



ST NICHOLAS AND ST MARY'S

DECEMBER 2023/JANUARY 2024 ISSUE

Editor's email: mirrie1@sky.com

Articles for the February issue to me by 20th January 2024 please.



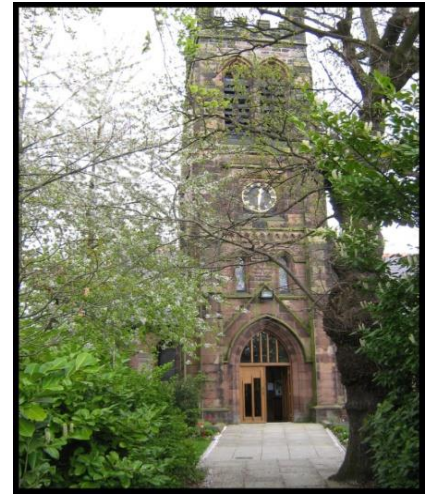
Church website

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 December 2023



Almighty Father,

Thank you for your indescribable gift of Jesus – the Light of the world. Thank you that he brought light and life to all who received him during his life on earth and that he still brings light and life to all who receive him.

Lord, how this broken world needs your light today. As we rejoice and give thanks for Christmas, we pray that the light of Jesus will pierce the darkness of self-interest and hatred – and change the hearts of those who do not love you or their neighbours.

We pray that by the power of your Holy Spirit you will deliver your people from evil, and that your kingdom will come on earth as in heaven. Thank you, Father, that because of Jesus, light will *always* shine in the darkness and the darkness will *never* be able to extinguish it.

Glory and thanks and praise to you Father God, this Christmas and always. In Jesus' saving and powerful name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

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**St Nicholas and St Mary's Ecumenical Team Ministry
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MINISTRY MESSAGE

Well, it's that time of year again. We're in Advent and we're journeying towards Christmas. Advent is a time of preparation and a time of expectation as we await the birth of Jesus into the world.

Now I guess for many of us we probably let Advent pass us by as we're just getting everything ready for Christmas and there's all the hustle and bustle of what needs to be done, the presents that need to be bought and the food we need to have in. I'm definitely guilty of letting these things get in the way.



However, the season of Advent is a time when we are called to prepare for the coming of Christ in his incarnation as a baby at Christmas but also to look ahead to the time when he will come again at the end of time.

To watch and to wait would suggest that we need to maybe slow down a bit because, let's be honest, if we're going at things at a hundred miles an hour then we're not going to see much as it will just whizz past us.

As we enter Advent, I would encourage everyone to take some time to prepare themselves spiritually for the coming of our Lord at Christmas but also to think about what would happen if the second coming was to happen now. Would we be ready for Jesus? What things are we reading, what things are we watching, what things are we doing that are getting us ready for Jesus?

We don't know when Jesus will come again and therefore it's important that we are always watching and waiting and that we are ready for him. In Mark 13, Jesus makes it clear that we need to watch and to wait and be ready for the hour of his return. He says, "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come."

During this time of Advent, let's remember that as Christians we are in a time of waiting, of watching and of anticipation for the coming of our Lord and saviour and let's not let it pass us by. As we decorate our houses, buy our food and give gifts, let's remember that we are waiting for the best gift of all. The gift of Jesus, who was born in a stable and who came to bring us into eternal life with God by dying on a cross and who will come again at the end of time.

So this Advent, I pray that amongst the busyness, amongst the festivities, and amongst all of the chaos of Christmas, that we will take time to wait, to watch and to prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus into the world.

Wishing you a very Peaceful Advent, a Happy Christmas, and a Blessed New Year.

