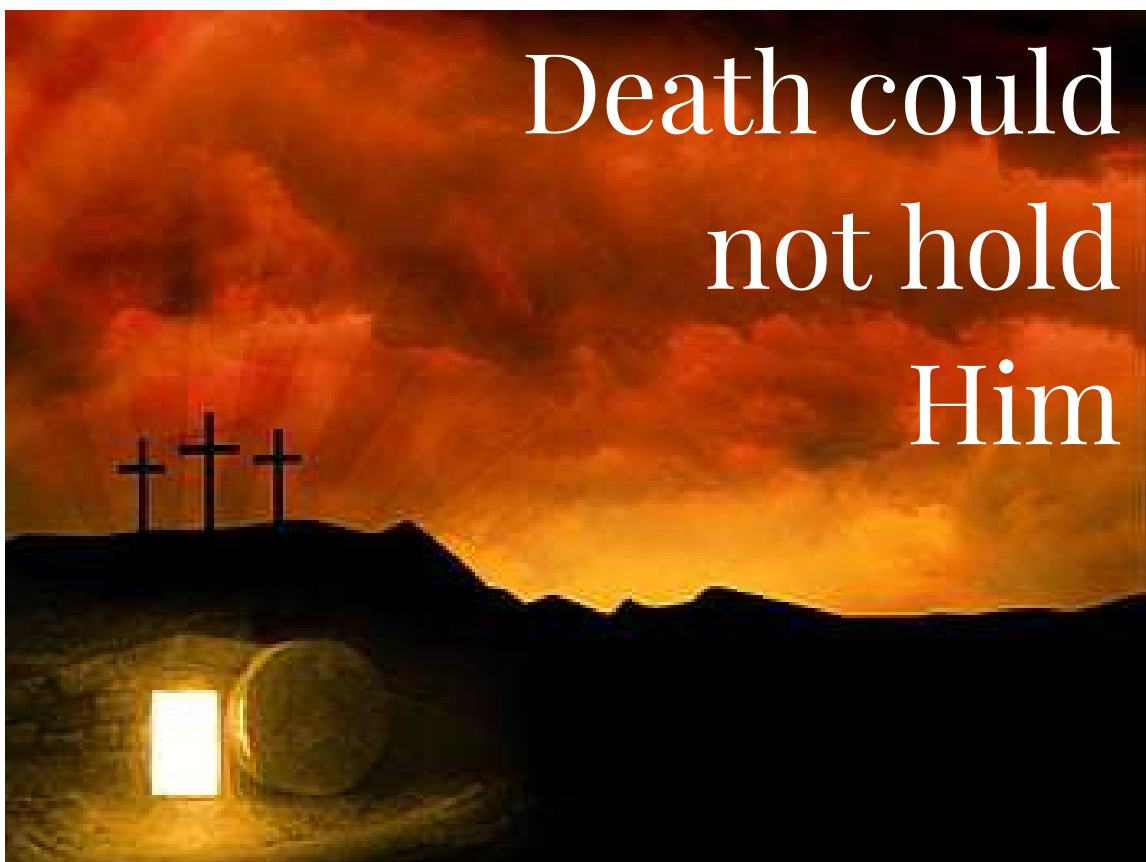


# Wigan South Parish Magazine

- Holy Trinity
- St Andrew's
- St Peter's
- St Aidan's
- St Luke's
- St Thomas'

**St Thomas' and St Luke's edition**



April 2025

70p

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# Parish Information

## Baptisms

Baptisms (also called Christenings) are held around the Parish throughout the month. Please come along to the morning service at the church of your choice, and you can talk about booking a date that works well for you and church. Godparents must have been baptised themselves and be prepared to attend a baptism preparation session with the parents.

## Funerals

Every parishioner has the right to a service in church, followed by a committal.

## Marriage

You can marry in a CofE Church of your choice if certain criteria are shown to be met.

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If you would like further information or to book a wedding or a baptism, please attend at one of our churches or see the contact details at the rear of the magazine. Funeral Directors will book any funerals.

# Magazine Deadlines

Please send any material for the magazine to your local assistant editor (see contact details at the back) or [magazine@stthomasstluke.org.uk](mailto:magazine@stthomasstluke.org.uk).

	May	June	July
Deadline for material	17th April	15th May	19th June
Publication date	27th April	25th May	29th June

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# A Letter from



In CS Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the lion Aslan is put to death by the White Witch. The stone table on which He is killed cracks in two, but Aslan meets with Lucy and Susan alive again. He explains the Witch's failure: 'her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of time. But if she could have looked a little further back, she would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack, and Death itself would start working backwards.'

This is a great picture of what Jesus' cross and resurrection has achieved. As Paul writes, 'I want to know Christ, to know the power of His resurrection' (Philippians 3:10). To understand the real Easter, we should experience the same power that raised Jesus from the dead!

**New Hope:** Like the girls in the story, Easter highlights the sadness and confusion that loss brings. Yet the resurrection of Jesus brings new hope, as it demonstrates the victory secured by the cross over sin, Satan and death. We can face life's difficulties knowing that Jesus walks beside us.

**New Love:** Our relationships are often characterised by a lack of forgiveness, hurt and betrayal. Yet Jesus' resurrection opens the possibility of new love, as His power enables us to accept others and forgive them.

**New Life:** When we are trying to make sense of life, like the girls in the story, Jesus offers us a living relationship with Himself. It's a friendship with God through Jesus that can begin today and continue for eternity.

When Lucy met Aslan again, she cried: 'Oh, you're real, you're real!' We too can find the real Easter through a life changing encounter with the living Christ.

Wishing you all a blessed and rejoicing Easter.

# Parish News

## Weekly Events

### Mondays

- 9.30am - 10.30am: Mini Street Pop Up Play (St Andrew's)
- 6.30pm: Girls Brigade (St Peter's)

### Tuesdays

- 10am - 12pm: Coffee Morning (St Thomas' church hall)
- 6pm: Boys Brigade (St Peter's)
- 1st & 3rd weeks, 7pm: Student Group (St Aidan's)

### Wednesdays

- 1pm - 2.30pm: Wednesday Weenies (St Thomas' church hall)
- 1pm - 3pm: Knit and Chat group (St Peter's)
- 3pm - 4pm: Hot Spot for Y7 - 11 (St Thomas' church hall)
- 4pm - 5pm: Discipleship Group for Y7 - 11 (St Thomas' church hall)
- 7.30pm - 9pm: Women's Fellowship (St Peter's)

### Thursdays

- 1.30pm - 2.30pm: SWAP support & advice drop in
- 2pm - 3pm: Gentle dance class (St Luke's)
- 3pm - 4pm: English Classes (St Thomas' church hall)
- 7.30pm: Craft group (St Thomas' church hall)

### Fridays

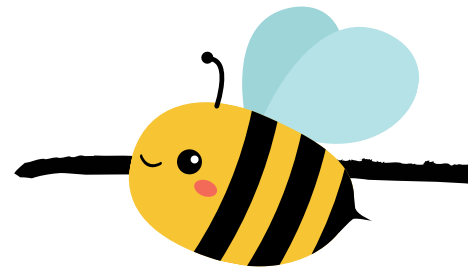
- 2pm: Bible Study (St Thomas' church hall)
- 11.30am - 12.30pm: Mini Street Pop Up Play (St Andrew's)

### Sundays

- 1pm - 3pm: Asylum seeker support (St Thomas' church hall)



