
Newsletter #35

Friday 9th June to Friday 23rd June 2023



St Mary's Church Eccleston / St Mary's Church Pulford

[Eccleston and Pulford Churches](#)

Email:

rector@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

EcclestonChurchWarden@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

PulfordChurchWarden@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

Dear Reader,

The parish newsletter as well as home worship guides for those unable to attend the service in person, are available to download from the church website:

<https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/category/newsletters/>

For up-to-date service information please see the church website:

<https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/services/>

Please feel free to email suggestions for future newsletter articles.

Thank you to Jeanette Howe, Rob Hughes, and Mike Nethercott for their contribution this week.

Kind Regards

Stephen Hutchinson (hutch@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org)

Contents

Parish information.....	3
Church Service Dates Times and Locations.....	4
Official Facebook pages for Eccleston Church and Pulford Church:.....	4
Funeral for Philip Rowland	4
Rob Hughes Homily: "Is your glass half-full or half-empty"	5
Jeanette Howe Homily 1: What is Prayer?	7
Jeanette Howe Homily 2: What is a disciple?	8
Pulford Church circa 1870.....	9
Contemporary Christian Music Song(s) of the week:.....	10

Parish information

Rector:

Pulford/Eccleston	Revd. Dr Stephen Torr	rector@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
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Church Wardens:

Pulford	Sue Payne (assistant Bridget Marsden)	PulfordChurchWarden@ ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Eccleston	John Richards (assistant Julie Rowland)	EcclestonChurchWarden@ ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

Lay Minister

Pulford/Eccleston	Jeanette Howe
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Planned Giving Officer / Treasurer

Pulford/Eccleston	Les Hocking
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Electoral Roll Officer

Eccleston	Andrew Wilkinson
Pulford	Clare Willan

Organists and Assistants

Pulford/Eccleston	Derek Whatling /Dennis Jones
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Director of Music

Eccleston/Pulford	Maureen Richards	mothemusic@gmail.com
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Tower Captains

Eccleston	Andrew Pridding
Pulford	

PCC Secretary

Pulford/Eccleston	Andrew Wilkinson
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Newsletter/Website

Pulford/Eccleston	Stephen Hutchinson	Hutch @ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
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Church Service Dates Times and Locations.

All services will be led by the Reverend Dr Stephen Torr.

Please see <https://ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/services> for up-to-date service times.

Date	St Mary's Church PULFORD	St Mary's Church ECCLESTON
Sunday 11 th June (Trinity 1)		11.15am Choral Holy Communion Service
Sunday 18 th June (Trinity 2/ Father's Day)	9.45am Holy Communion	11.15am All Age service.
Sunday 25 th June (Trinity 3)		11.15am Eccleston Choral Holy Communion
Sunday 2 nd July (Trinity 4)	9.45am Holy Communion	
Sunday 9 th July (Trinity 5)		11.15am Eccleston Choral Holy Communion
Sunday 16 th July (Trinity 6)	9.45am Holy Communion	

Official Facebook pages for Eccleston Church and Pulford Church:

There are now 2 official pages for Eccleston and Pulford Church on Facebook. There were already 2 unofficial pages, but these new official pages, it is hoped, will be more relevant to the Church and its activities.

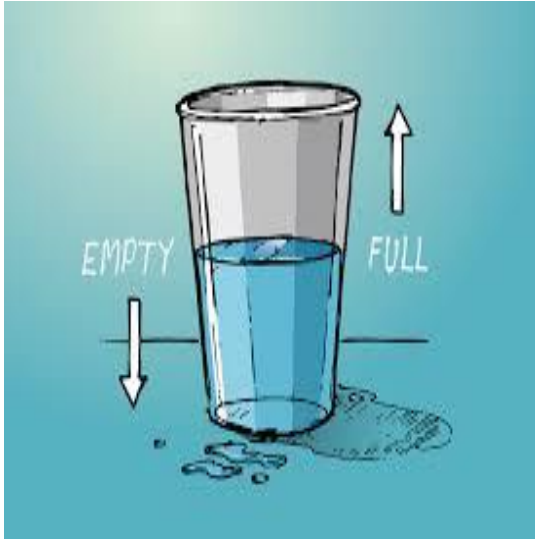
Eccleston Church: <https://www.facebook.com/EcclestonChurch>

Pulford Church: <https://www.facebook.com/PulfordChurch>

Funeral for Philip Rowland

Our thoughts and prayers are with Julie Rowland and her family this week after the sad passing of her husband Philip. A funeral will be held on the 21st June at 11am at Eccleston Church.

