

# SAINTS ALIVE

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL SAINTS AND ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, KINGSTON UPON THAMES

## Responding to Gexit

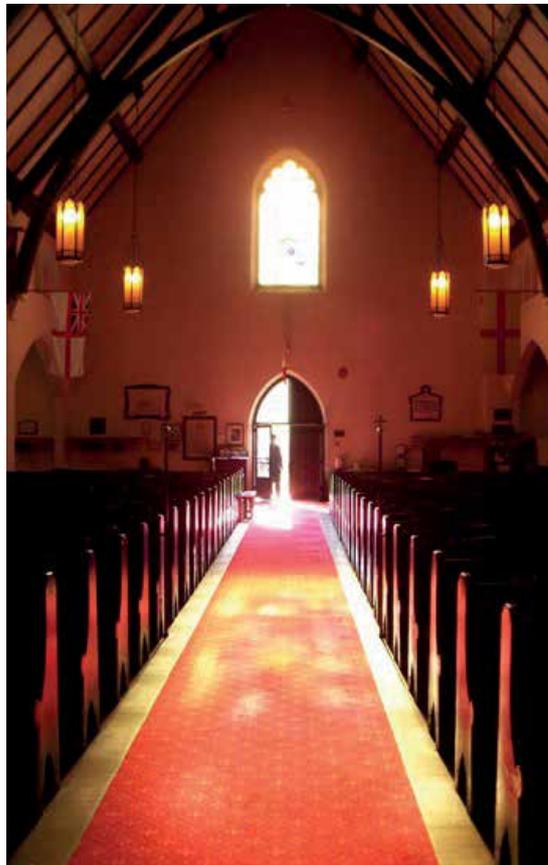
by | Rev'd Andrew Williams, Faith Advisor, Kingston University  
and Associate Priest, All Saints Church

**A**longside the complex task facing our nation and its many public institutions as we move towards leaving the European Union, the church in this country is presented with another challenge, namely the erosion of Christian faith within the population. Gexit – exit from God – represents one of the most striking changes in British society in the last half a century or so. And it poses to the church a number of difficult questions.

Why do fewer people have an active faith in God today? Has the Christianity itself, at least in the version presented by the church, somehow contributed to the loss of belief? What response might the church offer to a society that is deeply sceptical about orthodox Christian belief?

To address these points, it may be helpful to consider some of the reasons why atheism has arisen. For, like the theism upon which it is parasitic, atheism is not a homogeneous belief system. There are, then, several factors that have led to the loss of faith.

For some, the key issue behind disbelief centres on the application of reason. They argue that the lack of any convincing evidence for the transcendent reality, which many religious believers call “God”, makes such claims unreasonable. For others, the issue is less an intellectual one than a moral one. Their position leads to a rejection of the Christian faith (and the church) as oppressive and emotionally damaging. Another issue is more practical. This is the experience of removal from religious norms and structures,



such as prayer and church-going, because of societal changes and shifting patterns of work and leisure. There is often no room for religion in peoples' busy lives.

In confronting the various causes of atheism, only some of which have been mentioned here, the church should acknowledge that it is partly to blame. It was the church in the Early Modern period that sought to utilise reason to demonstrate the existence of God from first principles. The church has, indeed, over the centuries, sometimes promoted a life-eroding vision of God as a supreme being who is more about wrath than love. And, let's be honest, the church can be boring and appear out-of-touch with society.

So, atheism is a sobering matter for Christians. Yet, it may not always mean bad news for the church. The French thinker Simone Weil noted that “there are two atheisms, of which one is a purification of the notion of God.” Atheism can help to formulate the challenge of faith faced by all people, believers or not, in thinking about the unknown God. Atheism may, too, play

a valuable role in challenging idolatrous notions of God and the excessive claims made by some Christians. Furthermore, atheism might just be the prompt that the church needs to scrutinise its structures, behaviours and the way it presents its message to society.

Pope Benedict suggested that the world may need a smaller but purer church. Could it be, then, that atheism has a therapeutic function? And, if that is the case, might Gexit, quite unexpectedly, bring forth models of Christian practice and teaching that are more, rather than less, attractive to those on the outside of the church?

