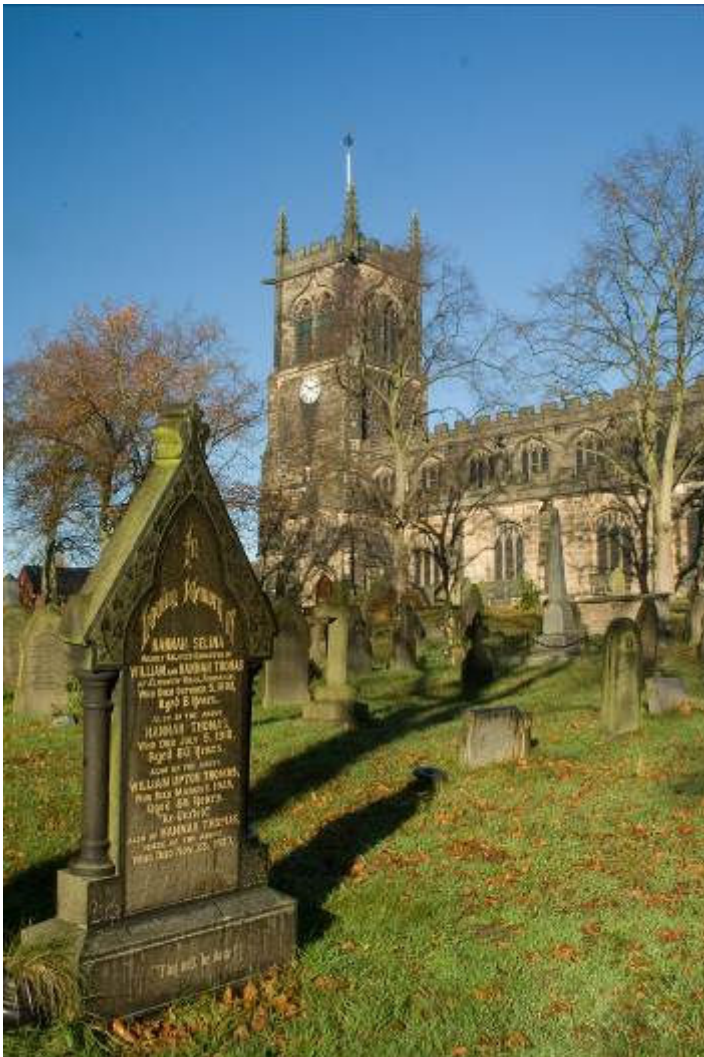


# CHALLENGE



May 2011

Volume 47

No 555

30p

## WELCOME TO OUR WORSHIP

At St Marys in May 2011

### May Festival

30<sup>th</sup> April to 2<sup>nd</sup> May

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May**  
**2 Easter**

8.00 am Holy Communion  
10.00 am Morning Worship  
6.30 pm Festival Songs of Praise

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May**  
**St George**

7.30 pm Holy Eucharist  
(transferred from 23<sup>rd</sup> April)

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May**  
**St Mark**

7.30 pm Holy Eucharist  
(transferred from 25<sup>th</sup> April)

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May**  
**St Phillip and St James**

11.00 am Holy Communion  
(transferred from 1<sup>st</sup> May)

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May**  
**3 Easter**

8.00 am Holy Communion  
10.00 am Parish Eucharist  
6.30 pm Evensong

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May**  
**St Matthias the Apostle**

