

# OUTLOOK



December  
2023

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# The Parish of St. Thomas, Mellor

Registered Charity No. 1130414

**Vicar: Revd Andrew Tawn , The Vicarage , 51 Church Road, Mellor**

Phone 0161 604 4993      Vicarage

Email revandrewtawn@gmail.com

**Parish Office** The Mellor Centre, Church Road, Mellor, Stockport SK6 5LX

For all enquiries and bookings for the church & Mellor Centre  
contact phone 0161 484 5079 or email office@mellorchurch.org

The Office is open Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 12.30pm

**Parish Office Admin.** Val Wallace (Mon, Wed & Thurs mornings)

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Alex Eggeman 07772849657

**Dep Church Warden** Rachel Howling 0161 427 5891

**PCC Treasurer** Richard Elliott contact via Parish Office

**Assistant** David Butterworth

**Treasurers** Andrew Sanders

**Gift Aid Secretary** Karen Greenough

**PCC Secretary** Julie Elliott 64 Ernocroft Road 427 5981

**Director of Music** Tom Howling (email:t.howling@nhs.net)

**Editors of Outlook Magazine** Maggie Williams and Margaret Leng

**Elected Members** Ian Dayes, Alison Dowdeswell, Alex Eggeman, Julie Elliott,

**Of PCC** Richard Elliott, Kate Higgins, David Horsfall, Sylvia Knight,

Angie Stanton, Sian Yeowell.

Emma Wilson & Kathryn Maxwell (Safeguarding Officers)

**Deanery / Diocesan** Judith Shiel / Mary Heijbroek

**Churches Together in Marple Representative** Helen Kennedy

**Pastoral Care Group Coordinator** Lesley Futchter 449 0977

*Articles for Outlook should be submitted to the editor (preferably by email)  
melloroutlooksubmissions@gmail.com.*

*The deadline for the January issue is **December 7th** please.*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR DECEMBER 2023

2 Sat	1pm to 5pm	Winter Wonderland Marple Bridge
<b>3 Sun Advent Sunday</b>	8.30am 10.00am 6.30pm	Holy Communion Parish Communion Advent Carol Service
6 Wed	10.00am	Holy Communion (The Mellor Centre)
<b>10 Sun 2nd Sunday of Advent</b>	8.30am 10.00am 6.30pm	Holy Communion Parish Communion Evening Prayer (The Mellor Centre)
11 Mon	10.45am-12 noon	Coffee & Chat (The Mellor Centre)
13 Wed	10.00am	Holy Communion (The Mellor Centre)
<b>17 Sun 3rd Sunday of Advent</b>	8.30am 10.00am 6.30pm	Holy Communion Parish Communion Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols
20 Wed	10.00am	Holy Communion (The Mellor Centre)
20 Wed	7.30pm	Rose Queen Molly Carol Singing
<b>24 Sun Christmas Eve</b>	8.30am 10.00am 4.00pm 5.30pm 11.30pm	Holy Communion Parish Communion Crib & Toy Service Crib & Toy Service Midnight Mass
25 Mon Christmas Day	10.00am	Parish Christmas Communion
<b>31 Sun 1st Sunday of Christmas</b>	8.30am 10.00am 6.30pm	Holy Communion Parish Communion Evening Prayer (The Mellor Centre)

Coffee and Chat with the Vicar is on the 2nd Monday of the month

Prayer Group meets every Monday 10.30 to 11.00 am (The Mellor Centre)

**Women's Evening Fellowship meets on the second Wednesday 2-4pm (The Mellor Centre)**

Toddlers' Group meets on Thursday each week 10.00 am to 11.30 am (The Mellor Centre)

Knit and Natter meets on Thursday each week 10.30 am to 12 noon (The Mellor Centre)

The Choir practises each week on Friday at 6.30 pm



## Vicar's Viewpoint December 2023

### Crib services and Carol services

For weeks people have been asking, 'Are you going to have a Crib service this year?' As a newcomer, it is obvious that the crib service at St. Thomas' has been a significant event for many years. I am delighted that this year we are going to be returning to having two crib services on Christmas Eve: at 4 pm and 5.30 pm. I am deeply grateful to the many people who are needed to make this happen. To avoid having too many people turn up for one service we are using a ticketing system. The tickets will be free, but will help us know how many people are intending to come to each service. For more information please contact the parish office.

Before we get to Christmas Eve we have two great musical services of preparation:

**Advent Carol Service, Sunday  
3rd December at 6.30 pm  
Nine Lessons and Carols for  
Christmas, Sunday 17th  
December at 6.30 pm.**

We are blessed to have a very fine choir. Please do come and enjoy their singing.

## Balancing our books

First of all I want to say 'thank you' to all who contribute to the church, in terms of your money, your time, your talents and your work. The Church relies on the generosity of givers and fundraising events such as the Fete to balance the books. However, costs have increased over recent years and income has not kept pace so, as a result, the balance of income and expenditure is not sustainable. Income from regular givers has declined from £54,000 in 2016 to just over £45,000 in 2022. While the church has some reserves, at this level of deficit these will be insufficient to last more than another year.

