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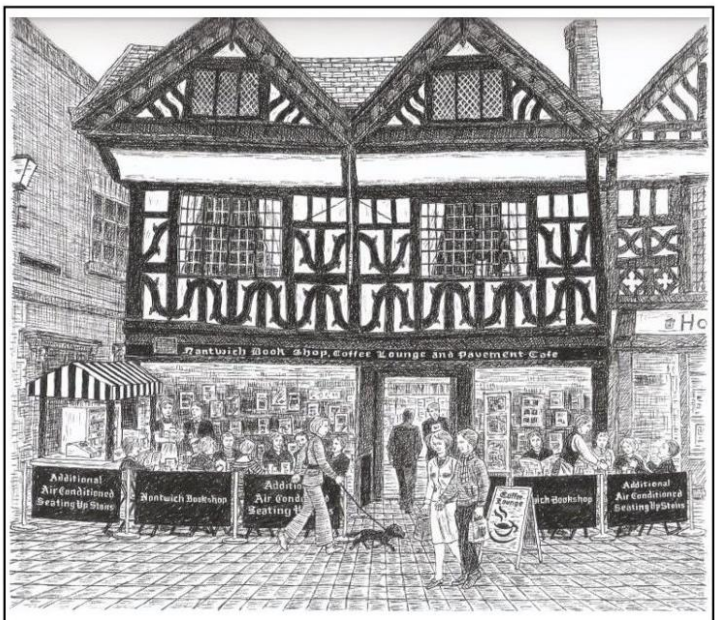
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Front cover: Thanks to Nantwich in Bloom, the entrances to St. Mary's have looked spectacular in recent weeks as the summer planting has flourished, and made the church look all the more inviting and welcoming. All around the town the results of their skill and hard work can be seen in the floral displays, which were commended when the judges of North West in Bloom visited on Wednesday, 23rd July. The results of their scoring will not be known until October, but we wish the best for Mark Betteley and all the committee of Nantwich in Bloom and their volunteers - and for the whole town. More on p. 25.



From the Rector

Are you looking forward to the removal of the scaffolding? It should happen in August. Outside we will find eyesores have been replaced by beautiful craftsmanship. Inside we will enjoy the windows afresh, and at last be able to undertake a deep clean. Much help will be needed here – please look out for notices.

The New Testament speaks of church members as "living stones" who are "being built up as a spiritual house". Just as we will welcome new stones into the building, so we continue to welcome new people into the life of the church.

The recent Electoral Roll renewal brought quite a turnover of "stones", including 158 new members. Altogether it feels like a year of restoration and refreshing, and we will continue that theme with some initiatives for renewal in the coming months.

Whether or not we are new stones at St. Mary's we should be living ones, and therefore growing. Soon everyone will receive a booklet encouraging us to ask if we are growing in three areas:

Growing in Faith. How do we practise our faith? What could we be doing differently? Are we expecting to grow? A wide range of aids to growth will be suggested.

Growing in Generosity. Jesus spoke often about money, without any embarrassment. Do you understand how much St. Mary's relies on the financial support of its members? Are we each playing our part, according to our means?

Growing in Service. Just as each stone plays its part in supporting the whole, so we may best find our place, and feel that we belong, when we are active in the work of the church. There are so many ways to serve at St. Mary's.

We should be encouraged that new people are joining St. Mary's. I believe we should expect this and welcome people on the way. Some have made the bold step of joining us from having no previous contact, and with little or no church background. How many more may respond to an invitation? We can all play a part in that, individually and collectively, and there are plans for new opportunities in the coming months. We should hear, and sometimes use, the first words of Jesus in St. John's Gospel: "What are you looking for?" and "Come and see".

God bless,

Mark Hart

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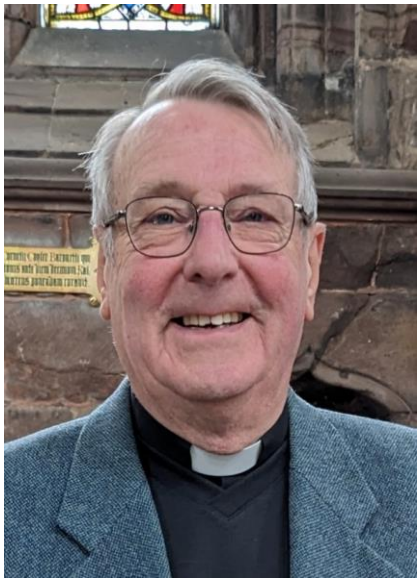
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I Believe in Angels!



Recently I re-read a book written nearly 50 years ago, "Mister God, this is Anna". It is about a girl abused by her family in the East End of London in the 1930s who is rescued by a young man called Fynn and is then looked after by his mother. Anna thinks a lot about God and one day she says, "It's easy to tell the difference between people and angels, most of an angel is on the inside and most of a person is on the outside". How true that is. I'm sure that we all think that angels are by nature elusive and yet equally we may know people who have angelic qualities which are quietly hidden. Those "angelic" people though are real, they have in many cases experienced great pain, suffering or sorrow that has left them wounded, yet healed. They seem to radiate inner truth. They have poise. They have grace.

Describing angelic people is difficult but if you look at accounts of angels in the Bible they are also elusive, they come and go, they bring a message and they disappear, they leave their message and go! Seemingly, they fly between heaven and earth and leave no trace other than the message they bring.

You might experience something similar going to a musical concert. The music is so wonderful that you are somehow transported and you find it difficult to describe the effect that it has had on you, even though that effect may have been profound. I think of walking in mountains and the views literally take your breath away. In the music and the vision on the mountain, the only response is a joy filled silence, anything else is inadequate. No words, yet the experience is taken down into our souls and we reflect upon it and often many years later it continues to feed us, shape us and form us.

It should be our prayer (shouldn't it?) that we should remain open to the signals from eternity, so that our inner lives might be filled with the healing love of God and that through his Grace we may be brought to that vision of heaven where (as we do in the Eucharist every Sunday morning) with Angels and Archangels and all the Company of Heaven, we join in singing HOLY HOLY HOLY!

Tony Long

Church News

Walk for Ghana

In July 2026, I will be going on a trip to Ghana for 10 days with African Adventures where I will be helping to build and renovate school classrooms. I need to raise just under £3,000 for this trip. So, a few weeks ago, I organised a fundraising walk with a ploughman's lunch afterwards. It was a beautiful day for a stroll along the canal, followed by lunch in our garden. Thank you to everyone who came.



Look out for future fundraising events but if you would like to support me before then, you can donate here: *https://www.gofundme.com/f/felixs-ghana-adventure*

Felix McCauley

Stewards Needed

Tuesdays 9.30-10.45am. Would you consider becoming a steward and covering this slot? Are you a reserve steward and able to cover some weeks? We'd be grateful for any help. Please contact Penny Smith or the Rector.