7.30 pm Holy Communion

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May**  
**4 Easter**

8.00 am Holy Communion  
10.00 am Parish Eucharist  
6.30 pm Evensong

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May**  
**5 Easter**

8.00 am Holy Communion  
10.00 am Morning Worship  
6.30 pm Evensong

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May**  
**6 Easter**

8.00 am Holy Communion  
10.00 am Parish Eucharist  
6.30 pm Evensong

**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May**  
**Visit of Blessed Virgin**  
**Mary to Elizabeth**

7.30 pm Holy Communion

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June**  
**Ascension Day**

7.30 pm Holy Communion

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June**  
**7 Easter**

8.00 am Holy Communion  
10.00 am Morning Worship  
6.30 pm Holy Eucharist

**Weekday Services**

See Notice Board

## Vicar's address to the PCC AGM 10<sup>th</sup> April 2011

**Home Life.** The vicarage remains a delight to live in although it often feels quite empty without the children. The elder two now rarely visit with their own busy lives to lead. I keep reminding them that Catherine and I are entering the "Grandparent" stage of our lives. The garden is hard work – it is probably a good thing to keep me in reasonable health doing a bit of manual labour in the grounds, but weeks go by without being able to do anything. The quality of the soil has improved dramatically and we have a good, if not quite self-sufficient, supply of potatoes, onions, beans, salad crops, plums, etc. As a born urbanite, it's good to have a connection with the soil. I've absolutely loved the occasional visits to the farms round about. I would never dream of saying I would make a good "rural minister", but it's lovely to know that the working countryside is part of the parish.

**The Worship.** The figures for church worship show in the church year to Advent Sunday 2010 there were 4266 acts of communion (including home communions), 33 Thanksgivings for the Gift of a Child, 50 Baptisms (2 adult), 11 weddings, 32 church funerals and 16 at the crematorium only. All of these figures are much the same as last year which amidst the siren calls of the church in decline is at least not discouraging!

Our regular Sunday 10.00am congregation has shown signs of slight growth but it is sad to see the early morning Sunday and mid-week BCP attendance drop considerably over the past year. The monthly informal Sunday Evening Eucharist has settled into a regular pattern and I have now introduced Prayers for Healing and Reconciliation and the laying on of hands.

As a town civic church we have been called to minister at the Chairman's Inaugural Service and the Armed Forces Day Service. Remembrance Sunday, at the war memorial and afterwards in church continues to attract more and more people. Churches Together in Sandbach struggles somewhat, yet continued the series of ecumenical events throughout the year in various locations. The work it does is appreciated by those involved and it keeps the lines of communication open between the various Churches. This year we intend to do a number of "pulpit swaps".

Once again we were involved in the work with schools. Offley Primary children have visited on a number of occasions, once to enact a typical church wedding (with chocolate cake and pink lemonade to conclude!). One class from Sandbach Primary made the church a special topic for a project about the issues of the funding of historic buildings in Sandbach. There was even a plasticine model of the vicar as part of a short film animation. Sandbach School held their annual founders day commemoration in October and there were four School Carol services attended by nearly 2000 - the church at its busiest. It was at the end of that week, which had been particularly cold, that we ran out of oil for first of three times in December. During that time we had the interesting

and intimate experience of worshipping in the church hall. This was a good time as it led to a fresh sense of community and a closeness that the church itself rarely gives week by week. Then came the thaw on St Stephens' Day when the radiator in the Choir Vestry emptied hot water under pressure over the entire room. The carpet was ruined, rust stains over the walls and light fittings and the stock of choir books, prayer and hymn books and musical instruments were ruined. Damage was done to the pump in the boiler room beneath. There was little that could be salvaged, although Catherine gave the entire stock of choir robes a wash which saved them from permanent rust stains. The insurers have been very helpful and we have been able to replace the worn out hymn books with brand new hymn book which cost us nothing.

As with the previous two years I would like to remind you that I put great store by the "Occasional Offices" and through them I probably come in contact with several thousand people every year that have nothing directly to do with St Mary's Church. Like most other active Anglican priests, I guess that more than 80% of my time is devoted to those who do not come to church. As a sign of the increasing effectiveness of this ministry, it often takes an hour or so just to get a little shopping done in town. As age gets to me, I'm often stumped by names, yet can usually remember life histories and situations. It's an amazing privilege, and over the past two years (they have flown by!) I have been able to understand at a fairly deep level the complexity of the story of Sandbach through the interweaving of the histories of its inhabitants. It's a rich and diverse area full of good people who have few pretensions and often remarkably tolerant and self-effacing. It's also a people that love the church. They may not come or support it financially, but they still do not instinctively feel it is a total irrelevance and are comforted by its presence when they need it to celebrate the joys and sorrows of life.

