**February 2024**

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| ***Letter from the Rector*** | | | | | |
| “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil”. Luke 4:1-2  The forty days and forty nights that Jesus spent in the wilderness are the blueprint for the ***season of Lent***, and ever since then, Christians around the world have been challenged to think about how they mark the six weeks that directly precede Easter.  For many Lent is about deciding what to give up. The list is endless; chocolate, sugar, alcohol, coffee, mobile phones or tablets (by which I mean those hand-held computer devices) or swearing. Equally it might be about trying to be more disciplined in consciously slowing down for a short time each day or spending time reading the bible. Whatever we decide to do we need to do with our whole heart and with an expectation of being both challenged and surprised.  Pope Francis said, “Lent comes providentially to reawaken us, to shake us from our lethargy. Fasting makes sense if it really chips away at our security and, as a consequence, benefits someone else, if it helps us cultivate the style of the good Samaritan, who bent down to his brother in need and took care of him.”  So how will you approach Lent in 2024? In addition to your own Lenten discipline, what about committing to learning about some of the challenges we face as communities? This year we are inviting a series of speakers to come and get us thinking around issues of social justice. Why not come along and bring a friend or a neighbour? (Details are given elsewhere in the newsletter).  Whatever you decide to do, may I encourage everyone to try something different this year. Who knows? Maybe this will be the start of something. And maybe an alternative approach will draw us all closer as a community and help us all to be even more thankful for all we have been given.  *With every blessing, Susan.*    **Tuesday 6th February 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.  Come and pick up some supplies to help you manage, if you or someone you know is struggling,  no questions asked.    **Warm Space, Millenium Centre, St Thomas’ Church EVERY Wednesday 12.30- 4pm with**  A simple warm lunch served from 1-2pm followed by time to chat & relax. See Glen Gardner for more details.    **Ash Wednesday February 14th 2024**  Holy Communion, 11am St Thomas’ and 7.00pm St Cuthbert’s    Lent course starts Tuesday 20th February 7.30-9pm – pick up a flyer at the back of church.  Come and think about Social Justice and ponder our response, with a cup of tea and some simple worship.    Parent and Toddler Group at St Thomas’ Thursday mornings 10- 11.30am  Thank you to everyone for the amazing number of donations of toys.  **Launches Thursday 25th February. £4 a family** | | | | | |
| **Services for January** | | | | | |
| Date | | Time | Place | | Service |
| Thursday 1st February | | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | | Said Morning Prayer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **Sunday 4th February**  **Second Sunday before Lent** | | 8.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said BCP Holy Communion |
| 9.30am | St Cuthbert’s Halsall | | BCP Holy Communion *(Church without walls)* |
| 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Common Worship Holy Communion |
| Tuesday 6th February | | 9.15am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said Morning Prayer |
| Weds 7th February | | 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thursday 8th | | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | | Said Morning Prayer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **Sunday 11th February**  **Sunday before Lent** | | 8.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said BCP Holy Communion |
| 9.30am | St Cuthbert’s Halsall | | Common Worship Holy Communion |
| 11.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Church Parade |
| Tuesday 13th February | | 9.15am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said Morning Prayer |
| **Ash Wednesday**  14th February | | 11.00am  7.00pm | St Thomas’ Lydiate  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | | Holy Communion with imposition of ash  Holy Communion with imposition of ash |
| Thurs 15th February | | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | | Said Morning Prayer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **Sunday 18th February**  **First Sunday of Lent** | | 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 |
| Tuesday 20th February | | 9.15am  7.30pm | St Thomas’ Lydiate  St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said Morning Prayer  Lent Course in Millennium Centre |
| Weds 21st February | | 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thurs 22nd February | | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | | Said Morning Prayer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **Sunday 25th February**  **Second Sunday of Lent** | | 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 |
| Tuesday 27th February | | 9.15am  7.30pm | St Thomas’ Lydiate  St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said Morning Prayer  Lent Course in Millenium Centre |
| Wednesday 28th February | | 11.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thurs 29th February | | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | | Said Morning Payer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **All are welcome, whether you have been a life-long Anglican or are just exploring.** | | | | | |
| **Wine tasting with quiz and raffle at St Cuthbert’s School Hall, to raise funds for St Cuthbert’s Church**  Sat 2nd March, 7pm. Tickets £20 from Pam Carr (01695 423817). Please come and bring a friend.  **Looking Ahead - important dates for your diary**  Holy week, Sunday 24th March to Saturday 30th March  **Why not plan to come to daily service as we prepare to celebrate Easter Day on 31st March.** | | | | | |
| Pause | | Ponder | | | Pray | |
| As the snow drops emerge pause to look at the buds and spring bulbs that herald the arrival of spring. Notice their delicate beauty that can withstand the frost | |  | | | God, thank you for Spring and the hope of warmer, longer, brighter days. Thank you for the coming of growth and life and birth. Thank you that things are coming awake in the world. Now we ask that you bring into reality all that belongs in this season, hope and joy. We hope in you and in your promises.  We hope in your gift of Spring. Amen | |