

FROM THE REGISTERS

*Baptisms*

8th Dec Ellis Edward Harris

*Weddings*

*Funerals*

18th Dec Mrs Jean Senior (followed by burial)

FLOWER ROTA

Jan 5th Fiona Ablett & Maureen Woolley  
 Jan 12th Fiona Ablett & Maureen Woolley  
 Jan 19th Liz Beech  
 Jan 26th Liz Beech

MAGAZINE CONTRIBUTIONS

The deadline for the next magazine is **Thursday January 16th 2020**  
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Large format copies of the magazine are available.

**The Rector looks forward to 2020**

2019 was a year of adjustment and change for St.Mary’s Church and parish – and in 2020 St.Mary’s Church will be challenged to further renewal and growth

**The financial deficit in 2018 led to increased giving by a number of people in 2019**, and I anticipate that a significant renewal of approach to this will be adopted in 2020. In my book (31 years as a parish minister) it is a basic principle of a parish church that freewill offerings should cover all costs.

**In 2019 the management committee of the Parish Hall said goodbye to the caretaker and bookings secretary, and the committee’s members took on these tasks themselves.** This has cut costs and brought people together in the service of the common good.

**In October the Parochial Church Council decided to keep two Family Services each month** and to introduce the contemporary Holy Communion service once a month. It also agreed to aim to hold Messy Church once a month in the Parish Hall. Renewal in worship is essential for every parish church.

**Nether Alderley Parish Council has made great progress with the Parish Hall project for repair, extension and refurbishment of the building.** In 2020 the applications for approval will be made. St.Mary’s Church has a key role to play in this. Having a parish hall that is fit for purpose will benefit St.Mary’s Church greatly.

**Also in my book is that a parish church must publish and distribute to its parish a paper newsletter at least six times per year.** Faith is caught as well as taught – and this needs regular communication. This will start in February 2020, with a new Nether Alderley News, produced and delivered and paid for jointly by Nether Alderley Parish Council and St.Mary’s Church. I would then like to get a similar publication started in Great Warford which is the other part of St.Mary’s parish.

**Financially self-sustaining, with an up to date parish hall, with worship that serves the needs of all, and with good communications and relationships throughout the parish:** in all these ways and more, renewal of St.Mary’s Church will take place in 2020. Let us pray that we may all play a part in this in our Christian discipleship, and that each of us may be guided by the Holy Spirit in the ways which each of us have been given to serve our Lord.

The Revd Jon Hale

**DIARY JANUARY 2020**

**Sun.5th The Epiphany**  
 8.00am Holy Communion at Birtles  
 9.45am Holy Communion at Alderley BCP  
 11.15am Family Service at Birtles  
 6.30pm Evensong at Alderley  
 Thur 9th 10.00am Holy Communion at Alderley

**Sun 12th 1st Sunday of Epiphany**  
 9.45am Family Service at Alderley  
 11.15am Holy Communion at Birtles  
 6.30pm Holy Communion at Alderley (said)  
 Thurs 16th 10.00am Holy Communion

**Sun. 19th 2nd Sunday of Epiphany**  
 8.00am Holy Communion at Alderley  
 9.45am Holy Communion CW  
 11.15am Plough Service at Birtles  
 6.30pm No Service  
 (Christian Unity at Methodist)  
 Thurs 23rd 10.00am Holy Communion

**Sun 26th 4th Sunday of Epiphany**  
 9.45am Family Service at Alderley  
 11.15am Holy Communion at Birtles  
 6.30pm Evensong at Alderley

**There will not be a Holy Communion service on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February at 8.00am at St.Catherine's Church.**

At the end of the Morning Service coffee and biscuits are provided by a stalwart group of volunteers in the Parish Hall.

Donations will be given to charity.