Let me remind you of some of the particular work I do in the community. I still serve as Wing Chaplain to the Air Training Corps East Cheshire and South Manchester Wing and as a member of the Criminal Justice Group who meet regularly in our local prisons to support the work of our Diocesan Prison Chaplaincy service. I have been involved in the Local Authority's Standing Council for Religious Education and part of the team responsible for re-writing the latest revision of the Cheshire East's Agreed Syllabus for use in LA Maintained Schools. I'm involved as one of the Governors at Offley Primary School. The staff and governor tea on the vicarage lawn at the end of summer term will I hope become a regular feature. I feel very proud to have been asked to be involved in these very different groups, and know that I bring little expertise and even less time to each one of them. However I have learnt that the church's presence is an encouragement to others who do the work.

It is a wonderful pastoral opportunity and I'm forever hearing the same sort of personal stories about the joys and sorrows of life, as I would from a more generally mainstream pastoral ministry. This is surely what we are all called to do in our own homes and places of leisure and work - indeed in whatever

situation we are in. Yet I also know that the ordained ministry gives an unparalleled permission to enter quickly and deeply into people's lives.

**The Ministry.** In a few months' time we will be hiring a coach to take us to Chester Cathedral for the licensing service of Jane as a Reader. I'm so grateful for her ministry amongst us and I often depend upon her insights and suggestions. She is beginning to develop a "voice" of her own in the pulpit and I'm always pleased with the way in which she leads public worship. It is often difficult to say the daily office by oneself, and I'm particularly grateful to her for being at Morning Prayer three times a week. I think she is to become a very good, pastorally sensitive and prayerful minister of the Word.

In recent weeks we have been pleased to welcome Lynne to fulfil part of her training for the Ordained Ministry. This has been a fruitful placement and she has made a considerable impact upon study groups and worship. We wish her well during the completion of her training and her future ministry in the church. Perhaps we should press for a curate at St Mary's? There is certainly enough work to be done! We will see.

I'm very happy indeed about the way Lay involvement is working in public worship with rotas for reading the lesson, leading the intercessions and administering the chalice. Vera is still organising them. I am grateful to all who have felt able to offer themselves for these ministries.

I'm immensely encouraged by all the sense of God's call to various and varied ministries apparent in the parish - it is very heartening indeed. As your incumbent I'm supposed to encourage vocations and would urge any others of you who feel called by God to any form of ministry not to ignore it!

And thanks are due! It is dangerous to name people because you run the risk of missing someone out! I will take that risk. Thanks are due to:

The Wardens and sidesmen and women who keep the West end going throughout the services.

Sylvia for her untiring support to the PCC in minute taking and production of working documents (and more recently for taking on the hall bookings as a temporary measure). Paul our financial advisor and Roger our Parish Treasurer for keeping a close eye on the finances. June and Catherine who keep me in order before, during and after weddings and funerals.

Our flower ladies whose work goes on all year round and is most apparent at Easter and Christmas.

Those who make the refreshments week by week and cheerfully clear up afterwards. The outstanding ministry of the Thursday Teas both as a place for many to meet and chat but also to be fed and watered. Alan Bourne for developing and maintaining the website.

These are but a few -there are many others and to you all a big thank you for your support and energy in keeping St Mary's going.

As I said last year a “Friends of St Mary’s” needed starting to promote the renovation and maintenance of the church building and historic fabric as the responsibility of all the people of Sandbach. We can do our bit as a worshipping community, but our responsibilities are to the maintenance of the Christian ministry in the place. The “Friends” needs to galvanise the local community to the importance of their historic church building. Responses to general requests for local finance usually amount to nothing whatsoever. There will be a need for many thousands of pounds to complete the funding of the third part of the roofing project in the next five years. Gail has taken charge of the friends and I have given her the rather grand title of “Heritage Co-ordinator”. She is coming up with some good ideas about developing strategic fundraising. A parish this size and complexity generates big issues of management and that often falls to the vicar, which often means there is little forward planning. Often I miss papers that need attention. As I said last year, it would be good to see a part-time parish secretary employed to manage what will become an increasing and inevitable amount of paper work.

Like last year we know there is a constant vigilance about the budget and pressing need to improve general giving. It is a cause for real concern and I make no apology for mentioning it again. It is however the story behind the figures upon which I would wish to concentrate. In many respects we are a wealthy parish, and once upon a time there was a decent enough historic reserve. You will by now all know that that has gone. People outside (and some inside) the church community believe that we are wealthy and that we get grants from national government, the local authority or other charities. We get no help whatsoever for the day to day running costs. External agencies do not give to religious bodies anyway. We exist right on the edge of insolvency. We need to work towards a situation where our expenditure is matched by our regular giving. There is no easy way out here, but by a considerable increase in giving. I recognise appreciatively the sacrificial giving of many and equally am aware that many of you are on fixed incomes and that you face similar increases in the cost of living as does the Church, but would ask you to prayerfully consider if possible increasing your financial support. At the same time we are working hard on strategies to encourage those on the fringe of our fellowship to regularly support their parish church. It is very hard still to get the message across that the £1 coin has considerably less value now than when decimalisation was introduced in 1971. It is shameful that it is normative on the collection plate. Many gave £1 then and still do now. Put into context £1 in 1971 would buy 33 second class stamps and 20 first class. Now it is 3 second and 2 first. Please respond with continuing enthusiasm and encourage others to do the same.

**The Buildings.** Much of the year has been taken up with the details associated with the Tower Project. I am delighted that Reg Dunning has steered the work on our behalf on the second stage of the roof replacement. Tony and Trevor

have for years been managing the hall, the bookings and the building. Both asked when I arrived two years ago to be relieved of their duties, now we have found them replacements and with very grateful thanks we thank them for years of faithful work on our behalf. Recently the issues about the church hall have become even more pressing - the lavatories and kitchen are in desperate need of replacement and the heating system is oil-fired and very expensive. I often have to remind people that the church hall is exactly that, a CHURCH hall. It is not a community hall or village hall. As such it is for use by the church community. As often we have spare capacity, we are able to let others use it but in so doing we must recover the basic costs of running it and can no longer subsidise other groups. At present there are a number of bookings that are paying considerably under a break-even rate. Some groups feel aggrieved that we are having to increase our rates. There are several other places in Sandbach with community facilities that may be happy to subsidise them - we no longer have the luxury of such largesse. This should encourage us to take stock about the future of the church hall. Is this building fit for another thirty years or so? Will it be the right building for that time? And given no constraints whatsoever, what about taking stock of the whole area of the church hall and church? Could a new vision for the "plant" of St Mary's be a useful discussion for the next decade? Dilapidated, worn out and weary buildings attract no one to the worship in the church, or that we are professional in our care of our church hall. We should have and expect to have buildings that are fresh and fit for purpose as well as beautifully maintained and treasured icons of the past. I would not wish to dispose of the past, but when it becomes threadbare and worn out it is not worthy or fit for preservation.

July 13th this year marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Sir George Gilbert Scott. As far as I can see this is not being celebrated by anyone. He was, as you will be aware, the main architect of Victorian Sandbach. St Mary's is not alone in finding the legacy of his building work at times somewhat difficult to use now. Just ask the town council about the "Literary Institute" if you don't believe me! That his work was considerable and usually of a very high standard, should not enslave us 150 years later. There are many Victorian design features are less than accommodating in the 21st century. I'm often amazed how uncomfortable the seating is and yet how we still feel able to put up with the discomfort and pain. Recently someone even commented that "to come to church should never be a comfortable experience". I beg to differ! Even last week someone brought their own collapsible chair to sit in at a funeral. I would encourage you to read the challenging essay by the former director of the Victoria & Albert Museum, Sir Roy Strong delivered a few years ago to Gresham College. Entitled "*The Beauty of Holiness and its Perils*"<sup>Note 1</sup> (or what is to happen to 10,000 parish churches?) he argued quite passionately that the survival of the Church of England's large stock of architecturally and culturally significant churches will depend not so much in preserving the past but in adapting a building for the future. The church

building as part of the community in which it exists has always been changed and recycled to meet the needs of the community for the present time. Perhaps it is time to look at our church in respect of its future use in Sandbach by its inhabitants- to meaningfully give it back to the town for the general use of the community and to make the space and facilities inside useful and welcoming to a society that has little real interest in maintaining its historic buildings (look how Sandbach managed “The Old Hall” for years) and even less in maintaining its historic churches.

Once the roof is watertight in the next few years, perhaps it is the time to begin to think to the future. Easy access, toilet facilities, comfortable seating, sustainable heating, more varied uses of the building outside worship times are the obvious areas of change that might be discussed. As it is at the moment, I fear St Mary’s may easily drift gently into terminal decline - becoming an interesting waterproofed pile on the hill that but a very few people visit. Those that do will be the purveyors of aspic, the architectural and historical curious and those after an atmospheric and moody picturesque photographic opportunity. When all is said and done, it is a sad truth that casual visitors ‘doing’ heritage make a lot of noise about preservation and no contribution to the needs or finances of the church of the future. Incidentally neither did the production team of “Come Dine with Me” when they used the graveyard a year ago as a backdrop to some peculiar antics from the diva of “Most Haunted”.<sup>Note 2</sup>

**Conclusion** People in moments of crisis or in great perturbation of spirit drop in on the off-chance to talk quietly and put themselves before God. So above all the main Vision of the future for St Mary, Sandbach has to be what it always has been at heart, a faithful witness of the love and purposes of God. We are to be faithful in prayer for all who live and work in Sandbach and the wider world. In the third year as vicar, I’m acutely aware of the many things that I have failed to do that I would have hoped to. Often failing to do small and routine and trivial duties occasions the greatest sense of guilt. However I’m also aware that it has been a most fruitful time as well. There is a sense of urgency and adventure about the parish that I was not aware of when I started. I am very conscious of what has been achieved, and even more conscious of work still to be done. I am deeply grateful to God for the opportunity of serving Him and his people in this place.

*Thomas Shepherd*

Note 1: <http://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/the-beauty-of-holiness-and-its-perils-or-what-is-to-happen-to-10000-parish>

Note 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBLFBrMvKoU>

## From the Registers

### Funerals

#### April

- 1<sup>st</sup> Eilene Gunn (91)  
7<sup>th</sup> Ethel Machin (90)  
8<sup>th</sup> Margaret Amy Hinett (79)  
11<sup>th</sup> Joan Needle(62)



### Altar Flowers

#### May Altar

- 1<sup>st</sup> Mrs Stanway  
  
8<sup>th</sup> In memory of Norman Basnett  
15<sup>th</sup> In memory of Mrs Halden  
22<sup>nd</sup> Mrs Round  
29<sup>th</sup> Mrs Willis

#### Pedestals

- Mrs Stanway  
Sanctuary Mrs Atherley  
  
In memory of Mrs Lees  
  
Mrs Holdcroft and in  
memory of Muriel White

### Coffee Rota

#### May

- 1<sup>st</sup> May Festival  
8<sup>th</sup> Stella Craven and Christine Hirst  
15<sup>th</sup> Joyce Griffith and Lynne Winfield  
22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Circle  
29<sup>th</sup> Marjorie Burgess and Renee Bickerton



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### Editors' Note

Unfortunately I had to cancel the meeting scheduled for last November when we were going to discuss the magazine. I would like to reschedule it and discuss everything about the publication to see how we can improve it – cost (income vs. expenditure), adverts and how much we charge, distribution, content etc. In the next issue I will notify you of the date and venue and would like to ask anyone who is interested to attend the meeting.

