



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Sunday 24th January 2021 – The Third Sunday after Epiphany

TODAY'S SERVICES

11:00am Holy Communion Service at St. Bartholomew's Church Revd Angela Wynne

We pray for:

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

*** Please note that we are updating this list regularly. If there are names that you would like to remain on this list or be added, please see / e-mail us here so we comply with the Data Protection legislation. Many thanks. Ed ***

Those who have died recently: Mary Dolphin, Julie Holmes, Eva Lomas, Dorothy Winward, Rita Fairhurst, George Ashcroft, Alan Flanagan, Neil Harrison

And on their anniversaries this week we remember: William Aspinall, Arnold Astle, Joseph Brocklehurst, Eric Cook, Phyllis Eastham, Matthew Lee, John Leyland, John Hindley Lowe, Alfred Naylor, Mark Pilkington, Vincent Smith, Joyce Stride, Jacqueline Winrow.

This week:

Welcome to worship this week on the Third Sunday after Epiphany when, as part of the season of manifestation [showing] and firsts in Jesus life, we hear the story of Jesus' first miracle, turning water into wine at the Wedding at Cana in Galilee.

Sunday services at St. Bartholomew's will continue at 11:00am and will all be Communion services until end-February. Next week we come to the end of the Epiphany Season as we mark Candlemas [The Presentation of Christ in the Temple] when we go back to thinking of Jesus as a baby but also look forward to Lent and Easter.



Mary Dolphin

22nd October 1920 – 20th January 2021

We're sorry to announce the death of Mary Dolphin this week at the age of 100. She had led a very full and active life, seeming to spend more time on holiday than at home, and was a well-known and much loved figure in our churches. It's sad that the Covid restrictions meant that we were unable to celebrate her 100th birthday last year with the party that we know she would have loved and enjoyed. Attendance at her funeral service will have to be restricted by invitation only in line with the legal requirements at the moment, but we take this opportunity to send our deepest condolences to Graham, Margaret and her family and remember them all in our prayers this week.

requirements at the moment, but we take this opportunity to send our deepest condolences to Graham, Margaret and her family and remember them all in our prayers this week.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity end on Monday so we finish our selection of prayers from this year's theme. Daily readings continue from the letter to the Hebrews although we have a quick detour on Monday and Tuesday as we mark the Conversion of St. Paul and also look at his companions Timothy and Titus on Tuesday. You'll be used to our Top Ten Best Bits for saints by now – sadly I couldn't work any of them into 10 this time. For about 200 years from the 1660's the Church of England also held special services to commemorate King Charles I – see Friday for the explanation.

While services and attendance at church is limited, these pewsheets and on-line services 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

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

The Collect:

God of all mercy,
your Son proclaimed good news to the poor,
release to the captives,
and freedom to the oppressed:
anoint us with your Holy Spirit
and set all your people free
to praise you in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Old Testament Reading : *Genesis 14. 17 - 20*

¹⁷After Abram's return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. ¹⁹He blessed him and said,
'Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
maker of heaven and earth;
²⁰and blessed be God Most High,
who has delivered your enemies into your hand!
And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything.

New Testament Reading: *Revelation 19. 6 - 10*

⁶I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder-peals, crying out,
'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. ⁷Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; ⁸to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure' – for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.
⁹And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.' ¹⁰Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am a fellow-servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'

Gospel Reading:

John 2. 1 - 11

¹On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' ⁴And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' ⁵His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' ⁶Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. ⁹When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, ¹⁰'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' ¹¹Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.



The Post Communion Prayer:

Almighty Father, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen.**



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Homily Christine Radford

Have you ever been responsible for catering an event? Did you know how many people were going to turn up? If you do, it's comparatively straightforward to work out how much food and drink you will need, but when it's an open invitation, or when you get unexpected partners or hangers-on turning up, catering becomes more of an issue.

It can be embarrassing when you put on a big 'do' for a wedding or a baptism or a birthday. You want everyone to have a good time, to have enough to eat and drink. You want to be generous and hospitable, but then again, you don't want to waste food or money by overdoing things either and having to throw good stuff out. Getting it just right is not easy, because you can't just conjure up extra supplies out of nowhere. Not as a rule that is. Not unless you have Jesus at your party.

We know this story so well. Jesus, his disciples and his mother were all invited to a wedding. In those days, a wedding party would go on for several days and would involve the whole village - everyone knew everyone else, and most of them were related in some way. The rules of hospitality meant that they all had to be made welcome and to be well fed and watered (well, water is not usually the drink of choice at a wedding, then or now) It was a matter of pride and if the supplies ran out, there would be a serious loss of face - the hosts would never live it down. And you couldn't just nip round to the local off-licence or supermarket. When the supplies were gone, they were gone. Red faces all round.

It seems Mary, Jesus' mother, was so concerned about the wine giving out that she asked Jesus to do something about it to help save face for the host. What **did** she think he could do? She clearly thought he could do **something**.

Jesus seemed reluctant to act at first. He had not come to earth to perform conjuring tricks, to save face, but to save the world. Mary however had no doubt that he would help. Her faith in him was absolute, and she instructed the servants to do exactly what he told them without questioning it, which they did.

