



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Sunday 27th June 2021 The Fourth Sunday after Trinity

TODAY'S SERVICES

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 9:15am | Service of the Word at St. George's | Elaine Simkin |
| 11:00am | Service at St Bartholomew's | |
| 9:15am | Service at St. Thomas' | Revd Angela Wynne |

We pray for:

Those who are ill: Cassie Buono, Brian Cato, Christopher Davies, Christine Greenhalgh, Jenny Harris, Keith Haworth, Mario Heaton, Edith Ibbotson, Joan James, Patricia James, Mike Johnson, Geoff Kyte, Eileen Marsh, Jean Partington, Norman Sidlow.

Those who have died recently:

And on their anniversaries this week we remember: Gladys Crosswell, Ivy Darwell, Canon Thomas Davies [both former curate and rector of this parish], Ronald Howe, Margaret Lee, Bernard Norman, Violet Robinson-Todd.

This week:

Sunday services at St George's and St Thomas' continue this week at 9:15am and St. Bartholomew's at 11:00am.

The choir will be singing at St. Bartholomew's again this week with hymns relating to the theme of healing. Although there have been a number of doctors who have also been organists, including local ones, we've got music by "sick" composers this week. Pre-service we'll have Bach and Handel who, although they never met, were both treated by the same eye surgeon and both went blind as a result. After the service we'll have the Toccata from the Suite Gothique by Leon Boellmann who died at the age of 35 from tuberculosis.

The daily Bible readings this week complete the story of Abraham from the book of Genesis. For the basic overview, please consult last week's pewsheets plus. We also have the Feast Day of St. Peter and St. Paul to celebrate on Tuesday and St. Thomas' feast day on Saturday. We'll be marking this in our services next Sunday but there are the top ten best bits this week in case you want to swot up and look very clever at next Sunday's service.



LEPERS ... I HEAL LEPERS



Ordinations: St. Petertide is the traditional time for the church to ordain new deacons and priests. We remember all those preparing for ordination especially Andy Jones who will be ordained deacon by the Bishop of Manchester at Manchester cathedral on Sunday 4th July 10:30am and will be serving his curacy in our team. He'll have particular responsibility for St. George's during his time with us and will be living at Daisy Hill vicarage.

We pray for Andy, Katie and their son Harry as they prepare for this new ministry.

His first services with us will be at St. George's and St. Bartholomew's churches on Sunday 11th July.

Christian Aid Collection: across the parish we collected £340.65 and for the team [not including St. John's] £870.42 – with Gift Aid to claim the final total will be larger. Many thanks to all who contributed to this collection.

The PCC are meeting tomorrow [Monday 28th June] at 7:30pm by zoom. The agenda and links should have been sent out over the last week – please get in touch if you're on the PCC but haven't received a copy.

Bolton Parish Church: Bolton Parish Church of St Peter-le-Moors, Bolton was consecrated on St. Peter's Day in 1871 so celebrates its 150th birthday on Tuesday. As with everything else at the moment, their celebrations won't be what was planned but we pray for Revd Dr Canon Chris Bracegirdle, Kenneth Newport, Barrie Gaskell, Ian Hepburn, their new curate Grace Hart and all involved in the life, work and witness of the church in Bolton.

There are also the notices at the end. The Monthly Newsletter and Prayer Diary should also come out this weekend.

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>

Online Services from July: we'll be running the weekly online services until the end of June. In July and August we'll be running them on the first and third Sundays only.



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The Collect:

Gracious Father, by the obedience of Jesus you brought salvation to our wayward world: draw us into harmony with your will, that we may find all things restored in him, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading Lamentations 3. 23 - 33

The LORD's compassions are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young. Let him sit alone in silence, for the LORD has laid it on him. Let him bury his face in the dust - there may yet be hope. Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him, and let him be filled with disgrace. For men are not cast off by the LORD for ever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men.

New Testament Reading:

2 Corinthians 8. 7 - end

⁷You excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you – so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

⁸I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. ⁹For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. ¹⁰And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something – ¹¹now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. ¹²For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has – not according to what one does not have. ¹³I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between ¹⁴your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. ¹⁵As it is written, 'The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.'

¹⁶But thanks be to God who put in the heart of Titus the same eagerness for you that I myself have. ¹⁷For he not only accepted our appeal, but since he is more eager than ever, he is going to you of his own accord. ¹⁸With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his proclaiming the good news;^[a] ¹⁹and not only that, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us while we are administering this generous undertaking^[b] for the glory of the Lord himself^[c] and to show our goodwill. ²⁰We intend that no one should blame us about this generous gift that we are administering, ²¹for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others. ²²And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found eager in many matters, but who is now more eager than

ever because of his great confidence in you. ²³As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker in your service; as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. ²⁴Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

Gospel Reading: Mark 5. 21 - end

²¹When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the lake. ²²Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, ²³fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, 'My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.' ²⁴So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.' ²⁹Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' ³¹And his disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, "Who touched me?"' ³²He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.' ³⁵While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?' ³⁶But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe.' ³⁷He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. ³⁸When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹When he had entered, he said to them, 'Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.' ⁴⁰And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha cum,' which means, 'Little girl, get up!' ⁴²And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. ⁴³He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

The Post Communion Prayer:

Eternal God, comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken, you have fed us at the table of life and hope: teach us the ways of gentleness and peace, that all the world may acknowledge the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Homily: Elaine Simkin

Lord, we bow in your presence, May, your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher, and your greater glory our concern. Amen.

I would like to start today by asking a question...How do you feel about touch? Do you like to be touched?

Well, like it or not, the last 18 months of this pandemic have stopped all of us hugging, touching, shaking hands, having a cuddle with those we love, and even those we don't particularly like. For some people it's been a blessing, for other a time of sorrow for not being able to cuddle our loved ones.

Touch is a very powerful thing, don't you agree?

I read an interesting article this week about the power of human touch. Many studies have been done about the devastating effects on infants if they are deprived of human touch. This is also true for adults. Most of us love to be touched.

Today we are going to look at the story of two touches ...

It's a story about three main characters: Jesus and two women.

First, let's look at Jesus.

Wherever Jesus went he always had a huge crowd following him around. Imagine taking The Beatles in their heyday, Billy Graham, Our Queen Elizabeth, mashing them all together and multiplying it by 100. That is the kind of fame that Jesus had in the first half of his ministry.

Jesus was a rock star.

There are three reasons why Jesus was very popular. The three "P" s

Preaching, Parables and Power.

The people loved his preaching because he taught with authority.

They loved his parables. The stories made it easier to understand ...He told stories that invite people to have "ears to ear," to learn and explore the deep mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

The third reason everybody loved Jesus was his Power... In today's gospel we see Jesus casting out demons and healing the sick. His unique Power.

We take this man who can mesmerize people with his teaching and combine it with someone who can heal the sick and restore the tortured soul, and you've got it... Jesus the rock star...

Today we see that Jesus heals by touching two women.

Let's start with the girl who has a life-threatening fever.

She is not just any girl. This is the daughter of Jairus. He is the leader of the synagogue. He's a big deal in their town. A powerful man. His daughter is well known



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in society...she's twelve years old. To be twelve in an ancient Jewish village would be equivalent to being 17 years old today. She is just about to become a full adult woman in society.

Jairus is so worried about his daughter that he walks up to Jesus, in the middle of the huge crowd, and falls at his feet, he actually begs Jesus to come and heal her from the fever. Everyone is worried about this girl. Jesus sees the urgency and starts walking to the house.

Then something happens.

Another woman enters the scene. She's had a disease, a haemorrhage, for 12 years. Now, in our modern times, we would think, "Oh, that's a shame," but it's not a big deal. With today medicine and NHS she can be treated and cured ...

So, we need to take a moment and try to grasp what's really happening here.

No one had touched this woman for twelve years. It was thought when a woman bleed she was unclean,

Nobody in society today would have been pushed so far to the margins, that they are unclean and untouchable, unable to be cured or helped...

This woman musters up her courage, pushes through the crowd, and touches the hem of Jesus' cloak. He stops and asks "Who touched me?"

He sees this woman. He sees the longing, the desperation, and the courage it took for her to do what she did. He stoops down, touches her, and says, "Daughter, your faith has made you well."

Just then, a messenger comes from Jairus' house. The girl is dead.

Jesus leaves the crowd. And enters the house...she is dead, but he touches her, and said "little girl, get up."

In both cases, these were forbidden touches. The Law of Moses clearly stated that, if anyone touches a bleeding woman or a dead body, then that person would become unclean.

But, when Jesus touches the unclean person..... His power is their healing...

This is the power of Jesus' touch. To make that which the law declares as unclean... to be well and clean again.

We all need that touch, we should all have that faith, only found in Jesus the rockstar...Have that Faith.

Amen.



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Intercessions

We pray in the name of Christ, by whom we are raised to new life.

Lord, look in your mercy on your Church. Our hope lies in your word and we draw strength from you and from each other as we gather to worship you. Heal your Church, both the wounds of the past and those we inflict on each other in the present. Heal the dissensions which divide us from one another, and bring us into unity of love in you, so that we may reach out to a troubled world in your name.

Lord, make us whole that we may do your will: in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, in a world whose web of life is intricate and beautiful, save us from carelessness and blindness. In a world whose creatures are so varied and so vulnerable, save us from wanton plundering. In a world whose oceans should cleanse the earth, save us from absent-minded pollution. In a world whose forests protect the very air that we breathe, save us from the urge to destroy them in the name of profit. In a world whose fruits are rich and plentiful, save us from waste and greed.

Lord, make us whole that we may do your will: in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, you have given to us in abundance: may we share that abundance with those amongst whom we live. Help us to overcome all that divides us, and to build up all that makes for the common good. When new ventures are struggling to survive, we ask you to breathe on them your life-giving oxygen, and water them with your living water so that they may be brought to thrive.

Lord, make us whole that we may do your will: in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, we bring before you all those who are empty, exhausted or in anguish. All those who feel themselves alone, marooned in a bleak wasteland, and unable to see a brighter horizon. Like watchmen waiting for the morning, they hope for the dawn. Pour on them, we pray, your healing grace, so they may feel the reality of your compassion and love and begin once more to hope in the possibilities of the new day.

Lord, make us whole that we may do your will: in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for the souls of all that have recently died. Comfort all those whom they loved, and were loved by in return and may the departed arise to life eternal in you.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers...



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Verse 1

We cannot measure how you heal
or answer every sufferer's prayer,
yet we believe your grace responds
where faith and doubt unite to care.
Your hands, though bloodied on the cross,
survive to hold and heal and warn,
to carry all through death to life
and cradle children yet unborn.

