



# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020 – The Third Sunday of Advent

## TODAY'S SERVICES

9:15am	Service of the Word at St. George's church	Elaine Simkin
11:00am	Holy Communion Service at St. Bartholomew's church	Revd Carol Pharaoh

### We pray for:

**Those who are ill:** Cassie Buono, Brian Cato, Christopher Davies, Revd Malcolm Edwards, Lisa Ginniff, Irene Halliwell, Jenny Harris, Keith Haworth, Mario Heaton, Edith Ibbotson, Joan James, Patricia James, Mike Johnson, Jeffrey Lyon, Eileen Marsh, Norman Sidlow, James Tonge.

**Those who have died recently:** Irene Booth,

**And on their anniversaries this week we remember:** Harold Bond, James Bridge, Rita Butterworth, John Clarke, James Galvin, Frances Glover, Joan Green, David Highton, Wilfred Peters, Edwin Ritson, Leslie Simpson, Joseph Smalley, Mary Southworth, Walter Taziker, Sylvia Valentine, William Whitton, Emma Woodward.

### This week:

Welcome to our third Pewsheets Plus for Advent. In church today, we'll be lighting the third Advent Candle as we think of the John the Baptist telling the people to prepare. We've another fine selection of daily readings, prayers and hymns for Advent with the notices at the end.

**PLEASE NOTE the new guidelines about registering for attendance for school places which is being implemented from today – see the notices at the end of this sheet.**

Many thanks to all who provided gifts for our Toy service last week. There was a large collection that have been collected by Bolton Lions for distribution. Even in these difficult times, everyone's generosity is much appreciated.

### Coming Up:

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December:** we'll have a Holy Communion Service at St. George's [9:15am] and A Sequence of Readings & Music for Christmas at St. Bartholomew's [11:00am]. I'm delighted to say that the choir have restarted their weekly practices for this service and although we still cannot have any congregational singing [in line with every other church] we hope this will prove a fine preparation for Christmas instead of our usual Carol Service.

**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December: Pretoria Pit 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** will be marked at St. Bartholomew's church at 10:00am [in some form to be finalised].

### Christmas Eve:

Crib Service at St. George's on Christmas Eve at 6:00pm

Midnight Eucharist at St. Bartholomew's at 11:30pm.

### Christmas Day:

Joint Christmas Day service at 10:00am at St. Bartholomew's

### Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December:

Joint Communion Service on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December at 11:00am [no service at St. George's / no on-line service that day].

**Please do send in items of news to list to put on the pewsheets so that we can all keep in touch with what's going on.**

While services and attendance at church is limited, these pewsheets and on-line services [this week a team carol service] will continue. Do keep any news, views and feedback coming. Please also check our Team YouTube channel for online services:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDx266HLh9ShYeBJnON8ODg>

Ed



# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

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## *The Collect:*

God for whom we watch and wait,  
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of  
your Son: give us courage to speak the truth,  
to hunger for justice, and to suffer for the cause  
of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



## *Old Testament Reading : Isaiah 61. 1 – 4 & 8 - 11*

The servant of the Lord said:

<sup>1</sup>The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup>to provide for those who mourn in Zion –

to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. <sup>4</sup>They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations

<sup>8</sup>For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. <sup>9</sup>Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. <sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

## *New Testament Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5.16 - 24*

My brothers and sisters, <sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; <sup>21</sup>hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

## *Gospel Reading:*

*John 1. 1 – 6 &*

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

<sup>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' <sup>23</sup>He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord"', as the prophet Isaiah said. <sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' <sup>26</sup>John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

## *The Post Communion Prayer:*

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts; kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when your Christ comes again we may shine as lights before his face; who is alive and reigns now and for ever. **Amen.**



# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew      St Thomas      St George

## Homily – Carol Pharaoh

### Adventure

When you hear the word “adventure” what do you think of? Indiana Jones, Swiss Family Robinson, and Jules Verne? Columbus sailing on the high seas in search of new worlds? Neil Armstrong stepping out onto the moon? Captain Kirk and the Starship Enterprise “bravely going where no man has gone before?”

We’re in the season of Advent. The word “advent” itself comes from the same root as “adventure.” I think that we are in danger of feeling so keenly the pressures of preparing for Christmas, that we forget that advent is a time of adventure, of waiting and watching and preparing for the coming of the King as a baby in Bethlehem and in the future. A theologian called Stanley Hauerwas said this; -

The most basic task of any [church] is to offer its people a sense of participation in an adventure. For finally what we seek is not power or security, or equality, or even dignity, but a sense of worth gained from participation in and contribution to a common adventure.

Advent, then, is about adventuring together. How do we do this?

### **Adventures in the wilderness**

Think of John the Baptist being like our scoutmaster and he’s out there in the wilderness shouting the scout motto: “Be Prepared! Get ready!” he says. “Be prepared! Be ready for anything because anything can happen in this life! Good stuff and bad stuff. The adventure can take us sometimes into the wilderness.”

Sometimes wildernesses are sprung on us and much to our distress. Life is full of them. Illness is one of them and grief. Loneliness and anxiety too. You could say that the weariness and pain of the world we currently live in, is also a wilderness. We might not like to see these times as ‘adventures’ as these are all painful and difficult places to be. Never the less, it’s often in the wilderness, as John discovered, that we often find God. God is there in every wilderness, waiting for us, the adventurers.

### **Trail Magic**

I once read that Apache Indians have their own words for the experience of finding God in the desert and wilderness places. They call it “trail magic” and they would say, when you’ve been on the trail long enough, you find it everywhere. Trail magic is anything good or beautiful or marvellous or unexpected that happens on the trail. It’s the experience of going through great difficulty, and coming to improbable beauty at the end of it. For those with the eyes to see, trail magic is the very presence of God in the midst of the wilderness.



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During lockdown, the BBC ran a programme featuring Michael Palin, looking back at his adventures around the world. If you remember, one of Michael's trips was across the Sahara Desert. I remember thinking when the series was about to be shown originally, that this wasn't a journey I would have liked to have made. I guess most of us wouldn't have enjoyed such a trip. The desert, the wilderness, are places we would easily choose not to go. They are strange and inhospitable places where we could feel easily vulnerable, perplexed and lost. Yet as Michael Palin's trip unfolded, even I could recognise the real moments of joy he discovered, that trail magic. Our resistance to stay in our safe and secure worlds and avoid exploring the wilderness means that we lose out on the opportunity of being deeply touched by that trail magic and drawing closer to God.