Gareth

DECEMBER AND JANUARY SERVICES

- Sunday 3rd December: ***Advent 1 (1 Corinthians 1.3-9, Mark 13.24-37)***
10.30 am St Mary Morning Worship: Andrew Gillespie
11.00 am St Nicholas Holy Communion: Gareth Morgan
6.30 pm St Nicholas Evening Worship: Adam Grey
11.00 am St Hilda Morning Worship: Andy Radford
- Thursday 7th December: 9.30 am St Nicholas Holy Communion: Gareth Morgan
- Sunday 10th December: ***Advent 2 (2 Peter 3.8-15a, Mark 1.1-8)***
10.30 am St Mary Holy Communion/Toy Service: Andy Radford
11.00 am St Nicholas GMJC/Parade/Toy Service: Gareth Morgan
6.30 pm Carols at Tarbock
11.00 am St Hilda Morning Worship: Carol Burke
- Thursday 14th December: 9.30 am St Nicholas Holy Communion: Andy Radford
- Sunday 17th December: ***Advent 3 (1 Thessalonians 5.16-24, John 1.6-8 & 19-28)***
10.30 am St Mary Morning Worship/Nativity: Gareth Morgan
11.00 am St Nicholas Morning Worship: Matthew Hargreaves
6.30 pm St Nicholas Parish Carol Service: Gareth Morgan Co-ord
11.00 am St Hilda Holy Communion: Phil Saltmarsh
- Thursday 21st December: 9.30 am St Nicholas Holy Communion: Gareth Morgan
- Sunday 24th December: ***Advent 4/Christmas Eve (am: Romans 16.25-27, Luke 1-26-38)***
pm: (Titus 2.11-14, Luke 2.1-14)
10.30 am St Mary GMJC/Christingle: Matthew Hargreaves
11.00 am St Nicholas Morning Worship: Gareth Morgan
4.00 pm St Nicholas Carols around the Crib: Gareth Morgan/Matthew Hargreaves
11.30 pm St Nicholas First Communion of Christmas: Gareth Morgan
11.00 am St Hilda Nativity: Andy & Jen Radford
11.15 pm St Hilda First Communion of Christmas: Andy Radford
- Monday 25th December: ***Christmas Day (Luke 2.1-20)***
10.30 am St Mary/St Nicholas Joint Family Christmas Service at **St Mary's**:
Gareth Morgan
10.30 am St Hilda Family Christmas Service: Andy Radford
- Thursday 28th December: No service.

Sunday 31st December:

Christmas 1 (Galatians 4.4-7, Luke 2 15-21)

10.30 am St Mary Team Service at St Hilda's: Matthew Hargreaves

10.30 am St Nicholas Team Service at St Hilda's

6.30 pm St Nicholas – no service

10.30 am St Hilda Team Service at St Hilda's

Thursday 4th January:

9.30 am St Nicholas Holy Communion: Andy Radford

Sunday 7th January:

Epiphany (Isaiah 60.1-6, Matthew 2.1-12)

10.30 am St Mary Morning Worship: Carol Burke

11.00 am St Nicholas Holy Communion: Phil Saltmarsh

6.30 pm St Nicholas Evening Worship: Gareth Morgan

11.00 am St Hilda Morning Worship: Gareth Morgan

Thursday 11th January:

9.30 am St Nicholas Holy Communion: Gareth Morgan

Sunday 14th January:

Epiphany 1/Baptism of Christ (Acts 19.1-7, Mark 1.4-11)

10.30 am St Mary Holy Communion: Andy Radford

11.00 am St Nicholas GMJC/Parade:

Matthew Hargreaves/Gareth Morgan

12.15 pm & 1.00 pm Baptisms: Gareth Morgan

6.30 pm St Nicholas Evening Worship: Gareth Morgan

11.00 am St Hilda Morning Worship: Adam Grey

Thursday 18th January:

St Nicholas Holy Communion: Gareth Morgan

Sunday 21 January:

Epiphany 2 (Revelation 5.1-10, John 1.43-51)

10.30 am St Mary Morning Worship/Baptism: Gareth Morgan

11.00 am St Nicholas Morning Worship: Andy & Jen Radford

6.30 pm St Nicholas Holy Communion: Gareth Morgan

11.00 am St Hilda Morning Worship: Matthew Hargreaves

Thursday 25th January:

St Nicholas Holy Communion: Gareth Morgan

Sunday 28th January:

Epiphany 3/Candlemas (Hebrews 2.14-18, Luke 2.22-40)

11.00 am St Mary Joint Service at St Nicholas: Holy Communion and Covenant Service: David Goodwin/Gareth Morgan

11.00 am St Nicholas – see above

6.30 pm St Nicholas Evening Worship: Gareth Morgan

11.00 am St Hilda Holy Communion: Andy Radford



Halewood Ecumenical Team Christmas Services & Events

Sunday 10th December

Toy Service - 10.30am at St Mary's

Toy Service/Parade - 11am at St Nicholas'

Carols @ Tarbock - 6.30pm at Tarbock Village Hall

Sunday 17th December

+ Nativity Service - 10.30am at St Mary's

Morning Worship - 11am at St Nicholas'

Parish Carol Service - 6.30pm at St Nicholas'

Sunday 24th December

Christingle Service - 10.30am at St Mary's

Morning Worship - 11am at St Nicholas'

Carols Around the Crib - 4.00pm at St Nicholas

+ First Communion of Christmas - 11.30pm at St Nicholas'

Monday 25th December

+ Family Service - 10.30am at St Mary's

ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH - CHURCH RD, L26 6LA

ST MARY'S CHURCH - HILLINGDEN AVE, L26 9TS

www.halewoodparish.org

LOOK HOW BEAUTIFUL ST NICHOLAS LOOKED ON THE EVENING OF THURSDAY 16TH NOVEMBER FOR THE LATE NIGHT LILIES CONCERT. This was part of the Knowsley Music Festival.





Also part of the Knowsley Music Festival was the Hollywood Concert presented by the Bentley Operatic Society. This took place on Saturday 18th November at St Mary's Church. The concert featured well loved songs and medleys from movies old and new.



Countdown to Christmas 2023

Stay relaxed during the festive season with our healthy little helpers

0800 0234 834

bwcharity.org.uk

Bank
Workers
Charity

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

4

Let go of the things you can't control and focus on the things you can

5

Take each day one step at a time - focus on the present moment

6

Give yourself something to look forward to - make plans with friends

7

Lend an ear to someone who's feeling down, listen to them carefully

1

Set your budget now so you don't overspend for the festive season

2

Prioritise what matters: eat healthy, stay active, and sleep well

3

Catch up with a loved one - give them a call or send a text

11

Relax - don't feel pressured to always be doing something

12

Surround yourself with positive people who bring out the best in you

13

Get a daily dose of sunlight - just 15 minutes can help boost your mood

14

Plan ahead before you hit the shops - have a clear budget in mind

15

Challenge beliefs that anything 'needs' to happen over Christmas

16

Show yourself the same love you give to others - self-care isn't selfish

17

Learn to say no - saying yes too much can leave you feeling overwhelmed

18

Write down your priorities for the week and focus on getting them done

19

Acknowledge all the things you do well today, no matter how small

20

Tell yourself 'What I'm doing is enough' and be kind to yourself

21

Reach out to someone if you need a listening ear - you're not alone

22

Stop striving for perfection and strive for what feels right to you

23

Get in touch with someone who may be feeling lonely or anxious

24

Relax ahead of the big day tomorrow - be kind to yourself and others

25

Christmas day is here. Have a happy holiday and enjoy yourself

Seen on a church noticeboard:

**"When you were born, your mother brought you here.
When you were married, your partner brought you here.
When you die your friends will bring you here.**

Why not try coming on your own sometimes?"

