

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	<b>Reader</b>	John Robinson	356588
	<b>Pastoral Assistant</b>	Jackie Hendry	453010
	<b>Organist &amp; Choirmaster</b>	John Hendry	453010
	<b>Treasurer</b>	Douglas Seal	456124
	<b>Hall Bookings</b>	Jacqueline Dungay jd018e0936@blueyonder.co.uk	833415
	<b>Head Server</b>	Anne-Marie Eames	serving@hotmail.co.uk
	<b>Mothers' Union</b>	Valerie Chaili	460695
	<b>Walsingham Cell</b>	Oliver Bunting	07769 903476
	<b>Parish Administrator</b>	admin@saintjohnthebaptist.org.uk	451710

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# The Vicar writes ...

As I get around to writing, it is now a couple of weeks since Fr Matthew's ordination as a Priest. As the photos suggest, it was a wonderful occasion. There were, I think, seventeen Priests who laid hands on Fr Matthew, and a very substantial congregation, to say nothing of Bishop Norman, and Bishop James! At the servers' rehearsal I was heard to say that the most difficult thing was getting everyone in and then out again; if we could achieve that the rest would be easy! In truth, there was nothing to fear, and everything from the serving, to the music, to the flowers, and a whole host of other things, were handled with the normal aplomb of St John's.

Fr Matthew's First Mass, the following evening, was also a



splendid occasion, and it was good to welcome a group from St Mary's Wellingborough, where Fr Matthew's vocation was nurtured. In addition it was good to hear Fr Robert Farmer, Vicar of Wellingborough, preach at the Ordination, and Fr Sean Gilbert, a friend of Fr Matthew's from St Stephens's House, preach at the First Mass. Ordination as a Priest is always an exiting time, not least as this is what an Ordinand has spent so long preparing for. I certainly remember being 'on a high' for several days after I was Ordained Priest, and I am

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sure it has been the same for Fr Matthew too. Over the coming weeks Fr will settle into a new ministry and a new way of being. The Church teaches us that when Ordained, Priests - and for that matter Deacons and Bishops - are ontologically changed, that is altered within their very selves. They are no longer as they were, but really changed into something different. Fr Matthew will, no doubt, spend some time, both in prayer at the altar and in his daily ministry working out what some of this means. This is not to say that I somehow have all the answers and he doesn't! As a Priest, I am still working out what this means for me and how I am called to live this vocation out. It will be a joy to see Fr preside at the Mass, both on a weekday and on a Sunday, to see him anoint the sick and the dying, and generally partake in a Priestly

ministry.

Thank you to those who were so generous in buying Fr a gift. We raised around £450 pounds for him. Fr has chosen to have a red stole made to match a chasuble he has been given, and to receive a copy of the missal, the book from which a Priest says Mass. In due course these will arrive and be presented to him. They will be reminders to him, wherever he ministers, of his time here in Seven-oaks; not that his time with us is anywhere near finished!

One piece of the Ordination service that struck me was the declarations. They are pieces of text I have made on many occasions, not least when I arrived in this parish, but they did make me ponder on this occasion. The Priest is reminded that they are to 'proclaim afresh in every generation' the faith contained in

*Continued on p7*

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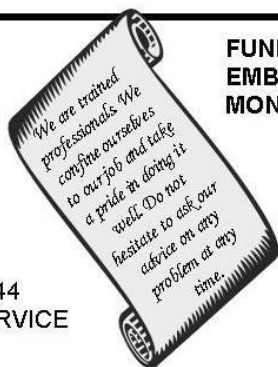
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*Continued from p5*

'holy Scripture and set forth in the Catholic Creeds'. As I listened, it occurred to me what a delicate balance this is! Go one way and the faith is not proclaimed afresh, go the other, and you simply water down faith. One of the great strengths of our Church is our rooting in the Catholic movement of the Church of England. This gives us deep roots to call upon, whilst accepting that some of the methodologies of the past do not always work. I am sometimes asked why people don't stay as worshipping members of the Church and I do not

claim, by a long way, to have any of the answers, but I do think we can ponder some of what we do, without compromising on what we teach and practise. One of the most vibrant periods in the history of St John's was Fr Heal's incumbency. It was a period of much change in worship, indeed even in the look of our church, and also consistency with what had gone before. Perhaps we need to be as equally open to change to ensure that we are proclaiming afresh the catholic faith as handed to us.

