



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Sunday 20th December 2020 – The Fourth Sunday of Advent

TODAY'S SERVICES

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

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, Edna Marjorie Crook, Muriel Rose Yates, Brian Davidson

And on their anniversaries this week we remember: William Astley, Elizabeth Delafield, Elizabeth Hesketh, Jean Johnson, Doris Knowles, James Leyland, Edward Matthews, Leonard Morris, Ronald Rothwell, Vicky Taplin, William Towers, Clarice Truswell.

This week:

Welcome to our final Pewsheets Plus for Advent. In church today, we'll be lighting the fourth Advent Candle as we think of the Angel Gabriel telling Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus. We've a final selection of daily readings, prayers and hymns for Advent switching to the Christmas readings and carols with the notices at the end.



Today we have a Holy Communion Service at St. George's and A Sequence of Readings & Music for Christmas at St. Bartholomew's. 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.



Tomorrow: the Pretoria Pit 110th Anniversary will be marked at St. Bartholomew's church on Monday 21st December at 10:00am.

Christmas Services 2020:

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 27th December:

Joint Communion Service 11:00am St. Bartholomew's
[no service at St. George's / no on-line service that day].



From all our churches in the team, we hope that everyone finds some way to celebrate Christmas in a happy, healthy and peaceful way despite the many restrictions placed upon us at the moment.

... and do keep at least 2 metres from any sprouts.

While services and attendance at church is limited, these pewsheets and on-line services [this week a special Team Young people's Christmas 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



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The Collect:

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading : 2 Samuel 7. 1 - 11, 16

¹Now when David, the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' ³Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.' ⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' ⁸Now therefore you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you, David, that the Lord will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

New Testament Reading: Romans 16. 25 - end

²⁵To God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith – ²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

Gospel Reading:

Luke 1. 26 - 38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' ³⁴Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' ³⁵The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.' ³⁸Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.



The Post Communion Prayer:

Heavenly Father,
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of the promised saviour:
fill us your servants with your grace,
that in all things we may embrace your holy will
and with her rejoice in your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



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Homily – Elaine to add

Lord... Give us grace not only to hear your words with our ears, but receive it into our hearts, and show it in our lives. Amen.....

My brief today was to do a child friendly homily...well I hope all you adults out there are still young enough to enjoy a childrens homily...so let me start with a question

Have you ever been chosen? A special person to do a special job?

How many times have you been the chosen one? Maybe you were chosen to sing a solo in the school concert...or been the one chosen to read in front of many people, or the one chosen to represent your school at sport or whatever else....

I clearly remember being chosen to play King Herod in the school nativity when I was six years old...I felt really important...but very scared...I was excited and very honoured.

Well today's bible reading is just about this very subject...Being a chosen one...

' the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.' (Luke 1:30-31)

Mary was the chosen one...Wow, what a privilege, what an honour, what a shock... Imagine how Mary felt... being the chosen one to have GODS BABY... she was not married but only engaged to Joseph...how would he react...what a massive shock, what a surprise...how can this be...surely there must be a better person for this job...I think Mary must have questioned the Angel... Why...Why...Why me, she must have felt disbelief, maybe anger, worry, but also some excitement, and greatly honoured that God had chosen her.

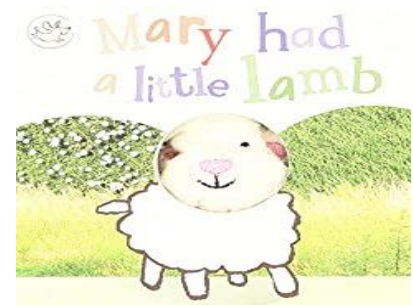
In our Bible reading today, we read about the Angel who appeared to Mary and told her that she would have a child and that she would name him Jesus. The Angel also appeared to Joseph to reassure him that the baby was Gods.

Jesus is often called "The Lamb of God," and since Jesus' mother was named Mary, it always reminds me of the nursery rhyme... 'Mary had a little lamb'...do you remember it...

Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow.
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.

Well recently a lovely lady has re written a new poem called "Mary Had a Little Lamb." It may never be as popular as the original poem, but it might help us to remember the true meaning of Christmas.

Let me read it to you:





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Mary had a little Lamb,
He was born on Christmas day.
She laid him in a manger bed
To Sleep upon the hay.

Angels filled the night-time sky
And they began to sing.
Shepherds heard them all proclaim
The birth of our new King.

Wise men saw a blazing star
Up in the sky that night.
They followed it until they found
The King of love and light.

Mary had a little Lamb,
But he wasn't just hers, you know,
He was the very Son of God,
The One who loves us so.

The Father of this little Lamb
Loved the world so much
That He sent his only Son to earth
So we could feel His touch.

He came to give us joy and peace
And take away our sin.
So when He knocks on your heart's door,
Be sure to let Him in.

How lovely is that.... Make sure you always let Jesus
into your heart...

