

St Thomas', Trowbridge and St John's, West Ashton Monthly News March 2024

**St Thomas
Trowbridge**

**St John's
West Ashton**

**Kingfisher
Church
Mead school**

**Holy Trinity
Trowbridge**



“Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because he wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things he now has in store.”

— N.T. Wright

Giving Renewal Sunday 3rd March 2024

I moved into St Thomas' Vicarage on 3rd March 1999... and my first service was a few weeks later, Palm Sunday 25 years ago. What stands out in all that time? Many highs, a few lows, and always the generosity and support of some amazing people. And behind it all, of course, the unwavering faithfulness and love of God.



Several times, over that period, when it looked as if we were facing a major financial problem, God has provided wonderfully for our family of churches. Once or twice a big cheque has come in just when we needed it, or expenses have miraculously been less than expected. Sometimes, we don't really know how it happened, but when all the numbers were crunched at the end of the year, the big deficit we feared had shrunk to nothing, or nearly nothing.

Now, for one last time, I am asking you to pray about what you are able to give to the church – money, time and talents – and be open to what God says. God provides, but he loves to do so through the generosity of his people. To help you reflect on this important topic, I would like to share two principles of financial provision in church life which I have learnt or relearnt many times over the years. First, Proverbs 3:9-10:

*Honour the LORD with your wealth,
with the firstfruits of all your crops;
then your barns will be filled to overflowing,
and your vats will brim over with new wine.*

Our two PCCs have always sought to give away at least a tenth of our income (to home and overseas mission) and when you also factor in Parish Share which, in part, goes to support parishes in less fortunate circumstances, that figure is probably well above the Biblical 10% tithe or first fruits. I am sure this is one reason God has provided for us so faithfully over the years. It's not like a slot machine, or a guarantee that

we will never face hardship, but God does honour those who honour him with their material wealth. This is true of our personal finances as well as those of the church.

I learnt the second principle from Sandy Millar when he was vicar of Holy Trinity Brompton. *"Money follows Vision"*. HTB have always sought to present people with a compelling vision of what God could do through his church and then ask people to give generously to that. Specifically, we must have a vision beyond ourselves. I would not be able with integrity to ask you to increase your giving if it were all about maintaining buildings and worship for our own benefit. That is important, of course, but I am also confident that we have a bold, outward-facing vision, with many ministries and initiatives which seek to serve our local community and beyond.

So, I make no apology for asking you once again to prayerfully consider – no guilt, no pressure – what God would have you commit to give to the church. Thank you so much.

Allan



St John's Update

February has not been a strong month at St John's, the damp weather has fuelled the damp mould on the internal walls and we are awaiting various reports of how to proceed.



The first cut of the churchyard had been made, so not looking quite as much like a field.

Grass was long and the moss is spreading. The rain that we had on 17 February flooded the vault again and really flooded the old part of the churchyard.

However, on a brighter note, we have had two excellent services. At the beginning of the month Angela Grist led the worship, it was a joy to see her back with us and her ministry was admirable.

The mid month Communion Service was led by Allan and provided a thought provoking sermon. A parish profile is being drawn up for a replacement incumbent and as always, these procedures are lengthy and involved. Thanks to St Thomas' for grasping the nettle and drafting recommendations for all three churches. A PCC meeting was held at the end of the month. We head into March with Lent and Holy Week. St John's has four services in March, please see separate poster. You would be very welcome to join one or more of these.

Spring is in the air, a season of change with hope and anticipation for us all. Can we fire our spiritual expectations. Jesus said "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness" John 12 V46

Wishing you a Bright and Safe Easter.

Jean Robertson

Bishop Andrew Gig

Friday April 26th 7.30pm St Thomas Church,

Come along to a solo performance by our very own Bishop Andrew, playing guitar, singing from his critically acclaimed album Evensongs and giving readings from his book English Grounds. With conversation and stories he shares his love of countryside, local and ecclesiastical history and our interaction with it.

You may remember his talks at our church weekends, both at home and away. Some will know of his YouTube videos that started in Covid - 'Going to Ground', where he talks about faith, place and landscape as he walks around the Marlborough downs with his Portuguese waterdog Effy, named after the band The Effras that he was in, back in his London days.

