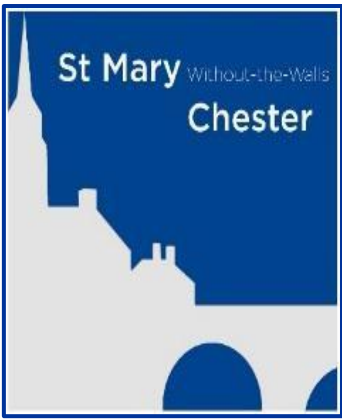




ST. MARY'S MAGAZINE



Nov/Dec
2025

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The River Dee 1963

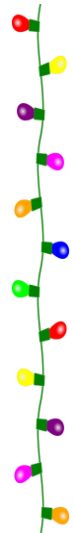
With kind permission from the History Hub at Chester Grosvenor Museum (slide collection)

What is in this issue?

- Letter from Rector Antony
- Changing Prayer
- Incredible Edible
- Mother's Union Matters
- **Featured Article – Christmas traditions, Wreaths & Panto**
- Socials; Pickles & Chez Jules
- Tower News, two Leos!
- A Cancer Diary chapter 2

- Junior Choir contact
- News & Notices
- Remembrance Book Pages
- St Mary's Garden Colour
- Busy CMC Cluster news
- Christine, local artist
- Letters
- Nov & Dec diaries
- Bible readings
- Concert Posters
- Parish Directory

St Mary Without-the-Walls, Overleigh Road, Chester CH4 7HL





All advertising enquiries to be made through the Parish Administrator, Doris Keen by email: office.stmaryscheester@btconnect.com or via the website www.stmaryscheester.co.uk All Editorial enquiries to be made through the Editor, Catherine Jones email: stmaryseditor@gmail.com Articles, letters, funny jokes and photos to be submitted to Catherine by 10th of the month for the following month's magazine, so **10th December** for the **January/February** edition of the magazine please!

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www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding

If you or anyone you are in contact with, would like to talk with someone independently, please call the [Safe Spaces](http://safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk) helpline on 0300 303 1056 or email safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk Alternatively, you may contact our Parish Safeguarding Officer Sue Fryer safeguarding.stmaryscheester@btconnect.com or the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor 07703 800031

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Three little boys were bragging about how tough they were. "I'm so tough," said the first boy, "that I can wear out a pair of shoes in a week."

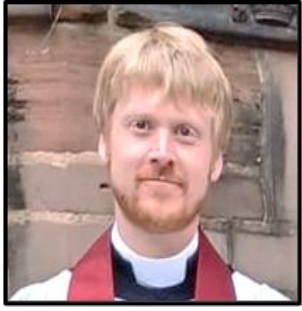
"Well," said the second little boy, "I'm so tough, I can wear out a pair of jeans in a day."

"That's nothing," said the third boy. "When stay with my Granny and Grandpa, I can wear them out in just one hour."



...A little boy was pestering his parents for a baby brother or sister. They kept telling him, 'Maybe one day, but we can't afford one yet.' Then one Sunday the little boy dragged his parents over to the noticeboard at the back of church. It was advertising a coming sale at the church and announced: 'Children: free'.

Letter from Revd Antony Dutton, Rector



It feels like it has been a particularly violent year. Our media has been saturated with images of destruction from Gaza. There was a surge of violence in Syria and continued strikes in Yemen. In America there have been the tragically regular shootings in schools and places of worship, and there was the assassination of Charlie Kirk which threatens to cause further division. In recent weeks, we have seen the antisemitic attack in Manchester when Jews were murdered on Yom Kippur. And these acts of violence are just the ones that make it into our news cycle. In recent years, the two conflicts responsible for the loss of the largest number of innocent lives have been in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan.

There are very few images of these places in the press – if any. There are no protests filling British streets, no calls for boycotts.

In Nigeria the spectre of Islamic State has not gone away. The numbers are some 125,000 Christians murdered since 2009, with 7,000 massacred in the first 220 days of 2025. There are suggestions that Christians are now the most persecuted religion.

I realise that this is not a cheery way to start the Rector's letter for the edition of this magazine which covers the beginning of the Christmas season. You might have picked up this copy hoping for a bit of festive cheer, a reminder of what we will be celebrating at St Mary's: the baby Jesus lying in a manger with lots of big-eyed animals peering into the manger in adoration. Maybe you'd have settled for secular Christmas, all trees and lights, mince pies and mulled wine, Santa and snow. A veritable winter wonderland.

Unfortunately, I've snapped you back into the real world, with all of its violence, murder, and bloodshed.

Christmas is special. It is heart-warming and magical. God comes down to earth and becomes one of us. Jesus, the light of the world, enters the darkness and the darkness could not overcome it. Wonderful.

But just the day after we are reminded of the cost of this Incarnation: St Stephen stoned to death. Another two days on and we remember the Holy Innocents, all those children who were butchered by King Herod in his efforts to try and ensure that the King of the Jews was killed. Our response to the love of God was to resort to human violence. God's response was to submit to that violence and defeat it with his love.

Faith in the God who became one of us at Christmas has so often led to earthly pain, persecution, and suffering in the pursuit of eternal glory and to bring about the coming of the Kingdom. For the saints, who we celebrate at the beginning of November, being called by God has meant being incarnate in the world, in the middle of all its violence, cruelty, and brutality. The saints have confronted this violence and courageously remained faithful to their calling, in order to bring the Christ child's peace, light, and hope into those dark places.

So, in defiance of this violent world, I hope you might come to St Mary's this Christmas and celebrate the joy of the Incarnation and remind ourselves that the light will always triumph over the dark and look to the future with renewed hope. The diary lists the many varied things that are happening over the next two months, including Advent when we prepare to receive this light (and usually forgotten by a world that begins to celebrate Christmas in October). There are social events to help put us in a festive mood, including our Christmas Fair and a Christmas Quiz, plus all the liturgical activities of the church.

One final thing. It's the perfect time of the year to invite people to St Mary's. Publicise our events, extend an invitation to family and friends. Tell them of the palpable joy and peace that they could experience at Nine Lessons and Carols or at the Crib Service. Everyone is welcome.

Antony

Changing Prayers

Peace



My soul, there is a country
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry
All skilful in the wars:

There, above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles,
And one born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files,

He is thy gracious Friend,
And – O my soul, awake! –
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake.

If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flower of Peace,
The Rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress and thy ease.