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

Carol singing is not what it used to be. My fond memories of a group of choristers, muffled in scarves and overcoats, carrying lanterns, and walking from door to door in the snow, as they sang 'While shepherds watched ...' had to be suddenly revised when I saw your own music group, in T-shirts inscribed with 'Jesus loves You', singing 'Little donkey', in your shopping centre. I suspect any money you raised would just about have paid for the electricity used to power your banks of electronic equipment. Singing in the main square of the Centre next to the fountain may have looked good, but it seemed to mean that the choir members were obliged to make constant trips to the lavatory.



Here at St James the Least of All, carol singing is regarded as a staff perk for the choir; the year when the Boys' Brigade tried to break their monopoly was suppressed with a ruthlessness that would have impressed Genghis Kahn.

Our annual carol-singing route involves months of meticulous planning. We find that a transparent collection box is vital, so that donors can see what earlier patrons have given. This means that those who are bound to put in notes must be visited first - '*pour encourager les autres*'. It also needs a detachable base, so that if coppers are given, they can be removed from sight before the next call.

Those homes that contain several children are visited just after bedtime, so that parents will give generously simply to get the choir to go somewhere else. Veiled threats to stay and sing more carols (unless they give generously) are usually very effective. Getting whoever looks the most innocent and photogenic to ring the bell and ask for money is a far more subtle way of ensuring a donation than planting any number of mafia lookalikes (such as our church treasurer) on the doorstep.

The choir always finishes its evening at the local pub - but again, the timing must be carefully managed. Too early and there will only be the landlord, his wife, and their Labrador to listen; too late and people will be so full of Christmas cheer that any carols will be hi-jacked and become the equivalent of back-of-the bus rugby songs.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Thankyou Parish Pump

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2024
ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH
FRIDAY 1st MARCH**

This is an advanced notice for your diary - further details will follow in the new year.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Reverend Gareth has shared these two photos from the Remembrance service at St Nicholas on 12th November. It was his first Remembrance Day service at St Nicholas and there was a smashing full house in attendance.



The Town Mayor, Councillor Ian Hamilton, laid a wreath on behalf of Halewood Town Council and the Town Manager, Gerry Allen, did a reading.

And children from the uniformed organisations in the town paraded their colours.

Saturday December 9th , Christmas Craft Fair at Hollies Hall ,
11.00 am - 2.00 pm.

Wednesday December 13th, Annual Christmas Concert at Halewood Academy, tickets £5 from schools or Halewood Town Council .



Oh No they're not....Oh yes they are

The Hargreaves family are once again treading the boards in The Waterloo and Crosby Theatre Company's Annual Panto 'Mother Goose' from Friday 1st - Sunday 3rd and Friday 8th - Sunday 10th December.

Flyers giving further details and booking information are available in both churches.



Shining Lights Halewood CIC

A reminder that our Baby Bank is open at St Mary's church every Saturday 10 – 12: please come along if you need anything - we have baby essentials and clothing and shoes for all ages & sizes.



Look out for your liver

Free liver screening is coming to Knowsley.

Find out more visit www.knowsleynews.co.uk

No appointment necessary

202nd Liverpool Rainbow and Brownies Muddy Day Adventures

On the 8th October 2023 a group of 14 brownies and 6 Rainbows met at Hightown train station.



Their destination- Altcar Army Camp.
Their aim - to get muddy - very muddy.

The day had been put on by Girlguiding North West England in conjunction with the Army for a day of activities for International Day of the Girl.

Around 600 girls and their leaders from around the North west attended the day. After a walk to the entrance of the camp, a bus ride and then another walk they were ready to start their day of muddy fun.



The Brownies' first activity was a game of "Human Hungry Hippos". They had to crawl along a tarpaulin covered in mud to collect balls and compete with other teams. Some of them got into it quite quickly and got very muddy. Others were a bit more hesitant. They then had a mud bath in an inflatable pool filled with mud which they enjoyed very much.

Their next activity was making a boat out of recycled materials and then seeing if they would float in a very appropriately placed muddy puddle which they were encouraged to splash in to make the boats move.

The Rainbows enjoyed a muddy assault course and egg and spoon race and then had a go of making their own den.

