

Friday 24th November to Friday 8th December 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)

Contents

Parish information.....	3
Church Service Dates Times and Locations.....	4
Important News and Reminders	5
Food Bank.....	5
Rob Hughes Homily: Christ King?	6
Official Facebook pages for Eccleston Church and Pulford Church:.....	9
Pulford Church Statues.	10
Religious Painting of the week: Caravaggio's "The Conversion on the way to Damascus"	11
Adverts.	13
Pulford and Poulton Local History Group Talks (Held at Pulford Village Hall)	13
Pulford Church App	13
Christmas Fair November 25 th Eccleston Village Hall	14
Reader/Intercessor/Sidesperson Rota	15

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	Jeanette @ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
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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	Safeguarding @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 PULFORD	St Mary's ECCLESTON
Sun 26th Nov. Christ the King		11.15am HC
Sun 3rd Dec. 1 st of Advent	9.45am HC	3pm Christingle (3pm Eccleston Village Hall, 4pm Eccleston Church)
Sun 10th Dec. 2 nd of Advent		11.15am HC
Sun 17th Dec. 3 rd of Advent	9.45am HC & 6pm Carol Service.	
Sun 24th Dec. Christmas Eve	Midnight HC 11.15 PM	11.15 AM HC & 4 PM Crib Service
25th Dec Christmas Day		10am HC
31st Dec. 1 st of Christmas		11.15am HC

HC = Holy Communion, **MW** = Morning Worship.

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

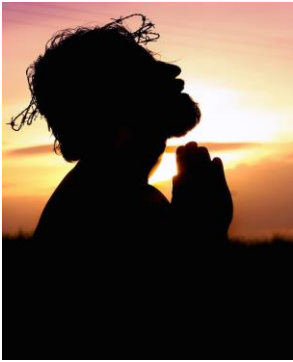
- Tinned Meat and Fish, Tomatoes, Desserts & Potatoes, UHT Milk & Juice, Custard, Small Jars Instant Coffee, Jams and Spreads, Instant Mashed, Cereal Bars, Instant Pasta & Instant Noodles

Also Wanted

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

Rachel would like to especially thank everyone from both Churches and Ecclestone Primary School for their spectacular generosity during the Harvest Festival Service. Between the school and the parishes a massive 135kg of food was given to be distributed locally.

Rob Hughes Homily: Christ King?



2000 years ago, and according to Roman imperial belief, the emperor was not simply the ruler of Rome; he was, as the 'son of Apollo', divine. So, for the empire's Jewish subjects, Pilate was seen not only as the local governor on behalf of Rome - he represented the will of an 'emperor-god'.

In order to celebrate the Feast of the Passover, (even then) there could be up to 200,000 Jews in Jerusalem - and this situation was seen (by Pilate and Rome) as an ideal opportunity to stamp their authority on the maximum number of people. The Governor of Judea would be escorted by cohorts of armed Roman soldiers - with full pomp and ceremony - literally hundreds of marching men, in full armour, carrying weapons and shields, to the beating of drums and sounding of horns; dust and noise that would intimidate the dead. The people lining the streets were probably silent, unless paid for (or threatened into) cheering.

The New Testament relates an entirely different picture upon 'the same day' 2000 years ago - and tells of an itinerant preacher riding into town on a donkey, at a time when Jesus of Nazareth was at the very least seen as having a reputation for healing the sick, possessing 'power' beyond that which was considered normal; and maybe, just maybe, having the potential to lead some sort of insurrection...



The expectations of some would have been, simply: 'let's see what this is all about'; others would have just wanted to get out of the way of the Romans at the West Gate. Some would have been hoping for, if not anticipating, the coming of a saviour. Whilst probably hoping for a warrior-king who would finally free them from the cruelties of the Roman occupation.



Either way, there appears to have been sincere cheering, and waving of palms of victory. But I doubt that anyone would have expected what they saw - a rather ordinary-looking man, in simple robes, riding on the back of a donkey.

Two parades on the same day.... At the same time, or in quick succession? That detail that doesn't matter:

- **One was a noisy affair**, an army trying to intimidate the crowds with the sound of marching soldiers, armed to the teeth dressed in clanking armour.
 - The crowds would probably have been largely silent, but inwardly-resentful and unwelcoming - maybe even inwardly-hostile, to the 'same old message'. All in the name of an '*emperor-god*'
- **The other was a once-off affair**; a gentle man riding a donkey, accompanied by his friends-on-foot.
 - But it was this crowd that was ecstatic - clamouring and shouting, whilst paving the way with palms - in anticipation of some sort of victory - as if welcoming a *warrior-king*.

So it was that Jesus ended up head-to-head with Pilate. And from Pilate's perspective, Jesus was just a man - an uneducated lowly provincial 'hick', with some odd and dangerous religious ideas (dangerous to him, that is).

