



St John the Baptist, Sevenoaks



About St John's

Summer 2020

The parish magazine of
St John's, Sevenoaks



www.stjtb.com

01732 451 710



@SJohns7oaks



[facebook/stjtb](https://facebook.com/stjtb)

The Vicar writes...

It was somewhat ironic that the final Sunday of lockdown turned out to be our patronal festival, the Solemnity of the nativity of St John the Baptist. I had rather hoped that this might have been the first back to Church, but it proved not. In the end, it was a glorious finish to our solely online offering. From where I was seated Church looked very different. The doors were closed, and instead of your smiling faces, I saw metres of cable and the television screen, showing what was being broadcast to you. Multiple camera angles required continual monitoring.

John Hendry and the choir had done their absolute utmost to ensure much of the music we are used to at our patronal was performed. John's lovely setting of the Office hymn *Ut Queant Luxis* provided the introit, followed by the glorious hymn *Hail Harbinger of Morn*. We also heard *Now thank we all our God*, as well as Martin Shaw's glorious anthem '*With a voice of singing*'. To hear familiar voices in Church once again was a funny feeling – not least when the only singing for weeks had been my own! The choir are to be congratulated on their efforts.

We were also grateful to Fr John from St Barnabas Tunbridge Wells for recording a sermon for us. Unfortunately, technical gremlins made it a little hard to hear. It turned out we needed to tick a small box to make sure you were hearing the computer files directly rather than through the speakers in Church.

I also owe a debt of thanks to Marina, who sat there controlling cameras, playing files in the right place and generally ensuring what reached you was of an acceptable standard – all whilst ensuring the children were quiet – no mean feat!

The past four Sundays seem to have passed well. It has been wonderful to welcome people back to Church. Moving the early Mass from 8am to 9am seems to have been particularly popular, with far more people present. The 10am Mass is inevitably smaller at this point, but it is good to welcome more of you back as that becomes

possible. Mass is inevitably shorter than it has been due to the measures we have taken, but it is the right thing to do at current.

Doubtless, there is still great uncertainty in the world in which we live, and I am sure things will continue to develop and change as the weeks go past. As I write this, it looks like face coverings will become compulsory in Church in the coming weeks. All of this can feel uncomfortable terrain to navigate, but it is not impossible. Sense and care are needed to ensure we are as safe as possible.

On a personal note, I want to thank you all as a congregation for your tremendous support of me in this time. Your kindness and generosity has been very much felt by me, and I am very grateful indeed.

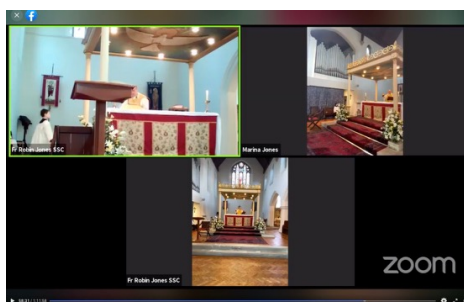
On a final note, I have always felt that we fail to keep the Beheading of St John the Baptist in an appropriate way. This year it falls on Saturday 29th August - to that end we will transfer it to Sunday 30th August. I hope, circumstances allowing, that this may be an appropriate celebration of our Patron Saint together, as we plot a course forward through September.

Your parish priest,

Fr. John Caster

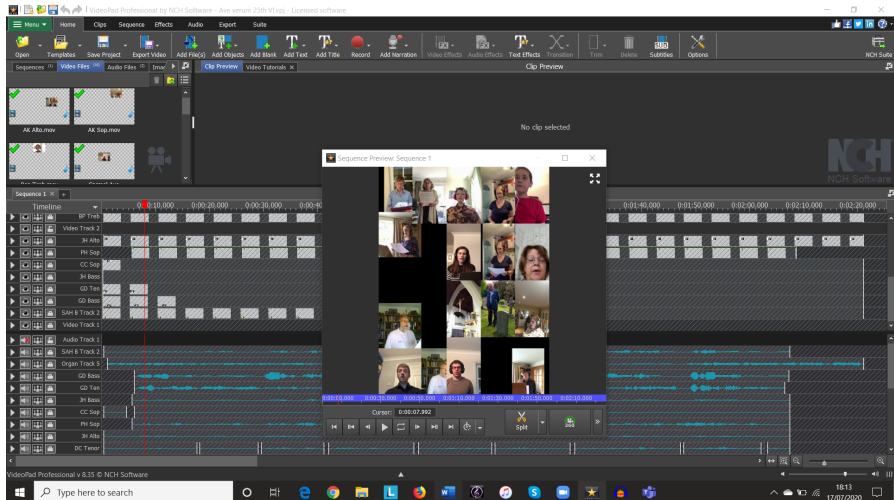


Fr John Caster



Multiple camera angles...

Lockdown Choir



St John's choir coping with the last four months... Singing at home is so hard.