*Fr. Robin*

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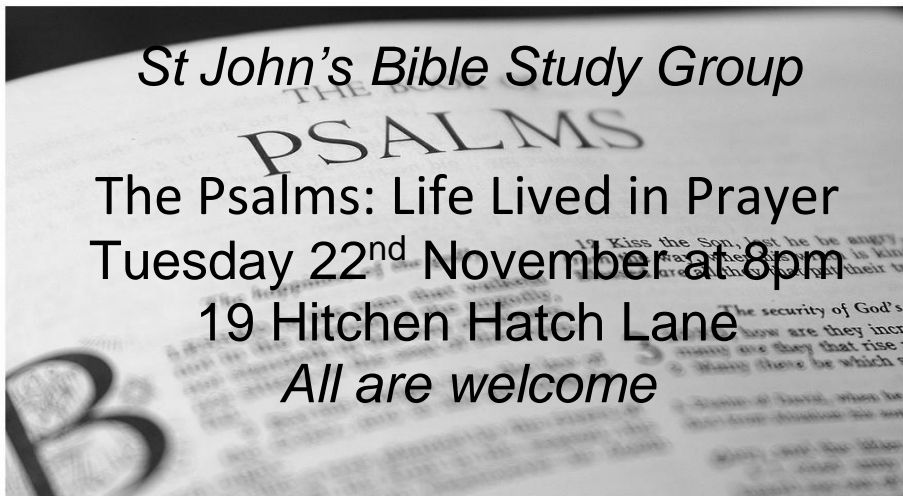
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Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016  
Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2017  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017  
Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017  
Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017

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## *St John's Bible Study Group*

The Psalms: Life Lived in Prayer

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November at 8pm

19 Hitchen Hatch Lane

*All are welcome*

As the father of a school age child September feels to me like the beginning of a new year. The return to school, with its attendant hopes and expectations stands in contrast with the natural world which is beginning to shed its colour and life.

So perhaps this is a good time to be taking stock and making plans. God willing I will be ordained to the sacred priesthood on Sunday the 2nd October. As part of my prepara-

tion for that day I shall go on retreat. This is a time when the day to day cares of life can be, if not entirely put to one side, balanced against deeper considerations as to the direction of my life and my relationship with God.

As Christians we are called into relationship with God, we are grafted into the body of Christ at our baptism and our life thereafter becomes not about us but about God, seeking Him so that we can

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become transformed by Him into the people He intends us to be, that is people united with our Creator.

Prayer is one of the ways in which we can deepen this relationship and make sense of it. My time on retreat will give me more time for prayer than I normally have and of course prayer will be at the heart of the service during which I am ordained. It is through the prayer of ordination itself that God will bring about the change in me from deacon to priest and then through prayer He will change the bread and wine to His body and blood in the Mass within which my ordination takes place. So we can see in the life of the Church how prayer is transformative.

However, prayer is not just for special occasions. It should be our constant recourse as we go through life. I said that on retreat I would not entirely put aside the concerns of everyday life, and this is important because if we are to be transformed by God then no part of ourselves and our experiences can be kept from Him.

The Psalms are a great compendium of prayer to which God's people have traditionally turned to to express their life experiences and to find God. They contain all the characteristics of an active prayer life; adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication and can therefore be a great source of encouragement in our own attempts to pray. They are woven into the

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liturgy of the Church at Morning and Evening Prayer and the Mass.

This term our Bible Study Group will be studying the Psalms. Whether you are familiar with this book of the Bible and confident in your habits and practises of prayer, or whether the Psalms are new or largely unknown and you struggle with prayer (as we all do from time to time) I

would like to encourage you to come along and join our group. We will study the background to the Psalms, their history and place within the life of God's people and consider how they might nourish us on our prayerful journey to God. Our first meeting will be at 19 Hitchen Hatch Lane on Tuesday 18th October at 8pm. All are most welcome.

*Fr Matthew*



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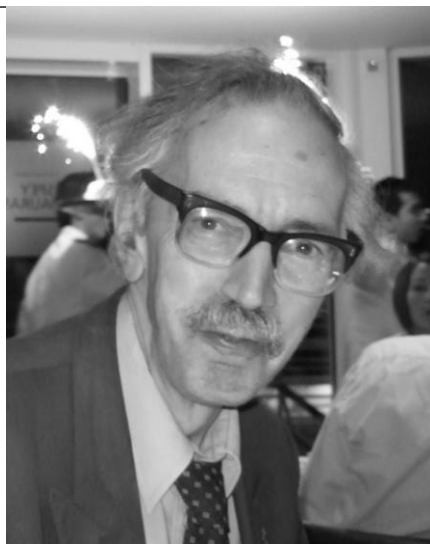
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## Douglas Seal, R I P

Douglas was baptized, confirmed and married in The Sunday Mass at St John's, and was delighted to give his daughter away in her marriage in the very same church in 2006. His love for St John's was true and deep. He was raised within sight of the church in Wickenden Road and together with his brother Victor attended St John's school. He became a server at the age of eleven and church treasurer in 1975. He also became treasurer of Churches Together in Seven-oaks in 1976 and was still on that committee when he died.

The opportunity to become sacristan came just at the right time for him when he retired from work and he spent many happy days in



church preparing everything and making sure the candles were straight. His particular love was to carry one of the banners: a procession containing three banners was, for Douglas, the absolute best.

Douglas was a very private person who, according to him, did not speak to people! He preferred to get on with things behind the scenes at work, at home and at church without letting people know, if possible, and often

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worked late into the night. He could be forthright and bossy, but usually because he had very high standards in his work and at church. He was also incredibly patient and kind with people in need and when explaining complicated tax matters! Because of this his clients from his days at Creasey's accountancy firm loved him.

Marigold, Elizabeth, Douglas and Daryll took a trip on the Bluebell Railway for Marigold's birthday one year, having afternoon tea aboard the train. The food was served on the return leg and as Marigold, Elizabeth and Daryll were taking in the fields of bluebells for as far as the eye could see, Daryll turned round to see Douglas eating some of the little cakes on offer. In fact, he proceeded to eat them all quite quickly and proclaimed

that he thought they would be getting a set of cakes each! He certainly never liked waste and always enjoyed eating up any left overs at family meals!

Sport played a strong part in his life - he was a complete encyclopedia where sport was concerned. He was at all the matches in the 1966 World Cup and relived the last moments of the final for the rest of his life. At his retirement lunch in 2011 the partners of the firm secretly arranged for George Cohen, who played in that 1966 final, to attend. Douglas was almost speechless... but not quite. Moving with the times, he was a keen participator in fantasy football at work and in the Daily Telegraph. He insisted upon only having English players in his team and called it Anglo's Athletic. He was also useful at Quiz

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Please ask Terry and Marigold for further  
details.

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Nights as he could remember trivia facts and he always played to win.

Cricket was one of his greatest passions. He and his brother were introduced to the intricacies of bowling and batting by his father, who took them to Hollybush Rec to practise at an early age. They went to watch Kent play whenever possible and that love of the game and their knowledge of it was incredible. He was Captain of St. John's 2<sup>nd</sup> XI cricket team in 1970s and 80s and managed to break his arm at Oxford, when the team was visiting there, fielding a ball when he was only a spectator! In later life he took great pleasure from watching Kent and England play on TV or indeed listening to them on the radio - a great example of Douglas being happiest in his own home environment.

He really had three loves - sport, church and family. Marrying Marigold completed him and he loved her very deeply. He delighted in doing things that made Marigold happy and was particularly thrilled to plan a surprise party for her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was incredibly proud of Elizabeth and the fact that she was very clever in the mathematical field was the icing on the cake.

He enjoyed nothing more than a family holiday and organised great trips to the Commonwealth Games in Manchester in 2002, the Holy Land, two visits to the Oberamagau passion play and a variety of cruises, including a very memorable trip to the Norwegian fjords.

Douglas was also very keen on country music and had an unforgettable holiday visiting Nashville as well as attending

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every country music concert he could in London. Everywhere he and Marigold went he kept leaflets, bus timetables and maps etc. He was sure that posterity would want the mountain of leaflets he built up, even if Marigold was not so convinced. When he came across them they did however allow him to reminisce about past holidays and trips out - something he would happily do for hours.

Douglas will be dearly missed by many people for his loyalty, complete discretion and his hard work. His family remember him for his love of broccoli and tinned spaghetti, for his ability to listen to one

sport on the radio, watch other sports on the television and computer and read the Radio Times or Sevenoaks Chronicle at the same time. They will never forget his slightly tuneless but very enthusiastic singing while washing up, his quick wit, his writing every letter of every card to Marigold in kisses, his walking ten steps behind on days out listening to Kent play cricket on the radio, his extensive collection of plastic bags and used envelopes - so many things that made him the Douglas we loved so much.