I preached about this in October, pointing out that we were heading for a shortfall of £17,000 by the end of the year. I know this is a difficult time to be asking for more money, when the cost of living is increasing, but we have already seen a generous response from a number of people to this appeal, and I truly believe we can manage to balance our books if we do it together. If you count yourself a member of St. Thomas', please could you consider the following steps:

- If you are able to **gift aid your giving** (and do not do so already) that would help us enormously. That immediately increases the value of your giving by 25%.
- If you are not already giving by **standing order from your bank**, I encourage you to consider doing this. It makes it much easier for us to meet our regular financial commitments when we have a reliable regular income.
- Finally, are you able to **increase your giving**? It may be a while since you last reviewed your donations to the church.

If you are not a member of the church but receive Outlook out of interest, we are grateful for any support you choose to give.

If you would like to give, either regularly or a one off donation, please contact the church treasurer via the parish office:

[office@mellorchurch.org](mailto:office@mellorchurch.org) or

phone: 0161 484 5079

We will get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you so much for your help.

### **Confirmation and a course for people wanting to explore faith**

The last confirmation service held in St. Thomas' was over 6 years ago. We have booked Bishop Sam, the Bishop of Stockport to come to St. Thomas' on Sunday 14th January for our 10 am service, and I would love to get a group of candidates together, to be confirmed at that service. I have invited the young people of secondary school age who already attend church to consider this. But I wonder if there are any adults who might also be interested?

I will gladly organise a separate short course for anyone who would like to explore questions of faith and to learn more about the Bible, God and prayer. Are there questions you would like to ask about faith? I would never tell you what you should believe. What I can do is explain some of the different answers people have come up with to the questions you are asking, and let you decide which of those answers is helpful to you.

People are most welcome to attend this course without any commitment to being confirmed, or even to attending church, but just to come and see. If you are at all interested, please do contact me:

[revandrewtawn@gmail.com](mailto:revandrewtawn@gmail.com)

## Prayer in troubled times

The conflict in the Middle East has dominated the news recently. Meanwhile the war continues in Ukraine and in many other places in the world. These conflicts seem so entrenched it is hard to see how they will ever come to an end. But as Christians we have to believe that what is impossible for humans can become possible with God. Many people from different faiths share this universal prayer for peace:

*Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth;  
lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust;  
lead us from hate to love, from war to peace.  
Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe.*

I used the following prayer at the end of a service one Sunday recently and a few people asked if I could put the prayer in Outlook.



The following comforting words come from Teresa of Avila (1515-1582):

*'Let nothing disturb you; nothing dismay you;  
All things pass, but God never changes.  
Whoever has God lacks nothing:  
If you have God, you have more than enough.'  
God bless you and give you the peace which this world cannot give.*

Andrew

## Prayer for the Month

from the Prayer Group

Christ, born in a stable, give courage to all who are homeless.

Christ, for whom the angels sang, give the song of the kingdom to all who weep.

**Christ, worshipped by the shepherds, give peace on earth to all who are oppressed.**

Christ, before whom the wise men knelt, give humility and wisdom to all who govern.

Christ, whose radiance filled a lowly manger, give the glory of your resurrection to all who rest in you.

Jesus, Saviour, Child of Mary, you know us and love us,

You share our lives and hear our prayers.

Glory to you for ever.

Amen.

## Reverse Advent 2023

Lynda Gwyther

This year, once again, there will be a 'Reverse Advent' in Church. Each Sunday of Advent you will be asked to bring different gifts which will be distributed to those who need them. This will include **Wood Street Mission** and the **Wellspring**.



Week 1 - Chocolate, sweets, selection boxes.

Week 2 - Children's books.

Week 3 - Toiletries (No razors)

Week 4 - Adult hats, gloves, scarves, socks.



Many thanks for your support.

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## Parish Office Christmas Opening Times

Please note the Parish Office will close for Christmas and New Year on Thursday 21st December at 12.30pm and re-open on Tuesday 2nd January at 9.30am.



*Thank you to all of you who work so hard for us in the Office to keep us on track! To Val and Mike, Lorraine, Sue and all the others who 'drop in' we wish you a very Happy Christmas. Eds*



# Christmas Eve Crib & Toy Service at St. Thomas' Church Mellor



The timeless beauty of the Christmas story will be told with carols in candlelight. Children are invited to dress as angels, sheep and shepherds.



## At 4pm or 5.30pm Christmas Eve

Due to the popularity of the services, numbers are restricted, with free tickets available from 5<sup>th</sup> December by using this link

<https://www.mellorchurchchoir.co.uk/crib-service> , QR code or via the Parish Centre Office.

Presents for children brought by the congregation will be taken to the Wood Street Mission to help make their Christmas special.