And the result? Jesus turned 6 huge stone jars of water intended for ceremonial washing into the finest wine. The reputation of the host was saved - and in fact, enhanced because this was not the usual plonk that people would serve once their guests had had a few and couldn't tell the difference any more. This was the finest wine any of them had ever tasted. And what an enormous amount there was! About 180 gallons or 720 litres. What does an average wine bottle hold? 75cl. That's 960 bottles! Of the finest wine! What a party that must have been! (and possibly they had the finest hangover the next day!)

Jesus responded to his mother's plea, or prayer. He not only did what she asked, he did it in a way that went beyond her wildest dreams. She asked for help, he provided much more than was needed. He provided lavishly, unstintingly. God has provided for us lavishly and unstintingly. He has placed us on a beautiful world, which has everything we need to sustain life. The fact that so many go hungry, while so many have more than they need, is our doing, not his.

At this time of distress and danger to us all, it is tempting to think that God has turned away from us, that he is no longer interested in what happens to us. This could not be further from the truth. God is here with us, sharing our sufferings, feeling our distress. Because Jesus came to earth as a human, he completely understands our feelings and our fears - Jesus himself felt abandoned, in Gethsemane. But he held fast. He prayed. He trusted God to be with him, to support him, to help him to endure and to uphold him to the end. And God did. We must do the same. We don't know what is going to happen, when or how this will all end, but we do know that we have God with us, sustaining us, upholding us. We do not need to panic, whatever happens. He is there. He knows what is to come and we can trust him. We too should pray, pour out our hopes and fears, and place them in God's hands. And trust God.

Mary did not know what Jesus could do to save the day, but she was sure he could, and would, do something. She put her trust in him, and left it up to him. We must do the same. We may know what we want to happen, but God will decide what **will** happen and when.

This week I came across a quotation by Corrie Ten Boum, which struck me forcibly.

Worry does not empty tomorrow of sorrows, but it empties today of strength.

In other words: Leave it up to God. Trust in his unfailing love.

Amen



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Intercessions –

We bring to you, our loving God and Father, all that we are today. We come with memories of the last week and our hopes and fears for the week to come. In the stillness, quieten our hearts and minds and take from us the strain and stress that weigh us down. Give us instead we pray, a sense of your compassionate presence and the beauty of your peace.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us.

We pray to you, Lord, for your Church throughout the world that she may bear faithful witness to your generous love and your saving power.

As we offer you our prayers and worship today we ask that you will bring new richness into our faith making it like the best wine which we can share joyfully with those around us.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us.

Grant us, Lord, to look with your eyes of compassion at the long struggle of mankind, the wars, the hungry millions, the countless refugees, the victims of natural disasters, the needless deaths, the heartbreak and hopelessness of so many lives.

By our prayers and through our lives may we hasten the coming of the age when all nations shall be at peace and all people shall live free from fear and free from want, when there shall be no more pain or tears and when all your children will live in the security of your will and the assurance of your love.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us.

We pray for our families, our friends and for the community in which we live. As we share in each other's joys and sorrows may we be united in your love and strengthened by the knowledge that we do not travel through life alone.

May your healing presence be with those who marriages begun with joy, hope and celebration are now in difficulties or are broken. In the darkness of their confusion, grief and anger may they somehow sense your compassion and strength which surrounds them and their families and friends who hurt with them.

We pray for all those among us who feel alone, unloved and unlovable. Lord, give us the insight and sensitivity we need to offer the same love and acceptance that Jesus showed to those suffering the pain of loneliness. And as we seek to serve Christ in one another may our communities and relationships be transformed by hope and love so that, in our lives, your will may be done.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us.

Lord, we bring into your compassionate presence all who suffer physical pain of the body, emotional distress of the mind and empty dryness of the spirit. You know the deepest needs of each one of us and we ask that in your love and mercy you will minister to those needs. We pray especially for the healing ministry within your church and for those who exercise that ministry. May your compassionate love surround us and lead us in our journey of faith into wholeness of body, mind and spirit.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us.

Into your hands, Lord, we commend the souls of those who have died recently

and we remember too those who died at this time in years gone past....

Help us to trust in your mercy and love that we may live our lives in the assurance of your promise to grant us, with them, a share in your eternal kingdom.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us.

Lord, may the healing of your compassion, mercy and love remain among us in our worship this morning. In the days ahead may your transforming spirit bring your joy and love into our everyday lives and may we gladly share that joy, love and faith with those around us.

Merciful Father

**accept these prayers
for the sake of your son,
our saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.**



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

St. Paul – Top Eleven Best Bits:

1. Saint Paul is one of the most important and influential of all the saints. Many of his writings are contained in the Bible and have influenced the growth and development of the Church since the first century.

2. St. Paul was originally known as Saul, and he was a Roman citizen [born in Tarsus in Southern Turkey] but from a devoutly Jewish family.

3. He grew up in Jerusalem and was brought up by Gamaliel, a leading authority in the Jewish religious establishment (Sanhedrin). In addition to learning religious scriptures, he also studied Greek philosophers. In his daily life, he was a tent maker and continued to support himself financially in this work.

