



OUTLOOK



December
2025

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The Parish of St. Thomas, Mellor

Registered charity No. 1130414

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

Email revandrewtawn@gmail.com Tel 0161 604 4993

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

For all enquiries and bookings for the church & Mellor Centre please contact 0161 484 5079 or email office@mellorchurch.org. The office is open Monday to Thursday 9.30am—12.30pm

Parish Office Admin	Val Wallace (Mon, Wed, & Thurs mornings)
Church Wardens	Alex Eggeman 07772849657 Mary Heijbroek 0161 427 3241
PCC Treasurer	Richard Elliott contact via Parish Office
Assistant Treasurers	David Butterworth, Andrew Sanders
Gift Aid Secretary	Karen Greenough
PCC Secretary	Julie Elliott, 64 Ernocroft Road 0161 427 5981
Director of Music	Tom Howling (email: t.howling@nhs.net)
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Deanery / Diocesan Churches Together in Marple	Mary Heijbroek/Rachel Howling/Judith Shiel Helen Kennedy/Judith Shiel
Pastoral Care Grp Co-Ord	Lesley Futchter 0161 449 0977
Editors of Outlook Magazine	Julia Mann and Maggie Williams

We welcome articles for Outlook which should be submitted to the editors (preferably by email) to melloroutlooksubmissions@gmail.com - earlier deadline for the January issue is December 8th please.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR DECEMBER 2025

3 Wed	10.00 am	Holy Communion (Mellor Centre)
6 Sat	1.00-5.00 pm	Marple Bridge Winter Wonderland
7 Sun	8.30 am	Holy Communion
2nd Sunday of Advent	10.00 am	Parish Communion
	3.00 pm	Service for Baptism families
	6.30 pm	Holy Communion (Mellor Centre)
10 Wed	10.00 am	Holy Communion (Mellor Centre)
12 Fri	5.00pm	Dark Peak Vineyard Carols
		Test Event 2025
13 Sat	3.00 pm	Community Carols (Mellor Centre)
14 Sun	8.30 am	Holy Communion
3rd Sunday of Advent	10.00 am	Parish Communion
	6.30 pm	Evening Prayer (Mellor Centre)
17 Wed	10.00 am	Holy Communion (Mellor Centre)
21 Sun	8.30 am	Holy Communion
4th Sunday of Advent	10.00 am	Parish Communion
	6.30 pm	Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols
24 Wed	4.00 pm	Crib & Toy Service
Christmas Eve	5.30 pm	Crib & Toy Service
	11.30 pm	Midnight Mass
25 Thurs	10.00 am	Parish Christmas Communion
Christmas Day		
28th Sun	8.30 am	Holy Communion
1st Sunday of Christmas	10.00 am	Parish Communion
	6.30 pm	Evening Prayer (Mellor Centre)

Prayer Group meets every Monday from 10.30am to 11am (Mellor Centre)
Women’s Evening Fellowship meets on the second Wednesday at 2pm (Mellor Centre)
Toddler Group meets in term time on Thursday each week 10am—11.30am (Mellor Centre)
Knit and Natter meets on Thursday each week 10.30am –12 noon

Vicar’s Viewpoint



Admission of children to communion

As I write I am looking forward to a very special Sunday on 23rd November, when we will be admitting several of our children to receive Holy Communion. You may remember, I wrote about this in Outlook earlier this year? Since then we have completed our period of consultation and received permission from the bishop to go ahead. In Holy Communion the bread and wine are symbols of sharing, both with each other and also with God. What I hope for those children is that as they share in communion, week by week, they may come to feel fully members of the body of Christ here, and grow in communion with God.

What does communion mean to you?

This is a good opportunity to reflect on what communion means to us. There are some who truly believe that in some mysterious way, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. Others see the bread and wine rather as symbolic reminders of the last supper. But even if we see communion as a purely symbolic act, it can still be very important and meaningful. I find helpful an analogy with a pair of wedding rings. Imagine a young couple who see two rings in a jeweller’s window, priced at £1000. They buy the rings and in their wedding ceremony they make vows to each other as they place the rings on each other’s hands. The rings have not changed - but they now mean so much to the couple. The monetary value of the rings has not increased, but for that couple they have become priceless. In the same way, in communion the bread and wine come to mean so much more to us than simple bread and wine.

