Newsletter #66

Friday 13th September to Friday 27th September 2024

St Mary's Church Eccleston / St Mary's Church Pulford

Eccleston and Pulford Churches

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Dear Reader,

The parish newsletter is also available to download from the church website:

https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/category/newsletters/

For up-to-date service information please see the church website:

https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/rota/

Please feel free to email suggestions for future newsletter articles.

Thank you to Rob Hughes for his homily this week, to Helen Allison for allowing me to republish Peter Jackson's interesting article from June 2011 and to Robin Glaze for allowing me to use his photos of the stained-glass windows at Eccleston.

Kind Regards

Stephen Hutchinson (admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org)

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Eccleston & Pulford Parish Contact Information

Rector	**Revd. Dr Stephen Torr**	Rector@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Associate Minister	**Revd. Holly Torr**	messychurch@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Pulford Wardens	Sue Payne & Bridget Marsden	PulfordChurchWarden@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Eccleston Wardens	Steve Hutchinson & ***vacancy***	EcclestonChurchWarden@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Vergers	Julie Rowland & Sue Payne	
Messy Church	Revd. Holly Torr	messychurch@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Home Worship & Silent Church	Rob Hughes	SilentChurch@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Licensed Lay Minister	Jeanette Howe	Jeanette@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Treasurer	Bridget Marsden	Treasurer@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Safeguarding Officers	Hilary & Jeanette	Safeguarding@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Electoral Roll Officer	Clare Willan	
Organist	Derek Whatling	
Director of Music	Maureen Richards	mothemusic@gmail.com
Tower Captains	***vacancies***	
PCC Secretary	Jeanette Howe	
Newsletter/ Website / Admin	Stephen Hutchinson	admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Pulford Village Hall Hire and ***Pulford Church Keyholder***	Pete Gosmore	PulfordVillageHall@gmail.com
Eccleston Village Hall Hire	Jeff Brett Roberts	JeffBrettRoberts@hotmail.co.uk
Sidesperson	***vacancies***	HilaryGarrard@btinternet.com

Church Service Dates Times and Locations.

PLEASE REFER TO WEBSITE FOR LAST MINUTE UPDATES

https://ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/rota

Date	When and Where	Reading	Reader	Prayers	Preacher	Sides-person
Sun 15th Sep.	9.45am Pulford HC	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Paul	Jeanette	Rev Stephen Torr	n/a
Sun 15th Sep.	10.45 am Harvest Messy Church at *Pulford* (Rev Holly Torr and Team)					
Sun 22nd Sep.	11.15am Eccleston Trad HC	Jeremiah 11:18-20	Hutch	Mo	Rev Stephen Torr	Hutch
Sun 29th Sep.	*11 am* Pulford HC followed by food after service.	Joel 2:21-27	Terry	Rob	?	n/a
Oct 6th	HC Pulford/Eccleston (Evening) TBC *	Gen. 2.18-24	?	?	Jeanette	n/a
Oct 13th	HC Eccleston 11.15am	Amos 5.6-7, 10-15	?	?	Rev Stephen Torr	
Oct 20th	HC Pulford 9.45am	Isa. 53.4-12	?	?	Rev Stephen Torr	
Oct 20th	Messy Church at *Pulford*. 10.45am (Rev Holly Torr and Team)					
Oct 27th	HC Eccleston 11.15am	Jer. 31.7-9	?	?	Rev Stephen Torr	

(*) Because of Marathon.

Important News and Reminders

Vacancies

We are ***urgently*** looking for tower captains for both Eccleston and Pulford Churches. There is also a vacancy for an additional Church Warden at Eccleston Church.

We are also looking for a social media admin (i.e. someone to be in charge of updating the Facebook pages for Eccleston and Pulford Churches).

If anyone wishes to volunteer for any of these roles, please contact either the Rector, any of the Churchwardens at ***admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org***

Food Bank

A reminder from Rachel Williams. Here are a few of the facts being highlighted on the Foodbank website: 3507, Emergency Food Parcels issued in 6 months to 30 September 22 - up 60% on pre pandemic levels, 7617, Local people in crisis fed, 2828, Feeding the equivalent of 2828 local children. The charity is very grateful for all donations - but especially non cook items such as crackers, Ryvita, Fish/meat pastes, Instant pastas/rice/soups and toiletries (toothpaste and brushes). They have PLENTY of dried Pasta, Baked Beans

Urgently Wanted

- Tinned Meat and Fish, Tomatoes, Desserts & Potatoes, UHT Milk & Juice, Custard, Small Jars Instant Coffee, Jams and Spreads, Instant Mashed, Cereal Bars, Instant Pasta & Instant Noodles

Also Wanted

- 'Cuppa' Soup, Pot Noodles, Pasta Sauce, Biscuits, Breakfast Cereal

[Rachel Williams]

Rob Hughes Homily – Half full or Half Empty?