So let us pray, hands together,

Dear Lord... with just five more sleeps to go before we celebrate the birth of your Son Jesus...help us to remember the greatest gift we will receive this Christmas is the gift of Jesus into our lives, to forgive our sins, to show us the light, to guide our footsteps, to show us how to love.

Thank you Lord for sending your Son...Help us to always remember the true meaning of Christmas, Amen.



The Church of England has launched its [annual Christmas film](#), with a message of Comfort and Joy after a year like no other.



The Diocese of Manchester's Carol Service/ Advent 4 reflection from Bishop Mark Ashcroft is now available to view on [YouTube](#).



A series of 'guest preacher' sermons from our senior clergy, to support your online services at this busy time.



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Intercessions:

God of all hope and joy, open our hearts in welcome, that your son Jesus Christ at his coming may find in us a dwelling prepared for him.

*Lord, grant us to share in the divine mystery of Christ's coming: **in your mercy, hear our prayer.***

Lord, as we once again prepare for Christmas, help us to make time in all our busyness for quiet prayer and contemplation; that we may reflect upon the wonder of your love and allow the reality of the Saviour's birth to permeate our hearts and minds and souls. So may our joy be deeper, our worship more real and our lives worthier of Christ's incarnation and sacrifice.

*Lord, grant us to share in the divine mystery of Christ's coming: **in your mercy, hear our prayer.***

Lord, look with loving kindness upon your Church. As we struggle to be a body worthy of Christ's name, we ask you to help us heal our divisions by focussing on the great panorama of the coming of the Kingdom rather than the minute details of the route we may take.

*Lord, grant us to share in the divine mystery of Christ's coming: **in your mercy, hear our prayer.***

Lord, we rejoice in the love of our homes. We pray for all who have enriched our lives by their goodness, all who have accepted us and cared for us. We pray for all who are separated from those that they love, either by physical or emotional distance. We pray for all who are alone, that they may not feel lonely.

*Lord, grant us to share in the divine mystery of Christ's coming: **in your mercy, hear our prayer.***

Lord, we pray for all who are hungry for acceptance, who are hungry for love, all who long to be needed. We remember all who are ill at this time, and those who are anxious for them.

*Lord, grant us to share in the divine mystery of Christ's coming: **in your mercy, hear our prayer.***

Lord, you came to earth that in your power and love we might ascend into heaven; bless those whom we love that have departed this life with the gift of life and love eternal.

*Lord, grant us to share in the divine mystery of Christ's coming: **in your mercy, hear our prayer.***

Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation;

*Lord, grant us to share in the divine mystery of Christ's coming: **in your mercy, hear our prayer.***

1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
With wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

2 "For known a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honour thee.
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold.
"Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head.
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify His holy name."
Most highly favoured lady. Gloria!

4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn.
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever
say:
"Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

Words: from a Basque carol adapted by Revd Sabine Baring-Gould and first published in 1922, although not making into hymn books until 1971

Tune: Gabriel's Message in an arrangement by Edgar Pettman [1865 – 1943] organist of St. James' church Piccadilly and a prolific carol tune writer.



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Background: Nine Lessons and Carols

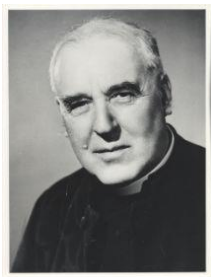
When one thinks of the Traditional Nine Lessons and Carol Services services in big churches or cathedrals, particularly that broadcast from King's College Cambridge, it's often easy to forget that this tradition is only a little over 100 years old and, in a proper Nativity story way, began in a shed albeit in Cornwall.

Up to the late 19th century, the singing of Christmas carols was normally performed by singers visiting people's houses, and carols — generally considered to be non-Christian — had been excluded from church services. In the Victorian era, the rising popularity of hymnody encouraged church musicians to introduce carols into worship. An 1875 book of carols, *Carols for Use in Church During Christmas and Epiphany* by Richard Chope and Sabine Baring-Gould, was an influential publication. At around this time, the composer and organist John Stainer was compiling a collection, *Christmas Carols New and Old*, and during Christmas 1878 he introduced carols into the service of Choral Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral in London and other cathedrals also began to adopt carols at Christmastide that year.

Two years later, the Right Rev. Edward White Benson [pictured], at that time Bishop of Truro, conducted the first formal service of "Nine Lessons and Carols" on Christmas Eve 1880. Benson, concerned at the excessive consumption of alcohol in Cornish pubs during the festive season, sought a means of attracting revellers out of the pubs and into church by offering a religious celebration of Christmas. The idea for a service consisting of Christmas music interspersed with Bible readings was proposed by the succentor of the cathedral, the Rev. George Walpole (who later became Bishop of Edinburgh). The cathedral — a Victorian gothic building — was still under construction, and services were being held in a temporary, large wooden shed which served as a pro-cathedral. The first Nine Lessons and Carols service took place there at 10:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve and was attended by over 400 people.



Bishop Benson was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1883, and the Nine Lessons service began to gain in popularity across the Church of England.



