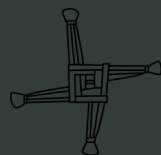


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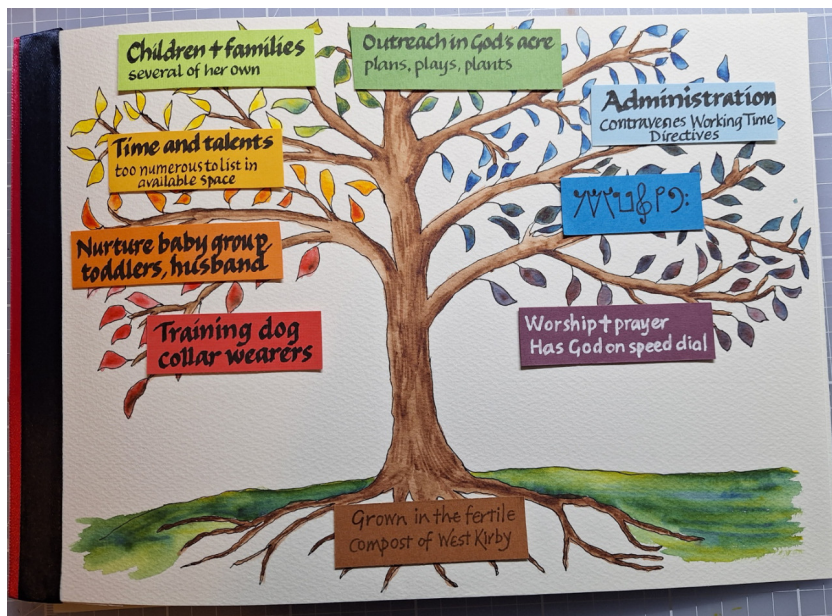
www.stbridgetschurch.org.uk

www.caldychurch.org.uk

February 2026 (Vol. 16: No 1)

£1.00

For those of you who might not have seen Alex's birthday card, here it is. The design is based on the 'Tree' that Alex uses to show the branching and interdependent areas of our parish worship and work.



Cover: Fra Bartolomeo, 'Presentation of Christ in the Temple' (1516) Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



letter from alex

Hold on to your eyeballs!

Almost every Friday I say Morning Prayer in the lower churchyard at St Bridget's, streaming it via Facebook. I usually begin by encouraging a moment of reflection, looking back over the week past and noticing the blessings and the challenges it has brought. Then to look around at where we are on that particular morning, what we are preoccupied with or simply how we are feeling, and then to take a moment to look to the week ahead.

The first magazine of 2026 seems a good opportunity to encourage this time of reflection on the year past. To think about what 2025 brought us, the blessings and the challenges, to ask ourselves where we are now, how we are feeling, and to look to the year ahead. What we might be hoping for and who we might be called to be as individuals and as a church community.

Our patron saint is Bridget of Kildare (Bride, Brigid,) and we celebrate her day on February 1st. She is renowned for her care of the poor, her generosity and compassion and her courage in challenging those in power. Legends speak of her miracles as well as her fiery temper; it is claimed that she could turn water into beer and draw salt from a rock. Her prayers could stall the wind and rain, and when a man insulted her, she made his eyeballs implode.

So watch out!

As well as the St Bridget's cross made from rushes, Bridget also had a legendary cloak. Distressed at the plight of the poor and wanting to establish a community which could care for them she approached the King of Leinster to ask for land. The King was rather mocking of this simple and

foolish woman and said that if she spread her cloak out upon the ground, she could have all the land it covered. As Bridget whooshed out her cloak, four holy maidens appeared taking a corner each and the cloak spread far and wide across Leinster. And so it was that the king awarded Bridget land upon which she constructed a small church of oak and established a community. The Irish word for church is “cill” and the old Irish word for oakwood is “daire”. Over time these two words were put together and Cill Dara, or Kildare became the name of Bridget’s estate and now the name of the entire county.

