



The news we had all been waiting has arrived since my last newsletter and that is of course the news that Revd Rachel Newell will be joining us as the Rector of Ellesmere Port and her induction service will be on Wednesday 29 May at 7pm in St Thomas Church. This will be such a special moment for Rachel and for the parish as we look forward with her to the future of the parish and what God has in store for her and us! The service will be followed by refreshments but more of that later in the month, once final decisions have been made. Rachel is very much looking forward to joining us and settling with her family in the Rectory. Please do keep them in your prayers.

Experience Easter was very well received by the schools who joined us, and we had some great feedback from them. As we prayed each morning before the children joined us, we prayed that small seeds of faith would be planted in their young hearts and minds and so we must continue to pray for that seed to be watered, wherever and by whoever! Following Experience Easter I visited a couple of schools to lead assemblies and classes and it was great to hear that the children remembered what they had learned during their time with us – a great whoop of 'hosannas' came from year 6 at William Stockton during my visit to them!



Holy Week was very busy but once again it was so encouraging to see folk really engaging with Jesus' final journey to the cross before we celebrated the resurrection on Easter Day. A big thank you to everyone who donated Easter eggs for the egg hunt – the children shared their bounty with those in church!

### Easter Chicks

A big thank you to all the knitters! The chicks were spread throughout the community and some were also handed out during our Easter praise in The Port Arcades.



Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting is on Sunday 21 April at 10.45am in St Thomas & All Saints. We are incorporating the meeting into our morning service which shall then be followed up by a bring and share lunch. Please do make every effort to join us for this – a most important meeting in the life of the church as we look back and give thanks and most importantly look forward. God has been so good over these last twelve months please do make every effort to join us to give thanks.

If you would like to stand for election to the parochial church council or deanery synod or churchwarden then proposal forms are at the back of church. You will need to be

proposed and seconded – please prayerfully consider serving your church in these roles.

The Electoral Roll is just being revised this year – the last date for names to be added is 7 April 2024. If you need to check if your name is on the roll please do just ask Pat Nelson or me.

### **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. April 2024 requested items – toys, small musical instruments, toy vehicles, small ball and stationery.

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.

News from Gemma –

It has been a busy time for reaching out to our community. Just in time for the Easter school holidays, 196 food hampers were delivered to schools ready to be distributed to families in Ellesmere Port. This couldn't be done without all of the volunteers within the Parish, plus all of the community partners we now have on board supporting us - so a huge thank you to all involved. Even with such huge numbers of hampers being delivered, this operation ran more smoothly than ever thanks to everyone's hard work. Thank you also to all who contributed to the Lent 'sponsor a bag' appeal. This support is vital to our food hamper project as it continues to grow, so we really do appreciate every contribution made. A total amount of £932.50 was raised which included a donation of £250 from Andersons Funeral Directors – thank you to all who supported this project.

Then we welcomed lots of families into church for our 'Xplore' family fun day. This was packed with excitement as we looked at the relationship between faith and science. Who knew 'Jesus Christ Slime Star' would be such a popular activity!! However, by exploring things in such a fun way, our families felt welcomed, had a great time, and we were able to plant seeds whilst they were here with us. Please do take a look at our social media pages to see the video of what we got up to, it really was very entertaining.

Our Easter programme also gave us plenty of opportunities to reach out to our community, with working together with other churches, singing in the Port Arcades, the walk of witness, our knitted chicks going out in to the community. Thank you once again to everyone who gets involved in all of these initiatives, it is such a blessing to have so many people supporting the growth of the church.

I think the important message with regards to the current community work taking place is that we are very active, which is extremely positive. We are seeing a positive impact upon our numbers within our cafe church services in particular, however

recently there have also been some visitors to other services too. This would not be possible without a lot of hard work from a lot of people - so I want to say again a huge thank you!! "Commit your work to the Lord and your plans will succeed" Proverbs 14:23

### **Dates for April 2024**

Wednesday 3	10.30am	Fun Day for families in the community in St Thomas Church
Sunday 7	10.45am	Café Church – Now what?
Wednesday 10	2pm	Tea at Two in coffee lounge
Sunday 14	4pm	ABC service at St Lawrence
Wednesday 17	7pm	Rural Dean's commissioning service at All Saints, Thornton Hough
Sunday 21	10.45am	Joint Service at St Thomas incorporating Annual Parochial Church Meeting followed by bring and share lunch
Friday 26	1pm	PALS lunch in church hall

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

I think that is it for now.

Take care & God bless  
Gill & the staff team

P.S. Brilliant news! Susan Mayers, our PCC secretary has been informed this afternoon that we have been successful in our application for grant funding to repair many of the window frames at St Thomas Church which are desperately in need of some TLC! We have been granted £9,500. Praise the Lord!