

Wrexham

Mission Area

News



No. 26
Advent 2020

Jonathan Smith writes ...

Welcome to the Advent edition of Mission Area News. As a church, we get to start our new year a month early with the hopeful season of Advent. After the past year, we should be grateful for that opportunity to begin again.

No one had been on the training course entitled: 'How to do Church in a Pandemic'. It has been amazing to see how our church communities have coped and even flourished in the world of coronavirus. In this Mission Area, I believe we have 'responded' well and I would like to offer thanks and appreciation to everyone who has made that possible.

As we look forward with whispers of a vaccine in the air and the tantalising possibility of life returning to something approaching normal in 2021, we need to consider the next "R", "recovery". How do we begin to get the rich fabric of church life up and running again as the restrictions on our lives ease? What do we take up again? What do we leave behind? What do we start which is new? There is a further 'R', reconstruct. It is often said that continental Europe did better in the years following the second world war because so much infrastructure had been destroyed, it had to reconstruct everything to a new and better standard whereas Britain where there was less destruction simply refurbished what it had. What approach should we take longer term? How much should we retain from the pre-covid world and what should be a fresh construction? These kinds of questions will come to the fore as we undertake a diocesan review of our Mission Area in the early summer of 2021.

Thank you to those who shared their thoughts in our mini review prompted by Sam and Chris' departure. The upshot of that was a desire for our basic structure to remain unchanged and to reappoint to All Saints' and Holy Trinity. As you read this, their new vicar will be about to be announced. The challenge of this decision will be the payment of our Mission Area share to the diocese, just over £228,000 for 2021. We agreed amongst ourselves that we needed to investigate the charitable status of six of our churches and halls, something which has been made more pressing by the pandemic.



Banner from St. Margaret's showing the arrival of Margaret from Scotland to marry King Malcolm of Hungary, 1070

Photo: Jonathan Smith

I am grateful to the Wrexham Parochial Education Foundation who are working with Church Army to maintain the "Centre of Mission". Under the plans, Josh Smith will become 'Lead Evangelist' and a 'Pioneer Evangelist' will be appointed to work alongside him. Please pray for this work and the further development of the Tin Can Youth Centre to share the gospel of Jesus with young people who are a long way from our churches.

Thank you to all those who represent their churches on the MA Conference. We have had 4 interesting and stimulating meetings this year, one by Zoom. Get in touch with Ann Owen (contact details on the back page) if you would like to see copies of the minutes. All are welcome to the meetings and to contribute although voting is restricted to the representatives from each church chosen by their annual vestry meetings.

I hope the pandemic and its restrictions may help us to keep a more penitential Advent this year as we prepare to celebrate the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nadolig Llawen, Happy Christmas

Jonathan

All Saints' and Holy Trinity

All Saints'

All Saints' and Holy Trinity are awaiting the appointment of a new vicar. Jonathan Smith, our Mission Area Leader, has kindly provided the following account of the appointment procedure.

How is a new vicar chosen?

Unlike some Christian denominations, notably the Methodists and the Salvation Army, Anglican clergy do not usually have fixed terms of office apart from their curacy (apprenticeship). Vicars are by and large left to discern for themselves under the guidance of the Holy Spirit when it is right for them to move on and to where. Research conducted by the Ven. Bob Jackson has shown that the most fruitful period of a vicar's ministry is 7-12 years in post. His work also discovered that vacancies should be kept short if church growth was to be maintained. (*The Road to Growth*: Church House Publishing 2005)

In the past, the appointment of a new vicar was at the behest of the bishop perhaps on the advice of his archdeacons and the patrons of a living. It was a bit like moving the chess pieces around on the board. In Wales, private patronage went with disestablishment and was replaced with a complicated system of "turns" for the right to appoint shared between bishop, diocese and province. Today, it is a more open process. Most posts are advertised on the diocesan website and often in the Church Times (both in print and online). A profile of the post is prepared including considerable information about the church(es) in question, the mission area and the local area. This is made available to those who show interest in the post. Informal chats may also take place with local clergy and archdeacons. At the closing date for applications, a short list will be drawn up by the bishop's staff team and the candidates invited to view the churches, meet the wardens and members of the MA team. A formal interview will then take place with the bishop, the relevant archdeacon, the MA leader and representatives from the churches. A decision is reached by consensus. The successful candidate is offered the post and others given feedback and support.