4. During his early life, St Paul was a Pharisee – a group of Jewish people who administered the law. He admitted to participating “beyond measure” in the persecution of Christians. This included taking part in the stoning of Stephen, a Christian [Acts 7:58-60;22:20]. One reason St Paul was so critical of the followers of Jesus was the fact he was appalled that Jesus died a ‘criminal’s death’ on the cross. He couldn’t reconcile that with how a Messiah would be treated.

5. But Saul experienced a powerful vision that caused him to convert to Christianity while on the road to Damascus [31 – 36 AD] – see tomorrow’s reading. He was duly baptized and took the name Paul.



PAUL'S LETTERS AND MISSIONARY JOURNEYS				
YEAR A.D.	MAJOR EVENTS	ACTS	PERIOD	LETTERS
34	Conversion, Damascus, Arabia	9	3 years - Arabia	
37	Jerusalem, Tarsus, Syria, Cilicia			
46-47	Antioch, Jerusalem	11	1 year - Antioch	
48-49	First Missionary Journey and Antioch	13-14		Galatians
50	Jerusalem Council and Antioch	15		
51-53	Second Missionary Journey	16-18	18 months - Corinth	1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians
53-54	Antioch			
54-57	Third Missionary Journey	19-21	3 years - Ephesus	1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Romans
57	Jerusalem Arrest	22-23		
57-59	Caesarea Prisoner	24-26	2 years	
59-60	Journey to Rome	27-28		
60-67 circa	Rome House Arrest	28	5-7 years circa	Ephesians Colossians Philemon Philippians 1 Timothy Titus 2 Timothy

ConformingToJesus.com

6. Paul travelled the world, first to Arabia then back to Damascus. He also visited Jerusalem to see St. Peter. During these travels, he preached ceaselessly, often drawing criticism and anger from those who rebuffed his message. He taught that old religious rites, such as circumcision were no longer necessary & that faith in the redemptive power of Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save sinners was the essence of Christianity. St Paul also rebuffed the idea that Jews were a special people, due to their lineage from Abraham. St Paul’s teachings helped move the early sect of Judaism into the separate religion of Christianity. Before St Paul, followers of Jesus Christ were

still associated with Judaism. St Paul successfully argued that Gentiles (non-Jews) could be converted directly to Christianity and didn’t need to become Jews first.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

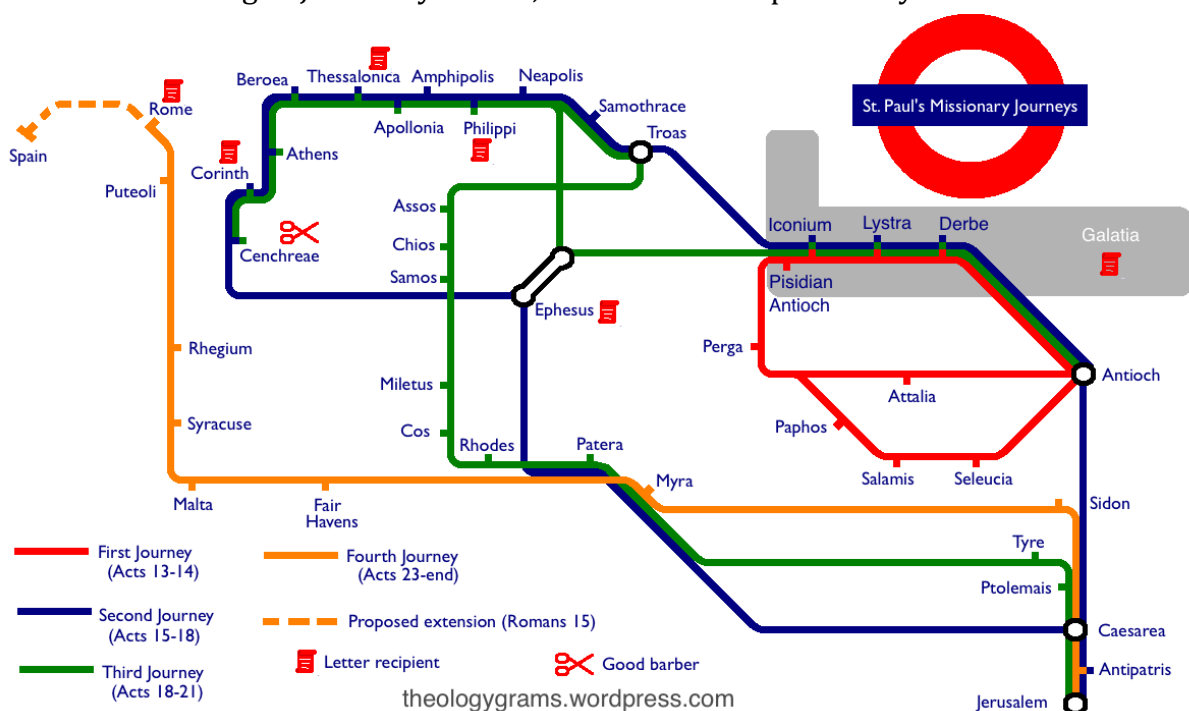
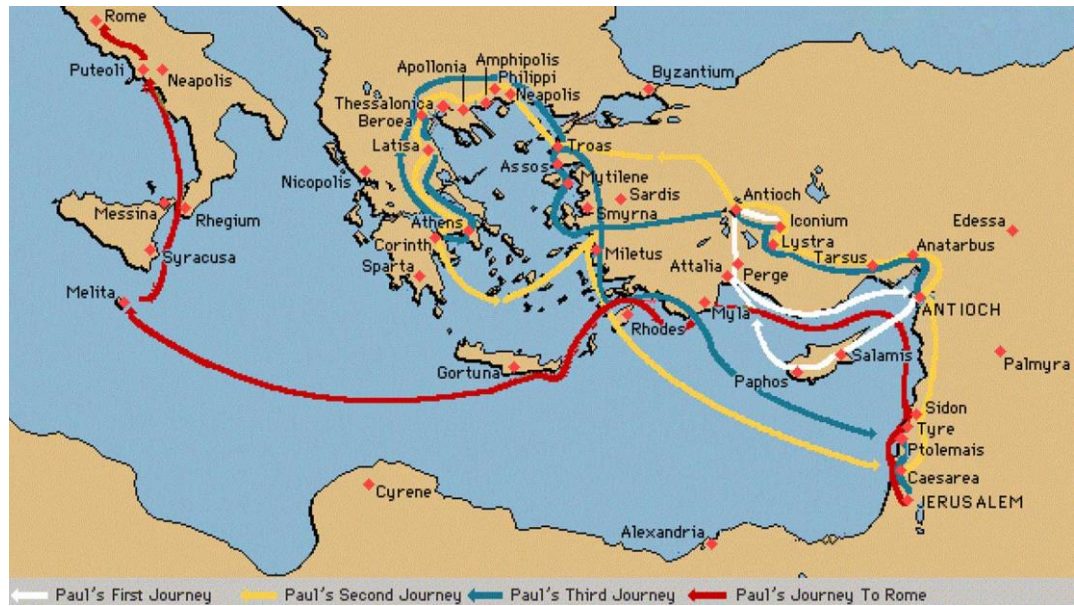
7. Eventually, Paul returned to Tarsus, where he was born. He preached there until he was called by Barnabas to come to Antioch. After a year spent in Antioch, a famine occurred in Jerusalem and the pair was dispatched to the city with charitable offerings. They accomplished this mission, and returned to Antioch.