## **The challenge of adventure**

It's the call of Advent. The call to adventure! The challenge for us at times I think is to deliberately go and get ourselves into the wilderness by some means or other. Advent is a good time to do this so that we might learn more of what it means to wait and watch. It's by allowing ourselves to be stripped of all our comfortable defences and taking the risks, that we can come face to face with God.

Whether we put ourselves voluntarily in the wilderness, or whether we just find ourselves there by life's cruel blows, if we hold on and trust God, as Adventurers we can embrace these wildernesses, face them in confidence and continue the trek. One of many things we can learn as an adventurer is that if you keep on walking, eventually you'll get to where you're going.

## **Advent joy.**

So, where is your wilderness? What adventure are you being called to but resist because you're afraid? I cannot answer that for you. But I can assure you that you are being called because that's trail magic which is the presence of God in our lives. God greets those adventurers who courageously step into the wilderness and follow the path that he prepares for them. God's calling each of us. He may call us into a scary place, those places where we feel vulnerable and perplexed and things are very messy. But if we wish to prepare ourselves this Advent for the coming of Jesus at Christmas and in the future, then we need to be brave and bold. We should be exploring ways to give our lives to God and allow him to challenge us in new ways. This way, we'll be ready as never before to receive our God at Christmas, now and in the future. We will know more deeply that profound joy that knowing Jesus brings. Amen.



# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

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## Intercessions:

Into the daily cycle of our lives  
When all seems well  
With us and with the world  
When our yoke is easy  
And the burden light  
You break in

**And scatter our complacency**

Into the daily cycle of our lives  
When we are comfortable  
And at our ease  
When the fire is lit  
But eyes are closed  
You break in

**And challenge our dependency**

You break into  
Our daily prayers  
Humble hearts  
Lay souls bare  
You break in  
**You break in**

You break in  
When defences are down  
With an Angel's shout

May God the Father bless us;  
may Christ take care of us;  
the Holy Ghost enlighten us all the days of our  
life.

1. How lovely on the mountains are the feet of  
Him  
Who brings good news, good news.  
Proclaiming peace, announcing news of happiness,  
Our God reigns, our God reigns.  
**Our God reigns, our God reigns, Our God  
reigns, our God reigns.**

2. You watchmen lift your voices joyfully as one  
Shout for your King, your King,  
See eye to eye the Lord restoring Zion  
Our God reigns, our God reigns.

Or the quietest sound  
You break in  
**You break in**  
And we change  
**And all things change**  
When you break in

Thank you Father, for your patience  
With a rebellious people  
Loving you one moment  
Forgetting you the next  
Thank you for your endless love  
Which does not give up  
But wants the best for us  
Despite our faults  
Thank you for your promise  
To all who believe  
And put their trust in you  
Everlasting life  
And in this Advent season  
May the Baptist's call  
Resound in hearts and minds  
Drawing many to the living water  
Where they might find forgiveness  
And knowledge of your Salvation. Amen

The Lord be our defender and keeper of body  
and soul,  
both now and for ever, to the ages of ages.  
*(Æthelwold c 908-984)*

3. Waste places of Jerusalem break forth with joy  
We are redeemed, redeemed  
The Lord has saved and comforted His people  
Our God reigns, our God reigns!

4. Ends of the earth, see the salvation of your  
God  
Jesus is Lord, is Lord.  
Before the nations He has bared His holy arm  
Our God reigns, our God reigns!

**Words & Music:** *Words: based on Isaiah 52: v1 Leonard E Smith Jr [b.1942] vv2 – 4 unknown.*



# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

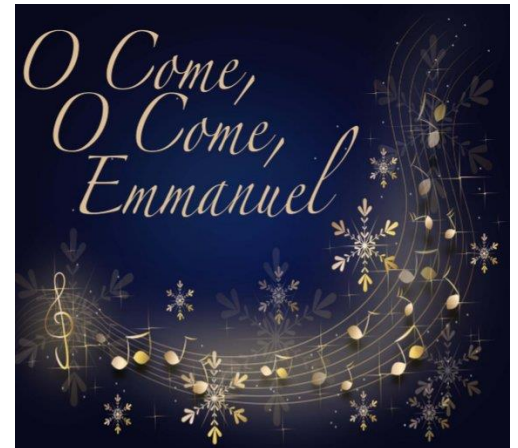
St Thomas

St George

## Background: O Come, O Come Emmanuel

If you've been following the Advent Calendar of hymns, you may be wondering why this one hasn't appeared yet? Well, panic over, as it's in this Thursday which is really the day that we should start singing it.

Its beginnings lie in the seven "O" Advent antiphons, which were a series of prayers invoking Christ by one of the titles he is given in scripture. They were known to Boethius, a Roman author of the early 6<sup>th</sup> century, and the Anglo-Saxon poet Cynewulf in about 750-800AD. These were translated by Sir Israel Gollancz in London in 1892 [which were read by J R R Tolkien inspiring many of his images and names including Middle Earth and Earendel].



In the first millennium, one of these 7 antiphons was sung each day in the week leading up to Christmas Eve. In the Benedictine monasteries, the first was sung by the Abbot with each successive one being sung by a more junior member of the order. Today, we do the opposite in the service of Nine Lessons and Carols where the first reading is usually read by a junior chorister working up to the last being read by the Bishop.

In the service, these would have been sung at Vespers [sort of modern-day Evensong] before and after the Magnificat [the Song of Mary] on the 17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> December and survived the reformation and are still used in churches of many denominations today.

This set of seven starts with the cantor singing "O" in a florid style set to many notes [implying a longing for Jesus to come] followed by one of the titles [with the rough translation shown]:

- Sapientia                      wisdom
- Adonai                         Lord
- Radix Jesse                 branch of Jesse [the family of Jesse, the house of King David of Judah]
- Clavis David                key of David
- Oriens                         dayspring / from the east / rising sun
- Rex Gentium                King of the Gentiles
- Emmanuel                 God with Us

It has been noted that there is a hidden meaning in that if you take the initial letters from end to beginning you get "Ero Cras" which is claimed to mean "tomorrow, I will come." Sadly this is nonsense as it really translates as "Tomorrow, I will be," this sort of word play isn't often found in the liturgy, the verses may come in a different order depending upon local tradition and Advent is not about going backwards.

