

St. Thomas' Moorside

May 2022

£1

swallow a nest

where she may raise

Just as the sparrow has found a home and the

her young, my resting place is in your house, O



and my God. Ps 84:3

LORD my King

Keep up to date with worship and events online:-

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Letter from the Vicar

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I hope you are all continuing to celebrate the good news of Easter. Never forget that in the Church the season of celebration is longer than the season of preparation. So, Eastertide is longer than Lent. Christmas and Epiphany are longer than Advent. Christianity is a religion of joy and hope and this is reflected in how the Church celebrates and give thanks.

Holy Week and Easter are the most important events in the story of our faith, and should be shared with everyone we meet and know, but the story doesn't stop there. The whole story of the life of Christ is the foundation of what we believe. That's why throughout the year some events are highlighted such as the Ascension, or Pentecost or Christ the King, or the Annunciation. These special celebrations orientate us and help us focus on various aspects of Jesus' life and ministry. They also remind us that time, God-given as it is, has an aspect which is divine and sacred.

They also remind us that our faith is not necessarily a faith of 'doctrine' that is, accepting a set of official beliefs or rules, Christianity is a faith of a person, or better expressed faith in a person. We put our faith and trust in the person of Jesus, a man who walked and talked, who ate and slept, who had friends and family and who ultimately gave his life for all of humankind. This is good news and news which is worth celebrating. Hence, we celebrate for weeks not just for one special day, as secular society does at Easter and Christmas.

So, I am wishing you all a continuing joyful and fulfilling Easter, an Easter with Jesus at the centre.

Yours in Christ,

Revd Denise



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"I would like to recommend Hugh's work as he decorated my dining room. After I'd stripped the old wallpaper, he spent a day prepping and five more days to complete. The final result is beautiful and of a very high standard. If you would like further details, see Lynn in church". From Lynn Weston.

NOTICES

Services :- 8.30am (Book of Common Prayer - BCP)
 10.30am on Sundays
 Parade Service Second Sunday of the Month at 10.30am
 Wednesday Worship at 7pm

Friday 6th May	Poppets Place Fashion Show – Doors 7 for 7.30pm
Sat 7 th May	10am – 12 noon Scouts “Time for a Cuppa” coffee morning for Dementia UK
Sun 22 nd May	Songs of Praise service 6.30pm (see Page 18)
Thurs 26th May	Ascension Day - Holy Communion at 7pm
Fri 27 th May	Delph Band 7pm
Thurs 2 nd June	Virtual Balloon Race
Whit Sunday (5 th June)	Pentecost - Whit Walk at 10.30am from church
Sat 11 th June	Tea Dance 1.30 – 5pm
Sun 30 th Nov	Confirmation Service with Bishop Mark

Please also see additional adverts throughout the magazine for our 150th Anniversary celebrations. There’s lots going on so come along and join in the fun!!

Time for a Cuppa?

St Thomas’ Scouts will be holding a **Coffee Morning** in St. Thomas Community Hall at **10am -12 noon on 7th May** as part of the national week for Dementia UK to raise vital funds to help support and develop more Admiral Nurses so no one has to face dementia alone.



Everyone is invited so please come along and the scouts will serve you tea and coffee plus plenty of cake. If anybody wants to support by donating a cake that would also be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

AFTERNOON TEA DANCE TO CELEBRATE QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE



**SATURDAY 11TH JUNE 2022: 1.30 TO 5PM
ST THOMAS CHURCH COMMUNITY HALL,
NORTHGATE LANE, MOORSIDE**



**Music by Calderdale Big Band, dancing, afternoon tea, quiz
sheet, raffle, licensed bar, British Amateur Latin Dance
Champions demonstration and chocolate tombola**

**Entry strictly by free ticket from St Thomas Church, STYLE
members, “STYLE Fundraising Group” Facebook page or
from Corinne 07483 836554**

Thanks to 'Forever Manchester', STYLE has received funding to hold a Queen's Platinum Jubilee Afternoon Tea Dance. Please come along and join us but be quick in securing your ticket! (Only charging for raffle tickets, chocolate tombola (prize every time) and licensed bar





Sunday 22 May – Songs of Praise at 6.30pm

Friday 27 May - Delph Brass Band Concert at 7pm

Sunday 5 June – Whit Walk

Saturday 11 June – Tea Dance in the afternoon

Sunday 26 June- David Walker, Bishop of Manchester presides at Parish Communion at 10.30am

Sunday 2 July – Patronal Festival – Victorian Dress Day

Saturday 3 September – Beating the Bounds – A walk around the parish boundary at 10am

September date to be confirmed – Saddleworth Male Voice Choir concert

From 5 to 15 - Could you match our 150th anniversary with a matching commitment to increase your regular giving? If you currently give £5 could you make it £10 or £15? This would make a huge difference to the church. If you don't give by direct debit or standing order, please consider doing so. We'd be very grateful We are currently working on the display which will be in church.

Please donate to the work of St Thomas Church here:



Pointing your mobile phone camera will take you to a donation page.
Thank you for your generosity



VIRTUAL BALLOON RACE QEII PLATINUM JUBILEE

Want some fun and help us to raise money for St. Thomas Church all from the comfort of your own home? Well, please take part in the QEII Platinum Jubilee **virtual** balloon race which sets off from Westminster Abbey at 12pm on **2nd June 2022** and will last for seven days.