# From the vicarage

## *All Saints*

by | Rev'd Jonathan Wilkes



# *St John's*

by | Rev'd David Bell

## Wandering about

When I was first ordained, keen as mustard, I was desperate for something to do. Towards the end of my first staff meeting, in the parish to which I had gone, the Vicar, John, a wise and thoughtful man, out of politeness really, asked me if there was anything I wanted to add (having sat there in a bemused silence for the rest of the meeting while issues were discussed and tasks allocated to the experienced and capable). All at sea and wanting, somehow, to impress, I said "well, what shall I do?" John paused for a moment, and, taking off his glasses, looked into the middle distance outside the window for a moment or two before returning to the room, replacing his specs and saying "well, why don't you wander about a bit, and see what happens". It was brilliant, but hard, advice that had as its underlying suggestion something important about faith.

"Great doubt, great enlightenment. Little doubt, little enlightenment. No doubt, no enlightenment." It's not a Christian quote but a Buddhist one though it could be very much at home in churches at this post-Easter season. One of the big stories to emerge after the resurrection appearances of Jesus is the response of Thomas, the disciple who, perhaps understandably, wouldn't buy the tale that others told about Jesus reappearing to them in the upper room. "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my hand in his side, I will not believe," he says, and for this, pretty reasonable, scepticism was branded "doubting Thomas" for evermore. But as the Buddhists suggest, doubt is an essential part of what it is to have faith. Faith without doubt isn't faith, it's certainty and that's a very different thing. We're called to have faith, not be certain, because genuine faith, a faith that leaves room for doubt, has space for learning (which is what a disciple is, from the Greek *mathetes* meaning "a learner") and lets us be humble enough to benefit from someone else's view, and you'll remember how blessed the meek are in the sermon Jesus gave on the mountainside (Matthew 5:5).

Trust is a tricky business where we have to accept that we can't always be in control and may have to begin a path or a thought or a sentence without knowing quite where it will end. After all, the sun rose this morning not because someone pressed a button to make it happen but because a force greater than our understanding was at work to make it so. Faith is the business of learning to work in concert with that force so that, without irresponsibly expecting it to do everything for us, we can draw on its energies, insight and wisdom, to find the balance between making things happen on the one hand, and seeing what happens on the other.

*Jonathan*

If you were asked to draw an image that represented a significant moment or event in your life, what would it be? A time when things changed. Would you choose a picture of a person, an object or an abstract image?

Recently a national magazine has filled its pages with images from artists portraying their own personal life-changing moments. Tipping points, they called them. It contained a wide variety of images ... and stories alongside them. An unexpected ending; An up turn in one's fortune; A decision to no longer be manipulated. One famous photographer describes how he was going nowhere early in life and then in 1974 a friend put a camera in his hand. He said that he had no idea how to use it, but that it was to turn his life around. It was his tipping point. Sir Peter Blake, the designer of the Sergeant Pepper's album cover, shows his painting called "Self-portrait with badges" as the image that portrayed a moment of real change in his life. It was painted during his summer holiday, when he was a teacher. At the end of the holiday, with the paint still wet, he and his friends drive to Liverpool to enter the John Moores competition. The painting won a prize and, as he puts it, "his life changed".

There is a tipping point for Jesus that John tells about in his gospel. Not only for Jesus, actually, but also for Lazarus. It is when Jesus returns to Judea out of love for his friends and at great risk to himself and his disciples. After praying, instigates a spectacular miracle by bringing Lazarus back to life after he had been dead for four days. John writes that many believed ... by witnessing all this, but also that it was a step too far for the establishment. A tipping point in Jesus's life on earth; because at that moment the religious authorities decided that Jesus had to be destroyed. They plotted and ultimately succeeded in their goal. At least initially. Then God did something that would change millions of lives. He demonstrated what love means. Unlike Lazarus who lived again and then died, Jesus was to have life eternal and to give that life to others.

Each year, the feast of Easter is the church's tipping point. New life is there to be taken. No form filling or special conditions that you have to fulfil. What is on offer is unconditional love that can bring new opportunities. A chance to change. To pick up a pen and draw how you would like your life to be.

So what would you describe as your tipping point? One artist's very simple image of his tipping point was of a number of clear glass jars and glasses placed dangerously near the edge of the table. Above the drawing he wrote, Dear Lord, please protect the fragile glass vessels and do not allow them to fall and break. Amen.

At Saint John the Evangelist there is an active pastoral team who can be there for you, if you wish, and at All Saints there are trained listeners available, Monday to Saturday mornings, 11am-12.15pm.

*David*

# Branding – Words on the Way

by | Martin Corner

**I**n the market world, brands are fiercely protected. Trademarks are registered and those who try to steal or imitate them can expect the full force of very expensive legal action. It is made clear that only McDonalds can sell McDonalds, and that the only way to Coca-Cola is through Coca-Cola™.