Summer Fair

Thank you to all who contributed to the Summer Fair held on 19th July, especially those who organised and staffed the stalls. The weather was poor and the town wasn't busy, but we raised a healthy **£1,076**.

Crib service planning

Like last year we have ensured that the basis of the crib service script was sorted in July. There's still quite a bit of work to do on tweaking the script, incorporating the carols and working out stage directions. But very exciting.

We will arrange the read-through on a Friday evening in October. This will be well advertised. All interested will be asked to give preference for parts (no guarantees) and state availability for rehearsal dates which are already booked.

We had a feedback meeting in February about 2024's crib services and have taken on board comments received.

Mums and Toddlers



So it is just before 10am on a Tuesday morning in the Parish Hall. All is set up ready for the fun to begin. Lots of toys to play with, new friends to make and crafts to do. Will it be a butterfly we make today, a wiggly worm or colour in some nice shapes? There is lots to do here. Of course all our mums, dads, grandmas, grandpas and carers, do keep an eye on us but they also get the chance to sit down, relax with a hot drink and have a chat themselves. Soon it's tidy up time and that means nursery rhymes to sing. Never the same songs two weeks in a row. Before we know it, it is 11.30am and time to go home for lunch. Never mind, we can come again next Tuesday for some more fun. Do you have children, grandchildren or care for preschool children? Then why not come along to the Parish Hall with them on a Tuesday morning in school term time. We are back on 9th September and would love to see you all.

Baptism and Confirmation

A service of confirmation with baptism will be held at St. Mary's on Sunday, 16th November at 10.45am with the Rt. Rev. Sam Corley, Bishop of Stockport.

Have you been baptised? If not, why not think and pray about it? It's about a new start, a new hope, a new life, and a new sense of belonging - known and named by Christ, made a part of his body, the Church.

Have you been baptised but not confirmed yet? Have you never received Holy Communion? The highest form of Christian worship, and the only act of worship which Jesus asked his followers to continue to do, was the Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist, or Communion. It's the simplest, and yet the most profound of rituals. We draw near with faith; we remember Christ's death; we receive his life; we go in peace, renewed and refreshed to serve in perfect freedom. Think and pray about it. At your confirmation the bishop will declare that God has called you by name and made you his own. And as you confirm your faith, so God's love for you will be confirmed by his Holy Spirit upon you, represented by the bishop's hands upon your head.

Are you wanting to know more? Contact the Rector, Rev. Mark Hart, 01270 620668 or *markhart61@gmail.com*

New Volunteers

The following volunteers have recently been recruited:
Susan Farrer (Steward), Charles Farrer (Steward), Daphne Seddon (Reserve Steward & Place of Welcome Volunteer) and Yvonne Herbert-Jackson (Steward). Thank you to all for their support.

When a Child Dies

Dr. Jonathan Griffiths (Associate Medical Director for Primary Care at Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board) has been working with colleagues to produce a framework document to help GPs support bereaved families when there is the death of a child. Listening events were held with bereaved parents to ensure their voice was heard, and the resulting framework includes a wealth of practical tips and guidance. "When a child dies - a framework for General Practice" has been acknowledged by the Royal College of General Practitioners which says *"This framework will help GPs to support parents through devastating grief while also looking to support themselves through the process. NHS Cheshire and Merseyside have produced a resource that will help GPs and thereby help the patients they serve. We would encourage all to read and adapt for their own local settings."*

It was published a couple of weeks ago. The framework is intended for a GP audience, although is publicly available here:
https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk//latest/publications/guidance/child-death-framework/

Jonathan wrote this blog to support the launch:
https://drjongriffiths.wordpress.com/2025/07/01/when-a-child-dies-a-framework-for-general-practice/

And here's a blog he wrote earlier this year on the National Child Mortality Database site sharing his family's personal experience:
https://www.ncmd.info/blog/jonathan-griffiths-can-you-sit-beside-me-on-my-mourning-bench/

Safeguarding at St. Mary's Church

Everyone who participates in the life of the church has a role to play in promoting a safer church for all. If you have any concerns about either yourself or another person that may be being harmed or is at risk of harm, please contact us straight away. If you are concerned about anybody working or volunteering within the church acting inappropriately, we want to know. Contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer (p38).

Diana Rathbone Edge (1936-2025)



Diana was born in Minshull Vernon and spent most of her childhood in Crewe. In 1956, aged 20, Diana moved with her parents to Welsh Row, Nantwich. The front room of the house was a general store at that time. Diana's father died in 1984, and her mother in 1989. Her sister, Marion, then moved to Welsh Row and we must pay tribute to Marion's care of Diana over the following years.

Diana has been a faithful and committed member of St. Mary's for 69 years, enjoying the worship and fellowship of the church, and playing an active part. She was a friendly, talkative person with a strong faith. As a regular member of prayer groups and study groups at St. Mary's over the years, Diana played her part both participating in them and leading them. Together with Marion, Diana served as a steward at St. Mary's for 25 years and we are grateful for that special contribution to the welcome we offer here.

Diana loved reading, drawing, and painting, and once had her paintings exhibited in the library, two of which were sold. She also loved writing poetry, and this was occasionally published in the parish magazine. Here is an example:

The Beech Tree by Diana Edge

All is pleasant and serene
As I stand on the village green
For many years I have stood,
Tall and strong, and made of wood

The children around me do play,
And I listen to everything they say
The birds on my branches do nest
And they sing their very best.

It's a lovely image of the tree as something hospitable and lasting, there before we're born and after we die, standing firm when all around changes and decays. It's a poem that indirectly points us to God, the unchanging source of life from whom we come and to whom we move. The one who in Jesus Christ has prepared a dwelling place for us, as the tree does for the birds. We can have confidence that the Lord in whom Diana trusted will hold her and bring her to the fulfilment of all that he has always had for her. The frustration and difficulty of this life will give way to the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Thank you Diana. May you rest in peace, and rise in glory.

Mark Hart

Congratulations ...



to Charlotte Oliver who has won the top prize for textile design at the 2025 Fashanne Awards for her collection "When the Clock Strikes Thirteen", inspired by the 1958 novel "Tom's Midnight Garden" by Philippa Pearce. The prize was judged and presented by Patrick Grant (judge on the BBC's The Great British Sewing Bee).

Charlotte says, "I have painstakingly hand drawn all my designs, using watercolour, acrylic and fine liner. I have a deep interest in historical and heritage design, and combined with modern, digital skills such as Photoshop and Illustrator, my collection encapsulates my personal design style - detailed and timeless interiors and fashion prints."

Charlotte has now graduated with a 1st Class Honours BA degree in Textile Design from Nottingham Trent University. We wish her well as she returns to Nottingham in September to train as an Art and Design teacher.





L to R: Anne Davies (BBC presenter and founder of Fashanne), Charlotte Oliver, Patrick Grant.

Grace in Africa

On Saturday 19th July I gave a breakfast talk about my recent 3.5 month adventure around Africa with Plan My Gap Year. I began in the city of Kumasi, the centre of Ghanaian Ashanti culture. Life in Ghana was loud and our host family enthusiastically welcomed us in.