8. Paul and Barnabas then went forth on a mission to Cyprus and throughout Asia Minor. They established several churches in their travels. After establishing his churches, Paul remained in communication with the faithful, often writing letters to answer questions and resolve disputes.

9. Paul travelled throughout much of Europe, particularly in Macedonia, Greece, and Italy. While preparing for a missionary trip to Spain, he was imprisoned in Caesarea by the Jews for two years. Since he could claim rights as a Roman citizen, he was eventually released. He travelled again, was shipwrecked in Malta, and was imprisoned for another two years for preaching in Rome. Despite these imprisonments, Paul continued to preach.

10. He spent his remaining years writing letters to the early church and acting as a missionary. Within the 27 books of the New Testament, seven books are signed by St Paul and are considered to be his writings – Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon. Another seven books are likely to have been written by or had input from St Paul.

11. In 67 AD, Paul was arrested in Rome for a second time and this time he was beheaded under Emperor Nero. According to John Chrysostom, Nero knew Paul personally.





PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Monday 25th January

The Conversion of St. Paul

Collect

Almighty God,

who caused the light of the gospel to shine throughout the world

*through the preaching of your servant Saint Paul:
grant that we who celebrate his wonderful conversion
may follow him in bearing witness to your truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, Amen.*

Acts 9. 1 – 22

¹Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' ⁵He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' ⁷The men who were travelling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' He answered, 'Here I am, Lord.' ¹¹The Lord said to him, 'Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, ¹²and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.' ¹³But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; ¹⁴and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.' ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the



people of Israel; ¹⁶I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' ¹⁷So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁸And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, ²⁰and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.' ²¹All who heard him were amazed and said, 'Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?' ²²Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

Matthew 19. 17 - end

²⁷Peter said to Jesus: 'Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?' ²⁸Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.'



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – Final Day

Prayer

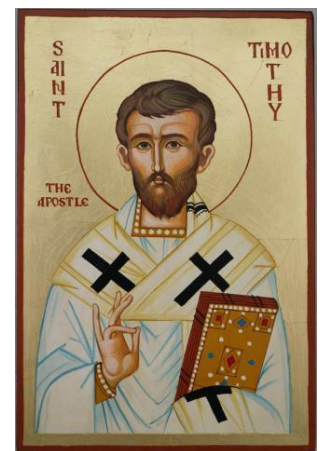
Thrice-holy God, we thank you for having created and loved us.
We thank you for your presence in us and in creation.
May we learn to look upon the world as you look upon it, with love.
In the hope of this vision, may we be able to work for a world
where justice and peace flourish,
for the glory of your name.

