

PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George



SUNDAY 5TH NOVEMBER 2023 ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY

Welcome to Worship today

Sunday Services

St George's Church 9:15am Holy Communion Revd Andy Jones	St Thomas' Church 9:15am Holy Communion Revd Malcolm Wearing	St Bartholomew's Church 11:00am Service of the Word Elaine Simkin HYMNS: 310, 308, 312, 296
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This week we pray for:

Those who are ill: Harry Bowyer, Brian Cato, Libby Evans, Georgia Gidney, Denise Gilliland, Nigel Ginniff, Kathleen Grundy, Keith Haworth, Mario Heaton, Edith Ibbotson, Joan James, Patricia James, Eileen Marsh, Ted Morgan, Jean Partington, Arthur Robinson, Norman Sidlow, Arthur Winrow.

Those who have died recently: Elizabeth Sutcliffe, Margaret Callis, Susan Roberts

And on their anniversaries this week we remember: Arthur Bowden, Alfred Buckley, Joseph Buckley, William Crompton, Trevor Cupitt, Mary Edwards, Donald Ellison, Harold Halliwell, Mary Keegan, Alan Martin, Audrey Merrifield, Harry Riley, Alun Roberts, Leonard Sharples, Eileen Southern.

Coming Up this week:

Sunday 5th 2:00pm	St Bartholomew's Church	Memorial Service
Monday 6th 9:30 – 11:00am 9:30 – 11:00am	St Bartholomew's Church St Bartholomew's Church	Office Hour – for booking baptisms / other church business Toddler Group with Wiggle Worship
Wednesday 8th 3:45 – 4:30pm 7:30pm	St Bartholomew's Church St Bartholomew's Church	Café Church: Prayer – The Lord's Prayer Choir Practice

Next Sunday: 12th November 2023 Remembrance Sunday

NEXT SUNDAY: **Third Sunday before Advent** **Remembrance Sunday**

Readings: Amos 5. 18-24 / Thessalonians 4. 13-18 / Matthew 25. 1-13

9.15am No morning Service at St George's

9.15am Service of the Word at St Thomas'

Revd Angela Wynne

10.00am Service of the Word at St Bartholomew's

Revd Carol Pharaoh/Alan Morris

11.00am Service at the Cenotaph

Revd Carol Pharaoh

11.30am Holy Communion

Revd Andy Jones/Elaine Simkin

To receive these pewsheets or special events leaflets electronically, please e-mail

westhoughtonparish@outlook.com

Readings for Sunday 5th November 2023 All Saints' Sunday

Collect:

God of holiness, your glory is proclaimed in every age: as we rejoice in the faith of your saints, inspire us to follow their example with boldness and joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

First Reading: Revelation 7. 9 - 17

⁹After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!' ¹¹And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, ¹²singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.' ¹³Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' ¹⁴I said to him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. ¹⁶They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; ¹⁷for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

Second Reading: 1 John 3. 1 - 3

¹See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is

that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Gospel: Matthew 5. 1 - 12

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ²and he began to teach them, saying:
³Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
⁵Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.
¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
¹¹"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Post Communion Prayer:

God, the source of all holiness and giver of all good things: may we who have shared at this table as strangers and pilgrims here on earth be welcomed with all your saints to the heavenly feast on the day of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Prayers for All Saints' Sunday:

United in the company of all the faithful
and looking for the coming of the kingdom,
let us offer our prayers to God,
the source of all life and holiness.

Merciful Lord,
strengthen all Christian people by your
Holy Spirit,
that we may live as a royal priesthood and
a holy nation
to the praise of Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Bless our bishops and all ministers of your
Church,
that by faithful proclamation of your word
we may be built on the foundation of the
apostles and prophets
into a holy temple in the Lord.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Empower us by the gift of your holy and
life-giving Spirit,
that we may be transformed into the
likeness of Christ
from glory to glory.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Give to the world and its peoples
the peace that comes from above,
that they may find Christ's way of freedom
and life.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Hold in your embrace all who witness to
your love in the
service of the poor and needy;
all who minister to the sick and dying;
and all who bring light to those in darkness.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Touch and heal all those whose lives are
scarred by sin
or disfigured by pain,
that, raised from death to life in Christ,
their sorrow may be turned to eternal joy.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Remember in your mercy all those gone
before us
who have been well-pleasing to you from
eternity;
preserve in your faith your servants on
earth,
guide us to your kingdom
and grant us your peace at all times.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Hasten the day when many will come
from east and west, from north and south,
and sit at table in your kingdom.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

We give you thanks
for the whole company of your saints in
glory,
with whom in fellowship we join our
prayers and praises;
by your grace may we, like them, be made
perfect in your love.

