

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



God is love

Whoever lives in love lives in God,
and God in them.

1 John 4:16

February 2024

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.

	February	March	April
Deadline for material	18th January	15th February	21 March
Publication date	28th January	25th February	31 March

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Winter Now

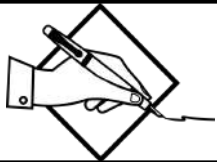
'Tis winter now; the fallen snow
Has left the heavens all coldly clear;
Through leafless boughs the sharp winds blow,
And all the earth lies dead and drear.

And yet God's love is not withdrawn;
His life within the keen air breathes;
His beauty paints the crimson dawn,
And clothes the boughs with glittering wreaths...

O God! Who giv'st the winter's cold,
As well as summer's joyous rays,
Us warmly in thy love enfold,
And keep us through life's wintry days.

*From a poem by Samuel Longfellow
1819-92*





Letter from Sandra

I am a mum to two adult children, Bethany 29, who is due to be married to her husband to be Joe in April, and Jacob 26. I am also mum to two Yorkshire Terrier dogs, Teddy and Tilly!

Prior to my curacy I was a deputy head and early years teacher (for 30 years). I worked all my teaching career in Crosby, Liverpool, with 25 of those years being in a church school.

Prior to ordination training, I was a lay reader at St Paul's Church in Skelmersdale, but even before my licensing, I knew God was calling me to full time ministry. I am excited to be joining the team in Wigan South and staying in Church Wigan, having served my curacy in the Northeast Hub.

When I have any spare time, I enjoy arts and craft, and making things.

Hello! I am really looking forward to being part of South Hub and getting to know everyone, but with 6 churches it might take me a while, so please bear with me, and keep reminding me of your name if I forget it. I'll get there eventually!

When I was an ordinand, training for the ministry, I never once thought that God would sent me to Wigan, but he did, and slowly but surely, I have fallen in love with the people and places of Wigan. I knew, as I was coming to the end of my curacy, I didn't want to go anywhere else, but wanted to stay in Wigan, feeling that once again, this is where God was calling me.

I know that at the moment things are not easy for our churches and congregations with all that is going on with the challenges of aging population, finance and the Right Buildings process. But I firmly believe that God is in it all, that he is with us, and through prayer and discerning God's voice, He will lead and direct us.

I don't come with all the answers, but what I do come with is a desire to work with you all as we navigate the changing landscape together. I am very much a team player. I Corinthians 12 talks about how we each have different giftings, and that we are all different parts of the body, but we are all part of the body of Christ. I just want to thank each and every one of you who plays a part in the life of our six churches, however big or small, without you our churches wouldn't be the places they are.

My passion has always been for people to come into a deeper relationship with Jesus, and for us to grow together as disciples, journeying together in our walk of faith. Prayer is vitally important to me too, and I want to assure you that I will be upholding each worshipping community in my prayers and ask that you pray for me as I settle into South Hub.

Please also pray for my family who are staying behind in Skelmersdale, my daughter Bethany, soon to be son in law Joe, my son Jacob, and my mum Joan.

I pray God will bless each of you as we seek His will in our lives and the lives of His church.

***Blessings
Sandra***

Rev Sandra Jones will be licensed
at **10am on Sunday 4th February** in St Thomas'.

Everyone is welcome in church, but we do ask that you avoid using St Thomas' car park as Sandra's guests who don't know the area will need to park there.

If you would like to watch the service live on-line, please use this link <https://www.youtube.com/@stthomasstluke/streams> or you can watch it after it has been uploaded.

Parish News

Weekly Events in December & January

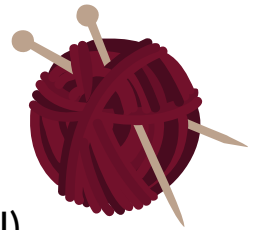
Mondays

- 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)
- 6pm: Boys Brigade (St Peter's)



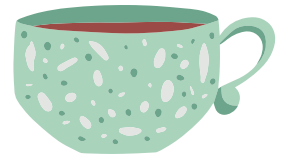
Wednesdays

- 1pm - 2.30pm: Wednesday Weenies (St Thomas' church hall)
- 1pm - 2.30pm: Walk the Walls (St Thomas')
- 1pm - 3pm: Knit and Chat group (St Peter's)
- 2.30pm - 4pm: Hot Spot for Y7 - Y11 (St Thomas' church hall)
- 7.30pm: Women's Fellowship (St Peter's)



Thursdays

- 2pm - 3pm: English Classes (St Thomas' church hall)
- 2pm - 3.15pm: Gentle dance class (St Luke's)



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)

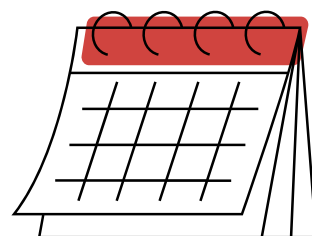
Please check locally for dates around term times

Services in February

Thursday 1st	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	St Thomas'
Sunday 4th	10.00am: Sandra's licensing service *All are encouraged to join this celebration*	St Thomas'
Wednesday 7th	10.00am: Holy Communion	St Aidan's
Thursday 8th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	St Thomas'
Sunday 11th	9.00am: Holy Communion 9.30am Holy Communion 10.30am: Sta's4all in school 10.30am: Holy Communion 10.30am: Christingle Service 10.45am: Worship Together 11.00am: Holy Communion 4.00pm: Evening Prayer	St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's Holy Trinity St Peter's St Thomas' St Luke's St Aidan's
Wednesday 14th	10.00am: Holy Communion	Holy Trinity
Thursday 15th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	St Thomas'
Sunday 18th	9.00am: Morning Worship 9.30am Church café 10.00am: Morning Worship 10.30am: Morning Worship 10.30am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Holy Communion 11.00am: Family Worship 6.30pm: Evening Prayer	St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's Holy Trinity St Peter's St Thomas' St Luke's St Thomas'
Wednesday 21st	10.00am Holy Communion	St Aidan's
Thursday 22nd	9.45am BCP Holy Communion	St Thomas'

Sunday 25th	9.00am: Holy Communion 9.30am Morning Worship 10.00am: St Aidan's Beacon 10.30am: Holy Communion 10.30am: Morning Prayer 10.45am: Worship Together 11.00am: Family Worship 4.00pm: Holy Communion	St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's Holy Trinity St Peter's St Thomas' St Luke's St Aidan's
Wednesday 28th	10.00am Holy Communion	Holy Trinity
Thursday 29th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	St Thomas'

February Diary



Monday 5th February

10.30am: Communion at Garswood House (organised by St Peter's)

Tuesday 6th February

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

10am - 1.30pm: Pop up quality goods stall (Ashton Pantry)

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

Saturday 10th February

10am - 2pm: St Aidan's Antique Road Show

Saturday 17th February

11am - 1pm: Mothers' Union Winter Brunch at St Thomas'

Wednesday 21st February:

K4C (Kids4Christ) online group via St Aidan's

7pm: Mothers' Union Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 20th February

1.30pm - 3pm: Peace of Mind Dementia Cafe

¹⁰**Friday 1 March 11am:** Mothers' Union Women's World Day of Prayer

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.



**St Aidan's Church,
Billinge**

Friday 11.30am - 2pm



**Holy Trinity Church
Downall Green**

Friday 9am - 10am

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

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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



St Aidan's Antique Road show



**Saturday 10th
February
10am - 2pm**



Pay just £2 for a valuation
from our expert Steven
Parkinson.

You then have an option to sell through
Steven if you wish.

Why not come along and find out if that
vase of Aunt Mabel's that has been stuck
on the sideboard for years actually has
any value!

There will be a bucket for your old foreign
and English coins.
These will be sorted, any valuable coins
will be sold and the proceeds given to
church funds.

All contributions gratefully received.

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

Life on a spin

Many years ago, at the Pleasure Beach at Blackpool, there was a certain 'ride' or amusement that was strictly for the physically fit. It consisted of a flat wooden disc about 20 feet in diameter and set at an angle of 45 degrees in the floor. When it began to rotate, the aim was to get to the centre where there was a pole. As the disc rotated faster and faster, everyone who failed to get to the pole got flung off. Nowadays there's probably a European Community regulation banning it as far too dangerous!

The principle of the game was a basic law of physics. When any wheel rotates, the outer rim moves fastest of all. Half way to the centre and you are moving a lot more slowly. And, at least theoretically, at the absolute centre will be a point which is totally still. That's why anyone who reached that pole could stand there quite comfortably.

We have just started the Church's season of Lent. It's generally thought of as being a time for giving up chocolate, wine, whatever. But it's really a time to remind us that in our own rapidly spinning world, God is the still centre.

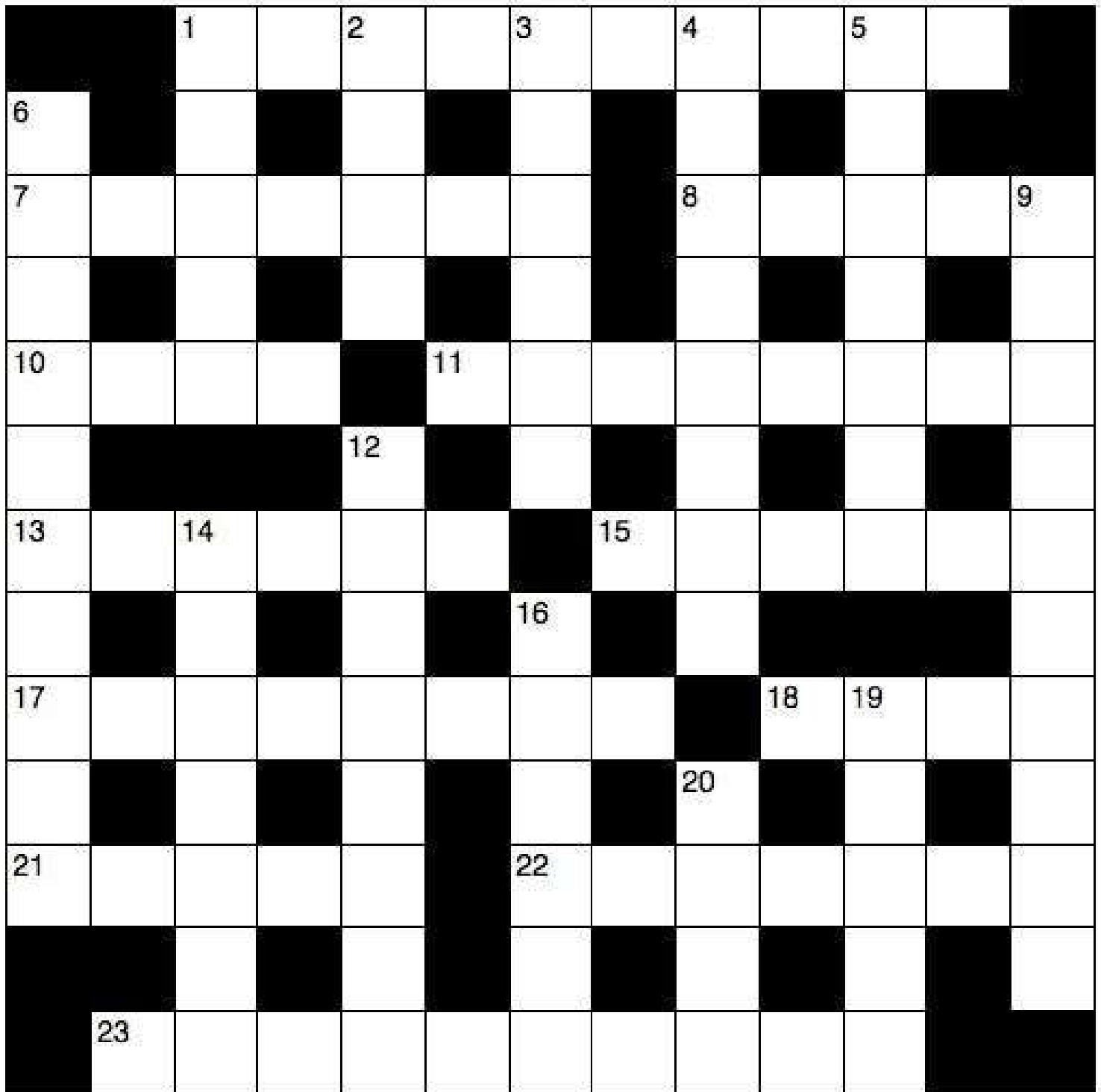
All around God is motion, sound, change and decay – galaxies circling, seasons and years rotating, life developing and decaying. And at the still centre, where there is no variableness, is God, the same yesterday, today and forever.

