

Dear friends,

We are about to light the third candle in church this week: the pink candle if you have one. The traditional Collect began with the Latin '**GAUDETE**', meaning '**PEACE**'; so pink is a relief from the purple of penitence, the tone for the rest of Advent. (Thank you Adrian for the reminder of this.)

Comfort
and Joy



There are still a few booklets available with the beautiful reflections of the Church of

England's 2020 Christmas campaign. Let us hear the good news of God's unfailing love for a world that is weary and hurting. Let us be reassured that God's light continues to shine in the midst of darkness: a message of hope we can share widely.

Please come and join us as for a **SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION**
on 13 December ~ the third Sunday of Advent.

It will be led by Reverend Carol Hayden at Christ Church Walmsley at 9.30am.
The third candle of the Advent wreath will be lit.

Reverend Carol will then move on to St. Andrew's
for a Service of Holy Communion at 11am.

There will be a mid-week Service of Holy Communion
on Wednesday 16 December at 11am – also led by Reverend Carol.

*Please note that social distancing is still in place;
please wear a face covering and use the hand sanitiser as you enter; thank you.*

A reminder of Reverend Carol's message to us all:

Christmas this year is going to be different...

You may have seen our beautiful, HUGE Christmas tree outside church!? We invite you to help decorate it as an idea – thinking outside the box - to bring us together at this difficult time. You could make your own tree decoration, perhaps a star with a prayer on, or a name of someone you will miss this Christmas time.

Carol singing is also a big part of our Christmas Story and we love singing carols. The Government guidelines say that we can sing outside so on [Sunday 20th December at 3:00pm](#), we are inviting you to join us outside church, where we can socially distance, to sing some of our favourite carols around our beautifully decorated tree. Wrap up warm and bring a torch.

Love & Prayers ~ Reverend Carol

ORIGAMI ANGELS

Christmas Angels have flown in and arrived at Walmsley! Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the amazing display of angels in Christ Church. A chance glance of a photograph of the Wing and a Prayer display of angels in Ripon Cathedral in a national newspaper led me to thinking could we replicate it on a smaller scale in our beautiful church.



A few weeks later lots of kind people had made over 400 angels to make the display. These include Ken Holt, Kate Taylor, Active Afterschool Care, Kath Pearson and Jane Dent. If anyone else has contributed please accept my thanks. Special thanks are due to Ken Holt, Anne McCreesh and Tony Foster for helping to mount the display. There is still room for more, so please don't think you are unable to contribute.



Please contact myself or Dawn Hitchen to collect or deliver and we will ensure they are added to the display. (We need steps and the net is fragile, so please do not attempt to hang them yourself.) If you would like to dedicate your angel please write your message on the wings. I hope you see them in church this Christmas and they bring you as much joy as we had making them. Thank you to everyone again; you have come together to make Christmas 2020 a little different and better, even if it is in a small way.

Angie Foster angie@walmsleyparish.org



'Dunscar Tableaux' - a reminder:

If you haven't yet bought your CALENDAR for 2021 from Jo & Stephen Woods, there are some available for purchase at Christ Church or contact Jo on 01204 303322. All the money from the sale of these will go to the fund-raising for Walmsley Parish Community Hall. The calendars are £5.00 each, thank you.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas...

In these strange times, when you're not allowed to 'properly' visit friends, I often stand at front doors for a socially distanced chat and, in this instance, I admired the beautiful floral wreath – which, I am told, was made by the fair hands of the one, the only, Grace Cheeseman ...beautiful ...!

The lady of this particular house then sent me the photo of her Christmas 'menagerie', who have taken up residency right across the hearth! What a cheerful and friendly display ☺. Thank you, Marjorie.



An update from Yvonne Ashmore... Some of you may know that Yvonne's knee replacement, which should have already happened, was cancelled – for the third time – this week. Her consultant was actually involved in trauma cases on the day it should have taken place. Yvonne wishes everyone a peaceful and happy Christmas and good health in the New Year.

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

“**Good News**” – that was the message of the angels to Mary and to shepherds in very troubled times.

“**Peace**” – that was the content of the good news, and how much we yearn for peace and stability today. In the next few days we will know what our future relationship with Europe will be, but whatever it is, there will be significant and wide-scale disruptions.

In the coming weeks some will receive their vaccinations and will feel more hopeful, but others will be hospitalised, and families will be anxious. We plan for what we think we can do over Christmas, but we are unsure.

The good news of God and the offer of peace are for a troubled world, now as they were then, but they are not a magic wand. Things did not improve overnight when Jesus was born, but at a deeper level they did; the Christ had come into the world to open up the way through. In the difficulties we can find God's gift of peace and we can share it, just as we can have hope and share that hope. May we live as those who radiate the Kingdom in advance of its fulfilment, people of hope, peace and joy.

If hope is the assurance of God's promise for the future, then peace is the assurance of God's presence in the here and now.