# April Events



## Tuesday 1st April

**10am - 11.30am:** Bereavement Support Group at St Luke's

**1.15pm - 2.45pm:** Bereavement Support Group at St Andrew's

## Wednesday 2nd April

Rectory School visiting Holy Trinity to explore the Easter story

## Thursday 3rd April

**10.45am - 12pm:** Bereavement Support Group at St Thomas'

Rectory School visiting Holy Trinity to explore the Easter story

## Friday 4th April

**11.30am:** Easter Service with Rectory School at Holy Trinity

## Saturday 5th April

**10am - 4pm:** Plant Sale at Billinge Public Hall

**5.30pm:** Easter Bingo arranged by Brigades at St Peter's

## Monday 7th April

**11am:** Service at Garswood House, organised by St Peter's

## Friday 11th April

**7.30pm:** Spring Quiz Night at St Aidan's

## Saturday 12th April

**10am onwards:** Always Ashton Easter Trail ending at St Thomas'

**11am - 3pm:** Feast of Fun at Holy Trinity with craft, games, music & food.

**11am onwards:** Graveyard action day to spruce up outside at Holy Trinity

**12pm - 5pm:** Easter Fair at St Peter's



**Friday 18th April**

**10.30am:** Messy Church in St Thomas' church hall

**Monday 21st April**

**1pm - 4pm:** Craft Fair at St Mary's Club on Trent Road

**Thursday 24th April**

**2pm:** St Aidan's Friendship group with guest Louelle from Billinge in Bloom

**Tuesday 29th April**

**1.30pm - 3pm:** Peace of Mind Dementia Cafe at St Andrew's



# Advanced Notices

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**After Easter \*Mondays - start date TBC\***

**7pm - 8.30pm:** Prayer Course at Holy Trinity

**Sunday 11th May**

**1pm - 6pm:** VE Day Picnic in the Park at Bank's Park, Billinge

**Friday 16th May**

**7pm:** St. Helens Ladies Choir evening of song at Holy Trinity. Tickets £8 inc refreshments.

**Saturday 24th May**

**2- 4pm:** Vintage Afternoon Tea & Military Talk in the Narthex at Holy Trinity, tickets £10

**Tuesday 17th June**

**7pm:** Wigan South Confirmation Service at St Thomas'



We invite you to  
come to a  
Safe Space

Don't walk your  
journey of grief  
alone

# Bereavement Support Group



First Tuesday  
of the Month

10am - 11.30am

St Luke's Church  
Bolton Road  
Stubshaw Cross

First Tuesday  
of the Month

1.15pm - 2.45pm

St Andrew's Church  
Garswood Road  
Garswood

First Thursday  
of the Month

10.45am - 12pm

St Thomas' Church  
Warrington Road  
Ashton-in-Makerfield

**Easter  
Fair**

12th April

Lovely local small business all ready to  
share their products with you

Brigade Hall,  
Brun,  
WN4 0AA

Open  
12pm-5pm

## HOLY TRINITY CHURCH



*A CONCERT WILL BE  
GIVEN BY  
ST HELENS LADIES'  
CHOIR*

On Friday 16th May at  
7pm

TICKETS: £8 INCLUDING  
REFRESHMENTS

FROM CHURCH  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
ALL PROCEEDS FOR  
CHURCH FUNDS

Holy Trinity Church  
Rectory Road  
Downall Green







**FEAST OF FUN**



# GRAVEYARD ACTION DAY

Are you free on:

**Saturday 12th April from 11am!**

We really need help to trim and tidy the main graveyard.

We will provide food and drink for everyone!

## *Vintage* **AFTERNOON TEA**



MAY  
**24**  
2PM TO 4PM

**TICKET  
£10**

HOLY TRINITY  
CHURCH, DOWNALL  
GREEN

INCLUDES A MILITARIA DISPLAY  
AND A TALK



Holy  
Trinity

**COME JOIN US  
FOR A CHILDREN & FAMILIES  
EVENT ON SATURDAY 12TH APRIL  
IN CHURCH BETWEEN 11AM AND  
3PM.**

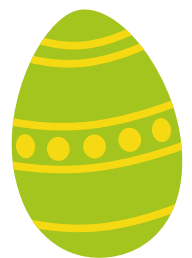
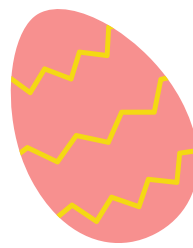
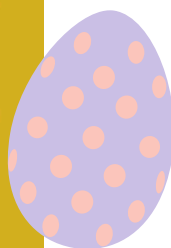
crafts and  
games

Free Food

Music

All Welcome!

**FEAST OF FUN**  
at Easter



**Together with local businesses, we are working to reduce the amount of food going to land fill.**

**The pantries are regularly stocked with food that is near its sell by date but can still be used to feed bellies not bins.**



**St Thomas' Church Hall,  
Ashton in Makerfield**

Tuesday 11am - 12pm  
Thursday 2pm - 3pm  
Sunday 3pm - 4pm

Max 2 visits per week

Additional donations welcome to be used to build a pantry and kitchen behind the church hall.



**St Aidan's Church,  
Billinge**

Friday 11am - 1.30pm





**Holy Trinity Church  
Downall Green**


Friday 9am - 10am

**Each Pantry has a £5 annual membership  
and minimum £3 donation per visit**

# Services in April

<b>Wednesday 2nd</b>	10am: Holy Communion	St Aidan's
<b>Thursday 3rd</b>	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	St Thomas'
<b>Sunday 6th</b>	9am: Morning Worship 9.30am: Holy Communion 10am: Holy Communion 10.30am: Morning Worship 10.30am: Morning Prayer 10.45am: Worship Together 11am: Morning Worship	St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's Holy Trinity St Peter's St Thomas' St Luke's
<b>Wednesday 9th</b>	10am: Holy Communion	Holy Trinity
<b>Thursday 10th</b>	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	St Thomas'
 <b>Sunday 13th</b> <b>Palm Sunday</b> 	9am: Holy Communion 9.30am: Morning Worship 10.30am: Palm Sunday Special 10.30am: Holy Communion 10.30am: Morning Service & Brigades 10.45am: Worship Together 11am: Holy Communion 4pm: Evening Prayer	St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's Holy Trinity St Peter's St Thomas' St Luke's St Aidan's
<b>Wednesday 16th</b>	10am: Holy Communion	St Aidan's
<b>Thursday 17th</b> <b>Maundy Thursday</b>	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion 7pm: Service inc hand & feet washing	St Thomas' St Luke's
<b>Friday 18th</b> <b>Good Friday</b>	9.30am: Service of Reflection 10am: Reflective Service 11am: Ecumenical Service 11am: Reflective Service 11am: Reflective Service 2pm: Last Hour Service	St Peter's St Aidan's St Thomas' St Luke's On The Green Holy Trinity



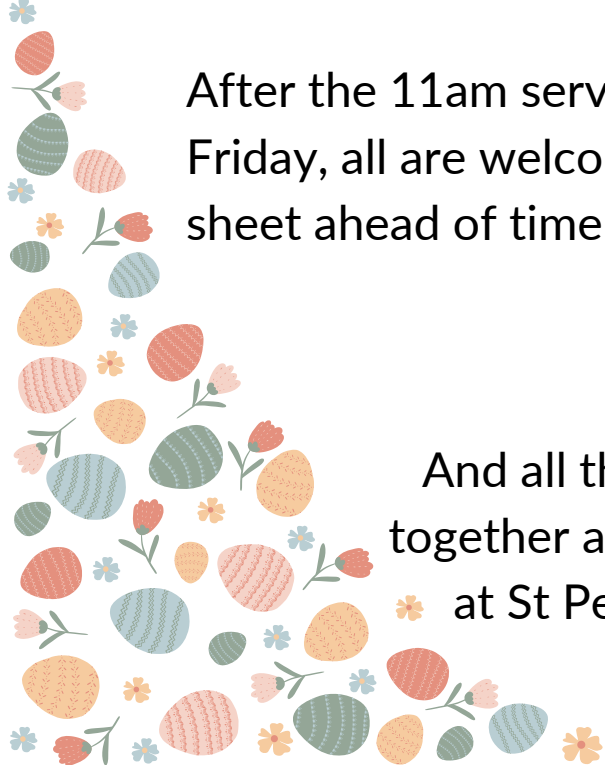
 <p><b>Sunday 20th Easter Sunday</b></p>	<p>6.30am: Sunrise Communion          9am: Holy Communion          9.30am: Holy Communion          10am: Holy Communion          10.30am: Holy Communion          10.30am: Holy Communion          10.45am: Holy Communion          11am: Holy Communion          6.30pm: Evensong</p>	<p>The Three Sisters          St Thomas'          St Andrew's          St Aidan's          Holy Trinity          St Peter's          St Thomas'          St Luke's          St Thomas'</p>
<p><b>Wednesday 23rd</b></p>	<p>10am: Holy Communion</p>	<p>Holy Trinity</p>
<p><b>Thursday 24th</b></p>	<p>9.45am: BCP Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Thomas'</p>
<p><b>Sunday 27th</b></p>	<p>9am: Holy Communion          9.30am: Morning Worship          10am: St Aidan's Beacon          10.30am: Holy Communion          10.30am: Café Church          10.45am: Worship Together          11am: Morning Worship          4pm: Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Thomas'          St Andrew's          St Aidan's          Holy Trinity          St Peter's          St Thomas'          St Luke's          St Aidan's</p>