Only about seven weeks ago Christians worldwide were thinking of God getting involved in a special way in the ever moving and changing life of the world. And one great characteristic of Jesus was His stillness. Busy, harassed, injured people found someone with neither clever chat nor idle gossip, neither vulgar boasting nor loud opinion. His life always seemed to rotate round a still central point, which gave Him balance and authority.

"Be still then and know that I am God" wrote the Psalmist. Lent is a time for us to try and do just that – to find the still centre of God in our own individual lives.

Of course, we're all of us very much in the world, and must live our lives in all of its busyness. But it may do none of us any harm to be a little more silent than we often are – quick to listen and slow to speak. And the more silent spaces we give ourselves, the more we'll give that still, small voice within each one of us the chance to be heard.

Crossword



Answers on page 18

Across

- 1 Success or wealth (Deuteronomy 28:11) (10)
- 7 Forbidden fruit for Nazirites (Numbers 6:3) (7)
- 8 Concede (Job 27:5) (5)
- 10 Look at (Psalm 48:13) (4)
- 11 Much in evidence after weddings (8)
- 13 Condense (Job 36:27) (6)
- 15 Breakwater (6)
- 17 Give a tan (anag.) (8)
- 18 More usually now called Pentecost, — Sunday (4)
- 21 After living for 365 years, it was said of him that 'he walked with God' (Genesis 5:23–24) (5)
- 22 Trampled (Judges 9:27) (7)
- 23 For example, Miriam, Deborah (Exodus 15:20; Judges 4:4) (10)

Down

- 1 Arrogance (Proverbs 8:13) (5)
- 2 Roman poet from first century BC (4)
- 3 So rapt (anag.) (6)
- 4 Declare again (2 Corinthians 2:8) (8)
- 5 Paul's 'fellow worker', to whom he sent two epistles (Romans 16:21) (7)
- 6 God's foreseeing care and protection (Job 10:12) (10)
- 9 Traditional form of Roman Catholic Mass (10)
- 12 'The Lord... has given the — of Israel to David and his descendants for ever' (2 Chronicles 13:5) (8)
- 14 'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my — ' (Luke 1:46–47) (7)
- 16 The central element in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, identified and interpreted by Daniel (Daniel 2:31) (6)
- 19 'On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of — will not overcome it' (Matthew 16:18) (5)
- 20 City where Paul was under house arrest for two years (Acts 28:16) (4)

Let's Reclaim the Bible as our Story

Dear friends,
A Happy New Year to all.

Happy
New Year

"As Christians we watch the years pass not with nostalgia or sentimentality but with the joy of those moving forward to an encounter with true life"

~ Oscar Romero

May we be able to fill the year ahead with peace and love.

I pray for peace in our world, especially in the Holy Land, and wish a ceasefire including the release of the hostages.

I hope that you had a blessed Christmas and feel refreshed as we begin this new year. I pray for you and your community as you seek to work humbly for God in whatever way you are called to serve.

As you do so I would like to encourage you to consider how the bible will feature in your thoughts during this year. It may seem strange for a bishop to be saying this to a Christian community.



Yet as I have spoken before this is a longstanding concern of mine. That Christians have lost the knowledge of God's great story as written in the sixty-six books that make up our bible. We must reclaim that story and see it as our story. And we must be confident in telling it. Young and old, lay and clergy, we must be confident in the story and be able to show how our story fits into God's great story.

I don't want this to be a fad or an initiative. I want us to consciously weave our understanding of the bible and biblical study into all that we do over the next and future years.

We have the rule of life where we are encouraged to pray, read and learn and I would ask you think about how you use this discipline to reengage with your bible, to maybe delve into places that you haven't visited for a while. You will find great joy in the exploration. Our rule of life challenges us to continue to place scripture at the heart of what we are doing.

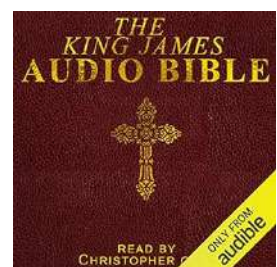
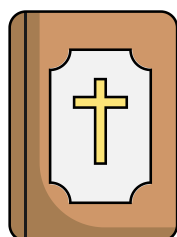
As will the rhythm of our clergy study and retreat days. I want to model what you can also do in your settings and places where you gather and worship. I am using the opportunities from our calendar to be able to think around the bible. I want to encourage you to do the same in your setting.

Some of you may choose to read the whole Bible in this year. Some may want to read the books in the Bible you are not familiar with. Some may want to re-read the familiar parts of the Bible with fresh eyes and ears. You may want to look at the provision you have in your congregation for studying the Bible. 'Disciple' means 'student.' We are all called to be learners as disciples of Christ.

Let's make 2024 a year where we consciously read, engage with, and study the Bible in every possible context, making a commitment to learn our own story in Christ and to share it confidently.

+John

Rt Revd Dr John Perumbalath, Bishop of Liverpool



Faith leaders call for change to asylum-claim system

Bishops and other faith leaders have joined forces with the Bishop of London to call on the Government to make a change in the leave-to-remain status situation for asylum seekers.