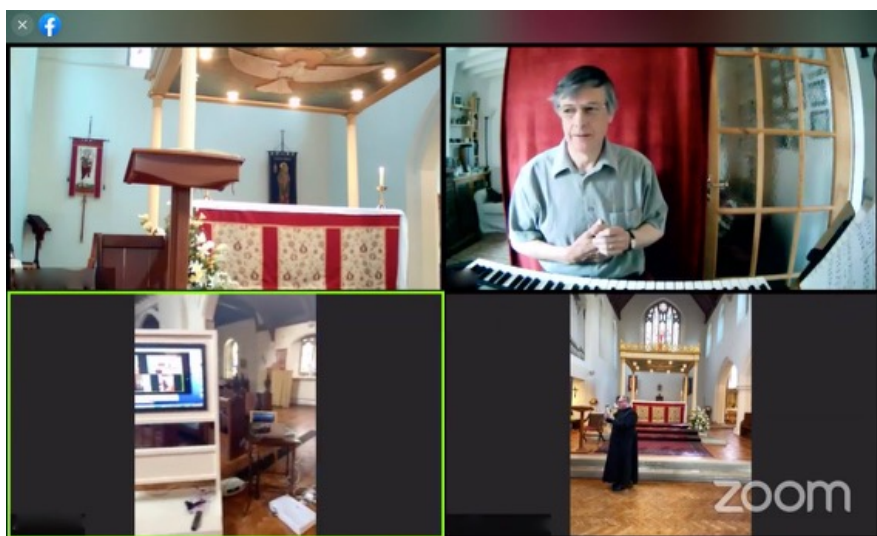
From the start of Lockdown I was sending links via email to all the choir each Sunday with recordings of two or three hymns and an Anthem appropriate for that particular day in the liturgical calendar. [Those with no internet access got a CD recording]. I suggested they sang along to keep in voice. You'd better ask them if they did! I know I was amazed at how many different recordings and videos there are out in the public domain. The range in quality is from the sublime to the baffling. We also had a ZOOM meeting each Thursday at choir practice time and after a while, thanks to the technical skill of Graham, we managed to get a way of sharing a rehearsal experience and, although we none of us could hear each other, it was great to see so many lips moving in time to the track we were hearing.

Soon after Easter I suggested we should perhaps try creating our own virtual choir as many groups were by then... aiming for our Patronal celebration. This is a really tough ask – you have to listen to a guide track through headphones on one device and record audio and video onto

another machine. I found this so hard to do and shared the agony of recording myself over and over until I thought it was passable.

We were then able to combine all the voices and videos to create what you may have seen on 28th June. Above is a screen shot of all the participants and the software I used. I was so impressed with just how many of our choir submitted recordings and the quality of what was sent in. It was really heartening the way folk rose to the challenge. Jackie will tell you how many hours it took for me to get it all together – I thank her for her patience. They are all, I am sure, now waiting for me to come up with a suitable piece for next time, something for Harvest perhaps? Actually we are all just desperate to get back to singing in our lovely church; it's such a gorgeous building to sing in.

John Hendry



Putting it all together to celebrate our Patronal Festival

Some Lockdown jokes...

David Candlin has kindly forwarded the following jokes to lighten the mood...

Never did I imagine that I would go to a bank clerk with a mask on and ask for money.

After years of wanting to clean my home well but lacking the time, this week I found that wasn't the reason.

All those grandparents who are missing their grandkids now — once this is over you can have them for a month.

Sincerely, a tired Mum.

I went to the cloakroom in the restaurant. I washed my hands. Opened the door with my elbow. Raised the toilet seat with my foot. I switched on the tap with tissue. Opened the door to leave with my elbow. And when I returned to my table I realised... I had forgotten to pull up my pants!

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
Two metres from the madding crowd,
When all at once my name was called
To enter Waitrose hallowed hall.
This was the pensioners' special hour:
I'd gone to get a bag of flour,
But I forgot, when through the door,
What I had gone to Waitrose for.*

*The Waitrose staff are extra kind,
I told them it had slipped my mind.
They asked what else I had forgot,
They clearly thought I'd lost the plot.
I phoned my wife again to ask,
She reminded me of this special task:
"I need some flour to bake a cake
With all that cream you made me take."
"Ah yes, I recall," I had to lie,
I dared not ask what flower to buy,
But then I saw them next to the tills —
A bunch of golden daffodils.*

Some images from the Church in Lockdown



The 'virtual' National Pilgrimage, Walsingham

'Zoom coffee' after Mass on Sundays



Technical support!

Running in Lockdown...



David Davies came up with the idea during Lockdown of running 100 miles to raise money for the NHS. He set himself an end target of 30th June and planned a few miles each day during a two month period. This was alongside doing school learning at home, sitting a week's worth of exams and attending school for a week.

David has completed his 100 mile run and has raised £850 for the NHS!

Well done, David!

Lockdown projects...

David and Mark Davies spent some time making this bird table. They have enjoyed watching many birds visit the garden ever since.



Meanwhile, in a garden in Sevenoaks, a wildlife camera caught foxes enjoying their night-time wanderings...



Adult fox posing for the camera, swiftly followed by a cub



Fighting foxes!