Leave then thy foolish ranges;
For none can thee secure
But one who never changes –
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

By Henry Vaughan 1623-95

Incredible Edible Handbridge The Arches Community Garden early winter update

by Liz McGrady

NEWS FROM THE PLOT

🌱 Hello everyone! 🌱 Hope you are all easing into colder days by keeping cosy and finding hope and enjoyment even in some of our darker days. It isn't always easy, but there are always things to be grateful for and with which to count our blessings.

I'm always grateful that we have our lovely little Handbridge community across the bridge from such a beautiful city. How lucky are we and how pretty it can be on those darker days.



I'm also very grateful for the abundance enjoyed at the Arches community gardens over the summer months! We achieved a lot during this first year with both sides developed. We have met so many lovely folk over the year who stop to chat on a Saturday morning, and helpful folk who have joined our small but merry team.

We are continuing to develop the gardens, with the addition of more espalier apple trees to replace the corn, beans etc. should be lovely. An orchard for us all to enjoy!

We meet mostly every Saturday at 10.30 am; please do come along and get involved 🙏👤🌱

This community project can only happen with the strength of the community behind it 🙏

We generally keep the gardens locked overnight, with an 'open when light' policy. However, as we are a small bunch of volunteers, this can change from day to day.

Sadly (but fortuitously, as it poured down that day!!) we had to cancel the planned GREAT BIG SOUP AND VEG GIVEAWAY. However, we will be arranging something for the spring.

As always, we invite you to sign up to our *easy* fundraising page which allows donations from companies with each purchase. It's a great way to raise funds to buy equipment, materials and to plan for further developments along the gardens and passageways. We have new flyers and posters to reflect our evolving venture.

You can also follow us on our IEH and Arches Facebook pages, and IEH instagram.

Find more details on our incredible edible website and join our mailing list by emailing ie.handbridge1@gmail.com

In these challenging times, it's helpful to have spaces like The Arches to connect with nature, and community. It's a little oasis where body and soul can feel nourished 🍓

Best wishes from Liz and all the Incredible Edible and Arches gang 🙏

Instagram: [incredibleediblehandbridge](https://www.instagram.com/incredibleediblehandbridge) **Email at:** ie.handbridge1@gmail.com

Mothers' Union Matters

This is the name of our Chester Diocesan Magazine, which I feel is very appropriate given Mothers' Union will be celebrating, in 2026, our 150th Anniversary since its founding by Mary Sumner whose prayer is:

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee;
and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through
the word I speak, the prayer I breathe, or the life I live. Amen

As I am sure you are aware our Deanery Banner is now in the Lady Chapel & will be displayed in our Deanery Branches during the Triennium. Chester City Branch, to which Pat Swain & I belong, meets at St. Thomas of Canterbury church, on the **3rd Wednesday in the month @ 2.00 p.m.**

Mothers' Union at St. James' Christleton, is represented by one member & St. Marks' Lache-cum-Saltney have become a Fellowship but are still Mothers' Union.

On Saturday 20th September 2025 the Commissioning of the Diocesan President, Diocesan Chaplain and Trustees of the Mothers' Union Handbridge of Chester once again took place at St. Mary's.

During the Service prayers were offered for the many Mothers' Union initiatives in this diocese which help to bring change for good. In particular, we prayed that God would prosper our prison ministry, our work with Away From It All Holidays, our campaigning against domestic abuse and our partnership with Door to Hope and the Bags of Education project.

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families



Inspire us to be bold in proclaiming this year's theme:
'Join Us and Join In! MU is changing lives!'

so that there will be an increase in those drawn to join us, having an even greater impact for good in our communities.

Linda Schofield





Featured Articles

CHRISTMAS – Wreaths & Panto History



Christmas Wreath, origins and meanings

Many of us adorn our door with a decorative Christmas Wreath but why do we do this and what is the significance of this beautiful creation? The tradition dates back to ancient times, rooted in pagan rituals and religious ceremonies.

The circular shape is a symbol of immortality with basic wreaths being associated with life, rejuvenation and renewal with additional natural materials used to symbolise victory, honour and achievement. In some countries, wreaths, worn on the head or body, are still used today by students and athletes, to signify success and triumph.

In pre-Christian Europe, evergreen wreaths played a prominent role in winter solstice celebrations with Pagan cultures believing that evergreen plants, which remain lush and green throughout the winter, held powers of protection, fertility and rebirth.

As Christianity spread across Europe some pagan customs and symbols were incorporated into Christian rituals and celebrations. It has been suggested that this has been intertwined with Christian theology with the circular Christmas wreath representing eternity and the evergreen foliage symbolising the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

The wreaths we make at home start with a base of some sort, be it wire, straw or wood. This is then covered with a moss base and then small overlapping bunches of evergreen material, such as fir or spruce being wired onto the moss ring. These evergreen rings can then be enhanced by incorporating different colours and textures including tree ivy, holly and trailing ivy to give extra richness and add additional meaning.

You could add holly to symbolise immortality or pinecones for long life and prosperity. Adding herbs not only

provides a fragrance to your wreath but further meaning, rosemary for remembrance, sage for good health and juniper for life and hope. Many modern wreaths can include cinnamon sticks, dried orange slices and even tree baubles, in fact anything you like.

Finally, don't forget a luscious bow to complete your decoration. As a tip to keep an existing wreath lush and longer lasting, you can take it off the door and lay it onto wet grass for an hour or so. This will hydrate the moss and keep the evergreens fresh. Whether hung on doors, windows or mantels, the wreath serves as a symbol of welcome and hospitality, inviting guests to share the joys of the

season and to feel at home in the presence of loved ones.

