

# LIFE

February 2023

Christ Church  
Eccleston  
magazine



## Beauty from Ashes

You may be familiar with the enormous puddle that often forms at the top of the Vicarage drive. Those of you that walk will be familiar with timing your dash past it to avoid getting sprayed with muddy water by a passing car. Those that drive, maybe you're in the make the biggest splash possible for fun crowd or maybe you edge round slowly out of kindness or to keep your car clean. Usually that puddle irritates me. I ring the council, they send someone to clear the drain but it makes little difference. During the freezing weather, I was so glad it was still there! As cars drove through, spraying up the water, a beautiful array of icicles formed on the hedge next to the puddle. A phenomenal, unique, opulent display of God's creativity. Like all the best jewellery, the icicles seemed to change constantly as the light changed through the day. It may amuse you to know I got soaked, more than once, trying to photograph them in different lights.



For the people of God, in exile, without their own prophets or kings, desperate for the long awaited Messiah, the time when Jesus came was very much a muddy puddle moment in history. A once great nation under foreign rule. It makes God's choice to send his Son when Israel were oppressed all the more startling, so utterly in contrast to the surrounding ugliness, opulent in generosity and love. Jesus read the words from Isaiah in the temple, a statement of his purpose that contrasted completely with the status of God's people at the time.



The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

Isaiah 61 : 1-3

What is your statement of purpose? How does God's purpose for you contrast with contemporary culture?

**CHRIST CHURCH ECCLESTON**

*holding you with God for life*

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## Hearts

Thank you so much to those of you that have already made hearts. We will be giving them out as a Valentines reminder of God's love, with a card letting people know they are a token of God's love from the church. If you are making some you can either bring them to church for other's to give away with one of the cards, or collect some cards and give them to neighbours, friends or family that may be in need of a reminder of the enormity of God's love for them. There are patterns for knitting or crocheting below, but do use whatever skill you have, wool is not the only thing hearts can be made of!

### Knit a heart

Size 10 needles

Cast on 2 stitches

1 knit

2 Purl

3 Knit into front and back of both stitches. 4 sts.

4 Purl

5 Knit. First and last stitch knit into front and back. 6 sts.

6 Purl

7 Knit as row 5. 8 sts.

8 Purl

9 Knit as row 5. 10 sts.

10 Purl

11 Knit as row 5. 12 sts.

12 Purl

13 Knit

14 Purl

15 Knit as row 5. 14 sts.

16 Purl

17 Knit

18 Purl

19 Knit as row 5. 16 sts.

20 Purl 8. Turn.

21 Knit 2 together. Knit 4. Knit 2 together.

22 Purl

23 Knit 2 together. Knit 2. Knit 2 together.

24 Purl

25 Knit 2 together. Knit 2 together.

26 Purl 2 together

27 Pick up other 8 stitches and repeat rows 21 to 26.

Well done! You can, for added challenge, make up 2, join them and stuff

### Crochet a heart

1: Work 6 sc in a magic ring [6]

2: Work 2 sc in each st around [12]

3: (Sc in next st, 2 sc in next st) rep 6 times [18]

4-5: Sc in each st around

Cut the yarn leaving a short tail for sewing. Make another piece just like the previous one by repeating rounds 1-5. Do not cut the yarn as we will continue using the yarn of the second piece.

6: Crochet the pieces together. Work 9 sc on the second piece, 18 sc around the first piece and again 9 sc on the second piece [36]. Sew the hole between the two pieces closed.

7: Sc in each st around

8: (Sc in each of next 4 sts, sc2tog) rep 6 times [30]

9: Sc in each st around

10: (Sc in each of next 3 sts, sc2tog) rep 6 times [24]

11: Sc in each st around

12: (Sc in each of next 2 sts, sc2tog) rep 6 times [18]

13: Sc in each st around

Fill the heart with fiberfill. Add a bit of stuffing after the next rounds as well.

14: (Sc in next st, sc2tog) rep 6 times [12]

15: Sc in each st around

16: (Sc2tog) rep 6 times

Cut the yarn leaving a tail for closing the piece. Weave the threaded needle through the front loops of all remaining stitches and pull tightly to close.



## Church St Helens - Renewing Hope

As the part of the first cohort of the Fit for Mission process in the Diocese of Liverpool, each Parochial Church Council (PCC) in the Deanery of St Helens has had the opportunity to vote on whether to opt in or not. As you'll know, if you are a regular reader, Christ Church Eccleston voted to be part of this exciting project and some of our members have benefited from the opportunity to attend Cultivate as a result. I hope that many more will next time it runs, especially as feedback from the first course has been taken on board and improvements made to include more time in group discussion, slower pace and reduced content to allow for greater interaction.

As we start to work towards what will become a legal reality sometime next year, PCCs across the soon to be formed larger single parish were asked for suggestions as to what it should be called. We submitted a suggestion, St Helens All Saints but as there is already a parish called All Saints within the Deanery it was not a viable option.

