Eccleston & Pulford Churches of St Mary's

Sunday 22nd November
Christ the King



St Mary's Church Eccleston,
Church Rd, Eccleston, CH4 9HT
St Mary's Church Pulford,
Wrexham Rd, Pulford, CH4 9DG
https://ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Rector: Rev Dr Stephen Torr.
Associate Minister: Rev Holly Torr.

Please refer to the website for latest locations and times.

Your prayers are asked for those who are sick and all the sick of the Parish. We remember our beloved dead, particularly those who have died recently and those whose anniversaries occur about this time.

Parish Contacts: https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/contacts/

3rd Sunday of the month: 22nd Nov 10:30 am: Eccleston Church: HC - **Christ the King:**
Readings: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46
4th Sunday of the month: 29th November 10:30am: Eccleston Church: HC - **Advent 1**:
Readings: Isaiah 63:18-64:9 Gospel: Mark 13:24-37
1st Sunday of the month: 6th December 10:30 am Pulford Village Hall: HC - **Advent 2**:
Readings: Isaiah 40:1-5a; Gospel: Mark 1:1-8
2nd Sunday of the month: 13th December 10:30 am Eccleston Church: HC - **Advent 3**:
Readings: Isaiah 61:1-2,10-11; Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28
2nd Sunday of the month: 13th December 3:00 pm: Eccleston Village Hall: Messy Christmas Christingle
See poster: https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/2026/11/21/messy-christmas-christingle/
3rd Sunday of the month: 20th December 9:45 am: Advent 4: Eccleston Church: Said HC
Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-9, 11,16; Gospel: Luke 1:26-38
3rd Sunday of the month: 20th December 6:00 pm: Six Lessons and Carols: Eccleston Church
See poster: https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/2026/11/21/festival-of-6-lessons-and-carols/
Thursday 24th December 4:00 pm: Eccleston Church: Christmas Eve Crib Service
Readings: Isaiah 9:2,6,7; Gospel: Luke 2:1-20
Please note there will be no midnight service on Christmas Eve.
Friday 25th December 10:30 am: Eccleston Church: Christmas Day: All-age HC
Readings: Isaiah 52:7-10; Gospel: John 1:1-14

Church Vacancies: ***Is anyone interested in becoming a Church Warden? Sue Payne would like help setting up for the service at the Village Hall (due to the Church not being used over the Winter) once a month. This will be the first Sunday of every month.***

For Christmas Service Times and Locations: Please see Rev Holly Torr's poster:
https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/2026/11/21/christmas-2026-at-eccleston-church/

Eccleston & Pulford Churches Christmas Fayre: 28th November 12 noon to 4pm. Eccleston Village Hall.
Christmas Gifts, Jewellery, Clothes, Cake, Raffle, Tombola, Visit from Santa, hot food and drink

Bob Hughes Homily: Rob's homilies can be downloaded and read from the Church website:
https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/category/homilies/

Messy Church Dates and Locations 2026
All Messy Churches will be in Eccleston Village Hall at 10.45 am on the 3rd Sunday of the month (unless otherwise indicated). Please see Holly's poster for details: **https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/messy-church/**

Reader/Intercessor Rota: The Church reader/intercessor rota can be found at the following URL: **https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/timetable/** If you would like to be a reader or make changes to your reading times, please email Hilary or me at **admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org**

Pulford & Poulton Local History Group. The next History Group event can be found on their website. To book tickets or simply to find out more about these talks visit the Pulford and Poulton Local History Group at https://pplhg.org.uk or email James at info@pplhg.org.uk

Cleaning 4 St Mary's. We have a team of dedicated volunteers that help to clean Eccleston Church on the 4th Saturday of every month from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm. If anyone would like to volunteer to help Sue keep Pulford Church clean, or join the Eccleston team, we would be extremely grateful.

Chester Diocese News News (List) | Chester Diocese

We desperately need volunteers to act as **Tower Captain** for Eccleston Church, **Readers, Intercessors, Welcomers and Cleaners for Pulford Church and Eccleston Church.** Please email: admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

Please note the times and locations of the Church Services are published in our fortnightly newsletter and on our website at: https://ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/timetable

The World God dreams of: Imagine, for a moment, a world in which the most powerful people were also the most compassionate. A world in which presidents and prime ministers competed not to build the greatest armies, but to bring the greatest peace. A world in which nations measured their success not by how much wealth they accumulated, but by how many people they lifted out of poverty. A world in which the hungry were fed, the lonely were welcomed, and the frightened could sleep peacefully at night. Wouldn't that be a wonderful world?

Well, here is the extraordinary thing. That is precisely the kind of world God is calling us to build. In our first reading, from Ezekiel, God speaks with remarkable tenderness: "I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out." Notice what God does not say. He does not say, "I will wait for the lost to find their own way home."

He does not say, "I will help only those who deserve my help." No. He says that *He Himself will go looking for them*. He will seek the lost, bring back the strayed, bind up the injured and strengthen the weak. What a beautiful picture of God this is. Not a distant ruler sitting upon a throne, indifferent to the suffering of His people, but a loving shepherd who goes out into the wilderness to find even the smallest, most frightened sheep. And then, in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gives us one of the most challenging and beautiful teachings in the whole of Scripture. "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

And when the righteous ask when they ever did these things for Him, Jesus replies: "Just as you did it to one of the least of these ... you did it to me." Think about what that means. *Christ is not asking us to look for Him only in the splendour of a cathedral, or in the beauty of a hymn, or even in the quietness of our prayers*. He is asking us to recognise Him in the suffering of another human being. In the hungry child. In the elderly person sitting alone. In the frightened mother wondering whether her family will survive another night of bombing. A soldier fighting for their life. And perhaps that is the greatest tragedy of war. *That when we look upon another nation as an enemy, we so easily forget that its people are loved by exactly the same God who loves us*. Every child killed in war is someone's precious son or daughter. Every family driven from its home carries the same hopes and dreams that we carry. *And every life lost is a life that God intended to flourish*. How different our world might be if those who govern nations remembered that. If, before declaring war, every leader had to look into the eyes of a child who would suffer because of that decision. If, before spending billions on weapons, they first asked how many hungry people that money might feed. If they understood that the true greatness of a nation is not measured by its power to destroy, but by its willingness to protect. Of course, peace is not always easy. There is injustice in the world, and the innocent must sometimes be defended. But surely war must never become the easy answer to problems that patience, courage, diplomacy and understanding might resolve. And surely, we must never lose hope that humanity can learn to choose a better way. Because that is the wonderful message hidden within today's readings.

God has not abandoned His world. The Good Shepherd is still searching. Still gathering. Still healing.

Still calling us towards something better. And we are invited to join Him. We may not sit around the tables where the great decisions of nations are made. We may not have the power to end a war or negotiate a peace treaty.

But we can bring peace into our own small corner of the world. We can forgive someone who has hurt us. We can show kindness to someone who feels forgotten. We can be generous when it would be easier to turn away. We can pray for those who suffer, and for those who hold the power to relieve that suffering.

And we can remember that no act of love, however small, is ever wasted. For Jesus tells us something astonishing today. When we show kindness to another person, we are showing kindness to Christ Himself. What greater encouragement could we possibly need? So, as we leave church today, let us not look at the troubles of the world and despair. Let us look at the world with the eyes of the Good Shepherd. Let us see not a world beyond redemption, but a world still waiting to be healed. Not a future determined by hatred and greed, but one that can still be shaped by generosity, compassion and peace. And let us remember this: The Kingdom of God does not begin when the powerful finally decide to change the world. It begins whenever an ordinary person chooses to love their neighbour. Perhaps that ordinary person is you. Perhaps it is me. And perhaps, with God's help, the brighter, kinder, more peaceful world for which we pray is already beginning, quietly, in the smallest acts of love.

Amen.

Newsletter items - *Please email newsletter items* to: *admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org Newsletter #153*
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