

St. Aidan's Church Autumn 23

Wigan South Bible passage for 2023:

God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. (2 Corinthians 9:8)

Upcoming Services:

Our services follow the usual pattern in October and November.

There is an extra service at 4pm on Sunday October 15th Remembering Loved Ones. Families of those who have had a funeral at St Aidan's will be invited but this service will be open to everyone. If you have been bereaved recently and would like a name to be read out, please will you contact Margaret Stott by email or phone at margaret.stott@icloud.com Tel 01744 895751 or Barbara Goulden at 894694.



On October 29th, a fifth Sunday, there will be a joint Hub Service in the morning, time to be confirmed. It is the turn of St. Thomas Ashton to host this service.

At 4pm on November 12th the Civic Remembrance Service will be held in church. Church will be decorated with knitted poppies. Thanks to all those who have been working hard for this service.

The Beacon Service in November will include our annual Toy Service. You are asked to bring gifts suitable for children and teenagers in the parish who are in need this Christmas. This will be given to the Mayor's Christmas Appeal. Please do not wrap the gifts, this will be done by volunteers. There is a special need for gifts for the teenagers! Thank you in anticipation of your great generosity.

Donations of toys may also be brought to the 4pm Evening Prayer Service.

A big thanks to all those who decorated church for our Harvest Festival. It looked amazing. Many thanks also to all those who donated food and financial contributions. This year they will be used in setting up the Food Pantry (see below) which is due to open in November.

You may already have read some of the following notices in the Church magazine -

Food Pantry:

We are now getting ready to open a Food Pantry at St Aidan's in November (date still to be confirmed). The pantry will be called Aidan's Pantry and will be open on a Friday afternoon 14.00 - 16.00.

The food pantry is being opened and funded by the Lifted Mission under the umbrella of Church Wigan and Wigan Deanery Trust. The difference between a Food Pantry and Food Bank is that the pantry is open to everyone.

Anyone wishing to shop at the pantry will pay £5 per year and will be allowed to buy 15 items for £3 every week. All the food is donated by supermarkets and factories like

Heinz. This not only stops food being sent to land fill sites but it also helps families of all age have access to food at a very low cost. There have been a number of pantries that have been opened throughout Church Wigan and have been proved not only to be successful in feeding people but become a social event where people can meet and have a chat. Once established we hope to be able to expand our Pantry into much more.

Through the Lifted Mission we have access to lots of other organisations who can offer help and advice like Christians' Against Poverty.

We really want to make our pantry into a warm and welcoming place where the people of Billinge can not only have access to good cheap food but a place to make friends.

However you want to use the Pantry everyone will be welcome.

Joan Roberts

Prayer changes things!

At St. Aidan's we believe in the power of prayer. It is something that we can do at any time, in any place, even if we are not able to get out and about. We can all pray on our own at home, with others in our church services, in small groups with a common goal, (as we do at Sta's4all planning meetings) and we can also pray as individuals with a common aim. For instance

- St Aidan's Emergency Prayer Group pray for individuals in need within or known to our congregation:

Do you know someone in need of prayer support? Sick, anxious, feeling unloved, bereaved, depressed? Prayer enables us to be encircled in love. This emergency prayer group will pray in confidence for your loved one. Ring Jennifer on 01942 537325 or Brenda on 01744 894528 to share the need.

- Prayer for the Mission and Ministry of St. Aidan's pray for all aspects which affect our church mission to reach out to our community and for the practical aspects of our church building and services and our position within Wigan South

This is co-ordinated by one of our prayer warriors - Pauline Griffiths. We hope to meet face to face occasionally, but this currently works by prayer needs being emailed by Pauline to the prayer support group for them to pray in their own time. Recent topics have included for the appointment of the right person as leader of our Parish of Wigan South, progress with the Food Pantry, our school and teachers, Sta's4all and Beacon Services, upkeep of the churchyard, the process of the Right buildings review, and more. If you would like to be a part of the team of prayers for the Mission and Ministry of St. Aidan's please contact Pauline on paulinesonia@hotmail.co.uk

An independent review into the 7 year Transforming Wigan Project which ended in 2021 has taken place by Kate Hutton of Integras Consulting. It was published on 21/09/23 and can be found on the Diocesan website in the section of news and events. See www.liverpool.anglican.org There is a full 56 page report or you may download a 6 page summary. It looks at how and why the Project was set up, its relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. It reports on successes in mission and how changes in team benefice enabled quick adaptation and support during the Covid pandemic and also acknowledges that it was unable to turn around the downward trajectory in finances which burdens all churches at this time.

ANNOUNCEMENT READ IN WORSHIP SERVICES in Wigan South Sunday 1st October 2023 From the PCC

Many of you will know that a **Right Buildings Review** has been conducted this year throughout Church Wigan. This recognises that all our church buildings are precious and important, yet also that we can no longer afford to keep all of them. We need a smaller number of wisely sited church buildings which can fulfil the ongoing needs of traditional worship *and* help us engage in the new mission Jesus is giving us today. The Right Buildings Review was undertaken to help us do this.

Last week parish church councils met to consider the draft recommendations of the Right Buildings Review. We now want to host a series of open and honest conversations with congregations and other groups connected to our churches, to pray and discuss how we will move forward with those recommendations.

We invite you all to attend the conversations which we plan to take place after the morning service later this month. At that meeting you will be able to learn about the review and share your thoughts. Please try to be there: we want everyone to be involved.

We want to share the recommendations with you today, in preparation for the meetings.

Of the 31 church buildings in Church Wigan, twelve were deemed currently to offer a sustainable base for ministry without requiring large investment or development. Therefore they should be retained.

Four church buildings were identified as not easily supporting sustainable ministry without large investment and therefore should be released.

The remaining fifteen offer both potential and challenge for sustainable ministry and require significant investment or development. Sadly, Church Wigan does not have the resources to retain all of them. Thus, PCCs will review them urgently to discern which to retain or release.

In our Parish of Wigan South

- *St Aidan's, St Andrews and St Thomas* are recommended to be retained.
- *Holy Trinity and St Luke's* will be reviewed over the next months to assess sustainability and options before deciding whether to retain or release.
- *St Peter's* will continue to meet in the Brigade Hall, Bryn.

The PCC recognises that the Right Buildings Review, while supremely necessary, will bring pain to many. To do this well will mean doing it together, with the Holy Spirit and each other. Thank you.

Similar notices have been read out in each church in Church Wigan.

Changes in Church

You may remember that both Rev Jeremy Thomas and Rev Sue Fulford, our Team vicars have reduced their hours to part time because of personal need. The appointment of a new full time Team Vicar and Hub Leader for Wigan South is progressing. An advert was released on 26/09/23. The closing date for this is Monday 16th October and the Interviews are scheduled for 9th November. Please pray that God prompts the 'right person' to respond and apply for this post, and pray for those who will interview and select, that our individual churches and our joint Hub activities may receive the leadership needed to fulfil God's will for our parish and that we all feel supported in our mission and our spiritual walk with Jesus.

Helen has received 'Permission to Officiate' as Reader allowing her to continue to take a leadership role, lead services and preach.

Changes for Lesley Leppard

Last year pressure of work in her paid job as a teacher prevented Lesley from completing her training as a Reader. As we know, Lesley is very accomplished in the role that she has been doing here at St. Aidan's. She may not have completed the formal training but her leading of services and preaching is appreciated by our congregation, especially at the 4pm services. She feels at this time that she is not able to continue the formal course but would like to continue to support St. Aidan's as our other Service Leaders are doing. We are very grateful to Lesley for this. We will still be able to benefit from her leadership and her thoughtful, spiritual insights.

Our Assistant Warden, Barbara Goulden's email had been incorrectly recorded in the magazine. This should be put right in the November magazine. Please note that any enquiries about weddings, graves or the burial of ashes must go to Barbara Goulden on 01744 894694 or email - staidansverger@yahoo.com. Enquiries about funerals are dealt with through the funeral directors, not directly to Barbara or clergy.

Prayer for the Parish

If anyone needs to be added to our prayer list please let Helen or Margaret Stott know. The family **must give permission** for any name to be added to the list. The list that has been on these updates is also used in church services.

For confidential prayer needs contact Jennifer Berry for the St Aidan's Prayer Circle on 01942 389715 or Brenda Bridge on 01744 894528.



Please pray by name for Tracey-Ann Napier, Lorraine Webb, Jeanette Caine, Baby Janie, Wally Brooks, Dorothy Ashall, Judith Burns, Brenda, Sian Gasson and David Davenport. And we remember the bereaved - the families and friends of May Cornforth, Elizabeth Ann Dixon and Leanne Jones.

A prayer:

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and change. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen