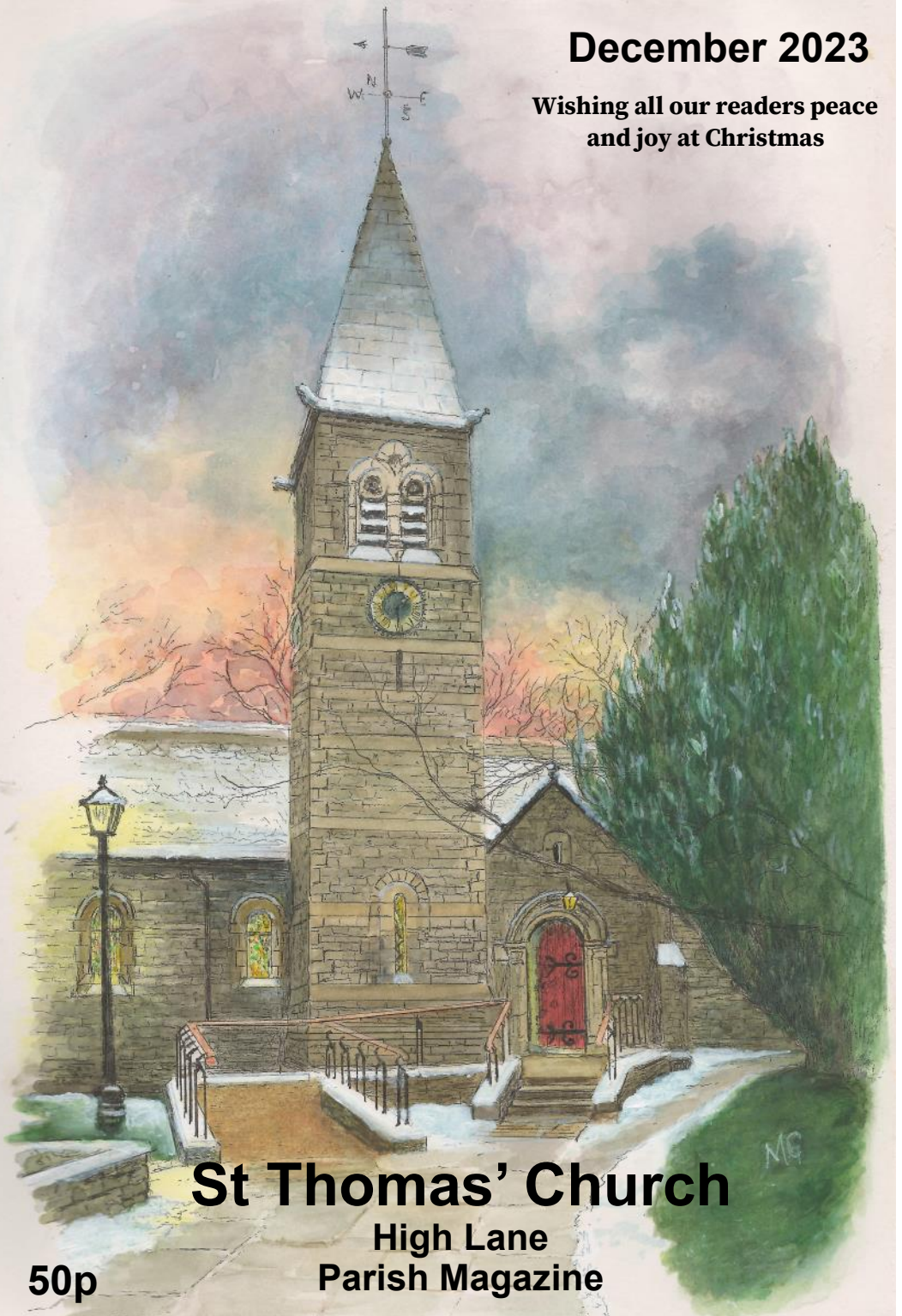


**December 2023**

**Wishing all our readers peace  
and joy at Christmas**



**St Thomas' Church**

**High Lane  
Parish Magazine**

**50p**

St Thomas is a living church in the community of High Lane where everyone is welcome and our mission is to share the love of Christ with all.

## **Worship with us**

Join us for worship in the Anglican tradition.

We are worshipping together in church again but we also offer different ways that you can still be a part of our services by Zoom or phone. Please see the calendar in the centre pages for details.

## **Weddings and Baptisms**

If you wish to arrange a Wedding or Baptism, please contact Rev'd Hannah.

## **Pastoral Care Team**

Life can be challenging and we all need support. If you would like to talk or receive a visit, please contact the Vicar who can put you in touch with someone from the Pastoral Care Team.

## **We are Bronze Award Eco Church**



## **Digital Donations**

To make a donation to support our ongoing ministry and mission here please scan this QR code and you will be directed to the 'Give A Little' donation page. In these tough financial times, we are especially grateful for your support.



**Contact the Vicar, Rev'd Hannah Hupfield**

**01663 766448**

**[hannahhupfield@cantab.net](mailto:hannahhupfield@cantab.net)**

# Vicar's LETTER



I find that December tends to be a month of great contrasts. The alarm clock is accompanied by darkness behind the curtains and those same curtains shut out the night long before dinner is on the table (in this house anyway!). Against the gloom of these darker months the flicker of Advent candles and the sparkle of Christmas lights seems magnified. A spark of hope is kindled even on the wettest and coldest of winter days.

