

# St. Mary And All Saints Church



Great Budworth

**EPIPHANY 1**

**The Baptism of Christ and also Plough Sunday**



Lord, in the stillness of the early morning the air is clear, crisp and cool.  
It is like a pause as the day waits to begin its journey.  
We praise you for the gift of this new day.



**2025**

**For those of you we haven't yet seen, the Ministry Team wish you all a happy, healthy and blessed New Year.**

Good morning to all, and we hope you have managed to get through the snowy and frosty days so far without mishap? The countryside has looked beautiful though in the snow, and it can be so much fun!



Last week we celebrated The Epiphany, the arrival of the three wise men in Bethlehem, where they found a baby in a manger, a baby named Jesus who was destined to be a King. Epiphany marks the end of the 12 days of Christmas. We will however be keeping our Christmas tree up in church until Candlemas on 2<sup>nd</sup> February as well as the crib.

Services for Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January: The Rev Alec Brown

10.30am Plough Service – we will be holding a special service and will go outside during the service to bless the plough. We do this each year, asking God for his blessing on the work of the farmer and farm workers, and for the growing of the new seed when planted: The Rev Christina Westwell is leading the Plough Service at Antrobus St. Marks – 10.30am

### **Blessing of the Plough**

**1<sup>st</sup> Speaker** The plough is the foundation of our work and a symbol of our labour:

**2<sup>nd</sup> Speaker** For the soil to be broken up and the seed sown, we must first plough the fields.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Speaker** For the green corn to grow and ripe grain to be reaped, we must first plough the fields.

**1<sup>st</sup> Speaker** For the bread to be baked and the people fed, we must first plough the fields

**2<sup>nd</sup> Speaker** For prosperity to come to our farms and families, we must first plough the fields.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Speaker** So we bring this ploughshare here for you to give your blessing upon it and upon all the work done on our farms.

**1<sup>st</sup> Speaker** God speed the plough:  
the plough and the ploughman,  
the farm and the farmer.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Speaker** God speed the plough:  
the beam and the mouldboard,  
the slade and the sidecap,  
the share and the coulter.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Speaker** God speed the plough:  
in fair weather and foul,  
in rain and wind,  
in frost and sunshine:

**All: God speed the plough!**

## **Plough Sunday**

The observance of Plough Sunday on the First Sunday of Epiphany goes back to Victorian times, but behind it there is a much older observance, associated with the first working day after the twelve days of Christmas, hence 'Plough Monday' in some places. In medieval times some ploughs were kept in the parish church, and some churches kept a 'plough-light'. In days when work was scarce in winter, the observance looked forward to the time of sowing with the promise of a harvest to come. Some Christian communities have reintroduced it as a focus for asking a blessing on human labour near the start of the calendar year.

4.00pm Holy Communion Common Worship

Today also marks the Baptism of Christ, when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan.

### **Luke 3:15-17, 21-22**

15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup>John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

### **The Baptism of Jesus**

21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, <sup>22</sup>and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

### **From the Vicar**

Happy New Year, and very best wishes for 2025 to everyone!

"A cold coming we had of it....." begins T.S. Eliot's famous "Journey of the Magi" and it's a line I'm sure we can all identify with at the very cold start of this new year! We have of course just celebrated the subject matter of Eliot's poem – The Epiphany – and for me the celebration speaks both of place and of dispersion. Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, Galilee and Judea are such pivotal places for our Christian story, but we remember too that the three Wise Men or Kings came from far-away places to worship at the manger throne, and then "returned to their own country by another way." And we know that in the decades, and centuries, following Jesus' birth, death and resurrection – to which Eliot refers in the last line of the poem - "I should be glad of another death" – the Christian message was taken far and wide, to the very furthest borders of the known world – place and dispersion.

Over two millennia after the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus we are still involved in, and firmly rooted/grounded in both place and dispersion/mission. There is no doubt whatsoever of the importance of St Mary and All Saints Church, in the heart of our large and ancient parish, for so many people, now and in the past – all parishioners, members of the congregation, visitors and enquirers – and the business of mission, in different forms, occupies us all, in one way or another. And so, as we begin this new year, with all its challenges in so many areas and aspects of our lives, and not least in the Church nationally, may the joy of the shepherds and the Wise Men be with us all in this wonderful season of Epiphany, as we give thanks to God for the revelation of the Messiah amongst us, and as we go about our daily lives.

Happy New Year!

The Revd Alec Brown.

## **Prayer**

**As children of our heavenly Father, who knows us so well and loves us completely,**

**Let us pray:**

Lord, we pray for the Church, which is one in the greatness of your love, but divided by the littleness of our own. May we be less occupied with the things that divide us, and more with those we hold in common, and the love that enfolds us all.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for those who are hungry in a world of plenty,

For those who do not know where their next meal is coming from and for those who can only watch as their children die. Lord let us provide for them.

We pray for the people of Ukraine, Gaza, Lebanon, Israel, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Syria and The Yemen, where war has and is destroying countless lives. We pray for peace.

We keep in our prayers all who are suffering from floods in this country and beyond, and for those countries fighting fires due to the hot weather, or sadly set maliciously, thinking today of the people of LA.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for those who have the power to change the world,

For leaders of nations whose decisions can mean the difference between death and life for many

And for those with the power but not the will to cancel the debts of the poor.

Please help them to hear the cries of the poor.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for those who remember the high hopes and exciting dreams that once were theirs;

For those whose lives have been wrecked by addictions that now rule their lives

And for those who are left to ponder their 'if onlys' and their 'might have beens'.

May the light of Christ bring peace to their hearts.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for those whose lives are trapped by the darkness of fear;

For those facing a time of uncertainty, illness, and the fear that comes from not knowing;

For those in hospital, and those undergoing treatment or surgery.

For those who wait through dark days of uncertainty.

We pray for those who care for them, whether at home, in hospital, hospice or care home.

Lord, be with them in their darkness and come as their light.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for those whom we love but see no longer; knowing that all of life is a gift from you and that its value cannot be measured by its length.

We thank you for the lives of those recently passed away.

We pray for the families and friends who mourn their loved ones passing, and ask you Lord to hold them, to share their tears and sadness, their questions and the pain deep inside.

Lord, so great and understanding, give them courage, strength and hope.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

**Lord, you give us times of stillness, and quiet moments of life to remember you and your love.**

**We give you thanks.**

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

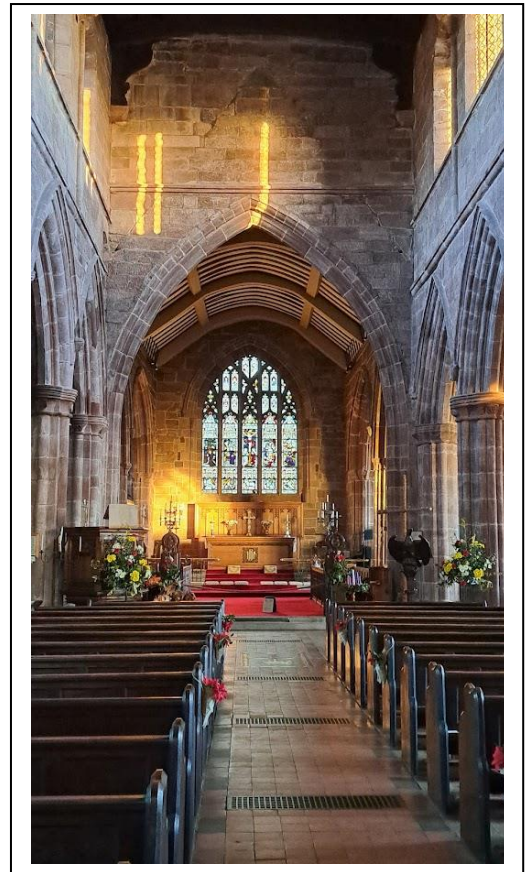
*Prayers taken from 500 more prayers for all occasions by David Clowes*

## The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
For ever and ever, Amen.**

## Blessing

**Blessing and laughter and loving be ours.  
The love of a Great God  
who names us and holds us while the earth turns and the  
flowers grow,  
this day,  
this night,  
this moment,  
and forever. Amen**



## The whole world

Can you see the whole world from here?

Called the little boy excitedly, as the family finally made it

To the very top of the castle crag

And stood admiring the extensive views.

Well, most of the north west and parts of Wales

Answered his father, to which came the happy reply from the boy

Almost the whole world then;

And we all laughed as we stood and gazed

Over the castle ramparts and remaining walls

To the surrounding and sodden countryside and beyond

At the beginning of a very cold and wet new year;

And when will it stop raining

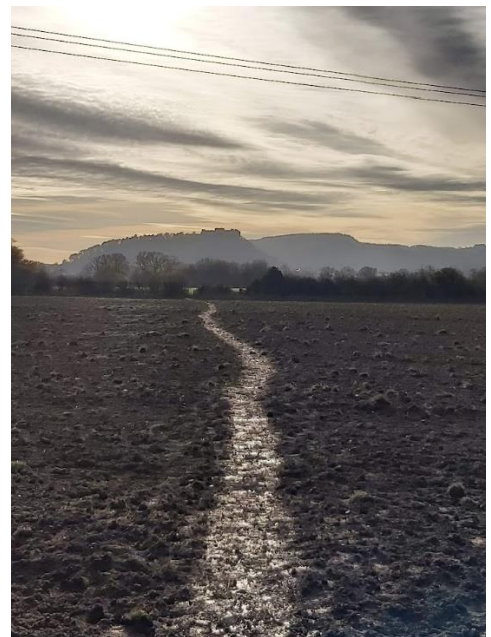
Asked the boy again, will it be soon?

But reply from his father came there none.

© The Revd Alec Brown

Beeston Castle, Cheshire

1<sup>st</sup> January, 2025.



We want to thank everybody who attended the services over the Advent and Christmas period. The carol services at Arley Chapel and Great Budworth were well attended and enjoyed by all. We are grateful to Alison Willis who led The Village Voices Choir again this year, they sang at both carol services, and to Stephen Reynolds for accompanying the choir.



The Crib and Christingle Service at 4.00pm on Christmas Eve was as always well attended, with lots of families coming along to as they say 'start Christmas'. Thanks to the team for putting the Christingles together, and all who helped out at the service.



We had various school carol services, and a concert by the Equali Choir. Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve and two services on Christmas Day; a busy time!



A huge thank you to all who helped out in whatever way, we couldn't do it without you all!



We look forward to what 2025 holds for St. Mary And All Saints.

We thank all of you that support us financially, all that support us with your time doing jobs that go unnoticed quite often.

We thank The Rev Alec Brown and The Rev Christina Westwell for all their ministry and care over the last year.



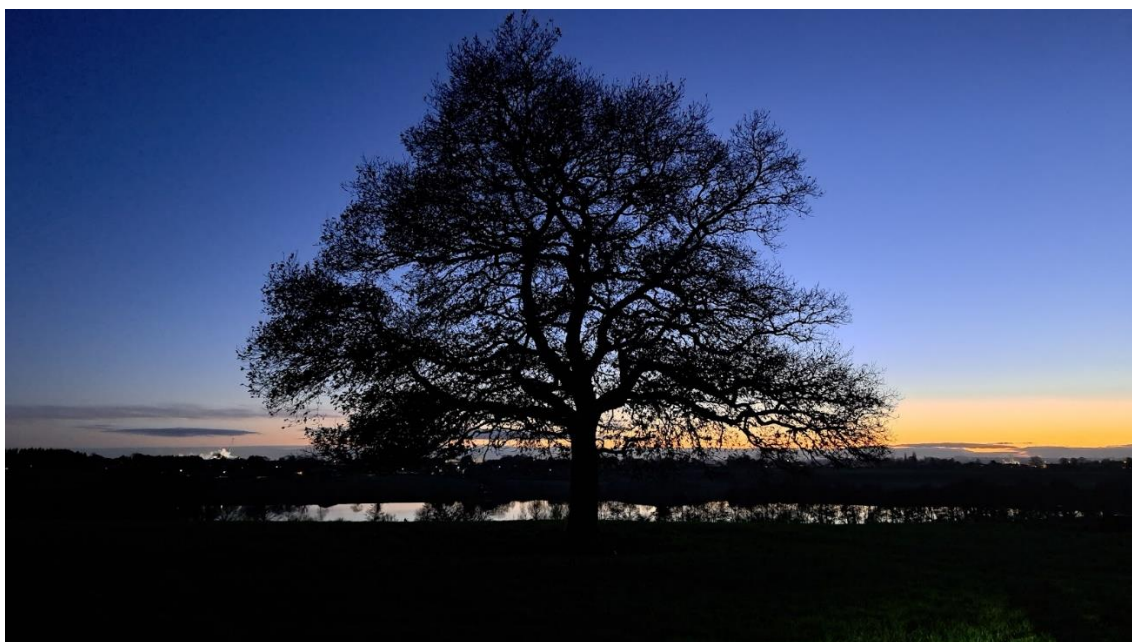
# Forest Church 2025

Our first Forest Church for 2025 will be on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> January at 2.30pm. We will start the year off meeting in Great Budworth, in the church. Everybody is welcome to join us from 0 to 100 yrs! Well behaved dogs welcome. Always dress for the weather!

## Diary

### January

Sun 12 <sup>th</sup>	Plough Sunday Service	10.30am
	Holy Communion <i>Common Worship</i>	4.00pm
Wed 15 <sup>th</sup>	Ministry Team meeting	4.00pm
	<u>Week of prayer for Christian Unity</u>	
Sun 19 <sup>th</sup>	Holy Communion <i>BCP</i>	8.00am
	Parish Communion <i>Common Worship</i>	10.30am
	Evening Prayer at Arley Chapel <i>BCP</i>	6.30pm
Mon 20 <sup>th</sup>	PCC Meeting tbc Old School	7.00pm
Wed 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Craft & Natter Old School	10.30am
Thur 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Play and Praise	1.30pm
Sun 26 <sup>th</sup>	Parish Communion <i>Common Worship</i>	10.30am
	Forest Church venue Great Budworth	2.30pm
February		
Sun 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Holy Communion <i>BCP</i>	8.00am
	All Age Worship – Candlemas	10.30am



Test: Can anybody tell me where in the Parish this tree can be found?

Margaret

# What's in a name?



Georgina Byrne *reflects on* Isaiah 43:1-7 and Luke 3:15-17. 21-22

So much of who we are, how we present ourselves to the world, is wrapped up in our name. Our name might represent our nationality, our background, it might give away our likely age, or the aspirations of our parents. Some people spend their lives having to spell or explain their name. We grow into our names – some of us change them.

Isaiah 43 reminds us that our name has something to do with our relationship with God. God, the creator, we recall, names things in the beginning of Genesis and they come into being. When Isaiah tells us that God calls us by name, it signifies that God calls us into being and gives us our purpose. God knows who, what and how we truly are. We are God's.

In Luke's version of the baptism of Jesus, God names Jesus "my Son", and in so doing, imbues Jesus' life with a meaning beyond imagining. Jesus is named as God's son, by God, and his whole life's purpose is made known.

Christians often recall their own baptism on this day. The Prayer Book catechism reminds us that our baptism makes us "a member of Christ, the child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven". Whatever our moniker, God has called us into being for a purpose. We are named, called, and known by God. 😊

O God, you call me into being and know me by name; walk with me through the journey of life. Protect me when storms rage and fires burn and hold me precious in your sight. For I am your child. Amen.

## Ephesus

### Part 2 – Mary's legacy to mothers

by Sr Janet Fearnis

*Sr Janet continues her tour of Ephesus.*

As well as being a guest at the House of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus, I was also a pilgrim. Regardless of the joy of the resurrection and of being reunited with Jesus, Mary's post-resurrection life would always include the horrific memory and image of Calvary. I wanted to bring to Mary all the mothers whom the loss of a child has changed for

ever. She has shared their pain and heartbreak and understands their struggle to rebuild life.

Many Christians are unaware that Muslims regard Jesus as a prophet and hold Mary in such high esteem that she is mentioned five times in the Qur'an. Hence, despite the differences in Christian-Muslim understanding and belief, Jesus and Mary can unite the two religions in the harmony for which both Jesus and Mohammed prayed. It also explains the tangible peace surrounding the shrine – broken only by birdsong. 😊

“For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

Galatians 3:26-27

## Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

Lestyn is my late-born lamb. He's pure black with a tiny white dot in the middle of his forehead and he's my favourite. He is two months younger than the other ram lambs and therefore smaller but full of life... until two days ago, when I found him collapsed in the field. He couldn't walk, he couldn't see very well and he was terrified. I carried him on

my shoulder to the small shed where we keep straw, laid him down and gave him an antibiotic injection and some molasses. The next day I did the same. Each morning I've expected him to be cold and still and each morning I've been wrong.

Hope can feel so distant, yet today he joined his flock mates and began grazing. The God in this, for me, is in the brilliance of the discovery of antibiotics and their preciousness as holy life restorers. 😊