**January 2024**

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| ***Letter from the Rector*** | | | | | |
| Here we are at the beginning of a New Year. I wonder what your hopes and dreams are for 2024? This is the time of year for thank you letters or telephone calls and for resolutions.  For me, it is a time to say thank you to everyone who has done so much over the last year to enable both our churches to function and serve our local communities. Thank you to those prayer warriors who quietly hold the parishes in prayer day after day with open hearts and open hands. Thank you to those who give their time and their skills to support others in the community. Thank you to those who give without counting the cost and without expectation of reward. Thank you to those who have committed to give financially to ensure the doors remain open. We have made a start but there is much more to do to ensure both our churches thrive and survive for the next generation.  Our vision for the united benefice is to:   * deepen and broaden our worship based on the Eucharist * deepen discipleship through prayer and bible study * strengthen links with our schools and uniformed organisations * grow in our generosity and our hospitality   It is a vision that involves every single one of us – we are all links in the chain. We all have a part to play no matter how young or old, no matter how long we have been part of the church family. Without your commitment, without your prayers, without your generous giving, neither church will grow and flourish. So what is your resolution for 2024?  The nature of time and our calendar is linear. It is made up of moments that have a beginning and an end. But there is another way about thinking about time. As people of faith, time has an eternal depth. So beyond the superficiality of an ending there is an ongoing presence being integrated into the eternal. That means nothing is lost or closed but rather transformed by experience and wisdom into something far deeper. As your Rector I am grateful for every single one of you. Each one of you has blessed me. As we pray and worship together, God will work his purposes out for us and for community.  *May God bless each of you in the coming year. Susan*    **Tuesday 2nd 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.  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 restarts Wednesday 17th January 12.30- 4pm with**  A simple warm lunch served from 1-2pm followed by time to simply be. See Glen Gardner for more details.    **Christian Chatter Tuesday 23rd January 2024 7.30-8.30pm.**  We will be looking at “blessed are those who hunger and first for righteousness”  Come and join an informal chat about the sermon on the mount. All Welcome.    Parent and Toddler Group at St Thomas’ Thursday mornings 10- 11.30am  Thank you to everyone for the amazing number of donations of toys.  Keep an eye open for the launch date.  **Please note: no midweek services at St Cuthbert’s on 4th and 11th January.** | | | | | |
| **Services for January** | | | | | |
| Date | | Time | Place | | Service |
| Wednesday 3rd January | | 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Aaid CW Holy Communion |
| **Sunday 7th January**  **Epiphany** | | 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 |
| Weds 10th January | | 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said CW Holy Communion |
| **Sunday 14th January**  **Second 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 | | Common Worship Holy Communion |
| Tuesday 16th January | | 9.15am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Morning Prayer |
| Weds 17th January | | 11.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thurs 18th January | | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | | Morning Prayer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **Sunday 21st January**  **Third 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 |
| Tuesday 23rd January | | 9.15am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Morning Prayer |
| Weds 24th January | | 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thurs 25th January | | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | | Morning Prayer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **Sunday 28th January**  **Presentation 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 | | All age Eucharist |
| Tuesday 30th January | | 9.15am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Morning Prayer |
| Wednesday 31st January | | 11.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thurs 1st February | | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | | Morning Payer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **All are welcome, whether you have been a life-long Anglican or are just a little curious.** | | | | | |
| Thank you to everyone who helped to ensure the success of the Christmas Tree Festival at St Cuthbert’s and all the services held at both Churches to mark Christmas. Over 200 people attended at least one service over the Christmas weekend.  **Looking Ahead, important dates for your diary**  **Ash Wednesday February 14th 2024**  Holy Communion 11am St Thomas’ and 7.30pm St Cuthbert’s and at each of our schools  **Lent Course will be on Tuesday evenings 7.30-9pm**  on 20th and 27th February, 5th, 12th and 19th March 2024  Why not come along and hear how different people look at Micah 6:8 and put its message into action? | | | | | |
| Pause | | Ponder | | | Pray | |
| What is God calling us to do as parishes?  What can we share with our fellow Christians?  What is God prompting you to do? | | A close-up of a logo  Description automatically generated | | | Loving Lord, as we explore together what it means to be fit for mission, may we be devoted to prayer and watchful for the signs of your coming kingdom. Give us thankful hearts and open doors to make known the Gospel. May our words and actions point people to Jesus, who is our Lord and Saviour. Amen. | |