A symbol of our yearning for ‘something more’

Have you ever had moments when you have thought, there must be something more to life than material things? There is something in our souls that cannot be satisfied by possessions. We yearn for love, for inner peace, for justice and goodness. Jesus said, ‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness’. I see Holy Communion as an expression of our deep longing for something more - a longing for food for our souls, a hunger for the bread of life, and a thirst for the water of life.

What does Christmas mean to you?

Christmas is a time of celebration. And good celebrations will often involve decorations, food and drink, and gatherings with family and friends. Over the years celebrations can become empty rituals - we retain the externals but lose the meaning, and this is just as true with church rituals as it is with secular ones. John Betjeman expresses this poignantly in his poem ‘Christmas’. His wonderful final couplet suddenly takes us beyond all that is superficial to the ‘something more’ that Christmas and communion are all about:

‘No love that in a family dwells,
No carolling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
Can with this single Truth compare -
That God was man in Palestine
And lives today in Bread and Wine.’

God bless you this Christmas and always,
Andrew

Reverse Advent



In December we will be making our usual ‘Reverse Advent’ collections of goods for the **Wood Street Mission** and **Wellspring**. On Advent Sunday (November 30th), we welcome donations of selection boxes of sweets for children, these will be collected by the Wood Street Mission which has been supporting families in Manchester and Salford since 1869, providing needy children with clothes, bedding, toys, school uniforms and books.

Week 1 30th November Chocolates such as selection boxes of sweets for children

For Wellspring we will collect as follows:

Week 2 7th December Toiletries: soap, shower gel, shampoo and toothpaste

Week 3 14th December Socks, gloves, t-shirts and underwear

Week 4 21st December Tinned meat and wrapped biscuits which can be made in to lunch packs

Parish Office, The Mellor Centre

Please note the Parish Office will close for Christmas and New Year on Tuesday 23rd December at 12.30pm and re-open on Monday 5th January at 9.30am.

St Thomas' Church

Advent Carols by candlelight



Sunday 30th November
6.30pm

Music includes

O Radiant Dawn (Macmillan)
Rejoice in the Lord alway (Purcell)
This is the record of John (Gibbons)

A Note of Thanks at Christmas

The Editors would like to wish all those involved in helping with **Outlook Magazine**, including our contributors, those who print and proof read and all those who kindly deliver the magazine,

a very Happy Christmas.

Thank you for all that you do throughout the year.



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St Thomas’ Church Autumn Baroque Concert

Many people hold a rather negative opinion about the recorder, associating it with shrill and piercing shrieks in the hands of novice school children. Such a notion would have been quickly dispelled for anyone attending the concert presented by the newly-formed “Mellor Baroque” on October 18th. A pleasingly full church was treated to a varied programme performed by a delightful combination of instruments and played with infectious enthusiasm and considerable expertise. Little snippets of information about the music, the composers and the instruments deepened our appreciation and enjoyment. The evening was master-minded by Helen Tawn, whose passion for the recorder is well-known (she has an impressive collection from tiny to huge!) How fortunate we were that she was able to gather such an accomplished group of players, among them our own Clare Jackson on violin and Eleanor Rosser proving to be a very assured harpsichord player in spite of feeling very unwell that evening, while John LeGrove filled a solo slot for Eleanor, scampering round the keyboard in the second of two Scarlatti sonatas. With Helen’s friends Kate Breeze (recorder and baroque flute) and Anne Windsor (harpsichord and recorder) supported by cellist Paul Hickman this was a rich ensemble which opened and closed the concert with concertos by Pepusch and Schickhardt. In between there were various combinations- trio sonatas by Handel and Quantz, duos including a canonical sonata by Telemann, and solos for recorder and flute- all showing the special qualities of these instruments. This concert was the first of its kind at St Thomas’-we hope it won’t be the last! Thankyou for a very special evening.

Helen Kennedy



Laughs with Lynda

A man walked into a pub and put a mushroom down on the bar and ordered a pint for it.

The landlord asked why he's brought the mushroom into the pub, and the man replies, “because he's a real Fun guy”.

*My wife told me to stop impersonating a flamingo.
I had to put my foot down.*



What causes dry skin?
A towel

Women’s Evening Fellowship News

Thank you very much to everyone who supported the Fellowship Fundraiser in November in any way.

The total raised so far this year for Kinder Mountain Rescue comes to £960.97. We will be welcoming them to our January meeting to hand over the cheque and learn more about their work.



