

St Mary's Parish Church
Whitegate



NEWS FOR FEBRUARY 2024



Our cover photo

Many will recognise Jane Millinchip's glorious photograph of the Baptistry window in Coventry Cathedral. It was designed by John Piper and its 198 highly coloured glass panels form what Sir Basil Spence, architect of the cathedral, considered to be a masterpiece. Piper worked with the glassmaker, Patrick Reyntiens, creating the window from thousands of differently sized pieces of glass, to visually vary the space and rest the eye.

Lent Series 2024

Jane offers us the photo to illustrate "light", the subject of the first session of this year's Lent Series. The series, which focuses on the symbols of Christianity, will run for five weeks from 21st February on Wednesday evenings in The Mews at 7.00 pm, lasting about an hour. Led by Jane Millinchip and John Stopford, on 21st the subject will be "Light". In the weeks that follow will come "Water", "Bread", "The Cross", concluding with "Fish" on 20th March. (See February Diary for dates)

In addition, from 1st February, there will be a new exhibition of photos in The Mews, linked to these themes. It will run until Easter Saturday, so don't miss it.

A verse for FEBRUARY

Psalm 112: verse 4

Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.

In the Bible, light is often used to symbolise life, but it is used in so many different ways from light being the dawn of life in the creation story in Genesis, to Jesus being the light of the world in the Gospels and other places.

The opposite of light is darkness and our world can be a dark place, for each of us as individuals where health or other circumstances cause us pain, for communities or even of the world as a whole. Wars, wherever they are, affect us all in some way or another. Natural disasters often affect thousands of people, and have impacts far beyond where they happen.

Psalm 112 is a psalm of hope and encouragement and tells us that if we fear the Lord and keep his commandments we will be able to cope with anything that the world throws at us.

Verse 5 tells us that; Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice. Verse 7 : They will have no fear of bad news; Their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord. And the final part of verse 10, the last verse tells us that the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.

In our troubled world perhaps this psalm should always be in our minds to keep us on the right path, but also to give us hope that however dark things get the light will overcome it and that with the light of Christ in our lives we will never be in darkness.

JTS

FEBRUARY Diary

FEB 1st	10.30 am	First Thursday Café (<i>see page 8</i>)	The Mews
4th	9.30 am	Candlemas Family Service	St Mary's
6th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides	L.B. Methodist Chapel
7th	10.30 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
11th	9.30 am	Transfiguration Sunday Holy Communion	St Mary's
13th	2.00 pm 4.00- 7.00 pm	Shrove Tuesday Bible Study at Commonsides Pancake Party for Christian Aid (<i>see page 8</i>)	L.B. Methodist Chapel The Mews
14th	9.00 am 10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.30 pm	Ash Wednesday Men's Breakfast (<i>see page 8</i>) Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Holy Communion with imposition of Ashes	Tarporley G'dn Centre The Mews St Mary's St Mary's
18th	9.30 am 9.30 am 2.00 for 2.30 pm	Lent 1 Morning Prayer Storytelling Service Movies in The Mews: "Marvellous" (<i>see page 8</i>)	St Mary's The Mews The Mews
20th	2.00 pm 7.30 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides St Mary's Mothers' Union meeting	L.B. Methodist Chapel The Mews
21st	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.00 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Lent Series 1: "Light"	The Mews St Mary's The Mews
25th	9.30 am	Lent 2 Holy Communion	St Mary's
27th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides	L.B. Methodist Chapel
28th	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.00 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Lent Series 2: "Water"	The Mews 12.00 noon The Mews
MAR 3rd	9.30 am 9.30 am	Lent 3 Holy Communion Storytelling Service	St Mary's The Mews
5th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides	L.B. Methodist Chapel
6th	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.00 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Lent Series 3: "Bread"	The Mews St Mary's The Mews
7th	10.30 am	First Thursday Café (<i>see page 8</i>)	The Mews
10th	9.30 am	Mothering Sunday Family Service	St Mary's

February thoughts from the Vicar ...

On New Year's Eve at our Benefice Communion Jane spoke of the words Mary pondered in her heart. On the threshold of a new year we were invited to reflect on things that bring us comfort, maybe the words of a hymn or a prayer, maybe a piece of Scripture, maybe music or a piece of art.



The Mexican poet and academic Cesar A Cruz is often quoted as saying that "Art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable." That thought is often used to describe the task of the Church but it goes back to an earlier suggestion made by Peter Dunne (1867 – 1936) that the role of journalism is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.

When we speak of comfort I am reminded of the section of the Bayeux Tapestry which depicts Bishop Odo comforting the Norman troops. He is doing so by waving his mace at them! That's not what we usually mean by 'comfort'.

Bishop Odo's intervention was critical to the Norman victory. The English held the high ground and made good use of it repulsing successive charges by the Norman Cavalry. On seeing the cavalry retreating, Bishop Odo sallied forth wielding his mace and whacking the retreating Normans who, being more frightened of their bishop than the English soldiers, turned again and made a successful attack.

Think of the well-known words in Psalm 23, "*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.*"

A rod or staff are not soft gentle things, they are hard and strong. I am reminded of a Scottish shepherd who taught a bishop the proper uses of a shepherd's crook. It is used to haul sheep out of ditches, to free them from being tangled in brambles. It is a weapon used to fight off predators. It is a staff to give support climbing steep hills. At the top of the hill, it may be used to lean on and watch over the sheep.

God's comfort is about supporting us in the rugged places of life. Sometimes it is also about encouraging us to do an about face and get on with something difficult.

February begins with Candlemas, or the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. It is a feast rich in meaning. We see a young mother bringing her first child with wonder and adoration. We meet Simeon and Anna, old people, perhaps thinking their days were over. Yet through their patient presence in the holy place, they came to see God's greatest promise fulfilled. We are never too old or frail to be part of God's plan. Simeon's words speak of who this child is, and hints at the pain Mary will endure at his death.

Candlemas is our last look at the crib, our first glimpse of the cross. It is a turning point. Sometimes at turning points we need to be comforted.

And then Lent, which starts early this year, Easter Sunday being on 31st March. Our Bibles tell us that after his baptism Jesus went into the wilderness. It is always worth being reminded that the word used to describe the action of the Holy Spirit is 'ekballei' from which we get our word 'ballistic'. It means to hurl, to forcibly throw, this is the Spirit comforting Jesus. Sometimes what we need to do isn't 'comfortable'.

If we sense an instinct to avoid the difficult bits of being a Christian, if the idea of Lent doesn't appeal to us, if we'd rather stay at home rather than join a Lent group, maybe we need to be comforted.

In the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Mr Beaver has to remind us that Aslan isn't a tame lion. If you choose to be on his side, it won't always be safe. But you will be on the right side.

Paul.

FEBRUARY NEWS FROM ST MARY'S

□ St Mary's support for other charities

The Mission and giving group at St Mary's meets quarterly to allocate the sum (5% of church income from donations & fundraising) that is donated to other charities. Over the course of any year, we aim to support local, national and international organisations in equal measure. At the recent meeting, it was agreed to support Embrace the Middle East, the publishers of the Bethlehem Carol Sheet that we use at St Mary's at all the Christmas services. It is a Christian aid & development agency which, for 170 years now has worked with local partners of all faiths, tackling poverty and injustice throughout the Middle East. As you can imagine, their work is particularly challenging at present, so our donation of £693.16 will be especially welcome.



□ A message from Pauline Hayward

As many church members will know, Pauline has had her own business for some years. Please see below her request for some temporary office help. Could it suit you?

"I am looking for someone who can come into my office (based in my home) to assist with basic admin tasks whilst I recover from an operation. I will be sitting alongside that person – I am not allowed to type for a period of time. Such help is required to start on Tuesday, 30 January. Please contact me on my mobile: 07714 277343 or speak to me after the morning service."

☐ **Shrove Tuesday – Pancakes in The Mews**

On 13th February, Shrove Tuesday, we will be serving pancakes in the Mews between 4.00 and 7.00pm. No charge, any donations will be offered to Christian Aid. Please join us at a time that suits you for a pancake. There may be a wait at busy times but we are hoping people can come and go so everyone will have a freshly cooked pancake.



☐ **Movies in The Mews**

A small group met in January to share ideas about films to show in our mini-cinema in Whitegate. It was a productive evening for we now have a plan for the year. The Mews has been booked, the films have been acquired and we have 6 screenings for you in 2024. A flyer showing all of them accompanies this edition of the NEWS. The first date is Sunday 18th February, when we'll be showing "Marvellous", starring that great actor whose name is on everyone's lips at present, Toby Jones. See page 8 for more details.

☐ **Hedge laying complete**

All at St Mary's would like to thank Countryside Ranger, Chris Moseley and his diligent and hardy band of hedge laying volunteers, who over the last two winters, in all weathers, have generously given their time and skills to tackle the hedges around Whitehead Fields burial ground and behind the school. Their job is just about complete and those hedges will grow thicker and stronger in future because of the work they've done.

☐ **Last call for stamps**

The collecting box in church will disappear on Sunday 4th February, so please bring your British and Foreign stamps in by then.



WHITEGATE WI

Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month; 7.15 pm for 7.30 start, in Whitegate Recreation Room. On 7th February, we welcome Bob Baker with "From Crime to Crime", the tale of a detective's journey from dealing with crime to writing about it.

Visitors and new members are always welcome. There is a small fee for visitors, which includes refreshments. To find out more, contact Alison: whitegatewi@outlook.com

□ Contacts

Please note that only e-mail addresses for the Vicar, the News coordinator & the Mews Lettings officer are shown in the online version of the monthly News. If you need the e-mail address of one of the other Contacts, please phone them to ask for it.

<p>Vicar Rev Canon Paul Dawson 01606 889995 The Vicarage, Cinder Hill, Whitegate CW8 2BH vicaragecinderhill@outlook.com</p>	<p>Churchwardens John Duthie 01606 889836 Anne Blayney 01606 74020</p> <hr/> <p>PCC Secretary Roger Wilkes 01606 75738</p>
<p>Curates Rev Dr John Stopford 01606 558802 Rev Jane Millinchip 07981 981293 Rev Margaret Byrne 07368 375970</p>	<p>Treasurer John Duthie 01606 889836</p> <hr/> <p>Children's Worker Teresa Finney 01606 889311</p>
<p>Safeguarding Officer Sue Whitehead 01606 852302</p>	<p>Mothers' Union Eileen Lees 01606 786895</p>
<p>Mews Lettings Andrew Millinchip amillinchip@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>Church Flowers Pam Davies 01606 557833</p>	<p>Social & Fundraising Group John Blayney 07964 844642</p>

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



Men's Breakfast

Once a month, at
Tarpoley Garden Centre

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

9.00 am
on

Wednesday
14th February

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

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

FIRST THURSDAY CAFÉ

The Mews
Church Green
Whitegate
CW8 2AY

Thursdays, 1st February & 7th March

Come down, meet friends & chat over tea,
coffee and delicious homemade cakes

Open 10.30 am
to 12.00 noon



Movies in The Mews

Sunday 18th February 2024

Refreshments from 2.00 p.m.

film starts at 2.30 p.m. prompt.

(Will finish around 4.30 p.m.)



MARVELLOUS (2014)

*"... a truly remarkable story.
Who can fail to be inspired by
this man?"*

Written by Peter Bowker, directed
by Julian Farino & starring Toby
Jones, Gemma Jones & Tony
Curran

The true story of Neil Baldwin. He is considered to have
learning difficulties but has a huge appetite for life.
Encouraged by his mother Mary, he shrugs off perceived
limitations to live an incredible life.

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: 01606 593260 or chrisball2015@gmail.com



St Mary's Church
Whitegate

SHROVE TUESDAY 13th February

Pancake Party



Join us in The Mews,
Church Green, Whitegate, anytime
from 4.00 - 7.00pm & choose your
favourite topping

Donations please, for
Christian Aid

