

**March 2025 newsletter**

When I lived and worked in India there were many things that I missed, One of them with the seasons. I am not often thankful for the British weather, but I enjoy the changing seasons each one bringing its beauty.

I love spring; the warmer days, flowers pushing up from the ground to burst forth in all their glory, farmers preparing for the lambing season, and yes, you guessed it, I am enjoying that it's almost Easter and there's even more opportunity to eat chocolate! If I was to think of a word to encapsulate spring, I think I would say hope. Early spring is full of signs of hope, of things that are yet to come. However, we equally still get those dull days where it's cold and miserable, and it can leave you wondering if spring will ever come at all.

As I thought about this it made me reflect on life. How many things are we hoping for, how many early signs do we see that suggest it may be happening? maybe it's a promising conversation with a loved one who doesn’t yet know Jesus, new faces in church or a problem that you're facing that is getting a little easier. It doesn't take much though does it, for something to happen and for us to begin to wonder if what we are hoping for will ever happen at all.

But we do hope, because we trust in a God who is at work in all things, Romans 15:13 says “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”. May the visual reminder we have of spring being on the way remind us of the God that we place our hope in, the God who is at work in our world in our lives and in the lives of those we love. Let's not lose hope! *Rachel*

A group of stuffed animals on a table

Description automatically generatedLent reflections – we are not doing any specific course over Lent but you might like to take a look at either [Living Hope - Lent reflections | The Church of England](https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/what-we-believe/lent-holy-week-and-easter/living-hope-lent-reflections) or TearFund have produced a Lent Devotional series entitled ‘Together as One’ which can be accessed through their website tearfund.org.

We are hoping to share something of our Easter hope and joy into the community with our chickens! If you need a pattern then they are available at the back of church. Let’s see if we can beat the numbers made last year!

**Enquirers course – we are running a course for those new to faith or for those wanting to be baptised or confirmed. It will start on Tuesday 1 April 2025 at 7pm and will run for 6 weeks. Venue to be decided – depending on numbers. If you would like to join us then please speak to Rachel or Gill. Exciting times!**

**Summer Fair 21 June 2025** 11am – 3pm St Thomas church grounds – in the sunshine! We had our first planning meeting for the fair and so have lots of ideas for stalls etc. Once we have a few matters confirmed I will write to you separately so you can see how best you can support this fundraiser for general church funds.

During half term we hosted another family cinema night which was a huge success - over 80 attendees, hotdogs and pizzas galore, and a wonderful 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! We delivered 150 hampers to 6 schools in the parish with the help of our volunteers from the Co-Op and students from The Ellesmere Port Church of England College, who were a credit to the school. Thank you so much to everyone involved, and long may this continue - having additional volunteers really does have such a positive impact!

Toms Tots have continued to meet and they have been making some lovely craft courtesy of Susan Mayers. A big thank you to everyone who helps in any way with Toms Tots, it is always lovely to go into church on a Thursday morning and hear the laughter and squeals from the little ones enjoying themselves.

Our ‘What’s Next’ group continues to meet on the first Monday of the month – meeting from 5pm – 6.30pm in the coffee lounge. We have a good number of young people joining us and food is always included. We could do with help to oversee the preparation of the food – usually pizza, hot dogs etc. If we had a couple of people it would mean perhaps once every couple of months. Please have a word with Rachel or Gill if you could help with that. Thank you

**2025 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 2025 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 – they don’t want men’s shoeboxes thank you as they are too big! Thank you for your continued support.

**Experience Easter –17 – 20 March 2025 – 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 and sharing the Easter story with over 300 primary school children! How exciting is that??

**Holy Week and Easter dates for the diary**

Maundy Thursday 17 April 7pm Agape service & light supper in St Thomas

Good Friday 18 April 10am All Age Worship at St Thomas followed

by coffee & hot cross buns

2pm Hour at the Cross at St Lawrence

Easter Day 20 April 9am & 10.45am Holy Communion at St Thomas

11am Holy Communion service at St Lawrence

Looking ahead - Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting is on Sunday 18 May 2025 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 will be available soon. You will need to be proposed and seconded – please prayerfully consider serving your church in these roles.

There is a new Electoral Roll being prepared this year so everyone will need to complete an application form. Further details will follow later this month.

**Dates for March 2025**

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| 2 March | 10.45am | Café church at St Thomas – not giving up but taking up! |
| 3 March | 5pm | What’s Next? In the coffee lounge at St Thomas |
| 4 March | 7.30pm | PCC meeting in coffee lounge |
| 5 March | 7pm | **Service for ASH WEDNESDAY at St Lawrence** |
| 9 March | 4pm | ABC at St Lawrence |
| 12 March | 10am  2pm | Holy Communion at Christ Church School  Tea at Two in the coffee lounge |
| 13 March | 1pm | FIG meeting at 4 Deeside Close |
| 17 – 20 March |  | Experience Easter at St Thomas |
| 21 March | 1pm | PALS lunch in the church hall |
| 23 March | 10.45am  12.30pm | Joint Service at St Thomas  Welcome lunch in church hall for those relatively new to our two churches |

Pastoral matters – please do let the clergy 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

Rachel, Gill & the staff team

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