

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



Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

March 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.

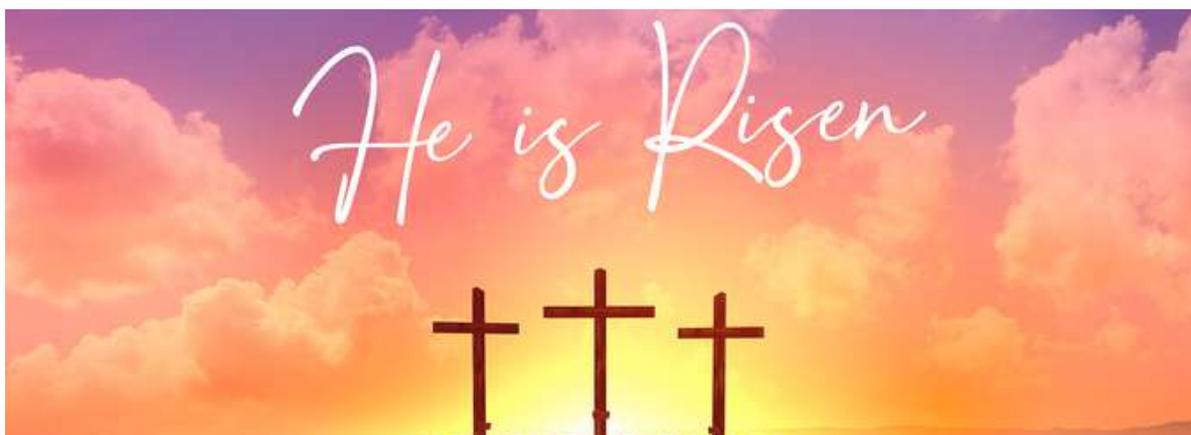
Magazine Deadlines

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

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

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The Gardener



Spring's a time for planting in the warming earth
Seeds and saplings growing at this time of birth.
Carefully we tend them, pulling out each weed
Watering and weeding every plant and seed.

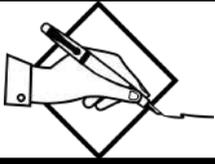
Yet we are just helpers – nothing done alone
For without our Father, nothing will be grown;
He's the Creator, He alone can bring
Growth into our gardens each succeeding spring.

Let us praise our Maker who makes life appear,
Praise Him in the springtime, and throughout the year;
Praise Him for all nature – ev'ry tree and flower
Gaze upon the garden, praise Him every hour!

God the gracious gardener cares for more than plants
As to us, His children every breath He grants.
He that for salvation gave His only Son,
Do not fail to praise Him for all that He's done.



By Nigel Beeton



Letter from Rosalyn

Dear Friends,

We are embarking on the Season of Lent a time when we think of the hardships that our Lord endured during his time in the wilderness, 40 days of intense heat by day and intense cold by night.

A time when He was tempted by the Devil testing his resilience, his patience and his endurance, almost like his own private war. He knew what the outcome would be in the end and he prepared himself for it.

In our lives we can endure our own time in the wilderness, it may be enduring illness, loss of a loved one, financial problems, broken or fractured friendships and relationships, all of which can cause great pain.

In all of this we must continue to pray as we ask for God's help and support to guide us along the right pathway of life with it many twists and turns to a positive end.

As a community in this South Hub we can all recognise the love and support of our Leaders, and all of our friends across all churches and we must be mindful that we are not alone and that there is always someone there for us.

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



Just recently a friend of mine visited a church in Peterborough and high above the Font was a Crucifix with some wording below, and this is what he sent me: "I was intrigued by the words on the Crucifix. I had never seen them before.

Stat crux dum volvitur orbis
I looked up the meaning of course and found a short version below.....

The Cross is steady while the world turns".

The Cross is steady while the world turns.

It can serve as a reminder that no matter what happens in the world, God is always with us and so is his Church.

During this Lenten tide take these words with you as you look forward to the ultimate celebration of Jesus Christ is risen, He is Risen Indeed Alleluia!

Blessings to you all
Rosalyn xx

Parish News

Weekly Events

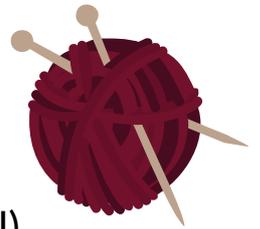
Mondays

- 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)



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

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**

Services in March

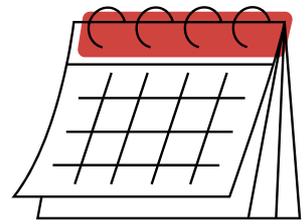


Sunday 3rd	<p>9.00am: Morning Worship 9.30am: Morning Worship 10.00am: Holy Communion 10.30am: Morning Worship 10.30am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Worship Together 11.00am: Family Worship 6.30pm: Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's Holy Trinity St Peter's St Thomas' St Luke's St Thomas'</p>
Wednesday 6th	<p>10.00am: Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Aidan's</p>
Thursday 7th	<p>9.45am: BCP Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Thomas'</p>
Sunday 10th (Mothering Sunday)	<p>9.00am: Holy Communion 9.30am Holy Communion 10.30am: Sta's4all in school 10.30am: Holy Communion 10.30am: Morning Worship with Brigades 10.45am: Worship Together 11.00am: Holy Communion 4.00pm: Evening Prayer</p>	<p>St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's Holy Trinity St Peter's St Thomas' St Luke's St Aidan's</p>
Wednesday 13th	<p>10.00am: Holy Communion</p>	<p>Holy Trinity</p>
Thursday 14th	<p>9.45am: BCP Holy Communion</p>	<p>St Thomas'</p>
Sunday 17th	<p>9.00am: Morning Worship 9.30am Church café 10.00am: Morning Worship 10.30am: Morning Worship 10.30am: Morning Prayer 10.45am: Holy Communion 11.00am: Family Worship 6.30pm: Evening Prayer</p>	<p>St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's Holy Trinity St Peter's St Thomas' St Luke's St Thomas'</p>