The very idea that Jesus could be a legitimate king or have any right to talk about truth, would have seemed (to Pilate) utterly absurd. So, when he insisted on the inscription "Jesus the Nazarene - King of the Jews", that was purely ironic (and, albeit grudging, respect)!

INRI

I = IESUS (Jesus)
N = NAZARENVS
(The Nazarene)
R = Rex (King)
I = IVDAEORUM (Jews)

So, in what sense is Jesus a King? Well, let's substitute the word 'king' with the phrase 'supreme leader'... In every sense, Jesus Christ is just that - Our Supreme Leader, not only for our spiritual lives, but also in our personal- and social lives. So, Christ's leadership 'style' isn't a style at all - it's an invitation to, and example of, a way of living. And the truth of that could only be finally revealed in the way he suffered and died (by Roman-style execution) on a cross, and in the company of other broken human beings.

I'm not in any way trying to redefine new ways to describe our Christian faith in terms of the leadership we experience from Jesus, the Christ. Though The Letter to the Hebrews says this, ***"Jesus leads us in faith and completes our faith"*** (12:2).

Jesus Christ is literally King (supreme leader as head) of The Kingdom of God - which includes everyone, everywhere all the time, and forever.

The Kingdom of God isn't defended, or in any way 'policed', by armies, nor influenced by bureaucracies; it's a kingdom of:

Inner peace, in spite of hardships

- Inner joy, in the face of sadness
- Unconditional love, in a world full of hatred and division
- Courage, in the face of danger
- Faith and Hope in the face of uncertainties
- Unconditional forgiveness (even if we're unforgiven in an unforgiving world).

We're left to answer for ourselves the questions: "What sort of kingdom do we want to live in?". And, frankly, are we willing to pay the price of serving God's Kingdom - which is "not of this world"? If we say yes to God's Kingdom, and the Kingship of Jesus Christ, the rewards are simply-stated - an inner contentment, and inner strength, that can overcome the worst of the realities of living in difficult times. This is the 'Peace of God, which passes all understanding'.

To experience it, and whilst we have the freedom to be ourselves, we must do our best to follow the example of Jesus Christ, and the way of The Cross - Living God's way, and living for each other - supporting and sharing who we are, as well as what we have, in His name.

New Testament scholar N.T. Wright says: "What you do in the present—by painting, preaching, singing, sewing...building hospitals, digging wells, campaigning for justice, writing poems... loving your neighbour as yourself—will last into God's future ('forever'). These activities are not simply ways of making the present life a little less beastly...They are part of what we may call building for God's Kingdom."

Lord God, may our prayer be one of respect and gratitude that our leader is not only Jesus Christ - King - but Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Amen

[Rob Hughes]

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>

If there is anyone who would like to volunteer to be our church Facebook administrator, please email me at

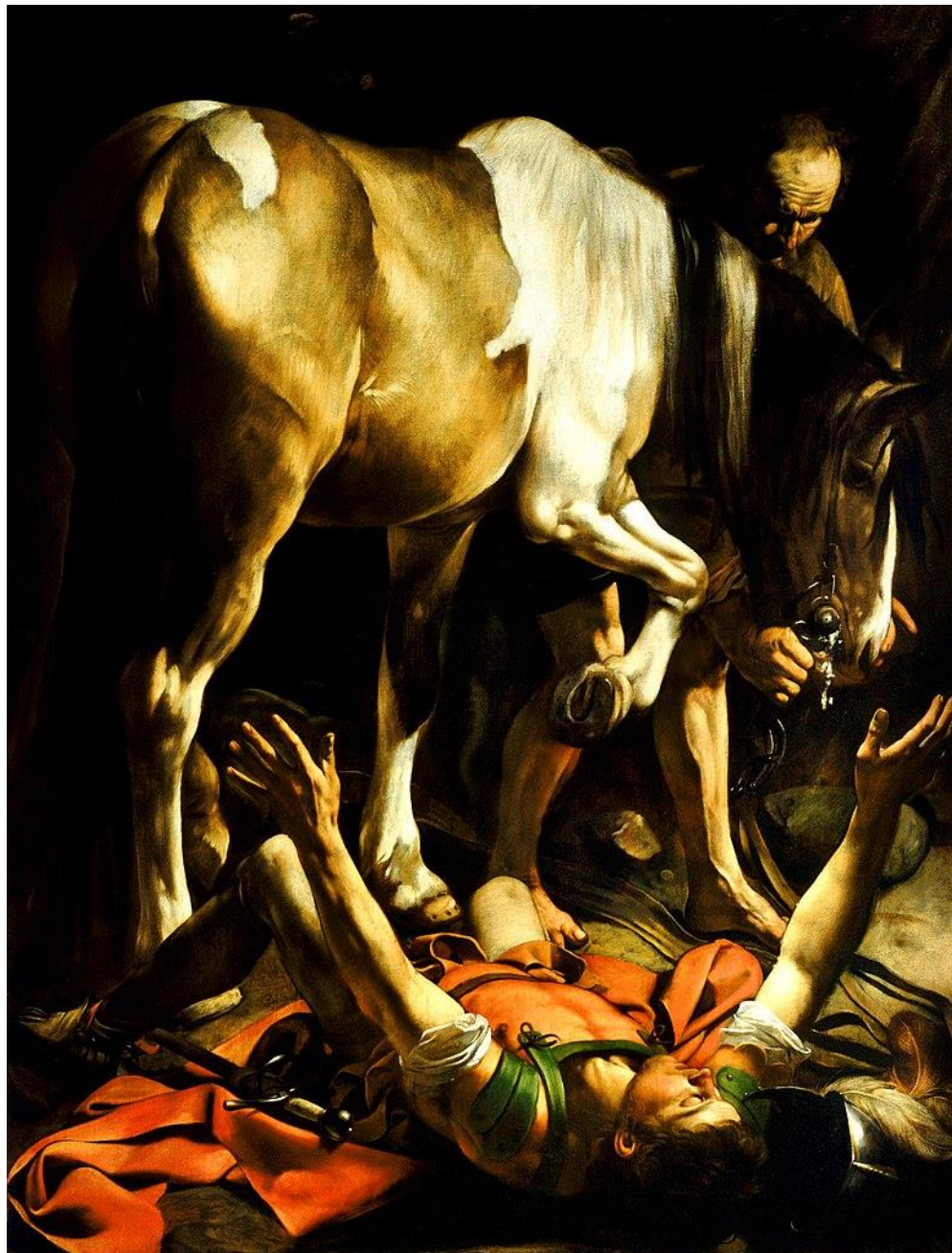
admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