Christianity and its various churches have often behaved in the same way. It is not only the Roman Catholic Church that has claimed exclusive rights: some Calvinists and Christadelphians and Latter-day Saints have also presented themselves as the only retailers of the genuine, authorised product, salvation.

The New Testament, of course, provides foundation for that. In the last gospel, John's, written sixty years after the Crucifixion, within a Church eager to establish its claims against Judaism and Roman religion, Jesus is made to say "no one comes to the Father except through me." The writer makes him the sole earthly agent of salvation. Exclusive rights, again.

But the earlier gospels paint a rather different picture. There Jesus's concern is the Kingdom, of God or of Heaven; and he sees traces of it everywhere, in children, in those who try to do God's will, even in those who don't know they come anywhere near it. His Kingdom is inclusive, expansive, welcoming; he doesn't set himself up as the one who controls entry. People can



be very close to the Kingdom without Jesus having had much to do with it.

This is the place from which Christianity in the 21st century should start. The brand and the sub-brands, Christianity™ and its various institutional franchises, are performing less and less well in the spiritual marketplace. The time of spiritual gatekeepers is past. Instead we should work from and to the inclusive Kingdom that Jesus proclaimed, where citizenship comes from the direction of the heart, not from holding documents of admission.

For all its frequent exclusivity, the Church has always recognised that the work of grace, the constitutive activity of the Kingdom, goes on well beyond the limits of any definable creed or formal organisation. God appears in people's hearts under many names and none, and God's first consideration is not what they call him. In the same way Jesus, in his Incarnation, connects God to the whole of humanity, not just to those who call themselves Christians. The Christianity of the future needs to see itself, not as a bastion Church, but as an open Kingdom, realised under many different names.

## ASK Topical Lunches

Summer 2017



Every Third Thursday of the month – All Saints Parish Church, Kingston Market Place.

Enjoy lunch – discuss Kingston's topical issues

- **Thursday 18 May**  
*Kingston's new Chief Executive reflects – listens – looks ahead*  
CHARLIE ADAN, Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kingston
- **Thursday 15 June**  
*Music by Tiffin Boys' School*  
Young musicians introduce and perform Kingston's very own Promenade Concert
- **Thursday 21 September**  
*Hampton Court: Our Royal Palace; Our youngsters' heritage; Our local asset*  
EVA KOCH-SCHULTE, Head of presentation, Hampton Court

Lunch from 12noon – Sandwiches at the ASK East End Cafe; or bring your own.

Introduction by speaker 1–1:15 pm – Questions, comments, discussion. Finish 1:45 pm

For further information, contact  
Leslie Packer [leslie@packerhome.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:leslie@packerhome.fsnet.co.uk) or 020 8549 1960

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# Summer Heritage Events at All Saints

## Lecture Series

This summer there will be a series of free evening heritage lectures in June and July. Topics vary from Anglo Saxon history to WW1 and are all based on the history and heritage of All Saints and Kingston. Refreshments and bar from 7pm; 7.30pm start

*Thursday 15th June*

### David Robinson – “All Saints: The Stripping of the Altars”

Five hundred years ago, All Saints was a blaze of colour with paintings and statues, altars with priests singing mass in Latin, screens and organs and dramatic celebration of Easter. A century later, these had vanished. The services were in English and dominated by long sermons. We shall see how these changes came about and how the people of Kingston responded to them.



*Thursday 22nd June*

### Tom Holland – “Athelstan and the making of England”

Crowned in Kingston, Athelstan was the king who made England possible. It was an achievement won against the odds: the division of Britain into rival kingdoms, the conquest of much of the island by the Vikings, the need to foster an urban civilisation where there had been only brambles and weeds. Athelstan

himself, though, was building on foundations laid by his immediate forebears, and this is their story too: Alfred, the only English king to be called “Great”; Edward, the great warrior whose conquests reached as far as the Humber; and Æthelflæd, the “Lady of the Mercians”. It is a remarkable story: a reminder that the making of England was never inevitable.



*Thursday 6th July*

### Nicholas Howgill – “Now it’s Serious – the East Surrey Regiment in 1917”

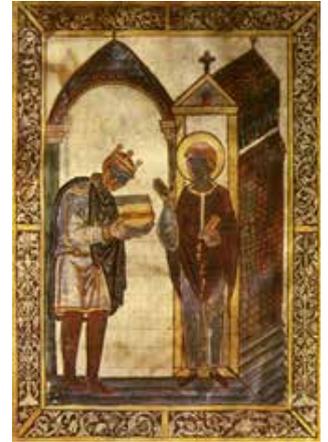
A look at the activities of the East Surrey Regiment in 1917, examining the composition of the battalions especially on the Western Front to see how they changed with the advent of

conscription and how they were developing the techniques and organisation required to win the war.

