IN TOUCH

Magazine of the Hanley Team Ministry



November
2026

NOVEMBER DIARY

Events in bold take place each week but check with organisers

Mondays	**Cobridge Kiddies**	**Christ Church**	**10.00**
Tuesdays	**Lunch Club**	**Christ Church**	**12.00**
Wednesdays	**Places of Welcome**	**St. Luke's**	**08.30**
	Open Door	**St. Mark's**	**09.30-14.30**
	'Drop-In'	**Christ Church**	**10.00**
	Baby & Toddler Group	**St. Luke's**	**13.00**
	Over 55s	**St. Matthew's**	**13.30**
Thursdays	**Place of Welcome**	**St. Mark's**	**08.30**
Fridays	**Open Door**	**St. Mark's**	**09.30-12.30**
Last Sunday	**Bubble Church**	**St. Luke's**	**15.00**
Sunday 1st	Memorial Service	St. Matthew's	16.00
Sunday, 8th.	Service of Remembrance	Hanley Cenotaph	11.00
Monday 9th.	Wear Odd Socks Day	St. Luke's CE Academy	
Thursday, 12th.	Pudsey Bear	St. Luke's CE Academy	
Thursday 12th.	Early Years Open Event	St. Luke's CE Academy	17.00-18.00

SUNDAY READINGS IN NOVEMBER

1st. All Saints' Day

Rev. 7: 9-end 1 John 3: 1-3 Matt. 5: 1-12

8th. The Third Sunday Before Advent (Remembrance Sunday)

Wisdom 6: 12-16 1 Thess. 4: 13-end Matt. 25: 1-13

Or Amos 5: 18-24

15th. The Second Sunday Before Advent

Zeph. 1: 7, 12-end 1 Thess. 5: 1-11 Matt. 25: 14-30

22nd. Christ the King (Sunday Next Before Advent)

Ezek. 34: 11-16, 20-24 Eph. 1: 15-end Matt. 25: 31-end

29th. The First Sunday Of Advent (CW Year B begins)

Isa. 64: 1-9 1 Cor. 1: 3-9 Mark 13: 24-end

On 22 November, there will be a Team Eucharist at Christ Church, Cobridge at 10.00 a.m. and no separate services that morning. We will be saying au revoir and thank you to Rev. Gill Shilkoff whose final service this will be before she retires. Hopefully, it will be 'au revoir 'rather than 'adieu', as we are hoping that Gill's application for 'Permission To Officiate' beyond her retirement may be approved quite quickly.

November

A time for looking back, a time for remembrance, a time for looking forward to Christ The King

All Saints' and All Souls' 1st / 2nd. November

All Saints, or All Hallows, is the feast of all the redeemed, known and unknown. When the English Reformation took place, the number of saints in the calendar was drastically reduced, with the result that All Saints' Day stood out with a prominence that it had never had before. 1,255 ancient English churches were dedicated to All Saints, a number only surpassed by those dedicated to the Virgin Mary.
To commemorate the faithful departed and for those who mourn them we will hold a **Memorial Service on Sunday, the first of November**, offer prayers, light candles and offer comfort to the bereaved.
See page 10 for details.

Remembrance Sunday 8th. November

A time to remember with gratitude the supreme sacrifices that our armed forces and others made during World War I, World War II and other more recent conflicts. Significant milestones this year include: 110th anniversary of the Battles of the Somme and Jutland and the introduction of wartime conscription; 70th. anniversary of the Suez Crisis; 25th. anniversary of the entry of UK armed forces into Afghanistan

Christ the King 22nd. November

In an uplifting note, Anne Coomes of Parish Pump writes: 'The Book of Revelation, chapter 21, promises that one day God will wipe every tear from our eye, and death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things will have passed away.
'**So, this month is not only a time for Remembrance, but a time for looking forward to the world to come, when "Thy Kingdom Come" will no longer be a prayer of hope, but an eternal glorious reality.'**

ROLE OF THE PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Neil Spiring
Diocese Safeguarding Officer.