Reminder to members: our Christmas Party is on December 10th at 2pm in the Mellor Centre. Looking forward to seeing you then.

Lesley Fatcher

My retirement from the choir

Thank you all

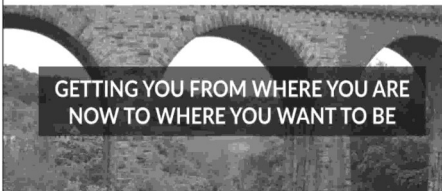
Thank you all who sent best wishes or came to my retirement party. As you may have guessed it was a very emotional occasion for me. Tom had created a joyful and happy evening that I really appreciated. I very much enjoyed the cabaret, organised by Ian, the acts of Anne and Rachel, accompanied by Jackie, William, Helen Kennedy and John Wilson; I found it impossible to decide who the winners (Mellor's Got Talent) were, they were all such a high standard. I have recapped on the evening and have many people to thank for making it a memorable event not least thanks to Katya and others for the photographs, Matty K, Oscar and John for the wonderful piano playing from the beginning. Thank you to Glyn, Jane and helpers for the hard work setting everything up, to Ian and bar staff, to Jill for the largest chocolate cake in the world, decorated with choristers and for the messages and cards I have received—it will be a treasured memory. Tom's kind words in his introduction and summary of my time in the choir and the presentation of the Loyal Service Award Certificate and the Bronze Loyal Service medal left me unable to say much in response, all the words just wouldn't come out (which is a first). I think I did thank him, but I wanted to say what I have told him before; that he is doing an amazing job as the Director of the choir and that we are very fortunate to have him and John LeGrove at St Thomas'. It has been a great joy being a member of the choir and St Thomas' church, Mellor for the last 46 years. We have made many friends in the church and the choir. From now on, Eileen and I will be sitting together in the congregation, a very rare experience.

Mike Benford-Miller





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Mellor Sports Club. 215 Longhurst Lane. Mellor SK6 5PN

Stollen Bites

Jill Baker

An easy way to make stollen and get ahead as they keep for around a week. Makes 35-40

100g raisins

30g mixed peel

1 tbsp dark rum or brandy

300g plain flour

50g cornflour

75g caster sugar

1 tsp baking powder

½ tsp bicarb

1 tsp cinnamon

½ tsp ground cloves if you have it

1/8 tsp grated nutmeg

Finely grated rind of lemon

1 egg

120g butter at room temperature

200g quark

1 tsp vanilla extract

To coat

220g icing sugar

130g unsalted butter melted (I am sure I used salted)

Heat the oven to 180°C. Line two large baking sheets with baking parchment.

Put the raisins and mixed peel into a bowl and pour over the rum and set aside whilst you make the dough.

Put the dry ingredients into a large bowl and stir everything together then add in the egg, butter, quark, soaked dried fruit and vanilla extract. Mix together until you have a soft sticky dough. Leave to one side for 10 minutes for the bicarb to work then pinch off small walnut sized pieces and form into pillow shapes.



(cont next page)

Stollen Bites (continued)

Place on the prepared baking sheets leaving ¾ inch/2 cm between each and bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Turn the baking sheet once during baking - they should be golden brown.

Whilst they are baking place the sifted sugar in a large shallow bowl and melt the butter. Using a pastry brush glaze each stollen bite with melted butter as they come out of the oven and then roll in the icing sugar until thickly coated. Place on a wire rack to cool completely. Cool and enjoy . They will keep in an airtight tin for a week. Freeze some or halve recipe or have lots of people round. Not sure at what point I would freeze, probably before butter and sugar!

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 and 5.30pm Christmas Eve

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

St Thomas' Church
MELLOR, NORTH YORKSHIRE

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Mellor Birds



Maggie Williams

A year ago at knit and natter on a Thursday morning, Joan C. said she saw 20 black and white birds on her lawn opposite the Sports Club. I hadn't a clue what they could be. Then a couple of weeks ago Catherine S. at knit and natter said she had seen 20 pied wagtails on her lawn at Red Row. I am only used to seeing odd ones in Mellor occasionally, my last view was on Knowle Farm's barn roof. It turns out that pied wagtails are partial migrants. Birds in the north of Britain tend to get together and fly south, sometimes as far as Morroco. I hear them saying "Chiswick" and they continually wag their long tails. They like short grass and tarmac to chase insects. Often seen at Motorway services. I have



been sent photos of a cute goldcrest by Maurice at Tarden. There have been 20 swallows nesting in the buildings there this summer.