They say they want practice to match policy, for there to be better communication with asylum seekers, and for the timeframe to be extended.

While the faith leaders welcomed the Home Office's efforts to tackle the backlog in asylum claims, they expressed concern "at the number of refugees who, on receiving their leave-to-remain, are becoming street homeless."

The faith leaders said this meant a growing demand on London's churches, mosques, gurdwaras, synagogues and temples, for support with accommodation for those who have just achieved refugee status.

The faith leaders ask that Home Office to abide by its policy that refugees be given a minimum of 28 days from the date when they receive their biometric residence permit (BRP) before having to leave their accommodation. They also ask that the eviction notice period be extended from 28 days to 56, to allow adequate time to apply for Universal Credit and other benefits.

Bishop Mullally said: "Our churches are doing what they can to meet the need, and we all want to avoid further strain on our crisis systems. Homelessness increases the burden on the NHS, and has an overall impact on health, well-being, and the economy."

Crossword Answers

ACROSS: 1, Prosperity. 7, Raisins. 8, Admit. 10, View. 11, Confetti. 13, Distil. 15, Groyne. 17, Navigate. 18, Whit. 21, Enoch. 22, Trodden. 23, Prophetess.

DOWN: 1, Pride. 2, Ovid. 3, Pastor. 4, Reaffirm. 5, Timothy. 6, Providence. 9, Tridentine. 12, Kingship. 14, Saviour. 16, Statue. 19, Hades. 20, Rome.

4th February - Phileas, the brave bishop and martyr of Egypt

When did you first encounter Christianity? If it was as an adult, then Phileas is a saint for you. His life shows that Truth matters, whenever you encounter it, but is also a warning that you need to count the cost of becoming a Christian.

Phileas was a rich man living in Egypt at the end of the third century, when he first met Christians. Highly educated, he did not convert quickly, but instead studied their Gospels, and also at least part of the New Testament. Only then did he conclude that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

It was good that Phileas had done his research and was firm in his faith, because after his conversion, events came thick and fast. In those pressured times, the Church hadn't the luxury of long training programmes for leaders, and so Phileas was chosen to be bishop of his city in the Thebaid, a desert region of ancient Egypt.

Sadly, the new bishop hardly ever had a chance to pastor his flock. Soon after his consecration at Alexandria in 303, Phileas was arrested under the edicts of the Roman emperor Diocletian. He spent the next three years in prison, deeply moved by the willing martyrdoms of other Christians around him. Finally, in 306, it was Phileas' turn. He faced the questioning of the prefect, Culcianus, who could not fathom why such a previously wealthy man had thrown his life away to follow some (long dead?) carpenter from Galilee.

Phileas' strength now was that he really knew what the Bible said. And so when questioned about Jesus's divinity, he replied that "... He performed the works of God in power and actuality... He cleansed lepers, made the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dumb speak, He drove demons from His creatures at a command; He cured paralytics, raised the dead to life, and performed many other signs and wonders."

Still Culcianus urged him to save his life, by sacrificing to the gods. Phileas again had a biblical answer ready. Paraphrasing St Paul, he said that the sacrifices which God requires are "a pure heart, a spotless soul and spiritual perceptions which lead to deeds of piety and justice..." Pressed one final time, he replied "I have reflected many times, and this is my decision." And so, he was led out and beheaded.

What's so special about Jesus?

The gospels record that people were astounded by many of the things that Jesus said. Even His enemies, intent on trapping Him, admitted:

"No one ever spoke the way this man does."

(John 7:46)

Furthermore, *"the crowds were amazed at His teaching, because He taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law."* (Matthew 7:28-9)



For in Jesus, we find something without precedent in the span of human literature. While urging humility on others and while giving the impression of the ultimately humble person, Jesus' teaching and claims are basically egocentric and completely focussed on Himself. In ordinary life, that would get a person labelled as crazy or as a megalomaniac!

Just think of the few astounding claims Jesus made about Himself. "I am the Resurrection and the Life." (Jn 11:25) "I am the Bread of Life." (Jn 6:35) "I am the Light of the World." (Jn 8:12) "I am the Good Shepherd." (Jn 10:7,9) "...whoever lives and believes in Me will never die." (Jn 11:26) And – most staggering of all - "anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father." (Jn 14:9)

CS Lewis comments on the inescapableness of Jesus' uniqueness: "There is no half-way house, and there is no parallel in other religions."

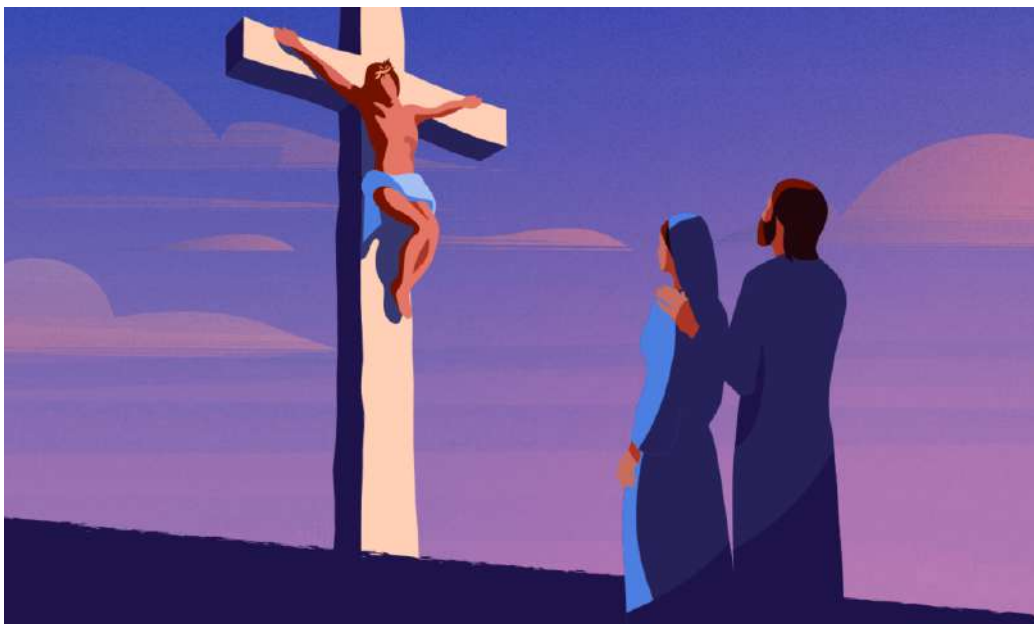
That Jesus cannot be ranked among a pantheon of religious leaders or prophets becomes further obvious when one reflects further on His claim of being at both the beginning and at the end of Creation and of History. He said: *"I am the First and the Last"* (Rev 1:17), as well as : *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."* (Mt 28:18).