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## Remembrance Poppies – Red and White

*In Flanders fields the poppies grow, between the crosses, row on row.'*

Lt. Colonel John McCrae's 1915 verse was the source of the remembrance poppy. In 1918 a French YWCA volunteer Anna Guerin took the flower home and used French war-affected veterans and families to make fabric flowers to raise money for charity. The poppy was then promoted throughout the Commonwealth, the first British poppy appeal taking place in 1931 with French-made flowers, before a British factory was set up.

The red poppy appeal is today organised by the Royal British Legion, and specifically represents remembrance associated with the British Armed Forces, which includes many thousands from Africa, Canada, India, Australia and New Zealand.

Another poppy appeared in 1933, a white one, first produced by the Cooperative Women's Guild, and now by the Peace Pledge Union, to symbolise two things: a message of 'no more war', and a remembrance of



ALL victims of war, to include civilians and non-combatants of all nationalities. Over the years the white poppy has been described by some as 'an insult to the war dead' and a 'left wing political symbol', but it was never intended to replace or oppose the red poppy.

Indeed, the Royal British Legion is not opposed to the white poppy, and states on its website that it has no objection to any other colour of poppy, and that some volunteers choose to wear these side by side. It has also condemned online abuse of white poppy wearers. St. John's Ambulance also allows its volunteers to wear red or white poppies.

In the light of the current and recent fighting in Syria, Ukraine and Gaza it seems more appropriate than ever to make a point of remembering the suffering of innocent civilian populations as well as those in the armed forces.

*Mike Barley*

*Thank you Mike for your very moving Remembrance tribute. Ed.*

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## Mellor Birds.

*Maggie Williams*

Clare was telling me of a good bird watching spot. It is outside Libby's at the back. She and Joh sat there enjoying their refreshments and watched **dippers** (cinclus cinclus) down below in the Goyt. This was when the river was not so high as it is today. So pick a day when the river is low enough for the dippers to stand on a rock to bob up and down. If you are not sure where to look, look for some white poo on the rocks.



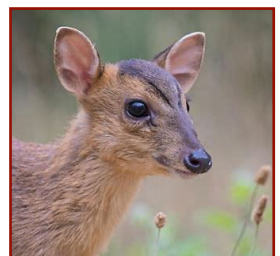
Dippers are a bit smaller than a blackbird and have a black back with white chest and a gorgeous chestnut band above their legs which is not always easy to see unless you have binoculars. They fly low and fast up and down the Goyt. I think their whirring wings are like a toy propeller you wind around on an elastic band and let go. They feed underwater and swim well despite not having web feet.



When Peter and I got off the 385 bus at its terminus on Shiloh Road and started to walk down Rush Lane towards Meadow Farm we met Daryl and Moira on their bikes. They told us that on two occasions they have seen a big round black bird on the stone walls near five lane ends. When they got home and looked it up they were sure they were male **black grouse**.

The male is the size of a football and wears white frilly knickers and has two bright red markings above the eye like Christmas decorations. The females are brownish. I have only ever seen them when I got up at 4am and went off to Llandegla forest (near Wrexham an hour and a quarter away) in April to see a Lek of about a dozen birds.

Last week Margaret and Richard L had a **muntjac deer** jump into their garden on Clement Road and jump back out again. It looked very cute.



**NOVEMBER 2nd 2023:**

**A VERY SPECIAL EVENING AT THE BRIDGEWATER HALL.**



What a wonderful tribute to Peter and Paddi Cunningham from the Hallé Orchestra in recognition of all the work they did for the Hallé Education Fund.

Peter Cunningham was a greatly respected and highly talented violinist in the orchestra which he joined in 1971. Sadly he died in 1993 but he had already become very enthusiastically involved in the education programme.

After his death Paddi took on his legacy through establishing the Peter Cunningham Memorial Fund, organising and hosting chamber concerts in Mellor church and Parish Centre which ran for 28 years, an amazing achievement. We, in Mellor, were treated to concerts given by first-rate musicians from The Hallé giving up their time freely (in every sense of the word) virtually on our doorstep. One of the joys of these evenings was the informality of the players, who we felt we got to know through their amusing anecdotes and insightful explanations of the music. Being introduced to an astonishing variety of chamber music of the highest quality greatly enriched Mellor's cultural life.

The final concert was in April this year, after which the idea of a public acknowledgement of all Paddi's hard work was put forward. Seeing Paddi standing on the stage in front of the orchestra while Sir Mark Elder thanked her for all the time and energy she had invested in the series, listing some of the ways the thousands of pounds raised had been put to good use in the Hallé Education Fund, was a great thrill for all her family and friends present. She was presented with a framed photo of the orchestra which they had all signed - the perfect gift. It was indeed a very special evening.



