



Never a dull moment! I think that sentiment has been so true during February, we no sooner seem to be leaving Epiphany season and then Lent began! It is so refreshing to see new life springing up around us as we journey through the day – the signs of spring are everywhere, travelling to a meeting last week I was dumbstruck by the carpet of snowdrops along the roadside, fragile flowers blooming along a very busy road.

We have had much going on in February and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking our churchwardens who do so much in the life of the church and much of it behind the scenes in order that our buildings can be open and welcoming. February has seen Jan and I meeting with the pest control man over the pigeon problem in the tower at St Lawrence – thankfully no sign of pigeons there this time thank goodness, we've had issues with various graves in the churchyard that have had to be dealt with. St Thomas church hall has had to have locks changed, the boiler in the coffee lounge has caused much disruption and all of this work and much more is overseen by our hardworking churchwardens – so a big thank you to them and those who support them.

Our Ash Wednesday service was well attended. We enjoyed a light lunch afterwards and then have continued through Lent to join together for a Bible study and lunch, a time to look at God's Word but also a time to get to know each other better.



One of our lovely young men (Ollie) who attends some of our fun days and cinema nights, who is very polite and always very chatty has made something special for us.

He has set up a woodwork shop in his grandparents shed. At the age of just nine, he has begun making products, has his own business logo, and is selling items already. However, he has made and gifted us a special birdhouse for the church garden.

A big thank you to everyone who had a sort out of their clothes and donated their 'cast offs' to the fundraising initiative for church funds. We raised £224.20 through our clothes with the bonus that the clothes were being recycled and send overseas to those in need.

**Experience Easter – 11 – 14 March 2024 – further to my recent email please do let me know if you can help in any way – craft, refreshments, welcoming.** It will be a great week working together as the Body of Christ and sharing the Easter story with over 300 primary school children! How exciting is that??

**2024 Christmas Shoebox appeal**

We are continuing to support the T4U shoebox appeal this year and so we shall be requesting various items over the next months. There is a donation box at the back of St Thomas Church. March 2024 requested items – toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, facecloth, hair accessories.

We are also collecting empty shoeboxes for use in this project – would you please let Doreen have any girls/ladies shoeboxes – she does not want men's shoeboxes thank you as they are too big! Thank you for your continued support.

Message from our finance team – if you need reimbursing for expenses then would you please send your BACS request and invoice on a PDF document to Diana Burton via email [diana.burton@talktalk.net](mailto:diana.burton@talktalk.net) copied to Gaynor via email [gaylyth15@gmail.com](mailto:gaylyth15@gmail.com).

News from Gemma –

February has been a busy month for reaching out to our community - and what a privilege it has been to see so many people from so many aspects of our community come together to support our various initiatives.

Cinema Night was a huge success - over 70 attendees, hotdogs and pizzas galore, and a wonderful Disney film too. Well done team!

FIG food hampers - thanks to so many volunteers, and an array of local community supporters, I think we managed to get our food hampers delivered in record timing! Even with such huge numbers of hampers to pack and deliver, with the amount of support we had, this made the process much smoother. Thank you so much to everyone involved, and long may this continue - having additional volunteers really does have such a positive impact!

Tea at Two - the fun and fellowship at these afternoons is wonderful. It really is a delight to be in this atmosphere, with people simply enjoying each others company and the wonderful baking from our fantastic church family bakers.

Beat the TV Programmes Fun Day - this was a very busy, interactive and highly entertaining day, with some wonderful feedback from our families. Again I must say a huge thank you to our volunteers - a huge amount of work went in to ensuring this fantastically fun-filled day went ahead, and having comments such as 'we've had the best time today' makes it all worthwhile. Please see our social media pages for the video of what we got up to!

We also had our joint eco/community project with our Year 2 class from Christ Church School. A massive £154 was raised from the cake sale - so many thanks to everyone who baked cakes and contributed to this project. The plan now is to have a tree planted at school and each of our churches, with the remainder of the monies going towards planting schemes in the UK and abroad, helping the children tackle the deforestation issue that they have become so passionate about.

Wow - what a lot within such a short month! I think it highlights how much we put our motto 'Christ at the centre of the Church, the Church at the centre of the community' in to action, and as a Church family, how hard everyone works together - so thank you again for all of the volunteers that support our community work - it is with your support and dedication that we are able to achieve all of this, and just think of all those seeds of faith being planted out there in our community - remembering this, it doesn't matter if they are small seeds, for faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains (Matthew 17:20)!

Pastoral matters – please do let me or the churchwardens know of any church family members that are sick in hospital or at home and would appreciate a visit.

### **Dates for March 2024**

Sunday 3	10.45am	Café Church – Giving up/giving in
Thursday 7	12pm	Lent Course & light lunch in coffee lounge
Sunday 10	10.45am	Mothering Sunday - joint Service at St Thomas
Monday 11 – Thurs 14	9am til 3pm	Experience Easter week in St Thomas Church
Wednesday 13	7pm	Deanery Synod in St Thomas Church – speaker Revd Debbie Wilkinson – The Well, Wirral Waters – all welcome
Tuesday 19	7.30pm	PCC meeting in coffee lounge
Wednesday 20	2pm	Tea at Two in coffee lounge
Thursday 21	12pm	Lent course & light lunch in coffee lounge
Friday 22	1pm	PALS lunch in church hall
Monday 25	10am 4.30pm	Christ Church Easter Service in St Thomas Food collection from Aldi, Ellesmere Port
Tuesday 26	9am	Food packing in St Thomas
Thursday 28	7pm	Maundy Thursday Service & Supper at St Thomas
Good Friday	10am 12.30pm	All Age Service at St Thomas followed by coffee and hot cross buns Walk of Witness starting from Trinity Methodist Church and concluding with service at 2pm at URC Church
Easter Saturday	10.30am	Easter Praise in the Port Arcades
Easter Day	7am 9am 10.45am 11am	Sunrise Service at The Boat Museum Holy Communion at St Thomas Family Communion at St Thomas Holy Communion at St Lawrence

I think that is it for now.

Take care & God bless  
|Gill & the staff team