Verse 2

The pain that will not go away,
the guilt that clings from things long past,
the fear of what the future holds,
are present as if meant to last.
But present too is love which tends
the hurt we never hoped to find,
the private agonies inside,
the memories that haunt the mind.

Verse 3

So some have come who need your help
and some have come to make amends,
as hands which shaped and saved the world
are present in the touch of friends.
Lord, let your Spirit meet us here
to mend the body, mind and soul,
to disentangle peace from pain,
and make your broken people whole.

Words: John Bell [b.1949] and Graham Maule [1958-2019] (of the *Iona Community*, Scotland)
composed this hymn text in 1989.

Music: Ye Banks and Braes traditional Scottish tune.



Monday 28th June

Genesis 18. 16 – end

¹⁶ Then the men got up to leave. They looked toward Sodom and began walking in that direction. Abraham walked with them to send them on their way.

Abraham's Bargain With God

¹⁷ The LORD said to himself, "Should I tell Abraham what I am going to do now? ¹⁸ Abraham will become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on earth will be blessed because of him. ¹⁹ I have made a special agreement with him. I did this so that he would command his children and his descendants to live the way the LORD wants them to. I did this so that they would live right and be fair. Then I, the LORD, can give him what I promised."

²⁰ Then the LORD said, "I have heard many times that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are very evil. ²¹ I will go and see if they are as bad as I have heard. Then I will know for sure."

²² So the men turned and started walking toward Sodom while Abraham stood there before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham approached him and asked, "Will you destroy the good people while you are destroying those who are evil? ²⁴ What if there are fifty good people in that city? Will you still destroy it? Surely you will save the city for the fifty good people living there. ²⁵ Surely you would not destroy the city. You would not destroy fifty good people to kill those who are evil. If that happened, those who are good would be the same as those who are evil—both would be punished. As the judge of the whole world, surely you would do the right thing!"

²⁶ Then the LORD said, "If I find fifty good people in the city of Sodom, I will save the whole city."

²⁷ Then Abraham said, "Compared to you, Lord, I am only dust and ashes. But let me bother you again and ask you this question. ²⁸ What if there are five less than fifty? Will you destroy a whole city because of just five people?"

The Lord said, "If I find forty-five good people there, I will not destroy the city."

²⁹ Abraham spoke again. He said, "And if you find only forty good people there, will you destroy the city?"

The Lord said, "If I find forty good people, I will not destroy the city."

³⁰ Then Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry with me, but let me ask you this. If only thirty good people are in the city, will you destroy it?"

The Lord said, "If I find thirty good people there, I will not destroy the city."

³¹ Then Abraham said, "Lord, may I bother you again and ask, what if there are twenty good people?"

The Lord answered, "If I find twenty good people, I will not destroy the city."

³² Then Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry with me, but let me bother you this one last time. If you find ten good people there, what will you do?"

The Lord said, "If I find ten good people in the city, I will not destroy it."

³³ The LORD finished speaking to Abraham and left. Then Abraham went back home.

We carry on from last week where Abraham has been visited by three strangers one of whom he realises is God. As they come to leave, Abraham went with the men for a short distance as was the custom with any visitor. But he knew that one traveller was God, so Abraham had another reason to go with them - he loved to be with God.

God wants us to know what he is doing [v. 17]. Jesus said the same thing to his followers in John 15:15. He said, 'I do not call you my servants. A servant does not know what his master will do. But I have called you friends.'



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There were 2 men that went further [v.22] who we think of as angels (Genesis 19:1.) The other man was God who stayed and he talked with Abraham. Until Jesus was born, God seldom appeared as a man, but he appears here to Abraham who was called 'God's friend' (James 2:23.)

Because God had heard that the city of Sodom was so evil, he had decided to destroy the city. But by his prayer [v.23-25], Abraham changed what God intended to do. God now intended to save Sodom if there were 10 good inhabitants. Abraham could not have prayed like this if God had not told him his plan, so God and Abraham were working together. Abraham said, 'I am only dust and ashes' meaning that that he was worth nothing and God was very much greater than he was. Abraham meant that he was only a man and God had made man from dust. (See Genesis 2:7.)

God does not usually give judgement on whole cities or on whole nations but save individuals and he will give judgement on each person.

God of yesterday, today and tomorrow,
we call to mind your presence within us and around
us.

Open our ears that we may hear your Word.
Open our hearts that we may understand your Word.
Open our mouths that we may speak your Word.

Inspire us with the Gospel message,
that we may celebrate all that is life-giving,
restore hope where it has been lost,
and work to bring about change where it is needed.

May we live the Gospel with courage, constancy and
love.

May we be open to the challenge of your call to true
freedom.

May we be faithful to you in our daily choices and
decisions.

May we make your love known through our words
and actions.

May the three-in-one God reign in our hearts, now
and forever. **Amen**





Tuesday 29th June St Peter and St Paul

So, in X-Factor style, let's have a look at St. Peter's top twelve best bits – it should be 10 but there's a lot to cover!

1. St. Peter, who was also known as Simon Peter or Cephas [which means "Rock"], was ordained by Jesus as the rock on which I shall build my church. [Matthew 16: 17-18](#)

2. Peter was a native of Bethsaida, near Lake Tiberias and was the son of Jonah. He and his brother Andrew, both apostles, were fishermen on Lake Genesareth [Luke 5](#).

