

Friday 19th January to Friday 2nd February 2024



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 is also 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 and also to Helen Allison for providing the article written by Peter Jackson.

When driving to Eccleston / Pulford Church on Sunday watch out for the pot holes on the roads, especially on Eaton Rd and Rake Lane.

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: Alpha and Omega Beginnings and Endings.	6
Rectors of Eccleston Part 3&4 – Ralph Lowndes 1685 to 1689.....	9
Official Facebook pages for Eccleston Church and Pulford Church:.....	11
Children's Book Recommendation.	11
Foxhills Events.....	12
Adverts.	13
Pulford and Poulton Local History Group Talks (Held at Pulford Village Hall).....	13
Pulford Church App	13
Reader/Intercessor/Sidesperson Rota.....	14

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 & Steve Hutchinson)	EcclestonChurchWarden @ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

Licensed 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 Officers

Pulford/Eccleston	Jeanette Howe/Hilary Garard	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.**

Date	St Mary's PULFORD	St Mary's ECCLESTON	Reader	Prayers	Sides-person
Sun 21 st Jan	9.45am HC		Jane Yeoward	Rob Hughes	Jane Yeoward
Sun 21 st Jan		11.15am All Age	Clare Willan	TBC	
Sun 28 th Jan		11.15am HC	Garth	Mo	Garth
Sun 4 th Feb	9.45am HC		Paul Williams	Margaret Walker	Paul Williams
Sun 11 th Feb		11.15am HC	Penny Brett Roberts	Steve Hutch	Steve Hutch
Wed 14 th Feb					
Sun 18 th Feb	9.45am HC		Sue	Jane Yeoward	Sue
Sun 18 th Feb		11.15am All Age	TBC	TBC	Jeanette

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

*N.B. Communion will **not** be served at **All Age** services. These are services aimed at a younger audience. The prayers, sermons and hymns will be much shorter and aimed at a younger audience.*

An up-to-date rota for readers/intercessors and sidespeople (including the passages to be read) can be found at:

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

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: Alpha and Omega Beginnings and Endings.

Aα

How time flies! It doesn't seem like twelve months since the beginning of 2023, does it!! On the one hand, this is a time for the usual new year celebrations for "us"; on the other hand, this new year heralds the continuation of violence and struggle for many people, in many countries throughout the world. Especially so in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. And we all hope and pray for the cessation of violence, and increasing support for the injured, homeless and refugees, of course, who may see their current situation as hopeless. But it's not!

It occurs to me that the Bible has a lot to say about "beginnings" - and endings, too, for example in:

- Genesis – *In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth*
- Ecclesiastes: *to everything there is a season, and a time for everything under the sun: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to kill and a time to heal...a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.*
- The Gospel of St John: *"In the beginning was the Word – and the Word was with God, and the Word was God – and without him was not anything made that was made"*.
- The Revelation of St John: talks about the end of the universe, the end of time that will be ushered in with much suffering and death actually a 'love story' that speaks of great hope.

It's all pretty heady stuff, but I am somewhat relieved when I can also read simple statements that I think I can more readily understand. Specifically, when we read about God being described as the Alpha and the Omega - the beginning and the end. And it's in "John One-One" that we learn that Christ (The Word) was not so much there FROM the very beginning - but He WAS the Beginning. He preceded the "Big Bang", so to speak; He has always been, and He always will be.

- Beginnings and endings are often difficult, aren't they? Childbirth (is usually ushered-in with "labor pains"; new relationships can be awkward and unpredictable - even 'rocky' at times; the birth of freedom usually comes with much sacrifice and violence - witness so many so-called Revolutionary Wars, and national protests throughout the world denouncing oppressive governance.
- Endings such as the end of a relationship are rarely without hurt and pain; the end of the second world war was the consequence of great loss of life; the endings of oppressive regimes also come about during painful and bloody change (we've seen it in recent history; we're seeing it now); the end of mortal life is nearly always accompanied by grief and mourning.
- But when The book of Revelation says of Jesus "I am the Alpha and the Omega - the beginning and the end", he is saying, in modern language, Jesus has all knowledge, and our "A to Z". Therefore we should recognise Him as:
 1. The Alpha of creation. The famous Scientist (and Christian) Sir Isaac Newton, (remember the apple and gravity story?) said, "***This most beautiful system*** [The Universe] ***could only proceed from the dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.***" - In other words, not only does our world have a beginning, it has a beginning in Jesus - the first and the last, the beginning and the end. And since that is the case, Jesus has authority over His creation.

