

Crosstalk

60p



The Parish Magazine of St Bartholomew with St Chad
www.thurstaston.org.uk

 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Chester

October 2020



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Diary Dates

**Please see the back page for
Church Service dates and times**

From the Registers

* **"Your magazine needs you"** *
* Please send your contributions *
* (eg. Poems. Prayers, interesting articles etc.,) *
* to office@thurstaston.org.uk *
* no later than 21st October *

The views and
opinions expressed
in the articles in
this magazine are
those of the
author(s) and do not
necessarily reflect
the views or
opinions of the
editor, the Rector
or the PCC.

From Your Rector

Harvest and Bible Sunday

There is such a great variety of foods available in the world today. I wonder if you can name different fruits for each letter of the alphabet? My thoughts at the bottom of the next page!

Harvest is the time of year when we say a massive 'thank you' to God for giving us such an amazingly fruitful world. It is indeed a tasty world and God wants us to enjoy it! But there is an even greater 'fruit' that God has for us all, if we are ready to 'taste and see' (Psalm 34:8).

Let me use some fruits to help us in our discovery of the story of the Bible.



God has given us the gift of this world. He is its creator and he has said it is good. He put us in charge of this world, to look after it.

and God gave us the gift of choice. He did not force us to love him, but wanted us to decide to do so of our own free will. It was a risk and in fact we chose to go our own way.



In the story we have in the Bible, it was the first pair (*pear*) the first couple, Adam and Eve - who made that choice; but it is a choice that we have all made down the ages. We have chosen our own way and not God's. And what was the result?

Man goes (*mangos*) from bad to worse (like the puns!) All that is destructive and painful began to spoil this world.



To help us, God gave us guidance in the ten commandments, to show us the best way to live; the way to stop the ly-ing and cheat-ing - the *ly-chee-ting that hurts each other*.

Again and again God spoke to us and showed us his love. There were the stories of individuals touched by that love and the people of God who God rescued again and again; but God's vineyard produced grapes that were sour and rotten, just as Isaiah sang about (5:1-7). God planned a way both to get rid of the bad and start all over again, because God still loved us.





The sign of that way was the star that hung over the manger when Jesus was born. God's gift to the world was his only Son, who came to show us the sort of people we should be and to provide the way for us to start again.

Like an olive, Jesus allowed himself to be crushed by all the bad that was spoiling our world.



Jesus went right down to the depths of all the pain and suffering in the world, taking it into himself, *plum*-ing its depths out of love for us.

And he experienced death and they buried (*berried*) him in a tomb. And on the third day, he rose again.



He was alive in a new Easter sort of way. There was a new beginning possible out of his passion... the fruit of his passion is the new life that he offers to us.

Now those grapes don't have to be rotten, but they can bear great-fruit (*grapefruit*), as his love works in our lives. But it depends on one thing...



... whether we say 'yes' to God. It is up to (*p*)each of us to make our response. Not just a 'thank you' at harvest time but a 'thank you' for God's grace for all time, so we might become the best we are meant to be; part of the first fruits of the new creation Jesus has made possible for us all (see Romans 8:23).

We cannot celebrate Harvest as we normally would this year, but are you able to be Generous (one of the fruits of the Spirit - see Galatians 5:22-23) in helping and supporting others? On the next two pages you will find information about Harvest Appeals from Forum Housing and Christian Aid.

Revd Jane

apricot, banana, cherry, damson, elderberry, fig, guava, honeydew melon, ..., jackfruit, kumquat, lemon, mandarin, nectarine, olive, papaya, quince, raspberry, satsuma, tangerine, ugli fruit, ..., water melon, ..., yucca, zucchini... any offers for I, V and X?



It's all about you

Harvest Appeal 2022

Dear Supporters,

Due to Covid-19 which has impacted so many, we're having to do things a little differently this year.

To promote the safety and wellbeing of our supporters, staff, and residents, we wonder if you would consider supporting us financially? This will enable us to continue providing essentials to our young people who may be experiencing difficult times, or who have little or nothing to start off with on move in.

How will it work?



