

Please pray for our church family	
Mon	Phil & Jenny Evans
Tue	Irene Ferguson & Peter
Wed	Peter & Pam Fletcher
Thurs	Loretta Francis & Tom
Fri	Linda Frost & Eddie
Sat	Alan & Colleen Futter
Sun	Liz & Andy Gardner

### Please Pray

Some are retiring and some are going to be doing more. We pray for **Sharon and Ali**, and for **Simon** as they guide the church through the vacancy. We want them to feel really strongly supported by the congregation.

**We need to pray for +Viv** who has even more responsibility on her plate now that +Lee is retiring. And for the choice of the next **Bishop of Swindon**.



**Sunday  
March 12  
2023  
Lent 3**

**“We’ve  
never seen  
anything like  
this!”**



**It’s an all age communion at 11am with  
children at the centre.**

### Electoral Roll 2023



**It is that time of the year again.** Sharon is working on the revision of the Electoral Roll, our list of church members. We do this on an annual basis and the revision will take place between the **12 March and 26 April.**

**We warmly welcome those who are new to the church,** and would love to see you as members of St John’s and the electoral roll.

**Please see Sharon for an application form.**

### **Services for Next Sunday**

19th March Lent 4	9am	Holy Communion	Michael Johnson
	11am	All Age Service	Simon Robertson

Time	Service	Sermon	Readings
9.00 am	Holy Communion 1662	Raymond Adams	1 Corinth 15: 20-26 Matthew 9: 9-13
11.00 am	All Age Holy Communion		Mark 2: 1-12

## Meetings for prayer



**Ash Wednesday** was a great evening of prayer, focusing on our future as a church but also ranging around the world. In order to keep God at the centre, we will be meeting to pray in March on the following dates.

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March at 1.30pm**, immediately before the Monday Afternoon Homegroup.

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March**, 7.30pm in the Quiet Room.

## Lunch on Sunday

**Raymond and Alison would like to say a huge thank you** to Mary Southgate and the team who have done so much to organise the catering for lunch on Sunday.

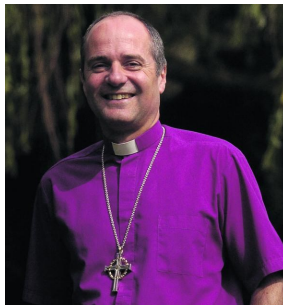
**As ever, it is not just the physical work**, but the willingness to take on the responsibility — and the worry that goes with it — that we appreciate.



## Virtual Bishop Lee

**Bishop Lee suddenly appeared at Raymond's final Bristol / Uganda Link** meeting on Tuesday evening in Chippenham to say farewell by video and to express his thanks. +Lee is also retiring at the end of April. There will be a farewell for him in Swindon in Pattern Church at that time. Alison and I will certainly be back for that.

**+Lee has been a long-standing supporter** both of our church and of our Uganda Link, and has seen the diocese through the long vacancy between +Mike and +Viv.



## Looking Back



**Alison and I were thinking about the** number of St John's members, still worshipping with us today who can remember our arrival back in November 1990, thirty-two years ago. We have come up with just eight. **Very unfortunately**, a CPAS speaker had been booked months in advance for the very same Sunday on which I was due to preach my first sermon. So, after the vacancy was finally over, the congregation still had to wait for a week longer to find out what the new vicar was actually like.

**It would be very difficult** to stay in any church as long as Alison and I have done had the congregation remained stable over the years. Fortunately, there is a lot of coming and going here. St John's 2010 congregation is very different from the congregation of 2020.

**Back then, things looked different.** We had no parish office. That was just grass. We had no Upper Room, no Quiet Room, no carpets or curtains in the worship area, no dais, and no soft chairs. The Lounge, Kitchen and Balcony had not been developed. The front door was in a different place and there was no Haydon Centre.

**Our only musical instrument was the piano**, and occasionally a guitar. When we got back from holiday in August 1991, we discovered that our sole pianist had decided to move to the North East to run a fish and chip shop. Suddenly we were in lots of trouble! But as can happen, when one person steps down, others step up.

**That Great Chip Shop Disaster** turned out to be the beginning of our music group which has now been leading our worship for over three decades. Only two members—Alison and David Evans—were part of the group back then.

**We were, at that time, not an independent parish** but part of the *Rodbourne Cheney Team Ministry* as well as being in a *Local Ecumenical Project* with Emanuel URC in Haydon Wick. It felt like we were running a three-legged race and were tripping each other up. It was Bishop Barry Rogerson who suggested that St John's should become a parish in our own right. That was definitely the right decision and it released us to develop the church into the worshipping community of today.