Rather than leave these to choirs to sing to the traditional plainsong melodies, it was decided to turn them into a hymn with a regular tune for congregations to sing. John Mason Neale produced a hymn version in Latin with the chorus "*nascetur pro te, Israel*" more "*Emmanuel shall be born for thee, Israel*" than the translation sung today. The tune was harmonised by Thomas Helmore and it was claimed it was adapted from an old French Catholic Prayer Book. This appears true as in the National Library of Paris in a 15<sup>th</sup> century book for nuns to use at funerals, the tune appears set to words of a litany at the Requiem mass.

The world and his wife had a go at translating it into English, which is why there are so many versions about, many compiled by editors from lots of different sources.

So it's a complicated history, but it may just be the oldest hymn we sing regularly in December and 600 year old musicians could probably join in without a problem.



# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

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Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December

Numbers 24. 2 – 7, 15 – 17

## Balaam's Third Message

<sup>2</sup> He looked out across the desert and saw all the Israelites. They were camped with the tribes in their different areas. Then the Spirit of God came on him, <sup>3</sup> and he gave this message:

“This message is from Balaam son of Beor.

I am speaking about things I see clearly.

<sup>4</sup> These are the words I heard from God.

I saw what God All-Powerful showed me.

I humbly tell what I clearly see.

<sup>5</sup> “People of Jacob, your tents are beautiful!

Israelites, your homes are beautiful!

<sup>6</sup> You are like rows of palm trees planted by the streams.

You are like gardens growing by the rivers.

You are like sweet-smelling bushes planted by the LORD.

You are like cedar trees growing by the water.

<sup>7</sup> You will always have enough water,  
enough water for your seeds to grow.

Your king will be greater than King Agag.

Your kingdom will be very great.



## Balaam's Last Message

<sup>15</sup> Then Balaam gave this message:

“This message is from Balaam son of Beor.

I am speaking about things I see clearly.

<sup>16</sup> I heard this message from God.

I learned what God Most High taught me.

I saw what God All-Powerful showed me.

I humbly tell what I clearly see.

<sup>17</sup> “I see him coming, but not now.

I see him coming, but not soon.

A star will come from the family of Jacob.

A new ruler will come from the Israelites.

He will smash the heads of the Moabites  
and crush the heads of all the sons of Sheth.

*So why do we have these readings now. Well, it's because Balaam is telling of his visions of the coming of a future king both soon and in the distant future.*

*In v.3-9 Balaam saw a vision from God which showed the future, when the Israelites would live in the Promised Land. Balaam compared the Israelites' homes there to beautiful gardens with strong trees and plenty of water.*

*Next, Balaam emphasised the military power of the Israelites. He prophesied about Israel's future king who would be greater than the king of Israel's enemies, the Amalekites. In fact, Saul, Israel's first king, defeated Agag, the Amalekites' king (1 Samuel 15:8).*

*V 15-19 are very similar to the words that Balaam spoke before his third prophecy (24:3-4). But, this time, he spoke about events that would happen a long time in the future.*

*Balaam prophesied about a king who would come from Israel. This king would defeat the Moabites. The 'sons of Sheth' (verse 17) might refer to a tribe that lived next to the country called Moab or it might be another name for the Moabites.*

*Also, this king would defeat Israel's enemies in the country called Edom, which was south of Moab.*

*Most of these prophecies happened about 300 years later. David, Israel's most famous king, ruled after Saul. He was a great military leader. He defeated the people in Edom and in Moab (2 Samuel 8:2 and 8:13-14; 1 Kings 11:15-16).*

*Some people believe that these prophecies refer also to the Messiah, the great leader and king that would come in the future whom the Jews believed would defeat all their enemies – verse 17 certainly ties in with the Christmas readings..*



# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew      St Thomas      St George

*You challenge us this Advent time  
This season of preparation  
To put aside our pride  
And understand our need  
For repentance  
Forgiveness  
And mercy  
Less of self*

1 Christ is coming! Let creation  
from her groans and travail cease;  
let the glorious proclamation  
hope restore and faith increase:  
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!  
Come, thou blessed Prince of Peace.

2 Earth can now but tell the story  
of thy bitter cross and pain;  
she shall yet behold thy glory,  
when thou comest back to reign:  
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!  
Let each heart repeat the strain.

*More of you  
Preparation for our journey  
To the stable and beyond  
Purify our hearts  
Sanctify our lives  
That we might serve you  
Faithfully this day and all days. **Amen***

3 Long thine exiles have been pining,  
far from rest, and home, and thee:  
but, in heav'nly vestures shining,  
they their loving Lord shall see:  
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!  
Haste the joyous jubilee.

4 With that blessed hope before us,  
harps be played and songs be sung  
let the mighty advent chorus  
onward roll from tongue to tongue:  
"Christ is coming! Christ is coming!  
Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come!"

**Words:** *John Ross MacDuff [1818 – 1887] a Scottish Minister who wrote about 30 hymns*

**Tune:** *we sing it to Regent Square by Henry Smart [1813-1879], organist at Blackburn Parish Church [now Cathedral] before moving to London.*

## Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December

Zephaniah 3. 1 – 2 & 9 – 13

### The Future of Jerusalem

**3** Jerusalem, your people fought against God. They hurt other people, and you have been stained with sin. <sup>2</sup>They didn't listen to me or accept my teachings. Jerusalem didn't trust the LORD. Jerusalem didn't go to her God.

<sup>9</sup>Then I will change people from other nations so that they can speak the language clearly and call out the name of the LORD. They will all worship me together, shoulder to shoulder, as one people. <sup>10</sup>People will come all the way from the other side of the river in Ethiopia. My scattered people will come to me. My worshipers will come and bring their gifts to me.

**The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save.  
He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you  
with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.**

- Zephaniah 3:17 -







# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

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<sup>11</sup> “Then, Jerusalem, you will no longer be ashamed of the wrong things your people do against me. That is because I will remove all the bad people from Jerusalem. I will take away all the proud people. There will not be any of them on my holy mountain. <sup>12</sup> I will let only meek and humble people stay in my city, and they will trust the LORD’s name. <sup>13</sup> The survivors of Israel will not do bad things or tell lies. They will not try to trick people with lies. They will be like sheep that eat and lie down in peace—and no one will bother them.”

*Zephaniah is the son of Cushi, and great-great grandson of King Hezekiah, ninth in the literary order of the Twelve Minor Prophets. He prophesied in the days of Josiah, ruler of the Kingdom of Judah (640–609 BC) and was contemporary with Jeremiah, with whom he had much in common. He is the author of this three chapter book of the Old Testament which bears his name. The scene of his activity was the city of Jerusalem, which he seems to know well. Most of his book is unremittingly miserable but with a better ending.*

*Verses 1-5 God says what will happen to Judah. Although the Hebrew does not say that these verses are about Jerusalem, those in the know are sure that they are. These people do not trust their LORD and do not think that God will make them safe from their enemies. So they do not come near or pray to God. But he promised to do this if they obeyed him. They neither believe nor obey God and only trust their leaders.*

*Verses 9-11 Here God spoke (by Zephaniah) to all the people in the world. ‘Speak the language clearly makes Bible students think about the story about the Tower of Babel [Genesis 11:1-9]. Everybody spoke the same language until God confused their words. But Zephaniah says that it will change! One day we will all speak the same language again. We do not know when this will be but Bible experts think that this is another part of Zephaniah’s book which will happen in future times when Jesus comes back to the earth.*

*The Book of Zephaniah has a happy ending! God will bring back the remnant of his people from exile. Only those faithful to God will remain in peace – we have again a pastoral metaphor involving sheep, so common throughout the Bible.*

*God of majesty and power  
Who spoke and this world was  
Who breathed and this world lived  
Who counts the hairs upon our head  
Who sees our thoughts and reads our hearts  
Who loves us more than we deserve  
How can we not bring today*

*Our sacrifice of praise?  
For in the child at Bethlehem  
Lies the promise of intimacy  
With a Saviour who would die even for me  
And the promise of an eternity  
In which to praise you more each day  
God of promise we praise your name, **Amen***





# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

1. Long ago, prophets knew

Christ would come, born a Jew.  
Come to make all things new;  
Bear his People's burden,  
Freely love and pardon.  
Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!  
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!  
When he comes,  
When he comes,  
Who will make him welcome?

2. God in time, God in man,

This is God's timeless plan:  
He will come, as a man,  
Born himself of woman,  
God divinely human.  
Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!  
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!  
When he comes,  
When he comes,  
Who will make him welcome?

3. Mary, hail! Though afraid;

She believed, she obeyed.  
In her womb God is laid;  
Till the time expected  
Nurtured and protected.  
Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!  
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!  
When he comes,  
When he comes,  
Who will make him welcome?

4. Journey ends! Where afar

Bethlem shines, like a star,  
Stable door stands ajar.  
Unborn Son of Mary,  
Saviour, do not tarry!  
Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!  
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!  
Jesus comes!  
Jesus comes!  
We will make him welcome!

**Words:** written in 1970 by Fred Pratt Green [1903 – 2000] a Methodist minister and fine hymn writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

**Tune:** from Finland; first appears in the *Piae Cantiones* of 1582 along with other tunes that we still sing today

## Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December

Isaiah 45. 6b – 8 & 18 & 21b – end

From the east to the west, people will know that I  
am the LORD

and that there is no other God.

<sup>7</sup> I made the light and the darkness.

I bring peace, and I cause trouble.

I, the LORD, do all these things.

<sup>8</sup> “May the clouds in the skies above  
pour goodness on the earth like rain.

May the earth open up  
to let salvation grow.

And may goodness grow with that salvation,  
which I, the LORD, created.

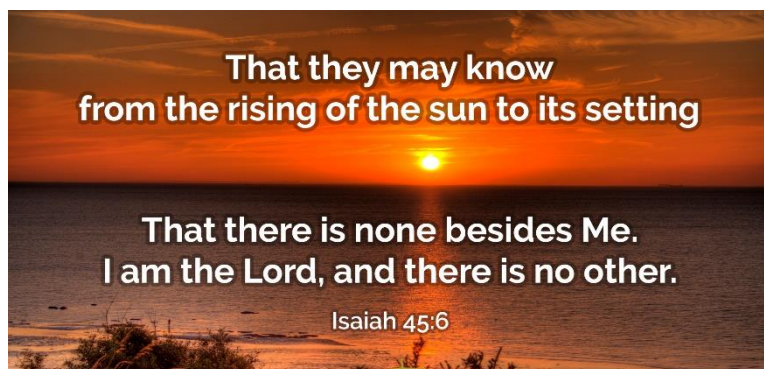
<sup>18</sup> The LORD is God.

He made the skies and the earth.

He put the earth in its place.

He did not want the earth to be empty when he made it.

He created it to be lived on.





# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

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St Thomas

St George

“I am the LORD.

There is no other God.

“Who told you about this before it happened? Who told you this so long ago? I, the LORD, am the one who said these things. I am the only God, the one who does what is right. I am the one who saves, and there is no other! <sup>22</sup> So all you people in faraway places, turn to me and be saved, because I am God, and there is no other.

<sup>23</sup> “When I make a promise, that promise is true. It will happen. And I swear by my own power that everyone will bow before me and will take an oath to obey me. <sup>24</sup> They will say, ‘Goodness and strength come only from the LORD.’”

And all who show their anger against him will be humiliated. <sup>25</sup> The LORD will help the people of Israel live right and praise their God.

*Top tip: this chapter continues the section that starts in [Isaiah 44:24](#) so if you read the end of chapter 44 first, this chapter may make more sense.*

*V.6 ‘east to west’ just means all the world that people knew at that time. ‘Trouble’ refers to the bad things that Cyrus will do; he will defeat and destroy countries and was successful because he was used by God.. God said, ‘I will hold his hand’, [verse 1](#).*

*V. 8 is a prayer for showers from the skies which will produce fruits that will show God’s kindness to the world. It is as if Isaiah cannot wait for Cyrus to do his work! Even as rain makes plants grow, Isaiah wants ‘God’s rain’ to come from the skies. The result is that goodness and safety will come like plants that grow from the earth. The Hebrew word for goodness really means ‘righteousness’ & for safety means ‘salvation’.*

*Verses 18-25 finish the section that started at verse 9. Verse 22 emphasises the main subject of Isaiah chapter 45.*

