
Newsletter #37

Friday 14th July to Friday 28th July 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 Rob Hughes for his contribution this week.

Kind Regards

Stephen Hutchinson (hutch@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org)

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Figure 1 Eccleston Church 1800

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 (assistants Julie Rowland and Steve Hutchinson)	EcclestonChurchWarden @ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

Lay Minister

Pulford/Eccleston	Jeanette Howe
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Planned Giving Officer / Treasurer

Pulford/Eccleston	Bridget Marsden	Treasurer @ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
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Safeguarding Officer

Pulford/Eccleston	Hilary Garrard	PccSafeguardingOfficer @ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
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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
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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 16 th July (Trinity 6)	9.45am Holy Communion	11.15am All-age Morning Worship
Sunday 23 rd July (Trinity 7)		11.15am Choral Holy Communion
Sunday 30 th July (Trinity 8)		11.15am Choral Holy Communion.
Sunday 6 th August (The Transfiguration)	9.45am Holy Communion	
Sunday 13 th August (Trinity 10)		11.15am Choral 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>

Important News and Reminders: Food Bank

A reminder from Rachel Williams. Here are a few of the facts being highlighted on the Foodbank website: 3507, Emergency Food Parcels issued in 6 months to 30 September 22 - up 60% on pre pandemic levels, 7617, Local people in crisis fed, 2828, Feeding the equivalent of 2828 local children. The charity is very grateful for all donations - but especially non cook items such as crackers, Ryvita, Fish/meat pastes, Instant pastas/rice/soups and toiletries (toothpaste and brushes). They have PLENTY of dried Pasta, Baked Beans

Urgently Wanted

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

Also Wanted

- 'Cuppa' Soup, Pot Noodles, Pasta Sauce, Biscuits, Breakfast Cereal

Rob Hughes Homily: 'Law or Love', or 'Law is Love'.

The legal system in Britain is the result of centuries of law creation, amendment and repeal, and the UK still has a few archaic pieces of legislation to prove it. For example, *it's true* that it's still against the law:

- To keep a whale as a pet (where would you put it?).
- To enter the Houses of Parliament wearing a suit of armour (**so you don't have to make excuses for not doing so anymore!**).
- Or to catch a sturgeon when out fishing (**as if you know what's on the hook until it's too late!! It is true, though, that the catch should be offered to the Crown**)

There are loads of myths, too, the best of these (in my view) being: that it's against the law to drop dead in parliament (**even though it might be perfectly understandable through sheer boredom... but in any case, what else could they do to you?**).

'Real' laws are, of course important - primarily to keep society on the straight and narrow. And 'The Law' was considered to be important in biblical times as well - mentioned no less than 420 times in the Old and New Testaments. St Thomas Aquinas, the medieval philosopher, explained that there are **three types** of biblical 'legal principles':

- moral (universal and unchanging, as matters of conscience)
- ceremonial (for example, the Jewish rituals and festivals)
- and judicial (enforced by the authorities).

So, in biblical texts, 'The Law' usually refers specifically to the first five books of the Old Testament – 'The Torah'. In simple terms the Jewish people as God's chosen people, believed that they had a covenant - a legally binding agreement - with God, and would receive God's favour and blessing by 'sticking to the rules'. So the laws were not 'regulations' laid down by tribal chiefs; they were regarded as a covenant between the people-of-God, and God Himself. So if they broke the law, they also broke the Covenant - and for a while, they used rituals, such as the sacrifice of animals, to try to put things right when they went astray. But blaming animals for the sins of their owners could never have been enough; the thorny issue of sinfulness needed to be addressed. The people needed a Saviour...

Jesus changed all this - not by "abolishing the (old) Law" - but by fulfilling it - interpreting the essence of the law in a different way - God's way!

Why? Because people had become rather prone to bending and re-interpreting the rules to suit themselves, so some important issues emerged - for them, then (as they do for us, today):

- Are laws meant to be absolute, or should they just be regarded as guidelines, and open to interpretation?
- Is it OK to break the 'absolute' if we 'stick to the essence' of the law?
- Which then begs further questions: who decides how far it's OK to bend the rules, and under what circumstances?

St Paul adds a potential complication by saying this: "*Owe no one anything, except to love one another; **for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law***". It's important to remember the context here: Paul is addressing people who know that they receive forgiveness through God's Grace, not by obeying regulations; **forgiven people** who needed to understand the difference between:

- Trying to **merit** God's forgiveness by simply 'being good, and doing good' (we're unable ever to **do** enough),
- **Accepting** God's forgiveness simply because He is kind, and merciful, and that is his way.

