



Welcome to St. Thomas'!



A very warm welcome to St Thomas' Church.

This sheet is now also being sent via email! Please contact the office on our temporary number of 07702 822546 if you wish to receive an emailed copy.

St Thomas' Website - www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4121/

St. Thomas' Facebook - www.facebook.com/stthomasaldridge/

Rev's Ramblings

30 April 2020

Max and I particularly like visiting the Peak District with our caravan, and I was thinking the other day of when we visited the village of Eyam (pronounced EEM) in Derbyshire, otherwise known as the Plague Village. It reminded me somewhat of the situation we're now in with Coronavirus!

In 1665 Bubonic Plague was rife in London and many thousands of people had died. By June 1666, the outbreak in London had begun to ease off, but the plague arrived in Eyam via a London cloth trader who inadvertently brought in a bundle of cloth infested with fleas. The villagers were way ahead of their time in "social distancing" – they realised that in order to stop the spread of the plague to the nearby large towns of Sheffield and Manchester, saving hundreds of lives, they needed to lockdown Eyam. No-one left the village, and no-one came in. Food and supplies were brought by the Duke of Devonshire from Chatsworth and left at the gate to the village. This sacrifice of freedom (and lives too, sadly) by the villagers meant that the outbreak was contained.



Once the infection was over, they held a service of thanksgiving out in the open air – still aware of avoiding the close contact of being in the church building. They commemorate the village's sacrifice each year with an outdoor service in the fields, which we were lucky enough to chance upon during one of our visits.

That made me think about what we could do when we can meet together again – services outside perhaps? We could perhaps decorate our Easter cross and have a parade of celebration around the area ... the ideas are endless!! Put your thinking caps on – let me know your ideas!

Blessings

Sue Quibell

MISSION FOCUS

Watts in Madagascar

(Thank you to Colin and Sue Goodall for this information)

We received the photo below from Ted last week and we share it with you to assist your prayers for them. He took it at the entrance of the Good News Hospital in Mandritsara.



As we look at the rainbow in the clouds Ted points us to read the following verse -

Psalm 33:20. "We wait in hope for the Lord; He is our help and shield."

Please continue to pray for Ted, Rachel and their colleagues.

The temporary shelter that you see in the foreground to the left is the triage centre

where all new patients at the hospital are seen and checked, so that any displaying symptoms or signs of coronavirus can then be isolated from the remainder of patients.

As we look at this picture, let us pray that very few people will be found to have the virus in an already understaffed hospital.

We also learnt this week that the local school in Mandritsara is now closed and Ted and Rachel ask for prayer to have wisdom to make good and sacrificial decisions about the hospital's needs, whilst also caring for Ethan and Jamie at home who are experiencing disruption and disappointment at this time. Please pray that the four of them would know God's protection and strength as they serve the people in the village.

Blessings

Colin and Sue Goodall

Digital Resources For Online Worship and Prayer

There are lots of options to keep us going! ...

Live Family Worship: Join the Drake Family on Wednesday's and Saturday's at 4pm for their live Family Worship session. Nick and Becky Drake are the people behind the songs such as 'Creator God', 'City on a Hill' and 'Big Family of God' if you know them. Their sessions comprise of some live acoustic songs, an interactive, family participation story and prayer, lasting about 30 mins. Well worth a watch, and the previous videos can be viewed at any time at: <https://www.facebook.com/worshipforeveryone/> Look at Facebook & Website

Faithlife: Please use this facility for spiritual teaching, where you can view some online services and listen to sermons that you may have missed or listen again to those that challenged you or that you enjoyed <http://faithlife.com/stthomas> Follow the instructions below to go direct to our sermon site, Look out the button on the bottom right, it's blue like a tray with an arrow on it. The option then comes up down load audio, or download video. If you download video you will get pictures too. Any problems let me know and we'll see what we can do. I'm hoping to expand our options as time goes on. God Bless. **Roger Woodhall**

1 click on <http://faithlife.com/stthomas>

2 scroll down to choose message or sermon you want

3 click on blue button on right hand side, looks like a tray with an arrow in to it

4 choose either download audio or download video from little blue box

5 wait for it to download then press the play button in middle of screen.

The Church of England Website: Please look at this website as it provides a variety of helpful tools for online worship and prayer. Please copy or type the following link in your search engine:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches> Then click **Digital Resources** (*found in the middle/left of your screen*). You should see lots of options, such as - apps for prayer, audio services, online streaming and a link to BBC Radio 4 Live Lent.

BBC Radio 4 Daily Services: Sunday 3rd May, 8.10am Service entitled "Unless The Lord Builds The House" The Bishop of Salisbury Nicholas Holtam marks the 800th anniversary of Salisbury Cathedral.