The larger single parish will be called 'Church St Helens' - simple, clear and memorable. The name will, when appropriate, be accompanied by the strap line, 'Renewing Hope.' This encompasses our purpose as faith communities in sharing the hope of the Good News of Jesus Christ as well as expressing the hope for the future and growth of the Church of England in St Helens through the strategic reorganisation and collaboration of the Fit for Mission process.

## Church St Helens Get Together Sunday 26th February, 6pm, St Helens Parish Church

Come together with the rest of church St Helens and bring and share some dessert (cakes, puddings etc, ready to serve, nothing that needs warming up please!) Pray and chat and share good news of what God is doing amongst us. We'll be in the café area at the back of church, comfy and informal.

## Announcement: from Blackburn Diocese

We are pleased to announce that the Revd Gregor Stewart has been appointed as Rector of the Fellside Team. Gregor is currently curate in the Eccleston Team ministry in St Helens, in the Diocese of Liverpool. Please do be praying for Gregor and his family as he prepares to take up his post. A date for his induction will be arranged in late spring/early summer.

Gregor adds, 'It has been an absolute privilege to serve my curacy with you all in the Eccleston Team. You have been hugely supportive and encouraging to not only myself but the rest of the family as well. I will deeply miss you all and you can be assured of my continued friendship and prayers in the future. I would like to ask you all to be praying us as a family as we prepare for the move.'

Gregor's last service as curate in the Eccleston Team will be on 5th March, 9:30 at St Luke's, those that usually worship across the Eccleston Team will be joining the St Luke's congregation to worship together and say our goodbyes.

## Team Service 5th March 9:30 am at St Luke's Farewell to Rev Gregor and family.



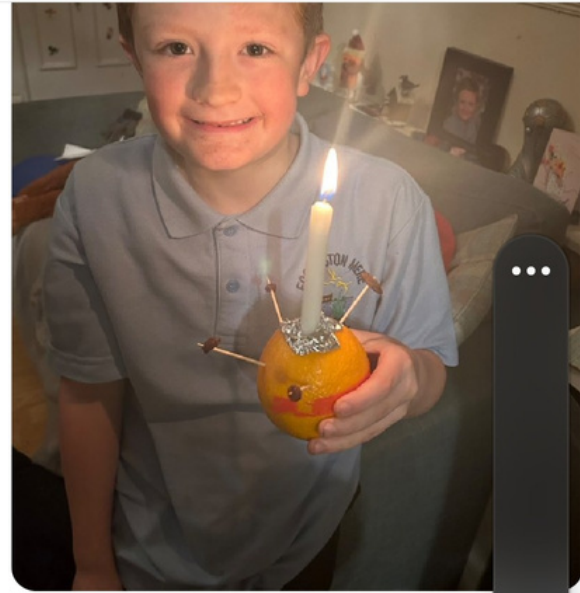


## That Christingley Feeling

Thanks to the Children's Society and a group of fabulous Christ Church volunteers, DIY Christingle bags were sent home with every child at Eccleston Mere Primary School. Inspired by the success of making our own Christingles during the Christingle service in 2021, vision grew to include not just our congregation in 2022 but the whole school too!

Rev Sonya made the biggest Christingle at Church and during collective worship at school by dressing herself as an orange and explaining the significance of the different elements as she added to her costume. In church we made our Christingles during the service, helping one another with the tricky bits. At school every child received a bag with all the elements of a Christingle and a leaflet. The leaflet included instructions to make a Christingle, what it represents, a prayer and an invitation to our Christmas services.

What a delight following the assembly to find some of the children posting pictures of their brilliant Christingles on twitter (pictured right) and sending Rev Sonya thank you messages with photos via Whatsapp. I hope the nimble fingered ladies agree it was worth the effort of sticking tape around the fiddly cocktail sticks to know the Good News has been shared and to see such beaming smiles!



1   2   2



**Eccleston Mere Prim...** · 1h  
A fab Christingle Amelia! ❤️

**Graham Pinder** @pi... · 1d  
Amelias Christingle  
@EcclestonMere



1   2



## The Birth of a Snowdrop

Have you ever heard the silence of the falling of the snow?  
And saw trees etched with filigree and on windows of our homes,  
Watch! Sunbeams shed their brilliant light upon the glistening floor,  
All life beneath lie fast asleep, for it's winter time once more.

Have you ever heard the silence of the falling of the snow?  
And felt its icy cold white kiss upon your face below,  
Each crystal is a snowdrop it melts to Mother Earth.  
The life within her womb will then gradually stir.

She whelms a stem of beauty, the time has come at last,  
The seed she held so patiently for Mother Nature's task,  
Her first born is the snowdrop, as white as driven snow  
And when we see her birth occur then spring will come once more.

So listen to the silence of the falling of the snow  
And watch the sun beams brilliant light upon the glistening floor  
Then look! Behold the snowdrop a tiny flower of white  
Her bed though buried deep in snow a truly warming sight.

By Dorothy Ann Partington

## 80!

No, it's not someone's significant birthday but absolutely something worth celebrating... since the Covid restrictions eased and we have been able to return to collecting for the Food Bank, we have delivered 80 bags of food, Thank you to everyone who has donated and those that regularly deliver. It is great to know we are helping to make a difference!.



## The Orchard

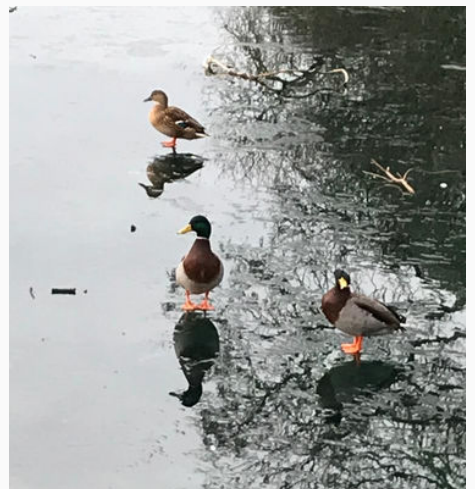
After several frustrations and delays as we waited for the utilities to be connected and meters fitted, the building inspector signed off on the Orchard this week. Those at Church on Sunday were able to look around and PCC met in the Orchard last week, sharing communion on camping chairs and deck chairs as our first gathering in the new space. Furnishing, equipping, installing wifi and sound system etc can all start now, we are ever so nearly there.

## Special Moments with Jennie Platt

I started writing Special Moments in January 2008 and am grateful for the kind words that readers have shared with me. This encouragement was also provided for the Christmas Fair. Although this event is now in the past it was a wonderful occasion and reflected our strengths as a warm and friendly community. Children loved visiting Father Christmas and adults enjoyed chatting. Many thanks for the help so willingly provided.

To those who spotted my error last month, in the date of the dedication of the lych gate- 1922 not 1822- I apologise. For those who did not spot my mistake do not worry I am sure there will be more in 2023. I move on optimistically and hope to take on Rev. Gregor's message to us in January to share our faith. I have started by expressing my dismay at the use of 'god awful' as the answer to a crossword clue in a national newspaper. Although I understand that over time the meaning of words change, I sent a simple message sharing my concern. A prompt reply explained that this phrase is now common in everyday English and most dictionaries do not list it as offensive. However, some dictionaries note that some people may find the phrase offensive and in light of my objection, they will refrain from future use of the phrase. I have joked with friends that I am now famous but seriously it did show me that it is worthwhile to pursue concerns. A first step in sharing what is important in my faith and trying to play a part in working for a kinder future.

Last year we had the amazing news that the first baby bison was born in the wild in the UK for 6,000 years. This event reflects the success of a rewilding project to woodland near Canterbury. Whilst I am not suggesting we aim for anything so extreme I hope that in 2023 all our dreams and hard work will come to fruition with the opening of the Orchard. Our patience has been rewarded as it has through a severe winter and we have learned to value the positives. For example, ducks on Taylor Park Lake are skilled ice skaters. The memorial garden was even more peaceful covered in snow and the frozen icicles on the church hedge were spectacular. As snowdrops appear and more signs of spring arrive watch out for opening events at the Orchard. You will see what a wonderful building the community has, to share and enjoy friendship and experience new ventures in 2023.



Images (by Jennie Platt) from top down:  
A snowy Garden of Remembrance  
Snowdrops emerge  
Ducks on Ice  
Left: The beautiful Catkins



## God's Promises

N	I	H	T	L	A	C	I	S	Y	H	P	I	N
N	D	E	S	B	G	E	S	S	P	L	E	M	P
E	E	A	P	S	L	M	A	I	P	L	E	G	E
V	S	L	C	O	V	E	R	I	N	G	S	I	A
O	E	I	S	P	T	D	S	S	U	S	E	J	C
L	R	N	A	R	E	E	O	S	V	S	L	O	E
E	T	G	A	E	C	A	A	R	I	A	A	C	S
P	E	I	R	N	S	E	C	N	A	N	I	F	N
A	A	G	O	G	R	E	H	T	A	F	G	P	T
G	O	P	A	C	T	S	S	E	L	P	P	S	S
A	H	O	L	I	N	E	S	S	S	O	E	S	N
S	V	O	W	Y	S	E	S	I	M	O	R	P	T
O	E	R	S	D	R	O	W	S	D	O	G	O	I
C	A	H	A	P	P	I	N	E	S	S	P	M	Y

- FACTS
- FINANCES
- FATHER
- PROMISES
- AGAPE LOVE
- PEACE
- HEALING
- HAPPINESS
- GODS WORD
- PHYSICAL
- HOLINESS
- JESUS
- COVERING
- BLESSINGS
- DESERT

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/3557/>

In February we celebrate St Valentine's Day, a chance to think of all the people we love. See if you can decorate our special colouring-in picture, and have ago at our wordsearch, which is based on God's Promises.