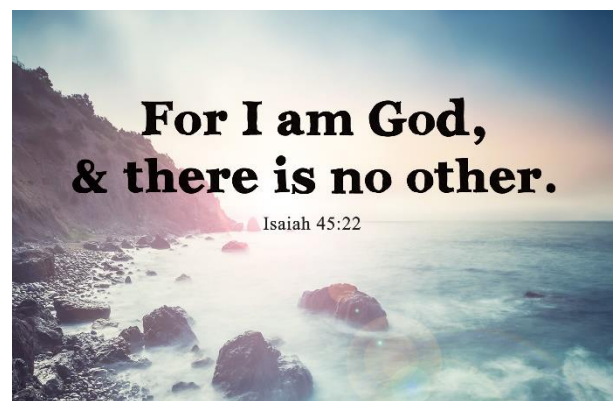
*In v.21, God puts and answers his own questions. But when was ‘a long time ago’ and ‘in the distant past’? If God is referring to Cyrus in verse 20, then God told these things to Isaiah in 700 B.C. But perhaps God is referring to ‘people who are escaping from idols’. Then it probably refers to the occasion when God spoke to Abraham, 2000 B.C. The important thing is this. God could say what would happen; idols could not.*

*V. 23 starts with the same Hebrew words that God said to Abraham in [Genesis 22:16](#). This shows that verse 21 may be about Abraham’s time. ‘Everybody’ will kneel in front of God [or worship], and ‘people’ will make promises. This means people in every country in the world, not just people in Israel.*

*Paul explains this in [Galatians 3:7](#). The Hebrew words for ‘has Israel as an ancestor’ are ‘seed of (or children of) Israel’. [Psalm 87](#) explains this. ‘Seed’ is an important Bible word. As plants grow from seed, so people are called the ‘seed’ of their ancestors.*

To you O Lord we bring our lives  
Troubled, broken or at ease  
A sacrificial offering  
For you to use  
Take away our selfishness  
And teach us to love as you loved  
Take away our sense of pride  
And show us the meaning of humility  
Take away our blindness  
And show us the world through your eyes  
Take away our greed  
And teach us how to give as you gave  
Show us your ways  
Teach us your paths  
That we might walk with you more closely

Our hand in your hand  
Our feet in your footsteps  
From the baby in a stable  
To eternity, **Amen**





# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew      St Thomas      St George

1. People, look east. The time is near  
Of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able,  
Trim the hearth and set the table.

People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the guest, is on the way.

2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,  
One more seed is planted there:

Give up your strength the seed to nourish,  
That in course the flower may flourish.

People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the rose, is on the way.

3. Birds, though you long have ceased to build,  
Guard the nest that must be filled.

Even the hour when wings are frozen  
God for fledging time has chosen.

People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the bird, is on the way.

4. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim  
One more light the bowl shall brim,

Shining beyond the frosty weather,  
Bright as sun and moon together.

People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the star, is on the way.

5. Angels, announce with shouts of mirth  
Christ who brings new life to earth.

Set every peak and valley humming  
With the word, the Lord is coming.

People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

**Words:** Eleanor Farjeon [1881 – 1965] included in her “Carols for Advent part 3” but is best known today as the author of “Morning has Broken.”

**Tune:** Besancon – a traditional French carol melody [you will have heard the choir sing it at St. Bartholomew’s.

## Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December

Genesis 49. 2, 8 – 10

**49** Then Jacob called all his sons to him. He said, “My sons, come here to me. I will tell you what will happen in the future.

**2** “Children of Jacob, gather around.  
Come listen to Israel, your father.

### Judah

**8** “Judah, your brothers will praise you.  
You will defeat your enemies.

Your brothers will bow down to you.

**9** Judah is like a young lion.

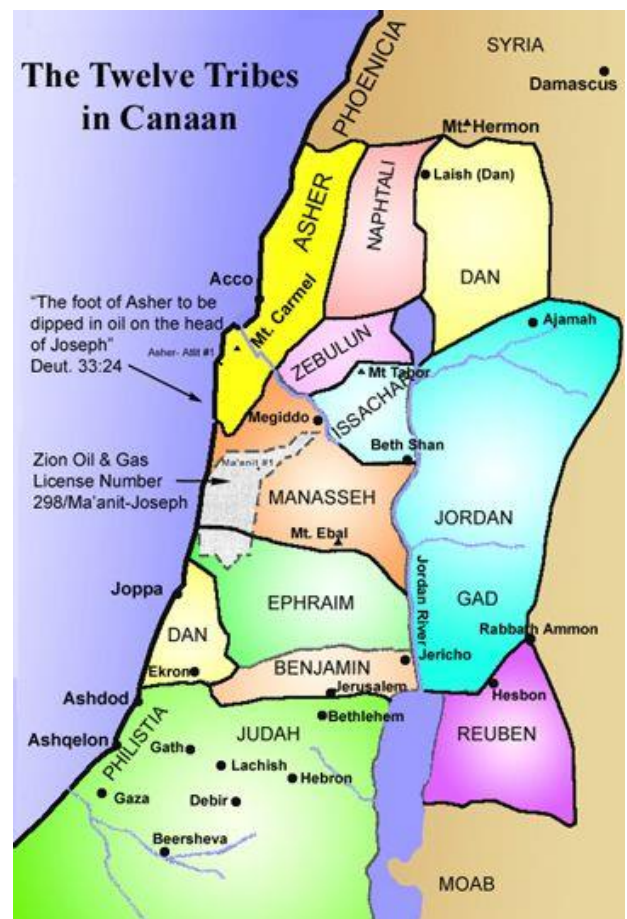
My son, you are like a lion standing over the animal it killed.

Like a lion, Judah lies down to rest,  
and no one is brave enough to disturb him.

**10** Men from Judah’s family will be kings.

The sign that his family rules  
will not leave his family before the real king comes.

Then many people will obey and serve him.





# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

## St Bartholomew      St Thomas      St George

*In this chapter of the book of Genesis, after Jacob blessed Joseph's sons, Jacob blessed his own sons. In fact, Jacob did not give a blessing to all 12 sons. Reuben, Simeon and Levi deserved no blessing because of their evil deeds. [If you know the musical, this is the Joseph of Technicolour Dreamcoat fame, his brothers and their father, Jacob].*

*But God still gave Jacob a prophecy about each son who all belonged to Jacob's family. All the sons received the benefit of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God would make the descendants of all the sons into a great nation. The descendants of each son would become a tribe in that nation and God would give them the country called Canaan.*

*God would use them to bless people from all the nations. Among them, Eve's special descendant ([Genesis 3:15](#)) would be born who would free people from sin. God's promises to Abraham were also promises to that descendant ([Galatians 3:16](#)) who would be the real king of Israel ([Genesis 49:10](#)). We know that these promises were referring to Jesus.*

*Now the hard bit! This is a very difficult chapter to translate as some phrases have many possible meanings and it's not always clear.*