**ROTA FOR JANUARY 2020**

**SIDESPEOPLE / LECTORS / WARDENS**

D'T	TIME	SIDESPEOPLE	LECTOR	W'N
5 <sup>th</sup> Jan	8.00am	(at Birtles)		
	9.45am	Mrs J Martin & Mr M Stonehewer	Mrs M Stonehewer	MP
	6.30pm	Mrs L Kershaw	Mr P Kershaw	AJH
12 <sup>th</sup> Jan	9.45am	Mr & Mrs G Woolley	George Vardon	KW
	6.30pm		AJH	AJH
19 <sup>th</sup> Jan	8.00am			HW
	9.45am	Mr G Hilton & Mrs R Dyas	Mrs A Davis	MP
	6.30pm	(no service)		
26 <sup>th</sup> Jan	9.45am	Mrs G Beeley & Mrs E Jackson	Mrs L Marsh	KW
	6.30pm	Mr G Barrie	Mr M Dyer	AJH

**FOOD BANKS**

**St.Mary's Church has a long-established link with the Oasis Centre at Gorton.** Please leave in the basket at the back of church donations of non-perishable food, clothes and baby requirements which will be taken to Oasis. Our partner church of St.Catherine, Birtles now also collects items for Oasis: these are brought to St.Mary's Church regularly by the Rector.  
<http://oasisgorton.org/>

**The churches in Alderley Edge run food banks for the Alderley area.** St.Mary's and St.Catherine's Church supports this work by prayer. If you would like to give practical help to the local food banks please contact the Rector and he can put you in touch with those who run these food banks.

## COLLECTION TOTAL

### Pigeons at War

At the outbreak of World War 2 thousands of Britain's pigeon fanciers gave their pigeons to the war effort to act as message carriers. During the period of the war nearly a quarter of a million birds were used by the army, the RAF and the Civil Defence Services including the police, the fire service, Home Guard and even Bletchley Park. Pigeon racing was stopped and birds of prey along the coasts of Britain were culled so that British pigeons could arrive home unhindered by these predators. There were tight controls on the keeping of pigeons and even rationing for pigeon corn.

Homing pigeons were used not only in Western Europe by British forces but also by American, Canadian, and German forces in other parts of the world during the war – Italy, Greece, North Africa, India and the Middle and Far East. One pigeon, GI Joe, saved the lives of thousands of British troops who were preparing to take an Italian town after the US Air Force had bombarded the Germans. However, the British forces found no resistance from the Germans and so entered the town unchallenged. Unfortunately the USAF were already en route to bomb the town and with radio contact broken GI Joe flew over a mile a minute (60 mph) back to the base. He arrived back just in time for the air raid to be called off before the USAF would have bombed our troops.

All RAF bombers and reconnaissance aircraft carried pigeons and, if the aircraft had to ditch, the plane's co-ordinates were sent back with the pigeon to its RAF base and a search and rescue operation was effected. Thousands of servicemen's lives were saved by these heroic birds that flew often in extreme circumstances.

Pigeons carried their messages either in special message containers on their legs or small pouches looped over their backs.

Quite often pigeons were dropped by parachute in containers to Resistance workers in France, Belgium and Holland. This was often quite precarious as it was a bumpy landing and very dangerous for the Resistance workers if they were caught with a British pigeon.

Pigeon lofts were built at RAF and army bases but the mobile lofts had to be constructed so that they could move easily over land. The Dickin Medal was awarded for any animal displaying conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during World War II and its aftermath. Of the 53 Dickin Medals presented, 32 went to pigeons.

Week ending	Envelopes	Misc Cash	Standing Orders	Total
Nov 3rd	220.00	36.60		256.60
Nov 10th	412.84	90.55*		493.39
Nov 17th	293.20	7.80		301.00
Nov 24th	132.27	30.00		162.27
TOTAL	1058.31	164.95	1821.00	3044.26

Donald Henderson Tel 01625 584008 or email [donhenderson276@yahoo.com](mailto:donhenderson276@yahoo.com)

### **NETHER ALDERLEY 200 CLUB**

#### **Latest draw winners**

1<sup>st</sup> prize      Fiona Ablett  
2<sup>nd</sup> prize      Peter Robinson  
3<sup>rd</sup> prize      Elizabeth Fairhurst

Congratulations to all the winners

Your cheque or standing order gives you a chance of being the winner.

Forms can be found at the back of Church and in the Parish Hall Kitchen.

Over £8000 has now been handed over to St Mary's treasurer, towards the day to day running costs of the Church.

## SOCIAL COMMITTEE

We are all feeling cheered following the successful Christmas Fair. Such a lot of hard work by many people to get it up and running. Many belated thanks to everybody.

Next for all of us is Christmas. How quickly the year has flown by.

The next date for the Social Committee is The Annual Bridge Drive on Monday February 10th in the Parish Hall 1.30 till approx.4.00 and of course includes \ afternoon tea. Tables 40.