Pulford Church Statues.

I thought people might be interested to see these beautiful sculptures of St Joseph and the Virgin Mary that belong to Pulford Church. I was wondering if anyone knows the history of these sculptures?



Religious Painting of the week: Caravaggio's "The Conversion on the way to Damascus".



This painting depicts the moment when Paul, on his way to Damascus, sees God (1 Corinthians 9:1). After this revelation, he becomes convinced that God chose Jesus to be the promised messiah. Instead of persecuting Christians, for the next 20 years he establishes churches in Asia Minor and Europe.

Caravaggio's first version of Paul's conversion was rejected. The painting above is the second version.

The beauty of this painting is that the more you study it, the more is revealed. What at first sight depicts the conversion of Paul, shows so much more when studied. The very way Paul is depicted, on his back helpless as the newborn Jesus was at the Nativity, a baby in a manger, yet with his arms simultaneously outflung, as Christ's were on the cross.

The imposing figure of the horse appears to dominate the painting, its head and its groom shrouded in shadow.

Here we see Caravaggio's genius in depicting scenes from the Bible. We see extreme contrasts of light and dark, the light suggesting divinity.

The setting is intentionally vague. Is this scene actually in a stable? The dirt floor emphasizes Paul's humanity. Although Paul was Jewish, he was a Roman citizen, not a Roman soldier, so by dressing Paul as a Roman Soldier, Caravaggio is alluding to the persecution of Jesus by the Roman Soldiers and that which will later be inflicted on Paul himself.

Adverts.

There have been several requests to return to including adverts in the Parish Newsletter. If anyone would like to advertise, please email:

admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

Pulford and Poulton Local History Group Talks (Held at Pulford Village Hall)

There will be a Quiz and Buffet at Pulford Village Hall (CH4 9ES) on **Wednesday 17th January** at 7.30pm. Tickets are £8 and can be purchased in advance from the Pulford and Poulton Local History Group. Email: info@pplhg.org.uk for details.

Their website is available at <https://pplhg.org.uk>

Pulford Church App

A Pulford Church tour guide is available for Android Phones only.

[Click here for Pulford Church Tour Guide for Android Phones](#)

Christmas Fair November 25th Eccleston Village Hall



Christmas FAIR
SAT. NOVEMBER 25TH
12PM - 3PM
ECCLESTON VILLAGE
HALL

Mulled wine and mince pies,
tombola, gift stall,
Book stall,
Cake stall,
Hamper Raffle,
hot dog & pork/apple/stuffing
rolls,
brie and grape rolls,
guess the weight of a cake,
guess the teddy's name,

Reader/Intercessor/Sidesperson Rota

At the last PCC meeting it was suggested that Eccleston Church return to having a sidesperson. It was suggested that either the reader or prayer lead for the service act as sidesperson to make things easy. If someone is already available to read then it saves having to try and organize an additional rota for sidespeople.

Duties of the sidesperson include

- ***greeting people*** as they enter the church
- ***handing out hymn books/service sheets***
- ***inviting people to communion (for Holy Communion Services)***
- ***counting the total number in the congregation.***
- ***Putting the correct hymn numbers in the hymn boards.***

If any of the readers/intercessors do not want to appear as sidesperson, please let me know

by emailing me at admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

The Rota for readers/intercessors and sidespeople will be available live at:

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