

St Mary's Upton



faith for life in Jesus

Sunday 20 September 2026

The Real Work of Love

For some reason, my mind has been on love lately – specifically, what it actually looks like in practice.

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul writes: *"If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal... Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."*

This passage shows up at almost every wedding, and for good reason. Rebecca and I celebrated 30 years of marriage this year. Looking back over three decades, I'd like to think my love has often been patient and kind... but I know I've also been selfish and irritable. At weddings, Paul's words sound poetically romantic, but in real life, they function as a practical survival guide for daily living.

So what does this have to do with us, and why am I bringing it up?

Paul originally wrote this to a church community in Corinth – a bustling, chaotic hub of trade and shifting influences. In many ways, that mirrors our current reality as a Church: we are navigating change, managing reduced capacity, and adapting as personnel shifts. In the middle of all that pressure, we need grounding.

The other day in the office, Becca gave me a gentle reminder of what that looks like. She asked if I was alright, and I reflexively gave the standard lie: "Yes, I'm fine."

She didn't let it go. "Are you feeling overwhelmed?"

As I'm not a fan of lying, I had to drop the act and admit the truth. She simply looked at me and said, "We need to look out for each other." Just like those moments in Al and Alec's sermons that linger long after Sunday, that sentence stuck with me for the rest of the day.

Real love isn't soppy or romantic. It's the active decision to care for one another – especially when capacity is low, stress is high, and we're being a little annoying.

As we navigate this next season, let's keep checking in on each other—beyond the standard "I'm fine."

David Steele

St Mary's Verse for the Year:

"Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain." Psalm 127.1

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Lord of creation, whose glory is around and within us: open our eyes to your wonders, that we may serve you with reverence and know your peace at our lives' end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Church Office - The office will be open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Address for the St Mary's Church Centre, Saughall Massie

127-129 Saughall Massie Rd, Saughall Massie, Wirral CH49 4LA

Parish Safeguarding Pastoral Lead - Miriam Lambert. In the event of a safeguarding concern you can contact her by phone: **07763 826364**, or by email: **miriamsafeguarding@stm-upton.org.uk**



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Coming up this week...

Saturday 19 Sep	10am to 12pm	Repair Café in the Church Hall
Sunday 20 Sep	8.45am	Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
	10.30am	Morning Worship at the Parish Church with children's groups
	11am	Holy Communion at the Centre
	6pm	Evening Prayer at the Parish Church
Mon 21 Sep	10am - 11.30am	Tots Spot (0-4s) at The Centre
	11am - 12.30pm	Forget Me Not Café at the Parish Church
	3.30pm - 5.15pm	Drop In (11-18s) at The Bank
Tues 22 Sep	3.45pm - 4.45pm	Fuse After School Club (4-11s) at the Parish Church
Wed 23 Sep	9.30am-10.30am	Prayer Meeting in the Parish Church West Room
	11am	Holy Communion in the Parish Church West Room (with light lunch)
	3.30pm - 5.15pm	Drop In (11-18s) at The Bank
	5.30pm - 6.30pm	Bank Bible Study (11-18s) at The Bank
Thurs 24 Sep	10am-12pm	Our Place Café at The Centre
	10am - 11.30am	Dots 2 Tots (0-4s) at the Parish Church
Friday 25 Sep	3.30pm - 5.15pm	Drop In (11-18s) at The Bank
Sunday 27 Sep	8.45am	Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
	10.30am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion at the Parish Church
	11am	Morning Worship at the Centre
	6pm	Evening Prayer at the Parish Church

Please pray for...

Mission Links: This week we pray for International Justice Mission (IJM) – Please pray for IJM's work protecting vulnerable children and communities from exploitation and trafficking around the world. Give thanks for the successful National Justice Conference in Ghana and pray that it leads to lasting protection for children. Pray for survivor leaders in El Salvador as they advocate for women and children affected by violence, and give thanks for a family in South Asia who have recently been brought to freedom and are beginning to rebuild their lives.

Acutely ill/or in hospital: Emma (Fiona William's daughter), Alex Nolan, Joneen Hughes, Tom Sewell, Martin Hallett, 'J' (aged 14) recovering from surgery and ongoing treatment, Ronnie (1yr) recovering from a stem cell transplant.

Please let us know of any names for personal prayer.

Praying for 0-18s...

Chaplaincy Update - In Woodchurch High School this week we talking about prayer, thinking about the God who loves us and loves to hear from us. We are introducing "Say One For Me", which runs in school as well as here at church. "God's there, listening for all who pray, for all who pray and mean it." (Psalm 145:18). Please pray for our school's pupil premium cohort as the cost of living continues to affect everyone; for their parents and carers as they look after them and make difficult financial decisions, and for the school as they seek ways to offer the necessary support.

Could you help parents feel welcome in church? On Tuesdays in term-time we run a primary-aged after school club in church from 3:30 til 4:45pm, with a parents' café alongside. We would love some folk from church to come along regularly to get to know the parents, and help them to feel welcome in church. For more information, please speak to Becca or Alec.



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Staff News:

Please pray for our Youth and Chaplaincy job advert to be spotted! The role is being advertised on several national church job websites, and also in more local networks. Please pray that God will be at work as we look forward to receiving applications (deadline 21st October). You can find full details of the job advert here: <https://stm-upton.org.uk/staff-vacancies/>

Dates for your diary:

SEPTEMBER

Repair Café - Saturday 19th September, 10-12: If you've got a small domestic electrical item, worn out and torn clothes, bikes, wooden objects or computers, in need of repair, please bring it along and our volunteers will have a look - if we can't repair it, we'll let you know. Only one item per person.

An Introduction to Sustainable Church Flowers - Sunday 20th September, 3.30pm at St Bridget's Church, West Kirby (ending with a short Evensong at 6.30pm). Everyone is welcome to this free event.

Exploring Celtic Christian Spirituality with the Northumbria Community: An evening for anybody interested in exploring the legacy of Celtic spirituality passed down to today's church - particularly in terms of our prayer life. Led by local Christians with connections to the Northumbria Community, we will engage in prayerful reflection on some often-neglected - but nourishing! - streams of spiritual life that have direct relevance to us in the 21st century. **When:** Thursday 24 September at 7pm. **Where:** Community SOUL, 117 Wallasey Village, CH45 3LF. **Further info:** Contact Ian Corsie.

Remembrance Sunday Parade Information Meetings, Thursday 24th September, 2pm or 7pm. Plans are underway for this year's Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service in Upton. Working alongside other groups we're looking for volunteers (from church and community) who would like to play a part in supporting the running of the Remembrance Sunday Parade Service on the 8th November. Come along to St Mary's Parish Church for whichever meeting time suits you, to find out more about what's involved, and see how you might be able to help.

God of All the World: A Celebration of Worldwide Mission, Saturday 26th September, 12-4pm at Chester Cathedral. This celebration includes displays from mission agencies and Chester Diocese's global links (including those from St Mary's), music from around the world and an address by Bishop Anthony Poggo, the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion. Please contact Alastair Miatt (alastair@stm-upton.org.uk) if you would like more details.

OCTOBER

Sundays at 7 with Rev John Naude - Sunday 4th October: John has led an amazing life and through his own disability has encouraged others to find their own strength in taking part in wheelchair sports and activities. After the loss of his first wife whilst missionaries in Malawi, John has remarried and he and Janine are the proud parents of three adult children. John is currently a vicar in Rock Ferry; he will share a lifetime of faith, experience and wisdom on a wide range of Christian issues.

The Little Mermaid, Tuesday 13th to Saturday 17th October at the Little Theatre, Birkenhead - We're counting down to this year's Treading the Boards production. Please put the dates in your diary and come along to support our casts in what promises to be another excellent production (don't ask us, we're biased, but ask anyone who's been in previous years). We'll also be asking for people to help us with front of house, refreshments, and a few other elements too, so if you think you could help please speak to Becca, Cat or Inga.

General Information:

Sunday services this term. We look forward to worshipping God together on Sundays this term, and growing as followers of Jesus. In most of our morning services (8.45, 10.30 and 11.00am) we'll be exploring a new series "*Made Perfect in Weakness*", remembering that God has so often worked most effectively through the least likely people, or in times of need and 'weakness'. In our evening services (6pm) we'll be digging deep into the life of Jesus, by working our way through the book of John.



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Communion Services at St Mary's and The Centre. The PCC have recently been thinking about how we run our Communion services. This is for 2 reasons: because our current practices aren't very 'green' (single-use plastic cups) and because Church of England rules don't allow for the use of individualised cups (trying to reflect the symbolism of the shared cup at the Last Supper). In these discussions, we have committed to always make provision for people who either can't, or would prefer not to, drink from a shared cup, as well as for people who need gluten-free or non-alcoholic options. After careful consideration, the PCC has agreed that we will return to the use of a shared cup for the communion wine, while *also* offering the alternative of 'intinction' (the bread being dipped in a separate cup of wine, giving no possibility of cross-contamination with the shared cup). Gluten-free and non-alcoholic options will always be available with both the shared cup, and intinction. We will begin to introduce these changes from October, and will let you know more about the practicalities then. For now, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

From the Church Treasurer: THANK YOU. At the APCM I told you that, over the last few years, our yearly church costs have been about £60,000 more than our income. We expected it to take a while to close that gap, both by reducing annual costs by £25,000 in 2027 and also increasing our regular annual giving income by £35,000 (including tax reclaimed through Gift Aid). **An update** on this: So far, 62 households have increased their existing regular giving, and 17 new households have joined the regular giving scheme. Overall, this will increase our giving income by around £32,000 next year against our £35,000 target. We have also been generously left a legacy, which won't go into general funds but will be set aside to do the sort of things that we would not have been able to do without such a blessing. *"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."* – 2 Corinthians 9:7. Graham Morris, Treasurer

A note about the Creation Sunday Outdoor Service – On Sunday 6th September we celebrated the Season of Creation and our Creator God, all the wildlife in our St Mary's land and the increase in biodiversity there over the years. Everybody seemed to enjoy it, the sun shone for us, and several frogs even visited us while we were there! If you were one of those who came – thank you, and please could you contact the church office to let us know whether you are happy to have your photo included in the Diocesan Eco Church Newsletter or other Diocesan communications, or email the Eco Church Group on ecochurch@stm-upton.org.uk

Eco Encouragement for the Season of Creation (1st Sept to 4th Oct): This season is dedicated to God as the creator and sustainer of all life. It is observed by Christian churches across the world to reflect specifically on God's wider creation, His relation to it and our own relationship with it. This is a time for us to worship, pray and ask ourselves what more we can do as stewards of God's created world.

Chair Based Exercise Class: The next session will be **September 24th**. If you are interested in joining please email: Lizzie@stm-upton.org.uk.

Shared Reading Group, Thursdays at 10:30am in the North Room: The reading group which meets at St Mary's reconvened last week. We are reading a mixture of short stories, full length books and poetry. Anyone is welcome to join us - there is no homework and no compulsion to contribute, feel free to just come along and listen. For further details please contact the church office.



The church does not take a collection during the service but you can contribute to the ministry and mission of St Mary's by placing cash / cheques (payable to St Mary's Church) in the offering box, using the contactless card machine (at the Parish Church) or by scanning this QR code with your mobile phone. For further information please contact Graham Morris: graham@stm-upton.org.uk



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