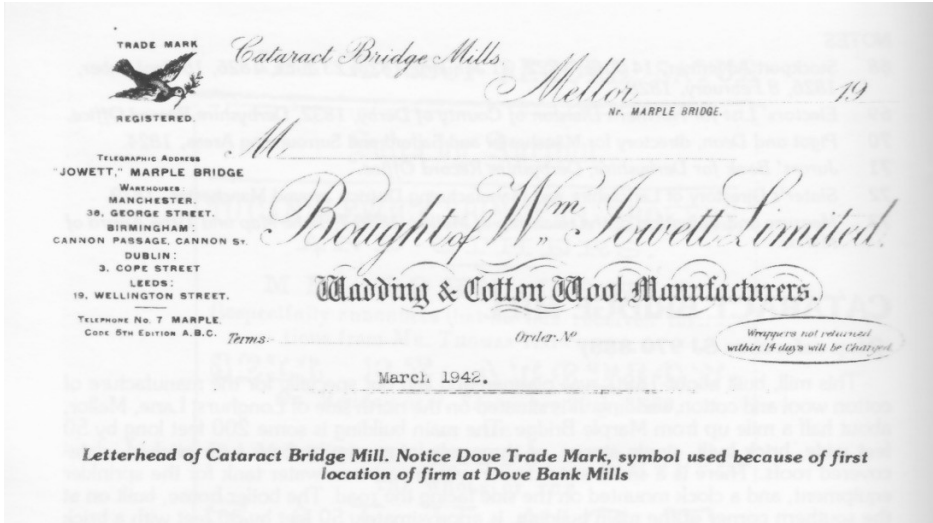
I was also sent photos of two parakeets in the top of a tree on Highfield by Terry who had not seen them there before. So far I have only heard of them randomly wandering through Mellor and no one with a tree used as a roost.



At church on Remembrance Sunday, when the theme was "peace", the children made paper doves, and also at Messy Church (good fun) in the Mellor Centre.



Then I read that the Cotton Mill at Moor End called Dove Bank Mill had a logo of a dove with an olive branch in its mouth. The industrious Marple Local History Group meet at the Mellor Centre on Thursday mornings. Hilary found and speedily sent me two letter headings of Dove Bank Mill and Cataract Bridge Mill. So much nicer than having an email invoice.



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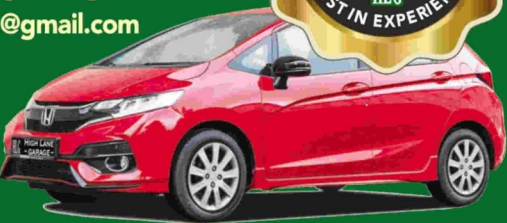
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Tales of Christmas Plants

We usually think that the garden closes down in autumn and there is nothing much to look at until spring brings the bulbs and early flowers, but some plants are coming into their own at the Christmas season. Evergreens are particularly attractive and many such as holly and mistletoe have berries in winter. It is an ancient practice, dating back to pagan times, to bring evergreen into homes as decoration, expressing the hope that life would return to the world after the winter. Holly has both pagan and Christian symbolism attached to it. In Celtic mythology the Holly King ruled the natural world in the winter months and the Oak King took over in the summer. In Christian tradition the spiny leaves are seen as symbolic of Christ’s crown of thorns, and the red berries of his blood. The well-known carol ‘The holly and the ivy’ illustrates this well. Ivy flourishes in the winter, and also has berries then, but as these are black they are not decorative, though useful as food for some birds. In tradition, ivy is associated with everlasting life and also with love and fidelity because of its twining habit. The Roman god of wine, Bacchus, is depicted wearing a crown of ivy leaves, and these were supposed to prevent drunkenness. Ivy plants with leaves in various shades and patterns of green and golden are available and the yellower ones can bring light to a dark corner of the garden. Mistletoes are a group of parasitic or hemiparasitic plants growing on trees, particularly apples. The variety most associated with Christmas is *Viscum album* or European mistletoe which is another traditional Christmas decoration plant. It has white berries attractive to birds which eat them, then take the sticky seeds as they move on to another tree, spreading the plants. A plant with the word ‘Christmas’ actually in its name is *Helleborus niger*, the Christmas rose, so called because it is supposed to flower at this time of the year. This may depend upon the weather, but the beautiful white flowers should certainly lighten the garden in January and February. The name ‘Helleborus’ comes from the Greek words for ‘food’ and ‘kill’, indicating the plant’s poisonous nature. Ancient myth holds that an overdose caused the death of Alexander the Great, but a more attractive legend tells of a young shepherdess who saw the Magi on their way to Jesus, carrying gifts, and she wept because she had nothing to give. Where her tears fell on the ground a white flower, the Christmas rose, sprang up.

Judith Shiel



Boost Your Wellbeing This Winter by Helen Roscoe

As the days grow shorter and the air turns crisp, our natural rhythms start to slow down. Winter invites us to rest more, spend time indoors and create small rituals of warmth and care.

Here are a few simple ways to support your wellbeing through the season:



Move mindfully

Gentle movement like yoga, walking or swimming can boost both mood and metabolism. A few of my favourite poses for this time of year include:

- **Warrior I** - builds stamina and confidence
- **Tree pose** - improves balance and connection to nature
- **Corpse pose** - encourages deep rest and recharge



For inspiration, you can practise for free with me online - search Helen Roscoe Yoga on YouTube.



Step outside daily

Even on grey days, light exposure supports your energy levels. A short mindful walk can help clear your mind. Tune into your senses - what can you see, hear, touch, taste and smell?



Create cosiness at home

Layer up with soft blankets, light a candle and bring a little of the outdoors in with pine cones or branches. These small touches remind us of the light that still lives within the darker months.

If you’d like to nurture your winter wellbeing further, join me for a **Winter Solstice Morning of Yoga and deep rest.**



Saturday 20 December | 10.00am–12.30pm

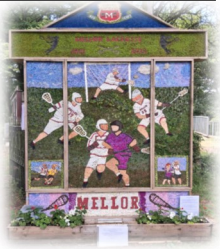


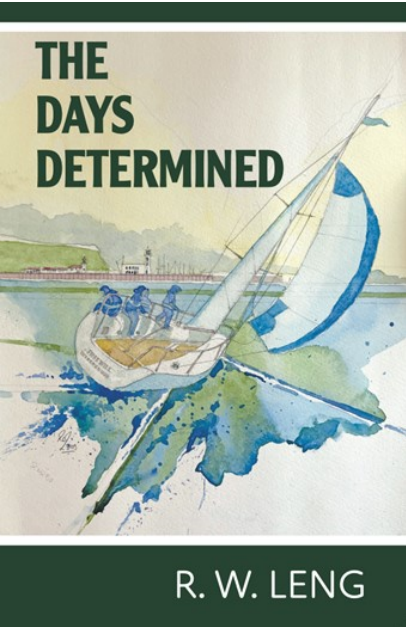
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A Christmas Present?

Mellor Well Dressing tea towels are now on sale for £5 each. This year’s theme is 100 years of **lacrosse in Mellor**. To buy one contact any member of the well dressing team or me, hilary4030@gmail.com.





Following on from his first book about Adam Rowntree and his family by our own local author, Richard Leng, his second book has just been published. *Can Trevor, the charismatic Vicar, save the avaricious Adam from himself or can he discover the better angels of his sister-in-law, Gaynor, hungry for revenge? And how will the sinister Carlo Segretti determine their fate and support church funds?*

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News from last year's Rose Queen Mimi



Mimi handed over a cheque for £2,653 to The Weekend Day Centre for Dementia Care from part of her fundraising over the past year.

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Report on the PCC meeting of 27th October

Following on from last month's decision to start allowing children to take Communion, we heard about Andrew's plans for a service to admit the children who would like to do this. Andrew is also planning to increase offering the choice of how to receive Communion (either by receiving the wafer, or 'dipping' it in the chalice) every alternate Sunday. The meeting heard that the Mellor Centre Management Committee (MCMC) is planning to replace the kitchen in the Centre - the existing one has been there since the Centre opened 25 years ago. The PCC agreed, in principle, to fund this work, and the committee will work on the details of the installation. Andrew reported that the Deacon for Marple Methodist Church is hoping to start offering a regular (monthly or quarterly) dementia-friendly service, and has asked if local churches would be willing to take turns in having such a service in their churches. The PCC agreed to this.

We also heard that the initial planning for the Christmas Crib service was under way, and all agreed that we will not return to a system of ticketing, but equally do not want to have to turn anyone away. This was followed by a discussion about a proposal that the church consider whether to revisit holding occasional Sunday services in the Mellor Centre, as we used to do some years ago. The advantages of this include greater accessibility and scope for inclusion, and more flexibility to use the space in a creative way, particularly in order to possibly engage children and young people more easily than in the church building. The disadvantages included the amount of work and numbers of people needed to be involved in planning and setting up such services. It was agreed that Andrew would carry out some informal consultation of members of the congregation on their feelings about using the centre in this way, and that we would discuss the issue again, and make a decision at our meeting in January.

Julie Elliott PCC Secretary



Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols



Sunday 21st December 6.30pm

Music includes

- Lux aurumque (Whitacre)*
- O magnum mysterium (Lauridsen)*
- Angel Tidings (Rutter)*

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R A T S A M T S I R H C T E J S
N E M E S I W S H E E P I G O E
J G N I K M A R Y G I U V N S J
M O S Y I H X Q U R Q W I A E T
D O N K E Y R E G N A M T D P M
Z I L I N N K E E P E R Y O H F



angels
Christmas
donkey
innkeeper
Jesus
Joseph
king
manger
Mary
nativity
salvation
sheep
shepherds
star
wisemen

Thought for the Month

Jenny Johnson

We will celebrate Christmas before the month is over, with the familiar story of His birth in songs and carols, crib services, and the Nativity plays in many a primary school. Yes, we will celebrate the festival, exchanging gifts with family and friends and giving thanks for the coming of the Christ child : but will we pause to consider the experience of Mary his mother? Dorothy Parker, American journalist, poet and story writer, born in 1893, evidently did pause to give much thought to Mary :-

Prayer for a New Mother

*The things she knew, let her forget again -
The voices in the sky, the fear, the cold,
The gaping shepherds, and the queer old men
Piling their clumsy gifts of foreign gold.*

*Let her have laughter with her little one;
Teach her the endless, tuneless songs to sing;
Grant her the right to whisper to her son
The foolish names one dare not call a king.*

*Keep from her dreams the rumble of a crowd,
The smell of rough-cut wood, the trail of red,
The thick and chilly whiteness of the shroud
That wraps the strange new body of the dead.*

*Ah, let her go, kind Lord, where mothers go
And boast his pretty words and ways, and plan
The proud and happy years that they shall know
Together, when her son is grown a man.*

From The Registers

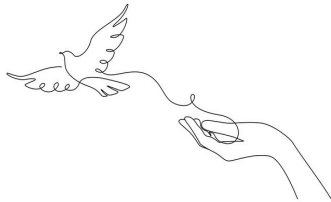
Funerals

We remember before God and commend to His love and mercy

Muriel Barton - 14th November.

Prayer for the Month

I open the stable door,
I kneel before the infant.
I worship with the shepherds.
I adore the Christ child.
I ponder the word made flesh.
I absorb the love of God.
I sing glory with the angels.
I offer my gifts with the Magi.
I have come from lands afar.
I receive the living Lord.
I hold him in my hands.
I go on my way rejoicing,
Glorifying and praising God.



From *Tides and Seasons* by David Adam

Stewards Rota

8.30am

10.00am

December 7	J Shiel	K Hargreaves and C Langford
December 14	J Butterworth	S McAllister and C Starling
December 21	P Cunningham	R and J Elliott
December 28	J Shiel	A Muller and P Long
January 4	J Butterworth	P and L Forbes

Please arrange your own substitute. If this is not possible contact Mary Heijbroek 0161 427 3241.

Flower Rota

December 7 Advent	January 4 Christmas flowers
December 14 Advent	January 11 Lesley Futcher
December 21st Christmas flowers	January 18 Louise Driver
December 28th Christmas flowers	January 25 Gwen Perks

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

Holy Dusters

Brass Cleaning

December 7	H Kennedy & M Lowe	Judith Shiel & Joyce Wood
December 14	J Cooper & A Muller	
December 21	J & L Futcher	
December 28	J Burrows & E Wilson	
January 4	S Mc Allister & M Williams	

Please arrange your own substitute. Any problems contact Mary Heijbroek 427 3241

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