Tuesday 26th January

St Timothy & St Titus, Companions of Paul

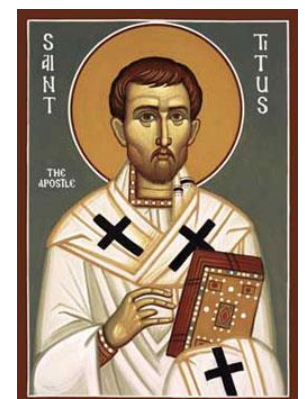
St Timothy:

1. Born at Lystra, Lycaenia, Timothy was the son of a Greek father and Eunice, a converted Jewish woman.
2. He joined St. Paul when Paul preached at Lystra replacing Barnabas, and became Paul's close friend and confidant. He was about 20 years old.
3. Paul allowed him to be circumcised to placate the Jews, since he was the son of a Jewish mother, and he then accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey.
4. When Paul was forced to flee Berea because of the enmity of the Jews there, Timothy remained, but after a time was sent to Thessalonica to report on the condition of the Christians there and to encourage them under persecution, a report that led to Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians when he joined Timothy at Corinth.
5. Timothy and Erastus were sent to Macedonia in 58AD, went to Corinth to remind the Corinthians of Paul's teaching, and then accompanied Paul into Macedonia and Achaia.
6. Timothy was probably with Paul when the Apostle was imprisoned at Caesarea and then Rome, and was himself imprisoned but then freed.
7. According to tradition, he went to Ephesus, became its first bishop, and was stoned to death there when he opposed the pagan festival of Katagogian in honour of Diana.
8. Paul wrote two letters to Timothy, one written about 65AD from Macedonia and the second from Rome while he was in prison awaiting execution.



St. Titus:

1. A disciple and companion of St. Paul to whom the great saint addressed one of his letters. Paul referred to Titus as "my true child in our common faith".
2. Not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, he was noted in Galatians where Paul writes of journeying to Jerusalem with Barnabas, accompanied by Titus. He was then dispatched to Corinth, Greece, where he successfully reconciled the Christian community there with Paul, its founder.
3. Titus was later left on the island of Crete to help organize the Church, although he soon went to Dalmatia, Croatia.
4. According to Ecclesiastical History, he served as the first bishop of Crete.





PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Collect

Heavenly Father,
who sent your apostle Paul to preach the gospel,
and gave him Timothy and Titus
to be his companions in faith:
grant that our fellowship in the Holy Spirit
may bear witness to the name of Jesus,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

2 Timothy 2. 1- 8

¹You, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; ²and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. ³Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No one serving in the army gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier's aim is to please the enlisting officer. ⁵And in the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules. ⁶It is the farmer who does the work who ought to have the first share of the crops. ⁷Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things. ⁸Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David – that is my gospel.

Titus 1. 1 - 5

¹Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that is in accordance with godliness, ²in the hope of eternal life that God, who never lies, promised before the ages began – ³in due time he revealed his word through the proclamation with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Saviour, ⁴To Titus, my loyal child in the faith we share: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour.



⁵I left you behind in Crete for this reason, that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

Luke 10. 1 - 9

¹The Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ²He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. ³Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" ⁶ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹ cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Wednesday 27th January

Hebrews 10. 11 - 18

¹¹ Every day the priests stand and do their religious service. Again and again they offer the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But Christ offered only one sacrifice for sins, and that sacrifice is good for all time. Then he sat down at the right side of God. ¹³ And now Christ waits there for his enemies to be put under his power. ¹⁴ With one sacrifice Christ made his people perfect forever. They are the ones who are being made holy.

¹⁵ The Holy Spirit also tells us about this. First he says,

¹⁶ "This is the agreement I will make with my people in the future, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts. I will write my laws in their minds."

¹⁷ Then he says,

"I will forget their sins and never again remember the evil they have done."

¹⁸ And after everything is forgiven, there is no more need for a sacrifice to pay for sins.



So remembering back to last week, the writer is still comparing the work of the priests on earth offering sacrifices in the temple with Jesus as the great High Priest offering himself as the one perfect sacrifice for all people and for all time. If we've got that we don't need to read the rest of this!

The writer again compares the work of Jesus with that of the priests. They had to stand doing their duty day after day, offering more sacrifices for sins, none of which could meet the real need of the people. Jesus made the one perfect and complete sacrifice that did take away all sin so there is no need for him to repeat it. The priests could never satisfy God with the sacrifices that they offered. But Jesus has done all that God asked him to do and, job done, sat down in the place of the highest honour, at the right hand of God.

V. 13 refers to Psalm 110:1 God says to Christ, 'Sit at my right hand. Sit there until I make your enemies a place to rest your feet'. From the time that he rose from the dead, Jesus has been waiting for God to do this. The apostle Paul says the same (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

Again in v.14, the writer makes it clear that Jesus died once for all time and for all sin. It is most important that we know and believe that this is true. The Holy Spirit is a witness to the truth of this as well [v.15 – 18]. In the words of Jeremiah 31 v.33, he talks of the new agreement. God will put his laws in the hearts and minds of his people. That is, God will give his people the power to obey him. He will remember their sins no more. This is the new agreement which Jesus has made for us. Where God has forgiven sins, there is no need for any more sacrifices for them. What Christ has done is complete and final. Now Jesus has made this new agreement, the old one has no value.