*Thursday 13th July*

### Caroline Godden – “Blood, bones and books: getting to know King Æthelstan”

An introduction to the renowned Anglo-Saxon King Æthelstan, the self-styled ‘King of All Britain’, who was crowned here in Kingston in 925AD. He is famed for his momentous victory at the Battle of Brunanburh, for his international political outlook, and for the eventual dominance of his rule in England, Wales and Scotland. But more than this, he was a ruler whose individual touches and personal tastes can be seen across different aspects of his kingship - from changes in his law-codes to his international search for holy relics and religious texts. This talk will explore the reign of Æthelstan and what it was that made him extraordinary.



## Church Tours

Discover the hidden stories of All Saints by joining one of the forthcoming church tours. David Robinson will lead the first four tours – these start at 11am on the following Saturdays: 27th May, 22nd July, 26th August.

The plan is to continue the tours into the autumn – if you are interested in the history of the church and would like to volunteer as a guide, do get in touch. Full training will be given and anyone wanting to know more about becoming a tour guide should email Kate Kern at [heritage@allsaintskingston.co.uk](mailto:heritage@allsaintskingston.co.uk). Note – There is no June tour due to the ordination service taking place in the church that month.

## Activity Days

ASK Heritage is gearing up for another busy summer at All Saints. There will be themed craft activities, trails, games and much more every Thursday in the school holidays between



11am-2pm. Don't miss it! It all starts on Thursday 1st June with Thumbs Up It's Thursday featuring Mythical Beasts. The following dates are 27th July – Trail-tastic; 3rd August

– ASK August Activity Day; 10th August – ASK August Activity Day; 17th August – ASK August Activity Day; 24th August – ASK August Activity Day.

# BloomFields 2017 Community Street Party

# Day of Dance celebration

by | Phil Mundy



**B**loomFields 2017 Community Street Party will take place in Bloomfield Road and St John's Church gardens on Saturday 13th May 12noon-5.30pm

Dust off the bunting and roll out the grass carpet BloomFields is back and better than ever. Guaranteed to be the most fun you'll have in May with something for the whole family to enjoy from a live music stage, sizzling BBQ, Pimm's and local beer, cream teas and ices, Punch and Judy, children's games, a special 40th anniversary Morris Dance performance, it's a day not to be missed!

We have fantastic prizes to be won so why not enter the Great BloomField bake-off and impress our guest judges with your Mary Berry skills, prizes for taste and decoration! Or what about the Hotdogs and Hotwheels competition where we challenge you to decorate anything with wheels (bike, buggy, scooter) or four legs and a tail in the most spring like way and then show off your creations in our parade!



Fingers crossed for sunshine and we look forward to seeing you all at the best community event of the year raising funds for St John's regeneration.

For more information on how to get involved – and updates

Find us on Facebook #BloomFields207

The Spring Grove Morris Men were formed in 1977 when six men volunteered (or more accurately were volunteered by their partners) to learn and perform two morris dances at an "Evening of Love" charity event in the Spring Grove area of Kingston. They had so much fun that they decided to form a side and carry on. One of the original men, Steve Nash, is still going strong 40 years later.



To celebrate our 40th anniversary we are holding a Day of Dance on May 13th with six other Morris sides joining us. We are dancing throughout the day, starting at 10am in Richmond where we will also appear at the Richmond Fair. After lunch we move to the riverside at Twickenham before getting back to Kingston riverside, by the Ram pub at around 4pm. Our last stop at about 5pm will be at the St John's street



party in Spring Grove where it all started 40 years ago. The day will close with a meal together with further music and dance in the evening.

The emphasis on fun has never changed over the 40 years and hopefully some more local people will like what they see when we dance and join us to keep the tradition going for another 40 years. We always welcome new members, both men and women, as Morris dancing is no longer just for men.