In the case of Holy Trinity and All Saints, there was an initial pause while we reassessed resources as an MA (see previous edition of MA News). Given the present financial restraints on the diocese, the post was to be advertised internally only. At least three clergy showed interest but only one had applied by the closing date of November 16. The candidate will however go through the interview process. If successful, the bishop will ask for the announcement of the move to be made simultaneously both in the mission area the candidate is leaving and here in Wrexham. If the appointment is not made, the process will be repeated in the new year, possibly with a wider net.

While this may look very much like the recruitment in secular employment, it does give all key interested parties a say. If everyone is praying, it is a process through which God can work.

Jonathan



The High Altar,
All Saints. Christmas
2019
Photo: Nick Roe

Holy Trinity



Although the church was closed during lockdown, our car park was open and a dedicated group of “young” enthusiastic people decided to put on their working boots, pick up the gardening gear and get to work cleaning up the car park. The photo shows just a few of the workers. Our thanks go to all who helped with this tremendous task. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Photos: Mandy Roberts



This is a photo of the Memorial Gardens in Rhostyllen just after a short service of Remembrance on 8 November, led by The Revd. Jo Mackriell

Photo: Beryl Edwards

Online Worship

During Lockdown many churches everywhere have developed online worship, reaching many who do not normally go to church, as well as regular worshippers who are unable to attend. Here is a list of online worship available from Wrexham Mission Area churches.

St Margaret & St Mark

Sunday service on the church Facebook sites at 4.00pm each Sunday and then available on their web pages.

A 40 minute service of the word featuring a sermon and music digitally recorded by the choir of St Margaret's and contemporary music from Josh Smith and friends at the Tin Can.

St James & St John

Sunday Service on Facebook available at 10.00am each Sunday and then available on their web pages.

A 30 minute service of the word with a sermon and gentle contemporary worship music.

St Giles'

Sunday Service recorded live at the church each Sunday morning and uploaded to You Tube in the afternoon. Also available on the church Facebook site and their web pages.

A traditional Eucharist with hymns and sermon. Evening Prayer is also available on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays each week on the same platforms.

The Facebook sites for each church are easily accessed by googling 'Facebook'. It is easier if you are a Facebook user already.

Google "You Tube St Giles Wrexham" to find the channel.

Everything is available on the web sites to view without strings attached although there may be some delay in the material being put up.

Go to the Mission Area Web page: <https://plwyfwreccsam.org.uk/> and click on the church in question.

Hope Street update (see previous Mission Area News)

The Hope Street project continues to move forward towards an opening at the end of January 2021. Since arriving in the summer the team have been working on building a foundation in prayer by meeting regularly to pray for Wrexham, finding ways to meet people and build friendships; and serving Wrexham. In November people have continued to explore the big questions of life and faith through Alpha online, with an online Holy Spirit day taking place on Saturday 21 Nov. The team are making plans for what will no doubt be an unusual Christmas this year, with online carols planned for the 13th December.

Work continues on the refurbishment of 1 Hope Street with an expected completion at the end of the year. November has seen a transformation in the outside appearance of the building with the replacement of the shopfront, generating a good deal of curiosity and interest from passers-by in the town centre and on social media.