*As a part of nature's wondrous cycle
Of new birth, growth, fruitfulness and death
We rejoice in the creation of new life,
For parenthood, the passing on of knowledge,
For understanding and the wisdom of years.
We are grateful for those who have gone before
Passing on to us our spiritual heritage.
May our lives blossom as the apple tree in Spring
May we become fruitful in thought and deed
And may the seed of love that falls to the ground
Linger beyond our time on this earth.*

*God of Winter, Springtime
Summer and Autumn,
God of Light
God of Warmth
God of Love
God of Potential
God of Hope
Who in the darkest days
Enters our lives
As you entered this world
Bringing Love
Healing and Wholeness
We praise your glorious name!*



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Thursday 28th January

Today the church remembers St. Thomas Aquinas – priest, philosopher, teacher of the faith who died on this day in 1274. He is one of the great writers on theology, scripture and some of his Eucharistic hymns are still sung today – we've printed one at the end.



*Eternal God,
who enriched your Church with the learning and holiness of your servant
Thomas Aquinas:
give to all who seek you
a humble mind and a pure heart
that they may know your Son Jesus Christ as the way, the truth and the life;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

Hebrews 10. 19 – 25

Come Near to God

¹⁹ And so, brothers and sisters, we are completely free to enter the Most Holy Place. We can do this without fear because of the blood sacrifice of Jesus. ²⁰ We enter through a new way that Jesus opened for us. It is a living way that leads through the curtain—Christ's body. ²¹ And we have a great priest who rules the house of God. ²² Sprinkled with the blood of Christ, our hearts have been made free from a guilty conscience, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. So come near to God with a sincere heart, full of confidence because of our faith in Christ. ²³ We must hold on to the hope we have, never hesitating to tell people about it. We can trust God to do what he promised.

Help Each Other Be Strong

²⁴ We should think about each other to see how we can encourage each other to show love and do good works. ²⁵ We must not quit meeting together, as some are doing. No, we need to keep on encouraging each other. This becomes more and more important as you see the Day getting closer.

The most holy place [v.19] here means the place where God will meet with us. In the old agreement the people could not approach God themselves but had to do it via the priests who could go into the special tent on their behalf. Now those who trust in Jesus can meet with God directly, with confidence and without fear because of the work of Jesus.

In the old special tent the way into the most holy place was through a curtain [v.20]. Jesus has opened a new way to God. His body, like the curtain, is the way to God. When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple split from the top to the bottom to show that the direct way to God was now open. As Jesus said, 'Nobody comes to the Father but by me' (John 14:6).

It was the responsibility of the chief priest to go to God on behalf of the people [v.21-23]. In Jesus we have the great chief priest who does not just go in for us; He himself will take us to God. We have to be right with God and be pure as we come to him. We must know that Jesus has washed us clean from all our sins. God has made promises to us and he will not fail to do all that he has said. In the Bible the word 'hope' is a strong word. Our Christian hope is for something that has not yet happened, but it will happen and we are sure that it will.

While we take care for ourselves, we should think of other Christians [v.24]. We should do all that we can to help them to grow strong in their belief (Romans 15:7). We should encourage them to love and to do good works. Some



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St Thomas

St George

Christians had stopped coming together with the rest, which was not good for anyone. We need to help each other in our Christian belief and in how we live as Christians. We should encourage each other all the more as the day approaches when Jesus comes back again (v. 37 – coming up tomorrow).

With all of our strengths and weaknesses
Hopes and fears
We come to you now
Our Creator God.
Fill us
Renew us

Take us
Use us

As your lights in a world of darkness,
empowered through your Spirit
Your Spirit of love

Your Spirit of peace
Your Spirit of hope

In a world that lives but has yet to experience life in all its fullness.
In a world that loves, but has yet to meet with the source of all love.
In a world that forever seeks, but stumbles in its searching.

And as we think of those leaves, and the passing of Winter through to the hope of a Springtime when life will emerge from the frozen earth, we remember that we also are a part of that cycle of death and rebirth, that the seeds we sow in this life will fall to the ground with the potential to grow and be fruitful.

1 Now, my tongue, the mystery telling
of the glorious body sing,
and the blood, all price excelling,
which the Gentiles' Lord and King,
in a Virgin's womb once dwelling,
shed for this world's ransoming.

2 Given for us, and condescending
to be born for us below,
he, with us in converse blending,
dwelt the seed of truth to sow,
till he closed with wondrous ending
his most patient life of woe.

3 That last night, at supper lying,
'mid the Twelve, his chosen band,
Jesus, with the law complying,
keeps the feast its rites demand;
then, more precious food supplying,
gives himself with his own hand.

4 Word-made-flesh, true bread he maketh
by his word his flesh to be,
wine his blood; which whoso taketh
must from carnal thoughts be free:
faith alone, though sight forsaketh,
shows true hearts the mystery.

5 Therefore we, before him bending,
this great sacrament revere:
types and shadows have their ending,
for the newer rite is here;
faith, our outward sense befriending,
makes our inward vision clear.

6 Glory let us give and blessing
to the Father and the Son,
honour, might, and praise addressing,
while eternal ages run;
ever too his love confessing,
who, from both, with both is One. Amen.

