

St Mary's Church Eccleston /

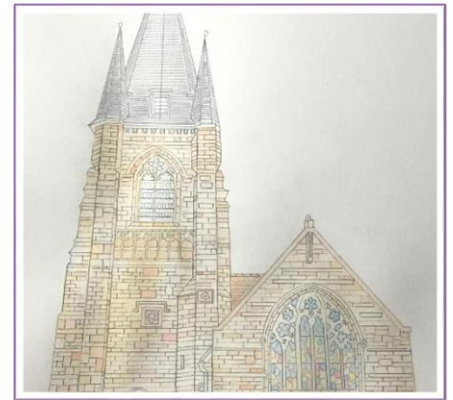
St Mary's Church Pulford

[Eccleston and Pulford Churches](#)

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## Upcoming Services

- **12/06/2022 Sunday 11.15 at Eccleston Church**  
*Choral Communion led by Rev Canon Stephen Attwater. [Joint Service]*
- **19/06/2022 Sunday 9.45 at Pulford Church**  
*Parish Communion*
- **19/06/2022 Sunday 11.15 at Eccleston Church**  
*Choral Communion led by Rev Canon Chris Samuels.*
- **26/06/2022 Sunday 11.15 at Eccleston Church**  
*Choral Communion led by Rev Canon Stephen Attwater [Joint Service]*
- **3/07/2022 Sunday 9.45 at Pulford Church**  
*Parish Communion [Joint Service]*
- **10/07/2022 Sunday 11.15 at Eccleston Church**  
*Choral Communion [Joint Service]*

Dear Reader,

The parish newsletter is available to download from the church website as well as being emailed once a fortnight.

In this edition, Rob Hughes delivers a thought-provoking homily entitled - 'Presence and the power of now' and Helen Shielke discusses a fundraising event held locally on the 9<sup>th</sup> May for her charity B.I.R.D.

**Please note that in June, the service times are changing. Pulford Services will be at 9.45am, Eccleston Services at 11:15am. For up-to-date service information please see the church website [Services – St Mary's Church Eccleston and St Mary's Church Pulford \(ecclestonchurch.org\)](#)**

Kind Regards

Stephen Hutchinson

## Important News and Reminders

### Food Bank:

A reminder from Rachel Williams

#### Urgently Wanted

- Tinned Meats, Tomatoes, Desserts & Potatoes
- UHT Milk & Juice
- Custard
- Small Jars Instant Coffee
- Jams and Spreads
- Instant Mashed
- Cereal Bars
- Instant Pasta & Instant Noodles