**Our verse for the year is:**

## **Romans 15:13 NIV**

**May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace  
as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with  
hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.**





After the 11am services at St Thomas' and St Luke's on Good Friday, all are welcome to join for fish and chips - see order sheet ahead of time to get booked in.

And all those rising early on Easter morning to join together at the Three Sisters are invited to warm up at St Peter's afterwards for a warm drink and hot cross buns.

We have just finished the Moving On Course. It is a course that helps us to prayerfully consider our faith journey and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. It was attended by people across the Hub. And we have learned and grown together.

One session was all about the Holy Spirit. It prompted Amanda from Holy Trinity to write this poem:

*What can I say about the Holy Spirit?*

*He walks with us being our guidance, helping to commit, accomplish and keep our troubles at bay.*

*He is our comforter, our guide.  
Bringing gifts of wisdom, understanding and knowledge.  
The bringer of love, peace and joy.*

*Patient and kind, waiting for when he is needed, let him dwell in and he will stay with you forever.*

*Our gift from Jesus Christ who helps guide you, helps you pray, walk in step with the Holy Spirit for he is your connection to God.*

## 23rd April

### St George and Hiccup and the dragon

Have you seen the film *How to Train your Dragon*? It's set in a Viking village under attack from dragons, who steal livestock and burn down houses. Hiccup, the village Chief's son, invents a machine to capture dragons. However, when he catches one of the most dangerous dragons, he cannot kill it, when he sees that the dragon is just as frightened as he is. Through this friendship, the people and dragons eventually learn to live in harmony.

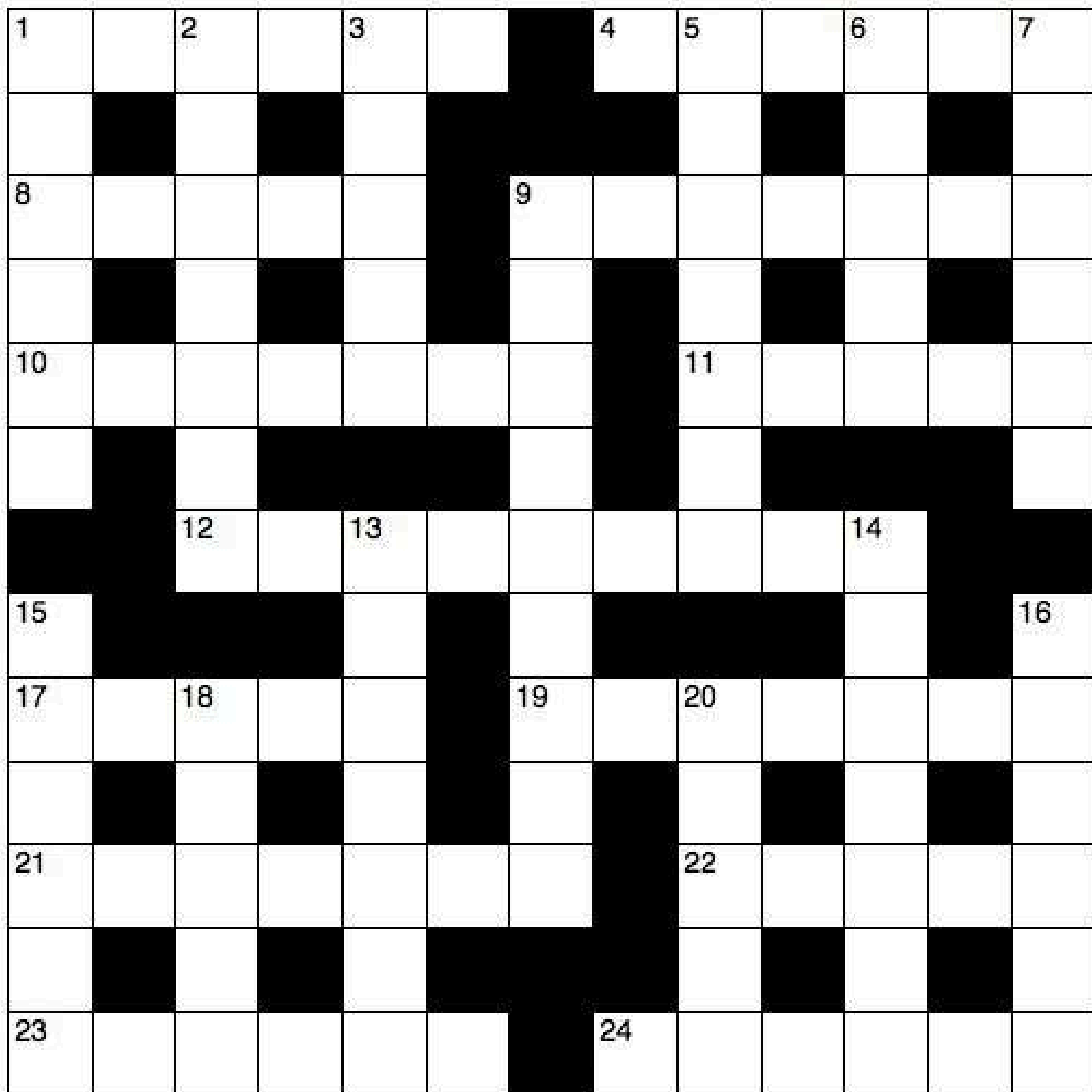
This month we celebrate St George, the patron saint of England. He is famous for slaying a dragon, a tradition which became popular in the Middle Ages. Whether he killed an actual dragon is open to question! However, we do know that the original George was a Roman soldier at the time of Emperor Diocletian. He refused to renounce his faith, as commanded by the Emperor, resulting in his death on 23 April 303 AD.

The contrast is clear: St George slayed the evil dragon, while Hiccup refused to kill one. However, they also have something important in common. Both acted according to their conscience, defying the popular understanding of those around them and not worrying about the personal cost to themselves. St George was martyred for standing up for his faith in Jesus before a pagan emperor, while Hiccup risked rejection by his father and village because of his compassion.



Today, we are still called to stand for Christ against wrongs and injustice in daily life, whatever the personal cost. However, we also need to be ready to look our enemies in the eye and meet their hostility with love and compassion. This is why we also remember this month that Jesus died and rose again, so that we might have God's power to do this in our lives.

