St Mary's Upton

faith for life in Jesus

Sunday 22nd November 2026

I've been thinking a lot this week about The Good Samaritan – he's made an appearance in several school assemblies, in various different ways, and a lot of my thoughts.

The account is in Luke 10 and it begins with a teacher of the Law asking Jesus how he can inherit eternal life. An important question, and in Jesus' usual way he turns it back on the questioner and asks him what he reads God's Law to mean. The expert quotes from the Law as follows: *"'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"*

This sparks the story about the Good Samaritan, learning who our neighbour is, and what it means to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. Not an easy task. And this looks different for each one of us. In school it looks like playing nicely at lunchtime, helping someone in class, bringing groceries for the harvest collection, collecting pencils for the teacher. In church, in our jobs and in our home life it will look vastly different for each one of us depending on our contexts. For some of us it may mean talking to the person who lives next door to us, if we've never done that before, but as Jesus' story explains, it's certainly not limited to that!

In our 0-18s work, we get lots of opportunities to show love to people who walk through the door each week (in church, at the centre or in the bank), or whose doors we walk through (in schools, or when meeting folk in different places), and one of those opportunities is our annual Tots Swap Shop. The original concept of this came when the cost of living shot through the roof after the lockdowns; families were struggling to pay bills, and some were wondering how to afford Christmas presents. In our very small way, we created opportunity to get something for nothing, in order to give a gift that seems new to little ones. Each year it has grown, it's blessed more families that we have direct contact with, and it has blessed children and families who we have indirect contact with via local charities.

So, if you walk into church this week, and you trip over the many toys and clothes that have gathered, and you wonder why we're doing this event that takes so much time and effort for so many people (a **huge** thank you to those people!), please take a minute to remember the story of the Good Samaritan, who teaches us what it means to Love Your Neighbour as you Love Yourself, as we endeavour to love our neighbours with toys and clothes and all kinds of lovely things for little ones.

Becca

St Mary's Verse for the Year:
"Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain." Psalm 127.1

Prayer (Collect) for Christ the King:
God the Father, help us to hear the call of Christ the King and to follow in his service, whose kingdom has no end; for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, one glory. **Amen**

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

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

2 Church Road, Upton, CH49 6JZ
0151 677 1186
www.stm-upton.org.uk
office@stm-upton.org.uk

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

Coming up this week…

Saturday 21 Nov	10am - 12pm	Repair Cafe in the Church Hall
Sunday 22 Nov	8.45am	Morning Prayer at the Parish Church - James Hsuan
	10.30am	Holy Communion at the Parish Church - James Hsuan
	11.00am	Morning Worship at the Centre - John Rainer
	Made perfect in weakness: Mary's song, Luke 1.46-56	
	3.00pm	Commemorative Service
	6.00pm	Evening Praise at the Parish Church - Dave Wood, ***John 7:1-52***
Mon 23 Nov	10am - 11.30am	Tots Spot (0-4s) at The Centre
	11.00am-12.45pm	Forget Me Not Café at the Parish Church
	3.30pm - 5.15pm	Drop In (11-18s) at The Bank
Tue 24 Nov	3.45pm - 4.45pm	Fuse after-school club (4-11s) at the Parish Church
Wed 25 Nov	9.30am - 10.30am	Prayer Meeting in the Parish Church West Room
	11.00am	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 26 Nov	10am - 12pm	Our Place Cafe at the Centre
	10am - 11:30am	Dots to Tots (0-4s) at the Parish Church
	10am - 11.30	Tots Swap Shop at the Parish Church
	1pm - 2.30pm	Parish Nurse Drop in - West Room
	1.30pm - 3pm	Elderbranch at the Church Halls
Friday 27 Nov	2.00pm - 4.00pm	Prayer Hub at the Parish Church
	3.30pm - 5.15pm	Drop In (11-18s) at The Bank
Sunday 29 Nov	8.45am	Morning Prayer at the Parish Church - Al Rodgers
	10.30am	Morning Worship at the Parish Church - Al Rodgers
	11.00am	Morning Worship at the Centre - Alec Ham
	"Preparing the Way: Isaiah 40.3-5"	
	6.00pm	Holy Communion at the Parish Church - Dave Wood, ***John 8:1-11***

Please pray for…

Mission Links: This week we pray for **True Freedom Trust**, which supports Christians experiencing same-sex attraction to live faithfully as followers of Jesus through pastoral care, friendship and biblical encouragement. Give thanks for an encouraging National Conference in September, exploring comfort and belonging in God's goodness and faithfulness. Pray for the training of new volunteer pastoral workers, the growth of support groups, and the forthcoming *Ascend* magazine, which aims to encourage churches to offer welcome and belonging to those who may find Christmas and the idea of family particularly difficult.

Acutely ill/or in hospital: Jean Hughes, Ruth Callaghan, Christine Clarke, Martin Hallett, Alex Nolan, Tom Sewell, 'J'

Please let us know of any names for personal prayer.

Woodchurch High School Chaplaincy – We are continuing our collective worship series based on the film 'The Man Who Invented Christmas', about the life of Charles Dickens. This week we're looking at poverty and wealth – we're thinking about what the Bible says about looking after the poor and those in need, and we're looking at what Jesus said about generosity, based on the actions of the widow's offering at the temple. Please pray for hearts of generosity throughout the school as we fundraise for the school charities and collect for CAP hampers.

Opportunities to Engage…

Christmas 2026 - St Mary's and The Centre Christmas Card. The Christmas card is coming! Starting next Sunday (22nd November) there will be the opportunity to sign the St Mary's and the Centre Christmas card, as a way of sending greetings to one another **AND** to make a donation as we have done for many years now to one of our Mission links. This year we'll be supporting IJM (International Justice Mission) in their work to combat modern slavery.

The idea is that in lieu of the cost of sending cards to one another we sign and donate towards IJM. The 'sheets' on which you sign will be available on Sundays 22nd, 29th Nov & 6th Dec. Then the card will be sent for printing on 7th December and will hopefully be available to collect from Sunday 13th December.

Sadly, all too aware of identify fraud these days, we suggest that when writing your name(s) you **DO NOT** use your usual signature.

You will be able to give by using the contactless card machine (at the Parish Church), or by placing gifts in the envelopes marked 'Christmas Card 26' and popping them in the collection box. If you are able to 'Gift-Aid' your donation, then please fill in all the details requested on the front of the Gift-aid envelopes (marked 'Christmas Card 26'). Any questions please contact Steve Johns – Assistant Treasurer (steve@stm-upton.org.uk).

The Prayer Hub, Fridays 2-4pm. We would love to enable anyone who wants to come into church for a time of quiet or personal prayer to be given the opportunity. For this to happen long term we really need a few more volunteers who would be able to come on a Friday, once or twice a month. The volunteers would be there to welcome others and if asked, to pray with, or for, other hub users. The role requires a Basic level DBS, and basic and foundation level safeguarding training – which we are happy to support you with. If you are interested, or would just like to know a little more please feel free to chat to Miriam Lambert (0765351876) or Lizzie Hsuan (07763826371)

Could you join our Wednesday Communion Refreshments team? We serve refreshments and a light lunch to our friends who attend Wednesday Communion in the West Room. We are looking for more volunteers and would love you to join our rota, with availability to help once a month on Wednesdays from 10:15am-1pm. Don't worry, you won't be alone but will be helping alongside another volunteer. Your help will be very much appreciated and is a great way of serving God in a practical way. For further details, please contact Miriam Lambert, 07565 351876, or David Steele in the Church Office. Thank you

CAP Christmas Hampers: CAP Wirral are once again asking for donations for the client Christmas hampers. We would appreciate items such as mince pies, Christmas puddings, and special treats such as chocolates and biscuits. In addition, could we please ask for items such as savoury rice and pasta packets, toiletries, and jars of sauces. The collection cage is now in place at St Mary's and the collection box is out at The Centre. They will be available until **Sunday 6th December**. Thank you, we very much appreciate your generous support!

Donations of shop-bought mince pies welcome for hospitality at Christmas events: We would like to offer mince pies at several of our Christmas events (starting from 5th December), and would welcome donations of (long-dated) shop-bought mince pies. You can bring them to any service, or drop them in to St Mary's during the week.

Second-hand bookstall raising money for Christians Against Poverty: A wide selection of well-priced second-hand books will be available after the 10.30 service this week (and we hope other services soon), so do have a browse (cash only).

Staff News:

Following some staffing changes, we have a **vacancy** in our **Pastoral Care team**, and are seeking to appoint a ***Pastoral Care Worker*** (Job-share, 3 hours per week at £13.96/hour, until 30th September 2027).

The main duties of the role will include:

- Being a proactive pastoral presence at the Forget-me-not café (2hrs a week, Monday morning)
- Some home/care home/hospital visiting.
- Helping coordinate home/small groups.

As part of our pastoral care team this role will contribute to our support and care of church members and the wider community. It would be ideal for someone with a heart for pastoral care, a mature Christian faith, and is both self-motivated and a team player.

The Church of England is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. This appointment is subject to safer recruitment procedures, satisfactory references, an enhanced DBS check with barred list clearance, and completion of required safeguarding training.

The full job description and application form can be found here (https://stm-upton.org.uk/staff-vacancies/), and the application deadline is 5.00pm on 26th November.

Dates for your Diary:

NOVEMBER

Repair Café – Saturday 21st November, 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

Commemorative Service – Sunday 22nd November, 3pm: You are warmly invited to attend this short service in which we give thanks for the lives of family members and/or friends we've lost in recent years. Slips of paper will be available for you to write the name of the person you are remembering. During the service we will read out the names and light a candle as we remember. Refreshments will served in the Atrium and West room after the service."

Tots Swap Shop – Thursday 26th November, 10-11:30am. A freecycle-style event for toys, books, puzzles and clothes that are suitable for 0-4s, because Christmas is just around the corner! Donations are now closed. Feel free to invite friends and family.

DECEMBER

Thursday 3rd December 2026 - Coming Alongside People Living With Dementia, 7:30pm-9:30pm at Bromborough Evangelical Church.
Do you have a desire to support, care and minister to those living with dementia and to walk alongside those with caring responsibilities?
If so, Paul Crowther from the Christian charity *Embracing Age* will be running the above course.
Please contact Miriam Lambert on 07565 351876 for further details and lift share options.

Celebrating the start of the Christmas Season with the local community. Saturday 5th December, 6pm. Join us to celebrate the start of Christmas at St Mary's Church, with Overchurch Junior School choir, Phoenix Dance & Drama, and Treading the Boards Youth Theatre Company. There will be a show featuring these 3 groups, and we'll will then have the big countdown to switch on the church Christmas lights. We hope you can join us!

Sundays at 7 – Sunday 6th December, 7pm: Our guest will be the **Bishop of Stockport, Sam Corley**. Following a call to ordination at the age of just four, Sam's faith journey led him to University in Durham, teaching in South London, and training for the ministry in Nottingham. He has served God's people in Lancaster, Bradford and Leeds before becoming Bishop of Stockport. A host of wonderful stories and an evening not to be missed. Join us for drinks at 6.30pm with the interview at 7pm.

On the Bethlehem Beat – Friday 11th December, 5pm: Angels, Shepherds and Missing Wallets! Big city cop Sgt. Barton has been reassigned to the sleepy town of Bethlehem – but with census crowds, a thief at large and a conspiracy surrounding a new king, it won't be a silent night! Join 4Front Theatre for a copper caper filled with laughs, music and a whole load of festive silliness in this cops and robbers pan-tivity, delivering all the fun of a panto while celebrating the hope found in the gospel message at the heart of the nativity. Hot dogs, ice creams and games at 5pm, with the performance at 6pm. Tickets can be booked here: https://stmarys.churchsuite.com/events/d5fhrb1x.

JANUARY

Sunday 10th Jan 2027, 12.30pm-3pm, Newcomers Lunch. More details to follow.

Monday 18 Jan 2027, 1pm, Fraud Awareness Talk, St Mary's Church. More details to follow.

General Information:

Live-streaming Update: Whilst we normally seek to livestream the 10.30am Sunday service, this will not be available on 29th November. Please remember you can usually follow a livestream service, or catch up with previous sermons, on the St Mary's Church Upton YouTube channel.

10:30 services in December: As part of our vision to welcome children, young people and families into the wider life of the church, at our 10:30 services on 6th, 13th and 20th December, we're having a mini series on ***The Christmas Journey***. We'll have a focus on giving an extra-special welcome to young people from our midweek activities. The welcome of our regular congregation will be a very important part of the success of these services, so if you normally attend the 10:30 we hope you'll be able to join us!

Eco Encouragement for November – Becoming an Ethical Consumer. You could use the Ethical Consumer website to inform and inspire you to spend, save and live in a more ethical way, as a part of caring for God's wonderful Creation: https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/. This gives advice about ethical clothing, bank accounts, toilet paper, deodorant, shampoo, cars and electric cars, books and other items that many of us consume. You can get a free digital copy of the Ethical Consumer magazine there (a paper version of this magazine is also available).

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