

Welcome!

We are so glad you are here with us today. We welcome those who are new to the Church. If you would like more information about us, please take and complete a slip in the Welcome Area and give it to a Steward or a Minister, or scan the QR code (right), and also in the Welcome Area.



Collect

Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life and serve you continually in righteousness and truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Parish Services Today

8am	St John's	Communion (BCP)	1 Samuel 17 <i>Preacher: Glyn Lucas</i>
10am	St John's	Communion	
4pm	Emmanuel	Afternoon Worship	
6.30pm	St John's	Evening Worship	Christianity Explored: Power and Authority

Parish Services Next Week (April 26th)

8am	St John's	Communion (BCP)	1 Samuel 18
10am	St John's	Morning Worship	
4pm	Emmanuel	Afternoon Worship	
6.30pm	St John's	Evening Worship	Christianity Explored: The Problem

A hearing loop is available in the church.

Recordings of our livestreamed services are available on our website
www.stjohnswoking.uk

Events This Week:

Mon 20 th	9:30am	Ladies' Bible Group	Church lounge
Tues 21 st	6:00pm 7:15pm 8:00pm	Dangerous Kids Club (7-10s) Youth groups (11-18s) Music Rehearsals	Youth Centre Youth Centre Church
Wed 22 nd	10:00am 7:45pm	Men's Bible group Homegroup in Church	Church lounge Church lounge
Thurs 23 rd	9:30am	First-steps toddler group	Youth Centre
Sat 25 th	8:00am	Ladies' Breakfast	Narthex

Large print sheets of the Bible Reading are available at the back of the church.

Emmanuel Access Please be aware that, when going to Emmanuel, Saunders Lane is still closed at the Hook Heath Road/Blackhorse Road end for ongoing sewer repairs and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. The only access to Saunders Lane is from the Mayford village end, or Goose Lane.

Ladies' Breakfast: Join us on the **25th April, 8:30- 9:45 am**. We will be thinking about our mental wellbeing in a biblical context. £3 payable on the day.

Sign-up sheet is in the welcome area, or email Charlotte Langdon charlottelangdon@gmail.com to book your place by Monday, 20th April.

The God who knows how to rescue His people: An overview of the big theme of Exodus: An evening with Rev. Simon Vibert, Thursday, 21st May at 7:30pm, Christ Church, Guildford. RSVP: gdefsec@hotmail.com.

Cheese and Wine will be served.

We have an increasing number of people who no longer drive or have transport. Please consider if you could offer them a lift directly, so that they can attend our services.

Please be considerate to our neighbours when you park, and ensure that emergency service vehicles can get through to houses in Jackman's Lane, beyond the church, and residents can turn out of their drives on St John's Hill Road.

Financial need: If you know of anyone who is in need of financial help, please speak to clergy or the church wardens as they have access to small charitable grants which could help.

Our Parish Safeguarding Officer, Mary Kirkman, is available for advice or to talk through concerns relating to safeguarding.

Tel: 07763 456015 or Email: safeguarding@stjohnswoking.uk

Dressing up in medieval crusading knight's armour? Morris dancing? Drinking lager and re-watching the 1966 world cup win over the Germans? 23rd April each year commemorates the famous dragon slayer, but what's the best way to celebrate St George's Day?

Few people know the true story of our national patron saint. But George's story is worth telling, despite the lack of dragons. What marks him out is astonishing integrity and bravery, and this Thursday marks the 1723rd anniversary of his martyrdom in 303AD.

George was born in 275AD in Cappadocia (in modern day Turkey) and brought up in Lydda (known today as Lod, a city in central Israel). His family were nobles. His father Gerontius was a pagan Roman military officer. But his mother, Polychronia, was a Christian, and had George secretly baptised, bringing him up in the faith. After his parents died George enlisted in the Roman army, and rose rapidly through the ranks, eventually becoming a member of the Praetorian Guard (imperial bodyguards) – serving the Emperor Diocletian.

However, all was not well. In the year 302AD Diocletian ordered that every Christian in the army be arrested and required to sacrifice to the Roman gods, on pain of death. Various versions of events are told, but what they agree on is that twenty-seven-year-old George boldly refused to obey the Emperor, resolving to worship Christ alone. Loathe to lose such a talented soldier, according to some traditions Diocletian offered him a bribe – land, money, slaves – if only he would recant, but George remained steadfast. He suffered torture, was paraded through the streets, and eventually beheaded for his faith.

In all, perhaps 3,000-3,500 Christians were killed during the Diocletian persecution, from 303-313AD. It was the most severe and systematic persecution by a Roman Emperor – the state had sponsored persecution under Decius and Valerian, but this was something new. Diocletian's edict prohibited Christians from assembling for worship and ordered the destruction of their bibles, prayer books, and places of worship across the empire. Truly "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12). But, as always, the LORD had the last laugh. According to eastern Christian tradition, Alexandra, wife of Diocletian, was converted having seen George's faithfulness even to the point of death!

Where does dragon slaying come into it? Not until the 11th century, 700 years after George's death, when he became a popular saint amongst crusading European knights, and a story was constructed (an allegory perhaps, for his standing up to the Roman authorities), in which he delivered the Libyan city of Cyrene from a dragon.

What is clear from George's life is that the best way to mark St George's Day is to emulate his bold confession of faith in Jesus, whatever the cost to our reputations and worldly prospects, honouring Christ alone as Lord in our lives. And the Church of England's collect in memory of him isn't bad: God of hosts, who so kindled the flame of love in the heart of your servant George that he bore witness to the risen Lord by his life and by his death: give us the same faith and power of love that we who rejoice in his triumphs may come to share with him the fullness of the resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Peter

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