# Crossword



Answers on page 21



## Across

- 1 Relating to the whole universe (6)
- 4 The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across (John 20:24) (6)
- 8 'Unless I see the nail marks — — hands, I will not believe it' (John 20:25) (2,3)
- 9 He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 36:25) (7)
- 10 Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry — (7)
- 11 'Look, here is — . Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36) (5)
- 12 Repossessed (Genesis 14:16) (9)
- 17 Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3-4) (5)
- 19 'Moses was not aware that his face was — because he had spoken with the Lord' (Exodus 34:29) (7)
- 21 Roonwit, C.S. Lewis's half-man, half-horse (7)
- 22 Grill (Luke 24:42) (5)
- 23 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles' (Acts 1:26) (6)
- 24 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came to visit me' (Matthew 25:36) (6)

## Down

- 1 Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)
- 2 Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)
- 3 Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)
- 5 For example, the Crusades (4,3)
- 6 11 Across is certainly this (5)
- 7 He reps (anag.) (6)
- 9 Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)
- 13 Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7)
- 14 They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)
- 15 The human mind or soul (6)
- 16 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is — ' (Graham Kendrick) (6)
- 18 'We played the flute for you, and you did not — ' (Matthew 11:17) (5)
- 20 Bared (anag.) (5)

WOW!!! What a response to the Mothers Union Knicker Night. This was a continuation of the work Mothers Union has been doing around the Rise Up Campaign highlighting the issue of Domestic Abuse.

We organised a 'Knicker Night' in response to Cherry the manager of our Wigan Women's Aid services who were noticeably short of women's underwear, as often the women arrive in the clothes, they are stood up in. The response was amazing with 238 pairs of new knickers being donated on the night. I advertised it across all Church Wigan Hub via our Church magazine. We had 26 members attending and 11 visitors - 2 of whom joined the Mothers Union on the night.

CEO Jane Martin of DIAS (dial in and share) a charity who support victims of domestic abuse with wrap around support including counselling for adults and children attended and our local counsellor Jenny Bullen who was proposing to include information in a local newsletter.

We started the evening with prayers for those who are victims of domestic abuse as is our norm at the beginning of each of our meetings.

We then had a Domestic Abuse Quiz. My role prior to retirement was Named Nurse For Safeguarding and I hold a teaching qualification so I used the quiz as a training opportunity and further evidence to obtain our gold award as a Mothers Union. I am aware it is an emotive subject and participants were encouraged to speak to me or Jane Martin if they had any concerns.

This wasn't a stand alone exercise as the group had already received lots of information prior to this. The feedback afterwards from our WhatsApp group and in church was incredibly positive in that people stated they had learnt a great deal. Also Jane Martin gave a short talk about the role of DIAS.

Jane Fennel one of our committee members collects donated handbags and fills<sup>18</sup> them with toiletries. On the night Jane donated 17 to DIAS.

St Thomas and St Luke Mothers Union members and other members of other churches in our hub have been very generous and have donated lots of things to our Women's Aids e.g. bedding, towels, duvets, pillows, bric a brac, clothing, suitcases etc in response to need. So much so that I am making weekly trips to drop donations off. This is further evidence of the amazing work our Mothers Union are doing.

Following the quiz we had a fun beetle drive organised by Linda Bailey



Pictured from the left Linda High (Committee), Jane Martin (CEO of DIAS), Linda Bailey (Treasurer), Michelle Rawsthorn (Branch Leader), Patricia Hamilton-Whittaker (Secretary), Karen Griffiths (Support to Secretary), Paula Gillespie (Committee), Jane Fennel (Committee). Jenny Bullen (Counsellor) with a few of the knicker donations, Easter Crafts for the children in Women's Aids and mobile phones requested by DIAS.

I feel privileged to be part of such a dynamic Mothers Union.

***Patricia Hamilton-Whittaker  
Secretary, St Thomas and St Luke's Mothers Union***

## 19th April – Easter Eve or Holy Saturday

Easter Eve is the last day of Lent. It is the day between Good Friday and Easter Day, and represents the one full day that Jesus was dead. It is a day of quiet reflection and anticipation for Christians worldwide.

In various church traditions it is known as Easter Eve, Holy Saturday, the Great Sabbath, Hallelujah Saturday, Saturday of the Glory, and Black Saturday.

Easter Eve is sometimes incorrectly called Easter Saturday. But Easter Saturday is the Saturday following Easter Sunday.

Most churches do not have any services on Easter Eve. In the Catholic Church, the altar remains stripped completely bare. Many Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, and other churches observe many of the same customs as the Catholic Church; however, their altars may be covered in black instead of being stripped.

In the Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, and Methodist traditions, Easter Eve lasts until nightfall, after which the Easter Vigil is celebrated, marking the official start of the Easter season.

What did Jesus do on that one full day in the grave? Christian understanding varies on this.

The Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and most mainline Protestant churches teach that Jesus descended to the realm of the dead on Holy Saturday, to save the righteous souls who died before His crucifixion.

The catechism of the Catholic church calls the descent "the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission," during which He "opened heaven's gates for the just who had gone before Him." Often called "the Harrowing of Hell," the dramatic image of Jesus breaking down the doors of Hades has proved almost irresistible to artists, from the painter Hieronymus Bosch to the poet Dante to countless Eastern Orthodox iconographers.

But some Protestants say there is little scriptural evidence for the detour to hell, and that even Jesus' own words contradict it. For on Good Friday, Jesus told the Good Thief crucified alongside Him that "today you will be with Me in Paradise," according to Luke's Gospel."

"That's the only clue we have as to what Jesus was doing between death and resurrection," John Piper, a prominent evangelical author and pastor from Minnesota, has said. "I don't think the thief went to hell and that hell is called paradise."

The Bible says little about the interlude between Jesus' death and resurrection. Churches that teach He descended to the realm of the dead usually quote 1 Peter 3:18-20. "Christ was put to death as a human, but made alive by the Spirit," Peter writes. "And it was by the Spirit that He went to preach to the spirits in prison."

The descent might not have become a doctrine if not for a fourth-century bishop named Rufinus, who added that Jesus went *ad inferna* - to hell - in his commentary on the Apostles' Creed. The phrase stuck, but it was officially added to the influential creed only centuries later.

## London Marathon 2025 – Sunday 27th April



Last year's London Marathon attracted more than 53,000 runners, which made it the world's biggest annual one-day fund-raising event EVER. It also raised a world record-breaking amount of £73.5 million for charities.

The route is 26.2 miles long. Greenwich and Blackheath is the starting point, and then the route takes in Woolwich, Greenwich, Rotherhithe, Bermondsey, Tower Bridge, Limehouse, Canary Wharf, Isle of Dogs, Shadwell, Tower Gateway, Westminster Bridge, Great George Street, Birdcage Walk, Buckingham Palace and finally to the iconic finish line on The Mall.

It is all a far cry from the first London Marathon back in March 1981, when 6,747 people ran, and which did not raise any money specifically for charities.





## Vanity

The elderly Veronica May  
Awakening to the breaking day'  
Whilst in her mirror glancing'  
She observes the years advancing.  
Creams and potions she'd applied'  
The ageing process wouldn't subside.  
Her image in the mirror's reflection  
Sways her into another direction.  
An eminent beautician she's now consulting,  
With miraculous events resulting'  
In Botox saving the day  
For the rejuvenated Veronica May!  
Concerned about how you look?  
Trust in God and read his book.

*John Daniels*

# Crossword Answers

ACROSS: 1, Cosmic. 4, Thomas. 8, In his. 9, Delaiah. 10, Falwell. 11, Water. 12, Recovered. 17, Sidon. 19, Radiant. 21, Centaur. 22, Broil. 23, Eleven. 24, Prison.

DOWN: 1, Cliffs. 2, Scholar. 3, Issue. 5, Holy war. 6, Moist. 7, Sphere. 9, Deliverer. 13, Candace. 14, Deacons. 15, Psyche. 16, Stolen. 18, Dance. 20, Debar.

## The ordeal is over; the scars remain

“Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it.” (John 20: 25)

How patient Jesus was, in giving ‘Doubting Thomas’ a second chance! Earlier, the risen Christ had said to His disciples, “Peace be with you!” (verse 19). And it is only because of those scarred hands that His peace is made available.

There have been many religious leaders in history – but only one had scars as the proof of what He had achieved. It is also evident that – after Christ’s bodily resurrection – the scars were never obliterated. “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe” (verse 27).