Janet Edwards, Handbridge Flower Club

Christmas Panto tradition and origins

Christmas brings entertainment, especially Pantomime, which has its roots in ancient Greek and Roman theatre, where actors used mime. In the 16th century, this evolved into the Italian Commedia dell'arte, street theatre, which included physical comedy. This travelled to England in the 18th century when the Italian performances were adapted, leading to Harlequinade which combined comedy, music and dance. By the end of that century, the shows were incorporating fairy tales and nursery rhymes, with cross dressing e.g. Principal Boy being played by a woman and comic Dame by a man. In the very early days however women were not allowed to perform. When I was a kid, there were always a section of the performance that featured three characters on a bench and a ghost behind them, who would tap their shoulder in turn; all the kids would shout, "It's behind you", the reply being, Oh! no it's not! I remember a screen would be lowered down to the stage with these words on it – 'Why does a brown cow eat green grass, and only gives white milk?' Everyone would sing it together and then a competition to see which half of the audience could sing the loudest. The best Pantos, in my opinion took place at the London Palladium. In 1956, I saw Aladdin, starring Norman Wisdom, who during the show played a drum solo. Did you know that Widow Twankey is named after a cheap Chinese tea of inferior quality from the Tuan Key region of China, possibly implying that she is past her best. Many great performers have trod those boards, such as Max Bygraves, Harry Secombe, Charlie Drake, Dick Emery, Arthur Askey, Una Stubbs and even Cliff Richard to name but a few. I saw Cinderella on ice, when Frankie Vaughan came down the stairs, singing 'Give me the moonlight' in his top hat and tails. I don't know what that had to do with Cinderella! For those of you who are old enough to remember the Billy Cotton Band Show, with his opening cry of Wakey! Wakey! I went to his Christmas show where fake snowballs were hurled into the audience and we had great fun throwing them back! Russ Conway and Mrs Mills were his pianists. Modern Pantomimes are not the same, although the Rock and Roll versions at Theatre Clywd have talented musicians who swap around with the instruments and can play anything!

Merry Christmas!

Wendy Gorman



Post Choral Evensong at Pickles

Fr Paul from St Werburgh's Church preached at the evensong service **Sunday September 14th** prior to his move to Stalybridge, in Tameside, Greater Manchester. It was a most inspiring service with a wonderfully uplifting sermon given by Fr Paul. The choir of 25 members, sang the anthem, which was most fitting for such a moving service. Following the service there was invitation to meet up at **Pickles, in Handbridge**, for convivial discussion and bonhomie.



Photos kindly taken by Richard Lyndon.



Servers' Dinner, Friday 12th Sept, Chez Jules



The Servers' annual social evening, organised seamlessly by Sue Dickinson, was a great success. The servers were joined by several members of the clergy, one of whom took this photo. You will have to guess which one preferred to be behind the lens rather than in its glare...

Time for Seasonal Good Wishes and to present a Challenge for 2026!



Through the summer we have been training up new bellringers. Joy has been with us over a year now and Leo, who started in July, has now joined the team on Sunday mornings. We wish them both all the best in developing their skills – there are lots of churches to visit, people to meet and methods to ring!

We have also been very pleased to welcome into the world **little Leo, Jack and Rose-Anne Ninnnes' son** born



in July. The team, including father and granddad, rang to mark the occasion. It will be a few years before he is ready to pull on a rope!

If anyone is interested in giving it a go, come along and visit the tower during the **Christmas Fair** on 22nd November or drop in on any Wednesday evening from 7.30pm.

Give me a call on **01244 314712**.

Fiona Harrison, Tower Captain

Learning the ropes: 3 months in

Coming from a musical family, and playing 2 instruments, I was naturally very keen when my mum said I could pick up bellringing **and** start my volunteering section for my Silver Duke of Edinburgh award. I went in with zero knowledge of bellringing (I didn't even know that the bells are attached to wheels), and some of the jargon like "bob", "doubles" and "dodge" can still seem Greek to me but I can begin to appreciate the complexity and technicality it offers. Where I used to wonder "why can't they just ring an even-rhythm scale?" I now find myself impressed by what used to seem a random sequence of strikes be it at the Cathedral or going past St. Mary's. I have to thank Fiona for the patient and thoughtful lessons – twice a week during the holidays! – because I can currently just about ring rounds (descending scales) and am beginning to understand change ringing, even though I only started in the summer holidays. Bellringing is not only a physical skill (plus climbing the tower stairs every session) but a

precise art that hones your listening, brains, and coordination. And for those who wouldn't consider themselves musical, I was pleasantly surprised how the skill has only a vague familiarity with playing instruments in using one's ears and developing technique yet all with no musical knowledge required.

Leo

A Cancer Diary: Finding Faith

Chapter 2 By Bells

It seems fitting that I write this next chapter, as my two boys begin theirs. The chaos of getting them ready for university brings a lovely ordinariness to my days. And it's a welcome relief from the relentless uncertainty of cancer and another couple of weeks spent on NHS wards. I will admit that I lost faith again as I was lying in my hospital bed with consultants standing next to me saying they didn't know what to do. It's not what you need to hear when the Critical Care team are hovering to whisk you down the corridor!

The quest to discover what faith means to me began as I realised that, ultimately, I would rather have faith than fear when the inevitable happens. My dad had a very deep faith: whilst I envied him his certainty, I didn't properly understand it. The intellectual rational me sees a rather large barrier: I genuinely don't know if God exists. I am a people person. I find the modern world a bit of an issue in many ways: I appreciate the efficiency of doing things remotely, but I much prefer to be in the room, talking to a real person. If a friend moves house, I find it really hard to talk to them until I've visited them at home: when we chat, I always ask which room they're in so I can see them in my mind's eye. It makes it feel real, particularly as I can't get out and about as much these days. I think I feel the same about God. There's a big part of me that wants to believe he is there - but because I haven't met him, I find it a really difficult concept. Maybe because I'm neither spectacular nor a sinner so I'm 'under his radar'. Ordinary in the extreme. But I do know that I never leave church - His house, if you will - without feeling better.

In the last weeks, I think I've found a starting point: in a childish way, I can believe in a Holy Spirit: gently hovering in nature - in the clouds, in a sunset, above the sea, in the woods; through joy when I'm singing; in family and friendship. It's a much easier thing for me personally to imagine a Spirit as a tangible reality. And I so like to think there are guardian angels, who we can choose to lean on in those lonely hours when you don't want to burden those closest to you. So that's where I'm starting. Full credit to Revd Antony for not putting his head in his hands as I put this to him! But does this mean I'm any less worthy when I get to the pearly gates? I know I have Christian values: my morning mantra isn't to be perfect: it's to be better than I was yesterday, always be kind and to look for the good in whoever I might see that day. But I'm still working out if I'm a Christian in the religious sense.

Time is my biggest uncertainty right now. This is not a negative! I appreciate every minute of every day. I don't waste minutes feeling sorry for myself - every second is precious, and negativity is, frankly, far too

much like hard work. But I feel the race against time to get myself in a place where faith has a definition for me. That's my own pressure - but it's strangely enjoyable. So I'm doing my homework with the Reverend Antony, and getting my thoughts in order reading through poems, sermons, and researching faith through both art and in music. But I'll leave you all with a film quote I've always loved: "Faith is about what you think and feel - not about what you know". So, for now, I'll start with expressing faith through the ordinariness of life, and how I feel day-to-day. And as I wave my boys off on their new chapter - hoping they'll work hard and play hard in equal measure - I'll be working on Chapter 3!

