



THE FRIENDS OF ST JOHN'S CHURCH, CARDIFF

(Registered Charity 1066605)

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NEWSLETTER

January 2021

Dear Friend,

We are living in difficult times, and this is as much so for the church as for each of us. The church has been closed for most of the last year since March. It opened just briefly around the time of Harvest Festival before having to close again, and again after opening for a short period later, had to close before Christmas, and remains closed since then. It was especially disappointing to lose all our Christmas celebrations, both our own, and the many carol services we host for outside organisations. Even when services were possible in the building they had to be conducted in a safe way with distanced seating, masks, sanitisers, and no hymns or cups of tea afterwards. Our vicar, canon Sarah, was quick off the mark in starting live worship on-line each Sunday, also available in a recording on the phone afterwards for those without internet access. This has been very successful and is still going every Sunday morning at 10am, now watched or heard by at least as many people as were attending the building during its two short and restricted periods of opening. In addition, there now is a short evensong Monday to Friday at 5pm using the Zoom system. If you aren't already joining either of these and would like to, please see details on the church website or contact the vicar for details.

The church is mindful of the stress and distress the pandemic is causing to everyone. Sympathy is offered to anyone who has suffered loss of loved ones, or loss, suffering or hardship in any way as a result of this disease. Even for those where it has no direct effect, everyone's lives have been disrupted by the disease and the measures used to counter it. Prayers are offered to support whatever sadness or suffering people are enduring.

FRIENDS ACTIVITIES.

Sadly, because of the pandemic, the Friends are not able to arrange any events at the moment. The Late Autumn Luncheon did not take place. The Annual General Meeting was held in the church on 18th October, one of the few Sundays it was open, following distancing guidelines, and with most of the members represented by proxy. It was very short, the minimum required by law. The Report and Accounts were adopted, committee members re-elected and the President re-appointed. The situation is being kept under review, but at present it is unlikely anything can be arranged at least in the first half of this year.

BUILDING REPORT.

The Vestry Block development has had to be suspended, and will be subject to review at such time as the church is able to be fully opened again. With the restricted opening

as happened in the autumn, it was one of the parts of the church that had to remain closed because of social distancing problems. By the time it can re-open, it could be that in a changed world our requirements and resources will differ from what was conceived when the project was started, and a fresh thoughts will be needed.

Following the two major projects of 2019, on the heating and the tower, there was no major work required in 2020. Although the church has been closed for public worship and other activities, it has not been neglected, and has been visited on a rota basis each week and kept in good order. When it is able to open again, it will be all ready to welcome people back in.

COMMUNICATION BY E-MAIL.

A number of our members now receive this newsletter by e-mail. If you have received it on paper, would you be willing to switch to getting it by email instead? Doing so will save us the cost of postage and distribution, more difficult with present restrictions. If you are happy to get it as a pdf document, please let us know. You can do this by sending an email request to the Hon. Secretary, richardhall@compuserve.com. But if you still prefer to receive it on paper, that is no problem. We will still be sending it out in this way.

CHURCH FINANCES.

With the church closed for much of 2020, a large part of its income was lost, and the church has had to draw heavily on its reserves. These have carried it through the past year, and into the present year, but they are limited, and will not last much into the future. The church has managed to obtain some grant support and has received some generous donations, for which it is thankful. But to keep open it needs to increase its reliable regular income. The church officers are giving this pressing attention, but it is not easy so long as the building has to remain closed. All help in this respect is welcome, and will be received with thanks. Particularly, regular amounts of income will help into the future. There are modern ways of giving, which don't involve putting cash into the plate or a collecting box. While the church is closed, this can't be done anyway, so any help by alternative methods will be much appreciated.

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

For those that subscribe annually, the subscription for 2021 is now due. A remittance form is enclosed for your use. The rates are the same as last year. In view of the present situation it would help us if you could make your payment direct into our bank account. Our bank details are: Lloyds Bank plc, Sort Code 30-91-63 a/c No. 00 52 63 90. "The Friends of St John's Church, Cardiff". If you prefer to pay by cheque, please make the cheque payable to "The Friends of St John's Church, Cardiff", and send it to our Hon Treasurer (address above) with the remittance form. We remain grateful to members for their continued support, and of course for any contributions by way of additional donations.

Richard Hall, (Hon.Sec.)