



**THE UNITED BENEFICE of ST LUKE'S,  
ENDON with ST CHAD'S, BAGNALL**

*Encounter, Encourage, Enable ...Committed to Sharing God's Love*

[www.endonstlukes.org.uk](http://www.endonstlukes.org.uk)

Vestry (church office): 01782 502166 or 07517 653370



December 2023

INTERREGNUM Month 42

**ADVENT & CHRISTMAS  
CELEBRATIONS**

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**DECEMBER 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday at 4.00pm**  
**CAROLS at CONNECTIONS**  
**St Luke's CE Academy, School hall**

**CHRISTMAS EVE, Sunday**  
**December 24th at 6.00pm**  
**CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT**

**11.30pm Ecumenical MIDNIGHT  
COMMUNION at Endon Methodist Church**  
**(come at 11.00pm for mince pies!)**

**CHRISTMAS DAY**  
**9.15am HOLY COMMUNION**  
**at St Luke's**

## DECEMBER at ST LUKE'S

**3<sup>rd</sup> ADVENT SUNDAY –**

**OUR TOY SERVICES**

**9.15am HOLY COMMUNION – Rev Philip**

**11.00am CONNECTIONS**

**10<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY - ADVENT 2**

**9.15am MORNING WORSHIP  
Barrie/Roger**

**4.00pm CONNECTIONS CAROLS\*\***

**17<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY – ADVENT 3**

**9.15am HOLY COMMUNION – Fr David Nicol**

**11.00am CONNECTIONS - Godly play led by Rev Patricia**

**6.30pm COMMUNITY CAROL SERVICE at Methodist Church**

**24<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY - ADVENT 4  
CHRISTMAS EVE**

**6.00pm CAROLS by CANDLELIGHT\***

**11.30 MIDNIGHT COMMUNION at Methodist Church**

**25<sup>th</sup> MONDAY - CHRISTMAS DAY**

**9.15 HC Rev P Robinson**

**31<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY NEW YEAR'S EVE**

**9.15am MORNING WORSHIP –  
Barrie / Roger**



### CONNECTIONS

Sunday at 11am at St Luke's CE Academy,  
Leek Road in the school hall.

***NB There will be no Connections Services  
on Sundays 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> December.  
Back on January 7<sup>th</sup> 2024!***

## DECEMBER at ST CHAD'S

**3<sup>rd</sup> ADVENT SUNDAY -**

**10.45am FAMILY CHRISTINGLE SERVICE -  
Julia and Claire**

**10<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY - ADVENT 2**

**4.00pm CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT - KH / MF**

**17<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY - ADVENT 3**

**10.45am HOLY COMMUNION - Rev Barry**

**24<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY – ADVENT 4 CHRISTMAS EVE**

**5.00pm OUTDOOR CAROLS**

**11.30pm MIDNIGHT COMMUNION – Rev  
Barry Wilson**

**SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup> CHRISTMAS DAY - NO SERVICE**

**SUNDAY 31<sup>st</sup> Dec – TBA**

***\* Remember to bring a torch to this service so  
you can read the words of the carols!***

***\*\* Please note change of time for  
Connections on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December for our  
special carol service. All welcome!***

### ST LUKE'S CHURCH OFFICE

Unless involved with funeral duties Barrie  
mans the office on Mon, Wed, and Fri from  
10.30am to 1.00pm using **07517 653370**.  
During these times the church is open for  
private prayer.

### ECUMENICAL MIDWEEK SERVICES

#### on WEDNESDAYS

**Holy Communion at 9.15am**  
Dec 6<sup>th</sup> at Methodist Church  
Dec 13<sup>th</sup> at Methodist Church  
Dec 20<sup>th</sup> at St Luke's  
Dec 27<sup>th</sup> NO SERVICE  
Jan 3<sup>rd</sup> at St Luke's



**Connections  
invites you to  
a  
Family Candlelight Carol  
Service  
4pm  
Sunday, 10th December  
@  
St. Luke's CofE Academy  
School**

**Refreshments served  
after the service  
A warm welcome awaits  
everyone**

## PASTORAL TEAM (Phone nos on back page)

- **HILLSWOOD LODGE CARE HOME** Volunteers are welcome to help boost the singing. There is room for 6 or 7 of us. **The next date is Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 11.00am.** Please inform Shirley or Rev Patricia if you are able to come. The residents really do enjoy these services and the chats afterwards.
- **WALKS followed by refreshments:**  
Listen up for details of the next walk. Do join us.

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# The Methodist Church



- **Every Sunday** 10am Worship ***NB No service on Dec 24<sup>th</sup> at 10am***
- **Monday** 10am – 1.30 Community Café (not bank holidays).
- **Wednesday** 9.15 Holy Communion  
Alternately with St Luke's Parish Church
- **Thursday** 10.30 Fit-as-a-fiddle: Exercise, conversation and coffee
- **Wednesday** December 20<sup>th</sup> 2pm –3.30pm Bereavement Café
- **Fridays** 10 – 12 Carers' Café: Dec 8<sup>th</sup> party and entertainment
- **Friday** 6pm 'Blast' – youth club for 7-11 year olds (during term time)

[Eleanor.smith@methodist.org.uk](mailto:Eleanor.smith@methodist.org.uk)  
01782 503228

## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> Dec at 6pm Community Carol Service (see below)

Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> Dec at 4pm Christingle Service for families

Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> Dec at 11.30pm Midnight Communion (refreshments from 11pm)

Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> Dec at 10am CHRISTMAS DAY service for families



## COMMUNITY CAROL SERVICE

Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 6.30pm

Endon Methodist Church

Don't miss this celebration of our Saviour's birth!



# CANDLE DEDICATIONS for DECEMBER

For £2.50 you can keep the Candle of Hope or the Sanctuary Light burning for a week with a dedication. Thank you to all of you who have supported the candle dedications this year. Shirley is now taking dedications for 2024. **Please contact her on 504089 by the beginning of December if you would like a particular date.**

Dec	CANDLE OF HOPE	SANCTUARY LIGHT
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Sylvia Bradshaw to celebrate the 15 <sup>th</sup> birthday of her grandson Archie	Barrie in celebration of Fay's 10 <sup>th</sup> birthday
10 <sup>th</sup>	Barrie in loving memory of Mum, Dad, brother Ron and grandson Tom	Ann Boulton to celebrate Evie's birthday (14 <sup>th</sup> )
17 <sup>th</sup>	Maureen and Alan Payne to celebrate Tracy's birthday (17 <sup>th</sup> )	Mabel McGrath to celebrate the birthday of Max McGrath
24 <sup>th</sup>	Maureen Foster in loving memory of Malcolm, a dearly loved husband, father and grandfather	Maureen and Alan Payne in loving memory of Bill and Bett Payne (parents of Alan Payne)
31 <sup>st</sup>	Maureen and Alan Payne in loving memory of Joe and Lil Brierley (parents of Maureen Payne)	Ann Boulton in loving memory of Les on his birthday



## DECEMBER GREETINGS to

Thomas Morris (6<sup>th</sup>), Maurice Woolliscroft (10<sup>th</sup>),  
Tracy Payne (17<sup>th</sup>),  
Bob Morris, Evie Greatbatch (14<sup>th</sup>)

*If you would like your own or a family birthday included here please contact Ros 504137*

In view of the current situation in the Middle East, Ukraine and other countries at war...

## THE COLLECT for REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Almighty Father, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of all: govern the hearts and minds of those in authority and bring the families of all nations, divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin, to be subject to His justice and gentle rule, who is alive today and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

# GREETINGS 2023



Christmas greetings to everyone at St Luke's and St Chad's...

**Stan and Sheila Hurst**

**Christmas Greetings to all at St Luke's from all at St Chad's! ...Kath Howell**

Peace at Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone at St Luke's and St Chad's

... **Ann Boulton**

A very happy Christmas to everyone at St Luke's and St Chad's... **Mabel McGrath**

Hello all! A Merry Christmas and here's to a great and safe 2024.

Love and God bless, **Sophie and Jean xxx**

To all our friends at St Luke's, St Chad's and Connections we wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. ..**Alan and Maureen**

**Revs Philip and Patricia** send Christmas greetings to everyone at both our churches

A merry Christmas and a happy new year to all my friends, worshippers and colleagues at St Luke's. May the Lord Jesus Christ lead each and every one of you into a closer relationship with Him to life eternal... **David Moss**

A very happy Christmas and peaceful New Year to all at St Luke's and St Chad's and especially to members of the pastoral team ... **James and Ros**

**Roger and Sheila...**Best wishes to all our friends at St Luke's, especially to all those who help to keep the boat afloat.