I spent time volunteering in a school where I enjoyed teaching a year 7 class English grammar skills. Their enthusiasm for learning was heart-warming. Roughly 71% of Ghana are Christian so, as a Christian myself, I was keen to immerse myself in this side of Ghanaian life. Worship, especially through gospel music, was clearly an integral part of life, and I particularly enjoyed Sunday church services. Connecting with the locals through faith was uplifting and I felt lucky to be able to share this passion.



The next leg of my African adventure took place in Arusha, Tanzania, where we learnt about Maasai culture and had the opportunity to spend time in a Maasai village community, which was absolutely fascinating. The boys there strive to become warriors. To do so they are required to kill a lion and bring back its parts for the village as a token of their bravery. We met the chief of the village who showed us his branded scar and some photographs of his success. We talked to them about traditional practices, some of which shocked me.

Weekdays in Arusha were spent at a daycare where I helped to prepare porridge and take care of 60+ toddlers. This was a challenge in such hot, cramped conditions but nothing a speaker and some dancing couldn't fix! We spent lots of time singing, dancing and drawing.



Ngorogoro crater safari was one of the highlights, where we spent days inside the vast green space rich with safari animals.

During my time in Tanzania, I also flew to Zanzibar. This was quite a culture shock at first, as 99% of the population are Muslim and we happened to visit during Ramadan.



Swimming with dolphins, exploring night food markets and snorkelling amongst tropical fish were some of the amazing things I got up to, but my favourite: a skydive!

The last leg of my travels was spent in South Africa. Immediately the difference is noticeable. The country is generally much more westernised than most other African countries, largely due to its colonial history, particularly the influence of the Dutch and the British during the apartheid. We spent sunny days painting the playground and classrooms as a project to create a more welcoming environment.

After this placement we explored Cape Town with trips including Boulders Beach, famous for its penguins, and Camps Bay Beach. We hiked Table Mountain and Lion's Head and paraglided over the city. I still wanted to see more of what South Africa had to offer, so did a two week road trip called the "garden route" where I drove from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth stopping every few days at a new destination along the coast.

The last week was spent in Johannesburg: home of Nelson Mandela and the heart of South Africa's history. We were lucky enough to be able to visit SOWETO (south western township) the biggest township in South Africa with a population of over a million. Approximately 50% of the population of SA actually live in townships like this. We were shown around the township by a local, beginning in Mandela's house where he lived with his late wife Winnie on Vilakazi Street. Police riots happened here and hundreds of South Africans including many school children died in their fight for freedom.

The unfairness of it all made it much easier to understand why there seems to be much more hostility in South Africa. Whilst we met some beautiful, welcoming people, it was also clear that the apartheid had created a huge disparity between people.



If you missed my breakfast talk but want to hear in much more detail what I got up to, it can be found on St. Mary's YouTube page: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOrhd6rI4So&t=1168s*

Grace Lewis

Mission Commencing



I first started worshipping at St. Mary's on one leg, arriving late for every service, hobbling about a lot, dropping my service book and feeling I was very welcome nonetheless. I am now a regular worshipper at the fabulous 8am service and enjoy the community and fellowship very much.

Over the last 12 months, I have continued to arrive late, and now walk without a stick and I can run, very slowly. I have had fabulous support from our church community and the past year has led me to want to serve God and use what he has given me better. He is asking me to take my willingness to help kids and others through sports and the outdoor life to a Christian School and Mission in Southern India.

I leave on 4th August for an initial two week visit with the view to committing to a two-year residency as the Mission grows. I have no idea what I'm going to except that God has made it possible for me to go.

Thank you all for your warmth and welcome. Could you remember all the residents and staff at Samaritans Christian School, Yelagiri in your prayers. [And pray for Andy! - Ed.]

Andy Lewis

The Pearts



Some of you will have met this British/American family when they visited and spoke at St. Mary's, most recently in 2024. They are our mission partners working with CMS (Church Mission Society) in the city of Santa Cruz in Bolivia, based at an Anglican Church called Cristo Luz del Mundo (Christ, Light of the World).

Andrew and Lisa have a background working in the hotel business and Andrew has been using his experience in teaching financial skills, stewardship and setting up small businesses to individuals and groups. Recently they visited the city of Cochabamba to work with the Anglican Diocese with their long-term financial stability plan. He also works in the poorer part of the city where a Bolivian couple have set up a business running public toilet facilities and ministering to the locals who meet there for a Bible study.

I keep in touch with the family on WhatsApp and when I last heard from Lisa she was about to meet with a potential teacher for English classes they want to start at their church. They have a vision for a Community Garden and Centre at the church and projects of utilizing the resources they have to offer to the community, working together to meet practical needs and building relationships, preparing the ground for the gospel.

Liliana, now 18, stayed behind in Britain after the family last came over in 2024. She lived with some church friends in Hampshire and was working in 2 jobs while applying for university. She has since been accepted to start an engineering degree at Southampton University. She managed to visit her family in Bolivia for 2 precious weeks at the beginning of the summer, caught up with friends there and had a few days hiking in the foothills of the Andes with her parents and sister. Ideally the Pearts would want to come over to England to see her settle into university in September but are not yet sure if this will be possible.

Anayah is just about to turn 16 and start her last school year in the High School in Bolivia. Like her sister she has been very involved with their church and volunteers teaching English at a home for girls in Santa Cruz.

If you are interested to find out more about the Pearts and Bolivia and how to support them in prayer and practically please get in touch.

Elisabeth Findlay-Domes, Mission Support Group

Building Bridges

At Encounter on 20th July the theme for the informal service was "bridges". The participants worked in small groups to create bridges from recycled card and paper. Each group successfully produced a free-standing bridge within the strict time limit and there were some ingenious designs. Surprisingly when it came to strength testing some of the bridges were able to hold three china mugs.





Reflecting on the features of bridges; strength, connection, stability, safety and design the group went on to consider how we can build bridges with others in our Christian lives. There were some lively and thought-provoking discussions covering the need to meet people where they currently are, listen as much as speaking, overcoming differences and the need for bridge building at all levels from individuals to nations.





Throughout the Bible, bridges are not specifically mentioned (water was crossed by fords and boats) but there are many references to making connections with others. The Encounter group focused on Jesus as the ultimate bridge builder, spanning the chasm between man and God. All the prayers used that evening followed the bridge theme too.

If you would like to be involved in informal and creative worship within a friendly and supportive environment do come along to Encounter.

Carole Tilt

VJ Day Memories

My mother, Audrey Foster, (1923-2021) who attended St. Mary's in her last seven years of life, received a letter from her sweetheart, my father Derek Foster, on 29th August 1945. He wrote it on board HMS Victorious on 15th and 16th August while in the Pacific Ocean celebrating VJ Day.

