



Follow The Star
THE GREAT
INVITATION

Now may the God of hope fill you
with all joy and peace in believing,
that you may abound in hope by
the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Wigan West

PARISH MAGAZINE



December 2022

January 2023 £1

The Parish of Wigan West is the Church of England in the West of Wigan—covering Worsley Mesnes, Poolstock, Goose Green, Hawkley Hall, Winstanley, and Highfield—the former parishes of St James with St Thomas, St Pauls, and St Matthews.

We are made up of different worship communities with many different styles and settings used for worshipping God, including our own buildings of St James with St Thomas (where *Tom's Pantry* is), St Paul's and its hall, and St Matthew's and its hall.

Have a look at our Facebook page for details of everything from online coffee and chat to traditional services, as well as the latest news.

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As you read this we shall have just begun Advent however as the last firework finished the first Christmas light went up. Advent is a season to stop, listen, and wait though Advent tends to be a busy season. The endless to-do list, the presents, parties, and gatherings. However, we are invited to stop. These last few years the Church of England has helped us do this more with their reflections. Started four years ago with #follow the Star. Not only a hashtag but daily reflections, prayers, and an invitation to be still. This year the theme is Follow the Star—The Great Invitation.



What a great theme because that is what Advent and Christmas are all about—a great invitation. As God became human all were invited. Those most unlikely to be invited were invited, why? Because this was what it was all about—God changing the world and changing it in a stable with a young woman and a carpenter. They were invited, the shepherds were invited, and you are invited.

So how do we respond over 2,000 years later? We invite. Firstly, if you have not heard or received that invitation before, know that you are loved and forgiven, Jesus died for you and he invited you to his great invitation into his family. Secondly, if you have received this invitation, who are you inviting and who are you telling? This is good news, this is a celebration. As you read this England may be flying high in the World Cup or the nation may be full of disappointment. If it is good news everyone will be talking about it, getting excited. Imagine that feeling, that excitement about the invitation to Jesus, do you talk about Jesus with that excitement of England's football or rugby team being victorious?

As you read on you will see there is so much you can invite people to, from Christingles, carol services, pop-up nativity, and free food gatherings, to the beautiful antiphon advent prayers. The simple challenge is: don't waste this great invitation and invite someone. To challenge you a bit more why don't you share why you believe and follow in Jesus? It's what Jesus asked us to do.

This season is all about hope, it's all about a great invitation.

As it says in the bible we have a hope that is:

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

This Christmas receive this invitation of the greatest invitation of hope. I pray that this Christmas will be full of love, joy, peace, and hope.

God bless, Mark



December Services

St Matthews		St James with St Thomas	St Pauls
December		December	December
4 Sunday		4 Sunday	4 Sunday
10.30 Service of the Word			9.00 BCP
6.30 Christingle Service		10.30 Service of the Word with Sunday School	10.30 Service of the Word
8 Thursday		11 Sunday	11 Sunday
10.30 Holy Communion		10.30 All age Baptism service	10.30 Holy Communion with Sunday School
11 Sunday		17 Saturday	4.30 Torchlight Carol Service
9.00 BCP		7.00pm 9 Lessons & 9 Carols	14 Wednesday
10.30 All age Parade & Toy Service		18 Sunday	10.30 Holy Communion
6.30 9 Lessons & 9 Carols followed by refreshments		10.30 Holy Communion & Pop Up Nativity	Refreshments from 10.00
12 Monday		24 Christmas Eve	18 Sunday
6.00 Community carols St Matthews Parish Hall, hosted by our local councillors with Pemberton band and free Hot pot	at	11.30pm Holy communion	10.30 Service of the Word In the Hall
18 Sunday		25 Christmas Day	21 Wednesday
9.00 BCP		10.00 Holy Communion	10.30 Holy Communion
10.30 Holy Communion			Refreshments from 10.00
12.30 Baptism Service			24 Christmas Eve
3.00 World cup Final Club in the Hall			4.00 Christingle Service
24 Christmas Eve			25 Christmas Day
11.30pm Holy communion			10.00 Holy Communion
25 Christmas Day			28 Wednesday
10.00 Holy Communion			10.30 Holy Communion
			Refreshments from 10.00



Apology from Mark

You will have noticed we don't have a cover designed by someone. This is my fault I forgot to ask and promote. We shall go bigger for the Easter one and this will return next year!

January 2023 Services

St Matthews

January

- 1 Sunday**
10.30 Holy Communion
- 5 Thursday**
10.30 Holy Communion
- 8 Sunday**
9.00 BCP
10.30 All Age Parade Service
- 15 Sunday**
9.00 BCP
10.30 Holy Communion
- 22 Sunday**
10.30 Holy Communion
12.30 Baptism Service
4.00pm Café Church in Parish Hall
- 29 Sunday**
10.30 Hub service

St James with

St Thomas

January

- 1 Sunday**
10.30 Praying the New Year in Service
- 8 Sunday**
10.30 All age Baptism service
- 15 Sunday**
10.30 All age Communion with Sunday School
- 22 Sunday**
10.30 Holy Communion
- 29 Sunday**
10.30 Hub service

St Pauls

January

- 1 Sunday**
9.00 BCP
- 8 Sunday**
10.30 Holy Communion with Sunday School
- 11 Wednesday**
10.30 Holy Communion
Refreshments from 10.00
- 15 Sunday**
10.30 Service of the Word with Sunday School
- 18 Wednesday**
10.30 Holy Communion
Refreshments from 10.00
- 22 Sunday**
10.30 Service of the Word with Sunday School
- 25 Wednesday**
10.30 Holy Communion
Refreshments from 10.00
- 29 Sunday**
10.30 Hub Service



Wellspring: Every Wednesday:
3.30-5pm St Pauls Hall and School



Lighthouse meets several times during the week, please check our facebook: **lighthousewigan**

MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Please have any content to the editors by the 15th of the month.

Follow us on Facebook for up-to-date news and information



WiganWestHub



Christmas Markets

As a parish, we are so excited about serving with our CiC (Highfield Community Hall) Highfield Cricket Club, Church Wigan, and the Parish of Wigan West.

✳ Learning from the great history of our Christmas fairs we are joining together to hold Christmas markets.

Here we shall gather in Highfield, we have the giant Wigan Council live stage where throughout the day local choirs will sing, Church Wigan will be hosting some open mic sessions, and the Pemberton Band will lead us in carols. Wigan West will be running a nativity trail where you can walk through and meet some of the characters from nativity as

they journey to the stable. The nativity trail is running from 11am-4pm. You can book a time slot for free via eventbrite: [west.wigan.church/christmasmarket](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wigan-west-christmas-market-tickets-34844444444)

There will be food stalls, fairground rides, Christmas market stalls, Christmas bars, traditional Christmas fair stalls, and our giant Christmas hamper raffle which shall be drawn after St Matthews carol service. If England are doing well it could well finish with a World Cup quarter-final.

This will be a great opportunity to raise money for all our partners and join together over Advent, and a great opportunity to invite a friend too.

There is also plenty of opportunity to come and help if you can offer an hour on Friday or Saturday please let Martin Gaskell know.

As Mark said in his letter, what a great opportunity to invite someone.

We look forward to seeing you there.

JOIN US FOR A FESTIVE DAY OUT!

ENTERTAINMENT INCLUDES:

- CHRISTMAS STALLS
- NATIVITY TRAIL
- CHOIR PERFORMANCES
- CAROL SINGING WITH PEMBERTON BRASS BAND
- FESTIVE OPEN MIC
- FESTIVE FOOD AND DRINK

The cost of loving at Christmas

We all know the uncertainties! Despite our best efforts the country is experiencing its worst crisis in decades. Political turmoil, the aftershocks of the pandemic, the devastation of war and communities, families and individuals deeply concerned about being able to survive - not to mention the ongoing effects of the climate crisis.

It doesn't feel like a recipe for a Happy Christmas does it?



Yet these realities of hardship, uncertainty and fear existed way back at the time of the first Christmas. God chose incarnation among the poorest of a turbulent country at a difficult and dangerous time. His birth set the tone for his life and ministry. Though fraught with risk, incredulity and profound uncertainty, Jesus reached to those living in poverty, to the sick, the hungry, the marginalised and dispossessed, bringing hope in what would have seemed like bleak and hopeless times. His birth wasn't, of course, good news to everyone! To the ruling elite, he would bring judgment for their actions and he brought fear.

Confident of the hope Jesus blesses his people with, we are called to be hope-givers, light-bearers and life-blessers. We have a song of hope to sing this Christmas and people need to hear the song more than ever. This means look beyond our walls and our peripheral vision to the people Jesus wants us to reach. So many of us are doing this and we are seeing the bigger difference that it makes in people's lives. One act of loving-kindness in the name of Jesus will transform somebody's life. This Christmas, let's commit to doing at least one act of loving kindness a day. However much we are struggling, please remember there are people starved of hope – they have less than nothing.

Christmas is the time when the world connects most with the Christmas story. This season gives us a wonderful opportunity to invite people to the many and various events and acts of worship. Those of you familiar with LYCIG will be familiar with the mantra, *'It's going to be great – I'm going, why don't you come, too!'* There are so many people of all ages, families and single people, the lonely, isolated and bereaved – people like you and me whose Christmas may be transformed by your invitation. Friends, the first worshippers around the crib were invited: the angels invited the shepherds; the star invited the magi. Who will you invite? The National Church's *Follow the Star: The Great Invitation* gives us fabulous resources and support to enable us to reach out gently yet confidently to the world around us, so very much in need of its saviour.

If you fear the cost, ponder for a moment the cost of love which came to us at Christmas – the love of God in the face of the Christ-Child, the one who lived for us and died for us in order to redeem death itself, that we might live with him in the place that knows no ending. That same love that is poured into the hearts of all who dare to invite Him in.

My hope for us all is that we will rise to the act of kindness challenge; that we shall dare to be invitation givers and hope bringers and that by blessing others, we will deepen our own understanding of what it means to be blessed by God.

I pray that you have a happy, blessed and warm Christmas.

Bishop Bev

Magnificat

And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord. And my spirit leaps for joy in God my Saviour. For he has looked with favour on the humility of his handmaid. For behold, from this time, all generations shall call me blessed. For he who is great has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is from generation to generations for those who fear him. He has accomplished powerful deeds with his arm. He has scattered the arrogant in the intentions of their heart. He has deposed the powerful from their seat, and he has exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has taken up his servant Israel, mindful of his mercy, just as he spoke to our fathers: to Abraham and to his offspring forever." *Luke 1:46-55*

At the beginning of Luke's gospel, we read that an elderly priest named Zechariah is told by an angel that his elderly wife, Elizabeth, is going to have a child, John the Baptist. Then her cousin, Mary, is visited by the Angel Gabriel and told that she is also to have a child, but in this case without a human father, and that this child, Jesus, will be the Son of the Most High. Mary goes to visit Elizabeth, and the unborn John leaps in Elizabeth's womb when he senses Jesus's presence. Mary then recites the song we know as the Magnificat.

We might expect that Mary would concentrate on the aspects of Jesus's mission which we call religious: that this child would save believers from sin and death, from the pains of hell, that he would give his life that his followers might have eternal life. But there is a quite different emphasis in this song. Through Jesus, God shows mercy on those who fear him; he does powerful things; he brings down the mighty, and raises the lowly; he gives food to the hungry and leaves the rich empty. It is a bit of a surprise that we should read these things in Luke's gospel. In his two books, The Gospel of Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles, Luke is careful to emphasise that Christians are good citizens of the Roman Empire, no threat to public order. But here we have an uncompromisingly radical agenda, the world turned upside down.

In Jesus, we are offered new life if we turn to him, but that is a new life, not just the old life sprinkled with holy water. It is a life in which the priorities and

values of the world are replaced by the priorities and values of the Kingdom of God. Much of what the world values and respects will be brought low, many things which the world despises will be lifted up.

One of the insights of the Protestant reformation was that it was possible to be a first-class Christian while living an ordinary life as a lay person, doing an ordinary job, perhaps married with children. In the Middle Ages, it had been taken for granted that the higher path for a Christian was ordination to the priesthood and/or membership of a religious order, as a monk, friar or nun. To live in the world as a lay Christian seemed to be a compromise. The better way was to give up all possessions and live the religious life. But this ignored the evidence of the New Testament. Not all followers of Jesus were "followers" in the literal sense. Mary, Martha and Lazarus do not seem to have travelled around with Jesus. They stayed in their own home, and that home was the nearest that Jesus would have to a home himself during his years of ministry.

Those of us who live ordinary lives as Christians are still called to live out the values of God's kingdom. For some, that will mean a great deal of time spent involved in the institutional life of the Church, but for others, the main arena of their discipleship will be their work, their home and their secular activities. We cannot be salt and light in the world, if all the salt is locked in the salt pot and the light confined to the aisles of the church building. We are all ambassadors for Christ in the world, so the way you and I speak to and interact with others, day to day: the woman on the supermarket checkout, the man begging outside the supermarket, your boss, your subordinates, your customers, and yes, even the driver of the car that cuts in a bit too close to you, in all these circumstances you represent Jesus, and the gospel of Jesus will be judged by them according to your actions. Do we really treat the humblest of our neighbours as equal to the rich and famous? If our lives, individually and corporately, contradict the values of the Magnificat, then the world will see and notice, and the world can spot hypocrisy a mile off.

Gordon James

Encounter

In the new year we are introducing a new worship gathering once a month.

This will be charismatic worship followed by a talk and prayer ministry.

We are starting on Sunday 15 January 2pm - 3.30pm at St Paul's hall.

All are welcome, there will be know junior church at this gathering.

Space to worship, be still and listen.

Welcome to our new Bishop: Bishop John

Downing Street has announced that the Ninth Bishop of Liverpool is to be the Right Reverend Doctor John Perumbalath. Bishop John will join us from the Diocese of Chelmsford, where he has served as Bishop of Bradwell since 2018. He follows Bishop Paul Bayes who retired in February 2022. Image of the next Bishop of Liverpool to be The Right Reverend Doctor John Perumbalath



Bishop John comes from the ancient Christian community in Kerala, South India and was ordained into the Church of North India in 1994. He moved to the UK in 2001 taking up positions in the Diocese of Rochester. Bishop John then served as Archdeacon of Barking before becoming the Bishop of Bradwell in 2018.

Amongst other roles, Bishop John is the Chair of Churches Refugee Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. He is the Church of England's Lead Bishop on Churches Together in Britain and Ireland relations and a trustee of CTBI. He chairs Christians Aware, an educational charity and serves on the Anglican Communion-wide Advisory Group of USPG, an Anglican mission society. The Bishop lectures widely on faith and social engagement and in Biblical theology.

Bishop John demonstrates the influence of the evangelical, Anglo-Catholic and Oriental Orthodox traditions that shaped his theology and contributed to his formation and follows a Benedictine framework of spirituality. He has served in catholic and evangelical parishes and has been known as a unifying leader in situations of conflict. Bishop John is married, with one adult daughter. He is a keen walker and enjoys reading poetry and novels from various parts of the world.

Bishop John says "I am delighted and humbled to have received this call to be the next Bishop of Liverpool. I have come to love Liverpool through my numerous visits when my daughter was in university here for six years. I look forward to becoming part of the vibrant and diverse communities served by the Diocese of Liverpool.

"We have many challenges ahead of us both in the church and society. A pandemic has shattered human confidence and a cost-of-living crisis is staring us in the face. Anxiety, fear, and anger take many forms in such a context.

"As a follower of Christ coming to lead a diocese that aspires to be a bigger church to make a bigger difference, I want to proclaim and live out a message of hope, peace, and justice. I pray that I will lead a church that is faithful in offering our communities the hope that we have in God, serving the

communities by working together well and in partnership with others.

"The good news in Jesus Christ breaks all barriers and boundaries and is always welcoming and inclusive. I am excited about leading God's people out to proclaim this good news in words and deeds in a new context and to love and care for those I serve."

Welcoming the appointment Bishop Bev, The Bishop of Warrington said: "Bishop John is an excellent appointment to our diocese and his wisdom and grace will help guide us as we continue to seek to be fit for mission asking God for a bigger church to make a bigger difference. I look forward to welcoming him and Jessy and working alongside him in our diocese,"

The Archbishop of York, the Most Reverend Stephen Cottrell added: "It is a huge joy to be welcoming John Perumbalath as the next Bishop of Liverpool. John is a person of huge vision and integrity, a biblical scholar, a champion for justice, a loving pastor and a humble and good-humoured disciple of Jesus Christ.

"Strengthened by his care and leadership, the Liverpool diocese will continue to be a bigger church striving to make a bigger difference. Building on the courageous example of previous Bishops of Liverpool, John will be a new and compelling voice for the Christian faith in the Liverpool Diocese, across the north and in the life of our nation."

Bishop John is expected to be installed in Liverpool Cathedral in a special service early next year. Until that time Bishop Bev, the Bishop of Warrington will remain as Acting Bishop of Liverpool.

**Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*
parts I and II**



plus carols for choir and congregation

Join us for music and mince pies!

3 December 2022, 7.30pm

St Stephen's Church, Whelley, Wigan

Musical Director: John Powerll, Accompanist: Carol Kwater

Soloists: Samuel Horton and James Connolly

Tickets £10 available on the door

Wigan Choral Society is a registered charity—1155474

(Christmas)

(Services and events)

Saturday 3 December

11am—2pm **Breakfast with Santa at Faith Café**, St James Centre

Sunday 4 December

6.30pm **Christingle**, St Matthews

Saturday 10 December

11am—late **Wigan West Christmas Market** with CIC and Highfield Cricket Club, St Matthews Hall & Field

Sunday 11 December

10.30am All age parade and toy service, St Matthews

4.30pm **Torchlight Carol Service** interactive carol service, St Pauls

6.30pm **9 Carols and 9 Readings** followed by refreshments, St Matthews

Monday 12 December

6pm **Community Carols** with Pemberton Band and hot pot hosted by our local councillors, St Matthews Parish Hall

Saturday 17 December

7pm **9 lessons and 9 carols**, St James Centre

Sunday 18 December

9am **Book of Common Prayer communion service**, St Matthews

10.30am **Pop-Up Nativity**, St James Centre

10.30am **Holy Communion Service**, St Matthews

10.30am **Service of the Word**, St Pauls

12.30pm **Baptism**, St Matthews

3pm **World Cup final**, Highfield Cricket Club

Thursday 22 December

5pm **Christmas Light Trail**, St James Centre

Bring a torch and join in as we walk through the Christmas story looking for Jesus, refreshments available, all ages welcome.

This Advent and Christmas we are pleased we can gather so much more than last year and we look forward to sharing the hope and promise of Jesus. The only slight change is we have a world cup in Advent, the key change is not holding a carol services on 18 December to avoid clashing with the world cup final, but there is a great missional opportunity that afternoon to join together at St Matthews Parish Hall to hopefully be cheering England on!

Friday 23 December

12pm—3pm **Christmas Lunch**, St James Centre

Our pay-as-you-feel lunch is supported by the Co-Op Community Fund

Saturday 24 December (CHRISTMAS EVE)

4pm **Christingle**, St Pauls

11.30pm **Holy Communion Service**, St Matthews

11.30pm **Holy Communion Service**, St James

Sunday 25 December (CHRISTMAS DAY)

10am **Holy Communion Service**, St James

10am **Holy Communion Service**, St Matthews

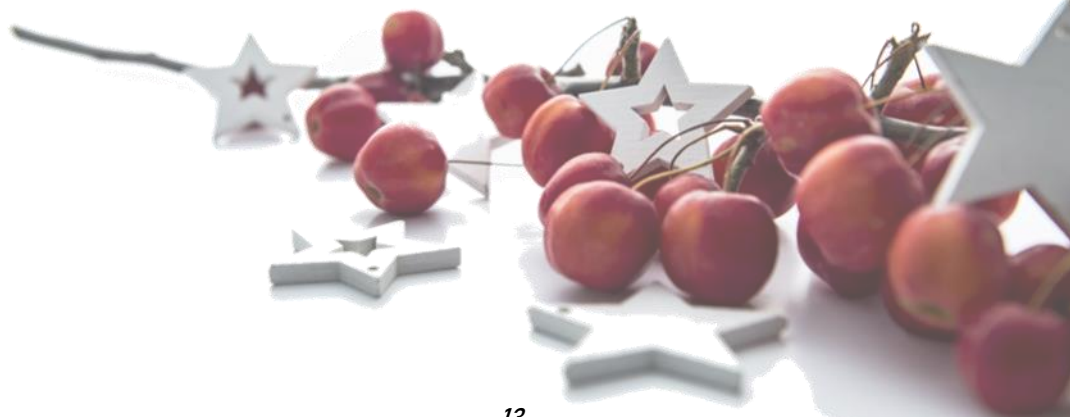
10am **Holy Communion Service**, St Pauls

Sunday 1 January New Year's Day

9am **Book of Common Prayer traditional communion service**, St Matthews

10.30am **Service to Pray the New Year In**, St James Centre

10.30am **Holy Communion Service**, St Matthews



Hymnformation

What a friend we have in Jesus

This hymn was written by Joseph Scriven who was born near Banbridge in the heart of the rolling hills of County down in Northern Ireland. After graduating from Dublin's famous Trinity College, he seemed set for a brilliant career and a happy life for he was engaged to be married. But then tragedy struck! His fiancée was accidentally drowned on the very eve of their wedding and Joseph Scriven's was plunged into a deep sorrow. However, this brought him to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ.

In 1845 he sailed to Canada to start a new life but due to ill health after two months he returned to Ireland.

Two years later he again set sail for Canada to take up a teaching post. Again, he met and fell in love with a charming young woman of twenty three. They became engaged. Suddenly she was stricken with a serious illness and died before their marriage vows could be solemnised.

Cheated for the second time by the cruel hand of death, Scriven became the victim of a deep depression and declining health. Despite all this he never gave up his personal faith in the Saviour. He became known as the local 'Good Samaritan' helping the poor and under-privileged, sharing his food with the needy and often giving them clothing.

Through all his trials and afflictions Scriven had come to know the Lord in a very personal way not only as a Saviour, but also as a friend.

To comfort his ageing mother who was suffering a serious illness he wrote these words:

'What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear,
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer'

He sent the full poem to his mother who he had not seen for ten years to remind her of the 'never failing friend, Christ Jesus.'

A friend saw the beautiful words and it was published in a local newspaper. Remarkably a copy of that newspaper was used to wrap a parcel destined for an address in New York City. The recipient caught sight of the poem when he unwrapped his parcel and arranged to have it published. Eventually it was seen by German-American composer, Charles Converse and very soon his simple plaintive melody gave wings of a song to Joseph Scriven's telling words. Thus the Irish-Canadian and a German-American were used of God to bring blessing and encouragement to millions.

Kathleen Shepherd.



Faith at Home youth pages!

Bible reading: Mark 1 : 1-3 - John the Baptizer

***"The good news of Jesus Christ—the Message!—begins here,
following to the letter the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.***

***Watch closely: I'm sending my preacher ahead of you;
He'll make the road smooth for you.
Thunder in the desert!
Prepare for God's arrival!
Make the road smooth and straight!"***

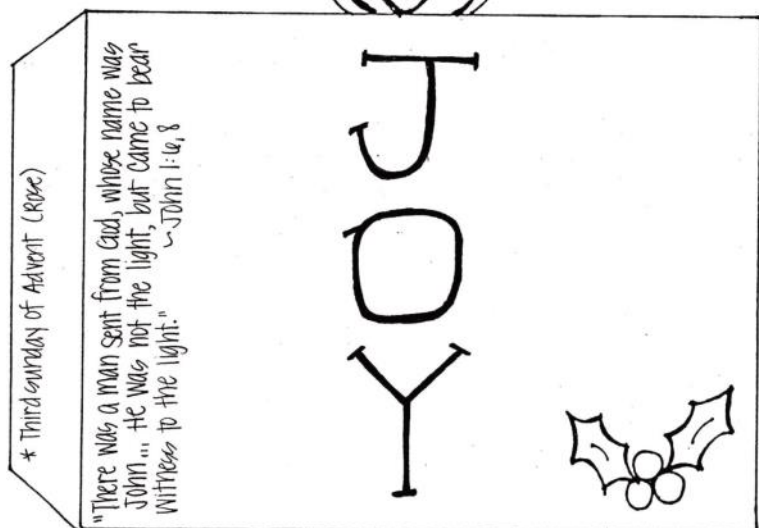
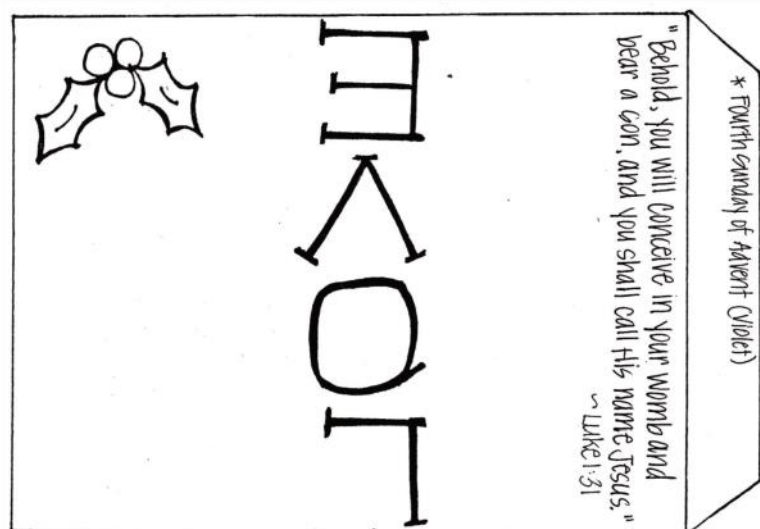
The weeks before Christmas are what Christians call Advent – it means arrival, because there's a very big arrival coming. Big arrivals mean big preparations.

Advent is the time when we prepare for the arrival of Jesus, the Son of God, Emmanuel, God with Us.

Some Christians prepare by praying more, fasting, reading specific bible passages, and of course there are the preparations for the Christmas celebrations too!

See page 19 for instructions on how to build your advent wreath.

See page 19 for instructions on how to build your advent wreath.



Over to you...



Read the bible verses - Mark
Chapter one, Verses 1-3.
Can you also find that prophecy
in Isaiah, Chapter 40?

Discuss in your house:

**What does preparation look like for you,
especially reparing for someone arriving?**

Cleaning the house? Cooking?

What do you prepare? Food? Decorations?

Presents? Cards?

**What might it look like to prepare your heart,
your home, your family, for the arrival of**

Jesus? Prayer, Reading the bible, Talking to
others, Fasting, Going to church? Carols?

What else?

Let's make an advent wreath

- 1. Pull out these centre pages, you will have a picture of what you're trying to create - an advent wreath, and then three pages with things to colour and cut out!**
- 2. Colour your candles, and leaves, and cut them all out. There are clues on each candle cutout as to what colour these would traditionally be, but it's up to you how you.**
- 3. Roll up your candles and stick the tabs to make them stay.**
- 4. The candle flames can be lit or unlit. Fold each flame down inside the candles to start with, you can lift each one in turn to 'light' the candle as we go through advent.**
- 5. Use the leaves to make a wreath, or put the candles first onto a paper plate and then decorate that with the leaves and berries that you've coloured in.**
- 6. Let it all dry and use it to count down the weeks as we wait for the coming of Christ!**
- 7. Send a photo to West Hub's facebook page or email address, we'd love to see these wreaths taking shape all over West Wigan.**

See page 19 for instructions on how to build your advent wreath.



Time to pray ...

Each week through Advent we encourage you to think about something that makes you Hopeful, Joyful, Peaceful and filled with Love, as you "light" your candle on the wreath. Write down one thing, thank God for it. Pray for God to help you to spread the Hope, Love, Peace and Joy that we know comes from knowing Jesus. Place what you've written on the wreath to decorate it, and to help you remember.

***Thank you God for this,
which gives me hope:***

Help me to spread your Hope.

***Thank you God for this,
which gives me joy:***


Help me to spread your Joy

***Thank you God for this,
which gives me peace:***

Help me to spread your Peace

***Thank you God for this,
which fills me with love:***

Help me to spread your Love

Dear God,
All around us people 
are getting ready for
Christmas. We eagerly
wait for the coming of
your Son, Jesus. Help
us to get ready in our
hearts to celebrate
his coming into the
world and into our
lives.

See page 19 for instructions on how to build your advent wreath.



St Matthews Guides

We had an extended break for half term since Halloween fell on a Monday this year and most of the girls were out trick or treating. On our return we finished off the remembrance wreaths that had been made to put in church for the Remembrance Sunday service. We are also starting to practice for the Guide talent show which will be on Monday 5th December this year – advanced notice for everyone.



The Guide Christmas post box will be in church from the end of November for the delivery of Christmas cards in the Highfield and Winstanley area. We are suggesting a cost of 25p per card any money raised is for our Guide funds.

Our last meeting this year will be on 12th December, and we will return to Guides on Monday 9th January 2023.

We would like to thank all parents for their support over the last year and wish everyone a happy Christmas and good new year.

The Guiders



Highfield Cricket Club

At a packed Community Hall, players and members celebrated a positive 2022 season with a cup win for the first team, promotion for the second team and great development opportunities through the third team.

It was also a night to celebrate the contribution of the club's fabulous volunteers across groundworks, facilities, junior coaching, fundraising and so much more.

Martin Gaskell compered the event brilliantly, with great support from Kim Fulton, whilst it was so good to have one of our Honorary Life Members, Tony Clark, presenting the trophies.

Bala was named as Players Player of the year with the captains own choices Bala (first team), Lee Martinus (second team) and young Charlie Farrell (third team). Captains Mike Farrell, Matty Wallace and Steve Martlew also awarded batting, bowling and fielding awards for their respective teams. Jamie Darbyshire was named Junior Player of the Year.

Chairman Gary Speakman, on behalf of the Club Committee, announced Honorary Life Membership for three very deserving (and surprised) club members; long serving Treasurer Phil Gaskell, Secretary Matthew Jones and Richard Farrell who has made a wide contribution to the club through junior coaching and community programmes.

There was also a very popular recognition through a Lifetime Achievement Award for Keith Ashcroft, one of the Clubs longest serving members who continues to support the club including work on the ground. After the event, Lifetime Achievement Awards were also presented to Club President Brian Lancaster and Honorary Life Member Brian Liptrot who had been unable to attend. Both Brian's also continue to work on the ground. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to these three gentlemen.

It was a wonderful night, showcasing much of what makes Highfield CC a very special community club.

Looking forward and following a successful and safe Bonfire and Fireworks event, there are several community events planned. The cricket club is supporting the Highfield Christmas Markets event of course whilst on the preceding night, Friday 9th December, there is a Christmas Family Party night. £5 per person, under 5's free, more details on the club Facebook pages.

The cricket coaching programme will recommence at the end of January at the Deanery, all existing and new players are welcomed. Please check the club website highfieldcricketclub.co.uk, for contact details of age group coaches and senior team captains.

We also have a great opportunity for Year 3 and Year 4 boys and girls. From January 25th we will run a 10-week coaching programme at The Deanery Sports Hall, which will be absolutely free to attend for up to 20 boys and girls in that age group. The weekly sessions will be led by experienced and qualified Coaches.

Existing Highfield CC under 9s members have been given first refusal but there are at least 10 new spaces on the 10 weeks programme offered to boys and girls in Year 3 and Year 4 at local primary schools. Please contact Gary on 07721639970 to register your interest.

Gary Speakman



14th Wigan Boys' Brigade



The boys' have settled down with their work and we hope to be presenting some of them with badges in church soon. Owen Hook is progressing with his Queens Badge (no information as to when it will be changed) and has spent another weekend away at Kirkham as part of his work. Owen also presented the BB wreath on Remembrance Sunday at the church service.

We're holding our bottle stall, (along with many other stalls and entertainment} in the hall on Saturday the 10th of December. We hope everyone will try to attend and make it a success. so please bring plenty of money!

The officers' and boys' wish everyone a happy Christmas and hope that the New Year is a good one.

The Officers

Food Pantry

As I write this in mid-November, the contributions of St. Matthew's congregation over the three years since the starting of our fundraising efforts stand just a couple of hundred pounds short of the albeit self-imposed target of £10,000. With a complete month to go before the end of the year I am quietly confident that we can achieve this amount.

When I started this effort three short years ago, I had not thought far enough ahead to visualise this sort of success and I feel that we can be justifiably proud of our achievement. Not that we will cease our efforts of course, as the demand for this type of service seems ever increasing.

Considering everything that has happened in the world since we started in January 2020 (Coronavirus and the massive disruption to our lives that has caused), the Ukrainian war and other disasters throughout the world asking for massive financial aid, as well as the energy crisis causing untold financial hardship, sometimes very close to home, it makes me wonder how much we could have raised if circumstances had been different. Those who have continued to financially support our efforts are special people and those who for whatever reason have fallen by the wayside, can still have an enormous effect by simply starting to contribute once again. Forget any arrears you may feel that you owe, just remember that no matter how badly you think that life may have treated you, there are some people living alongside you who cannot even afford to feed their children, let alone heat their houses. If we can afford to help, surely, we have a Christian obligation to do so.

Dave Whitter

The Friendship Group

Once again, the Group paid a further visit to Ashton Golf Club for lunch in early November. An excellent meal was again had by the 17 members able to attend. In December we will again be partaking of the Christmas menu at the Wheel Restaurant in Wigan. This is where students on catering courses at Wigan Technical College cook and serve a range of delicious dishes to members of the public whilst supervised by teaching staff. I cannot recommend the restaurant too highly. The food is excellent as well as being moderately priced and expertly served. Finally, to end the year on yet another culinary note, we will again be having a Christmas buffet on the 21st of December, to end the year on a festive note.

I appreciate that it may seem that we do nothing but eat at our meetings, not that there would be anything wrong with that if we did. You must bear in mind that the group funds these meals out using the subscriptions paid by the members, so it appears that they are free on the day, though of course the actual cost is spread over the £2 per week subs, which you don't miss, it being such a small amount. Nobody has ever complained it has to be said.

We are still picking up the occasional new member but are always open and welcoming to anyone who wishes to join us. I should reiterate that though founded to cater for bereaved persons, we no longer limit ourselves to that category, having included 'loneliness' amongst the qualifying criteria. So, if you are on your own and fancy some convivial company, why not join us at 2pm on Wednesday afternoons in St. Matthew's Parish Hall. You never know, you might enjoy it. If you would like to speak to me first, as we appreciate that it can be daunting to walk into a room full of strangers, you can ring me on 07836 330324, or if you prefer, I will ask one of our lady members to speak to you.

Dave Whitter



Christmas Quiz

1. Where have The Archbishop of Canterbury and his predecessors lived for over 800 years?
2. In the Vatican in Rome there is a famous ceiling painted by Michelangelo. Where is it?
3. In what county is the city of Southampton?
4. How many dozen is in a gross?
5. How many pounds are in one hundredweight.
6. What is the capital city of Slovakia, which for three hundred years was the capital city of Hungary.
7. Before it was Virgin Media, what was the tv cable service in the NW. called?
8. What was the original nickname for Wigan Warriors R.L. Team.
9. There is a range of hills in Herefordshire with a town of the same name. What are they called?
10. There is an annual military tattoo held in the grounds of which castle?
11. What is the freezing point in Fahrenheit?
12. North is divided from south at the equator. Where is the meridian from which east is separated from west, recognized throughout the world?
13. Where is the famous Harland and Wolf shipyard which built The Titanic
14. The largest lake in the U.K. is in Northern Ireland what is it called?
15. What is the most westerly point in England?
16. The height of a horse is usually measured from the ground to the top of the withers, or shoulders. What is the unit of measurement used?
17. A town in Devon has a name synonymous with quality carpets. Which?
18. Which famous American actor played Forrest Gump in the film of the same name.
19. What name do a young lady of virtue and an item for clothes drying share.
20. Many people lay claim to inventing the telephone. Who is the one usually recognized.

(answers on page 32)

Notices



Faith Café

Saturday 3 December will be **breakfast with Santa**. All the usual lovely things to eat but expect a visit to the man himself in his grotto.

St James, 11am—2pm

Sunday 18 December

3pm World Cup final (Club)

St Matthew's Hall



Christmas Feast

On **Friday 23 December** between 12 & 2pm we will be hosting a Christmas lunch, with Turkey & all the trimmings. Do join us for this feast, we will have live music as well for a sing a long. This community event has been sponsored by our local Co Operative store at Hawkley Hall so it's a huge thank you to them for helping make this possible.

We collect used stamps all the year around - We have a collection box in each church building.

Leave a border of 1cm (half an inch) when trimming around the stamps and if possible be kind enough to sort them into British & Foreign stamps. Stamps will then be forwarded to a charity. Thank you.

Please pass all stamps on to
Marjorie Latham
41 Howden Drive
Wigan
WN3 5JT 01942 234880

Toy Service

There will be the usual appeal for "toys" for the second Sunday in December (11th) to donate to families who find Christmas a difficult time to provide presents for their children. However, since COVID I have found it a lot easier to ask for money to purchase supermarket vouchers as an alternative and if you would like to donate please leave it in the container clearly marked at the back of St. Matthew's church. Many thanks in advance for your support.

Barbara Jenks

Women's Fellowship

Programme for December:

1 December – Christmas lunch at Park Hotel (no evening meeting)

8 December – Carol Service in Parish Hall with Pemberton Youth Band

The Women's Fellowship are changing their meetings from Thursday evenings to afternoons in the New Year – further details in the February magazine.

May I take this opportunity of wishing all members a peaceful and blessed Christmas and New Year

Sheila Highton

Christmas Cards

At the back of St. Matthew's Church are Christmas card packs and special, individual "hand-made" Christmas Cards for sale in aid of Church funds. Many thanks to all who have already bought cards this year and in past years. **Eileen, Barbara and Marion**



The Shed

Our men's group meet the first Saturday in the month at St Matthew's Hall at 9.30am.

Come and join us for a bacon/sausage barm, cup of tea/coffee, a chat and fellowship. All welcome

Shoebboxes

I would like to thank all the people who donated to the Shoebox appeal. I'm grateful to you as I'm sure the children who receive them will be. This is our support for Overseas and In December we will try to support our disadvantaged children in the Wigan area.

There is a box at the back of Church for money donations to buy Super-market vouchers for the children to buy what they would like. Thank you again for your continued support in this necessary work

Barbara Jenks

Church Decoration

With grateful thanks to all those who give up their time and skills to decorate St. Matthew's Church on all festive occasions in our calendar. Most recently to Alan Peet and Andrew Bond who assisted me in helping to appropriately decorate our church for Remembrance Sunday. Also, to those who assist in similar functions at St. Paul's and St. James' with St. Thomas's churches
Dave Whitter

Volunteers

We have almost concluded our events for 2022, can we say a massive thankyou to everyone who has supported the Pemberton Community Association this year, including families and our sponsors. As with all voluntary groups, we rely on volunteers, we haven't been able to provide all our events this year due to lack of help, if you could spare some time, please contact us by phone or text on 07305 978989. On behalf of the Pemberton Community Association, we wish you all a Merry Christmas and our best wishes for 2023.

Dave Arrowsmith

Children's Christmas Party

The Pemberton Community Association is hosting their Children's Christmas Party on Sunday 11th December at Pemberton Masonic Hall. The party includes our resident entertainer, Kevin the Clown, with party games for all the family to join in with, lunch and a visit from Santa and his Elves to meet each child and give them a present. This is a ticket only event, which are priced at £8per child. Tickets on Sale from Monday 31st October. Please contact 07305 978989 for more information. **Dave Arrowsmith**

If you would like a copy of the magazine in **LARGE PRINT** please email Barbara at

hubadmin.west@churchwigan.org

Word Search

Christmas is nearly here! Two thousand years ago the Jews were longing for the coming of their Messiah. The Old Testament had promised that when He came, He would preach good news to the poor, bind up the broken hearted, proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, comfort all who mourn and to bestow on his people a crown of beauty instead of ashes. Jesus did all those things. He was and is the Son of God, and whoever has seen Him has seen the Father. Whoever believes in Him will have the best gift of all – His Spirit within them, which gives them eternal life.

Messiah
Broken
Heart
Freedom
Darkness
Favour
Prisoners

Comfort
Mourn
Bestow
Crown
Beauty
Ashes
Son

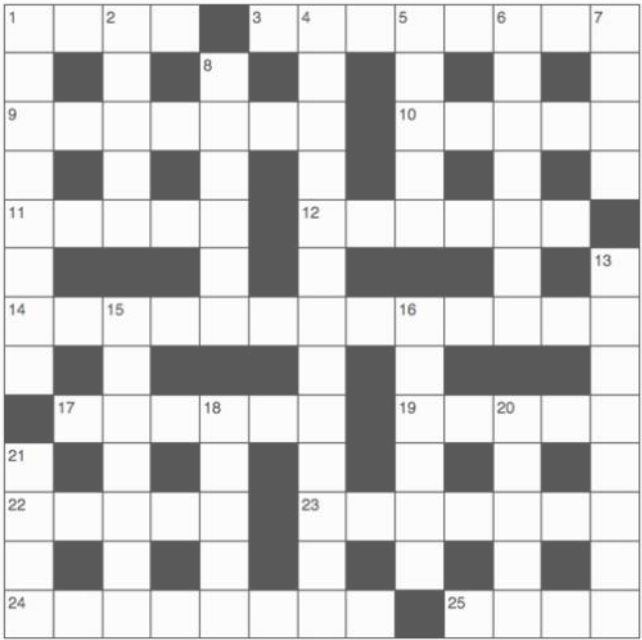
God
Jesus
Seen
Father
Whoever
longing
thousand

Across

- 1 'How long will you — your face from me?' (Psalm 13:1) (4)
3 'Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the — he bore' (Hebrews 13:13) (8)
9 Posh sin (anag.) (Romans 8:15) (7)
10 Solemn pledges (Matthew 5:33) (5)
11 Italian term for full orchestra (5)
12 'For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not — the cry of the afflicted' (Psalm 9:12) (6)
14 Prescience (1 Peter 1:2) (13)
17 Where a Hindu holy man lives (6)
19 'If he found any... who belonged to the Way, whether — women, he might take them as prisoners' (Acts 9:3) (3,2)
22 Fragrance (2 Corinthians 2:15) (5)
23 Vine hen (anag.) (Jonah 1:2) (7)
24 Precious stone decorating the twelfth foundation of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:20) (8)
25 'Will you keep to the old path that evil men have — ?' (Job 22:15) (4)

Down

- 1 'Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with — — ' (Numbers 20:11) (3,5)
2 'You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, " — murder"' (Matthew 5:21) (2,3)
4 One of Paul's many hardships endured



- as a servant of God (2 Corinthians 6:5) (13)
5 'We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, — inwardly' (Romans 8:23) (5)
6 Changed (Daniel 6:8) (7)
7 'My yoke is — and my burden is light' (Matthew 11:30) (4)
8 Recoil (Revelation 12:11) (6)
13 'O Lord, you have — me and you know me' (Psalm 139:1) (8)
15 ' — to me the joy of your salvation' (Psalm 51:12) (7)
16 Express sorrow (Isaiah 16:7) (6)
18 'Then he said to Thomas, " — out your hand and put it into my side"' (John 20:27) (5)
20 'God has said, " — will I leave you; — will I forsake you"' (Hebrews 13:5) (5)
21 Son of Onam and brother of Shammai (1 Chronicles 2:28) (4)



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Answers. - 1. Lambert Palace. 2. Sistine Chapel. 3. Hampshire. 4. 12. 5. 112
 6. Bratislava. 7. Northwest Telecom. 8. The Riversiders. 9. Malvern Hills
 10. Edinburgh. 11. 32 degrees F. 12. The Greenwich Meridian. 13. Belfast
 14. Lough Neagh. 15. Land's End. 16. A hand (4 inches). 17. Axminster.
 18. Tom Hanks. 19. A Maiden. 20. Alexander Graham Bell.

Donations

Treasured memories of all my loved ones at Christmas, **from Elaine O'Hara**

In memory of Roger Crook, a dear husband **from Florence**

Grateful thanks for the substantial donation to Church Funds for the use of church for their annual service.

From Wigan Masonic

Christmas memories of Bob with love **From Sheila**

Donation in lieu of Christmas cards **From John and Christine**

Loving memories of Margaret at Christmas **From Dave and family**

Donation to Church Funds **From Sunday morning refreshments**

Donation to pay for the card machine in church **From Sunday morning refreshments.**

Donation from the sale of cards **From Eileen, Barbara and Marion**

Thank you for prayers said for Millie Hart. With love **From Grandma and Grandad, Maureen and Eric**

Happy Birthday (7/11) and Anniversary (16/1) memories of Arthur Hall. Loving Dad, Grandad and Great Grandad. With lots of love **From Eric and Maureen Hart xxx.**

Happy Christmas memories of Arthur and Ethel Hall. Loving parents, Grandparents and Great Grandparents. **From Maureen, Eric and Family**

Loving Christmas memories of Keith and all our loved ones **From Barbara, Ian and Neil Richardson**

Burials and Funerals

St Paul's

27/10/2022 John Unsworth, aged 75

St James with St Thomas

7/10/2022 Derek Leadbetter, aged 89

St Matthew's

None



Baptisms

October

Rory Jack Clarke at St Matthew's
Thomas Raymond Michael McCloy at St Matthew's

November

Ada Sharon Dorothea Goulden at St James'
Autumn Lowe at St James'

If you wish for your donation to appear in the Church Magazine could you please **PRINT** the information to be enclosed clearly on the front of your envelope and hand it into **CHURCH**, so as to avoid any unnecessary upset, or email it to one of the magazine team,

Thank you for your co-operation in the matter.
Editor

N.B. *If you have occasion to make out a cheque to the parish, please make it payable to **Wigan West PCC**. Cheques made out to the old parishes will soon no longer be valid.*

St Matthew's

Assistant Warden's

Andrea Wood 07734 447699

Shelia Albers

Elizabeth Gaskell

Reader *Colin Hesketh 07712 431105*

Organist *Sue Gordon 01942 214955*

Deputy Organist

Colin Hesketh 07712 431105

Bereavement Support

Iain Matthewson 07595 898737

Bowling Club

Keith Harris 01942 211518

Choir *Sue Gordon 01942 214955*

Church Fellowship

Matthew Jones 07930 867209

Cuppa & Chat

Barbara Jenks 01942 213101

Friendship Group

Dave Whitter 07836330324

Boys Brigade

Jim Harrison 01942 218465

Guides:

Rainbows

Jennifer Halliwell 01942 218334

Gill Marsh 01942 207723

Brownies

Joanne Tabener/Elizabeth Gaskell

14thwiganbrownies@gmail.com

Guides

Helen Albers 07960 920587

Women's Fellowship

Sheila Highton 01942 217754

Primary School Headteacher

Mrs A Barron 01942 747818

St Paul's

Assistant Wardens

Cliff Unsworth 01942 933772

Maureen Gower 01942 234410

Miriam Unsworth 01942 933772

Pam Wilkinson 01942 716668

Geoff Birch 01942 227036

Reader *Arthur Hubbard 01942 321977*

Reader *Gordon Fath 01942 621173*

Organist

Kathleen Shepherd 01942 248683

Flowers *Pam Wilkinson 01942 716668*

Mother's Union

Anne Hubbard 01942 321977

Sunday School

Lucy Haigh 07900 252 361

Craft Workshop

Gillian Greenwood 01942 825670

Friends Together

Lynn Conroy 01942202249

Linda Berry 01942 492521

House Groups

Anne & Arthur Hubbard 01942 321977

Mike & Gill Greenwood 01942 825670

Primary School Headteacher

Mrs A Jackson 01942 243068

Need to book a hall?

St Matthews Church Hall:

Matthew Jones 07930 867209

St James with St Thomas:

Alison Brown 01942 740777

St Pauls Church Hall:

Darren Speakman 07456 840803

BAPTISMS If you wish to enquire about Baptism please attend a service and ask to speak to someone from the Baptism Team.

WEDDINGS *Gordon Fath: treasurer.benefice@churchwigan.org*

FUNERALS Church Wigan Funeral Coordinator: 01942 705641, 07754 569022,
funeral.coordinator@churchwigan.org

Wardens Corner

Our buildings What has happened over the past month or so?

St Paul's Re-ordering

Meetings with Maggie our architect – a basic plan for St Paul's buildings has been agreed, so now the process of how it best can be achieved is underway. We have had inspections by building contractors and other professionals who can draw up detailed plans and who are in a position to know the most appropriate materials to use and how they can be accessed. It's a frustrating time because we just have to wait for them to do their job.



St Matthews Parish Rooms

The Parish rooms have been demolished and we are now waiting for the contractors to start work on the road bridge when we will start to receive some income.

The repairs to St Mathews tower.

Another waiting game. The funding is available thanks to grants from The Grocers Charity. The contractors are available. We are waiting for permission from the diocese so that the work can begin.

Meanwhile lots of great things are things have been happening. St James and St Matthews have hosted musical events. A new worshipping community has started at St Matthews, the FUNdraising team have organised and planned many events, and lots of people have taken advantage of the 'warm spaces' opportunities'.

Once again we thank all the teams and individuals who make the life of our parish possible. New people who've joined and immediately got involved and people who have 'always been there' who we take for granted until something that we expect to happen doesn't!

Have a Joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year

PRAY
for
UKRAINE

Please can you help with our Ukraine appeal.

The collection point has changed and is now at

St Paul's Church, Goose Green, Wigan WN3 5LH

**Drop off times are Mon, Wed and Friday
10am to 2pm**

Also during church services at St Pauls Church