

ST. MARY'S MAGAZINE

May / June
2026

£2

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The heavens are telling
the glory of God
and the firmament
proclaims his handiwork

Psalm 19: 1

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.stmaryschester@btconnect.com or via the website www.stmaryschester.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 June** for the **July/August edition** of the magazine please!

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Message from Bill & Jaqi Yates, John & Melissa Grundy
(St Mary's magazine distributors team)

Magazine Subscriptions: How To Pay in 2026

Hi Everyone, you will see on the front of this magazine that the cost of having a subscription to this UNIQUE magazine is £12. The one big advantage is that subscribers have their magazine delivered to their door and there is no charge for the cost of delivery! **A BARGAIN!** Everyone's a winner, especially when you have a St Mary's bi-monthly magazine proudly sitting on your table at home full of interesting facts, information and fun! Therefore, subscriptions of **£12** are due for the period from **1st February 2026 to 31st January 2027**. If you have forgotten to pay for your subscription this year, it is never too late!

The five alternative ways of paying your subscription are:

- * A. **Online banking** – Transfer your subscription fee to PCC of St Mary's Without-the-Walls Chester. Sort code 60-40-08. Account number 80005209 using the Reference 'Magazine and your surname' and this will help our PCC Treasurer to identify the payment as a magazine annual subscription.
- * B. **By cheque**, made payable to PCC of St Mary's Without-the-Walls Chester, which you can hand to your local magazine distributor.
- * C. **By Standing Order**
- * D. By dropping off their **cash or cheque** subscriptions into the Parish Office using the Reference "Parish Magazine", this will help our PCC Treasurer to identify the payment as a magazine annual subscription.
- * E. If you prefer not to use any of the above options, you can, of course, continue to **pay in cash to your local magazine distributor**. Please inform your local magazine distributor which option you would prefer to use, & this information will be passed to the appropriate magazine distributor. Finally, if you do not yet subscribe to the magazine, why don't you consider it?

Sidesman to newcomer at church door: "Good morning. How far down do you wish to sit?"

Baffled newcomer: "Well, all the way, of course."



Safeguarding Policy

St Mary's Handbridge takes its duty and obligation to protect all extremely seriously. We have adopted the national Church of England's robust procedures and guidelines. Read about the policies and procedures at

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** helpline on 0300 303 1056 or email safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk Alternatively, you may contact our Parish Safeguarding Officer

Sue Fryer

safeguarding.stmaryschester@btconnect.com
or Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor 07703 800031

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Letter from Revd Antony Dutton, Rector

At the beginning of May, a group of people of different ages are going to be confirmed by the Bishop of Birkenhead at St Mary's. Confirmation has been described as a 'rite without a theology'. The statistics would seem to support that there is a sense of uncertainty about the purpose of confirmation. In 2005 in Chester diocese there were 837 confirmations. By 2024 there were only 221. In 2010 there were 699 confirmations in contrast to the 4,990 baptisms that were recorded in Chester diocese.

So what is confirmation?

Previously, confirmation was thought to be the second step in the church's initiation rites and the means by which people were admitted to Holy Communion. The contemporary theological view is that baptism is the sole initiation rite into the church – once you are baptized you are a fully paid-up member of the church – and that confirmation is not the second step in a two-step process. So what is the point of confirmation? The statistics seem to suggest that lots of parish churches are abandoning confirmation. Perhaps the figures are indicative of declining numbers more generally. It might be that confirmation is being overlooked for theological reasons. Yet I think confirmation does several important things.

There are many who are baptized who then lapse from their faith and then, when they are older, wish to reengage with it. In certain types of churches, it is popular for these people to seek baptism again. But you cannot be baptized more than once. Confirmation can therefore play a role at this point. It doesn't complete the first stage of the initiation process but rather renews and strengthens the candidate in their faith and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

There is also another aspect to confirmation: in the Church of England, it must be the bishop that celebrates this rite. The individual is not being admitted as a member of a local club but to the universal and catholic church. In May, our confirmands are being reminded that, through the office of bishop, they are connected to the wider reality of the church's life; they don't just belong to the congregation at St Mary's but to the great communion of saints spread across space and time.

One misconception about confirmation is that, because there are preparatory classes, it is some sort of intellectual test. But confirmation is not an intellectual rite; nobody will be turned away if they cannot correctly answer a particular set of questions. It is about developing Christian discipleship, and Christian initiation is never complete in this life. Although baptism confers a once-and-for-all character on the candidate, it does not leave us in a state of completion; it inducts us into a life of growth, of which confirmation, and then Communion, is a part. We see this when we look at when confirmation usually happens. It often occurs when people are trying to discern how their faith is going to manifest in their lives. Frequently, we see teenagers seek out confirmation, but often it is those who have enthusiastically come to faith more recently; those beginning new jobs, moving house, recently married, or those who are bereaved. It is those key staging posts on our journey when we wish to re-engage with our faith.

Finally, confirmation can be a time when the renewal of the Holy Spirit can be seen as enfranchisement. What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do? What is your particular role within the church? The re-gifting of the Holy Spirit during confirmation can be a time when people discern their own vocation, and the mission and ministry they are called to live out within the church.

Those candidates who are being confirmed will need our prayers and support as they continue to grow in their faith. Please do join us and celebrate with them on the day. A confirmation is a chance to celebrate with one of our bishops, and it is a sign that St Mary's is a community which is nurturing and growing individuals in their faith.