He left school at 16 so by the age of 21 had gained experience as a junior reporter on the local newspaper and seen action in 1944 in the Atlantic before HMS Victorious entered the Pacific arena. He was in the Fleet Air Arm as a Telegraphist/Air Gunner. Here are some extracts from the letter:

"Darling mine, Another three days nearer to seeing you than when I last wrote. I've started counting them now. Hope I don't have to go above a hundred, it gets complicated.

We heard today that Japan had finally decided to resign from the war, and altho' the news was glad news, it was nevertheless something of an anti-climax, as we had ceased to take all active interest in the war on the day the Japs first offered to surrender.

The usual celebrations were forthcoming, splicing of the mainbrace and afternoon off. This is the third time I've seen the mainbrace spliced, and it's a rare occurrence. The other two were when Italy and Germany went out of the war. Did you have a good time?

The San Francisco radio broadcast the celebrations in the streets there and at Washington, which to a crowd of blokes outcast in the middle of an ocean, with little opportunity to rise to such an auspicious occasion, is a most primitive and cruel method of torture …

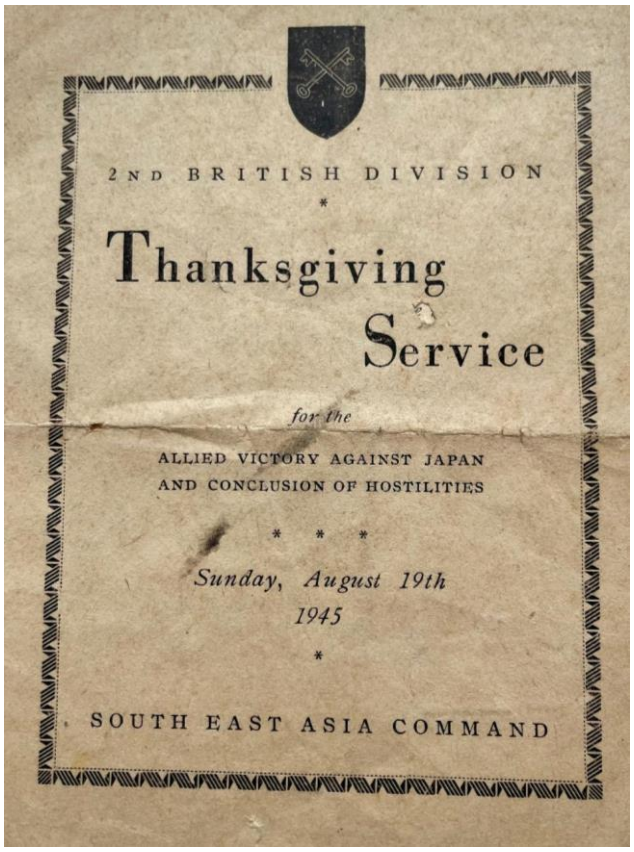
So long sweetheart, all my dreams are of you,
All my love Derek xxxx"



He returned home to journalism and in 1948 married my mother. He had a long, enjoyable career working for the Yorkshire Post and received an OBE in 1985 for services to journalism. My parents were married for 56 years before Derek died aged 80 in 2004. They had become sweethearts at Hemsworth Grammar School at the age of 15 when he wrote a note to Mum and popped it in her desk asking if they could be friends; such a long love.

Sue Hutt

Reconciliation across the generations 80 years on



After an episode of Antiques Roadshow in 2024 an appeal was made to anyone who had any memorabilia from VE and VJ day, the 80th anniversary of which would be commemorated in 2025. I submitted a picture of the thanksgiving service for the cessation of hostilities with Japan and the end of WWII dated 19th August 1945. This had survived and came to light after my father's death. I had forgotten all about the submission until February this year when I received a call from one of the Antiques Roadshow producers who wanted to discuss filming a piece for the VJ special.

My father had been in the army (Royal Engineers) since 1935 and was part of the British Expeditionary Force which went to France in 1939. He was evacuated from Dunkirk in May 1940. In 1942 he was posted to India.