*John*



## **Churches Together In Sandbach Garden Trail 2011**

This year, the chosen charities are:-

Bees Abroad UK Limited, who sponsor beekeeping in poorer parts of the world to help lift families out of poverty and to ensure the pollination of crops. The honey can be sold. Funds provide essential equipment to get started plus training and support from experts.

Macclesfield Community Garden Centre. An innovative scheme which supports learning-disabled adults to gain training in horticulture and gives work experience. It is based in West Park and has some very good plants on sale which have all been propagated in the garden centre.

Our Garden Trail covers gardens over three weekends. The April one has already happened, of course, but you can visit gardens on weekends of June 4 & 5 and August 13 & 14.

Programme and event guide is just £4 and allows entry to all weekends. Katie Cavanagh has programmes (01270 760270) but if unavailable please contact Sheila Scragg (01270 765746).

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### **Quiz Sheet**

A quiz sheet, with the theme "Occupations", will be on sale at £1 from 17<sup>th</sup> April to 15<sup>th</sup> May. The winner will be announced on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, in the case of a tie a name will be drawn from a hat and will receive £20. Available from Thursday Teas, Sunday Coffee and Jean Birchenough.

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### **Christian Aid Week 2011 – Starts 15<sup>th</sup> May**

"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40)

This year about 200,000 people will be out on the streets. It's a great act of witness. As followers of Jesus, we take our inspiration from his mission and ministry. We are driven by the gospel of good news to the poor and are inspired by the vision of a new earth where everyone lives in justice, peace and plenty.

Please support Christian Aid - by praying, acting and giving during this week in May when most of our funding is generated.

"We have a great deal to be proud of in Christian Aid, the churches' agency for development." - *Archbishop Rowan Williams*



As you will have seen the Church Tower has been covered in scaffolding as the repair works commence. During the week the contractors will be on site and therefore we urge everyone to take extra care when entering and walking around the Church.

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### **New Books**

Sixty new prayer books have been purchased at a cost of £10 each. This is still a reduction from the recommended price of £17.50. I invite you to "sponsor a book" and have your name inscribed on a book-plate. Please contact Nora Bebbington, c/o The Vicarage, 15 Offley Road CW11 1GY with the correct money and your name.

Many copies of the green Hymn book, which were second hand and given free of charge a couple of years ago, are now falling to pieces. Recently we had a serious incident with water damage to books in the choir vestry and through the insurance claim will be able to restock with a brand new hymn book. Thus there will be no cost to the parish. There is also a very generous grant available of 25% on a bulk order. So in the next few weeks we will be retiring "New English Hymnal" and replacing it with "Common Praise" which is an excellent successor to the highly acclaimed "Hymns Ancient and Modern". I expect the new book to last at least for the next decade.

*Thomas*

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### **When technology goes wrong**

The father of a family - who was a big-time techie - got his oldest daughter an iPhone for her birthday. He also got an iPad for his son. Later he bought an iPod for the youngest daughter. Then, when his wedding anniversary rolled around, he got his wife an iRon. That's when the fight began.

St. Mary's Church, Sandbach



**MAY FESTIVAL**

**'Occupations past and present  
around Sandbach'**

Open

**Saturday 30th April**

**Sunday 1st May**

**Monday 2nd May**

**10 am until 4 pm**

Family Service 10am Sunday

Songs of Praise 6.30 pm

Refreshments, plants, cakes, books etc

in the Church Hall

**Annual Vestry meeting and Annual Parochial Meeting of the Parishioners**

At the Annual Vestry meeting on Sunday 10th April 2011 the minutes of the Annual meeting in 2010 were accepted and signed. Two churchwardens were elected, Martin Colley and Reg Dunning. This was followed by the Annual Parochial Church meeting chaired by the Vicar and attended by forty parishioners.

It was reported that there had been five PCC meetings, the November one being cancelled due to the snowy weather, and three Standing committee meetings. The main topics of discussion were the tower roof and the Giving

Initiative. Five working groups have now been formed: Inreach and Worship; Outreach, Social; Church Hall and friends of St Mary's.

Four members were elected to the PCC Gail Morris, Richard Wait, Marjorie Spence and Sylvia Watkins. Joyce Nixon was elected on to the Deanery Synod. Thirty three sidespeople were prepared to continue their duties. All sidespeople are expected to attend the Archdeacon's Visitation on May 26th at Astbury so that they can be legally sworn in.

In Paul's absence Thomas read the financial report for the year ending 2010. Thomas gave his own report which is at the beginning of the magazine.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12pm.

*Sylvia*

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I think it was Benjamin Franklin who said "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn" and as I come to the end of my training placement at St. Mary's I feel I have learned so much by being fully and generously absorbed and involved for the past months in the day to day life of this great parish.

I've learned how to construct rich and varied services, the nuances of baptism and wedding requests and the pastoral sensitivity of funeral visits. I'm enormously grateful to Thomas both for agreeing to host me on placement originally and for taking the time and trouble to ensure I have been able to learn as much as I have whilst here. I'd like to thank Jane too for the many occasions on which she has helped, supported and encouraged me.

But beyond Jane and Thomas my education here really would not have been complete without the many people who have added learning that I hadn't anticipated to be truthful – learning as diverse as how to make beetroot in blackcurrant jelly, to how relaxing a neck rub over coffee after the service can be!

So, as I prepare to bid St. Mary's a very fond farewell, I'd like to say a HUGE and sincere thanks to each of you for all that I have learned, experienced and gained whilst on placement with you – my time here has been both a pleasure and a privilege.

Every blessing, *Lynne*



## **Sandbach Voices**

The next Sandbach Voices concert is on May 21st at 7.30pm in Sandbach High School, Middlewich Rd. The concert is entitled "A Night at the Opera" and the choir will sing some great opera choruses and soloists from the Royal Northern college of Music will join us.

Tickets can be booked in advance on 01606 738373 or 01270 766546 or on line.

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## **Church Fellowship**

On Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April we met for a talk on "Enjoying National Trust Gardens" by Mr. Harold White" Harold showed slides and talked about the gardens and houses of several National Trust properties in England and Wales. We would like to thank Harold for the beautiful pictures, especially the Azaleas and Rhododendrons and a very informative talk.

Again may I remind everyone about the cakes for the May Festival stall. These can be delivered, to the Church Hall, anytime on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April or before 10am on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May. If anyone has a problem getting their cakes to the Church Hall please let Marjorie Spence (767020) or me (762054) known and we will try to arrange collection.

## **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July the Church Fellowship Outing will be to Worcester.**

The bus will leave the Commons at 9.15am and arrive back at 6.00pm. The cost is £12 per person and for anyone wishing to join us the list will be at the back of Church on Sundays or alternatively please contact Marjorie Spence (767020) or Sue Mitchell (762054). We look forward to seeing you.

*Sue*

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## **What God is like**

A Sunday School teacher began her lesson with a question, "Boys and girls, what do we know about God?"

A hand shot up in the air. "He is an artist!" said the little boy.

"Really? How do you know?" the teacher asked.

"You know - Our Father, who does art in Heaven... "

## **The Sandbach Crosses – (this information will soon be available on the fence around the Crosses)**

The Sandbach Crosses were erected over a thousand years ago by a Saxon king. The purpose of the crosses was to proclaim the Christian message which had recently been accepted in the area. This information is designed to identify the images on one of the crosses and explain their significance.

Stand facing the crosses with your back to the betting shop and the red post box. Looking at the right hand (North) cross, starting at the top:

### **The Visit of the Magi**

Just below the blank stone near the top, The Three Wise Men (Magi) visit the baby Jesus. On the left side Mary is depicted seated and holding the baby, whilst on the right are the Magi (one above the other in alcoves). This tableau shows that Jesus (a Jew) came not just for Jews, but for all the people of the world, including those in England.

### **The Crucifixion**

In the centre is a cross depicting Jesus being crucified. Above and below Jesus' outstretched arms are symbols representing the writers of the four 'Gospels' which tell the story of the life and teaching of Jesus. Starting at the top left the symbols are of a man with a book (St Matthew), an ox (St Luke), an eagle (St John) and a lion (St Mark). Two figures stand at the foot of the cross, thought to be St John the disciple and Mary the mother of Jesus. This depicts the central Christian belief that not only was Jesus God, but He died a painful death for us.

### **The Nativity**

Immediately below the crucifix is a picture of an ass and an ox looking over the manger in which the infant Jesus lay, with an angel spreading its wings over the animals' heads. The message of the nativity is that God came into our world in the same way each one of us did, as a baby – Jesus.

A thin unmarked stone divides the Nativity and the Transfiguration.

### **The Transfiguration**

Two standing figures are clearly visible, with a slightly higher figure between them. This depicts a scene in the Bible where Jesus was revealed to be God to some of his disciples. The figure on the right portrays Elijah holding a scroll over one shoulder, while that on the left depicts Moses holding tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written.

## **The Foundation of the Church**

In the circle near the base are two figures - one holding a key and the other a book - with a larger figure in the middle. The larger figure in the middle represents Jesus giving authority to Saints Peter and Paul to found the Church. The message of God can be found in the Church today. A living tradition continues and links all the events from 2,000 years ago when God came to earth as a baby, through the carving of the Sandbach Crosses over 1,000 years ago up to the services in the Church today.

[www.sandbachchurches.org.uk](http://www.sandbachchurches.org.uk)

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## **Signs and Promises**

(Mark 13:5-13, Rev 21:4,22:20)

‘The one who endures to the end will be saved.’

Earthquakes, explosions,  
Tsunamis and terror,  
Nation rising against nation,  
Dictators destroying their own,  
Floods, famine,  
Families in sewer-slums,  
Persecution, opposition,  
And the list goes on...

Signs all around of a broken world,  
A warning world.

Send your Spirit, Lord,  
Bring your healing,  
Your compassion,  
Bring your good news  
To those who must endure.  
Open eyes to see beyond disasters  
To the one who saves  
And will wipe away all tears.

Come Lord Jesus.

*By Daphne Kitching*



## **WHO'S WHO AT ST MARY'S**

<b>Vicar</b>	<b>The Revd Thomas Shepherd</b>	<b>762379</b>
	e-mail	<a href="mailto:revts@me.com">revts@me.com</a>
Churchwardens	Reg Dunning	762681
	Martyn Colley	759704
Sacristan	John Percival	765700
Verger	June Ollier	766973

### **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICERS**

PCC Secretary	Sylvia Watkins	767386
Treasurer	Roger Cooke	762118
Covenants/Gift Aid	Paul Burden	764687
Captain of Bells	Arthur Yorke	765444
Church Flowers	Sheenagh Ashworth	529187

**CHURCH HALL** Bookings Sylvia Watkins 767386  
[hall@sandbachchurch.co.uk](mailto:hall@sandbachchurch.co.uk)

**SUNDAY CIRCLE** Margaret Corlett 762246  
Meets on Sundays at 10.00am in the Church Hall

**CHURCH FELLOWSHIP** Marjorie Spence 767020  
Meetings 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in each month at 7.30pm in the Church Hall.

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A copy of the magazine is also available on the web-site

[www.sandbachchurch.co.uk](http://www.sandbachchurch.co.uk)

**"CHALLENGE"** is edited by John Bottomley. Tel: 768744 15 Chartwell Park  
If you or your organisation has any items to be published in the magazine, please contact John either by email to [magazine@sandbachchurch.co.uk](mailto:magazine@sandbachchurch.co.uk) or telephone. Please submit details of events well in advance so that they can be properly publicised. Reports of events that have already happened, progress updates of continuing projects, notices etc Copy may be left in Church but please submit by

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2011**

FOR BAPTISMS AND WEDDINGS, PLEASE CONTACT  
The Vicar in Church on Sundays between 5.00pm-6.00pm to make the necessary arrangements