A very happy Christmas to everyone at St Luke's and St Chad's...**Muriel Buckle**

Very best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year ... **Chris and Sue Wilson**

To everyone at St Luke's Church and Connections, wishing you all God's blessings over Christmas and the New Year... **Shirley O'Brien**

Happy Christmas to everyone at St Luke's and St Chad's and blessings for a happy and prosperous 2024... **Debbie and Dave Podmore**

**Margaret & Maurice** – we wish for a peaceful Christmas and a blessed 2024 to all our friends in St Luke's Church and the wider community

Wishing everyone at St Luke's and St Chad's a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year....**Sylvia Bradshaw**

**John Moss** sends Christmas greetings to all at St Luke's and St Chad's

***THANK YOU to all who have sent greetings and supported the Christian Blind Mission with donations.***



## KNITTED SQUARES LATEST NEWS...

Your knitted squares are still very welcome!

Here is the latest batch of freshly blessed blankets, vacuum-packed and being delivered to the Women's Refuge near Calais by Sue and Norman. These blankets really do get to where they are intended to go and are much appreciated.

## ...and DON'T STOP!

Please keep knitting folks and thank you very much for joining the squares together in groups of six. It really does help to speed up the creation of the blankets at Biddulph Methodist Church.



Sheila H writes...



## BORDER CONTROL...

Thanks to Joe Porter for volunteering to look after the border from the lych-gate to the church porch. Thanks also to Alan Payne for clearing the border so that Joe has a clean start. Joe would welcome a second volunteer to help him. See Joe.

## and MORE READERS PLEASE!

To all reader volunteers, please note that there is a new reading list on the notice board. Please don't wait to be asked. No-one will think you pushy if you fill in a space that would be convenient for you! After all, volunteers will see an opportunity to help and step in.

Thanks to Ros for all her hard work compiling the monthly newsletter over another 12 months. What would we do without her?



Lindsey writes...

With everything in pretty short supply, all donations are very gratefully received. Pasta is now on the list.

***Please include some Christmas treats this month if you can.***

Longlife semi-skimmed milk  
Pasta sauce  
Tinned vegetables  
Instant mash  
Tinned potatoes  
Tinned soup  
Ketchup/brown sauce

Fruit squash  
Sponge puddings  
Tinned rice pudding  
Rice  
Tinned fish  
Custard  
Pasta

Cereals  
Tinned tomatoes  
Coffee  
Tinned meat  
Tinned fruit  
Biscuits/snack bars

### **Household cleaning products:**

Washing up liquid  
Multi surface cleaner  
Cleaning cloths/sponges  
Laundry liquid/capsules/powder

### **Babies:**

Nappies – all sizes PARTICULARLY NEED SIZE 2 AT THE MOMENT  
Nappy bags  
Wet wipes  
Baby shampoo and bath lotion  
Cotton wool  
Talcum powder

### **Toiletries:**

Shampoo and conditioner  
Shower gel and soap  
Toothpaste and toothbrushes  
Deodorant  
Razors and shaving foam

If you are a donor, please try to deliver your donations at the Foodbank on Tues and Fri between 10.00 am and 12 noon – as it gets very busy with clients after this time. Alternatively, you may use any of our Permanent Collection Points which are still available at various locations listed on our website <https://leekdistrict.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>. We are also able to collect any large donations - please contact the Foodbank to arrange this. If any of you would like to discuss anything relating to the Foodbank or arrange a visit, please contact me at [projectmanager@leekdistrict.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:projectmanager@leekdistrict.foodbank.org.uk) or on 07916 005064. We continue to welcome corporate volunteers, school groups and individual volunteers, and we are always very happy to show people around and share with them the work we are doing. Love, best wishes and blessings to you all.

*Lindsey Stockton, Project Manager*

***NEXT COLLECTION at St Luke's and Connections: Sunday December 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
See p10 for blanket collection.***

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## **FLOWER & CRAFT CLUB**

**Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> December**

**in the Chapter House from 1pm to 3pm**

**Thank you to members for creating the lovely displays for Remembrance Sunday.**



If you would like to come and watch, have a cuppa and a chat or bring knitting, you would be very welcome too. **Sue**

## **and OUR NEW ART CLUB...**



**Our next club meeting will be on Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> from 10.00am to 12noon.**

Here is a sample drawing from our recent session where we drew poppies for remembrance. Pencils, crayons and sketch pads are needed. Nicola demonstrates techniques for drawing still life and is very encouraging to those who feel they have no talent in this area!

A **£2** donation covers tea, coffee and biscuits.

You don't need to come every time and can book on to sessions that interest you.

**For any further information about the Art and Flower & Craft Clubs please contact Sue Forrester on 07854 043187.**

## **CHILDREN'S ART CLUB**

As part of our outreach, we hold a termly children's art club on a Saturday morning from 10am to 11am. Next one is **December 9<sup>th</sup>**.



## CHRISTMAS WREATH WORKSHOP

Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December from 2.00pm

As Endon village hall is booked up, this very popular workshop will be taking place in church this year.

The ticket price of **£22.50** includes all you need to make a wreath with the exception of your individual decorations e.g., lights, baubles and bows. This year we will be weaving the wreath ring from ivy strands making it a very organic and recyclable Christmas decoration. Please see Sue for tickets. Only 20 spaces.



## MARSHMALLOWS FOR ALL HALLOWS' ... GREET & TREAT

Thank you to all the volunteers who went out into the highways and byways of Endon on a cold, damp evening to distribute 'Hope' bags to youngsters they met. About 30 (including mums and dads) took up their invitation to the chapter house for hot chocolate and marshmallows.

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## BLANKETS REQUESTED BY LEEK FOOD BANK

Leek Foodbank is now also collecting knitted blankets - they're made up of squares, again. They're for people who depend on Foodbank and who struggle with their heating bills.



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## Stop press: FLORAL TRIBUTES!

What a wonderful evening with Pauline and Jeanette creating some truly delightful floral Christmas displays on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Thanks to them and to the amazing support crew who provided tea/coffee and a delicious array of cakes! Over £300 was raised for church funds. More next month with photos!



**Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad**

## Nativity Plays - Truth or Myth

A swaying sensation, a crash and the kindly arms of a teacher picking me up. The year was 1978, and a 6 year old me, giddy with the excitement of being an angel, and forced to stand in my sparkly outfit for what seemed like hours (but was probably minutes), had fainted.

How much of this memory is truth and what has been added over the years I am not sure. Fast forward 30 years, and I am directing a nativity play. The ingredients are still the same: tinsel halos, a doll in a manger, Joseph, Mary, a donkey, innkeepers. Nativity plays have been a staple of my life forever, whether as actor, director, or spectator. But like my memories of my ill-fated angel role as a child, what of the modern nativity play is truth and what is myth? There is no written record of the events of 1978 when a child fell off a stage, but the facts around Christ's birth were recorded, by the gospel writers. Luke tells us of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, Jesus' birth and the shepherds, while Matthew tells of magi from the east. While most people know that aliens and lobsters are modern additions, many are more fuzzy on the other details. I almost caused a riot in a classroom once when I challenged the children to find the donkey in the Biblical account (look it up - he's not there!). There is also no mention of a stable, innkeepers, kings or animals.

So yes, there are parts of the story that are myth, but what is true? I love nativity plays, not because of the cuteness factor, or the tradition, but because in the midst of the tinsel and tutus, lies the most profound, earth-shattering truth. God took on flesh, to save his people from their sins, and that changed everything.

The incarnation of the Son of God is the most profound truth, around which the history of our world pivots. The nativity play is a glorious celebration of this truth, one that I pray will reignite our hearts this year, refilling us with the profound joy of God's love for his world, and giving us a truly happy Christmas.

*Charmian Gamble is one of three Christian Distinctiveness Adviser supporting teachers and leaders in church schools across Lichfield Diocese.*



[charmian.gamble@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:charmian.gamble@lichfield.anglican.org) / <https://www.ldbe.co.uk>



## TOY SERVICES: Sunday, December 3rd

Toys and toiletries collected this year will be taken to Leek Salvation Army.

We invite gifts appropriate for 0 – 18 age group:  
teenagers, babies and toddlers.

**PLEASE DO NOT WRAP YOUR GIFTS.** No wrapping paper required as the Salvation Army has plenty. Thank you!

# Mark my words – all together

*O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence. (Isaiah 64.1)*

This is how we start a new church year. On the first Sunday of **Advent**, Isaiah's words rip through the air and his prophecy will continue to thunder around us Sunday by Sunday. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus cries 'Keep Awake!' and we hear his passion for this world to flourish and for his followers to take their place on the side of hope. These cries of hope and determination are set against feelings of anguish and frustration. Surely this year, after months of praying for places of conflict, we recognise that anguish and hope. Perhaps scripture never feels more powerful than in Advent.

The world – and even the church – seems bent on division and conflict. The power and simplicity of scripture can give us strength, purpose and even unity.