**Blessing and glory and wisdom,
thanksgiving and honour and power,
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen.**

All Saints to Advent

Introduction to the Season

No Christian is solitary. Through baptism we become members one of another in Christ, members of a company of saints whose mutual belonging transcends death:

One family, we dwell in him,
one Church, above, beneath;
though now divided by the stream,
the narrow stream of death.

(Charles Wesley)

All Saints' Day and the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed on All Souls' Day both celebrate this mutual belonging. All Saints' Day celebrates men and women in whose lives the Church as a whole has seen the grace of God powerfully at work. It is an opportunity to give thanks for that grace, and for the wonderful ends to which it shapes a human life; it is a time to be encouraged by the example of the saints and to recall that sanctity may grow in the ordinary circumstances, as well as the extraordinary crises, of human living.

The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed celebrates the saints in a more local and intimate key. It allows us to remember with thanksgiving before God those whom we have known more directly: those who gave us life, or who nurtured us in faith.

Redemption is a work of God's grace; it is God who redeems us in Christ and there is nothing to be done beyond what Christ has done. But we still wait for the final consummation of God's new creation in Christ; those who are Christ's, whether or not they have passed through death, are joined in prayer that God's kingdom will be revealed finally and in all its fullness. We also sense that it is a fearful thing to come before the unutterable goodness and holiness of God, even for those who are redeemed in Christ; that it is searing as well as life-giving to experience God's mercy; and this instinct also is expressed in the liturgy of All Souls' Day.

Remembrance Sunday goes on to explore the theme of memory, both corporate and individual, as we confront issues of war and peace, loss and self-gift, memory and forgetting.

The annual cycle of the Church's year now ends with the Feast of Christ the King. The year that begins with the hope of the coming Messiah ends with the proclamation of his universal sovereignty. The ascension of Christ has revealed him to be Lord of earth and heaven, and final judgement is one of his proper kingly purposes. The Feast of Christ the King returns us to the Advent theme of judgement, with which the cycle once more begins.

All Saints' Sunday Sunday 5th November

All Saints' Day is a Christian festival celebrated in honour of all the saints, known and unknown, celebrated on 1 November in the Western church. All Saints' Day celebrates men and women in whose lives the Church as a whole has seen the grace of God powerfully at work. It is an opportunity to give thanks for that grace, and



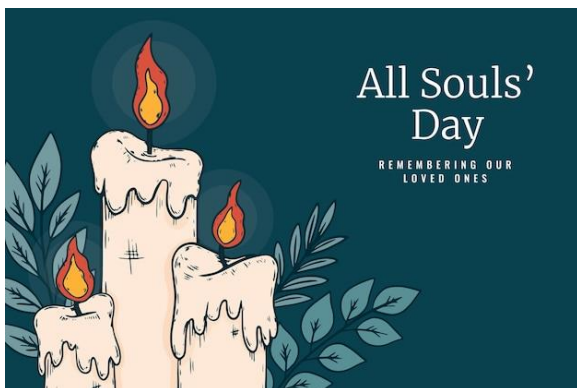
for the wonderful ends to which it shapes a human life; it is a time to be encouraged by the example of the saints and to recall that sanctity may grow in the ordinary circumstances, as well as the extraordinary crises, of human living.

The Christian celebration of All Saints' Day [1st November] and All Souls' Day [2nd November] stems from a belief that there is a powerful spiritual bond between those in heaven (the "Church triumphant"), and the living (the "Church militant").

It has been a tradition to celebrate saints on a specific day since the 4th century AD but it wasn't until 609AD that Pope Boniface IV decided to remember all martyrs. It was originally celebrated on 13th May but when Pope Gregory IV decided to celebrate all saints and martyrs together in 837AD, the name of the day was changed to the "Feast of all Saints" and the date set as 1st November. Some Eastern Orthodox churches have kept the celebration on the Sunday after Pentecost when we mark Trinity Sunday.

In the British Isles, it is known that churches were already celebrating All Saints on 1 November at the beginning of the 8th century.

With its other title of "All Hallows' Day" [all those hallowed or made perfect by God], the day before became All Hallows' Eve or Hallowe'en.