Andy Kitchen

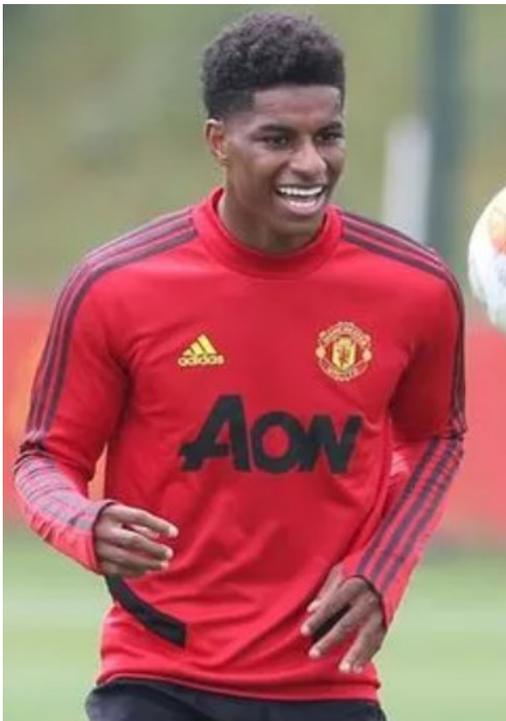
Child Poverty

St. Mark's has continued to be active in projects in the Caia Park community addressing child poverty. Our particular contribution, as many readers will know, was to head up efforts to address Holiday Hunger using a scheme devised by the Diocese of St. Asaph Engagement Officer, Sarah Wheat. Earlier in 2020 our fellow agencies asked Jonathan to write to government ministers, and we were delighted that the Welsh Government ensured that Wales was the first of the nations of the United Kingdom to confirm that the children of poorer families would receive financial support for food purchases during school holidays. The Welsh Education Minister, Kirsty Williams, wrote to Jonathan saying:

The Welsh Government has announced £11 million additional funding for free school meal provision for school holidays up to and including Easter 2021. I am keen to ensure that local authorities are given the flexibility to meet the needs of our most vulnerable families when making free school meal provision and some local authorities may even choose to make provision using a number of different methods because of this.

These measures mean we need not run our traditional project currently, but the agencies working on Caia Park continue to ask us at St. Marks to convene occasional meetings so we can review the situation, particularly the situation faced by vulnerable families.

We were also asked to make representations about the threat to play schemes which do such an important job for the children from vulnerable families. The minister wrote back offering these assurances, which hopefully will help keep our play schemes open into 2021:



I am pleased to confirm that £500k revenue funding and £3m capital funding has been allocated to local authorities to help them meet their Play Sufficiency duty. The revenue funding will focus on staffed play provision and will help children and young people suffering from the consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic. Staffed play work provision is able to continue over the October half term period and the revenue funding we have provided to local authorities is for all holidays up to and including Easter 2021.

Recently a play worker member of the project working group proposed that together we develop a Christmas message to circulate in the Caia community. This is our current project. Meanwhile in England, Marcus Rashford, who was brought up on a large estate in Manchester has had success in persuading the UK government that provisions are made in England to help overcome holiday hunger. It's good to know that in this most difficult of years, community agencies, a famous footballer and the Church are seeking to make a difference that should help reduce child poverty.

Art Ellinson

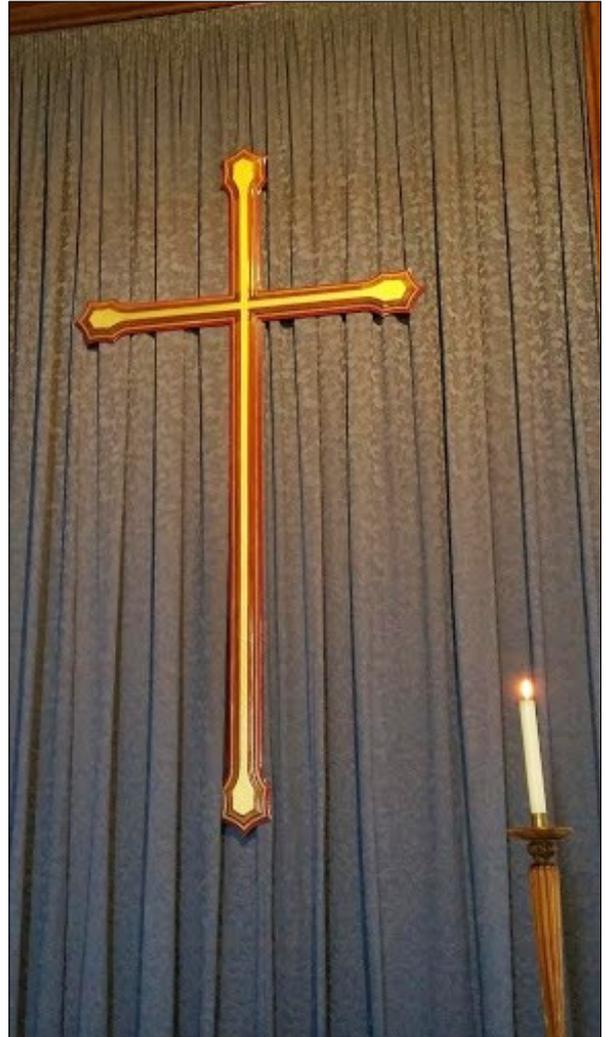
"In person" worship has been popular since we have been able to reopen the church for worship. Numbers at the 9.30am service have hovered around the capacity for the building. In October, we restarted the early 8.15am service and welcomed back some of the regulars to this act of worship. Also, we have a midweek Eucharist service on a Wednesday. Harvest provided the opportunity to see some of our families in church and for some stunning decoration of the church.