The ordeal was over – but the scars remain – for ever. At the end of time – in the future New Creation – our Lord Jesus Christ will still have those scars, when He is affirmed as ‘the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world’ (Revelation 3:8). The apostle Peter himself echoed the timelessness of the Cross of Calvary (1 Peter 1:20). The Cross and Resurrection form the centrepiece of our entire human story.

The scarred hands... It is vital that one and all should receive the lesson that Thomas learned that day: “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (v29)

For it would not be long before the bodily presence of the Lord would be removed from human sight. From then on, it would be the preaching of the apostolic witnesses that would take Christ’s message to the ends of the world. Thomas himself was going to be despatched to India! Later would see Augustine to Canterbury, Francis sent to Assisi, Patrick to Ireland and Livingstone to Africa.

Today sees the mission of the risen Jesus criss crossing all over the world – creating the biggest and fastest-growing body of belief ever known.

Be a living exponent of this Easter Gospel yourself. Use it, proclaim it, know it and live it. Then you can identify along with believing Thomas!



## Where did your Easter egg come from?

Your Easter egg can be traced back to the early Church in Mesopotamia.

Since ancient times, people had been giving each other eggs at pagan Spring festivals, as eggs were a symbol of the new life and rebirth in nature all around them. Then came Jesus and His death and resurrection, which made Easter the ultimate time for Christians to celebrate new life and rebirth. After that, it was only a matter of time before eggs found their way into commemorating Easter.



This seems to have first happened with the very early church in Mesopotamia, where those early Christians began dyeing their eggs after Easter, to celebrate the new birth that Jesus had given to them. The practise of using eggs in Easter celebrations then spread to the Orthodox Churches, and from there to the Western Churches across Europe.

There are 80 million Easter eggs being sold in the UK this year, but The Real Easter Egg is unique. It is the only one which has a copy of the Easter story in the box, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and which supports charitable projects.

There are six types of eggs to choose from. Each Real Easter Egg comes with an Easter story in the box, the stories range from simple guides to 24 page activity book versions. So, buy a 2025 edition Real Easter Egg this Spring, and encourage others to give one to their loved ones, a school or sponsor a food bank donation.

The 2025 Real Easter Egg is not available in any supermarket, but the full range can be ordered at [www.realeasteregg.co.uk](http://www.realeasteregg.co.uk), or by calling 01925 877004.

The Real Easter Egg is made by The Meaningful Chocolate Company which was 'crowd founded' in 2010 by thousands of churches and church schools which pre-paid for the manufacture of The Real Easter Egg. Since then more than two million eggs have been sold, and £420,000 raised for charitable causes.



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<sup>‡</sup> dependent on plan chosen

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Stretton House, 23 Hall Green, **Upholland T: 01695 622099** • Templeton Lodge, Templeton Road, **Platt Bridge T: 01942 863936**  
Carina Lodge, 178 Tyldesley Rd, **Atherton T: 01942 318025** • Century House, 6-8 Wigan Road, **Hindley T: 01942 318081**

# News from our churches



## April Services

	<b>St Thomas'</b>	<b>St Luke's</b>
<b>Thursday 3rd</b>	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
<b>Sunday 6th</b>	9am: Morning Worship 10.45am: Worship Together	11am: Morning Worship
<b>Thursday 10th</b>	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
<b>Sunday 13th Palm Sunday</b>	9am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Worship Together	11am: Holy Communion
<b>Thursday 17th Maundy Thursday</b>	9.45am: Holy Communion	7pm: Holy Communion with hand & foot washing
<b>Friday 18th Good Friday</b>	11am: Reflective service	11am: Reflective Service
<b>Sunday 20th Easter Day</b>	9am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Holy Communion 6.30pm: Evensong	11am: Holy Communion
<b>Thursday 24th</b>	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
<b>Sunday 27th</b>	9am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Worship Together	11am: Morning Worship

# St Thomas & St Luke's News



As we approach the season of Easter, I would like to take this opportunity of wishing all our readers a very happy and blessed Easter. Full details of our Easter services appear in this edition of the magazine and as always, I hope that you will be able to join us at those services.

We begin to celebrate the resurrection of our Saviour with our traditional 6.30am communion service at the Three Sisters followed, I might add, by toasted teacakes at St Peter's to whom we are grateful.

Another of our Parish traditions occurs on Good Friday, when we take the opportunity to reflect on the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for us and all mankind. Our morning service at 11.00am will be followed by the fish and chips, its time to get your order in.

There is much to look forward to for the children with a Messy Church in the hall and the Ashton Easter Trail ending in church. As always, these events rely on our willing volunteers without who's help they would not take place. Please contact Jan and Anne if you are able to help.

We enjoyed a very pleasant evening On the 21in March when many of us were well entertained by the unusually named Really Awful Orchestra, nothing could be further from the truth they were quite wonderful and well enjoyed by all present. The church building lent itself to such an occasion and always we are grateful to help in setting up the venue and assisting to make a memorable evening for all in attendance.



I was amazed to read that there was to be a Bishop of Wigan appointed. Not another bishop was my first reaction until I discovered the reason for the appointment. The bishop although having the title of Bishop of Wigan is in fact appointed to look after Liverpool Diocese following the resignation of our Bishop and the unavailability of the Bishop of Warrington. I was intrigued to find out more about the 'see' of Wigan and its bishops.

The person to ask was of course our resident historian David Fearnley. This is what David discovered:

There never has been a Bishop of Wigan only Rectors. The Wigan 'see' is classed as a dormant suffragan 'see' under the Diocese of Liverpool. It was created on 6/4/1889 but the position of bishop was never filled. The 'see' was created as Wigan became a county borough on the 1/4/1889 and independent of Lancashire County Council. A dormant 'see' can be revived and filled at any time. A suffragan bishop assists a diocesan bishop but has no right of succession.

Once again, our thanks to David Fearnley for another insight into historic Ashton.



## **1837 SIR JOHN GERARD AND THE ALKALI WORKS AT NEWTON & ST. HELENS**

In the 1830's Garswood New Hall, Ashton in Makerfield, a large mansion house formerly situated on the present day Ashton golf course, was the residence of Sir John Gerard and stood in a park of 260 acres surrounded by gardens which had been laid out in 1796 to the plans of the famous landscape gardener Humphry Repton.

Sir John vastly improved and extended the gardens at a cost of £30,000 (today £2,500,000). In 1837 a strange mist/vapour descended upon Ashton, rolling along the country lanes and across the fields covering the landscape like a sheet. Leaves on trees decayed, died, and fell to the ground within days, tree bark became discoloured, trees died, hedgerows withered, orchards failed to produce fruit, garden flowers died and crops were destroyed. It was eventually realised that the mist was the acidic fumes from the alkali works at St. Helens and Newton in Makerfield. The alkali works produced vitriol/sulphuric acid which was used to make soda ash used in the glass, soap and textile industries. During the manufacturing process hydrochloric acid gas was produced and released into the atmosphere. The acidic fumes were an example of acid rain that we are familiar with today.

The alkali works at St. Helens were owned by Messrs. Crossfield, Kurtz and Gamble. In 1835 James Muspratt had set up an alkali works in Newton in Makerfield on the banks of the Sankey Canal. He built the tallest brick chimney in England, 400 feet high, in an unsuccessful attempt to safely disperse the toxic fumes produced. Large amounts of waste were produced by the alkali works. Today on the banks of the Sankey Canal, near the former "Sankey Sugar" works, Earlestown, is an area of dereliction called the "Mucky Mountains" which is the waste from Muspratt's works. Some waste released into the Sankey Canal resulted in the corrosion of lock gates and the bottom of barges. The owners of the alkali works were making vast profits and were willing to offer limited compensation for damage caused by the fumes rather than solve the problem which would have been very expensive.

