



Welcome to St. Thomas'!



Forthcoming Services

Please note - our twice monthly live Services of Holy Communion have been suspended until further notice.

Services will continue to be shared online.

Sunday 7th February: Join with Aldridge Parish Church Online Service

Sunday 14th February: The Transfiguration of Jesus, Mark 9:2-9

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

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

Phone 01922 453942 / Email office@stthomasaldrige.org.uk

Rev's Ramblings - 4th February 2021

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Last week I told you how I knew Spring was on the way – this week I can assure you that Easter is on the way too – I've had my first Hot Cross Buns!! They are my secret vice!! I just love the currants and the spices in them! Mmm... it's making my mouth water just writing about them!

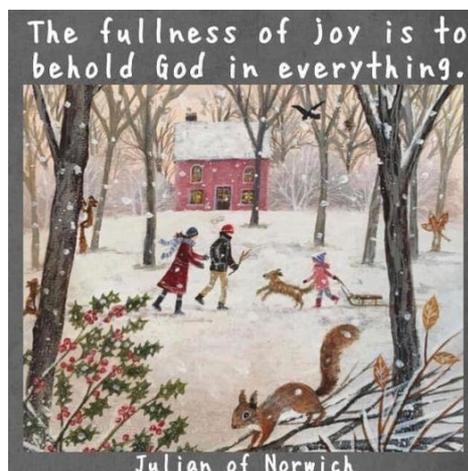


Whilst it's nice being able to eat the buns, don't you think it's a shame the way the shops anticipate seasons and events so far in advance? Yes, if you're a gardener, you need to have your seed catalogues well in advance of planting – but it's only just the end of January – do we really need Easter eggs yet? And when the Easter eggs go off the shelves, the buckets and spades and sunscreen will replace them – which in turn will be replaced at the end of the summer holidays by Halloween (sadly!!) and even Christmas cards!!

If you want to buy shorts, swimsuits and sandals, you need to hit the shops now – if you wait until summer, they'll all be gone because the autumn & winter stock will be in!! It's almost like wishing our lives away!!

As I write this, it's snowing. I played snowballs with our dog last week – he really enjoyed chasing them, and I really enjoyed playing in the snow (yes, at my age!!). It's very tempting to want to wish the snow away, to long for spring – but did you see Winterwatch on the TV? There's actually so much to see in winter – we need to open our eyes to the beauty that's around us at the moment and thank God for everything He has given us – whatever the season.

Blessings
Sue Quibell



MISSION FOCUS

TEARFUND – FEBRUARY 2021

Whilst some of those involved in the US violence carried banners with Christian images, this in no way reflects true discipleship and the role most Christians have played historically and today in supporting democracy and the rule of law around the world.

Peace and Provision

Across Africa, Asia and Latin America, many countries where Tearfund works have a weak democracy or none at all. When the rule of law is fragile, it forces many millions of people into extreme poverty.

Tearfund staff and partners are in these places, feeding malnourished people, restoring hope and helping to bring peace. From South Sudan to Nigeria, the Rohingya camps to the refugee camps in Beirut, we are standing with the most vulnerable and helping them be released from the grip of poverty.

Our advocacy work in many of the world's most dangerous countries directly supports democracy and the rule of law.

People of hope

What we have seen in the US undermines those crucial efforts and the respect with which democracy is held around the world. They remind us that in every country democracy is fragile. It can be thrown away if it is not protected and upheld by Christians and others who believe in its importance.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are people of hope. We trust in our Lord and know that ultimately he will work out all things for good. We believe democracy, freedom and the rule of law has a bright future in all countries around the world. Christians and local churches have always been and will always be at the forefront of the work to establish and maintain it and that is why our mission is to follow Jesus where the need is greatest, responding to crisis and partnering with local churches to bring restoration to those living in poverty.

Thank you for your support and we hope you can carry on your support through 2021 with prayer, action and giving.

God Bless

Janet Berrill

TEARFUND CHURCH REP

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.*

PROVERBS 31: 8-9

Digital Resources For Online Worship and Prayer

Virtual Sunday School: Every week, Virtual Sunday School release a fun Sunday School session to watch involving a story, activity or game and prayer. These are full of energy and lots of fun.

These can be watched

here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMu2bG8L2dp7ywUZVa9uXDA>

Bible Buds: On Facebook every fortnight <https://www.facebook.com/biblebuds/>

Worship for Everyone

For a whole host of fun, faith filled family worship and story sessions available online, do check out the Drake Family either on facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/worshipforeveryone> or on you tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2dYemDuCz36mIKAt0DwhcA>

Lichfield Diocese Daily Prayer: A daily prayer video posted on the [diocesan Facebook page](#) every weekday at 1pm for people across the diocese to join in prayer together.

Lectio 365 – this is a free downloadable audio app, providing a daily devotional resource that helps you pray the Bible every day.

BBC Radio 4 Daily Services at 9.45am each morning.

Services are available every day with spiritual reflection, bible reading, prayer and Christian music. Simply tune in at 9.45am.

05.02.2021, Friday – Lifegiving Light

(The titles of next week's services have not yet been released online).

BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship –7th February at 8.10am –

Marking Chinese New Year and as what is likely to be the largest UK immigration from outside Europe begins since Windrush, from Hong Kong. Chinese Christians have been worshipping in the UK for at least 70 years. Today the Chinese Christian community flourishes with congregations preaching in English, Mandarin and Cantonese in most major towns and cities across the country. As Chinese New Year approaches Rev Henry Lu of Chinese Overseas Christian Mission leads today's Sunday Worship, exploring the themes of hospitality and welcome, particularly in anticipation of the many immigrants expected to arrive in the UK from Hong King in the coming months.

PRAYING TOGETHER

If it would comfort you to pray at a time when you know others will also be praying, it may help you to know that the following Groups will be praying at the times mentioned below:

Monday 6.30pm-7.15pm – Space to Pray

Wednesday 7.30pm-8.00pm – Revival Prayer Meeting

Fridays between 12 noon-1.15pm Jan's Prayer Group

Sundays when church would be meeting.

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 Spiers, Prayer Coordinator**

Weekly Zoom Prayers: If you would like to take part in our weekly live Zoom prayer meetings you would be most welcome to join on Sundays at 5.30pm for the whole church. If you would like to take part, please give Roland a ring on 01922458769. He will help you to join the meeting, and provide you with the relevant pass numbers. **Roland Jones**

A Call To Prayer: The situation regarding the Covid-19 virus is worsening daily, but what can we do about it? WE CAN PRAY!!

We recently shared a heartfelt and upsetting plea from Liz Grace* who has to deal with the effects of the virus daily at the Manor Hospital. It was clear to see how much this is affecting her, so folks we need to get behind her and the whole of the NHS and pray!

In normal times we'd be asking you to meet at church to pray together, but obviously we can't do that. So, can we ask you to commit to praying at 6pm each day, then we know we'll be cont... praying powerfully together every day. Lifegroups and Roland's Zoom prayers are being asked to soak the situation in prayer too. Please also continue to pray for this situation during your usual prayer time.

This is the least we can do for one of our sisters in Christ, and for all those who daily put their own lives at risk in fighting Covid. There is strength in praying together.

(Jesus said..) Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my Name, there I am with them. Matthew 18:19-20. Thank you. **The Wardens, Sue and Jeremy**

* Liz's letter can be found here ... <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4121/page/62951/view/>

NOTICES

Sunday Services: Our Services will continue online, and we're trying to get a bit more variety into them. Many of you seem to have enjoyed the sermons from our bishops in January, and to continue to help out, they have decided that they, the archdeacons and others will carry on recording sermons up to Easter, so we'll be using some of these – it's always good to hear new voices and interpretations! We're also going to try linking in to services at Aldridge.

Testimonies / Life Examples: We'd like to include testimonies or examples of how God has been helping you through the lockdowns etc, so if there's anything you feel you would like to share, please let Sue or the Wardens know.

Sunday Services: A Note From Hannah - We are looking for more faces to appear in our weekly online services (*If Emily (aged 7) can open the service and lead a prayer, so can you!*) If you feel able to record yourself reading the passage, leading some prayers or opening the service (in the comfort of your own home) please let Hannah Evans (07921 387 241) know, so that we can include you one week. The recordings don't have to be polished or a 'performance', just you being yourself (and we can edit the start and finish, so don't worry about rough edges that way either). We would love to see more of your lovely faces (young and not-so-young), that we have all missed so much. You might even like to do a family or double act? **Hannah Evans**

Together At Home: Please look on our website for the section titled "Children – Together At Home". This week Hannah looks at when Jesus was presented at the Temple for the first time.