Wednesday 20th	10.00am Holy Communion	St Aidan's
Thursday 21st	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	St Thomas'
Sunday 24th (Psalm Sunday)	9.00am: Holy Communion 9.30am Morning Worship 10.00am: St Aidan's Beacon 10.30am: Holy Communion 10.30am: Café Church 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 27th	10.00am Holy Communion	Holy Trinity
Thursday 28th (Maundy Thursday)	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion 7.00pm: Hub Holy Communion	St Thomas' Holy Trinity
Friday 29th (Good Friday)	10.00am: Reflective Service TBC: Service of Reflection TBC: Good Friday Service 11.00am: Service on the Green with local churches	St Aidan's St Thomas' St Peter's Downall Green
Sunday 31st (Easter Sunday)	6.30am: Hub Holy Communion 9.00am: Holy Communion 9.30am: Holy Communion 10.00am: Holy Communion 10.30am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Holy Communion 11.00am: Holy Communion	Three Sisters St Thomas' St Andrew's St Aidan's St Peter's St Thomas' St Luke's

Everyone is welcome to attend any services
at any of our churches
and will receive a warm welcome.

March Diary



Thursday 29th February, 7pm: Mothers' Union meeting (St Thomas')

Friday 1st March, 11am: Mothers' Union Women's World Day of Prayer (Holy Trinity)

Monday 4th March, 10.30am: Communion at Garswood House (organised by St Peter's)

Tuesday 5th March

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

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

Saturday 16th March

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

2pm: Afternoon Tea (St Andrew's)

Tuesday 19th March

1.30pm - 3pm: Peace of Mind Dementia Cafe

DRINK DEEPLY

PRAYING FOR REFRESHING IN
THE CHURCH & COMMUNITY
4-22 MARCH

GET A DAILY DEVOTIONS SHEET
email prayer@churchwigan.org

JOIN ONLINE PRAYER
MON-FRI 9AM, FROM 4-22 MARCH
CHURCH WIGAN FACEBOOK

PRAYERS ON ZOOM
THU 7, 14 21 MARCH, 7.30-8.15PM
email prayer@churchwigan.org for link

IN PERSON NIGHT OF PRAYER
FRI 22 MARCH, 7.30-9.30PM
ST ANNE BEECH HILL, WN6 7TA

Wigan House of Prayer

*With joy you will draw water
from wells of salvation.*
ISAIAH 12.3

Lent ad clerum

Bishop John's message at the beginning of Lent

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

The calendar dictates that we have hardly had time to pause for breath after the Christmas season

and we find lent upon us. My prayer is that you have the opportunity to use Lent wisely for you and your worshipping community. The spiritual disciplines that we can properly observe during the Lenten season are for our benefit as we seek to grow as disciples of Christ.

For me lent is about focusing my heart and mind on the direction that God wants for me. Observing spiritual disciplines are a challenge in the modern world with the pressures of commercialism swirling around us. Ash Wednesday occurs on Valentine's Day this year as we try to engage with a serious message at a time when the world seems focused elsewhere. These pressures are often strong enough to lure us into a spirituality that is consumerist, rather than a path of love.

In one sense, love is revealing to someone one's beauty. I need someone else to help me discover my own beauty. By receiving someone else's love, you discover yourself. By accepting God's immeasurable love, we discover ourselves fully. Can we, in this Lenten season, find quiet and private time to get to know a bit more about ourselves and about others who are around us, and spend time in our inner room with shut doors to discover something more of the profundity of God?

Warnings in Matthew 6, 1-6 and 16-18 about almsgiving, prayer, and fasting – the classic disciplines of the penitent – point to the need to shed superficiality, to remove any traces of attention getting, to eschew mixed motives. These warnings are a call to self-disclosure, the disclosure of some of our secrets.



But they are also a guarantee that going to God in intimacy will unveil for us some of God's own profound truths and mysteries. And such an encounter with God is not going to keep us where we are; rather it would lead us to where we are expected to be. The challenge of Lent here is one for change and transformation: to become what we are meant to be.

The gospels show how Jesus modeled taking time to focus on being close to God. Yet he also showed us the resolution and determination to focus on the task God appointed him for. He was set for Jerusalem to fill his purpose in his death and resurrection. He was not to be diverted from this divine task.

We must be determined face the challenges before us as we serve God in the contexts he called us to. At our last Diocesan Synod we heard of the financial challenges, pressure on church numbers, the loss of giving and the strain that places on all church communities. We need to support each other through the challenges but we need to have a Jesus-like clarity to remain on course.

We have a clear vision and purpose. We want to see more people knowing Jesus and have more justice in the world. We know that if we are to achieve that then we all need to introduce people to Jesus and deepen their discipleship. From there we can grow leaders and have communities working for justice. Agreed by synod and one that I, my senior colleagues and all who serve at St James House are working towards. We hope that this is something you have signed up to and are working towards.

It is easy to be swayed off course. It is tempting to find the easy way out, to duck the challenges and to follow other paths believing this is right. It is tempting to lose heart besieged by tales of failure and overcome by a sense of responsibility for the place we find the church in. This does us no good. We are part of God's church, called by Jesus to make disciples and we can do that together.

Togetherness in Christ's service is massively important. Our diocese carries the marvelous legacy of the Sheppard Worlock vision of being better together. This vision was carried forward by their successors and I am honoured to hold it now. As such I was privileged to be part of prayers for unity in Merseyside then conferring with Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops in Norwich.

In our diocese, parishes are still aiming to come together in the discernment over Fit for Mission. It is the people of God discerning locally how best we do the mission of God – locally, determinedly, and humbly. This reimagining of church trying to create a parish system for the 21st century that maintains a resilient Christian presence in every community will only succeed if we work at it and pray for it together.

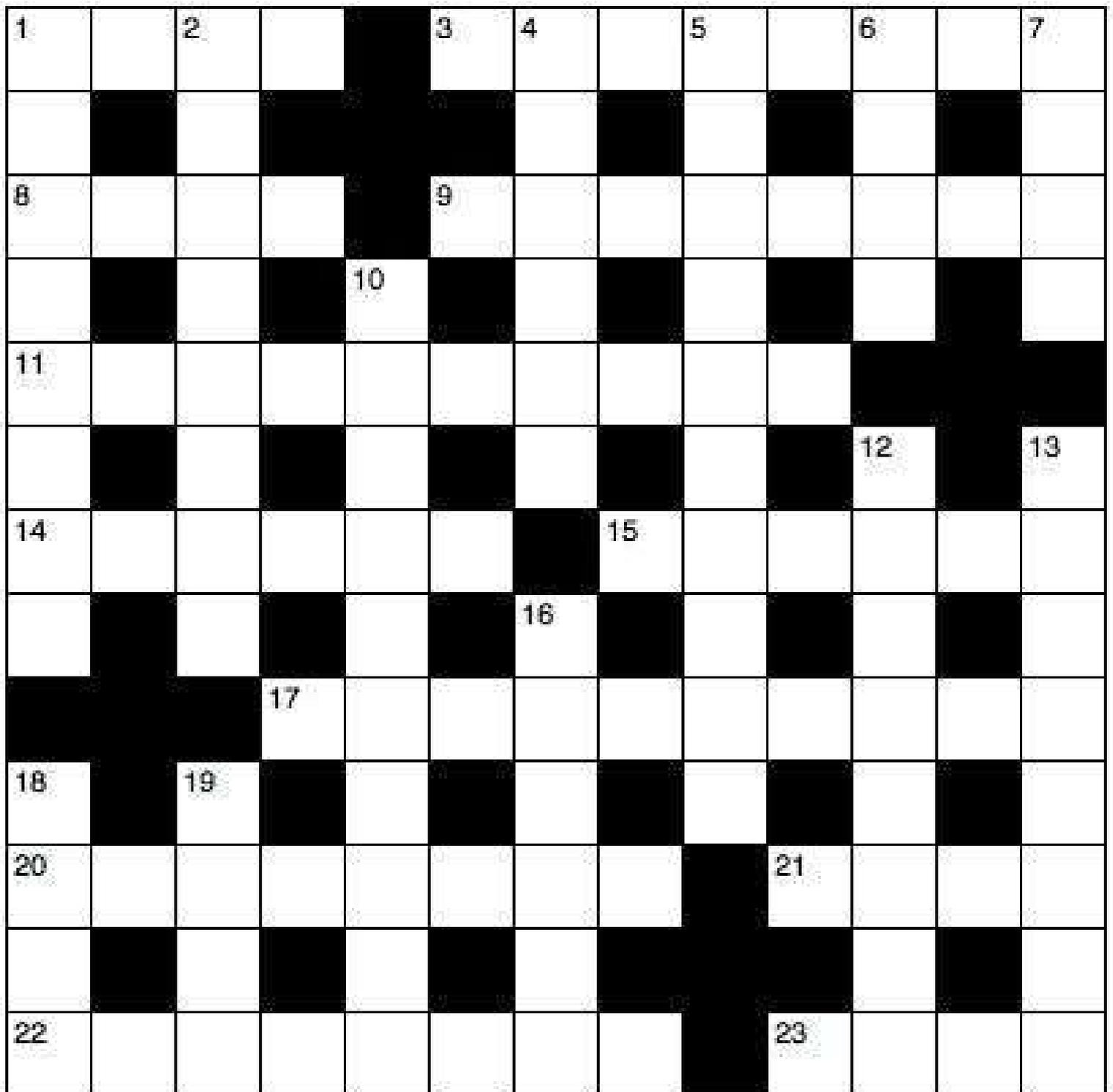
Lent marks the time before Jesus started his public ministry. The bible shows us that he was tempted to shape that ministry according to the patterns that might have made him popular in the short-term. During his journey to Jerusalem, his enemies are shown to be trying to prevent him achieve his purpose. He remained resolute.

I call on you to spend this lent to focus your heart and mind on God's purpose for you. I encourage you to support each other in this. And I hope that, as part of your spiritual discipline, you will join me at the diocesan Chrism Eucharist where we renew our commitment together. Then my prayer for you is that you remain resolute in achieving that purpose as you seek to build the kingdom in the context God has called you to serve in.

With every blessing

Bishop John

Crossword



Answers on page 21

Across

- 1 Made from the fruit of the vine, symbol of the blood of Christ (4)
- 3 'You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from it. All of you be on — — ' (Joshua 8:4) (3,5)
- 8 Seep (4)
- 9 Celebrated by Jesus on the night of his betrayal (Luke 22:15) (8)
- 11 One of the supposed sites of Christ's burial place in Jerusalem (6,4)
- 14 'A city on a hill — be hidden' (Matthew 5:14) (6)
- 15 He inherited Elijah's mantle (2 Kings 2:12-13) (6)
- 17 Where Jesus prayed 'Not as I will, but as you will' (Matthew 26:36, 39) (10)
- 20 'Only in his home town and in his — — is a prophet without honour' (Matthew 13:57) (3,5)
- 21 Sail (anag.) (4) 22 How Jesus was punished before his crucifixion (Matthew 27:26) (8)
- 23 Eye sore (4)

Down

- 1 Can't grow (anag.) (5,3)
- 2 A servant girl to Peter, 'You also were with that — , Jesus' (Mark 14:67) (8)
- 4 Well-being (Proverbs 3:8) (6)
- 5 Pentecostal denomination, — of God (10)
- 6 One of the 'obvious' acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19, 21) (4)
- 7 'I preached that they should repent and — to God' (Acts 26:20) (4)
- 10 ' — — , the world will not see me any more, but you will see me' (John 14:19) (6,4)
- 12 He betrayed Jesus: Judas — (Luke 6:16) (8)
- 13 Jesus to Peter: ' — — of my sheep' (John 21:16) (4,4)
- 16 The centurion said, 'Surely this man was — — of God' (Mark 15:39) (3,3)
- 18 Baked bread (Mark 8:14) (4)
- 19 'Blessing and honour, glory and power, be — Him' (Handel's Messiah) (4)

Reflecting Faith: Lychgates

On the moors near to where I used to live in West Yorkshire, there were a couple of large stones with crosses marked on them. Many people thought that they were boundary or marker stones, and in so far as they marked the way towards the oldest church in that area they were. To be more exact, they were on the route towards the oldest churchyard.

In ages past bodies were carried by hand, sometimes over long distances, and there were restrictions placed on where they could be laid to allow the bearers to rest. These two stones were 'resting' stones.

When a body arrived at the church for burial, it would again be put down while the administrative formalities were carried out, and again the bearers could rest. So, a resting stone was placed at the edge or start of the consecrated land around the church.

The priest conducting the funeral would meet the cortege here, not originally out of respect, but rather to receive the required legal certificate for burial before he allowed them to enter the church grounds.

Because of typical English weather - rain and wind - it was usually sheltered, and benches were built for the bearers. There would also be a cross within the construction to signify the start of holy land. This is what today we call the 'lych-gate'; lych coming from the anglo-saxon word lich or lic, related to the modern German word leiche, all meaning corpse.

Few old lychgates remain today, as many were destroyed or damaged after the Reformation, and most of those that survived were constructed of timber and have since decayed. In the eighteenth century, when the use for the resting stones and thus lychgates declined, many were removed and replaced with gates, often retaining the shelter as it continues to be a meeting place for the priest to receive funeral parties.

The Coventry Passion Cross

“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement that bought us peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:4-6

Coventry Cathedral uses as its emblem the Coventry Passion Cross – three nails together forming the Cross of Christ. Here is my reflection on the Coventry Passion Cross; what does this design mean to you?

The first nail is the carpenter’s nail and focuses us on the purpose of the nail. We are reminded that Jesus worked as a carpenter before entering His ministry. As He sat there in His carpenter’s workshop, smoothing and working the wood with love, did He contemplate the rugged cross on which He would one day be crucified? As He hammered nails into wood, did He ever accidentally hammer one into His finger, and as He felt that pain, did He foresee the nails of His crucifixion? As He carried large logs to His workshop to make tables, chairs, and doors, did He contemplate the cross he would one day carry to Calvary?

The second nail is the nail of Passion, it represents the nails in Jesus’ hands and feet that He accepted because of His passionate love for us.

The third nail is the nail of Promise, like the promise He made to the dying thief on the cross. It was that if we believe in Him, then we will reign with Him in paradise. This is the nail that Christ offers to you and to me. Will you accept this nail as a sign of His passionate love, His forgiveness of your sin and promise of eternal life for all who will come to Him? If so, why not pray the following prayer this Eastertide?

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You that You have a plan and a purpose for my life, thank You for Your passionate love for me, thank You that Your blood was shed for my sins, thank You for Your promise of eternal life. As I think about that nail of promise, I receive Your passion, Your grace and Your forgiveness, may I fulfil Your plan and purpose for my life, In Jesus name, Amen.

24th March - Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, martyr 1980

(this is his normal place in the church calendar)

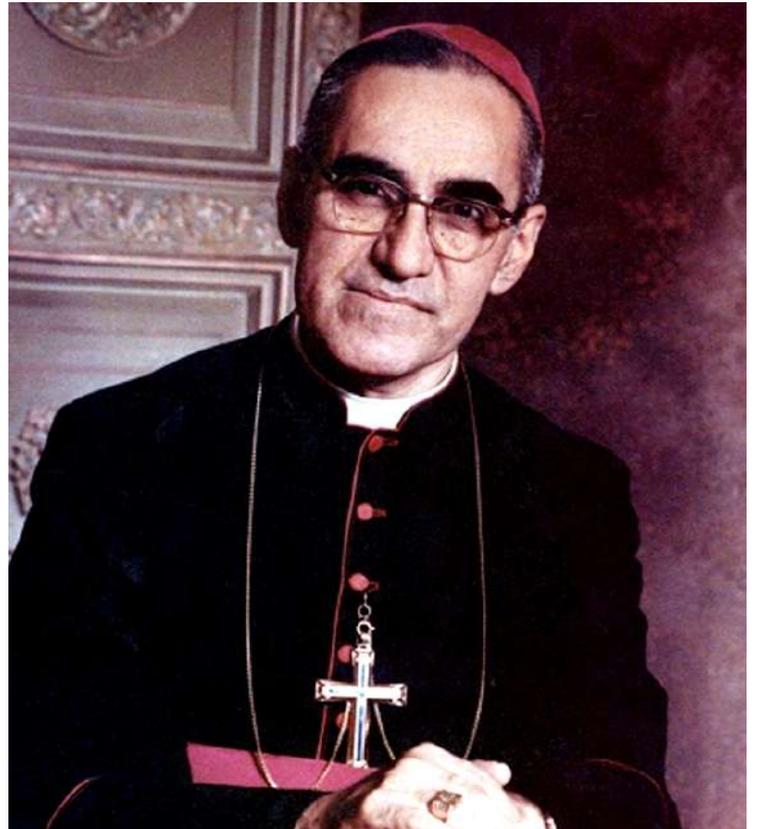
Oscar Romero was a bit of a modern Thomas Becket – loyal to the authorities until he was given great responsibility for the Church. Then, like Becket, there was trouble.

In Romero's case, it all began when he was born Ciudad Barrios in El Salvador back in 1917. Devout from a young age, he was ordained in 1942, and became a parish priest in the diocese of San Miguel.

For 25 years Romero worked hard in his parish, where he was a traditional priest, very conservative, ascetic, and devoted to the Virgin Mary. In 1967 he was appointed Secretary to the Episcopal Conference of El Salvador. He was elevated to be Bishop of San Salvador and then Bishop of Santiago de Maria. An admirer of the conservative Opus Dei movement, Romero firmly opposed any liberation theology.

Then in 1977 Oscar Romero was appointed Archbishop of San Salvador. The Salvadorian government saw him as a safe pair of hands for the job.

But they were in for a shock. For Romero's new responsibilities made him look afresh at the relationship between Church and State in El Salvador. He did not like what he saw. Romero saw that social unrest and poverty were the direct result of government repression, and even worse, that the Church played its part in the on-going violence of Salvadorian society. After the murder of several outspoken priests and then the expulsion of several allegedly Marxist Jesuits, Romero felt compelled to speak out.



The right-wing Latin American governments were well used to priests who worked with the poor speaking out against them. But this was the first time that an Archbishop had raised his voice, and they were furious.

But Romero became a champion of liberation theology. He condemned government violence and championed the right of the poor to economic and social justice. He even wrote a pastoral letter from the Salvadorian bishops, supporting proportionate counter-violence towards the oppressive right-wing regime. When, nonetheless, he also still tried to act as a mediator between the rival groups, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

For several years Romero received death threats from both left- and right-wing paramilitary groups. Finally, while celebrating Mass, he was shot through the heart by a government assassin. It was 24th March 1980, and 40 more people died in the gunfire and explosions at his funeral. The Church worldwide mourned for him.

Crossword Answers

ACROSS: 1, Wine. 3, The alert. 8, Ooze. 9, Passover. 11, Garden Tomb. 14, Cannot. 15, Elisha. 17, Gethsemane. 20, Own house. 21, Lisa. 22, Flogging. 23, Stye.

DOWN: 1, Wrong act. 2, Nazarene. 4, Health. 5, Assemblies. 6, Envy. 7, Turn. 10, Before long. 12, Iscariot. 13, Take care. 16, The Son. 18, Loaf. 19, Unto.

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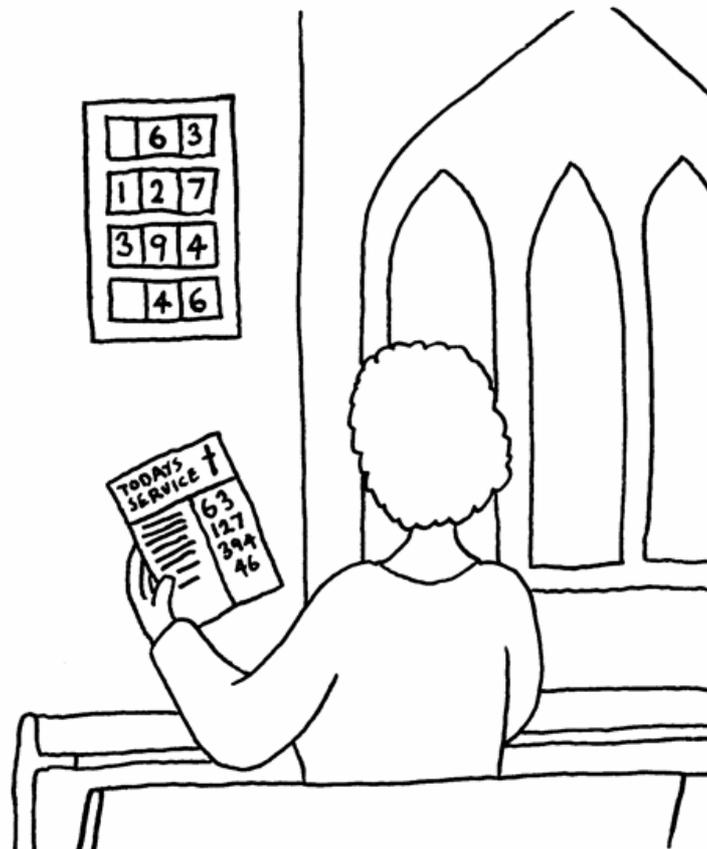
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25 Bolton Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan WN4 8AA

CartoonChurch.com



SHE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE SHE HAD
WON ON HER FIRST VISIT TO CHURCH



March Services

	St Thomas'	St Luke's
Sunday 3rd	9.00am: Morning Worship 10.45am: Worship Together 6.30pm: Holy Communion	11.00am: Family Worship
Thursday 7th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 10th	9.00am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Worship Together	11.00am: Holy Communion
Thursday 14th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 17th	9.00am: Morning Worship 10.45am: Holy Communion 6.30pm: Evening Prayer	11.00am: Family Worship
Thursday 21st	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 24th	9.00am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Worship Together	11.00am: Family Worship
Thursday 28th	9.45am: BCP Holy Communion	
Sunday 31st	6.30am: Holy Communion at The Three Sisters	
	9.00am: Holy Communion 10.45am: Holy Communion	11.00am: Holy Communion

News from our churches

Well, our new hub leader, Sandra, is here and was welcomed and licenced by Bishop John at a very moving and enjoyable service on the 4th February. The service took place in St Thomas church where some 315 members of our congregations across the hub, along with Sandra's family and friends joined together. It was lovely to welcome those from the Northeast hub who, whilst wishing Sandra every success in her new ministry, were sad to lose her. I was told on more than one occasion that "you are getting a good one." The hub truly came together on the occasion with tea, coffee and cakes being enjoyed after the service. Thanks to everyone involved in any way. I am sure that we all wish Sandra well and keep her in our prayers as she gets to know us in the weeks to come.

It is my pleasure to express thanks and appreciation on behalf of the parish to John Mitchell who has again cleaned out the entire length of guttering around the church hall. Well done John, keep up the good work please.

I am trying to solve the mystery of the missing milk pan and lid! With the Thursday Coffee Fund we purchased 2 new pans a couple of years ago for use in church. One of the pans and its lid are no longer in the church kitchen. Whilst unable to offer a reward for their recovery, the solution to the mystery would be welcome to the Thursday coffee volunteers; the new pans are nonstick!

One of the annual events of the Mothers Union is the Winter Brunch, this was held on the 17th February and was well organised and thoroughly enjoyed by the many who came along to enjoy soup, bacon and sausage barmes and deserts. The fellowship was buzzing and the event raised some £450 to the MU funds. A big thank you to all involved in preparing serving and enjoying special thanks to Patricia Hamilton for her part in the organisation and running of the brunch.

Malcolm

Our resident historian and friend David Fearnley was telling me that he is putting together a book of the many articles that he has provided for the magazine over 50 of these and they are still coming read below the history of Ashton's fire station

ASHTON IN MAKERFIELD FIRE STATION, COUNCIL AVENUE

One of my earliest recollections of Ashton was c1954, as a very young child, walking with my grandmother in Council Avenue and stopping to watch a man cleaning the red fire engine of Ashton Fire Station. In 1906 the Fire Station was to the rear of the Town Hall on the left as you enter Council Avenue. Later the station was replaced by the Town Hall office block and the fire station moved over to the right hand side of Council Avenue to occupy the site of the present small carpark opposite the new medical centre.

Established March 1881 the Fire Brigade was originally a volunteer force. In 1882 the brigade consisted of 14 men under the command of Captain William Boardman, grocer, 76 Gerard Street. In 1900 Captain William Roberts, joiner, 6 Bryn Street, was fire captain and the brigade included Fred Ogden, driver of the horses pulling the engine, he lived at 9 Sylvan Glen (now Millingford Grove, – 1st house has datestone Sylvan Glen 1899), and was a carter for Ashton district council, William Sutton, possibly 129 Wigan Road, plumber/water fittings, J. Ogden, possibly son of Fred Ogden, and Mr. Williams. In 1908 Captain Henry Sixsmith, plumber. 95 Heath Road, was the fire captain.

1884 at the Ashton Fire Brigade Dinner at the Fleece Hotel, Warrington Road, Captain Boardman said the brigade was supplied with all the necessary equipment for extinguishing fires except a manual engine that they hoped to acquire soon. He said that some years ago there were 2 cotton mills – one on the site of the gasworks, Heath Road (the mill owned by Edward & Olivia Turner (Whitley), the widow of John Whitley the younger who died 1839, the owner of John Whitley, hingemakers, Gerard Street, later Thomas Crompton & Sons) and one at Town Green (Grey & Co. burned 1866), both burned down but might have been saved if Ashton had a fire brigade.

1884 Ashton Fire Brigade, with Newton and Haydock Fire Brigades attended a fire at Haydock Lodge Lunatic Asylum, Newton, owned by Dr. Edward Lister. The roof was destroyed and most of the building resulting in several thousand pounds damage.

1885 members of the Ashton Fire Brigade practiced with the newly arrived hand pump fire engine. Previously all they had was a light carriage with a plentiful supply of hose and other necessaries. Starting from the Town Hall the brigade went to the estate works of Lord Gerard (Dock Lane House, Liverpool Road, on the site of the present timber yard) where the first trial of the new fire engine took place in front of Adolphus Moubert, the land agent to Lord Gerard, Peregrine Ball, manager of the estate works, Dr. Nathan Hannah, medical officer of health for Ashton, and others. In 5 minutes the hose was playing a lot of water on one of the workshops. Captain Boardman then ordered the hose to be played on a large chimney. The trial was a success. They then went to Thomas Crompton at Downall Green, a hinge & lock manufacturer and conducted more trials. Then they proceeded home via Four Footed Cross/Bryn Cross calling at the yard of the Oddfellows Arms, Downall Green Road, Bryn, owned by Mr. Morris, to conduct another trial. On arriving in Ashton they went for a prepared meal at the Gerard Arms, Gerard Street.

Until c1910 the fire engine was pulled by horses then it became motorized. The earlier engine was a manual hand pumped fire engine of 1885 which was replaced by a steam fire engine in 1900. In 1900 Lord William Cansfield Gerard had returned from one years' service in the Boer War, S. Africa. A welcoming home ceremony was held in the open space at the junction of Wigan Road, Gerard Street and Bolton Road before the age of traffic lights and traffic islands. The ceremony was also to include the welcoming of the towns new steam fire engine which had been built in Manchester. Lady Mary Gerard gave a speech welcoming the fire engine which was to be named "Gerard". After the ceremony horses pulled the fire engine to the yard of the Record Mill, York Road (on the site of the present Travis Perkins yard) where it abilities were demonstrated.

The fact that the fire engine was pulled by horses sometimes presented a problem. In 1901 Captain Roberts reported that the fire engine was called out to a fire at the pit brow at Garswood Hall colliery but the turnout was badly hampered for horses. In 1900 an alarm of fire was raised in Bryn Street and the steam fire whistle at the gasworks, Princess Road, being blown. Captain Roberts and several members of the Volunteer Fire Brigade were quickly in attendance at the front of and proceeded with the hand reel to the rear of Mr. McBride's shop and bakery where the fire, owing to a defective flue, had taken hold in the rafters, quickly subdued the fire. Damage was limited to £5.

In 1900 it was decided to store the new steam fire engine in Ashton and the manual hand pump fire engine at Downall Green with a man employed by the council and living at Downall Green to look after it. The fire brigade was to receive a new uniform a lighter pattern than the present uniform, the trousers having a red stripe down the leg. The uniforms were to be numbered and embossed AUDC (Ashton Urban District Council) Fire Brigade. Each fireman was to be provided with an axe and a life line. Two helmets were to be obtained, an inspirator and goggles. A fire escape ladder/extension ladder on large cart wheels which could be rolled into position was ordered from Merryweather & Sons in London.

c1907 the voluntary fire brigade eventually became a full time force. In 1928 the fire brigade attended a fire at No. 2 pit Mains colliery, Bamfurlong. In 1939 the Ashton in Makerfield Fire Brigade smashed a large window at the Union Bank of Manchester, Gerard Street, to contain an outbreak of fire. The Ashton in Makerfield Fire Brigade was part of the Lancashire County Fire Service.

In 1974 with local county reorganisation and the formation of Greater Manchester, the Ashton in Makerfield Fire Service came to an end and was merged into the Greater Manchester Fire Service.

David A. Fearnley

Mothers' Union



Dates for your diary:

Thursday 1st March: Women's Day of Prayer, 11am at Holy Trinity

Sunday 10th March: Mothering Sunday

Wednesday 20th March: Bible Sale, 7pm in St Thomas' Church Hall

Don't panic! We are not selling our bibles. Instead, each member will bring an item with them that is referenced in the bible. For example, bread. The member will read out the verse that the item is mentioned in (or I can read out the verse for you). All items will then be auctioned off and all proceeds will be put into our MU funds. If you prefer to not auction off your item that is also OK.

The Winter Brunch had a fantastic turn out, and we raised approximately £450! A lot of hard work went into organising the brunch, so a huge thank you to all who organised, helped on the day, baked gorgeous cakes, and made delicious soups. Also, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who came, as without you, we would not have raised these much needed funds.

Donations In February we donated £900 which we had raised on 2023 via activities and events to Mothers' Union Global. For example, we donated £250 to children's fund and £200 to the literacy fund.

The Women's refuge is in desperate need of single duvet covers for adults and children.

Easter Crafts There is always around 10-11 families based in The Women's Refuge at anyone time. Therefore, the Mothers' Union is collecting Easter crafts and it would be lovely if we can provide easter crafts for one family. If you would like to donate, easter crafts can be bought from places like The Works, Hobbycraft or Home Bargains.

Single duvet covers and crafts can either be passed to me at the 10.45am or left in the porch of No1 Townsfield. Last date for donations is 13th March.

MU Treasurer it is with a heavy heart that I have to announce that Pauline Wharton has now retired from being the Mothers' Union Treasurer after 25 years of service. I just would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you from everyone for all your hard work and commitment over the last 25 years, and you will be truly missed.

I'm also happy to announce that Linda Bailey has now taken on the role as Mothers' Union Treasurer. All the best Linda, in your new role.

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

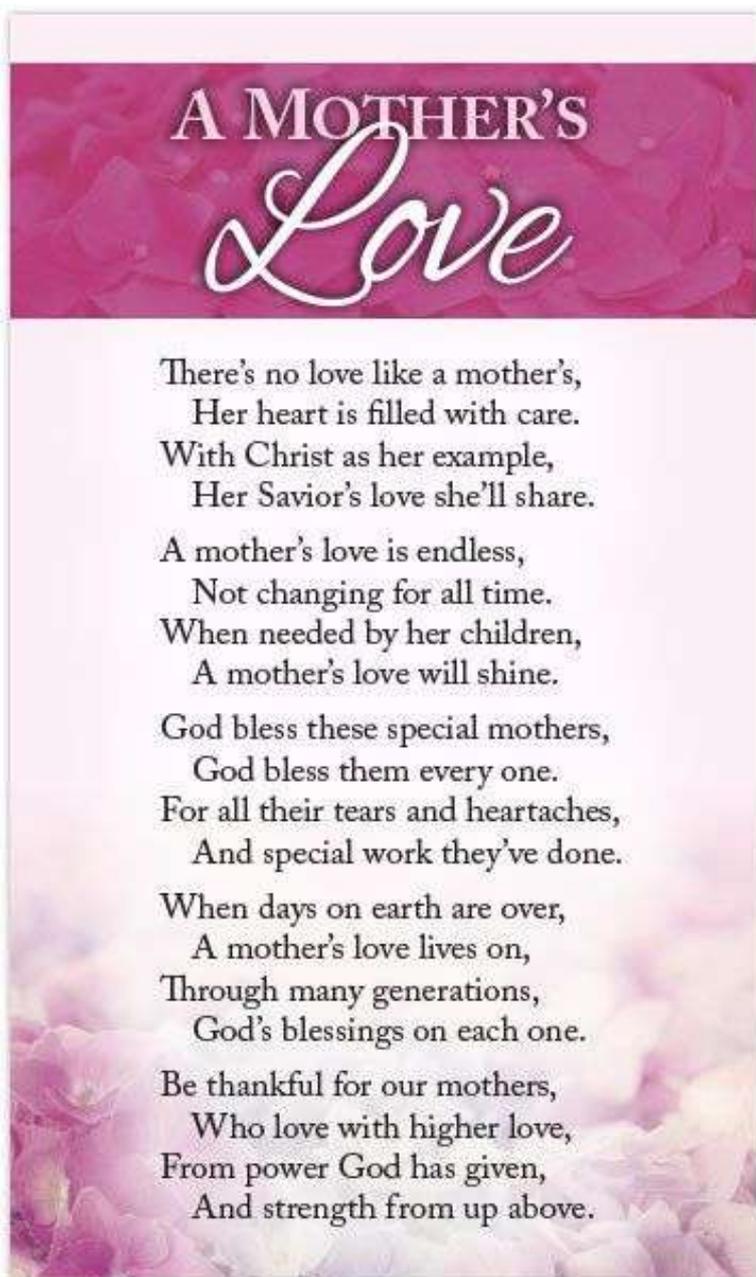
MU Globally RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse is Mothers' Union's new campaign to raise awareness about domestic abuse. Our aim is to make sure that activism against domestic abuse and gender-based violence happens 365 days of the year.

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

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



To the Flower Guild, in memory of loved ones.
Jean and Les Johnson

In memory of **Joan** and **Ray Parry**, and **Roy Parry**
from Christine Kelly

Thanks for home communion
From Isabel Bowen

Anniversary (28th Dec) and birthday remembrances of **Edna Brown** (31st Jan)
Stan Brown (17th Feb)

Birthday remembrance of **Ethel Brown** (11th Jan)
Always in our thoughts and sadly missed
Geoff, Denise, Julie and their families

Thank you for making us welcome once again
Anne and Vernon



The Registers



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

18 February	Sabir Rasoulpoorarnaei
18 February	Pishawa Rasoulpoorarnaei
25 February	Louie Thomas Haughton

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'
Michelle Rawsthorn

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

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St Thomas': Tony Cornthwaite 721626
Paula Gillespie 711270

St Luke's: Carole Pye 517318
John Boon 204082

St Thomas' Deputy Wardens

Barbara Taylor 205136

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Magazine Distribution

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St Thomas' and St Luke's
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