

St Margaret's Church

Holyrood: Prestwich



PARISH MAGAZINE

Magazine No. 776: December 2025

60p

THE PARISH OF ST MARGARET, HOLYROOD, PRESTWICH

CLERGY AND CHURCH OFFICERS

Incumbent	Rev Canon Steve Williams	RevSteve@stmargaretsprestwich.com	
Focal Leader (St Margaret's)	Rev Sue Walker		07761 565428
Focal Leader (St George's)	Rev Christine Hardy		07557 883501
Curate	Rev Helen Tyler		07899 800649
Churchwardens	Vacant		
Deputy Churchwarden	Vacant		
Authorised Lay Ministers	Mrs Carol Olive (Prayer and Spirituality)		798 9635
	Mr Andrew Ginn (Pastoral Care)	SafeAdults@stmargaretsprestwich.com	
	Dr Carol Porter (Digital Church)	Technology@stmargaretsprestwich.com	
P.C.C. Secretary	Mrs Joan Evans	Secretary@stmargaretsprestwich.com	
P.C.C. Treasurer	Mrs Janet Dalton	Treasurer@stmargaretsprestwich.com	
Electoral Roll Secretary	Mrs Zandra Lewis		
Child Protection Officer	Mrs JP Jackson	SafeChildren@stmargaretsprestwich.com	
Stewardship Secretary	Mrs G McConville	GiftAid@stmargaretsprestwich.com	

SERVICES AT ST MARGARET'S

SUNDAY	8.00am Holy Communion 9.45am Sung Eucharist followed by refreshments Evening Service - As announced
WEDNESDAY	10.00am Holy Communion followed by refreshments
HOLY DAYS	Holy Communion - As Announced

See the magazine calendar for the full list of services for the month
(Home communions by arrangement with clergy)

SUNDAY CLUB

Our children's Sunday Club meets in term-time in church for a service of all-age worship at 9:45am on the first Sunday of the month, and in the church house from 9:45am to 11.00am on the third Sunday of the month. All children aged 3 and over are welcome. Co-ordinator Mrs. G.M. McConville <https://stmargaretsprestwich.com/sunday-school/> or SundayClub@stmargaretsprestwich.com

BAPTISMS & MARRIAGES

Enquiries regarding arranging Baptisms, Banns of Marriage, Marriages and Funerals by email please to stmargaretsprestwich@gmail.com

PARISH MAGAZINE

Advertisements (fees & invoicing)	Mrs V Swallow	798 6561
Articles	Dr Carol Porter	Magazine@StMargaretsPrestwich.com

Dear friends,

The Bethlehem Carol Sheet is having its 70th anniversary this year. Not only is it an affordable way to have in one convenient place nearly all the carols we might want to sing, but its profits support projects helping the poorest people in the Middle East. You won't find *Jingle Bells* in it, though – all the songs are suitable for singing in church.

So here is a trivia question for you: which carol doesn't mention Jesus, God or Christmas? It's one that was recorded by Bing Crosby, the Beatles and R.E.M., to name but a few. The answer is *Good King Wenceslas*. The words were written by the prolific Victorian hymn writer J. M. Neale, set to the tune of a 13th-century carol that celebrates not winter but spring.

Wenceslaus (or Wenceslas, as the carol calls him) was a Duke of Bohemia in the tenth century. He was a Christian in an era when many Bohemians were pagans, and he was born into a family marked by infighting and even murder. He became known as a wise and caring ruler with a concern for the poor, and very soon after his death he was declared to be not only a king but also a saint. Today he is the patron saint of the Czech Republic, and his statue stands in its capital city, Prague.

The carol is based on a legend. It depicts Wenceslas looking out of his window on St Stephen's Day and noticing a poor man gathering wood for his fire. He and a page set out together to take the man food, drink and firewood, even though he lives an hour's walk away, through snow and bitter wind. The page – still only a boy – struggles to keep going, so Wenceslas tells him to tread in his footsteps. There the boy finds a mysterious warmth, enabling him to continue.

St Stephen's Day, December 26th, or Boxing Day, has long been a traditional day for giving to those in need, possibly linked to the church alms boxes that were opened and distributed on that day.

In my view, the carol has a very proper place in Christian worship. It reminds us that we should remember the poor at Christmas, not only our own families, and it speaks of the strength we can find in following in the footsteps of the saints. It also reminds us that generosity is sometimes costly. Wenceslas was a saint not because of the gifts he could easily afford, but because he took them himself instead of sending a servant. The boy was there not just to guide his master, but to experience a blessing he would never forget.

As you sing from the Bethlehem Carol Sheet this year, spare a thought for the Christians in Egypt, Iraq, Israel and Palestine, Lebanon and Syria – minority communities often overlooked and sometimes persecuted. Pray that they will have peace and joy this Christmas.

Have a blessed Advent and a joyful Christmas, Rev Sue

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

BAPTISMS

We welcome into our church family:

Hallie Grace Salt who was baptised on 2nd November 2025 at St Margaret's church. Her parents are Leah Hulme and Alex Salt.

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 2025

Tuesday 2 nd December	2.00 pm Rhyme Time
Wednesday 3 rd December	10.00 am Holy Communion at St. Margaret's followed by coffee 5.30 pm Maggie's Music Makers
Saturday 6 th December	3.30 pm Young at Heart party
Sunday 7 th December	Second Sunday of Advent and Christingle 8.00 am Holy Communion at St Margaret's 9.45 am All Age Holy Communion at St Margaret's 11.15 am Holy Communion at St George's
Tuesday 9 th December	2.00 pm Rhyme Time
Wednesday 10 th December	10.00 am Holy Communion at St. Margaret's followed by coffee 4.00 pm Messy Church 5.30 pm Maggie's Music Makers
Sunday 14 th December	Third Sunday of Advent 8.00 am Holy Communion at St. Margaret's 9.45 am Holy Communion at St. Margaret's with Laying on of Hands in the Baptistry area during Communion 11.15 am Holy Communion at St. George's 6.00 pm Carol Service at St Margaret's 7.00 pm Copy deadline for Magazine
Tuesday 16 th December	2.00 pm Rhyme Time

Wednesday 17th December 10.00 am Holy Communion at St. Margaret's followed by coffee
5.30 pm Maggie's Music Makers

Sunday 21st December **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

8.00 am Holy Communion at St. Margaret's
9.15 am Silent prayer at St Margaret's
9.45 am Holy Communion at St. Margaret's with Sunday Club
11.15 am Holy Communion at St. George's with Carol Service

Wednesday 24th December 10.00 am Holy Communion at St. Margaret's followed by coffee
4.00 pm Crib Service at St Margaret's
11.00 pm Community carol singing at St Margaret's
11.30 pm Midnight Mass at St Margaret's

Thursday 25th December **Christmas Day**

10.00 am Holy Communion at St. George's

Sunday 28th December **Holy Innocents**

8.00 am Holy Communion at St. Margaret's
9.45 am Holy Communion at St. Margaret's
11.15 am Holy Communion at St. George's

Wednesday 31st December 10.00 am Holy Communion at St. Margaret's followed by coffee

Livestreamed services (9.45am Sundays and 10.00am Wednesdays) are only available via our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/StMaggieP>
Please do check our Facebook page, Instagram, Bluesky feed and website for up-to-date information.

NB GOODS FOR PORCH BOXES CAN BE DROPPED OFF ON THURSDAY MORNINGS, 9.30-11.00AM

St George's Church, Simister

This month, as well as sending our prayers to Joan Knott, we pray for a volunteer to provide a short report from St George's Church and the Lady Wilton Hall each month, a bit like this one.



The boiler has been repaired once again so fingers crossed it lasts us through the winter, until the new boiler is installed.

Teapot Time: Monday 1st and 15th December, Lady Wilton Hall

Messy Church: Wednesday 10th December, Lady Wilton Hall, 4:00pm

Lady Wilton Hall: sincere thanks to everybody who helped with the cleaning and painting of the hall. It is looking good!

Christmas Fair: Thank you to everybody for their help at the Christmas fair and especially to Margaret and the group, for the organising and the help, the decorating and the Christmas tree.

Prayer list: please remember in your prayers all who are sick. If you know of anybody who should be in our prayer list, please notify Rev Christine:

Tom Porter, Joyce Roebuck, Rita Evans, Bob Hardy, John Porter, Harriet Knott, Joan Knott, Barbara Taylor, Geoff Knaggs, Barbara Peeling, Achmed, Mike Crompton, Addie Herzog, all our church Families, our own relations and friends.

Anniversaries of loved ones for December: Paul Smith, John Crompton. Mary Warburton, Joyce Maxwell, Fredrick Pitt, Margaret Symes, Carol Fahey, Jean Ward, Bill Hodgkinson, Fred Heywood, Gladys Hefti, Cecil Cole, Doreen Heywood, and Hilda Heywood

Altar Flowers:

	Name	In memory of
7 December	ADVENT	No altar flowers
14 December	Mrs M Woodcock	Gemma Greenwood (Memorial book only)
21 December	Mrs Stewardson & Hardy	Fred Heywood
24 Dec – 1 Jan	CONGREGATION	CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Since Carol and Joan have retired, volunteers are also needed for flower arranging, cleaning, and sides persons to help with the services. *There is now no lay infrastructure at St George's.* All offers of help will be gratefully received, and training will be provided. Please speak to a member of the clergy.

If you wish to help with any aspect of ensuring worship at St George's continues, put flowers in church, or have any problems, do not hesitate, please contact any member of the clergy.

Floral Mice

This month we meet Floral Mouse. These mice decorate the Church throughout the year with beautiful flowers and other decorations for special times and in memory of loved ones.



3 Simple Christmas Prayers

Christmas Prayer for Peace:

Prince of Peace, on this holy night, we lift our prayers for peace in our hearts, in our homes, and in the world. May the message of Christmas be a beacon of hope, guiding us to strive for harmony and understanding with one another. Let your peace reign in our lives as we seek to live in the light of your love. Amen.



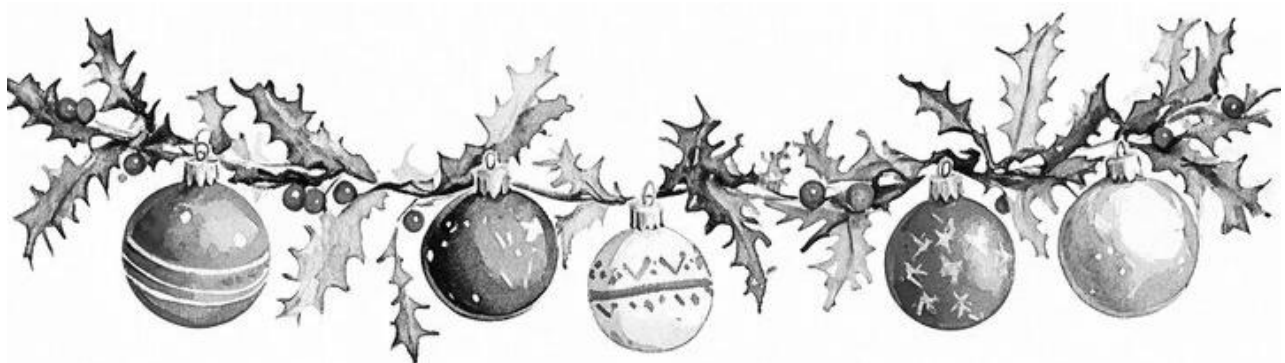
Christmas Prayer of Joy:

Heavenly Father, as we celebrate the birth of your Son, fill our hearts with the joy that comes from knowing Him. May the joy of Christmas be a constant presence in our lives, reminding us of the true source of happiness found in Jesus Christ. Let us share this joy with others and be a reflection of your love in the world. Amen.

Christmas Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Gracious God, on this sacred day, we gather with hearts full of gratitude for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank you for the love that brought Him to us and for the hope that His birth brings to the world. As we celebrate this Christmas, may our hearts overflow with thanksgiving for the ultimate gift of salvation. Amen.

Submitted by Carol Olive
ALM Prayer and Spirituality



Nativity Now

She was so tired, as they walked along,
Only his arm kept her from falling down.
The child within her clamoured to be born
She was not much more than a child herself.