The Feast of St Margaret of Scotland on November 16 is a time when the church traditionally celebrates and reaches out, but this year it was marked in a more muted fashion with a 'virtual choral evensong'. It can be viewed from our website. We have all been very grateful to organist David, the choir and friends for all the recorded items they have provide for both in person and online worship.

We admit that we are struggling financially at present and need to increase our planned giving especially through the Church in Wales 'Gift Direct scheme. The building requires some urgent remedial work and the hall a new roof. Our prayer is that resources will be forthcoming from our regular congregation along with grant aid to ensure the future of the church.

Looking forward to Christmas, we hope to have worship in church with Christingles, carols and something for children along with take out packs and online worship too. We are also going to use a resource from Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) to provide a basis for our thinking and reflecting over Advent and Christmas. This should be accessible to those with online access and those without.

Jonathan Smith



Cross at the "east" end of St. Margaret's. Photo: Jonathan Smith

Bible study

For many people 2020 has been a year they would rather not remember, and if that is now you feel and you can't wait for the end of the year, help is at hand sooner than 1st January 2021, because Advent Sunday 29th November 2020 marks the beginning of the Church's New Year. The liturgical year we're heading into is Year B, which means that many of the Gospel readings are taken from St Mark's Gospel, although there are quite a few from St John too.

We believe that Mark's Gospel was the first to be written, and was probably composed about 65AD. Mark himself remains an enigma – he may be the John Mark mentioned in Acts where he accompanies Paul and Barnabas on their journeys, but a tradition from the early second century suggests that he wrote down the stories of Peter. And there is something about Mark that has the immediacy of an eye-witness account, maybe more than the other Gospels, and it does feel as if the whole of Jesus' ministry is being experienced as one massive headlong rush told in simple language as if someone were just telling the story.

But what a story it is! – because what Mark is telling us about is when the kingdom of God broke into the lives of people in Palestine two thousand years ago as Jesus, the Son of God is revealed, as Jesus' first words make clear: "The time is now. The kingdom of God is here. Turn your lives around, and believe in the good news."

For the world today, this can all seem like old news: we've heard it all before, and the world isn't interested any more. But 2020 has taught us that there is still an appetite for the real good news of Jesus, and that more than ever today we need to know that the kingdom of heaven is still with us, and that Jesus' power to save is as great now as it was all those years ago.

So enjoy Mark's Gospel this year: listen to the narrator's voice telling you of Jesus, and allow Jesus himself to speak to you, and allow yourself to respond to him and to see the signs of the kingdom around you.

Jason Bray

Photo: Paul Wynn



During these last two months, sometimes on Zoom, sometimes meeting together at church, friends from St. Mark's and St. Margaret's have been using this great new product from the Bible Society, which over eight sessions takes you through the whole Bible in an easily digestible way. Something for your church to think about in 2021? For more details, please contact your Vicar. Maybe before long you could consider arranging the course with a group in the comfort of your home.



TCC Campaign Kickstarter for young leaders

We are looking for young leaders to join our online campaigns

TCC young leaders are running campaigns on **mental health, LGBTQ + education, anti-racism, climate change**. Young people in TCC member groups and schools can get involved, by joining our upcoming Campaign Kickstarter training.



CAMPAIGN KICKSTARTER

WE ARE LOOKING FOR YOUNG LEADERS TO JOIN OUR ONLINE CAMPAIGNS!

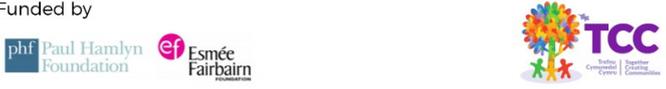
TCC YOUNG LEADERS ARE RUNNING CAMPAIGNS ON:

- ▶ MENTAL HEALTH
- ▶ LGBTQ+ EDUCATION
- ▶ ANTI-RACISM
- ▶ CLIMATE CHANGE

YOUNG PEOPLE IN TCC MEMBER GROUPS AND SCHOOLS CAN GET INVOLVED, BY JOINING OUR UPCOMING TRAINING.