Using donations, we will purchase essential food supplies



Food will be delivered directly to site, reducing the handling process



We will make food bags for people moving in, for those in difficulty, or awaiting benefits

How to Donate

Donations can be made in the following ways:

By Cheque, made payable to:

Forum Housing Association - Appeal

And posted to: 18 Hamilton Square,
Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 6AX

Online bank transfer:

Name of bank: NatWest
Account name: Birkenhead Forum
Housing Association Ltd
Sort code: 60-23-17
Account number: 03163296
Reference: **Appeal**

As always, we so grateful for your continued support, especially during this difficult time

Thank You

**Love never fails.
In times of crisis, love unites us all.**

Angela's coffee farm used to provide a good living to support her daughters Ariana and Johaira.



When crisis arrived on our doorsteps this year, neighbourly love helped us through.

Will you stand together with your global neighbours near and far this autumn?

**christian
aid**

This autumn, let's show love to communities still facing crisis
caid.org.uk/neighbours

Christian Aid is a key member of ACT Alliance. Eng and Wales charity no. 1105851 Scot charity no. SC039150 Company no. 5171525 Christian Aid Ireland: NI charity no. NIC101631 Company no. NI059154 and ROI charity no. 20014162 Company no. 426928. The Christian Aid name and logo are trademarks of Christian Aid. Printed exclusively on material sourced from responsibly managed forests © Christian Aid July 2020 Photo: Christian Aid J191673

Understanding the Bible

As we acknowledge Bible Sunday this month (25th October), it's a good opportunity to ask the question: ***why should I read the Bible?***

The Bible is the world's best-selling book of all time. However, it isn't one book, but a library of 66 books, composed by some 44 writers over a period of 1500 years in a range of literature including history, poetry, prophecy, letters and apocalyptic (end times). Despite having a number of different writers, the Bible claims one author: God himself!

This is the basis of the unity of its message and authoritative claim to be the primary way by which God speaks to us: *'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work'* (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is inspired (*'the word of God in the words of men'*) and presents itself as a ***manual for life***, equipping us to live for God in every aspect of our lives. We also have the promise of the Holy Spirit to guide us in applying the words to our lives: *'the Spirit will guide you into all truth'* (John 16:13).

However, the Bible could also be described as a ***love letter*** from God, as He uses it to deepen our relationship with him. As Jesus said: *'You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me'* (John 5:39,40). Christians follow a person not a book, and the Scriptures are intended to help us to know Jesus better.

At her coronation the Queen was given a Bible with the words ***'the most precious thing this world affords'***. Does this reflect our own attitude to the Bible?



MEETING OF PARISHIONERS AND ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The Annual Meetings usually take place in March or April, but this year they could not take place because of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the meetings must take place before the end of October and as the current restrictions mean that we cannot meet in the usual way, we have to make alternative arrangements in ways that have been authorised by the Church of England.

The meetings will take place at 6pm on Monday 26 October, using "Zoom". Many of you will have become familiar with this computer program during the past few months, but for those who have not encountered it, it has become a very popular way in which people can meet and interact using desktop or laptop computers with Internet links, or some mobile telephones. It is also possible to use an ordinary telephone, which enables the user to listen to what is being said and to speak to others involved, without being able to see them.

If you wish to attend the meeting, please inform the Rector by email (rector@thurstaston.org.uk) or telephone (648 1816). Please say if you wish to phone in rather than use a computer. The Rector will send you a "link" (for computer access) or a telephone number. You join the meeting by clicking on the link in the email or using your phone to ring the telephone number.

If you click on the link in the email, say 5-10 minutes before the start of the meeting, a message will appear on your screen saying you are in a "waiting room". Someone will check a list of the names of those who have informed the Rector that they will be participating, and the Church Electoral Roll if your name is not on the Rector's list, and will then let you into the meeting. You will be able to see all the others on your computer screen.

If you join by telephone, you will be asked to give your name and then let into the meeting using audio only.

During the two meetings, we will hear reports on the activities and finances of the church during 2019. We will also appoint members of the congregations as churchwardens, members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and members of the Deanery Synod. The first meeting is very brief and is called the Meeting of Parishioners. The second meeting is the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

The Meeting of Parishioners

The only business during the Meeting of Parishioners is to elect or re-elect churchwardens. They are usually appointed for a year, working closely with the Rector and the PCC particularly in relation to the buildings or church grounds. At the end of the year, usually in April, they may agree to be nominated again for election, but there is a time limit of six consecutive years on an appointment as churchwarden.