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4121/page/56973/view/>

Tom's Toddlers and Footprints: This week Hannah shares the importance of prayer support and some lovely sunshine themed craft ideas. You can find this on Facebook and also the Church Website, look for "Children – Tom's Toddlers and Footprints"

Church Website - <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4121/63466/view>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/StThomasAldridge/videos/2990665504364619>

Wednesday Zoom: Originally intended for the children of our Tom's Toddlers and Footprints groups, we have welcomed their elder siblings and other children of primary school age, who are currently home schooling at home too. Our Wednesday Zoom's happen fortnightly at 1pm for 40-60mins, including a singing time, story, craft, game and prayer time. Our next Wednesday Zoom is this Wednesday, 10th Feb. If you have small (or smallish) children that you would like to take part in this, contact Hannah on hannahevans@stthomasaldrige.org.uk

Sunday School Zoom: Similarly to our Wednesday Zoom, we run a fortnightly 'Sunday School' Zoom, excellently led by Roland and Margaret, including worship, story, Roland's now infamous Duplo story videos, games, social time and prayer. Our next Sunday group zoom is Sunday 14th February at 10.30am. If you would like your child to take part, please do let Roland (rolandjones2@blueyonder.co.uk) or Hannah (hannahevans@stthomasaldrige.org.uk) know so that they can send you the zoom invite.

Shrove Tuesday is 16 February, and that means PANCAKES!! Sue Quibell is going to set up a Zoom Pancake Party from 7.30pm – all you need to do is make your pancakes beforehand and we'll log into Zoom and eat our pancakes together!! We can even enjoy a glass of wine together!! Log in details will be sent out via Genette on 15 February.

Ash Wednesday is therefore 17 February, and Sue will send out via Genette some appropriate prayers for us to use at home and set us up for Lent.

Lent Course will begin on Thursday 25 February – please see the notice Julie Fuggle has already sent out regarding signing up for this

28th February Sunday Service, Exciting news - At the end of the month, we are looking to run our first Sunday Service via zoom! This gives us the opportunity to be more able to genuinely worship together and to see each others faces. Even with an opportunity at the end of the service to catch up (including with a cuppa, if you make your own!) The service will still be recorded and still available in the usual channels shortly after the service too. If you would like to join us via zoom, please sign up here: <http://bit.ly/stTlive> so that we can send you the details of how to sign in, and unlike recent live services, there is no limit to the number of people that can come together in this way. Yippee! **Hannah Evans**

Weekly Bible Study: If you missed Sue Quibell's Bible Study this week, you find it here <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4121/page/57342/view/>

Watts in Madagascar: Ted and Rachel ask, that we join with them, in giving thanks for God's goodness, with the safe arrival to Mandritsara of the Hinds family and Dr Lesley. It is a huge relief for Ted and Rachel and their colleagues to finally have additional support in their work at the Good News Hospital and to have another family once again on site for Ethan and Jamie to spend time with. Please pray for the new arrivals as they settle into their new surroundings and routines. In December last year, Ted and Rachel told us all about a 5yr old boy, Christolin, who fell from a tree and broke his larynx. They report that after 2 months of treatment they have started the process of removing the tube that has been his support. They ask us all to Praise God that he can speak and breathe and very much want to send the family home in the coming weeks to their village, praying that God might work the miracle of faith in their hearts because of the gospel message they have heard whilst at the hospital. **Colin & Sue Goodall**

Sad News: Two great ladies have gone to be with the Lord –

Erna Meissner who was very well known at St Thomas Church, has very sadly died, aged 99. Erna was a member of St Thomas for some years before moving back to Prague in more recent years. Erna sadly passed away peacefully in her sleep at 15.30pm on Thursday 28th January 2021. She had been in hospital for a few days with heart failure, lung failure and other issues, having previously survived Covid19. Can we please pray for her son George living in Prague.

Mavis Turvey very sadly passed away yesterday morning aged 93. She had been in a nursing home for a while and it was not covid related.

CONTACTS

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 with your queries. Messages on the office answer phone are listened to twice weekly (01922 453942) / Emails are read Monday's-Thursdays **office@stthomasaldridge.org.uk** **Please be mindful that messages may not be seen or heard on Fridays, Saturdays or Sundays.** (for urgent or emergency contact, Genette's personal mobile number is 07702 822546).

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 and Saturdays)***

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.