Just like that, Peter followed Jesus and his life was changed forever. Though he was one of the first disciples called to follow Jesus and eventually became the spokesman for the group, Peter is known for his "little faith."

3. While Jesus prayed, the boat the disciples were on was experiencing rough waves and "In the fourth watch of the night," Jesus approached their boat as he walked on the water. When his disciples spied Jesus walking on the water, they were afraid but Jesus called to them and said, "Courage! It's me! Don't be afraid." Peter answered "Lord ... if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water."

Jesus told him to come so Peter began to walk toward Jesus on the surface of the water. It wasn't until he noticed the wind that he began to fear and cried "Lord ... save me!" Jesus touched him and said, "You have so little faith ... why did you doubt?" [Matthew 14. 22 - end](#)

4. Another famous story is Peter's attempt to save Jesus from the soldiers who came to take Him away. "Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword back in its scabbard; am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?' The cohort and its tribune and the Jewish guards seized Jesus and bound him." [John 18:10 - 12](#)

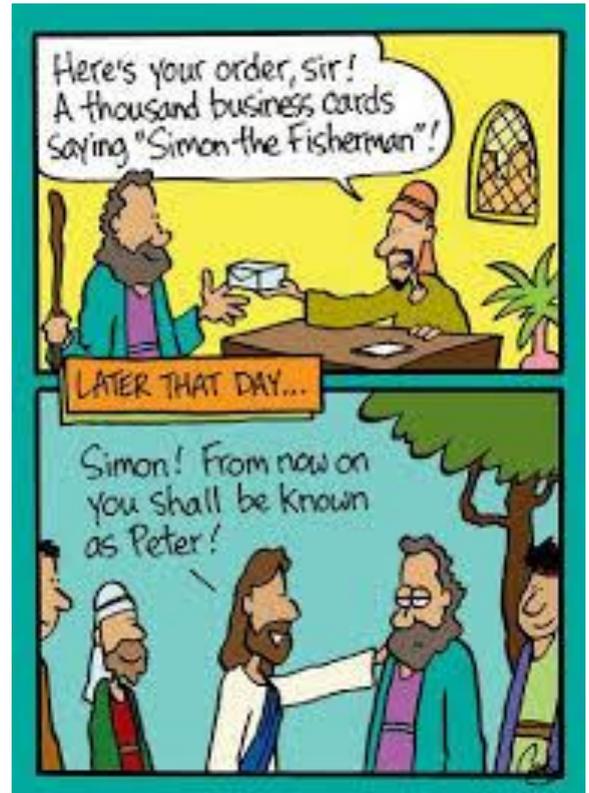
5. Following the failed attempt to save Jesus, Peter was recorded denying Jesus, which He foretold during the Last Supper. [Mark 14:18 - 31](#). Regardless of his claims, Peter did deny Christ three times. [Mark 14: 66 - 72](#)

6. Following Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, it was Peter who first entered the empty tomb. When Peter heard Mary of Magdala, Joanna, and Mary, the mother of James, claim Jesus' tomb was empty, he "went off to the tomb, running. He bent down and looked in and saw the linen cloths but nothing else; he then went back home, amazed at what had happened." [Luke 24:12](#)

7. Jesus resurrected, appeared before Peter first. "The tradition I handed on to you in the first place, a tradition which I had myself received was that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried; and that on the third day, he was raised to life, in accordance with the scriptures; and that he appeared to [Peter of] Cephas; and later to the Twelve. [1 Corinthians 15:3 - 7](#)

8. Peter is given three chances to admit his love for Jesus, and each time he says he does; with the three confirmations of love, Peter was able to balance his three previous denials. [John:21:12-23](#)

9. In the time following Christ's Ascension, Peter stood as the unquestionable head of the Apostles, which the book of Acts clearly describes. He went on to appoint the replacement of Judas Iscariot,





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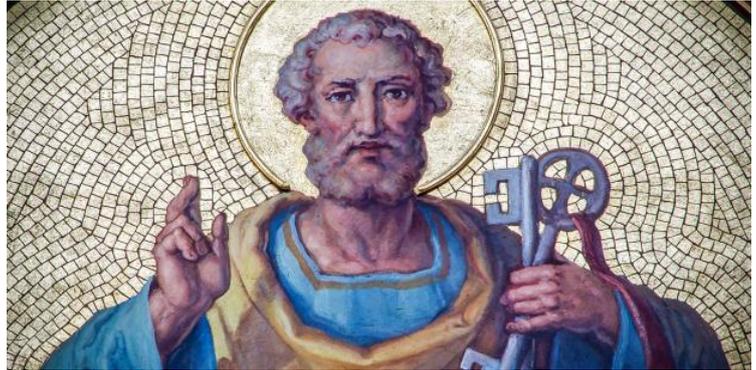
St George

spoke first to the crowds that had assembled after the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and he was the first Apostle to perform miracles in the name of the Lord. [Acts 1. 15 - end / Acts 2. 14 - end](#)

10. Peter was instrumental in bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles [non-Jews]. He baptized the Roman pagan Cornelius, and at the Council of Jerusalem gave his support to preach to Gentiles, thereby permitting the new Church to become universal. [Acts chapters 3 - 12](#)

11. There are so many stories about Peter in Acts; one of note was when he was imprisoned by King Herod Agrippa but was able to escape with the help of an angel. King Herod had begun to persecute specific members of the church and had James, the brother of John beheaded. The Jewish community was grateful for the persecutions so Herod continued and went after Peter. [Acts 12: 4 - 11](#)

12. Following his escape, Peter resumed his work in Jerusalem and his missionary efforts included travels to such cities as Antioch, Corinth, and eventually Rome. He made reference to Rome in his first Epistle by noting that he writes from Babylon. Through a variety of works, it is certain that Peter died in Rome and that his martyrdom came during the reign of Emperor Nero, believed to be in 64 AD. He is traditionally acknowledged to be the first Bishop of Rome [Pope].



In liturgical art, he is depicted as an elderly man holding the keys of the kingdom of heaven [Matthew 16: 19](#) or with a church modelled on St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, an inverted cross [*he was reported to have been crucified upside down*] or a cockerel as a reminder of his denial of Jesus.

Acts 12. 1 - 11

During this same time, King Herod began to do harm to some of those who were part of the church. ²He ordered James, the brother of John, to be killed with a sword. ³Herod saw that many of the Jews liked this, so he decided to arrest Peter too. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. ⁴He arrested Peter and put him in jail, where he was guarded by a group of 16 soldiers. Herod planned to bring Peter before the people, but he wanted to wait until after the Passover festival. ⁵So Peter was kept in jail, but the church was constantly praying to God for him.

Peter Is Led Out of the Jail

⁶One night, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two of the soldiers. More soldiers were guarding the door of the jail. Herod

was planning to bring Peter out before the people the next day. ⁷Suddenly an angel of the Lord was standing there, and the room was filled with light. The angel tapped Peter on the side and woke him up. The angel said, "Hurry, get up!" The chains fell off Peter's hands. ⁸The angel said, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." Peter did as he was told. Then the angel said, "Put on your coat and follow me."

⁹So the angel went out and Peter followed. He did not know if the angel was really doing this. He thought he might be seeing a vision. ¹⁰Peter and the angel went past the first guard and the second guard. Then they came to the iron gate that separated them from the city. The gate opened for them by itself. After they went through the gate and walked about a block, the angel suddenly left.

¹¹Peter realized then what had happened. He thought, "Now I know that the Lord really sent his angel to me. He rescued me from Herod and from everything those Jews thought would happen to me."



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2 Timothy 4. 6 – 8 & 17 - 18

⁶ My life is being given as an offering for God. The time has come for me to leave this life here. ⁷ I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have served the Lord faithfully. ⁸ Now, a prize is waiting for me—the crown that will show I am right with God. The Lord, the judge who judges rightly, will give it to me on that Day. Yes,

he will give it to me and to everyone else who is eagerly looking forward to his coming.

¹⁷ But the Lord stayed with me. The Lord gave me strength so that I could tell the Good News everywhere. He wanted all those who are not Jews to hear that Good News. So I was saved from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will save me when anyone tries to hurt me. He will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. Glory forever and ever be the Lord's. Amen.

Matthew 16. 13 - 19

Peter Says Jesus Is the Messiah

¹³ Jesus went to the area of Caesarea Philippi. He said to his followers, "Who do people say I am?"

¹⁴ They answered, "Some people say you are John the Baptist. Others say you are Elijah. And some say you are Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵ Then Jesus said to his followers, "And who do you say I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ Jesus answered, "You are blessed, Simon son of Jonah. No one taught you that. My Father in heaven showed you who I am. ¹⁸ So I tell you, you are Peter. And I will build my church on this rock. The power of death will not be able to defeat my church. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys to God's kingdom. When you speak judgment here on earth, that judgment will be God's judgment. When you promise forgiveness here on earth, that forgiveness will be God's forgiveness."

Collect – for those being ordained

*God our Father, Lord of all the world,
through your Son you have called us into the
fellowship of your universal Church:
hear our prayer for your faithful people
that in their vocation and ministry
each may be an instrument of your love,
and give to your servants now to be ordained
the needful gifts of grace;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.***

Collect – St. Peter and St. Paul

*Almighty God,
whose blessed apostles Peter and Paul
glorified you in their death as in their life;
grant that your Church
inspired by their teaching and example
and made one by your Spirit
may ever stand firm upon the one foundation,
Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen***

For Bolton Parish Church – 150th Anniversary of Consecration

*Gracious God,
We celebrate the 150th anniversary of the consecration of Bolton Parish Church,
We give thanks for all who have made it a house of prayer.
May all people, like St Peter, proclaim with confidence that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.
Bless the ongoing work of Bolton Parish Church,
as we give thanks for the past, live fully in the present and look with hope to the future. **Amen***



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Wednesday 30th June

Genesis 21. 5 - 20

⁵ Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born. ⁶ Sarah said, "God has made me happy, and everyone who hears about this will be happy with me. ⁷ No one thought that I, Sarah, would be able to have Abraham's child. But I have given Abraham a son, even though he is old."

Trouble at Home

⁸ Isaac continued to grow, and soon he was old enough to begin eating solid food. So Abraham gave a big party. ⁹ Sarah saw Hagar's son playing. (Hagar was the Egyptian slave woman who gave birth to Abraham's first son.) ¹⁰ Sarah said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son. Send them away! When we die, our son Isaac will get everything we have. I don't want that slave woman's son sharing these things with my son Isaac!"

¹¹ This upset Abraham very much. He was worried about his son Ishmael. ¹² But God said to Abraham, "Don't worry about the boy and the slave woman. Do what Sarah wants. Your descendants will be those who come through Isaac. ¹³ But I will also bless the son of your slave woman. He is your son, so I will make a great nation from his family also."

¹⁴ Early the next morning Abraham took some food and water and gave them to Hagar. She carried them and left with her boy. She left that place and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.

¹⁵ After some time, when all their drinking water was gone, Hagar put her son under a bush. ¹⁶ Then she walked a short distance away and sat down. She thought her son would die because there was no water. She did not want to watch him die. She sat there and began to cry.

¹⁷ God heard the boy crying, and God's angel called to Hagar from heaven. He said, "What is wrong, Hagar? Don't be afraid! God has heard the boy crying there. ¹⁸ Go help the boy. Hold his hand and lead him. I will make him the father of many people."

¹⁹ Then God allowed Hagar to see a well of water. So she went to the well and filled her bag with water. Then she gave water to the boy to drink.

²⁰ God continued to be with the boy while he grew up. Ishmael lived in the desert and became a hunter. He learned to shoot a bow very well. ²¹ His mother found a wife for him in Egypt. They continued to live in the Paran desert.

To recap, God had promised that Abraham would be the father of a nation and have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. Abraham has doubted this as he and his wife Sarah were so old, so Abraham has his first son, Ishmael with his servant, Hagar. But God promised again to Abraham and Sarah that they would have their own son who would found the new nation. Sarah did not believe what God said and laughed, treating this as a joke (Genesis 18:12.) After Isaac's birth when Abraham was 100 [v.5], Sarah laughed again, this time through happiness.

So now we get to the family arguments! Ishmael knew that he was Abraham's oldest son and thought that he, Ishmael, would have the rights that go with that, including inheriting Abraham's wealth after Abraham's death. He behaved as if he were more important than Isaac.

But in God's promise to Abraham, when his name was still Abram (Genesis 15:4-5.) God promised that Abraham would have a son, Isaac, and by that son, Abraham would have very many descendants. God intended that Isaac should have the rights of the oldest son as he was the son of Sarah, whom God had chosen as Abraham's wife. If Ishmael remained, he would have the rights of the oldest son. Therefore, God told Abraham to send away Ishmael and his mother, Hagar. But Ishmael did not become completely separate from Abraham. When Abraham died, Isaac and Ishmael together buried him (Genesis 25:9.)



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

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St Thomas

St George

Abraham gave to Hagar and Ishmael all that they needed. They could have gone to another family as servants, but Hagar chose to wander in the desert which was not yet called Beer-sheba. Abraham and Abimelech named it at a later time (verse 31.)

Ishmael was about 17 years of age. The heat and the lack of water affected him more than they affected Hagar so she took him to sit in the shade. But Abraham had taught Ishmael to know God and saved them both, promising that Ishmael would found a great dynasty also.

Father, you have given all peoples one common origin.

It is your will that they be gathered together as one family in yourself.

Fill the hearts of all with the fire of your love and with the desire to ensure justice for all.

By sharing the good things you give us, may we secure an equality for all

our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

May there be an end to division, strife and war.

May there be a dawning of a truly human society built on love and peace.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.



Thursday 1st July

Genesis 22. 1 - 19

Abraham, Kill Your Son

22 After these things God decided to test Abraham's faith. God said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Yes!"

² Then God said, "Take your son to the land of Moriah and kill your son there as a sacrifice for me. This must be Isaac, your only son, the one you love. Use him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains there. I will tell you which mountain."

³ In the morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took Isaac and two servants with him. He cut the wood for the sacrifice. Then they went to the place where God told them to go. ⁴ After they travelled three days, Abraham looked up, and in the distance he saw the place where they were going. ⁵ Then he said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go to that place and worship. Then we will come back to you later."

⁶ Abraham took the wood for the sacrifice and put it on his son's shoulder. Abraham took the special knife and fire. Then both he and his son went together to the place for worship.

⁷ Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!"

Abraham answered, "Yes, son?"

Isaac said, "I see the wood and the fire. But where is the lamb we will burn as a sacrifice?"

⁸ Abraham answered, "God himself is providing the lamb for the sacrifice, my son."

So both Abraham and his son went together to that place. ⁹ When they came to the place where God told them to go, Abraham built an altar. He carefully laid the wood on the altar. Then he tied up his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham reached for his knife to kill his son.

¹¹ But the angel of the LORD stopped him. The angel called from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"



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St Thomas

St George

Abraham answered, "Yes?"

¹² The angel said, "Don't kill your son or hurt him in any way. Now I can see that you do respect and obey God. I see that you are ready to kill your son, your only son, for me."

¹³ Then Abraham noticed a ram whose horns were caught in a bush. So Abraham went and took the ram. He offered it, instead of his son, as a sacrifice to God. ¹⁴ So Abraham gave that place a name, "The LORD Provides." Even today people say, "On the mountain of the LORD, he will give us what we need."

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time. ¹⁶ The angel said, "You were ready to kill your only son for me. Since you did this for me, I make you this promise: I, the LORD, promise that ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and give you as many descendants as the stars in the sky. There will be as many people as sand on the seashore. And your people will live in cities that they will take from their enemies. ¹⁸ Every nation on the earth will be blessed through your descendants. I will do this because you obeyed me."

¹⁹ Then Abraham went back to his servants. They all travelled back to Beersheba, and Abraham stayed there.

This is one of those passages in the Bible that's hard to read and very difficult to explain. God is setting Abraham an impossible dilemma to prove that Abraham trusted him completely.

'Moriah' was Jerusalem - see [2 Chronicles 3:1](#) which tells us that, many years after this time, Solomon built a building for God on the hill called Moriah at Jerusalem. People offered sacrifices of animals in that building on the site where God told Abraham to kill Isaac.

Abraham probably expected that God would bring Isaac back from death [[Hebrews 11:17-19](#)] seems to mean this, but Abraham did not guess what God actually intended to do. In serving God, he trusted him completely without knowing what he actually intended to do. He may do something more wonderful than that which we expected.

Isaac was familiar with offerings [[v.7](#)]. God's ancient people used to give animals to God as offerings. Noah did that when the flood was over ([Genesis 8:20](#)) and Abraham did that at Mamre ([Genesis 13:18](#).) So Isaac had seen Abraham kill a lamb (young sheep) as a gift to God and he expected that Abraham would do the same thing again. 'God himself will provide a lamb'. Abraham said this so that Isaac would not be afraid. This had another meaning also, however, that Abraham did not know about. Many years later God provided Jesus as an offering ([John 1:29, 36](#).)

So in this passage, God is teaching about Jesus, centuries before Jesus walked on earth. And he did that very many years before Jesus came. God had said that Isaac should die but provided a ram to take his place. In the same way, Jesus was given as the one perfect sacrifice for all people.

In [v.16](#), God used the words "I, the Lord promise" in this promise. These words meant that the promise was absolutely firm. God does not change and therefore the promise will not change. God had not used these words before and used them on only 3 other occasions in the Old Testament [[discussed more in Hebrews 6:13-18](#).] God blessed Abraham because he had obeyed him.



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St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Friday 2nd July

Genesis 23. 1 – 4 & 19 / 24. 1 – 8 & 62 - end

Sarah Dies

23 Sarah lived to be 127 years old. ² She died in the city of Kiriath Arba (Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Abraham was very sad and cried for her there. ³ Then he left his dead wife and went to talk to the Hittites. He said, ⁴ “I am only a foreigner staying in your country. I have no place to bury my wife. Please give me some land so that I can bury her.”

¹⁹ After this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of that field near Mamre (Hebron) in the land of Canaan.

A Wife for Isaac

24 Abraham lived to be a very old man. The LORD blessed him and everything he did. ² Abraham’s oldest servant was in charge of everything he owned. Abraham called that servant to him and said, “Put your hand under my leg. ³ Now I want you to make a promise to me. Promise to me before the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry a girl from Canaan. We live among these people, but don’t let him marry a Canaanite girl. ⁴ Go back to my country, to my own people, to find a wife for my son Isaac. Bring her here to him.”

⁵ The servant said to him, “Maybe this woman will not want to come back with me to this land. If that happens, should I take your son with me to your homeland?”

⁶ Abraham said to him, “No, don’t take my son to that place. ⁷ The LORD, the God of heaven, brought me from my homeland to this place. That place was the home of my father and the home of my family, but he promised that this new land would belong to my family. May he send his angel before you so that you can choose a wife for my son. ⁸ If the girl refuses to come with you, you will be free from this promise. But you must not take my son back to that place.”

⁶² Isaac had left Beer Lahai Roi and was now living in the Negev. ⁶³ One evening he went out to the field to think. He looked up and saw the camels coming from far away.

⁶⁴ Rebekah also looked and saw Isaac. Then she jumped down from the camel. ⁶⁵ She said to the servant, “Who is that young man walking in the field to meet us?”

The servant said, “That is my master’s son.” So Rebekah covered her face with her veil.

⁶⁶ The servant told Isaac everything that had happened. ⁶⁷ Then Isaac brought the girl into his mother’s tent. Rebekah became his wife that day. Isaac loved her very much. So he was comforted after his mother’s death.

The Hittites were the people who lived in that country before Abraham arrived.

The servant referred to in 24.2 was probably Eliezer (Genesis 15:2.) ‘Put your hand under my leg’ sounds really odd to us but was a sign of an important promise.

Abraham wanted his son to marry someone from his own tribe and when he said ‘my country’, he meant west Mesopotamia. Abraham had lived there, in the city that was called Hara (Genesis 11:31) the land that is between the river Tigris and the river Euphrates, now mostly in the countries of Syria and Iraq.

*‘He will send his *angel in front of you’ [v.7] does not mean that his servant would see an angel. Abraham meant that God and his angel would make the journey successful, following the correct route to the right place.*

The Negev is a desert region in the south of Canaan where Isaac meets Rebekah and they married on the same day.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

*It helps, now and then, to step back
and take a long view.*

*The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even
beyond our vision.*

*We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of
the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.*

*Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying
that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.*

No sermon says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings complete wholeness.

No programme accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

*We water seeds already planted, knowing that they
hold future promise.*

*We lay foundations that will need further
development.*

*We provide yeast that produces far beyond our
capabilities.*

*We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of
liberation in realizing that.*

*This enables us to do something, and to do it very
well.*

*It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,
a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's
grace to enter and do the rest.*

*We may never see the end results, but that is the
difference between the master builder and the
worker.*

*We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not
messiahs.*

We are prophets of a future not our own.

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it:

a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;

a world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;

a world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;

a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.

*Give us the inspiration and courage to build our part today, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.***



Saturday 3rd July St. Thomas the Apostle

So, here's St. Thomas' top 10 best bits:

1. St. Thomas was born a Jew and was called to be one of the twelve Apostles. His birth and death dates [? AD 72] are unknown, but his feast day is celebrated July 3.

2. He is recorded as being a twin – the name Thomas means “a twin”. *John 11.16*

3. He was a dedicated but impetuous follower of Christ. When Jesus said He was returning to Judea to visit His sick friend Lazarus, Thomas immediately urged the other Apostles to accompany Him on the trip which involved certain danger and possible death because of the mounting hostility of the authorities. *John 11.12 – 16*

4. When Christ told His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them to which they also might come because they knew both the place and the way, Thomas pleaded that they did not understand and received the assurance that Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. *John 14. 1 - 7*

5. St. Thomas is best known for his role in verifying the Resurrection of his Master. Thomas' unwillingness to believe that the other Apostles had seen their risen Lord on the first Easter Sunday earned him the title of "doubting Thomas." *John 20. 24 - 25*

6. Eight days later, on Christ's second appearance, Thomas was gently rebuked for his scepticism and furnished with the evidence he had demanded - seeing in Christ's wounds in his hands and side. After verifying the wounds were true, St. Thomas became convinced of the reality of the Resurrection and exclaimed, "My Lord and My God," thus making a public Profession of Faith. *John 20. 26 - 29*

7. St. Thomas is also mentioned as being present at another Resurrection appearance of Jesus - at Lake Tiberias, when a miraculous catch of fish occurred. *John 20. 1 - 8*

8. This is all that we know about St. Thomas from the New Testament. Tradition says that after Pentecost this saint was sent to evangelize to the Parthians, Medes, and Persians. He ultimately reached India, carrying the Faith to the Malabar coast, which still boasts a large native population calling themselves "Christians of St. Thomas."

9. According to tradition, Thomas was killed in an accident when a hunter shot at a peacock and struck Thomas instead. Following his death, some of his relics were taken to Edessa while the rest were kept in India. They can still be found within the San Thome Basilica in Chennai, Mylapore, India. The relics taken to Edessa were moved in 1258 to Italy, where they can be found in the Cathedral of St. Thomas the Apostle in Ortona, Italy. However, it is believed that Saint Thomas' skull rests in the Monastery of Saint John the Theologian on the Greek Island Patmos.

10. In art, Saint Thomas is commonly depicted as a young man holding a scroll, or as a young adult touching the resurrected Christ's wounds.





PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Habbakuk 2. 1 – 4

I will stand like a guard and watch.

I will wait to see what the LORD will say to me.
I will wait and learn how he answers my questions.

God Answers Habakkuk

²The LORD answered me, "Write down what I show you. Write it clearly on a sign so that the message will be easy to read. ³This message is about a special time in the future. This message is about the end, and it will come true. Just be patient and wait for it. That time will come; it will not be late. ⁴This message cannot help those who refuse to listen to it, but those who are good will live because they believe it.

John 20. 24 - 29

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴Thomas (called Didymus) was one of the twelve, but he was not with the other followers when Jesus came. ²⁵They told him, "We saw the Lord." Thomas said, "That's hard to believe. I will have to see the nail holes in his hands, put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side. Only then will I believe it."

²⁶A week later the followers were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand here in my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!"

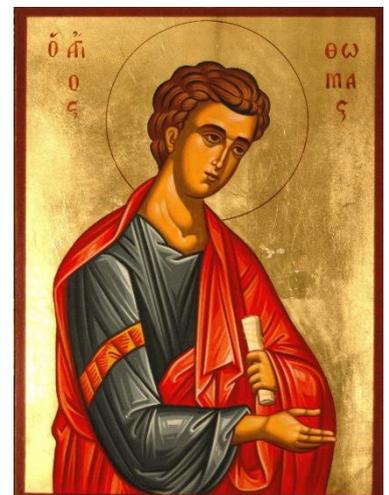
²⁹Jesus said to him, "You believe because you see me. Great blessings belong to the people who believe without seeing me!"

Collect – St. Thomas

*Almighty and eternal God,
who, for the firmer foundation of our faith,
allowed your holy apostle Thomas
to doubt the resurrection of your Son
till word and sight convinced him:
grant to us, who have not seen, that we also may believe
and so confess Christ as our Lord and our God;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

Ephesians 2. 19 – end

¹⁹So now you non-Jewish people are not visitors or strangers, but you are citizens together with God's holy people. You belong to God's family. ²⁰You believers are like a building that God owns. That building was built on the foundation that the apostles and prophets prepared. Christ Jesus himself is the most important stone in that building. ²¹The whole building is joined together in Christ, and he makes it grow and become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in Christ you are being built together with his other people. You are being made into a place where God lives through the Spirit.





PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

NOTICEBOARD:

*The Children's Society box collection has now been completed.
£329-09 has been sent to the Children's Society to help vulnerable children.
Thank you to all who have continued to contribute throughout these challenging times.
If you would like a collection box or just to send a donation, please let us know.
Andrew & Christine Jolley
Westhoughton Parish representatives for The Children's Society.
01942 815820*

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

Next Sunday: St Thomas the Apostle

Readings: Habakkuk 2. 1 - 4 / Ephesians 2. 19 - end / John 20. 24 - 29

9:15 am Service of the Word at St George's Church Elaine Simkin

11:00am Service of the Word at St. Bartholomew's Church Alan Morris

9:15am Holy Communion at St. Thomas' Revd Angela Wynne

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

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

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