**December 2023**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Letter from the Rector*** | | | | |
| What sort of memories do you have from Christmas past? For me, as a child, the excitement certainly started when the Christmas tree, with all its baubles, lights and tinsel, was brought down from the attic. That was usually around mid-December, and it marked the start of a time when everything was just that little bit different and normal routines were laid aside for a while. My parents enjoyed some time off work and family members gathered at our house for Christmas dinner. It was, of course, great to be off school as well!  Maybe that was not a very holy view of Christmas, but it does make me think now of one very important aspect of the incarnation (God being born and living with us on earth). When Jesus came into the world, he came *to make a difference.* Whether he truly understood just what an impact he would make we can only guess at, but in the end, he changed things so much that the majority of the world now measures dates and seasons based on the time of his birth.  With this in mind, it seems right that the way we mark Christmas should be special, allowing us to depart from our daily routine. For some that means more partying, but even amongst the rowdiest of parties the name of Christ is uttered without shame or embarrassment (even if it is not obvious to all that he is what ‘Christ-mass’ is all about!). For others it might mean a trip to the local church to join in with some carols or even come along to an Advent Quiet Service. Even for those already committed, it means worshipping at different times and with the crib always in view, bringing home that message that God so loved his world that he sent his only son to be born and die for each of us.  Christmas should be different, but we must go beyond simply marking it out as a special season. If Jesus came to make a difference, it is up to us to make sure that we too make a difference in the world. And the world today, more than ever, needs to hear a different message that speaks of peace, mutual respect and hope not anger, division and hopelessness.  *May the peace of Christ dwell in you this Christmas time and be your inspiration in the coming year; Susan*    **Tuesday 5th December 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 are struggling, no questions asked.    **Warm Space, Millenium Centre, St Thomas’ Church every Wednesday in December 12.30- 4pm with**  A simple warm lunch served from 1-2pm followed by time to simply be.  See Glen Gardner for more details.    **St Cuthbert’s Christmas tree festival.**  Come and start your Christmas celebrations with a visit toChurch - open each weekend  Saturdays 11am – 3pm and Sundays 1-3pm except Sunday 10th December 2-3pm.    Come and start your festive season with  **Carol Concert at St Thomas’ Church Wednesday 6th December from 7.30pm**  with Ormskirk Community Choir. Donations towards church funds with simple refreshments and a raffle. | | | | |
| **Services for December** | | | | |
| Date | | Time | Place | Service |
| **Sunday 3rd December**  **First Sunday of Advent** | | 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 |
|  | | 4pm | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Christingle |
| **Monday 4th December** | | **7pm** | **St Thomas’ Lydiate** | **Advent Quiet Service** |
| Tuesday 7th November | | 9.15am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Morning Prayer |
| Weds 8th November | | 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thurs 9th November | | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Morning Prayer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **Sunday 10th December**  **Second Sunday of Advent** | | 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 |
| **Monday 11th December** | | **7pm** | **St Cuthbert’s Halsall** | **Advent Quiet Service** |
| Tuesday 12th December | | 9.15am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Morning Prayer |
| Weds 13th December | | 11.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thurs 14th December | | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Morning Prayer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **Sunday 17th December**  **Third Sunday of Advent** | | 8.00am | St Thomas Lydiate | Said BCP Holy Communion |
| 9.30am | St Cuthberts, Halsall | BCP Holy Communion *(No Messy Church)* |
| 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | All Age Communion with scratch nativity |
| 4pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Carols and mulled wine with Marshside Brass band |
| 7pm | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Carol Service for the recently bereaved |
| **Monday 18th December** | | **7pm** | **St Thomas’ Lydiate** | **Advent Quiet Service** |
| Tuesday 19th December | | 9.15am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Morning Prayer |
| Weds 20th December | | 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Said CW Holy Communion |
| Thurs 21st December | | 9.15am  1.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall  St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Morning Prayer  Said Holy Communion with prayers for healing |
| **Sunday 24th December**  **Christmas Eve** | | 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 |
|  | | 4pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Christingle |
|  | | 11pm | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Midnight Eucharist |
|  | | 11.30pm | St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Midnight Eucharist |
| **Mon 25th December**  **Christmas Day** | | 9.00am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | BCP Holy Communion for Christmas |
| 9.30am | St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Eucharist for Christmas |
| 11am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | All Age Eucharist for Christmas |
| Thurs 28th December | | 7pm | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Quiet Service for Holy Innocents |
| Sunday 31st December | | 8am | St Thomas’ Lydiate | Said BCP Holy Communion |
| 10.30am | St Cuthbert’s Halsall | Joint Benefice Service |
| **All are welcome, whether you have been a life-long Anglican or are just a little curious.** | | | | |
| If you wish to make a donation to the **Christmas flowers at St Thomas’,** please pick up a leaflet at the back of church and hand your donation, with the name of your loved one to be remembered, to one of the church wardens or Anne Holt or Val Blakemore | | | | |
|  | ***T****here will be no* ***Christian Chatter*** *in December the next one will be January 23rd 7.30-8.30pm*  *when we look at blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*  **Parent and Toddler group to launch around 14th January 2024, Millennium Centre, St Thomas’**  If you have any good quality suitable pre-loved toys please bring them ***to church on Sat 16th Dec 9.30-11.30am*** | | | |