*Verses 1-2 are a prophecy about the future as Jacob spoke the words that God had given him to say. Jacob often referred to past events as he spoke, using these events as a way to explain what would happen in the future. He also used the names of some sons in a special way. The meanings of their names also helped to explain future events.*

*These prophecies would not happen during the lives of Jacob's sons. Instead, the prophecies were about the descendants of Jacob's sons who became the 12 tribes of Israel. The descendants of each son became a tribe and the prophecies were about the regions that each tribe would receive in Canaan and the work that each tribe would do and the troubles it would face.*

*The tribe of Judah became a very large & important tribe. Even before there were kings in Israel, men from the tribe of Judah led Israel's army into battle ([Judges 20:18](#).)*

*Jacob said in his prophecy that the tribe of Judah would be like lions and overcome its enemies. In [v.10](#) Jacob was saying that the kings of Israel would come from Judah's descendants. David and Solomon came from the tribe of Judah and they were the greatest kings of Israel. Their descendants ruled as kings for many centuries but the other tribes did not remain loyal to David's family.*

*In the end, God's plan is that the 'real owner' will be king i.e. Jesus. He is David's descendant and belongs to the tribe of Judah ([Revelation 5:5](#)). God said that he would bless people from every nation by means of Abraham's special descendant ([Genesis 12:3](#)) who is Jesus ([Galatians 3:16](#)).*

*In this season of expectation*

*We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah*

*Into the bustle of our lives*

*and the hard to find moments of solitude*

*We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah*

*Into our homes and situations*

*along with friends and families*

*We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah*

*Into our hearts, and those often hidden parts of our lives*

*We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah*

*For beneath the surface of your story*

*is an inescapable fact*

*You entered this world*

*as vulnerable as any one of us*

*in order to nail that vulnerability to the cross.*

*Our fears, our insecurities and our sins*

*all that can separate us from God*

*exchanged by your Grace for Love.*

*We cannot comprehend the reasoning*

*only marvel that Salvation comes to us*

*through a baby born in a stable,*

*and reaches out to a world in need.*

*In this season of anticipation*

*We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah*



**JUDAH'S BLESSING #2 (10A-12)**

**THE SCEPTRE WILL NOT DEPART UNTIL  
HE COMES TO WHO IT BELONGS  
AND THE OBEDIENCE OF THE  
NATIONS SHALL BE HIS**



# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here,  
Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

2. O come, Thou wisdom from on high  
who madest all in earth and sky,  
Creating man from dust and clay:  
to us reveal salvation's way.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

3. O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell Thy people save,  
And give them victory o'er the grave.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

4. O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high,  
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

5. O come, Thou Key of David, come  
And open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

6. O come, Adonai, Lord of might,  
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,  
In ancient times didst give the law  
In cloud and majesty and awe.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

7. O come, desire of Nations, show  
Thy kingly reign on earth below;  
Thou corner-stone uniting all,  
restore the ruin of our fall.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

**Words & Music:** [see introductory page at start of pewsheet](#)

## Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December

Jeremiah 23. 5 – 8

### The Good "Branch"

<sup>5</sup> This message is from the LORD:

"The time is coming,  
when I will raise up a good 'branch' from  
David's family.

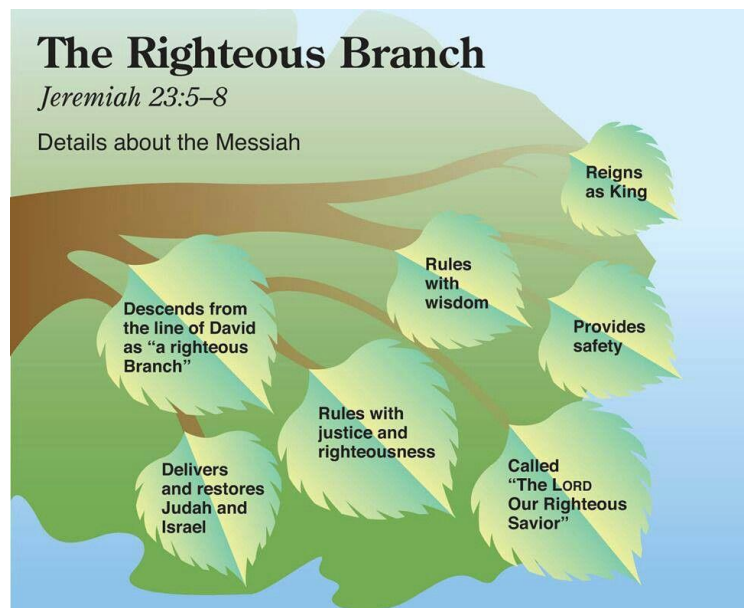
He will be a king who will rule in a wise way.

He will do what is fair and right in the land.

<sup>6</sup> When he rules, Judah will be saved,  
and Israel will live in safety.

This will be his name:

The LORD Makes Things Right for Us.





# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

<sup>7</sup> “So the time is coming,” says the LORD, “when people will not make a promise by saying, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, the one who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt ....’ <sup>8</sup> But people will say something new: ‘As surely as the LORD lives, the one who brought the Israelites out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had sent them ....’ Then the people of Israel will live in their own land.”

The LORD had promised a king to rule over them who would be like a branch. It would grow from the roots of a tree that had fallen down. Isaiah used a similar description (*Isaiah 11:1*). That new king would be fair and he would rule wisely. Like David, he would rule over Judah. 'The Branch' became the name for that ideal king for whom the people hoped (*Zechariah 3:6; 6:12*). *V 7-8* repeat *Jeremiah 16:14-15* and are a promise. In the past, the LORD had brought the Israelites out from Egypt. In the future he would bring them out from the north and from all the countries where they were in exile. That would unite the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel again. Ezekiel also prophesied that future unity. (*Ezekiel 37:19-22*).

So this reading is interpreted as referring to Jesus, the new king who would unite all people, coming from the town of David [as we sing in the carol “Once in Royal David’s City”].

*You gave your all to the world  
In the bleakness of that stable  
Love was born that day  
Pure love  
Undiluted  
Poured out for all  
Who call on Your name  
Such Grace  
Undeserved  
Deserves a response  
In the life that we lead  
Forgive our ingratitude  
After all you have done  
Draw us to your Word  
Give us a new song to sing  
That will resonate throughout this world  
And begin with us today. Amen*



1 The advent of our King  
our prayers must now employ,  
and we must hymns of welcome sing  
in strains of holy joy.

2 The everlasting Son  
incarnate deigns to be;  
himself a servant's form puts on,  
to set his servants free.

3 Daughter of Sion, rise  
to meet thy lowly King;  
nor let thy faithless heart despise  
the peace he comes to bring.

4 As judge, on clouds of light,  
he soon will come again,  
and his true members all unite  
with him in heaven to reign.

5 All glory to the Son  
who comes to set us free,  
with Father, Spirit, ever One,  
through all eternity.

**Words:** Charles Coffin, born at Buzaney (Ardennes) [1676 – 1749], principal of the college at Beauvais and rector of the University of Paris. He published in 1727 some, of his Latin poems, for which he was already noted, and in 1736 the bulk of his hymns appeared in the Paris Breviary of that year.

**Tune:** Usually Franconia [Blest are the Pure in heart] J B Konig of Frankfurt [1738]



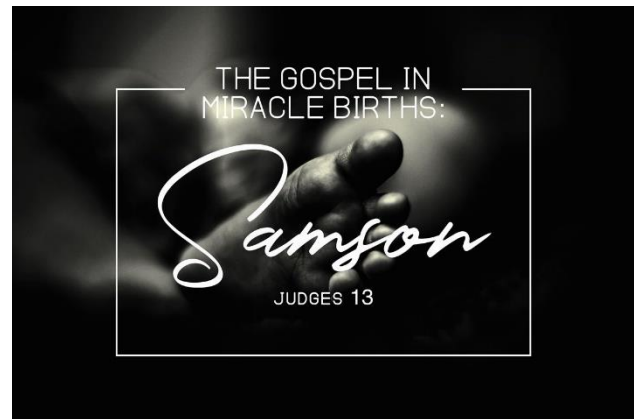
# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December



Judges 13. 2 – 7 & 24 – end

## The Birth of Samson

<sup>2</sup> There was a man named Manoah from the city of Zorah. He was from the tribe of Dan. Manoah had a wife, but she was not able to have any children. <sup>3</sup> The angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah's wife and said, "You have not been able to have children. But you will become pregnant and have a son. <sup>4</sup> Don't drink any wine or any other strong drink. Don't eat any food that is

unclean, <sup>5</sup> because you are pregnant, and you will have a son. He will be dedicated to God in a special way. He will be a Nazirite. So you must never cut his hair. He will be God's special person from before he is born. He will save the Israelites from the power of the Philistines."

<sup>6</sup> Then the woman went to her husband and told him what had happened. She said, "A man of God came to me. He looked like the angel of God. He frightened me. I didn't ask him where he was from, and he didn't tell me his name. <sup>7</sup> But he said to me, 'You are pregnant and will have a son. Don't drink any wine or other strong drink. Don't eat any food that is unclean, because the boy will be dedicated to God in a special way. The boy will be God's special person from before he is born until the day he dies.'"

<sup>24</sup> So the woman had a boy. She named him Samson. He grew and the LORD blessed him. <sup>25</sup> The Spirit of the LORD began to work in Samson while he was in the city of Mahaneh Dan. That city is between the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol.

*In total, there were 12 judges in the Old Testament book called [Judges](#) of which Samson was the last.*

*The story about him shows that matters had got much worse. People turned away from God, suffered the consequences but would not change their ways. The people of Judah's tribe chose to remove Samson, because otherwise they would spoil their good relations with the Philistines who were in reality ruling over them. They had forgotten about their covenant with God as his chosen people.*

*But God continued with his plans, even using Samson's selfish actions for his own purposes. Samson was not a leader with great skills, who worked together with God. He was an example of how God can use anyone to achieve what he has planned. The name Samson means 'sun'. Samson was born at Zorah opposite the town called Bethshemesh, which means 'house of the sun'. The Philistines made their home in the plain near the sea about 40 years after the Israelites entered the country. The Philistines lived in Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath. Before that time, Dan's tribe had lived near them but, because of the Philistines' power, many of them fled and went to live in the north ([chapter 18](#)) probably before the time when Samson was the judge. He began the fight against the Philistines which Samuel continued. There is a parallel in the stories about Samson and Samuel as both were born to a mother that could not have children [[1 Samuel chapter 1](#)]. Which is why we have this story in Advent – see the parallels with Zechariah and Elizabeth, parents of John the Baptist [[Luke, chapter 1](#)] and Jesus' birth; apologies for the long preamble, we do get to the point eventually.*

*An angel appeared to Samson's mother but neither she nor her husband understood who he really was until [v 20](#). Until then, they thought that he was 'a man of God' (a prophet). Samson was a Nazirite ([Numbers 6:1-21](#)) meaning that he made a special promise. There were many things that he could not do such as drink wine or strong drink, touch a dead body and nobody could cut his hair. Samson's mother had to obey some things in the promise - she could not eat or drink anything that God did not allow. But Samson obeyed only the rule that nobody should cut his hair and ignored all the rest.*

*In the Bible, when God promised to give a son, he promised this to the most unlikely people. It seemed impossible that they could have a child, so to have one was a miracle.*





# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

*Restore us, O Lord, we pray,  
bring us back to that place  
where we once met,  
as shepherds to the stable  
after hearing angels sing.  
Bring us back to that place*

*when our love was fresh,  
not embarrassed  
to express itself in praise  
to our heavenly King.  
Restore us, O Lord, we pray.*

I. "Sleepers, wake!" A voice astounds us,  
the shout of rampart-guards surrounds us:

"Awake, Jerusalem, arise!"

Midnight's peace their cry has broken,  
their urgent summons clearly spoken:

"The time has come, O maidens wise!

Rise up, and give us light;  
the Bridegroom is in sight.

Alleluia!

Your lamps prepare and hasten there,  
that you the wedding feast may share."

2. Zion hears the watchmen singing;  
her heart with joyful hope is springing,  
she wakes and hurries through the night.  
Forth he comes, her Bridegroom glorious  
in strength of grace, in truth victorious:  
her star is risen, her light grows bright.

Now come, most worthy Lord,  
God's Son, Incarnate Word,

Alleluia!

We follow all and heed your call  
to come into the banquet hall.

3. Lamb of God, the heavens adore you;  
let saints and angels sing before you,  
as harps and cymbals swell the sound.  
Twelve great pearls, the city's portals:  
through them we stream to join th' immortals  
as we with joy your throne surround.

No eye has known the sight,  
no ear heard such delight:

Alleluia!

Therefore we sing to greet our King;  
for ever let our praises ring.

**Words:** *Philipp Nicolai [1556-1608]*

**Tune:** *melody by Philipp Nicolai [1556-1608] adapted by J S Bach [1685-1750]. You'll know the tune when it appears at the carol service.*



# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew      St Thomas      St George

## NOTICES:

*As announced in our churches last week:*

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Revd Dr Malcolm Jamieson Wearing as Self Supporting Minister Associate Curate in the Blackrod, Daisy Hill, Westhoughton and Wingates Team Ministry. Malcolm is currently OLM Associate Curate at Farnworth, Kearsley and Stoneclough. The date of his institution will be Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021 at St James' Daisy Hill.

Malcolm is a Chartered Civil Engineer, and in his secular work runs a small consultancy business in Farnworth. He is married to Katie and they have a son Tom, who is at University in York. They live in Over Hulton. Malcolm is looking forward to the new challenges that will come with the move from OLM ministry to a ministry with shared incumbent responsibility for a church, and believes God is calling him to work with the enthusiastic team in Daisy Hill and with colleagues in the wider team of churches.



Please note that this doesn't affect the appointment of Andy Jones as Curate in the Team from July 2021. He will live at the Vicarage in Daisy Hill and will have particular responsibility for St. George's in his period of training with us.

### Primary School Application Form Signing:

As you will be aware, Church of England Voluntary Aided primary schools have particular admissions criteria which means that an extra form needs to be completed **in addition to** the Local Authority form on which your preferences are recorded. This extra form should have been supplied to you with the preference form. As we're trying not to have face-to-face meetings to do this [tier 3 restrictions] in order to make the process as straightforward as possible:

**If your usual place of worship would have been St Thomas' church [before lockdown]** please send an email to Angela [revawynne@gmail.com](mailto:revawynne@gmail.com) to arrange completion of the form.

**If your usual place of worship is St Bartholomew's or St George's** please email Carol at [carol.pharaoh@gmail.com](mailto:carol.pharaoh@gmail.com) to get the form completed.

Please contact them as soon as possible so we can get the forms completed well before the deadline.



Many thanks to Helen Kemp for sending us this picture of daughter Alice's Nativity Scene. You'll see that Mary and Joseph even have a map.



# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew      St Thomas      St George

## Church Attendance for School Places:

The Church of England has issued further advice on registering Church Attendance for admission to church schools.

Church attendance can now be recorded but we cannot do this in ways that would be unsafe, break social distancing rules or put anyone attending at risk of transmitting or catching Covid / coronavirus.

We have, therefore, suspended the forms that were signed at St. George's / St. Bartholomew's and the cards that were stamped at St. Thomas' churches. This is to avoid sharing pens, paper and crowding around tables for signing / stamping cards which all break distancing regulations.

**From Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December, if you do attend a service within the team or would have attended a service had restrictions not been in place** [i.e. you would have attended St. Thomas' church, a Café Church Service, an 8:00am service] or where you cannot attend due to limits placed on attendance, **please e-mail:**

[bdhww.churchattendance@gmail.com](mailto:bdhww.churchattendance@gmail.com)

giving both your name / your child or children's names and the church you would usually attend.

You will need to do this even if you attend a service and sign in as these sheets are for contact tracing purposes only and must be destroyed after 21 days.

Only one e-mail per week will be counted [even if you would have attended more than once in any week].

Please do NOT use any other e-mail address to register church attendance as these will not be included.

Do contact us if you have any questions.

Thank you.

## Christingle 2020

Although we're not able to run a Christingle Service as usual this year, we have set up a fundraising page so that you can donate to the Children's Society if you wish.

The fundraising page has an automatic donate feature included where donations will go directly to Westhoughton Parish Christingle this year, can be Gift Aid marked at the same time.

This is the link: <https://thyg.uk/CUS042122>





# PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

## From The PCC:

You may have seen that the Church of England is now allowing people to receive communion in two kinds [i.e. bread and wine]. When this was discussed at the PCC, we found that the way this could be put into practice was so complicated and introduced additional risks that we have agreed to continue to administer the bread only at present. As with everything at the moment, we'll review this following the latest advice as things change.

**School Governors:** we were delighted to re-appoint Elaine Simkin to the Governors at St. Bartholomew's school and elect Linda Gillett & Pauline Hann to the Governing body at St. George's school.

## Church of England – Christmas Campaign “Comfort and Joy”

Comfort  
and Joy



Christmas will be very different this year. Not only will attendance at church services be restricted in order to be Covid secure, but it is uncertain whether other national or local restrictions will also be in place. It

is unlikely there will be any congregational singing of the carols we love so much. In addition, as we know well, Christmas comes at the end of an exhausting year which has been exceptionally tough for so many of us.

And yet, never has Christmas been more important. More than ever, we need to hear the message of the angels, and to be reassured that God's light continues to shine in the midst of darkness. It is an encouragement that faithful Christians will wish to hear once more, and also a message of hope we can give as a gift to our wider communities.

### COMFORT AND JOY RESOURCES

Resources from the Church of England include a printed booklet containing daily reflections for use during Advent. Also a range of online services and events and an Advent activity calendar. Visit the [Church of England website](https://www.churchofengland.org.uk) for all the details.

### Next Sunday: The Fourth Sunday of Advent

**Readings: 2 Samuel 7. 1 – 11 & 16 / Romans 16. 25 - end / Luke 1. 26 - 38**

9:15am Holy Communion Service at St. George's  
11:00am A Christmas Sequence at St Bartholomew's  
Music & Readings for Christmas

Revd Carol Pharaoh  
Revd Carol Pharaoh

**Do contact us if we can offer any help or support at this time.**

Team Rector: Revd Carol Pharaoh 01942 859251 [carol.pharaoh@gmail.com](mailto:carol.pharaoh@gmail.com) [www.westhoughtonchurches.org.uk](http://www.westhoughtonchurches.org.uk)

Team Vicar: Revd Angela Wynne 01204 468150 – [revawynne@gmail.com](mailto:revawynne@gmail.com)

**FACEBOOK** – locate us by searching Westhoughton parish  
@Westhoughtontowerbellringers

Follow us on twitter @Wparishchurch

Material for the news sheet should be sent to Joan Warner by Wednesday morning 01942 818821 [joan.warner35@outlook.com](mailto:joan.warner35@outlook.com)

To receive these pewsheets, newsletters or special events leaflets electronically, please e-mail  
[westhoughtonparish@outlook.com](mailto:westhoughtonparish@outlook.com)