

Dear friends,

Being open for private prayer this last week has been a step closer to some kind of 'normality', but from speaking to church friends, we know that it is hard to fathom why we can't be open for worship.

In last week's online Team Service, Canon Peter Reiss asked us to consider if we practise the gift of **generosity**? Personally, I am aware of so many folk across the Turton Moorland Team Ministry who are well practised in their gift of generosity. May we always seek to use our talents and skills for the benefit of others, whether that is calling for a friendly chat or giving a kindly word of encouragement.



In the freedom that God has given us, may we always make the most of what gifts we have been given to share our **faith, our hope and our love**.

Church Opening during the current restrictions: PLEASE NOTE that Christ Church Walmsley will be open on Sunday mornings and Wednesday mornings between 10.00am and 11.00am for private prayer. If you would like to come and sit, pray, be silent, please do come at this time. Please bring a Bible and / or Prayer Book if you would like to.

Comfort
and Joy



Christmas will be quite different this year. Not only will attendance at church services be restricted in order to be Covid secure, but it is uncertain whether other national or local restrictions will also be in place. It is unlikely there will be any congregational singing of the carols we love so much. In addition, as we know well, Christmas comes at the end of an exhausting year which has been exceptionally tough for so many of us. And yet, never has Christmas been more important. More than ever, we need to hear the message of the angels, and to be reassured that God's light continues to shine in the midst of darkness. It is an encouragement that faithful Christians will wish to hear once more, and also a message of hope we can give as a gift to our wider communities.

Comfort and Joy is the Church of England's 2020 Christmas campaign.

Taking inspiration from a traditional carol service, it features daily reflections for the Christmas season from Kate Bottley, Jonathan Bryan, Bob Chilcot, Martha Collison, Stephen Cottrell, Guli Francis-Dehqani, Chine McDonald, Sally Phillips and Justin Welby.

Beginning on Christmas Day and ending on 2 January, each day explores a Bible reading and a familiar carol, encouraging us to look with fresh eyes at how the timeless truth of Christmas might shape our lives in these extraordinary times, and inviting us to hear again the message of the angels - good news of God's unfailing love for a world that is weary and hurting.

If you would like a booklet please contact Reverend Carol on 01204 587150.

Turton Moorland Team Ministry Advent Wreath devotion 2020

Across the team, we are inviting people to make their own advent wreath. There is accompanying liturgy to be used each Sunday in Advent (attached to the e-mail). It is hoped that people will engage and send pictures via Facebook and our webpages of their Advent wreath in the making.



First make your wreath: There are different traditions about the wreath, but the basis is a ring of evergreen with 4 or 5 candles placed inside. The four outer candles can be all purple, or three purple and one pink, or all red. The middle candle is always white. You can make yours however you like. Make sure they are secure and in a safe place, especially if children are involved!

Blessing the wreath: On Advent Sunday, say a prayer of blessing over your wreath:

Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ. He is the hope of all peoples, and the Saviour of every nation. As we wait for his coming, bless this wreath, that it may be for us a sign of our faith, hope, peace and joy this Advent.

Lighting the candles: Each candle stands for a different aspect of Advent and links with readings from the Bible. Each Sunday in Advent, choose a time to light the candles, listen to words of scripture and pray for yourself and for all those you love.

A different family member can light the candle each week and lead the readings.



The DUNSCAR TOYS are getting ready to sell you a CALENDAR for 2021!

...with the help of Jo & Stephen Woods!!

A reminder to you from last week's Walmsley Newsletter that the **2021 Calendar**, featuring a selection of the daily tableaux from the spring-time displays at the home of Jo & Stephen Woods (next to Dunscar Woods) will be on sale on **Saturday 21 November from 10am to 2pm** from their front garden.

All the money from the sale of these will go to the fund-raising for Walmsley Parish Community Hall. Could people please contact them on 01204 303322. The calendars are £5.00 each, correct cash preferred, thank you.

For those of you who intensely dislike the wearing of a face mask, please read this and then try and think rather differently about the act of putting one on...

A prayer for putting on a face Mask:

(as shared by Rev. Richard Bott, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Canada)

Creator God, as I prepare to go into the world, help me to see the sacramental nature of the wearing of this cloth. Let it be a tangible and visible way of living love for my neighbours, as I love myself.

Christ Jesus, since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart, that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes.