*Helen Kennedy*



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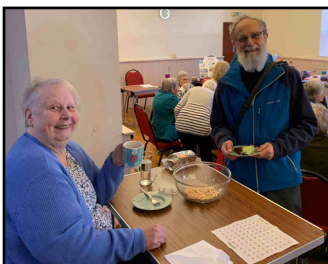
## Women's Evening Fellowship

Following closely behind our November Fundraiser for St Ann's Hospice New Building Fund comes our **December Christmas Party**. Once again this will be happening in the afternoon as coming out in the cold and dark of a winter evening has understandably not proved popular.

We will be meeting from 2-4 pm on Wednesday December 13th in The Mellor Centre for a time of fellowship and celebration which will include quizzes and games and seasonal refreshments.

As ever there is no charge for this event but members are asked to bring a wrapped gift (value £5) for our Lucky Dip which will round off the afternoon.

### Bingo and Bakes for St Anne's Hospice



Many thanks to all who supported the Bingo and Bakes for St Anne's Hospice. It raised £900. It was helped by Lynda selling raffle tickets and calling out the Bingo numbers and members producing yummy cakes, Christmas decorations and raffle prizes.

*Lesley Fatcher.*






# The Write Before Christmas...




Christmas Card writing evening at The Mellor Centre, Church Lane,  
Mellor

**Tuesday 5th December, 4:30-6:30pm**



You bring the cards, we'll supply a festive drink and cake to sustain  
you!

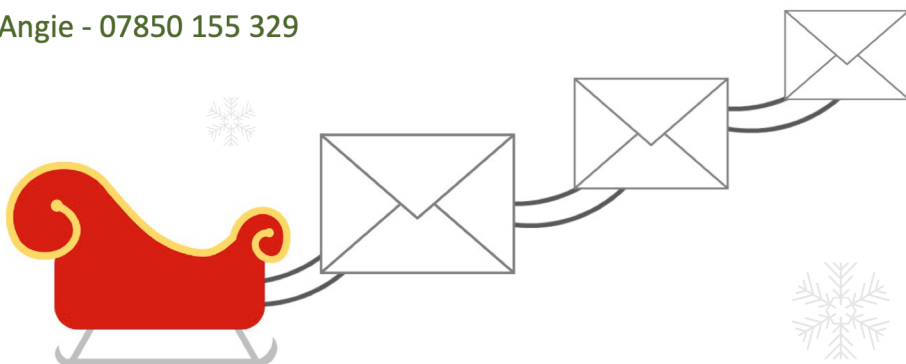
Stationery Supplies will provide some sparkly pens to write with and  
will be there selling Christmas Gifts, pens & cards.



Tickets are £7.50 per person and available from:

Mellor Centre - 0161 484 5079

Angie - 07850 155 329





## Captain Ken

*Ken Owen*

When I first went to sea, in the early fifties, like most boys of my age, I was intrigued to know that off the coast of China there were still pirates operating.

While visiting Hong Kong, I remember noticing that the Butterfield and Swire coastal China Navigation ships, which, in those days, served the Chinese ports, had very strong defences protecting their bridges and accommodation blocks. This was to prevent pirates hiding amongst the deck passengers, taking control of the ship.

When Mau Tse Tung's Navy gained control of the coastal waters the Chinese pirates were unable to operate.

Shipping world wide increased massively, and general cargo ships gave way to huge container ships while tankers grew bigger and bigger.

It was in the late eighties when I was captain of a very large container ship when I was horrified to learn that a great friend and colleague of mine, commanding a sister ship, had been boarded and robbed just clear of the Singapore Straits.

The pirate had gained access to his quarters while the ship was in Singapore, then waited until the ship sailed towards Hong Kong. Several hours later the captain handed the control of the ship to the duty officer and left the bridge returning to his room where the pirate was waiting.

Armed with a knife, the pirate forced my friend to open the ship's safe and then in complete darkness took the contents over the side and into his own launch which had followed the ship into the China Sea.

Instances such as this were becoming more and more frequent but much more serious with whole ships being taken and crew members being killed. This prompted me to write the accompanying letter to the Sunday Telegraph, which I am delighted to report did seem to have some affect.

The Illustration was of the Sunday Telegraph's choice! (See next page)

*SIR – What could better highlight the atrocious piracy situation at present than Captain Philip Beale's letter (December 6) sent from the Indian Ocean? He is navigating his replica sailing ship following the same route the Phoenicians took 2,500 years ago, but appears to have found pirates more hazardous than they ever were then.*



*Recently, the International Transport Federation declared the Indian Ocean as "unfit for seafarers". The International Chamber of Shipping stated that the current level of threat to the industry was unacceptable and could not be allowed to continue. Since early last year, more than 250 ships have been attacked, over 70 hijacked, 1,300 seafarers taken hostage and several killed.*

*The few international naval ships trying to guard the merchant shipping are hamstrung by the very size of the area to patrol and with restrictive terms of engagement, favouring the human rights of the pirates over that of the seafarers.*

*Governments are too immersed in the climate-change debate, worrying economics and the Afghanistan conflict to pay sufficient attention, and the merchant seafarer's concern is that as insurance rates escalate, the piracy they face will simply become included with "perils of the sea" and forgotten.*

*Captain Ken Owen*

*High Peak, Derbyshire*

*The date my letter was published in the Sunday Telegraph was 13th Dec. 2009 and it wasn't long after that that ships were provided with ex Army sharp shooter guards, which soon largely solved the problem.*

## Outlook report on PCC meeting November 2023

The PCC met in the recently renamed The Mellor Centre, and this was an opportunity to welcome Rachel Howling back, after her two months stay, working with Educaid in Sierra Leone.