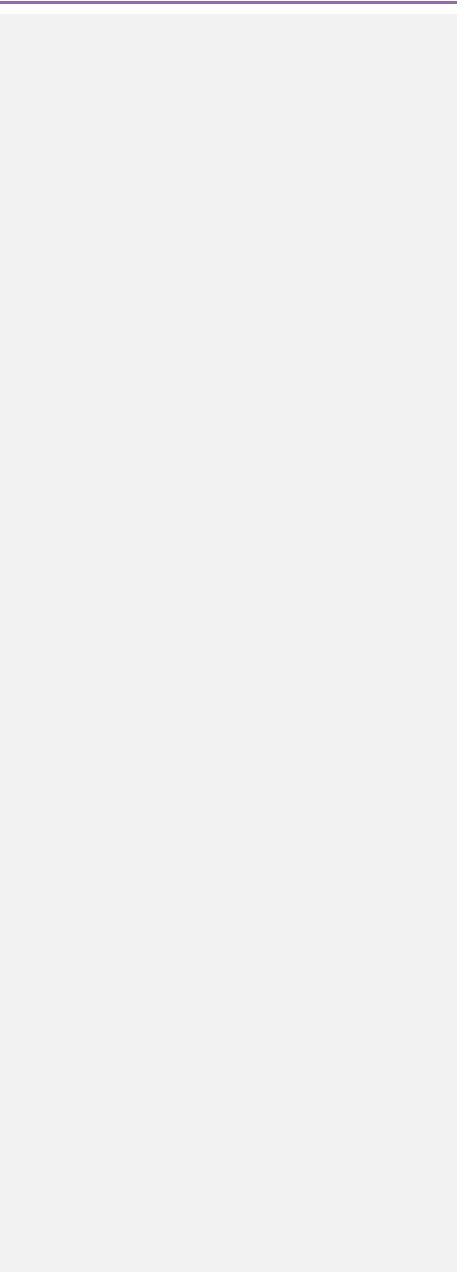
#### Wanted

- Tinned Meat, Fish, Vegetables, Potatoes, Tomatoes, Custard & Fruit
- Cuppa Soup
- Pot Noodles
- Instant Pasta & Pasta Sauce, Mashed Potato, Coffee & Custard
- Biscuits
- UHT Milk and Fruit Juice
- Breakfast Cereal

#### Plenty Of

- Pasta
- Baked Beans

The list changes from time to time. Both donation stations are emptied on the last service in the month and for those parents who receive the magazine we collect from school the last week of each half term.



## Rob Hughes Homily – Presence and the power of now.

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In the world of leadership and management development, an often-used phrase that's mentioned in time management models is this: **"When you're up to your neck in alligators, it's difficult to remember that you're trying to drain the swamp!"**



In the last two newsletters, I've attempted to present a personal perspective that has helped me through extremely challenging times - challenging for all of us, I guess. Guided by conversations with Roger, and encouraged by experiences during Silent Church, I've come to understand a little bit more about the beneficial effects of making time for quiet times for reflection (in spite of the alligators), and simply recognising what is meant by simply be-ing, and not just do-ing, and deciding, and taking immediate action. There's a huge difference between responding to situations (having given due thought to them) and reacting on the impulse to 'do something. Now!'

I mentioned in a previous instalment that there are a number of Christian publications that detail the wisdom of Buddhism for Christians. I say again, I am, first and foremost, a Christian - but my Christian faith has been reinforced as a result of believing, and adopting, a number of practices that are often (and not necessarily accurately) associated with Buddhism; it's all a matter of perspective, and anything I've said, or about to say, is open to individual interpretation.

**In a worship context:** I mentioned last time, for example, that when we find our minds wandering off during a service, we shouldn't fight the thoughts that crop up (not easy - it's a practice), learn to refocus on something in the present situation (another practice that needs to be nurtured) - and to indeed, expect them, rather than fruitlessly and needlessly trying to avoid them. This is another practice in... it takes time so there are no quick-fixes here!

I was delighted to have received a comment from a parishioner the other day mentioning that when thoughts grab the attention in church, the 'solution (for this person) is to look at The Cross, to recenter on the here-and-now. Others have mentioned other practices that they've adopted during private prayer and devotion, at Silent Church and during Home Worship. These practices work, they really do - but need to be recognised, believed and nurtured over time.

**In our daily lives:** I refer back to the alligator/swamp analogy again - we've become so busy, haven't we? Always thinking; always doing something 'now' - not for the purity of doing the best we can, but to get things out of the way so that we can get on with the next task; or make the next urgent decision - immediately, or in an hour's time, or tomorrow, or next week. There's always something else to concern, or distract or divert us from what really matters.

How can we help ourselves? Well, turning to the Bible will immediately assure us:

**Jesus said: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself"** - this isn't a simple call to 'take each day as it comes'! It's much more to do with not worrying unduly about a future that we entrust to God.

**St Paul added: "Take your thoughts captive"** - basically, this is not a call to control your thoughts (which doesn't work anyway!), but's meant as encouragement to give us confidence to come to a decision, moment by moment if needs be, and decide what really needs to be thought-about, there and then, about in that particular situation!

Which brings me to what is meant, in spiritual development terms, by "living in the Now"; "being conscious"; "being present and "maintaining presence". I used to think that it simply meant 'living for the moment', identifying and dismissing any intrusive (and unnecessary) thoughts and 'getting on with life regardless, moment by moment. Then the penny dropped. Living in the now - being present - isn't a technique at all - it's a practice that needs to be believed, deep within, and 'practiced', over and over again. Practiced until our minds 'get the message', and eventually quieten down enough for it to become second nature.