The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed or All Souls' Day [2nd November] celebrates the saints in a more local and intimate key. It allows us to remember with thanksgiving before God those whom we have known more directly: those who gave us life, or who nurtured us in faith.

Organ Music at St Bart's this Sunday



As it's Bonfire Night, what better Sunday to play the Music for the Royal Fireworks by George Frideric Handel. Well, any other day would work as it was actually written to mark the end of the War of the Austrian Succession and the signing of the peace treaty of Aix-en-Chapelle in 1748.

During the preparations Handel and the official responsible for the Royal Fireworks, had an argument about adding violins. The duke made clear to Handel that King George had a preference for only martial instruments (winds and percussion), and hoped there would be "no fiddles". Handel omitted the string instruments against his will. Also against Handel's will, there was a full rehearsal of the music in Vauxhall Gardens and not in Green Park. On 21 April 1749 an audience, claimed to be over twelve thousand people, each paying two shillings and six pence (12 ½ pence) rushed to get there, causing a three-hour traffic jam of carriages on London Bridge, the only vehicular route to the area south of the river. Nothing changes with London traffic.

Six days later, on 27 April, the musicians performed in a specially constructed building in London's Green park for the world premiere. The display was not as successful as the music itself: the weather was rainy causing many misfires and in the middle of the show the right pavilion caught fire and burned down. Also, a woman's clothes were set on fire by a stray rocket and other fireworks burned two soldiers and blinded a third. Yet another soldier had his hand blown off during an earlier rehearsal for the 101 cannons which were used during the event.



But the music is brilliant. I'll cram in the first three movements before the service and the final two very famous ones at the end.

NOTICEBOARD

A Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace, for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at-risk and in fear, that you would hold and protect them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. **Amen.**



Archbishop Justin Welby / Archbishop Stephen Cottrell

Recording Attendance for School Admission

We are recording physical church attendance for school admission purposes.

Parents will need to sign registers or, in the case of St Thomas, have their card stamped if they physically attend the service – nothing else will count.

NOTICE FOR PARENTS

If you would like your attendance at church to be recorded for school admission purposes, please note that, in line with the individual school admission policies, we do expect children and their parent(s) to attend a full service from the beginning start time until the service concludes.

If you arrive after the service starts or leave before the end, your attendance will not count. If this is the case, please do not sign the register or have your attendance card stamped at the end of the service.

We know some families repeatedly arrive late (sometimes 30 minutes after the start time) and this, we feel, is unfair to the families who do attend the full service each week. If our system of recording church attendance is abused, we will have to take steps to amend our administration practices. Thank you.

Sunday School

We're running on 5th November at both St George's and St Bartholomew's churches. We're not meeting next Sunday on Remembrance Sunday.

PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Office Hour

We're back on Monday 6th November 9:30am – 11:00am

We're still running some limited Saturday morning appointments for booking baptisms. Please e-mail westhoughtonparish@outlook.com for an appointment.

Parent & Toddler Group with Wiggle Worship - St Bartholomew's

We're back on Monday 6th November 9:30am – 11:00am

Committee Meetings - Dates

PCC: Mondays at 7:30pm [** = St Bart's Committee will meet at 6:30pm on those dates]

13th November **

15th January 2024 **

11th March 2024 **

St Bartholomew's Church Choir

We're after new members. If you enjoy singing and are able to attend the weekly practice each Wednesday at church from 7:30pm for about 30 – 45 minutes and sing at the Sunday service, do have a word with Ed or any of the choir. Any age and ability welcomed.



Café Church

We're back on Wednesday 8th November from 3:45 – 4:30pm at St Bartholomew's church as we look at the Lord's Prayer. See poster below.

	PRAYER		
8 Nov	The Lord's Prayer – Matthew 6. 5-15 (Bible Chat Mats / Family Time)	Carol	Carole Linda
15 Nov	Listen and do / Samuel - 1 Samuel 3.1-21	Elaine	Lynne John
22 Nov	Prayer Stations (Experience session)	Angela	Sue Ged
29 Nov	The Pharisee's and tax collector's prayers - Luke 18:9-14	Joan	Jean Fran
6 Dec	Advent Agape Service	Andy	Carole Linda
13 Dec	Preparing for Christmas – Matthew 1.18-23	Christine	Lynne John
20 Dec –	CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS		
8 Jan	Next Café Church 10 th January 2024		

Café Church

It meets each Wednesday in term
time at St Bartholomew's church
3:45 – 4:30pm

This week we're looking at

The Lord's Prayer

How to Pray

The Lord's Prayer



Matthew 6.5 - 15

Wednesday 8th November

St Bartholomew's Church Cleaning

We're after anyone who could help us on the cleaning rota at St Bartholomew's on a Saturday morning. One hour once a month would be really helpful and the more people we have, the quicker it is and the fewer times everyone is on the rota. Please see Joan or Christine for more details.

Annual Memorial Service Sunday 5th November 2:00pm St. Bartholomew's

Our annual Memorial Service at which we can remember our loved ones by name, by lighting a candle or simply in silent prayer will be on Sunday 5th November at 2:00pm at St. Bartholomew's church. The service will last about one hour.

Everyone is welcome to attend.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

THE PARISH OF
ST. BARTHOLOMEW,
WESTHOUGHTON



Sunday 5th November

11:00am

All Saints' Sunday



Service of the Word

All Welcome

**ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S
CHURCH,
WESTHOUGHTON**



Parish Memorial Service

Sunday 5th November

2:00pm

**A service at which we
remember our loved ones by
name, in silence or by lighting
a candle**



All Welcome

PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

November Diary ... what's coming up

<p>Sunday 5th 2:00pm</p>	<p>ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY Services at all our churches Memorial Service at St Bartholomew's</p>
<p>Monday 6th 9:30am – 11:00am St Bartholomew's</p>	<p>Office Hour Toddler Group and Wiggle Worship</p>
<p>Wednesday 8th 3:45pm – 4:30pm 7:30pm St Bartholomew's</p>	<p>Café Church at St Bartholomew's Choir Practice</p>
<p>Sunday 12th 9:15am 9:15am 10:00am 11:00am 11:30am ?? time</p>	<p>REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY – Third Sunday before Advent NO SERVICE at St George's Church Service at St Thomas' Church Civic Service at St Bartholomew's – <i>limited attendance</i> Two Minutes Silence at the War Memorial Holy Communion Service at St Bartholomew's Confirmation Preparation Session at St John's Wingates</p>
<p>Monday 13th 9:30am – 11:00am St Bartholomew's 6:30pm – <i>earlier time</i> 7:30pm</p>	<p>Office Hour Toddler Group and Wiggle Worship St Bartholomew's Committee Meeting PCC meeting at St Bartholomew's</p>
<p>Tuesday 14th 7:00pm</p>	<p>Confirmation Service at St John's Wingates</p>
<p>Wednesday 15th 11:00am St Bartholomew's 3:45pm – 4:30pm 6:45pm St Bartholomew's 7:30pm St Bartholomew's</p>	<p>Midweek Communion Service followed by Luncheon Club Café Church at St Bartholomew's Baptism Preparation Meeting Choir Practice</p>
<p>Saturday 18th 11:00am - 1:00pm 10:00am – 1:00pm</p>	<p>St John's Wingates Christmas Fair St Katharine's Blackrod Christmas Fair</p>
<p>Sunday 19th 1:00pm 6:30pm</p>	<p>Second Sunday before Advent Services at all our churches Baptism at St Bartholomew's "Kingdom" Team Worship Service at St John's, Wingates</p>
<p>Monday 20th 9:30am – 11:00am St Bartholomew's 7:30pm</p>	<p>Office Hour Toddler Group and Wiggle Worship St George's Committee meeting [at St Bartholomew's]</p>
<p>Wednesday 22nd 9:45am [<i>new time</i>] 3:45pm – 4:30pm 7:30pm St Bartholomew's</p>	<p>Year 4 Schools Service at St Bartholomew's Café Church at St Bartholomew's Choir Practice</p>
<p>Saturday 25th 10:00am</p>	<p>St James' Church Daisy Hill Christmas Fair</p>
<p>Sunday 26th</p>	<p>Christ the King Sunday Services at all our churches</p>

PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

6:00pm	Taize Advent Worship at St Katharine's, Blackrod
Monday 27th 9:30am – 11:00am St Bartholomew's	Office Hour Toddler Group and Wiggle Worship
Wednesday 29th 3:45pm – 4:30pm 7:30pm St Bartholomew's	Café Church at St Bartholomew's Choir Practice

Christmas Fairs

There are lots of Christmas Fairs coming up in November

Saturday 18th November 11:00am – 1:00pm

St. John's Church, Wingates

Saturday 18th November 10:00am – 1:00pm

St. Katharine's Church, Blackrod

Saturday 25th November from 10:00am

St. James' Church, Daisy Hill



Confirmation 2022

Tuesday 14th November 2022 7:00pm

St. John's Church, Wingates

This year's Confirmation service is being held at Wingates and we pray for all our candidates being confirmed this year.