Later in May we also have our next big fundraiser and social event: the Singing Vicar. The Revd Ron Iveson is a tremendous vocalist, who sings Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra and much else, and he is going to perform in St Mary's. It will be a memorable night and so please do buy tickets and come along and enjoy. **Antony**

Changing Prayer - The Prayer of St Francis of Assisi who died 800 years ago in 1226

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek



to be consoled as to console,
to be understood, as to understand,
where there is doubt, faith;
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

(L. statue in the Frari church, Venice R. 'Part of the habit of St Francis d'Assisi' in S. Croce Church, Florence)



Incredible Edible Handbridge, The Arches Community Garden

Summer update from Lisa Rossetti

NEWS FROM THE PLOT

🌱 Hello everyone! 🌱

Hope you are enjoying the warmer days and light nights!

Lots going on at the Arches, which is a community wellbeing and wildlife garden in the heart of Handbridge, between Devonshire and Prenton place.

This once overgrown, unloved and avoided place is now a pleasant and welcoming space where we grow food and provide inspiration for what can be done with very little. As summer progresses there will be fresh veg and fruit to pick, and everyone is welcome to get involved or to just enjoy the space.

We have resumed Saturday morning get-togethers 10-12 which will run until winter. Please do come along and get involved 🙏👷 This community project can only happen with the strength of the community behind it 🙏

We will have a stall again this year at the fabulous **HCA Handbridge Summer Festival, 28th June**. Do look out for us. There will be giveaways, information, surprises and friendly faces.

We continue to lock the gates overnight to deter antisocial behaviours and keep our neighbours feeling happy and respected. This is in line with most public parks, and therefore we feel it is reasonable. If you would like to be part of the gate crew, please get in touch!

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 and materials, and to plan for further developments along the gardens and passageways.

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

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

<https://join.easyfundraising.org.uk/incredible-edible-handbridge/BM3SFM/s2s/N5Znntup/DSF6H/facebok/>

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 mind, body and soul can feel nourished 🍎

Look forward to seeing you soon!

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



Unlicensed Lay Weeders update!

I hear many complimentary remarks about the church and carpark grounds which is always heartening especially when the weather doesn't co operate As well as the Unlicensed Lay Weeders who are willing to roll



up their sleeves we would be struggling without the weekly sessions put in by both Brians who keep the major jobs under control. They have mowed lawns, cut back ivy, spread bark mulch and maintained machinery amongst other maintenance tasks. Thank you both so much.

Alison McLellan

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five- and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to 'honour thy father and thy mother,' she asked: "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

Without missing a beat one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."



Christian Aid News

Christian Aid Lent Lunch



A **Big Thank You!** to everyone who came to support our Lenten Lunch on 25th February this year. 42 people attended on the day and we raised **£466** in donations with an additional **£100-25** from gift aid! Everyone had a lovely time and there was a



very warm and friendly atmosphere. Another very **Big Thank You!** to all our wonderful volunteers who helped on the day and the talented cooks who donated a very impressive array of soups and cakes to choose from. It was so generous of everyone in giving of their time and talents and very much appreciated 😊

Christian Aid week 2026

This year Christian Aid Week will run from **May 10th-16th** and we focus on fighting poverty in communities with a special focus on supporting families such as in Nairobi and Kenya through partnerships with organisations like Beacon of Hope. The 2026 campaign emphasises actionable community-led change to tackle hunger and economic injustice, tackling urban poverty, ensuring food security for families, and supporting sustainable livelihoods.

We shall be having our traditional **street collections** during that week and anyone who would like to help with the delivery of envelopes in any area of the parish **please contact Helen or Chris** for more information.

We shall also be offering again this year our "Take Six Envelopes Home" where if you choose to take just six envelopes home to pass on to friends and family you will make such a big difference in the fight against global poverty. Thank you

Christian Aid Cream Tea afternoon

We are starting off Christian Aid week with our very popular **Cream Tea Afternoon on Monday 11th May 12.30pm-2.30pm** at St Mary's Centre. Please come and join us for an afternoon of tea/coffee with scones/jam and cream plus lively conversations and not forgetting The Raffle! All the money goes **Christian Aid**. Help us to create a world where everyone can live a full life free from poverty. **Helen and Chris**



Mother's Union Update

The Chester City branch of Mothers' Union A.G.M. was held at the January meeting. After the formal business we were treated to a very interesting talk by **Pat Spencer**, a member of our congregation. It was with her Church in Bonsall, in the Diocese of Derby, that Pat became involved



in supporting, visiting & enabling the Mothers' Union in Uganda.

I had suggested another friend, from our Thursday 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion Service (B.C.P.), might like to visit our Branch again to hear Pat's talk. After the meeting Judy Palmer delighted us all, by renewing her Membership of 25 years at Wickersley, Sheffield Diocese. Incidentally both ladies are now valued members of St. Mary's flower team!

The month of March was a busy one! I attended the Province of York 150th Celebration Service at Manchester Cathedral, when the memorial stand, in honour of **Mary Sumner**, founder of the Mothers' Union, who was born in Swinton, Salford on 31st December 1828, was dedicated by The Rt. Revd. Mark Davies, Bishop of Middleton. Also, during the service, the **Prayer Capsule** was handed to Southwell & Nottingham Diocese. On Lady Day 25th March I was pleased to be part of the 10.00 a.m. Eucharist at St. John's Church, Chester where 3 of Chester City branch members worship. The Mothers' Union Prayer Capsule is a travelling, commemorative item journeying through the Province of York to celebrate 150 years of the Mothers' Union. It contains the official York Provincial prayer and a special 150th-anniversary prayer written by the Provincial Chaplain, serving as a beacon of united prayer.

Pat Swain & I attended a meeting at Christ Church, Willaston, at which The Diocesan President, Di Waller, talked about the Prayer Capsule (as mentioned above) which is being carried by Dr. Deb Lee, Zonal Trustee Zone H (York Province) travelling by bicycle to St. Paul's Cathedral for the Service on 10th June.

