



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 March: Online Service

Sunday 14th March: Service details to be advised

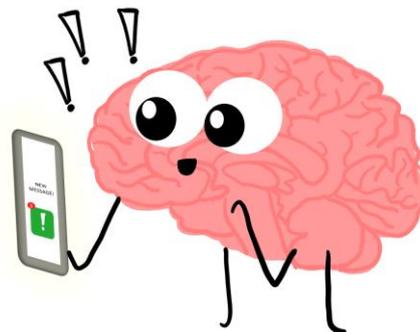
St Thomas' Website - www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4121/)

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

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

*Rev's Ramblings – 4th March 2021**Rev's Ramblings
4 March 2021*

I'm writing this fresh from preaching at our first Zoom service, and it's struck me just how far we've come in the past 12 months! Once we were a people who didn't know much about technology, now we are a people who still don't know much about technology but are giving it a go!! (Thanks mainly to Andy Evans who puts up unstintingly with our lack of knowledge!)



When I left work to have a baby in 1979, I'd not long had a golf-ball typewriter – the bees' knees at the time! Photocopiers were only available in the Printing Department and were only for presentations, and "instant" messaging happened by sending a written message to the Telex Department for onward transmission. How things had changed when I went back to secretarial work in 1987!! Every department had its own photocopier, there were word processors and, my nemesis – the fax machine!!

For some reason I was able to cope with all the other kinds of technology but not the fax machine!! Why should that addle my brain? I don't know, but every time I went to use it, it just stared back at me, daring me to press its buttons! And I had to ask my friend, Teresa, how to send the message ... every single time for about six months!!

God has given us amazing brains, hasn't He? There are the brains who develop science and technology; brains that guide doctors and nurses towards healing ... and brains that desperately try to keep up!! But, how often do we ever think to thank God for our brains, and for those of other people? Perhaps that's something we could all do during the coming week.

*Blessings
Sue Quibell*



MISSION FOCUS: Watts in Madagascar – March 2021

This month we are highlighting the Watts family, Ted, Rachel and their two sons, Ethan and Jamie. Ted is a surgeon and Rachel is a paediatrician and they are working at the Good News Hospital in Mandritsara in northern Madagascar. They have gone to serve there through SIM (Serving In Mission) working alongside others who are a part of the mission project which seeks to make the good news of Jesus known in Mandritsara and beyond. Ted, Rachel and the boys are supported with regular gifts and prayer support.

After what has been a challenging past year in Mandritsara for Ted and Rachel, we have all been praying that this next 12 months will be filled with blessings, with the arrival of additional families and co-workers to assist in the project.

Presently, the hospital as you know from previous updates, is having an ongoing building project supported by Friends of Mandritsara Trust, which exists to support the hospital and its associated projects. Ted recently sent a picture showing how far the new theatre block building had progressed, asking us to give thanks for the work done so far.



The long term vision once this building is equipped and in use, is to launch a surgical training program, with the hope that if accreditation is given, it can begin in January 2022. The vision is to train Malagasy junior doctors to be highly skilled mission minded surgeons serving Mandritsara. God has blessed this vision with the arrival in the early part of February of two colleague surgeons, who will be working alongside Ted in running the program. Ted supplied a picture of him with them, to assist our prayers.



On the left is Jesh, who has come from Canada, along with his wife and 3 children. He is a qualified surgeon having already served at mission hospitals in Burundi and Togo. They have pledged to serve for 4 years. In the middle is Marco, a Malagasy surgeon.

Ted and Rachel write, "Marco and his wife have made many sacrifices to follow God's call and make the move from the capital."

Please pray that God will bless their time working together, in bringing the plan to fruition.

Also recently joining the team for one year, are the Hinds family from Sheffield, Mark a teacher and Lucy a paediatrician, along with their two

children. Pray for all the Watts family as they help all of the newcomers settle into their new surroundings and working routines. Keep praying too, that as COVID restrictions are lifted further, more short term mission workers will once again return to Mandritsara.

Here is a picture Ted and Rachel sent of Ambohimandroso church.

It is in a suburb of Mandritsara and is the church that the Watts family joined when they first arrived. It is a church plant from a larger more central Baptist church. The present pastor is retiring this March. They ask for prayer, that God would protect and grow the church, whilst the process of appointing a new pastor takes place.

Thank you for your prayers and interest in the Watts family and the peoples they serve.



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.

Friday 5th March – The Teachings of Jesus, Turn the Other Cheek

Monday 8th March – The Teachings of Jesus, God and Politics

Tuesday 9th March – The Teachings of Jesus, The Parable of the Sower

Wednesday 10th March – Jesus Reaches out to Those in Need: The Possessed

At the time of writing this, services for further days had not yet been given a title

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

Lent 3 – This is the third Sunday of Lent and we focus on young people in lockdown. Led by Jamie Cutteridge from the UK's first bespoke ecumenical Christian community serving young people.

BBC TV Lent Course: A series of Lent Services are being shown on BBC1 TV on Sundays. This week is Lent Worship 3 where The Rev Kate Botley will introduce a church service for the season of Lent. This service comes from All Saints Church in Hale Barns and is led by the Rev Clair Jaquiss. You can also catch up on last weeks episodes on BBC Iplayer, by clicking this link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/search?q=lent+worship>

PRAYING TOGETHER

At this time of the third lockdown some of us are still praying each week at the times our regular prayer meetings would have been held and as suggested at the beginning of first lockdown. Even though we cannot meet in person we can still meet in spirit. What I have found very helpful is to phone a close friend from church and have a prayer time over the phone. It has been a great blessing to share our thoughts and feelings through the months and spend some quiet time in the Lord's presence together. I would recommend this way of praying if you have an anytime plan with your phone but it's not such a good idea if it's pay per minute as an hour or so can soon pass and can be very costly. I'm sure there are other ways of connecting if you are into technology.

I would just like to mention the various ways of getting prayer for ourselves, our friends or our families whilst we are not meeting up and just a reminder that nothing is too small or too big to ask for the Lord's help with:

Prayer Circle

The prayer circle is a group of about a dozen people who are willing to pray for anyone or any situation that needs prayer. A weekly list of prayer needs is produced which is circulated to Prayer Circle Members and remains confidential to that group and is not shared anywhere else. Prayer requests should be passed on to Liz Spiers at Lizspiers55@blueyonder.co.uk. If your request is for someone else please ensure you have their permission before sharing.

Special prayer list

This was originally set up to pray for those known to us who were suffering the effects of, or affected by, Covid19 but has now expanded to include those who have other needs and wish to be prayed for by all members of the church rather than within the confines of the Prayer Circle. This information should still respectfully be kept within the congregation. Any requests for this list should either be passed on to Liz Spiers or Genette Andrews in church office. If your request is for someone else please ensure you have their permission before sharing.

We need to keep on praying, however we do it. The Lord needs to hear our prayers for our world and ourselves. Be encouraged that the Lord does hear all our prayers. 'The prayers of a righteous person has great power' James 6.16 **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!! 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 praying powerfully together every day. 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 * <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4121/page/62951/view/>

NOTICES

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 still 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**

Weekly Bible Study: If you missed Sue Quibell's Bible Study this week, you can find it here

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4121/page/56985/view/>

World Day of Prayer Friday 5th March 2021: The World Day of Prayer (previously Women's World Day of Prayer) service for this year has been prepared by the Christian women of Vanuatu, an archipelago of 80 islands in the South Pacific. The service is entitled 'Build on a strong foundation' and is based on Matthew 7.24-27. Unfortunately, due to covid19, we are unable to meet to take part in this service but Rev. Bev Boden of Aldridge Methodist Church and their Superintendent Minister have organised a service via Zoom at 7pm on 5th March. If you would like to join in with this the link is below. If you are unable to join in please remember the people of Vanuatu in your prayers on that day so that we will be joining with others praying around the world.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6962765153?pwd=L2tkc3o0SkYzTkxaYnZNYWZrUnR2QT09>

Meeting ID: 696 276 5153 / Password: Easter2020

Lent Course: A reminder about our Lent Course which takes place on Thursday evenings via Zoom.

Watts in Madagascar: In this week's update Ted and Rachel write that they have had a good week helping the Thiessen family from Canada settle in. However they ask for prayer for Pastor David. This is the pastor mentioned in this month's mission focus. He is due to retire but unfortunately in the early part of this week became unwell with COVID. To prevent any deterioration in his health, Ted had to organise a cylinder of medical oxygen which thanks to good team work they managed to obtain and this has enabled Pastor David to be transferred to the capital for further treatment. The Watts ask, "Please pray that pastor David continues to respond to treatment and that his health will not deteriorate."

Colin and Sue Goodall

Brian and Chris Clarke's Book – Relying on God: "In this new book, we will continue to recount our faith journey through the last decade, as we have continued to lead the work of Krasif Aid, "Reaching out with Christian Love; serving and partnering in Eastern Europe." As we do this, we would also like to share a few important spiritual insights that we believe God has shown us along the way. We have had the privilege of sharing these in camps, churches and other events, as part of our ministry."

Cost £6 (plus postage – 1 book £1.50, 2 books £2, 3 or 4 books £3, free postage for 5 or more books)

To order – EMAIL brianchris.bc@gmail.com or TEXT/CALL 07990 543406 **Brian and Chris**

Thomas Project, 40 Days Of Kindness: For Lent The Thomas Project are joining the campaign with other Food Banks in Walsall. We are asking people to support our food bank by choosing one of our shortage items from the list below and buy 40 of that item during Lent to help us feed people in need. **Tinned potatoes/mash, Tinned meat, Orange Cordial/squash, Tinned tomatoes, Long Life Milk, Shampoo, Rice Pudding, Tinned Fruit, White sugar, Pasta sauces, Instant Noodles, , Deodorant (roll on type).** The Food bank is open to accept donations on Wed 10am to 1pm and Fridays 3pm to 6pm.

Karen ☀

CHILDREN & FAMILY NOTICES

Together At Home: Please look on our website for the section titled "Children – Together At Home". This week Hannah looked at how Jesus' predicts his own death.

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

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

Tom's Toddlers and Footprints: This week Hannah explains how giving up things for lent is an opportunity to create more time to spend with God.

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

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

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@stthomasaldridge.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 will be **Sunday 28th at the special time of 4pm** to avoid a class with the Zoom Service in the morning. If you would like your child to take part, please do let Roland (rolandjones2@blueyonder.co.uk) or Hannah (hannahevans@stthomasaldridge.org.uk) know so that they can send you the zoom invite.

School Uniform Swap shop: As the children return to school on the 8th March, we are aware that many of the children have outgrown their nearly new uniform and school shoes. So if you have uniform in good condition with life still left in that your child has outgrown, or are in need of replacement uniform for when the school's return, I have created a 'swap shop' style page on our Church Facebook page where for free you can either offer uniform to others or hopefully see uniform available in the sizes and school uniform that you need, so that these can be privately arranged to collect in a Covid secure way. Please click here to find out more: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1615562628640823>

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.