

PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George



CHRISTMAS PEWSHEET PLUS

Welcome to Worship this Christmas

Christmas Services December 2021 – January 2022:

Christmas Eve: Friday 24th December:

Crib Service at St. Thomas' 4:00pm

Crib Service at St. George's on Christmas Eve at 6:00pm

Midnight Eucharist at St. Bartholomew's at 11:30pm.

Christmas Day: Saturday 25th December:

Joint Christmas Day service at 10:00am at St. Bartholomew's

Boxing Day: Sunday 26th December

Joint Communion Service 10:00am St. Bartholomew's

[no service at St. George's or St. Thomas' that Sunday].



This week we pray for:

Those who are ill: Cassie Buono, Brian Cato, Denise Gilliand, Christine Greenhalgh, Dawn Grundy, Jenny Harris, Keith Haworth, Mario Heaton, Edith Ibbotson, Joan James, Patricia James, Mike Johnson, Geoff Kyte, Edward Lakstigala, Eileen Marsh, Jean Partington, Norman Sidlow,

Those who have died recently: Maurice Ginniff,

And on their anniversaries this week we remember: Martha Anderton, Kate Andrews, Stephen Beckett, Oswald Chesney, Mary Dootson, Norman Fitzpatrick, Nicholas Green, Richard Gregory, Elizabeth Hesketh, Ena Hindley, William Howcroft, Jean Johnson, Gladys Kirkman, Doris Knowles, Jess Mather, Edward Matthews, Leoanard Morris, Brian Prescott, Edith Roden, Ronald Rothwell, Kenneth Spencer, Mary Street, Francis Trevor, Thomas Turner, Ernest Watkins, Emma Wood.

Coming Up this week:

All events are taking a Christmas break this week.

Further details on upcoming events at the end of this pewsheet. Do keep any news, views and feedback coming.

Next Sunday: 2nd January 2022 Epiphany

Epiphany

Readings: Readings: Isaiah 60. 1 – 6 / Ephesians 3. 1 - 12 / Matthew 2. 1 – 12

9:15am Service of the Word at St George's Church

Revd Andy Jones

11:00am Service of the Word at St. Bartholomew's Church

Revd Andy Jones

No services at St. Thomas' church this morning

To receive these pewsheets, newsletters or special events leaflets electronically, please e-mail

westhoughtonparish@outlook.com

Readings for Christmas Eve [St Bartholomew's 11:30pm]

Collect:

Eternal God,
who made this most holy night
to shine with the brightness of your one true light: bring
us, who have known the revelation of that light on
earth,
to see the radiance of your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
Amen.



Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 9. 2, 6 - 7

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness –
on them light has shined.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness from this
time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the
LORD of hosts will do this.

New Testament Reading: Hebrews 4. 1 - 4

¹Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many
and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these
last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he
appointed heir of all things, through whom he
also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of
God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very
being, and he sustains all things by his powerful
word. When he had made purification for sins, he
sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on
high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels
as the name he has inherited is more excellent
than theirs.

Gospel Reading

John 1. 1 - 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word
was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in
the beginning with God. ³All things came into
being through him, and without him not one
thing came into being. What has come into being
⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all
people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the
darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man
sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came
as a witness to testify to the light, so that all
might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not
the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The
true light, which enlightens everyone, was
coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and
the world came into being through him; yet the
world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was
his own, and his own people did not accept him.
¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his
name, he gave power to become children of God,
¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of
the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And
the Word became flesh and lived among us, and
we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's
only son, full of grace and truth.

Post-Communion Prayer:

God our Father,
in this night you have made known to us again
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:
confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him
until the day dawns
and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts.
To him be glory both now and for ever. **Amen.**

PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

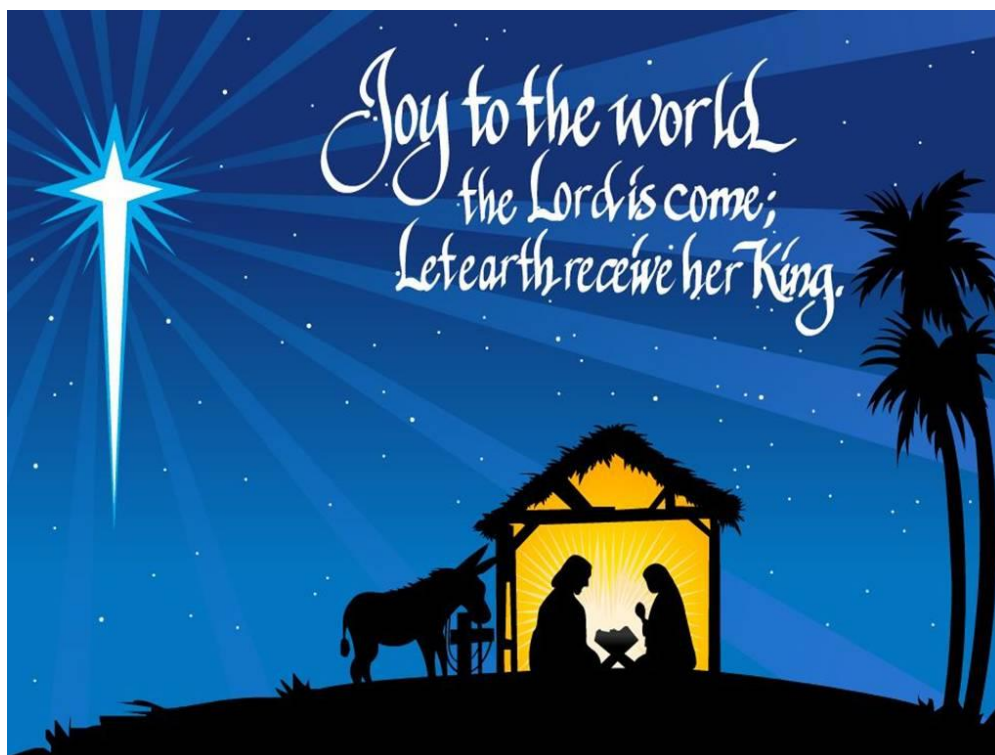
St George

1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him
Born the King of Angels
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!

2. God of God, Light of Light
Lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb
Very God
Begotten, not created
O come, let us adore Him ...

3. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
All glory in the highest
O come, let us adore Him ...

4. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning
Jesus, to Thee be glory given
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing
O come, let us adore Him ...



Readings for Christmas Day [St Bartholomew's 10:00am]

Collect:

Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise
as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God.
Amen.

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 9 . 2 - 7

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light.
They lived in a land of shadows,
but now light is shining on them.
³You have given them great joy, Lord;
you have made them happy.
They rejoice in what you have done,
as people rejoice when they harvest grain
or when they divide captured wealth.
⁴For you have broken the yoke that
burdened them
and the rod that beat their shoulders.
You have defeated the nation
that oppressed and exploited your people,
just as you defeated the army of Midian
long ago.

New Testament Reading: Titus 2 . 11 - 14

¹¹The grace of God has appeared, bringing
salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce
impiety and worldly passions, and in the
present age to live lives that are self-
controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we
wait for the blessed hope and the
manifestation of the glory of our great God
and Saviour, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave
himself for us that he might redeem us from
all iniquity and purify for himself a people of
his own who are zealous for good deeds.



⁵The boots of the invading army
and all their bloodstained clothing
will be destroyed by fire.
⁶A child is born to us!
A son is given to us!
And he will be our ruler.
He will be called, "Wonderful Counsellor,"
"Mighty God," "Eternal Father,"
"Prince of Peace."
⁷His royal power will continue to grow;
his kingdom will always be at peace.
He will rule as King David's successor,
basing his power on right and justice,
from now until the end of time.
The LORD Almighty is determined to do all
this.



*Gospel Reading**Luke 2. 1 - 20*

At that time Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. ² When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria. ³ Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own hometown.

⁴ Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. ⁵ He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, ⁶ and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. ⁷ She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger—there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

⁸ There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, ¹⁰ but the angel said to them, “Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. ¹¹ This very day in David's town your Saviour was born—Christ the Lord! ¹² And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God:

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those
with whom he is pleased!”

*Post-Communion Prayer:*

God our Father,
whose Word has come among us
in the Holy Child of Bethlehem:
may the light of faith illumine our hearts
and shine in our words and deeds;
through him who is Christ the Lord. **Amen**

Readings for Sunday 26th December [St Bartholomew's 10:00am]

Collect:

God in Trinity, eternal unity of perfect love:
gather the nations to be one family, and draw us
into your holy life through the birth of Emmanuel,
our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading:

1 Samuel 2. 18 – 20 & 26

¹⁸Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁹His mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year, when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. ²⁰Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, 'May the LORD repay you with children by this woman for the gift that she made to the LORD'; and then they would return to their home.

²⁶Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favour with the LORD and with the people.

New Testament Reading: Colossians 3. 12 - 17

¹²As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything

in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2. 41 - end

⁴¹Every year the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' ⁴⁹He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

Post-Communion Prayer:

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home:
help your Church to live as one family, united in love and obedience, and bring us all at last to our home in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Feast of St Stephen

St. Stephen, (died 36 AD, Jerusalem; feast day December 26)

1. The name Stephen is Greek. Chapter 6 of Acts of the Apostles tells us that he was a Hellenist (a foreign-born Jew who spoke Greek) who lived in Jerusalem and had become a Christian.
2. Saint Stephen was one of the first ordained deacons of the Church and also the first Christian martyr. The Greek word from which we derive the English word martyr literally means witness.
3. His behaviour, even forgiving those who were taking his life while he was being stoned to death, was a reflection of his faith. It is recorded in Chapter 7 of the Acts of the Apostles ([Acts 7:54-60](#)), which immediately follows the Gospels in the New Testament.
4. The 6th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles contains an account of the choice of the first seven deacons of the Church. As the Apostles worked to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ as his elders, some of the Greek-speaking widows were being neglected in their practical needs. The Twelve decided to ordain seven deacons to oversee their care. In doing so, the deacons extended the pastoral care of the Apostles, the first Bishops of the early Church, enabling them to attend more to teaching.
5. Of the seven ordained, Stephen was the oldest and given the title of "archdeacon," the chief among them. Little is known about him before this account.
6. Great preaching and miracles were attributed to Stephen. The Bible records that Stephen "full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people." Stephen's popularity created enemies among some Jews. They debated with him, to generate evidence for their persecution of the early Church.
7. They accused him of blasphemy, of speaking against God and Moses. The charges inflamed the local populace which demanded he be tried and punished. When Stephen was put on trial, several false witnesses were brought forward by the Sanhedrin to testify that he was guilty of blasphemy. He was charged with predicting that Jesus would destroy the Temple and for preaching against Mosaic law.
8. Stephen was filled with wisdom from heaven. He responded by detailing the history of Israel and outlining the blessings God had bestowed upon his chosen people. He also explained how disobedient Israel had become, despite the goodness and mercy of the Lord. Stephen explained that Jesus had come to fulfil the law of Moses, not destroy it. He quoted extensively from the Hebrew scriptures to prove his case. Finally, he admonished the Sanhedrin ([Acts 7:51-53](#)).
9. As Stephen concluded his defence, he looked up and saw a vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He said, "Look, I can see heaven thrown open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." That vision was taken as the final proof of blasphemy to the Jews who did not believe Jesus was the Messiah or Son of God. For them, Jesus could not possibly be beside the Father in Heaven. The crowd rushed upon Stephen and carried him outside of the city to stone him to death.
10. As Stephen was being brutally stoned, he spoke his last words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Lord, do not hold this sin against them." Words which echoed the very words of Jesus on the Cross. Following those words, Stephen died.

Watching the trial and execution was a Rabbi named Saul of Tarsus, a virulent persecutor of the early Church. Shortly thereafter, he would himself encounter the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus and be dramatically converted. His encounter is recorded in the 9th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. He took the name Paul as a sign of his new life in Jesus Christ and went on to become the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Collect:

*Gracious Father,
who gave the first martyr Stephen
grace to pray for those who took up stones against him:
grant that in all our sufferings for the truth
we may learn to love even our enemies
and to seek forgiveness for those who desire our hurt,
looking up to heaven to him who was crucified for us,
Jesus Christ, our mediator and advocate,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*



Bishop's Boxing Day Sermon

With Boxing Day falling on a Sunday this year, Bishop David has recorded a sermon which is available if churches would like a little help in preparing their online service for Sunday 26 December. The bishop's sermon focuses on the life of St Stephen, who he thinks is often overlooked.

Bishop David offers three challenges for listeners: considering whether our words and actions together speak about our faith, resisting and speaking out about different forms of prejudice in our communities, and praying for Christians who are being persecuted for their faith.

You can access and download the sermon [here](#).



Epiphany Services

January 2022:

Epiphany: Sunday 2nd January 2022

Service of the Word 9:15am St. George's

Service of the Word 11:00am St. Bartholomew's

[no service at St. Thomas' that Sunday].



HAPPY NEW YEAR



On behalf of all our churches, we wish everyone a very happy healthy and peaceful 2022.

NOTICEBOARD:

Organ Music at St. Bartholomew's:

For Advent / Christmas we're running the "Toccata" series. Initially a toccata was a music piece played on a keyboard [from the Latin "toccare" = to touch] as opposed to a cantata which was a sung piece ["cantare" = to sing]. As organs developed, these became showier and flashier with organist/composers writing ever more and faster notes to show off the skill [or not] of the player. They reached their height in the Parisian Organ lofts of the late 19th – early 20th century with way too many notes for the hands and a big tune played on the pedals.

For Christmas Eve, we'll be having the now-traditional Toccata from the Fifth symphony of Charles Marie Widor [1844 – 1937]. It's his most famous piece written in 1879 with lots of semiquavers for the hands [each one marked with a staccato dot] with the pedals playing the big tune in octaves. He wrote much music including 10 organ symphonies and more of his music should be better known. Widor thought many performers played this toccata too quickly – his own recording is very slow, but he was 91 when he committed it to disc. It's what they play in St Peter's in the Vatican after Christmas Midnight Mass, so if it's good enough for the Pope ...

He came from a family of organ builders and was appointed organist for a provisional one year period at the Parisian church of St Sulpice in 1870. His contract was never confirmed and he retired still as provisional organist in 1933 after 64 years in post. He's one of only two people buried in the crypt of the church and, after a lifetime of service, they put the wrong year of birth on his tombstone.

By the Boxing Day [Sunday 26th December] service, anything could happen.

Recording Attendance for School Admission

We have been asked to start recording physical church attendance for school admission purposes.

Parents will need to sign registers or, in the case of St Thomas, have their card stamped if they physically attend the service – nothing else will count.

The dedicated email account for parents to submit their attendance or intention to attend is no longer operating.

Christmas Cards:

We have a number of Christmas Cards left at St. Bartholomew's church for people who, for one reason or another, no longer attend church. We'll leave them on the welcome / signing in table this Sunday. Please either take them away or stick a stamp on them and we'll address and post them. Thanks.

St Bartholomew's Carol Service:

Many thanks once again to St. Bartholomew's Parish Church Choir for their work running up to and contribution to our Carol Service. It's always one of the highlights of the year and worth the hours of rehearsals we put in each week on a Wednesday. The special service sheets also allow us to run through the service with the carols and readings telling the story of the birth of Christ without interruption. Many thanks also to those who provided the usual refreshments with mince pies and mulled wine which adds to the festive celebrations.

Many thanks also for the positive comments we've received following the service. We try and avoid singing Christmas carols at the Advent services until we get to the Carol Service. In answer to the people who've asked how I decide what the choir are to sing, well it's a complex process of mixing old and new with some carols we've sung before to manage the practice time efficiently. We also try to match the carols to the readings so everything fits together well. For this year, the choir sang:

Come, thou Redeemer of the earth – we haven't sung this before but it's always good to begin with something unaccompanied rather than start with "all guns blazing." The words are by St Ambrose [c340 – 397] Bishop of Milan and all round genius. We sang it this year as the tune is by Michael Praetorius [1571 – 1621] who marked both his 450th birthday this year as well as the 400th anniversary of his death. Some references tell you that he died on his 50th birthday, but we don't think that's true now.

I saw three ships – is another we haven't sung before, but I found a fun arrangement and, with the choir split on the balcony, we could try some antiphonal effects between the men and women. The words are nonsense as Bethlehem isn't a port and Jesus and his mother wouldn't need three ships. Traditionally it's thought to refer to the Wise Men who are supposed to have sailed around the Mediterranean once they left the Holy Family and are now in Cologne Cathedral [well worth a visit if foreign travel is ever allowed again].

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly – is an old Polish carol and gives the choir a good opportunity for singing unaccompanied. I don't have to learn or play an accompaniment, which is always a bonus.

Word of the Father – is a modern set of words to an old French tune. It's one of the few carols to try and set the John 1 reading [*In the beginning was the word ...*] to music.

The Angels' Carol - has words and music by John Rutter [b.1945] who is probably the most famous of modern Christmas carol writers today, although he has written a lot of other fine music for the rest of the year. Like many of his carols it has a cracking, memorable tune and a "tinkly" accompaniment and is much more difficult than it sounds.

My Lord has come – last year [when congregational singing was banned] we had a choir-led Sequence of Readings and Music, closing with "Silent Night" sung by the choir alone. It went so well that we decided to try ending this year with something more reflective before the frenzy of the final organ voluntary. We have sung this carol before. It's by the British composer, Will Todd [b. 1970] who writes in a sort of jazz / blues style and closed the carol service brilliantly.

If any of this has inspired you to come and join the choir at St. Bartholomew's, do come and see Ed.

PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George



You are invited to join an exciting new 10 week course called "Being with" which is for those wishing to explore the Christian faith more in an inclusive and supportive environment

Start date will be on Wednesday 19th January 2022

The course will take place at St Katharine's Blackrod 7.30 to 9pm please contact for more information and joining information:

revawynne@gmail.com

reverendandyjones@gmail.com

Office Hour will run for the next few weeks but be taking a break over the Christmas period so won't run on Mondays 27th December or 3rd January 2022. You won't be surprised to find out that we aren't taking Saturday office hour appointments for Christmas Day or New Year's Day.

Committee Meetings

The next PCC meeting is planned for Monday 17th January at 7:30pm at St. Bartholomew's church. St. Bartholomew's church committee will meet immediately before that at 7:00pm.

Primary School Admission Forms

If you have a school form for any church primary school which needs a member of the clergy to sign, please bring your forms to church in the next few weeks and leave them for the attention of Carol or Angela. Those who attend St Thomas church should also include a copy of their attendance cards. Alternatively you can drop your forms off at the Rectory, Market Street Westhoughton. Parents with an application form for St Thomas School should read the recent new advice on the school website concerning school admissions. Thank you.

Admitting Children to Holy Communion prior to Confirmation

Our four team parishes have received the Bishop of Manchester's permission to admit baptised children to Holy Communion before confirmation. Traditionally receiving communion has been linked with confirmation which has often taken place as children are preparing to leave primary school. However, there has been a realisation in recent years that full church membership focuses on the individual's faith in Jesus and on baptism – irrespective of the age of the individual. Many children in our congregations are very regular and committed worshipping members of our church and they are very able to talk about matters of faith. Accordingly, we offer the opportunity to **baptised children in Year 3 and above** to take part in a short course of preparation for receiving Holy Communion - "Belonging to God". This course will begin in the New Year and children will be Admitted to receive Holy Communion on Mothering Sunday, 27th March 2022 in the church they attend. Children who wish to do this should get a parent to fill in an application form available in all our churches and return it before the closing date of Sunday 16th January 2022. The course will begin in February.

PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

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CONTACT US:

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Curate: Revd Andy Jones 01942 813 750 Email: reverendandyjones@gmail.com

FACEBOOK – locate us by searching Westhoughton parish

Follow us on twitter @Wparishchurch

@Westhoughtontowerbellringers

Material for the news sheet should be sent to Joan Warner by Wednesday morning

01942 818821 joan.warner35@outlook.com

Or to westhoughtonparish@outlook.com

OFFICE HOUR: Mondays 10:30am – 11:30am at St. Bartholomew's church [just drop in] or Saturday mornings by appointment e-mail westhoughtonparish@outlook.com