To be continued...



Michael Reynolds, St Mary's Musical Director



would love to hear from any 7-11 year olds who would like to join **St. Mary's Youth choir**. We meet 6.45pm -7.30pm every Thursday. The Youth Choir is invited to sing with the choir once a month during the Sunday 10.30am Family Eucharist service. If you are interested, please contact **Michael Reynolds, 07786 323946** michaelreynoldsmusic@gmail.com





News & Notices



Registers August 2025:

Funerals

Margaret Joy Bates
Royston Loveluck
Sheila Mary Sweeney
Baptisms
Jace Charles Foden
Freya Hannah Cowie
Imogen Grace Cowie



Marriages

Danny Anderson & Danni Rodber
Dean Stening & Kim Williams
Andrew Argyle & Victoria Selley



Registers September 2025:

Funeral

Joan Veronica Smart

Baptism

Cecelia Clara Hart

Marriage

Josh Henney & Seren Challand

We hold all those named above in our prayers as well as those loved ones known to us personally.



Church Flower Arranging

Rota for November/December

The flower rota in church for **November** is

Team 2: Joy Barton, Helen Pritchard, Sylvia Summers and Anne Clifford.

December has no flowers in church, but we will be calling on all to help with decorating the church for **Christmas, on Tuesday the 23rd December.**

Further information will follow nearer the time on the Sunday sheets.

Hilary and Elizabeth can be called on to provide cover, when possible, for holidays and sickness.



Are there any more volunteers to help on a Friday morning with the church flowers? Come and try - you might enjoy it! Each team is made up of experienced arrangers and some new. We have all been novices at some time and the experienced are still learning new techniques. We all help each other out and each team is only on for 2 months in the year. Elizabeth Bennett tel: 01244 67850

St Mary's Social & Events Diary 2025/2026

November 14th Music by the Bridge - Vale Royal Singers Special Concert in celebration of John Rutter's 80th Birthday. £10 a ticket.

November 22nd St. Mary's Christmas Fair

December 6th Christmas Quiz

December 19th Outdoor Carols & Mulled Wine

January 23rd Burns Night



Tea & Coffee Rota (after 10.30am service)

2nd Nov Team 6

Sybil Graham
Ted Graham
Elizabeth Bennett

9th Nov Team 7

Lyn Barritt
Klaus Armstrong-Braun
Janet Davies

16th Nov Team 8

Joy Barton
Diana Morgan
Catherine Jones

23rd Nov Team 9

Margaret Rushton
Betty McLoughlin
Helen Brophy

30th Nov Team 1

Alma Hukin
Pat Jones
Margaret Teasdale



7th Dec Team 2

Elsie Scott
Alistair Jones
Joan Morgan
14th Dec Team 3
Wendy Gorman
Margaret Davies
Julie Pickett

21st Dec Team 4

Liz Young
Sue Dickinson
Sue Fryer

28th Dec

NO COFFEE this Sunday

We would love more people to join this merry band on the rota! Please contact the Parish Office 01244 671202 to let us know that you are happy to help.

Handbridge Flower Club

November/December 2025

Our last demonstration of the year will be held on **Thursday 20th November** from 1.45pm in **St Mary's Handbridge Centre**. We are pleased to welcome **National demonstrator Gill McGregor** who will present '**Festive Flair, Flight and Fantasy**'. Gill is not only a talented demonstrator but also an author of several flower arranging books.

As usual her designs will be raffled at the end of the demonstration and this will be followed with a chance to catch up with friends over tea/coffee and cake. Members and visitors will receive a warm welcome. **Visitors charge is £10.** We do not hold a meeting in **December** so we will meet again in January for our AGM. For further information please see our Facebook page or contact Jan Edwards via our e-mail handbridgeflowerclub@gmail.com



News & Notices

Lache and Westminster Local History Group
Randolph Caldecott – Illustrating Victorian Life

By Jessie Petheram

Curator of Art, West Cheshire Museums

Lache Community Centre

Hawthorn Road, Chester, CH4 8HX

Wednesday 19th November 2025 at 7.30pm



Best known as a hugely popular illustrator of children's books, **Chester-born Randolph Caldecott** was a wide-ranging and varied artist, admired by Gauguin and Van Gogh. He illustrated novels and travel books, drew cartoons, caricatures and architecture, and exhibited sculpture, paintings and drawings. This talk will look at his life and his work, asking whether the apparent nostalgia in his work was an escape from an increasingly industrialised world.

All welcome, no need to book. £2 per person on the door.

Refreshments will be included as usual.

Linda Shuttleworth, Secretary, shuttleworths@talktalk.net

01244 679791/txt 07726 425847

Handbridge WI meetings November & December

Handbridge WI will be meeting on **Tuesday 4th November** at 7.30pm at **St Mary's Handbridge Centre**. This will be our **Annual Meeting**, followed by a short talk by a member – **Life on a Kibbutz in Israel**.



Our **Chat & Craft**

Group will be meeting at St Mary's Handbridge Centre on **Monday 10th November 1– 4.00 pm** and will be

Christmas Card Piercing.

Book Group will be on **Tuesday 18th November** and members will be talking about **The Women by Kristin**



Hannah. Our darts team



The Handbridge Belles will be playing their first match against Huntington WI on **19th November** at the

Grosvenor Arms. The Grosvenor Arms have been very supportive and are doing a **buffet lunch** for the teams.



Our **December** meeting will be on **Tuesday 2nd December**. Member **Rose Owen** will show and talk about **Craft for Christmas**. Our

Christmas lunch will be at **Chez Jules** on **5th December**. We will have our usual **Secret Santa**.

Members will also be taking part in **The Santa Dash** held by the **Hospice of the Good Shepherd** on **Sunday 7th December**. **No Chat & Craft or Book Group in December**.



All visitors and potential new members are made welcome. First 3 visits are free of charge. Any further information please contact **Maureen** on **07410450177**



BABY and TODDLER GROUP



A thriving group between 25 to 40 plus children attending. Each session offers play, craft and singing. The sessions are open to children under school age, their parents and carers. The sessions are run each **Friday 10.00am to 11.30am**. (There is a suggested donation of at least £2 per child, if you are able. This helps to cover expenses.)