Rob Hughes Homily: “Is your glass half-full or half-empty?”



In one particular episode of my favourite Television Series, **Yes Minister**, Sir Humphrey Appleby was accused by the Minister of being a pessimist. Appleby's pithy reply was, simply - “A pessimist is what an optimist calls a realist” - an allusion, no doubt, to the old adage, “if it can go wrong, it will” ... Ring any bells?

However, a real-life politician and statesman, Sir Winston Churchill had something else to say about pessimism and optimism: “**The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty**”.

Given the current global and national challenges we all face, now is as good a time as any to examine a couple of important questions:

- Are you a ‘glass-half-full person, or is your ‘glass half-empty’ most of the time?
- Are you more inclined to say “things will never be the same again” with fear and trepidation, or with trusting acceptance, and hope?

There's a world of a difference between:

- accepting what's happening now and being resigned to thinking that things will never be the same again
- as opposed to patiently going-with-the-flow, for the time being, and awaiting opportunities to support the changes that will inevitably be needed...

That said, ‘we're only human’ - therefore probably prone to slipping into pessimism from time to time. Realistically, it's nigh impossible to be completely worry-free-and-optimistic. But it's precisely **then** that we need to remember to trust God and ‘let go’ - even if it may seem counter-intuitive!

I was particularly moved by an **Old Testament Reading** from the Prophecy of Isaiah (Chapter 55) which was written during a period in which the Jewish people were still having a really hard time, in exile, and cruelly ruled by the Babylonians.

They had become more than fed up; they were at the end of a very long tether, and had probably long-since-forgotten that God had promised them a return to their homeland. So Isaiah's optimistic prophecies would have made them doubt the existence of the God of their ancestors. No doubt sensing this, Isaiah had this to say:

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace...”

In these few verses, Isaiah describes a world where the impossible suddenly seems possible again, and invited the Jews to look at their broken world with new (dare I say, optimistic) eyes. More than being an inspirational speech, Isaiah was presenting the doubters with **God's word** of hope - Hope offered by the God who would, indeed (and in His own time) fulfil His promises. The same's true today: God's promises can heal not only the fractured lives of 'one race' (then), but can heal the relationships between our global community of races, here and now. Surely, God was saying to them, then, and to us, now, "I mean what I say, and I'll keep my promise".

Can we believe it in an increasingly dangerous world of: rising international tension; an immediate willingness to threaten and use force, and unwillingness to negotiate or compromise? We face ever-rising costs of living, and actual or anticipated shortages of things we've come to take for granted. All this is fueled by hyperactive news- and social media traffic, with a glass-half-empty attitude! It's here we should note the tone of Isaiah's message: he isn't painting a picture of a better world as it **could** be, **might** be or even as it **should** be. He's painting the picture of a world as it **will be, because God has promised it will be that way.**

But if we (as individuals, and as a society) are inclined towards pessimism, we could all-too-easily erode any kind of 'hope-full' perspective.

So, it's important for us to maintain, or as quickly as possible **regain**, a "glass half full" state of mind, and to get over 'bad news', 'a bad day' or 'a bad week' (and we all have them from time to time!). Only then can we expect to hear what God wants us to do for Him as the future unfolds. Remembering that "A pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. An optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty"

Loving God, we begin this new week with this prayer for optimism.

If ever we tend to see 'failure at every turn', give us courage to take that important first step, trusting that You will ensure that we can take the next, and the next...

Help us to lay aside fear of failure, and trust in the process of taking one step at a time.

Whenever we might think we are alone in our struggle, remind us how beautiful and wondrous life can be for us today, right now,

if we adopt an optimistic attitude towards the future.

You are our grounds for that hope ...

Amen

[Rob Hughes]

Jeanette Howe Homily 1: What is Prayer?



*"The Angel Standing in the Sun" by Joseph William Turner
Public Domain Image.*

The English evangelist, John Wesley, wrote in his journal that,

'The end of your praying is not to inform God, as though he knew of your wants already; but rather to inform yourselves; to fix the sense of those wants more deeply in your hearts, and the sense of your continued dependence on Him who only is able to supply all your wants. It is not so much to move God who is always more ready to give than you to ask, as to move yourselves, that you may be willing and ready to receive the good things he has prepared for you.'

Reference: John Wesley, cited by Rev. Dr Andrew J Taylor, 'Light the Fire Again: Daily Prayers for the Next Great Awakening' (unpublished paper, 2023 version), p. 51.

[Jeanette Howe]

Jeanette Howe Homily 2: What is a disciple?



