

St Mary's Parish Church Whitegate



NEWS FOR MAY 2026



Our cover photo

This month we thank Ulrike Allen, from whom we've received this photo of some of the Crafty Coffee members, who had gathered for a lunchtime get-together at The Dysart Arms in Bunbury.

The lunch, whilst delicious, was tinged with sadness as it marked their farewell to the Reverend Margaret Byrne, who after almost three years as Curate in Whitegate and Little Budworth, is now moving on to become Vicar of the parishes of Kingsley, Norley & Crowton, with Alvanley and Manley. However, safe in the knowledge that Margaret is not moving far away, the lunch was light-hearted and happy, with lively conversation.

A few days later, on Sunday 12th April, Margaret took the final service of her curacy in our parishes, leading the 10.30 service of Holy Communion. There were speeches, presentations, great music from choir and organ, with hearty singing from the congregation. All followed by a bring and share lunch in the school hall, as we marked goodbye for the moment, but certainly not for ever!

Thank you, Margaret, for all you have brought to the Benefice. We wish you a happy and fulfilling ministry in your new parishes.

A verse for May

Acts Chapter 1:vv 6 - 8

Then the disciples gathered around Jesus and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

How good are you at waiting for something to happen? Queuing in the supermarket. Waiting for guests to arrive. Looking forward to a holiday. I am not good at it. Especially waiting for something really special. I get quite anxious I must admit, and I always have, even as a small child.

Well, these verses, which come from the account of the Ascension and look forward to Pentecost, remind us that God has a plan for the salvation of the world, and for our part in it, but that he also does things in his own way and in his own timing. We need to be prepared to wait and be patient (however uncomfortable or anxious it might make us feel) if things don't seem to be happening how we would like or as quickly as we would like. That applies both in our personal lives, and in the life of our church. Perhaps a good message for us as we live through a period of change in our parish?

SJM

May Diary

3rd	9.30 am	Easter 5 Family Service	St Mary's
5th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsideside	L.B. Methodist Chapel
6th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
7th	10.30 am	First Thursday Café – <i>see page 12</i>	The Mews
10th	9.30 am	Rogation Sunday Rogation Service	St Mary's
12th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsideside	L.B. Methodist Chapel
13th	9.00 am 10.00 am 12.00 noon	Men's Breakfast – NB Venue <i>see page 12</i> Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Village Restaurant, Blakemere CW8 2EB The Mews St Mary's
14th	7.30 pm	Ascension Day Ascension Holy Communion Service	St Mary's
17th	9.30 am 9.30 am 11.30 am 2.00 for 2.30 pm	Easter 7 Morning Prayer Storytelling Service Baptism Service Movies in The Mews: The Choral , by Alan Bennett & Stephen Beresford – <i>see page 12</i>	St Mary's The Mews St Mary's The Mews
18th	2.00 pm	Mews Management Committee meeting	The Mews
19th	2.00 pm 2.00 pm 7.30 pm	Bible Study at Commonsideside St Mary's Mothers' Union: Di Waller, Diocesan President, will speak on MU Prison Ministry at Appleton Thorn & Styal St Mary's PCC meeting	L.B. Methodist Chapel N.B. To be held at Marton Sands House The Mews
20th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
21st	9.45 am meet	Whitegate Amblers – <i>see page 12 for details</i>	Little Budworth Country Park
24th	9.30 am	Pentecost Holy Communion	St Mary's
26th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsideside	L.B. Methodist Chapel
27th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
31st	10.30 am	Trinity Sunday Benefice Holy Communion	St Mary's
JUNE 2nd	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsideside	L.B. Methodist Chapel
3rd	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
4th	10.30 am	First Thursday Café – <i>see page 12</i>	The Mews
7th	9.30 am	Trinity 1 Family Service	St Mary's

May letter from the Vicar...

Many years ago I was walking down a corridor in a nursing home when a vase came flying through an open door and smashed on the wall behind me. The staff member I was with told me, "Oh don't mind Ethel, she just hates vicars."