Something they enjoyed very much.



After a lunch break it was time to get back to more activities.

The brownies took part in an army camouflage activity trying on army jackets and playing hide and seek with another group. One brownie complained that someone stood on her as she was so well camouflaged.

They then learned about different careers available in the army before finishing off the afternoon making creatures out of clay.

The Rainbows made a muddy canvas which ended up very muddy and roped the leaders into joining in with them in the hungry hippo game. One of the rather muddy leaders had to get the train to London later that day.

It was then time to make our way back to the train station to meet the parents and hand over their very muddy daughters.

All the Brownies and Rainbows had a fabulous day and so did the Leaders.

Some quotes from the parents:

"G has been in the shower for at least half an hour and still covered in mud."

"Thank you so much for taking the girls. They have not stopped talking about it all evening."

"I really appreciate all that you do for the girls and the experiences they have with you whilst in Rainbows/Brownies."

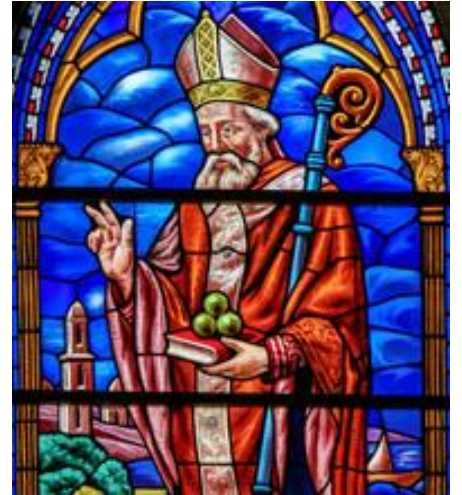
"My girls have had a fabulous time, thank you."

By Becky - Leader of 202nd Liverpool Rainbows and Brownies in Wavertree.



Another look at this much loved Saint

One account of how Father Christmas began tells of a man named Nicholas who was born in the third century in the Greek village of Patara, on what is today the southern coast of Turkey. His family were both devout and wealthy and, when his parents died in an epidemic, Nicholas decided to use his inheritance to help people. He gave to the needy, the sick, the suffering. He dedicated his whole life to God's service, and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. As a bishop in later life, he joined other bishops and priests in prison under the emperor Diocletian's fierce persecution of Christians across the Roman Empire.



Finally released, Nicholas was all the more determined to shed abroad the news of God's love. He did so by giving. One story of his generosity explains why we hang Christmas stockings over our mantelpieces today. There was a poor family with three daughters who needed dowries if they were to marry, and not be sold into slavery. Nicholas heard of their plight, and tossed three bags of gold into their home through an open window – thus saving the girls from a life of misery.

The bags of gold landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. Hence the custom of children hanging out stockings – in the hope of attracting presents of their own from St Nicholas – on Christmas Eve. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols of St Nicholas.

The example of St Nicholas has never been forgotten – in bygone years boys in Germany and Poland would dress up as bishops on 6th December, and beg alms for the poor. In the Netherlands and Belgium 'St Nicholas' would arrive on a steamship from Spain to ride a white horse on his gift-giving rounds. To this day, 6th December is still the main day for gift-giving and merry-making in much of Europe. Many feel that simple gift-giving in early Advent helps preserve a Christmas Day focus on the Christ Child.

Thanks to Parish Pump

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://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_QFMMVOMxaTa38ibdKzVag.

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.



PARISH WALK

It was a small but enthusiastic group that started out from St Nick's on the 2nd of December. Thankfully all well wrapped up against the elements. After our customary pre walk refreshments which, on this occasion, were at Strawberry Field, we drove to Sefton Park.

The park was busy with families and others, all enjoying the beautiful, frosty morning sunshine. The ducks were not having such a good time, though, as the pond was mostly frozen - Maria had brought some duck food and it was comical to see them skating on the ice.