Tuesday 1st, 8th and 15th of December
4.15-5.45pm
Online via Zoom
For further information or to register please visit:
www.tcc-wales.org.uk/youngleaders

Funded by



What?

The training will build skills and confidence so young people can take action on issues that affect them. Online sessions are interactive and explore campaign issues which are important to young people, and will develop key skills in community organising and campaigning such as working with decision makers and running effective meetings. This training will also be an opportunity to have fun and meet with other young people from across North East Wales and TCC staff (virtually). Following your training session, you can join TCC young leaders working on campaigns collaboratively online using apps and continue to meet online at our Youth in Action meeting once a week. Young people in TCC member groups and schools can get involved, by joining our upcoming Campaign Kickstarter training.

When?

We plan to run training sessions at 4.15-5.45pm on Tuesday 1st, 8th and 15th December, but this may change to adapt to participants' availability.

How?

Access to an internet connected computer, tablet or phone and Zoom is required to participate in these sessions. A parent or carer must give permission for their child to participate.

Once you have booked a place, Lucy will be in contact to say hello and confirm the arrangements. The meeting will run on Zoom, so participants will be able to see and hear other young people and staff from TCC on their screen, and they can also appear on screen themselves via their device camera if they wish to.

Questions?

You can also contact us to discuss the training, or book a place by emailing youthorganiser@tcc-wales.org.uk or calling 07307 358274.



Our Sunday services have continued each week, with a break for the firebreak lockdown.

As with most churches, there is not much else we can do at present. A small group of mainly St James' members has been meeting online to do the 'Discipleship Explored' course this term. It's proving challenging but very worthwhile, as people learn more about God's purposes, and grow in their faith.



St James' Crib

Christmas at St. James'

Our plans for Advent and Christmas are as follows:

Christingle Service, Sunday 6 December at 11.00 am **in Church**

A Service of Lessons and Carols, with Holy Communion, Sunday 13 December, 11.00 am **in Church**

Sunday Worship, celebrating the Nativity, Sunday 20 December, 11.00 am **in Church**

Crib Service, Christmas Eve, 3.30 pm **online** (streamed to <https://www.facebook.com/StJamesWrexham/>, and later posted to our website: <https://stjames.wrexhamparish.org.uk/index.php/streamed-services/>)

First Communion of Christmas, Christmas Eve, 5.00 pm **in Church**

Sarah Errington

St John's opened for Sunday services at the beginning of September, and has held one service each Sunday since then, except during the recent firebreak lockdown. At the beginning of October, we re-started the Wednesday morning Communion service as well. Those members who have been able to come along are very pleased to be able to gather for communal worship once more, despite the restrictions we all have to live with for the moment. There are still quite a number of our members who have not felt able to come along to our services, and of course we miss them! Some are able to join in our online services, which continue each Sunday morning on our Facebook page.

Frustratingly, the work on the roofs of both church and hall has ground to a halt, and we are only now in a position to look to reopen the church hall.



The Nativity set in this picture belongs to St John's

Christmas at St. John's

As for everyone else, Christmas will look a little different this year. Our plans are as follows:

Carol Singalong, to be held online on **Tuesday 8 December** at **7.30 pm**. The exact format is still to be finalised, so if you're interested, please keep an eye on St John's Church Wrexham Facebook page.

Christingle Service to be held online on **Sunday 20 December** at **4.00 pm**. This will involve a 'scavenger hunt', and some very untraditional Christingles!

Carol Service to be held online on **Christmas Eve** at **6.30 pm**. Join in to sing some traditional favourites.

First Communion of Christmas in Church, starting at **11.30 pm** on **Christmas Eve**

Christmas Morning Communion in Church, starting at **10.00 am**.

Online events will be streamed to <https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsWrexham/>, and later posted on the church website: <http://stjohns.plwyfwreccsam.org.uk/index.php/streamed-services/>

Sarah Errington



It's been quite a year. The poppies have come and gone, although there are still people arriving to see them even now! We've been open and closed and now open again, and we are rather hoping this will still be the case at Christmas.

This year everyone is having to rethink what they are doing. At St Giles' we are looking to have an innovative Christmas Light Service on Sunday 20th December at 4pm, at which we are hoping to tell the Christmas story through sound and light, through music and the spoken word.