Linda Schofield

"The trouble with quotes on the Internet is that you can never be sure they are genuine." – Winston Churchill.





Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary School

World book day is a celebration we really enjoy at Overleigh. This year, the children enjoyed a visit to StarBOOKs where they enjoyed refreshments and the opportunity to discover some new titles that were recommended by their year group friends. Each class also had an author focus and decorated their doors to share all their learning. Our cluster of CDAT schools also completed activities themed on a wonderful book called *The Hundred Decker Bus* by Mike Smith. As ever, we also dressed up for the day and enjoyed the huge range of creative ideas the children and their families had come up with.



*Love God
Love Ourselves
Love People*

Emma Drew - Headteacher
admin@osm.cheshire.sch.uk

Cancer Diary: Finding Faith

Chapter 5 by Bells

At the beginning of this year was a week declared to be for Random Acts of Kindness. I find this wonderful – mostly because even if people aren't aware of it, I find I am searching for the Acts and, more often than not, I'm not disappointed. Kindness is easily given, but also equally easily withheld – so to see it in action in the everyday is heartwarming.

Despite all my cancer malarky, I truly believe I'm the most fortunate woman on earth. I have met the most amazing people on this journey. One of the volunteer drivers who takes me to the hospice is a brilliant companion for talking about faith. He's much further down the road than I am. We bounce ideas around in the 20 minutes we're in the car together. But the last time I was with him, he asked if I'd done much reading around faith – and suggested an 'easy' place to start was the Bear Grylls book. I've been meaning to get to it, but simply forgot in the general chaos of chemotherapy. I came out of my appointment to find that very book on the passenger seat with a lovely note from Alan. I was, unusually for me,

speechless. What a man. The following week, he dropped through my door a line-by-line breakdown of the Lord's Prayer, having read my column. I was unbelievably touched. He's a man who embodies the active benevolence and generosity of spirit in every pore.

People like Alan have made me see that a bedrock of Christianity and faith is more in evidence than I realised. I have to admit that I was 'put off' church – probably like many – by being forced to go during school years, both in term time and holidays. Typical teenage rebellion meant that, as soon as I didn't have to go, I didn't: too young and stubborn to get religion, as I saw it. And I had a total falling-out with God when we lost a family member in a car crash. He was one of life's truly good people: I never ever heard anyone say anything bad about him. During the time of grieving, I had a conversation with my dad, who turned resolutely to his faith. But to me, it was simple: I couldn't understand why good people died and bad people were still running amok in the world. Dad's answer was "only the good die young" but that, for me, was that. I couldn't believe in a god who would do that.

So coming back to examining faith is a really big deal for me. I'm (obviously!) not young but I feel I have so much more to achieve. Getting a terminal diagnosis doesn't feel 'unfair': I've accepted the reality – but I can't help feeling I could have done more with my time on this earth – but the past is a foreign country: they do things differently there! Getting done what I want to get done might not be possible. This is a tricky concept for me. I can't leave things unfinished, preferably tied up with a nice big bow!

I spend a lot of my days (and sleepless nights) listening to the radio. The other day, up popped a conversation with the rather fabulous Rose Hudson-Wilson. One of her quotes really resonated with me: "Christianity isn't meant to be something we do in a building. It is meant to be lived out – and we live it out by showing love, forgiveness and compassion." To me, this sums up my thoughts about expressing faith through the ordinariness of life.

Cancer has made me see that, in many ways, growth begins where comfort ends.

Evensong Visiting Preachers 2026

3rd MAY, The Fifth Sunday of Easter: **The Ven Mike Gilbertson**, Archdeacon of Chester
Readings for Evensong in May: Zechariah 4:1-10; Revelation 21:1-14

14th JUNE, The Second Sunday After Trinity: **Simon Eardley**, Sheriff of Chester, Councillor for Saughall and Mollington Ward, and Licensed Lay Minister of Thornton-le-Moors with Ince and Elton

Readings for Evensong in June: 1 Samuel 21:1-15; Luke 11:14-28

13th SEPTEMBER, The Fifteenth Sunday After Trinity: **The Revd Sarah Batchelor**, Rector of St John the Baptist, Chester

11th OCTOBER, The Nineteenth Sunday After Trinity: **The Revd Simon Chesters**, Co-Director of Ministry in Chester Diocese and Assistant Minister at St Mark's, Saltney



Featured Article

Holy Week and Easter in Spain & Italy

This year we were lucky enough to be in Spain and Italy over the Easter holidays. It felt that it was either feast or famine with the attention to the festival, depending on the town.. We noted that, as soon as we left England, Thursday 19th March, a couple of weeks before Easter (Easter being 5th April), that we pretty much left behind the chocolate egg over indulgence in our shops and supermarket aisles. There were some eggs, but generally children have just one egg wrapped in colourful foil and inside the egg, a small gift.

We were in Orgiva in Andalucia 10 days before Easter (Semana Santa) . On the Saturday before Palm Sunday this small town is famed for its annual noisy fireworks ('cohetes') that are detonated in the town's main street. We were staying higher up in the hills when the fireworks were detonated. They reverberated around the mountains, terrifying every dog/horse in the area, sounding like some sort of warfare. We heard from friends who

had gone into town for a coffee, being stuck in the cafe not being allowed out until the firecrackers were finished due to the danger in the street. It continued with the traditional effigy of Christ being taken from his 'dressing room' in the 16th century church (Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de la Expectación), and being moved to the altar. This is then paraded through town on the next day, Palm Sunday.