Balloons are £4 each and proceeds from St Thomas' Church Moorside supporters' balloons will go directly to support the church. Using live weather data and a bit of computer magic you can track your balloons for 7 days to see how they could travel far and wide. There are some super overall prizes (includes other organisations) with the winner receiving £500, 2nd place an Amazon Alexa/Echo Dot 4th Generation and 10 runners-up win a £10 book voucher. There will be a special prize too for the St Thomas Church balloon that travels the furthest!

A Beginner's Guide to a Virtual Balloon Race:

What is a Virtual Balloon Race?

It's an eco-friendly, simulated balloon race, where everything is real, except the balloons! By using real live weather data, coupled with clever mathematical and physics stuff, a computer simulates your balloon's flight.

Can I personalise my balloon?

Yes, you will be able to change its colour, add text, change its shape and even decide on the thickness of the virtual latex and how much virtual helium you'd like it to contain - all important stuff when it comes to how far your balloon will fly and whether or not it may burst!

How will I know where my balloon is?

Even more clever computer wizardry enables you to track your balloon 24/7 using Google maps. So you can keep track of your progress at the same time as having a geography lesson.

To join the race and buy a balloon, visit our special web page:
<https://ecoracing.co/user/page?ID=2158> You will need to create an account if you don't already have one so that you can be contacted if you win.

To track the balloons visit our special web page:
<https://ecoracing.co/race/index/31>

Also, very importantly, as this balloon race is 100% eco-friendly, it will not kill any wildlife.



LETTER FROM PAUL MONK

Throughout the whole of May, the Church celebrates the glory of living the Christian life: life with the risen Christ at its core. Rightly, we reflect and rejoice. We sing praises and we kneel in silent adoration. But it's often difficult.

Our responding to His Resurrection will pass through many stages, which mirror the readings and themes of the Easter readings throughout the month of May. As we start the month, we live on a 'high', remembering the sights and joys of encountering the Risen Lord. We recall him walking beside the disciples and comforting them. And, like them, we feel our 'hearts burning within us' with love and joy.

The Bible readings set for the start of the month mention Jesus appearing to the disciples but later we celebrate Jesus' Glorious Ascension. Indeed, the Scriptures relate only a small number of resurrection appearances. The Gospels seem to suggest they become progressively rarer until, at the Ascension, His physical appearances stop altogether because He then resides in Heaven.

The separation caused by Jesus' Ascension requires a different relationship, for with Jesus safely returned to Heaven he cannot be seen in the same way as when he was still on earth. Following Jesus after the Ascension is different and requires a greater trust, and faith.

As we progress through the Easter season, the readings and liturgy therefore ask us to change our spiritual focus in ways that help our faith develop and grow. They are designed to suggest a faith that can cope with a Jesus who lives in Heaven and cannot be seen here on earth.

Wishing all of you a profound and delightful growth in faith as we explore our relationship with God through the Risen Christ:

PAUL

Bedding plants.

Do you enjoy gardening? If you do and are thinking of buying bedding plants any time soon, please pick up a leaflet from the back of Church and send in your order. Order forms will also be available on our Church website. **But be quick!!** We need **orders in by May 8th** and plants will be available for collection after **May 23rd**. We will be in touch when your order is ready for collection. We will probably be able to deliver a few orders.

Profits from the sale of plants will be shared between the Church and the uniformed organisations. Please do support us.
Donald and Millicent.

Liturgical Seasons

Pardon? What on earth are liturgical seasons? Well, let me tell you.

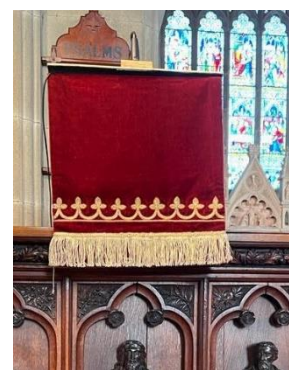


Red is an unusual one. It isn't used very often in the church, and isn't really associated with a particular season. Having said that, it can be used if a church observes the Kingdom season which can be part of the calendar before Advent, but this is quite short and not observed in all churches.

Red has a particular meaning for the Church and that meaning involves quite a contrast. First it is the colour of martyrs, as it is meant to reflect their blood, so any saint or historical figure who died for the faith can be commemorated by wearing red. In these instances, red takes on a sombre aspect, and we are encouraged to consider those who have given, and continue to give, their lives for Christ. Its second use is as the colour used to reflect the Holy Spirit, so it's worn for Pentecost, or Whit Sunday. In this case it is meant to mirror the fact that the Holy Spirit appeared at Pentecost as tongues of fire hovering over the disciples, and as such it is a joyful reminder of the Third Person of the Trinity, and His place in the lives of the faithful.

Red is also worn for Palm Sunday, and Holy Week until the colour changes to white on Maundy Thursday, this is meant to signal the coming death of Jesus.

All the colours used in the Church are meant to be helpful pointers to the mood of the season, and reflect some event in the life of Christ or, as in the Kingdom season, Christ's teaching. Each year, throughout the year we recall the life of Christ, and as his life moves towards his death and resurrection, so the Church moves through his story in different ways. If you're wondering what the symbols and letters on the altar frontal and fall mean...just ask!



Revd Denise



Treasurer's Letter

Thank you for your generosity. We really appreciate all your financial giving.

Charity

Thank you to everyone who made soup and donated bread for our Soup Sundays during Lent. Apart from eating tasty soups, supporters raised £134.50 – thank you. To add to this, we're counting the money jars/donations that have been returned for our Lent charities Dr Kershaw's Hospice and Unicef's Afghanistan Emergency Appeal.

Good news: By recycling your used inkjet cartridges, we raised £24.70 in the first quarter of 2022. In total, so far, £130.05 has been raised for our church and kept 6.78 kg from landfill – win win! Thank you and please keep donating.

I was busy last month arranging new 2-year fixed deals (cheaper than standard variable tariffs for business users) for our gas and electricity usage. As we're all aware, the cost of energy has soared and will continue to do so. We're doing our best to reduce our load and it's important that heating and lighting is not left on unnecessarily, especially in the hall. Please help where you can.

HOW YOU CAN HELP US TO RAISE FUNDS?



"Thank you" to everyone who's helped make a BIG difference during this difficult time by raising donations for us. If you're not supporting us yet, please sign up now. It takes 2 minutes & 6,000+ shops will donate to us for free every time you shop with them!

Visit:

easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stthomasmoorside/payments/61f901cd4a900db4227b865b/

Money related questions, just for fun...

On what street is the U.S. Stock Exchange situated?

Answer to the March question: What do you call the land at either edge of a river? Answer: River Bank

Corinne



STYLE

It's been a busy few weeks for Kathy for which we are eternally grateful. Here's what she's been up to:

- Our Mother's Day raffle raised £87 – thank you for participating. We hope that you managed to win some of the lovely prizes on offer
- Our virtual Easter treasure map sold out very quickly and there will be a raffle on Easter Day – thank you to all who participated, donated Easter eggs and knitted lots of chicks and bunnies. Kathy has organised 50 squares, each filled with a prize. Huge thanks also to everyone who donated prizes and bought a square(s) and raffle tickets.
- Margaret and Kathy ran a chocolate tombola stall at Sholver and Moorside's Spring Fair last month and raised £72. Thank you to all those who donated chocolate prizes and to Margaret and Kathy



At a loose end? Please come along to the Coffee and Conversation Group for a cuppa, cake and a chat if you are able in St Thomas Community Hall any time between 1 and 3pm on Thursday afternoons. We recently enjoyed celebrating birthdays for Angela, Elaine's 'special' and Mary. Recent activities included making Easter cards (thanks to Sandra for bringing her equipment), decorating eggs for the Easter competition and, thanks to the hand bell group, we enjoyed another entertaining afternoon and lots of cake!



For our next event, we are looking forward to 'Poppets Place' fashion show on **6th May 2022** in the church community hall. Doors open at 7pm for a prompt start at 7.30pm. (Please note this is not the same company we have used before as they are no longer trading so the clothing is not high street named fashion). Poppet's Place is a ladies clothing shop, based in Lees, selling sizes 6-26 for all ages, budgets and occasions and they are running the fashion show. They will also be selling accessories; handbags, scarves and jewellery. View their regular posts on their Facebook page or website <http://www.poppetsplace.co.uk/>. Sharon will also be returning with her stall selling costume jewellery. We will have a licensed bar and raffle to win vouchers to spend on the night. Admission strictly by ticket (£3 each) available from any of the Style ladies or by messaging the STYLE Fundraising Group Facebook page or St Thomas Church Facebook page or ring Corinne on 07483 836554.

Please note that our meetings have now reverted to their usual time of 7.30 pm in the choir vestry – entry via the back of church. We welcome all people to join our STYLE community group.



Moorside & District Historical Society

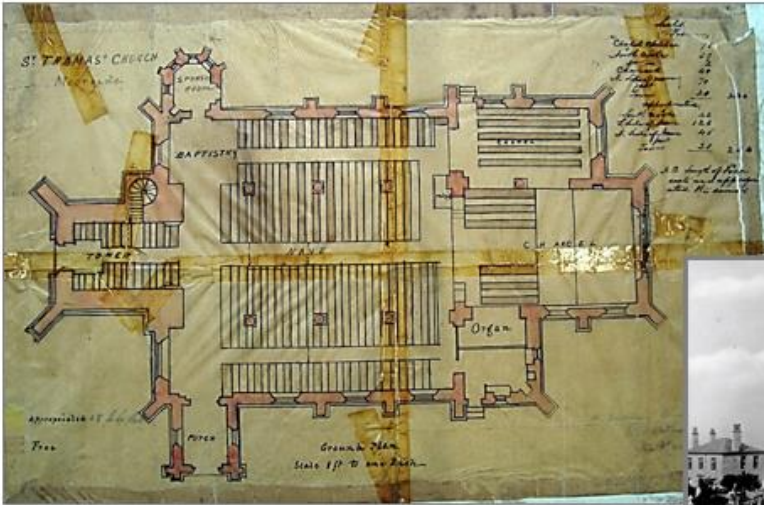

Monday 16th May 2022.


150th St Thomas' Church Anniversary.

"Church Plans and Miscellany" ~ Start of the year of celebrations.

illustrated presentation by Mike Smith



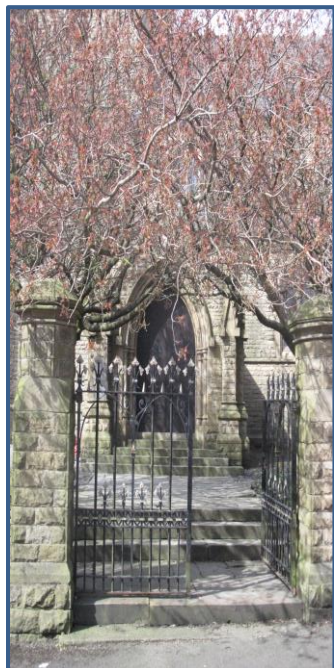
To be held in Moorside St Thomas' Church, OL1 4SJ

7-30 p.m. all are welcome. **Church, Lounge or Vestry.**

Note: Other meeting planned for 2022 if all goes well for the third Monday of the month.

Except for the summer break July & August + December. £2 including refreshment.

ST THOMAS CHURCH MOORSIDE 1872 - 2022



Back in May 1872
Thanks to Thomas Mellodew
St Thomas Church was complete
Wasn't that an awesome feat?

In the year of our Queen's Platinum Jubilee
St Thomas celebrates its 150th anniversary
Lots to see in our July exhibition
Looking back at old tradition.

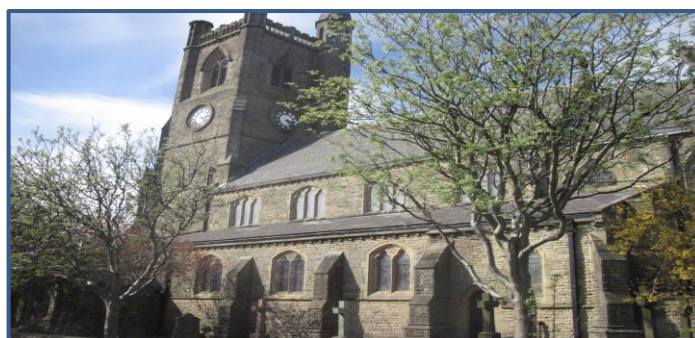
Reverend Gray, here for a very long stay
Until he finally moved away
Now it's the time of Reverend Owen
About the bible she is all-knowing!

On Sundays, hear the eight bells ring
And how lovely the choir all sing
Blessed with Readers Angela and Gail
And all of us at the altar rail.

We have the best bell captain in Peter...
A dedicated organist (phew, not paid on a meter!)
Choir mistress Gail is a talented star
Whose musical compositions have been played afar.

Interesting articles in the church magazine
Lots of information one can glean
Faith, hope and humour found in each
Eco news to save the planet and beach.

In our four Commonwealth War Graves
Lie soldiers whose lives they willingly gave
For us all to be free and to remember
Especially on the 11th of November.



Many children's groups run and flourish
With care and knowledge they are nourished
Sunday School, Beavers, Rainbows, Cubs,
Brownies, Scouts, Guides and Explorer clubs.

Grateful thanks to our many volunteers
Covering all the 150 years
Your time and talents are held very dear
By the PCC and everyone here.

Charities are supported during Lent
Money saved instead of spent.
Helping others where we are able
Like donating clothing and food for the table.

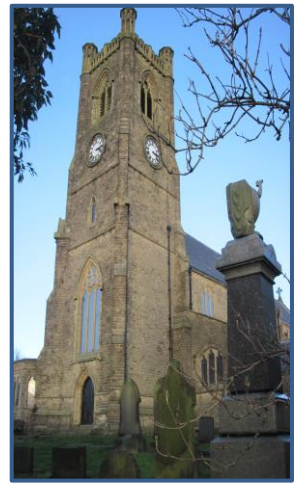
At the feast of Pentecost
A walk through the Parish is not lost
Music played by Delph Brass Band
Watched through windows and out on the land.

Bishop Mark of Middleton
Brings us laughs and words of inspiration
During the Confirmation service
The candidates feel a little nervous.

Lots and lots of family occasions
Funerals, baptisms and marriage celebrations
Photographs and memories will absolutely never
Alter St Thomas being part of your forever.

St Thomas Church Moorside
A place of worship found inside
Quiet reflection and faith you can find
By praying and keeping God in mind.

By Corinne Ogden



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Holy Matrimony

We pray for couples preparing to be married here in the coming months.

Funerals and Burial of Ashes

We pray for the repose of the souls of

Eunice Murgatroyd
Henry Miller

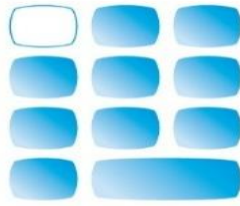
Baptisms

We pray for all those who have been baptised at St Thomas recently. We pray that they will grow in faith and learn to follow the Lord Jesus Christ

Songs of Praise Service

As part of the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of our church, we shall be having a Songs of Praise service on **Sunday 22nd May at 6.30pm**. This is the Sunday closest to the consecration of St Thomas Church which took place on 20th May, 1872.

We shall be inviting you to nominate a favourite hymn to be sung at this service, so, keep an eye open for the hymn suggestions box at the back of church and nominate your favourite by Sunday 15th May. The service will be similar in style to the candlelit carol service, including hymns, readings and items by the church choir and handbell group.



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Brendan – 07887 536301

Prayer for May

Dear Father in Heaven,

As we thank you for May, this most beautiful of months, we are aware that not everything in your world is beautiful; not every attitude or action is beautiful, or kind, or just.

There is so much pain and suffering in the world that we can sometimes feel overwhelmed. Help us, Lord to remember that Jesus came to bring all this brokenness together, to bring reconciliation and wholeness. Thank you that by His life, death and resurrection Jesus overcame death for ever. Thank you that He ascended into heaven so that the Holy Spirit could come to live in believers, to give strength and power and resilience, so that Your work goes on.

Thank you that nothing in all creation – no evil attacks, no illness, no human powers, no circumstances at all – can ever separate us from Your love.

We will not be overwhelmed as we keep our eyes on You.

We may not always understand, but we acknowledge You to be the Lord, who reigns over all – and we are thankful.

In Jesus name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

The travellers

They travelled together sad and forlorn
With all of their dreams shattered and torn,
It started so well, their hopes were high
Never to guess that He would die.

The Man joined the two as they walked along,
He asked why their faces were sad and long,
'Have you not heard?' disbelieving they cried
'How the One we followed was crucified?'

Opening the scriptures He began to unfold
How the Christ should suffer as written of old,
It was not a disaster, but all of God's plan
That one should come as Redeemer of man.

They listened enraptured as slowly they saw
The purpose of God revealed in the Law
The Prophets and Psalms, it's all about Him
The One who should come and rescue from sin.

O that eyes should be opened and scripture made plain,
To see Christ in its pages again and again,
That just like the travellers I too should see
The Master, the Saviour dying for me.

By Megan Carter



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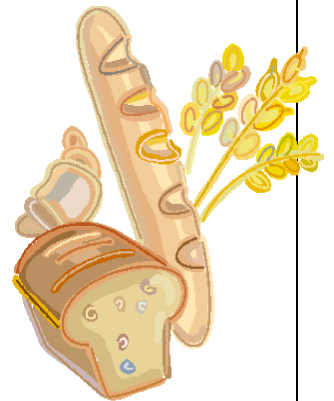
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Dear Larry – and Sylvester,

I hope you are both well. I've never had any feline pen pals before so this is very nice.

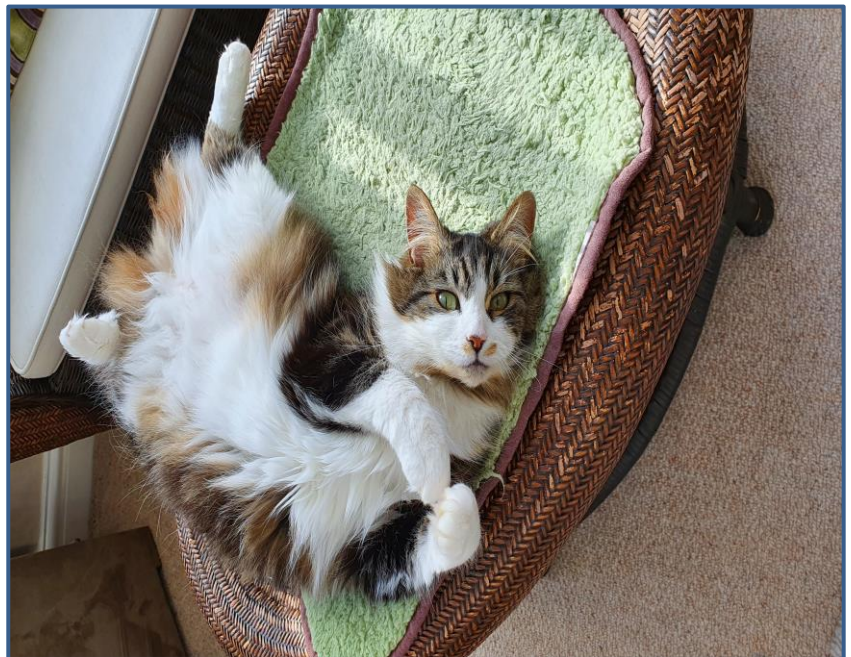
Larry, you asked if I have any catplains about my humans. Well, they're not at all bad really. My main issue is with the noise from music – and the vacuum cleaner. They have a big instrument called a piano and I can tolerate that. Sometimes Gail plays music by a composer called Debussy and I really like that – it helps me relax (see photo) – and I always enjoy listening to Peter practising the hymns. But there's a much smaller instrument (it's called a flute) that plays too many notes, too fast and often too high. When Gail gets that out, I leave the room. As for the vacuum cleaner..... Apart from that, I know I am very blessed to live here.

I watch the TV news with my humans and it's been making me feel very sad and quite helpless. I've been told that when I hear the names of towns and cities in Ukraine as well as other parts of the world where there is war and suffering, I should hold those names in my heart and pray for the people who live there. Every prayer is important.

Take care and keep purring.

God bless.

Your feline friend, Belle.



Dear Belle and Sylvester and barkie Lily and Everyfurr!!



What helpful kitties we are!! We help our humans finish jigsaws, guard the bins, and redecorate our houses by pushing everything on the floor! I'm sure Lily is helpful too... I also help decorate the vicarage by leaving my fur everywhere for Revd Denise and her visitors to enjoy. I don't understand why Revd Denise has to apologise and give people a sticky roly thing to get it off their clothes... Clothes look better with my fur all over them!! Here is a photo of me helping Revd Denise with the washing. I don't know why humans can't wash themselves like we do... I've said it before and I'll say it again, humans are very strange.

Anyway, Revd Denise has told me that it's something called Eastertide at the moment. It's the biggest celebration in the Church and it lasts for weeks and weeks and weeks! I'm hoping that it means my Dreamies quota will go up (a lot). Jesus died and then rose again. That's amazing. Revd Denise says it's the best news ever. I think it is the best news too, even better than when Revd Denise puts Dreamies in my penguin!! Have you had extra Dreamies to celebrate Eastertide?

Yours purfully,

Larry T Cat



Parking space...

Angus was driving down the street worried because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place. So, looking up toward heaven, he said "Lord, take pity on me. If you find me a parking place I will go to church every Sunday for the rest of my life and give up whisky." A moment later, miraculously, a parking place appeared. Angus looked up again and said, "Never mind. I found one."

Beavers 127 St.Thomas is a great Scouting Group for Boys & Girls. We have lots of fun playing games, completing badge work, and more importantly making new friends and learning new skills.



If you are 6 to 8 years old and want to join or find out more, please contact Zelda Martin – 07956 444912
We meet 6-7pm on Tuesday nights.



8th Oldham St Thomas Rainbow Unit is at full capacity, with a large waiting list. If you would like to put your daughter's name on our waiting list (or Brownies /Guides) please go to the girlguiding website

and follow the instructions.

<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/register-your-daughter>

Thank you – Your Rainbow Leaders – Kelly & Christine



Adam Haigh has returned to Scouts as leader with Judith and Darren as assistant leaders. Scouts runs from 7.45 – 9pm on Tuesday nights and is for boys and girls aged 11-14.

Please get in touch if you are interested in joining – adam.haigh@btinternet.com or 07760 178074. We currently have space and would welcome some new faces to join in our exciting programme of activities.

Not expecting this...

The young minister took his wife to the Maternity Hospital and was told it would be a long labour. So, he agreed to ring at lunchtime for news. But when he phoned, he dialled the wrong number and got the County Cricket Ground. He said: "I brought my wife to your place early this morning. Is there any news?"

He was surprised to be told: "Yes, there are seven out and the last two were ducks."

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Parishes prepare for mass 'citizen science' biodiversity events for 'Churches Count on Nature'

Churches and cathedrals across the country are preparing for the annual Churches Count on Nature event. The 'citizen science' event – set to run between **4-12th June** – will welcome people to churchyards and encourage them to record what animals and plants they see.

That data will then be collated on the biological records hub, the National Biodiversity Network.

Last year more than 540 activities and events were organised by churches across the country. People submitted 17,232 recorded pieces of data on wildlife they saw, with more than 1,500 species recorded.

This year's event will take place during the same week as Love Your Burial Ground Week (4-12th June).

Churchyards and gardens have been called an "incredible home of biodiversity, making up thousands of acres of green oases in every community of the country". Last year, hundreds of parishes got their local community searching for insects and plants in their open spaces.

As the Bishop of Norwich has pointed out: "The Gospels are full of stories of the growth of seeds, the choking of thistles, the beauty of lilies and the fruitfulness of trees. We have the privilege and responsibility to care for the earth and to tread gently on it.

"The Churches Count on Nature is a great opportunity to help people understand their local environment and that biodiversity is essential for the processes that support all life on earth, including humans."

Last year, many parishes used Churches Count on Nature as an opportunity to reach out to their local community.

Churches Count on Nature is jointly run by the conservation charities A Rocha UK, Caring for God's Acre together with the Church of England and the Church in Wales.

Andy Lester, from A Rocha UK, said “Churches Count on Nature is a unique opportunity for those who love their churchyards and church spaces to take part in the largest ever nature count. With nature still in decline nationwide this count will provide valuable data on what is happening to wildlife. In turn that will help us to collectively work to take targeted action for nature’s recovery.”

Last year 540 groups organised events during Love Your Burial Ground Week, resulting in over 1,700 new wildlife records. More than 4,000 people got involved.

With over 20,000 churchyards and other burial grounds across England and Wales, these special places are seen as crucial havens for wildlife.

Take a walk on the wild side!

How neat do we like our gardens to be? Full of manicured lawns, with immaculate flower beds?



Well, yes and no. A recent survey by BBC’s Gardener’s World magazine has found that more than half (54 per cent) of gardeners now include ‘uncultivated areas’ in their garden. And some 44 per cent of gardeners have also set up a wildflower area.

Certainly, Nature could use a helping hand just now. In 2019 32 per cent of us saw a butterfly in our garden. By 2020 that was down to 21 per cent. By 2021, that was down again, to just 16 per cent.

Simple tips to rewild your garden:

- Avoid chemical pesticides and herbicides, which also kill ‘good bugs’, butterflies and bees.
- Tolerate as much mess as you can. Leave wood and leaf piles for hedgehogs and invertebrates.
- Set aside some room where grass can grow longer, and wildflowers can bloom.
- Don’t pull up all your weeds – they can be a critical source of pollen for bees.



The Ascension

This month at Ascension Day, we remember Jesus ascending to *'God's right hand'* (1 Peter 3:22). It's a somewhat neglected Christian festival, taking place on a Thursday, 40 days after Easter. However, this phrase is used in three different contexts in the New Testament.

Sitting at God's right hand

Jesus occupies a position of power and authority at the centre of the universe, *'exalted to the right hand of God'* (Acts 2:33). This position was secured by His death and resurrection, enabling us to experience the life of heaven, including eternal life, forgiveness, healing and the power to transform lives and communities. Is this our expectation and experience?

Standing at God's right hand

Our experience of heaven is only partial because of the presence of suffering and disappointment in our lives. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, saw Jesus *'standing at the right hand of God'* (Acts 7:56), when being stoned to death. Do we see that Jesus is on the throne and has a purpose for our lives, even when we are going through setbacks and difficulties? As a result of Stephen's death, the church grew and the apostle Paul was impacted. Where do we see the fruit of the suffering in our lives?

Praying at God's right hand

Finally, we are told that Jesus is *'interceding for us'* at God's right hand (Romans 8:34 & Hebrews 7:25). Jesus is on our side at the heart of the universe and fully knows our needs when praying for us. He is for us, even when we feel defeated by the wrong things in our lives. How does this help us now?

So where has Jesus gone? Because He is in heaven, the Ascension opens up the possibility that we can experience the life of heaven, both now and in eternity.

The story behind ‘Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son’

Here is a hymn that is so well known and loved that it has simply burst the bounds of Easter, and gets sung regularly at other times of the year. It has two stories behind it.

First, the music. The rousing music did not start out as a hymn, but instead was written by Handel for his opera ‘Judas Maccabeus’, first performed in 1746. Originally the words ran ‘See the conquering hero comes’, for Handel’s opera tells the story (found in the Apocrypha) of the leader of the Jews, Judas Maccabeus, who led an army against the Syrians and restored worship at the Temple. With its triumphant refrain after each verse, the music is easy to learn and sing, and can be (and has been!) played to great effect either by the trumpets, on an organ in a large resonant church, or even on guitars (!).

Secondly, the words. They were not written until 1884, which was 138 years after the music. We owe them to the Revd Raymond Budry, a Swiss pastor from Lausanne. Ordained in the Free Evangelical Church in Vaud, he spent 35 years as the pastor of Vevey on Lake Geneva. Budry wrote the hymn in French (‘A Toi La Gloire!’) to console himself after the death of his first wife, and a year later (1885) it was published in *Chants Evangeliques*. Soon it found its way into English – translated by a Baptist minister from Kingston-upon-Thames, Richard Hoyle.

It is not clear who first had the happy idea of teaming *those* words with *that* music, but when they did, the hymn really took off. By 1904 it was being translated into other languages.

The theme of ‘battle’ is never far from this hymn, whether it was the battle of Judas Maccabeus, or the battle over sin which was won by Christ on the cross and in rising from the tomb. Easter, of course, marked the biggest victory over the biggest enemies of all time: sin and death.

What would Handel make of it, if he could know that his battle music had become one of the world’s most popular and well-known Easter hymns? He was a devout man, working for the poor, praying twice each day, and attending St Paul’s Cathedral. So, it seems pretty certain that he would be delighted.

There, but for the grace of God, go I

This saying is attributed to John Bradford (1510-1555), who was one of the Protestant Reformers. When he saw criminals on their way to execution, Bradford would utter, "But for the grace of God, there goes John Bradford." It was his way of acknowledging that he depended every day on the mercy of God, despite his sins, which he considered were on a par with those of rogues.

Sadly, Bradford's freedom was to last only a short time, for he was convicted as a heretic, incarcerated, and finally burned at the stake, during the reign of Queen Mary. Renowned for his prayer life and preaching, Bradford had continued to proclaim the Gospel in prison. One of his biographers wrote, "He lived a long life in a short space of time."



Out and about on the roads? Remember the NEW Highway Code

When did you last read the Highway Code? Various 'fundamental' changes were recently made which will surely affect you.

For example, there is a new hierarchy of road users, where drivers now have new responsibilities to watch out for people who are walking, cycling, or riding a horse.

Another example is that cyclists are now advised to cycle in the *centre* of lanes in slower-moving traffic.

Finally, do you even know how best to open your car door? According to the Highway Code, you should use your hand on the opposite side to the door you are opening; for example, use your left hand to open a door on your right-hand side. This will make you turn your head to look over your shoulder. You are then more likely to avoid causing injury to cyclists or motorcyclists passing you on the road, or to people on the pavement.

Read all about the new rules at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code>

Make time for your older relatives

Many of our older people are lonely. They lost touch with their families during the pandemic, and it seems that they have still not caught up again.



A recent survey by Age UK found that as many as 27 percent of people aged 60 and over admit that they speak less to their families now, and 24 per cent of older people say they feel less close to their relatives than before the pandemic.

The survey also found that millions of older people have lost the confidence to go out, and suffer more from memory loss, disturbed sleep, and anxiety.

The charity is urging people to reach out to their older friends and relatives and encourage them. It warns: "The pandemic has had a big impact on everyone and very few of us are emerging from the last two years completely unscathed."



Older mums

Mothers are getting older. More than half of women in the UK are now still childless by the age of 30, according to recent official figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The data provides a picture of changes in our national fertility.

The vice-president of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists says: "Over the last few decades, there has been a trend of women choosing to have babies later than women did a generation ago, and there is a growing trend of women having fewer or no children. This is due to a range of social professional and financial reasons."



Packed lunches are back in style

With food prices soaring, who needs a bought sandwich or salad? They can cost nearly £8 a day from LEON or Pret or other food outlets. Instead, it seems we are investing in plastic food containers (John Lewis reports sales are up 64 per cent on last year) and taking our own lunches to work.

As one cookery blogger explains, “You can’t reduce your council tax, but you can make little savings on everyday meals, which add up to a significant difference.”

“It’s ‘cool’ these days to take a packed lunch to the office,” says Suzanne Mulholland, author of *The Batch Lady: Shop Once. Cook Once. Eat Well All Week*. “Being organised and prepared is seen as a good thing.”

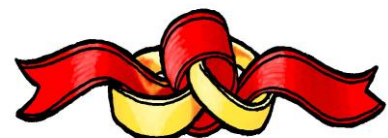
As for coffee, consider this: buying a £3 cappuccino every day adds up to £1,095 a year. Far cheaper to fill a flask at home.

Where is the best place to get engaged?

Proposing marriage to someone these days needs more preparation than you might expect. Forget about just going down on bended knee and hoping for the best. Instead, you need to think location, location, location.

A recent survey found that a fifth of Gen Z and Millennial young people say they would be far more likely to accept a proposal while in an exotic place. Popular choices range from sunset beaches in Greece, whale watching in Iceland, and helicopter rides in the Grand Canyon.

As we are entering the wedding season, perhaps you would like to share your engagement story? Maybe tell us why you have chosen St Thomas’ as your venue?



Time to take some responsibility for our health

Did you know that nearly one half of the NHS budget is spent on diseases that could have been prevented? And that Britain's overall health budget is now bigger than the GDP of Greece?

So says the Health Secretary, Sajid Javid, who has recently warned that the NHS cannot continue spending "vast sums" on lifestyle conditions that are "wholly avoidable".

Just one example is obesity. Obesity rates have doubled since the 1990s, with two out of three adults now overweight or obese. Our lifestyles have also become increasingly sedentary. The result? An eighth of the NHS drugs budget is now spent just on treating cases of diabetes, 90 per cent of which cases are caused by excess weight.



Something to think about if you have a heart or lung problem

What is the quality of the air like in your home? That is the concern of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Nice).

It urges that anyone with breathing or cardiovascular conditions who has "repeated or worsening respiratory conditions" should be asked about their housing conditions. Nice warns that exposure to poor indoor air quality may cause or worsen symptoms such as coughs and wheezing.

May READINGS	1st Reading	2nd Reading	Gospel
1st May Third Sunday of Easter	Acts 9. 1-6	Revelation 5. 11-14	John 21. 1-19
8th May Fourth Sunday of Easter	Acts 6. 36-end	Revelation 7. 9-end	John 10. 22-30
15th May Fifth Sunday of Easter	Acts 11. 1-18	Revelation 21. 1-6	John 13. 21-35
22nd May Sixth Sunday of Easter	Acts 16. 9-15	Revelation 21. 10, 22-22.5	John 14. 23-29
29th May Sunday after Ascension	Acts 16. 16-34;	Revelation 22. 12-14,16,17,20- end	
5th June Pentecost	Acts 2. 1-21;	Romans 8. 14-17	John 14. 8-17

Acknowledgements:- With thanks to

Joan Tomlinson
Sam Atherton

100 Club - Thank you once again to all those who are part of the 100 Club, both old and new members. We can now go back to monthly prizes.

May winners are:-

First prize.	£30.	No.2.	Kathy Salt
Second prize.	£20.	No.62.	Adam Haigh
Third prize.	£10.	No.44.	Gary O'Neill



Why not sponsor the altar flowers in church in memory of someone or to celebrate a special occasion? Please speak with Helen Cunliffe or the Churchwardens or add your name to the Rota sheet at the back of church.

May 29th
June 5th

Susan McKenna in memory of Harry Eastwood
Dave Salt Birthday

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Monday	Handbell Group	10.30am – 12pm	Choir Vestry
	Wings Group	10am – 12 noon	Church Hall
	Rainbows	5.30pm – 6.30pm	Church Hall
	Brownies	7pm - 8pm	
	Bell Ringers	7.30pm - 8.30pm	Bell Tower
	Bible Study	7.30pm – 9pm	Choir Vestry
Tuesday	Beavers	6pm -7pm	Church Hall
	Cubs	7.00pm - 8.30pm	
	Scouts	7.45pm - 9pm	
	Explorers	8.30pm-10pm	
Wednesday	Wednesday Worship	7pm	Church
	Guides	6.30pm – 8pm	Church Hall
Last Weds of month	Junior Bible Study	6pm	Choir Vestry
Sunday	Parish Communion	8.30am/10.30am	Church
	Sunday School/Sunday Youth	10.25am	Church Hall