Picture the scene in 1980's Whitehall - in an office in The Ministry of Administrative Affairs. The Minister, Jim Hacker, is having a pop at an EU official, Maurice - "Does it make sense to have an office full of people in Brussels accumulating a food mountain, and another office full of people next door destroying it? And the reply? "That's not true; they're not in the next office - they're not even on the same floor"

I have to say, as an outside observer, political systems do seem absurd at times… And in another episode of Yes Minister, Jim Hacker said to his Private Secretary - doesn't the futility of it all ever depress you, Bernard" - and this priceless reply was simple - "No Minister, I'm a Civil Servant". Which prompts the question, I guess, is optimism futile? Will confusion, distrust, uncertainty and violence ever end, in tough, and uncertain times?

Well, it seems not much has changed - because much the same was happening in Old Testament times - about 700 years BC, in fact. A time when the Jewish people were in exile in Babylon; they couldn't see an end to that, either. The captives were having a really hard time…. They would have been more than fed up; they were at the end of a very long tether, and probably long-since forgotten that God had promised them a return to their homeland.

The word *optimism* was no longer in their vocabulary; their *pessimism* would have given way to "*absolutely no hope*". Isaiah's prophesies about a return their homeland would have sounded hollow; and the people were probably not even sure anymore whether they still believed in the God of their ancestors.

No doubt sensing this, Isaiah decided to give them a pep talk - and that's recorded in Chapter 55 of his Book. "***As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish…. I will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace…***"

Surely, God is saying (through Isaiah) "I meant what I said to you. I will keep my promises".

And in these few short verses, Isaiah, as God's spokesman, describes a world where the impossible seems possible again. Isaiah's giving his fellow-exiles a much-needed morale-booster - to help them to look at their broken world with optimistic eyes again. Isaiah was presenting these doubters with a word of hope from God, that **He always fulfils His promises,** always inclined to exercise mercy, and continually seeking to transform fractured lives.

Fast-forward to now. Times are tough for us, too - no doubt about that… And recent government elections, here and elsewhere - throughout the world, even (and those pending) - may not inspire optimism, either. Which prompts the question - is our "partly-filled" bottle, half-full or half-empty? Are we still pessimistic about the as-yet unknown and unknowable future? Or dare we remain (or become) more optimistic? After all, it has been said that "***A pessimist is what an optimist calls a realist."***

But as we live or lives - in the here-and now - do we view the newscasts and newspaper headlines with fear and trepidation? Or, maybe, view them more optimistically - with trusting acceptance and hope? One thing's for certain, "All will be revealed in the fulness of time" (another Yes Minister quote springs to mind).

But it occurs to me that there's a world of a difference between accepting what's happening **now,** with

- grudging resignation (that it might never get any better).
- Or true optimism, based on our Christian hope?

Of course, things will get better - and it's a fundamental Christian belief that it's God's promises that will ensure it!! When all said and done, we share, with Isaiah and the people of his day, the same God - The God who has the power to transform even the most negative, even impossibly-hopeless, situations into the positive outcome that He wants for us all.

And we can be sure that God **needs** us to remain optimistic during the worst of times, so that we can do our bit to help our families, our communities, our diocese and even our society to emerge from the current uncertainties more positive and more hopeful.

Isaiah wasn't painting a picture of a better world as it **could** be, as it **might** be or even as it **should** be. He's painting the picture of a world as it **will be.** Why? **Because God has promised it will be that way**. A promise He made to them, then, and makes to us, now!

As you can imagine, Sir Winston Churchill had something to say on the subject: "A pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. An optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty". So, is your bottle half empty? Or half full? Either way, we pray:

Loving God, we begin this new week with this prayer for optimism. If ever we tend to see 'failure at every turn', give us courage to take that important first step, trusting that You will ensure that we can take the next one, then the next… Help us to lay aside fear of failure, and trust in the process of taking one step at a time.

Whenever we might think we are alone in our struggle, remind us how beautiful and wondrous life can be for us today, right here, right now, if we just adopt an optimistic attitude towards the future.

You are our grounds for that hope…

AMEN
[Rob Hughes – September 2024]

Silent Church.

The next Silent Church gathering will be art St Mary's Eccleston on Wednesday evening, **September 25th, starting at 7.00pm**. All welcome

In the meantime, I will be reviewing the next steps with Rev Dr Stephen Torr, based on recent experience and ongoing feedback from (and with thanks to) the 'regulars' - so watch this space in the next Newsletter.

Take care and stay well,

Rob

St Mary's Eccleston Window N2a - St Helen / St Helena

Looking up at the stained-glass windows of Eccleston Church, the North wall features a window dedicated to St Helena (also known as St Helen). It shows her carrying the cross that Christ was crucified on.



Figure 1 - St Helena

Flavia Julia Helena (Helena of Constantinople) was born in 248 in Bithynia. She reputedly discovered Christ's cross during a visit to the Holy Lands.

Helena was an Augusta of the Roman Empire, and mother of Emperor Constantine the Great. She was born in Bithynia which was renamed Helenopolis in her honour.

In her final years, she visited Syria Palaestina and Jerusalem, during which time she is reputed to have discovered the cross that Christ was crucified on.

[Stephen Hutchinson. September 2024]

John Wilkins (No ordinary Bishop) - by Peter Jackson

This article written by Peter Jackson originally appeared in the June 2011 Parish Church Newsletter.

It occurred to me, long ago, that the hinge, or the frontier, when Western man crossed from the mediaeval preponderance of superstition, demonology and fiction into more logical understanding must lie in the 17th Century.

The English Reformation, through protracted, opened men's minds to the future. Prior to the 17th Century, scientific teaching still depended upon the ancient Greeks. But Copernicus and Galileo had shown that, contrary to the teaching of the Church, the Earth was not the centre of the Universe.

The 17th Century, in consequence, saw the emergence of men who saw that the future lay in scientific research and not upon the continuing reiteration of Greek research.

Into this heady atmosphere was born in 1614, one John Wilkins, the son of a Goldsmith. His mother Jane Dod was daughter of John Dod, a well-known confirming Puritan. He was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, BA (1634). In the latter years, he became tutor at Magdalen. In 1637, he followed his grandfather as Rector of Fawsley in Northamptonshire.

In 1638, he wrote a book, "The Discovery of New World in the Moone" which went into two editions, with a third edition in 1640. This was very probably, the first popular book on astronomy. Wilkins is also one of the few persons ever to have headed a college at both the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge.

A word is necessary now regarding Wilkins, as an individual. Though he was outstandingly intellectual, he was known equally for his faults. He was, basically, a Royalist, but was quite prepared to change his allegiance. He also cultivated persons of influence and wealth who might help his future career!

In 1648, he became Warden of Wadham College, Oxford, by which time it would appear that he was of the Roundhead persuasion.

In 1649, together with other intellectuals, he began the "Experimental Philosophical Club" which became the forerunner of the Royal Society, which was established, after the Restoration of the Monarchy, in 1662.

It is difficult to believe that applied scientific research in England is only 350 years old and that in this comparatively short time we have come all the way from a mediaeval to the "high-tech" society which we currently enjoy.

In 1656 he married Robina French (nee Cromwell), a widow and younger sister of Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector. Contemporary writers were unkind to Robina suggesting that the marriage was one of extreme convenience in that it was to save himself from Cromwell's ire! In 1659 Wilkins became Master of Trinity but he was evicted in 1660 on the Restoration of the Monarchy because of his Roundhead leanings.

Apparently unabashed, Wilkins became Rector of Cranford and, in 1662, he became the first Secretary of the Royal Society (a title accorded to the Society by Charles II).

Wilkins spent some years in the wilderness, memories of his Roundhead allegiance were long, but in 1668 he became Bishop of Chester by favour of George, Duke of Buckingham whom he had cultivated.

There was some criticism of his elevation, not least from the then Archbishop of Canterbury but according to Aubrey's Brief Lives, he was "extremely well behaved" in his Diocese.

Whatever his allegiances, nothing can detract from his intellectual effect upon the 17th Century not least for his espousal and Secretaryship of the Royal Society and his authorship of books on theology, astronomy and ciphers.

He is particularly known for "An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language (1668) in which, among other things, he proposed a universal language and an integrated measurement system, similar to the metric system.

Wilkins was key in setting the Church of England on the path toward comprehension for as many sects as possible "and toleration for the rest".

Books by John Wilkins:

1. The Discovery of a World in the Moone (1638)
2. A Discourse Concerning a New Planet (1640)
3. Mercury, or the Secret and Swift Messenger (1641), the first English Language book on cryptography.
4. Ecclesiastes (1646)
5. Mathematical Magick (1648)
6. A Discourse Concerning the Beauty of Providence (1649)
7. A discourse concerning the gift of prayer: shewing what it is, wherein it consists and how far it is attainable by industry (1651)
8. Vindiciae academiarum (1654) with Seth Ward
9. An Essay towards a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language (1668), in which he proposes a new universal language for the use of natural philosophers.
10. Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion (1675)

[Peter Jackson – June 2011]

The Hidden Message from God, contained in "The First Ten Names" in Genesis Chapter 5.

If we read Genesis 5, the family of Adam, Adam's descendants are listed as:

Adam, Seth, Enosh, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech and Noah.

The original Hebrew meaning of each of these names are as follows:

- Adam – Man
- Seth – Appointed
- Enosh – Mortal
- Cainan – Sorrow (but)
- Mahalalel – The Blessed God
- Jared – Shall Come Down

- Enoch – Teaching
- Methuselah – His Death Shall Bring
- Lamech – The despairing
- Noah – Comfort and Rest.

These names, when translated, appear to spell out the following message:

Man, appointed mortal, sorrow, but the Blessed God, shall come down, teaching, His death shall bring the despairing comfort and rest.

I did not believe this at first, and had to look up each of these names and their meanings, and indeed it does appear to translate to this message.

This message hidden in the names of Adam's descendants in the Old Testament appears to be quite prophetic, predicting our Saviour Jesus Christ's death and our salvation.

[Stephen Hutchinson - September 2024]

A Collection for John Richards.

The Parish Church Council are organizing a collection for our former Church Warden – John Richards. I am sure you will agree with me when I say how much all appreciate the hard work and devotion to duty, John has undertaking in keeping Eccleston Church going the past twenty years. This role, entirely voluntary and unpaid, goes largely unacknowledged. The sheer number of tasks done by a church warden are countless. I am sure John will agree that people don't notice the jobs done, only the jobs not done. It really is a full-time job, which John has been tirelessly doing since he started as Church Warden in 2004 with Eric Gittins. It is testament to his dedication as Church Warden that the quinquennial reports read so glowingly about St Mary's Church Eccleston. From arranging fuel deliveries, boiler servicing, roof inspections, PAT testing, fire extinguisher testing, paying in the plate takings every month, reading and submitting water and electricity meters readings, contacting tour guides, acting as the first point of contact for wedding / funeral requests, repairing the church fabrics and fittings when in need of repair, organizing the cleaning of the church, updating of the rectors board, arranging cover for a Rector on holiday, just to name a few of the countless tasks of a church warden. John also used to act as a regular sidesperson inviting people to share in the Holy Communion or to receive a blessing. John continues to offer his assistance and share his knowledge with the new church warden, who is very grateful for his continuing help.

Those wishing to contribute towards a gift for John in gratitude for all his hard work, can do so using either of the following options:

1 - Through the treasurer (Bridget Marsden),

2 – Directly through the Eccleston Church of St Mary's bank account (remembering to add a suitable reference e.g. 'For John Richards'):

The Eccleston Church of St Mary's bank details are as follows:
Account Name: Eccleston & Pulford PCC
Sort Code: 60-40-08
Account Number: 79937926

3 – Or by putting money in the collection box at the back of the church in the box labelled "For John Richards".

Adverts:

Pulford and Poulton Local History Group Talks (Held at Pulford Village Hall)

There will be a talk entitled "*Discoveries in Old English*" by James Harvey at Pulford Village Hall (CH4 9ES) on Wednesday 18th September at 7.30pm. Tickets are £5 (non-members) and £3 for members. For details of up-and-coming lectures please refer to the following link:

https://sites.google.com/view/pulford-poulton-lhg/programme

Reader/Intercessor/Sidesperson Rota

At the last PCC meeting it was suggested that Eccleston Church return to having a sidesperson. ***It was suggested that either the reader or prayer lead for the service act as sidesperson to make things easy.*** If someone is already available to read then it saves having to try and organize an additional rota for sidespeople.

Duties of the sidesperson include

- ***greeting people*** as they enter the church
- ***handing out hymn books/service sheets and collecting them at the end of a service.***
- ***inviting people to communion (for Holy Communion Services)***
- ***recording the total number in the congregation.***
- ***Putting the correct hymn numbers in the hymn boards.***
- ***Taking the plate money to the vestry for counting.***

If any of the readers/intercessors do not want to appear as sidesperson, please let me know

by emailing me at admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

The Rota for readers/intercessors and sidespeople is accessible at:

https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/rota