Over the following months we came to an agreement. They placed Mars bars on Ethel's bedside cabinet rather than a vase. It gave Ethel something easy to throw – and I got a free Mars bar.

One day they rang me to say that Ethel was dying. She had no-one in the world. No-one had ever been to visit her. She was grumpy, cantankerous and totally alone. "Can you come and sit with her," they asked.

"I thought she hated vicars?"

"She does, but she's been unconscious for the past few days. She won't know you're there. But someone needs to be with her at the end."

So I went, having no idea what I was meant to do. In the end I just quietly offered the Lord's Prayer. Ethel, who hadn't shown any signs of consciousness for days, joined in. In a voice barely audible she recited those ancient words.

I suppose as a child she had learned the Lord's Prayer and it was deep within her bones. They say that at the end, when all else fails, the sense of hearing remains. It wasn't the only time someone non-responsive murmured those words.

Words of prayer which are used time after time sink deeply into us. It is one reason I enjoy the old 1662 Book of Common Prayer service. It has many faults but it is the example par excellence of words which are known.

In 1928 the Church wanted to revise the Prayer Book and produced the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. However, Parliament rejected the proposed new Prayer Book and it was never legal to use. (Which didn't stop many copies being printed and used.) During the 1960's and 70's the Church of England experimented with Series 1, 2 & 3. Do you remember them? Series 3 in particular caused upset when it changed the words of the Lord's Prayer. ("Lead us not into temptation" becoming, "Do not put us to the test".)

Ultimately this led to the 1980 Alternative Service Book (ASB) which was designed to last from 1980 to 1990. In the end it lasted twice as long being legal to use until 2000. In 2000 the Church introduced our current form of service book, Common Worship. The 1662 Book of Common Prayer and the 2000 Common Worship are both legal to use in public worship. The 1980 ASB is not.



One thing the ASB kept was a form of intercessions which was available in a set form with the same words used every Sunday. Those leading the prayers could adapt them, but the basic structure was there. I thought that was a good idea because it meant we heard words which sank deep into our bones.

Under Common Worship there is much less 'set'. It more a menu of options which parishes can adapt to provide services which suit their needs. There are strengths in this approach but we have lost the 'set' words of prayers which are repeated week after week. Those leading the prayers have tended to write their own. Again, this has been very good providing a refreshing range of prayers which have reflected and engaged with contemporary life and events. But when the intercessions are different every week we lose that repetition of words which soak into us.

We approach a time of change for our benefice. Margaret has moved to her new parishes, I will retire in August, the Churchwardens will take on leadership of the benefice ably assisted by Jane, John, Teresa and our elected officers. I think this could be a time to look again at how we lead prayers during our services.

I am very thankful for those who write prayers and lead them but it is not for everyone. I suggest that if we were to adopt the wisdom of the Book of Common Prayer and the ASB and use set prayers in our services more people would feel able to lead us in prayer. These 'set' prayers are still part of Common Worship but they aren't printed in our service books so most of us don't know they are still available. They are, and I believe we might try using them more often.

Here, for example, is the Common Worship option for leading prayers which is very much based on the ASB format:

*In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.*

*Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you promised through your Son Jesus Christ
to hear us when we pray in faith.*

*Strengthen N our bishop and all your Church in the service of Christ,
that those who confess your name may be united in your truth,
live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.*

*Bless and guide Charles our King; give wisdom to all in authority;
and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and of peace;
that we may honour one another, and seek the common good.*

*Give grace to us, our families and friends, and to all our neighbours,
that we may serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.
Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit ...;
give them courage and hope in their troubles;
and bring them the joy of your salvation.*

*Hear us as we remember those who have died in the faith of Christ ...;
according to your promises,
grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.
Rejoicing in the fellowship of [N and of] all your saints,
we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.*

Would you please give some thought and prayer to consider if you might join the small band of people who lead our intercessions? Please speak to one of our Churchwardens or any of the clergy. We are very willing to offer some guidance and training in how to use the set words.

Thank you

Paul.

NEWS FROM ST MARY'S

□ APCM at St Mary's

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting took place, as planned, on Sunday 19th April, after the morning service. Sad to say, the Vicar, Revd Canon Paul Dawson, was indisposed and unable to attend but Churchwardens, Anne Blayney and Sandra Paskin co-chaired the meeting. The proceedings were minuted by PCC Secretary, Roger Wilkes. Approximately 30 church members attended.

The meeting ran according to the preset agenda: the two Wardens both agreed to stand and were elected for a further year; the Electoral Roll Officer, Eileen Lees was also re-elected; the meeting received reports on the past



year, from the PCC Secretary, the Vicar, the Treasurer, the Wardens and the Chairmen of the various PCC subcommittees.

Then followed the election of PCC members. Maxine Woodmansey, Eddie Stamper and Julie Webb had all reached the end of their elected term and were due to stand down. They were heartily thanked for their service. Julie was prepared to serve again and was elected for the coming term, along with Carole Sweet and Elaine Campbell. The Wardens and all on the PCC were thanked for their willingness to serve St Mary's in this role, which is particularly important this year as we prepare for the vacancy that will follow the retirement of Paul Dawson later in the Summer.

□ **Christian Aid Week: 10th – 16th May**

We shall of course be advertising Christian Aid Week at St Mary's, with donation envelopes available in church and in the church porch too. If you pick one up in the porch when St Mary's isn't open, just put your donation inside, seal it and put it through the Vicarage letter box, or bring it into church of course.



The theme of this year's CA campaign is "*Where hardship means hunger ...urban farmers can grow hope*". They are supporting communities in shanty towns in Nairobi for example, to grow crops in the smallest spaces, in pots, in plastic bin bags, in any container or inch of ground available. With the organic vegetables harvested, the residents have enough to feed their family and take some to market. What's more, it's sustainable, for anything left over is composted to enrich the soil for the next crop.

There's an awe-inspiring little video clip on the Christian Aid Week website. If you have a moment, do look at it: <https://caw.christianaid.org.uk/> Just scroll down that page and you'll see it.

□ **Mews Gallery**

The new exhibition "Our Animal Friends" is now hung in The Mews – and a more delightful and engaging family of domestic companions you have never seen. Take the earliest opportunity to go in and choose your favourite.

Jane Millinchip is very conscious of how busy she will be once the parish goes into the vacancy, so she is appealing now for photos for the Winter exhibition. It's on the theme of Whitegate throughout the year (but not any specific year) so look out any pictures you have of events past, showing just how much goes on in and around the village, or scenes that show the seasons changing etc.

As always, the resolution needs to be good enough to print the photo A4 size, so the digital photo file size should be at least 1mb or greater.

☐ **Mothers' Union strikes the right note – mostly!**

At the recent April meeting of St Mary's Mothers' Union, members were treated to a crash course in tune-ringing on handbells. Under the direction of Andrew Ball - and at only the second attempt, the novices were able to play all the way through the Eton Boating Song and everyone reached the last bar at the same time. The cheers and applause raised the roof! Never were the refreshments that followed more appreciated. Thank you to mentors and mentees alike for a very enjoyable evening.

☐ **Whitegate Music Festival**

As you'll see from the poster on page 10, plans are well advanced for our 4th annual Whitegate Music Festival on Whitegate Village Green in front of the church.

This year we have new talent on stage as well as some of our favourite acts. We will be lighting the Barbecue earlier this time and the bar will be open all afternoon. You can't have a village event without tea and home-made cakes and you won't be disappointed.

Each year the Festival has grown. Last year many young families came and enjoyed themselves. The children enjoyed our children's corner where fun was had by all. In fact our efforts were so successful that this year we thought we would encourage even more children to come and so we are making the Festival FREE for all 11-year-olds and under. In addition to the children's corner there will be FREE face painting. We feel "Happy Kids makes Happy Parents"!



The best way to support us is by collecting a group of friends and family and adding "The Whitegate Festival - 27th June" into your diaries. Then come along and support this local village event. If you want to get involved in village life what better way than coming along and helping? Phone or text John Blayney 07964844642 for details.

