

NEWS FROM THE PEWS OCTOBER 2020

Welcome to your October newsletter from St Mary's Church in Stansted.

As we all are aware Covid related issues have affected our lives and still isn't showing any signs yet of releasing its grip. Sadly our dear friend and longtime carer of the church passed away. She spent many hours in church over many years. Stella, we miss you. Our thoughts and prayers to James and the family.

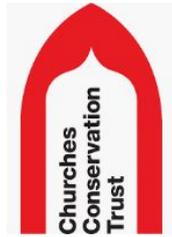
During lockdown the church was forced to close its doors and no visitors were allowed. However, during this time the work on the organ scheduled for September was brought forward. The work was undertaken under social distancing rules with every precaution taken. And so the organ is now working. Special thanks go to Keith Turner who masterminded the project to completion and also to Keith Ayres who spent many hours dedicated to the restoration of the organ. Sadly at this time we can not safely hold an event to showcase the organ but as soon as restrictions allow we will!! Keith Turner is creating the book of dedication for all those who purchased pipes to help the organ fund.

After a few hold ups the Champing side of church life resumed and we have had lots of bookings and very happy Champers. (For those not familiar with Champing, it is camping in church. We are one of 23 churches in the country to do this. It is booked via the Champing website, www.champing.co.uk and I do not deal with bookings.) I get a print-out once per week to let me know of any future bookings. The main question I am asked.... Is it cold? Well I'm sure it is but the champers all come prepared and I do provide hot water bottles to snuggle up to. Due to the late start, the season will be running until the end of October.

The Champing team invited a lady called Laura Kennington to Champ. She has over 10K followers on social media and she posted on her platform to help promote champing. They also ran a competition to win an overnight stay right here in St. Mary's.

I was asked by the CCT to host the cultural team from the Benedictine Abbey in Tyniec which is in Krakow, Poland. A group of four came to ask about volunteering and how it works in relation to the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT). They want to do something similar at the Abbey. They visited a total of seven churches during their stay including some in the West region and some in Sussex.

Sadly and after a great deal of thought, it has been decided that we will not be holding our usual Christmas Tree festival or very popular Carol concert. I will of course decorate the church tree and invite you all to leave messages on our memory tree during the Christmas season. The church will be open from 10am to 3pm daily, including Christmas day. We hope to run the events that had been scheduled for this year for next year, pandemic permitting.



We can only hope that 2021 brings better fortune and that we can win the battles we all face right now with this dreaded virus. The church does remain open daily but could I remind you that face coverings need to be worn inside the building.

Since this will be my last newsletter for 2020 I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and to wish you health and happinessand a very Happy Christmas .

Lynda Dale (Chairman, St Mary's Friends Committee.)

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