*Elizabeth Brown*

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**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> / Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November**

## **Parish Gift Weekend**

Donations this year will be specifically for the purpose of substantially improving our car parking facilities.



# House of Bishop's Declaration

I spoke after Mass post the successful vote on the Consecration of Women to the Episcopate. When I arrived at St John's one of the things you asked for was a Priest who would lead you through these discussions in the Church of England with respect to a spectrum of views.

The new legislation simplified the provisions for parishes who did not wish to receive the ministry of women as Priests and Bishops. Rather than the old three resolutions, better known as A, B and C, it created one simple resolution. Earlier this year the PCC met to discuss the new resolution. It was passed unanimously by the PCC, not least for the sake of unity in our parish. In essence, it continues the arrangements by which we have lived over the last twenty-five years. The Provincial Episcopal Visitor,

the Bishop of Richborough, will act pastorally and sacramentally as our Bishop, whilst we are still a parish playing a full part in the Diocese of Rochester.

In essence, Fr Matthew's Ordination showed these arrangements in practice. It was good to welcome both the Bishop of Richborough and the Bishop of Rochester and to see the good feeling between them.

These issues have sapped much energy from the Church of England for thirty years. I believe a resolution has been reached that helps both views and allows, in the words of Fr Sam Philpott, Catholics in the Church of England to get off the battle field and into the mission fields. Nothing can be more important for our parish, and indeed our Nation.

*Fr Robin*

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# St John's School Harvest Festival



I attended St. John' School Harvest Festival on the 6<sup>th</sup> October in our Church. How lucky I was to see such a glorious celebration by the children of St. John's School.

The School Verse for the academic year 2016 -2017 is 'live in harmony, be sympathetic, love as brothers and sisters be compassionate and humble' (1 Peter 3, verse 8).

The Church was beautifully decorated with vegetables of the autumn season with pumpkins, marrows, sweetcorn and carrots to name a few. Also, there were several baskets of bread. There were bread rolls, brown and white loaves, French bread, all smelling so delicious in the Church.

Many parents began to arrive to take their seats and with them bringing food donations

for *Loaves and Fishes*. There were many buggies and strollers with excited younger siblings all waiting to see their siblings and to enjoy the Harvest Festival with songs, readings and storytelling.

Soon we heard the chatter of excited young voices walking up Quakers Hall Lane ready to enter our Church. Displaying beautiful manners, each year group came in to the Church bringing with them tins and boxes of scrumptious foods. There were tins of beans, tomatoes, soups, tuna, corned beef, pies, spaghetti, sweetcorn, custards, coffee and golden syrup and boxes of Rice Krispies, Cornflakes, Porridge, Muesli, tea, coffee, sugar, rice and many, many more foodstuffs. How very generous are the fami-

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lies from St. John's School!

Once, the children were seated, Father Robin and Father Matthew welcomed everyone. The first hymn to be sung was 'Come Ye Thankful People Come'. The second song was 'The Bread Song', which was sung beautifully by the children of Reception and Years 1 and 2.

Father Matthew asked the children questions on how and what it takes to make food grow and there were so many hands up to answer them. The children of Years 5 and 6 explained facts about bread and where food comes from. Oh, the children of St. John's are very smart indeed!

The Choir sang 'Sing of the Lord's Goodness' beautifully

and Year 4's Bible Reading of Psalm 65 Verses 9-13 was read with thoughtfulness and clarity.

After Father Robin's sermon, we all sang the hymn 'I will enter his gates with thanksgiving' and the final song was sung by the Choir singing 'Summer Goodbye'.

To end this wonderful Harvest Festival, there was a video presentation called 'Miniature Earth' which reminded us of what a wonderful world we live in.

Well done, boys and girls of St. John's School, for an excellent Harvest Festival.

*Maria Martyn  
Foundation Governor*





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The Vicar at Harvest Festival had arranged all the vegetables in front of the Altar. He asked the children if they could name them. The replies were potatoes, cabbage, carrots, broccoli, and swede. So he asked if they could use one word to cover them all. A little boy held his hand up and replied, "Gravy!"

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## Celebrating Harvest Festival at Gloucester House and The Alpine...



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## *Living the Psalms*

"I FIND it so difficult to pray - I don't know where to begin." We have all said that at one time or another, and in trying to expand our prayer have used various methods and followed our particular ways under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He, patiently and lovingly, through our many setbacks and enthusiasms, would pray within us and in his power would raise up in us the life of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the end bring us to the glory which he shares in the unity of the Blessed Trinity. We pray, then, in God. God prays in us - Maker, Redeemer, Sanctifier, the be-all and end-all of our prayer. As redeemed Christians, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we shall take for our pattern the prayer of our Lord: if we do this we cannot go wrong. It would be an error to think that prayer is merely a thing 'between myself and God', because in one sense there is no such thing as prayer

which is completely individual. At no moment of our lives can we put on one side the fact that we are members of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. Everything we are and do must be offered to God for acceptance, not on our own merits, but through the eternal self-oblation of the crucified, risen and glorified Son who has made us his own and saves us by drawing us into the Church, which is the extension of his Incarnate life here and now in this present time.

So we do well to take as a basis for our prayer the psalms, the prayer-book of the Church. They not only form the greater part of the Church's official worship, the Divine Office, but meet the needs and voice the aspirations of the individual soul. By praying the psalms we enter into the prayer of Christ. In them, the whole range of human experiences is expressed. There are no clichés in this book. Instead David and the other writers honestly pour out their true



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feelings and life-changing friendship with God. Let the Psalmist guide us into a deep and genuine relationship with Christ. It is essential to interpret the psalms in this Christian sense: to use them with this end in view - to seek Christ, to find Christ, to know him, to pray in him, and through them to enter into his life, sufferings, death, resurrection and triumph. This is the traditional Christian interpretation of the Psalter.

There is no need to concern ourselves here with questions of origins and authorship, or to trace the compilation of the Psalter. However interesting and profitable such study may be, it is important first of all to see the Psalter *as a whole*, to realize that it is a living thing, finding its true context in the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. The revelation of God is a single divine mystery: it is a mistake to try to divide it, to departmentalize it. The Catholic Church and the Holy Bible are each part of this

mystery, are each instruments fashioned by God for his purpose. The revelation of God as we see it in the Old Testament is the record of his mighty and wondrous works, gradually unfolding before our eyes in all its exciting splendour. It leads us to the supreme moment of the fullness of time when the Word was made flesh.

The Psalter was the prayer-book of the Old Israel and was destined to become the prayer-book first of Christ himself and then of his Church. Through its recitation in the Divine Office, her worship ceaselessly ascends to the courts of heaven, there to be joined to the adoration of the angels and saints. The Divine Office is the prayer of Christ in his Church, the vehicle of our Lord's own devotion in which we are allowed to share. Whenever we take part in the Church's worship we should be careful to attune our minds in this way and to realize that the truth of many of the psalms is

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Christ. Otherwise some of the phrases, as we use them, will seem either incomprehensible or insincere: the protestations of innocence, for example, which are too lofty for us; the cries of penitence which are too profound; the appeals for help which are too earnest and heartfelt.

The Psalter is a vast territory and the first task is to make a survey, to find our bearings. The psalms are not neatly arranged into groups according to their various themes or moods. We have to explore and discover them for ourselves. We can begin by taking the list of 'proper psalms on certain days' to be found in the Book of Common Prayer (printed in very small type and hidden away amongst the tables of lessons etc. at the beginning of the book). Here at once we have some useful subdivisions. The psalms appointed for Christmas Day are the 'Royal' or 'Messianic' psalms, proclaiming the divinity of Christ, the Lord's Anointed,

King and High Priest. If for 'David' we read 'Christ' these psalms immediately stand out as triumph songs of the unending reign of Christ the King in his Church.

We Anglicans possess this priceless treasure in an incomparable translation in our Prayer Book, yet we seem to have lost, and badly need to rediscover, the right interpretation and use of the Psalter. The present vogue of hymn-singing in public worship, which results in a depreciation of the Psalter (how often the psalms at Matins or Evensong are reduced to one in number, usually the 23<sup>rd</sup>!) is a sign that, for a time at any rate, we have strayed from the ancient and traditional way of prayer which through the ages has been the instrument of sanctification for many souls. But the treasury is still with us: it remains for us to re-discover it.

*John Robinson*

## More photos from Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October...





**Fr Matthew's First Mass, Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016**