This Christmas is going to be different but we will celebrate with joy –

Dec 20th online Carol Service from the Team – YouTube and Facebook from 8.00am

Dec 20th 3pm Carols around the Christmas Tree at Christ Church Walmsley
4.30pm Edgworth Christmas Celebration - @ Edgworth Cricket Ground

This will be a shared event with the Methodist Church and the Barlow. It will be different but please make it good. We can gather safely there and sing carols. The themes of this will be Joy, Peace and Celebration. Do come, wrap up warm, bring torches and lights.

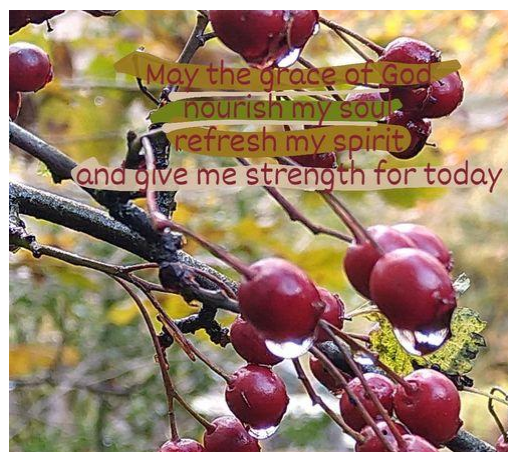
Christmas Eve 11 pm Midnight Communion - @ Christ Church Walmsley

Christmas Day 10.00am Holy Communion - @ St. Andrew's, BX

Dec 27th 11.00am Holy Communion - @ St. Andrew's, BX

People are finding ways to share their Christmas decorations “outside” through windows, hung outside, on bushes online. We are thinking how better we can share. Our churches likewise will be looking to share outwards so inside will look different. We are facing up and facing outwards.

A prayer from the daily posting on social media across the Team: St Nicholas Day (Sunday 6 December) - **Freely we have received, freely let us then give, for God loves a cheerful giver.** Let us all give freely and cheerfully ...even if it's just a smile to a stranger ☺



Praying for God's strength:
May the grace of God nourish my soul, refresh my spirit and give me strength for today.

A reflection for the third week in Advent from our Team Rector:

The focus for this week in Advent is on John the Baptist – Jesus' cousin – who proclaimed the imminent coming of the Messiah. This is how John's Gospel introduces him (John 1 6-8, 19-23)

***There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.
He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.***

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord" ', as the prophet Isaiah said.

This week we move from the Old Testament prophets to the New Testament and this enigmatic figure of John, who was known for baptising people, something that did not happen- hence he got the name! This is what he did and it was noteworthy. His baptism was like a metaphorical journey through the Red Sea and Jordan for those who wanted to sign up for God (and remember in Hebrew Joshua and Jesus are basically the same name!). And John went on to quote from Isaiah that he was come to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

St John says that John the Baptist "**came as a witness to testify to the light**". The theme of witnessing is a key theme in the gospel - witnesses help build a legal case and St John makes the case for Jesus through various witnesses leading to the culmination that people will "**believe and know that Jesus is the Messiah and that through believing we may have life in his name**".

And the challenge to us as we think about this extraordinary man who pointed people to Jesus is whether our lives and our words point others to Jesus (or not). And not just in some vague general way, but in the actual context of our world today in all its confusion, in its structural inequality and the hurts and divisions that people face. John spoke of Jesus, pointed people to Jesus, and challenged Herod in his wrong-doing. This Christmas we can let the various tinkly sparkly lights give us a warm and happy feeling, though probably this year we will feel so much is missing, or we can also gently, warmly, in word and action, point people to the true Light.

The wilderness of Isaiah was the desert, the empty spaces in the semi-desert; the wilderness in our world is often in the towns, in the busiest places, where the poorest and marginal live, in the homes where people are alone and lonely and sad, in the uncertainty and confusion of the current situation. We are called to be those who, in the wilderness places, speak of God, and help others find God. We are called to learn from John and – like John – testify to the light, and help others discover God's love in Jesus- the light that shines in darkness and which the darkness cannot overcome.

Born to set your people free

Peter Reiss

In the Turton Team online service last Sunday, the video recording of the Isaiah text set for that day was given by some excellent Year 6 readers from Walmsley CE School. Thank you for the joy of your reading - the smiles at the end gave everyone a real lift to see - and the sparkly Christmas tree behind you all, which made a fabulous backdrop. Thank you to Year 6 teacher, Miss Kathy Browning and to Head Teacher, Mrs. Debra Carr, for organising this.



Chris Foster sent a message following the service, to say that it took her right back to a photo they have of their son, Richard, standing with Rev Jeff & Anne Davies' daughter - in front of the school Christmas tree in about 1985 - wearing the same uniform ☺! Richard came into Walmsley when a class I taught were studying the USA, to talk about his year living with his family in Portland, Oregon when his Dad, Jeremy was on a teaching exchange!



This image was sent to me by Lesley Smith, who shared that she was going to print it out and keep it close to her and her family this Christmas.

We sincerely hope that there will indeed be plenty of room in your homes and in your hearts for Jesus CHRIST this CHRISTMAS.

It will no doubt be a different Christmas for many of us, but please spare a thought for those whose Christmas may be difficult and challenging this year.

Jamie Mackenzie, the Local Ministry Officer for Manchester Diocese, who organises the Authorised Lay Ministry training and courses, posted a message on social media to all the ALMs with this message ...and as it is so very appropriate for us all, I re-print it here:

I know it's been a really tough year, so as we begin this season of Advent I just wanted to send you all God's richest love and blessings. May the Christ child be born anew in you, in your communities and in those you love. **"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."** Luke 2:14



Jamie Mackenzie also talked about an annual health check (for ALMs), from which we could all benefit; but let's start by just encouraging one another...

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another." Hebrews 10:24

Jupiter & Saturn align!! As 2020 comes to a close, the solar system has decided to grace us with a cosmic **Christmas miracle** that hasn't been witnessed in nearly 800 years. On 21 December (the Winter solstice), Jupiter and Saturn will align so closely in the night sky that they'll almost appear to collide from our vantage point here on Earth, creating a radiant point of light often referred to as the "Star of Bethlehem" or the "Christmas Star."

"You'd have to go all the way back to just before dawn on 4 March, 1226, to see a closer alignment between these objects visible in the night sky."

To catch a glimpse of the phenomenon for yourself, make sure you have a clear view to the southwest about 45 minutes after sunset. The planets will be at their closest on 21 December, but the "Christmas Star" will be visible from anywhere on Earth for about one hour after sunset in the northern hemisphere for the entire fourth week of December. If you're viewing with a telescope, you may also be able to see Jupiter and Saturn's largest moons orbiting them that week. The next Great Conjunction this close won't happen until 15 March, 2080, so take this opportunity to seek out what the Wise Men saw from afar!



He is the fountain of all truth,
but He is more—He is truth itself.
...He is the fountain of all wisdom,
but He is more—He is wisdom itself....
He is the fountain of love, but again,
He is far more than that—He is love!

A. W. TOZER

From Rev Chris Jamieson:

Lord, when you seem far away, draw near to us. When we are afraid, lighten our darkness. When we are down, lift us up. This we ask in your dear name. Amen.

From Walmsley Unitarian Chapel:

This week in Advent is said to represent peace; **May the peace of the spirit be felt in our hearts today.**

There are always beautiful words to take to heart in Bill Braviner's [#MorningPrayer](#):

May we be filled with God's peace, light, and love. Amen

Give us, Lord, a vision for your Kingdom where you dwell with your people and fill them with your peace, light, and love.

Give us not only a vision; give us also such an experience of you in our life together, that we begin to live in its peace, light and love now.

We sincerely hope that we are 'hitting the mark' with our weekly 'Walmsley Parish Newsletter' and that it is indeed managing to keep you connected whilst we continue to share our ***faith, our hope and our love*** with you all. Please tell us if we can help you in any other ways.

Pamela Marden sent this - which she had seen on Facebook - to share with you. The words are lovely, not just for those missing a loved one no longer with us, but for everyone who's not seeing family and friends just now ❤️ ...

***If Christmas is hard, if you've lost someone dear.
Just look in your heart, and you'll know they're still here.
The star in the sky, the light falling snow.
The robin outside, it seems like they know.
If this is a time, when you're struggling through.
Just do what you can, for what matters, is you.
There's no need to be merry, there's no need to bright.
Just do what you can, it will all be alright.***



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
Angie Foster – Assistant Church Warden



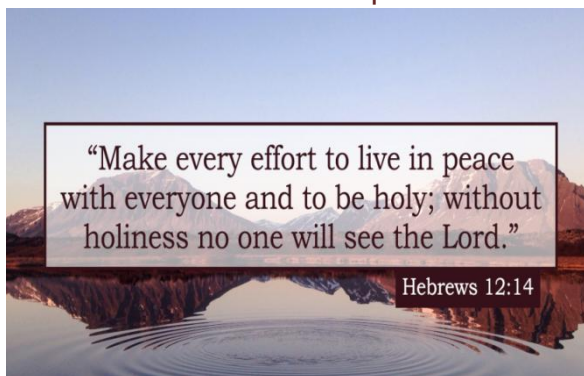
If you need to speak with a church representative, please contact:

Angie Foster angie@walmsleyparish.org or

Dawn Hitchen dawn@walmsleyparish.org or telephone 304142. Thank you.

An exhortation to live in peace:

Ken Holt has now added some flora to his painting project:



"Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord."

Hebrews 12:14



**TURTON MOORLAND
TEAM MINISTRY**

Blessed by the beauty around us and blessed by the good Lord above; may we care for our land and our neighbours and share the good news of God's Love.



PLEASE REMEMBER:

For those who don't have internet or social media, try the Church of England free resource: 'DAILY HOPE'.

Friends 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.



0800 804 8044

DailyHOPE

A free phoneline of hymns, reflections and prayers

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND