

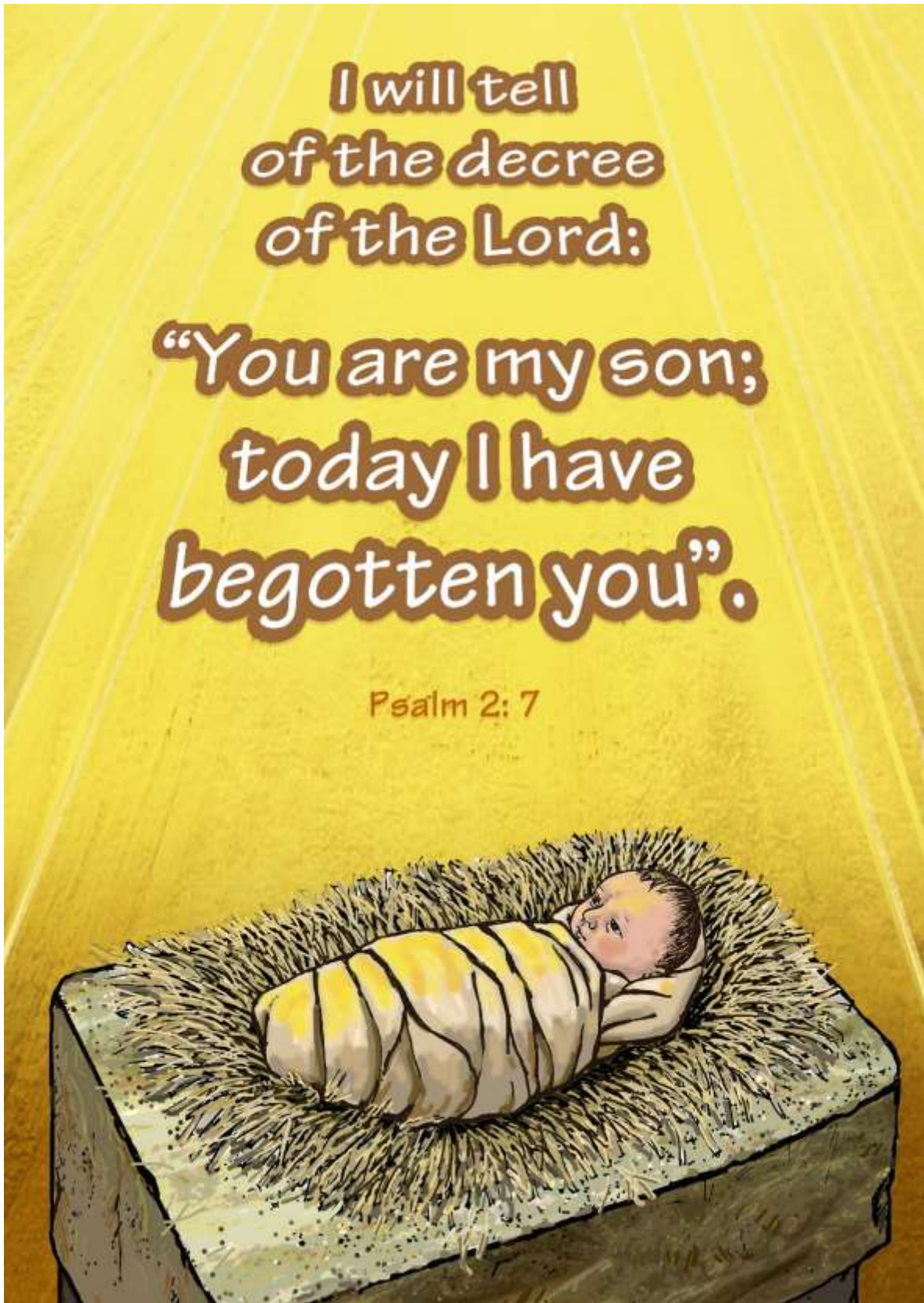
Crosstalk 60p



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

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Chester

December 2024 & January 2025



"Cross Talk Subscription for 2025 is £6"

These are now due for 2025. If you see your deliverer please pay them.

Alternatively either post a cheque for £6.00 payable to Thurstaston PCC, to St Chad's Church Office, Roslin Road, Irby, CH61 3UH

or pay on-line at 40.52.40 00018674,
putting your surname and mag subs as reference.

- I live in the parish and would like (to continue) to have Cross Talk delivered to my house. I enclose £6.00
- I don't live in the parish and would like (to continue) to have Cross Talk posted to my house. I enclose £16.00 (£6.00 subscription + £10.00 postage)
- I would like to pick up my reserved copy of CrossTalk from Church. (Please indicate whether St Chad's or St Bartholomew's). I enclose £6.00
- I no longer wish to have Cross Talk delivered/posted to my house

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel. No. (optional) _____

St Bartholomew and St Chad takes its duty and obligation to protect all extremely seriously. We have adopted the national Church of England's robust procedures and guidelines. You can find out more about the national policies and procedures at www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding

**Safeguarding is
Everyone's
Responsibility**

* "Your magazine needs you" *
* Please send your contributions *
* (eg. Poems. Prayers, interesting *
* articles etc.,) *
* to office@thurstaston.org.uk *

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.

Contents

4	<i>From your Rector</i>	16	<i>What's the Big Idea - John Prayer for December</i>
5	<i>A message from Ailsa</i>	17	<i>Warm Hub and Foodbank</i>
6	<i>A Book for Advent</i>	18	<i>Donations for Flowers, Tots and Tinies</i>
7	<i>Table Talk for Christmas Love Matters - Discussion Group</i>	19	<i>Reflecting Faith—Wall Paintings</i>
8	<i>C of E and Methodist Covenant</i>	20	<i>God in the Sciences</i>
9	<i>Teaching the Lord's Prayer</i>	21	<i>God in the Arts</i>
10	<i>The most beautiful story</i>	22	<i>Hall Hire/Facebook</i>
11	<i>Ruth's Reflections</i>	23	<i>Irby Artists</i>
12	<i>Mouse Makes</i>	24-26	<i>Advertisers</i>
13	<i>Wordsearch</i>	27	<i>Contacts List: Who's Who</i>
14-15	<i>Parish Giving Scheme</i>	28	<i>December and January Services</i>



Baptisms

Weddings

Funerals

**22nd November - Evelyn Jones
29th November - Avril Mercer**



From Your Rector

The story is told of a farmer who didn't believe in Jesus. One snowy Christmas Eve, his wife was taking their children to a service at their local church. He refused to come saying: *'Why would God lower Himself to come to Earth as a man? That's ridiculous!'* So, they left him at home.