In larger towns, such as Toledo, for instance, on Palm Sunday, there are parades through the streets with the waving of palms and the carrying of the incredibly heaving effigies, their massive ornate floats, known as Pasos or Tronos. These Pasos often weigh over a ton (some up to 5,000kg) and are carried by teams of 24 to over 200 people. Conical hoods worn in Spain during Easter, known as *capirotos*, are worn by *nazarenos*

(penitents) in the Holy Week processions. Originating from the 15th-century Spanish Inquisition, these pointed hoods symbolise humility, penance, and anonymity, with the height directing gazes toward heaven. These parades are not joyful or celebratory, but solemn, dramatic reenactments of the Passion of Christ with the life size wooden sculptures of Jesus and the Virgin Mary. They are often covered in gold, silver, velvet, precious jewels and thousands of flowers. In all the churches we saw in Spain, particularly some of the churches in the south, the small chapels inside the church appeared over bright, gaudy with silver, gold and sparkles. Then, as we got closer to Barcelona, in Holy Week, we visited Alcañiz, on the banks of the river Guadalupe, where we saw less 'glitz' and very touching Pasos waiting for the Easter parades. We were actually in Italy for the Easter weekend, in Arezzo, having crossed the Mediterranean by ferry from Barcelona to Cittavecchia. Arezzo is a most beautiful town with a



cathedral, lovely square and well known for its Antique Markets! The cathedral (Duomo) was packed on Easter Day (right) mainly with locals, but obviously some tourists too (like us!) There was a wonderful choir and a few brass instruments playing with the organ. Vivaldi's Gloria at the end of the service was almost as good as the music at St Mary's!

The Manns & Joneses



Intangible Cultural Heritage



Bellringing is a very English tradition going back over 400 years and over the centuries has become highly skilful. Today, it offers a unique blend of social and technical skills bringing together people across the community. There is no bar - except possibly the ability to climb the stairs up the tower. All are welcome to come along and 'have-a-go'. Some will progress to the sophisticated ringing in our cathedrals while others keep the bells ringing out on Sunday mornings.

When talking about these traditions, people note the opportunity to take part, to learn new skills, to be part of a team. People gain a sense of identity and belonging and the sense of being part of a long history within our community which are still important and will continue to be into the future.

Bellringing is beginning to receive publicity as work begins to gain UNESCO recognition of this ancient tradition. A couple of years ago, the UK Government ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers is preparing a submission to add bellringing to the UK



Inventory of Living Heritage. This all sounds very 'heavy' but essentially it is a way for communities to recognise traditions, raise awareness and support discussion on their future. The intention is not to 'freeze' the practice but rather to identify traditions which are important to us and encourage their continuation into the future.

For more information on the UNESCO inventory search bell ringing on <https://livingheritage.unesco.org.uk/get-involved/elements>

There will be more on this as the project develops but in the meantime, St Mary's team continues to recruit and teach new members. Laura and Matteo (left), who started in February, are making great progress and will be joined shortly by another two volunteers.

St Dunstan is known as the Patron Saint of Bellringers due to his experimentation in early forging of bells in the 900'sCE. His feast day is 19 May and Bell Sunday is celebrated on Sunday 17 May; a day when the contribution of bells and bellringers to the life of the Church is recognised.

Fiona Harrison, Tower Captain

Florence Nightingale



May 12th, 1820, is an important date in nursing, it is when Florence Nightingale was born to a wealthy British family in Florence, Tuscany, after which she was named, (a bit like Brooklyn Beckham!). The family moved back to England in 1821 to their home at Embly, Hampshire. She, with her older sister, were educated by their father who had very advanced ideas on women's education, at the time when most women were expected to get married and raise a family. They studied history, Italian, mathematics and philosophy. Florence was more academic than her sister, especially in analysing data, which became very useful in her later career; she was a social reformer and statistician. She became well known as The Lady With The Lamp, because of her routine of going round at night to check on the soldiers who were wounded in the Crimea war 1853-1856. She reduced the death rates among the men by improving hygiene and living standards. In 1860, she founded a nursing school at St. Thomas' Hospital in London. It was the first one of

its kind in the world, (now part of Kings College). She is known as the founder of modern nursing. International Nursing Day is celebrated on her birthday. She died, aged 90, in Mayfair. Florence's relatives declined to have her buried in Westminster Abbey, instead she is interred in the grounds of St. Mary's Church, Hampshire, near Embly. A truly remarkable woman.

Wendy Gorman



'You shouldn't lie till ten. There's the very prime of the morning gone long before that time. A person who has not done one half his day's work by ten o'clock, runs a chance of leaving the other half undone'.

Mrs Dean, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë



News & Notices



Registers February 2026:

Funerals

Keith Jones
Edward 'Ted' Graham



Baptisms

Cora Caroline Sarah Guerin
Margot Mae Cree



Marriages

None

Registers March 2026:

Funerals

Bryan Pearce
Jean Walsh
Pamela Pape
Barbra Sutherland



Baptisms

None

Marriages

None

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

St Mary's Social & Events Diary 2026

May 8th Music by the Bridge with The Dee Ensemble

May 11th Christian Aid Afternoon Tea



May 22nd Ron Iveson Cabaret, The Singing Vicar

June 12th Music by the Bridge with St Mary's Church Choir

June 28th Handbridge Festival

July 10th Music by the Bridge with Chester Cathedral Nave Choir

September 11th Music by the Bridge - tbc

October 9th Music by the Bridge with Kelsborrow Choir

November 13th Music by the Bridge with The Thursday Saxophone Quartet

Tea & Coffee Rota (after 10.30am service)

3rd May Team 4

Liz Young
Sue Dickinson
Sue Fryer

17th May Team 6

Margaret Lawson
Elizabeth Bennett

10th May Team 5

Doris Keen
Wendy Gerrard
Helen Pritchard

24th May Team 7

Lyn Barritt
Klaus Armstrong-Braun
Janet Davies

31st May Team 8

Joy Barton
Diana Morgan
Catherine Jones



7th June Team 9

Margaret Rushton
Betty Mcloughlin
Helen Brophy

21st June Team 2

Elsie Scott
Alistair Jones
Joan Morgan

14th June Team 1

Alma Hukin
Pat Jones
Margaret Teasdale

28th June Team 3

Wendy Gorman
Margaret Davies
Julie Pickett

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.