As we ponder what we are called to do and be in a world which feels in need of healing, these tales of Bridget can perhaps focus our thoughts and stir us to action. Bridget challenged those who used their power to diminish or exploit others and courageously spoke out about injustice. She cared for the poor, the homeless and the hungry as well as honouring creation. She was not put off by those who mocked her or tried to silence her.

As we look around and make plans for 2026 let’s take courage from such an inspiring saint and seek to be a transforming presence in our community, caring for those in need, championing the marginalised or excluded and cherishing creation. In a world which is so fractured let’s seek to speak out and speak up for the values Jesus modelled and to invite others to join us in doing so

And let’s do it all with grace and hold on to our eyeballs.

Alex

The Sales Table in the centre run by Carole and John Steel always has a good supply of second-hand books, useful items for the home and gifts. Since its inception, the sales table has raised £8300 for the PCC and £3250 has been allocated to the Organ Fund. The doll raffle (for the doll made by Carole) raised £100. Thank you, Carole and John!

Anne Samuels: Progress Report

Thank you so much, everyone, for your ongoing support.

I will have to continue playing pirate for a while as we wait for my eye to heal or be given treatment. I still have to contend with some tiredness and dizziness but this is expected as recovery from a brain injury takes a long time. I've been advised that it will probably take at least two years to reach whatever level of recovery I can. No-one completely recovers from a brain injury but it's very heartening that in these first three months, there have been real improvements. I hope you will pray for some more!

I won't be up to doing what I used to in church (and other contexts) but I'm tremendously grateful for your love and prayers and patience. I just need to learn to live one day at a time – and I'm sure that's true for all of us.



'THE BELLS, THE BELLS...'



For centuries church bells have sounded, calling people to worship, in celebration of special occasions, in remembrance and to mark special events. In the very early days, the bells were "chimed" to make a sound but the ringers had little control over the order in which the bells sounded and therefore the "music" they played.



The origins of what is called change ringing lie in the sixteenth century when church bells began to be hung with a full wheel enabling the bell to swing in a full circle and back again. This gave ringers control of their bell, which allowed sets of bells (rings) to be rung in a continuously changing pattern. Music is created by moving bells up and down the ringing order to a defined sequence known as a method. The team at St Bridget's can ring several methods and are aiming to improve their ringing of *Wells Minor* and *St Clements*.

Bellringing is a team activity that stimulates the brain and helps keep you fit... it also makes a glorious sound! Many consider ringing to be their contribution to church life, others do it for the pure pleasure it brings.

We have a great team of bell ringers but need to train up new ringers to sustain this amazing skill. If you would like to know more please speak to Don Naylor our Tower secretary who can be reached on 0798 365 7859 email donhिल्re@sky.com

WEST KIRBY MUSEUM

It's to be hoped that all our readers know that West Kirby Museum is attached to St Bridget's Centre. It was founded in 1892 to commemorate a local worthy, Charles Dawson Brown, principally to house an important collection of sculptured stones, some dating back to the Viking period. Enlarged and refurbished, it reopened in 2013.

Volunteers are desperately needed by the Museum to meet and greet visitors. The Museum is open every Saturday morning from 10am to 1pm and on other special occasions. Volunteers work on a rota basis with each Volunteer working two or three Saturdays in a 4-month period. No qualifications are required and the Volunteers always work together in pairs. If you are interested we would love to hear from you.

Please contact the person who organises the rota at crossange@aol.com to find out more.



Mothers' UNION
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We held our AGM on Tuesday 13th January. One member retired from the committee and a new member was voted on. Chris gave a report on our financial position and Carole a report on the past year. The Mothers' Union is 150 years old this year and services and events are being held around the country.

Our group will be holding a strawberry tea later in the year. All groups are being encouraged to promote the work of the Mothers' Union in this country and around the world. Anyone can become a member: you don't have to be a mother or even a woman and men are just as welcome to join. Please see Carole Steel if you would like a programme of our meetings for 2026.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 17th February at 2 pm in the Beacon Room (please note: this is one week later than usual). **John Roberts** is giving a talk entitled 'A View from the Bench'. This is an open meeting and everyone from the congregation is welcome to come along.

