

## St Swithin July 15



"St Swithin's day if  
thou dost rain,  
For forty days it will  
remain.

St Swithin's day if thou  
be fair,  
For forty days 'twill rain nae mare."

In 1716, John Gay, the author of *The Beggar's Opera*, published a poem entitled *Trivia: Or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London* – a lengthy paean to the joys of striding around the capital. In it, he poured scorn upon the age-old legend of 15th July - St Swithin's Day:

All Superstition from thy Breast  
repel / Let cred'lous Boys, and  
prattling Nurses tell, [...] / How, if on  
Swithin's feast the Welkin lours, / And  
ev'ry Penthouse streams with hasty  
Show'rs, / Twice twenty Days shall  
Clouds their Fleeces drain / And wash  
the Pavement with incessant Rain. /  
Let not such vulgar Tales debase thy  
Mind; / Nor Paul nor Swithin rule the  
Clouds and Wind.

The St Swithin's Day legend is an old one – dating back to the 14th century – although its roots are much disputed. St Swithin (or Swithun) was an Anglo-Saxon bishop of Winchester who died in around AD862. He requested that his remains be interred among the common people outside the church, but in 971, after he had been made patron saint of Winchester Cathedral, his body was dug up and moved to a new indoor shrine. According to some writers, this caused sufficient displeasure in the heavens for a terrible downpour to strike the church and continue unabated for 40 days, hence the legend. The only problem with this theory is a complete and utter

absence of any evidence, with no early account of the reburial mentioning the slightest drop of rain.

John Earle, a renowned authority on Anglo-Saxon Britain, suggested, more convincingly, that the legend had its roots in a widespread pre-Christian belief in weather auguries, later adapted to coincide with Christian feast days – in France, an almost identical legend is attached to the feast day of St Medard on 8th June, and similar stories exist all over northern Europe.

Whatever its roots, the veracity of the St Swithin's Day myth clearly fails to stand up to much detailed examination. Since records began, not a single 40-day drought has occurred anywhere in the UK during the summer months, and there has been not one instance at any time of the year of 40 consecutive days of rainfall. Sunshine on St Swithin's Day in Miami may well auger 40 days of unbroken sunshine, but in Blackpool it most assuredly does not.

That said, there is the tiniest glimmer of sense to the rhyme. The middle of July tends to be around the time that the jet stream settles into a relatively consistent pattern. If the jet stream lies north of the UK throughout the summer, continental high pressure is able to move in, bringing warmth and sunshine. If it sticks further south, Arctic air and Atlantic weather systems are likely to predominate, bringing colder, wetter weather. The rhyme just needs a little re-rendering:

"St Swithin's day if thou dost rain  
For forty days, relatively unsettled  
there's a fair chance it will remain.  
St Swithin's day if thou be fair,  
For forty days, a northerly jet stream  
might result in some fairly decent  
spells  
But then again it might not."

## St Cross Newsletter July/August 2023

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### *The Vicar writes...*

Last month at our first PCC of the year since the Annual Meeting we were visited by Kay Baker and Ian Robertson of Hope Central. This charity began life as 'Hampers of Hope' and St. Cross, alongside other Knutsford churches, has supported this for many years. Hope Central has broadened the support to people who are struggling to being far more than a foodbank. It has two centres, one at St Chad's Church in Handforth, and the other at 'The Welcome' on Longridge. It offers support through courses such as Money Management, Dealing with Addictions, Job Clubs, English Language lessons for refugees, and also offers the Alpha Course to help those who are interested to explore the Christian faith.

Hope Central in Knutsford needs a base from which it can offer some of these services, and in fact we have already been allowing the use of our hall for a Money Management Course. The PCC overwhelmingly agreed to allow Hope Central to use our corridor as a base for them to use between visits where the charity staff can do any necessary paperwork or photocopying, make a cup of tea or coffee etc. It's all about trying to put a greater Christian emphasis on the worthwhile, life-transforming activities that are taking place and offering us a chance to build a bridge between the Church and the community. Hope Central seeks to share the love of God and help people in crisis because everyone needs a helping hand at times. It's embodying the command from Jesus to 'love our neighbour as ourselves'.