Public Domain Image

Rowan Williams describes a disciple, simply, as a learner, someone like you and me; he says that ultimately, what the disciple learns is how to be a place in the world where the act of God can come alive. How can we be that place?

We are children of our Heavenly Father; we carry that relationship everywhere we go;

Jesus asks us to abide in him and he will abide in us, so that we can bear fruit (from John 15)

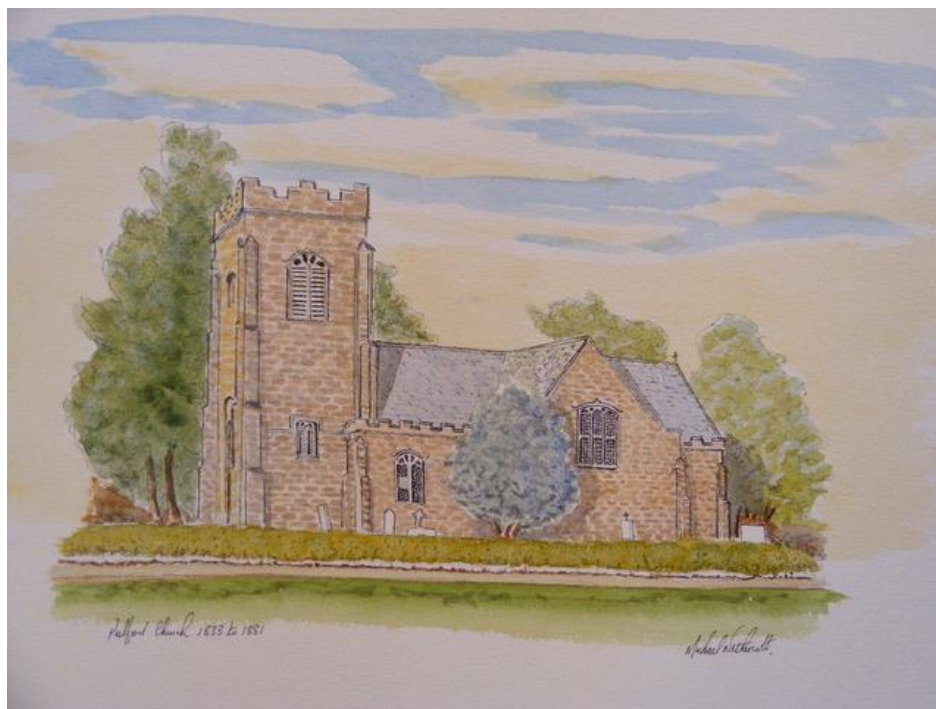
And we are told that we are temples of the Holy Spirit, in 1 Corinthians chapter 6.

The Trinity makes us that place.

[Jeanette Howe]

Pulford Church circa 1870

Mike Nethercott found this photo of Pulford Church from 1870



Pulford Church circa 1870 had a West Door entry in the tower (just visible!!). Large trees dominated the churchyard to the North and it is most likely that the path to the west door of the church was directly off the Wrexham Road, the present parking area would have been the Duke's land as part of the 'Pulford Approaches' direct to Eaton Hall. This inspired the painting above by Mike Nethercott. Thank you to Mike for sharing his painting.

[Mike Nethercott]

Contemporary Christian Music Song(s) of the week:



Figure 1 *Anything you Sow* by William Onyeabor
(Photo used by kind permission of Luaka Bop Records).

My contemporary Christian Music Song(s) this week are "Believe in God" and "Anything you sow" composed and sung by William Onyeabor in 1985.

William Onyeabor [1946-2017] led quite an interesting and highly secretive life. One journalist managed to track him down and phoned to request an interview. The journalist asked if he could speak to William about his music. William replied "Why do you want to talk to me about my music, all I want to talk about is God" and put the phone down. In an extremely rare radio broadcast in 2014 he said that *he only ever created music that would help the world.*

William produced albums from his home in Nigeria from 1977 to 1985. Not only did he compose, play multiple synthesizers, add backing tracks and sing on his own albums, but he built his own recording studio together with a factory to press his albums. Even to this day, no one is quite sure how he funded this enterprise. What is certain is that his music was way ahead of its time.

While most musicians in the 80s were producing trite and banal lyrics to pander to the pop industry, his songs were anti-war and mostly about God. Even if this sort of music is not to your taste, you have to admire his ambition, his talent, his love of music and love for God.

The LP album (vinyl) "Anything you Sow" is available on Amazon from Luaka Bop records.

"Believe in God", and "Anything you sow" are freely available to listen to on both YouTube and Spotify.

[Stephen Hutchinson]