As December begins, the season of Advent is guiding the thoughts and reflections of the church community. We have the gift of this season to ponder the themes of hope, peace, joy and love. Rather than being simple, cheery words that slip into our conversations easily, these have become words that jump out as being in direct contrast to so much of the national and international news. We live in a time of turmoil and conflict but this season, whether secular or within the church, invites us to look beyond the seemingly impenetrable gloom and to discover the more joy filled possibilities waiting to be discovered.

Visitors to the vicarage may have noticed that our living room is festooned with fairy lights all year round. What started as an accidental omission when packing away the Christmas decorations (how *does* one decoration always get overlooked?) became something of a family tradition and a hope-filled reminder. In the middle of our daily lives, at the heart of our struggles, distractions and worries, there are those little sparkles that allow a bit of fun to attract our attention.

Fun can be an underrated and overlooked quality. It can be an abundance of joy that doesn't reach the excesses of hedonism but that is extravagant and exuberant to break through our defences and barriers and helps us to discover that there truly is goodness to be found in the world.

Jesus, the light of the world, came into a hurting world where pain and violence were all too evident. His arrival as a tiny, human yet divine baby revealed the goodness and the presence of God. It broke through the gloom and began the invitation to 'follow him' and discover the relationship that God desires with each of us. Each light and candle that we see during this season is a reminder of the promise and the revelation of God's love for us. Jesus, the light of the world, is with us.

My prayer this season is that we can all find sparks of joy, glimmers of hope and genuine peace as we celebrate together, in love, this Christmas time.

Rev'd Hannah



# Parish ACTIVITIES



**9th December  
at 3.30pm  
in the Church Hall**

Lots of crafts, a story, and a lovely meal together at the end. This month our theme is Advent and Christmas

If you are planning to come along, please confirm your attendance by contacting Revd Hannah on 01663 766448

## Christmas Flowers

There's a plant pot at the back of church for any donations towards helping the church be decorated fabulously for Christmas.



**Any and all donations most gratefully received!**

## Advent Carol Service

**Sunday 3rd December  
at  
6.00pm**



## St Thomas' Church Christmas Coffee Morning



**Wednesday  
13th December**

**10.00am - 12.00 noon  
In the Church Hall**

**Coffee and Mince Pies  
Stall and Raffle**



# Advent Photo Challenge

1st - 24th December



See article elsewhere in magazine or Pewsheet.

## Christingle

The St Thomas' Christingle service will be held on Christmas Eve as we get ready to celebrate Jesus' birth. To help to make room for everyone who might like to come along there will be two Christingle services again this year – one at 1 pm and one at 3 pm on Christmas Eve.

As a guide, the first service will be particularly suitable for younger children - but everyone is welcome at either; we hope that by offering two services you can join us for this festive celebration as part of your family traditions and preparations.



## SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday  
17th December  
at  
6.00pm



## Blue Christmas Service

6pm Friday 22nd December

The Blue Christmas service aims to provide a supportive, calm, and welcoming space for anyone who might find the Christmas season difficult or painful

If you would like to know more contact Rev'd Hanniah or Rev'd Ashleigh.



# Parish ACTIVITIES



## Knit and Stitch Group

There will be no Knit and Stitch in December.  
Check January's Parish Magazine for start date in 2024.

Any questions contact Alison: 07897489792

*We would like to thank all the Knit and Stitch group for everything you have done for St Thomas' and our fellow residents in 2023. Ed*

### Reverse Advent calendar

We are living in tough economic times and many people are struggling financially.

As we approach Christmas it is traditional to open the door of an Advent Calendar each morning, eager to eat the chocolate and reveal the picture.

This year, you might like to try keeping a 'reverse' Advent calendar. Why not find a box and each day add a small item of food or toiletries each day.

Alternatively, you could collect one item for each of the four Sundays in Advent, or collect one item as a Christmas gift – whatever is most practical for you.

Donations can be brought to St Thomas' between Christmas and New Year and we can give a boost to the foodbank in the deanery based at St Mark's, Bredbury at the start of 2024.

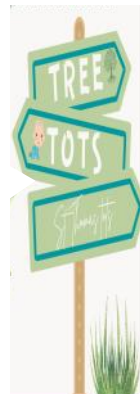
### Come join us at St Thomas Church Tree Tots Group

**Monday**  
**9.30-11.30am**  
**during term time**

A group of bumps, babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their parents or carers.

Tea, coffee, play, a chance to chat and make new friends

Suggested donation



# Parish NEWS

## Anniversary of Baptisms

4th                      Reggie Coupe

## Funerals

22nd Nov      John Phillips  
23rd Nov      Stanley Garnett

## Burial of Ashes

12th Nov      Charles Bishop  
19th Nov      Ralph Dickin  
19th Nov      Anne Makinson  
19th Nov      Donald & Vera Marston

## Advent Photo Challenge

If you enjoy taking photographs of the things around you that bring moments of joy or reflection then you might like to take part in the Advent Photo Challenge.

There is a word for each day of Advent which provides a theme or prompt to use as inspiration for the photograph you might take. Pictures will be appearing on the St Thomas' Facebook page – why not join in and share your pictures with us.

Our Facebook page can be found at *St Thomas' Church, High Lane*. If you don't use Facebook, just email your picture to [st.thomas03@btinternet.com](mailto:st.thomas03@btinternet.com) We look forward to seeing your pictures!

