



ST NICHOLAS AND ST MARY'S

SEPTEMBER 2026 ISSUE

Editor's email: mirrie1@sky.com

Articles for the October issue to me by 20th September 2026 please.

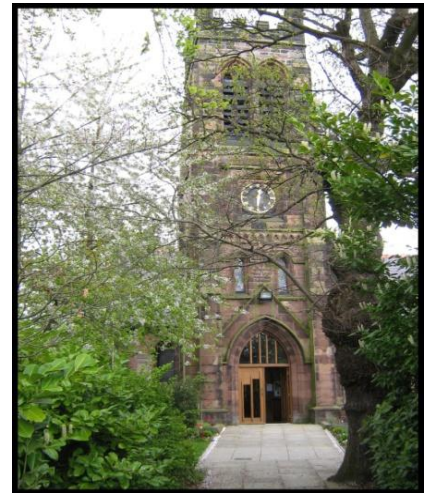
Church website www.halewoodparish.org



Please feel free to send me any articles that may be of interest to our readers.

Email address above.

Margaret



Prayer for September 2026

Dear Lord, September – the month of new starts!

New terms, new groups, new friends, new hopes, every year.

Lord, be with us!

Lord, thank you for the new start you offer us when we put our trust in Jesus. A new start that we make once – and then can renew every day.

Every time we falter, you pick us up. Every time we come back to you, you forgive us and accept us.

Thank you, Lord, for never letting us down, for never leaving or forsaking us, that new starts with you are always possible, not just in September.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

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St Nicholas and St Mary's Ecumenical Team Ministry
PARISH OFFICE

Administrator: Jessica Forrester - Mon to Fri 9 am to 1 pm

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MINISTRY MESSAGE

Psalm 23 and the road to recovery

As I'm sure you are aware, Celebrate Recovery officially launched on 30th June 2026, and we have welcomed 46 people through the door for the launch event. Since then, we have been meeting weekly, and the team have been welcoming around 20 people every week for a time of teaching or testimony and a time of worship and sharing.

One thing that has been evident since launching is how God has been preparing the way for us, and for the people who are attending, long before our doors even opened. We have heard incredible testimonies of God's timing: a chance introduction to someone back in February, who now attends regularly and has brought several friends along; many others who were uniquely directed to our social media posts; and individuals who had been praying for a local 12-step recovery group, only for a friend to mention that Celebrate Recovery was starting at a nearby church.

It is incredibly encouraging for us as a team to hear these stories. They deeply affirm the need for this new worshipping community within Halewood and the wider single larger parish.

We have also received wonderful feedback from attendees about how the weekly teachings are positively impacting their daily lives. One of the many beautiful aspects of this programme is seeing how God works through the teachings to begin healing people's hurts, habits, and hang-ups. This healing isn't just for the attendees, but also for the team facilitating the meetings. Having worked with this programme for many years, I am equally excited to see what God will reveal to me next, because for me recovery is an ongoing journey.

One of the songs we have regularly used in worship "He restores my soul" is based on Psalm 23, and this particular piece of scripture has been following me around over the last few months and it got me to thinking about how pertinent this psalm is in relation to the journey we begin at Celebrate Recovery.

When we think of Psalm 23, we often picture a serene, peaceful painting of a shepherd sitting in a quiet meadow. But for anyone who has ever wrestled with hurts, habits and hang-ups, we know that life rarely feels like a calm meadow. True recovery is messy, exhausting, and often terrifying at first.

When we look closely at King David's words, Psalm 23 isn't a song about a life free from trouble. It is a song sung by a man who intimately knew the pain of brokenness, the agony of bad choices, and the desperate need for rescue. It is a song of recovery. In Celebrate Recovery, we talk about admitting our powerlessness, turning our lives over to God, and letting Him restore us. Psalm 23 is the ultimate map for that exact journey.