During the evening the winds grew stronger, and the snow turned to a blizzard. He heard a series of loud thumps on the window. In the field near his house he saw a flock of wild geese. They had been migrating south when they got caught in the snowstorm. They were lost and stranded on his farm, with no food or shelter.

The man wanted to help the geese and so he opened the doors of the barn, hoping they would go inside for shelter. But the geese didn't do anything, despite the man's efforts to move them. He made a breadcrumb trail leading to the barn and tried to shoo them toward the barn, but they only got more scared and scattered.

Nothing he did could get them to go into the barn: *'Why don't they follow me?!'* Then he realised: *'If only I were a goose and become one of them, then I could save them.'* Finally, he understood the heart of the Christmas message. God has become one of us in Jesus. The eternal creator God has entered time and space as a baby, to show us who God is and how we can know Him.

This Christmas let's celebrate again this amazing truth that we have a God who knows and can meet our needs in Jesus. *'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means 'God with us''.* Matthew 1:23.

Revd Jane





A message from Ailsa



Christmas Greetings!

Dear Friends,

As we gather to celebrate this joyous season, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to each of you. Your unwavering support, kindness, and commitment to the parish make a meaningful difference in our community.

Please take some time to think of C Squadron at the regiment who will spend Christmas in a freezing Poland away from their loved ones. Thank you.

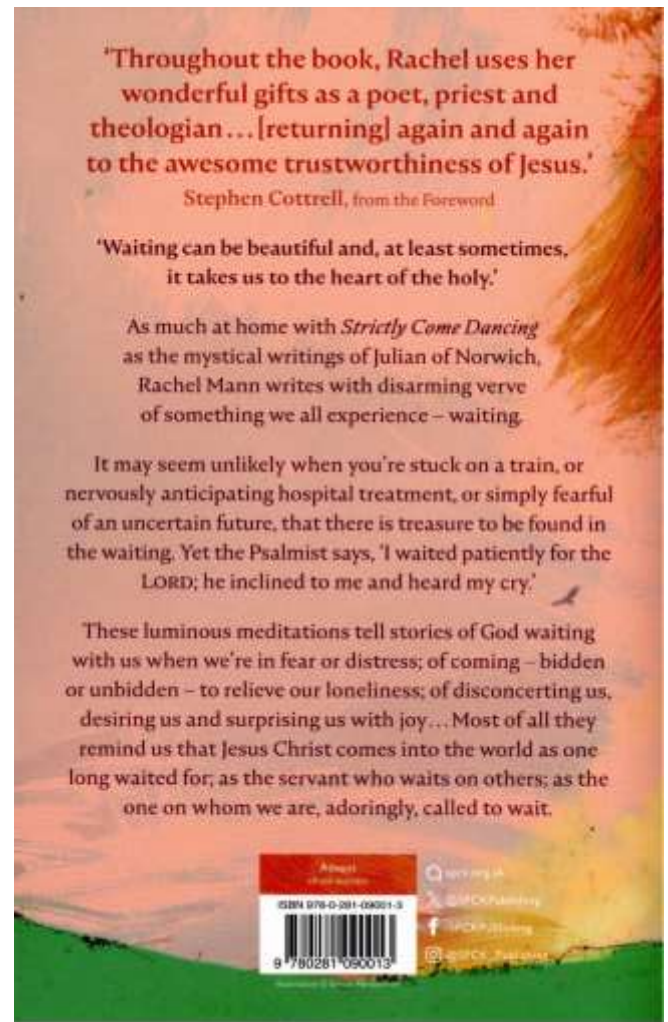
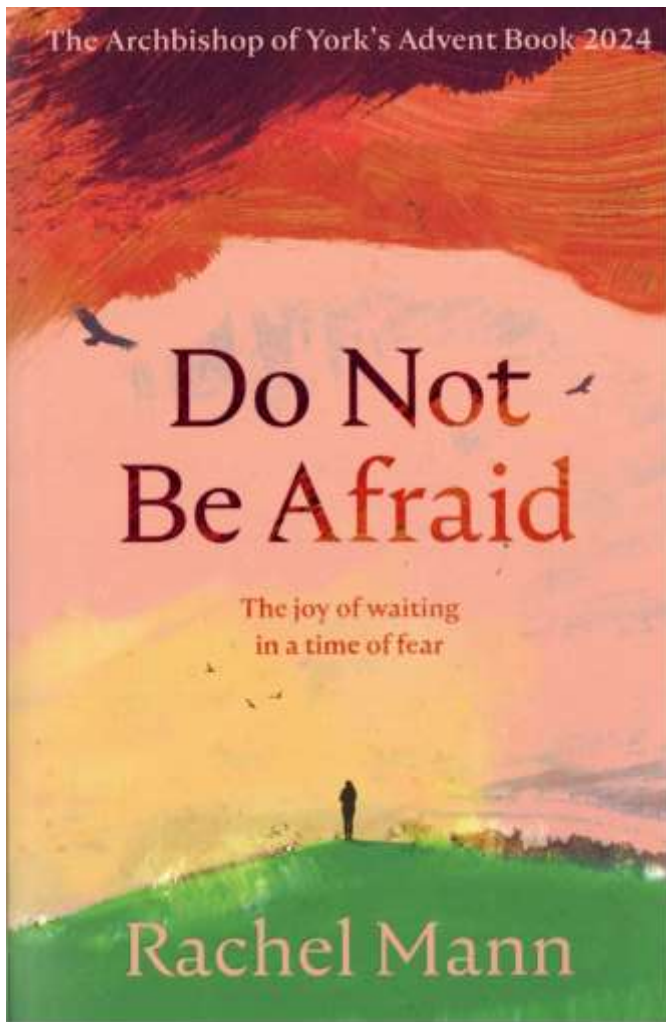
This Christmas, may your hearts be filled with joy and your homes with love. Let us remember the true essence of this season—hope, generosity, and the light that Christ brings into our lives.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year filled with blessings, peace, and renewed spirit.

