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CONTACTS





ST THOMAS CHURCH

Comments and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors, the PCC or the clergy of St Thomas.



UPCOMING EDITIONS

Please could any articles for the NovemberDecember edition be sent to: Cassie Wainwright via email to ploughsharesttoms@outloo k.com before Friday 18th October

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CHURCH PHOTO PROVIDED BY TONY
WITHAM

Congratulations Josie! Sophie Heaton

On June 29th we headed to Derby to celebrate and witnessed Josie, Our Curate, Being ordained as a priest.



It was brilliant to be part of such an important day and to experience such an occasion in the Cathedral.

Josie was being ordained with a group of other ordinands. Men, women, younger and older; it was a great vision of the diversity in ministry rising within the Church of England.

It was also great to see Josie's lovely family, both hers and her husband Jack's. You could see that they had really walked this journey with her and were so very proud to see her reach this place.

Many members of our congregation gathered and it took us some time to spot everyone in a busy cathedral. It was great to see so many people there to support Josie. We also got to see Josie and Gary in all their formal robes!

We had a brilliant BBQ to celebrate on the Sunday and we're joined by many more members of our church family, and also Josie's family. Despite the British classic BBQ weather being at play, we had a great time.

Ordination is a big occasion, but it is also a moment on a very long journey of calling. A moment of confirmation and recognition that that in some ways that journey has come to fulfilment. At the same time, it's a reminder that there is no such thing as fulfilment. Instead, it is another chapter opening and starting in Josie's life and ministry. As our Curate, it's our role to encourage and support Josie as she

spends her years with us growing and developing. It's also our opportunity to learn from her, to be inspired by her personality and ways of leading, her spoken word, and her ideas for our discipleship and mission. It's also our opportunity to keep welcoming Josie and Jack into our church family and to continue getting to know them. Josie is also finishing her dissertation this month so pray for her as she brings that to completion too!

Josie, congratulations from St Thomas on such a significant moment in your walk of being called to ministry. We are so looking forward to seeing all that God does through you in the coming years.



(Photo taken from Facebook)

New Wine 2024 Diane and Mick Boothby

We went to New Wine this year wondering what it would be like. There were 21 adults and an abundance of children from St T's, mainly in tents, although some of us had the luxury of a caravan!



We really enjoyed being part of a big family together, getting to know each other on a deeper level, sharing meals, chatting together in the evenings and getting to know the children better. We enjoyed a fantastic heatwave so relaxing was the order of the day, plus a water fight with children and adults having a really good laugh.

It was good too to be part of the wider family of God, 12 thousand of them of all ages mixing together on the massive site at Shepton Mallet. It was also good to share in praise and worship alongside others from many different churches and backgrounds, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

There was a wide choice of speakers on various subjects in the many seminars on offer plus good bible teaching in the main big top

meetings. Much food for thought.

There was a wide variety of stalls representing Christian voluntary organisations plus a big fun fair to keep the children happy when not going to their various kids times (some adults love this

too !!)

All in all an enjoyable 5 days. We will be going again next year so if this has got your interest come and join us!

(Photos provided by Mick Boothby)

Gates Art Group Betty Frost

The Gates Art group

The Gates Art group 4th exhibition took place on the 6th and 7th July at St Augustines' Church.



The atmosphere was relaxed and gave an opportunity for visitors to reconnect with old acquaintances or make new ones around refreshments. Most people commented on the wide range of media and styles on display and were moved to see how they all worked together to become an even more beautiful whole.

Indeed, we had been praying that each person's uniqueness would be reflected and shine through, regardless of their technical skill, and that was very obvious all around. The

of their technical skill, and that was very obvious all around. The exhibition was once again a testament to God's glory, and spoke more widely of His special craftsmanship of each and everyone of us, and how we all have our own stone to bring to the edifice.

The colours brought beauty, life and hope at a time when it is really needed and there was a deep spiritual message through many of the artworks. The people who attended felt truly blessed, and the group members felt valued, and encouraged by their reactions and by the comments left in

the visitors' book.



