

A Packed Calendar



4th February, United Plough Sunday Service at Reaseheath College. Details on page 3.



14th February, St Valentine's Day. There are actually three St Valentines commemorated on this day, all martyred and all are symbols of romance.



14th February, is also **Ash Wednesday**, the beginning of Lent. Ash Wednesday gets its name from the tradition of burning last year's palm crosses and marking the forehead of worshipers with the ash and is still performed. Lent gets its name from the lengthening days at this time of year and brings to mind the period of Jesus' time of fasting in the wilderness ending on Easter Day.

10th March, Mothering Sunday. This was the day that household servants were given off work to visit the church where they were baptised. This usually meant returning to their parental home and they were allowed to use ingredients from the larder to make a cake to take with them. This gave birth to Simnel Cake and as the first flowers were appearing in the hedgerows, these were picked and given to mothers, starting the tradition of giving flowers. American soldiers visiting the UK in the two World Wars strengthened the tradition but called it Mother's Day.



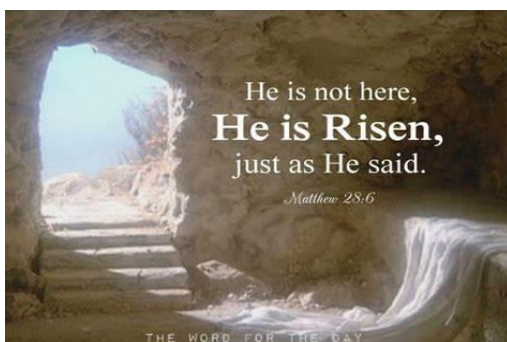
24th March, Palm Sunday. The day Jesus entered Jerusalem, riding on a donkey. The crowds welcomed him shouting Hosannah and casting palm branches or their cloaks in his path. It is the first day of Holy Week.

29th March, Good Friday. Called 'good' from the archaic meaning of the word for 'pious' or 'holy'. It is the day that Jesus was crucified.



Jerusalem is a centre for Christians of all denominations on this day, when they carry a cross along the Via Dolorosa, (Road of the Rosary). It follows the path Jesus was taken by the soldiers from the Antonia Fortress, where he was tied, to Golgotha, the place of the crucifixion.

31st March, Easter Day. The most important day of the Christian calendar when Jesus rose from the dead. Easter eggs resemble the stone over the tomb entrance and also follow the Roman tradition of presenting gifts to commemorate new life in Spring.



Who we are ...

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A Letter from the vicar

Can we walk with God in the cold days of Spring?



February can be a month of hope; early spring flowers, especially snowdrops, begin to flower, and in these days of global warming, perhaps a brave daffodil. February can also be a month when winter feels unending, and we long for the warmer, longer days of spring. It is also a busy month, especially this year when Easter falls relatively early. On 2 February, we mark Candlemas, the celebration of the 40 day old Jesus being presented in the Temple. Candlemas is associated with many country sayings, many centred around the midway point of winter, and the likely weather that is to come in what remains of winter. Candlemas is also the point at which we turn from the manger to the cross. It was whilst Jesus was being presented in the Temple, that the godly Simeon took the child in his arms, giving thanks that he has seen God's salvation, and predicting the sword which will pierce Mary's heart when Jesus is crucified. On 14 February this year, we turn in a very real way towards the cross, as we mark Ash Wednesday and the beginning of 40 days of Lent. The name 'Lent' comes from the old English word for 'lengthen', relating to the lengthening hours of daylight. It is a time of growth, both as the season of spring gains in strength, but also the spiritual growth which Christians seek as they prepare for Easter. This leaves us with a challenge. Can we grow with God through this season of the year? Nearly 40 years ago, I was deeply struck by words written by the then Chaplain of what was, in those days, Chester College. I end with some of them now:

... *The infant prince of Christmas becomes the strange, discomfoting King of Good Friday. Can you live with that sort of King? In the cold spring days, can you grow up with him, and walk with him till Easter Day dawns?* Stephen J Ridley
Revd Anne

Lent Course - Caring for Creation

This year's Lent Course is a 'York Course' which focuses on the care of creation. It provides opportunity to discuss a subject which is of great interest to many people inside and outside of the Church.