# View from The Thames: All Saints and the Kingston Reach – concluding part

by | Sheila Stiling Ward



**R**iver management and navigation was always a challenge. In the 16th century upstream at Hampton Court Henry VIII included a pre-Copernican astronomical clock still to be seen on the inner gatehouse which amongst other things shows high water at London Bridge. This was essential information as the monarch would be rowed from Westminster where tides were strong to the Thames in the Kingston Hampton Court section which would become a narrow twisting creek at low water. Early maps show the confluence of the tributaries such as the Hogsmill and the Mole to be, in effect, tidal creeks. Parts of the river now controlled by locks and weirs were difficult and often dangerous to navigate and in dry weather too shallow with sand and gravel deposit. As the nearest bridges were at Kingston and at Chertsey passengers and goods traffic travelling to Hampton Court came either via Kingston or Summer Road Thames Ditton. The river by the Swan Inn, Thames Ditton, could be forded at low tide or at high tide the ferry taken for a goat.

To make a grander approach for the royal barges and reduce flooding the Thames was dug out and straightened.

Nevertheless, conditions could be extreme. Alexander Pope at Twickenham writes in 1720: “The opposite meadow is covered with sails and we see a new river running behind Kingston which was never beheld before”.

Thames locks only began to appear in the late 18th century though from Staines through to Teddington the river was too wide and turbulent. Barges frequently ran aground at Kingston. Eventually a lock was completed at Teddington in 1811 and Molesey in 1815.

The Thames was further altered in the 1850s by dredging due to the construction of the waterworks at Surbiton. Dredged material raised the level of Raven’s Ait. However, as leisure time on the river increased during the 19th century, slide rollers were incorporated into Molesey lock to accommodate the vast numbers of skiffs, punts and rowing boats. There is still a narrow skiff lock at Teddington.

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Thames Festival Orchestra

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*or at the door*

Today there is a variety of craft and riverside clubs who run training competitions and regattas and less purely commercial activity.

At Kingston the whole riverfront from Canbury Gardens to Kingston town used to be boatyards and wharves plus an electricity generating station near



the gardens. Now there is a large department store and apartments. Change indeed. The Canbury Gardens’ site was also originally an ait (island). Its name derived from a medieval landholding of the Canons of Merton Priory. It was used by a factory for tar paving after the arrival of the railway 1863 only later reclaimed with topsoil from nearby reservoir excavations. In 1890 a bandstand was erected but meadows just behind became the local sewage works: “With wind in the wrong direction the concert audience could be cleared in seconds.” (David McDowall: *The Thames – Hampton to Richmond Bridge* (2002).) The All Saints Young Families’ lunches held in the Canbury Park Pavilion have never smelled anything unsavoury but perhaps that is because the area has now been developed as tennis courts and a children’s play park, and apartments now line the gardens giving a measure of peace and tranquility.

## May Events

- Mon 24th April-Mon 8th May All Saints:** Marcel Schreur Exhibition
- Sat 6th All Saints:** 7.30pm An Evening of Art with Marcel Schreur
- Sat 6th St John's:** 10am-2.30pm Book Fair and Café
- Mon 8th All Saints:** 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert – Yoon-Seok Shin (piano)
- Mon 8th St John's:** 2-4pm First Monday Club
- Sat 13th All Saints:** 7.30pm Guy Pearson Music Concert – Albion Unbound
- Sat 13th St John's:** 12noon-5.30pm BloomFields Community Street Party
- Sun 14th All Saints:** 9.30am Baptism of Olivers Marks Niedra and Markuss Niedra
- Sun 14th St John's:** 12noon Baptism of Martha and Sebastian Howard
- Mon 15th All Saints:** 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert – Simon Ferris Trio
- Thu 18th All Saints:** 1pm *Kingston's new Chief Executive reflects – listens - looks ahead* Charlie Adan, Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kingston
- Mon 22nd All Saints:** 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert – Julia Dewhurst (soprano) & David Elwin (piano)
- Thu 25th All Saints:** 7.30pm Ascension Day Choral Eucharist
- Fri 26th All Saints:** 4pm & 7pm Kingston University Fashion Shows
- Sat 27th All Saints:** 11am Free guided tour of All Saints Church

## June Events

- Thu 1st All Saints:** 11am-2pm Mythical Beasts
- Sat 3rd St John's:** 10am-2.30pm Book Fair and Café
- Mon 5th All Saints:** 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert – South London Saxophone Quartet
- Mon 5th St John's:** 2-4pm First Monday Club
- Sat 10th All Saints:** 7.30pm Thames Philharmonic Choir
- Sun 11th All Saints:** 9.30am Baptism of William Rufus Aneurin John
- Mon 12th All Saints:** 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert – Sarah McKenna (violin)
- Thu 15th All Saints:** 1pm *Music by Tiffin Boys' School* Young musicians introduce and perform Kingston's very own Promenade Concert; 7pm Heritage Lecture I All Saints – the Stripping of the Altars (David Robinson)
- Sat 17th All Saints:** 1.15pm-5pm Kingston Council 'Come and Play'; 7pm Jo Cox MP memorial concert
- Mon 19th All Saints:** 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert – Belgard String Quartet
- Thu 22nd All Saints:** 7pm Heritage Lecture II Getting to know King Athelstan (Tom Holland)
- Sat 24th All Saints:** 7.30pm Kingston Chamber Orchestra
- Mon 26th All Saints:** 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert Richard Pilliner (organ)

## July Events

- Sat 1st All Saints:** 7.30pm Teddington Choral Society Summer Concert
- Sat 1st St John's:** 10am-2.30pm Book Fair and Café
- Sun 2nd All Saints:** 7.30pm-9.30pm Refugee tales
- Mon 3rd All Saints:** 12noon Dementia Awareness Talk
- Tue 4th St John's:** 2-4pm First Monday Club – changed day for outing
- Thu 6th All Saints:** 7pm Heritage Lecture III East Surrey Regt (Nicholas Howgill)
- Sun 9th St John's:** 10am Joint service for All Saints and St John's at St John the Evangelist (Please note: no 9.30am Holy Communion at All Saints)
- Thu 13th All Saints:** 7pm Heritage Lecture IV King Æthelstan (Caroline Godden)
- Sat 15th All Saints:** 7.30pm Thames Youth Orchestra
- Tue 18th All Saints:** 7pm Tiffin Choir 60th Anniversary Concert
- Sat 22nd All Saints:** 11am Free Guided Tour of All Saints Church
- Sun 23rd St John's:** 12noon Baptism of Oliver Viltan

## All-Year-Round Events

**All Saints:** The church and cafe are open daily and visitors are welcome.

On weekdays and Saturdays from 11am to 12.15pm trained listeners are available to offer pastoral support to people who wish to speak with someone in confidence. Little Saints toddler group is on Tuesdays & Fridays.

**St. John's:** The church is open for Little Groovers toddler group on Tuesdays.

### All Saints Sunday Services

8am Holy Communion  
9.30 Sung Eucharist (with Children's Church).  
6pm Sung Evensong

### Weekday Communion Services

Tuesday and Wednesday 12 noon Common Worship;  
Thursday 10.30am Book of Common Prayer;  
Friday 11.30am Praytime - brief songs and prayers for  
Toddlers and Carers; 12 noon Silent Prayer

### St John's Sunday Services

**1st Sunday of the month:** 10am Family Communion  
**2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays of the month:** 10am Parish  
Communion with children's church  
**3rd Sunday of the month:** 9am Holy Communion  
10am Sacred Space with children's church

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## All Saints

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**Appeal website:** Keith Long - [klong@whereenglandbegan.co.uk](mailto:klong@whereenglandbegan.co.uk)

**Safeguarding Officer:** Philip Walker - [pwalker535@gmail.com](mailto:pwalker535@gmail.com)  
 Amanda Bullen - [amanda.bullen@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:amanda.bullen@hotmail.co.uk)

**Organist and Director of Music:** Stephen Westrop - contact via PA to the Rector

## St John's

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All Saints & St John's are part of an Anglican Team with St John's Kingston Vale and members of the Local Ecumenical Project in Kingston Town Centre with their partners Kingston United Reformed Church, Eden Street, & Kingston Baptist Church, Union Street.

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DEADLINE FOR AUG/SEP/OCT 2017 7TH JULY

**Bloom Fields 2017**  
 #BloomFields2017

Live music  
 Family fun  
 Sizzling BBQ  
 Morris dancing  
 Punch and Judy  
 Cream teas and ices  
 Local beer and Pimm's bar

Community Street Party in Bloomfield Road and Games in St John's Garden

**Saturday 13th May 2017**  
 12-5:30 pm

St John's Church Kingston upon Thames & Hall  
 SPRING GROVE  
 CURCHODS

## Mythical Beasts

Learn all about mythical medieval monsters and heraldry!

- Design your own heraldic shield
- Dress up as a medieval knight
- See which fantastical beast comes out on top with our terrific top trumps
- Free entry with some small charges for individual crafts
- Accompanied children only

Thursday 1st June  
 11am-2pm

All Saints Church  
 Market Place, Kingston upon Thames KT1 1JP