**January 2025**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Letter from the Rector*** | | | |
| **The Rector writes**  I don’t know about you, but I am never quite sure what to make of a new year. One aspect that I particularly struggle with is when does it stop being ‘new’ and become just the current year? Does it cease to be new when our best intentions are thwarted and the reflective diary remains unwritten, the trainers remain firmly on the shoe rack and the biscuit tin has magically become restocked? Or is it when I finally manage to write the correct year without thinking about it?  Am I still the ‘new Rector?’ I am surprised to find that I have been in the united benefice for two years! So, am I still new? In the long history of the two churches I clearly am, but am I still new to you?  But perhaps that is completely the wrong question to ask. At the heart of our faith is the promise that we can be made ‘new’ any time, not just at the turn of a year, or when starting a new role, or becoming a parent or grandparent or marking any other life event. As a famous hymn tells us, we can be made new every moment of every day:  New every morning is the love  our wakening and uprising prove;  through sleep and darkness safely brought,  restored to life and power and thought.  As Paul puts it in his second letter to the Corinthians, “if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).  As we look forward to 2025 let’s continue to build on our commitments in 2024, to be prayerful worshipping communities, that are generous and hospitable. Let’s pray for our communities and beyond. As we ponder this coming year with all its challenges and blessings, let us recognise that our amazing God makes us new day after day, if only we will let him mould us and renew us.  At new year, the old gives way to the new. For us to be renewed implies we might need to give up something of our old self as St Paul suggests – to be cleansed, refreshed, reshaped... But for the sake of having new life in Christ, it is worthwhile letting God do his work!  May the peace of Christ dwell in you and be your inspiration in the coming year; Susan    **Tuesday 7th January 10am to 11.30am, St Cuthbert’s Church, choir vestry**  Meet old friends and make some new ones and take the opportunity to have a quiet moment in church.    **Warm Spaces will meet in St Thomas’ Church whilst the Millenium Centre is closed due to flooding**  **restarts Wednesday 8th January 12.30- 3pm**  A simple warm lunch served from 1-2pm followed by time to simply be.  See Glen Gardner for more details.    **Christian Chatter will restart in February – sorry for any inconvenience.**  Come and join an informal chat about our faith. All Welcome.    St Thomas’ Parent and Toddler Group  Will restart as soon as possible in **Lydiate Guide Centre** after the flood in the Millenium Centre. | | | |
| **Services for January 2025** | | | |
| Date | Time | Place | Service |
| **Sunday 5th January**  **Epiphany** | 8.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Said BCP Holy Communion |
| 9.30am | St Cuthbert’s Halsall | BCP Holy Communion *(No Church without walls)* |
| 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Common Worship Holy Communion |
| Weds 8th January | 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thursday 9th January | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Morning Prayer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **Sunday 12th January**  **Baptism of Christ** | 8.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Said BCP Holy Communion |
| 9.30am | St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Common Worship Holy Communion |
| 11.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Common Worship Holy Communion |
| Weds 15th January | 11.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thurs 16th January | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Morning Prayer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **Sunday 19th January**  **Second Sunday**  **of Epiphany** | 8.00am | St Thomas Lydiate | Said BCP Holy Communion |
| 9.30am | St Cuthberts, Halsall | BCP Holy Communion *(*Messy Church) |
| 11.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Common Worship Holy Communion |
| Weds 22nd January | 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thurs 23rd January | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Morning Prayer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **Sunday 26th January**  **Third Sunday of Epiphany** | 8.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Said BCP Holy Communion |
| 9.30am | St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Common Worship Holy Communion |
| 11.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | All age Eucharist |
| Wednesday 29th January | 11.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thurs 30th January | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Morning Payer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| Thank you to everyone who helped to ensure the success of all our Christmas services. So many people do so much from getting the church ready to welcoming people; from putting up the hymn numbers to tidying the books away at the end of a service. Thank you all. Worship could not happen without each and every one of you. If you feel you could help by offering your time then please speak to one of the churchwardens or Susan.    2025 is a crucial year for our parishes as we decide on the shape and our role in the new larger single parish.  Please come along to these key meetings so you can be informed about the issues and prayerfully decide  how we should be involved.  **Finance Question and Answer Session**  Tuesday 7th January 7.30pm St Paul’s Skelmersdale (new venue due to flooding)  **Mission Planning Workshop**  Rainford Parish Church Tuesday 28th January 7.30pm  **Could you volunteer for the Samaritans?**  Southport Samaritans are desperately short of volunteers. Please seriously consider if you are being called to be part of this vital mental health support service. To find out more go to: samaritans.org/volunteer  **Renewal of the Electoral Roll 2025**  2025 will see a renewal of the electoral roll for both churches. This means that everyone who wishes to be part of the parish must complete a new electoral roll form. We are asking people to include their email and phone number as well as postal address this year to make it easier to communicate and keep people informed.  No names will be transferred from the old electoral roll. Everyone must complete a new form.  Our electoral roll secretaries are Jean Cropper (St Thomas’) and Kathryn Rankin (St Cuthbert’s) | | | |