All Welcome

*Sessions will take place at
St David's, Wettenhall
at 2.00 pm on Tuesdays
beginning on 20 February*

Confirmation

A Confirmation Service with Bishop Sam will take place at 11.00 am on Sunday 2 June (Trinity Sunday). I am aware of a small group of young adults wishing to be Confirmed. **If you have not been Confirmed and would like to think more about the possibility of joining them, please contact Rev Anne.**

(countryvicar@outlook.com or 01270 628864)

A 6 week course looking at the Christian faith will be held after Easter, for anyone interested in Confirmation or in refreshing their understanding of the Christian faith. If you have already been Confirmed but have recently come back to faith it is possible to renew your Baptism Vows as a way of publicly re-affirming your commitment to Christ. Adults who have not been Baptised and would like be Baptised are normally baptised and Confirmed at the same service.

Date	St Bartholomew's Church Minshull	St Mary's Acton	St Davids Wettenhall	St Oswald's Worleston
4 th Feb	11am Plough Service at Reaseheath	11am Plough Service 6.30pm Christ in Quiet	11am Plough Service	11am Plough Service
11 th Feb	11am Café Church	8am Communion 11am Morning Prayer	11am Communion	9.30pm Communion
18 th Feb	11am Communion	10am Messy Church	11am All Age	No Service
25 th Feb	11am Messy Church	8am Communion 11am Morning Prayer	6.30pm Informal Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer
3 rd March	11am United at Wettenhall	11am United 6.30pm Christ in Quiet	11am United Communion	11am United
10 th March	11am Mothering Sunday Café Church	8am Communion 11am Mothering Service	11am Mothering Communion	9.30am Communion
17 th March	11am Communion	10am Messy Church	11am All Age	No Service
24 th March	11am Palm Sunday Messy Church	8am Communion 11am Morning Prayer	6.30pm Informal Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer
29 th March Good Friday	10.30 am Cross Service	12 noon Cross Service 2pm At Foot Of Cross	11.15am Cross Service	9.45am Cross Service
31 st March Easter Day	9.30am Communion	11am Communion	11am Communion	9.30am Communion
7 th April	11am Service of the Word	11am Communion	11am Morning Prayer	No Service

There is a Communion Service every Wednesday at St. Mary's, Acton at 10.30 am

Plough Sunday Service



Plough Sunday is an ancient tradition dating to the time when the Church owned the only plough in the village.

Together with the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, we have been invited to Reaseheath College again to celebrate Plough Sunday this year. Donations will be taken for lunch and will go to RABI.

This event has become very important to the staff and students at the college, and they will be bringing their own ideas to the celebrations, although details were not available at the time of going to print.

Please note that there will be plenty of tables at **which to sit and eat lunch and it will not be necessary to go outside to access lunch.**

Plough Sunday Service

***11 am Sunday 4th February
The Horticultural Building
Reaseheath College***

The Horticultural Building is the new building behind the large new Agricultural Engineering building. Car parking is via entrance 1 off Main Road, Reaseheath, (the B5074)

Limited parking for the disabled is available immediately outside the horticultural building accessed via entrance 2 off Main Road, Reaseheath, (the B5074)

All Welcome

A review of our Christmas Events

Christmas Decoration and Wreath Making



Messy Church Christmas Party for Everyone



Charity Christmas Swing Night by the Swinging Woodpeckers for Hands at Work in Africa



Carols Round the Tree



Carols & Readings with Sound & Light





December's Café Church was on the subject of Angels and we looked at angels from Victorian pictures of cute and cuddly to the more realistic descriptions of beings of great power in the Bible. John Bentley talked of Angels he had met, not with wings and white robes but of strangers who had come to his aid when they were needed. We all felt we had known such events in our own lives and we talked openly of our experiences.



In January our subject was God's Peace in a conflicted World and we looked at how we as individuals react to the news headlines that are dominating our TV screens.

We had several Bible readings on the subject and looked at how we are advised to deal with it as Christians. Our challenge for the day was what we would do if we were in power to change things for the better and a video from Justin Wellby, Archbishop of Canterbury, told us we were here to make a difference where we could.



Thanks go to Richard and Bob who accompanied our hymns on guitar and electric violin.



Our December get together was our Christmas party seen on page 4 but in January our service was our Christingle with the collection given to the children's Society. **Every year at least 10% of St Bart's income is given to charity and this is one of the main beneficiaries.** In a letter of thanks for our donations from Andrew Moran, Head of Support, he stated they helped 63,000 children in the UK last year alone.





Parish Council News

The last Parish Council meeting was held on 9th January 2024 and the minutes of the previous meeting were passed.

Flooding and River Pollution Councillors noted that this was a countryside issue and despite previous efforts, little progress had been made from lobbying the agencies responsible.

Road Issues Cllr Schiller provided an update from a meeting attended by the Police and Crime Commissioner. It was hoped that speed cameras would be provided as part of a speed monitoring exercise. Concern was expressed at the condition of the roads and numerous potholes throughout the village. Cllr Smith expressed concern about a street lighting issue and would raise these with the Borough Councillor.



Village Hall Re-development Cllr Boote raised the importance in increasing the number of people supporting the development project. The next phase of the project was to obtain the finance, which would be time consuming. It was suggested that a village meeting should be held to encourage support.

Village Improvements It was noted that the dog bin required replacement and the clerk was asked to review the provision of a metal bin.

Finance Report There is £6,487 in the in the bank account and a forecast outturn of £4,541.

Budget and Precept 2024/25 The Clerk circulated the draft budget and precept analysis for 2023/24. The budget included a sum for the provision of a Speed Indicator Device. It was noted that a precept of £6,500 equated to 60p per week at a Band D property. RESOLVED – that:- i) the budget be agreed in the sum of £10,286; and ii) the precept be agreed in the sum of £6,500.

Councillors Items Tree Felling Cllr Smith advised that he had received a holding response from the Forestry Commission regarding the felling of trees on land off Eachus Lane. It was noted that the landowner had a licence to fell trees.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING Tuesday, 05 March 2024



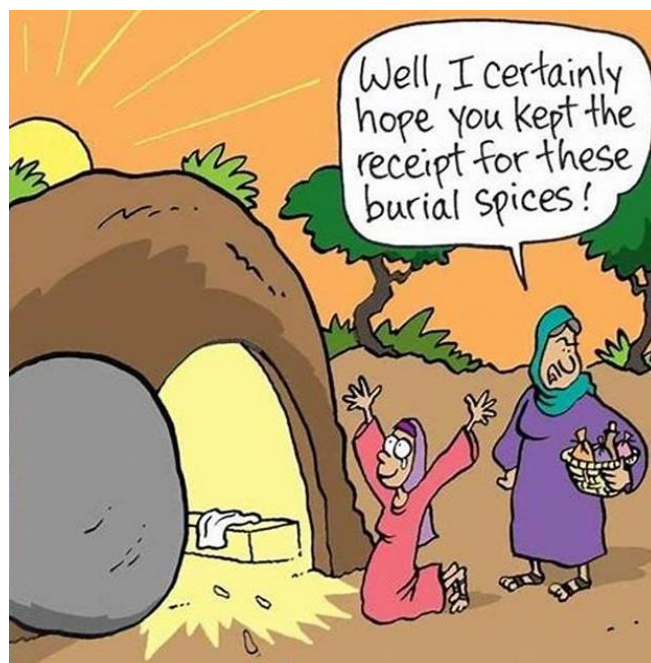
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Books on Wheels

The Cheshire mobile library bus service will be visiting Church Minshull next on February 13th and then on March 5th & 26th.

It will arrive at the Badger Inn car park at 10am then travel to Home Farm Park South at 11.10am and Home Farm Park North at 11.30am.




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