☐ **www.easyfundraising.org.uk**

Don't forget that St Mary's Church Whitegate is registered with easyfundraising. If you sign up, then each time you buy online, from many different shops and businesses, St Mary's will receive a small donation AT NO COST TO YOU! Sign up to support us at <https://tinyurl.com/mubythrp> or scan this QR code.



□ **Whitegate Amblers start the season in sunshine**

The first walk of 2026 was a glorious one in warm, dry weather and the birds sang sweetly in the trees. Thirteen Amblers set off, first for a stroll around Whitehead Fields to see the new benches around and about that encourage explorers to sit, watch and listen for wildlife. The fruit trees planted a couple of years ago have put on a huge spurt this season.

After that short diversion, the group headed off through Church Wood and down towards the locks beyond Vale Royal Abbey, halting for a drink and a chorus of Happy Birthday for Charlotte. The return trip was via the path across the field, through the wood and across the golf course and back to The Mews. Thanks, John and Elaine, for the planning & guiding. You do a grand job.



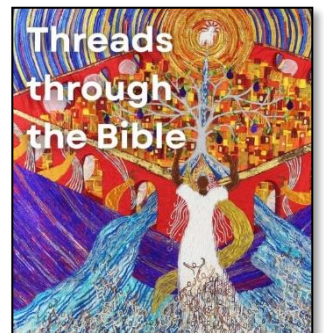
□ **Ladies, keep this date in June**

There is a Ladies' Summer Brunch planned for Thursday 11th June at The Badger Inn, Church Minshull. Full details to follow but for now, just save the date.

□ **Threads through the Bible**

This fabulous display at Chester Cathedral runs from 8th May to 28th June and will be open throughout normal cathedral opening hours.

Visitors will experience a breathtaking journey through the story of creation, redemption and revelation in this remarkable textile exhibition. Featuring three monumental sequences - Threads through Creation, Threads through the Cross and Threads through Revelation - by textile artist Jacqui Parkinson.



Ten years in the making and composed of more than 25 million stitches across 44 panels, this extraordinary work celebrates both artistic devotion with the timeless message of the Bible.

This is one of the largest textile artworks ever created by a single artist. Together the panels stretch over 80 metres, weaving scenes of beauty, faith and hope with colour and creativity on an awe-inspiring scale.

□ **Weekly Reading Sheets: www.stmaryswhitegate.org/**

Readings and prayers for May services are on the website. Each service sheet contains the readings and prayers specific to that Sunday. If you don't see the sheets straight away on the Home page, click on the Blog button, top right.

St Peter's Church Little Budworth



MUSIC FOR A SUMMER'S AFTERNOON

with

Andrew Millinchip (piano)
+ Emma Morley (mezzo-soprano/flute)

Sunday 14th June 2026 2.00pm
followed by tea + cakes

Free admission
Retiring collection in aid of

North West Air Ambulance Charity



Gentlemen's Dinner

THE PLOUGH INN
Whitegate

Monday 29th June
6.30 pm

Sign up & pre-order on the notice boards in St
Mary's and St Peter's or contact Alan Newton:
acenewton513@gmail.com
01829 760239



VALE
ROYAL
STRING
ORCHESTRA



Vale Royal Abbey, Whitegate CW8 2BA
Sunday 14th June 2026 at 7 pm

A Programme for Summer, with music
by

**Debussy, Vaughan Williams, Elgar,
Grieg and Herrman**

Bethan Conway Harp

Richard Adamson Conductor

Buy your ticket at the door, cash or
contactless:
Adults £18, Children & students, £8

www.valeroyalstringorchestra.co.uk



2026 WHITEGATE MUSIC FESTIVAL

@ WHITEGATE VILLAGE GREEN

**SATURDAY
27 JUNE
2PM TIL 7PM**

**LIVE
BANDS
BBQ
& BAR**

Adults £10
[£12.50 ON THE DAY]

Teenagers 12+ £5
[£6 ON THE DAY]

Kids under 12 FREE

Free Face Painting

FOR TICKETS, SCAN QR CODE OR CONTACT
JOHN BLAYNEY 07964 844642

Limited chairs available: so feel free to bring along
your own chair or picnic rug.
Note: children must be supervised at all times.

20p tickets to fund St Mary's Church repairs.

Contacts:

In this online edition of the NEWS, many contacts prefer us only to show their phone number. If you need to e-mail them, please call them first to ask for the address.

<p>Vicar Rev Canon Paul Dawson 01606 889995 The Vicarage, Cinder Hill, Whitegate CW8 2BH vicaragecinderhill@outlook.com</p>	<p>Churchwardens Anne Blayney 07815 713012 Sandra Paskin 01606 882031</p> <hr/> <p>PCC Secretary Roger Wilkes 01606 75738</p>
<p>Curates Rev Dr John Stopford 01606 558802 Rev Jane Millinchip 07891 981293</p>	<p>Church Flowers Pam Davies 01606 557833</p> <hr/> <p>Children's Worker Teresa Finney 01606 889311</p>
<p>Safeguarding Officer Anne Blayney 07815 713012 safeguardingwhitegate@outlook.com</p>	<p>Mothers' Union Eileen Lees 01606 786895</p>
<p>Mews Lettings Andrew Millinchip mewsbookingswhitegate@gmail.com</p>	<p>"News" coordinator Christine Ball 01606 593260 chrisball2022@outlook.com</p>
<p>Musical Director Andrew Millinchip 07821 810772</p>	<p>Pastoral & Fellowship Committee Alan Newton 01829 760239</p>
<p>Treasurers Gary Chadwick 07590 999169 Sarah Campbell Woodward 01829 760438 treasurerwhitegatepcc@outlook.com</p>	<p>Social & Fundraising Group John Blayney 07964 844642</p>

JUNE NEWS: Comments and contributions for the next edition of the Monthly NEWS are always welcome. Please send copy to chrisball2022@outlook.com by 15th May.

FIRST THURSDAY CAFÉ

The Mews
Church
Green
Whitegate
CW8 2AY

Thursdays 7th May & 4th June

Come to The Mews, catch up with old friends & meet new ones. Chat over tea, coffee and delicious homemade cakes.



Everyone welcome!
10.30 am to 12.00 noon

Men's Breakfast

at The Village Restaurant,
BLAKEMERE
CW8 2EB

Join us for a great value
breakfast and chat in friendly
company

9.00 am

Wednesday
13th May

Sign up at St Mary's
Whitegate or St Peter's Little
Budworth,

or contact Alan Newton on
01829 760239
acnewton513@gmail.com

Movies in The Mews

Church Green, Whitegate

Sunday 17th May 2026

Refreshments from 2.00 p.m.

film starts at 2.30 p.m. prompt.



THE CHORAL

(2025)

"A very British film"

"Amusing, touching and well
crafted"

Written by Alan Bennett & Stephen Beresford. Directed by
Nicholas Hytner. Starring Ralph Fiennes.

A choral society's male members enlist in World War I, leaving the
demanding Dr. Guthrie to recruit teenagers. Together, they
experience the joy of singing while the young boys grapple with their
impending conscription into the army.

Sub-titled for the hard of hearing.
Suggested donation £5.00 per person

Book by signing up on the board in church, or contact Chris Ball:
01606 593260 mob: 07786 132938 chrisball2015@gmail.com



Whitegate Amblers

Come and join us for our monthly walk discovering
the beautiful countryside around the Village of
Whitegate. You can let us know you are coming by
texting or phoning or just turn up on the day.

Date: Thursday 21st May

Time: 09:45 meet for walk starting at **10:00**
and lasting approximately 2 hours

Start: Little Budworth Country Park Car Park.
Driving South on the A49, turn left onto Coach
Road, following signs for Oulton Park and it's on the
Left at the far end near Oulton Park Entrance.

Description: Walk is easy and dry.

You may like to bring a drink and a snack to enjoy
at the end of the walk. We welcome well behaved
dogs who can be kept under control all the times.
The toilets in the carpark are often open but not
guaranteed. If you can't find a lift from church
please phone me.

Information: call John Blayney (07964844642)