This event is on Friday, April 26th, at St Thomas with refreshments (Lyndsey's in charge of those! 😊) Tickets for £8 will be available from April 7th, there will be a list to sign at the back of the church to reserve tickets in March.



Ukraine

Amazing members of St Thomas' Church!

Thank you so much for your support of the Ukrainian nation!

Thank you for showing the love of Christ to others not only in words but also in deeds!

Thank you for supporting Ukrainians with such care and concern last weekend, on the second anniversary of the War in Ukraine!

Thank you to everyone who came and helped organise the service! Thank you for your time that you spent helping with the service!

Thank you to everyone who brought sweets for tea and coffee!

Thank you to everyone who helped organise the sound, video and decoration!

Thank you for all the hugs and words of encouragement!

Thank you to everyone who has been praying for Ukraine and Ukrainians all this time!

I know that some of you could not come due to circumstances, but thank you also, I know that you were thinking and supporting us even from a distance!

Thank you! I think that sometimes words of gratitude are not enough. But I pray, I believe and I know that the Lord will certainly bless you and give you everything you need and want! I believe and pray that He will be able to convey my gratitude in full!

War is a time of death. But we have Hope. Oh, how wonderful it is that we have the One with whom death is no more! God is our Hope at all times!

A lot of Ukrainians have left Ukraine and a lot of people have lost hope. On Saturday we tried to remind them, to point them to Jesus, the only Hope for all mankind. I believe that the Lord will continue to work in the heart of every person who attended this service. He is God, and nothing is impossible for Him!

Thank you for your donation for brothers Andriy and Ivan. They have not yet accepted Jesus as their Saviour. But I believe and pray that they are on their way to making this life-changing decision.

Unfortunately, I still don't know all the details about their health condition, the only thing Olya, Andriy's wife, wrote was that they are in hospital in Dnipro. She also sent a photo of Andriy, which she allowed me to share with you. I am surprised that he continues to smile even in this condition. Thanks to everyone who came on Saturday (and some donated money on Sunday as well), we raised £708! Can you imagine that? This is incredible!

I told Andrey's wife (I can still keep in touch through her) that you were praying for them and I know you are continuing to do so. She was very grateful. I told her how much money we had raised for the guys. I believe that this is a testimony of God's love for them! That through all these circumstances, they will see Christ, who loves them infinitely! Today, my husband Mykhailo will transfer the money collected in Ukrainian currency to the bank card of Andriy's wife.

If you have any questions about the transfer of funds, you can write to me or ask me in person when we meet, I will be happy to answer!

May God bless you all abundantly!

I love you all and pray for you all!

Best regards, Anastasiia.





Guide Dog Update

Gucci is 8 months old and as ever, she is lovely.

She walks well on the lead, enjoys free runs, enjoys her food and still loves to sleep in her crate – which is ok for when she lays down in it but really far too small for her to stand up in. She loves to use ‘big Ted’ as a pillow.



Free runs are out for a few weeks now as she is ‘in season’ so could be very attractive to male dogs – so it is early morning and evening walks for three weeks.

She doesn’t mind rain or wind – but as can be seen in this photo she enjoys a few home comforts after these walks.

We have also noticed this week that she is less enthusiastic than she was when visitors enter – very pleased to see them but not over the top as she has been. Whether this is a sign of her current state or whether she is just growing up remains to be seen – watch this space!!

Ugandaid

March and April this year will be the Mission Focus months for Ugandaid, a charity that Pauline has been involved in since 2012 and I joined in 2013.

This is some background information from the Ugandaid website, they can explain the history far better than I ever could.

"The Ugandaid story"

Uganda has seen turbulent civil war, violent dictatorship and HIV/AIDS, which has left over a million children orphaned. Poverty is widespread, most people live at a subsistence level and children commonly die from malaria, measles and dehydration. Primary education is almost universally accessible, but schooling after 11 years old is beyond the means of many families.

There is little hope of employment for most poor and orphaned youngsters in Uganda, and they desperately need an opportunity to learn skills to provide for themselves as they approach adulthood.

Ugandaid has two primary objectives:

- To offer hope to vulnerable youngsters, the poorest of the poor in Uganda, by sponsoring vocational training (primarily at Nile Vocational Institute) leading to personal growth, confidence, employment and self-sufficiency. A life-changing opportunity for hundreds of students and their extended families.
- To support NVI in the development of existing and new courses (with appropriate building infrastructure and equipment) at its Njeru campus, and to work with similar training organisations, as appropriate, to improve the education and well-being of disadvantaged teenagers and young adults in Uganda.