If you would like to join our lovely group of **volunteers** to help regularly, **please** contact me Contact: **Sue Fryer: 07799 862828/01244 679945**. **Please be aware that during the baby and toddler sessions, access to the Centre may be restricted.**

You are eligible for a free carbon monoxide alarm, if you:

- Use medical equipment reliant on electricity or water
- Are living with children under five
- Are blind or partially sighted
- Are deaf or hard of hearing
- Have a chronic illness
- Have anxiety, depression or any mental health condition
- Have a disability
- Are of pensionable age
- Have a loss or impairment of smell
- Need documents translated into another format or language
- Temporarily need extra support due to life changes such as post hospital recovery or bereavement.

Please ask at the Parish Office to receive your free alarm



FREE Carbon Monoxide alarm?

See if you fit the criteria and if so, ask for an alarm at St Mary's Handbridge Centre. Why wait? Keep you and your family safe.

November and December pages from the Book of Remembrance at St Mary's

November +

1993
11th Reginald Rowlands aged 82

1992
20th Harry Curmill aged 62

1996
11th Neville Hukin aged 56

1998
23rd Stanley Raymond Pickering aged 71

1997
1st Thomas Alexander Rowe aged 79

2000
22nd Florence Rowlands aged 89

1975
20th Ronald Cureton-Williams aged 49

2010
14th Joan Cryer aged 76

2011
15th Geoffrey Trevor Sellers aged 61



November (cont'd)

Stanley Raymond Pickering
1998 23rd Aged 71

Captain Dominic Richard
1995 21st Lenz R.E. Aged 25

Valerie Hailey Billinghamurst
2018 8th Aged 87

Lorna Jane McTague
2019 29th Aged 57

Sandra Claire Teasdale
2021 23rd Aged 46

Robert John Tricklebank (BOB)
2021 16th Aged 77

William Ellis Davies
2023 19th Aged 82

November (cont'd)

David Alan Watkins
2023 20th Aged 83

David Symmons Roberts
2017 11th Aged 83

James Cyril Egan
2024 20th Aged 96

Sarah Judith Christian
2024 25th Aged 64

December +

1994
23rd Vera May Heap aged 75

1995
8th Gwendoline Gerrard aged 76

1994
16th Elsie Hayes aged 78

1999
21st Rupert White aged 88

2001
22nd Betty Joan Armitage aged 85

2002
5th George Hornsby aged 85

2007
11th William Kentish aged 89

2011
30th Vivian Albert Knight aged 84

1996
27th Dennis Hebblethwaite aged 82

2013
5th Ray Coppack aged 82



December (cont'd)

2017
20th Ron Carroll aged 79

2017
16th Stephen Pritchard aged 60

2009
25th Tim Robertson aged 68

2020
28th Frances Elizabeth Willday aged 96

2006
12th Edith Rowlandson aged 95

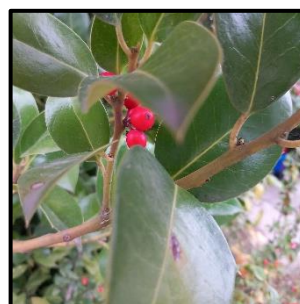
1990
22nd Edith Crimes aged 83

2020 9th aged 83
Colin Andrew McHellan

If you are wanting to have the name of a loved one added into the book of Remembrance, please speak to either Lynne or Mavis, our churchwardens. Alternatively, the information can be dropped off at the Parish Centre office, in St Mary's Handbridge Centre, behind the church. Information needed: **name, age, and date of death**. There is no charge, but donations are gratefully received.

Snapshots of colour from St Mary's Church Garden

By Alison McLellan



News from the Community, Mission and Charities

St Mary's Christmas Fair Saturday 22nd November 2025 12 - 3pm in the Centre

We are requesting the following items for the **Christmas Fair**:

Bottles of wine

Hand crafted items

Complete (!) jigsaws

New or regifted items for the general tombola

Nearer the time - homemade cakes and produce

Bring the Family, Friends, Neighbours and enjoy the MOST Christmassy Event EVER!

Many thanks from Alice & the rest of the CMC Cluster



Bring and Share Lunch 7th September 2025

There was a Most Delicious lunch in the Centre after coffee time Sunday 7th September to celebrate our St Mary patronal festival. The bring and share lunch was very much just what it said on the tin! Such a variety of foods and no replicas! The CMC cluster members were overseeing the event and, as ever, organised a great celebratory event. Thank you so much everyone!



Advent Christmas card Tree

Our Advent Christmas card Tree will be back in church again at the beginning of December for anyone who would like to send a Christmas card to members of our congregation, instead of writing individual cards.

All donations will be going to **Christian Aid**, as we have done before. Last year we had lots of fun with the children from Messy Church, deciding what to buy with the donations. Hopefully the same fun, bringing with it the joy of giving to others, will happen when the money is raised.



Macmillan Big Coffee Morning

On **Friday 26th September 2025**, St Mary's Church was the venue for our **4th Macmillan Big Coffee Morning**. Members of the congregation produced a stunning array of home baked items and together with a raffle (always a favourite at St Mary's!). Together with online donations, **£1263.00** was raised for **Macmillan Cancer Support**. A huge thank you to all those who gave generously to this event, whether in donations or their time.
Alice Jones



A little girl was watching her daddy repair his tractor. She asked her mother, "What happens to old tractors when they finally stop working?" Sighing, her mother answered: "Someone sells them to your father, dear."

C Towndrow Design



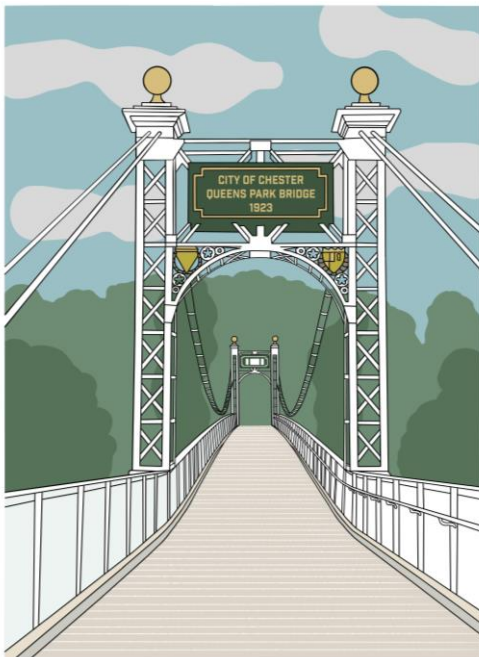
Hello, I'm Christine Towndrow, a local freelance illustrator. I grew up in Queen's Park, in fact went to Brownies in the early eighties at St Mary's! I live on the other side of town but have a big soft spot for Handbridge and this area of Chester.