Carole Steel, Secretary

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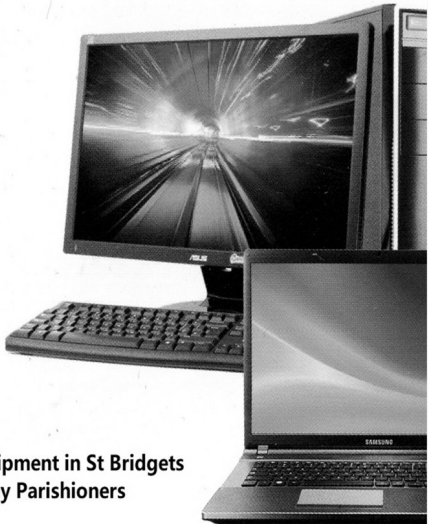
He says: "I have been working with computers for over 30 years and I have a relentless passion and enthusiasm for all things IT."

If you're having problems with your PC, or are looking to improve or replace it please give me a call and we'll have a chat about it.

My advice is free and I operate a no nonsense no fix no fee policy, customer satisfaction is at the heart of everything I do."

Dave has been supplying & maintaining the computer equipment in St Bridgets Parish Office for over 10 years and has helped out many Parishioners

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February 2026 Diary

Our churches are open for visitors and as places of prayer & stillness
St Bridget's daily until 5pm, Caldý Church every day

**The Parish Office in St Bridget's Centre is open
Monday to Friday mornings, 9.30am–12.30pm**

The Rector's day off is a Monday
*For additional information about our activities, including occasional services
and events, please consult our website*

(www.stbridgetschurch.org.uk),

A Church Near You

www.achurchnearyou.com/St-Bridget-West-Kirby

www.achurchnearyou.com/All-Saints-Caldy

or the weekly newsletter, or phone the office (0151 625 2739)

Sunday 1st February ST BRIDGET'S DAY and CANDLEMAS

- 8am Holy Communion – St Bridget
10am UNITED PARISH COMMUNION at St Bridget's (no service at Caldý)
6.30 pm Choral Evensong – St Bridget

Sunday 8th February SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

- 8am Holy Communion – St Bridget
10am Holy Communion – St Bridget
10am Holy Communion – Caldý
6.30pm Evening Prayer – St Bridget

Sunday 15th February THE SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

- 8am Holy Communion – St Bridget
10am All Together Worship – St Bridget
10am Holy Communion – Caldý
6.30pm Compline – St Bridget

Wednesday 18th February ASH WEDNESDAY

- 11.30am Holy Communion and Imposition of ashes – St Bridget

Sunday 22nd February FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

8am	Holy Communion – St Bridget
10am	Holy Communion – St Bridget
10am	Holy Communion – Caldy
6.30pm	Evening Prayer – St Bridget

Regular weekday services

Tuesday	10am	Holy Communion at Caldy Church
Wednesday	8.30am	Morning prayer at St Bridget's
Wednesday	11.30pm	Holy Communion at St Bridget's
Thursday	9am	Morning Prayer on Zoom
Friday	9am	Morning Prayer livestreamed on Facebook

Regular weekday activities

Tuesday	3.30pm	Toasty Tuesday in St Bridget's (term time)
	4.45pm	Sing Aloud junior choir practice (term time)
	6.00pm	Choir practice
	7.30pm	Bell ringing practice
Wednesday	8.30–11.30am	The Link Café – Centre
	10am	Knit & Natter, craft and chat group – Centre
Thursday	10am	Caldy Baby & Toddler Group (term time)
Friday	10am	St Bridget's Baby Group – Centre (term time)

Other regular activities

Second Tuesday of month	2pm	Mothers' Union in the Centre
Third Wednesday of month	12 noon	Men's Shed Lunch in the Centre
First Tuesday of month	7pm	Theology Discussion group at the Ring O' Bells
One Saturday each month	9.30–12 noon	Churchyard Working Party St Bridget's

FROM THE REGISTERS...