St Thomas Aquinas





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Friday 29th January

Hebrews 10. 32 - end

Keep the Courage and Patience You Had

³² Remember the days when you first learned the truth. You had a hard struggle with much suffering, but you continued strong. ³³ Sometimes people said hateful things to you and mistreated you in public. And sometimes you helped others who were being treated that same way. ³⁴ Yes, you helped them in prison and shared in their suffering. And you were still happy when everything you owned was taken away from you. You continued to be happy, because you knew that you had something much better—something that would continue forever.

³⁵ So don't lose the courage that you had in the past. Your courage will be rewarded richly. ³⁶ You must be patient. After you have done what God wants, you will get what he promised you. ³⁷ He says,

“Very soon now, the one who is coming
will come and will not be late.

³⁸ The person who is right with me
will live by trusting in me.

But I will not be pleased with the one
who turns back in fear.”

³⁹ But we are not those who turn back and are lost. No, we are the people who have faith and are saved.

The writer begins by asking his readers to remember the early days, when they had first come to Christ. The truth of God was to them like a light, shining into their hearts and minds and changing them. Then they had to suffer a lot but were strong in their faith and did not fail. They helped other Christians when they suffered the same things. Some people were in prison for their faith. There they needed the help and the pity that other Christians were able to give them. They had their possessions taken from them. But nobody could take away their inner joy. In Jesus they had the promise of things to come that were so much better than any possessions and could not be taken away.

In v.35-36, he tells them not to lose heart. The new life we can have in Jesus is not something that we can ever earn. It is the free gift of God to all who trust in Jesus as God has promised.

V. 37-38 use words from [Isaiah 26:20](#) and [Habakkuk 2:3-4](#). They tell us that Jesus is coming back soon and he will not delay his coming. When he comes back, He will bring in his promised blessing of life with God. We can never earn life with God by anything that we do. God gives us that life because of what Jesus has done on our behalf.

Verse 39 The writer now makes clear that those who really trust Jesus, do not turn back. People who turn back from Jesus will have to face the judgement of God. All who maintain a bold trust in Jesus will be safe from that judgement. They will gain God's promised life.

*You challenge us to follow you;
not by staying as we are
but by stepping out in faith,
casting our net into deeper water
as with Simon Peter, fisherman.
You challenge us to trust you
and be prepared for all
eventualities,*

*even when the load is heavy
and we struggle to succeed.
But with your challenge comes
blessing.
Flimsy nets are filled,
broken lives made whole.
From emptiness
to abundance.
Thank you for your challenge
Grant us courage to follow. Amen*



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Saturday 30th January

Today the church remembers Charles, King & Martyr who died on this day in 1649

King Charles the Martyr, or **Charles, King and Martyr**, is a title of Charles I, who was King of England, Scotland and Ireland from 1625 until his execution on 30 January 1649. There remain some churches and parishes dedicated to Charles the Martyr today.

The Calendar of the Book of Common Prayer included among the red letter days "state services" - commemorations of the Gunpowder Plot, the birth and restoration of Charles II, and the execution of Charles I. In addition, a proclamation made at the beginning of each reign from Charles II to Victoria added special services for these days to the Prayer Book by royal decree. Special sermons were preached, and hundreds of sermons on King Charles the Martyr were printed from the 1660s until the late eighteenth century. The title of the service for 30 January was:

A FORM OF PRAYER WITH FASTING,

To be used yearly on the Thirtieth of January,

Being the Day of the Martyrdom of the Blessed King CHARLES the First;

to implore the mercy of God, that neither the Guilt of that sacred and innocent Blood, nor those other sins, by which God was provoked to deliver up both us and our King into the hands of cruel and unreasonable men, may at any time hereafter be visited upon us or our posterity.

In 1859 the State Services were omitted from the Prayer Book by royal and parliamentary authority. Of the three commemorations, only that of King Charles I has been restored in the calendar in the Alternative Service Book of 1980 - although not as a Red Letter Day - and a new collect composed for Common Worship in 2000.

Collect:

*King of kings and Lord of lords,
whose faithful servant Charles
prayed for those who persecuted him
and died in the living hope of your eternal kingdom:
grant us by your grace so to follow his example
that we may love and bless our enemies,
through the intercession of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*



Hebrews 11. 2 – 2 & 8 - 19

Faith

11 Faith is what makes real the things we hope for. It is proof of what we cannot see. ² God was pleased with the people who lived a long time ago because they had faith like this.



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⁸ God called Abraham to travel to another place that he promised to give him. Abraham did not know where that other place was. But he obeyed God and started traveling because he had faith. ⁹ Abraham lived in the country that God promised to give him. He lived there like a visitor who did not belong. He did this because he had faith. He lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who also received the same promise from God. ¹⁰ Abraham was waiting for the city that has real foundations. He was waiting for the city that is planned and built by God.

¹¹ Sarah was not able to have children, and Abraham was too old. But he had faith in God, trusting him to do what he promised. And so God made them able to have children. ¹² Abraham was so old he was almost dead. But from that one man came as many descendants as there are stars in the sky. So many people came from him that they are like grains of sand on the seashore.