We should have two churchwardens, but at present we have only one and it is increasingly important to appoint another. Churchwardens have important roles in the general management of the churches and as one of the links between the congregations and the Rector. If you are interested becoming a

churchwarden, please speak to the Rector or Liz Whitehead as soon as possible.

The Rector must receive nominations for churchwardens on the proper forms before the meeting begins, forms will be available from the parish website (or by request) in good time before the meeting. Nominations may not be made after the meeting has begun. Anyone who lives in the parish can vote in the Meeting of Parishioners.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

The PCC is responsible for maintaining the churchyard, the buildings and their contents. Deanery Synod members represent the parish at Synod meetings. Sidespersons (sometimes called churchwarden's assistants) help with the arrangements at services.

During the meeting, we will elect PCC Members and Deanery Synod Representatives. We shall also receive written reports on what the PCC discussed in 2019, the church accounts and the organisations associated with the church. These too will be available on the parish website (or by request) before the meeting.

PCC members are elected for three years, with four members retiring each year. We are hoping for new members who can bring fresh ideas and insights to our discussions and decisions. Four members have reached the end of their terms of office and may be re-elected, and there are two other vacancies, six altogether, four until 2023 and two until 2022.

The current three-year term of office of our Deanery Synod representatives has ended. At present, Julie Davies, Malcolm Studholme and Chris Smale represent us. We must elect three representatives, and those who currently represent us can stand for re-election if they wish. Malcolm has indicated that he does not wish to be re-elected, so we will definitely be looking for at least one new person to fulfil this role.

Anyone who has any interest in becoming more involved in helping with church activities should speak as soon as possible to the Rector, the Honorary Secretary or to any PCC member. Everyone can offer something – do not be put off just because you think you don't know enough about it.

Notices with more details of the meetings will be displayed in both churches and distributed by email, with nomination forms for PCC members, deanery synod representatives & churchwardens; and copies of the annual report and accounts.

Finally, if there are any matters that you wish to bring forward for discussion, please inform the Rector or the Honorary Secretary before the meeting.

G.J Barley (Hon. Secretary)

St Bartholomew's, Thurstaston and St Chad's, Irby
Annual Church Meetings
Sunday 7th April 2019 at St Chad's at 6.30 pm

Thirty three people were present, including one under 16 years.

1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- a) Apologies (shown in alphabetical order) were received from Mrs L Barley, Mrs E Barton, Mrs J Dennison, Mrs J Hodgson, Mr B Jones, Mrs H Perry, Mr C Perry, Mrs M Reed, Dr D Reed, Mrs C Rostock and Mrs S Smale.

2) ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

a) Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting (16th March 2018)

The minutes had been published in the Church magazine and copies were available at the meeting. It was agreed unanimously that they were a true and accurate record.

b) Election of Churchwardens

Mrs E Whitehead had been nominated by Mrs R Smith, seconded by Mr R Dennison. There were no other nominations and Mrs Whitehead was re-elected, the second post of churchwarden being left unfilled.

3) ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

a) Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting (16th March 2018)

The minutes had been published in the Church magazine and copies were available at the meeting. It was agreed unanimously that they were a true and accurate record.

b) Approval of the following Reports published in the Annual Report

Mr Oliver, seconded by Mrs Oliver, proposed acceptance of the following reports:

- i) Churchwarden's Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Churches
- ii) The Business of the Church Council in 2018
- iii) The Electoral Roll
- iv) The Junior Church
- v) The St Chad's Seniors
- vi) Safeguarding

The proposal was agreed unanimously.

c) Approval of other Reports

Mrs J Bibby, seconded by Dr P Robson, proposed acceptance of the following reports:

- i) The Leprosy Mission
- ii) The Children's Society
- iii) Bellringers' Report
- iv) Evening Mothers' Union
- v) 1st Thurstaston Guides
- vi) 3rd Irby Brownies
- vii) Tots and Tinies

The proposal was agreed unanimously.

4) The Financial Affairs of the Parish during 2018

Mr Marley, the Treasurer, referred first to the financial report and accounts published in the Annual Report for 2018 and asked if there were any questions. He was asked whether Parish Share was a debt. A supplementary question was that if Parish Share is not a debt, why was it a liability? Mr Marley said it was essentially an aide memoire, but not paying it in full could lead to significant difficulties in the future. Mr Turnbull commented that "contactless giving" was being

trialled in some churches and that the amount collected during services had fallen by a third. New “top-up” regulations allowed us to reclaim more under the GASDS scheme. In response to another question about the Open Door Fund, Mr Marley said it had been agreed [by the Charity Commission] that it could be used for the new boiler in St Bartholomew’s.

The Rector thanked Mr Marley for all the work he had undertaken to produce the accounts. She thanked the Finance Committee for their work throughout the year.

5) The Independently Examined Accounts for 2018

Dr P Robson, seconded by Mrs P Hulme, proposed acceptance of the independently inspected annual accounts for 2018. The proposal was agreed unanimously.

6) Appointment of an Independent Examiner of the Accounts for 2019

Mrs B Appleyard proposed the appointment of Mrs M Walker, Chartered Accountant, Irby, as the Independent Examiner of the accounts for 2019. The proposal, which was seconded by Mrs J Bibby, was approved unanimously by those present.

7) Safeguarding Arrangements

A report by the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Mrs Kathryn Timmins, had been published in the Annual Report. The Rector invited questions. Mrs Deboorder, seconded by Mr Marley, proposed acceptance of the report and the proposal was agreed unanimously. Mr Smale asked about training and renewal of training. The Rector said that the Diocese was not currently offering retraining but she would be attending a retraining course in the next week and would make enquiries.

8) Matters discussed by the Deanery Synod during 2018

The account published in the Annual Report was accepted unanimously.

9) Election of a member of the congregations to fill a casual vacancy to represent the parish at the Deanery Synod until 2020

Mrs P Crammond, seconded Mr C Smale, proposed Mrs J Parmenter. As there were no other proposals, Mrs Parmenter was declared elected.

10) Election of three members of the Parochial Church Council to serve until 2022

The following people were elected or re-elected as members of the PCC:

- i. Mr A Harford was proposed by Mr Smale, seconded by Mrs Neil and elected until 2022
- ii. Mrs J Hodgson was proposed by Mr Barley, seconded by Mrs Neil and elected until 2022

11) Appointment of Sidespersons

The Rector read out the list of names of serving sidespeople, noting that more were required. All serving sidespeople were re-appointed unanimously.

12) Other Business

There was none.

13) Rector’s closing remarks

The Rector thanked everyone who had helped in any way during the year, saying that it was a huge number of people. Mrs Whitehead thanked the Rector for her dedication, commitment, organisation, faith and continual hard work, and for the support and guidance she had provided. She added a short prayer asking that the grace of God and the power of the Gospel would continue to renew the Rector in the faithful care of His people.

Reflected faith: Music and Singing

Many churches are holding Sunday, weekday and pastoral (Baptism, Wedding and Funeral) services again in their buildings.

However, for most of us no singing is allowed; and this often means no music is being played.

Whilst the churches were closed, one of the key things about worshipping together that people missed was the communal singing and the listening to the organ or other instruments.

If we look at the time taken to sing in each service (approximately a third of the whole service) and the amount musicians are usually paid, we can see the level of importance churches give to singing together.

So, although we understand the science behind the ‘no singing rule’ (breath is exhaled more forcibly so reaches further) it is still very strange to be in our normal church buildings but not to be able to sing.

Singing hymns and songs helps us to learn about our faith, to pray and to express our praise – but what is it about singing *together* that lifts our hearts in our time of worship?

There are plenty of said responses during most services, but they don’t have that same *lift*!

Is it the physical breathing aspects, the sounds we aim to make, or indeed the way our voices join and blend together?

All through the Bible there are passages telling of times of singing: of musicians leading processions towards a place or time of worship.

There are many exhortations in the Psalms to the people to come together, ‘singing with joy and thanksgiving’.

The Bible also talks about a time to put down our instruments and refrain from singing. Let’s hope and pray that our time for restraint will pass quickly and we will soon rejoice together with thanksgiving, joyful and loud singing!

This month: How can you best sing to the Lord? It is usually easier to sing along with a video of people singing than to a recording alone.

Have a look for suitable videos to join in with their singing, a recording if that’s not possible, or even a hymn book. Perhaps video call a church friend and sing the first verse of a couple of your popular songs and hymns together.



Don't 'go it alone'

If you are helping others at this time, remember to still leave space and time for yourself.

Going the extra mile for other people all the time will only ensure one thing; your collapse. Work in teams. Even the Good Samaritan did not attempt to help the injured man all on his own; he brought in the innkeeper. By sharing the problem, they solved it!



Heavenly Father,

We bring to you all those struggling with their mental health just now.

We pray:

For everyone who is smiling, when inside they're in pain.

For everyone who is saying they're fine, when inside they feel drained and empty.

For everyone struggling with fear and worry as the easing of the lockdown brings new anxieties.

Be with them in their suffering, as so much of their world has been stripped back and emptied.

When loved family and friends have been taken by illness, Or made distant by lockdown.

Pour your healing balm into their pain and sadness.

May you walk with them besides still waters

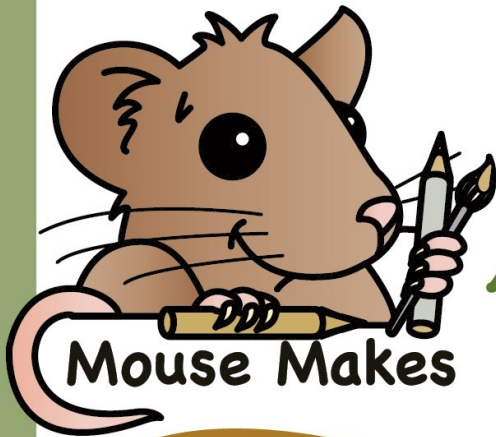
May you speak to them in a still small voice.

May you heal them, and fill them, and bless them with your abundant love and fullness of life.

And may they know that they are loved by you for the beautiful unique person that they are, created in the image of their heavenly creator and loving Lord.

*In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
Amen.*

By the Revd Peter Crumpler



Mouse Makes

"GOD is the **one** who gives seed to those who **plant**, and He gives **bread** for **food**. And GOD will give you spiritual seed and make that seed grow. He will **produce** a great **harvest** from your goodness."

2 Corinthians 9:10

Look out for seeds in the park and garden and in your kitchen store cupboard.



How many different seeds can you find?

Jesus said:
 "The kingdom of heaven is like a _____ **seed** that a man took and sowed in his **field**. It is the _____ of all the seeds, but when it has grown it becomes a tree, so that the wild _____ come and nest in its branches."

Read Matthew 13:31-32

Jesus said:
 "You do not need more **faith**. There is no 'more' or 'less' in faith. If you have a bare kernel of faith, say the size of a poppy seed, you could say to this sycamore tree
 "Go jump into the lake" and it would do it!"
 Luke 17:6

So the one who plants is not important, and the one who **waters** is not important. Only **GOD** is important because He is the one who makes things grow."
 1 Corinthians 3:7

H A R V E S T W O E S
 F I A F T P L A N T B
 O F A I T H A T E E R
 O O J E S U S E E D E
 D E U L O U G R O W A
 P R O D U C E S G O D

Find the words in **bold** on this page in the word search





WELCOME BACK TO CHURCH

St Bartholomew's and St Chad's

This is a summary of the guidance sent to all our church members. It's intended as a pocket-sized "aide memoire", and has deliberately been placed in the middle of the magazine so that you can pull it out and keep it easily to hand. It doesn't include all the details – please refer to the full guidance document for those (available on parish website - or in printed form by contacting the parish office). The numbers in brackets by some of the headings refer to the full guidance notes.

Service Times (p 1)

St Chad's 9.30 am

St Bartholomew's
8.00 am on 1st and 3rd Sunday
11.15 am on 2nd, 4th and 5th Sunday

St Chad's - Wednesday 10.15 am

The services at 8 am (St Bartholomew's) and 10.15 am (St Chad's) are for those who are over 70 or clinically vulnerable.

Numbers Attending (p 1)

Up to 7 households at St Bartholomew's

Up to 16 households at St Chad's

You must book your place in advance, otherwise you might find that the limits have already been reached.

How to book a place (p 3)

Book by email from Monday morning for the service the following Sunday, or Thursday morning for the service on the following Wednesday. You cannot book before bookings open at 9am.

**Email for bookings:
servicebookings@thurstaston.org.uk**

You should include your name and phone number; the date and time of service you wish to attend; names of all those attending, with ages if under 16; if you have children who will be in a pram, pushchair or on your knee for the whole service please let us know. If you will be in a wheelchair, please also inform us so we can make appropriate arrangements.

We would encourage you to sign a consent form for the NHS "Track and Trace" system for each service you attend. There is a copy of the form at the end of the main document (on page 5) which is downloadable from the front page of the website and will be available in physical form when you arrive at church.

If you cannot send an email and do not have a friend who can do it for you then you can book by phone on 07553 099 388.

If you can send emails, please do not use the phone number.

Arrival at Church (p 3)

A steward will ask you to confirm that you are well, remind you about face coverings and ask you to use the hand sanitiser. On your first service under these arrangements, another steward will invite you to pick up an envelope with two service books – Morning Worship and Holy Communion. You should take these home after the service and bring them with you the next time you come.

When it is safe to do so, we will ask you to return them for general use again but until then they will be your personal copies. Please write your name on the envelope.

The stewards will show you to your place, starting at the front.

You will not be able to sit next to anyone who is not in your household or support bubble.

In St Chad's, please ask the stewards for help if you need to bring chairs together for your household.

Some quiet music will be playing. Please use the time before the service for private prayer and reflection.

Safety is paramount (p 2)

We will follow the guidelines of the Church of England and the Government. Symptoms of Covid-19: new continuous cough, high temperature or change in or loss of your sense of taste and smell. If you have any of these, please do not attend church as you could infect others. You should self-isolate at home immediately.

If you are at increased risk or over 70, Government advice is to stay at home as much as possible. If you do go out, take care to minimise contact with anyone who isn't in your household.

The church will be cleaned before and after every service and left for 72 hours (the time recommended at present) before it can be used again. That means just one service per building on Sundays.

Face coverings

Everyone in the building must wear a face covering which covers mouth and nose. More details and the legitimate exemptions are shown on page 2 of the full guidance notes.

Other changes in the form of the services

- Children and young people are always very welcome but please supervise them, with appropriate precautions. For the time being, there will be no Junior Church at St Chad's.

You might wish to bring some "quiet" toys or books for your children, as none will be available in the churches.

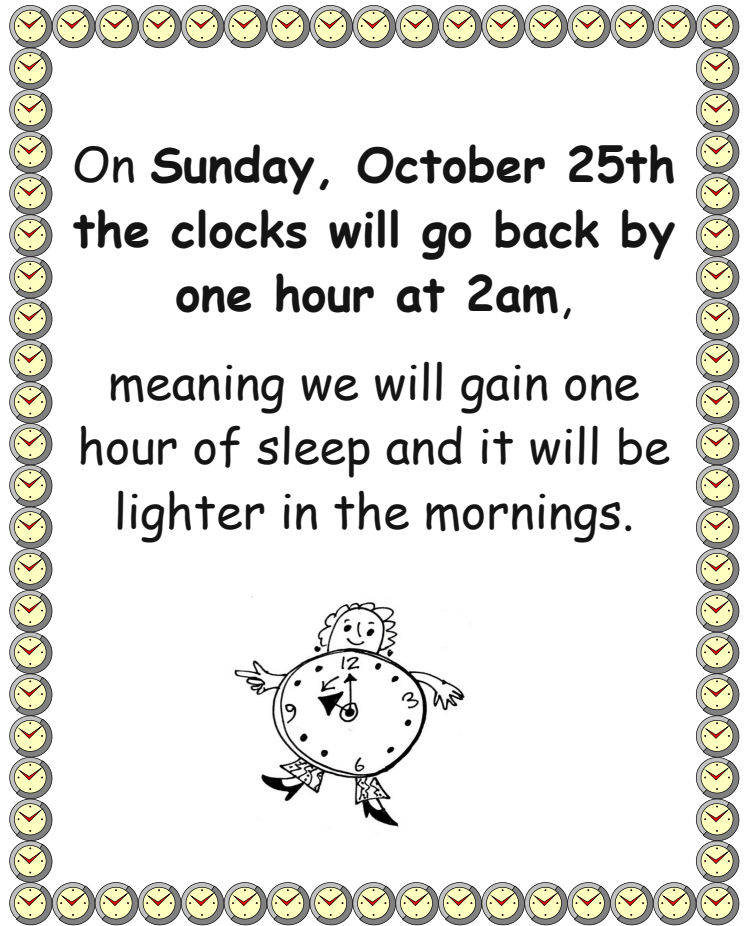
- There will be no singing.
- You will be able to greet other people, with social distancing, outside the church after the service.
- Doors and windows will be open for the duration of services, so if it is a cooler day, please bring something warm to wear.
- For our Giving, we are encouraging people to set up Standing Orders if possible. Otherwise, there will be a collection plate at the back of the church for cash and cheques.
- Receiving Communion – when these services are started, only bread will be distributed, not wine. You should stand to receive, as the altar rails cannot be used. The priest will come to you. If possible, please sanitise your hands before and after removing your face mask and before and after replacing it (do not touch the front of the mask).
- At St Chad's, only the disabled access and baby-change toilet will be in use – but only in an emergency, please.
- At St Chad's - No refreshments will be provided after the service.

Litter Virus

A face mask is a helpful thing –
It traps those nasty germs!
An extra message I must bring
In these poetic terms:

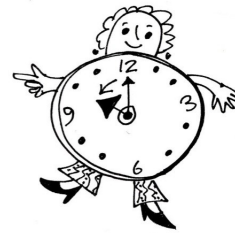
When you've finished with your mask
A bin is simply found
So drop it in – an easy task!
Don't leave it on the ground!

By Nigel Beeton



On **Sunday, October 25th**
the clocks will go back by
one hour at 2am,

meaning we will gain one
hour of sleep and it will be
lighter in the mornings.



facebook

St Bartholomew's and St Chad's
on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/stchadsstbarts/>

If you are already on Facebook it is easy to find and "like" the page. Just search for "stchadsstbarts" or "St. Bartholomew's Thurstaston, with St. Chad's, Irby" and you will find us.

If you "like" the page you will receive notifications when we add events and other informative posts.

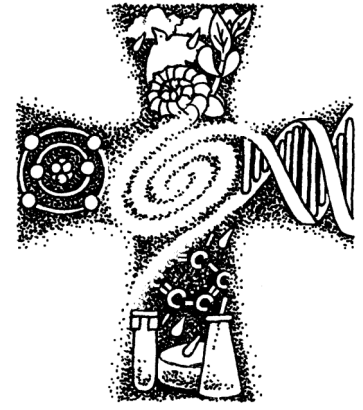
From our page you can also share individual posts and events with others you may think would like to hear about us and our events.

Please do share this page with your friends.

You do not have to be on Facebook to view our posts.

Do the Bible and Science contradict each other?

For the Christian, the Bible is God's word to us; it tells us about His character and creative purposes, how He has related to people in the past, and His promises for the future. Science is a specific way of studying the world, exploring the physical properties of things – a wonderful way to explore God's creation. So, the question to ask if the Bible and Science seem to be contradicting each other is, have we made a mistake in interpreting one or the other?



Science is very good at answering certain types of questions: 'What size is it?', 'How fast does it travel?', 'What is it made of?', and so on. Questions like 'What's it for?', 'What should I do with it?', and 'What's it worth?' can't be answered using scientific methods. Some of the misunderstanding in discussions of science and religion come from not recognising the limits of science.

It's also important to recognise what the Bible is, and what sorts of questions it can answer. The Bible was written well before people began to investigate the world in ways we would recognise as scientific. Of course, people in the Ancient Near East were studying the world around them, observing the movements of the stars, the processes of life and death that happened all around them, the seasons, the behaviour of physical objects, and so on. But they did not study the mechanisms underlying these things systematically using the tools of science, and they did not see or describe the world in scientific terms – not because they weren't intelligent, but because science as we know it wasn't happening at that time.

Instead, the biblical writers used words that were commonly used in their own cultures to record events, share truth and wisdom, and tell stories that convey deep truth about God's character. If we want to understand God's intention in inspiring these words, we need to do some careful work to connect with those ancient writers and find out what they meant, before we can discover what those words mean to us today.

These principles can help us have far more fruitful conversations about science and Christian faith. If we allow any apparent conflict between Science and the Bible to fuel our search for understanding, not only will we learn as individuals, but we will be able to draw others into a conversation that is relevant to wider society today.

He gave us eyes to see them: 'St Francis of Assisi preaching to the fish'

On 4th October we give thanks for one of the most loved saints in the church - Francis of Assisi. He died in 1226, but his example and witness have lived on to inspire Christians through the centuries.



His was a life focused on the crib and the cross, Lady Poverty and the stigmata, suffering and transfiguration. But also, it was a life marked by a deep love of creation: St Francis had a special nearness to all creatures great and small. As we read the stories of Thomas of Celano, we learn how he tamed a wolf in Gubbio, how swallows would chirp and fly around his head, how lambs would come close and gaze with delight, how his faithful donkey wept as the saint approached death, and in this month's painting, how fish would come to the shore to hear him preach.

Thomas relates how Francis returned some fish that had been caught to the water, telling them not to be caught again. They lingered near the boat, listening to the saint until he gave them permission to leave.

The sermon to the fish is portrayed in this work by Luc-Olivier Merson, a French artist who lived from 1846 to 1920. He is better known for his work with designs for banknotes, postage stamps, and the basilica of Sacré - Coeur in Montmartre. Here in this canvas, we see St Francis with followers young and old, a faithful dog and the fish at the water's edge.

What was the saint telling them? I think that they were loved and valued as part of the rich tapestry of God's creation, and they must return that love. It is the mood of the Benedicite where all things that move in the earth, the skies and the seas are exhorted to praise the Lord and magnify him forever. St Francis captures that mood in his own Canticle of the Sun.

In the weeks and months of lockdown many of us have had the time to look afresh at our relationship with the world of nature as we have journeyed through the seasons of spring and summer. We have learnt to wonder at the richness and variety of creation. We need to take that lesson into the 'new normal' as restrictions are gradually relaxed. The clock and the complexity of life may easily take over again, but St Francis is inviting us to journey with him in simplicity and joy as we praise God with all His creatures:

*'Let all things their Creator bless
and worship Him in humbleness.'*

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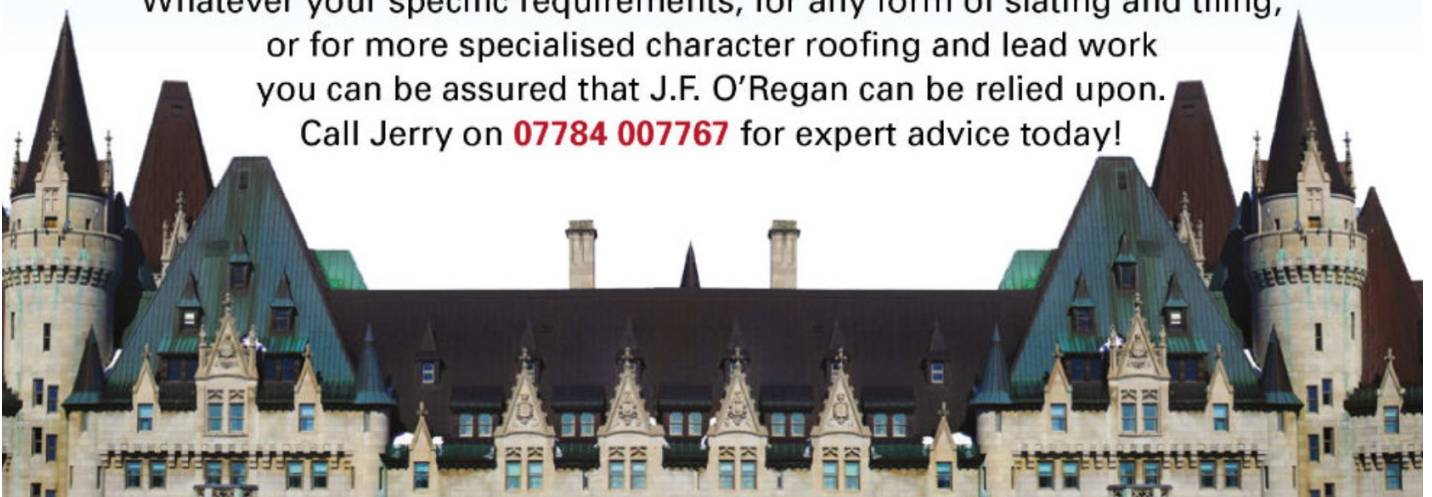
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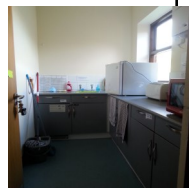


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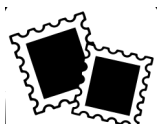
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St Bartholomew's

8.00am BCP HC

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8.00am BCP HC

11.15am HC

4th October

11th October

18th October

25th October
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St Chad's

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9.30am HC

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