Safeguarding has rightly become a key part of how our churches, schools and chaplaincies undertake our ministry of caring for people, expressing the instruction to care for the weak and vulnerable as we share the love of God in our communities.

Safeguarding is the sometimes uncomfortable or downright difficult part of that, but is something we are all responsible for – learning the signs that cause concern and informing the right people at the right time. In most situations, that's the Parish Safeguarding Officer. PSO's are the beating heart on the ground, ensuring compliance and the point of first contact. The role is undisputably critical to helping make the Church of England safer, more transparent and accountable to those who's needs it seeks to meet. It is also true that those undertaking this role have not always received the recognition, training and empowerment they deserve in discharging such a crucial duty on behalf of all involved in the church.

One year ago, Lichfield Diocese introduced area based safeguarding leads and held the first PSO conference targeted at recognising and empowering our PSO's. In 2026 we are again looking to build on this inaugural event with a second conference to be held at Telford Minster on Saturday 7 November 2026. Introduced by Bishop Sarah the event will have representatives present from Thirty One Eight, NSPCC and many other Safeguarding sector organisations. Our emphasis this year is working with those surviving abuse and our keynote speaker will be Sally Hope, author of 'No visible Scars', who will be exploring Christian focused work with survivors of domestic abuse.

I thank PSO's on behalf of the diocesan safeguarding team for the continued determination, commitment and professionalism PSO's show in this often difficult role.

(Our thanks go to Mary Chanot for her time and efforts in this area of work on behalf of the Hanley Team Ministry – Ed.)

NEWS

Next Primates' Meeting to be held in Johannesburg

The Archbishop of Canterbury has called her first Primates' Meeting. It will take place in Johannesburg from 28th February to 5th March 2027, and it will be hosted by the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. The gathering of Primates will explore mission, service, and advocacy. Also on the agenda will be peace and reconciliation, migration and the refugee crisis, the environment and safeguarding.

Kirk School Matron recognised at Auschwitz

The name of a Scottish woman who died in the Holocaust after refusing to abandon Jewish children in her care has been added to a special memorial wall at Auschwitz. No registration photographs were taken of Jane Haining. Originally from Dunscore in Dumfries and Galloway, Miss Haining was the Matron at the Scottish Mission School in Budapest, Hungary from 1932-1944. It had around 400 day and boarder pupils aged from six to 16 years old, a mixture of Jewish and Christian girls. Miss Haining helped keep the children safe for more than four years after the war broke out in 1939 until she was betrayed by the cook's son-in-law, whom she scolded for taking scarce food meant for the girls, some of whom were orphans or abandoned by their parents.

She was determined to stick to her post and had repeatedly ignored Church of Scotland requests to return home, saying: ***'If these children need me in days of sunshine, how much more do they need me in days of darkness?'*** Miss Haining was arrested by German officers in April 1944. Former pupil Agnes Rostas said her haunting last words to sobbing children were: ***'Don't worry, I'll be back by lunch.'*** But the kind-hearted Scot never returned to the school. She was transported along with Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz on 14 May 1944. Miss Haining was 47. It is widely accepted that she died in a gas chamber and her remains remain on the Auschwitz site.

Bishops urged to fight to protect ‘human dignity’ amid AI development race.

Churches and faith groups are uniquely placed to challenge Artificial Intelligence companies on the ethics of the technology’s development, Church of England bishops have heard. Much of their recent annual four-day residential meeting of the College of Bishops was given over to exploring the subject of ‘Christian Wisdom and Artificial Intelligence’. Bishops heard from and spoke to academics from Oxford, Cambridge and Durham Universities, as well as experts working in the fields of legislation, AI research and development.

The bishops discussed how the Church of England can help create space for considered debate on something that is beginning to shape childhood, education, politics and public life.

Speakers continually returned to the themes of oversight and decision making, noting that much of scientific research and development was previously undertaken in public institutions with ethical oversight but now happened in private companies. They encouraged Bishops to think about how we can ensure AI develops to solve the problems we need to solve, rather than developing the technology first and then seeing what it can do.

The Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, wants to advise the King on the appointment of bishops and archbishops in the Church of England and Church of Scotland.

The practice of the King being involved dates back to the Reformation, when the monarch was head of the Church, and so took responsibility for appointing clergy. Mr. Burnham is currently barred because he is a professing Roman Catholic, but he has called the Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829 an ‘antiquated and archaic anomaly’ and is determined to change it. These days, the Prime Minister’s approval of such appointments is symbolic. The Church puts its candidate forward, who will be approved. In the meantime, there are nine current or upcoming vacancies for diocesan bishops, including ours – see the prayer on page 19

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE
Evergreen Immortals: Yew Tree Folklore
Kaitlyn Elverson,

In St George's Churchyard in Clun, Shropshire, stands a marvelous sight to behold. Estimated to be around 2,000 years old, there lives a majestic ancient Yew tree. As the oldest tree in Shropshire, this beautiful specimen has likely witnessed rich history. It has stood tall, guarding the churchyard since medieval times. If it could speak, it would surely have some stories to tell.

There are many Yews across the UK, standing strong in churchyards and burial grounds, each with their own unique stories and heritage. The English Yew, *Taxus baccata*, is an evergreen tree that is commonly found in and associated with churchyards. Some are hundreds and even thousands of years old. Many of these Ancient Yews likely predate the churchyards they are found in, and have strong ties to Pagan, Celtic and Druidic traditions.

Yews are steeped in rich and sometimes dark folklore. They are known as the "tree of the dead" for several reasons. It is thought that these trees were planted in sacred places to watch over the dead and guide their passage to the other side. The species is known for its longevity and habit of rooting from drooping branches that touch the ground, further cementing its lore of being a tree of death and rebirth. Parts of the tree are toxic to humans, and even feature in Shakespeare's Scottish play, where a poisonous concoction featuring Yew berries is made.

The Kingley Vale Yews are one UK example of Yews with a spooky history. Legends say there was a great battle between local people and invading Vikings and when the local soldiers fell, their bodies were buried in the forests where the Yew trees now stand. The forests are supposedly haunted by the soldiers, who possess the Yews and come alive at night.

We can't forget to mention the Bleeding Yews of Nevern Church in Pembrokeshire. These Yews appear to be continuously bleeding red sap from their trunks.

Many legends and myths have arisen to explain this phenomenon, but one endearing explanation is that they bleed in sympathy with Jesus and his crucifixion. Nevertheless, Yews all over the UK will live on for hundreds more years, passing down their stories, legends and history for evermore. If you find yourself with one of these majestic trees in your churchyard, here are a few things you can do to help them out.

Most Yews don't need much management and generally like to be left alone. However, clearing anything over their root plate and underneath the trees as well as any ivy growing up the trunk will give them the best conditions to thrive.

Get thinking about how you can get your local communities involved with our Love Your Yew Week in February, 2027. To find out more, follow the link to our website to see our Q&A on Ancient Yews and why they're so important to churchyards and how you can help them.

GENERAL SYNOD OPENS THIS MONTH

There is a new General Synod beginning this month. Its term will run from 2026 to 2031. It is the 11th since the first General Synod began in **1970,** following the Synodical Government Measure of 1969. The new General Synod has lots to debate and decide. Some key issues:
Identity and relationships*:* Since the conclusion of the formal Living in Love and Faith (LLF) programme, new consultative groups will manage the work regarding same-sex relationship and marriage guidance.
Clergy care: There is a growing concern for the wellbeing of our clergy. It is felt they need stronger support packages, better pensions and improved care for themselves.
Safeguarding is still a top priority. The new General Synod will discuss and implement the strict new Clergy Conduct Measures (CCM) and responses to independent safeguarding recommendations.
Social & Environment: These problems are still growing, and so debates will address achieving net-zero carbon goals, protecting nature on church land, and reducing the polarisation in our society.

Parish Pump

Hanley St Luke's C of E Academy

Message from the Principal, Mrs. Cooper

A number of parents have shared comments regarding school meals. In response, I have spoken directly with pupils about their preferences and met with our catering provider and school team to review the current menu. I am delighted to inform that a new menu has now been agreed for Autumn 2 through to Easter. The menu can now be found on our website

https://www.hanleystlukes.com/parents/lunch-menus/our-menus

In addition, our catering provider will be hosting open sessions for parents, giving you the opportunity to sample the food and see first-hand the range and quality of meals available.

Wear Odd Socks Day – 9th November

This fun event encourages everyone to celebrate individuality, kindness, and respect for one another. Pupils are invited to come to school wearing their favourite pair of odd socks with their usual school uniform.

Early Years Open Event 12th November 5pm - 6pm

At Hanley St Luke's CofE Academy, our Early Years classrooms are filled with curiosity, creativity, laughter and learning every day.
We provide a nurturing and inspiring environment where every child is valued, encouraged and supported to flourish.
Through play, exploration and meaningful relationships, we help children develop confidence, independence and a love of learning that will stay with them throughout their school journey. Rooted in our Christian vision and values, we believe every child deserves the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

Some bear-y exciting news!

BBC Radio Stoke and Pudsey Bear will be at the school gate on Thursday 12th November. Make sure you're there to join in the fun, wave hello to Pudsey, and start the day with a smile!

Grace Ball – Shortly before going to print, the death was announced of Grace Ball, a member of St. Luke's Church for many years. Grace died just a few weeks short of her 100th birthday. There will be more about Grace in December's issue.

Memorial Service



'For those we have loved but see no longer'
In memory of those whose funerals have taken place in the past year either at one of the churches that are part of the Hanley Team Ministry or at the Crematorium. We will remember loved ones and say prayers at **4.00pm on Sunday, 1st. November at St. Matthew's Church, Birches Head.**
Each person who has died will be remembered by name. There will be an opportunity for mourners to light a candle for the deceased and time to talk after the service.

Service of Remembrance





At The Cenotaph in Hanley on Remembrance Sunday, 8th. November at 11.00 a.m. In the photo, poppies cascading from St. Matthew's Church last year.



Jane Haining
Kirk School Matron whose name has been added to a special memorial wall at Auschwitz – see page 5

This way, please… all welcome



Parish Warden Angus Paterson took advantage of traffic problems caused by the Potters' 'Arf Marathon to direct people into Holy Trinity Church as bewildered drivers navigated a part of Northwood they had not seen before. The next day, Severn Trent Water Authority began a three week 'rolling closure and parking suspension' for the street in which Holy Trinity is located.

WORDSEARCH

The poppies of Remembrance Sunday

In late 1914, WW1 erupted across Northern France and Flanders. Great swathes of previously green fields and forests were blasted and bombed, leaving them bleak and barren, with seemingly every living thing destroyed. Then in the Spring of 1915, something beautiful began to come out of all the destruction. Tens of thousands of bright red Flanders poppies began to put out tentative shoots across the endless vistas of mud. These resilient little flowers had actually flourished in the middle of so much chaos and destruction, because their seeds grow when exposed to sunlight, through disturbances to soil. Those endless fields of cheerful poppies, growing in the midst of such horror, were what inspired the Canadian doctor, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, to write the now famous poem 'In Flanders Fields'.

World	Fields	Spring	Mud	Cheerful
War	Bombed	Destruction	Chaos	Growing
France	Barren	Bright	Seeds	Horror
Flanders	Bleak	Red	Grow	Doctor
Green	Destroyed	Poppies	Soil	Poem

R O R B D G N I W O R G
O P F A T C G N C B O N
R U B R I G H T L A T I
R E D R A E S E O I C R
O S R E D N A L F H O P
H E D N Y K C G E P D S
S E I P P O P E R O E W
N O I T C U R T S E D A
E G W H A F M T D M E R
L R A W U U R S S R R N
W O R L D B O M B E D O
S W R S D O F I E L D S

ST. JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL

Uncle Eustace is incumbent in the small parish of St James-the-Least-of All, somewhere in Very Rural England. Eustace despairs of his nephew, Darren, who has become an evangelical curate in a busy urban parish… and so he writes letters, to try and properly 'educate' Darren in how to run a parish. The Revd Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'…

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

On Working With Young People

It is quite natural for you curates to enjoy working with young people in your parishes; church youth clubs were created in order to keep the newly ordained off the streets in the evenings. But be assured you will grow out of it. I consent to baptise babies and prepare teenagers for confirmation, but beyond that my contact with this alien life form is kept to an absolute minimum.