David begins with a foundational declaration: *"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."* The Lord is my shepherd - think about the words, he is talking about a shepherd, and shepherds know each of their sheep in a way that anyone who isn't a shepherd can't. In the ancient world, sheep were entirely dependent on their shepherd and that same dependence on their shepherd is how we were created to be, dependant on the Lord. Left to themselves, sheep get lost, fall over cliffs, eat toxic weeds, and become completely defenceless against predators. In similar ways we as humans have the same struggles and at Celebrate Recovery you can find freedom from them. To say "The Lord is my shepherd" is to look squarely at Principle 1 and Step 1 of recovery. It means admitting that we are powerless to control our tendencies to do the wrong thing, and that our lives have become unmanageable.

When David says, *"He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters,"* he is describing a sheep that has finally stopped running. Anxious, addicted, driven sheep do not lie down. They pace. They obsess. They try to fix themselves. It is only when we fully surrender our will and our lives to Christ—Principle 3—that He can finally make us lie down, quiet our racing minds, and begin to restore our souls.

The heart of recovery happens in the dark places. David writes in verse four: *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."*

In recovery, we all hit the "valley." The valley is Step 4—making a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. It is the painful process of facing our past, our trauma, our secrets, and our deep-seated flaws. Walking into that valley where we once lived is terrifying. It feels like walking into the shadow of death.

But notice two things. First, David says we walk *through* the valley. We do not pitch a tent there. We do not get stuck there. Recovery is a journey *through* the pain to get to the other side where freedom is. Second, we do not walk it alone. The Shepherd is right beside us. His rod protects us from the enemy's lies of shame, and His staff gently hooks us and pulls us back when we start to wander back into old, destructive patterns. You can be fearless in your inventory because the Higher Power walking with you, Jesus, is bigger than any secret you are hiding.

In the final verses, the scene shifts from a rugged mountain path to a grand celebration. *"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."* In life, our "enemies" are often our triggers, our cravings, our old playground buddies, and our deep-seated resentments, the hurts that keep us from moving forward. We often think that God will only bless us once all our temptations completely disappear. But David says God sets up a banquet table *in the very presence* of the enemies.

Right in the middle of a world full of temptation, God invites you to sit down at the table of recovery. He anoints your head with oil—healing the wounds of your past—and makes your cup run over with grace, community, and support. This is the beauty of the Celebrate Recovery family. God doesn't wait until you are perfect to throw you a party. He offers you a seat at His table right now, right in the middle of the battle.

David closes this anthem of hope with absolute certainty: *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."*

Before recovery, many of us felt like we were being hunted down by our past, our guilt, our shame, and our failures. They chased us into dark corners and bad habits. But today, because of Jesus Christ, the chase has flipped. God's aggressive goodness and relentless mercy are hunting you down every single day.

If you are stuck in a valley today, look next to you. The Shepherd hasn't abandoned you. He is ready to guide your steps, protect your heart, and lead you to a life of lasting freedom. This freedom is available to anyone and if you are struggling I would encourage you to give Celebrate Recovery a try

Amen. *Helen*



SEPTEMBER SERVICES

Sunday 6th September:

Proper 18 (Exodus 12.1-14, Matthew 18.15-20)

10.30 am St Mary Morning Worship: Carol Burke

11.00 am St Nicholas Holy Communion: Gareth Morgan

6.30 pm St Nicholas Evening Worship: Gareth Morgan

11.00 am St Hilda Morning Worship: James H-F

Thursday 10th September:

9.30 am St Nicholas Holy Communion: Andy Radford

Sunday 13th September:

Proper 19 (Exodus 14.19-31, Matthew 18.21-35)

10.30 am St Mary Holy Communion: Gareth Morgan

11.00 am St Nicholas GJMC/Parade: Mike Sutcliffe

6.30 pm St Nicholas Evening Worship: Geoff Pinnington

11.00 am St Hilda Morning Worship: Andy & Jen Radford

Thursday 17th September:

9.30 am St Nicholas Holy Communion: Gareth Morgan & Helen McGuinness

Sunday 20th September:

Proper 20 (Exodus 16.2-25, Matthew 20.1-16)

10.30 am St Mary Morning Worship & Baptism: David Goodwin

11.00 am St Nicholas Morning Worship: Andy Radford

6.30 pm St Nicholas Holy Communion: Gareth Morgan

11.00 am St Hilda Morning Worship: Gareth Morgan

Thursday 24th September:

9.30 am St Nicholas Holy Communion: Gareth Morgan

Sunday 27th September:

Proper 21 (Exodus 17.1-7, Matthew 21.23-32)

10.30 am St Mary **Morning Worship with Celebration of Volunteers service plus presentation of new Constitution:** Gareth Morgan,

James H-F and Helen McGuinness

11.00 am St Nicholas: See above

1.00 pm St Nicholas Baptisms: Gareth Morgan

6.30 pm St Nicholas **Christ Our Light joint service**

11.00 am St Hilda Holy Communion: Andy Radford

Prayers - If you would like us to include someone in prayers on a Sunday morning and/or evening, there is a book at the back of each church to which you can add names. Please ask the duty warden/steward.

PARISH WALK

Today was the day of our Church Walk and it proved to be an eventful day for a few reasons. The temperature on this early July day was 31 degrees C, which is undoubtedly the hottest weather we have walked in. We also had the Long family with us from St Mary's, husband, wife and three young children. This reduced the average age of our group drastically and meant that the play areas on our journey proved to be much higher on the must do list than they would normally be. Penni had a plan to reduce the length of the walk should that be necessary.



After refreshments, we went to Sefton Park and we began to walk around the perimeter of the lake, armed with bird/duck feed from the little café there.

Once we were past the amazing wildlife we encountered our first enormous fountain, which seemed so inviting in the blazing sunshine. Next, we arrived at the very high Eros feature, just alongside the

Aviary café and there we had a photo call, minus two of our children, who were attracted to the nearby swing park area.

We left Sefton and headed towards Princes Park, using Windermere Terrace as the link between the two parks. In that street we walked past the very grand Windermere House, which is Grade II listed and once owned by Roger McGough, poet and member of the Scaffold music group. Once we were past Princes Park's beautiful lake we rested under a lovely large tree, which was very near a play area. This proved to be another good decision.



Normally we would walk on from here along Princes Avenue to the Anglican Cathedral, but Plan B came into force, which meant that this was our point to head back towards our cars. On our way back we visited the grave of Judy the donkey, who was buried at her favourite grazing spot in Princes Park in 1926. Judy had spent 21 years pulling carts for gardeners and giving rides to local children and died aged 26. Her grave is now a community landmark in Princes Park. She was known for her cheeky personality, famously accepting lollipops, sticky buns and other things from her admirers.

Apparently, one of her duties was to haul coal all the way to Tarbock. The gravestone reads: -

*"In memory of Judy,
Who in 21 years' Service to this park
Was the children's Friend, died 12th
August 1926, aged 26"*

We then went back into Sefton Park and we were immediately drawn to a Grade II listed, polished red granite column dedicated to the Victorian philanthropist and Liverpool MP, Samuel Smith. It features twin drinking fountains, not in use, and has the wonderful John 4:13-14 quote: -