2024 Team Retreat

Building on the great success of the retreats in 2022 and 2023, we have booked a weekend at the Foxhill Retreat Centre in Cheshire for 24th to 26th May 2024. Cost will be £190 per person for the whole weekend, or £45 for just the Saturday (including lunch). Most rooms are en-suite rooms all have private bathrooms. Please contact Revd Malcolm Wearing to book a place on the retreat for 2024

“Kingdom” Team Worship Service



**An evening of worship,
readings and reflection
led by the
Team Worship Band**

**Please join us on
Sunday 19th November
at 6.30 pm
St John's Wingates**



Refreshments will be served
after the service

Christmas Dinner on Jesus:

This year we've agreed to collect **400 selection boxes**

Any size / content is fine.

Please check that the use / eat by date is after Christmas Day and PLEASE don't bring them yet as we have nowhere to store them.

We'll be collecting in our churches between Sunday 19th November and closing date of Sunday 3rd December. Please don't bring them earlier as we have nowhere to store them.



URBAN
OUTREACH (BOLTON)



**Between our churches over the
next few weeks, we're aiming to
collect**

400 selection boxes

Any size / content

Use by date must be after 25th December

**If you can help, please drop them
off at any of our churches between**

19th November – 3rd December

Thank you

Urban Outreach's 'Christmas Dinner on Jesus' Hamper Making



Christmas Volunteers wanted: For those who are willing to be a volunteer for this year's Christmas Dinner on Jesus, there are a number of jobs including box making, hamper box packing and fresh bag packing - along with the usual setting up and clearing away. In order to allow as many people as possible the opportunity to volunteer you will only be allocated one volunteer slot. If you would like to sign up for more than one you will be added you to a reserve list just in case there are not enough volunteers. Please book in for the session you would like to volunteer by emailing admin@urbanoutreach.co.uk or by calling Urban Outreach on 01204 385848 and asking to speak to Laura or Jeanette.

Tue 12th December 10am-12pm Hamper Box Making

Wed 13th December 10am-12pm Hamper Box Making

Thur 14th December 10am-12pm Hamper Box Making

Fri 15th December 10am-12pm Hamper Box Making

Mon 18th December 10am-12pm Single Person Hampers

Thur 21st December 10am-1pm Veg Bag Making

From the Diocese of Manchester:

A [joint letter has been issued](#) from the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, the Most Rev'd Hosam Naoum, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev'd Justin Welby.

The Archbishops are appealing for prayers and donations, not only for the continuation of the Anglican-run Al-Ahli Arab Hospital's vital work in Gaza, but also for the Diocese of Jerusalem's ministries throughout the Holy Land.

Archbishop Justin said, "Please, continue to pray for those who mourn, those who are in pain, and those who are in fear, and for those who are caring for the injured and bereaved. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says that those who have looked after the sick have cared for Christ himself.

We will be having a retiring collection for Christian Aid's relief work in this area in our churches on Sunday 5th November.

Please join us in this prayer for peace written by The Very Revd Canon Richard Swell, Dean of St George's College Jerusalem.

O God of all justice and peace



We cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths - Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples.

Guide us into your kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

Please join The Mayor of Bolton for the . . .

Annual Remembrance Weekend events 2023



Friday

10th November
Doors open
6.15pm, concert
commences 7pm.
Carriages approx.
10pm
Albert Halls, Bolton
Tickets £7.50

Proceeds to the
3 Bolton Cadet Forces

Saturday

11th November
10.50am
Victoria Square

Remembrance Service
led by the Vicar
of Bolton.
The service will include
a two minutes silence
and maroon fire

Sunday

12th November
10.40am
Victoria Square

Remembrance Service
led by the Vicar
of Bolton.
The service will include
a two minutes silence
and live gun fire.

Concert Tickets available from: www.alberthalls-bolton.co.uk

Or by calling the box office on 0343 2080500

Box office open 10am - 4pm

Wednesday - Saturday Albert Halls, Victoria Square

Enquiries to the mayors office on **01204-331090**
or email: mayorsoffice@bolton.gov.uk

**Bolton
Council**

The New Testament: 27 books in 5 categories

The New Testament books fall into five general categories:

the Gospels

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John

the single book of Acts

Paul's letters to churches

- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1 Thessalonians
- 2 Thessalonians

Paul's letters to church leaders

- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon

and a collection of letters sent out (mostly) to large groups of people.

- Hebrews
- James
- 1 Peter
- 2 Peter
- 1 John
- 2 John
- 3 John
- Jude
- Revelation

Matthew

Despite variations in the arrangement of early lists of the New Testament books, Matthew always comes first. A distinctive feature of Matthew is its arrangement into alternating sections of narrative and discourse. There are five blocks, matching the Pentateuch that starts the Old Testament. Each answers a specific question: How are citizens of Christ's kingdom to live? How are travelling disciples to conduct themselves? What are the parables that Jesus taught? How should Christians conduct themselves in the church? How will it all end? The intervening narrative sections tell the story of Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

Mark

The shortest Gospel, and perhaps the basis for Matthew and Luke. Mark is the "action Gospel," with the word *immediately* appearing some 35 times. The genre is known as the "brief life"—a compilation of the minimum of what a reader wishes to know about a person.

Luke

The "human" Gospel, with much attention to marginalized members of society & the longest Gospel, covering more of Jesus's life than the others. It contains nearly thirty parables and four nativity hymns and has exerted the most influence on painters and hymn writers. Despite the variety of material, this Gospel flows beautifully and is easy to read from beginning to end.

John

The poetic Gospel, embodying much of its meaning in great symbols such as light, bread, and water. It relies on longer narrative units than the other Gospels. This book is built around seven great signs or miracles that Jesus performed, and these in turn are paired with surrounding passages that tie into the preceding or following "sign."

Acts

The storyline is accurately captured by the official title—*The Acts of the Apostles* (chiefly Peter and Paul). It's the history of the Christian church in various geographic regions, but with the focus on people and events rather than names and dates. The general framework is narrative, but a surprising three quarters of the book consists of speeches and orations (including the settings in which they were given).

Romans

An important literary consideration for all the epistles is that they are modifications of the standard letter writing conventions of the ancient world. Variations are always possible, but generally consists of five sections: greetings, thanksgiving, body, list of moral exhortations and close. Romans belongs to the genre of the letter essay. Set within the framework of letter-writing conventions, the main content is on the subject of sin and salvation. Two styles mingle in Romans: the grand or elevated style and features of a form of vigorous street preaching.

1 Corinthians

The most important feature of the New Testament epistles is that they are occasional letters written for a specific occasion, not a series of essays. The writers of the epistles did not sit down to write an essay; they wrote in response to questions they had been asked or circumstances that needed to be addressed. In 1 Corinthians Paul speaks to problems that existed in a disorderly church.

2 Corinthians

There are so many references to Paul's own life that this epistle falls into the category of personal letter. Paul defends his reputation against false accusations and carefully constructs a picture of his missionary life.

Galatians

A very argumentative letter written in response to a doctrinal crisis that had engulfed Christians living in a specific region (modern-day Turkey) - whether Christ's atonement is completely sufficient for salvation or whether human works are also necessary. Two common nicknames for this letter are helpful—"the angry letter" (denoting the tone) and "the freedom letter" (denoting the theological argument of being free from the need to earn salvation by religious rituals).

Ephesians

A circular letter intended for the whole church. A case study in letter form: salutation (1:1-1), thanksgiving (1:3-22), body (2:1—4:16), list of exhortations (4:7—6:20), and close (6:21-24). Also characteristic of many New Testament epistles is the division into a doctrinal or theological half and a practical or moral half. Written in a polished and exalted style.

Philippians

A prison epistle written in Rome. Balancing numerous personal references dealing with Paul's relations to the recipients are famous passages with a universal "feel," such as the hymn that celebrates Christ's taking the form of a servant (2:5-11) and the "whatever is true" list (4:8-9). Philippians is also a missionary update letter.

Colossians

It is a rare New Testament epistle that does not make reference to doctrinal issues, but in some epistles, including Colossians, the task of countering heresy is a major part of the letter. Paul only briefly denounces the heresy (which claimed that something more than Christ is needed [2:8-23]), preferring to conduct his debate by declaring that Christ is all that is needed. This epistle is strongly Christ-centred climaxing in the famous Christ hymn that exalts the supremacy of Christ (1:15-20).