C Towndrow Design (previously No14 Graphic Design) came from my love of art and design after I had to give up teaching due to illness. I work on my iPad in a programme called Adobe Fresco. I draw with my Apple Pencil. It's great to have that feeling of pen in hand rather than a mouse! And with an iPad you can design anywhere, although mostly it's from my home office where I'm often disturbed by my cheeky black and white cat Samson! I decided to specialise in illustration relatively recently. I'm self taught in graphic design and realised that illustrating was my main strength, and what I enjoy the most.

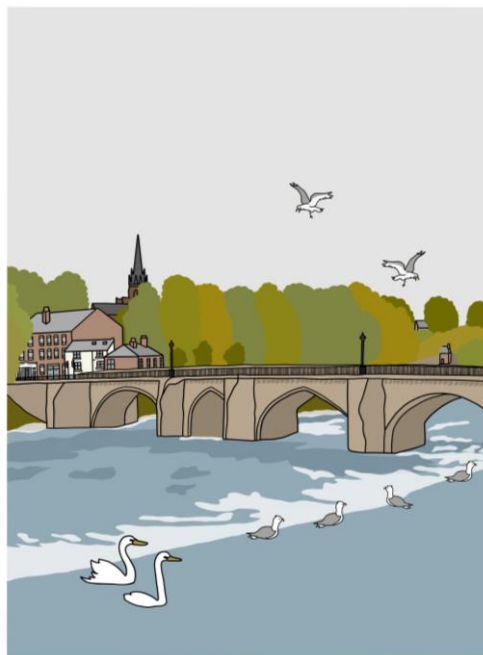
What I love about pictures is they're great at conveying many things beyond words and can provoke emotions and memories. I developed a method of using a base photo as a guide and have an approachable, minimalist graphic style. But it only came about a couple of years ago...

I was asked by a friend to make an illustration of the Queen's Park Suspension Bridge for the July centenary celebrations which the residents association used to promote the event. I had good feedback and it got me thinking as to which other parts of this beautiful city would I like to capture? So, I enjoyed choosing locations and interesting angles to showcase Chester, to appeal to tourists and to locals alike. They include the Groves, the Old Dee Bridge, Eastgate Clock, Eastgate Rows, the Meadows...and several more. After I posted my Old Dee Bridge design on Instagram, a past neighbour now living in the States messaged me saying how nostalgic it made her feel!

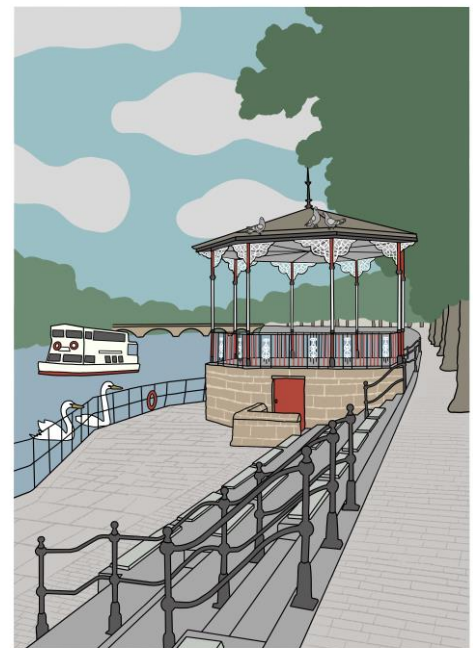
Since then I've also completed a set of twelve designs inspired by UK wildlife through the seasons and now have also branched out into offering custom illustrations. Some things are planned, others just happen which makes it all the more interesting. www.etsy.com/shop/ctowndrowdesign www.ctowndrowdesign.co.uk



CHESTER SUSPENSION BRIDGE



CHESTER OLD DEE BRIDGE



CHESTER GROVES

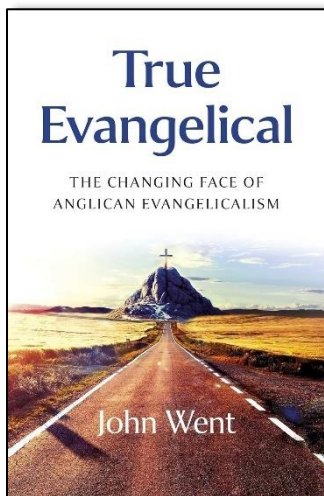


I love flying. I've been to almost as many places as my luggage.



LETTERS

A recommended read sent in by Bill & Jaqi Yates



True Evangelical
The Changing Face of Anglican Evangelicalism
John Went

John wrote this book where he reflects on his lifetime of discipleship and ministry from Parish Priest to Bishop Right Reverend (now retired). He describes the changing faces of Anglican Evangelicalism in this stimulating and most encouraging book.

Available from www.christian-alternative.com

All Royalties will be donated equally by the Author to TEAR Fund and World Vision. We hope that our Clergy and Congregation will find this book of interest.

Knitting thanks

More grateful thanks from the hospital in Liverpool Women's Hospital. Any baby clothes and hats go to the Liverpool Hospital, but our busy knitters are also making cardigans and jumpers for school age children and they are sent to Sierra Leone at the orphanage at the Houses of Promises – HOPE.

THANK YOU EVERYONE

Mavis Sellers



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A little **Christmas competition** – '12 Robins of Christmas' are hiding (or not!), in the pages of this magazine. Just email in to tell me where you found them and a PRIZE every correct entry!! (1st one easy – at the top of this page, so that you know what you are looking for!)

There are so many events to pop into our diaries. There is a lovely concert on 14th November, a big fundraiser for our Choral Scholarship Fund. In celebration of John Rutter's 80th birthday the **Vale Royal Singers** are treating us to an evening of his work. Of course, we MUST, if at all possible, attend the **Christmas Fair** on Nov 22nd where we can buy all our Christmas presents and have a really enjoyable afternoon! Raffles, music, visits up the Tower and lots more...(The following day is the Sunday before Advent, so don't forget to make your Christmas pudding as that day is Stir Up Sunday!)

We must get our brains in gear for the **Quiz** Dec 6th. It will promise to be a most entertaining evening if the last quiz is anything to go by...tickets will go fast! And don't forget that our voices need to be in good shape for **Carol Singing** outdoors 19th Dec! The mulled wine will help enormously!