## Advent in pictures:

Friday 1st December	Calendar
Saturday 2nd December	Angel
Sunday 3rd December	Hope
Monday 4th December	Church
Tuesday 5th December	Tree
Wed 6th December	Light
Thursday 7th December	Candle
Friday 8th December	Present
Saturday 9th December	Home
Sunday 10th December	Peace
Monday 11th December	Prepare
Tuesday 12th December	Holy
Wed 13th December	Star
Thursday 14th December	Trust
Friday 15th December	Comfort
Saturday 16th December	Praise
Sunday 17th December	Joy
Monday 18th December	Wreath
Tuesday 19th December	Shepherd
Wedn 20th December	Messenger
Thursday 21st December	Waiting
Friday 22nd December	Journey
Saturday 23rd December	Revelation
Sunday 24th December	Love
Monday 25th December	Christmas

## Outdoor October

Huge thanks to everyone who sponsored me for my challenge to sleep outside in a tent for the whole of the month of October. It was not an entirely unpleasant experience but I am definitely appreciating my home comforts again as the days get colder.

I hope to be able to share the total that was raised very soon. HH

## Thank You

Just to say a big 'Thank You' to all at the Luncheon Club for making my 90th Birthday so wonderful. The memories will always stay with me.  
Many thanks, Doris (Corbes)

## Reflections on the Christmas Story

*The following is a mix of Bible readings and comments by Tony Horsfall, a former OMF missionary to the Far East and now retreat leader and author based in Yorkshire.*

### **Matthew 1:18 Joseph's dilemma**

*This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit...."*

It is not clear at what point Mary told Joseph the news of her pregnancy, but when she did it came as a bombshell. What should he do, knowing the child was not his? Could her story be true? He was however a righteous man, and he sought God for direction rather than acting impulsively. God spoke to him through a dream, confirming that the child was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and this gave him the courage to stand by her, and take her as his wife. It was a brave decision, but he now knew that the child would be the One to save people from their sins.

It is easy when we have difficult decisions to make to be impetuous or hasty, but the best decisions are made slowly and with prayer. When you are making important choices ask God to guide you clearly, and to give you the courage to do what is right.

### **Matthew 1:22 Long-awaited Immanuel**

*All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us')... And Joseph gave Him the name Jesus.*

The plan of salvation is intimately connected to the Old Testament, and was the fulfilment of prophecies made long ago. God was sending His Son into the world that we might be saved. God is with us – this astonishing, mind-blowing truth underpinned Joseph's straight-forward trust in Him. Today as you get on with your life, pray that the wonder of knowing that God is with you will never be far from your awareness.

### **Luke 2:1-7 Bethlehem**

*In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world... so Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*

This is perhaps the most familiar picture we have of the Christmas event—but remember what was happening. This was no ordinary child. In Jesus, God became a human being and dwelt among us, perhaps the greatest miracle (and mystery) of all. As you visualise the scene again, let worship arise in your heart: *'From heaven you came, helpless Babe, entered our world your glory veiled.'* Emmanuel, God with us! The Servant King, worthy of all our adoration and love.

LORD God, in this season please help me to live in the wonder of your upside-down Kingdom where your love for us compels you to become helpless, vulnerable and dependent. May your Kingdom come in and through my life today.



### **Luke 2:8-12                      The Shepherds arrive**

*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.*

The first visitors are not VIPs but humble shepherds who have been summoned by an angelic visitor. For those who have eyes to see, there hidden in the manger beneath the blankets is the Son of God, the one sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world. Very few of those crowded into Bethlehem that night were aware of what was happening. Only those with faith could recognise the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah. It is the same today.

Lord, I pray for eyes to see where the glory of Heaven touches earth. May I be alive today with the truth that the Saviour, rescuer, King Jesus has been born 'to us' and that there is joy in this for all people. May my life reflect that glory even in a small way in my interactions with people, so that in this Christmas season the good news of great joy will be known.

### **Luke 2:13-15                      Angel hosts**

*Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'*

The darkness of the Judean hillside was lit up by the appearance of a great angelic choir, messengers sent to herald the birth of the Saviour. Their song breaks the stillness of the night, first in praise of God for his act of mercy in sending the Son, and then in proclamation of the peace the child will bring to earth. The shepherds now decide to do the unthinkable -leave their flocks, and head off into town to see the new born King. Such is the drawing power of the Saviour.

Sometimes there are things we too must leave behind if we are to follow his call, but whatever sacrifice is needed, it will be worth it just to find him for ourselves.

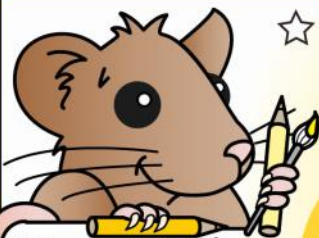
### **Luke 2:16-20                      Mary ponders**

*So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ... Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen...*

The shepherds became the first evangelists, proclaiming the good news...That was their response, and it should be ours too. But for Mary there followed a time of reflection. Exuberant witness and quiet contemplation are not opposites. They are in fact good companions in the spiritual life.

Thank you, LORD Jesus, that you are still found when we search for you. May I be willing to share the discovery I've made with others at this time. But I also want to know you better in my inner life, too. Please give me that balance of active following and heart-pondering reflection, especially in this Christmas season.





Mouse Makes



GOD'S PROMISE

Isaiah 9:6-7

CHILD • BORN • SON  
GIVEN • WONDERFUL  
COUNCELLOR  
MIGHTY • GOD  
EVERLASTING  
FATHER • PRINCE  
PEACE • LORD



AN ANGEL MESSENGER

Luke 1:26-38

ANGEL • GABRIEL  
JOSEPH • MARY  
FAVOUR • SON  
JESUS • GREAT  
THRONE • REIGN  
FOREVER • HOLY  
SERVANT • WORD

ADVENT comes from the Latin 'AD VENTO' which means ARRIVAL

In Advent we celebrate Jesus' birth and look forward to the time when Jesus will come again.