From here we walked through Princes Park itself before emerging onto Princes Avenue. This was fairly busy too as there was a market on in Granby Street. We didn't have time to look, unfortunately, but it has good reviews and might be good to look round on another occasion. Princes Avenue is great to walk or bike on, as there are dedicated paths along the central reservation and plenty of benches and shelters in addition to some interesting sculptures. Princes Avenue has a synagogue, several churches (sadly a couple of them in a sorry state of repair) and a mosque around the corner.

Our next stop was the German church on Bedford Street South. I had heard about their Advent Bazaar from my school friend whose mother was German. She used to go as a child. We arrived just as the Bazaar was opening and had a look around the stalls before settling down at a table to enjoy a hot drink with one of a mouthwatering selection of interesting German cakes. There were some beautiful Advent wreaths for sale; however, we thought they would be rather cumbersome to carry home. The church was small and plainly decorated but we received a warm welcome and enjoyed our visit.



From there we walked down to the Anglican Cathedral. Here there was a choir practicing carols and a beautiful Christmas tree.

After leaving the cathedral we walked through St James Cemetery (in the past we have stopped here to picnic and read the gravestones but it was not a day for dallying as it had begun to drizzle and the highest temperature of the day was three degrees).



We retraced our steps from here back to the cars having completed six and a half miles. This was our last walk of the year and we are looking forward to lots more in 2024.
Penni

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.



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.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING

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 in both churches – on a rota, approximately once or twice a quarter. *Speak to Gill Dover at St Mary's and Alison Shacklady at St Nicholas.*

Sidespersons at both churches – on a rota, approximately once or twice a quarter: meeting and greeting people, giving out and collecting in service sheets, taking collection, tidying up after services. *Speak to Wardens/Steward.*

Communion Stewards - 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 – approximately three or four times a year: supporting families during baptism services (12.15 pm and 1.00 pm on second Sundays). (But we would welcome a couple of volunteers for this role at St Mary's for the occasional baptism services which happen there.) *Contact Sally Moore, Baptism Secretary on halewood.baptisms@yahoo.com.*

Tea and coffee after morning services – on a rota, approximately two or three times a quarter. *Speak to Wardens/Steward.*

Church cleaning – St Nicholas on Thursday mornings between 10.15 and 11.00 am. *Speak to Lesley Webb.*
St Mary's – date and time can be arranged to suit – but Saturday morning when the building is open for Foodbank might be a good day - once a month. *Speak to Gill Dover or Jen Hargreaves*

Work with children – all roles need a DBS check and safeguarding training.
Creche and Junior Church at St Mary's and St Nicholas operate three Sundays a month during term times.
Help required on a rota basis.

For St Mary's contact Laura Fisher – lauraburke09@hotmail.co.uk or Emma Rooney
emma.creasy@btinternet.com

For St Nicholas' creche contact Catherine Williams catherine12725@gmail.com

For St Nicholas' junior church contact Hayley McShane hayleymcshane84@gmail.com

For after school clubs at St Mary's: Jam/Boss/Next Level contact Mike Sutcliffe
mike.circuitchildren@gmail.com

Volunteers are also often needed to help out with uniformed organisations (Rainbows/Brownies/Guides) – contact via <http://www.girlguiding.org.uk>

Gardening/Churchyard clearance – occasional gardening working parties at both churches.

For St Nicholas contact Geoff Bullen geoffbullen@btinternet.com

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

Warm Hub at St Nicholas' Centre - volunteers needed on a rota basis, approximately once a month

Following the success of our Thursday Morning Warm Hub over last winter, we are open again each Thursday morning from 10.00 am - 12 midday from October to April.

We have a small, dedicated team of volunteers who prepare tea and toast but, more importantly, who chat to visitors, some of whom are quite isolated and enjoy the company as much as the warmth and refreshments. We could do with a few more people to go onto our rota. So, if this is something you would be interested in doing, please speak to Alison alison1.shacklady@btinternet.com. It is very rewarding and doesn't involve a huge commitment of time. And even if you don't feel able to volunteer then just come along and enjoy a warm drink and a warm welcome.

DATES TO REMEMBER AND GROUPS

Next Vestry Date for Wedding and Baptism enquiries - Thursday 18th January 7.00 - 7.45 pm at St Nicholas' Centre. (There's no date in December.)

We now have a new email address for weddings after some problems with the previous one. Please use this to contact our Wedding Secretaries - halewoodparishweddings@gmail.com

Our Baptism Secretary's email address is halewood.baptism@yahoo.com

Two Messages from St Mary's Creche/Sunday School - Children's Nativity

This will be in the morning service on Sunday 17th December. If your child/children want to take part please let Laura or Emma know laura_burke_09@hotmail.co.uk or emma.creasy@btinternet.com

There will be rehearsals after the morning services on Sunday 3rd and 10th December for about 20 mins. Those wanting to take part must attend at least one of these rehearsals. After the Nativity service there will also be a Cake and Christmas Decoration sale and possibly a visit from a very jolly man!

Advance information - Halewood CultureFest 2024 will run from Friday 14th June – Sunday 23rd June. A Programme will be available in the new year. As part of this we are planning a Scarecrow Trail. We would like as many schools, community groups, local organisations and individuals as possible to be involved in this. More information in the new year.

Halewood Mothers' Union

Our Mothers' Union meets on the first Thursday afternoon of each month from 2.00 pm at the St Nicholas' Centre. Sadly numbers in the group are dwindling and they 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 Lin Green or Lesley Webb.

HALEWOOD ART GROUP

The group meets every week on Mondays, from 1.00 to 3:30 pm, at the Women's Institute Hall, Baileys Lane, Halewood.



The aim of the group is to help people wishing to get into painting, or to encourage those who previously painted and now want to restart. Beginners are very welcome and advice is given, if required.

You only pay for the week you attend, so if weekly is not possible for you, drop in whenever you want, whatever fits in with your lifestyle.

If you are interested, please contact Ken Allen on 07815 306502 or email allen556@btinternet.com
Website: halewoodartgroup.chessck.co.uk



Halewood Community Choir

Starts 14th September 2023

Meets Thursdays 7-9pm in Halewood Academy,
The Avenue, L26 1UU. £5 each session.
Open to those aged 18 to 108

No auditions, no need to read music, just join in and have a go.

Singers and Beginners – most welcome

Ideal way to have fun and make new friends.

New - Free Open Rehearsals for visitors, 7 – 9pm, once a month – come and find out what we do. Sing along or sit and watch, meet choir members and find out what we sing. Just turn up and enjoy!

Sept 28th Oct 26th Nov 30th

Want more info? Visit us on Facebook or ring/text

Phil on 0748 6709 567 or ring Carol 0151 281 2508

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE

Bishop John's Christmas message for parish magazines 2023

First published on: 12th October 2023

Bishop John has written his Christmas message for inclusion in parish magazines. Find the text you can copy here:

This will be my first Christmas among you in Liverpool and I am looking forward to experiencing how you do Christmas in Liverpool. Over many years in many places, I notice how churches build their own fabulous traditions around Advent and Christmas and I am excited to see how you mark this great festival.

But I am reminded that in our extravaganza and paraphernalia of festivities, we can lose sight of the harsh realities of the nativity story: a stable, the cold night, the Inn's closed door, refugees fleeing to Egypt, the brutal slaughter of the innocent.

These harsh realities mirror the harsh realities of the world we live in. We see war, natural disasters, chronic anxiety, and poverty all around us. God embraced this world when sending Jesus at Christmas and God asks us as a church, who face challenges of our own, to lift our heads and show love to the world. To be encouraged by the nativity story and encourage others because of it.

As in previous years, the Church of England tries to come together with a campaign for Advent and Christmas. This year's theme – Follow the Star: Join the Song – highlights how singing can help draw us closer to God and each other through the journey from Advent to Epiphany. I encourage you to use their resources and take part in their invitation to sing the First Nowell as part of a way of bringing people to church.

And then together we are singing a song of God's hope for God's world. A hope that can only come through our belief in Jesus and Jesus' story from Christmas to Easter.

So sing this song of hope as you celebrate Christmas in your place. And renew in yourself a commitment to being that light of hope in God's world.

Have a blessed, peaceful, hope-filled Christmas.

Statements on the war in Gaza

We know that the ongoing conflict in Gaza is concerning for all of us who are witnessing the events unfold. Unimaginable is the impact that this is having on those who are living in the conflict.

We must pray for peace and a resolution to the pain and suffering being experienced by millions.



“We asked food bank managers and users across the UK, and these are all the things people say consistently – time and time again – they need, but they are not things people often think to buy,” says Hodson. “And they make such a difference.”

1. Toilet roll

This is self-explanatory, and always necessary. “One food bank is having to ration it to one roll per household,” says Hodson.

2. Sanitary towels and tampons

“We don’t have the data on how users of the food banks break down across gender lines,” says Hodson. “When someone comes to the food bank, they’ll often pick up for the whole household.” But she adds: “[Feminine hygiene products] are an awkward thing to say that you’re short of. If you’re at the point where you can’t afford food, chances are that you’re not going to be able to afford sanitary products either.”

“It’s really important, especially in terms of dignity, to be able to cope. We’ve heard some horrible reports from some of our food banks where women were [having to use newspaper and that sort of thing](#). Obviously, you have to be resourceful in these situations and people come up with all kinds of coping mechanisms, but we’d prefer they didn’t have to cope, and that they actually were able to have what everybody else has.”

3. Tin openers

“There are all kinds of people who don’t have these, especially women who’ve been relocated because of domestic abuse,” says Hodson.

And as food banks get a lot of tinned, non-perishable food, this is a handy thing to drop off at the collection point.

4. Nappies

Generally, food banks would prefer disposable nappies over cloth nappies. “The best thing people can do is call their local food bank and find out what they need,” says Hodson.

“We get parents with children of all ages. Some of the most stark cases are women who have literally just given birth and haven’t got anything, and are really struggling as well as being a new mum.”

5. Toiletries (shampoo, shower gel, deodorant)

You know how at Christmas, lots of people get packs of toiletries they don’t want, because it’s a bit of a standard present? Bring them along to your local food bank collection point. “If people don’t want them,” says Hodson, “it’d be amazing if they gave them to the food bank, because it’s the kind of thing that makes a massive difference.” Shaving gels and foams are also welcome.

6. Baby food

Baby food is another item that many people don’t think to include on their list of donations to food banks, says Hodson. W

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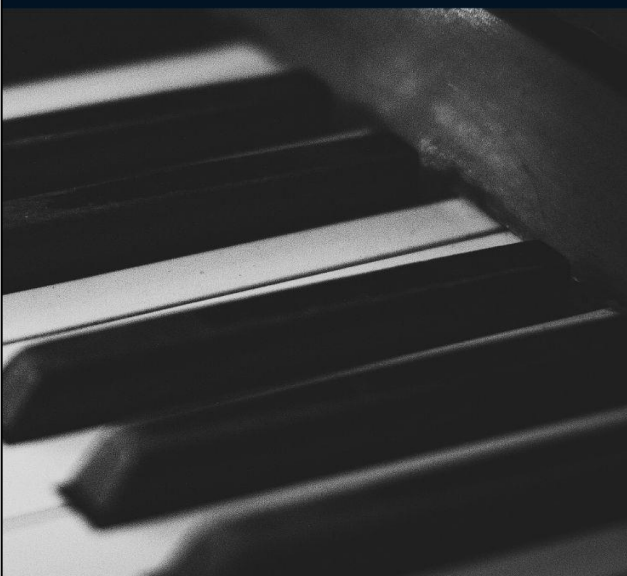
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