With warmest regards,

Ailsa





A Book for Advent "Do Not be afraid" by Rachel Mann

ISBN:978-0-281-09001-3

Daily Readings from Advent Sunday (this year 1st December) until Christmas day. Why not treat yourself to a few minutes space each day in the busyness of December to stop and reflect?

If anyone would like the opportunity to discuss the book and hear reflections from others as they read it too, you would be welcome to join us at St Chad's on Wednesday's 7.30-9.00pm

4th Dec - to look at days 1-4
11th Dec - to look at days 5-11
18th Dec - to look at days 12-18

You should be able to purchase the book from any good bookshop - online or physical



TABLE TALK FOR CHRISTMAS

11.30am - 12.30pm at St Chad's
WEDNESDAYS 4th, 11th and 18th Dec

Table Talk provides an opportunity to take part in meaningful conversations about the things that really matter. Gather around a table to talk, laugh, be understood and get to know another's point of view.

LOVE MATTERS

You are invited to join us
Wednesdays 7.30-9.00pm
St Chad's Extension

Let Revd Jane know if you plan to come and she will let you have a copy of the booklet.

Wed 8th January
Think Family

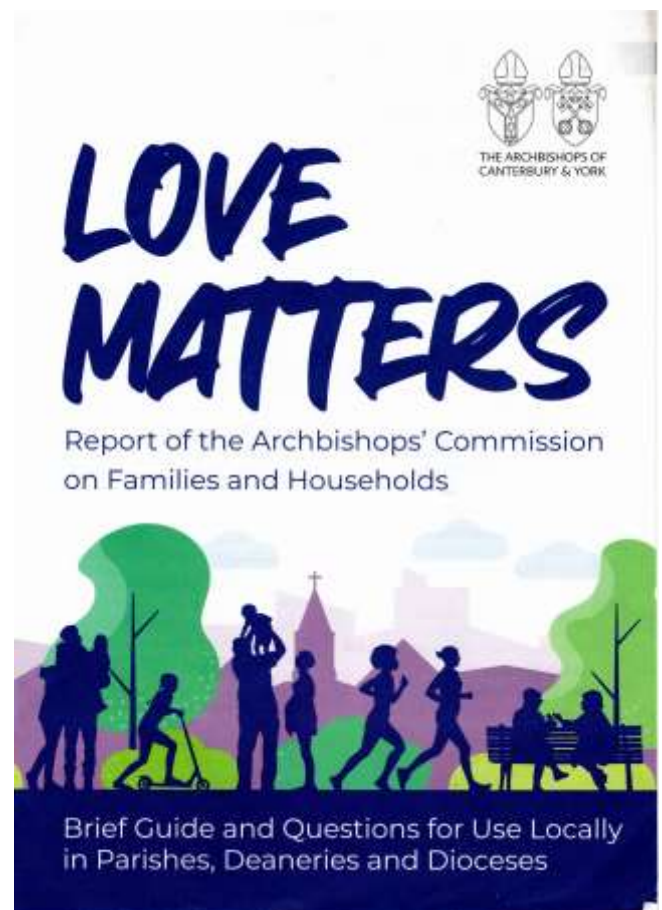
Wed 15th January
Think Loving Relationships

Wed 22nd January
Think Singleness

Wed 29th January
Think Children
and Young People

Wed 5th February
Think Forgiveness
and Kindness

Wed 12th February
Think Diversity



Church of England and Methodist Church recommit as Covenant turns 21

Anglicans and Methodists in England have underlined their commitment to forging closer ties as together they recently marked the 21st anniversary of an historic covenant between the two churches.

The Anglican-Methodist Covenant was signed by leaders of the Church of England and the Methodist Church in Great Britain in front of Queen Elizabeth II on 1st November, 2003, with services of celebration at both Methodist Central Hall and its immediate neighbour Westminster Abbey.

The Covenant recognises how much the two churches - which separated in the 1790s, after the death of John Wesley - have in common and commits them to removing further obstacles towards unity.

It has opened the way to new partnerships on the ground between local Church of England and Methodist congregations, ranging from joint worship and sharing church buildings to shared community projects and staff such as youth and family workers.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell, said: "The Covenant was both a reflection of the great degree of friendship and agreement in faith and life which the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain share, and a commitment that we should work ever more closely together in the years to come."

The Revd Helen Cameron, President of the Methodist Conference, and Carolyn Godfrey, Vice-President, said: "It is good to reaffirm the covenant that was signed 21 years ago, and to celebrate the work and worship that happens between the Church of England and the Methodist Church locally and nationally. We look forward in hope to journeying together in the future."



Teaching the Lord's Prayer across the North of England

The Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell plans to teach the Lord's Prayer across the North of England throughout 2025, a priority of his vision for Faith in the North.

Archbishop Stephen is to visit dioceses in the Northern Province of the C of E where he will be sharing the relevance of the Lord's Prayer to our world today, encouraging people to pray and live by this, as part of their missionary discipleship.

Archbishop Stephen is encouraging prayer, storytelling and church planting inspired by the Northern Saints such as Hild, Cuthbert, Bede and Paulinus. The aim is to foster deeper connections with the Christian faith across the north and renew the Church's missionary purpose to share God's love with all.

Archbishop Stephen said "In less than 70 words, Jesus gives us a prayer to learn by heart and a prayer that gets inside our hearts, shaping the way we live. The Lord's Prayer surely is the best place to start. It is said in just about every church service, from the coronation of the King to the christening of a child. It's a challenging prayer and when we say this prayer together, we become part of God's movement of change, of bringing God's heaven to earth. It teaches us how to pray. But it also teaches us how to live".

Monday 10th March - Chester Cathedral

Watch this space for more details.

We will try to take a group from the Parish to this.

Why not pop the date in your diary now!

To learn more about Faith in the North visit

www.faithinthenorth.org

Faith in the North is a movement of prayer and strategic resourcing which aims to help recapture the missional energy and commitment to prayer of the Anglo Saxon saints leading towards 2027, with the celebration of the 1400th anniversary of the establishment of the Church of Saint Peter in York and baptism of King Edwin by Paulinus in 627.

The most beautiful story

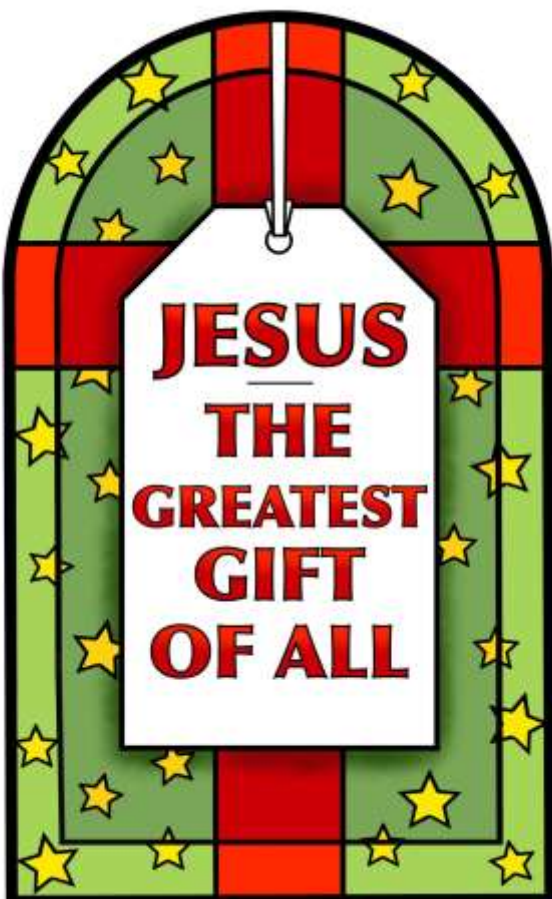
A well-known atheist was being interviewed on Radio 4. When asked how he spent Christmas, he said that he went to Midnight Mass at church. "But you're an atheist", his interviewer protested. "Yes", he replied, "but what they celebrate at Christmas is the most beautiful story ever told."

That 'beautiful story' tells of a Creator who sent His Son to share the life of His creation, to be born as a helpless baby, to grow up as a man of extraordinary wisdom, gentleness and love, who was executed by the authorities for contradicting the traditions of the time. His followers – who today number about two billion people all over the world – believe that He rose from the dead, and that by His death and resurrection He has made possible forgiveness and eternal life for men and women everywhere.

That is certainly quite a story, perhaps the greatest story ever told, and yes, beautiful. And that is the story that will be rehearsed again this Christmas, in children's Nativities, in hymns and carols, in Bible readings and sermons all over the country. People who stay away from church all year turn up to hear it, and who can blame them? This is a story of hope, of love and of heaven touching earth.

Probably the best-known statue in the world is 'Christ the Redeemer', towering over the South American city of Rio de Janeiro, His arms outstretched in blessing. Christmas celebrates the birth of that great Redeemer – a tiny baby laid in a feeding trough.

His birth changed history, His life transformed our understanding of what it means to be human, His death was at one and the same time a tragedy and a triumph. Yes, it is 'the most beautiful story ever told'. Enjoy it again this Christmas.



Ruth's Reflections

Hello again, first I must apologise for missing last month. My excuse is that I was not at all well. I had my covid jab and was fine apart from a slightly sore arm, but the next day I started with a cold and I have never had a cold as bad! Evidently the two do not go together well. I was ill for about a week and felt very sorry for myself! Still I am fully recovered now and back to doing my usual things.

I have just about got the garden ready for winter, but have noticed quite a few plants have got buds on them and the grass could do with another cut! I have had the fence at the bottom of the garden replaced and it looks very smart.

I have been out with the W.I. to some interesting places and most of the time we have been lucky with the weather. Our next big outing is to Chatsworth, by coach. We are booked to go round the house, then will be free to browse round the Christmas Market. It should be a good day, if somewhat tiring.



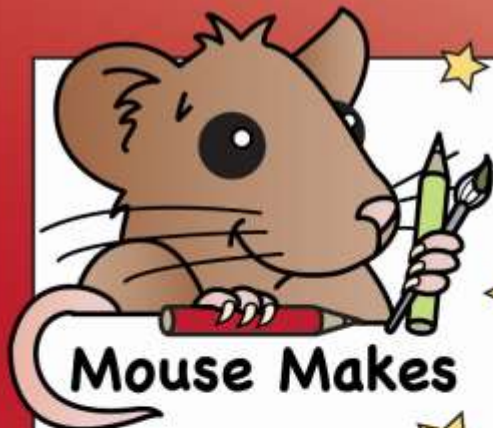
I haven't done much photography, for me the weather has not been nice enough for me to go out. I don't mind the cold but don't like the rain.

We rang for the Remembrance Service and several of us stayed for the following service. Luckily the rain held off for the ceremony outside.

I have just realised that Christmas is getting near. I must admit that I don't feel at all Christmassy and all the hype and adverts on television seem to negate the true meaning of Christmas for me. I also have two birthdays to celebrate before Christmas.

Take care and stay safe everyone.

Ruth.



Mouse Makes

★ "Jesus said,
I am the ___ Y
and the ___ U ___
and the ___ I ___.
No one comes to the Father
except through me."
John 14:6

"The child to be born
will be called
H ___ , the
___ of ___"
Luke 1:35

"For unto you is born
this day a
S ___
who is
___ R ___
the ___ R ___"
Luke 2:11

THE GREATEST GIFT

"She will bear a son,
and shall call his name

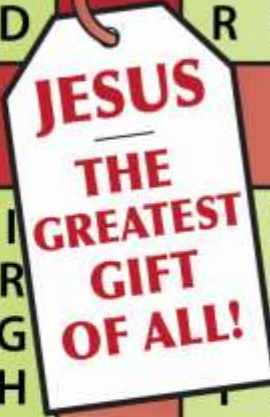
for he will save his
people from their sins."
Matthew 1:21

"Jesus said,
I am the

and the life."
John 11:25

B L I G H T L O
R A Y W O J J R
E M M A N U E L
A B Y J E S O
D S A V I O U R
S A V R J S D

O H O L Y O R C R T U
S O N O F M A N H A R T
N L S H E P H E R D U
O Y A E P E R G I F T G
C H R I S T M A S T H S
R E S U R R E C T I O N



P R O P H E T I
R E D E E M E R
I E M I L I G
E M E S S I A H
S R M E G F T
T E A C H E R E

E V E R L A S T I N G
K I N G O F K I N G S
I N K I G W F D O U
S E S O N O F G O D D
S E W O C O U W O R D
C O U N S E L L O R U

- EMMANUEL • MESSIAH
- REDEEMER • KING OF KINGS • WORD
- SON OF MAN • EVERLASTING • SHEPHERD • PRIEST • PROPHET • TEACHER
- LIGHT • BREAD • VINE • DOOR • LAMB • COUNSELLOR • CHRISTMAS • GIFT

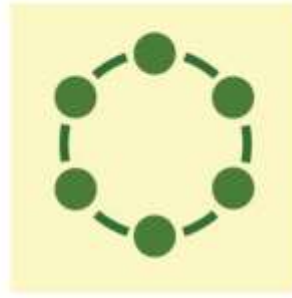
Find the words from the Bible verses too!

Dec24 © deborah noble @ parishpump.co.uk

Father Christmas is based on St Nicholas, who was born in the 3rd 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 help people. He gave to the needy, the sick, the suffering, and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. As a bishop, he suffered in prison with other bishops under the emperor Diocletian's persecution of Christians.

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.

father	U	G	S	D	C	M	F	A	M	I	L	Y
Christmas	K	M	G	Y	H	T	L	A	E	W	I	M
Nicholas	P	C	N	N	R	O	R	E	P	M	E	E
Born	O	F	I	O	I	S	T	M	D	L	H	G
Third	O	N	K	S	S	R	E	H	T	A	F	R
Century	R	T	C	I	T	E	E	N	R	T	K	E
Greek	A	U	O	R	M	T	G	F	E	E	M	E
Village	I	O	T	P	A	H	R	A	F	E	E	K
Devout	G	V	S	T	S	G	E	R	L	U	D	C
Wealthy	C	E	N	T	R	U	R	Y	M	L	S	Y
Needy	O	D	G	D	S	A	L	O	H	C	I	N
Sick	T	T	H	I	R	D	B	O	R	N	T	V
Suffering												
Prison												
Emperor												
Poor												
Family												
Three												
Daughters												
Stockings												



PARISH GIVING SCHEME

EASY & SECURE GIVING

One of the really important ways that each of us lives our faith and participates in the mission of the Church, is through the act of giving.

Regular giving can be a prayerful expression of faith in action, and it is vital to sustain our church, helping us to plan for the future.

We are members of the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) which provides the simplest and most secure way for everyone to give to our church. By making a gift through PGS, they manage all the admin on our behalf, which makes a big difference to the church staff and volunteers.

In fact, if you already give regularly through a Standing Order, please consider moving across to PGS. It's quite straight forward to make the change (you just cancel the standing order with your bank and set up a new gift with PGS) and you'll be lightening the load of our church team!

When you set up a regular gift by Direct Debit with PGS, you can choose the frequency and amount of your gift and opt in to Gift Aid, if you are eligible. Through Gift Aid, we receive an extra 25p for every pound you give which makes a significant impact across the year.

There's also an option for you to increase your gift annually, with the peace of mind that you can adjust your gift at any time. One of the most important aspects of our choice to partner PGS to process gifts on behalf of this church, is that the giver always remains in control.

The quickest and easiest way to set up and manage your regular gift is online, through the PGS website.

It is also possible to make a one-off gift online, using a debit or credit card, Apple Pay or Google Pay.

To set up a regular or one-off gift online, scan the QR code next to this article.

Or visit parishgiving.org.uk, find your church using the easy search tool, and follow a few simple steps to set up your gift securely.



If you're not connected to the internet, don't worry. You can set up your regular gift by phoning the PGS team on 0333 002 1271 and quoting our church code - 090609164, Monday to Friday, 9-5, or completing a paper gift form.

If you'd like to know more, please get in touch with our church PGS Project Leader - Ms Cheryl Goddard, pcc-secretary@thurstaston.org.uk

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is responsible for my personal information?

Although PGS has been set up to help us manage gifts, it is a separate legal entity from our parish and must comply with data protection law. By returning the gift form you consent to PGS using your information for the purposes of the Parish Giving Scheme. For more information please see PGS's privacy notice available on the PGS website www.paritygiving.org.uk/privacy-policy. Alternatively, please call PGS on 0333 002 1260 for a copy of the privacy notice.

Why can't our parish offer Direct Debit?

Direct Debiting is a highly regulated system, and is only offered by Banks for established businesses or organisations who are considered financially sound and reputable with proven internal control systems.

Will our parish be charged for this scheme?

There is no direct charge to us for using the Parish Giving Scheme or processing your gift. The annual running cost of the scheme is met by the National Church Institution of the Church of England.

Why am I giving to PGS?

In order to claim Gift Aid and manage your gift on behalf of our parish, it is necessary that your gift is legally given to PGS who are handling all the administration on our behalf. The gift is restricted to our parish and cannot be used by PGS for any other purposes.

Can I choose the day my gift is collected?

Unfortunately not. In minimising costs it is important that all gifts are collected on the same day each month, which has been agreed as the 1st.

What rate of inflation will be used?

If you opt-in to increase your gift annually, we will use the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as an independent and well known measure of inflation. As your giving anniversary approaches, we will calculate your increased gift using the most recently published monthly CPI data.

What if I say yes to an inflationary increase, but my circumstances change?

We fully understand that circumstances can change; please rest assured that you will be written to 30 days in advance of any increase with the revised amount. If you are unable to meet it simply let us know.

It is becoming increasingly important that

- we reduce the amount of cash and cheques that we handle
- and increase the number of donations made through PGS, standing orders, or using electronic payment devices, etc.

The reason being that the PCC is being charged to bank cash and cheques over a certain limit each month, and we have reached that limit a few times in the last year.

Thank you for taking time to prayerfully consider your donations to church and for all financial support that is received.

Your donations enable us to work towards our vision of serving Christ in Thurstaston and Irby.



What's the Big Idea?

An Introduction to the Books of the New Testament: John

'John's Gospel is like a pool in which a child may wade and an elephant can swim. It is for the beginner in the faith and for the mature Christian.' (Leon Morris).

The Apostle John is usually credited with the authorship of this Gospel, writing in Ephesus at the end of the First Century. His purpose is *'that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.'* (20:31). Throughout he stresses the deity of Christ and presents Jesus as the Son of God.

In the prologue (1:1-14) Jesus is presented as the pre-existent and incarnate Word of God revealed by the Father. It also highlights how He has come as light into the world, so that those who believe in Him will not remain in darkness (cf [12:46](#)).

The heart of John's narrative contains 7 *signs* or miracles, which demonstrate who Jesus is and demonstrating His transforming power over creation and people: turning water into wine (2:1-11); healing the royal official's son (4:46-54); healing the paralytic (5:1-18); feeding the 5000 (6:1-14); walking on the water (6:16-21); healing of the man born blind (9:1-41) and raising Lazarus (11:1-44).

After these signs, the story moves into the upper room discourses followed by the story of His death and resurrection. The whole Gospel is a revelation of the glory of God's only Son, who comes to reveal the Father and then returns in glory to the Father. It can be well summed up in the famous verse: *'For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.'* (John 3:16).

Prayer for December 2024

Father, the days are short; darkness deepens in December and this year it seems to reflect the darkness in so many parts of the world. We think especially of the land You came to, all those years ago, and other nearby lands where so many are suffering.

Father, thank you that Jesus came into the world as Your Light; that He shines today as brightly and powerfully as He did then, and will do forever.

Help us to open our hearts and minds to allow His light to fill us with the assurance that, no matter what is going on, we are safe in Him.

Thank you that, in Jesus, You have conquered death and darkness; that one day, everyone will bow before Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, whose Kingdom shall never end.

Help us, in thankfulness and love, to share Your Christmas Light and Hope and Joy. Hallelujah!

In Jesus' name. Amen.

A warm welcome at the **Warm Hub**

Every Tuesday 9.30am - 12.30pm

Open to everyone, so please drop in!

**St. Chad's Church, Roslin Road, Irby CH61 3UH
0151 648 8169**

*There are a range of activities
including quizzes, Games,
jigsaws, Crosswords etc*

*Throughout December there is a
programme of festive events.*

*The warm hub will be closed on
December 24th & 31st*



**The Warm Hub
belongs to a
growing national
network of
Places of Welcome**



Jigsaw Library

Over the time that Warm Hub has been operating, we have been gifted many jigsaws. While we always have a jigsaw in progress at Warm Hub, there are many waiting for us to use in the future. Rather than these jigsaws just piling up, with the winter nights ahead we would like to make these jigsaws available for individuals to borrow and then return to us. We can't vouch that all the jigsaws are complete as they are donated to us but if you would like to borrow one then we can make them available on a Tuesday morning when the Warm Hub is open - 9.30 to 12.30 at St Chad's

Susan Smale



You can make donations to Foodbank by placing items (non perishable food and toiletries) in the box by the office door at St Chad's.

Donations of Flowers for Church

You can make a donation
“in memory of”, “in celebration of”
or just because you like seeing flowers in church!



Please sign up at the back of church.

You do not have to arrange the flowers - the flower team can do that for you.

Money for your donation (with your contact details and the date for your flowers) should be given to the parish office in a clearly marked envelope, or by BACS indicating that it is Flower Fund, followed by email to the office.

St. Chad's Tots and Tinies

St Chad's Church (Roslin Road, Irby)

Every Thursday 9.30-11.30am
(Term Time Only)

£1.50 for one Adult and one child - All Welcome

Additional children £1.00
Additional Adults £0.50



Parents/Carers will be responsible for their child(ren) during the sessions

For further information please contact **Allison** via the Parish Office 648 8169

Reflecting Faith: : Christmas Tree Decorations

Over the decades the decorations on my home Christmas tree have come and gone. From an eclectic colourful mix of baubles and home-made items when the children were young, to a radical change to 'contemporary' and 'sophisticated'. It didn't last long, as quite frankly they seemed a bit dull, lifeless and lacking real meaning.

We quite rapidly added mementoes from holiday places to the mix to jazz it up a bit.

In more recent years we've been receiving and proudly displaying creations from the next family generation - so we come back to the start.

How about your tree?

And what about the tree decorations you have in your church? What is the story behind those? Are they identical or very different?

In 1957 at Ascension Lutheran Church, Danville, USA, Frances Kipps Spencer thought that the traditional, brightly coloured Christmas ornaments were not fitting for a worship setting, so she started thinking about a way to reflect the Christian faith through ornaments.

The first ornament was the name of Jesus and His title: Christ. The Greek *Chi* (X) *Rho* (P) is the monogram for the Greek word *Christos* (Christ).

There followed over the years a whole collection symbolising the life of Jesus and his ministry.

These ornaments even have their own name: 'Chrismons,' which comes from the words *Christ* and *monogram*.

Just as wall paintings and stained glass in churches tell the Christian story these Chrismons are a clever way to communicate the same key ideas of the Christian faith particularly to annual church visitors.

Chrismons are white and gold, representing purity and value. When used with an evergreen Christmas tree, symbolising eternal life, and white lights covering the tree, symbolising Jesus as the light of the world the whole gives a story just in its use of colour with no words required.

This month: Have a look at the tree decorations in a church near you. What does the overall effect say? and are there any 'Chrismons' on it?



God in the Sciences: Meditation on the Incarnation

*After the bright beam of annunciation
fused heaven with dark earth
His searing sharply-focused light
went out for a while
eclipsed in amniotic gloom:
His cool immensity of splendour
His universal grace
small-folded in a warm dim
female space*

This extract from Luci Shaw's poem *Made Flesh* captures something of the wonder of the moment when the second person of the Trinity became an embryo.

How does a single cell turn into an infant, and what does that process say about us – and God? These are the questions that Professor Jeff Hardin, a developmental biologist, asks himself. Having studied theology as well as science, he has a unique perspective on embryonic development.

A new-born baby is made of around five trillion cells. These cells come in hundreds of different types, each of which must be in the correct place for the child's body to function properly. Every new life is the result of intricate and highly ordered processes. Three things must happen as an embryo develops.

The first important process is for cells to take on their identity as types of muscle, bone, nerves, and so on. The second is when each cell learns which part of the body it belongs to. Third, those cells are moved around to form the different tissues and organs. These three are not discrete stages, but they all happen at around the same time, building up gradually like the different aspects of a picture coming into focus.

All three of these processes are driven forward by the movement of cells, the connections between them, and the signals they pass to each other. Jeff studies a sort of cellular glue which is involved in joining cells together. Making and breaking these adhesions can affect how cells move and signal to each other, their identity in the body, how they are organised as groups, and ultimately their survival. This glue is found on the surface of cells throughout the animal kingdom, including the small worms Jeff's lab studies.

For Jeff, peering down a microscope at tiny worm embryos can be an act of worship. It is also an exercise in art appreciation, as he learns to appreciate the created order. Understanding the complexities of development, while also being aware that God knows that process intimately both as Creator and created, fills Jeff with a profound sense of awe, wonder and worship.

Does the minute scale of our early development, compared to the incomprehensibly vast and ancient universe, give us a sense of insignificance? Psalm 8 says, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?" For Jeff and the Psalmist, such feelings can be a positive experience if they serve as a reminder to be humble in the face of a universe that is vastly complicated but also deeply meaningful, made by a God who loves each one of us.

God in the Arts : “Glorious the song when God’s the theme’: Morten Lauridsen, American composer

In the Middle Ages, at the end of the Christmas Midnight Mass, the clergy would often tell the animals’ version of the Nativity story and imitate the sound of each animal. The cock would crow ‘Christus natus est.’ (Christ is born). The cows would moo ‘Ubi?’ (Where?). The sheep would bleat ‘In Bethlehem.’ And the donkey would cry ‘Eamus’ (Let us go there). It was a way of expressing something of the joy and fun of the Christmas celebration.

Commercialism with all its trappings has sadly made that fun and festivity the be all and end all of Christmas. We need to capture again the heart of the Incarnation, which is a mystery rooted in silence and wonder. The book of Wisdom reads ‘For while gentle silence enveloped all things, and night in its swift course was now half gone, the all powerful Word leapt from heaven, from the royal throne.’

Those words remind us that at Bethlehem there is that silence and wonder. The animals may rejoice to tell the Good News of the Incarnation at the Midnight Mass, but at the crib they gather with the Holy Family and the shepherds. We are given no words of Mary and Joseph and the shepherds around the crib. The mystery of what was happening seems to have intensified their silence. They did not know what the future held for this new-born child, but they did know that God was acting in a special way. They were like people standing in the faint light of the dawn, and their response was an expectant and wondering worship.

It is at the heart of this month’s beautiful and moving setting of some words from the matins of Christmas morning, ‘O magnum mysterium.’ ‘O great mystery and wondrous sacrament, that animals should see the new-born Lord, lying in the manger. Blessed Virgin, whose womb was found worthy to bear Christ the Lord. Alleluia.’ The words were set by the American composer, Morten Lauridsen in 1994 and first performed a few days before Christmas in Los Angeles. Since then, the setting has been sung by choirs, both professional and amateur, around the world.

Morten Lauridsen has composed many works for the human voice, and all of them are sensitive and heartfelt responses to the words chosen. No more so than in ‘O magnum mysterium.’ After the opening chord, the altos introduce us to a motif that pervades the work: D to a rising 4th, and a falling 3rd that lights on A. It is like the movement of the heart, rising in praise and resting in hope at the mystery of the Incarnation. The joy is inner and deep and suffuses the music as it reaches a climax with Alleluia. The final words are that all this glory lies in a manger, where the animals gather.



The world will call us in this month to a frenzy of doing and buying amid a clamour of noise and muzak. ‘O magnum mysterium’ by Morten Lauridsen invites us to step into the stable again and join the animals, the Holy Family and the shepherds to find a joy and a wonder there that can nourish the soul. At the crib we can know ‘the silence of eternity interpreted by Love’ and with the choir we can respond Alleluia.

Need a Meeting Room?

At St Chad's we have a large hall
and some smaller rooms.

Booking Enquiries should be made by emailing
hallbookings@thurstaston.org.uk

For more information and prices please go to the website
<https://www.thurstaston.org.uk/hall-and-room-hire/>



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.

We also have a Twitter Feed:-

[@StBartsStChads](https://twitter.com/StBartsStChads)



Did you know.....

.....back in the year 1976, a committee based at St Chad's Church was trying to raise funds for the RNLI.

They decided to hold an exhibition of paintings by local Irby residents. The exhibition was so successful that the artists decided to join together to form an "Irby Artists Association".

....and the rest, as they say, is history!

The Irby Artists are proud to have had such a long association with St Chad's.

We welcome new members and actively provide support to those wishing to try their hand at painting & drawing, with weekly Monday afternoon sessions, indoors during the winter, and outdoors in the summer months, and two exhibitions of members works per year.

For more information, contact the Chair:

Alan McMahon, Text:07889 404917

Or Email: almac48@virginmedia.com

billy hill curtains ltd.

**Still going strong in
BIRKENHEAD MARKET
after 75 years!**



**Nets • Roller Blinds
Wooden Venetian Blinds
Curtains • Curtain Poles & Tracks
Pelmets • Roman Blinds**

**Visit us in
BIRKENHEAD MARKET
- Open 6 Days A Week -**

*Free Measuring &
Expert Fitting Service Available
1000's of **Clearance Fabrics**
Starting from £1mtr.*

**If you can't
come to us,
we will come to you!**

Home visits available

Please call **0151 647 8604** or
Mike on 07792 009505

billyhillcurtains@yahoo.com 
www.billyhillcurtains.co.uk 

Help St Bartholomew Thurstaston and St Chad Irby raise FREE funds when you shop online!



Every time you shop, you'll raise a donation for us and **it won't cost you a penny extra!**

1. Sign up to easyfundraising

Got to

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/stbartholomewthurstastonandstchadirby and follow the simple steps to sign up.

2. Hit the shops

When you shop online, visit easyfundraising first, click through to the retailer and shop as normal. Everything costs exactly the same

3. Earn donations

With every purchase you make you'll raise a donation from the retailer. Your donations are then transferred to **St Bartholomew Thurstaston and St Chad Irby**

**OVER 2,700
RETAILERS TO
CHOOSE FROM...**

TESCO



Argos

amazon.co.uk

John Lewis
johnlewis.com

M&S

Viking

ASDA

Expedia.co.uk

easyfundraising
.org.uk



Visit: easyfundraising.org.uk/stbartholomewthurstastonandstchadirby



Gary Furlong
Tree and Hedge Services
07759284091

Accounts Un Limited
 Patricia Brady ACMA

Personal Tax Returns .
 Company Accounts . VAT Returns

Home Visits . Friendly &
 Confidential Service
 648 4379 or 07968 908779

BIRKENHEAD MONUMENTAL LTD

QUALITY MEMORIALS, RENOVATIONS,
 ADDITIONAL INSCRIPTIONS ETC.

CALL FOR FULL COLOUR BROCHURE,
 PERSONAL ATTENTION OFFERED.

Telephone: 0151 608 2578

IRBY MOTOR COMPANY

CARS BOUGHT AND SOLD
 SERVICE & REPAIR - FREE LOAN CAR

SERVICE: 0151 648 0200

SALES: 0151 648 5488

RNIB 

See differently

Please collect your Postage Stamps
 throughout the year for RNIB
 (Royal National Institute Blind).

A Big Thankyou for all the stamps
 that have been collected this year,
 there has been a huge response

If you would like to purchase advertising space
 in this magazine please telephone

St Chad's Church Office on 0151 648 8169 or
E-mail: office@thurstaston.org.uk

Advertising space is sold in good faith.
 The Parochial Church Council and/or Editor can take no responsibility for the quality
 of goods or services offered.

Contacts

RECTOR: Revd Jane Turner **PLEASE NOTE: Rector's Rest Day - Tuesday**
The Rectory, 77 Thingwall Road, Irby, Wirral, CH61 3UB
Telephone: 0151 648 1816 (*Day off Tuesday*) E-mail: rector@thurstaston.org.uk

CHURCH OFFICE: Mrs K Butler St Chad's Church, Roslin Road, Irby, CH61 3UH
Telephone: 0151 648 8169. E-mail: office@thurstaston.org.uk
OPEN TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY 9.30am - 12.30pm (term time)

PARISH WEBSITE: www.thurstaston.org.uk

Churchwardens

Vacant

churchwarden@thurstaston.org.uk

Curate

Revd Gaynor Kydd

revdgaynor@thurstaston.org.uk

Associate Minister

Revd Ailsa Whorton CF

(Chaplain to the Forces, Army).

revdailsa@thurstaston.org.uk

Ailsa works full time and will reply to emails when she is able around her work commitments

678 4733 (Evenings only and messages will be passed on to Ailsa via her husband Derek)

Reader Emeritus

Mr Alan Jones

648 1400

PCC Secretary

Cheryl Goddard

c/o parish office

PCC Treasurer

Vacant

pcc-treasurer@thurstaston.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Mr Chris Williams

07956621731

safeguarding@thurstaston.org.uk

Electoral Roll

c/o Church Office

648 8169

St Chad's Hall Booking

hallbookings@thurstaston.org.uk

Verger

Mr Jon Oliver

648 1754

Organist

Mr Craig Vickers

648 7405

Bellringing - Tower Captain

Dr Peter Robson

648 6691

Flowers for both Churches

Team Co-ordinator Dawn Rudd

648 0209

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Junior Church (3-10) and Seniors (11-16)

Mrs Julie Deboorder

648 6331

Rainbows/Brownies/Guides

www.girlguiding.org.uk or

Freephone

0800 1 69 59 01

CHARITY REPRESENTATIVES

Christian Aid Representative

Vacant

Children's Society Representative

Mrs Jean Heath

648 6015

Leprosy Mission Representative

Julie DeBoorder

648 6331

Adoption Society Representative

Mrs Chris Rostock

648 1112

Baptisms and Weddings

To arrange a baptism or wedding, please telephone the Rector,
Revd Jane Turner on 0151 648 1816
or the Church office on 0151 648 8169.

December 2024 and January 2025 Services

EVERY Wednesday (**except Christmas Day and New Years Day**)
10.30am HC at St Chads

- Sun 1st December 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Communion at St Bartholomew's
- Sun 8th December 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am All Age Service at St Chad's
- Sun 15th December 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Morning Worship at St Bartholomew's
- Sun 22nd December 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Holy Communion at St Chad's
WITH NATIVITY AND JUNIOR CHURCH
6.00pm Carol Service at St Bartholomew's

Tuesday 24th Dec - Christmas Eve

- 4.00pm Crib Service at St Bartholomew's
11.15pm First Communion of Christmas at St Bartholomew's

Wednesday 25th Dec - Christmas Day

- 10.00am All-Age Communion at St Chad's

- Sun 29th December 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Communion at St Bartholomew's

- Sun 5th January 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Annual Covenant Service at Irby Methodist Church

- Sun 12th January 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am All Age Service at St Chad's

- Sun 19th January 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Morning Worship at St Bartholomew's

- Sun 26th January 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Holy Communion at St Chad's