The alpha of history. As John tells us: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without him was not anything made that was made.”* Echoing the first words of Genesis, these verses tell us that Jesus Christ is God, and, again, He is the beginning of all things. Everything has been, and will always be, held together by His power and love.

And the alpha and omega of our salvation. At Christmas time and throughout the Easter season, we hear these words: *“God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”* It follows on therefore that as Jesus has the authority to forgive our sins, He is also the alpha of our resurrection, and the omega of our salvation.

When push comes to shove, when Revelation says this: *“I am the Alpha and Omega”*, we have to realise that it's only in Christ that we can have true identity and purpose, with the absolute assurance of His forgiveness and support. Jesus proved to the world (through His death and resurrection) **who He really is**. This is really Good News for those who follow Christ's lead...

Unfortunately, there are many who don't. Which is why, as practicing Christians, we must not only live a life of hope-full-ness and love, we must also get the good news 'out there' - and to demonstrate what it means to live our lives in the absolutely **certain hope**, offered by “The Alpha and The Omega”.

Jesus Christ, Alpha and Omega, Wonderful counsellor, you order all things with your wisdom: help your Church Universal to reveal the mystery of your eternal love, from the beginning to the end, and fill all the Church with the Spirit of hope and truth.

[Rob Hughes 19/01/2024]

Ωω

Rectors of Eccleston Part 3&4 – Ralph Lowndes 1685 to 1689

(These fascinating articles originally appeared in the May and April 2009 editions of the Parish News. They were written by Peter Jackson and kindly submitted for re-publishing by Helen Allison)

William Bispham, who had been evicted in 1644, was restored to the living in 1660 at the Restoration of the Monarchy. He remained until his death in 1685 when he was succeeded by one Ralph Lowndes, a native of Middlewich – who, oddly enough, was to suffer the same fate as Bispham, being evicted in 1690 albeit for a wholly different reason.

At this point a note on the Monarch is necessary. This was King James the Second, who attempted, by arbitrary means, to restore Catholicism in England. He imprisoned certain Bishops in the Tower, and they were subsequently tried on charges of seditious libel. They were acquitted – much to the joy of the populace. The rightful heir to the throne was Mary, elder daughter of James, who was married to William of Orange, then the most powerful Protestant in Europe. Powerful factions in England invited William and Mary to succeed, and James left for France. William and Mary landed with a large army, but there was no opposition and the Revolution was, to all intents and purposes, bloodless. William insisted on being King, and so he and Mary became the first and only joint Monarchy in history.

The clergy were required to take the oath of Allegiance to William and Mary, but some 400 – including eight Bishops – refused on the grounds that it would break their previous Oath to James the Second. The deprived Bishops were Canterbury, Bath and Wells, Ely, Peterborough, Norwich, Gloucester, Chichester and Worcester. The Bishop of Chester had followed James to France and may have been a sympathizer. All were evicted by Act of Parliament. They were still regarded as their lawful Bishops by the evicted clergy who began to appoint successors in secret. They adapted the Liturgy to their own purposes.

Lowndes was not restored, but it has been suggested that he revoked his refusal after the demise of James, William and Mary but this is a matter for research.

Although Lowndes was a non-juror refusing to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, there is some evidence that he may have revoked his refusal by Penitential Confession in 1690. This is conjecture however, and it is possible that the confession is the work of an older relative of the same name.

The hinge or frontier when Western man crossed from medieval preponderance of superstition into a more logical understanding based on experiment, lay in the 17th Century. What started then has continued at an ever-accelerating rate and has resulted in the scientific age in which we now live.

In 1649, an experimental Philosophical Club met at Oxford and this was to be the foundation of the Royal Society. The club moved to London (Gresham College) in 1658 and was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1661. Early members included Pepys, Evelyn, Ward and Hook. Membership was not restricted to scientists until the beginning of the 19th Century. A list of members in the late 17th Century shows a wide range of professions but, as John Aubrey (Brief Lives), himself a member, has pointed out, very little scientific knowledge then existed and it was possible for any man, though untutored, to encompass and appreciate the scientific knowledge of the day. Scientists now pursue very narrow lines of research and the Royal Society has become the highest intellectual body in Britain, and possible the world.