FUNERALS, MEMORIAL SERVICES and BURIALS OF ASHES

"Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord"

5th December 2025	John Lewys-Lloyd (Landican & Caldý)
13th December	Peta Mills (burial of ashes at St Bridget's)
18th December	Arthur Wilfred Pennal (Landican)
16th January 2026	Florence Jocelyne (Jo) Ashcroft (St Bridget & Landican)
21st January	Eileen Romnes (St Bridget & Landican)
22nd January	Helen Brooks (St Bridget & Landican)
22nd January	Patricia Lee Sumner (Landican)
23rd January	Irene Moores (Chester Crematorium)
28th January	Florence Jocelyne (Jo) Ashcroft (burial of ashes at St Bridget's)

One of the Celtic traditions associated with Bridget's Day, was to ask her to come into the house and bless it. "Oh Brìde, Brideag, come with the wand to this wintry land; and breathe with the breath of Spring so bland, Brìde, Brìde, little Bride." —traditional rhyme translated from Scottish Gaelic, Scottish Customs by Shelia Livingston. ("Bride" is a modern form of Brìghde, pronounced as "Bree-jah.")

<https://regencyfictionwriters.org/st-bridgets-day-candlemas-and-quarter-days/>

A Reflection on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Given the remarkable ability human beings have for falling out with each other it is no surprise at all that even as early as St. Paul's day the disciples of Jesus were having arguments and disagreements. Paul chastises them in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 1. 10-16) as they appear to be following different teachers, Paul or Apollos or Cephas.

The history of the Church since has been one of disagreements and fallings out. First in Corinth, then in the wider Roman world with the Arian controversy. The first great council of the Church was called 1700 years ago to state beyond question what exactly you have to believe to be a Christian and we still say that Creed every Sunday. But the disagreements continued, famously in the 11th century over a slight change to the wording of the Creed with which the Eastern churches disagreed, which caused the Great Schism when the Eastern Orthodox Churches came out of communion with the Pope and the Churches of the west.

Another schism in 1378 divided the Western Church and we had, for a while, two Popes, one in Rome and another in Avignon. Then came the Reformation and all the division that caused.

And within our own Church of England there are divisions and disagreements. Churches which do not recognise the priesthood of women is a schism in the Anglican communion which causes pain to many. And recently the House of Bishops has drawn back from the inclusive stance that some of us would like to see towards the LGBTQIA+ community. Many feel hurt, excluded and disappointed. These divisions will not be overcome by brushing things under the carpet and hoping they'll go away.

Coventry diocese is known throughout the world as a diocese of reconciliation, built on the foundations of those words inscribed on the wall of the Cathedral ruins in November 1940, 'Father Forgive', not 'Father, forgive **them**' as some thought it should say. Provost Dick Howard was clear, we all bear some responsibility for conflict and we all must forgive, just as our heavenly Father forgives. The Ministry of the Coventry Cross of Nails has spread across the world to many places of division and conflict in an attempt to bring true reconciliation.

I was lucky, for a time, to work with one of our Canons for Reconciliation, David Porter, from Northern Ireland who had worked closely with the efforts to bring peace to that divided province. On one occasion he took one of my friends with him to Northern Ireland and my friend said, "I'll come just as long as I don't have

to meet Ian Paisley!” David opened a door to a room in Stormont Castle and a figure rose to greet them warmly, “Stuart, come in, I’ve been looking forward to meeting you, David’s told me so much about you” said Ian Paisley! My friend said that he was a pleasant, friendly man and they had a good chat. How often do we hear that about people who we believe to be monsters who turn out to be lovely people, loved by God, who just sometimes behave monstrously.

Reconciliation, bringing together those who believe in different things, *‘I belong to Paul’, or ‘I belong to Apollos’, or ‘I belong to Cephas’, or ‘I belong to Christ.’* is not about bullying people into believing what you believe, it’s about living alongside those differences, learning to live with them, and accepting that there are different ways of looking at things. The Church of England used to be very good at that but, I’m not so sure anymore. Once doors are closed it’s so much harder to open them again.