"When a group of us visited Jinja in 2000 we were touched by the poverty and the struggles faced by Ugandan people. Many young people don't have the money for secondary education or vocational skills training and with it the opportunity for independence.

In 2001 we discovered NVI and from the outset were impressed by all aspects of their work and it's excellent success rate. It seemed obvious

- rather than "reinvent the wheel" we should work with this well-

established Institute which had all the experience and infrastructure in place, yet had spare capacity for more students.

In 2002 we set up a sponsorship scheme to place students at NVI, where we could be confident of the quality of education and care students would receive. UgandAid has steadily grown, and now nearly 900 students have been trained at NVI through UgandAid."

Pauline and I have had the privilege of being part of 4 two week trips to Uganda each. These trips were amazing experiences we took part in so many different things it's difficult to even list them. We've put a UgandAid display and quite a few different activities are shown there. We'd also love to chat to anyone who would like to know more!

With the help of our St Thomas' family Pauline and I also took on the sponsorship of 2 students, Mary Faith who studied Hairdressing and we are still in contact with and Phiona who studied Electrical Engineering and we think she is now working at the Sugar Refinery near Kampala.

Also, we'd like to raise some more money for this vital work so we're inviting you to lunch on April 28th after Church in the hall. The cost will be £5 per family or £2 an adult for a Soup and Bread Lunch, donations of cakes or biscuits for pudding would be very welcome. This money will go towards St Thomas' Church funds.

However we're also having an **Auction of Promises**, maybe you could offer a gift, a skill or something you can share? We've already had some promises - a stay in an apartment in Turkey, a days' decorating, some gardening. Maybe you could bake a cake or make a meal for someone or babysit for an evening, clean a car, the possibilities are endless. Then after the lunch we will hold an Auction for people to bid on these amazing things and they'll go to the highest bidder. You can also bid direct to Val if you're not able to come along on the day.

Thank you for all your previous help supporting these vulnerable young people of Uganda. Hope to see you on the 28th, there is a sign-up sheet in the corridor or you can book with Ivor, Val, Pauline or myself.

Pauline Butler and Jane Bullock



Sunday 28 April

**A simple soup, bread & cheese
lunch, after church**

Family £5, Adult £2

(profits from this to church funds)

**Please sign up on the list in the church rooms
corridor, available from 7 April**

**Followed by an
Auction of Promises
*for Ugandaaid***

*For more details see
Jane Bullock, Pauline
Butler or Ivor & Val
Saxby*



Hurry Down

Recently I feel like God has been teaching me to stop hurrying through life; to swap the all too familiar 'hurrying up' for something new and different, a 'hurrying down,' if you like. A slowing of pace and rhythm. A pausing to enjoy the simpler moments, the many thousands of moments that make up a whole life.

To stop rushing through life and to make slowing down something I 'rush' to prioritise instead.

I feel like this life lesson is a call to enjoy life a little more deeply, to savour all the little things, to rest and be replenished more freely and frequently and to trust in Our Good Father more.

Before I would have described last year, 2023, as a busy year but I'm trying to avoid that word, 'busy,' as I'm learning that it goes hand in hand with 'hurry' and 'rush.' Instead, I'm choosing to say that it was a full year, full of lots of beautiful, big and bountiful moments.

It started with a proposal and a new job and ended with a wedding and celebrating completed goals and achievements.

I felt blessed by so many things that happened and one of the things that has been stuck in my mind are words spoken by one of our church pastors. He told us, as his fellow team members, that if we did not rest over Christmas and New Year, we were not honouring God. Because not resting would be like saying we didn't trust that God would take care of the things that He wanted to see happen; that He could and would do it. It would be placing ourselves in a higher position than we should hold. Of course, we are part of God's work and mission, but He calls us to and for Himself first. He calls us to rest and be still, to trust and obey. There are times for rest, for slowing down and breathing a bit deeper and longer. I am finding that life is that bit sweeter and fuller when I live in the present more intentionally and enjoy all the moments.