In 1839 Sir John Gerard received £1,000 compensation from Mr. Crossfield but the court expenses for Sir John were £500. In 1846 he began a court action against Messrs. Crossfield, Gamble, Kurtz and Muspratt claiming £20,000 for the damage caused to his estates in Windle, Garswood/Pewfall and New Hall, Ashton, between 1840 - 1846. Many workers at New Hall – gardener, gamekeeper, timber workers, butler, the land agent, Adolphus Moubert – gave evidence as to the damage caused.



Before 1837 at New Hall the estate woods and plantations were well stocked and healthy, some trees were over 100 years old and 80 feet high. The mist/vapour was worse on damp or foggy days, it affected the eyes and had a terrible sulphureous smell. Trees were mostly affected on the side facing towards St. Helens and especially Muspratt's chimney at Newton which was nearer New Hall. Alder, sycamore and beech were less affected than oak, ash, poplar and willow.

Since 1840, on all 3 of the Gerard's estates, thousands of trees had to be cut down, ranging from 100 years old to 5 years old. In 1846 500 dead trees were taken out of the Townfield Plantation at New Hall. Adolphus Moubert, land agent, said that the country around St. Helens was desolate with few trees and hedges, 75% of the trees within 1 mile of St. Helens were dead. He estimated the tree damage at New Hall as £1,309. A timber surveyor estimated the total damage at Windle, Garswood/Pewfall and New Hall, Ashton, to be £5,825. The butler at New Hall said that in the dining room facing Muspratt's chimney all the cutlery and brassware became tarnished.

The effects of the mist/vapour at New Hall were felt in Oak Wood, Canal Wood(near the lake on the present golf-course), Vista Plantation(Millfield Lane), Haydock Boundary Plantation(along the public footpath Millfield Lane – Warrington Road), Townfield Plantation(opposite the Bay Horse inn), Young Plantation and Holland Plantation.

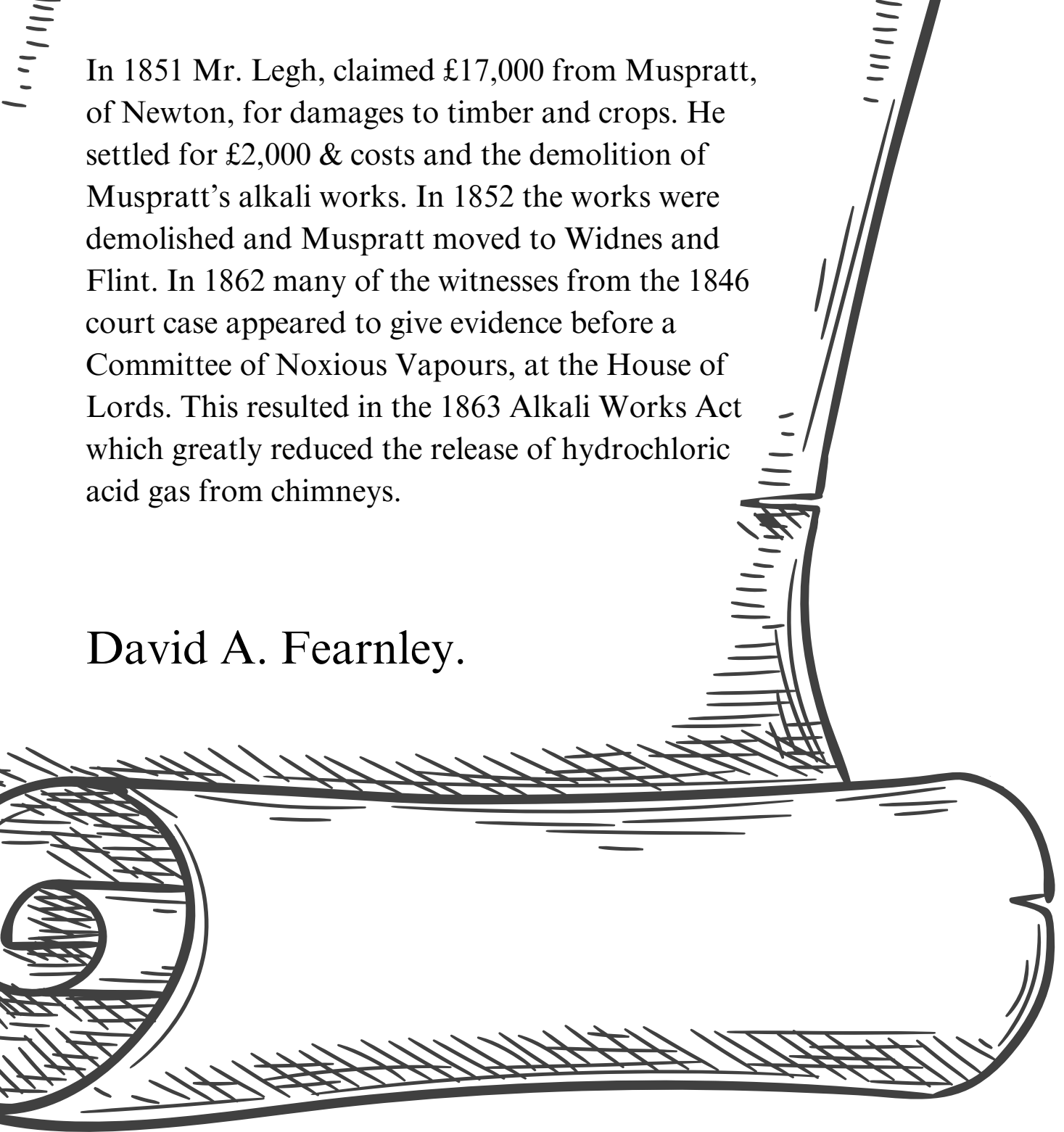
1846 Sir John was awarded £2,000 from Messrs. Crossfield, Gamble, Kurtz and Muspratt, but his court expenses were £900. He was compensated £450 in 1849 and had begun a court action in 1852 claiming £4,000 but fell ill and died 1854 before it went to court. In 1846 Mr. Legh, of Newton, and John Hornby, the Rector of Winwick received compensation for destruction of timber and crops.





In 1851 Mr. Legh, claimed £17,000 from Muspratt, of Newton, for damages to timber and crops. He settled for £2,000 & costs and the demolition of Muspratt's alkali works. In 1852 the works were demolished and Muspratt moved to Widnes and Flint. In 1862 many of the witnesses from the 1846 court case appeared to give evidence before a Committee of Noxious Vapours, at the House of Lords. This resulted in the 1863 Alkali Works Act which greatly reduced the release of hydrochloric acid gas from chimneys.

David A. Fearnley.