When Jesus walked along that lakeside calling the disciples away from their livelihoods, Andrew and Simon Peter, James and John, leaving poor old Zebedee to look after the family business, he called them to preach the gospel, the good news that God has come into the world to open up a new way of being with them, a new relationship, a new covenant, a covenant built on grace, peace, love. As Paul said to the Corinthians, *For Christ did not send me to baptise but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

As we ponder this year’s week of prayer for Christian Unity just passed may our prayer be that we might model the reconciling love of God for the world far better than many in positions of leadership in our country and world.

Richard Williams, former Hon. Canon of Coventry Cathedral, January 2026.

ORGAN UPDATE

Work on the organ continues but as we went to press (sounds so important, doesn’t it?) before the end-of-month report (and invoice) arrived, we’re unable to give you a detailed update. However, we are hoping that the end of the restoration and repair is in sight and we can start to plan the celebratory concert!

Do we have to impress God?

(Contributed by Ray Samuels)

We act as if we had to impress God, as if we had to have something in our spiritual 'repertoire' that would guarantee that he take us seriously – so we try to build up a professional arsenal of spiritual riches that will secure our place with him.

But we need to see that our utter inability to acquire a satisfactory and impressive spiritual life is the best possible news, because then we can simply put ourselves in his hands, trusting in his love. When we are empty of our fantasies about goodness or holiness or integration or however we phrase it, we can just allow God to be who he is, the one who wants to live in us and pray in us, so that we—silenced and humbled by his generosity—can come to life again, without anxiety, without arrogance, without despair.

This does not mean life becomes easy. But it does mean that our dry and dull inner life, that sense of getting nowhere, can be acknowledged without panic because the focus is God's action, not ours. Ultimately to be a disciple is to let God in Jesus Christ be who he is, free from our fuss and fear or hopes for impressive personal holiness. Jesus is our holiness and all we can do is let him live in us.

Rowan Williams, 104th Archbishop of Canterbury (2002–2012), in a forward to Love Unknown by Ruth Burrows (slightly modified)

Theology Discussion Group @ the Ring O' Bells

The next meeting is on Tuesday, 7th February at 7 pm in the upper room of the 'Ring of Bells'.

January's meeting was led by Richard Williams and stimulated interesting discussion on the subject of 'Liturgy'. This month's subject is the Apostle Paul and, as usual, Dave has supplied some materials in advance ('Paul's Background' N.T. Wright)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpreSe8BKP8>

All are welcome – please do come along and please invite others. Dave can be contacted on jg54@liverpool.ac.uk



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the birthday of the year!

On Sunday 18th January, at the end of the All Together Worship service, the Rector realised that her secret was out! Unbeknown to her, churchwarden Anna had been managing a covert operation to celebrate Alex's 60th birthday (yes, many of us found it hard to believe that she was to be aged 60). Alex was given a birthday card signed by many of the parish family and the music group led us in singing 'Happy birthday'.

We then moved to the centre for 'coffee' aka prosecco (generously supplied by an anonymous donor) with meringues and strawberries and cream and scones with strawberry jam and cream, made by our Star Baker, Sally. We were joined by our Caldys family and Anna said a few words of appreciation, heartily endorsed by everyone present. Anna then presented Alex with a money bag (literally) and we hope that Alex has much pleasure in deciding how to use the gift.





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The Star Baker
talking to Brian



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St Bridget's West Kirby and Caldy Church take the safety of everyone within our churches very seriously, and expect that everyone will work within the **safeguarding policy** of the parish, a copy of which can be found on our noticeboards.

If you are concerned about someone's safety or well-being contact:

- The Rector, Reverend Alex Williams, 0151 625 1052 rectorwestkirby@gmail.com
- The Parish Safeguarding Officer Rosemary Morgan 0782 1672232
safeguardingwestkirby@gmail.com
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Team 01928 718834 (option 4)
safeguarding@chester.anglican.org

IF SOMEONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OR HARM, **CALL 999** AND ASK FOR THE POLICE.