Church Flower Arranging

Rota for May and June 2026

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

June Team 4: Linda Schofield, Elizabeth Bennett, Suzie Hingston, Erica Edwards and

Margaret Davies.

Illness / holiday cover - Hilary and Elizabeth.

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



Church Cleaning Team

Would **YOU** like to help with the fun of cleaning the church on **Tuesday mornings** in church?

wielding a duster, running round with the hoover or brushing chairs? **10.00- 12.00 every Tues** (or just the Tuesday when you can!) Afterwards there is a cuppa in the Centre (and biscuits!) It is FAR more fun than cleaning at home! **Helen: 07522 477605**



A panel of inspiring local Christians will be sharing their testimonies and discussing how their faith impacts the people they meet each day, in the places where God has placed them throughout

the week, outside of their church walls.

You are invited to come to listen and even join the conversation by putting your questions to the panel. Let's encourage each other to share ideas of how we can be Good News among the people where God has uniquely placed us, wherever we are throughout the week. **The discussion will be recorded as a podcast for Chester Diocese.**

News & Notices



Lache and Westminster Local History Group

The Architects of Chester

by Stewart Shuttleworth

**Lache Community Centre Hawthorn Road, Chester,
CH4 8HX**

Wednesday 6th May, 2026 at 7.30pm



Chester has a wealth and variety of architecture, from the classical and neo-classical to the vernacular and the gothic. But who were the architects? Stewart will explore the stories of these influential personalities.

All welcome, no need to book. **£2** per person on the door. Refreshments will be on sale **from Carly at the new Café La-Chez at the Centre.**

Linda Shuttleworth, Secretary,

Lache and Westminster Local History Group

shuttleworths@talktalk.net 01244 679791/07726 425847

Handbridge Flower Club May/June 2026



The demonstration for May is from **Donald Morgan** who will present the very appropriate 'Darling Buds of May' on **Thursday 21st May.**

This will be followed in **June** by **Penelope Harrison** who will

present 'Natures Fantasy' on **Thursday 18th June.**

Both demonstrations will begin at **1.45pm in St Mary's Handbridge Centre.** Those people attending the demonstration will have the opportunity to win one of the designs in our raffle. The meeting ends with the chance to chat to friends, old and new, over a cup of tea or coffee and a slice of home-made cake.

Existing members, new members and visitors will all receive a warm welcome. For more information please see our Facebook page, send an e-mail to handbridgeflowerclub@gmail.com or call our Chairman Jan Edwards on 07952 778542.

Handbridge WI meetings May & June 2026

Handbridge WI will be meeting on **Tuesday 5th May at 7.30pm.** This will be our NFWI Resolutions Night followed by tea/coffee and refreshments and time for a chat.

Our Chat and Craft group will meet on **Monday 11th May at St. Mary's Centre 1.30pm to 4.30pm** to do Iris Folding. This group meets on the 2nd Monday of the month.

On **Sunday 17th May** a trip is being organised to **Elizabeth Gaskell House in Manchester.**



On **Tuesday 2nd June at 7.30pm** we will welcome Dr Joanna Pike who will talk about **Robot Companion Cats.**

We will have our usual raffle and stall.

A trip to the Little Theatre in Chester is being planned for the **9th July** to see Calendar Girls.



Our book group's format is being changed so from April to November, books will be decided by the Library scheme.

Visitors and potential new members are very welcome. For any further information please contact Sandy on 07590806592; for email; handbridgewi@gmail.com



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, grandparents and carers. The sessions 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**

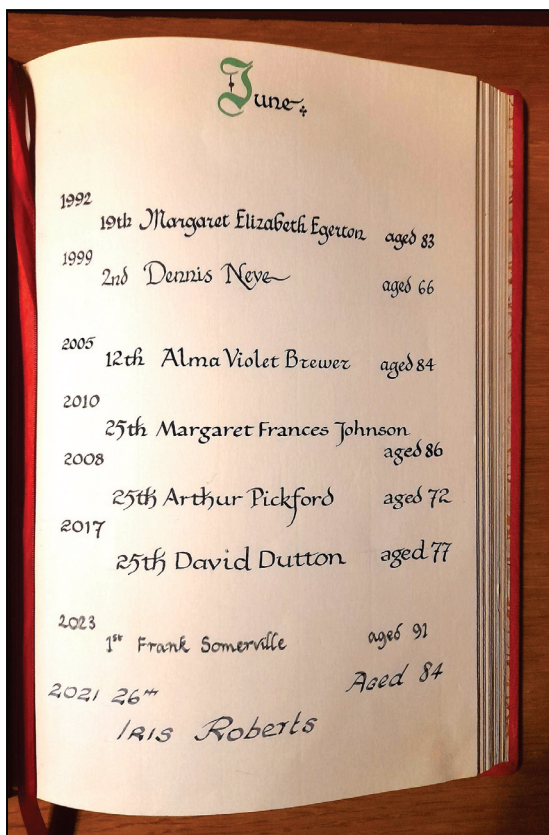
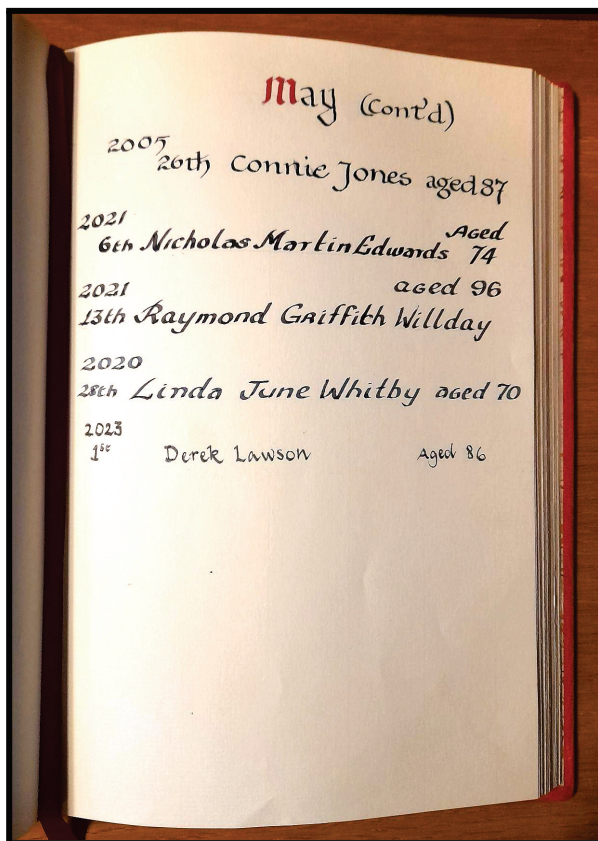
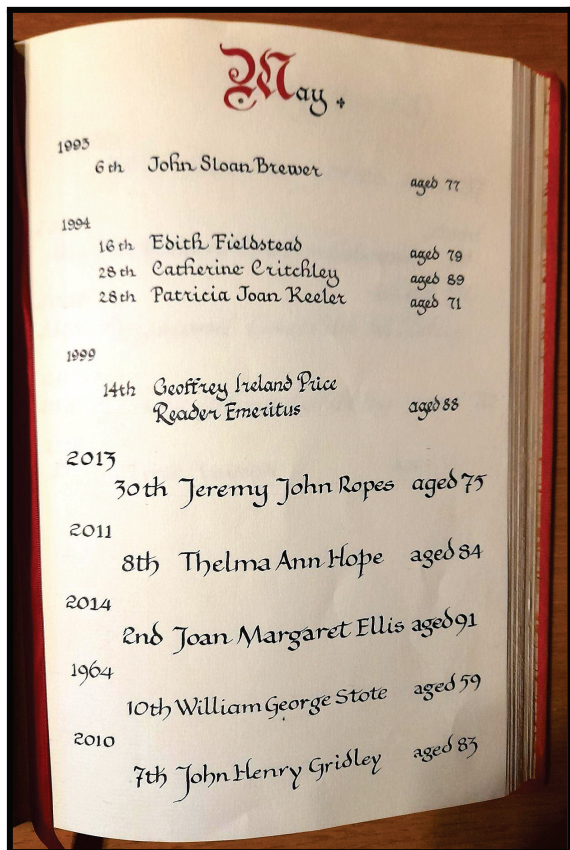
Please be aware that during the baby and toddler sessions, access to the Centre may be restricted.

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@googlemail.com

May and June pages from the Book of Remembrance at St Mary's



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.



Foxhill Retreats; Tarvin Road, Frodsham WA6 6XB, UK 2026 Brochure

Foxhill's new events programme for 2026 is awesome. Find out about the exciting new schedule of retreat and residentials from Candlemas to Christmas. There's something for all seasons and all tastes.

<https://heyzine.com/flip-book/3096827eec.html>



Foxhill Programme
2026

Make a Poppy for our Remembrance Day Cascade at St Mary's Church, Handbridge

Our whole community is coming together to create a beautiful cascade of (our aim) 1000 handmade poppies to decorate the outside of the church for Remembrance Day! Whether you enjoy knitting, crocheting, sewing, or crafting in your own way, every poppy matters, and every contribution helps us honour those who served.

How you can take part

- Make one poppy or as many as you like
 - Any shade of red is welcome
- Patterns are available at the Parish Office or on our website
 - Drop completed poppies at the Parish Office
- Deadline for completed poppies: **30th September 2026**

Enjoy your knitting experience!

Let's come together to create a heartfelt tribute that reflects the gratitude and spirit of our community.



Easy Knitted Poppy Pattern

You will need, red double knitting wool and a pair of 4mm (UK8) knitting needles

Cast on 80 sts.

Row 1 to row 8 knit every row.

Row 9 Knit 2 together (k2tog), repeat to end (40sts)

Row 10 K2 tog to end (20sts)

Row 11 K2 tog to end (10sts)

Cut yarn with a long end and thread a sewing needle.

Run yarn through remaining 10 sts. Remove them off the needle, pull up tight, sew up side seam and fasten off.

Sew a black button or circle of black felt into the centre of your poppy.

Poppy Cupped Shape Easy Pattern

1 ball red double knitting yarn, scrap of black yarn for centre
Pair of 4mm (UK8) knitting needles

Cast on 60sts, using red wool

Rows 1-8: K2, P2 across the row

Row 9: Join in black and knit across the row

Row 10: P2 tog across the row (30 stitches)

Row 11: Slip 1, K2 tog, pssso to end

Break off yarn leaving a long tail and thread back through remaining stitches and pull tight.