1 Thessalonians

An "open letter" intended for a group, but it is so full of statements of affection that it reads like a personal letter to an individual. There is a large autobiographical element and it ranges over a wide variety of topics, including Christ's second coming. Think of it as "programme notes" on living the Christian life.

2 Thessalonians

Partly a sequel to 1 Thessalonians, arising out of misunderstandings about when Christ would return and the need not to live idly in anticipation of that return. A theme in the letter is the need to exert oneself in the Christian faith and "not grow weary in doing good" (3:13).

1 Timothy

The first of a group known as the pastoral epistles written to individual pastors, 1 Timothy emerges as a manual for church life, with special emphasis on the role and conduct of the pastor.

2 Timothy

Paul's last will and testament, written while he was on death row in Rome. While following the usual format of New Testament epistles, it is also dominated by the genre known as the farewell discourse. Merging with that are elements of spiritual autobiography and a defence of the author's life.

Titus

A pastoral epistle written to a pastor on the island of Crete, this letter filled with commands is understood to be a general guidebook for living the Christian life in a world where evil seeks to destroy the good. The style is very compressed, reading almost like an outline. There are also directives for church organization.

Philemon

A single-chapter book known best for the story that lies behind it, namely, a runaway slave who had become a Christian and whom Paul is sending back to his owner (also a Christian) with the letter. The most literary aspect of the book is the delicate persuasion that Paul uses to induce Philemon to receive his slave with kindness.

Hebrews

A letter essay written in an exalted style. This Christ-centred book asserts the supremacy of Christ fulfilling the Old Testament. Christ is successively shown to be superior to prophets and angels (1-2), Moses (3), and the Old Testament priesthood (4-7); then the new covenant in Christ is shown to be superior to the old covenant (chapter 8 and following). A subtext is the need to hold fast to the Christian faith in a time of persecution. Another theme by which we remember the book is faith, climaxed in the famous roll call of faith in chapter 11.

James

Belongs to the genre of wisdom literature; accordingly, the basic unit is the proverb. The structure is a stream of consciousness. The goal is to impart skill for living, and a good tagline for the book is "faith that works."

1 Peter

Another very loosely organized epistle. The general progression is (1) the riches that believers possess in Christ, (2) duties for living the Christian life, and (3) how to endure suffering for the sake of Christ.

2 Peter

An informally arranged reminder of selected foundational truths of the Christian faith. The emphasis on remembering stems from the fact that this letter has affinities with that of the farewell discourse.

1 John

A letter built around the subject of tests by which people can know if they are Christians. An informal letter that yields a long list of separate topics instead of a tidy outline. 1 John resembles our familiar "position paper" on a subject that needs clarification.

2 John

An abbreviated letter, perhaps because John expected to visit the church soon (v. 14). The book falls readily into three parts: a reminder (4-6), a warning (7-9), and an instruction (10-11).

3 John

Like the books that precede and follow it, one of five one-chapter books in the Bible. A personal letter addressed to a specific person named Gaius, following the format of salutation, body, and personal greetings. It also fits the genre of the letter of instruction, with one of the topics being hospitality to travelling Christian teachers.

Jude

A "fireworks" letter, filled with vivid imagery and anger about the false teachers. The book is primarily an attack on evil. There is such an abundance of poetic imagery and figurative language that it becomes what literary scholars call poetic prose.

Revelation

The most literary book in the Bible full of poetry and symbolism, including visionary writing, prophecy, and apocalypse (literally "unveiling"). The book is structured as an unfolding series of scenes, each comprised of seven units (e.g., seven letters, seven seals, etc.).

CHURCH
FOR A
DIFFERENT
WORLD



Our Diocesan Prayer of Thanksgiving and Hope

Living and Loving God,
as your pilgrim people in Manchester Diocese
we thank you for the great commission
with which you have entrusted us:
to love and serve, and to bring
our parishes, schools, chaplaincies,
and all our communities
into new life in Jesus Christ.

Through your abundant love
lead us into your Kingdom
and grant us the trust to follow you;
meet our weariness, our griefs and fears
with your tender and comforting Spirit
that we may greet the promise
of each new day with joy and trust.

Teach us to pray in faith, hope and love,
that we may go out into your world
confident in your wondrous mission
and full of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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