A LONG JOURNEY

Luke 2:1-20

BETHLEHEM  
REGISTER • BIRTH  
MANGER • INN  
SHEPHERDS • FLOCK  
ANGELS • JOY  
GOOD NEWS • PRAISE  
SAVIOUR • CHRIST



THE BEST GIFT OF ALL

John 3:16

GOD • SO • LOVED  
WORLD • HE • GAVE  
ONLY • SON  
WHOEVER • BELIEVES  
ETERNAL • LIFE



## Christmas all wrapped up

*“And this will be a sign to you, you will find the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” Luke 2:2*

Do you ever dread wrapping all those Christmas presents? The large roll of fragile paper that slides around on the table, the lumpy gifts that defy wrapping, the tape that sticks to your fingers... what is so important about wrapping presents, anyway? Why not just hand them over?

Well did you ever consider that the very first Christmas present EVER was wrapped up – in swaddling clothes? In biblical times, after a birth, the umbilical cord would be cut, the baby would be washed, rubbed with salt and oil, and then carefully wrapped in swaddling clothes. The swaddling is described as a cloth or blanket, tied together like bandages. This process was carried out with great love and care and was thought to have health-giving benefits.

On the other hand, to ignore the swaddling process was seen as abandonment and rejection. “And as for thy nativity, on the day thou wast born, thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to soothe thee. Thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. (Ezekiel 16:4 KJ21)

So why wrap your presents? Because just as the baby Jesus was swaddled as a sign of great love and care, wrapping our gifts is a sign of our own effort, love, and care towards those whom we love.



### St Nicholas – another look at this much-loved saint

One account of how Father Christmas began tells of a man named Nicholas who was born in the third century in the Greek village of Patara, on what is today the southern coast of Turkey. His family were both devout and wealthy, and when his parents died in an epidemic, Nicholas decided to use his inheritance to help people. He gave to the needy, the sick, the suffering. He dedicated his whole life to God's service, and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man.

As a bishop in later life, he joined other bishops and priests in prison under the emperor Diocletian's fierce persecution of Christians across the Roman Empire. Finally released, Nicholas was all the more determined to shed abroad the news of God's love. He did so by giving. One story of his generosity explains why we hang Christmas stockings over our mantelpieces today. There was a poor family with three daughters who needed dowries if they were to marry, and not be sold into slavery. Nicholas heard of their plight, and tossed three bags of gold into their home through an open window – thus saving the girls from a life of misery. The bags of gold landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. Hence the custom of children hanging out stockings – in the hope of attracting presents of their own from St Nicholas – on Christmas Eve. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols of St Nicholas.

To this day, 6th December (his feast day) is still the main day for gift-giving and merry-making in much of Europe. Many feel that simple gift-giving in early Advent helps preserve a Christmas Day focus on the Christ Child.

Wives Group .....

F

November was a busy month as preparations went ahead with the Christmas Tree Festival.

R

We enjoyed some 'Armchair' exercises and also an interesting visit to the Holy Land with Rev'd Ashleigh.

I

We made a decoration with Bizzie Lizzie too!

E

**Dec. 4th** Advent Service & Fellowship

N

**Dec 11th** Phoenix Bell Ringers (festive music) & Faith Afternoon Tea

D

We have a break for Christmas & New Year, returning on January 8th 2024.

S

Sending Season's greetings to all and looking forward to another interesting programme in 2024.

H

*Best wishes,*

I

*Betty*

P

▪ MEALS OUT ▪ THEATRE ▪ TALKS ▪ FILM SHOWS ▪ QUIZ ▪



Little Donkey, Little Donkey

You are bound to sing about donkeys this Christmas, especially the little one that carried Mary to Bethlehem! But how much do you know about donkeys? They are really rather special.

Here are some fun facts:

- There are more than 44 million donkeys in the world, of all shapes and sizes.
  - There are more than 186 breeds of donkey.
  - Donkeys have good memories. They can remember places and other donkeys even 25 years after they last saw them.
  - Donkeys are not stubborn, they are cautious. If they are fearful about something, they will do their best to avoid it.
  - Donkeys are naturally clean. Given the chance, they are always grooming themselves and each other.
  - Donkeys like to be warm and dry. They come from deserts and savannahs.
  - Donkeys are social. They make deep bonds with their family and herd and get very upset if someone they love is taken from them.
  - Donkeys have big ears for a good reason – it means they can hear each other at a great distance. They communicate by braying, grunting, whiffling, squealing and snorting.
  - Donkeys help the ecology of their desert homes by digging into the ground to access water. This provides little creatures such as birds and chipmunks with life-saving water.
  - Donkeys need your help. Millions round the world are being mistreated, and you can take action to help them. [www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk](http://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk)

## A December Remembered

The month of December is generally accepted to mean a period of pleasure, a time especially for children and social gatherings of whatever sort with anticipation of the New Year ahead. That is, unless a world war intervenes as it did in 1939.

My own narrative concerns specifically Sunday 29th December 1940 at my home town of Crewe, Cheshire. As background, Crewe had been identified as an important railway town since the middle of the 19th Century, it was essentially a main line junction run by the London, Midland and Scottish railway (LMS). In addition there was a well established railway works manufacturing and maintaining steam locomotives. The railways provided work for the vast majority of Crewe's working population and school leavers were readily accepted in appropriate roles.

In 1938 the government decreed that Crewe should be the site of a "shadow" aircraft factory to be established on the western outskirts of the town and the factory was officially opened in July 1939 by the Air Minister, Sir Kingsley Wood. The word "shadow" was meant to indicate that the factory at Crewe would be duplicating production lines at Derby and Vickers Armstrong at Weybridge in the production of Merlin and Griffon Aircraft engines to be installed in Spitfire and Hurricane fighter aircraft, Lancaster bombers and, later in the war, Mosquito fighter bombers. The establishment of Rolls Royce rivalled the railways in terms of workforce. My father and uncle became Rolls Royce employees working 12 hour shifts 6 or 7 days per week. Additionally, the more able-bodied of the workers were required to volunteer their 'free' time as Home Guard, Air Raid Precaution Wardens (ARP), fire fighters or Special Constables. My father became a uniformed Special Constable with the Cheshire Constabulary working three shifts 10pm-2am at weekends.

The presence of Rolls Royce made Crewe more of an enemy target than it might have been otherwise and we had Ack Ack batteries (guns), search lights, barrage balloons and the capacity for smoke screening. The town had been the subject of indiscriminate bombing since we were on the flight path to Liverpool, which suffered badly.

I now revert to the point regarding Sunday 29th December 1940 — mid afternoon, a fine day, no weather problems. My mother and I ( a six year old boy) were in the rear garden of our home, my father was working. Suddenly a Luftwaffe Junkers 88 aircraft appeared at extremely low level, best described as roof top level. it was remarkable because the aircrew could be seen quite clearly. Frightening could barely describe the event and it was all the more terrifying because the aircraft was black in colour and seemed to emphasise how sinister it was. We guessed the target was Rolls Royce and minutes later heard the explosive noise of bombing.

There was no instantaneous means of communication like today and we had to wait for the information to gradually filter through that the bombing had affected number 16 Workshop leaving 18 men dead, many injured and causing devastating damage. My father and uncle were uninjured. The factory was back in business in a short time. I did not hear my father talk about the bombing, nor did he ever refer to it as I advanced in age but the memories of that day are indelibly inscribed on my mind. I have enjoyed over 80 Decembers since that day but 29/12/40 is the one that sticks with me. *Derek Ankers*



## God in the Arts

### 'The Virgin of the Lilies' by Carlos Schwabe

Occasionally we have been exploring how art can celebrate the wonder of this world. This month with our Lady and Jesus we stand above the world: high on the clouds with a glorious path of tall, elegant lilies that lead like a stairway to the earth beneath. This is 'The Virgin of the Lilies' by Carlos Schwabe. He was born in Germany and then lived in Switzerland and France, painting this canvas in 1899 when he was 33 years old.

It is like a scene caught when we look out of the window in an aeroplane. We can see the earth beneath and spot hills and valleys, roads and settlements, and a river weaving its way through the countryside. Mary and Jesus are haloed in a lunar-like radiance. The lilies are symbols of purity and obedience, the qualities that will take them to that scene at Bethlehem which we give thanks for at Christmas. The heavenly light shining out in the painting brings hope and joy to the world below, transforming lives with the wonder of the Saviour's birth.

Jesus holds three nails in his hand as a sign that His life will be tempered by rejection, suffering and death. But the lilies growing tall and straight in the skies are signs of new life and resurrection. The light come down to earth at Christmas can never be extinguished. That light and love are expressed in this vivid, moving painting of Carlos Schwabe as they are caught up in the carol of Christina Rossetti we sing at this time:

*Love shall be our token, Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men, Love for plea and gift and sign.*



What do Santa's helpers learn at school?

A: The elf-abet!



What do Reindeer hang on their Christmas trees?

A: Horn-aments!



Why did the Turkey cross the road?

A: Because he wasn't chicken!



What is green, covered in tinsel and goes ribbet ribbet?

A: Mistle-toad!



What happens if you eat Christmas decorations?

A: You get tinsel-itis!



What is the best present in the world?

A: A broken drum, you just can't beat it!

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# Calendar for December 2023

Services will be held in St Thomas' Church unless otherwise indicated.

Please do not attend if you have any Covid-19 symptoms.

St Thomas' Church is trying hard to reach all our parishioners using a variety of methods. Do join in our worship in person or by telephone

Church is open each day for Private Prayer.



Friday 1st December 9.30am

Morning Prayer

## Sunday 3rd

### First Sunday of Advent

8.30am

Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am

Parish Communion

6.00pm

Advent Carol Service



Wednesday 6th

9.30am

Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 7th

9.30am

Morning Prayer

9.00pm

Telephone Compline

Friday 8th

9.30am

Morning Prayer

Saturday 9th

3.30pm

Messy Church - Advent and Christmas

## Sunday 10th

### Second Sunday of Advent

8.30am

Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am

Parish Communion

Wednesday 13th

9.30am

Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 14th

9.30am

Morning Prayer

9.00pm

Telephone Compline

Friday 15th

9.30am

Morning Prayer



## Sunday 17th

### Third Sunday of Advent

8.30am

Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am

Parish Communion

6.00pm

Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Wednesday 20th

9.30am

Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 21st

9.30am

Morning Prayer

9.00pm

Telephone Compline

Friday 22nd

9.30am

Morning Prayer

6.00pm

Blue Christmas Service





**Sunday 24th****Fourth Sunday of Advent / Christmas Eve**

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Parish Communion  
1.00pm Christingle Service  
3.00pm Christingle Service  
11.30pm Midnight Mass

**Monday 25th****Christmas Day**

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Parish Communion



Wednesday 27th

9.30am Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 28th

9.30am Morning Prayer

9.00pm Telephone Compline

Friday 29th

9.30am Morning Prayer

**Sunday 31st****First Sunday of Christmas**

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Parish Communion

For inclusion in telephone services  
please contact Rev'd Hannah 01663 766 448

## A Christmas Prayer

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father, Help us remember the birth of Jesus,  
that we may share in the song of the angels,  
the gladness of the shepherds,  
and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the  
world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires  
with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which  
Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning  
make us happy to be thy children,  
and Christmas evening bring us  
to our beds with grateful  
thoughts, forgiving and forgiven,  
for Jesus' sake. Amen.