We heard how successful this year's weekend residential at Edale had been, and the PCC noted its thanks to all the adults who worked so hard to organise and make this so enjoyable for everyone.

In connection with our work with children, Andrew, our Vicar, said he intends to send out invitations to all the secondary school age children in the choir, and their parents, to consider taking Confirmation classes. This is with a view to being Confirmed by the Bishop at his visit on 14th January 2024.



There was then a discussion about the arrangements for this year's Crib service on Christmas Eve, which is always looked forward to by everyone in the community. Sadly, Chris Mann, who was for many years the driving force behind the Crib service, is no longer with us. But his wife Julia has bravely decided she wants to be involved and pass on her and Chris's knowledge and experience to the new team running it. We do now have volunteers willing to help with the organisation and

running of the service, and Andrew said he was keen to return to having two services, if the team were happy to do so. We may still need to offer entry by ticket, in order to ensure the numbers do not exceed health and safety guidelines.

The other important discussion we had was in connection with proposed improvements to the church porch. Some time ago the porch needed redecoration and updating, some of which was done. However, there was also money set aside from a legacy left to the church, with the intention of making the porch more pleasant and welcoming, as you come into the building. The details of this have taken a long time to firm up, and it has involved a lot of work by William Heijbroek and others. Chris Mann, when he was church warden, was particularly keen that we had a new inside door, with glass in it, to make the church look more open. There was also a proposal to install new York stone flooring. These proposals were reviewed and the PCC decided to go ahead with installing a new door / doors subject to the approval of the final design and costs, but not with the York stone flooring. The PCC wished to thank William and Peter Lowe for all their work on this project.

*Julie Elliott*

## Red Lion Trifle

*Jill Baker*

• This is the trifle my Mum made and my first memory is of it being served at the pub in Otley my Gran ran, with catering in an upstairs room. I did not like the taste of sherry. However I grew to like it but for quite a while I did not make it as no-one but me really liked it. I then discovered my late sister in law loved it too so I started making it for our annual Christmas Eve lunch. Soon some of the children (in their twenties) started to enjoy it too. Here is my Mum's recipe. The dish I use is a long low oblong glass dish 11 inches by 7, 2 inches deep but use what you have.

Plain cake cut into cubes sandwiched together generously with raspberry jam (could use trifle sponges - I make and freeze sponge with a sugary crust which my Auntie Brenda made and I gave the recipe for Outlook a few years ago). I use half the cake which is made with five eggs in a deep 8" round cake.

\* My mum states 'a piece of Madeira cake 5" by 4" by 3". Cut into 1" slices and thickly spread with jam - a good half a jar of raspberry jam.

\* For that quantity I use ¼ pt medium sherry and 3 tablespoons brandy or Cointreau.

\* I then cover with crushed almond macarons. \*

\* Now for the fruit layer – I puree 1½ tins of drained apricots in syrup and spread over. You could have a layer of raspberries.

\* Then the egg custard I use Delia's which has a tablespoon of cornflour to help stabilise it.

\* Finally a layer of 275 ml. whipped cream with a little sieved icing sugar in it. I spoon this on in dollops as my mum did but you could pipe or spread.

\* Topping snipped pieces of white and pink marshmallow, the dreaded silver balls and angelica snipped into pieces. Toasted almonds are more sophisticated. Use your favourites.

### **The custard**

4 egg yolks

25g caster sugar

1 dessert spoon of cornflour

1 teaspoon of vanilla extract 425 ml of a

mixture of cream and milk or some jersey milk ( Delia makes it with whipping cream but ....) Whisk the cornflour, egg yolks and sugar together in a bowl.

Heat the milk cream mixture to simmering point – keep an eye on it. Pour it onto the egg mixture whisking as you go then tip the whole lot back in the pan add the vanilla and whisk over a medium heat until it thickens, take off the heat (the cornflour will prevent scrambled egg). Keep whisking until smooth and pour into the bowl to cool.

*Enjoy your Christmas Trifle. Ed.*

## My Role as a Volunteer with the Charity PSPA.

Mellor resident, Val Wallace, is actively supporting families who are affected by PSP and also educates trainee GPs.

PSP stands for '**Progressive supranuclear palsy**' It is a complex neurological condition.

This kind of neurological condition can take a long time to be diagnosed because of its rarity and health professionals not being aware of it.

Val's husband, Neil, sadly suffered with PSP. His diagnosis came in September 2016 even though his symptoms

started in 2013. Symptoms may vary. Neil started to have slips and falls and his personality started to change, becoming impatient, depressed and aggressive. His eyesight was affected and he could not use his phone and computer. His writing became very small.

The diagnosis came after many appointments when the neurophysiotherapist suggested a second opinion from a neurologist.

Val cared for Neil at home for a year before he eventually moved to Eden Mansions Nursing Home in Styal who were wonderful, very caring and extremely supportive. Due to Covid restrictions sadly Val was unable to be with Neil for the two weeks before and when he died on March 31 2020.

Val established the Macclesfield PSPA Support Group in 2018, which has now become the Stockport and Cheshire Support Group. As well Val is passionate about educating health care professionals and after training became a PSPA Education Volunteer. Through Health Education England she has contacted each training group in the Greater Manchester and Cheshire area, which has enabled her to give talks to trainee GPs.

If you wish to find out more contact the PSP Helpline 0300 00110122



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## What is an Ordinand?

Trainee Vicar, Proto-priest, or Not-A-Curate-Yet?

*By Clare Jackson*

Some of you have asked how the training for priesthood is going, so forgive me, lovely Outlook readers, if I submit my diary extracts via this missive. It gives me a chance to thank you once again for your support and encouragement. I'm loving it!



👉 **Father Dougal** Not yet Andrew.....Father Brian from Donegal who I met randomly at Bluedot Festival in July.

Its fantastic that Emmanuel Theological College let me stay here at St Thomas' for my 3 year 'Placement in Context'. Chester Diocese needed no such persuasion as, unlike Father Ted, Rev'd Andrew's reputation as an excellent supervisor had preceded him. (Just ask Bishop Sam.) I've also been able to maintain my connection teaching online at Mellor Primary by opting to take a part-time DipHE course. I'm hoping that soon Church House will tell me that I'm entitled to a house keeper in the style of Mrs Doyle of Craggy Island.

### **Platform 9 3/4**

Every Thursday evening I meet some of my fellow ordinands and trainee lay readers for a couple of hours tuition at the Nazarene college in Didsbury, the base for the Manchester located arm of Emmanuel Theological College (here after known as ETC, but don't confuse it with Emmanuel Church Didsbury, either). When I say 'arm' I really do mean an educational organism with the same reach as a region-sized octopus. ETC is quite unusual, in that, unlike a residential Theology College in one tradition, it has students travelling from 6 dioceses, to 5 different educational centres or on zoom, sponsored by all 15 bishops across the North West. I have yet to try getting there by train, (The Hogwarts Night Bus might be better) but car share with another of my Poynton friends who is doing Reader Training. Its great to have time to chew the cud after an intense learning session.

Interestingly, this cross fertilisation of church traditions means we have all had different experiences that make up our spiritual and ecclesiastical journey. Rather than seeing through only one lens of worship style or experience. No conflict between Hufflepuffs or Slytherin....yet





## **Wade In The Water** (picture on previous page)

This first term has been quite the full immersion, and I've been glad to have the familiarity of my placement here at Mellor. ECT has full endorsement from Durham University but consequently the academic rigour expected seems considerably higher than when I was a naive and carefree undergraduate musician. For part-timers (many of whom are trainee readers with full-time jobs too) the weekly reading of theology and assignment writing is pacey and challenging. My 'formation' continues in more short placements, and regular residentials, all of which we are encouraged to pray about and reflect on. I'd be grateful if you'd add me to your own prayer requests occasionally, just as it is our worship and life together that will help me grow.

I still feel like I'm wearing inflatable arm-bands but by the time this goes to press we will be in Full Advent Mode, and I'll be waving not drowning. So here's a Vicar of Dibley joke for our December issue;

**What do you get if you cross a turkey with an octopus?  
A leg for everyone at Christmas.**



### **Christmas Coffee with the Vicar!**



We are inviting you to a special **Christmas Coffee with the Vicar!** The members of Prayer Group will be your hosts for some early festive treats...taste your first home made mince pie, sing your first carol and share some glad tidings! Dig out your Christmas jumpers and join us at **The Mellor Centre at 10.45 am on 11 December!!!**

## **Laughs with Lynda**

What do you drain your carrots with at Christmas?  
An Advent Colander.



Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?  
A mince spy.

Why couldn't the skeleton go to the  
Christmas party?  
Because he had nobody to go with.