Notably in 1918, the Rev. Eric Milner-White the new Dean of King's College, Cambridge, introduced the service to the college chapel, taking advantage of the established choral tradition of the Choir of King's College, Cambridge. During World War I Eric Milner-White, had served as army chaplain in the 7th Infantry Division and he was concerned that the distress of the "Great War" had hardened attitudes against religion. Taking advantage of the established choral tradition there, he introduced Benson's carol service to King's as a means of attracting people back to Christian worship. It proved very successful, and began an annual tradition.



In 1919, Milner-White made some changes to Benson's original format, notably introducing the tradition of opening the service with a solo treble singing "Once in Royal David's City". This was then followed by a bidding prayer penned by Milner-White himself, and re-ordering the lessons.

The BBC began to broadcast the service on radio from

1928 [except 1930] and a different version on television from 1954.





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Monday 21st December

Zephaniah 3. 14 – 18

A Happy Song

¹⁴ Jerusalem, sing and be happy!
Israel, shout for joy!

Jerusalem, be happy and have fun!

¹⁵ The Lord stopped your punishment.

He destroyed your enemies' strong towers.

King of Israel, the Lord is with you.

You don't need to worry about anything bad
happening.

¹⁶ At that time Jerusalem will be told,

"Be strong, don't be afraid!

¹⁷ The Lord your God is with you.

He is like a powerful soldier.



He will save you.

He will show how much he loves you
and how happy he is with you.

He will laugh and be happy about you,

¹⁸ like people at a party.

I will take away your shame.

I will make them stop hurting you

You'll need to cast your minds back to the end of last week when we started to look at Zephaniah which, you may remember, is three chapters of utter misery with a happy ending – so here's the happy part. The LORD has defeated the enemies of Israel. God's people will not be ashamed any longer. They will be famous and people will say good things about them. The LORD will give them back all the good things that they lost in the exile. This will please God and it will be like a big party.

So why do we get this reading now? It's because people ask, 'When did, or when will, all this happen?' Maybe there are two answers:

- it happened when the Jews came back from exile in Babylon, in 536 BC.

- it will happen again when Jesus returns to earth, one of the themes of Advent.

1 Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly
crown,

When Thou camest to earth for me;

But in Bethlehem's home was there found no
room

For Thy holy nativity.

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,

There is room in my heart for Thee.

2 Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang,
Proclaiming Thy royal degree;

But of lowly birth didst Thou come to earth,
And in great humility.

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,

There is room in my heart for Thee.

3 The foxes found rest, and the birds their nest
In the shade of the forest tree;

But Thy couch was the sod, O Thou Son of God,
In the deserts of Galilee.

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,

There is room in my heart for Thee.

4 Thou camest, O Lord, with the living word
That should set Thy people free;

But with mocking scorn, and with crown of
thorn,

They bore Thee to Calvary.

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,

There is room in my heart for Thee.

5 When the heavens shall ring, and the angels sing,
At Thy coming to victory,
Let Thy voice call me home, saying "Yet there is room,
There is room at My side for thee."
My heart shall rejoice, Lord Jesus,
When Thou comest and callest for me.



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Words: *Emily Elliott [1836-97] written for the choir of St. Mark's church, Brighton, where her father was the rector.*

Tune: *Margaret by Revd Timothy Matthews [1826 – 1910] first published in 1876*

*My soul magnifies the Lord!
All is ready
Stable prepared
Shepherds working
Magi journeying
Gifts are chosen
My soul magnifies the Lord!
A city awaits
Crowded and bustling
Stars are shining*

*People expecting
A drama unfolding
My soul magnifies the Lord!
The Lord is coming
To save his people
Mary's obedience
Jesus' willingness
Your gracious gift to us
My soul magnifies the Lord!*

Tuesday 22nd December

1 Samuel 1. 24 – end

Hannah Takes Samuel to Eli at Shiloh

²⁴ When the boy was old enough to eat solid food, Hannah took him to the LORD's house at Shiloh. She also took a bull that was three years old, 20 pounds of flour, and a bottle of wine.

²⁵ They went before the Lord. Elkanah killed the bull as a sacrifice to the Lord as he usually did. Then Hannah gave the boy to Eli. ²⁶ She said to him, "Pardon me, sir. I am the same woman who stood near you praying to the LORD. I promise that I am telling the truth. ²⁷ I prayed for this child, and the LORD answered my prayer. He gave me this child. ²⁸ And now I give this child to the LORD. He will serve the LORD all his life."

Then Hannah left the boy there and worshipped the LORD.



As we think of God sending his Son to earth born of Mary, here's another story of a mother [Hannah] and her son [Samuel]. Hannah did not expect to have children [see similar stories last week] and dedicated him to God when he was born.

Samuel was still young when Hannah took him to Shiloh to keep her promise to God. She did not try to delay it for a long time. [Leviticus 1-7](#) describes the sacrifices and gifts that people had to give to God. The chief priest of the Temple, Eli, may not have remembered Hannah, so she explained why she was giving her young son to the service of God.