The Crib Service will be very different this year. We will still be able to go ahead, and we're hoping people will still want to dress up (I am, but that's another matter, and a secret...!), but we'll be limited in what we are able to do on Christmas Eve at 4pm, so no wrestling little angels at the foot of the altar! We will, however, be live-streaming it.



We're looking to run two Midnight Masses, one at 9.30pm which will be half an hour before midnight in Bethlehem, and one at 11.30pm for Wrexham time.

All of the services will be ticketed, other than the Christmas Day Eucharist at 10am, and we're currently looking at the best way of ensuring that people are able to come, whilst giving priority to our regular congregation.

But most of all, what we want to do is to share the joy of Christmas with as many people as possible, because this year the message of Jesus, the Word made Flesh is one that people need more than ever.



Jason Bray

Photos. Christmas decorations: Paul Wynn; musical angels: Nick Roe

Wrexham Mission Area

Mission Area Leader: Rev Jonathan Smith

Mission Area Administrator: Ann Owen

01978 355808 or 07751 422594;

office@wrexhamparish.org.uk

St. Giles' Parish Church LL13 8LS

Sundays: 9.30am All Age Worship; 11am Said Holy Eucharist (available later on YouTube and Facebook)

Thursdays: 11am Eucharist

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays: about 5pm

Evening Prayer on YouTube and Facebook

Vicar: Rev Dr Jason Bray. 07957 222418;

vicar@wrexhamparish.org.uk

Curate: Rev James Tout

St. Margaret's, Garden Village Chester Rd LL11 2SH

Sundays: 8.15am Said Holy Communion

9.30am Worship with recorded music. Holy Communion
2nd & 4th Sundays

(Please let us know if you are coming to ensure a space)

4.00pm Online Service on Facebook posted on website
afterwards

Wednesdays 11.00am Said Holy Communion

Vicar of St. Margaret's & St. Mark's:

Rev Jonathan Smith: 01978 350797;

jonathan@plwyfwreccsam.org.uk

Assistant Curate: Rev'd Jo MacKriell:

curateofwrexham@outlook.com

St. Mark's, Caia Park, Bryn Eglwys Rd LL13 9LA

11.00am Worship with recorded music. Holy Communion
1st & 3rd Sundays

4.00pm Online Service on Facebook posted on website
afterwards

Vicar of St. Margaret's & St. Mark's:

Rev Jonathan Smith: 01978 350797;

jonathan@plwyfwreccsam.org.uk

Assistant Curate: Rev'd Jo MacKriell:

curateofwrexham@outlook.com

St. John's, Rhosnesni, Borrass Rd LL13 9ER

Sundays: 2.30 pm: Sunday Worship (1st & 3rd); Holy
Communion (2nd & 4th)

Sundays 10 am: Sunday Worship streamed to:

<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsWrexham/>

Vicar of St. John's & St. James'

Rev Sarah Errington: 01978 266018;

vicarstjohnswxm@gmail.com

St. James', Rhosddu, Rhosddu Rd LL11 2NW

Sundays: 11am: Sunday Worship (1st & 3rd); Holy
Communion (2nd & 4th)

Sundays 10 am: Sunday Worship streamed to: [https://
www.facebook.com/StJamesWrexham/](https://www.facebook.com/StJamesWrexham/)

Wednesdays 10 am: Holy Communion

Vicar of St. John's & St. James's:

Rev Sarah Errington.: 01978 266018;

vicarstjohnswxm@gmail.com

Holy Trinity, Rhostyllen, Esclusham, LL14 4DW

Sundays: 9.30am Sung Eucharist (3rd Sunday: Family
Eucharist)

Contact for All Saints' & Holy Trinity:

Rev Jonathan Smith: 01978 350797;

jonathan@plwyfwreccsam.org.uk

All Saints', Poyser Street, LL13 7RT

Sundays: 11am Sung Eucharist (Family Service 3rd
Sunday)

Contact for All Saints' & Holy Trinity:

Rev Jonathan Smith: 01978 350797;

jonathan@plwyfwreccsam.org.uk

St. Mary's, Bersham

1st Sunday: 11am Morning Prayer to be resumed
when singing allowed

Contact: Lloyd Fitzhugh

01978 263522 lloydfitzhugh@gmail.com

Church Army Officer:

Capt. Josh Smith

07983 881412 j.smith@churcharmy.org.uk

WREXHAM MISSION AREA NEWS

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