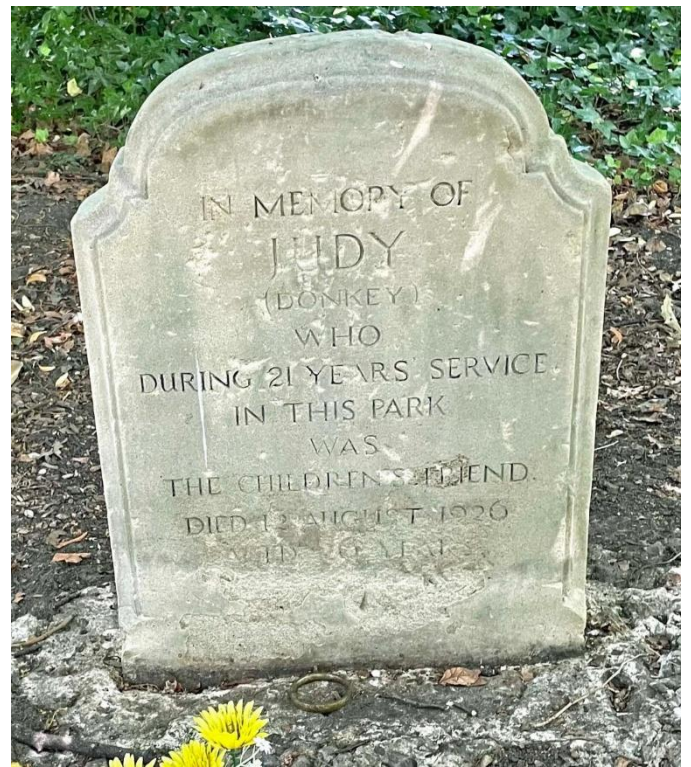
Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst"

Back at the Aviary Café we joined a throng of customers sampling their lovely ice creams. This was like an oasis in the desert and we all sat there and soaked it up.

Our youngest walkers were a credit to their parents and continued at a decent pace past the fountains and lake towards our cars.



It was a bold decision from Penni to run the walk on such a hot day, but with careful management it proved to be a wonderful walk, enjoyed by all and full of joy and interest, with no regrets.



THE NEXT WALK

Please see the notices for information about the next walk.

Live Streaming of services on YouTube

Thanks to some grant funding from Community Foundation Merseyside, we have installed cameras in St Nicholas' to enable us to live stream services on YouTube. The YouTube channel is called St Nicholas St Mary's Halewood Team and the direct link is: <https://bit.ly/halewood-ecumenical>



We are streaming Sunday and Thursday morning services live and it is also available for you to watch later. You may wish to make use of this if you are unable to attend church in person for any reason.

If you subscribe to our YouTube Channel (It's free) it will make it easier to access in future.

18th September – St Joseph of Copertino, the awkward saint

Joseph of Copertino (1603 – 63) should be the patron saint of all awkward people who mean well, but who drive those around them to distraction – especially their church leaders.

Joseph began life in a garden shed, because his father had sold the house to pay debts. Then he grew up wandering about open-mouthed – his mother despised him and called him ‘The Gaper’.

Young Joseph’s intense devotion to God led him to try and join the Capuchin monks – but he drove them crazy: forgetting to do what he was told, dropping piles of plates on the kitchen floor, and neglecting to tend the all-important kitchen fire. He was finally accepted by the Franciscans as a servant, and grew so religiously fervent that he was accepted as a novice in 1625, and ordained a priest in 1628.

As a priest he was devout, but apt to do anything – much to the irritation of his superiors. One problem was his repeated levitations, of which there were 70 reported instances. The most spectacular stories are of his flying to images placed high above the altars and helping workmen to erect a Calvary Cross 36 feet high by lifting it into place while he was hanging in mid-air himself. Such feats earned him the name of ‘the Flying Friar’ by admiring locals, but gave his superiors headaches. They were also disturbed by his habit of going into states of ecstasy, from which nothing could wake him.

Joseph’s reputation for flying about and for occasional ecstasy drew the crowds: they were all eager to see what would happen next. What did happen next was that his superiors kept him in virtual isolation for many years, eager to contain this intensely emotional and erratic priest. In 1767 he was canonised, not for his levitations, but for his extreme patience and humility.

Thank you Parish Pump

PHOTOS FROM THIS YEAR'S CULTUREFEST



Cricket match



Plant Swap



Murder Mystery

Bat Walk



Songs and Scones

Male Voice
Choir



Quiz



Brass Band



Ken Pye's talk



Barn Dance



Poems, Prose
and Afternoon
Tea

Nature Arts
Workshop



Closing service

HOW CAN A CHRISTIAN BE A SCIENTIST?

I used to ask this question as a student. I wondered what it was like to have a career in science, and how being a Christian might make a difference. Eventually I met a good number of successful scientists who were sincere Christians, and I learned that science and faith are a great combination. Dr Francis Collins, former Director of the project to decode the whole of human DNA, wrote that it is “possible for the scientist-believer to be intellectually fulfilled and spiritually alive, both worshipping God and using the tools of science to uncover some of the awesome mysteries of His creation.” So, what do people like this make of the opportunities and challenges of a life in science?

Although our beliefs may affect what we notice about the world and how we interpret our data, they don't affect the outcome of the experiments themselves. If a Muslim and a Christian drop the same ball from the same height under identical conditions, it will fall at the same speed. This means that a scientist can be respected by her colleagues for doing good work, regardless of what she believes and what her colleagues think of her worldview.

Science is an exercise in observing and measuring things, and coming up with general principles about the way things are. The world has been declared by God to be 'very good' (see chapter one and two of Genesis), and exploring it is a way to express our gratitude to Him. Scientific discoveries can also bring a sense of awe and wonder that feeds into our worship.

Some people don't want to get involved in certain lines of research because of ethical concerns. On the other hand, there are many issues that make Christians want to get stuck into new research that will help care for people and the rest of creation, such as medical research, ecology or developing appropriate technologies.

Organisations such as Christians in Science and the Faraday Institute gather together scientists who are also people of faith, and others who are interested in the subject. They come from a wide range of backgrounds, and express their beliefs in a variety of different ways. What they have in common is the conviction that you don't have to choose between science and God. As the young people in our churches prepare to return to their studies, online if not in person, let's encourage them that science (along with many other fields) is a great way to serve God.

This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith. See www.faraday.cam.ac.uk/churches and <http://www.cis.org.uk>

Thank you Parish Pump

BAPTISMS – JULY AND AUGUST 2026

26th July at St Nicholas:

Edna Ivy Pilkington Davies
Rex Roman Irwin
Evelyn Rose Griffiths
Philip David Griffiths

Funerals at St Nicholas' in July and August 2026			
<u>Funerals</u>			
16 July	Norma Hedges	Age 91	Funeral and burial
12 August	Glynis Rose Tierney	Age 67	Burial of ashes
17 August	Colin Critchley	Age 84	Funeral and burial
<u>Weddings</u>			
8 August	Joseph Cee Lim and Ashley Ann Worrall		
14 August	Graeme Stephen Parker and Chelsea Anne Cliff		

DATES TO REMEMBER AND GROUPS

Next Vestry Date for Wedding and Baptism enquiries – 17th September 2026 7.00 - 7.45 pm at St Nicholas Centre.

Our email address for weddings is. alewoodparishweddings@gmail.com

Please use this to contact our Wedding Secretaries -

Our Baptism Secretary's email address is alewood.baptisms@yahoo.com



Please check the details of the groups and volunteers below and let me know if any of them have changed. Thank you, Margaret.

Bible Study

Bible study meetings are held on Wednesdays at 7.30 pm at the home of Mark and Vanessa Harrison. The study runs weekly and is on the Old Testament book of Daniel, a book that will equally challenge and encourage.

All are welcome to come and see what God has to teach us through the reading of his word.

For details please contact Mark and Vanessa personally or via the parish office email :

(Halewoodparish@btconnect.com)

Community Connect (formerly Warm Hub)

Join us every Thursday at 10.00 am in St Nicholas' Church for tea, coffee, juice and toast!
And every Monday 1.00 – 3.00 pm at St Mary's Church.

You will receive a warm welcome! Volunteers always needed! Please speak to James.

Elevate - Youth Club for school Years 5 - 8

Elevate is a youth club for those in Years 5 - 8 on a Sunday night from 6.00 pm to 7.15 pm in St Nic's Parish Centre. There are games and activities, real talk and faith discussions and a space to belong. For more information contact James on jameshf.pariah@gmail.com or just turn up on a Sunday night. Parents will still need to attend the evening service to obtain a scan-in for schools' applications.

THRIVE — youth group for school years 9 - 13

We have a youth group for **Years 9 - 13** called **Thrive**. It's a place to hang out, have fun, and explore life and faith together. We have been running the **Youth Alpha Course** — real talk, good vibes, and plenty of snacks!

 **Sundays, 7:30 - 9:00pm**  **St Nicks Centre, Halewood**

Please pray for this exciting group — and spread the word to any teens who might want to come along!

Contact: James - jameshf.pariah@gmail.com | 07954 857 058

HALEWOOD ART CLUB —

EXPERT GUIDANCE AND TUITION FROM LOCAL PROFESSIONAL ARTIST, ANTHONY SMITH. BEGINNERS WELCOME! WEDNESDAYS 1.00 – 3.00 pm, Environment Centre, Okell Drive - BOOKING ESSENTIAL - £5

PLEASE CONTACT RANGER TONY on 07717301355 or 0151 488 6151

Run by Halewood Town Council, **Women`s Wellness Group, Self Care for You!**

Relaxation exercises, creative writing, fun quizzes, group discussions, and more!

£ 7.00 per session with refreshments included, 11.00 am - 12.30 pm at Hollies Hall, Hollies Road, Halewood. Please contact begertoncoaching@gmail.com to book a place.

Halewood Mothers' Union

Our Mothers' Union meets on the first Thursday afternoon of each month from 2.00 pm at the St Nicholas' Centre. We would love to welcome some new members. The group has a programme of guest speakers and other events throughout the year.

You don't have to be a mother to be a member and men (known as Muscle men) are also welcome. For more information, please speak to Georgina McQueen.

Knowsley Older People's Fun Olympics (K.O.P.F.O.)

Are you aged 50 or over, looking to take part in an activity, and meet new friends? Why not come and join us at our weekly activity sessions held at the Halewood Leisure Centre, Baileys Lane, Halewood, L26 0TY.

We meet every Thursday from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. Amongst the activities we play are:

- *Badminton*
- *Boccia (a game like bowls but played sitting down with soft leather balls)*
- *Indoor Bowls*
- *Curling*
- *Table Tennis*
- *Dominoes*
- *Draughts*
- *Scrabble*

The sessions are aimed at encouraging you to be active, socialise and having fun at the same time, so please come along where you will be made very welcome and quickly become one of the group. Cost is 90 pence per week. For further information, please ring Sue, a member of the team, on 0151 487 0974.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Both of our churches rely on the generosity of members of our congregation in giving up their time to volunteer in all kinds of ways. At St Nicholas and St Mary's we are very blessed with the number of volunteers we do have but there is always room for more.

Below is a list of some of the volunteering opportunities you might like to consider, a rough idea of what the time commitment might be and, where possible, details of whom to contact for further information. The list is not exhaustive and doesn't include roles which might require some specialist knowledge, such as finance skills, HR skills etc.

Reading and Leading Prayers at Services - Both Churches

On a rota, approximately once or twice a quarter.

Speak to Gill Dover at St Mary's or Alison Shacklady at St Nicholas' .

Sidespersons - Both Churches

Meeting and greeting people, giving out and collecting in service sheets, taking collection, tidying up after services. On a rota approximately once or twice a quarter.

Speak to wardens/steward.

Communion Stewards (St Mary's)

To help set up Communion and assist with administering Communion (2nd Sunday).

On a rota once a quarter.

Baptism Sponsors

At the moment just at St Nicholas' (but we would welcome a couple of volunteers for this role at St Mary's for the occasional baptism services which happen there).

Support families during Baptism services (1.00 pm on fourth Sunday of the month).

Approximately 3 or 4 times a year.

Contact Sally Moore, Baptism Secretary on halewood.baptisms@yahoo.com

Tea and Coffee before morning services at St Nicholas' and after morning services at St Mary's

On a rota, approximately two or three times a quarter.

Speak to wardens/steward.

Church Cleaning

St Nicholas' Friday mornings approx. 10.15 - 11.00 am.

Speak to Graham Elliott.

St Mary's - date and time can be arranged to suit.

Speak to Gill Dover.

Work with Children and Young People - All roles need a DBS check and Safeguarding training

Creche and Junior Church at St Mary's and St Nicholas' operate three Sundays per month during term times.

Help required on a rota basis.

For St Mary's contact Laura Fisher- laura_burke_09@hotmail.co.uk or Emma Rooney emma.creasy@btinternet.com

For St Nicholas Junior Church contact Hayley McShane hayleymcshane84@gmail.com

After School Clubs at St Mary's contact Mike Sutcliffe mike.circuitchildren@gmail.com

Sunday evening children's and youth groups, Elevate/Thrive contact James Hutchinson Feguson jameshf.parish@gmail.com

Volunteers are also often needed to help with Uniformed Organisations (Rainbows/Brownies/Guides).

Contact via <http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/>

Gardening/Churchyard clearance

Occasional gardening working parties at both churches.

St Nicholas' contact Geoff Bullen geoffbullen@btinternet.com

St Mary's contact Pam Boffey pam.boffey@hotmail.com or Dave Crerar d.r.crerar@btinternet.com

Community Connect

St Mary's Church Monday afternoons 12.30 - 2.30 pm on a rota basis approx. once a month.

St Nicholas' Church Thursday mornings 10.00 am - 12 midday on a rota basis approx. once a month

Serving tea/coffee and toast and chatting to visitors.

Speak to James Hutchinson Feguson jameshf.parish@gmail.com

Baby Bank

Every Saturday Morning at St Mary's Church, the Shining Lights Baby Bank is open from 10.00 am - 12 noon providing pre-loved baby items (clothes, toys, baby equipment etc) to families with babies and young children, all free of charge. Nicola Lamb who is currently staffing this, urgently needs some additional help to sort and organise donations as they come in.

If you are able to spare the occasional Saturday morning to help out with this or know anyone else who might be able to help, please contact Gill Dover on gillian.dover@gmail.com.

Please note that all volunteers must follow the Church's Safeguarding Procedures.

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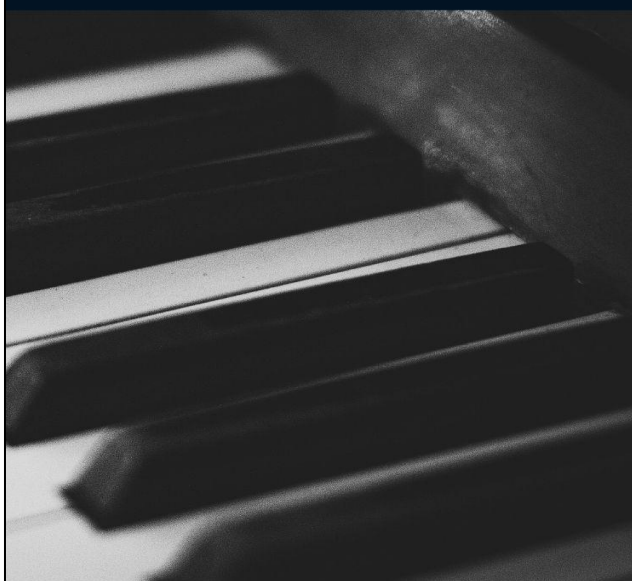
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