¹³ All these great people continued living with faith until they died. They did not get the things God promised his people. But they were happy just to see those promises coming far in the future. They accepted the fact that they were like visitors and strangers here on earth. ¹⁴ When people accept something like that, they show they are waiting for a country that will be their own. ¹⁵ If they were thinking about the country they had left, they could have gone back. ¹⁶ But they were waiting for a better country—a heavenly country. So God is not ashamed to be called their God. And he has prepared a city for them.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ God tested Abraham's faith. God told him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham obeyed because he had faith. He already had the promises from God. And God had already said to him, "It is through Isaac that your descendants will come." But Abraham was ready to offer his only son. He did this because he had faith. ¹⁹ He believed that God could raise people from death. And really, when God stopped Abraham from killing Isaac, it was as if he got him back from death.

A change of theme now. In chapter 10 the writer urged his readers to trust in God always. Now in chapter 11, he encourages us with many examples of men and women in the Old Testament who trusted God. His Jewish readers would be very familiar with these OT characters. The life of faith, that is, a life of trust in God at all times, is what pleases him.

We start at v.8 with Abraham. God called him to leave the country where he lived (Genesis 12:1) leaving behind his friends, neighbours and most of his family. God didn't tell Abraham where he was to go, He just said, 'Go to the land that I shall show you'. So Abraham set off, because he knew that he could trust God. We like to know where we are going and we like to choose the way. Abraham obeyed God's command as he knew it was right to trust God and to obey him. To leave the life that we know and go into the unknown future, because God calls us to do so, is faith.

When Abraham arrived in the land that God had promised to him, he lived there as a foreigner with no rights or possessions in that land. Later he did buy a small piece of land in which to bury those who died. He had no house to live in, but with his family he lived in tents. His son Isaac and Isaac's son Jacob also had no permanent place in the land. But God gave them the same promises.

Abraham was content to live that way as he knew that one day God would do all that he said that he would do. Abraham looked forward, beyond his death, to his true home in heaven where he would no longer be a stranger, but he would belong there. By faith he saw a city which God planned and built.

When God told Abraham that he would have a son (Genesis 15:1-5), both he and his wife Sarah were really too old and Sarah laughed at the idea (Genesis 18:9-15). But Abraham trusted God to do what he promised and Isaac was



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born. God promised that Isaac would be the first of a very large family, like the stars in the sky and the sand by the sea - too many to count.

God made similar promises to all the people that the writer has mentioned. But they did not receive what he promised in this life; they lived like strangers and foreigners here. The kind of people who say that they are strangers here are looking for a country of their own. They could have been at home here, but they knew that God's promised home for them was far better. Abraham and his family could have gone back to the country where they came from. But God had called them to leave it. To return would be to refuse to do what God wanted. God calls all his people to leave behind their old lives and go on to live for God and the life to come.

People like Abraham, who trust God completely, want to go to the much better place that God has made ready for them in heaven. God calls us to have the same faith and to live as they did. He gives to us the chance to join him in that city.

Now comes the greatest test of Abraham's faith. God told him to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to him. Isaac was his only son by Sarah his wife. (Abraham did have another son by Hagar, who was Sarah's maid: [Genesis 16](#)). Isaac was the only son of the promise. It was through Isaac that God said that his promises would come. So Abraham had a real problem. If he were to kill Isaac, would not the promises fail? If he did not do what God asked, would the promises still be there for his people? Abraham had to trust God that somehow God would find a way to keep his promises. Abraham decided to do what God told him to do and sacrifice Isaac. He took him and tied him on an altar. He had fire ready; he lifted his knife. Then God told him to stop. So Isaac did not die ([Genesis 22](#)). Abraham had been ready to obey God and to kill Isaac, so now it was like receiving him back from the dead. Jesus, the only Son of God, did die and he did come back to life from death. All the promises of God to us are in his Son Jesus. We shall receive those promises, if we trust God completely, as Abraham did.

We pray today, Lord God, not as in the days of Moses when a physical barrier, the veil, separated the people from your presence, but in the sure knowledge that when your Son died on the Cross for us, the curtain of the temple was torn in two to grant us access to the holiest place.

It is in this confidence that we approach your throne with our sacrifice of worship, and ask no more than that you will bless us with your presence, draw close to us and enable us to know you more. Amen



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

NOTICES:

Mission Community Proposals: Archdeaconry Events: Reminder

This is a reminder that people in our diocese – church officers, members of our congregations and our lay and ordained leaders - are invited to events in each of our archdeaconries to discuss our proposals for creating Mission Communities across the diocese, which were set out in the Briefing Document published in October.

The date for our area is: **Bolton**

Wednesday 27 January 2021, 19.00-20.30

All these events will take place via zoom. For further information, including how you can take part, click [here](#).

Church Attendance for School Places:

To register attendance, **please e-mail:**

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. 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. Thank You

Governors at Canon Slade have recently issued a statement saying that they are **not** asking churches to record the attendance of children and young people at worship services for the purposes of supporting future applications to Canon Slade School until **all churches are fully open**. For the time being, for all other schools, parents are asked to continue to email their attendance or 'intention to attend' to our dedicated email address – details in the notices at the end.

Next Sunday: **Candlemas / The Presentation of Christ in the Temple**

Readings: Malachi 3. 1 - 5 / Hebrews 2. 14 - end / Luke 2. 22 - 40

11:00am Holy Communion Service at St. Bartholomew's church Revd Carol Pharaoh

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

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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