The hostel for the homeless, by this time,
Was full to overflowing, "It's the rules,"
The warden said, not without sympathy,
"There's nothing I can do. There's just no room."

Then, as they turned away, the warden saw
How pale, how ill, how tired this couple were.
"You could sleep in my garage for tonight.
It's too late now for you to travel far."

And there, between the Volvo and the wall,
While families awoke, that festive day,
To gifts and garlands, merriment and meals,
A baby's eyes first opened on the world.

Policemen on their beat, seeing a light,
Came in to check, and saw the child, and stayed
Awhile, to chat, to offer help, then left
To go about their duties. Close behind..

Three vagrants from the shelter shambled in,
and stared in wonder. One of them bent down
To touch a tiny hand, and when they left
They seemed to carry with them warmth and light.
The morning came. Crisp air that smelt of snow.
The warden brought them down a cup of tea,
But found the garage empty. They were gone.
He stood a while, looking at the road.

He wondered where they'd gone, and wished them well.
He thought back to another Christmas Day.
Perhaps it happens somewhere, every year,
Perhaps it happens somewhere, every day.

By: Joanna Cooke



Give a Little

QR codes, like the one you see here, are clever bits of technology – a bit like bar codes – that link the real world with the online world. Those of us comfortable with using smartphones can simply point the camera at the QR code, and it will open a website (which is specific to a particular QR code). In this case, the QR code opens the parish “Give a Little”

page, in which we can donate £10, £20, £30, £50, or an amount of your own choosing, to help with the running of our parish.

For those of you reading this issue of our magazine online (and therefore for free!) here’s the link – please help us to help you, by contributing to our running costs:

<https://givealittle.co/c/7BenBwKBCZ82XbR8wJRir8>

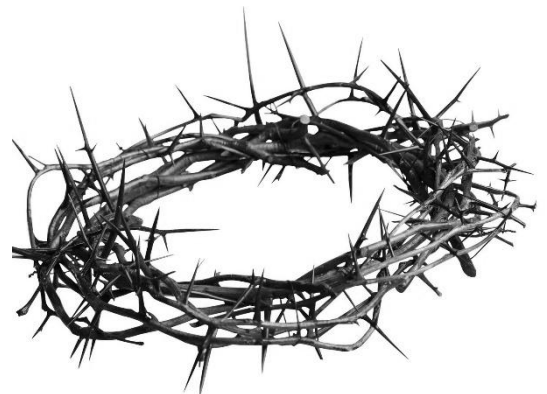
Thorns In the Straw Graham Kendrick (1950-present)

In mid-December 2024 Rev Christine came to me with a suggestion of a new anthem for Christmas, “but not this Christmas”, she said, “it’s far too short notice!” I found the sheet music, loved it, checked with Tom, and bought it. We offered it at the midnight and Christmas morning services that year.

Graham Kendrick skilfully sets the scene of Mary, teenaged single mum, making an arduous journey and giving birth in a distant and dirty stable. Kendrick wonders whether she foresaw the tragedy and injustice of how her child would die... *a sword shall pierce your soul...*

As the child Jesus grows, Kendrick asks again whether Mary made the link between her son and the Torah prophets. As he began his ministry, did Mary fear for his future? As he died, did she link it all together?

Jesus’ crown of thorns was made from acacia – each thorn around 5cm long and needle-sharp. In this song, Graham Kendrick uses these thorns as a device for Mary to understand the past, witness the present, and signpost the future. The lyrics are:



Since the day the angel came
It seemed that everything had changed
The only certain thing
Was the child that moved within
On the road that would not end
Winding down to Bethlehem
So far away from home

Just a blanket on the floor
Of a vacant cattle-stall
But there the child was born
She held him in her arms
And as she laid him down to sleep
She wondered – will it always be
So bitter and so sweet

*CHORUS: And did she see there
In the straw by his head a thorn
And did she smell myrrh
In the air on that starry night
And did she hear angels sing
Not so far away
Till at last the sun rose blood-red
In the morning sky*

Then the words of ancient seers
Tumbled down the centuries ...
A virgin shall conceive...
God with us... Prince of Peace
Man of Sorrows – strangest name
Oh Joseph there it comes again
So bitter yet so sweet

CHORUS

And as she watched him through the years
Her joy was mingled with her tears
And she'd feel it all again
The glory, and the shame
And when the miracles began
She wondered, who is this man
And where will this all end

'Til against a darkening sky
The son she loved was lifted high
And with his dying breath
She heard him say 'Father forgive'
And to the criminal beside
"Today – with me in Paradise"
So bitter yet so sweet

CHORUS

I particularly like this song because it doesn't sanitise the circumstances of the first Christmas. It looks ahead, unblinking, to Easter, and the reason for Christ's birth here on earth. For similar reasons, if I'm offered a choice of which king's verse to sing in "We Three Kings", I always choose Balthazar: "Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom – sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in a stone-cold tomb."

You will almost certainly hear this song again this year in our church's Christmas services.

Meanwhile, here is Graham Kendrick performing "Thorns in the Straw"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bv9sJ1s8Sik>, and here are Tom and I:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUof0-wNrPQ>

Carol P

CHRISTMAS FAIR

If you came, I hope you enjoyed it.

This was the first one I have organised and it has been a learning curve. I am very grateful for all the assistance and advice I have been given.



St Margaret's Church thanks:

- Tesco – Prestwich
- Smyths Toys – Bury
- Vue Cinema – Bury
- Asda – Pilsworth
- Morrisons – Whitefield
- and the NUMEROUS Individuals for their generous donations

I almost forgot. Thank you, Santa, for making the time to visit us.

We had a few different stalls and activities. I hope you found them interesting. Feedback is welcome.

At time of writing, the unconfirmed total raised is approximately £2,300.

Thanks to all stall holders, helpers and the hardworking cafe staff.

Also, all those who attended.

We couldn't have done it without you.

Maureen North



MESSY CHURCH

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 10 December 2025 in the Lady Wilton Hall, 4:00-5:30pm. Please come and join us then for lots of messy fun!