Join edges

Mavis Sellars

Thoughts from a friend? (plagiarised with permission of the original author)

Sent in by David Gilbert

Since the pandemic we all seem to be becoming resigned to endless global, national, local, and personal uncertainty and instability which is exhausting.

It all seems so incongruous that war is the go-to option for some, when the entire world knows that conflict is only ever resolved by negotiations, not bombs.

Here we are celebrating and embracing the hopefulness that spring brings, against a

backdrop of macho, I've got bigger bombs and can kill more people than you, egos.

Why does this matter, because this madness benefits the weapons industry but destroys economic stability and much needed growth, which in turn means our government has less money to spend on public services whilst having to spend even more on defence.

We know that as individuals, organisations, communities and as a country, that we must focus on the controllables, which for us is all about caring, for our families, our loved ones, our community, for each other and for ourselves!

We just need to be kind, be measured, be compassionate, be supportive and remember that we really do need to look after ourselves too.

Life can become once more a grand adventure if we will surrender it to God... He brings one adventure to an end, only to open another to us. ...with Him we must be ready for anything. – Paul Tournier

Flower Arrangers

Linda, Helen, Suzi and Elizabeth from your flower team, on a course for church flower arrangers, learning how to use containers and wire. All part of our commitment to sustainability.



2026 Easter Garden of Gethsemane in the Lady Chapel

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

What a richness we have in our parish, from our congregation and beyond our walls!

Looking at the pages of this magazine, they show the skill, the dedication and the hard work into keeping the cogs of our church & community turning! The idea of all of us

being a part of something bigger than our individual small lives, is wholesome and healthy. Each little cog helps the next cog to turn. We all need each other to keep it all

moving and working! Having been away from home for over a month travelling, this quote by Bill Bryson is very true, "To my mind, the greatest reward and luxury of travel is to be able to experience everyday

things as if for the first time, to be in a position in which almost nothing is so familiar it is taken for granted." The cog wheels of getting the magazine ready for *this* issue have been very much oiled by our

friend & neighbour Graeme! He has steered me through the techi-ness of my laptop during my absence from my reliable old PC at home on our extended travels! We sometimes need a bit of 'out of comfort

zone', and with his support it has worked! I am writing this in Venice! Thanks, Graeme! **Catherine**



Weekly Bible Readings for May and June 2026



<u>Bible readings for May</u>	<u>First Reading</u>	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>Second Reading</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
3rd May 2026 Fifth Sunday of Easter	<i>Either</i> Acts 7:55-end <i>Or</i> Genesis 8:1-19	Psalm 31:1-5. 15-16	1 Peter 2:2-10	John 14:1-14
10th May 2026 Sixth Sunday of Easter	<i>Either</i> Acts 17:22-31 <i>Or</i> Genesis 8:20 – 9:17	Psalm 66:7-end	<i>Either</i> 1 Peter 3:13-end <i>Or</i> Acts 17:22-31	John 14:15-21
17th May 2026 Seventh Sunday of Easter	<i>Either</i> Acts 1:6-14 <i>Or</i> Ezekiel 36:24-28	Psalm 68:1-10. 32-end	<i>Either</i> 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11 <i>Or</i> Acts 1:6-14	John 17:1-11
24th May 2026 Pentecost	<i>Either</i> Acts 2:1-21 <i>Or</i> Numbers 11:24-30	Psalm 104:25-35. 37	<i>Either</i> 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 <i>Or</i>	<i>Either</i> John 7:37-39
31st May 2026 Trinity Sunday	Isaiah 40:12-17. 27-end	Psalm 8	2 Corinthians 13:11-end	Matthew 28:16-end

<u>Bible readings for June</u>	<u>First Reading</u>	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>Second Reading</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
7th June 2026 First Sunday after Trinity	<i>Either</i> Acts 10:34-43 <i>Or</i> Jeremiah 31:1-6	Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24	<i>Either</i> Colossians 3:1-4 <i>Or</i> Acts 10:34-43	<i>Either</i> John 20:1-18 <i>Or</i> Matthew 28:1-10
14th June 2026 Second Sunday after Trinity	<i>Either</i> Acts 2:14a 22-32 <i>Or</i> Exodus 14:10-end; 15:20. 21	Psalm 16	<i>Either</i> 1 Peter 1:3-9 <i>Or</i> Acts 2:14a. 22-32	John 20:19-end
21st June 2026 Third Sunday after Trinity	<i>Either</i> Acts 2:14a,36-41 <i>Or</i> Zephaniah 3:14 end	Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19	<i>Either</i> 1 Peter 1:17-23 <i>Or</i> Acts 2:14a. 36-41	Luke 24:13-35
28th June 2026 Fourth Sunday after Trinity	<i>Either</i> Acts 2:42-end <i>Or</i> Genesis 7	Psalm 23	<i>Either</i> 1 Peter 2:19-25 <i>Or</i> Acts 2:42-end	John 10:1-10

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



St Mary's, Handbridge

2026 MUSIC

by the Bridge



FRIDAYS, 7PM

(lasts around 1 hour)

- 16th January - Jill Crossland - Piano
- 13th February - Local Vocals and St Mary's Youth Choir
- 13th March - Upton Community Choir
- 10th April - Henry Smith - Organ
- 8th May - The Dee Ensemble
- 12th June - St Mary's Church Choir
- 10th July - Chester Cathedral Nave Choir
- 11th September - TBC
- 9th October - Kelsborrow Choir
- 13th November - The Thursday Saxophone Quartet

(Donations gratefully received to support our choral scholarship fund)
Followed by wine or soft drink in the Parish Centre

