

St Thomas Parish Church

Newsletter Spring 2026



Janet Writes

It's February which means a couple of weeks of calm, green time before Lent begins on Wednesday 18th. Hopefully the weather heard me and will calm down a bit – hasn't it been windy up here in the hills? There are a couple of things I would like to draw your attention to.

Firstly, if you tend a grave in the churchyard and have not yet removed your Christmas wreaths please do, we don't have a rubbish collection at church. I know that spring is around the corner so may I remind you that, if you put yellow flowers (especially roses) on the graves they may be eaten by the local wildlife – I've no idea why they have a preference for yellow but please bear it in mind.

Secondly, our Mission Community confirmation service this year takes place at 6pm on Sunday 15th March at St James, Milnrow. If you are aged 15 or over and would like to be confirmed please contact me before 15th February. We are planning to run a confirmation course during Lent which will also be open to those who have been confirmed but would like a little extra input during this season of reflection. If you have not been baptised and would like to join us, please get in touch.

I also want to say a big thank you to everyone who got involved in our Christmas activities, especially to Neil, who was at everything and worked really hard. Remember – if we all do a little we can achieve a lot!

God's blessings on you
Janet

Lent / Confirmation Course

Reverend Janet is holding a joint Lent / Confirmation course for Confirmation candidates and anyone who would like spend time focussing on learning, reflection and renewal during this Lent period.

Course starts: Sunday 22nd February, 6pm

Venue: St James, Milnrow

Social Events – 2026 Plans

All events in church unless otherwise stated

Event	Date
Family Service Breakfast	Sunday 1 st March, From 10am
Mother's Day Breakfast and daffodils to be gifted during service	Sunday 15 th March, From 10am
Cheese and Wine Evening	Friday 17 th April, 7pm
Family Service Breakfast	Sunday 26 th April, From 10am
Afternoon Tea	Saturday 6 th June, 2pm
Family Service Breakfast	Sunday 7 th June, From 10am
Family Service Breakfast	Sunday 6 th September, From 10am
Milnrow Band Concert	September, date tbc
Harvest Lunch	Harvest lunch (soup & roll), approx. 12.30pm
Family Service Breakfast	Sunday 16 th November, From 10am
Christingle and Christmas Fair	Sunday 13 th December, 3pm

Confirmation 2026

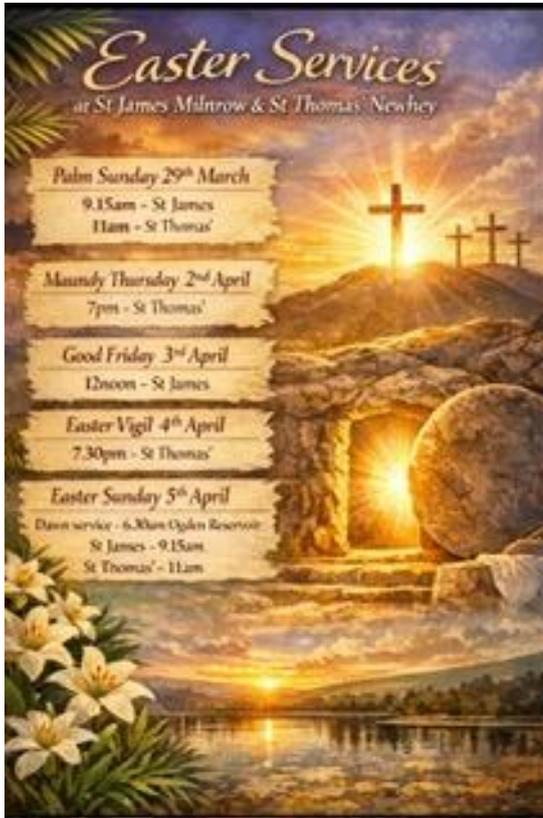
This year's Confirmation service will be held at St James, Milnrow on Sunday 15th March at 6pm.

Food in Church

Although we may be poor as church mice, we don't want to encourage any furry visitors into the building!

If you or your family members consume food in church, please ensure wrappers and any waste are disposed properly in the kitchen bin and any spillages are cleaned up.

Easter Services



Finance – why we need your help

We currently have the following major maintenance projects to fund:

- South door repairs
- Heating (move to Eco fuel or repair current system)
- Lighting (move to LED)
- Hearing loop

Rather than contributing just when you are physically in church, could you make a regular contribution by setting up a Standing Order?

For those already making regular contributions, are you able to increase your giving?

If we could all increase our giving by a few pounds and ensure that giving was regular, these changes would make a massive difference to our income and ability to budget for large expenses and also plan and sustain any outreach projects.

We do apply for Church of England and Manchester Diocesan Grants where possible to help with the cost of expensive repairs and upgrades. However, as this is OUR church, in

many cases we also need to provide matched funding.

For anyone already giving by Standing Order, to have something to enter to the weekly collection we have regular giving tokens available.



If you would like to set up a new Standing Order, please email Judith to request the forms

stthomaschurchnewhey@outlook.com

Votive Candles

We provide votive candles free of charge for all who would like to light one in prayer for themselves or others. The candles are placed in sand for safety reasons as they are left to burn out naturally after service.

Please feel free to light a candle before, during or after service, however, to respect the needs of others and the cost to church, please limit to one candle only.

Safety Notice: for safety reasons children are NOT permitted to light candles unaccompanied. Parents and guardians, please help ensure the safety of our young members.

Lay Ministry Courses

Lay Ministry Courses (formerly the General Lay Pathway) opens up and offers wider access to all of our current lay training courses and comes out of our vision to see all lay people empowered, enabled and equipped; not just those seeking authorisation or licensing through our existing programmes such as [Authorised Lay Ministry](#) (ALM) and [Licensed Reader Ministry](#).

ALM and Reader Ministry remain as distinct training pathways, but all ministry training courses offered on the ALM pathway are also open as stand-alone courses to any lay people wanting to develop their calling and gifting to Christian ministry and service.

What does the training involve?

All courses are around 12 sessions long and run from April to July each year. Delivery is a mixture of online and in-person teaching at a variety of venues around the diocese.

There are currently nine courses available:

- Children and Families
- Community Outreach and Social Justice
- Ecology and Creation
- Mission and Evangelism
- Parish Admin, Finance and Governance
- Pastoral Outreach and Listening
- Prayer and Spirituality
- Worship and Liturgy
- Youth Work

In the first instance, talk to Janet about your interest.

How do I apply?

Applications are now open for our 2026 courses. The application closing date for Lay Ministry Courses is Friday 27th March 2026.

To apply, [download an application form](#) and submit it to:

Beverley Angier, Lay Ministry Officer
St John's House, 155-163 The Rock, Bury, BL9 0NE
Email: Beverleyangier@manchester.anglican.org
Mobile: 07423 711298

Where can I get more information?

Learn more about Lay Ministry Training and the courses available in the prospectus below.

[Lay Ministry Courses 2026 Prospectus](#)

[Lay-Ministries - Courses](#)

Gardening Gang – Volunteers needed

Our first date of the 2026 season is yet to be confirmed, however if you would like to help us keep the churchyard tidy, please contact Judith (07795 818047).

Tasks: litter picking, weeding, cutting back shrubs, strimming grass



Fund Raising

Our social events are an important way for us to connect and build friendships, but they are also vital to the survival of our church!

It might surprise you to know that we don't receive funding from the national church or the Government - the only way our doors stay open on Sundays and for each wedding, baptism or funeral is with income from YOU in form of regular weekly collections, gift aid claims and from fund raising events.

- If you haven't attended one of our events yet, please buy your ticket and join us for some fun.
- Use our #easyfundraising link to make a gift to Church at no extra cost when you shop from your favourite online brands (over 7500 available).

It's an easy way to support us by doing what you do anyway and it doesn't cost you a penny extra.

So far we only received £10 from Easy Fund Raising this year – can you help us improve this income stream NOW.

Please support us by clicking here <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stthomaschurch/>

Take a look as it's really easy to use and you can make a BIG difference as we get a % contribution based on your total spend.

Nominate St Thomas for a chance to receive £1,000

The **Movement for Good Awards** programme gives churches the opportunity to obtain grants of £1,000 or more.

You can nominate St Thomas and your other favourite charities (one nomination per charity per person). The Movement for Good Awards has gifted over £5.75 million to more than 2,500 charities since the initiative started in 2019.

In 2023, £11,000 was gifted to 10 church-related charities through the £1,000 Movement for Good Awards. Kilkenny Christian Centre actually won twice, so get nominating, next time it could be us!!

To nominate, click on the link below:

<https://movementforgood.com/ecclesiastical>

Scroll down the page and click on this box ...

Nominate a charity for £1,000

In the search box, type or copy & paste 624345 St Thomas church, Newhey



Search for an organisation, group, charity name or charity number

Click 'Search' and tick the 'Registration exempt' box and select charity type 'church'. Complete your details and submit – it's that easy! If every adult receiving this newsletter completed a nomination, we might be in with a chance to receive a bonus gift of £1000!

Once you've submitted your nomination, share it, and get your friends and family to support us too.

Volunteering Opportunities

• **Gardening Gang**

Meets once a month to help keep our Churchyard tidy.

We are desperate for help from those with a bit more youth, fitness and strength on their side so we can tackle some of the larger jobs!

Please consider if you (or anyone you know) would like to join the Gardening Gang and volunteer just 2 hours a month.

• **Cleaning Rota**

New teams required - could you / friends / family give an hour or so every 6 weeks to help give the church a clean and vacuum? All equipment and training provided!!

• **Lay Assistant / Service reader**

Have you ever thought about joining the service team to support the Sunday readings or potentially serve as Lay Assistant?

For more information about what's involved for any of the above opportunities, please speak to Janet, Neil or Judith

A Church Near You

All services and activities are listed on our page on AChurchNearYou website. Click the link below and search for St Thomas, Newhey

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>



Regular St Thomas Service Timings

Sunday	Holy Communion	11.00am
Thursday	Holy Communion	10.00am

Contact Us

If you would like to add anyone to our collective prayers, or if you would like to talk to Janet about anything:

Priest in Charge - Reverend Janet Pitman

Email: hildaofwhitby67@gmail.com

Vicarage: 01706 594284

Mobile: 07401 344526

Curate - Neil McClure

Email: neil.mcclure@hotmail.co.uk

Mobile: 07799 417341

Warden - Judith Jones

Email: stthomaschurchnewhey@outlook.com

Mobile: 07795 818047

Please note, Friday is Janet's usual day off, so there will be a delay in any response.

Need a Helping Hand?

Do you or someone you know need a helping hand around the house?



Do you or a loved one need help around your home?
Are you feeling isolated or lonely?

Helping hands offers Reliable Domestic Help and/or a Befriending Service.
Whether it is light cleaning or a cup of tea & a chat we are here to help.

The services we offer include:

- Keep your home Clean & Tidy
- Laundry & Ironing
- Run Errands & Shopping
- Accompanying you to Outings & Social Events
- Support with Activities & Hobbies
- Meal Planning & Preparation
- Book & Take to Appointments
- Maintain Contact with Friends & Family
- Light Gardening
- Simply have a Cup of Tea & a Chat

For your peace of mind, we are & have:

- Advanced DBS Checked
- Fully Insured
- Level 2 Award in Food Safety & Catering
- Level 3 Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Emergency First Aider
- 18 years experience in Social Care

For further enquiries & pricing please contact:

Lisa

T: 07503 018629

E: lisa@lisashelpinghands.co.uk

Events & News from the Rochdale Deanery and Manchester Diocese

EVENTS

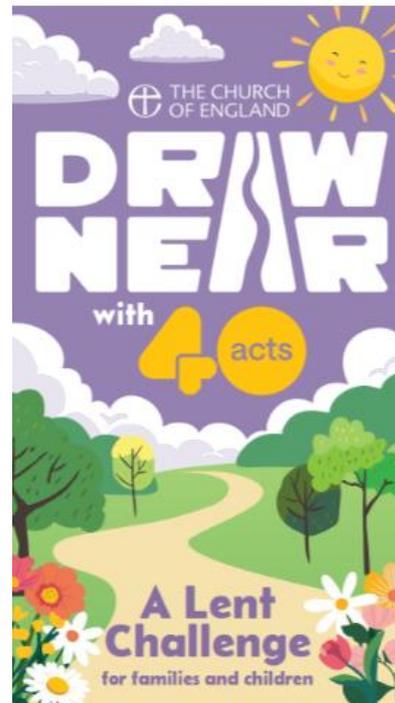
DRAW NEAR

LIFE-GIVING HABITS FOR LENT

During Lent, reflections are centred around a [summary of the Christian Way](#) from *Common*

Worship, which identifies six activities essential to our calling as disciples.

Each week a different contributor explores a different aspect of Christian discipleship – worshipping together, praying, exploring the Bible, sharing communion, offering service and sharing the good news with others.



A parallel 40-day challenge for families and children will also be available - exploring the life-giving habit of generosity in partnership with 40acts.

"Draw Near is all about teaching us how we can cultivate the habits and practices that will draw us nearer to God. And we will find that, in doing so, God will draw nearer to us, too."

Archbishops Sarah Mullally & Stephen Cottrell

<https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/what-we-believe/lent-holy-week-and-easter/draw-near-life-giving-habits-lent>

Celebrating Our Shared Journey: Deanery Gatherings Across our Diocese

This spring, please join us for one of our deanery celebration events taking place across the Diocese of Manchester. People from our parishes, chaplaincies, and schools will come together to reflect on how God is renewing lives and communities and to explore the next steps we can take together.

We'll share our diocesan vision, hear stories of hope from each deanery, and outline the national support and investment that is strengthening our mission and ministry.

At each gathering, we will explore the following four themes at the heart of our diocese's strategy and how national funding will support your deanery:

1. Parish Renewal
2. Growing Younger
3. Church Planting and Revitalisation
4. Developing Missional Leaders

You'll hear local stories of creativity, faithfulness, and discipleship offering ideas and encouragement for your own ministry context. Each evening will be led by one of our bishops alongside members of the teams responsible for supporting the delivery of our shared vision. Through worship, prayer, and conversation, we will celebrate what God is doing, acknowledge the challenges we face, and highlight the support, resources, and investment available to help us flourish.

These gatherings are for everyone: clergy, lay leaders, members of PCCs, school staff, chaplains, volunteers, new worshippers, and anyone curious about where God might be calling us. We hope you'll leave inspired and equipped to share this vision in your local context.

Dates and Locations

Each venue will open at 6.45pm for refreshments and the event will start at 7.15pm. You are welcome at any gathering but you'll get the most from attending your local deanery evening. As each gathering follows the same format, you only need to book onto one event.

Rochdale Deanery - Wednesday, 6th May - [Book Your Place Here](#)

Venue: Nelson Street Church, 6 Nelson Street, Rochdale, OL16 1NL



Prayer is both simple and profound. It changes us and the world. It moves us to action and stirs us out of our complacency.

When we pray repeatedly, publicly and privately, there is a slow conversion of the heart to the priorities of God. Grace seeps into the fractures and failings of our humanity, as well as into the hopes and longings of the soul.

Our [Transforming Prayer Community](#) is our diocese-wide community that seeks to connect and reconnect us with this simple vocation to pray.

Our prayer community is an invitation to simplicity, to growth and change, and to an adventure in which we will discover more about God's priorities and equip us to be his Body in a world of need.



TRANSFORMING PRAYER COMMUNITY
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER



Livestream services from Manchester Cathedral



[Click here for the Cathedral Facebook page](#)

Events at the Cathedral

Manchester Cathedral is a thriving, diverse and welcoming church in the heart of the city, Daily worship lies at the heart of cathedral life and offered throughout the day and on most days it includes at least one service sung by the Cathedral Choir.

[What's On - click here for more info](#)

Thought for the Day

<https://www.manchester.anglican.org/news/thought-for-the-day/>

Welcome to our "Thought for the Day" page, where we host reflections and insights to inspire and uplift your spirit. The reflections and thoughts are often shared by members of our Diocese, including our Bishops and our Archdeacons during their contributions to national and local radio stations, including BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio Manchester. Within these reflections, you'll find a blend of timeless truths and contemporary insights, addressing the joys and challenges of daily life through the lens of Christian faith. We invite you to explore these daily offerings as a source of inspiration, guidance, and spiritual nourishment.

BBC
RADIO



BBC RADIO
MANCHESTER

NEWS

The Ven Dr Rachel Mann to Retire as Archdeacon



We share the news that Archdeacon Rachel Mann will retire from her role at the end of July, following a period of ill health. Although she will be stepping back from full-time ministry, Rachel plans to continue writing, speaking, and taking up opportunities in the media as they arise.

Archdeacon Rachel Mann has served her entire ordained ministry within the Diocese of Manchester. She began her curacy at St Matthew's, Stretford, in 2005, before becoming Priest-in-Charge and later Rector of St Nicholas, Burnage. Alongside her parish ministry, she contributed significantly to the wider diocesan family as Poet in Residence and Minor Canon at Manchester Cathedral from 2009 to 2017, and was appointed an Honorary Canon in 2017.

Archdeacon Rachel writes movingly about the personal and medical journey that has led to her early retirement, reflecting that "this is not the end, just an end... I would like to believe I have much still to contribute to this diocese, the Church more broadly, and indeed to wider public life and culture."

She added, "It has been the privilege of my life to serve as a priest in this diocese. St John famously said, God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. In my ministry in Manchester, I have been blessed with that most awesome gift of grace: Love. Thank you. ... Please pray for me as I shall pray for you, and may Manchester Diocese be ever more marked and transformed by the love of Jesus Christ who is the heart of all good and hopeful things."

[Archdeacon Rachel's letter in full here](#)