Clearly the disciples accepted this, as John begins his gospel with these words: *“In the beginning was the Word (Jesus) and the Word was with God and the Word was God... Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made....The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.... and in Him all things hold together.”* (Col 1:16,17)

When we look at what Jesus goes on to say about the end of history, we are even more startled, as when He said of any person who follows Him: *“I will raise him up at the last day.”* (Jn 6:40) This was the local carpenter, remember! And when we note that throughout the Bible final judgement is a function reserved to God alone, it is astounding to register that Jesus says of Himself: *“For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son authority to judge because He is the Son of Man.”* (Jn 5:26–27)

Yes, between Creation and the end of History stands Jesus. That also means, of course, and we note it with comfort, because everything in between is His also.

During this Lent, why not spend some time just quietly thinking about these claims of Jesus?



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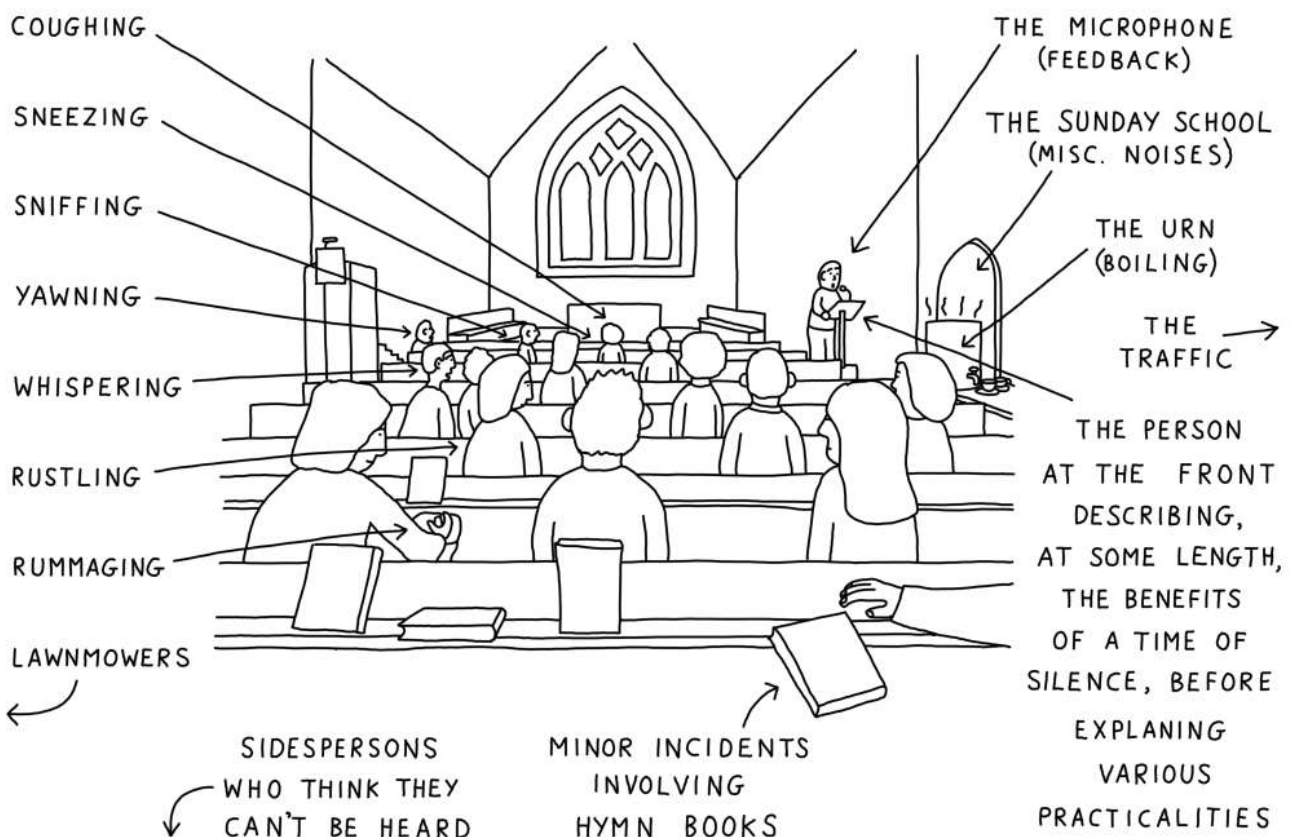
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A TIME OF SILENCE

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February Services

	St Thomas'	St Luke's
Thursday 1st	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 4th	10.00am: Sandra's licensing at St Thomas'	
Thursday 8th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 11th	9.00am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Worship Together	11.00am: Holy Communion
Thursday 15th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 18th	9.00am: Morning Worship 10.45am: Holy Communion 6.30pm: Evening Prayer	11.00am: Family Worship
Thursday 22nd	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 25th	9.00am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Worship Together	11.00am: Family Worship
Thursday 29th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	

News from our churches

The first news of the new year editions of our magazine with good things to look back on and to others look forward to. The Advent period was very busy with lots going on.