Our next meeting will be on Monday 2 February 2026, 2:00pm at Zandra's house. Please let her know if you plan to attend. We will be discussing:



- The Bee Keeper of Aleppo (Christy Lefteri)
- Call the Midwife – a true story of the east end in the 1950s (Jennifer Worth)
- The Trial (Rob Rinder)*
- Sensible Shoes (Sharon Garlough Brown)*

*These books are circulating the Club in hard copy. If you wish to borrow either of them to read, please let any member of the Book Club know.
Please tell Zandra if you plan to attend the November meeting.

Silent Prayer:



This is on the 3rd Sunday in each month at 9.15am. in St. Margaret's Church.

If you require further information on either of these please see Carol Olive – ALM (Prayer and Spirituality)

Christmas Church Flowers

As Christmas draws near, we flower arrangers would like to request your kind donations towards the cost of this year's Christmas Flowers. The box for donations is at the back of church on the table. We really appreciate all contributions as without them we would not be able to decorate our lovely church for the festive season. As flower Arrangers it gives us great pleasure in arranging flowers on your behalf and the result when our church is decorated is down to you.

Flower Monies

Can we please request that those who pay for Reredos and / or Columbarium Flowers in memory of their loved ones place their payment (either cash or cheque made payable to St.

Margarets Church) in the flower donation box on the table outside the office in church. Please put them in an envelope marked clearly with your name, your loved one's name, which flower arrangement they are for (Reredos or Columbarium) and the date of the anniversary or birthday they are for. If we have not received payment in a 12-month period, we will presume you no longer require your dates and they will be advertised as vacant.

Appeal for help with flowers

Unfortunately, over the last couple of years we have lost much valued flower arrangers Jean Munday and Barbara Ashurst, there are now only 4 of us and we are very much in need of help. If anyone is interested in joining the flower arrangers' group, we are always very grateful of any help. You do not need experience in flower arranging we will spend time helping you learn and the main objective is that you enjoy it, flower arranging is very therapeutic and good for the soul! If you are interested, please call Vicky Crookes on 07936548439.

Thank you on behalf of St. Margarets Flower Arrangers

**FOR ENQUIRES RELATING TO COLUMBARIUM AND REREDOS FLOWERS PLEASE CALL
VICKY CROOKES ON 07936548439
Columbarium Rota**

Date:	Paid for by:	In memory of & date	Arranger
Dec 7th	Direct to Church	George Smethurst 16th Dec	Sheila
	Vera Swallow	Gina Swallow 22nd Dec	Johnson
Dec 21 st	Church Donations	Christmas Church Flowers	0161 773 1406
	Church Donations	Christmas Church Flowers	

Reredos Rota 2025

Date	Paid for by:	In memory of & date:	Arranger
December	Advent - no flowers		

Ageing Prayer – Terisa of Avila

Lord, You know better than I know myself,
that I am growing older and will someday be old.
Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking
I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to
straighten out everybody's affairs.
Make me thoughtful but not moody;
helpful but not bossy.

With my vast store of wisdom,
it seems a pity not to use it all;
but You know, Lord,
that I want a few friends at the end.
Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details;
give me wings to get to the point.

Seal my lips on my aches and pains;
they are increasing, and love of rehearsing them
is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

I dare not ask for improved memory,
but for a growing humility and a lessening cock-sureness
when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others.
Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet, for a sour old person
is one of the crowning works of the devil.
Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places
and talents in unexpected people;
and give, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

Amen.

– Attributed to Terisa of Avila (1515-1582)

Maggie's Music Makers: Not a "Proper" Choir

Our parish has quite a reputation locally for the quality of music in worship. Imagine my surprise when I heard our choir described recently (by a regular and longstanding parishioner) as not a "proper" choir. I asked for clarification. Apparently, that bold statement was made because

1. The choir does not wear robes, and
2. The singers are "very shy" and won't sit up at the front.

This got me thinking, and I did some digging. Here are my research queries, and what I discovered.

What is the purpose of a church choir?

ChurchLeadership.com (<https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/four-functions-church-choir/>) tells us that there are three main purposes of a church choir:

1. To lead and enliven the congregation's song
2. To sing beautiful and challenging music that the congregation cannot, enhancing worship and praising God
3. To serve as a small group within the church for faith formation

Taking these in turn, our choir knows the hymns that are to be sung each week. They are practiced at the preceding weekly rehearsal, and sometimes ahead of the service, in order to lead the congregation and help them learn new hymns. With a small congregation that sits scattered about the rear of the nave, it is helpful to have a group of confident singers leading the hymns to prevent congregational singers feeling isolated, and as if they are the only one singing.

Most weeks we sing an anthem that is appropriate to the liturgical season. Usually this is whilst communion is distributed, but the traditional time is straight after the sermon. The congregation would then hear the Word (in the bible readings), have the Word explained (in the sermon), and hear it applied (in the anthem). We sing a rich and diverse variety of music from all around the world, from each of the past five centuries, and sometimes we even sing music that has been written by women! We usually sing in at least 2-part harmony, sometimes 3-part harmony, and dedicate the bulk of our rehearsal time to doing this well. Our repertoire includes music by (in no particular order) Duruflé, Britten, Quartel, Jenkins, Boyce, Redman, Purcell, Rutter, Humperdinck, Handel, Cohen and Mozart.

Our choir members attend church each week first and foremost to express their faith and to worship God. Note that singing hymns and anthems during church services is an act of worship, and not any kind of performance. Learning and practising hymns and anthems for

several weeks ahead of time creates a bond between us that runs deep. We care for and support each other in our musical and spiritual development – and we have fun together along the way.

What is the minimum number of singers for a church choir?

This depends on many variables, but the general agreement from the choral community is at least two voices per part. As we have 2 x Soprano I, 4 x Soprano II and 3 x alto, plus Tom and I, we meet numeric criteria for an upper voice choir.

Does a church choir have to wear robes?