If anybody feels able to offer a raffle prize I would be grateful. It helps with the overall profit.

Please apply to me for tables. Also tell your Bridge friends about the occasion.

Happy New year to everybody.

Janet Adamson 01625 583320

## WALKING GROUP

A friendly group from St Mary's are going for a walk on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The details are given below and anyone interested is welcome to join the group.

If you do come along, you do so at your own risk as walking can be a hazardous activity. Children and/or dogs are also welcome but you have to take full responsibility for them. It is advisable that you have appropriate footwear and clothing with you to cope with any weather and ground conditions that might be met.

### Hassall Green and the Salt Line

**Starting at 10.00 am prompt on 4<sup>th</sup> January from the Wilbraham Arms Alsager (ST7 2AX).**

**Length:** 5 miles, 200 metres of ascent

**Grade:** Easy - mainly on canal towpaths and a redundant railway track.

**Further information:** This is a walk to get you going for 2020. Hot drinks needed but will be back in time for lunch at the Wilbraham Arms for anyone who wants to join us. Contact Will Ablett (01625 585180 or 07977 978620) with any questions.

## Take time out on a mini-retreat at Foxhill House

Foxhill House, at Tarvin Road, Frodsham, is the Chester Diocese centre for prayer, study and mission. Once a month at Foxhill House, starting February, there will be a series of 'mini-retreat' days – each day based on one of the Psalms - 9.30am to 3.30pm. This is a chance to spend time listening to God. The cost is £23 per person, covering lunch and refreshments. If you would like to attend on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February and/or Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March with the Rector (travel in shared cars) please let the Revd Jon Hale know and he will arrange a group booking.

## Oasis

Dear Janet and everyone at St Mary's Coffee Morning

Thank you so much for your incredible gift of £100 from your coffee mornings which will go towards supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged adults living and sleeping rough in East Manchester this Christmas.

God bless you for your love and commitment to the work of Oasis!

Yours sincerely

**Victoria Armstrong**

**Prayer Calendar for the Parish of St.Mary, Alderley.  
January 2020.**

**Week beginning Please pray for**

5 <sup>th</sup>	All care givers in the parish
12 <sup>th</sup>	All who live in Pedley House Lane
19 <sup>th</sup>	All children in the parish
26 <sup>th</sup>	All who live in Faulkners Lane

## The story behind the hymn: Good King Wenceslas

Each year at Christmas we sing about good King Wenceslas looking on the Feast of Stephen... ever wonder who on earth he was?

This carol was 900 years in the making... and started with a brutal murder in Bohemia.

For Wenceslas was a real person, the Duke of Bohemia, who lived in the early 10th century. He seems to have been a rare ruler, in that he was just and had compassion for the poor. His goodness made him enemies, and when he was only 22, he was assassinated on the steps of a church in Prague in 935.

But that was not the end of Wenceslas. Deeply mourned by the common people, he was soon considered a martyr and a saint. A cult of Wenceslas grew up in Bohemia, influencing the High Middle Ages idea of the Rex Justus – or 'righteous king' - that is, a monarch whose power stems mainly from his great piety.

The story of Wenceslas came to England sometime before 1853, when Queen Victoria's envoy to Stockholm sent some rare books to a friend, John Mason Neale, Warden of Sackville College, East Grinstead. Here Neale found the story of Wenceslas in an ancient poem by Czech poet Václav Alois Svoboda. Neale published his translation as a carol in 1853. He made the 'Duke' into a 'King', as a later Pope had conferred the regal title on Wenceslas.

The carol tells the poignant story of a young king and his page braving harsh winter weather in order to bring food, wine and fuel to a poor peasant on the Feast of St Stephen (26 December). The journey is terrible, and the page only gets through by following in the king's footprints, step by step, through deep snow. There are themes here of following Christ, through suffering, to do good to the poor.

If the story is ancient, so is the melody that Neale chose for his carol - it goes back to Finland in 1582.

Good King Wenceslas... today, a millennium after his brutal murder, he is still remembered in Prague, where a statue of him stands tall in the middle of Wenceslas Square. His goodness is not forgotten.

## There are several ways in which you can give to St.Mary's Church, or increase your giving.

**Donate by Pay Pal:** [paypal.me/stmaryalderley](https://paypal.me/stmaryalderley)

**Direct bank transfer** – please contact our Treasurer – Will Ablett for our bank details – [treasurer@alderleychurch.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@alderleychurch.co.uk)

**Regular giving envelopes** – please contact our Envelope Administrator – Donald Henderson for more details – [envelopes@alderleychurch.co.uk](mailto:envelopes@alderleychurch.co.uk)

**Don't forget to gift aid any donations that you can** – please complete and return the form available -

## From the Honorary Treasurer:

On behalf of the PCC, many thanks to all those who have responded to the Rector's recent appeals to increase giving, it is very much appreciated. There have been a number of new standing orders together with some one-off donations. This additional income will really help to reduce the current level of the annual operating deficit of St Mary's.

There is still, however, some way to go to eliminate the deficit altogether. Therefore if anyone has not yet got around to looking at what they give could they please do so. The PCC is exploring various other ways of dealing with the deficit but this does not alleviate the need for all congregants to give what they can afford. It is also helpful if everyone can annually review what they give in order for St Mary's to meet ever increasing costs.

Paying by standing order makes it much easier all round for those involved and so if anyone wants to commence contributing in that way could they please contact either me or Don Henderson.

Thanks again. Will Ablett

## Christmas Cards

I would like to thank all those who bought the Christmas Cards of David's drawings.

As a result I am able to hand over £205 to the Treasurer.

Noni Watkins

## The Rector writes about Churches Together in Alderley

The Churches Together in Alderley (CTIA) are Alderley Edge Methodist Church, St.Pius Roman Catholic Church in Alderley Edge, St.Philip & St.James Church of England Church in Alderley Edge and St.Mary's Church, Alderley. St.Mary's Parish comprises both Great Warford and Nether Alderley.

CTIA is the ecumenical grouping of churches in the area which witness to unity in Christ. Various services and events are held by CTIA throughout the year. Each member church has at least one lay representative on the organising committee, together with its clergy representation. For many years, Terry Fones has been St.Mary's Church's lay representative. Terry is now retiring from this role and St.Mary's Church now appeals for someone to take Terry's place. Please talk with Terry or the Rector about what is involved.

The Annual General Meeting of CTIA is on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm at Alderley Edge Methodist Church. This will be followed immediately by a short meeting of the CTIA committee. I am unable to attend these two meetings on 27<sup>th</sup> January so it would be advantageous if a new lay representative of St.Mary's Church could be appointed before 27<sup>th</sup> January to represent St.Mary's Church at these meetings.

The main events organised by CTIA each year include:

- ◆ the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service. This year's service will be held on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January at Alderley Edge Methodist Church. There will not be a service at St.Mary's Church on this Sunday evening;
- ◆ prayer and study groups in Lent;
- ◆ Good Friday afternoon service;
- ◆ Quiz Night in October to raise funds for Christian Aid
- ◆ the Remembrance Sunday afternoon parade and service in Alderley Edge.

## The Rector writes about Messy Church at St.Mary's Church

Messy Church is a great way for families with pre-school children and children in Key Stages 1 & 2 to meet.

Messy Church provides a range of art & craft based activities, all with the same Bible story theme. There are also quieter activities like a prayer-writing table. These activities run for the first 50 to 60 minutes of Messy Church. Then 'story time' is held, when the theme Bible story is told and the art & craft works of the afternoon are part of telling the story. The prayers that have been written are said and an attractive song or two are sung. That lasts for about 20 minutes. While 'story time' is taking place at one end of the Hall, the tables are being set up for tea. After 'story time' we all enjoy tea and chat together.

I am now seeking at least six people – from both St.Catherine's Church and St.Mary's Church – and from Nether Alderley Primary School – who will form a team to run Messy Church with me. I would like us to start Messy Church once a month on a Sunday afternoon, in place of Evensong later this year.

Please let me know if you are interested in joining the Messy Church team.

### Starting 1<sup>st</sup> January the Sunday 9.45am service pattern is changing to:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in the month: Holy Communion (traditional)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in the month: Family Service
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in the month: Holy Communion (contemporary)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the month: Family Service
- 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the month: Holy Communion (contemporary)

At all services there is a children's play area and colouring-in sheet. WCs at the Parish Hall are always open when there is a service in church.

Baptisms (Christenings) are held by arrangement with the Rector on Sundays in the 9.45am Family Service or at 12.45pm.