Practicing 'presence' may seem like a technique - after all, it's simple enough to say, but it's made incredibly difficult with those pesky alligators all around, all the time. Presence (appreciation of the here and now) is about focusing and concentrating absolutely on what is happening here-and-now. If something crops up that needs more urgent attention, that then becomes your focus, and leave what you had just-been-focusing on behind (for the time being), and return to it if and when you can, or really need to.

This isn't so much 'doing one thing at a time', but more about bestowing a certain quality in doing whatever needs to be done, as-and-when you need to do it: to the best of your ability; to completion (when possible) - unless and until circumstance change 'in the now', in which case focus on the new priority - completely - until you can resume where you left off.



The bottom line is this - we don't have to allocate specific time-slots to calming down and being still in-the-now; nor is this restricted to being in church or participating in silent church. We can practice being present when we're walking around - shopping, taking a walk, sitting or working in the garden. If our minds start to wander and we start to worry about the future again, or fret about the past - we can readily just look around, and take a few breaths - then look again more closely with simple appreciation of the beauty of what we're looking at - a flower, the view; your home; your family. Look, and see, **and truly appreciate** what you can see, or touch, or perceive in the here and now. Intrusive, unhelpful or unnecessary thoughts will slowly diminish; surely worthwhile for even a short time! But with practice, that time gets longer - and can become a way of life!

By appreciating: everything we are; everything we see, touch and feel - 'here and now - and maybe appreciate the simple fact that we are able to think at all, can enable us to steal a moment or two of a less anxious mind. With practice, our minds can calm down, and in doing so, help us to take that extra step to stillness at home, and especially during worship in all its forms.

**[Rob Hughes]**



## B.I.R.D.

The 'Old Coach House' in Eccleston has been home to BIRD for the last 15 years and 2022 marks the charity's 40<sup>th</sup> year of supporting children and adults in our local area with learning difficulties and brain injuries through the therapies we offer.

Every year we hold a plant sale with plants supplied from a local wholesale nursery. Our friends, neighbours and supporters order their bedding plants and hanging baskets from us in March and await their delivery in May.

We had a great response and on the 9<sup>th</sup> May outside the Centre plants bloomed in the sunshine as they were collected by our supporters.

We raised a fantastic sum of £1048, thank you to everyone who ordered plants from us this year.



It was a fantastic day, the sun was shining, the plants were delivered from the nursery that morning and it was lovely to see the many friends and neighbours who support BIRD especially people who order plants from us every year. The moss hanging basket was the best seller again with over 70 baskets ordered – we hope they are all blooming and your gardens are looking colourful. If you would like to know about the plant sale next year or BIRD's work or events – do get in touch.

On behalf of the team and the many families who benefit from BIRD's therapies, we send our thanks for your support.



Helen Schielke  
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[www.birdcharity.org.uk](http://www.birdcharity.org.uk)

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*Registered Charity No: 326194*

## Two Prayers.

“Wherever I go – only Thou!  
Wherever I stand – only Thou!  
Just Thou; again Thou! Always Thou!  
Thou, Thou, Thou!  
When things are good - Thou!  
When things are bad – Thou!  
Thou, Thou, Thou!

**[An early Hasidic song]**

“Sometimes I feel lonely, and from the depths I cry unto Thee,  
and within me, Thy voice answers me, and I know that Thou,  
Eternal Friend, art near me.

Sometimes the sense of failure seizes me, and I am  
disheartened. Unto Thee do I raise mine eyes, and the light of  
my heavenly Father shines upon me, and bids me to  
persevere.

Sometimes my daily life oppresses me. Unto Thee do I lift up  
my soul, and I realise that by doing my duty manfully and  
cheerfully I am serving Thee, Divine Master, and my task is  
revealed to me as something good and sacred.

Sometimes I am sad and sick at heart, but when I think of  
Thee, Spirit of perfect righteousness and love, a wonderful joy  
comes to me, for I know that Thou art guiding me.

O Lord God of Hosts, surely Thou wilt ever comfort me.  
Blessed be Thy Name for ever and ever.  
Amen”

**[from the Fratres Book of Prayer]**