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1. When God Almighty came to be one of us,
Masking the glory of his golden train,
Dozens of plain things kindled by accident,
And they will never be the same again.
Sing all you midwives, dance all the carpenters,
Sing all the publicans and shepherds too,
God in his mercy uses the commonplace
God on his birthday had a need of you.

2. Splendour of Rome and Local Authority,
Working on policy with furrowed head,
Joined to locate Messiah's nativity,
Just where the prophets had already said.
Sing all you tax-men, dance the Commissioners,
Sing civil servants and policemen too,
God to his purpose uses the governments,
God on his birthday had a need of you.

3. Wise men, they called them, earnest
astrologers,
Watching for meaning in the moving stars,
Science or fancy, learned or laughable,
Theirs was a vision that was brought to pass.
Sing all you wise men, dance all the scientists,
Whether your theories are false or true,
God uses knowledge, God uses ignorance,
God on his birthday had a need of you.

4. Sing, all creation, made for his purposes,
Called by his providence to live and move:
None is unwanted, none insignificant,
Love needs a universe of folk to love,
Old men and women, youngsters and children,
On every continent, the whole world through,
God on his birthday, and to eternity,
Took upon himself the need of you.

This is pure self-indulgence. It's very much a hymn of its era [1960 – 70s] but does it does portray the nativity in a way that no other hymn does. The only hymn book I have with it in is the ecumenical Australian "With One Voice" book.

Words: *Revd Michael Hewlett [1916 – 2000] for many years a vicar in the Diocese of Exeter and author of about 70 hymns.*

Tune: *There is a tune, but I guess I'm the only person in the world who knows it. You can sing it "The Keel Row" if you know your folk music or "Waltzing Matilda" – whether Australians would allow such a sacred tune to be used with a hymn ...?*

What was it
in that natal star
pre-eminent in the night-time sky
that stirred the hearts
and imaginations
of those magi from the east
was it colour
brightness
conjunction
or more
a still small voice
whispering
in the darkness of the world
'This is the sign
that will proceed the birth
of he who fulfils the prophets' words.'
That still small voice
which whispers still
to our conscience
and soul
still leads
if we will but follow
to the stable door





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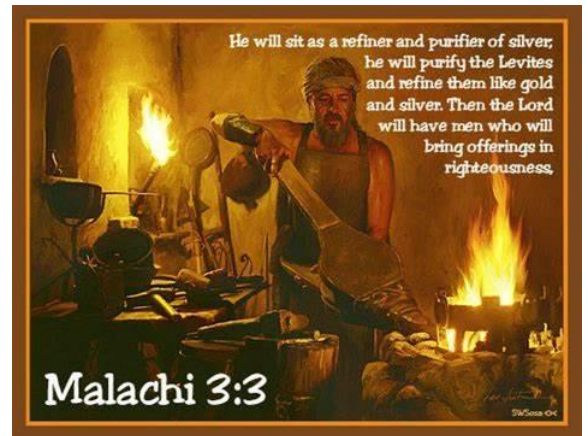
Wednesday 23rd December

Malachi 3. 1 – 4 & 4. 5- end

3 The LORD All-Powerful says, “I am sending my messenger to prepare the way for me. Then suddenly, the Lord you are looking for will come to his temple. Yes, the messenger you are waiting for, the one who will tell about my agreement, is really coming!

2 “No one can prepare for that time or stand against him when he comes. He will be like a burning fire. He will be like the strong soap people use to make things clean. **3** He will make the Levites clean. He will make them pure, like silver is made pure with fire! He will make them pure like gold and silver. Then they will bring gifts to the LORD, and they will do things the right way. **4** Then the LORD will accept the gifts from Judah and Jerusalem. It will be as it was in the past—as the time long ago.

4⁵ “Look, I will send Elijah the prophet to you. He will come before that great and terrible time of judgment from the LORD. **6** Elijah will help the parents become close to their children, and he will help the children become close to their parents. This must happen, or I will come and completely destroy your country.”



So, on the day before Christmas Eve, we have a reading from the final book of the Old Testament. As we turn over the page into the New Testament with the birth of Jesus, we're spanning a gap of about 400 years. It's thought that Malachi prophesied after Haggai and Zechariah in about 420BC.

At the time the Israelites were saying that there is no God! **Zechariah 8:3** made promises about 50 years before, but nothing seems to have changed. **Malachi 3:1** says that **something will happen!**

'Malachi' is a Hebrew word that means 'my messenger', or 'a person who brings my message'. It probably means anybody who helps to 'prepare the way of the LORD' (**Isaiah 40:3**). Mark used these verses to describe John the Baptist (**Mark 1:2-4**).

When the preparations are complete, the Lord will suddenly come to his temple and it will not be pleasant for those using it improperly. In **John 2:12-17**, Jesus cleared out the temple because the people's behaviour was unholy. So perhaps 'the person that you desire' is irony – what the people are saying they want is the opposite of what they want to happen.