To all these activities and, of course, all the church services, if we can all encourage just one friend or neighbour to come along with us, it may be that that person was just waiting for a friend to take them for moral support. Church activities can seem daunting to someone not familiar with regular attendance. Finally, we need to remind ourselves about the Reason for the Season, the birth of Christ, as we may find we become that person who says 'Christmas, not again!' We need to pace ourselves, prepare ourselves inwardly and then pray that we may experience Christmas as it should be received – with real joy, like the excitement and wonder felt by a child.



Catherine



WHAT'S ON AT ST MARY'S IN NOVEMBER?



The 10:30am Sunday Service will usually also be accessible via the St Mary's YouTube Channel. Please follow St Mary's Facebook Page for updates. Below, bold type denotes an event, not a service.

Sunday	2	All Saints' Sunday 8:00am Holy Communion (followed by bacon baps in St Mary's Handbridge Centre) 10:30am Sung Eucharist 12:30pm Holy Baptism
Monday	3	All Souls' (transferred) 6:00pm Requiem Mass 7:00pm PCC Standing Committee 7:30pm Julian Meeting
Wednesday	5	12:00pm Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	6	10:00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday	7	10:00am St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Sunday	9	Remembrance Sunday 8:00am Holy Communion 10:30am Sung Eucharist 11:30pm Cake Sunday - baked items for sale after the 10:30am service in St Mary's Handbridge Centre 6:30pm Service of Remembrance
Wednesday	12	12:00pm Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	13	10:00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday	14	10:00am St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group in St Mary's Handbridge Centre 7:00pm Vale Royal Singers Concert - Tribute to John Rutter
Sunday	16	Second Sunday before Advent 8:00am Holy Communion 10:30am Sung Eucharist 3:00pm Messy Church
Monday	17	7:00pm PCC Meeting
Wednesday	19	12:00pm Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	20	10:00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday	21	10:00am St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Saturday	22	12:00pm St Mary's Christmas Fair in St Mary's Handbridge Centre to 3:00pm
Sunday	23	Christ the King 8:00am Holy Communion 10:30am Sung Eucharist
Wednesday	26	12:00pm Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	27	10:00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday	28	10:00am St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Sunday	30	First Sunday in Advent 8:00am Holy Communion 10:30am Sung Eucharist 6:30pm Advent Carol Service



Church Cleaning Team - needs YOU! Would YOU like to help with fun cleaning on **Tuesday mornings** in Church wielding a duster, running round with the hoover or brushing chairs? **10.00- 12.00 every Tuesday** (or just the Tuesdays when you can!) and afterwards with a well-earned cuppa in the Centre; far more fun than cleaning at home! You will love it!!! Just turn up!



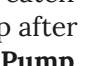
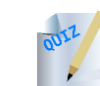


WHAT'S ON AT ST MARY'S IN DECEMBER?



The 10:30am Sunday Service will usually also be accessible via St Mary's YouTube Channel. Please follow St Mary's Facebook Page for updates. Below, bold type denotes an event, not a service.

Monday	1	6:30pm	Compline
		7:30pm	Julian Meeting
Wednesday	3	12:00pm	Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	4	10:00am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday	5	10:00am	St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Saturday	6	7:00pm	Christmas Quiz in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Sunday	7	Second Sunday in Advent	
		8:00am	Holy Communion (followed by bacon baps in St Mary's Handbridge Centre)
		10:30am	Sung Eucharist
		12:30pm	Holy Baptism
Monday	8	6:30pm	Compline
Wednesday	10	12:00pm	Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	11	10:00am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday	12	10:00am	St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Sunday	14	Third Sunday in Advent	
		8:00am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Family Eucharist
Monday	15	6:30pm	Compline
Wednesday	17	12:00pm	Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	18	10:00am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday	19	6:00pm	Outdoor Carols and Mulled Wine
Sunday	21	Fourth Sunday in Advent	
		8:00am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Sung Eucharist
		6:30pm	Nine Lessons and Carols
Monday	22	6:30pm	Compline
Wednesday	24	Christmas Eve	
		4:00pm	Crib Service
		11:00pm	Midnight Mass
Thursday	25	Christmas Day	
		8:00am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Sung Eucharist
Sunday	28	The Holy Innocents	
		8:00am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Sung Eucharist



You Tube filming at St Mary's

Filming of Services for YouTube at St Mary's. The **10:30am Sunday Service** is being filmed for YouTube for those unable to attend church. If you would rather not be filmed, then please talk to a churchwarden or a sides person.



Dear Lord,

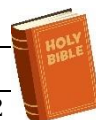
So far today, I am doing all right. I have not gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or self-indulgent. I have not whined, complained, or cursed. I have not charged on my credit card or eaten any chocolate. However, I am going to get out of bed in a few minutes, and I will need a lot more help after that! Amen.

Parish Pump

Weekly Bible Readings for November and December 2025



Bible readings for November	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
2nd November 2025 All Saints' Day	Daniel 7:1-3. 15-18	Psalm 149	Ephesians 1:11-end	Luke 6:20-31
9th November 2025 Third Sunday before Advent	Job 19:23-27a	Psalm 17:1-9	2 Thessalonians 2:1-5. 13-end	Luke 20:27-38
16th November 2025 Second Sunday before Advent	Malachi 4:1-2a	Psalm 98	2 Thessalonians 3:6-13	Luke 21:5-19
23rd November 2025 Christ the King	Jeremiah 23:1-6	Psalm 46	Colossians 1:11-20	Luke 23:33-43
30th November 2025 First Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 2:1-5	Psalm 122	Romans 13:11-end	Matthew 24:36-44



Bible readings for December	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
7th December 2025 Second Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 11:1-19	Psalm 72:1-7. 18-19	Romans 15:4-13	Matthew 3:1-12
14th December 2025 Third Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 35:1-10	Either Psalm 146: 4-10 Or Luke 1:46b-55 (Magnificat)	James 5:7-10	Matthew 11:2- 11
21st December 2025 Fourth Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 7:10-16	Psalm 80:1-8. 18-20	Romans 1:1-7	Matthew 1:18-end
25th December 2025 CHRISTMAS DAY	Isaiah 52:7-10	Psalm 98	Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]	John 1:1-14
28th December 2025 The Holy Innocents	Jeremiah 31:15-17	Psalm 124	1 Corinthinans 1:26-29	Matthew 2:13-18

St. Mary's Choral Scholarships - Sponsor a Scholar!

