

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



December 2023

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.

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.

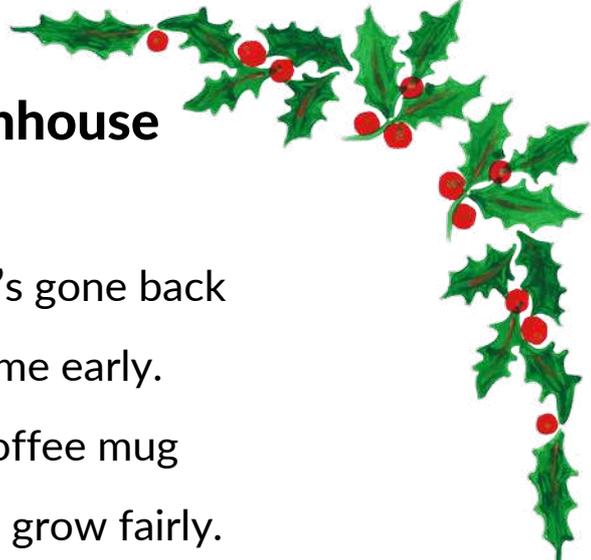
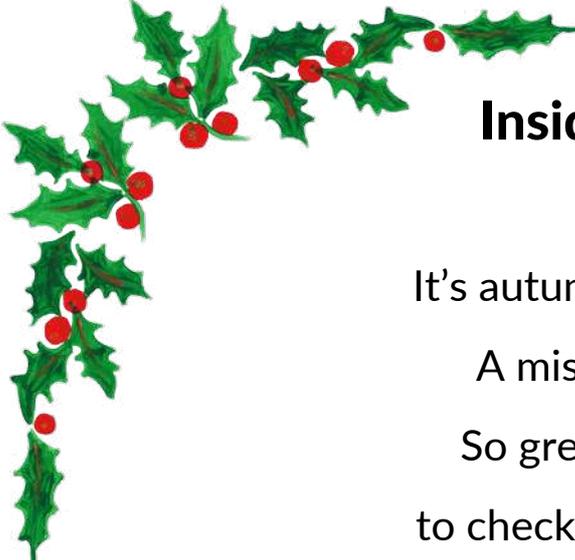
	January	February	March
Deadline for material	Christmas Break	18th January	15th February
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Inside in my Greenhouse

It's autumn now, the clock's gone back
A misty daylight woke me early.
So greenhouse with a coffee mug
to check my Costco plants grow fairly.

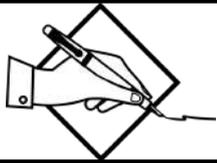
They sparkle on the wooden stage
Receiving tender, loving care.
"Please prepare some troughs and pots
To share with folks at Christmas Fayre".

I thought I heard them say to me
as autumn leaves dropped on the Drive.
"Just plant us out, and pot us up,
on Christmas Day we'll stay alive!"

For Christ's alive on Christmas Day
and his salvation brings relief.
Just like our plants, we'll grow and thrive
secure in this belief.



Maurice Smith
30 October 2023
08.30 am



Letter from Sue T

I wonder what your favourite songs are? And what about Christmas Carols? One of my favourites is Joy to the World which, based on Psalm 98, talks of heaven and nature uniting to sing together in joy when Christ comes:

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come
Let Earth receive her King
Let every heart prepare Him room
And Heaven and nature sing*



The Church of England's 2023 Christmas campaign is called "Join the Song" and highlights how singing can help draw us closer to God and each other through the journey from Advent to Epiphany; darkness into light. There are songs for every season of the church year, just as there are songs for every season of life, and music has the power to comfort and enlighten us.

Christmas is a time to celebrate, but it can also be a time that is difficult as we remember loved ones who are no longer with us. Often, we will have songs that remind us of that person and can be a source of great comfort and joy. It can also be good to talk to others about those we miss, and there will be plenty of opportunities to do this in the two bereavement groups that are starting in our parish on Tuesday 5th December. The first is at St Luke's in the morning from 10-11.30 and then from 1.30-3 in the afternoon at St Andrew's and they will meet at the same times on the first Tuesday of every month.

On the very first Christmas Day a heavenly host of angels frightened a bunch of shepherds with their heavenly song about a child born to save the world. The shepherds searched for the child and found that he wasn't a king in a palace but a baby lying in an animal's feeding trough. There was nothing sentimental, cosy or sparkly about this Christmas Day.

The apostle Paul wrote to the early church "May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace" (Romans 15:13). My prayer is similar, that whatever your personal circumstances, you are filled with the joy and peace of the Christ child this Christmas and the Hope he brings sustains you into 2024.

This will be my first Christmas among you in Liverpool and I am looking forward to experiencing how you do Christmas in Liverpool. Over many years in many places, I notice how churches build their own fabulous traditions around Advent and Christmas and I am excited to see how you mark this great festival.