Free Entry



 www.facebook.com/stmaryhandbridge/
 www.stmaryschester.co.uk



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



Please follow St Mary's Facebook Page for updates. Bold type denoted an event, not a service

Friday	1	10:00am	St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Sunday	3		Fifth Sunday of Easter
		8:00am	Holy Communion (followed by bacon baps in St Mary's Handbridge Centre)
		10:30am	Sung Eucharist
		12:30pm	Holy Baptism
		6:30pm	Choral Evensong
Monday	4	7:30pm	Julian Meeting
Tuesday	5	6:30pm	Confirmation Preparation in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Wednesday	6	12:00pm	
		for 12:30pm	Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	7	10:00am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday	8	10:00am	St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
		7:00pm	Music by the Bridge with The Dee Ensemble
Saturday	9	10:00am	Confirmation Rehearsal in Church
Sunday	10		Sixth Sunday of Easter
		8:00am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Sung Eucharist with Confirmation
		11:30am	Cake Sunday, baked items for sale in St Mary's Handbridge Centre after the service
Monday	11	12:30pm	Christian Aid Afternoon Tea in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
		to 2:30pm	
		7:00pm	PCC Standing Committee
Wednesday	13	12:00pm	
		for 12:30pm	Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	14		Ascension Day
		10:00am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday	15	10:00am	St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Sunday	17		Seventh Sunday of Easter
		8:00am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Sung Eucharist
		3:00pm	Messy Church
Wednesday	20	12:00	
		for 12:30pm	Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	21	10:00am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday	22	10:00am	St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
		7:00pm	Cabaret Evening with Ron Iveson, The Singing Vicar
Sunday	24		Pentecost
		8:00am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Sung Eucharist
		3:00pm	Wedding: Zak Miller & Nicola O'Riordan
Wednesday	27	12:00pm	
		for 12:30pm	Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	28	10:00am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Sunday	31		Trinity Sunday
		8:00am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Sung Eucharist





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



Please follow St Mary's Facebook Page for updates. Bold type denoted an event, not a service

Monday	1	7:00pm	PCC Meeting
		7:30pm	Julian Meeting
Wednesday	3	12:00pm	
		for 12:30pm	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	2:00pm	Wedding: Jack Wood & Jessica Mckenzie
Sunday	7		First Sunday After Trinity
		8:00am	Holy Communion (followed by bacon baps in St Mary's Handbridge Centre)
		10:30am	Sung Eucharist
		12:30pm	Holy Baptism
Wednesday	10	12:00pm	
		for 12:30pm	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
		7:00pm	Music by the Bridge with St Mary's Church Choir
Sunday	14		Second Sunday After Trinity
		8:00am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Family Eucharist
		6:30pm	Choral Evensong
Wednesday	17	12:00pm	
		for 12:30pm	Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	18	10:00am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday	19	10:00am	St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Sunday	21		Third Sunday after Trinity
		8:00am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Sung Eucharist
		3:00pm	Messy Church
Wednesday	24	12:00	
		for 12:30pm	Luncheon Club in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Thursday	25	10:00am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday	26	10:00am	St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group in St Mary's Handbridge Centre
Sunday	28		Fourth Sunday After Trinity
		8:00am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Sung Eucharist
			Handbridge Summer Festival



What the Bible really means....

A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, "I know what the Bible means, Daddy." His father smiled "Okay. What does the Bible mean?" "It's easy, Daddy," the young boy replied excitedly, "It stands for 'Basic Information Before Leaving Earth.'"

ST MARY'S HANDBRIDGE CENTRE

Rooms To Hire For All Occasions

The Foyer - Communal area available to all groups and individuals who use the Centre's facilities. Fitted with a small kitchen including tea and coffee making facilities, fridge space, cutlery/crockery and microwave.

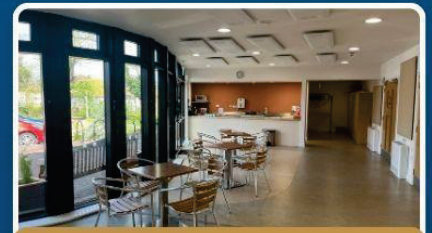
The Price Hall - seated capacity in rows for up to 100, can be extended to 150 when combined with the Davies Room. Can be hired in conjunction with commercial kitchen, accessible via internal door with serving hatch.

The Davies Room - seated capacity in rows for up to 40.

The Williams Room - seated capacity in rows for up to 40, fitted with a sink.

The Mollie Golder Room - seated capacity for up to 15, fitted with a sink.

The Evans Room - meeting space for up to 4.



Foyer



Price Hall



Davies Room



Williams Room

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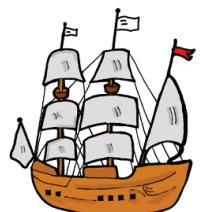
PARISH DIRECTORY



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Centre Assistant	John Rose	Contact via Centre Manager	
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	The Revd Trevor Dennis	trevordennis11@gmail.com	01244 638441
	The Revd Maureen Pickering	revmapickering@gmail.com	01244 749112
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	Christine Duke	teenee1@live.co.uk	
Beavers, Cubs & Scouts	Susan Jones		01244 675538
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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

“Yes,” boasted the woman to the visiting American priest, “my family can trace its ancestry back to William the Conqueror.”
 “I suppose,” said the American, “You’ll be telling me next that your ancestors were in the Ark with Noah.”
 “Certainly not. My people had a bigger boat of their own.”



Laughter is a property in man essential to his reason. – Lewis Carroll



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A Sunday School teacher asked her pupils if they could describe any of the miracles that Jesus performed. One youngster responded: "Yes, He cured people who had leopards."



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