St Mary's church has a strong tradition of choral music, with a Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass choir made up of a dedicated group of volunteers, as well as 12 Choral Scholars, aged 11-18 recruited from local schools. The project enables young people to learn to read music and experience the joy of making music in a wonderful setting.

Our Choral Scholars were initially funded by several grants, but regular fundraising is required to safeguard the project into the future. Our monthly series of 'Music by the Bridge' concerts helps to raise some of the money, but regular giving will enable us to secure the necessary funds to continue our work.

Senior Choral Scholars (aged 15-18) are paid £600 per annum, and Juniors (aged 11-14) are paid £300, making a total of £6000 per year. If you would like to know more about how you could sponsor a scholar for a year or make a regular donation of another amount please contact the church treasurer at finance.stmaryswithoutwalls@btinternet.com

Friday 14th November 7pm

A CELEBRATION OF THE MUSIC OF JOHN RUTTER

to mark his 80th birthday

By the

Vale Royal Singers

at St. Mary's Church, Handbridge CH4 7HL

£10 per ticket, available on Eventbrite (booking fees apply) or from the parish office

I not only use all the brains I have, but all I can borrow. – Woodrow Wilson (US President 1913-1921)





PARISH DIRECTORY



Rector	The Revd Antony J Dutton	stmarysrector.handbridge@gmail.com	01244 671202
			and/or 01244 913898
Parish Administrator & Centre Manager	Doris Keen	office.stmaryschester@btconnect.com	01244 671202
Centre Coordinators	Michael Mitchell	michael.stmaryschester@btconnect.com	01244 671202
	Joanna Polanczyk	joanna.stmaryschester@btconnect.com	01244 671202
Centre Assistant	John Rose	Contact via Centre Manager	
Hon. Assistant Clergy	The Revd John Carhart	jcarhart@nepc.co.uk	01244 380923
	The Revd Trevor Dennis	trevordennis11@gmail.com	01244 638441
	The Revd Maureen Pickering	revmapickering@gmail.com	01244 749112
Hon. Parish Reader	Linda Manning	lindamanning@uwclub.net	01244 682143
Churchwardens	Lynne Jones	lynnejones623@hotmail.com	07713 167332
	Mavis Sellers	mavissellers@gmail.com	07715 050850
PCC Secretary	Hailey Mason	pccsecretary@btconnect.com	01244 674517
PCC Treasurer	Tom Hardcastle	treasurer.stmaryschester@gmail.com	01244 671202
Director of Music	Michael Reynolds	michaelreynoldsmusic@googlemail.com	07786 323946
Music and Worship Cluster Chair	Michael Reynolds	michaelreynoldsmusic@googlemail.com	07786 323946
Community, Mission, Charities Cluster Chair	Alison McLellan	avej97@btinternet.com	01244 676772
Children and Young People Cluster Chair	Maureen Pickering	revmapickering@gmail.com	01244 749112
Communications Cluster Chair	The Revd Antony J Dutton	stmarysrector.handbridge@gmail.com	01244 671202
			and/or 01244 913898
Buildings and Environment Cluster Chair	John Scott	jande.scott@btinternet.com	
Finance Cluster Chair	David Gilburt	bonduca@hotmail.com	01244 630917
Churches Together Rep	Peter Collins	pcollins943@btinternet.com	
Deanery Synod Reps	Christine Dukes	teeneel@live.co.uk	
	Emma Degg	emma.degg@nwblt.co.uk	
	Alison McLellan	avej97@btinternet.com	01244 676772
Electoral Roll Officer	Alison McLellan	avej97@btinternet.com	01244 676772
Planned Giving Recorder	Helen Brophy	finance.stmaryswithoutwalls@btinternet.com	01244 629111
Safeguarding Officer	Sue Fryer	safeguarding.stmaryschester@btconnect.com	07754 894748
		PLEASE NOTE above email and phone no. are for Safeguarding purposes ONLY. Thank you	
Health & Safety Adviser	Parish Office		01244 671202
Bellringers	Fiona Harrison	fiona.harrison1@btinternet.com	01244 314712
Church Flowers Lead	Elizabeth Bennett	ebennett51@outlook.com	01244 678504
Church Flowers Treasurer	Linda Schofield		01244 659149
Church Cleaning	Helen Pritchard	helenpritchard5858@gmail.com	07522 477605
Intercessions Rota	Jackie Hirst	jgshirst@protonmail.com	01244 371083
Server Rota	Sue Dickinson	dickinsonsue28@gmail.com	01244 678328
Magazine Editor	Catherine Jones	stmaryseditor@gmail.com	07730 584510
Magazine Distributors	Bill & Jaqi Yates	yatesb@hotmail.co.uk	01244 681349
	John & Melissa Grundy	johng Grundy819@gmail.com	07821 425469
Julian Meetings	John & Denise Parkin	parkinjohn@tiscali.co.uk	01244 676009
Meditation Group	Jackie Hirst	jgshirst@protonmail.com	01244 371083
Luncheon Club Leader	Maureen Evans	evansrogers@yahoo.co.uk	01244 676123
Baby & Toddler Group	Sue Fryer	sue.fryer55@outlook.com	07799 862828
The Well (Youth Group)	Maureen Pickering	revmapickering@gmail.com	01244 749112
Gardening Group (Unlicensed Lay Weeders)	Alison McLellan	avej97@btinternet.com	01244 676772
Christian Aid Representatives	Helen Pritchard	helenpritchard5858@gmail.com	07522 477605
	Christine Duke	teeneel@live.co.uk	
Beavers, Cubs & Scouts	Susan Jones		01244 675538
Rainbows	Grace Hamilton	graceshamilton@gmail.com	07943 811854
Brownies	Krystina Littlehales	krys14_uk@yahoo.co.uk	07860 845402
Guides & Rangers	Helen Williams	helen_williams82uk@yahoo.co.uk	07951 959007
Overleigh St Mary's C of E Primary School Head	Emma Drew	admin@osm.cheshire.sch.uk	01244 267525

PLEASE NOTE: The Parish Office hours are as follows: **Monday - Friday: 9:00am - 3:00pm**

Website: <https://stmaryschester.co.uk/contact-st-marys/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/StMaryHandbridge>

Youtube: @stmaryschurchhandbridge8838



"Here's a king!" announced the five-year-old as he unwrapped a figurine from the Christmas decorations box. "Here's a donkey!" he added a moment later. Then he removed the tissue from another figure, finding the infant Jesus moulded permanently into the little manger. The child exclaimed, "And here's Baby Jesus in his car seat!"



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