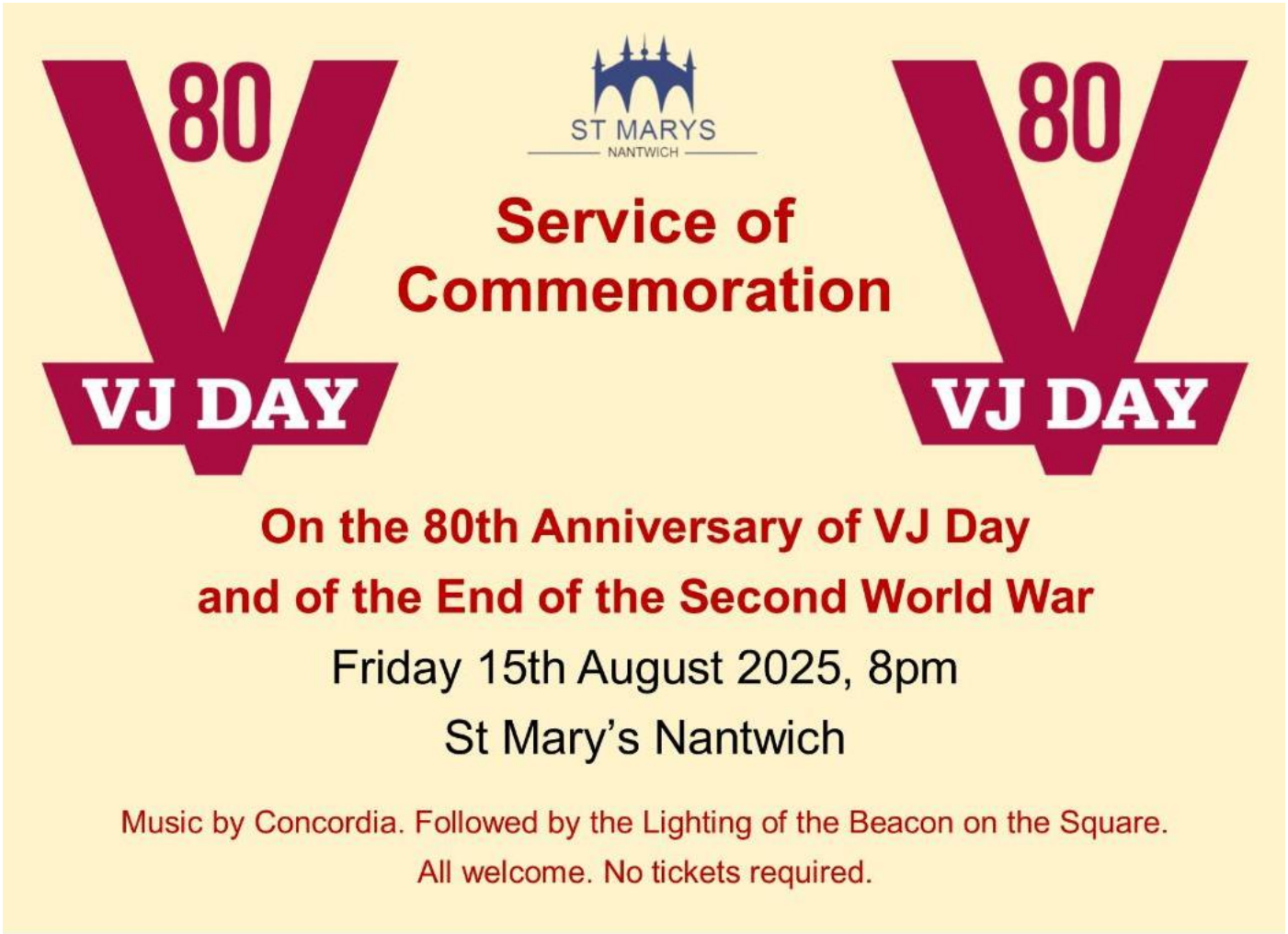


L to R: Fiona Bruce, Akiko, Robert

He had been in the Kohima Campaign, one of the bloodiest and bitter battles of WWII. The Stalingrad of the East, as one historian described it. A Japanese woman, Akiko, whose father had also fought in the same campaign, had also been in touch. This was rare as the Japanese casualties due to starvation, disease and combat were close to 100%.

The proposal was that we film a piece with Fiona Bruce at the National Arboretum. But the whole thrust the BBC were aiming for was for us to shake hands at the conclusion of filming as an act of reconciliation. I didn't agree straight away as my father had been vehemently anti-Japanese for the rest of his life, especially when he was suffering recurring bouts of Malaria. Would I be betraying his memory? After seeing the disgraceful episode in the Oval Office between Presidents Trump and Zelensky, I came to the conclusion that the world could do with a few more handshakes. Akiko and I even shared a hug off camera!

Robert Shotton



News in Pictures

Congratulations …



Congratulations to Dorothy Relton who celebrated her 90th birthday last month; here with her eldest and youngest granddaughters, Rosie (left) and Lily (right).



Congratulations to Erin O'Brien and Grace Lewis who have successfully auditioned for the National Youth Choir and will be singing at a BBC Prom in the Royal Albert Hall on Thursday, 11th September.



Congratulations to Chloe Ellis and Peter Bird, married on Saturday, 5th July, here with their parents in the chancel.

Nicaea 1700

To celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed an Encounter Explore was held in church on the evening of Sunday, 6th July.



The centrepiece of this was the display of illustrations of the creed by Pauline Baynes, whose work features in the Chronicles of Narnia by C S Lewis, and in many of J R R Tolkien's books. The Illustrated Creed is still on display, and a short guide to the meaning and history of the creed, written by the Rector, is available to take away.



The space above the misericords provides a beautiful, lit display area for people to explore.



Thank you to Carole Tilt for making a lovely cake in celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea.



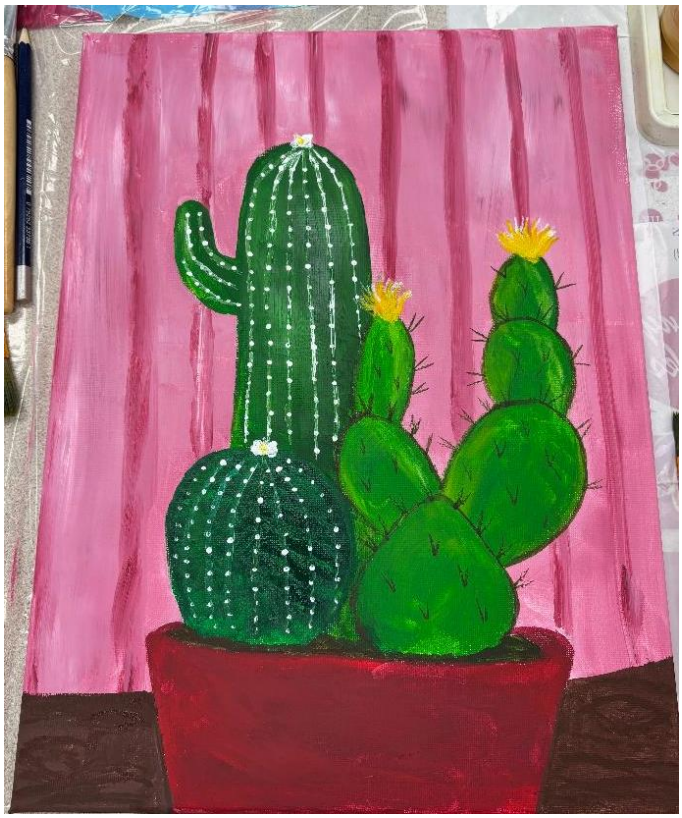
A bit of fun, but a serious point. If Christ is the bridge between Creation and God, as all parties at the Council of Nicaea agreed, then the "Gospel Train" only gets to its destination if there is no gap between the end of the bridge and God. Arius, who opposed the creed, wanted a gap, with Christ fully human, but not fully God.



Our last two Sewcials of the academic year were great successes. The first being tie dyeing (which most hadn't done since school), with a lovely array of adult and children's clothes beautifully patterned using marbles, rubber bands and different folding patterns to create them.

Our last session was based on "Sip and Paint" where everyone paints the same picture bit by bit gradually over an evening. We had two options and booklets with step-by-step pictures as due to work, bedtimes and babysitters, the amount of time each mum had that evening varied! Some great results and a great way to catch up over something enjoyable.





If you'd like to get involved in the autumn sessions do let me know!
Susie Phillips



Moving On:
The year 6 classes of St. Anne's Primary School and Nantwich Primary Academy attended a Leavers' Service at St. Mary's on Friday, 11th July.





They heard the story of Jesus calming the storm and thought about how they were feeling - nervous and excited at the same time.

The prayers involved moving around the church to take part in five activities focused on: Sorry, Wow!, Thank You, Please and Together. At the end, all the children were presented with a copy of St. John's Gospel, with a bookmark from St. Mary's.





"What's the plan if it rains?" We definitely didn't need a plan for wet weather but for 30 degrees instead! Both FNL groups met at Barony Park for rounders and games on Friday night, chosen by Lois, who has finished school and will soon be heading off to university. Rounders worked well, and ice lollies were very much appreciated!! Please pray for Lois as she waits for results and prepares for the next chapter ahead.



On Nantwich Pride Day, Saturday, 19th July, a service in the chancel at 12.30pm was led by Rev. Brian Statham, and attended by 29 people. It was held in association with "Open Table" who meet in Hospital St. Methodist Church. In the afternoon the Proud Marys from Chester, shown here with their conductor Matt Baker on the piano, held a short and lively concert.



Getting ready: Nantwich in Bloom members spent time on their hands and knees weeding and removing moss from the cobblestones in the well outside the West door in readiness for the Britian in Bloom competition judging.