But I am reminded that in our extravaganza and paraphernalia of festivities, we can lose sight of the harsh realities of the nativity story: a stable, the cold night, the Inn's closed door, refugees fleeing to Egypt, the brutal slaughter of the innocent.

These harsh realities mirror the harsh realities of the world we live in. We see war, natural disasters, chronic anxiety, and poverty all around us. God embraced this world when sending Jesus at Christmas and God asks us as a church, who face challenges of our own, to lift our heads and show love to the world. To be encouraged by the nativity story and encourage others because of it.

As in previous years, the Church of England tries to come together with a campaign for Advent and Christmas. This year's theme – Follow the Star: Join the Song – highlights how singing can help draw us closer to God and each other through the journey from Advent to Epiphany. I encourage you to use their resources and take part in their invitation to sing the First Nowell as part of a way of bringing people to church.

And then together we are singing a song of God's hope for God's world. A hope that can only come through our belief in Jesus and Jesus' story from Christmas to Easter.

So sing this song of hope as you celebrate Christmas in your place. And renew in yourself a commitment to being that light of hope in God's world.

Have a blessed, peaceful, hope-filled Christmas.

Bishop John



Parish News



Weekly Events in December & January

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)
last session 12th December, recommencing in January
- 6pm: Boys Brigade (St Peter's)*

Wednesdays

- 1pm - 2.30pm: Wednesday Weenies (St Thomas' church hall)*
- 1pm - 3pm: Knit and Chat group at (St Peter's)*
- 2.30pm - 4pm: Hot Spot for Y7 - Y11 (St Thomas' church hall)*
- 7.30pm: Women's Fellowship (St Peter's)
last session 6th December, recommencing in February



Thursdays

- 2pm - 3pm: English Classes (St Thomas' church hall)*
- 2pm - 3.15pm: Gentle dance class (St Luke's)
last session 14th December, recommencing 11th January

Fridays

- 2pm: Bible Study (St Thomas' church hall)*
- 9.30am - 10.30am: Mini Street Pop Up Play (St Andrew's)*



Sundays

- 1pm - 3pm: Asylum seeker and refugee drop in (St Thomas' church hall)
last session 17th December, recommencing in January

*Please check locally for dates around Christmas break

December Events

Saturday 2nd December

11am - 1pm: Christmas Fayre (St Luke's)

Tuesday 5th December

10am - 11.30am: Bereavement Support Group (St Luke's)

1.30pm - 3pm: Bereavement Support Group (St Andrew's)

Friday 8th December

10am: Christmas Tree Festival Opening Service (St Aidan's)

5pm: Children's Christmas Film Night (St Aidan's)

Saturday 9th December

10am - 3pm: Christmas Tree Festival (St Aidan's)

11am: Teddy Bears Christmas Brunch with baptism families (Holy Trinity)

Sunday 10th December

12pm - 3pm: Christmas Tree Festival (St Aidan's)

6.30pm: Christmas Praise (St Thomas')

Monday 11th December

9.30am: Rectory School Nativity Play (Holy Trinity)

Tuesday 12th December

6.30pm: Ladies Christmas Meal at Bryn Masonic Hall (Holy Trinity)

Wednesday 13th December

2.30pm: Rectory School Nativity Play (Holy Trinity)

Saturday 16th December

10am: Litter Pick (meeting at St Thomas' church hall)

10.30am: Carol Singing on the Gerard Centre



Monday 18th December

10am: Kids for Christ online (contact St Aidan's for details)

Monday 18th - Wednesday 20th December

Experience Christmas with Rectory School (Holy Trinity)

Tuesday 19th December

1.30pm - 3pm: Peace of Mind Dementia Café (St Andrew's)

Wednesday 20th December

2.30pm: Experience Christmas Celebration with Rectory School (Holy Trinity)

7pm: Mothers' Union Carol Service (St Thomas)



January Events

Tuesday 2nd January

10am - 11.30am: Bereavement Support Group (St Luke's)

1.30pm - 3pm: Bereavement Support Group (St Andrew's)

Wednesday 17th January

10am: Kids for Christ online (contact St Aidan's for details)

Friday 19th January

Mothers' Union and Friends meal (Bryn Masonic Hall)

*booking is essential

Saturday 20th January

10am: Litter Pick (meeting at St Thomas' church hall)

Tuesday 30th January

1.30pm - 3pm: Peace of Mind Dementia Café (St Andrew's)

POP UP SALE OF QUALITY HIGH STREET GOODS



**Heavily discounted
prices for
one day only**

Clothing &
accessories, toys,
homeware, gifts.

We accept cash &
card.
All proceeds go to the
Rebuild with Hope
Foundation & Ashton
Food Pantry

Tuesday 6th February 2024
St Thomas Church,
Warrington Road,
Ashton in Makerfield,
Wigan,
WN4 9PL
10:00 – 13:30



Find us on facebook



Wigan South Hub Churches

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

Bereavement Support Group

We invite you
to come to a
Safe Space

Don't Walk Your
Journey Through
Grief Alone

Share your experiences with
a group of loving people

St Luke's Church
Bolton Road
Stubshaw Cross
WN4 8UN

10.00am - 11.30am

St Andrew's Church
274 Garswood Road
Garswood
WN4 0TU

1.30pm - 3.00pm

1st Tuesday of every month - Starting December 2023





Christmas Celebration



From 3pm
Sunday 17th December
Holy Trinity Church

Come along and join us as we tell the Christmas story through music, film and poetry.

The church will be decorated as we sing Christmas carols followed by mince pies, tea and coffee.

Tell your friends, there is something for all ages.



Christmas Tree Festival

Friday 8th - Sunday 10th December

St Aidan's Church, Main Street, Billinge
WN5 7HD

Free Entry!



Come and see a spectacular array of beautifully decorated trees promoting businesses and groups in Billinge and local areas.

Friday 8th December

10am: Opening Service with local schools

Come and join us for the switching on of the lights!

5pm: Children's Christmas Film Night

Come along and watch a short Christmas film with your children. Hot chocolate and goodie bag included.

Only £3 each (pay on the door)

Contact Alison to book a place and for more details

Saturday 9th December

10am - 3pm: Church Open

Refreshments available

Sunday 10th December

12pm - 3pm: Church Open

4pm: Carols by Candlelight

Everyone is welcome!



**The trees will remain in church for the Christmas Season.
There will be a range of events held in church with lots of visitors.**

This is an ideal, cost effective way to advertise your business or group.

Please contact Alison if you would like to sponsor a tree or to find out more: Alison 07837549722



Services in December



<p>Sunday 3rd</p>	<p>9.00am Morning Worship 9.30am Christingle Service 10.00am Holy Communion 10.30am Holy Communion 10.30am Christingle Service 10.45am Toy Service 11.00am Toy Service 6.30pm Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's St Peter's Holy Trinity St Thomas' St Luke's St Thomas'</p>
<p>Wednesday 6th</p>	<p>10.00am Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Aidan's</p>
<p>Thursday 7th</p>	<p>9.45am BCP Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Thomas'</p>
<p>Sunday 10th</p>	<p>9.00am Holy Communion 9.30am Holy Communion 10.30am Sta's4all in church 10.30am All Age Worship 10.30am Holy Communion 10.45am Nativity Service 11.00am Christingle & Holy Communion 4.00pm Carols by Candlelight</p>	<p>St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's St Peter's Holy Trinity St Thomas' St Luke's St Aidan's</p>
<p>Wednesday 13th</p>	<p>10.00am: Holy Communion</p>	<p>Holy Trinity</p>
<p>Thursday 14th</p>	<p>9.45am: BCP Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Thomas'</p>

Sunday 17th	<p>9.00am Morning Worship 9.30am Carol Service 10.00am St Aidan's Beacon Crib Service 10.30am Carol Service 10.45am Holy Communion 11.00am Family Worship 3.00pm Christmas Celebration 4.00pm: Evening Prayer 6.30pm Nine Lessons & Carols</p>	<p>St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's St Peter's St Thomas' St Luke's Holy Trinity St Aidan's St Thomas'</p>
Wednesday 20th	<p>10.00am Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Aidan's</p>
Thursday 21st	<p>9.45am BCP Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Thomas'</p>
Sunday 24th	<p>9.00am Holy Communion 9.30am Morning Worship 10.30am Christmas Service 10.45am Christingle Service 11.00am Holy Communion 3.00pm Holy Communion 8.30pm Holy Communion 11.00pm Midnight Communion</p>	<p>St Thomas' St Andrew's St Peter's St Thomas' St Luke's Holy Trinity St Aidan's St Thomas'</p>
Monday 25th	<p>10.30am Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Thomas'</p>
Sunday 31st	<p>10.30am: Wigan South Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Aidan's</p>





Services in January



Wednesday 3rd	10.00am: Holy Communion	St Aidan's
Thursday 4th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	St Thomas'
Sunday 7th	<p>9.00am Morning Worship 9.30am Morning Worship 10.00am Holy Communion 10.30am Holy Communion 10.30am Morning Worship 10.45am Worship Together 11.00am Family Worship 6.30pm Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's St Peter's Holy Trinity St Thomas' St Luke's St Thomas'</p>
Wednesday 10th	10.00am Holy Communion	Holy Trinity
Thursday 11th	9.45am BCP Holy Communion	St Thomas'
Sunday 14th	<p>9.00am Holy Communion 9.30am Holy Communion 10.30am Sta's4all in school 10.30am All Age Worship 10.30am Holy Communion 10.45am Worship Together 11.00am Holy Communion 4.00pm Evening Prayer</p>	<p>St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's St Peter's Holy Trinity St Thomas' St Luke's St Aidan's</p>