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## Concert of Remembrance Mellor Church Choir



It was a wild night when we huddled into church for the Remembrance Concert, but it was very much worth the effort. What a pleasure to be able to see the choir for a change: they stood in the chancel, in front of the altar instead of in their usual place behind us. We could see who was in the choir- (and there too was the vicar!) and who were singing the solos. Laura Jarvis, Ian Collier, Mike Miller and Hannah Scott were wonderful! Who knew that they could sing so beautifully? With the organ at the back and the choir at the front we were enfolded in their music - and lifted to heights of contemplation and joy. The large programme of Faure's Requiem and Songs of Farewell was complex and must have been challenging, but it was presented with such polish! It is reflective of the high standard that Tom Howling has helped the choir to achieve that they could reach this standard with limited rehearsal time.

Our dear late friend Anthea was always a great supporter of the choir and her four children all received a superb musical education in its ranks. It was appropriate and touching that they had chosen to dedicate this excellent performance to her memory.

*Cathie Lowe*

# Letters to the Editors

*Thanks for the lovely memories of hearing Vince Prince and the Tone Deafs at local venues such as the Royal Oak in Mellor. The house really rocked at those nights. The rock and roll sounded so much better if you were a bit tone deaf yourself! The beat itself was enjoyment enough. Thank you 'boys' for the happy times.*

*Helen Ruffell*



## From the Registers

### Baptism

We welcomed into God's family

Ralph Thomas Gibson on 17<sup>th</sup> October

Eleanor Frances Hadfield on 5<sup>th</sup> November

Reuben Stanley Hadfield on 5<sup>th</sup> November

### Funerals

We remember before God and commend to his love and mercy:

Naomi McClean on Friday 10th November at the Crematorium

Alan Torkington on Monday 20th November

Sylvia Walton on Friday 24th November

Geoffrey Harrison Thursday 30th November - at the Crematorium

## A Memorable Date in December.....or not?*Margaret Leng*

*Why do we celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25th? Curiosity has the better of me again!*



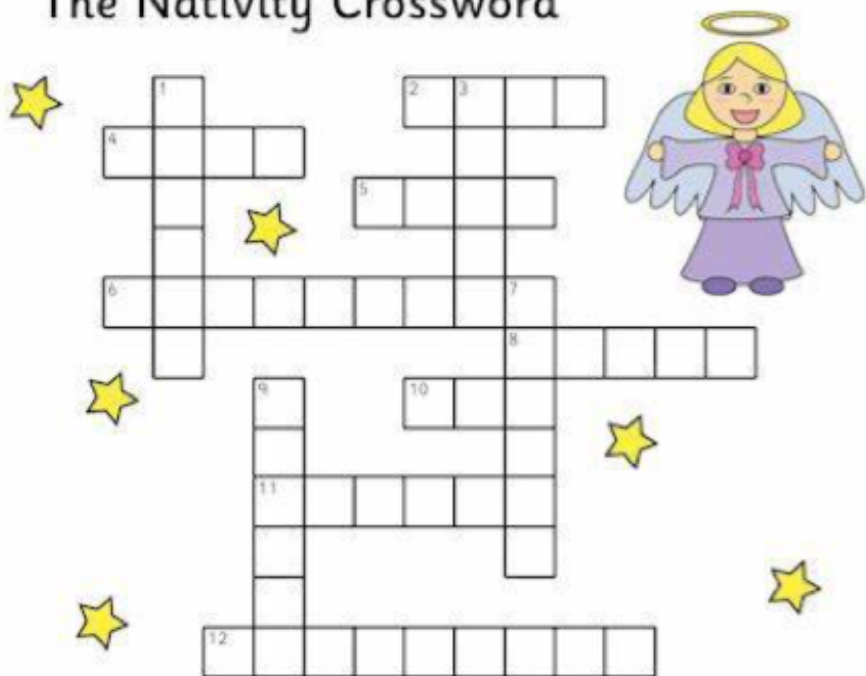
The Christmas Story begins well over 2000 years ago “**A virgin would conceive and bear a son**” ([Isaiah](#)) in **Bethlehem** ([Micah](#)). Then the New Testament takes over. Mary was told her future son would be called **Jesus** ([Matthew](#)). Joseph would be his step father ([Luke](#)). **The Bible does not tell us when Jesus was born** for in the ancient world births were not celebrated. Shortly before Jesus was born, ([Luke](#)) Caesar Augustus issued a decree ordering “all the inhabitants on earth to be **registered**.” Everyone had to **register** in “his own city,” which is why Joseph had to travel 94 miles with a donkey and a pregnant wife. That order—probably made to support taxation and military conscription—would have been unpopular especially in winter. Not quite “Peace on earth, good will to all men.” **Shepherds** were “living out of doors and keeping watch in the night over their flocks.” ([Luke](#)) The book *Daily Life in the Time of Jesus* notes that flocks lived in the open air from “the week before the Passover [late March]” through mid-November. It then adds: “They passed the winter under cover; and from this alone it may be seen that the traditional date for Christmas, in the winter, is unlikely since the Gospel says that the shepherds were in the fields.” Astrologers and astronomers have focussed on the **Star of Bethlehem** and the story is influenced greatly by **Herod the Great** but space is limited to exact years.