I am so lucky to be employed by the diocese to help parishes think about their next steps. I'm advocating several 'next steps' at the moment. One of them is for churches to come together to read the gospel of Mark (the main gospel set for Sunday readings through this year) aloud in one setting. It's simple, humble activity, yet a bold one.

The experience of hearing a whole gospel read aloud can be transformative. It's very different from hearing it week by week, or reading it alone to yourself. We notice the power and awe of the overall story. We notice how the individual stories are framed in a much bigger story. We understand how the parts we often hear fall into a particular sequence. We feel the ebb and flow of the story, the shifts of gear, and we imagine the disciples' experience much more easily. We notice the distinctiveness of the particular gospel we're listening to. And some parts of the story – perhaps especially some of the apocalyptic teaching – make more sense in their context. Hearing scripture together is also an act of unity. Whatever your church tradition or theological conviction, any Christian can sit alongside any other Christian to hear the gospel read aloud. If we hope for unity, this is an activity to bring us together in our diversity.

Reading the whole Gospel, perhaps at the start of the year, or in Holy Week, can help frame all the weeks that follow. It can help both preachers and congregations.

Understanding the big story helps understand all the individual stories it contains.

Could your church organise a reading of the gospel? Could you work with others around to do this? Who could that be good news for? Local schools and their parents? Ecumenical efforts? Or simply the discipleship of your own church community?

The gospels were written as whole stories to be heard. Let us receive them in that way, and encounter their power afresh!

***Revd Simon Foster** leads the Mission team for Lichfield Diocese which works with schools, parishes, fresh expressions, chaplaincies and the cathedral, to energise, resource and support them in mission and evangelism – looking out to and for our communities.*

Contact Simon at [simon.foster@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:simon.foster@lichfield.anglican.org) or see the team's web pages at [www.lichfield.anglican.org/mission](http://www.lichfield.anglican.org/mission).





## Holly

We tend to ignore holly trees until December, when they brighten up our churchyards, as well as our churches and homes at Christmas time, with their shiny leaves and bright berries. For the rest of the year they are less conspicuous, with dark green leaves, dark brown bark and small white flowers in the spring. Holly is an interesting tree however.

Before botanists brought tree seeds from other countries to our shores, winter foliage was unusual, and all evergreen trees were viewed as special. Use of holly and yew branches for winter decoration is an old custom, probably a mix of a wish to make the place look festive, coupled with superstition. Holly was believed to be a fertility symbol and a charm against witches, goblins and the devil. It was thought unlucky to cut down a holly tree.

Holly has good natural defences with the leaves of a young holly extremely prickly. As the tree matures, the prickles reduce, particularly on higher branches, out of reach of most browsing animals. Holly trees are dioecious meaning that there are male and female trees with the decorative berries only found on the female of course. Holly berries are a vital food source for birds and small mammals such as wood mice and dormice. In some cases, mistle thrushes will vigorously defend a particularly choice holly tree from other birds so have a look in your local burial ground and see if you see a flurry of activity.

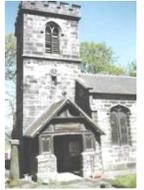
If you would like to start digitally recording wildlife in your local burial ground then why not use a churchyard holly tree to get going. Take a look on our website under Be Involved or click here: [caringforgodsacre.org.uk/add-your-records](http://caringforgodsacre.org.uk/add-your-records) to find out what to do. You will need to download the iNaturalist app onto a mobile phone, tablet or laptop. It's helpful to start recording with a familiar species and something that is easy to photograph. Maybe you have children or grandchildren in need of outdoor activities in the Christmas holidays? This could be a way to start exploring the wonderful wildlife to be found in churchyards, chapel yards and cemeteries.



All the best  
Harriet Carty

*Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor, [harriet@cfga.org.uk](mailto:harriet@cfga.org.uk), [www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk) - individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code **diomem22***

# ST CHAD'S NEWS



**BAGNALL COMMUNITY  
CHRISTMAS FAYRE**

SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER, 2023  
FROM 12PM  
THE VILLAGE HALL, BAGNALL

COME ALONG AND JOIN US FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT  
SHOPPING

DAISY MOON CREATIONS - WISTERIA BARN INTERIORS -  
NEALS YARD - BUTTERFLY DREAMS - PLANTS - GREETINGS  
CARDS - SWEETS - GONKS - KNITTED ITEMS - CAKES -  
TOMBOLA

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE

[WWW.BAGNALLVILLAGEHALL.CO.UK](http://WWW.BAGNALLVILLAGEHALL.CO.UK)

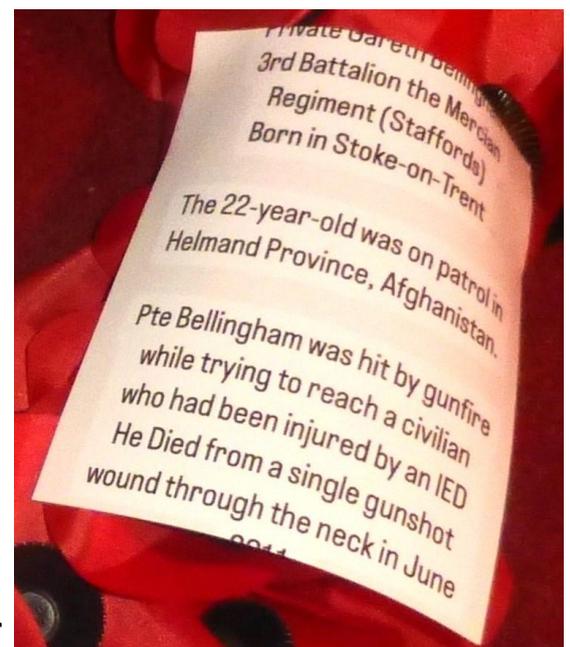


## ST CHAD'S REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

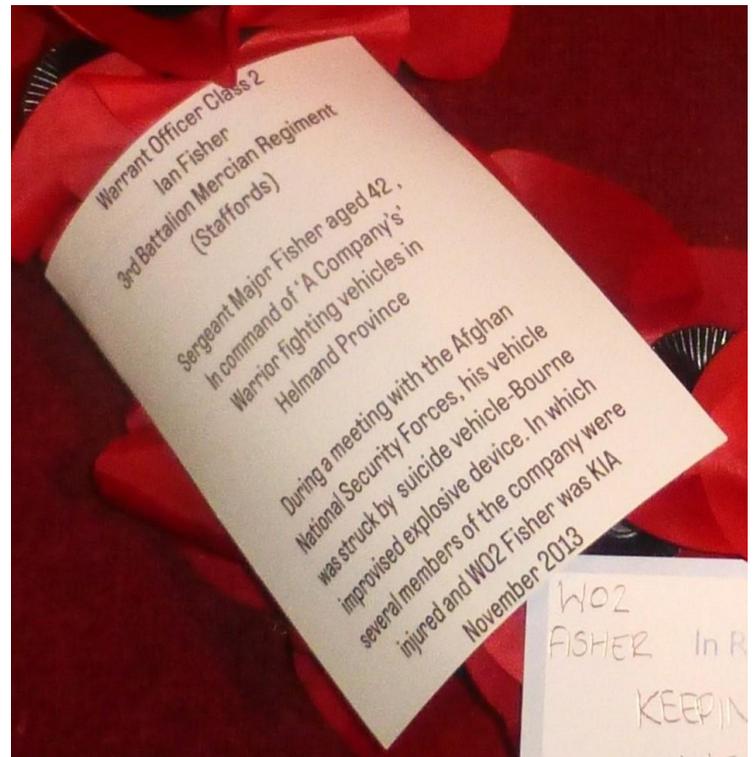
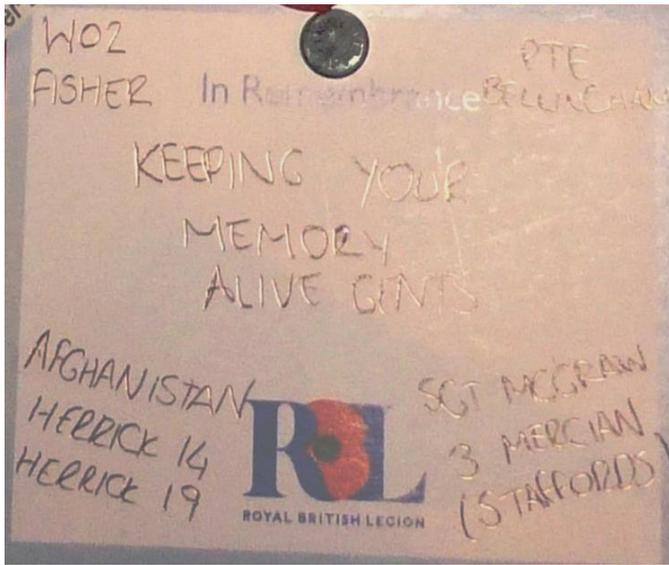
Sheila T writes...

Sgt Ashley McGraw of 3 Mercian (Staffords) with his son and fellow soldier Dale Walters. His wreath was in memory of two fallen comrades:

**Private Gareth Bellingham  
and Sergeant Major Ian Fisher**



When I went up to the altar two members of our congregation were in tears whilst reading this, and to be honest, I felt quite emotional and I thought that it was quite fitting to remember these brave men.



I would also like you all to think of Albert Rosie, a regular at our Remembrance services, proudly wearing his medals, who died earlier this year. He also will be remembered.



## BIBLE STUDIES:

After a gap of over 3 years bible studies have begun again! They are opportunities to meet and discuss the bible readings on the sheet the previous Sunday. Keep your Readings Sheet and bring it with you. Meet at 19.30 at Claremont, St George's Avenue (home of James and Ros). The next meetings will be on **Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> & Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>** (with mince pies). All welcome. If you need a lift or can offer a lift to someone please contact Rev Patricia.

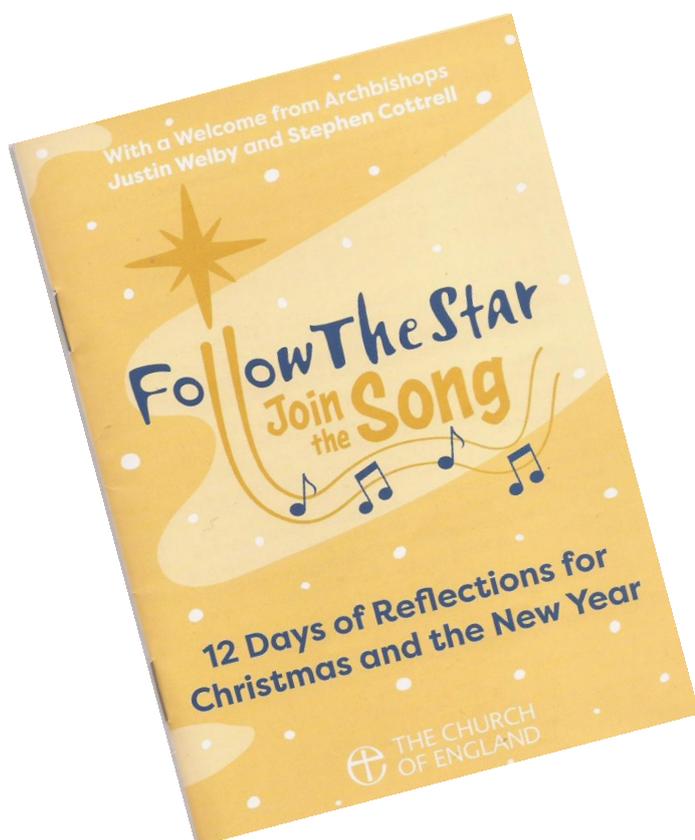


## REMEMBRANCE and MEMORIAL SERVICES...THANKS EVERYONE!

We extend a huge thank you to Barrie along with Revs Eleanor, Philip and Patricia for organising and taking part in our Remembrance and Memorial services on 12<sup>th</sup> November and to the children of St Luke's Academy who read to us and provided some lovely pictures. It was a cold, wet day so we were enormously appreciative of all those who made cakes and served tea and coffee after both services. In addition we thank members of our Flower and Craft Club for supplying us with beautiful floral displays and to Sue and husband Roger for putting out our poppy cascade in the south aisle and to Sheila H for keeping us warm and cleaning the church as we have no paid cleaner at the moment. Great team work!

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## 'FOLLOW THE STAR' THIS CHRISTMAS...



Rev Patricia has a few of these Christmas/New Year booklets with reflections for each of the 12 days of Christmas. Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell *"invite you this Christmas to follow the star, journey to the manger, join the song and come into the presence of Jesus Christ – a relationship which begins at Christmas but lasts forever."* If you like one please see Patricia.

# **December Prayer Focus**

- **The families of the four young lads who tragically lost their lives in Wales**
- **The truly horrendous situation in Israel and Gaza and especially the hostages**
- **The release of all hostages and desperately needed aid getting into Gaza**
- **Those dealing with severe flooding in parts of Scotland and England**
- **Many thousands experiencing dire living conditions and deep sadness having lost loved ones as a result of the recent severe flooding in Libya and the earthquake in Morocco as well as aid agencies trying desperately to help**
- **Inhabitants of the Hawaiian island Maui devastated by wild fires and those in danger of wildfires in other places**
- **Parts of Ukraine devastated by bombing and the people affected**
- **The serious consequences of shipments of grain being prevented from reaching their destinations, especially the African countries**
- **Those taken prisoner by the Russians**
- **An end to the war**
- **Serious concerns about the growth of Artificial Intelligence and its influence on all our lives**
- **Safe passage for those caught up in the current fighting in Sudan and an end to the conflict**
- **King Charles III and all working members of our royal family**
- **The recent upsurge of violence in Northern Ireland**
- **The current threat from China and N Korea supporting Russia in the war in Ukraine**
- **The threat to Taiwan from China**
- **Those in Turkey, Afghanistan and Syria still in desperate need after devastating earthquakes**
- **All aid agencies and volunteer recovery teams**
- **The problems of AI and managing them**
- **Climate change and that the COP27 conference will bear fruit**
- **Those affected by the severe floods and landslides and those trying to help them**
- **Those seeking justice for women in Iran and regime change**
- **For those on low incomes in the light of the rise in energy bills**
- **Organisations striving to get aid into Afghanistan where women have been banned from working as aid workers**
- **East African countries on the verge of famine**
- **The problem of people-trafficking across the Channel and those seeking asylum**
- **All hostages in Iran awaiting release especially Morad Tahbaz and Mehran Raoff**
- **The huge problem of loneliness**
- **Refugees in Yemen and the US border with Mexico**
- **All suffering at the hands of deeply corrupt governments**
- **Loved ones in our parish who are currently unwell**
- **Our church wardens and worship leaders during the interregnum**
- **The future of our benefice following more than 3 years of interregnum**
- **Those affected by the recent upsurge in knife crime**
- **The widespread drug problem especially in Stoke-on-Trent**
- **Lou Macari's hostel for the homeless in Hanley**
- **The problem of the millions of plastic bottles afloat in our oceans and the tons of 'space junk' orbiting our planet**
- **All who have lost loved ones recently**
- **The Trussell Trust food banks still needed as much as ever**

Roger Simpson, St Luke's warden / worship / PCC chair	01782 502006
Barrie Jackson, reader / St Luke's PCC Sec / Administrator (* tel no for church enquiries)	07510 074097 07517 653370*
Rev Philip Robinson (minister w Permission to Officiate)	07983 863372
Rev Patricia Robinson (organist, also minister w PtO)	07854 418488
Revs Philip & Patricia Robinson (landline)	01782 502448
Sue Forrester, Flower & Craft Club / Foundation gov / Safeguarding Officer / St Luke's Facebook / Art Club	07854 043187
Deb Podmore, Connections / school chaplain	01782 773383
Sheila Simpson, St Luke's Electoral Roll Officer	01782 502006
Shirley Brindley, candle dedications / pastoral tm	01782 504089
Steve Dale, St Luke's treasurer	07894 098011
Sheila Hurst, St Luke's Gift Aid Sec / MU rep	01782 503622
Ros Benson, newsletter / St Luke's website	01782 504137
Kath Howell, St Chad's PCC chair / warden / worship leader	01782 304616
Julia Podmore, St Chad's warden / treasurer	07980 802121
Pat Saul, St Chad's PCC vice-chair / secretary	07973 863930
Muriel Finney, St Chad's worship leader	01782 302229
Peter Millard, St Chad's buildings / warden's team	01782 505338
Emma Ashworth, St Chad's warden's team	07861 730806
Claire Houston-Brown, St Chad's Safeguarding Officer	07779 667470
Sheila Tipper, St Chad's news contact	01782 534647

For the duration of the interregnum the newsletter is available on-line as a PDF attachment and on the church website.

Paper copies are available for those without internet access.

Please submit notices for our next newsletter to Ros Benson

by **Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2024**

either by e-mail [jandrbenson@btinternet.com](mailto:jandrbenson@btinternet.com) or phone 504137.

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## A LOOK AHEAD...

It is being planned to hold a monthly prayer breakfast on the first Saturday of each month starting in the New Year. Further details will be in our next newsletter.

Also first Sunday in January (7<sup>th</sup>) 9.15am Holy Communion will be led by Rev Philip.

## 2024... HAPPY NEW YEAR?

As we go into an uncertain New Year let us all continue to pray for a massive outbreak of **PEACE** in our very troubled world.