# St Thomas' School

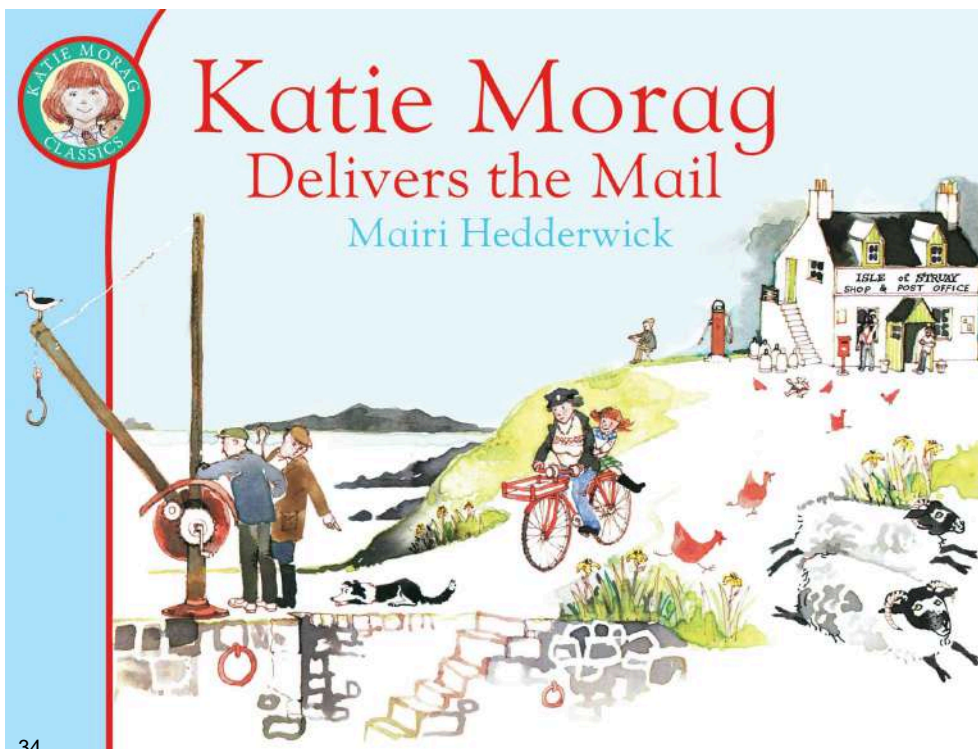
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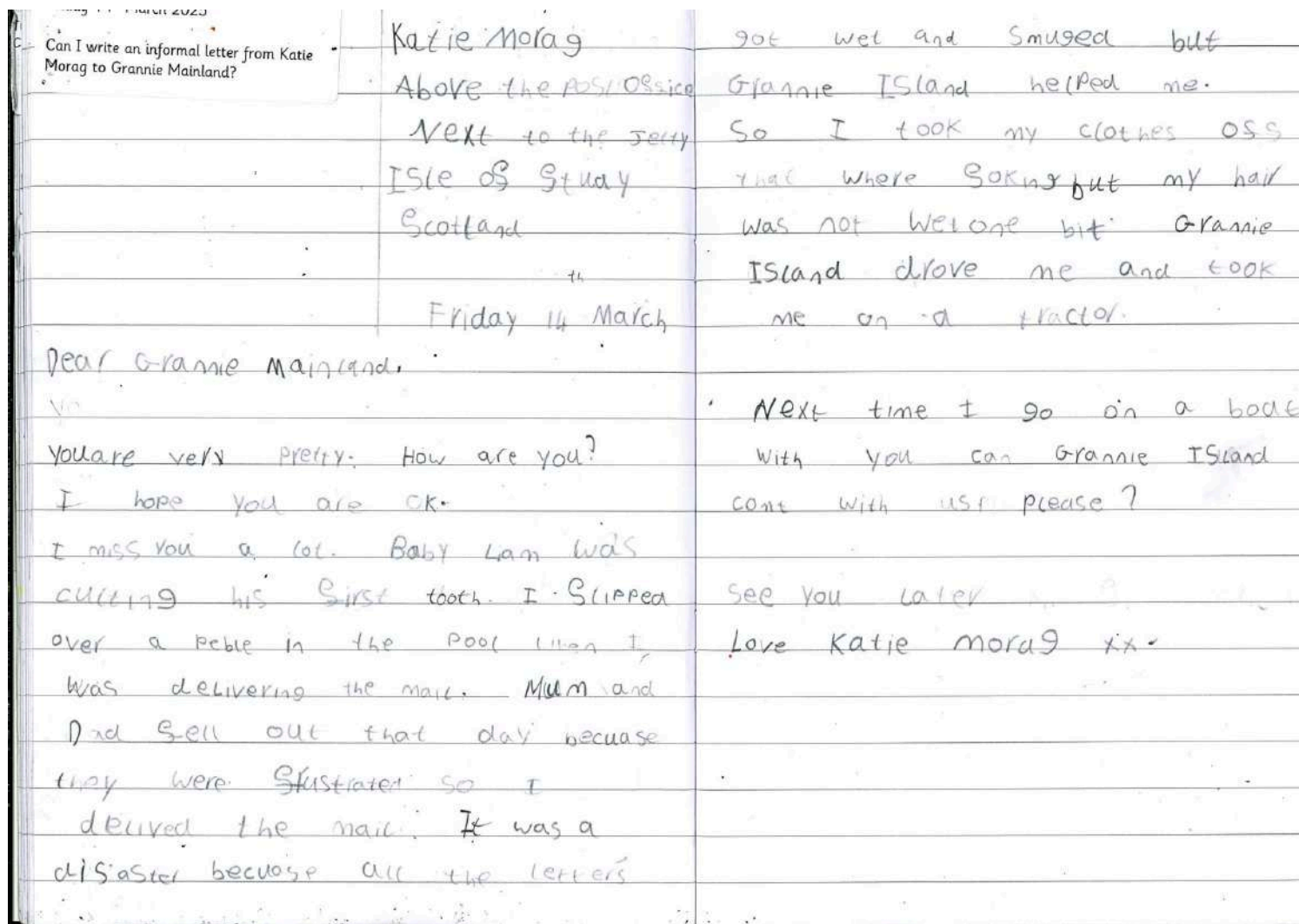
Please find attached our learning for the Church Magazine from Pippa M in Y2 and a picture of the book they have been reading. Millie (class teacher) has written a blurb below.



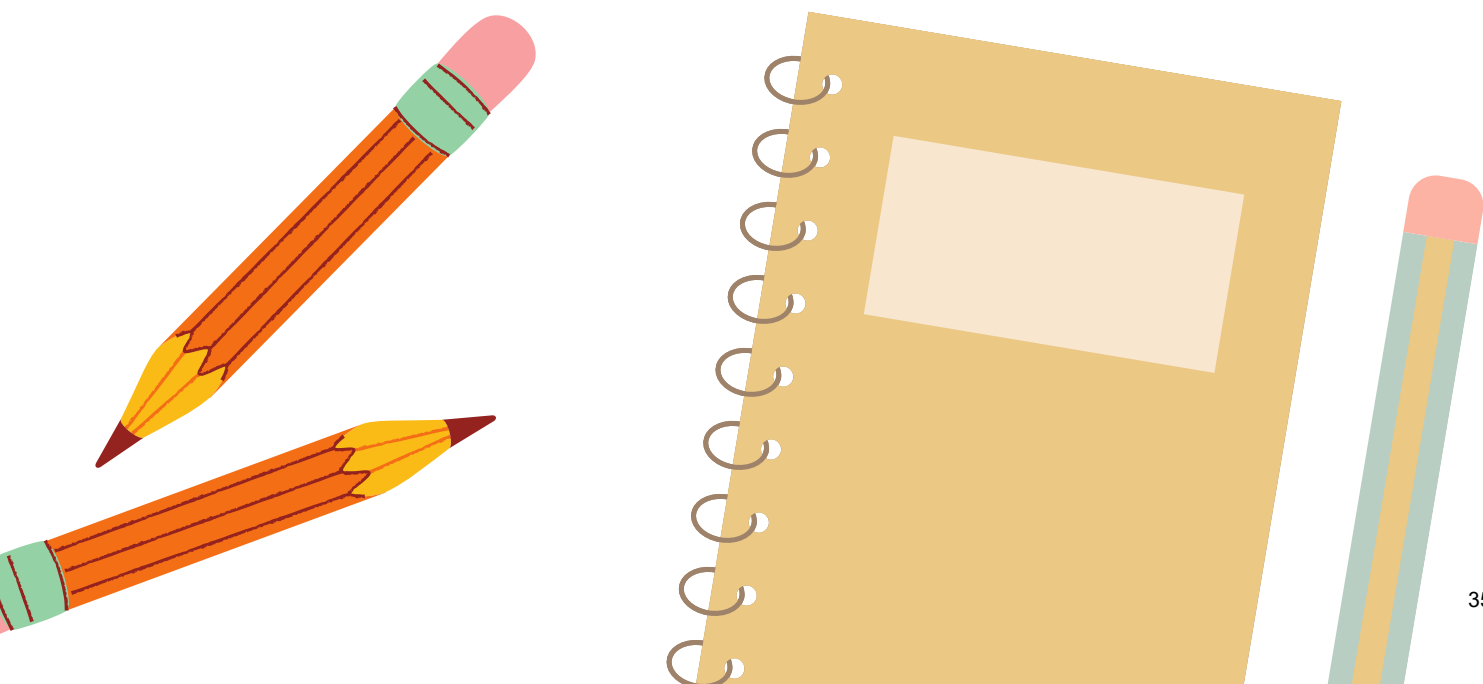
'Year Two have been following the adventures of Katie Morag in Katie Morag Delivers the Mail by Mairi Hedderwick. Katie Morag lives on the Isle of Struay in Scotland with her parents above the Post Office.