Andrea Howell-Jones started this work and she has also been busy re-planting the bed near the Parish Hall which had been somewhat over-pruned.



Media fail less traditional Christians, says PR firm

Madeleine Davies

THE national media are failing to look beyond "traditional streams" of the Church and struggle to describe "contemporary" expressions of Christianity, a new report suggests.

There is "still a deep misunderstanding of contemporary expressions of faith and the value those within the Christian community can add to meaningful public discourse", it says.

The report, *Christianity in the Media 2025*, published on Wednesday, was commissioned by Jersey Road PR, a communications agency that works with Christian organisations. During the 12 months from December 2023 to November 2024, it used the professional media-monitoring platform Agility PR



stories. The statistician Dr Peter Brierley has estimated that Pentecostal attendance grew by more than

but how to describe more contemporary expressions appears to be more challenging. Finding a syntax to describe these would not only present the stories more accurately, but would also honour those for whom these practices are deeply intrinsic to their lives."

Both the RC Church and the Church of England received about twice as many negative mentions as positive ones in the sample of articles studied. The report says that "politics and culture war issues were key sources of stories," and that stories about Christianity and politics were "twice as likely to be negative than positive".

In total, more than 20 per cent of the 5200 stories conveyed a positive impression of Christianity, a little more than 30 per cent were negative,

ST MARY'S, NANTWICH



Three in one, and one in three: the band of St Mary's, Nantwich, in Chester diocese, rang a peal of 3 × 1700 changes on their eight bells to commemorate the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea last month. It was the first performance of a new method, Nicene Creed Alliance Major, composed by Graham John and conducted by Paul Jopp, and the first recorded peal in celebration of the creed. The Rector, the Revd Dr Mark Hart, thanked the tower captain, Stefan Zientek, for "conceiving a peal which could reflect both the 1700th birthday of the creed and its Trinitarian structure"

National recognition of the peal of Nicene Creed Alliance Major rung at St. Mary's on 21st June - a report in the Church Times! Well done to all the ringers.



A pigeon which had been in church for many days finally left on Sunday, 27th July, during Evensong, just before the Nunc Dimittis.

Did it jump or was it pushed? Who is that dodgy looking character lurking in the shadows?



Forthcoming Events

Church Walk to Poole Chapel and Quiet Garden

Saturday, 2nd August at 11am. This will be a circular guided walk of approximately 5.5 miles in the local area on quiet lanes and footpaths with a stop for a picnic lunch and a short prayer/reflection. All welcome, please book with Carole Tilt or the Parish Office by **30th July.**

Final Lunchtime Concert

Thursday, 7th August, 12.30-1.15pm - Simon Russell (organ).

Mothers' Union Summer of Hope Fund Raising Event

Thursday, 7th August, 2-4pmin the Parish Hall. Tickets available at door priced £4, includes Scone with Rodders Clotted Cream and Tiptree Strawberry Jam (or cake) with hot drink. Home baking, book stalls and raffle tickets (£1 per ticket). All welcome to attend.

Seniors' Lounge

The next meetings will be on **Sundays 10th August & 14th September**, 3pm in the Parish Hall - company and chat over tea/coffee & cake.





Discovering Medieval St. Mary's

A talk by Katie Everett, **Wednesday, 10th September** 2pm in Church. Beginning with the architecture of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Katie will examine existing visual evidence to highlight the medieval parts of the church that we know and love today. A Nantwich girl, Katie has just graduated in History of Art from Warwick University and her talk will present the results of her dissertation study of St. Mary's which was highly commended by her lecturers, and given a first class mark, as it really tries to push the boundaries of what we know about the medieval church.

You are guaranteed to learn something new, about St. Mary's now, and about what has been lost. Free entry.



Saturday 13th September 3pm, St Mary's Nantwich
The perfect way to spend a Saturday afternoon in Nantwich!
Free entry Donations to St Mary's

St. Mary's Cake and a Cuppa

Saturday, 13th September, 4-6pm in the Parish Hall.
Are you relatively new to St. Mary's? Still not sure what's going on or how to be involved? Please join us at our welcome tea to discover more about St. Mary's. There will be a short presentation at 5pm.

Light refreshments including tea and cakes will be provided, and there will be activities for children. More information from Rev. Mark Hart.

If you are able, please RSVP to *office@stmarysnantwich.org.uk* so we know numbers for catering. Please also tell us of any dietary requirements. Thank you. We look forward to seeing you.

September Breakfast

The September breakfast will take place on **Saturday, 20th September**, at 8.30am in The Tea Lounge at Nantwich Football Stadium. As usual bookings available on the sign-up sheet at the back of Church or via the office. Once booked we have to pay.

The speaker will be **Kerry Christopher**, talking about her work as a Children and Families Social Worker, that spans 23 years working in the courts first as a Social Worker, then as a Children's Guardian, then within the Local Authority as a Fostering and Adoption Social Worker, and most recently as an Adoption Team Manager.

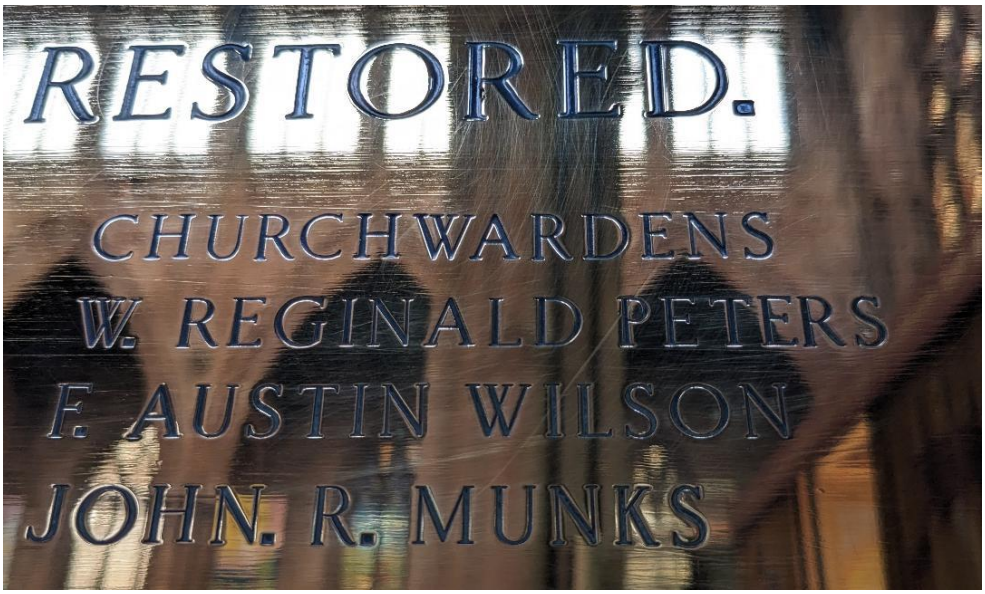
See also **"Special Services & Events Calendar"** on p. 40.