At first glance, Paul could be saying "forget the old rules, and do this instead"... But that's not so. He's neither denying nor disparaging the law. In fact, he implies here, and elsewhere in his writings (eg *Romans 7:7-12*), that we wouldn't even know the difference between good and evil unless we had 'moral law' (guiding) and 'judicial law' (telling) us what we should, or should not, do. He knew about a separate conversation that Jesus had had with His disciples, in which He said: "*A new command I give you: Love one another. **As I have loved you, so you must love one another***". (*John 13:34*).

So, if we truly love God and love one another (as Christ loves us), we simply wouldn't want to harm, or cause offence to, anybody. We wouldn't want to break any moral, ethical or judicial laws. It's that simple, in principle, and cuts through anything else we might worry about, or debate, or try to understand or circumvent.

But this remains a **very tall order** in practice! We live in a society (indeed, in a world) full of threats, uncertainties and contradictions; rules, regulations and emergency measures. We have no control over any of them, so we're unable to predict, or in any way try to 'legislate for', a future that has yet to unfold. Facing uncertainty, calm and unafraid, is only possible when we commit to loving and trusting God, and to loving and supporting each other in the Faith.

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul tells us what's required (*1 Corinthians 13*). we must:

- Always strive to be patient and kind in a society that's often frustrated and angry.
- Put the needs of others first, in a society that's generally self-seeking.
- Be forgiving, in the face of injustice, or ambivalence
- Take responsibility for ourselves, our families and each other, in a culture that generally seeks to 'pass the buck' to someone else.
- Remain faithful, trusting, hopeful and persevering, even when we might become exhausted in the trying.

That's not an easy path to tread; because the challenge of following Christ goes way beyond being passive observers (for example, 'loving others' in the sense of 'doing them no wrong'); it's a call for positive, proactive, action. So, are we up to the challenge of demonstrating our love and care for others? Forgiving each other, as God forgives us? Supporting each other, as He supports us - without condition?

In truth, it is all-too-often easier for us to justify whatever we do by interpreting 'the law' to suit ourselves. But discipleship makes us subject to God's Law above all else - not as a legal agreement, but as a way of living... We should keep it because **we want to**, not because we **have to** (Psalm 40:8 "I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart"); and because we **love** God, and want to do things His way. And we have his grace to encourage and help us.

So, we pray:

Loving Lord, give us the faith that overcomes the world and enables us to face both life and death, calm and unafraid. Give us the hope that looks beyond this mortal life and grasps hold of the things unseen and eternal. Give us the love that binds us more closely to one another, and to you, our risen Lord, ... to whom be all glory and praise, dominion and power, now and forever.

Amen

[Rob Hughes]

Crossword: Matthew Chapter 13

As we are reading from Matthew Chapter 13 at the moment, what better way to test your knowledge than a crossword based on Matthew Chapter 13.

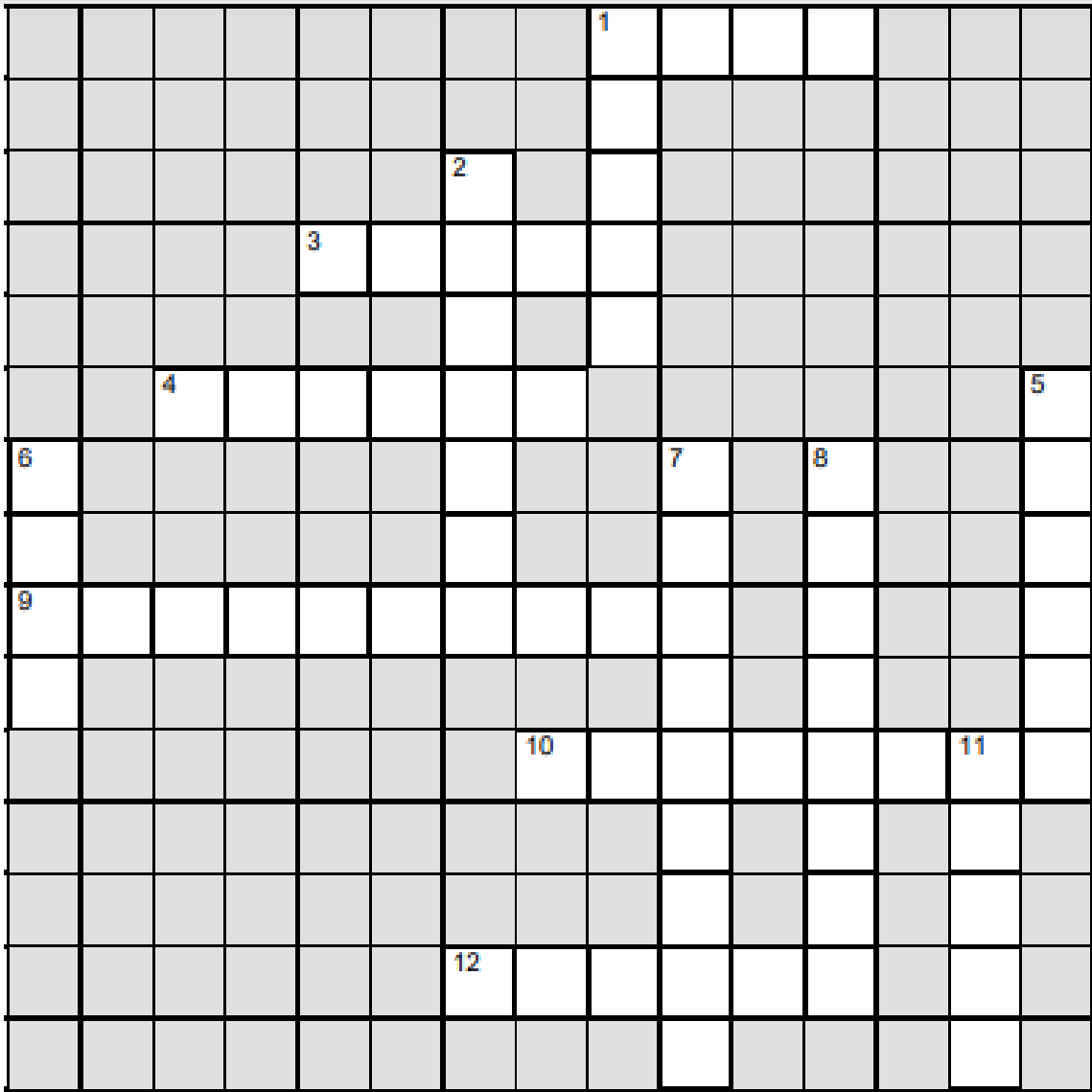
Across

- 1** What did Jesus get into when large crowds gathered by the lake? (4)
- 3** What did Jesus say the field was in the weed parable? (5)
- 4** One of Jesus brothers? (6)
- 9** The man who hears the words like the seed amongst thorns, is eventually what? (10)
- 10** What happens to rocky placed plants in the sun? (8)
- 12** Who were the harvesters? (6)

Down

- 1** What took the seed from the path? (5)
- 2** Who is not without honour? (7)
- 5** Who will the angels separate from the righteous? (6)
- 6** How many brothers did Jesus have? (4)
- 7** According to Isaiah what had the peoples hearts become? (9)
- 8** What did not do many of, due to lack of faith? (8)

- 11** Who sowed the weeds amongst the wheat? (5)



The Only News I Know: Poem by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)



The only news I know
Is bulletins all day
From immortality;

The only shows I see
Tomorrow and today,
Perchance eternity.

The only one I meet
Is God, the only street
Existence; this traversed,

If other news there be
Or admirabler show,
I'll tell it you.

Contemporary Christian Music Song of the week:

My contemporary Christian Music Song this week is 'Holy' by Steffany Gretzinger.

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/pveuLGdpKCc>

Spotify: <https://spotify.link/EIQwUqY7IBb>

Christian Painting of the week. The plains of heaven by John Martin (1789-1854)



This is the second picture by John Martin in a series of 3 paintings. Unlike the other 2 paintings which depicted fire, lava, death and destruction, this painting shows peace and harmony. The sheer vastness of the landscape is breathtaking. This celestial landscape represents salvation. There are poets and artists seen in white on the crest of the hill in the foreground of the picture. Behind them stretches a deep blue expanse of a heavenly lake, filled with rushing water of the distant falls, and surrounded by majestic mountain scenery. The painting is approximately 2m by 3m and very similar in style to a Turner landscape.

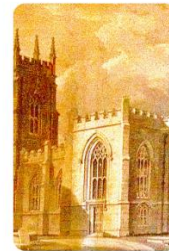
The 3 paintings fell out of favour after the artists death, and were apparently rolled up and stored in a warehouse until they were sold at auction in 1935 for £7. The paintings were then purchased by the Tate Gallery in 1945.



WELCOME TO

ST MARY'S CHURCH

ECCLESTON / CHESTER



WELCOME TO ST MARY'S

Thank you for visiting St Mary's today. We are proud to be the heart of our village community, a place of peace and sanctuary, proving a space to encounter God in all walks of life. We hope you have enjoyed your visit. If you have any questions, please contact rector@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org



"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."
2 Corinthians 9:7-8

Gifts to our church are a response to God's generosity to us, and enable us to live out Christ's story in our local community.

If you would like to give a gift to St Mary's Church, simply scan your phone camera here:



Alternatively, if you would like to give directly to our church, our details are:

Sort Code:
60-40-08
Account Number:
79937926
Account Name:
Eccleston and Pulford Churches.

Cash donations are still gratefully received too.
Thank you for all you're able to give.