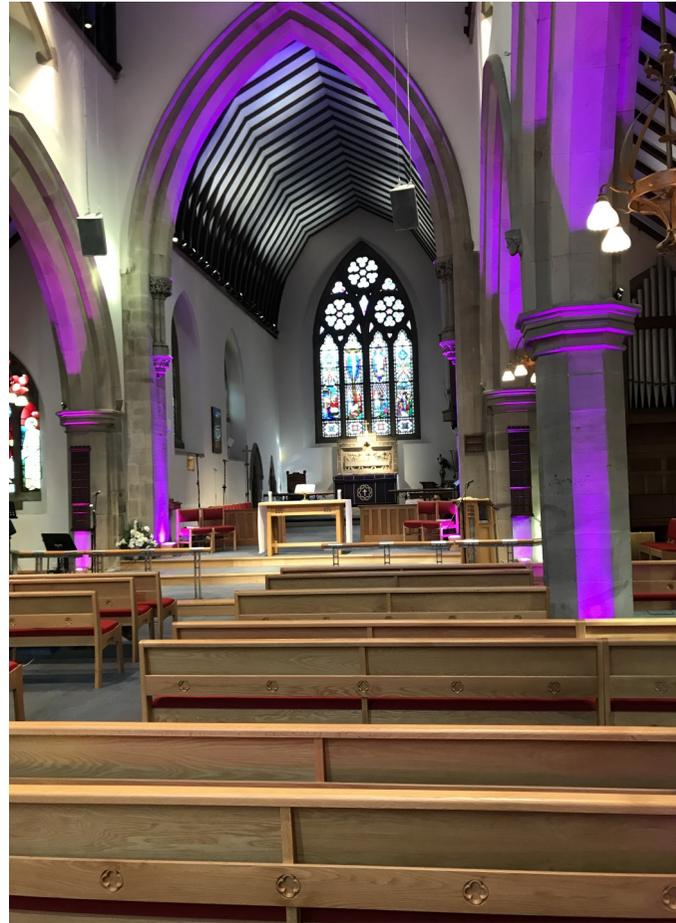




February 2021

*We can't bring you GRAPEVINE but we  
can bring you an Offshoot*

*Welcome*



*Poynton Parish Church*



This week marks the beginning of Lent – a season of preparation for the joy of Easter!

I wonder what you think of Lent? Is it a time for giving up chocolate or alcohol? Over the years I've given up a variety of things – meat, cheese, wine... one year I even gave up 'giving things up'! Whilst there is a tradition of fasting, of 'giving up', there is also an encouragement to take things up, and to grow in faith. These weeks can be a real time of seeking God, and taking time to look at our following of God's way and committing ourselves to live in the light of the good news of the resurrection.

Each Wednesday through Lent we are going to be sharing a video looking at a particular prayer, sometimes from the Bible, sometimes from the Prayer Book or Christian writer in history (There will be some paper copies too). The encouragement will be not just to learn something about the prayer, but to actually pray it! Our own prayer lives can be encouraged, broadened, deepened by learning from the ways in which others have prayed. These prayers from the past can also help us when we might not even know what to pray.

Psalm 51, David's song of seeking God's forgiveness is often said or sung on Ash Wednesday. The glorious setting by Allegri combines the pleading of confession with the soaring high Cs asking for absolution. The setting, 'Miserere', is frequently included in choral albums – I wonder how many realise it is a setting of this heartfelt prayer of confession:

Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.

May you know this Lent the good news of forgiveness offered to us in Jesus Christ, and may your prayer life be enriched by learning from others and being open to the Holy Spirit.

Yours in Christ,  
Matthew

## PLEASE PRAY FOR:

### The family and friends of those who have recently died:

6 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	Roy Percival	aged 83
13 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	Ian Hammond	aged 78
19 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	Leslie Clitheroe	aged 71
27 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	Audrey Hartley	aged 88
29 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	Edna Knowles	aged 98
2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2021	Gwyneth Snape	aged 92
10 <sup>th</sup> February 2021	Doris Mottershead	aged 97



## David Adam

Having been introduced by friends with a special love of Celtic spirituality to the writings of David Adam a good many years ago I was sorry to discover that he died in January 2020 aged 84.

Several of his prayers have appeared in Grapevine and indeed one last month in Offshoot so it seems a good time to find out more about him.

David Adam was born in Alnwick in 1936 and left school at the age of 15. For three years he worked down the coal mines before beginning his theological training at Kelham Theological College. He served first, and eventually for twenty years, as Vicar of Danby-Castleton-Commondell where he began writing his prayers and reflections. Eventually he became Vicar of Lindisfarne where he lived and worked and wrote for thirteen years. He worked with thousands of pilgrims who visited across the sands at low tide, many staying for longer than one tide turn.

He was made a Canon of York Minster in 1989 and died on 24th January 2020, leaving his wife Denise and two daughters, and many who valued his writing.

His titles included Times and Seasons, The Edge of Glory, Power Lines and The Open Gate to name but a few.

SW



I would like to thank everyone for the many cards, flowers, messages and support received following the death of my younger sister Rosaleen, to Covid recently. It has been such a comfort and a blessing to know that so many of our Church friends at St George's have been praying for my family during this time of mourning. We know that she is in God's presence now and at peace which is a great comfort. Please continue to pray for her family, Stephen, Roger and Jenny and their children.

Thank you so much.

*Alice Lees*

## Mighty God

Mighty God,  
Holy and strong One,  
Give us strength  
To do what you would have us do.  
Deliver us from lack of purpose,  
Free us from confusion of mind,  
Save us from loss of integrity,  
Maintain in us vision and ideals  
Sustain our openness and generosity.  
Help us to continue to work for you,  
that we may serve you all our days ,  
Mighty God,  
Holy and strong One.

*David Adam*



## Poynton Town Council supporting Middlewood Partnership

Poynton Town Council are proud to be supporting Middlewood Partnership with the roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccination clinics at the Civic Hall by co-ordinating volunteers to manage patient parking at the Civic Centre Car Park and ensuring patient experience into the clinic is as smooth as possible.



## Our Vaccination Experience by Jenny Cooke

**16<sup>th</sup> January 2021:** first my husband and then myself a week later were texted to go for our first Covid-19 Pfizer jabs in the Civic Hall here. Each time it was cold and snowy. Right from the start I was struck by the efficiency, kindness and cheerfulness of the staff and volunteers. I had to steer Francis on his way round the room as his eyesight is limited but everyone was so helpful and he found it a really positive experience. Neither of us was stressed by it. Afterwards we both got sore arms but this wore off in a couple of days and we were fine. We're so thankful for the vaccines and to the Middlewood GP Partnership for organising it so well.

## Families Together

Throughout the past year while there have been varying degrees of restrictions, we have been keen for our boys (aged 6 and 4) to still remain engaged with our church family and continuing to come to know more about God. We have really appreciated, and the boys have got a lot from, the different activities there have been for families, from singing together on zoom, meeting outside for a kids service, and more recently the Families Together zoom. Here the young people enjoyed singing together to worship God, hearing about God's love for them, praying together and even contributing to writing a psalm together. We know they would have been encouraged hearing from the Bible and seeing and joining in with part of our church family. We are all looking forward to when we can meet together in person but for now, we hope that the online input will continue to build the faith of our young people.

*Louise Coleman*

## 15<sup>th</sup> February: Thomas Bray, founder of SPCK

Thomas Bray was once called a 'Great Small Man', with good reason. This diminutive 18<sup>th</sup> century English clergyman (1658 – 1730) not only helped to establish the Church of England in Maryland, but he was also founder of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1698 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (USPG) in 1701.



Those are long names for societies whose aim was to get Christian books and resources into the hands of those who desperately needed them. For the early 18<sup>th</sup> century was not an easy time for poor clergymen: books were expensive, and many of them had few, or none to guide them in their ministry. And so, Thomas Bray, who had been educated at Oxford, joined with some other clergy friends to help them.

After a trip to assess the needs of the young Episcopal Church in Maryland (he was sent by the Bishop of London), Bray became rector of St Botolph's, Aldgate in London in 1708. From here he served his parish, and through SPCK eventually established 80 parish libraries in England and a further 39 in the Colonies. SPCK and USPG worked by asking learned authors to donate copies of their books. They also appealed to merchants to the foreign plantations for financial help in establishing the libraries.

Thomas Bray's life has affected hundreds of thousands of people over three centuries. Not only was his work in America the first major coordinated effort to establish libraries in the New World, but SPCK is still one of our leading UK Christian publishing houses today.

As if that was not enough, Bray also worked to help poor debtors emigrate to better lives, and homeless children to get care in England. He helped feed prisoners at Newgate prison in London and joined in the political fight against slavery. He also supported outreaches to Africans and Native Americans in their home countries. When he died on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1730, thousands mourned him. A great small man indeed!

## Shrove Tuesday 16th February: Who's for pancakes?

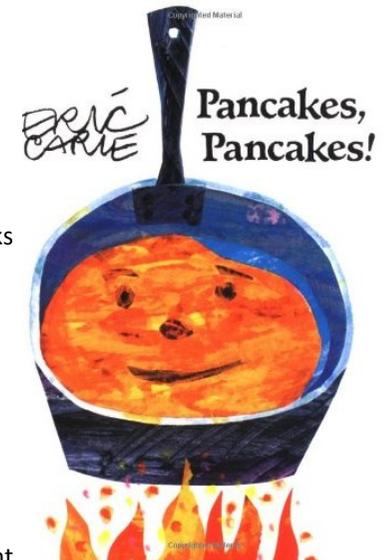
Why do we have pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, or Pancake Day, as we call it today? And what is Shrove Tuesday? And why do thousands of people feel it rewarding to race along a street somewhere tossing pancakes from their frying pans as they go?

Well, the answer to the first question is that it is the day before Lent begins and for well over a thousand years that has meant it was the last chance to enjoy meat, fat and other tasty dishes until Easter Day. The 'Lent Fast' was widely and strictly observed. The food in the larder wouldn't keep for six weeks so it had to be eaten. With all these rich foods no wonder the French call it 'Fatty Tuesday' – Mardi Gras.

So, what have pancake races got to do with all this solemnity? 'Shrove' is an old word for 'forgiven' and in those days to prepare for the rigours of Lent people would want to confess and seek forgiveness – not quite what you want at a party. The answer is quite simply enjoying yourself while you can! So, on Shrove Tuesday this year let's have some fun and make it last as long as possible.

The most convincing (and amusing) of the explanations of pancake races is of outwitting the Sexton who rang the curfew bell that marked the start of Lent. He was reluctant to do it while the race was unfinished. So, the revelry caused by dropped pancakes, postponed the inevitable.

Since the Reformation it has not been so rigorously observed in Britain, but still people will resolve to 'give up something for Lent'. Six weeks is about right as a duration and Sunday has always been exempt but I hope you made the most of those pancakes!



## LIVING WELL

In our present unusual circumstances many people are even more appreciative of the pleasure to be had in the open air, in parks and gardens and in the countryside around us.

When the situation eases one group will certainly benefit from the opportunity to spend a little more time outside.

Thanks to the generosity and kindness of the Coppice Road Allotments Association a raised bed has been made available to Living Well clients and their carers to enable them to enjoy tending plants together as soon as possible.



The bed is currently planted with pansies and wallflowers, with the promise of vegetables to come?

These gestures of support and encouragement are much appreciated.

*Colin Rookwood*



## Trees

I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed against earth's sweet flowing breast.

A tree that looks at God all day and lifts her leafy arms to pray.

A tree that may in summer wear a nest of robins in her hair.

Upon whose bosom snow has lain.

Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by folks like me.

But only God can make a tree.



*By Joyce Kilmer, an American poet - sent in by Vina Hall*





### Women's Breakfast

On Saturday 6th February 54 ladies met on zoom for another virtual breakfast. Sarah welcomed us and put us into breakout rooms, where it was lovely to catch up with one another,

whilst enjoying our breakfast or coffee.

We then heard a recorded talk from Lucy, our office manager. Lucy introduced herself sitting in the church office, explaining how much she loved her role serving the church, connecting with and supporting the community and being part of a great team. She said the last year had flown in a way, but that during this strange period she had made many friends and felt really settled in her "new" role. The next part of the talk came from Lucy's home where she told us a little about her



faith journey. She grew up in a Christian home where her parents lived out their faith in a real way, drawing in and providing for those less fortunate, and this impacted greatly on Lucy. She has a deep connection to God and seeks to live out her faith everyday , showing God's love to all those she meets. After a period of working for Christian Aid in the south the family moved up to Poynton where Lucy continued to write for charities, including Tearfund and Roots and writing educational publications and text books. She then joined the St George's team as office manager just over a year ago. The family all worship at PCF . Finally we got a snapshot of Lucy's family as we were introduced to Elliot her husband , their three children and the family dog from the sofa, which was lovely. Lucy ended by saying she is very much looking forward to meeting us all face to face when time allows it.

*Deborah Myers*



### A feast for Lent

**Lord,  
May we feast  
on the riches  
of your delight  
this Lent  
as we seek  
to leave behind  
selfish concerns and  
indulgences.**

Help us this Lent  
to fast from anger,  
and feast on patience:  
to fast from resentment  
and feast on gratitude:  
to fast from bitterness  
and feast on forgiveness:

So that we can  
celebrate with joy  
your Passover  
from death to life.



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## What did you do in Lockdown Auntie Val!!!



A play on “what did you do in the war daddy”. It was such a blessing that the weather was warm and sunny so for a part of most days I spent it in the garden. I have quite a large garden in which, in some areas, nature had run riot to say the least so I allocated an area which I wished to attack. Whilst I was doing this people on their daily walk passed and sometimes looked in not knowing I was there. One couple discussed the walled area and when I popped up they were so shocked; we had a socially distanced chat and I felt part of the outside world. I have learned such a lot about the habit of ivy and its ability to travel SO far. It’s a bit like communication - a lot is underground with signs of shoots popping up sometimes in the right place and sometimes not!

The wild roses in the woodland area have been a success and at the end of the season the hips gave another cheerful show. There’s a little rose called Canary Bird which brightens up a spot behind the winter flowering Mahonia but it suddenly died, or so I thought, but it began to put out some growth. The wonder of nature not giving up is really encouraging. I have been known to chop at a tree and been told I had killed it only to find it came back stronger to shame me.

The hedge had become intertwined with old tree stumps and the inevitable ivy. I chopped it down and to my absolute horror out came a nest with two young birds looking at me. I carefully placed it back and after a couple of days they fledged. The relief was intense. I thought all the young had gone but the sparrow has more than one family a year I now know.



Every summer this agapanthus comes out and I count the flowers - it’s a bit like good wine years and not so good years. I pass it every day and last year it had 49 blooms. I wonder what this year will bring. The joy is knowing that it lights up the pathway into the house.

As I garden the in-house robin stays near to see if I dig up anything tasty. His tweets are very companionable.

In this second lockdown which has been harder, I noticed that some winter aconites I had put in (but forgotten where!) appeared and now spring is just around the corner. The daffodils and snowdrops are up and outside the front door the display of hellebores, pink, deep rose, white with burgundy centres are thriving. It’s my ambition to buy a yellow one. After cutting the old leaves away they stand upright and ready to dazzle.



My garden survives in spite of me not because of me but I take all the plaudits it hands out. I realise how fortunate I am to have a garden to walk around, to see its blemishes, to say I will move you soon but overall to thank God for His creation which every year keeps giving and sustaining.

*Val Vibrans*