The Guild of Church Musicians (<https://gcm.org.uk/everything-else-an-organist-should-know/2-running-a-choir/#ch10.1>) tells us that there is nothing in canon law covering the robes a choir may or may not wear. However, there is a lot of custom and practice around this issue. Reasons for wearing robes:

1. Uniformity – all choir members are equal before God, regardless of social demographics
2. Professionalism – robes can instil a sense of purpose and seriousness in a choir's ministry
3. Symbolism – in some churches, robes are worn to visually connect the choir to ministerial attire worn by clergy

Reasons for not wearing robes:

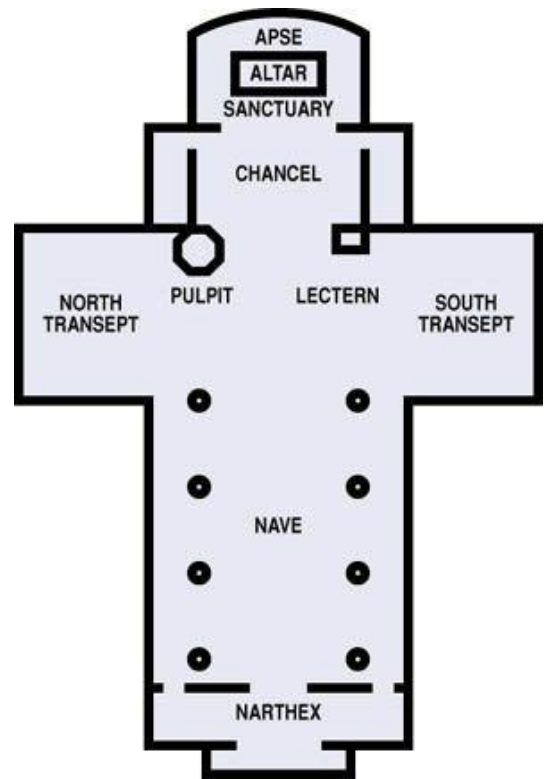
1. Comfort and practicality – robes can be very hot and cumbersome; they also present a trip hazard when walking up and down steps, and when kneeling to receive communion and rising again afterwards
2. Modernisation – absence of choir robes gives a more contemporary and accessible feel to the music, better reflecting the diversity of the congregation
3. Cultural fit – in some churches, robes are considered too formal or 'stuffy'

Our choir chooses, for practical and musical reasons, not to wear robes, and this decision does not impact on our ability to sing in any way.

Where in church should the choir sit?

Again, there is nothing in canon law about this. The “right” place for a church choir depends on theology, architecture, acoustics, and tradition. There are several common placements, each with its own purpose, pros and cons. There are given here, along with implications for St Margaret’s:

1. The Chancel (front of the church, facing the congregation – *we don’t have space for this at St Margaret’s*)



Why choirs sit here:

- They can easily lead the congregation in singing
- Direct communication with the clergy and organist (*but our organist sits to the side and is impossible to see from the chancel*)
- Common in Protestant churches

Pros:

- Clear leadership in worship
- Strong visual presence

Cons:

- Can feel like a performance if not thoughtfully arranged
- Blocks the congregation’s view of the altar

2. Choir Loft or Rear Balcony (over the narthex – *a superb place to sing from, but we have neither narthex nor balcony at St Margaret’s*)

Why choirs sit here:

- Historically common when organs are at the back
- Sound projects well over the congregation
- Allows worshippers to focus on worship rather than the choir

Pros:

- Excellent acoustics
- Less distracting visually

Cons:

- Harder for the choir to feel connected to the liturgy
- Limited space in some buildings

3. Choir Stalls facing each other in the chancel (*previously favoured in St Margeret's, and traditional in Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox and monastic settings*)

Why choirs sit here: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This antiphonal arrangement supports call-and-response singing – <i>which we rarely use</i> • It mirrors ancient worship practices – <i>but it's 2025!</i> 	
Pros: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideal for liturgical chant – <i>which we do not do</i> • Symbolises the choir as part of the worship leadership, not performers 	Cons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choir is behind the altar and feels excluded from worship • In St Margaret's, singing in the chancel cannot be heard by the congregation • Due to St Margaret's architecture and acoustics, singers in the chancel sing at least one beat behind the organ and congregation – so it's just as well they cannot be heard!

4. Front Side Seating (*currently favoured at St Margaret's*)

Why choirs sit here: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access for movement during worship • Direct connection with organist/pianist 	
Pros: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choir can see the altar and take part in worship • Choir can be heard by the congregation 	Cons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't think of any

By *any* of these metrics, Maggie's Music Makers is indeed a "proper" choir, that welcomes new members. If you love singing and want all the health and wellbeing benefits that come from regular choral singing, please come and join us. There is no audition process and no expectation that you are able to read music. For more information click here <https://stmargaretsprestwich.com/music-at-st-margarets/>, or speak to any member of the group.

Carol P
Director of Music

OUR DAILY BREAD DECEMBER 2025



In this season of celebration, we ask for Your peace to fill our hearts, homes, and communities. Help us to set aside differences and come together in love and unity. May the light of Christ guide us to be peacemakers in a world that longs for harmony. Bless us with kindness and understanding as we reflect on the miracle of Christmas. Amen.

1st: An Advent calendar is a special calendar used to count or celebrate the days in anticipation of Christmas. The Advent calendar begins on December 1 and was first used by German Lutherans in the 19th and 20th centuries but is now ubiquitous among adherents of many Christian denominations.

2nd: But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.” - **Luke 2:10**

3rd: We pray for the start of this new Christian Year. May we grow together in prayer and praise for our Lord.

4th: Every morning tell Him “Thank you for Your kindness,”
And every evening rejoice in all His faithfulness. **Psalms 92:2**

5th: Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good and His love endures forever. **Psalms 100: 4,5**

6th: Open your heart to God, and life will open the doors to your dreams.
“We can make our plans, but the final outcome is in God’s hands.” **Proverbs 16: 1**

Sunday 7th: Dear Lord, don't let us miss You this Christmas season. Help us to simplify our activities and traditions so we can focus our celebration on Your birth. Thank You for being the Prince of Peace, and I ask You for that supernatural peace to reign in our hearts. Thank You for the simple but life-changing message of Your love for us. In Jesus' Name, **Amen.** ~
Melanie Chitwood

8th: Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – This festival in honour of the conception of the mother of our Lord is celebrated on this day in both the eastern and the western Church. This feast, which dates from the seventh century, acknowledges the preparation by God of his people to receive their Saviour and Lord, putting 'heaven in ordinary' and showing that mortal flesh can indeed bring Christ to the world.

9th: They knew the day would bring opportunities to make God smile, and they would happily take each one of them. “If you search for good, you will find God’s favour.” **Proverbs 11:27**

10th: I will raise the Lord no matter what happens.
I will constantly speak of His glories and grace. **Psalms 34:1**

11th: Jesus, whose love for the world was so great you were prepared to die for it, we thank you for your sacrificial mission, which we remember started at Christmas. We offer up our prayers for your love to be shown abundantly to each and every heart. Amen.

12th: The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be. - **Anne Frank**

13th: "The LORD is my strength and my defence; He has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise Him, my father's God, and I will exalt Him." **Exodus 15:2**

Sunday 14th: She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. **Proverbs 31:26**

15th: Clouded with snow
The cold winds blow,
And shrill on leafless bough
The robin with its burning breast
Alone sings now. **From a poem by Walter de la Mare**

16th: Father in this season of advent we prepare our hearts for Your coming.
You are the vine, we are the branches. Come and tend us, prune us, clean us. Amen

17th: But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them! For the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." **Matthew 19:14**

18th: Jesus, who brings joy where there is sorrow, and happiness where there is despair, we thank you for your great mission of joy, which we particularly remember at Christmas. We offer up our prayers for your joy to resound through each and every soul. Amen.

19th: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. - **Reinhold Niebuhr**

20th: What can I give Him, Poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man I would do my part, Yet what I can I give Him, **Give my heart.**

Sunday 21st: This is the shortest day of the year, meaning the one in which we experience the least amount of daylight in 24 hours; it is also the time when the Sun reaches its southernmost point in the sky.

"A day without sunshine is like, you know, night." -**Steve Martin**

22nd: But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.” - **Luke 2:10**

23rd: “Walk with us and work through us that we may be faithful in prayer and draw many to you” - God is with us on our daily walk.

Sunday 24th: Christmas Eve

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining, It is the night of the dear Saviour's birth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices, For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. O
night divine, the night when Christ was born; O night, O holy night, O night divine!

25th: Christmas Day



Jesus, light of the world, we thank you for your holy rescue mission to bring hope, peace, love and joy to a world in darkness. We light the final candle as a reminder of the light you bring, a light that can never be put out. Help us to be your agents of light in the world, not just at Christmas but all year round. Amen.

26th: An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” **Matthew 2. 13**

27th: John, Apostle & Evangelist - Merciful Lord, cast your bright beams of light upon the Church: that, being enlightened by the teaching of your blessed apostle and evangelist Saint John, we may so walk in the light of your truth that we may at last attain to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ your incarnate Son our Lord. Amen

Sunday 28th: The Holy Innocents - Heavenly Father, whose children suffered at the hands of Herod, though they had done no wrong: by the suffering of your Son and by the innocence of our lives frustrate all evil designs and establish your reign of justice and peace. Amen

29th: Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury - Four knights journeyed to Canterbury where they finally chased Thomas into the cathedral, and murdered him on the steps of the altar on this day in 1170.

30th: Life would be infinitely happier if we could only be born at the age of eighty and gradually approach eighteen. - **Mark Twain**

31st: One more step along the world I go,
One more step along the world I go;
From the old things to the new,
Keep me travelling along with you:
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
Keep me travelling along with you.



Hi Friends, an early warning that I will be booking tickets for Romiley Operatic Society's production of Carousel if there is enough interest. This will be Saturday 21st March 2026 for the 2.15pm matinee. Tickets will be priced around the £20.00 mark. There will be a list at the back of the Church for you to indicate how many tickets you require. All tickets will have to be paid by the second week of January 2026.

Any problems please contact Joan 0161 7739683.

The Future of the Magazine

After last month's appeal, thank you to all who have submitted articles, poems, prayers, recipes and 'fillers'. Please keep them coming!

Whatever you submit need not be Pulitzer Prize-worthy journalism! A paragraph or two about something that interests you (written by you, or someone else – but in that case please include the name of the original author) will do nicely.

Is there something you've thought ought to be included in our magazine? Are you the person to provide that? Do you know of someone unable to continue with their contributions? (*HINT – we all do!*) Could you do that for them?

Articles for future editions of our parish magazine should be emailed as an attachment (Word doc, A4, portrait, no columns, preferably Calibri body 14) to Magazine@StMargaretsPrestwich.com no later than 7:00pm on:

January 2026 Magazine
February 2026 Magazine

Sunday 14 December 2025
Sunday 18 January 2026

Please note that "Magazine@StMargaretsPrestwich.com" is the only address that will be checked for magazine articles.

If you prefer to read this text size, please let whoever brings your magazine know.

4 Letter Words

BELL
SNOW

5 Letter Words

ANGEL
COCOA
ELVES
HOLLY

6 Letter Words

LIGHTS
SLEIGH
TINSEL
WINTER
WREATH

7 Letter Words

CHIMNEY
GARLAND
PAGEANT
RUDOLPH
SNOWMAN

8 Letter Words

CAROLING
DECEMBER
EXCHANGE
ORNAMENT
PRESENTS
REINDEER
WRAPPING

9 Letter Words

CHESTNUTS
CHRISTMAS
EVERGREEN
FRUITCAKE
MISTLETOE
NORTH POLE

10 Letter Words

POINSETTIA
SANTA CLAUS

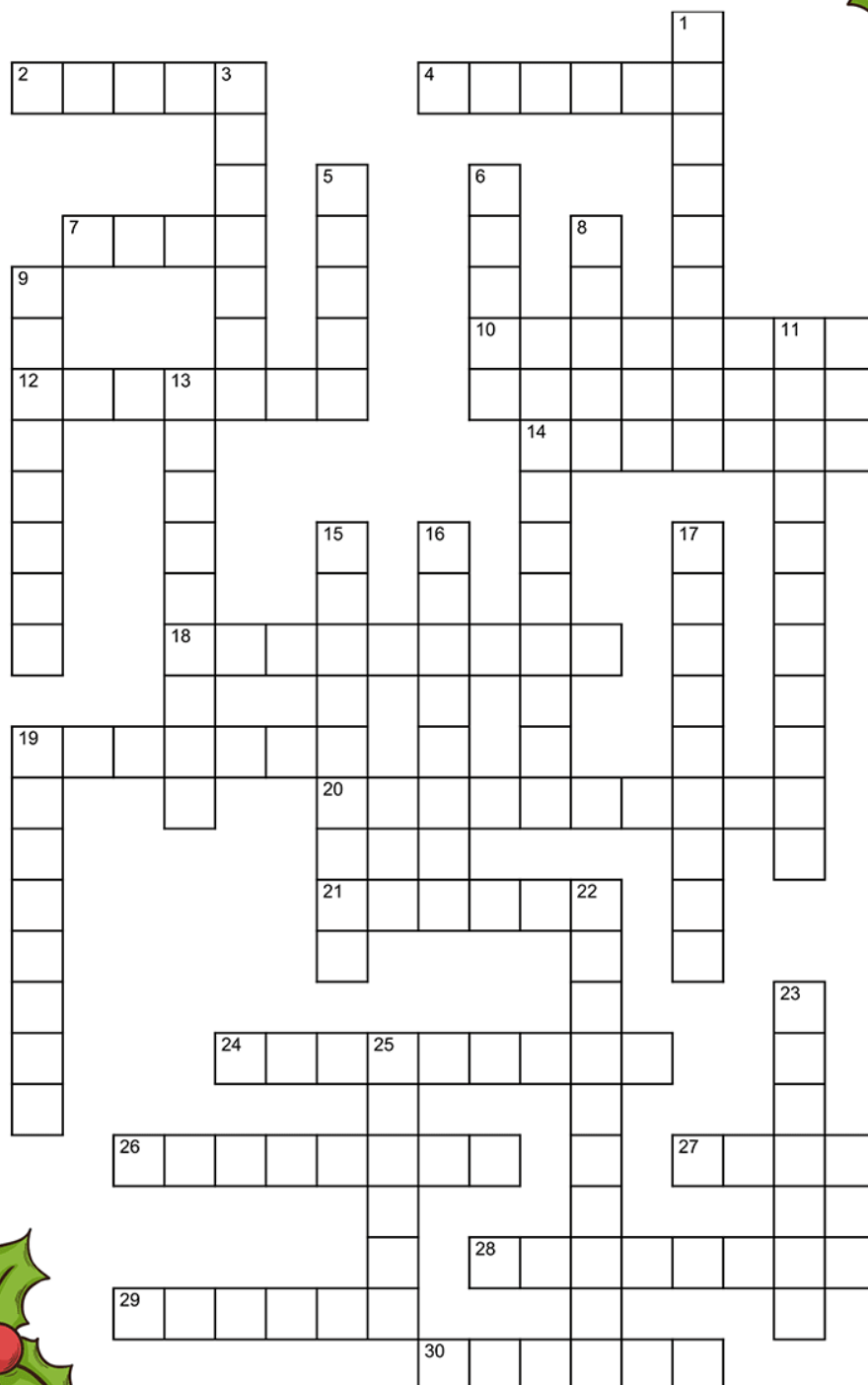
11 Letter Word

GINGERBREAD

Christmas Joy



DIRECTIONS: Fill in the crossword grid with the provided words.



Rhyme Time

**The joy of music for babies, toddlers
and pre-schoolers**

Tuesdays in term time in St Margaret's Community Centre, St Margaret's Road, Prestwich from 2pm for about an hour
(stay for as much or as little of that time as is appropriate for you and your child)

If interested, please contact Maureen (0161 766 2677)

It's FREE!



LILLEYWHITE

INDEPENDENT FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Serving the local community Since 1897

*"We're here to support, help and guide you
through the funeral arrangements
and to carry them out with the utmost
sympathy, dignity and respect"*

- Pre-Paid Funeral Plans
- International Repatriation Specialists
- Luxury Mercedes-Benz fleet
- Private Chapel of Rests



KENYON HOUSE
301 Bury Old Road
Prestwich
Manchester
M25 1JA

Telephone: **0161 773 2749**

WWW.LILLEYWHITE-FUNERALS.CO.UK

SARAH CLAVERING: DRIVING INSTRUCTOR



M: 07947 198896

E: sarahclav@outlook.com

F: sarahLclaveringdrivingschool



EXPERIENCED GARDENER REQUIRES WORK



Gardens tidied & Maintained

New Lawns Laid

Trees Lopped & Felled

Graves Weeded – Surrounding treated to stay weed free

Phone Colin on 0161 773 4337



Here to help
with support, advice
and guidance



Pre-payment plans

Paul Williams Funeral Directors is a family owned and operated business committed to providing a fitting tribute to the departed, and a personalised and dignified service to bereaved families and friends.



PAUL WILLIAMS

INDEPENDENT FUNERAL DIRECTORS LTD

215 Bury New Road, Whitefield, Manchester, M45 8GW
www.paulwilliamsfunerals.co.uk

For immediate and personal
attention 24 hours a day please call:

0161 796 6018



Home

There's no place like it



A flexible and friendly home based care service from a few hours to full time.

Our service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide:



- Companionship
- Respite support
- Light housekeeping
- Convalescence support
- Specialist dementia care and Alzheimer's care
- Shopping
- Meal preparation
- Personal care
- Local transportation and errands
- and much more

The service provided was excellent and enabled me and my sister to know that our father was being properly cared for, particularly important as we both live some distance away. I would have no hesitation in recommending Home Instead.

Mrs N, Client's daughter.

Contact us on 0161-796-2988

116a Bury New Road, Whitefield, M45 6RD

[www..homeinstead.co.uk/bury](http://www.homeinstead.co.uk/bury)

Each Home Instead Senior Care® franchise office is independently owned and operated.



Freedom Remedial Massage

Effective Treatment For

Headaches • Neck and Back Pain • Sports Injuries

Poor Circulation • RSIs • Joint and Muscle Pain

Whiplash • Frozen Shoulder • Tension and Stress

Injury Prevention and Recovery • Sciatica

and more.

Using techniques that focus on the deeper layers of muscle tissue, Sue Smith (RMT) provides treatment which is both corrective and therapeutic.

To make an appointment or discuss treatment,
contact Sue on **07976 724975**

359 Bury Old Road, Prestwich M25 1PY

Member of **NAMMT** (National Association of Massage & Manipulative Therapists).

4:00-5:30pm

Lady Wilton Hall, Simister

see Church calendar for date

Please join us and enjoy the fun, lots of things to make and light refreshments are served.



SPECS direct **0161 767 9740**

The Elms Square, Whitefield, Manchester

SPECIAL OFFER

2 pairs of glasses for 1 low price!!

Contact Lenses now available



www.specsdirectopticians.co.uk

Petite Fleur



Floral Design

*Modern & traditional flowers
for every Occasion*

452 Bury Old Road, Prestwich, Manchester M25 1PQ

Telephone: 0161 773 5939

CB Construction



*Small enough to care, big enough to cope.
Your complete local building and renovation company.*

All aspects of interior and exterior building and roofing work carried out from minor repairs to extensive renovations and property extensions.

- Plastering
- Joinery
- Tiling
- Exterior Maintenance
- Refurbishments
- Roof repairs and retile
- Bathroom/kitchen refits
- Rubber roofing

I have over 20 years' experience in the building trade and I pride myself on completing work to the highest standard and providing a clear, courteous and conscientious service to the customer. My work is fully guaranteed, and I have liability insurance provided by Simply Business

Current enhanced CRB disclosure can be viewed on request.

Please contact Craig on:

Mobile: 07817781989

Email: craig.bega@btinternet.com



Amanda Mitchell
Home Visiting
State Registered Chiropodist

Telephone: 0161 798 4674

Mobile: 07712122453

Chiropody Treatment in the comfort of your own home.
Corns, callus and difficult nails treated at your convenience.

Member of the Institute of Chiropodists and Podiatrists: M7332
Health Professions Council Registration Number: CH26197

JeaniusBags

Bespoke handcrafted bags made to order to suit your requirements

Proceeds from all sales are donated to a different charity each month. Please check the website or Facebook page for details.

A dark rectangular graphic with a light-colored border. At the top, the text 'JeaniusBags' is written in a large, white, serif font. Below it, in a smaller white font, is 'Handcrafted in the UK'. To the right of this text is a white line drawing of a handbag with a top handle and two side straps. Below the 'Handcrafted in the UK' text, there is a horizontal line, followed by the website 'https://jeaniusbags.com/' and social media links 'Facebook: JeaniusBags' and 'Instagram: jeaniusbags' in a white sans-serif font.

JeaniusBags

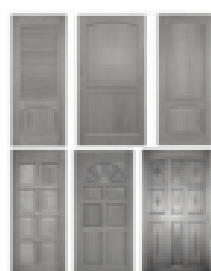
Handcrafted in the UK

<https://jeaniusbags.com/>

Facebook: JeaniusBags
Instagram: jeaniusbags

RELIONUS DOOR CENTRE

OVER 3000 DOORS ALWAYS IN STOCK
VISIT OUR EXTENSIVE SHOWROOM



- Superb Range of Italian Furniture
 - Internal & External Doors
 - Softwood & Hardwood
 - Double & Triple Glazed
- Some slight seconds available
- Large selection of Spindles & Stair Parts

TEL: 0161 798 9566

Website: www.relionus-diy.co.uk

199-203 Bury Old Rd, Prestwich, Manchester M25 1JF
5mins jct.17 M60-100yds from Heaton Park Metro Station.
Ample Parking

sikens

CHESHIRE
mouldings

Heritage Brass
SOLID BRASS DOOR HARDWARE

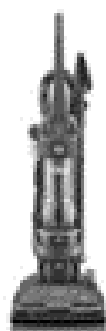
Carlisle
BRASS

RONSEAL

Would you like to advertise in our magazine?

If so, please contact us through our website and we will be pleased to provide you with further information.

1/4 page	£25
1/3 page	£30
1/2 page	£45
1 page	£65



Barlow's

VACUUM CLEANER

SALES & REPAIRS SERVICE

Free Estimates – Free Collection & Delivery

All Work Guaranteed – Over 30 Years' experience

**0161
792 4118**

St Margaret's Social Media Streams

- **Subscribe to our Blog:** <https://stmargaretsprestwich.com/blog/>

- **Follow us on Bluesky:** [@stmaggiiep.bsky.social](https://stmaggiiep.bsky.social)  **Bluesky**

- **Like us on Facebook**



Next time you're busy on Facebook, please take a moment to find and 'Like' our public page



(<https://www.facebook.com/StMaggieP>) and click to join St

Margaret's Community Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/600247334220158>

- **Follow us on Instagram**

<https://www.instagram.com/stmargaretsprestwich/>



- **You can catch up with sermons and Wise Words from the Ministry Team as podcasts via Spotify**

<https://anchor.fm/st-margarets-prestwich>



For full information about our parish visit our website:

<https://stmargaretsprestwich.com/>

PAROCHIAL ORGANISATIONS

MAGGIE'S MUSIC MAKERS (Parish Choir) – St Margaret's Church Dr Carol Porter
– music@stmargaretsprestwich.com

Rehearses in church Wednesdays 5.30-6.30pm during term time and welcomes new members

MESSY CHURCH Lady Wilton Hall, Simister

Third Wednesday of the Month, 4.00pm to 5:30pm during term time

RHYME TIME Community Centre Mrs M North (766 2677)

Tuesdays at 2pm during term time, a music group for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers, accompanied by a carer

UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS All in the Youth & Community Centre

Beavers Thursday, 5.30 to 6.30pm }

Cubs Thursday 7.00 to 8.30pm }

Scouts }

Explorers }

Rainbows Tuesday 5.00 to 6.00pm

Brownies Tuesday, 6.00 to 7.30pm

Guides Tuesday 7.30 to 9.00pm

gs/8th@praws.gmnscouts.org.uk

Mrs. D. Todd (773 0018)

Mrs. G. Storm (07773 026 398)

Mrs. G. Storm (07773 026 398)

St. GEORGES CHURCH, SIMISTER

Deputy Churchwardens Vacant

SERVICES AT ST GEORGE'S, SIMISTER

Sunday 11.15am Holy Communion

See the magazine calendar for the full list of services for the month

ALL THE CHURCH HALLS ARE AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

Church House (St. Margaret's Road) Bookings@stmargaretsprestwich.com

Youth & Community Centre (St. Margaret's Road) **Not currently taking bookings**

Lady Wilton Hall (Simister Lane) StGeorge@stmargaretsprestwich.com

St George's Church

Simister