# Community NEWS

## High Lane Residents Association

Now we have all reset our clocks, and the leaves are falling from the trees, all signs that autumn has arrived, and winter is around the corner.

During the summer months it's easy to see your neighbours, possibly pottering around in their gardens or going off to the shops. During the wintertime with the darker nights and colder weather we need to be a little more vigilant to make sure all is well with our friends and neighbours. We are fortunate in High Lane that there are activities going on around the village that all can join, the coffee mornings every Monday at the village hall, meetings at the church sometimes involving a lunch, various other groups such as the U3A putting on a variety of activities, and of course also the library. The library has been designated a warm space – you can have a hot drink there. You need to check opening times to see when it is staffed. There are many more groups in addition to those mentioned so if you feel like it, join in!

The RA will continue with monthly meetings – 1st Thursday of the month at 8pm at the library. Please get in touch if you have any concerns so they can be added to the agenda.

Our local Police officer Iain Wier and Jason Holmwood (Area Lead Sergeant) attended our November meeting reporting on local speeding and action taking place, also reported on local crime, with advice on reporting. All this is available on our website [hlra.org.uk](http://hlra.org.uk) look in meetings and minutes.

Our next monthly meeting will be on Thursday 7th December at 8.00pm, at the library, all residents welcome. *DB*



### HIGH LANE VILLAGE WI

Our Women's Institute group meets at High Lane Village Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm.

- 6th December** A Christmas Celebration with Guest Speaker, Peter Turner, magician.
- 10th January** New Year Dinner at the Crown, Hawk Green. (WI members only)

We are a friendly and informal WI and are always happy to welcome any ladies who may wish to join us, to come along and give us a try without any obligation. We have a special speaker at most of our meetings or some in-house entertainment.

If you should require any further details please contact:  
Jean Pye on (01663) 635595



## Disley & Lyme Horticultural Society wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

But before we get there, I thought I would add a photo from the 2023 show and remind ourselves of the colourful display we were treated to.



The Society would like to thank all those who chose our group as their chosen community fund recipient from the Co-op Community Fund Scheme. For all those who bipped their card at the check-out we can't thank you enough. This will enable us to continue to deliver an exciting programme of events throughout 2024 which will include specialist talks, garden visits and demonstrations, as well as our well-loved Coffee Mornings in Disley and High Lane, with bulbs and seasonal plants for sale....culminating in the 117th Annual Show.

Signing off for 2023. JL

## The British Pilgrimage Trust

You have probably seen the Pilgrim Walks on the television: long distance walks - usually in countries abroad like Spain and France - but did you know the UK is criss-crossed with a large number of Pilgrimage Walks? Like the Camino de Santiago, the walks should bring you healing and a chance for spiritual reflection.

The British Pilgrimage Trust provides free access to a pilgrim route network that currently has over 250 routes with maps, photos and info; a Britain wide Sanctuary low-cost pilgrim hostel accommodation network; and provides online guides to introduce concepts, logistics and practices to help you make your own pilgrimage. [www. britishpilgrimage.org/routes](http://www.britishpilgrimage.org/routes)

Some of the walks last several weeks and others can be completed in a day. Near to High Lane there is a four day walk, which could always be done in sections. **The Peak Pilgrimage** is 39 miles long and takes four days from Ilam to Eyam. Experience peaks, dells and national nature reserves, the twelve churches along the way provide stamps to show the route walked. Or how about the **Hope Pilgrimage**? It is 29 miles and again it can be broken down to 2-3 days. As well as taking you through awesome, beautiful and remote landscapes, the Hope Pilgrimage takes you into nine lovely churches where you can pause before stamping your Guidebook.

There is a one day, 7 mile, **Blackburn Cathedral** route or longer walks include The Two Saints Way, a new 92 mile pilgrimage route which has been recreated between the cathedral cities of Chester and Lichfield. There are also a number of much longer distanced cycle routes.

# Eco NEWS

## No more 'postcode lottery' recycling

Life is going to become simpler when it comes to recycling. From 2026, the national recycling laws are to be standardised, with Councils across the UK all having to collect the same glass, metal, plastic, paper and card, food waste and garden waste. It is expected that the plans will lead to packaging that is clearly labelled 'recyclable' or not, without the need for households to check local provisions.

"Simpler recycling will help us all recycle more easily, doing our bit to help save the planet and make the best use of precious resources that we use every day," said Therese Coffey, the Environment Secretary. "Alongside weekly food waste collections, we are ending the postcode lottery of what you can put in your bin, so that wherever you live in the country, you will be able to recycle the same products with confidence."

## Tips to protect things from freezing

This may look silly, but it works: cover your windscreen wipers with old socks, to stop them sticking to the windscreen on a freezing morning. The RAC warns that if windscreen wipers cannot move, there is a risk the circuit will overheat and blow a fuse.



If you are cycling to work, try wearing a swimming cap under your cycling helmet – Cycling UK recommends it as a good extra layer, to keep warm.

If you need to be outside for long, wear several thin layers instead of one big chunky one. The UK Health Security Agency says that the air which gets trapped between the layers also helps keep you warm.

## Stop mist on your windscreen

If you will be out in your car a lot this Christmas, here's an easy way to stop your windscreen from misting up: Simply clean it with shaving foam. It provides a protective barrier which stops mist forming. Ice hockey players use it to stop their face masks from steaming up while they're on the ice. It's easy to do. Put a good dollop of shaving foam onto a clean towel, and then wipe it all over the windscreen. Then take a second clean towel, and gently wipe off the shaving foam. This leaves a protective barrier, but it will need to be regularly reapplied, to continue to work. Check RAC or AA websites for more handy tips regarding cars and winter conditions.

## Food Waste

The king has been increasingly concerned that in the UK, 12 million tons of food is thrown away each year – even though almost three quarters of it could still be eaten, according to experts. In contrast, an estimated 4.7million people are living in food poverty. To combat this problem, King Charles has launched The Coronation Food Project, to coincide with this, his 75th Birthday year. Up to eight new food hubs around the country will store food, prepare it, and package it, before redistributing it to organisations like food banks and community kitchens. The long-term goal is to circulate 200 million meals a year.

Is there one simple thing you could do in your own kitchen this Christmas, to curb your personal food waste?

## Renowned composer 'thrilled' to write new Christmas carol for Church of England

This Christmas, the Church of England is inviting choirs across churches, schools, and communities to 'join the song' alongside one of the country's leading choral composers.



The 'song' is a new interpretation of 'The First Nowell.' It has been given a brand-new melody by the well-known composer Bob Chilcott and is the centrepiece of this year's Church of England Christmas focus: *Follow The Star: Join The Song*.

The C of E theme for 2023 highlights how singing can help draw people closer to God and one another, through the journey from Advent to Epiphany.

Bob Chilcott's most often performed pieces include *Can you hear me?*, *A Little Jazz Mass*, and the *St John Passion*. His music has been recorded by The King's Singers, King's College, Cambridge, The Sixteen, Tenebrae and The BBC Singers, among other choirs and groups. "It's been an absolute thrill for me to be able to write new music for the well-known carol, 'The First Nowell,' and to be a part of the 'Follow the Star' campaign at Christmas 2023," Bob Chilcott said. "I have aimed to make this melody easy to pick up and I hope all will enjoy singing it, at a time of year when the joy of singing is so central to worship and to the celebration of Christmas."

**Want to raise extra funds for Christmas?**

**Come along and book a table at our**

## **Table Top Sale**

**3rd December 2023**

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**Stall holders have access from 8.15 am**

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**No hanging rails permitted, extra goods for sale to go under tables**

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## The story behind the hymn: O Come, All ye Faithful

Nobody knows who wrote this well-loved Christmas carol. It was originally a Latin Christmas hymn, 'Adeste Fidelis'. It seems to have first 'surfaced' in English due to a John Francis Wade, who lived in the 18th century, and who made his living copying manuscripts and, sometimes, music by hand. Wade was a Roman Catholic, and all services in the church at that time were conducted in Latin, and so he knew the language well.

The story goes that in about 1750 he slipped this hymn into a manuscript he was copying for the English Roman Catholic College in Lisbon, Portugal. 35 years later, in 1785, it turned up in the Portuguese Chapel in London, where it became known as the 'Portuguese Hymn'.

From there, the hymn appears to have 'travelled' across to the Margaret Chapel in London's West End. Young William Ewart Gladstone, who later became British Prime Minister, greatly appreciated the services at this church. He said that the congregation were "the most devout and happy that I have ever seen."

The minister at that time was Frederick Oakley, one of the leaders of the 19th century Oxford Movement, who was later to convert to Roman Catholicism. Oakley believed strongly in the power of religious symbols and fine music, and before he bade farewell to the Margaret Chapel, he introduced this hymn to the congregation. Having started as 'Adeste Fidelis', and been for a while 'The Portuguese Hymn', this hymn soon became known – and loved worldwide – as 'O Come, All Ye Faithful'.

## Vitamin D Deficiency

As we head towards the shortest day, it is timely to note that about 1 in 5 adults and about 1 in 5 children in the UK have low vitamin D levels. More people have low vitamin D levels in the winter and spring because of less exposure to sunlight.

Vitamin D is essential for our health and well-being. It is usually made in the skin but requires adequate exposure to sunlight. It can also be obtained from some foods and vitamin D supplements. It helps our body absorb calcium and phosphorus from the gut and this is essential for healthy bones and to allow our muscles to function properly. It also plays a role in your nervous system and immune system.

In adults, low levels of vitamin D can increase risk of osteoporosis. But vitamin D is important for much more than bone health. Vitamin D may play a role in: Improving muscle strength; Keeping your immune system strong, helping to fight off infections; Protecting you against certain cancers; Reducing your risk of falls; Helping to stave off depression and low mood.

It's now recommended that everyone over one year old take 10 micrograms (400 International Units) a day from October to March. The pharmacists can advise on how to up your intake. If you are concerned about existing medical conditions, do check with your GP before taking supplements.

## Saint of the Month

**26 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, or 'Boxing Day', as we know it. 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 found himself involved with six others in administering the allocation of food to those in need. The apostles, who were the leaders of the church, felt that it wasn't appropriate for them to abandon preaching and 'serve tables', so they selected these seven to do the job for them. Stephen, however, quickly revealed hidden gifts as an eloquent spokesman for the Christian cause.

The Temple authorities, who had already had trouble with the apostles, 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). It's always dangerous to criticise a monument or a custom!

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.

There are 145 churches in this country dedicated to St Stephen. Stephen is the patron saint of deacons, headaches, horses, coffin makers, and masons. He is often represented carrying a pile of rocks or with rocks on his head.