In common with many churches since the pandemic broke in 2020, community usage of halls is down, but it seems to me that through all of this, God is calling us here to share this wonderful facility we have at St Cross with the community and to play our part living out that command Jesus gave us, and offering hope to those who need it most of all. We don't know where this will lead us, but, friends, be assured, if God is for something, and what is done is held in prayer, you can be certain that God will bless what we seek to do. The One who calls is faithful. I wish you all a very happy and enjoyable summer and may I also take the opportunity to remind everyone that we have the pleasure of the Knutsford Deanery Choir visiting us on Sunday August 20<sup>th</sup> for a service of Choral Evensong at 6.30pm. The day before there will be an 'Ice Cream Saturdae' fundraising event for Challenge 50 (raising funds for our church) from 2pm to 4pm at Hil and John's home. *(Please see sign-up details in church in due course.—Ed)*

Yours, in Christ  
*Paul*



BRINGING HOPE, RELIEVING POVERTY

### Occasional Offices in June

#### Funerals

**Winifred Jones**  
**Renee May Lockett**  
**Barbara Edwards**  
**Robert Alfred Eyres**



#### Wedding

**Wesley Oliver and Ashleigh Ralph**

### Readings for Eucharistic Services

Sunday 2 July Trinity 4	Genesis 22.1-14	Romans 6.12-end	Matthew 10.40-end	Psalm 50.1-15 or 1 Samuel 28.3-19. Luke 17.20-end
Wednesday 5 July	Genesis 21.5,8-20	Psalm 34.1-12	Matthew 8.28-end	
Sunday 9 July Trinity 5	Genesis 24.34- 38,42-49,58-end	Romans 7.15-25a	Matthew 11.16- 19,25-end	
Wednesday 12 July	Genesis 41.55-end; 45.5-7, 17-end	Psalm 33.1-4,18-end	Matthew 10.1-7	
Sunday 16 July Trinity 6	Genesis 25.19-end	Romans 8.1-11	Matthew 13.1-9,18- 23	
Wednesday 19 July Gregory	Wisdom 9.13-17 (Apocrypha)	1 Corinthians 2.9-13	John 17.6,18-24	
Sunday 23 July Trinity 7	Genesis 28.10-19a	Romans 8.12-25	Matthew 13.24- 30,36-43	
Wednesday 26 July	Exodus 16.1-5, 9-15	Psalm 78 17-31	Matthew 13.1-9	
Sunday 30 July Trinity 8	Genesis 29.15-28	Romans 8.26-end	Matthew 13.31- 33,44-52	
Wednesday 2 August	Exodus 34.29-end	Psalm 99	Matthew 13.44-46	
Sunday 6 August Transfiguration	Daniel 7.9-10,13-14	2 Peter 1.16-19	Luke 9.28-36	Exodus 34.29-end John 6.24-35
Wednesday 9 August Mary Sumner	Proverbs 24.3-4,12-14	Hebrews 13.1-5	Luke 11.9-13	
Sunday 13 August Trinity 10	Genesis 37.1-4,12- 28	Romans 10.5-15	Matthew 14.22-33	
Wednesday 16 August	Psalm 66.14-end	Deuteronomy 34	Matthew 18.15-20	
Sunday 20 August Trinity 11	Genesis 45.1-15	Romans 11.1-2a,29- 32	Matthew 15. 21-28	Psalm 90.1-12 Acts 16.1-15 John 6.51-58
Wednesday 23 August	Psalm 21.1-6	Judges 9.6-15	Matthew 20.1-16	
Sunday 27 August Trinity 12	Exodus 1.8-2.10	Romans 12.1-8	Matthew 16.13-20	
Wednesday 30 August John Bunyan	Exodus 3.7-12	Hebrews 12.1-2	Luke 21.21, 34-36	