

Bulletin for St Thomas' & St Mary Magdalene's – Sunday 17th November – Second Sunday before Advent

Dear Friends,

We are only two weeks from the beginning of Advent, the four weeks of preparation before Christmas. Next week is sometimes called 'Stir-Up Sunday' after the words in the Collect prayer, "stir up, O Lord, the wills of Thy faithful people..." so now is the time for us to get our act together spiritually so we are ready to welcome Jesus anew into our hearts and homes at Christmas. The sad fact is that we are often so bound up with the practical and commercial side of what should be a holy season that we don't give room for prayerful preparation. In today's reading from Mark 13, sometimes called the 'mini-apocalypse', Jesus warns the disciples from thinking the Temple is the only place to find God, when it will be destroyed in time, and tells them to beware of false prophets who think they are God's gift to creation. In a world where celebrities and political leaders boast of millions of followers on social media, it is good to remember that God is King and His Son Jesus came into the world in poverty and not as a celebrity. He came to turn the world's values upside down: so this Advent take time to be holy and see God in the everyday; read scripture and let God speak to you; let the Holy Spirit (rather than selfish ambition) guide you; and remember that Advent is a time of giving and prayer:

- Attend the Advent Services on Wednesdays at St. Mary Magdalene's beginning 27th November
- Read Christine's 'Prophecies and fulfilment: Preparing to welcome Jesus'
- Give towards Christmas Food Bags and Christmas Cheer bags

Yours as always, Michael.

Sunday 17th November : Second Sunday before Advent

8.00am	Holy Communion at St Thomas'
9.30am	Family Communion at St. Mary Magdalene's
10.45am	Come to the Table at St. Thomas'
5.00pm	Evening Prayer at St. Mary Magdalene's

Christmas Fair Saturday 23rd November 10.30am – 2.30pm We will be joining with our Church School. Please put this date in your diary, lists for volunteers to man the stalls for an hour or so are available in both churches- please sign up to help if you can. Also, please can you help support this event by donating homemade cakes, new items, new/nearly new toys, tombola prizes, wine / spirits, bottles of soft drinks? These can be brought into church from 4th November. If anyone is employed by a company who offer matched funding for charitable events and may be able to offer this for a stall at the fair please contact Sue on 07736 375 951

Weekdays	9.15am	Morning Prayer on Zoom
Monday	1-2.30pm	Praise and Play at St. Thomas' Church
	3.30pm	Ministry Team meeting at Christine's
Tuesday	2pm	Brampton Lodge Songs of Praise
Wednesday	9-11am	Little Sunbeams at St. Mary Magdalene's
	7.30pm	Think and Pray at Jan's
Thursday	10am	Midweek Communion at St. Thomas'
	11am	Pastoral Team meeting at St. Thomas'
	7.30pm	Men's Society at Jeremy's
Friday	10am	Preparation for the Christmas Fair at St. Thomas' church and hall
Saturday	10.30 - 2.30pm	Christmas Fair at St. Thomas' church and hall

Prayer Focus

- For healing and peace for all survivors and victims of abuse, and for an end to all evil actions that harm the vulnerable in our society. May our schools, churches and communities be safe places filled with the love of God.
- Hearts ready to be dutiful and prayerful during Advent.
- Discernment to see through this age's 'false prophets' who see power and influence as the ultimate aim.
- Generosity for the Christmas bags .
- The COP conference: for careful stewardship of our world and its resources.
- The Assisted Dying Bill, that all life may be respected and cherished right to its end.
- The NHS at this busy time and all in the care sector. May government make wise decisions about waiting lists and pay and conditions.
- Our wardens Mel and Sheila, our church council as we prepare for our meeting next week.
- Comfort for all who are sick and in need of healing – our prayers surround them with love:- Pam, David, Carol, Surya, Paul, Ken, Syd, Kirsty, Mark, Rachel, John, Hazel, Pat, Joan, Kara, Ivy, Ferenc, Mark & Alisha.
- May the bereaved be comforted : we remember the family of John Mason and all with anniversaries at this time.

Next Sunday 24th November : Christ the King

8.00am Holy Communion at St Thomas'
9.30am Family Communion at St. Mary Magdalene's
10.45am Family Communion at St. Thomas'
5.00pm Evening Prayer at St. Mary Magdalene's

Encounter Christmas

Sunday 1st December, 2-4pm at St. Mary Magdalene's Church. An afternoon filled with the awe and wonder of the Christmas story. From storytelling, to craft making, fun games to lantern creating, and all finished in good time before the Christmas light switch on begins in the village!

Family Christmas Extravaganza

Friday 13th December, 6.30-7.30pm at St. Thomas' Church. Come and join us for this Christmas cracker of an hour, with carol singing, poems, jokes and audience participation, all topped off with some tasty sweet treats!!

Time and Talents and Giving Forms Please return your forms this week – thank you to all who have already done so.

Confirmation We have had to postpone the Confirmation Service until 2nd March next year when Bishop Sam will be with us, thus there will now be a 9.30am service at St Mary Magdalene's on Sunday 24 November. Please pray for Alf, James, Ava, Imogen, Orla and Jacqui as they continue their preparations for Confirmation over the winter, and if you are interested in being confirmed but thought you had missed the opportunity, please get in touch with Michael or Ruth.

Advent Services at St. Mary Magdalene's at 7.30pm on Wednesdays 27th November, 4th, 11th and 18th December. A time of quiet meditation and prayer using Christine's Advent booklet. It is good to use Advent as a time of preparation to welcome anew the Lord Jesus into our lives. Christine's 'Prophecies and fulfilment : Preparing for the coming of Christ' will be available from 24th November in our churches and online.

A Musical Soirée Saturday 30th November, 7.30pm at St. Thomas' Church

Our own Ian, Gillian and Keiko are taking part in a concert in our church at the end of November – please support them by coming along! The concert features Keiko Tanaka (soprano and piano), Gillian Banks (soprano), Corinna Tyson (piano) plus the inaugural performance of the Warrington String Quartet (Ian Banks - violin, Andrew Winter - violin, Ian Ward - viola, Steph Eustis - 'cello). Admission at the door is £7, under 16s free and refreshments including wine and nibbles will be available for purchase in the interval. All proceeds will support the work of church.

Christmas Bags for Schools and Cheer! We will be working with local schools again to provide bags of food for vulnerable families. If you would like to make up a bag of your own, please sign the list at the back of church so we know how many to expect and please take a copy of the 'complete bag' contents sheet and try to adhere to these suggestions as far as possible. (We provide food for a family of 4 for 2 days and the bag contents should be fairly standardised.) You may also help by: making a monetary donation; donating some items (there is an 'individual items' list at the back of church which also includes a section about our Cheer Bags given to those in our Pastoral Visiting community); packing on 17.12 or distributing bags on 18.12. Ring Sue to volunteer 07736 375 951 Thank you!

Golborne Brass Christmas Concert Sunday 8th December at 3pm. Tickets available now, or you can pay on the door : £8 with tea or coffee and a mince pie included in the ticket price: all proceeds go to church funds.

St. Thomas' School Application Forms

Please hand these to Vicar Michael or Revd Ruth. We will return them to school in the New Year for processing before the January 17th deadline.

Future Dates

Advent Services at St. Mary Magdalene's at 7.30pm on Wednesdays 27th November, 4th, 11th and 18th December. Sunday 1 December is **Toy Sunday** : new and very good condition books are requested for the local Women's Refuge.

CONTACTS

Website www.stthomas-stocktonheath.org.uk

Parish Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/stthomasandmarymagdalenes>

Parish Instagram https://www.instagram.com/stthomas__stmarymagdalene

Church channel on YouTube www.youtube.com/channel/UCpsYBGYSbFuulUITYYxICQw

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