Since my voice may be muffled, help me to speak clearly, not only with my words, but with my actions.

Holy Spirit, as the elastic touches my ears, remind me to listen carefully and caringly to all those I meet. May this simple piece of cloth be shield and banner, and may each breath that it holds be filled with Your love. In Your name and in that live, I pray, Amen.

Our Team Rector, Canon Peter Reiss's letter this week:

So we come to the end of the Church Year – the final Sunday in the liturgical season before Advent Sunday heralds a new year. Advent will be - and is - the season of preparation, not just preparing the food and festivities but preparing our hearts and stilling our minds so we can focus on the amazing news the angels brought to Mary and to shepherds. And that news is not changed even though this year has been so restricted and difficult and separated.

This Sunday is **Stir-Up Sunday** in the old calendar, when Christmas Puddings, rich indulgent puddings would be stirred, full of tasty ingredients. And we have our own Turton Stir-Up led by Alice (on Zoom), and we can be stirred up together from our homes, even if not together in church. Look out for our *Stir Up hymn* in the online service this week with Christmas Pudding making in the background!

And in more recent times, following the Roman Catholic lead, the focus has been on **Christ the King** – we end the year remembering that Jesus Christ is Lord and King. The baby promised to Mary, born in Bethlehem and laid in a feeding trough, is the King and Lord of all. We are wondering what we can do to celebrate Christmas; we are planning some things but not sure they can happen.

We want to encourage people to **take Christmas home – bring Christ into the home**, rather than depend on going to church. God is with us in the home. **SO:**

☆ We are encouraging people to make an **Advent Wreath**, put it somewhere central in your home, make it as best you can, whatever way you wish, but we suggest four outside candles and an inner one for the middle (If you need help with a wreath let us know and we can help). You can use candles or tea lights or ...fill the wreath with whatever you want on it. And each Sunday we are providing a **prayer and reflection** for the Sunday, and a theme for the week. *(Look out for the resources which will be online, attached, downloadable or posted to those who need them.)*

☆ We know this is a time of year when we miss those who have died, recently or several years ago, and the church website has a space where you can **light a virtual candle** in memory of a loved one. *(See info in the e-mail for more details.)*

We will update on Christmas Services when we know more but, again, if we cannot go to the church, we can take Christmas home, or better: discover Christ in our home, and thank God, and pray, and acknowledge the wonder of it all. We can share our creativity and our joys so others can enjoy them too, and we can encourage and be encouraged.



An update on ORIGAMI ANGELS...

Angie Foster would like as many people to be involved as possible so, if you would like to make an angel and need paper delivered ...and then an angel (or angels) collected, please contact Angie via Dawn Hitchen.

If you would prefer to send a prayer or dedication to go on a ready-made angel, please also send your message via Dawn. These will then be hung from a prayer tree in church ...or (depending on numbers of origami angels created) suspended from a net over the baptismal font. As shared in last week's news, the plan is for the angels to be ready in

time for the fourth Sunday in Advent so that they could be in place in time for Christmas.

If you are interested in getting involved, please let us know. Angie has already made quite a number of paper angels and so has our prolifically creative Ken Holt...!! (See right)



Reflection on today's Reading – Matthew 25: 31- 46

This passage is normally known as the “sheep and the goats” but this is just a simple analogy – at night the shepherd would separate out the sheep from the goats in his mixed flock. The vivid image is simply to tell us that God will also separate out the nations, as it were some to his left and some to his right. This is Jesus coming again in glory for the whole world.

Why and who? Well, one thing we note is that in both groups there is surprise. There are people who thought they were in the good group who ask when was it that they failed to give the King water or other help. Jesus is clear it was when they failed to give it to the poor and needy.

There was a strand in Jewish thinking which already broadly taught this: ***‘My children, when you gave food to the poor, I counted it as though you had given it to me.’***

This passage sometimes gets caught up in the debate about whether salvation is by faith or good works. Some argue that the thirsty and hungry are restricted to thirsty and hungry Christians.

But the logic and force of Matthew's Gospel has always been to say that faith must be seen in action. We should *hear* the Word AND *act* on it. “Be doers of the Word and not hearers only!” says Jesus, and here at the end of Jesus' teaching, this is made very clear and in the same vivid language that Jesus has used many times.

We remember that Jesus' teaching in Matthew begins with “***Blessed are the poor***” and his teaching ends with the truth that those who help the poor find blessing. It is not social action without speaking of our faith. Rather it is speaking of our faith from the integrity of our social concern.

‘Let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven’ as Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount.

Good works are good, and everyone is capable of good works and many who are not Christians put us to shame with their endeavours. Goodness is not restricted to Christians – we all have the capacity for goodness. This passage is challenging the disciples / the new Christians who read the gospel to make sure that their faith leads to practical acts of mercy and goodness, to bear good fruit, it is not making a theological statement about what happens in judgement to non-believers.

‘Stir up we beseech thee ...’ We pray that we would be stirred up to good works, acts of kindness to the lonely, acts of generosity to the needy, acts of mercy to the “unlovely”.

As we celebrate “**Christ the King**” we are reminded that the King is found among the poorest; may we hear his invitation and his call to meet Him there, lest we later hear his judgement on our lack of concern.

A challenging end to a challenging set of teaching, but then being a disciple of Jesus is a challenge!

Peter Reiss

An update from **Dorothy Banton**:

Dorothy has asked me to include this report on her progress following her heart attack and triple bypass operation in September:

“I am so much better and able to walk, as requested by my consultant. Thank you so much for all your prayers, good wishes and cards I have received, they are all much appreciated and I am sure they have helped my recovery. Love Dorothy x”

**I was hungry and you gave me food
I was thirsty and you gave me drink
I was a stranger and you welcomed me
I was naked and you clothed me
I was sick and you visited me
I was in prison and you came to me.**

Matt 25: 35-36

NEWS ABOUT AUTHORISED LAY MINISTRY IN OUR PARISH:

My name is Angie Foster and I am in the process of submitting an application for training to become an ALM. This has been kindly endorsed by PCC at their last meeting and I offered to outline my reasons for applying and my vision, to share with you all in the next parish newsletter. So here goes.....

I understand Lay Ministry is an important part of enabling the church to thrive in the twenty first century and this is an exciting as well as challenging time and I would like to be part of it. I have always felt some calling and I feel the opportunity to study, listen, learn and participate through the course would be the next step on my Christian journey.

I feel that the time is right to develop my commitment to the work of the parish and the wider church as I am nearing retirement from paid work. The Covid 19 pandemic has caused me to reflect and evaluate what is important and a return to a simpler and more meaningful life. I believe the pandemic has caused the church as well as the wider society to think about what we do and how we do it. We can use the changing world into an opportunity for people to reach out to those people who have maybe not been involved in the church, as well as nurturing those who have been and are committed – to really be a church for a different world.

There are two ALMs in the parish at present for worship and pastoral work. As I am already involved in leading prayers on a regular basis and there is a prayer group that meets after church services, (pre-Covid), I feel that this ministry would fit in with the provision available, but would also provide an opportunity to develop the prayer life and spirituality in the parish. I am not sure what form this would take at present, but I am excited to think about the possibilities for example of extending the spirituality provision via a service, or providing a virtual journey for those who are housebound or following restrictions of any kind.

To start my journey, I am inviting you to become involved in a project to enable you to send a prayer or a dedication on an angel to be part of an installation at church this Christmas. You can make your own origami angel, (*See YouTube link on the e-mail cover letter and page 3*), or you can ask for one to be made on your behalf with your message inscribed. We are also hoping to have a Zoom training session and video to help you, as well as a paper diagram posted on the Walmsley Church website soon.

I would welcome any feedback, ideas or questions about my suggestions, and I would like to thank you for your help and support, that I am sure I will need in the coming months.

With regards, Angie Foster.

*These beautiful words by David Adam and accompanying image appeared on the page:
'Limping to Jerusalem'*

**Creator of the light
Maker of sun, moon and stars...
Giving brightness to the world
Be my light this night.**

**Christ, Light of the World
Conquering over death...
Giving new hope to the world
Be my light this night.**

**Spirit, descending as fire
Guiding and inspiring...
Giving wisdom to the world
Be my light this night.**

**Creator of light ~ Christ the light...
Spirit of Light ~ Be my light this night.**



News from Chris Foster (*certainly fitting in with the theme of generosity...!!*)

There was a nice surprise this week: The late Ann and Alan Sharples' son, Peter, phoned to say he had some blankets and gloves from clearing his parents' home and wondered if we knew who might be able to use them. I thought of Winter Watch and the refugees in Bury whom Canon Peter had told us about. We arranged for Peter Sharples to bring them here and were delighted to find eight beautifully soft blankets, looking unused, in the black bin liners plus some pairs of soft black gloves. We took them to St. Anne's Vicarage where Canon Peter and his wife could organise for them to go to both Urban Outreach and the Bury refugees. How generous of Peter Sharples - another act of kindness!