BBC One TV, Sunday Worship: Fourth Sunday of Easter 10.45am (*Please note service times can fluctuate from week to week*). This week's service will be at Bangor Cathedral and will be led by the Very Revd Kathy Jones. The service was filmed before the closure of all church buildings.

NOTICES

Praying Together: At this time of world crisis when we are not meeting together to worship or pray to the Lord we can still do this as individuals (couples or families) at home at the times some of us would be meeting together.

Monday 6.30pm-7.15pm – is when Space to Pray usually meet. **Wednesday 7.30pm-8.00pm** – is when the Revival Prayer Meeting usually takes place. Their members will be praying at home so why not set aside these times to join together 'in spirit' as we ask the Lord to intervene in our world and in our nation. We could also pray on **Fridays between 12 noon-1.15pm** when Jan's prayer group would be meeting and also on **Sundays when church would be meeting**. There is always so much to pray about but even more at this time, so let's come together in Spirit and show the Lord that we are serious in our requests. Let's also just keep reminding ourselves of God's promises to us and remember that He is still Sovereign over all. Peace of the Lord be with you. **Liz Spires**

Prayer Circle: The Prayer Circle was originally set up many years ago to pray for those amongst us who were ill or suffering bereavement. Over the years we have prayed for many other things including job loss, even sick pets, as well as for people to come to know Jesus – God is concerned with every aspect of our lives, nothing is too big or too small for Him. This service is here for you, so if you have any worries about anything at this time, do get in touch and we will pray for you. We are a group of about a dozen St Thomas' members who are willing to pray for you or your loved ones each day. Prayer requests are contained within the Prayer Circle, Sue Quibell and Jeremy Bakewell, on a confidential basis and not shared with the wider congregation. Please get in touch with Liz Spiers on 01922 453944 or email Liz at Lizspiers55@blueyonder.co.uk who will share your request and start praying. **Liz Spires, Prayer Coordinator**

Your world needs you to keep on praying! Have you been joining in with our set prayer times? For me personally, on Mondays at 6.30pm there has been a 'stillness' in the air as if the Lord is saying 'come now is the time to pray' and there has been a real feeling of meeting with Him at that time. This time is when Space to Pray would have been meeting and it recently occurred to me that previous prayers have been answered but in the most unexpected ways anyone could imagine.

Over the past year or so the 6-8 of us who have been meeting on Mondays have prayed for our world and the things that concern us. Some of the things we prayed for were: That people would have more respect and love for one another and now we are hearing stories of acts of kindness and people going out of their way to help others, building a community spirit.

Continued ...

NOTICES

We prayed about children and family life. Most families now have more time to spend together and hopefully the children are getting all the love and attention they need and building up relationships. Though we still need to pray against abuse.

We prayed about the homeless, that somehow they would find permanent homes. Councils have now found homeless people rooms in hotels to take them off the streets and will hopefully find them more permanent places in due course.

We prayed for knife crime to stop and now people are not allowed to meet up therefore lessening the opportunities for young people to injure one another.

We also prayed about human rights in China and now have a virus from there which is trying to destroy mankind, God's creation. God responds to our prayers and the devil tries to counteract but God always brings good out of the bad.

On Wednesdays at our Revival Prayer Meetings the 3-4 of us have prayed for revival in our church and our nation. We are now seeing more 'online' church services available to everyone to hear the gospel and Sue and Jeremy have been posting prayers and bible studies for us to join in with. We have been receiving the weekly prayer list to pray for those working with the NHS or suffering the effects of Coronavirus. Who knows how many people have turned to God in prayer over the last few weeks or heard a sermon for the first time. If this Coronavirus doesn't get people praying then I don't know what will.

When I took on the role of Prayer Co-ordinator my desire was for us to come together as a praying church and though few of us have been meeting each week I hope we are now becoming that praying church from our own homes. My other long held desire is for us to become a healing church and my prayer is that the Lord will equip us for when we emerge from our homes into this hurting world.

Let us keep praying. The world needs us to. And God does answer prayers but in most unexpected ways. **Liz Spiers – Prayer co-ordinator**

Tom's Toddlers and Footprints: Please look out our new prayer activity which was posted on our website on the 29th April. **Hannah Evans, Children and Families Worker.**

Homegrown Faith: Please look out for the new Children's Activity on our website, titled "*Children's Activity (10) On The Road To Emmaus*". **Hannah Evans, Children and Families Worker.**

NOTICES

Thomas Project, Request For Craft Items For Children: The Thomas Project would like to give out bags of crafty items to children during the lockdown. These bags will be given out to families through Foodbank. If you have any spare new craft items you can donate we'd be really grateful. We need new things only please, crayons, paper, playdough, books etc for ages 3+ years up to 12 years. Donations can be left at the project on Wednesdays 10am to 1pm or Fridays 3pm to 6pm. The Food Bank will still be open during the usual hours on Wednesdays and Fridays.

St Thomas' Church Office: Hannah and Genette are currently working from their homes.

Hannah can be contacted by email on hannahevans@stthomasaldridge.org.uk or by phone 01922 693298 or mobile 07921 387241.

Genette will still be working her usual office hours of 9am – 12pm, Monday to Thursday and she will be popping into the office periodically to collect post etc. You can contact her by email at office@stthomasaldridge.org.uk or by phone on 07702 822546.

Befriending: At LinkingLivesAldridge we are receiving lots of referrals from Making Connections Walsall for people who would like telephone befriending in Aldridge. We are looking for lots of volunteers who would give up a few minutes, 2 or 3 times a week, to give someone a call. Just hearing another voice can make such a difference when you are feeling lonely and isolated. It would be great if you could help. Please contact revbevboden@btinternet.com or call or text me on 07970808819 or message me on Facebook. Or contact Elaine by email Aldridge@linkinglives.uk **Rev Bev Boden**

Caravan Holiday Bookings: Please check with Marlene Bradburn regarding future bookings of their static caravan at Dyffryn Seaside Estate, Barmouth. contact Rob on 07873 403748 or Marlene at 01922 457790 for more details. Thank you. **Marlene Bradburn**

ALL REGULAR WEEKLY GROUPS ARE CURRENTLY SUSPENDED

CONTACT INFORMATION

Clergy:

- Rev Jeremy Bakewell 07790 986575
- Rev Sue Quibell 07889 885545 if you want would like to talk please feel free to phone on the numbers above.

Church office

- Office hours are usually **Monday to Thursday from 9 am till 12 pm**. Genette Andrews is currently working from home and will be happy to help, you can contact her on the following temporary number:

- Telephone 07702 822546 / Email: office@stthomasaldridge.org.uk
(Please be mindful that messages may not be seen or heard on Fridays, Saturdays or Sundays)

Children and Families Worker: Hannah Evans

- Hannah is currently working from home and can be contacted on the following numbers:
- Telephone 01922 693298 or mobile 07921 387241 / Email: hannahevans@stthomasaldridge.org.uk
(Please be mindful that messages may not be seen or heard on Mondays, Saturdays or Sundays)

Pastoral Care Coordinator: Vera Russell

- Telephone 01922 616383 or 07806 519301 / Email: vjrus@gmail.com

Prayer Coordinator: Liz Spiers

- Telephone 01922 453944 if you wish to discuss any prayer needs, including ongoing prayer ministry and details of the Prayer Circle.

Wardens

- **Clive Thomas:** 07811 341212 or email clivethomas62@yahoo.co.uk
- **Sue Grundy:** 07772 925069 or email susan.grundy@yahoo.com
- **Andrew Dickson:** 07989 143388 or andrewjdickson999@hotmail.com
- **Vera Russell:** 07806 519301 or email vjrus@gmail.com

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is *everybody's* responsibility. If you have concerns about how somebody might be treating you or another person, please do not hesitate to contact **Sue Grundy (for children) on 07772 925069** or **Sue Quibell (for adults) on 07889 885545** (see poster in church foyer for other numbers and information). A copy of our safeguarding policy is available from the church foyer and church office.

Fabrics and Health and Safety – Andrew Dickson may be contacted via 07989 143388 or andrewjdickson999@hotmail.com directly, if you notice or need help with any such issues.

Cooper and Jordan School Applications: Parents should be aware that we follow the school's admission policy on attendance and in accordance with Diocesan guidelines 'regular attendance' at **worship** constitutes a minimum of at least **two services per month**. The guidelines further suggest that regular attendance should have been for at least two years before application. Please see the Welcome Desk to ensure your attendance is recorded. **New information: Supporting letters are now being done in batches when we receive the list of applications from C&J. The letters are then sent directly back to C&J but feel free to check with our office that your child's name features in the list.**
Thanks, Genette.

Gift Aid: The Government adds 25% to each 'Gift Aided' donation at no cost to you. If you don't have a regular Gift Aid arrangement, but would nevertheless like to Gift Aid a donation today, please use one of the brown Gift Aid envelopes available from the leaflet rack, or do ask a Steward to find one for you. Please see our Treasurer, **Ron Heaton** for more information if needed.