Praise the Lord for all the healing He is orchestrating throughout it all, (including through our regular weekly sessions and the informal meetings between group members in between) and please keep praying for us.



(Photos Provided by Betty Frost)

A Prayer for Strength and Faith

Dear Lord,

I pray for strengthened faith. Help me know more of your word and face all adversities with the confidence of victory. Let me move mountains with my faith and command things to fall line with my life.

Let me conquer all the evil in my life. Let my words cause healing and life. Let my faith build all the broken pieces of my life.

Help me to remain strong and not be moved by any adversities in Jesus' name.

By The Graceful Chapter

Tearfund

The following article has been taken from the Tearfund magazine, Tear Times.



Q&A with Jeff Woodke from Tearfund partner, Jemed, who was held hostage in West Africa for more than six years.

Interview by Peter Shaw, Tear Times Editor

Jeff Woodke, a US humanitarian worker, was taken captive by terrorists in October 2016 and released in March 2023. Jeff is the former head of Jemed (Youth with a Mission Mutual Aid and Development), a Tearfund partner based in Abalak, northern Niger. At the time of his abduction, Jeff was no longer head of Jemed but had returned to monitor the organisation's work.

Jeff was abducted by gunmen who shot and killed his guards and was taken to northern Mali. Over more than six years of captivity, he was beaten, locked in chains for hours a day and endured self-imposed hunger strikes. The US government negotiated his release. His wife, Els, campaigned tirelessly for his release, for many years not knowing whether he was alive.

At Jemed, Jeff pioneered 'sustainable nomadism', a process that enables nomadic pastoralists (livestock farmers), their families and animals, to withstand drought while retaining their traditional way of life.

'Forgiveness is something I practised while I was a hostage' We are very grateful for Jeff agreeing to talk so candidly about his time in captivity, his faith and life back home.

'I couldn't let go of my faith 100 per cent - I just couldn't'

How are you Jeff, how are you doing in yourself?

I'm working on getting better. There's physical issues, there's emotional, there's psychological, there's spiritual issues. Everything has its own pace, rhythm and time.

How have you changed as a result of your experiences?

There are changes in every dimension of my life. The person I was when I was taken into captivity was not the person that came out. I kept my faith. Actually, my faith kept me. That's probably the best way to say it. The big challenge we've been facing, my family and I, is how to get healed from post-traumatic stress disorder, from all the physical things that I have from my captivity. And how to redefine being human, my situation and what it means. So that's the road we're on.

Did your experiences change the way you think about Niger and the people you were there to serve?

Yes and no. I was held, for most of the time, by the Tuareg people in the mountains. It was very difficult for me to be treated the way I was treated by them and by the Fulani people. These are people for whom, for 30 years in Niger, I had poured out my life. It's been very difficult for me to come to grips with the people that took me. But forgiveness is something I practised while I was a hostage. At every opportunity I got, I would forgive my jailers. Because I knew that if I didn't do that, I would break completely. I was already broken by the end. Forgiveness is just something you have to do day by day.

How did you manage to get through each day? Did your faith help?

I would pray and fast for two or three days. My captors would get angry at me if I fasted because I would get sick. But I felt prayer and fasting was the way out. When I could walk, I would walk about three miles a day. I would worship and pray, and then I would go back to whatever

little shade that I had and I would pray. I had a routine.
But, after a year, two years, three years of fasting and praying... man.
It's like prayer isn't working for me. My body started to deteriorate. My leg was already bad. I just couldn't walk. Hope went real soon.
Hope that I was ever going to go home was completely gone by my fifth year. As my hope went out the window, my faith began to drop and my time in prayer ended.

'You have to forgive, you have to love, you have to accept'
In the end, I just couldn't do much anymore. I was hunger-striking. I had terrible malaria that just about killed me. I was physically and emotionally exhausted. I didn't even want to come home. I just wanted it to be over. But, I couldn't let go of my faith 100 per cent — I just couldn't. I would try and then it would just come back to me: 'Got to pray.' I would pray for my family out of love, and I would continue to try not to be angry at God out of love. And, that was it. That was it.

How has your faith been since you came back?

When I recovered, I quickly found out that there were people all over the world who had been praying for me. I found stacks of letters and cards and things. There are children who have been praying for me since they could speak. People all over the world prayed for me. In my own prayers, I prayed for a lot of specific things. When I came out, I saw my prayers had been answered. I had no way of knowing. But, I saw that these prayers had worked. Things just fell together through prayer.

People's prayers are one of the things that saved my life. And, that's my message to everyone who prayed for me or even sent thoughts. Your thoughts and your prayers. They work. Through prayer, God literally raised someone from the dead. Because I was done. I was a walking cadaver. That's all I was. But, I'm home now. Thank God.

What are your feelings towards the people who took you captive now?

I want to walk free, so I can't hate. And if I feel that anger, I have to learn to let it go through me and out of me. And not to be carried away by it. You have to forgive, you have to love, you have to accept. It's up to people to make their peace with God. You're going to catch a whole lot more flies with honey than with vinegar. That's it.





A Halloween alternative

COME AS A FAMILY TO JOIN US FOR OUR PUMPKIN TRAIL, CRAFTS, ACTIVITIES, AND A WARM DRINK.

31 October • 5:30pm - 7pm St Thomas Church • Chatsworth Road • S40 3AW

THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS AND THE DARKNESS HAS NOT OVERCOME IT. JOHN 1:5





Women's Day

Saturday 21st September 10am-4pm

"Finding relaxation in a non stop world."

With guest speaker Ems Hancock.

Ticket including lunch: £15
Ticket without lunch (bring your own): £10



To find out more about Ems scan this QR code



To book your ticket scan this QR code

Golden Folks Nichola Edmunds

The Golden folks celebrated another year of events and fellowship together with a train ride on the Ecclesbourne Railway and afternoon tea at Carsington Water.



The event was blessed with a fine summer's day and was much enjoyed by all those who went.



The group, which meets twice a month, have been informed and entertained by a variety of speakers, including Ann Ryan from Hedgehog protection. Mike Newbold entertained with stories from his life as a film extra, and Sophie Heald highlighted the changing times in midwifery with Dorothy, our retired

midwife. We gained a fascinating insight into the world of influencing American politics and opinion from Catherine Alonzo.

We continue to enjoy delicious lunches and cake provided by Jason

and the team in the centre.

As well as sharpening our competitive edge with a beetle drive and curling!

The new season begins on Tuesday September 3rd 2024, with more guest speakers planned as well as crafts and time to party.



(Photos provided by Nichola Edmunds)

Thoms Blokes Newsletter-Issue No 34 August 2024 Bryn Garland

Thom's Blokes meets monthly, usually on the third Tuesday of the month at St Thomas' Church Centre for talks, outings, fun and friendship.

Long, Long, Time Ago Part Two



In June we visited Creswell Craggs. We set off from St Thomas' at 9:30am and arrived at the Crags visitor centre after a scenic tour of the surrounding area guided by Mick Sheldon. We met the others and had a coffee in the café. We then joined Sarah, our guide, who took us around the gorge explaining and showing the many different aspects of the caves and the area.

We started with learning about the minerology of the rock cliffs which are Magnesian Limestone, also called Dolomite. The rich sediment from the rocks led to a vibrant stream full of plants and insects which attracted larger animals to this verdant area. Man came then of course



hunting the animals, living in the caves beside the gorge.

There was not only man who used the caves, animals did, and we can credit the scavenging hyenas for many of the animal bones found in

the caves. These were later identified as lion, woolly rhinoceros, hippopotamus, bison, brown bears, wolves and reindeer. Animals not associated with the United Kingdom nowadays. A full skeleton of a baby hyena was found and is on display in the museum. The variety of animal bones showed the many climatic changes the world has experienced.

Fast forward to the 1870s and the caves began to be dug and explored by Victorian antiquarians and geologists. These included our very own Rev John Magens Mello, Rector of St Thomas', who presumably had more spare time than our present Rector, as even travelling to Creswell was more than a 40-minute drive in the premotor car age. However, the techniques they used would horrify modern archaeologists, including the use of dynamite to blast through the cave floors and thus destroy many finds. Discoveries have been made since that time and many finds have been dispersed through various museums around the U.K. including the National History Museum. Also, you will find material discovered at Creswell in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C. During the 1980s the site was designated a Site of Special interest by English Nature. This was the impetus which led to a visitor centre and museum on the site where finds could be displayed and explained rather than sending to other museums. The interest of David Bellamy and David Attenborough gave much needed publicity to the work on the site.

The work and new finds carry on to this day and in 2003 Britain's first Ice Age rock art and later in 2018 the largest assemblage of ritual protective marks found in a British Cave. We enjoyed our tour and the café afterwards where we stopped for lunch before going around the museum. I would recommend a trip to the Crags but would suggest a guided tour (which include for those more active going into the actual caves) as the guides like Sarah are most knowledgeable on the history, nature and archaeology of the site. Best to ring or google beforehand to book as tour places soon become full and the variety of tours mean certain tours do not run every day.

Journey to the Centre of the Earth

In July we heard our favourite geologist, Peter Webb, speak about volcanoes. Peter completed his postgraduate studies studying volcanoes in Kenya. After that he taught geology in Nigeria for a few years before a career in the oil and gas industry with B.P. Now in retirement, he talks on a range of subjects with knowledge and enthusiasm including his favourite, volcanoes. We enjoyed the talk and learnt much about moving tectonic plates and the different types and shapes of eruptions and volcanoes We ended the talk with some questions about Old Faithful (No not Robin) that other geyser, the one in Yellowstone Park.

We also heard at the meeting from Tony Witham on a visit to Iona last year. Tony told us about the geography, history and geology of the island. This of course included the story of St Columba, the building of the monastery and the spread of Christianity from this small island to many parts of the U.K. Hence the reason for so many visitors each year. Tony also showed photos of puffins and Fingal's cave on the island of Staffa which he had entered by a precarious rope bridge.

These are boots are made for walking

Perhaps this is what John Croot thought when he came up with the idea of Walking Football. John is involved with the Community Trust at Chesterfield Football Club. He had applied for a small grant from the football authorities to keep older people active and socially engaged. His idea has become a worldwide sport with hundreds of thousands of players and now administered by U.E.F.A. Also, other sports have taken up the idea such as basketball, netball, cricket and rugby, again worldwide both for men and women.

Chesterfield Civic Society recognised this wonderful local achievement and organised the unveiling of a blue plaque at the football club. John Croot of course did the unveiling and many tributes from around the world were read out thanking John The unveiling was well attended



with the original players from the club and representatives of other clubs and the league (including an ex-cabinet minister) who all spoke of the impact of the sport in their lives. The plaque also commemorates, not only the founding of the sport in 2010 but the European and World Competitions held at the club in 2019 and 2024,

Picture John Croot unveiling the plaque recognising the birthplace of Walking Football

Future Meetings

As we go to press, in September on the 17th, again at 1pm David Skillen returns to talk about "The Bentley Boys -the Playboy Racers", David has kept us entertained over the last few years on a range of interesting subjects.

In October on the 15^{th,} we will visit the Materials Recovery Centre, in Mansfield where we learn about what happens to our recycling. The numbers unfortunately are restricted to 15 so a list will be circulated at the September meeting for those interested.

In November on the 19^{th,} we are back in the centre at 1pm to hear about the work of the Air Ambulance.

Joke of the Month

This one is attributed to the late, great Barry Cryer who I saw many years ago appearing at the Cromer Pier theatre on a windy night with a gale blowing through the wooden panelling. His act consisted of telling a joke starting with every word of the alphabet. A memorable night.

"I've been trying to think of the right word for two weeks. And then it hit me. It's fortnight.

Have you a better joke, do not keep it to yourself but e mail me at bryn.garland@btinternet.com

If you want to know anything about Thom's Blokes or anything else get in touch with Tony 07983 663398 e mail tonywitham6@gmail.com or Robin 01246 550445 jrdawson07@btinternet.com

(Photos provided by Bryn Garland)



Sustainable Holy Spirit? A Reflection on the creating on Pentecost Rachel Wright

I had hoped it would stay up longer but there was some concern about the fishing wire used, we didn't want it to ping and collapse, covering the congregation in meters of painted netting. As I



was taking it down, I couldn't help but smile to myself: we had wondered whether the materials could withstand the stresses put on them by the weight of the installation that represented the Holy Spirit, but are we as a church, or as individuals, able to maintain the actual Holy Spirit for more than a few weeks?

The Holy Spirit is possibly one of the lesser explored parts of the trinity...He is often tagged on at the end of things. We can sometimes forget He is a he and refer to him as 'it'. As a church (body of people not building) are we open to the holy spirit's presence for more than 2 weeks?



His presence can be uncomfortable, he can provoke us into action in ways we wouldn't normally move. He can call out a behaviour in ourselves or worse want us to gently call out a behaviour in others. He can give you a prophetic voice which isn't as simple as seeing what will happen in the future but can often mean calling people back to God which can feel like a thankless task. He can ask you to sacrificially love your neighbour (both literal and figurative). He could prompt you to exercise a gift you have been squashing, one that you find

difficult to exercise or don't want to exercise. He can also heal those who hurt in so may ways. He can restore those who have been broken. He can protect, surround, guide and counsel. He can empower and equip, he can change lives in a drastic way, breaking chains that bind people and releasing people from bondage that is tangling and trapping them. This is not an exhaustive list...it is just the beginning!!

I always start with good intentions after Pentecost of inviting the Holy Spirit into my daily life and asking him to lead and guide me, I want to be available to his interruptions and distractions. But a few weeks in and life is hard and I don't give



the Holy Spirit that 5 minutes in the morning to re-focus me...I actually shy away from him, I notice that pang in my stomach of him nudging me to do something or say something but it's just a bit awkward so I don't. Or I'm running late so I think I can't, or any other excuse to not have to engage in what the Holy Spirit is asking of me because my life is so full and busy and hectic that I couldn't possibly have wiggle room for the Holy Spirit to work.

Maybe this year we could go further...if you're a reader why not explore 'Forgotten God', a book by Frances Chan, which explores the believer's call to live life in the power of the Holy Spirit, in obedience to Christ to the glory of the Father. If you're a listener to music you could listen to David Crowders 'I know a ghost', a modern eclectic album exploring contemporary music styles whilst also being theologically sound and profoundly worshipful. Or 'Here again' by elevation if you prefer more singer/songwriter music. If you enjoy listening to podcasts

there is a 4 part series on The holy spirit as a theme through the bible by The Bible Project. Check it out here:

https://bibleproject.com/podcast/series/holy-spirit-series/.

Or you can type 'bible project holy spirit podcast' into Google and it

will be the first search result.



If you just long to experience the Holy Spirit why not ask him in? You could get together with two or three others and do it together, intentionally explore what it might look like to invite the Holy Spirit in on a regular basis. If you're stuck for people to ask any of the staff team would love the opportunity to pray with you! Go on...give it a go.

Remember to share what happens with someone...let's see if St

Thomas' can be a church that maintains a steady relationship with the holy spirit all year round not just at Pentecost!



(Photos provided by Rachel Wright)

Ten Questions With... Nathan Rourke

Who are you and what is your role? What do you do as part of your role?

Hi, I'm Nathan and I have been coming to St
Thomas' since 2012. I serve on the PA desk and welcome team. I also help with children's church team.

Are you a morning person or a night owl?

100% a morning person. 7am is a lie in for me!

What is your favourite worship song and why?

The answer changes almost daily for me but today I'll say 'All Hail Jesus' as it's a worship song that has stuck with me since I first heard it at New Wine this Summer.

What keeps you motivated in your role?

It really helps that I enjoy all of the things that I do at St Thomas', but it is also great interacting with people and building great friendships too.

If you could learn a new skill what would it be?

I'm currently learning to speak Dutch but in addition to that I would love to play the piano.

What are you most thankful for?

I'm thankful for my family and friends, especially after spending a week down south seeing Uni friends and my extended family too.

How would you spend your ideal day?

I would be out for a round of golf, at the course by 6am, like I said, I am definably a morning person. Then, in the afternoon, I would be watching a Wigan Athletic football match and end the day with a family meal out.

Do you like your cereal crunchy or mushy?

Neither! The only sort of cereal I like is porridge.

What song is guaranteed to always get your feet tapping?

(Your love keeps lifting me) Higher and Higher by Jackie Wilson. Wigan is the home of Northen Soul so I hear this whenever I got to watch a home game and can't help tapping and singing along to this song every half-time!

If you could live in a book, film or tv series what would it be?

Definitely Ted Lasso. I hope you are starting to sense a football theme appearing.

What is your favourite meal?

A proper loaded burger with onion rings and chips. Finished with a sticky toffee pudding and loads of toffee sauce.

Hope House Bulletin Hope House Trustees and staff

Hi everyone, I hope you've driven past the house recently and seen the difference the new rendering has made! It's a



clear sign of restoration which goes much further than the walls. A sign of new life and hope that the Hope House project is bringing to so many.

Summer has encouraged outdoor activities in the form of planting vegetables and general gardening, BBQs and walking in the Lake District. Some have been fishing, one resident goes for a run each day, and a couple go for a walk each morning along the canal. Some residents attended the Christian Vision for Men Festival near Reading in July as volunteers. We are very grateful to the staff who organise these activities and support the men as they take part.

One of our residents has recently been successful in obtaining a place at Mattersey Hall College, he'll be training to become a support worker. An ex-resident moved there a couple of months ago and is really enjoying himself, studying and also volunteering out in the community.

Another of our residents has recently completed Race for Life in the memory of his best friend, he ran it in a good time and folks went along to cheer him on.

Currently the residents are looking for volunteer places and have been successful in obtaining placements so far with Gussies Kitchen, Derbyshire Law Centre and Ashgate Hospice.

Supporters continue to be generous which has helped us maintain the building and keep on top of expected wear and tear. We are currently

however looking for a leatherette sofa to replace one we had second hand when we opened. It needs to be a dark colour and have the fire label still attached. If you can help, please let us know.

As a trustee group we are looking to broaden our skill set by inviting some more trustees onto the board. If you are interested in being part of the team, please contact us for a chat – email - contact@ho-pehousecfd.org

If you are a praying person, please continue to pray for:

- our residents as they move on it's a big adjustment!
- our new residents it too is a big adjustment
- our staff team as holidays are taken that they get the rest they need and the house continues to operate smoothly as shifts are covered.
- continued financial support to keep the project going.

Date for your diary - we are next praying for the house on Zoom on Monday 21 October at 7pm if you can make it.

Thanks for all your continued support and good wishes - the challenges are real and some days are easier than others, but the results are keeping us going and we appreciate knowing that you are with us.

Please note that our general email address has now changed to contact@hopehousecfd.org



St Thomas Christmas Meal

Join us for a delicious Christmas dinner, with all the trimmings!



Dates

Tuesday 3rd December Thursday 5th December Friday 20th December



One course: £15 Two courses: £25 Three Courses: £30



Booking

To book, please call 01246 279916 or pop into the coffee shop. Spaces are limited, so we urge you to book early to avoid disappointment!





ADVENT MARKET ARTS - CRAFT - FOOD

10:00-15:00

Join us for an exciting Advent Market where you'll find unique gifts, a cozy atmosphere, and a festive spirit!

30TH NOVEMBER 2024

ST THOMAS CENTRE CHATSWORTH ROAD