Wednesday 17th	10.00am: Holy Communion	St Aidan's
Thursday 18th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	St Thomas'
Sunday 21st	9.00am Morning Worship 9.30am Church café 10.00am Morning Worship 10.30am Morning Prayer 10.30am Morning Worship 10.45am Holy Communion 11.00am Family Worship 6.30pm Evening Prayer	St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's St Peter's Holy Trinity St Thomas' St Luke's St Thomas'
Wednesday 24th	10.00am Holy Communion	Holy Trinity
Thursday 25th	9.45am BCP Holy Communion	St Thomas'
Sunday 28th	9.00am Holy Communion 9.30am Morning Worship 10.00am St Aidan's Beacon Christingle 10.30am Café Church 10.30am Holy Communion 10.45am Worship Together 11.00am Family Worship 4.00pm Holy Communion	St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's St Peter's Holy Trinity St Thomas' St Luke's St Aidan's

How wonderful to have so many services and events across Wigan South hub this Christmas time!

We do encourage everyone to join in any acts of fellowship across the hub.

As well as meeting new people, you are always sure to find a familiar face and a warm welcome.

Located at St Thomas' Church Hall, Ashton and St Aidan's Church, Billinge. Our local pantries will be open at the following times in December:

Tuesday 5th, 12th, 19th December

- 10.30am: Welcoming space to sit and chat
- 11am – 12pm: Food Pantry

CLOSED 26th December

Thursday 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th December

- 2.30pm: Welcoming space to sit and chat
- 3pm – 4pm: Food Pantry

Saturday 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th December

- 10.30am: Welcoming space to sit and chat
- 11am – 12pm: Food Pantry

Sunday 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th (see below) 31st December

- 2.30pm: Welcoming space to sit and chat
- 3pm – 4pm: Food Pantry

Sunday 24th December

- 6pm – 7pm: Food Pantry



Friday 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd December

- 11.30am – 2pm: Warm Space
- 12pm – 2pm: Food Pantry

CLOSED 29th December

Both Pantries will be back open as usual in January



High & Holy Days



17th December: Eglantyne Jebb, founder of ‘Save the Children’

Here is a modern-day saint whose compassion and determination has saved literally millions of lives.

Eglantyne did not begin as an obvious ‘mover and shaker’ of people. Born in Shropshire in 1876, she grew up in Ellesmere, studied history at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford, taught at Marlborough, and then resigned as she was not physically robust.

Eglantyne moved to live with her mother in Cambridge, and it would have been so easy to settle for a life of peaceful obscurity. But she was a Christian, and at Oxford she had developed a passion for social concerns, so this compassion now drove her to take action.

She began in 1906 by publishing research on the poverty she’d found in Cambridge.

Then in 1912 the Balkan Wars broke out, and Eglantyne left Cambridge for Macedonia. Her months among the refugees led her to decide that long-term constructive aid was more effective than short-term handouts.

The First World War left Eglantyne horrified by the prolonged Allied blockade on Germany and Austria-Hungary, which even after Armistice meant starvation for millions of civilians, especially children.

And so in 1919 Eglantyne and her sister Dorothy Buxton helped found the ‘Fight the Famine’ Council, which wanted to end the blockade and establish a League of Nations.

One day during a rally in Trafalgar Square, Eglantyne was arrested for distributing a leaflet showing starving children which read: “Our blockade has caused this – millions of children are starving to death.”

She ended up in court and was fined, but the judge was so impressed with Eglantyne’s commitment to children that he himself paid her fine. His money became the first donation to Save the Children, the new charity just set up by Eglantyne and Dorothy.



Save the Children was officially launched at the Albert Hall in May 1919, with the aim of helping the starving civilians of central Europe. It was a success, raising £400,000 in that first year alone.

When in the autumn of 1921 Russia was facing famine, Save the Children chartered a cargo ship, the SS Torcello, to carry 600 tons of lifesaving food and medical supplies to Russia – saving hundreds of thousands of lives.

By 1922 Save the Children had become one of Britain’s biggest charities. Eglantyne’s Declaration of the Rights of the Child, written in 1923, was adopted by the League of Nations the following year. The present-day UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is derived from it.

But ten years of running Save the Children had sapped Eglantyne’s fragile strength, and she died in Geneva in 1928, aged only 52.



Save the Children

26th December - On the Feast of Stephen

Everyone knows that it was on the feast of Stephen that 'good king Wenceslas looked on'. After all, it's in a Christmas carol - but why? There's nothing about Christmas in it: a splendid young page who rustled up some flesh, wine and logs, an old man out in the snow ('deep and crisp and even') and a kindly monarch. But Christmas?

The clue is in 'the feast of Stephen', which falls on 26th December. That, too, has nothing to do with Christmas, beyond the fact that in the past people put a contribution in tradesmen's boxes as a kind of Christmas present for their services during the year.

The Stephen whose feast day falls on the day after Christmas was the first Christian martyr. (You can read his story in the book of Acts). He was a member of the church in Jerusalem in its very early days, and soon found himself involved with six others in administering food to those in need. The apostles, felt that it wasn't appropriate for them to abandon preaching and 'serve tables', so they selected them to do the job for them. Stephen, however, quickly revealed hidden gifts as an eloquent spokesman for the Christian cause.

The Temple authorities, were soon alerted to this new and hitherto unknown evangelist. They decided to make an example of him, thus firing a warning shot, as it were, across the bows of the apostles themselves. So, they arrested Stephen and accused him of speaking against the two central elements of their religion - the 'holy place' (the Temple) and 'the customs Moses handed down to us' (the Law).

Given the right to defend himself, Stephen instead launched into an eloquent and at times biting account of Jewish history, culminating in the accusation that they had committed the worst possible sin by killing the Messiah. Inflamed by his words, his hearers abandoned any pretence of legal impartiality, rushing towards him and dragging him out of the city to a place where they began to stone him to death. Stephen, the rank-and-file Christian, died under a hail of rocks for claiming that Mary's Son was the promised Messiah.

That is most probably the reason why the first martyr is honoured on the day after we celebrate the birth of the Saviour. It's a bit like the myrrh in the gifts of the Wise Men - a reminder, as we celebrate, that the bitter shadow of a cross is never far away from this story.



Crossword



1		2			3		4		5		6	
7					8							
	9			10		11		12		13		14
15												
16												
17	18			19	20		21					
			22									23
24									25			
26							27					

Answers on page 26

Across

- 1 Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)
- 4 'He stretches out the heavens like a — , and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Isaiah 40:22) (6)
- 7 What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah's ark (Gen 8:11) (4)
- 8 Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8)
- 9 Judah's last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jer 52:11) (8)
- 13 'They all — and were satisfied' (Luke 9:17) (3)
- 16 Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9)
- 17 National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)
- 19 Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — — (4,4)
- 24 Able dock (anag.) (8)
- 25 The number of stones David chose for his battle with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4)
- 26 Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6)
- 27 Soak (Isaiah 16:9) (6)

Down

- 1 Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4)
- 2 Conciliatory (Titus 3:2) (9)
- 3 'Do this, whenever you — it, in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (5)
- 4 A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)
- 5 One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4)
- 6 'Reach out your hand and — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2)
- 10 Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5)
- 11 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3)
- 12 Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5)
- 13 Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9)
- 14 Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4)
- 15 One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20) (4)
- 18 Narnia's Lion (5)
- 20 One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have rather washed (2 Kings 5:12) (5)
- 21 Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5)
- 22 Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1)
- 23 Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4)

Where did Christmas cards come from?

Christmas cards have a history which may surprise you: their origins are not of the Church, but of the Post Office and railways.

Of course, very early 'Christmas cards' had been around for hundreds of years, in the form of a simple exchange of Christmas greetings in private letters. The earliest such letter on record was written in England in 1534.



In 1611 a HUGE Christmas card made a one-off appearance. It measured a whopping 33" by 24", and was given to King James I of England (who was also King James VI of Scotland). It featured an illustration of a rose, four poems, a song, and a Christmas message for the king and his son.

Then in 1843 came the creation of Christmas cards as we know them today. One enterprising man was responsible for this: Sir Henry Cole, a senior civil servant who had helped launch the 'Public Record Office', now called the Post Office.

Sir Henry Cole helped to introduce the Penny Post, as it was called. Until then, only rich people could afford the Post, but with the building of the railways, which carried far more packages than a horse and cart (and went much faster), suddenly the Penny Post became possible.

Sir Henry wanted to encourage 'ordinary' people to use the new service. So he came up with the bright idea of a creating a simple card that people could send each other for Christmas. His friend, John Horsley, was an artist, who designed a three-panel card. Two panels depicted people caring for the poor, and the middle panel showed a family enjoying a large Christmas dinner.

They printed about 1000 cards that first year, and advertised under the slogan: 'Just published, a Christmas Congratulations Card; or picture emblematical of old English festivity to perpetuate kind recollections between dear friends!'

The cards sold for one shilling each and could be posted to friends and family for a Penny. There was an immediate, warm response from the public.



Printing methods improved, and by 1860 Christmas cards were produced in large quantities. By



1870 the cost of posting one had dropped to half a penny, and the custom was rapidly gaining popularity. By the early 1900s, the custom had spread across Europe.

The first cards usually included a Nativity scene, and in late Victorian times, robins and snow-scenes. Robins were chosen because the postmen in those days were nick-named 'Robin Postmen', because of their red uniforms.

Christmas cards appeared in the USA in the late 1840s. They were mass produced from 1875, and in 1915 John C Hall and two of his brothers created Hallmark Cards, which today offers 2,000 different designs of Christmas card.

Charity Christmas cards began in Denmark in the early 1900s. They spread to Sweden and Norway, and then on throughout Europe and America.

Last year the Royal Mail estimated that it had delivered 150 million cards during the Christmas period.



Big Ben

Do you stay up until midnight on New Year's Eve? If so, this year will be special – it is 100 years ago, that the BBC first broadcast the chimes of Big Ben to welcome in the New Year.

For it was not until then that the chimes of Big Ben were ever heard outside of Parliament and Westminster. The BBC got permission to broadcast them to the nation, and history was made.

That first year, the BBC engineers were not allowed into Parliament, and so had to access Big Ben from the roof of the Palace of Westminster. This meant their microphone picked up a lot of traffic noise too. But a tradition started, and by 1924 the bongs were being broadcast every day.

The BBC installed low sensitivity microphones very close to the bells, so they missed the sound of the clock mechanism.

The nation quickly came to love the sound of Big Ben, and during WW2 the chimes were broadcast across occupied Europe – encouraging millions in their struggle against the Nazis.

The Big Ben daily time signal is still cherished today, and Big Ben rings live for important events such as Remembrance Day and New Year, when the BBC sends the sound right around the world.



Crossword Answers



ACROSS: 1, Depend. 4, Canopy. 7, Beak. 8, Irritate. 9, Zedekiah. 13, Ate. 16, Job's comforter. 17, NAE. 19, Lang Syne. 24, Blockade. 25, Five. 26, Enigma. 27, Drench.

DOWN: 1, Debt. 2, Peaceable. 3, Drink. 4, Curia. 5, Nuts. 6, Put it. 10, Excel. 11, Is man. 12, Hoofs. 13, Attention. 14, Ezra. 15, Ijon. 18, Aslan. 20, Abana. 21, Greed. 22, GCMG. 23, Leah.

Preparations

Christmas is a time for making plans. Presents to buy, cards to send, decorations to put up, food to order, travel arrangements to make... the list goes on and on. But whether our plans are ambitious or simple this Christmas, we still dread anything going wrong.

Yet plans seemed to fall apart that first Christmas. Mary and Joseph had planned to marry and set up home together in Galilee. Then Mary had become unexpectedly pregnant, and they were summoned to Bethlehem for the census. So instead of a comfortable Galilean home amongst family, they were suddenly parents, all alone in a place fit for animals!

The shepherds had expected another routine night on the hills of Bethlehem. But the angel's message and a heavenly choir changed everything, and they went to search for the Christ-child instead. Their change of plans brought them great joy!

The Eastern men had expected to find the 'King of the Jews' in a royal palace. But the star by-passed Jerusalem and took them to Bethlehem. Then their plans changed again, when they were warned in a dream to avoid Herod, and slip home another way.

The Holy Couple then had another upset of plans: Joseph was warned in a dream NOT to go home to Galilee, but to flee for safety in Egypt instead.

At first sight, all these changes display a chaotic mix of circumstances. But behind it all, God was working out His divine purposes. When Jesus was born, all the Old Testament prophecies of His coming were fulfilled. Nothing happened by chance. Into a messy world God brought to us His Son, to be our Saviour.

We worship a great and loving God who not only planned that first Christmas but is also preparing for our stay in His eternal home.

The plans God makes are wise, and they always succeed! (Isaiah 28:29)

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 3pm - 4pm
Saturday 11am - 12pm
Sunday 3pm - 4pm

Max 2 visits per week

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



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Danesbrook House,
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				3			9	7	
		3	1	2			4		

*Sara preferred to let people work
out the hymns for themselves*





December Services

	St Thomas'	St Luke's
Sunday 3rd	9.00am: Morning Worship 10.45am: Toy Service 6.30pm: Holy Communion	11.00am: Toy Service
Thursday 7th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 10th	9.00am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Nativity Service	11.00am: Christingle & Holy Communion
Thursday 14th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 17th	9.00am: Morning Worship 10.45am: Holy Communion 6.30pm: Nine Lessons & Carols	11.00am: Family Worship
Thursday 21st	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 24th	9.00am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Christingle 11.00pm: Midnight Communion	11.00am: Holy Communion
Monday 25th	10.30am: Holy Communion	
Sunday 31st	10.30am: Wigan South Hub Holy Communion at St Aidan's	



January Services

	St Thomas'	St Luke's
Thursday 4th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 7th	9.00am: Morning Worship 10.45am: Worship Together 6.30pm: Holy Communion	11.00am: Family Worship
Thursday 11th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 14th	9.00am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Worship Together	11.00am: Holy Communion
Thursday 18th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 21st	9.00am: Morning Worship 10.45am: Holy Communion 6.30pm: Evening Prayer	11.00am: Family Worship
Thursday 25th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 28th	9.00am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Worship Together	11.00am: Family Worship

News from our churches

Promotion Brochure

It's a couple of years since I first wrote in the December edition of the magazine and repeated last year that we were still looking for someone with media skills to prepare a promotion brochure detailing the facilities offered by our reordered church building. Sadly, we are still looking!

This deficiency was noted by the Right Buildings Group who stated in their report "However it is felt that the promotion of the excellent facilities offered by the church needs to be a routine part of its engagements with the local community and that of the south hub more broadly".

This particularly ministry must appeal to someone who can help us make our presence in Ashton community more prominent. It was ironic on the occasion of the Christmas fayre one lady told me that she had rung for a taxi and a well known local company professed no knowledge of St Thomas Church and told her that she would need to walk down to the Commercial pub to be picked up!

Christmas Fayre

Our wonderful facilities again played host to the Christmas Fayre arranged by Jan and her social team to whom we are so grateful. It was a very enjoyable occasion with quite a number of families in attendance enjoying the various stalls, including craft items, tombola and refreshments served in the church. There was the buzz of enjoyable fellowship.

It follows that our thanks go to all those who worked so hard in the kitchen, the soup and hot pot stall, the waitresses and those manning the stalls. It was a great effort and one which raised money for the church and organisation funds.

December Events

December is a busy month in the church year leading to celebration of the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Jess has compiled a detailed list of all the services and other events which are happening in the South Parish, please check them out and we look forward to seeing you all there.

For reference, the events and services across the parish are listed on pages 8 to 17.

It is time to sign off another year of St Thomas magazine news with the next edition in February 2024. May I take this opportunity of wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a wonderfully health new year.

Are you able to help?

Malcolm

Pauline McLaren does fantastic job at keeping the baptism and burial records up to date, but she would value some help from one or two others please. This could be for an hour a month, or more, or less. Pauline is the best person to speak to about if you would like to know what it will involve. She also sends out a birthday card to each child who is baptised in St Thomas on their next birthday after their baptism and we wondered if someone would like to take over buying and sorting out delivering these cards (or posting them)?



The Children's Society



The Children's Society work with many vulnerable children.

In Britain today there are children and young people who feel scared , unloved and unable to cope. These are the children and young people that the Children's Society work with. The Society listens, supports and acts to make small changes that can make big differences to their lives.

We have about 50 parishioners who support the work of the Children's Society by collecting loose change in a collecting box or make a donation. This year the total raised by these people was £1250.00. Which will enable the society to continue their work with the young people.

I took over as collection secretary from Margaret Herd in 1990, and I have now decided that I will no longer continue in the position of collector.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported The Children's Society over the past 33 years, I hope that you are able to continue to support the work that they do.

Valerie Hunter

David Fearnley has produced another look into the history of our town for which we are grateful.

RUTH EVANS (1819 – 1896) OF HAYDOCK

Ashtonians will recall that the Ashton View Residential Care Home, on Wigan Road, was formerly the site of the British School or Evans School. “Evans” refers to Ruth Evans, of Haydock, who paid for the building of the school in 1892.

10/8/1896 Miss Ruth Evans, aged 77, of “Bod Arthur”, Bath Street, Rhyl, died at Coed Tal Glyndfrdwy, near Llangollen. Ruth was born 1819 the daughter of Richard Evans the founder of the colliery firm Richard Evans & Co., Haydock, with other collieries at Golborne. She and her brothers Joseph and Josiah were brought up at the mansion named “The Grange” in Haydock. Joseph then built a mansion called “The Hurst” at Prescott and Ruth lived there with Joseph until his death. She then went to live at “Briars Hey”, Rainhill, then “The Holt”, Prescott, and in 1890 Ruth moved to “Bod Arthur”, Rhyl.

Whilst at “The Holt” she inherited the wealth of her late brother Joseph. She was also one of the largest shareholders in the family firm and with her vast wealth she began her many charitable deeds in the region.

The Congregationalist religion greatly benefited from her generosity. Ruth, her father Richard and brothers Joseph and Josiah, despite living in Haydock worshipped at the Congregational Church, Bolton Road, Ashton in Makerfield. The Evans family provided the finance to replace the old, dilapidated building with a new church in Gerard Street. Ruth laid the foundation stone of the new church. The old building being used by the Salvation Army (see Ashton Congregational Chapel article). Josiah Evans provided the finance for “The Manse”, Old Road (the building next to the former police station) as the residence of Rev. H. Wilson, vicar of the Congregational Church. In 1887 Ruth, in recognition of Charles Latham’s 50 years’ service as Superintendent of Ashton Congregational Sunday School, erected a memorial clock in the church tower. Ruth set the clock in motion.

In memory of her late brother, Joseph Evans of Haydock, Ruth financed the building of churches and schools in Ashton, Haydock and Rainhill at a total cost of £25,000 (today £2,500,000).

In 1892 Ruth financed the building of Emmanuel School/ British School/ Evans School on Wigan Road. The school cost £5,200 (today £500,000) and provided elementary education for 850 pupils. Ruth financed the building of schools in Haydock, Prescot and in Rhyl – the Christ Church British School, at a cost of £4,600, and Emmanuel British School. She left bequests in her will to secure the future of the schools.

At Rhyl she built a “Minister’s Rest” as a retreat for members of the ministry. She built Christ Church and manse, a residence for the vicar, at Haydock and a Congregational church, Sunday school buildings, swimming baths, gymnasium, club house and cocoa room for the public’s use at The Holt”, Rainhill. In Newton and Rhyl she also built cocoa rooms.

The Nonconformist religion also benefited from her generosity. Ruth was buried 14/8/1896 in the Evan’s family vault at the Congregational Chapel, Newton, which the Evan’s family had built. Wreaths of flowers came from Mrs. Grimke (sister; 1848 she married Theodore Drayton Grimke of South Carolina, N. America – see article, Theodore Drayton Grimke; Josiah Evans, of Haydock (brother); staff of Richard Evans & Co., of Haydock and of Haydock Cottage Hospital. Ruth left £47,000 (today £5,000,000) in her will.

In 1896, prior to Ruth’s death, her nephew Arthur Evans, of Haydock, the son of Josiah Evans had gone to Oberammergau, Germany, for health reasons. Arthur was found dead from a gunshot wound either accidental or suicide. He was buried in Germany. Ruth had been in ill health for a while but some believed that the shock on hearing of Arthur’s death hastened her demise.

David A. Fearnley

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



General Fund

In memory of parents and family from Jean Boon

In loving memory of **Marlene Thomas**
from Friends of Garswood Hall Bowling Club

Thanks for home communion from Isobel Bowen

Thanks for home communion from Elsie Deluce

Donation From Ashton Festival

In Memory of **Derek Twist** from Joan Martin and Family

Garden of Rest

In loving memory of **John Lee** and all our loved ones from Doreen

In memory of **Ronald Boon** from Jean and Family

From Margaret Turner

Christmas remembrance of **Gordon Lyon**
loved, sadly missed and thought of always from Marie and Family

In memory of **Derek Twist** from Maureen and Les Cook

In memory of a Dear Uncle, **Derek Twist** from Margaret and Eileen

Heating Fund

In loving memory of **Peter Raymond** from Margaret and Family

In loving memory of **Peter Raymond** from Jean Latimer and Family



The Registers



Funerals or Burials of Ashes 'May they rest in peace'

3 November	Derek Twist	89
9 November	Edna Pugh	90
25 November	Elizabeth Ogden	94
29 November	Leonora Presley	92



Holy Baptism 'We welcome them into the Lord's family'

5 November	Francesca Louise Simpson
5 November	Rebecca Jane Mallinson
26 November	Hallie Lea Sudworth
26 November	Daisy Louise Pendlebury

St Thomas' and St Luke's Organisations

Coffee Mornings

Tues 10am–12pm at St Thomas'
Barbara Taylor
205136

Wednesday Weenies

Wed 1pm–2.30pm in Church Hall
Jan Cornthwaite
721626

Mothers' Union

3rd Wed 7.30pm at St Thomas'
Barbara Taylor
205136

Fairtrade Stall

3rd Sun 11.45am at St Thomas'
Anne Wooff
724207

Litter Pick

3rd Sat 10am–12pm from Church Hall car park
Chris Wooff
724207

Flower Guild

Meta Laites
723679

Asylum Seeker Support

English Class
Thurs 2pm - 3pm
Social Drop in
Sun 1pm - 3pm

Anne & Chris Wooff
724207

**For more information, please visit our website at
stthomasstluke.org.uk**

Ashton Pantry Sue Thomas 07877704645

Tuesday & Saturday 11am - 12pm

Thursday & Sunday 3pm - 4pm

Children's Sunday Clubs at St Thomas' Karen Cunliffe 07721770305

Sunday 10.45am

Girl Guiding Rachel Starkie 718350

Brownies: Thursday 6.30pm

Guides: Tuesday 7.00pm

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

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Electoral Roll Secretary

Ruth Laemmel see below

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Mary Owen 203277

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