- Our school had their usual Nativity service and Byrchall held their carol service in church. Both were much enjoyed by the children and parents. A thanks goes to all who took part, and the teachers and assistants who put in a lot of work to make them a real success.
- Our own Christingle on Christmas Eve was a wonderful time; it was lovely to see so many gathered together and for those who had returned home for Christmas join us too.
- Both the candle lit carol service and the Mothers' Union annual carol service were also enjoyed as was the Christmas praise event held at St Thomas' and organised by Beacon and other churches. This proved to be a very popular event and was well attend.
- Once again, our congregations all provided an overwhelming support for local children at the toy services.
- And everyone enjoyed fabulous performances from our young people - and those young at heart - in crib services.

Post Christmas we 'older' members of the congregation were welcomed with a glass and were able to enjoy a wonderful afternoon tea comprising of sandwiches, sausage rolls, scones and fruit and other cakes. What a plateful!

Seriously, on behalf of the seventy or so who attended the event, I want to thank the organisers for this replacement of the former senior citizens Christmas meal. It was really appreciated, raising many complimentary comments. Thanks to Jess for getting out the invites and Jan and her dedicated team of helpers for putting together what can only be described as a feast.

The Mothers' Union meal at Bryn was once again enjoyed by the 84 members and friends who tucked in to a choice of Christine the Caterer's finest menu. Next year's date has already been booked!

Sandra's licensing

I mentioned looking forward to 2024, and a most important event takes place on the 4th February when at 10.00am in St Thomas' Church the Bishop of Liverpool will licence Rev Sandra Jones who has been appointed as the new Hub Leader for the South Hub. Sandra has kindly provided the magazine with a pen picture and we welcome her most heartily and I am sure that we all look forward to getting to know and love her. I have no doubt that she can rely on our full support here at St Thomas' and St Luke's.

Use of the church buildings

We are still looking to encourage more use of our church by the community in Ashton. One event which took place towards the end of last year does show the flexibility of the building. We were asked if after a funeral the buffet could be held at the back of church. An outside caterer was booked by the family and the whole event went off very well. Indeed, we are grateful to his daughter Janet and the family and friends of William Henry Wright who have made generous donations to our funds which are most appreciated.

The recent start of 'Walk the Walls' on a Wednesday afternoon also shows a unique use of our church in bringing people together from all areas of our local community and provides an opportunity for worship whilst keeping moving.

Children's Society

I mentioned above the Christingle Service where funds raised to the sum of £288 were donated to the Children's Society. We have supported the Society for many years and are particularly grateful to Val Hunter who, assisted by Henry, have organised the preparation for the service. Val has also looked after the Children Society collection boxes which have been filled during the year by members of the congregation. Val has decided to retire and does so with our thanks for many years' service. As a church we still would like to support the society and are looking for someone or perhaps a small team to take over this work.

Help needed

I make no excuse at the beginning of the year to repeat my comments from last year when I pointed out that there are always openings for those wishing to join our many volunteers and help make our church a growing, lively, vital and energetic church in the service to our Saviour Jesus.



Two areas where support is always needed have been mentioned; firstly, our music group, which is an essential part of our weekly worship, is really in need of musicians both to enhance our worship experience but also to relieve the ask on the small number of current members. There must be guitarists, drummers and other instrumentalists out there able to answer our call. Please contact Mary Owen with your interest.

The second opportunity to help relates to our sound desk. We have the tremendous benefit of our new sound and vision system but really do need more volunteers to join the rota manning the desk during our weekly services. We are grateful to our friend Karen Cawley who added to her regular bible reading duties help in the sound desk. Chris Wooff will always be glad to talk to anyone who feels that they may be able to help.

Freewill envelopes

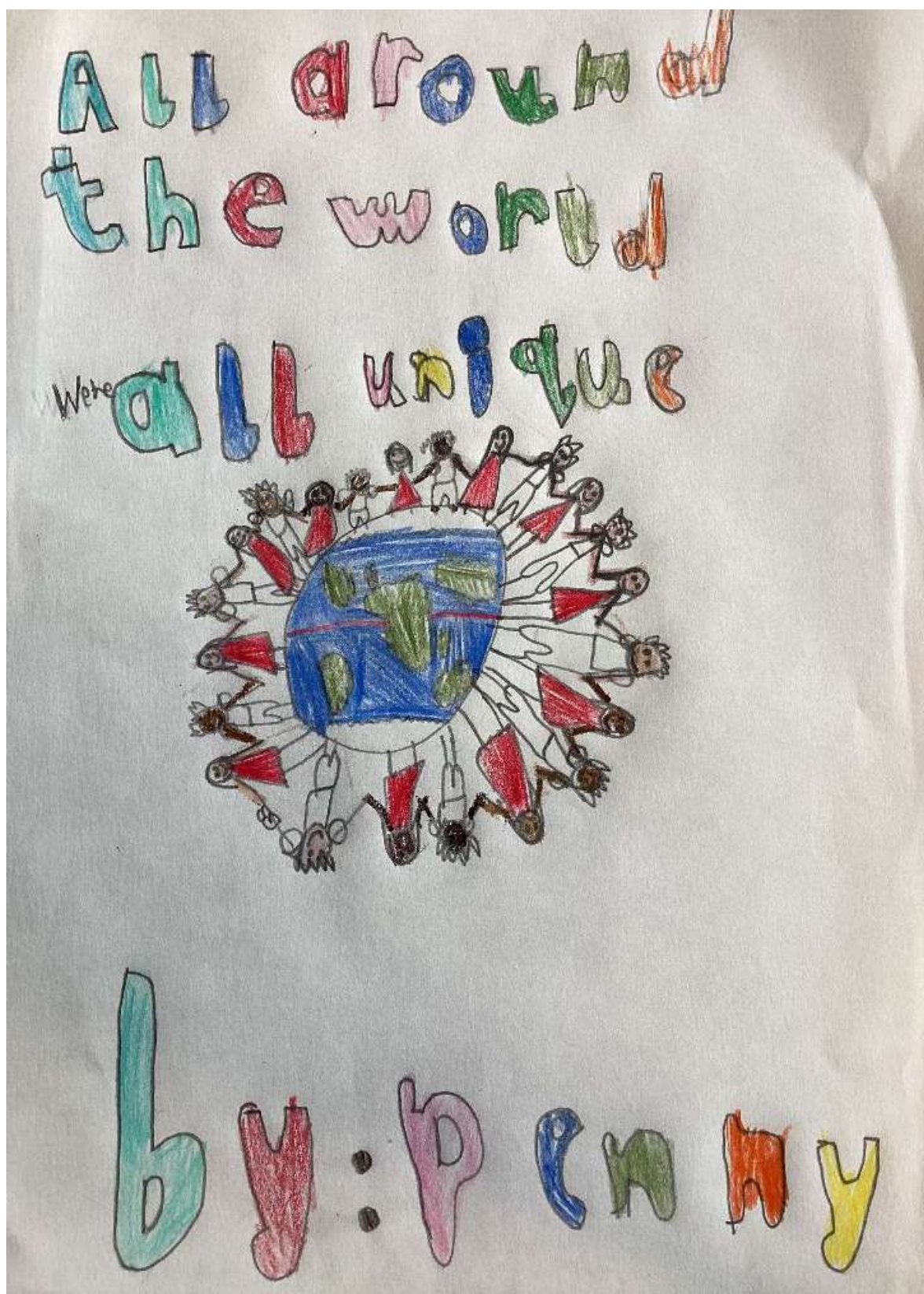
For many years we have run a system of freewill gift envelopes for regular weekly giving. At one time this scheme involved very many of our regular worshippers, however with the introduction of the Parish Giving scheme many former users of the envelopes transferred to this system. The freewill envelopes are still in use, and I am using this parish news to say that I have four sets of envelopes not currently in use. If this is of interest to anyone, please let me know.

Malcolm



Recently, the children were learning about how different we all are, but that we are all equally important regardless of those differences.

This poster was created by Penny in Year 3



This month gives us the opportunity to read a further glimpse into our past thanks to David Fearnley:

ASHTON IN MAKERFIELD GRAMMAR SCHOOL, WIGAN ROAD

1885 a scheme for a new grammar school to replace the Seneley Green school was drawn up and agreed in 1886. Under the new scheme the old Ashton Apprentice Stock Charity, under which girls were apprenticed out into millinery and dressmaking and boys into trades and farming had, with changing times, ceased to be of any practical benefit. The Charity Commissioners merged its funds with those of the Seneley Green Free Grammar School Charity to form the new Ashton in Makerfield Grammar School scheme. 12 governors were constituted – 1 appointed by the lord of the manor of Ashton (Lord Gerard); 1 by the Ashton Local Board/Council; 1 by Liverpool University and 3 by the Ashton Linen & Woollen Charities - each to serve for 5 years. 6 other governors were co-opted and to serve for 8 years.

Pupils were to enter the school at the age of 8 and to leave at 16. Tuition fees, set by the governors, were to be between £4 - £8. If the governors so desired the new school could take boarders but this was never enacted. The school was planned for 70 day pupils but eventually built for 130 with the governors arguing that the growth of the town necessitated the increase and because the school was to teach technical instruction it could obtain an additional grant via the 1889 Technical Instruction Act.

1890 Lord Gerard provided the site of 3,400 square yards fronting Wigan Road, Ashton in Makerfield, in exchange for the Seneley Green old school site.

1890 Wigan Observer: Wigan Road, Grammar School, Ashton in Makerfield: Competition – Architects. The governors of Ashton Grammar School invite plans and specifications for the erection of a Grammar School and Master's House on a site in Wigan Road, Ashton in Makerfield. £10 to be paid for selected plans.

1891 building of the new Grammar School and Masters House began, the total cost £2,678 1s 3d (£280,000 today) was met by the merging of the funds of the Ashton Apprentice Stock Charity and the Seneley Green Free Grammar School Charity in 1885. The old Seneley Green school became the Garswood RC Infants School and later Garswood Library.

December 1892 Mr. Edward Burnett, formerly Assistant Master at King William College, Isle of Man, was appointed headmaster. He was in control of the internal organisation, management and discipline in the School. The headmaster was to live in the Master's House and receive a salary of up to £70 pa. plus a capitation fee of £2 - £5 for each pupil in the School.

23/1/1893 Ashton in Makerfield Grammar School, Wigan Road, was opened by Lady Gerard. W J. Melville, Rector of Ashton took the chair, those present included Lady Gerard, Rev's. H. Siddall (St. Thomas'), H. Wilson (Congregational Chapel), F.C. Hurley (curate St. Thomas'), J. Stead (Park Lane Chapel), governors/councillors J. Gaskell (hinge maker, Burgrave Lodge, Wigan Road), W. Valiant (Claremont House, 16 Gerard Street, manager "John Whitley hinges", Gerard Street), C.F. Clark (Cranbury Lee, Park Lane, manager Garswood Coal & Iron Co.), Dr. Hannah (Ashton medical officer of health, Rock House, 41 Gerard Street), T. Crompton (Thomas Crompton hinge makers, Downall Green), Dr. Latham ("Elmfield", 90 Wigan Road), W. Painter (landlord "Robin Hood"), J. Pimblett (farmer, Edge Green Lane), C. H. Astle (butcher, Gerard Street), E. Burnett, headmaster.

The Ashton Grammar School was older than all other grammar schools in the area except Winwick. The first lot of boys in the new school were those elected under the Ashton in Makerfield Grammar School scheme providing scholarships. 10 scholarships, each of £5pa were given to boys attending local elementary schools. In 1893, 4 came from St. Thomas', 2 from St. Luke's, 3 from the Rectory and 1 from the British school. Josiah Gaskell and Lord Gerard were the only two governors descended from members of the old governors board of 1631. Lady Gerard declared "I have great pleasure in declaring the grammar school open and I wish it every success which it deserves".

23/1/1893 Wigan Observer: Ashton in Makerfield Grammar School. The new and handsome premises recently erected by the governors are now completed. Duties will resume Monday, January 23rd. Fees 4 guineas pa, paid terminally in advance. Boarders and full particulars from Mr. Edward Burnett, headmaster.

1899 a chemistry laboratory, costing £138, was erected in the grammar school. Girls were not admitted.

In 1899 W. Ewart McClure, formerly of St. Helens Grammar School, was the headmaster. In the 1960's there was a large portrait of McClure hanging in the assembly hall at the Old Road end of the school. 1929 succeeded by Frank Gardner Hall. Then E. Roscoe, of Walkden.

In **September 1901** girls were admitted – 11 in total and by 1908 girls were playing hockey.

1901 Wigan Observer: Ashton in Makerfield Grammar School: Girls & Boys. Fees Girls £1 1s a term Boys £1 8s a term. Inclusive charge for books and stationery – Girls 6s a term. Boys 7s a term. 3 terms a year.

As well as academic subjects technical instruction classes were held in the grammar school – maths, applied maths, geology, practical chemistry, mining, freehand drawing; in the Council Offices, Bryn Street, – book keeping, shorthand, music, dressmaking, laundry work, needlework; in the Rectory school, N. Ashton, – dressmaking.

1906 Wigan Observer: Ashton in Makerfield Grammar School – the governors of the Grammar School offer for sale Charity Farm, Arch Lane, N. Ashton, occupied by Henry Whittle – house, outbuildings, , land, mines and minerals. Total 7 acres.

The Trustees of the Seneley Green Free Grammar School Charity acquired Charity Farm of 12 acres by a grant of Bryan Sixsmith by lease 24/6/1629 whereby the farm “with all mynes, quarries, etc. was in consideration of £100 conveyed to them upon trust to use the rent and profits for the use of Seneley Green School paying Sir Thomas Gerard of Bryn and heirs 7s 8d(38p) pa”.

Sixsmith got the farm from Sir Thomas Gerard by a deed 10/4/1598 for £16 7s 4d paying rent of 7s 8d.

1936 plans to buy 16 acres of land at Weathercock Hill Farm, Garswood Road, Simms Lane End, to build an amalgamated Ashton and Upholland Grammar School met with opposition in both areas. The outbreak of war ended this plan.

Headmasters in 1950's: A. G. Standing, Kenneth Allen.

1965 the Wigan Road Grammar School moved to a new site on Warrington Road, Ashton in Makerfield.

David A Fearnley

Mothers' Union



MU Globally

RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse is Mothers' Union's new campaign to raise awareness about domestic abuse. Our aim is to make sure that activism against domestic abuse and gender-based violence happens 365 days of the year.

The letters of RISE UP stand for Respond, Inform, Support, Empower, Unite and Pray.



Mother' Union are working with their members to ensure that as many churches as possible have information about their local domestic abuse helpline. This information will be found in all toilets within the church and hall.

If anyone would like more information on joining the Mothers' Union, please either contact myself or Patricia Hamilton. Alternatively, you can email motherunionstthomas@gmail.com Love and prayers Michelle

Dates for your diary:



WINTER BRUNCH

Saturday 17 February Venue: St Thomas' Church Time: 11am - 1pm

We warmly invite everyone to join us for fellowship and friendship we will be having soup, bacon or sausage barmcakes, sandwiches and cakes etc. There will be the usual tombola, cake stall and raffle, of course contributions to these events will be gratefully received. We look forward to seeing you.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 21st February Venue: St Thomas' Church Hall Time: 7pm

Prior to this meeting, I would like to take the opportunity to remind everyone of the Mothers' Union mission and values:

Wherever Mothers' Union is we will express our Christian faith in the transformation of families and communities worldwide.

We will achieve this by promoting the importance of marriage, supporting families and nurturing faith; with members sensitively spreading the news of a God who loves and cares for us all.

Mothers' Union is a Christian mission organisation working with people of all faiths and none. We are firmly rooted in a voluntary ethos centered on mutual respect and collaboration.

Our governance, leadership and activities are driven by and undertaken through members within their own communities worldwide

Advanced notice

The Women's World Day of Prayer this year will be held on the 1st March at Holy Trinity Church at 11.00am.

Love and prayers
Michelle



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



In Memory of **William Wright**
From Michael and Helen Porter

In Loving memory of **Piers Unsworth, Mary Alice Unsworth**
and **Clifford Harold Unsworth**
from Jack , Barbara, Anne Marie, John and Brian

In memory of my husband **Keith** and daughter **Andrea**
from Rita Livesley

Thanks for home communion
from Elsie Deluce
from Sid and Pauline Barker
from Margaret Atherton
from Isobel Bowen

From Window Sill Trough Plant Sale held by Maurice Smith

From Bill and Izzy
From Pauline McLaren
From P and S Barker
From Jean Boon
From The Hingemakers Arms

In memory of my much loved and missed Dad, **Eric Hurst**
From David Hurst

In loving birthday and anniversary memories of **Madge Twist.**
A dear mother of June, also from son in law Mick, granddaughter Sharon
and husband Mark and great grandsons Aiden and Keiren. Sadly missed by all

The Registers



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

1 December	Joan Margaret O'Malley	92
5 December	William Henry Wright	93
7 December	Richard Hill	75
11 December	Patricia Grimshaw	82
18 December	Lavia Raspoulpoorarnaei	newborn
21 December	James Anthony Davis	47
22 December	Philip John Elliot	73
3 January	David Moore	62
4 January	Doreen Jones	89
10 January	Frank Bayliss	90
11 January	Normal Pilling	80
30 January	Edna Leyland	91

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

10 December	Lila Speakman
10 December	Elsie - Rose Simpson
22 December	Tommy Francis - Lee Tomlinson

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

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

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Church Architect

Bill Schafer 717300

St Thomas' Worship Group

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St Thomas' Organist

Paul Tushingham 711085

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