Where is it? Now with a prize for the winner!



There were no entries to last month's competition, with an answer to the whereabouts of this floor tiling. Is no-one interested, or was it too difficult? To be fair, it is well hidden, right up against the east wall of the sanctuary in a short gap between the end of Victorian marble floor and the wall. We must assume that this lower tiling is the earlier floor. When the steward on duty isn't looking, sneak over the rope barrier and have a look sometime.

An easier one this month, so we hope there'll be a response. Where can you find these names of former churchwardens? Answers by 20th September, and a small prize for the randomly selected winner.



Celebrating the Season of Creation

Orthodox Churches begin their church year on 1st September and they have an ancient practice of marking that date as Creation Day. The Western Churches have long marked 4th October as the Feast of St. Francis, patron saint of animals and ecology.

In 2007 there was an ecumenical move to make the period around and between the two dates a Season of Creation. This has become widely recognised within all churches, including the Church of England.

Join us as we celebrate the season this year for the first time at St. Mary's. On each of the following Sundays all the services will follow the theme indicated:

Sunday, 7th September: SKY

There is a total lunar eclipse on the evening of this day, and weather permitting there will be a tower roof visit during Encounter. We will consider the sky in its broadest sense – from our atmosphere to outer space.

Sunday, 14th September: TREES (Holy Cross Day)

Holy Cross Day falls on 14th September. The feast is celebrated across the western and eastern churches, from the date when the True Cross is said to have been found by Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine.

Sunday, 21st September: HUMANITY (St. Matthew)

Matthew was called from tax collecting to be an apostle and evangelist. The day provides an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between humanity and the material world.

Sunday, 28th September: ANGELS (St. Michael & All Angels)

"We believe in one God … maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen …" On this day we will reflect on the unseen part of creation.

Sunday, 5th October: ANIMALS (St. Francis)

There will be a focus on animals in all the services, but an opportunity in particular for the 9.30am All Age Service to be made an All Species Service with the Blessing of Animals!

Sunday, 12th October: HARVEST

In addition to Harvest Festival being held at all our usual service times, at 3pm on this day the Cheshire Harvest Service will take place at St. Mary's. Reaseheath College will hold an event on the Square. The social committee is planning a harvest lunch.

Mark Hart

Come and Enjoy the Singing Experience!

I'm always trying to think of new ways to encourage people to sing. Singing has been a vital part of my very existence for as long as I can remember and it's a privilege to be part of the St. Mary's Church "singing experience".

St. Mary's provides a magnificent space for worship and a place for music. We can fill the wonderful silence of the building with song.

Singing embraces many different intellectual skills and in addition it uplifts and energises, appeals to our senses and emotions and can also be a real boost to good health and wellbeing.

So, I'm asking you if you would like to take part in a new St. Mary's singing venture?

We already have a church choir and a chamber choir, a worship group and a children's singing group. We don't have a **Community Choir**, a choir that's open to everyone, with no great commitment or pressure, but a choir that enables the opportunity to come along and just sing a variety of more modern, popular songs, to make new friends, to forget the problems of everyday life for a while.

The church is booked for **Monday, 15th September, 7-8.30pm** and there is a sheet at the back of the church to sign if you would like to give a Community Choir a try. No age limit (under 18s to be accompanied by an adult) or cost, just come along and enjoy the singing experience!

Alison Phillips, Director of Music



Start

Got questions about life and the Christian faith?

New to St. Mary's?
New to the Christian faith and church life?
Just wondering what the Christian faith is all about?
Thinking about Baptism or Confirmation?
Why not join us for Start?

Run in informal small groups, each session involves video clips, exercises, group discussion and time for reflection. Each session lasts about 90 minutes and assumes no previous knowledge of the Christian faith or of the Church. Light refreshments are included and there is no charge for attending.

Start will help you think about God, Jesus and the journey of life. Sessions tackle questions like:

- What's life all about and where are we going?
- Does God exist and what is God like?
- Why is the world in such a mess?
- Who was Jesus, and is He relevant today?
- Why did Jesus die?
- How do I move on with God in my life?

The next course begins on **Tuesday, 23rd September** and finishes on **4th November 2025**. It will take place in **St. Mary's Parish Hall** (opposite the church) from **7.00-9.00pm**.

For further information or to book on the course please e-mail Canon David Taylor at *canondavid12@uwclub.net*, phone 01270 618936 or contact the Parish Office.

The Wheat and the Weeds

Jesus painted word pictures when he was teaching. In the gospel according to St. Matthew we have a picture of fields full of wheat and weeds. Many of us have found that our gardens are full of the plants we want and the weeds among them. The weeds seem to have been able to withstand the drought and flourish in the warmth of this spring and summer. The plants on the other hand that have been carefully planted have been gasping for water. Daily watering has been a task for several months.

We are being urged to have wild gardens with lots of grasses to combat climate change and to help wildlife. Some farmers are re-wilding or adapting to new methods of production.

There are life lessons here. Jesus was a brilliant observer of life around him. He knew that people were choked by the many tasks and activities, the problems and politics of their daily lives. So often as the weeds can choke the plants so these situations can choke the goodness that is inside everyone. We only have to look around the world to see the evil that is active and is so often focussed on by the media.

We need to give care and nourishment to the goodness that is within us. Prayer changes things because it helps us to focus on the good. God uses each of us to help and support goodness but only if we let him. There is a chorus "Prayer changes things, prayer changes things, day by day then let us pray for prayer changes things". We do not need to be strangled by the weeds.

I have recently been ill and I have received so much kindness and support from so many people. I know that so many were praying for me and helping me that they lit up the whole world for me.

After the death of an elderly priest in the east end of London his notebook was found. In it was a list of names. They were all the many people whom he met as he worked and for whom he prayed. A life of praying and caring for those around him. A life of ensuring that the wheat overcame the weeds.

Dot Roxby

From the Registers: June 2025

Holy Baptism

We welcome you into the Lord's family

1st	Henry Grundy	15th	Harvey Bibby
1st	Luca Tweats	15th	Connor Murray
1st	Harrison Tweats	15th	Lillie-Bet Parton
15th	Ebony Bibby	15th	Lilith Robinson
15th	Paige Bibby	18th	Amelia Teanby
15th	Darcey Bibby		

Holy Matrimony

Bless these thy servants

7th	Isaac Boyton & Anna Ghader
20th	Brett Upchurch & Emily Carson
27th	Sam Revell & Megan Allcock
28th	Aidan Cox & Laura Eaton

Funerals

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

9th	Peter Robinson (80)	24th	Lindy Moss (67)
10th	Barbara Turner (81)	27th	Jane Kelly-McIntyre (60)

From the Registers: July 2025

Holy Baptism

We welcome you into the Lord's family

20th	Jude Kirkham	20th	Cooper Priest

Holy Matrimony

Bless these thy servants

5th	Peter Bird & Chloe Ellis

Funerals

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

9th	Diana Edge (89)	18th	Gladys Bedson (96)
10th	Joan Brookfield (77)	24th	Thelma Jones (83)