Azaria Spencer CMS Mission Partner

Guatemala Number +502 41026249

https://azaria.blog/?fbclid=PAAaaabo0cmw0qUffnKyniHfSRJpuo1ARIL3fnLW3K30aNcN0xc5Cx9yH88TY_aem_AUUnw0Mcp8CxfqJBcD2v5BRquVfHr_CAF0BEzRZrYBPFH59BpfGgJjqJyreH4JiwC9E

A Lovely Surprise Meeting

On Monday 12th February, while staying with my mum in Cardiff, I decided that (almost 3 years after his death), I needed to go to a place called 'The Rock' in Bedwas, near Caerphilly, a 30 minute drive from Cardiff. The reason for this was to donate my dad's Christian books. Our son, Ed, had sorted the books and found that The Rock was a collection point near Cardiff, for Book aid Charitable Trust. The Trust supply specific Christian literature to areas of need around the world.

To cut a long story short; the Satnav initially took me to the wrong place (not the first time). I asked four different people if they could guide me, to no avail! Eventually, I found a postman who thankfully pointed me in the right direction.

I parked up and discovered that 'The Rock' was a wonderful Christian bookshop and coffee shop. The lady serving in the bookshop looked familiar. We looked at each other. I said "It's Liz, isn't it?" She also recognised me. St T's members; it was Liz Bateman. I couldn't believe it and nor could she! Liz had moved to Bedwas a few years ago. We had a lovely chat. I made some purchases in the bookshop, we had a photo taken and I was happy I donated dad's books. All in all, it was a very blessed day.

Jane Butler

Quiz

All the answers are animals, birds or insects.

1. There were four and twenty
2. Beach musician
3. An up in the air prank
4. Knight's enemy found in the ointment
5. Always in the centre
6. Sea reptile and a bar of soap
7. Found in the wheat field wearing legal headwear
8. Old coin in New Testament
9. This father does not need stilts
10. Timber carrier
11. Anchor a female fowl
12. Baby's toy found in the grass
13. Royal Angler
14. Winter weather with street decoration
15. It's on the Wiltshire badge
16. Sounds as if it is on your head
17. Cornish headland
18. A small police car
19. Precious metal on the peak
20. A dark evening container
21. Very fast
22. Teatime implement has an invoice
23. Kernel in front of a serving door
24. Might take off
25. A complaining game bird
26. Devonshire river
27. A beauty spot?
28. Shaver account

Answers next month

Lent Word Search

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

Alms Giving
Forgiveness
Penance
Repentance
Sin

Cleansing
Confession
Mercy
Temptation
Abstinence

Prayer
Ash
Penitance
Forty Days
Fasting

GREAT ARE THE
WORKS OF THE LORD.

PSALM 111:2a

Who is like God –
Creator, Lord!
In awe we worship You,
Great and mighty
Eternal One,
Who created the heavens
And gave the earth its form,
Almighty and
omnipotent God.

MB

This beautiful message was found and sits amongst the mountains in Zermatt, Switzerland.

St John's Church, West Ashton



St John's Church, West Ashton
Scarsdale, Wiltshire

Warmly Invite You To Celebrate

MOTHERING SUNDAY

SUNDAY, 10 MARCH, 2024

10.30 am Family Service



God Could Not Be Everywhere And

Therefore He Made Mothers

Proverb:



Warmly invite you to worship and witness the following
Easter Services:

Palm Sunday, 24th March 2024

Join us in our Palm Sunday Service - 10.30am

Good Friday 29th March 2024

An Hour by The Cross - 2.00pm

The reading of the Passion of our Lord's Death on the Cross.

There is a green hill far away, outside a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified, who died to
save us all.

We may not know, we cannot tell, what pain he had
to bear.

But we believe it was for us, he hung and suffered
there.

Easter Sunday, 31 March, 2024

Communion Service -
10.30am.



The Day of the Resurrection

Christ is Risen He is Risen Indeed – Alleluia

We remember the first Easter Day

Bringing a New Beginning and Hope to God's People



Good Friday is a time of sadness, Easter is a time of gladness.

On Good Friday Jesus died, but rose again at Eastertide

All Thanks and Praise to God.

Good and evil both
increase at compound
interest. That is why the
little decisions you and
I make every day are of
such infinite importance

CS Lewis