Ralph Lowndes was proposed for membership of the society in 1696 by one R. Southwell, Secretary of State, PC and Diplomat. I was hopeful that we should find him to be a scientist. The Royal Society confirmed that he was known to them though not as a scientist. Additionally, I found that he was never formally admitted and there is no record that he even paid his subscription. The subscription was £12 per annum, the equivalent in modern real terms of some £1500. No wonder he didn't subscribe.

I shall return to this theme anon particularly as the first Secretary of the Experimental Society was John Wilkins, who later, in 1668, became Bishop of Chester. He was a man of great interest who might even be called the Patrick Moore of the 17th Century.

[Peter Jackson. April/May 2009]

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>

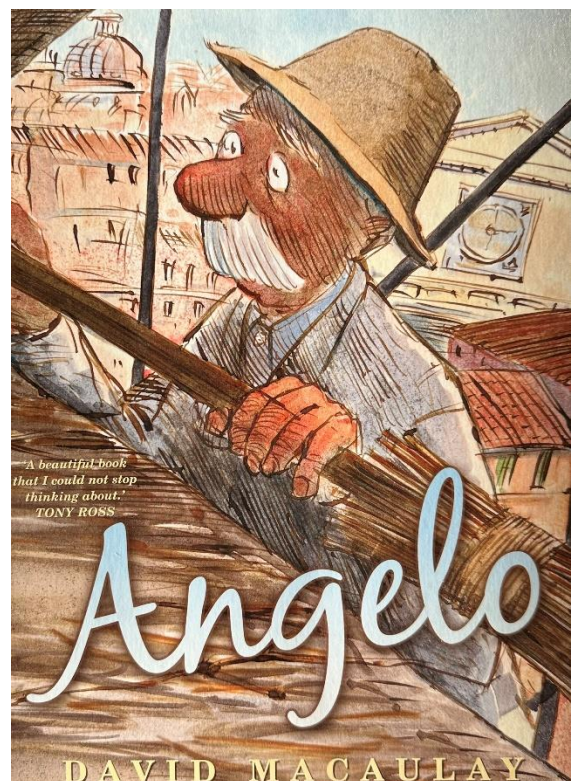
If there is anyone who would like to volunteer to be our church Facebook administrator, please email me at

admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

Children's Book Recommendation.

Angelo by David Macaulay is a lovely story about an old man who comes to the aid of a little pigeon he finds while carrying out repair work on the roof of a lovely old church.

It's a sad but heartfelt story with some astonishingly beautiful artwork that will be appreciated by all ages, not just children.



Foxhills Events

To Print off a full list of foxhills you can download their brochure from the following link: [Foxhills events. – ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org](https://www.foxhillchester.co.uk/foxhills-events)

There are some upcoming “encounter” days on *Wednesday 24th January* entitled “*He shall direct your path...*” and *Friday 23rd February* “*His steadfast love endures...*” From the Foxhills website....

“Encounter days are all about connecting more deeply with God.

How do you most readily experience a sense of God’s presence?

Some people love silence and long for space to simply be. Others find silence difficult, almost physically painful.

In our Encounter Days there will always be lots of space for quiet for those who value the silence, but we also recognise that not everyone processes internally.

We want to encourage additional ways of seeking a sense of God’s presence which might include discussion, prayer, or walking in a group or with another, making or listening to music, making or creating something, reflection using writing or reading.

£27 per person - Includes lunch and refreshments.

~ Special Offer ~

If, in one transaction, you book five Encounter Days for 2024, you will only pay for four. This applies to both individuals or a group booking - only when booked directly through Foxhill and paid by BACS payment, cheque or cash.”

Contact details for Foxhills are:

<https://www.foxhillchester.co.uk>

phone: 01928 733777

Address: Tarvin Rd, Frodsham WA6 6XB

Email: Foxhill@chester.anglican.org

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 talk on “**Neston Colliery**” at Pulford Village Hall (CH4 9ES) on **Wednesday 21st February** at 7.30pm. Tickets are £5 (non-members) and £3 for members. For details of up-and-coming lectures please contact 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](#)

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)***
- ***recording 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 is accessible at:

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