Eliza's Mum, Alison Bolton, has sent us a beautiful picture coloured in by her daughter. Thank you, Eliza.

And if anyone else has any pictures to share, please send them in.

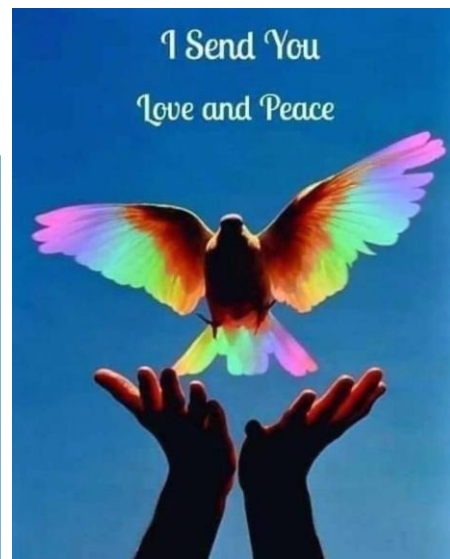
**Thank
You!**

Also: has anyone completed any of the 'LOOK' children's sheets which are attached each week and which match with the liturgy theme...? We'd love to see your handiwork. Did you manage to work out the puzzles? Were they too hard? We'd love to hear from some of the children across our Parish.

Linking with last week's sharing of 'rainbow prayers', this appeared as one of Bill Braviner's [#MorningPrayers](#) this week. **Help us, Lord, to see signs and to BE signs of your love working amongst us. Amen**

You give us signs, Lord, to assure us of your covenant love; from the days of Noah you have told us to see the rainbow and know your passion for us all.

Help us this day to see the signs of your love in action among us where we are, and to be such signs for others.



Thank you to those who continue to connect with others for your ongoing help and support. Please get in touch if you have any news, poems, prayers ...or words to share. Thank you. You are in our thoughts and prayers. Love and blessings,

Reverend Carol Hayden, Iain Stewart - *Church Warden*

Dawn Hitchen - *Church Warden + Authorised Lay Minister for Pastoral Care*



We continue to plan for services in **Advent** and for **Christmas**, though we do not know what the restrictions and limitations will be. All we can say at the moment is "watch this space"...



PLEASE REMEMBER: For those who don't have internet or social media, do check out the Church of England free resource: '**DAILY HOPE**'. Friends continue to tell me that they have enjoyed this resource. Please do use it.



The Church of England free phone: 'DAILY HOPE' 0800 804 8044 to listen to hymns, reflections and prayers.

Thank you to those who have now set up your offertory giving by standing order

Thank you for making a difference.

For those of you who wish to continue your offertory by cash or cheque, you might like to combine the number of weeks missed into one for when you return to church.

Thank you for your contribution to the running of our churches.

Switching to Standing Order is easy and, if you pay tax, Gift Aid adds an extra 25%; we can send you a Gift Aid form to be returned when church re-opens.

If you wish to contact your bank for a monthly standing order to be made payable to:

CHRIST CHURCH WALMSLEY:

Payable to **Walmsley Parochial Church** - Account number **10251161** –
Sort code: **16 – 00 – 06**

OR ST. ANDREW'S:

Payable to: **St. Andrew's** - Account number **91505262** -
Sort code: **40 - 12 - 41**

GRUB TUB for URBAN OUTREACH

Please do continue to remember those who rely on food donations. As a church we have supported Urban Outreach in a number of ways, including donating to the Grub Tubs in each church. Whilst our churches are closed, you can place your food donations in the GRUB TUBs in our local supermarkets. URBAN OUTREACH rely on the generosity of food donors to provide food parcels to those in need across the borough. Thank you to those who have given recently.



If you need to speak with a church representative, please contact:
Dawn Hitchen dawn@walmsleyparish.org or telephone **304142**. Thank you.

Always remember:

A final thought (as an Elvis fan) on this 'Christ the King Sunday':