The Hebrew word 'malachi' can also mean 'my angel' and some theologians think that 'malachi of the covenant' is the angel in **Exodus 3:2** and **Isaiah 63:9**. This angel helped to make the covenant. Others think it is Jesus as, when he came, **Ezekiel 43:1-5**; **Haggai 2:7** and **Zechariah 2:10** all became true.

In **v.2**, Malachi tells of how the Lord will clean up the Temple and its worship. The dirt that a refiner burned away included metals like tin and lead but pure silver and gold remained will all impurities removed. The Levites were the tribe (large family) that worked in the temple as priests or helpers. They lived in 48 towns all round Judah (the south part of the country) and Israel (the north part). Once the LORD has purified the priests, then the people will also offer to God gifts that please him as in days of old.

In **chapter 4**, God says that Elijah will come to warn people that the day of the LORD is near. **Joel 2:31** also calls it 'a great and terrible day'. Elijah's job will be to change people's attitudes so people can obey God's commands. They will prepare their lives for God's work among them. But God will punish those who do not obey him.

Luke repeated **Malachi 4:6** in **Luke 1:17**. This links John the Baptist with Elijah. Jesus did the same thing in **Matthew 11:10-15** where he repeats **Malachi 3:1** in these verses.



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1. The people that in darkness sat
A glorious light have seen;
The light has shined on them who long
In shades of death have been.

2. To hail Thee, Sun of Righteousness,
The gathering nations come;
They joy as when the reapers bear
Their harvest treasures home.

3. For unto us a child is born,
To us a Son is given,
And on His shoulder ever rests
All power in earth and heaven.

4. His name shall be the Prince of Peace,
The Everlasting Lord,
The Wonderful, the Counsellor.
The God by all adored.

5. His righteous government and power
Shall over all extend;
On judgment and on justice based,
His reign shall have no end.

6. Lord Jesus, reign in us, we pray,
And make us Thine alone,
Who with the Father ever art
And Holy Spirit, one.

Words: *Revd John Morison, a Church of Scotland minister paraphrasing Isaiah 9. 2 – 8. No-one's very keen on the original these days and many variants exist in every different hymn book.*

Tune: *Dundee – a traditional Scottish metrical psalm tune.*

*Gracious God, you have done so much for us
And we so little in return
You ask for humility
And we are often a proud people
You ask for willingness
And we are often a stubborn people
You ask for repentance
And we are often a deaf people
You ask for service
And we are often a busy people
Gracious God, you want the best for us
Teach us obedience
Grant us forgiveness
That we, like Mary
Might be your willing servants. Amen.*

*From the very beginning was
Your Word
Which spoke this world into being
Your Word
Which thunders from the skies
Your Word
Which flows like mountain streams
Your Word
Which whispers in morning breeze
Your Word*

*Revealed through kings and prophets
Your Word
Revealed through Angels' praise
Your Word
Revealed in humble service
Your Word
Revealed through a tiny child
Your Word
Alive from the beginning of all things
And to eternity.*

Malachi 3:1, 4:5 A bridge from the Old to
the New Testament



**The Kingdom of God is at hand....
The Messiah is here. Prophecy is fulfilled**



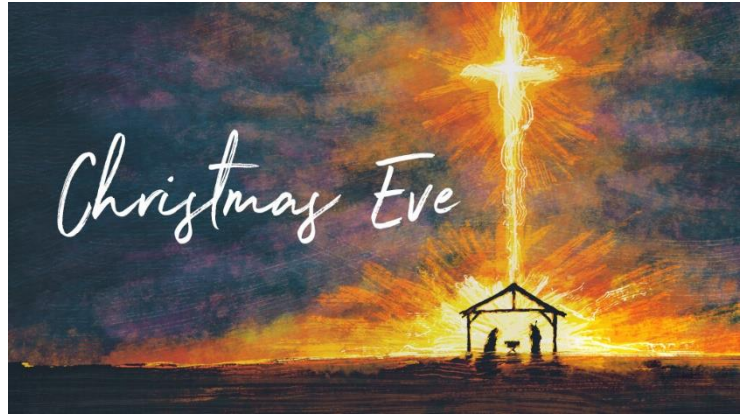
PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Thursday 24th December Christmas Eve

Collect:

Eternal God,
who made this most holy night
to shine with the brightness of your one true
light:
bring us, who have known the revelation of that
light on earth,
to see the radiance of your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.



Isaiah 9. 2, 6 - 7

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness –
on them light has shined.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

John 1. 1 – 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word
was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in
the beginning with God. ³All things came into
being through him, and without him not one
thing came into being. What has come into being
⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all
people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the
darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man
sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came
as a witness to testify to the light, so that all
might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not

Hebrews 4. 1 – 4

¹Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many
and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these
last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he
appointed heir of all things, through whom he
also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of
God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very
being, and he sustains all things by his powerful
word. When he had made purification for sins, he
sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on
high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels
as the name he has inherited is more excellent
than theirs.

the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The
true light, which enlightens everyone, was
coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and
the world came into being through him; yet the
world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was
his own, and his own people did not accept him.
¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his
name, he gave power to become children of God,
¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of
the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And
the Word became flesh and lived among us, and
we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's
only son, full of grace and truth.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

1. Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her Baby
In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little Child.

2. He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

3. And through all His wondrous childhood
He would honour and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden,
In whose gentle arms He lay:
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as He.

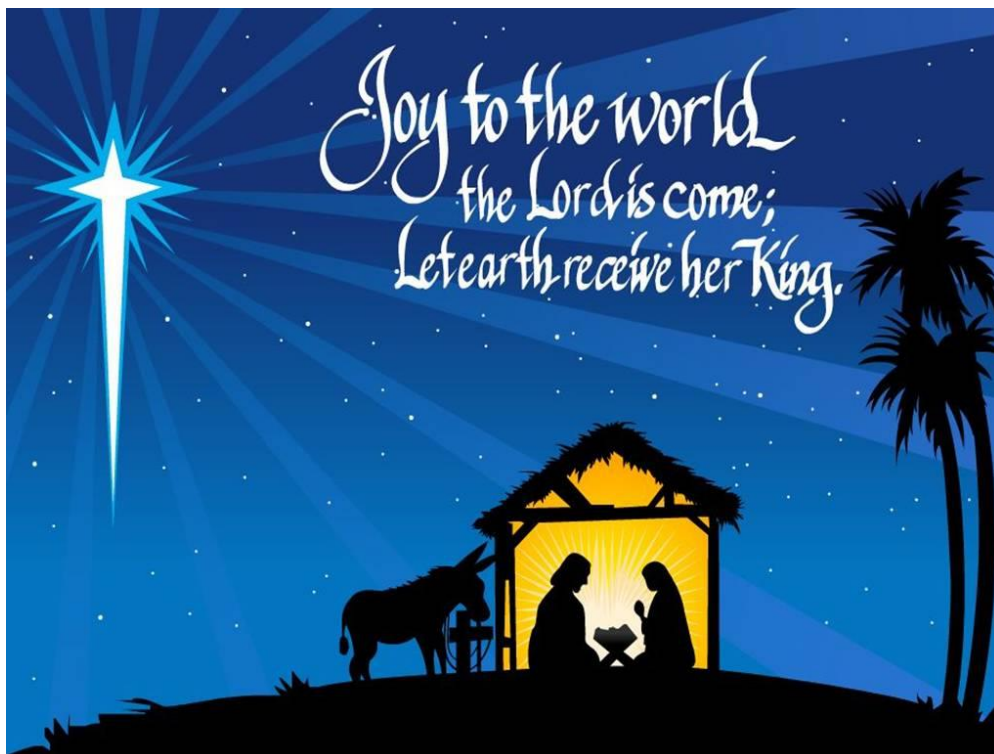
4. For he is our childhood's pattern;
Day by day, like us He grew;
He was little, weak and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feeleth for our sadness,
And He shareth in our gladness.

5. And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven above,
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.

6. Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see Him; but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high;
Where like stars His children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

Words Mrs C F Alexander [1818 – 1895] one of the 14 hymns she wrote to explain the different sections of the Apostles' Creed and first published in 1848.

Music: Irby by Henry Gauntlett [1805 – 76] who abandoned law at the age of 40 for a career in music. The tune dates from 1849.





PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Friday 25th December
Christmas Day

Collect:

*Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder
at heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise
as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God.*

Titus 2. 11 - 14

¹¹The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Luke 2. 1 – 20

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴'Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.



There is a Diocese of Manchester Christmas Day Reflection now available to view on Youtube, link below:

[Christmas Day reflection from Archdeacon Karen Lund](#)



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him
Born the King of Angels
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!

2. God of God, Light of Light
Lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb
Very God
Begotten, not created
O come, let us adore Him ...

3. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
All glory in the highest
O come, let us adore Him ...

4. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy
morning
Jesus, to Thee be glory given
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing
O come, let us adore Him ...

Words: *there are about 40 translations of the Latin Hymn "Adeste Fidelis" with the most used one today based on that of Frederick Oakley [1802 – 80].*

Tune: *John F Wade [1711 – 86]. The earliest known copies of the tune all bear his signature but whether he wrote it or copied it from someone else is still much debated – it appears in both French comic operas and in the Portugese Embassy chapel.*

Saturday 26th December Feast of St Stephen

St. Stephen, (died 36 AD, Jerusalem; feast day December 26)

1. The name Stephen is Greek. Chapter 6 of Acts of the Apostles tells us that he was a Hellenist (a foreign-born Jew who spoke Greek) who lived in Jerusalem and had become a Christian.

2. Saint Stephen was one of the first ordained deacons of the Church and also the first Christian martyr. The Greek word from which we derive the English word martyr literally means witness.

3. His behaviour, even forgiving those who were taking his life while he was being stoned to death, was a reflection of his faith. It is recorded in Chapter 7 of the Acts of the Apostles ([Acts 7:54-60](#)), which immediately follows the Gospels in the New Testament.

4. The 6th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles contains an account of the choice of the first seven deacons of the Church. As the Apostles worked to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ as his elders, some of the Greek-speaking widows were being neglected in their practical needs. The Twelve decided to ordain seven deacons to oversee their care. In doing so, the deacons extended the pastoral care of the Apostles, the first Bishops of the early Church, enabling them to attend more to teaching.

5. Of the seven ordained, Stephen was the oldest and given the title of "archdeacon," the chief among them. Little is known about him before this account.





PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

6. Great preaching and miracles were attributed to Stephen. The Bible records that Stephen "full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people." Stephen's popularity created enemies among some Jews. They debated with him, to generate evidence for their persecution of the early Church.

7. They accused him of blasphemy, of speaking against God and Moses. The charges inflamed the local populace which demanded he be tried and punished. When Stephen was put on trial, several false witnesses were brought forward by the Sanhedrin to testify that he was guilty of blasphemy. He was charged with predicting that Jesus would destroy the Temple and for preaching against Mosaic law.

8. Stephen was filled with wisdom from heaven. He responded by detailing the history of Israel and outlining the blessings God had bestowed upon his chosen people. He also explained how disobedient Israel had become, despite the goodness and mercy of the Lord. Stephen explained that Jesus had come to fulfil the law of Moses, not destroy it. He quoted extensively from the Hebrew scriptures to prove his case. Finally, he admonished the Sanhedrin ([Acts 7:51-53](#)).

9. As Stephen concluded his defence, he looked up and saw a vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He said, "Look, I can see heaven thrown open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." That vision was taken as the final proof of blasphemy to the Jews who did not believe Jesus was the Messiah or Son of God. For them, Jesus could not possibly be beside the Father in Heaven. The crowd rushed upon Stephen and carried him outside of the city to stone him to death.

10. As Stephen was being brutally stoned, he spoke his last words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Lord, do not hold this sin against them." Words which echoed the very words of Jesus on the Cross. Following those words, Stephen died.

Watching the trial and execution was a Rabbi named Saul of Tarsus, a virulent persecutor of the early Church. Shortly thereafter, he would himself encounter the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus and be dramatically converted. His encounter is recorded in the 9th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. He took the name Paul as a sign of his new life in Jesus Christ and went on to become the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Collect:

*Gracious Father,
who gave the first martyr Stephen
grace to pray for those who took up stones against him:
grant that in all our sufferings for the truth
we may learn to love even our enemies
and to seek forgiveness for those who desire our hurt,
looking up to heaven to him who was crucified for us,
Jesus Christ, our mediator and advocate,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

Acts 7. 51 – 60

Stephen said to the high priest and the council: ⁵¹ 'You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are for ever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. ⁵³ You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.'



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

⁵⁴ When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. ⁵⁵ Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ 'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' ⁵⁷ But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸ Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' ⁶⁰ Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died.

Matthew 10. 17 – 22

Jesus summoned the twelve and sent them out with the following instruction: ¹⁷'Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; ¹⁸and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; ²⁰for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; ²²and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

1. Good King Wenceslas looked out,
on the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about,
deep and crisp and even;
Brightly shone the moon that night,
tho' the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
gath'ring winter fuel.

2. "Hither, page, and stand by me,
if thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence,
underneath the mountain;
Right against the forest fence,
by Saint Agnes' fountain."

3. "Bring me flesh, and bring me wine,
bring me pine logs hither:
Thou and I will see him dine,
when we bear them thither."
Page and monarch, forth they went,
forth they went together;
Through the rude wind's wild lament
and the bitter weather.

4. "Sire, the night is darker now,
and the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how;
I can go no longer."
"Mark my footsteps, good my page.
Tread thou in them boldly
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
freeze thy blood less coldly."

5. In his master's steps he trod,
where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod
which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,
wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor,
shall yourselves find blessing.

Nothing to do with St. Stephen but the only carol to reference him. The 1928 "Oxford Book of Carols" hated it, describing it as doggerel and hoped it would pass into disuse.

Words: John Mason Neale based on a legend of Duke [not King] Vaclav of 10th century Bohemia.

Tune: From the Finnish tune book *Piae Cantiones* of 1582 set to a carol celebrating the arrival of Spring.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

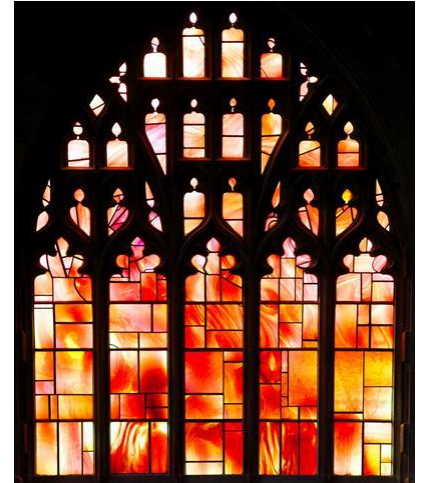
St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

NOTICES:

Midnight Mass from Manchester Cathedral

BBC Radio 4's midnight mass broadcast will come live from Manchester Cathedral on 24 December, 11.30pm-12.45am

Carols and anthems include the seasonal favourite by Harold Darke - In the Bleak Midwinter - and the service is sung to Mozart's Missa Brevis in F K192.



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>



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 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 to get the form completed.

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



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Church Attendance for School Places:

Advice for parents with children of school age.

There is new guidance in place and we are now asked to monitor attendance (or your 'intention' to attend church) for school admission purposes. Sadly, we can't fit everyone into our churches at the moment, St Thomas' Church is still closed and we have fewer services than normal. We also know some of you have concerns about coming back to church. So, we are not monitoring attendance or 'intention' using the usual signing in methods. Instead, if you come to church or would 'intend' to come if it wasn't for COVID-19 restrictions or concerns, **please email us each week** on the following dedicated email address. bdhww.churchattendance@gmail.com

Please give both your name / your child or children's names and the church you would usually attend. Please do NOT use any other email address to register church attendance as these will not be included.

Even if you attend and sign in you will still need to register using the e-mail above [the signing-in sheets are for Test and Trace only and must be destroyed after 21 days].

If, when restrictions ease, we decide on another method of recording church attendance, we will publish details of the new process.

Do contact us if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Christmas Cards:

We have a number of Christmas Cards left at St. Bartholomew's church for people who, for one reason or another, no longer attend church. We'll leave them on the welcome / signing in table this Sunday. Please either take them away or stick a stamp on them and we'll address and post them. Thanks.

Thank you:

Well, it's been an interesting year to say the least and all of what's happened over the last 12 months just couldn't have been predicted in January. Despite two lockdowns, the extra measures placed on Bolton, tier 3 restrictions and the rest we're still here. This could not have happened without a lot of people's time, dedication, resourcefulness and inventiveness, coping with whatever comes our way, and we pay a special Christmas "thank you" to them all:

- **Joan Warner** for preparing the pewsheets each week with all the collects, readings, anniversaries etc. that makes it so easy just to add the final touches.
- **Neil Belch** who updates the website each week with whatever gets thrown at him
- **George Twist and team** for once again sorting out our church Christmas Tree
- **Margaret Dolphin & Christine Andrews** as wardens at St. Bartholomew's for being on hand to open and lock up, organise rotas, staff the Sunday mornings, make sure that all the maintenance happens [and it still has to even when the building is shut] and way more...
- **Pat James, Sarah Barry, John & Helen Thompson, John & Hilary Moore** who keep St. George's worshipping each Sunday
- **All our teams of cleaners** without whom we wouldn't be able to open the doors at all
- **All who contribute to our worship** whether by leading intercessions or reading the bible lessons



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

- **All who have started and continue to run our online services** and who thought we'd be doing any of those 12 months ago?
- **St. Bartholomew's choir** who have returned to singing as if we've never been away [and let's hope congregational singing will be allowed soon]
 - **All serving on our committees** the decisions still need to be made, and all who are keeping our finances in good order, especially to all those who have given so generously this year despite all the problems
 - **All whose groups are currently suspended** particularly Sunday schools, Café Churches, midweek services, flower arranging, bell ringers - again hoping and praying that we'll be able to progress with these soon
 - **Sixsmith & Son Organbuilders** who have come off furlough to tune the organ at St. Bart's this week [I have no excuse now, the wrong notes are all mine rather than the tuning]
 - **Suzanne Walker from St. John's** who has taken on the Prayer Diary and produces "Our Daily Bread" each month
 - **To you all** for the feedback from the Pewsheets & Newsletters, those who have contributed articles, cartoons and pictures, everyone who's watching on-line and those who come to the services and coping so well with the face coverings, signing-in, hand gel, one-way systems and all the things we never thought we'd have to do to come to church.
 - **And to Carol, Elaine, Alan, Angela, Barrie [Gaskell]** for running services and leading the parish through these uncertain times.

To all, a very Merry Christmas

Please do send in items of news to list to put on the pewsheet so that we can all keep in touch with what's going on. We are going to press next weekend as usual despite the Christmas holidays.



Next Sunday: John, Apostle and Evangelist

**Readings: Exodus 33. 7-11a / 1 John 1 / John 21. 9b-end
[Galatians 4. 4-7 / Luke 2. 15 – 21]**

11:00am Joint Holy Communion Service at St. Bartholomew's Revd Barrie Gaskell

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

Team Rector: Revd Carol Pharaoh 01942 85925 | carol.pharaoh@gmail.com www.westhoughtonchurches.org.uk

Team Vicar: Revd Angela Wynne 01204 468150 – revawynne@gmail.com

FACEBOOK – locate us by searching Westhoughton parish Follow us on twitter @Wparishchurch
@Westhoughtontowerbellringers

Material for the news sheet should be sent to Joan Warner by Wednesday morning 01942 818821 joan.warner35@outlook.com

*To receive these pewsheets, newsletters or special events leaflets electronically, please e-mail
westhoughtonparish@outlook.com*