Her parents own the post office and one day, ask Katie to deliver the mail. On her journey, she encounters a mail disaster leaving lots of islanders annoyed at receiving the wrong parcel. With the help of her grandmother, Katie works to fix her mistake and make all the islanders happy again.





Year Two have been exploring letter writing this week and wrote their own informal letter from Katie Morag to her other grandmother explaining what had happened. They identified the important elements of informal letters and had lots of fun with this piece of work.'



# Donations Information

**Regular Giving:** We have traditionally taken envelope donations in our plate offerings and these monies help towards the payment that has to go to the diocese each month. If you are unable to get to a service and wish to still use your envelopes, please deliver them, to Malcolm and Barbara's (32 Townfields). In the alternative, please consider switching to the Parish Giving Scheme by phoning 0333 002 1271 as we can get the tax back much quicker this way.

**Donations:** Please place any donations in an envelope with your full name and amount written on it. Please post this through the Vicarage door. Please make cheques payable to St Thomas' PCC. If you want the donation to be for something specific, please write clearly on the envelope.

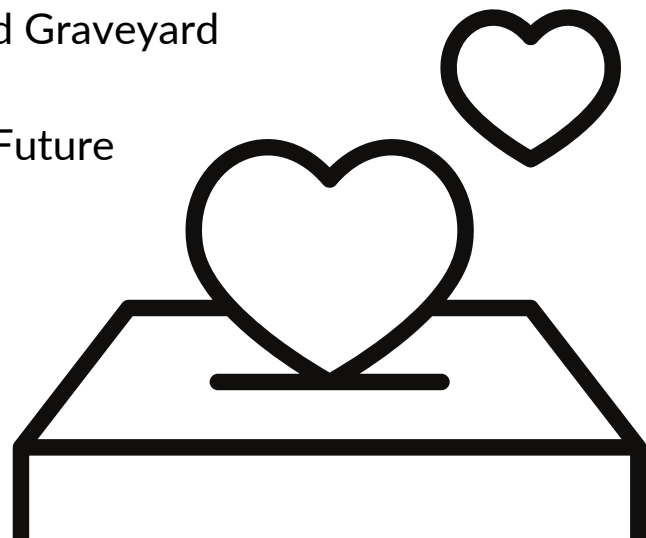
**Gift Aid:** If you pay tax in the UK and would like church to be able to claim 25p for every £1 you donate, please complete a Gift Aid form or state on your envelope that you are a UK tax payer, would like church to claim Gift Aid and include your full name and address.

**Wills and Legacies:** If you wish to discuss any issues around Wills and Legacies please ring the Parish Treasurer, Sarah Riley, on 01942 722747.

Funds currently in use are:

- Africa Fund
- Asylum Seek
- Audio Visual
- Church Hall
- Buildings and Maintenance
- Food Ministry
- Garden of Rest
- General
- Grave Maintenance
- Heath Road Graveyard
- Heating
- Fit for the Future

Unless otherwise stated, donations will go into the General fund



# Donations & Remembrance



*Sorry if some of these donations should have appeared in earlier magazines but it occasionally takes longer for them to be processed.*

## **General Fund**

In loving memory of Loved Ones from Les and Jean Johnson  
Thank you for home Communion from Margaret Cook

## **Garden Of Rest**

In memory of Alan Chadwick from Jean Boon  
Thanks for home communion from Elsie Deluce  
Thanks for home communion from Isabel Bowen

## **Heath Road Graveyard**

In memory of Doris, Walter and Gilbert Evans from Val Hilton



# The Registers

**Holy Matrimony** 'All the days of their lives'

15th March 2025

Craig Michael Davies  
and  
Nicola Jane Roberts

<b>Funerals or Burials of Ashes 'May they rest in peace'</b>	
12 February 2025	Cynthia Hodgson
12 February 2025	Walter Stanley
14 February 2025	Bernard Lucas
17 February 2025	Alan Chadwick
21 February 2025	John Middlehurst
25 February 2025	Samuel Myler
25 March 2025	David Jones



<b>Holy Baptism 'We welcome them into the Lord's family'</b>	
2 February 2025	Andrew Mason
2 February 2025	Alexandra Sarah Massey
16 February 2025	Theodore Ethan Gordon
16 March 2025	Harry Lloyd Parkinson
16 March 2025	Ava Mae Harvey

# St Thomas' and St Luke's Organisations

## Coffee Mornings

Tues 10am - 12pm  
St Thomas' church  
Barbara Taylor  
01942 205136

## Wednesday Weenies

Wed 1pm - 2.30pm  
St Thomas' church hall  
Jan Cornthwaite  
01942 721626

## Mothers' Union

3rd Wed 7.30pm  
St Thomas' church  
Michelle Rawsthorn

---

## Fairtrade Stall

3rd Sun 11.45am  
St Thomas' church  
Anne Wooff  
01942 724207

## Litter Pick

3rd Sat 10am - 12pm  
Meet at St Thomas' car park  
Chris Wooff  
01942 724207

## Flower Guild

Meta Laites  
01942 723679

---

## Asylum Seeker Support

SWAP support drop in  
Thurs 1.30pm - 2.30pm

## English Class

Thurs 3pm - 4pm

## Social drop in

Sun 1pm - 3pm

Anne & Chris Wooff

01942 724207

## Ashton Pantry

Tues 11am - 12pm  
Thurs 2pm - 3pm  
Sun 3pm - 4pm

Sue Thomas

07877704645

## Girl Guiding

Brownies  
Thurs 6.30pm

## Guides

Tues 7pm

Rachel Starkie

01942 718350

---

## Children's Sunday Clubs

Sun 10.45am

Karen Cunliffe

07721770305

For more information, please visit our website at [stthomasstluke.org.uk](http://stthomasstluke.org.uk)



St Thomas' and St Luke's Church,  
Ashton in Makerfield



St Thomas

# St Thomas' and St Luke's Church Officials

## Local Mission Leaders

St Thomas':  
Jan Cornthwaite 721626  
St Luke's:  
Carole Pye 517318

## Readers

Tricia Hancox 201540  
Alan Harrison 718618  
Carole Pye 517318  
Helen Weavers 07796334457

## Assistant Wardens

St Thomas':  
Tony Cornthwaite 721626  
Paula Gillespie 711270

St Luke's:  
Carole Pye 517318  
John Boon 204082

## St Thomas' Deputy Wardens

Barbara Taylor 205136

## Assistant Treasurers

St Thomas':  
Phil Hayton phaytonuk@yahoo.co.uk  
St Luke's:  
John Boon 204082

## Administration, Bookings and Advertising

Cheryl Knowles  
cheryl.knowles@churchwigan.org

## Magazine Editor

Jess Bradley 07498323469  
magazine@stthomasstluke.org.uk

## Freewill Offerings Secretary

Malcolm Taylor 205136

## Electoral Roll Secretary

Vacant

## Asylum Seeker Support

Anne & Chris Wooff 724207

## Children, Young People & Families

Jan Cornthwaite  
721626

## Flowers

Meta Laites 723679

## Church Architect

Bill Schafer 717300

## St Thomas' Worship Group

Mary Owen 203277

## St Thomas' Organist

Paul Tushingam 711085

## Magazine Distribution

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