Dear Miss Thrush runs our weekly Pram Service – whose sole purpose seems to be to give young mothers an opportunity to discuss the ever-changing liaisons within the village, while their offspring shred hymn books and destroy the flower arrangements. I drop in from time to time in order to check that the more mobile haven't found where we hide the matches. An infant equipped with that knowledge can so easily become a teenage pyromaniac.

I can give you little advice on your youth group. When I was a curate, the major activity seemed to be to teach them how to wear gas masks, although today I imagine there is more concern about protecting them from other sorts of exotic chemicals.

Also, I suspect you are kept busy keeping the young out of the darker corners of the churchyard as they develop their anatomical knowledge – a past-time still enthusiastically pursued by each new generation.

You clearly find your monthly Youth Service a deeply enriching experience. As far as I am concerned, if such a liturgy had been necessary, then Cranmer would have provided us with one. Endlessly repeated choruses accompanied by a guitar would make me warm to the Quakers. I am sure St Paul's services would have been much enriched with Hymns Ancient and Modern. The disciples in hiding in Jerusalem were not even able to sing accompanied by an organ, which must have greatly dispirited them. I also feel that our Verger would be unable to cope with organising the strobe lighting and dry ice effects. It takes him all his time to remember to light the candles on the altar.

On this matter we must differ. You must worship God in your way, and I in His.

Your loving uncle
Eustace

Cats and teenagers

Neither teenagers nor cats turn their heads when you call them by name. No cat or teenager shares your taste in music. Cats and teenagers can suddenly get 'hissy', without any known cause. Cats and teenagers can lie on the living-room sofa for hours on end without moving, barely breathing. Cats and teenagers are known to creep home at all hours of the night. Neither will tell you where they've been.

So, if you have teenagers, it is a good idea to follow instructions as for cats: just put out food at regular intervals and do not make any sudden moves in their direction. When they make up their minds, they will finally come to you for some affection and comfort, and it will be a triumphant moment for all concerned.

SMILE AWHILE …

Miscellaneous observations on life

* About the only thing that comes to us without effort is old age.
*An apology is the best way to have the last word.
*I'm good at firework displays. I've got a flare for it.
*The only thing that wakes you up faster than coffee is spilled coffee.

Still waiting A pious man, who had reached the age of 105, suddenly stopped going to church. Alarmed by the old fellow's absence, the minister went to see him. He found him in excellent health, so the minister asked, 'How come after all these years we don't see you at services anymore?' The old man lowered his voice. 'When I got to be 90, I expected God to take me any day. Then I got to be 95, then 100, then 105. I figured that God must have forgotten about me, and now I don't want to remind Him!'



...I haven't the heart to tell her the bishop went home 20 minutes ago!



So to November's Weather Forecast

'Probably northeast to southwest winds, varying to the southward and westward and eastward and points in between; high and low barometer sweeping around from place to place; probable areas of rain, snow, hail and drought succeeded or preceded by earthquakes, with thunder and lightning.'

Mark Twain's '136 varieties of New England weather'

THOSE GIANT AUTUMN HOUSE SPIDERS

We've all been there – quietly relaxing at home, when suddenly a HUGE thing with LONG legs scuttles right by you. You can't help but jump, and if you are normal, scream.

What just scared you was a fully grown adult male *Eratigena atrica*. They are among the largest spiders in Central and Northern Europe.

It has not just come in from the cold. It has been living warm and cosy, hidden in your house for weeks. Now it has left its dark hiding spot to race across your carpets and walls and bed with a definite purpose in mind: it is looking for love.

For autumn is mating time for the big spiders, and there are also females living in your house, safe and secure in cracks, lofts and behind furniture.

If you think giant house spiders are big, you are right. With a body length of 1.6cm, their leg span can commonly reach up to 7.5 cm.

Heaven help you if you find you are sharing your house with a cardinal spider (*Tegenaria parietina)* – their bodies are up to 2cm long, and their long hairy legs can span up to 12cm. If *that* thing runs down the couch towards you, you'll notice it!

Giant house spiders are fast. They can hit speeds of up to half a metre per second.

The good news is that giant house spiders are as scared of you as you are of them. They are disease-free, and their bite is extremely rare and harmless. They even pay their rent by eating your flies, mosquitoes, and other small bugs.

So, try and be kind to them, and let them live with you – they don't like the cold outside very much. Just lift your feet as they gallop across the carpet…

All in the Month of November…

400 years - 18th November 1626 St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican City was completed. It is the largest church in the world (measured by its interior).
175 years - 13th November 1851 the first telegraph service between London and Paris began operating.
150 years - 1st November 1876 the North Sea Canal in the Netherlands was officially opened. It links Amsterdam to the North Sea.
125 years - 12th November 1901 German physicist Wilhelm Roentgen was awarded the first Nobel Prize in Physics, for discovering X-rays.
100 years - 15th November 1926 the Balfour Declaration was approved by the delegates to the Imperial Conference of 1926. It declared that the UK and its Dominions in the British Empire were equal in status.
75 years - 2nd November 1951 the Suez Crisis began. 6,000 British troops arrived in Fayid, Egypt, to quell unrest in the Canal Zone. It was the biggest airlift of troops since WW2.
70 years - 11th November 1956 the Hungarian Revolution ended after its uprising was brutally supressed by the Soviet Union.
40 years - 22nd November 1986 the American boxer Mike Tyson became the youngest-ever WBC world heavy-weight champion, at the age of 20.
30 years - on 30th November England officially returned the Stone of Scone to Scotland after 700 years. It was the coronation stone of the Scottish and later English and British monarchs. It is now on permanent display in Perth Museum.
25 years - from 22nd November to 9th December 2001 the Fall of Kandahar took place when coalition forces ousted the Taliban from the last major city under their control. This marked the end of the Taliban regime's control of Afghanistan. Then in August 2021, NATO withdrew and the Taliban moved back in.
20 years - on 23rd November 2006 Alexander Litvinenko, Russian-born British intelligence agent, journalist and writer, died. He had been poisoned by radioactive polonium.
10 years - on 7th November 2016 Leonard Cohen, Canadian folk/soft rock singer, songwriter and poet died.

REMEMBERING LEONARD COHEN

Ten years ago, on 7th November 2016, Leonard Cohen, Canadian folk/soft rock singer, songwriter and poet died.

He was born into a well-off Jewish family in Montreal that was said to claim direct descent from Aaron – the name Cohen meaning priest.

Bob Dylan once observed that Cohen wrote songs that were really prayers. Before he was a singer, Leonard Cohen was a poet and a novelist. Two collections – *Let Us Compare Mythologies* in 1956 and *Spice-Box of Earth* in 1961– brought him acclaim as a poet, and this was enhanced by two novels, *The Favourite Game* and *Beautiful Losers,* in the early 1960s.

He had already moved to the Greek island of Hydra in 1960, where he met the Norwegian Marianne Ihlen, who became his muse. Later he was the long-time companion – though not husband – of Suzanne Elrod, whom he met in a lift in Manhattan in 1968. They had two children: Adam, also a singer-songwriter, and Lorca, a photographer.

Though some people mysteriously described his distinctive baritone voice as “depressing”, many others found his performances and his songs magical, compelling and full of spiritual and physical depth. Songs like *Hallelujah* and *You Want it Darker*, with its use of the Hebrew word *hineni* (here I am), implying total availability to God, meant much to practising Jews and Christians.

Leonard Cohen spent seven years in a Buddhist monastery in the 1990s, and afterwards lost much of his life savings. Following that, at the age of 71 he embarked on a global tour that was a massive success.

He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2008, and two years later was honoured with a lifetime achievement Grammy.

Parish Pump

BACK PEW

SAUDADE
The Presence of Absence

There is a word that travellers may have encountered in Northern Spain or Portugal or other parts of the world where their languages are spoken that reflects those feelings of love, sorrow and tenderness engendered by our commemorative services. The Iberian word is *Saudade*.

Saudade embraces emotions associated with people, places, or a particular moment for which a heart may ache. It is an elusive word that means something yet resists translation. Its meaning, as we are able to catch it, is of a deep longing. In the words of our All Souls' gatherings, it conveys that sorrow and yearning we may have for *'people we have loved but see no longer'*, in the hope, in faith, that they have arrived, they are home.

In Lisbon this year, in the back streets of the *Alfama* district of the city, we came across the musical style *Fondo* that touches upon this 'something'. Poet Rolph David has likened it to *'the echo of a song whose singer has long vanished, yet the melody clings to the chambers of the heart…the weight of a letter never written, the touch of hands that nearly meet… a flame cradled in the darkness.'*

This could tip into an excess of melancholy and nostalgia, but we should make allowances for, amongst the layers of love, memory and loss, peoples' lives and hearts are so deeply affected.

I like to think that individuals sometimes experience, if only briefly and without earthly explanation, an awareness of someone they have loved but see no longer, an absence dressed as presence*,* a sign, feeling or connection revealed in an uncluttered moment in a thin space between different worlds.

As daylight shortens, may we be pardoned for cradling flames of kindred spirits in our darkest moments.

Ed

For the 100th Bishop of Lichfield

Eternal Father,
you have provided faithful pastors in every age
to watch over your people and lead them in your ways:
as you chose your servant Chad
to be the first bishop of your church in Lichfield,
so raise up for us, who follow Christ in his footsteps today,
a shepherd to lead your people
in the joy and steadfastness of the Holy Spirit,
that all may know the abundant life
which you give us in Jesus Christ your Son.
Amen.

For the mission and ministry of the church in this City

Lord of the Church, thank you for your presence in the centre of Stoke-on-Trent. We acknowledge the fragility of our current situation. We open ourselves to the new thing you would do in us and through us. We seek your guidance and way forward. Deliver us from evil. Bless this region, our structures and networks, that alongside all people of good will we may play our part in your kingdom in the name of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

For a new Rector for the Hanley Team Ministry

God our Father,
you are all knowing.
God of all creation and life,
you know the needs of your Church in the Hanley Team.
In this time of seeking and praying for a new Rector, we pray for you to place this calling within the heart of the servant you have chosen.
You alone know the plans you have for your Church in Hanley.
We ask the Holy Spirit to guide us and give us discernment to know the person you have chosen.
We ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

CONTACTS

Rector – Vacancy



Assistant Minister **Rev. Mike Bridgewater**
for St. Mark's Church
and **Strategic Missioner**
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Assistant Minister Rev. Gill Shilkoff
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SERVICES

Holy Communion Sundays:	09.30	Christ Church, Cobridge
	11.00	Holy Trinity Church, Northwood
	10.00	St. Mark's Church, Shelton (First & Fifth Sundays, other Sundays Morning Worship)
Evensong	16.00	Holy Trinity (monthly)
Bubble Church	15.00	St. Luke's Church (Last Sunday of the month)
Tuesdays	10.00	St. Matthew's, Birches Head
Wednesdays	11.00	St. Luke's, Wellington
Thursdays:		
Service of The Word	10.00	Christ Church, Cobridge

Whilst the Rectorship is 'in vacancy', services will be co-ordinated by members of the laity in conjunction with available clergy.
For general enquiries, banns, baptisms and weddings, the contact is
Winnie Wilshaw 07731829785
winnie_184@msn.com
For funerals, contact a funeral director in the first instance, then
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The deadline for December's issue is the Second Sunday Before Advent