The common Christian traditional dating of the birthdate of Jesus was **25th December**, a date first asserted officially by **Pope Julius 1** in 350 AD, although this claim is dubious. **Pagan festivals - Saturnalia** honoured Saturn (the Roman god of agriculture) and **Mithra** (the Persian god of light) and church officials wanted to coincide Christmas with these dates. When **Emperor Constantine** converted to Christianity, it was easier for the newly formed church to repurpose the **pagan observance** of the **winter solstice** between December 17-25 since citizens were already prepared to celebrate the day. Thus, a celebration and festival filled with family and friends meant these traditions would continue as Christmas.

Whenever the birth of Jesus actually was it is based on the birth of a new baby bringing hope and joy to a family; to a country; to a world. The lights bring us cheer in the dark days and the winter solstice reminds us that spring is not very far away. I am not too keen on the over indulgence of food, drink, present buying etc. but I am keen on families getting together, the lonely being cared for and the **HOPE** that **PEACE** will come to a troubled world just as it was wanted in the Holy Land 2000 years ago.

# CHILDREN'S PAGE

## The Nativity Crossword



### Across

2. The Wise Men followed this.
4. Precious metal given to the baby Jesus as a gift.
5. Mother of Jesus.
6. The town that Jesus was born in.
8. Mary was visited by one to tell her she would have a baby.
10. There was no room here for Mary and Joseph.
11. Baby Jesus was born in this building.
12. An angel visited them to tell them about the birth as they watched their sheep.

### Down

1. Mary rode on one.
3. The number of kings or wise men who visited Jesus.
7. Jesus was laid in here as a crib.
9. Mary's husband.



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## Teach Cancer a Lesson

Any support will be appreciated for a new campaign I've just helped to launch called Teach Cancer A Lesson.

I will be co-chairing the campaign along with Dame Kathryn August.

The aim of the campaign is to secure more educational support for young people suffering with cancer. At present there is no automatic entitlement to an Educational Health Care Plan for children diagnosed with cancer.

Please visit the website to register your support : [www.tcal.co.uk](http://www.tcal.co.uk)

It would also be hugely appreciated if you were willing to follow us on Twitter:( X ) <https://twitter.com/>

Tim Lowe





# Thought for the Month

## Twelve Joys

The first good joy is that of the brush especially if it comes to a delicate point.

The second good joy is of excellent paper.

The third great joy is the actual painting.

The fourth great joy is a lump of clay, to be fashioned as one may.

The fifth great joy is a piece of wood, to be carved and shaped by will of man.

The sixth good joy is a piece of metal, to be forged or hammered into shape.

The seventh good joy is that of the pen, for writing poetry or prose.

The eighth good joy is peace and quiet in which to work.

The ninth good joy is to rejoice in the good work of others.

The tenth good joy is food and wine when work is done.

The eleventh good joy is to rest and sleep when all's complete.

But the twelfth and greatest joy of all, is the love and trust of oldest friends.

*E.C. CAYTON 13/2/1980*

The poem was written by Jenny Johnson's sister Elizabeth who died in 2008 aged 72.

The House of Commons starts its proceedings with a prayer.

The chaplain looks at the assembled members with their varied intelligence and then prays for the country.

*Lord Denning*



## Festival of Bells

The bellringers run Festival of Bells as a fundraiser for cancer charities using bells of all kinds as facilitators for activities. During the past year just over £1000 has been shared with Young Lives V Cancer, Stage 4 deserves More, The Little Princess Trust and St Ann's Hospice. Any bell related events eg Jingle Bell concerts will be welcomed.

# Church Rotas

## Stewards Rota

Date	8.30am	10.00am	6.30pm
3 Dec	P Cooke	S Knight & M Williams	Advent Carol Service
10 Dec.	A Mason	L Forbes & P Forbes	J Shiel
17 Dec	J Butterworth	J Elliott & R Elliott	A Shah
24 Dec	P Cunningham	D Jelleyman & A Sanders	R Holt
25 Dec	no early service	P Long & A Muller	No evening service
31 Dec	A Mason	S McAllister & C Starling	J Shiel
7 Jan	P Cooke	M Lowe & M Williams	R Holt

Please arrange your own substitute. If this is not possible email  
Rachel- redwards@nhs.net

## Flower Rota

3 Dec Advent no flowers  
10 Dec Advent no flowers  
17 Dec Christmas flowers  
24 Dec Christmas flowers  
31 Dec Christmas flowers

07 Jan	Louise Driver
14 Jan	Bishop visit flower team
21 Jan	flower team
28 Jan	Emma Houghton

If you wish to change a date, need a key or have any query, please contact Jill Baker (07881 902533 or [jillbaker427@hotmail.com](mailto:jillbaker427@hotmail.com)).

## Holy Dusters

3 Dec J & R Elliott  
10 Dec P Cunningham & I Morris  
17 Dec M Williams & S McAllister  
7 Jan J Cooper & A Muller

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