# Appeals in response to war

## Christian Aid

Thousands of people have been killed and over a million displaced after the recent escalation of violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

In Gaza, a humanitarian crisis is unfolding. 7,028 Palestinians have been killed and 18,482 injured. Over 1.4 million have been displaced from their homes; supplies of water and food are fast running out. We're urging all parties to abide by international law to protect innocent civilians and agree to an immediate de-escalation of this unprecedented violence.

In Gaza, our medical partner is providing mobile medical and psychological care, which ranges from access to a doctor, nurse, social worker or physiotherapist.

In southern Gaza, our partner is responding to those most recently displaced to southern Gaza as a result of the war. They're providing mattresses, medicines, and emergency food items.

We're also actively exploring ways in which we might also support Israeli civilians who've been directly impacted by the violence.

Please go to: <https://give.christianaid.org.uk>



## UNICEF IN THE UKRAINE AND SUDAN

The children and families of **Ukraine** have endured more than 18 months of escalating violence, trauma, destruction and displacement. Children continue to be killed, wounded and deeply traumatized by violence that has sparked displacement on a scale and speed not seen since World War II. Schools, hospitals and other civilian infrastructure on which they depend continue to be damaged or destroyed. Families have been separated and lives torn apart.

UNICEF was in Ukraine before the war escalated, and in the months since has stayed and delivered. We stand with the children of Ukraine and will continue working with partners to support them through the war and beyond.

[www.unicef.org.uk/donate/donate-now-to-protect-children-in-ukraine/](http://www.unicef.org.uk/donate/donate-now-to-protect-children-in-ukraine/)



More than six months of conflict in **Sudan** have left around 14 million children in urgent need of lifesaving humanitarian support. Sudan is now the largest child displacement crisis in the world, with a recorded 3 million children fleeing widespread violence in search of safety, food, shelter and health care – most within Sudan – while hundreds of thousands are sheltering in sprawling make-shift camps in neighboring countries. Places where children simply must be safe – homes, schools and hospitals – have consistently come under attack, and continue to do so. Meanwhile, urgent action is needed to preserve Sudan's health systems, especially at community and primary healthcare levels – about 70 per cent of hospitals in conflict-affected states are not functional. UNICEF is advocating for safe passage for children and their families trapped in conflict areas and is working to provide supplies and services, including water, critical health care, vaccine, access to basic supplies and services, emergency supplies, child protection and mental health support to those who have been affected by the conflict.

[www.unicef.org.uk/donate/sudan-appeal/](http://www.unicef.org.uk/donate/sudan-appeal/)

## All in the month of December

It was:

**800 years ago**, on 25th December 1223 that St Francis of Assisi created the first nativity scene, in Greccio, Italy, after visiting Jesus' birthplace in the Holy Land. It proved enormously popular and inspired other communities to stage their own nativity scenes.

**250 years ago**, on 16th December 1773 that the Boston Tea Party took place in Massachusetts. American patriots boarded ships and threw chests of tea belonging to the British East India Company into Boston Harbour, as a protest against the British tax on tea.

**200 years ago**, on 23rd December 1823 that the poem *The Night Before Christmas* was first published (anonymously) in the Sentinel newspapers in Troy, New York. It was written by Clement Clarke Moore.

**100 years ago**, on 6th December 1923 that Ramsay MacDonald became the first Labour Prime Minister. The General Election had resulted in a hung parliament, and the Labour Party had formed a coalition with the Liberal Party.

**Also 100 years ago**, on 31st December 1923 that the BBC broadcast the chimes of Big Ben for the first time, to welcome in the New Year. The tradition continues to this day.

**75 years ago**, on 10th December 1948 that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

**Also 75 years ago**, on 24th December 1948 that the first Midnight Mass to be televised was broadcast from St Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.

**70 years ago**, on 10th December 1953 that former US Secretary of State George Marshall was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for creating the Marshall Plan. The aid package helped Europe rebuild after WW2.

**65 years ago**, on 5th December 1958 that Britain's first motorway, the Preston Bypass, was officially opened. (It is now part of the M6 and M55.)

**60 years ago**, on 21st December 1963 that the Daleks made their first appearance on the British science fiction TV series *Doctor Who*.

**50 years ago**, on 21st December 1973 that the Geneva Conference opened in Switzerland, aimed at finding a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. No agreement was reached, but Israel signed a military disengagement agreement with both Egypt and Syria in 1974.

**30 years ago**, on 10th December 1993 that Monkwearmouth Colliery in Sunderland closed down. It marked the end of more than 800 years of coal mining in the region.

**25 years ago**, on 10th December 1998 that the Palestine Liberation Organisation voted to remove clauses in its charter that called for Israel's destruction.

**20 years ago**, on 1st December 2003 that using a handheld mobile phone while driving became illegal in the UK.



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twist! You could paint pasta for extra shine!



Hang on your Christmas tree, out of reach from small children and pets. Once the holidays are over, remove the thread/string/ribbon and pop the decorations in your nearest compost bin!



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Vicarage

01663 766448

Email address

[hannahhupfield@cantab.net](mailto:hannahhupfield@cantab.net)

## Curate

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07726 937939

Readers Emeritus

Tony Berry

01663 762393

John Wilson

01663 762151

Churchwarden

Malcolm Bennett

016637 65220

Hon Secretary

Les Coop

01663 830077

Hon Treasurer

Geoff Gaskell

01663 763796

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Alvin West

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Verger

Robert Taylor

01663 763478

Sacristan

Ann Lambert

01663 764521

Caretaker

Steve Billinge

0785 5053404

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Wives Group

Betty Upham

01663 766698

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Shan Alexander

0161 427 4419

Luncheon Club

Helen Richardson

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St Thomas, High Lane

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