Readings for August

3rd August *(7th Sunday after Trinity)*	Colossians 3: 1-11 Luke 12: 13-21
10th August *(8th Sunday after Trinity)*	Hebrews 11: 1-3, 8-16 Luke 12: 32-40
17th August *(9th Sunday after Trinity)*	Hebrews 11: 29-12: 2 Luke 12: 49-56
24th August *(10th Sunday after Trinity)*	Hebrews 12: 18-29 Luke 13: 10-17
31st August *(11th Sunday after Trinity)*	Hebrews 13: 1-8, 15-16 Luke 14: 1, 7-14

Readings for the Season of Creation

7th September *(Sky)*	Genesis 1: 1-19 Luke 21: 25-33
14th September *(Trees - Holy Cross Day)*	Genesis 2: 4-17 John 3: 13-17
21st September *(Humanity - St. Matthew)*	Proverbs 3: 13-18 Matthew 9: 9-13
28th September *(Angels - St. Michael & All Angels)*	Genesis 28: 10-17 John 1: 47-51
5th October *(Animals - St. Francis)*	Genesis 1: 20-25 Luke 12: 22-34
12th October *(Harvest)*	Philippians 4: 4-9 John 6: 25-35

Regular Services & Groups

The church is open for all our usual regular services, and open to visitors Monday-Saturday, 9.30am-4pm. The 9.30am and 10.45am Sunday services continue to be live-streamed on YouTube most weeks. Services and events below are held weekly unless stated otherwise, and this is the normal pattern, which may occasionally change (check the weekly notice sheet).

Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion
	9.30am	All Age Worship (Communion 1st Sunday)
	10.45am	Holy Communion
	2.30pm	Holy Baptism (1st and 3rd Sundays)
	3.00pm	Seniors' Lounge (2nd Sunday)
	3.00pm	Afternoon Prayer or Holy Communion (Richmond Village)
	3.30pm	Holy Baptism (1st and 3rd Sundays)
	6.00pm	Evensong
	7.15pm	Encounter (1st & 3rd Sundays)
Monday	8.00pm	Welcome to Baptism (2nd Monday)
Tuesday	8.30am	Morning Prayer
	10.00am	Mums & Toddlers in the Parish Hall
	3.45pm	SING!@St.Mary's in the Parish Hall
Wednesday	8.30am	Morning Prayer
	11.00am	Holy Communion
Thursday	8.30am	Morning Prayer
	9.30am	Flower Arrangers in Church
	10.00am	Little Fish Toddler Group in Church
	7.00pm	Bellringing practice in the Tower
Friday	8.30am	Morning Prayer
	10am-1pm	Place of Welcome in the Parish Hall
	2.00pm	Mothers' Union (3rd Friday) in the Parish Hall
	7.00pm	Choir Practice in Church
	6.30pm	Junior FNL
	7.30pm	FNL
Saturday	8.30am	Morning Prayer
	8.30am	St. Mary's Breakfast (3rd Saturday)
	10.00am	Concordia Practice in Church



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Parish Office:	Gail Johnson & Miriam Harvey	
(Open 9am-12noon Mon-Fri	Church Walk, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 5RG	
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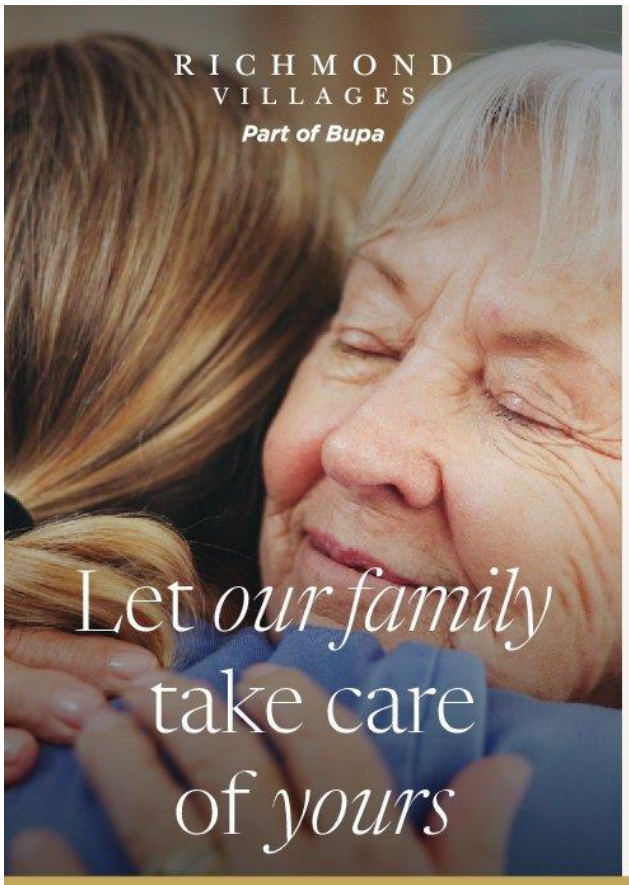
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Special Services & Events Calendar August-October 2025

August	7th	Final Lunchtime Concert - Simon Russell (organ)
	7th	Mothers' Union "Summer of Hope" fundraising Afternoon Tea in the Parish Hall
	12th	Holiday Club
	15th	VJ Day Service in Church, 8.00pm followed by an Act of Remembrance and Lighting of the Beacon
	17th	Encounter Supper in the Parish Hall, 7.15pm
	29th	Refreshments in the Hall, 2-4pm – Food Festival
	30th	Food Festival Refreshments, 10am-2pm, Hall/Grounds
	31st	Evensong with St. Christopher Chorale, 6pm
September	7th	Season of Creation - Sky
	10th	Discovering Medieval St. Mary's. A talk by Katie Everett, 2pm in church
	13th	Concordia Concert in Church, 3pm
	13th	Welcome Tea, 4-6pm
	14th	Season of Creation - Trees/Holy Cross Day
	17th	Sound Bath in Church, 7.15pm
	19th-21st	Youth Weekend Away
	20th	St. Mary's Breakfast at Nantwich Football Club, 8.30am
	21st	Season of Creation - Humanity/St. Matthew
	28th	Season of Creation - Angels/St. Michael & All Angels
October	5th	Season of Creation - Animals/St. Francis with Blessing of Animals
	12th	Season of Creation - Harvest Festival, Harvest Lunch and Cheshire Harvest Service
	15th	Words & Music Concert
	18th	St. Mary's Breakfast at Nantwich Football Club, 8.30am
		Candlelight Concert in Church, 7.30pm
	19th	Civic Service, 10.45am
	22nd	Sound Bath in Church, 7.15pm
	25th	Encounter Explore Day in Church, 11am-4pm, a C.S. Lewis day, marking the 75th anniversary of the publication of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe"