

**Christ Church Walmersley
and
St John with St Mark Bury
in the United Benefice of Walmersley Road**



December 2019/January 2020

50P



**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
Diocese of Manchester

**CHURCH
FOR A
DIFFERENT
WORLD**

REGULAR SERVICES

Sunday

8.30 a.m.	Holy Communion	St John w St Mark (Barritt Room)
9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (BCP)	Christ Church
10.30 a.m.	1 st Holy Communion 2 nd Family and Parade 3 rd Holy Communion 4 th Service of the Word	Christ Church
10.30 a.m.	1 st 2 nd 4 th Sung Eucharist 3 rd Morning Prayer	St John w St Mark
10.30 a.m.	5 th United Service	Alternately CC/SJM

Monday

7.30 p.m.	1 st Listening Prayer	150 Walmersley Road
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Wednesday

10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion	St John w St Mark
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Thursday

2.00 p.m.	1 st First Thursday Prayer	Christ Church Hall
7.30 p.m.	Holy Communion	St John w St Mark

Other services as announced
Evening Prayer will be said in St John w St Mark's Church
Monday - Thursday at 5 p.m.

If you need transport to church please contact the wardens.

Both churches have Fairtrade status



“Mucking in”

A conversation that took place over 20 years ago still comes to mind at this time of the year.

When I was a Curate in Morecambe a counter assistant at the town centre Post Office asked me whether “I was a modern Vicar?”. When I inquired as to the meaning of her question, she replied, “You know like the one in EastEnders – he mucks in with them!”

At Christmas time, we celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ who came to this earth to be our Saviour. He lived amongst the people of his community, within the context of a loving family. In the words that the lady used in that conversation with me “he mucked in with them”. He led a group of like-minded individuals who were to witness him being arrested and put to death on a cross. Three days later he was raised from the dead in triumph.

As John’s gospel states, “God so loved the world that He sent his only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.”

Few events change a person’s life more than the birth of a child. Parents in every corner of the world can testify to the arrival of a new born baby bringing a whole new set of life’s experiences. The birth of Jesus not only prompted a change in the life of his earthly parents, but of the whole world.

FOR
God so loved THE
world that He GAVE
HIS ONE & ONLY Son,
THAT whoever believes in HIM
shall NOT perish but have
ETERNAL life.
John 3:16

In the words of the famous hymn, “Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the new-born King! Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.”

Over the next two months, we prepare for the arrival of Jesus during Advent; we celebrate His birth at Christmas and recall His marvellous works in the season of Epiphany. As we reflect on that birth, we marvel at the wonder of the Son of God becoming human ("mucking in with us!") to show us how to live in accordance with God's will. He is our Lord and Saviour whose presence in our lives today is as relevant now as it was 2,000 years ago.

With best wishes for a very happy Christmas & a blessed and peaceful 2020.

Dave



Photo by Chris Sowder
on Unsplash

There is still time to get tickets (£7.50 including refreshments) – contact David or Margaret Peters

Christ Church Walmersley

'AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTMAS'

with

Whitworth Vale & Healey Brass Band

Sat 7th Dec 2019 at 7.30pm

Further details: ccwalmersleybury.org.uk





BIBLE READINGS FOR DECEMBER/JANUARY

Dec 1 Advent Sunday

Isaiah 2: 1-5 Romans 13: 11-14 Matthew 24: 36-44

Dec 8 2nd of Advent

Isaiah 11: 1-10 Romans 15: 4-13 Matthew 3: 1-12

Dec 15 3rd of Advent

Isaiah 35: 1-10 James 5: 7-10 Matthew 11: 2-11

Dec 22 4th of Advent

Isaiah 7: 10-16 Romans 1: 1-7 Matthew 1: 18-end

Dec 29 1st Sunday of Christmas

Isaiah 63: 7-9 Hebrews 2: 10-end Matthew 2: 13-end

Jan 5 Epiphany

Isaiah 60: 1-6 Ephesians 3: 1-12 Matthew 2: 1-12

Jan 12 The Baptism of Christ

Isaiah 42: 1-9 Acts 10: 34-43 Matthew 3: 13-end

Jan 19 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

Isaiah 49: 1-7 1 Corinthians 1: 1-9 John 1: 29-42

Jan 26 3rd Sunday of Epiphany

Isaiah 9: 1-4 1 Corinthians 1: 10-18 Matthew 4: 12-23

Feb 2 The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Malachi 3: 1-5 Hebrews 2: 14-end Luke 2: 22-40



FLOWERS IN CHURCH

At Christ Church

- Dec 1 In memory of Jennifer Melling and Mary Illsley
- Dec 8 Café Church
- Dec 15 Mr & Mrs R Nicholls in memory of their parents
- Dec 22 Congregation
- Dec 29 Congregation – Joint Service at St. John with St. Mark
- Jan 5 Alison and Brian Fewtrell in celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary
- Jan 12 Mr & Mrs J McDermott in memory of their daughter Carol
- Jan 19 In memory of Jim Melling
- Jan 26 In memory of Jack Grindrod

If you would like to donate towards the cost of the flowers in church, perhaps in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a special event, please speak to Betty Winterbottom (Christ Church) or Rosemarie Ashworth (St.John with St.Mark).

I want to thank all of you for your good wishes and prayers during my recent illness. I am now recovering at home. I don't think I will be doing any "high kicks" in the near future but I am aiming to be able to come to see the panto in the New Year.

Lots of Love & God Bless.

Mavis Bithell





FROM THE REGISTERS

Church Funeral

Nov 8 Michael Dempsey

Interment of Ashes in Bury Cemetery

Nov 12 Edna Wakes

Funeral Service held at the Crematorium

Nov 6 Irene Currie

"I am the resurrection and the life"



A PRAYER FOR OUR LEADERS

This is a prayer for Vicar Dave Thompson, Retired Priests, Readers, Authorised Lay Ministers, Wardens & Sidespersons.

Dear Lord, as we approach another year since the birth of Jesus, please look after and take care of our leaders. Bless them all for what they do for us through the year.

As we approach the coming of Christmas, they will all take on extra duties. Lord we ask you to keep them safe, warm and healthy through the coming months of dark nights, rain, wind, snow and sunny days.

Lord bless them all and a big thank you to all, from both our congregations. Amen

Barry Evans

The season of Advent marks the beginning of the Church's year and is part of its preparation for Christmas. The name Advent originates from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "arrival" or "coming").

It is used as a time of expectancy, waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas and the return of Jesus at the Second Coming.

The four Sundays of the season act as a countdown to the great celebration of our Lord's birth and is an important time in our spiritual lives.

The colour of the season is purple which reflects the solemnity of this time in the Church Year.

Traditionally churches use an Advent wreath to symbolize the passage of the season. A candle is lit each week as the liturgy reflects the coming of Jesus as a child and in time as Lord and Judge. On Christmas Day, the central candle - coloured white – is lit to signal the fulfilment of Advent and the arrival of the Son of God.

Advent Study Groups will be taking place throughout the season, beginning the week prior to Advent Sunday on Monday 25 November. We will meet on subsequent Mondays until 16 December. These will be held at 150 Walmersley Road, beginning at 7.30pm.

Another group will meet in Christ Church hall on Thursdays beginning at 2.00pm on 28 November until 19 December.

Why not come along and seek to deepen your faith during this special time? You would be most welcome.

Advent Prayer

O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful
as we await the coming of your Son our Lord;
that, when he shall appear, he may not find us sleeping in sin
but active in his service and joyful in his praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We live in a time of great opportunity. Every parish and deanery is putting Mission Action Plans into action, whilst God is calling candidates for ordination in greater numbers than for many years.

The diocesan mission goals of **growing, nurturing and serving** direct the strategic plan for the coming 10 years. We are aware too of the huge challenge to share the love of God in word and deed, not least in those parts of the diocese where we see fewer than one per cent of the population attends church, or where most regular churchgoers are of retirement age or older.



We recognise that to achieve this exciting vision for the future, we need to change the way we organise ourselves as the diocese. A significant proposal is a consolidation of the current 20 deaneries into seven deaneries with a move towards a new full-time Area Dean role, providing leadership for change and development, plus flexible parish cover.

For us, if this proposal is accepted the deaneries of Bury, Rossendale and Radcliffe and Prestwich will become one. Consultations are being carried out across the diocese and online. Your opinion counts! Go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/S9L9563> to give feedback online. If you are able please come to the evening planned for our area, with an opportunity to ask questions.

DEANERY CONSULTATION

8th January 2020 at 7.30pm
All Saints' Church, Brandlesholme
Lifts are available – please ask.

Christmas shoe box appeal For Bury Homeless

Please consider filling a shoebox
for a homeless person this
Christmas

Ideas include: Hats, Scarves,
Gloves, Socks, Toothbrush, Baby
Wipes, Hairbrush, Stick
Deodorant, Torch, Thermals,
Sweets, Chocolates, a Card...



Bury Homeless Project



Call 07565 819 763 for collection

Have you seen the sculpture in St Ann's Square, Manchester by Christian artist Timothy P. Schmalz? If not, do look next time you are in Manchester.



There are several copies around the world, including one in Vatican City. It depicts Jesus as a homeless person, sleeping on a park bench. His face and hands are obscured, hidden under a blanket, but crucifixion wounds on his feet reveal his identity.

Recently Worldwide President of Mothers' Union, Sheran Harper, from Guyana, visited the Province of York. On her final day, in Manchester, hosted by zonal trustee Cath Hilton, she saw this amazing sculpture and this was her response, posted on facebook:

"Just a few hours ago I stood before homeless Jesus in Manchester for the first time. I was moved to tears. It was a moment I would never forget... he was so alive ... the holes in his feet, his head in the folds - I could see one eye, he was sleeping peacefully on that cold hard bench ...



I thought about this winter ... and all who care for the homeless and vulnerable in York Province. I spent this week in the prison; with refugees; with those who had been trafficked; visiting the homeless and listening to the faithful who care for them. I prayed that God would shower his blessings on them... May they feel his presence always. Amen"

From the Vicarage

* 2020 sees both the 10th anniversary of the creation of the United Benefice of Walmersley Road and 250 years since the parish of St.John was formed.

The main event at St.John with St.Mark's will be held over the weekend of June 6/7 with our Summer Fair and a Celebration Service to be attended by the Bishop of Manchester. On Sunday evening we plan to hold a short service on the site of the old church at The Rock.

There will be a service to mark a decade of the Benefice at 10.30am at Christ Church on Sunday 25 October led by the Bishop of Bolton.

* Christ Church are pleased to be hosting the annual carol service for the Pennine Region of the Lancashire Federation of Young Farmers Clubs. This is to take place on Tuesday 10 December beginning at 8.00pm. All are welcome to attend what should be a very special occasion.

* A service of Holy Communion with hymns takes place at Burrswood House on the last Thursday of each month at 2.00pm. The residents and staff are always keen for people to join them at this service. Everyone is welcome to attend. An ecumenical group also visits Burrswood House and Limefield Court on a monthly basis for a short service. Once again anyone is welcome to join us. Please have a word with me for the exact dates.

* Please let a member of the ministry team know if anyone is ill and requires a home or hospital visit. At the heart of our ministry to the parish is pastoral care. This is not the exclusive concern of the clergy but part of each Christian's duty to love one another.

* Any enquiries about baptisms or weddings / marriage banns etc should be made at the Parish Office at St.John with St.Mark's Hall any Wednesday evening between 6.30-7.00.

- * The Ministry Team consisting of all the Clergy, Licensed Readers and our Authorised Lay Ministers meet every month – usually on the second Monday evening. If you have an issue that you would like us to discuss, please contact one of the team.
- * Porch Boxes are always in need of food items to meet their current demand. A box is available at the back of both churches. Items are also sometimes donated to the Booth Centre in Manchester. The Centre was previously based at Manchester Cathedral and aims to bring about positive change in the lives of people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness - to help them plan for and realise a better future. Thanks to those who regularly support these worthy causes.
- * The Men of the Benefice are holding their end of year meal on the evening of Friday 6 December at La Dolce Vita. The first meeting of the New Year will take place on Monday 27 January at The Towler from 8pm.
- * Regular attenders to church are encouraged to join our planned giving scheme. If you would like to do so or would like some further information, please speak to one of the Treasurers or Wardens.
- * If you would like to donate towards the cost of the flowers in church, perhaps in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a special event, please speak to Betty Winterbottom (Christ Church) or Rosemarie Ashworth (St.John with St.Mark).
- * Both of our Church Halls are available for a whole range of activities for use by church and community groups. Please however check with the bookings officers (June Banks for St.John with St.Mark and Jennifer Wood for Christ Church) if the building is otherwise occupied before anything is arranged.
- * Material for the parish magazine should be given in by the 14th day of the previous month. Articles may be sent via email to wrub@live.co.uk

NOTES FROM OUR COUNCILS

Christ Church PCC meeting held on 7th November 2019

1. Updated certificates for the electrical system in the church have been received after remedial work had been completed. Five new nave lights have been fitted to replace those lights that had failed. The cost for the new lights was £999 plus VAT. The remedial electrical work on the church hall has still to be completed.
2. The vicar discussed the reduction of the Manchester Deaneries and noted that there was to be a Synod meeting early next year to further discuss this. (*Wednesday 8th January*)
3. The meeting with diocesan representatives to discuss our parish share is now likely to occur early in the new year.
4. The treasurer presented the financial report to date and proposed that we pay £5000 towards our parish share, this was voted on and approved. It was decided to send £50 from the copper collection to the Wood Street Mission, currently marking its 150th year anniversary.
5. The celebration to mark ten years of the Walmersley Road Benefice will take place on the 25th October 2020.
6. The new hire agreement for the church hall is being reviewed and will be circulated to all hall users when finalised.
7. It was agreed to maintain the church hall rental prices at the same level for next year 2020.
8. The vicar presented the latest mission action plan that had been agreed from the joint PCC's meeting and this was discussed in more detail relating to the parts referring to Christ Church Walmersley.
9. The Church notice boards were discussed and further discussion with the advertisers and the council are to be actioned.

The next PCC meeting will be on the 6th of January 2020.

Ian Riddick
PCC secretary

NOTES FROM OUR COUNCILS (2)

St. John with St. Mark PCC meeting of 14th November 2019

Four people involved in the Pantomime need to go through CRB checks.

A list of social dates for 2020 has now been put together and these will be shared with Christ Church in due course to avoid clashes.

People were reminded about the Easyfundraising scheme, a site which provides a platform to various on-line shopping sites and gives the Church a percentage of all sales.

Several visitors to Church have remarked on how impressive the new flex-step lift access between Church and hall is.

Plans are continuing for the 250th Anniversary celebrations next year. It is now thought that Sunday evening will be more suited for a Service on the old site on The Rock as there will be less commercial activity.

It has been decided that a smaller group be put together to discuss the 'Church for a different world' suggestions resulting from the Cafè Church service. This will be organised at a later date.

The wardens have visited a couple of local Churches to inspect their sound systems to see if they are ideal for us and will go to Bolton Parish Church on 15th November to look at their system, which was installed by a firm who have provided one of our quotes. The quotes we received in July will obviously only be valid for a short time.

It was advised that the Coffee Morning on 28th September raised £241.

It was agreed in principle to once again donate 10% of our previous years planned giving to charities and a discussion took place as to which ones we would support. There will be 10 charities supported across the following categories: Overseas Mission, Overseas Relief & Development, UK Mission & UK Secular. Each will receive £336. The loose collection from the Christmas services this year will be donated to the local Bed for a Night Scheme.

The Vicar announced that there will be a further Deanery Synod meeting to discuss the Deanery synod on Wednesday 8th January at All Saints' Elton. Victoria Cook will be taking on the vacant role of governor at our day school. Victoria is a member of the Seedfield Methodist congregation. A student ordinand will be joining us from the New Year. Gary of St. Phillip's, Bolton will be with us until around Easter time. A 10 year Benefice anniversary joint celebration service with the Bishop of Bolton

will be at Christ Church on Sunday 25th October 2020 at 10.30am.

A more detailed Mission Action Plan has been produced following on from our joint PCC meeting with Christ Church on 30th October. This included more plans around actions including: encouraging more social activities across the Benefice, more vocations to the lay and ordained ministries, more ecumenical activity & improving effectiveness with communications and social media.

The health & safety officer pointed out that the stage curtains were in need of replacement and also reminded hall users to ensure that the emergency gate access is kept unlocked whilst groups are in the building.

Future PCC dates – Thursday 23rd January & Thursday 5th March to discuss draft accounts and PCC report.

250th Anniversary Celebrations

As part of our celebrations to mark the 250th Anniversary of the Parish of St. John Bury it is hoped that we can put together a display of old photographs or other memorabilia; from this building here on Sunny Avenue, the previous building on The Rock or any other Church events which may have taken place away from the buildings.

Please have a look around to see if you have anything we may be able to use and please speak to David Robinson or Margaret Duckworth at St. John with St. Mark or alternatively the Vicar or wardens. We may be able to take copies if you prefer. Thank You



St John 's
Chapel-of-Ease
on The Rock



Copper Collections

A massive thanks to members of our congregations who give so generously to our children's copper collections in both our churches.

In the past 12 months donations have been made to Boomerang, Porch Boxes, Tearfund, Wood Street Mission, Red Box, Mission to Seafarers, and to local charities supporting the homeless in our town.

We try to support mainly local charities, where a donation of £50 is much appreciated. It is certainly true that a little can make a huge difference, so THANK YOU.

Please keep saving your loose change for our children to collect.



1 Corinthians 13 for Christmas

If I decorate my house with beautiful twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I bake dozens of mince pies and roast the perfect turkey, but have no love for my guests, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, and give all that I have to charity, but do not have compassion for those in need, I am just another social service.

If I wrap, decorate and attend a myriad of parties, but don't focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child.

Love doesn't envy another's perfectly co-ordinated Christmas decor.

Love puts the present shopping on hold to run the elderly neighbour to the doctor.

Love is kind though harassed and tired.

Love bears all things, even irritating relatives. It believes all things, including a teenager's potential for development. It hopes all things and endures all things, even a spouse who is constantly depressed about job prospects.

Love never fails other people.

Food gets eaten, computer games will crash and even cashmere jumpers wear out, but the gift of love will endure forever.

Christmas Greetings



May you have the gift of faith,
the blessing of hope,
and the peace of his love
this Christmas and always,
Dave and Linda

To all our friends across the benefice - May
the God of hope fill you with all joy and
peace this Christmas and throughout 2020.

Barbara & Nigel



The Choir and organist at St. John with St.
Mark Church would like to wish each and
every one of you across the United Benefice
of Walmersley Road all the very best for
Christmas and a great New Year.

I would like to wish everybody within the
United Benefice a very Happy & peaceful
Christmas and all the best for 2020.

David Robinson



CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2019

Tuesday 10 December: 9.15am

St. John with St. Mark School service
in Church



Tuesday 10 December: 8pm

Christ Church is delighted to host
the annual carol service for
**the Pennine Region of the
Lancashire Federation
of Young Farmers Clubs**

All are welcome to attend what
should be a very special occasion.

Wednesday 11 December: 2.30pm **Carol Service**
at the Priory Highbank Centre
Everyone welcome



Wednesday 18 December: 9.15am
Springside School service
in Christ Church



Sunday 22 December:

6.30pm

Benefice Carol Service

at St John with Mark's Church

Christmas Eve:

5.00pm Crib Service – JMB

6.00pm Family Service – CCW

7.30pm Parish Communion - JMB

11.30pm Parish Communion – CCW



Christmas Day:

10.00 am Holy Communion

IN BOTH CHURCHES

St Stephen: 26th December

7.30pm Holy Eucharist - JMB



29 December 10.30am **Joint Benefice Service** – JMB

(and every 5th Sunday, alternating churches)

We warmly welcome our friends from Seedfield Methodist Church

More Christmas Greetings



John Brennan and the Christian Aid team wish everybody all the very best for Christmas and New Year.

Thank you to all who have supported Christian Aid during 2019.

Season's Greetings
to Everyone.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas &
a Happy, Healthy and Safe 2020



Barry & Margaret Evans

For
unto
us is
CHILD
is born
unto us a **SON**
is given, and the
Government shall be
Upon His shoulders,
and His Name shall be called,
Wonderful, Counselor,
**Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace!
Isaiah 9:6**

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child.

With love and prayers,
Barbara and Bob Taylor

***We wish you all the joys
of this festive season
and the very best for the New Year.
With love,
Ian & June***



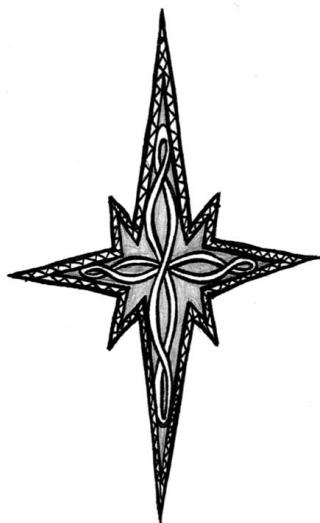
Quiet Moments for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany

Advent



The Advent journey –
Hope becomes peace.
Peace becomes joy.
Joy becomes love.
Love becomes Christ.

In this season of waiting,
 breathe in life.
 Life of the One
 who created all things,
 whose image we bear.
In this season of waiting,
 breathe in love.
 Love of the One
 who gave a precious Son
 to live as one of us.
In this season of waiting,
 breathe in peace.
 Peace of the One
 who calmed the sea
and quiets the tumult of our souls.
In this season of waiting
 breathe in hope.
 Hope that the One
 for whom we wait
is indeed making all things whole.



Christine Sine <http://godspace-msa.com>

Christmas

God, today we choose to "Hark",
to listen to your voice,
to be still and know that you are God with us.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King.

God we hear your promise of "peace on earth",
but we know that the nations have not yet embraced your peace.
God we pray for Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan,
and all other places where there is war, anger and broken lives.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King.

God we hear about the "incarnate Deity",
that you were pleased to dwell with us in flesh and blood.
May we know you as Emmanuel, God with us,
and may we share your presence with those around us.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King.

God we hear that Jesus was "born that we no more may die."
Be with those who are grieving at this time.
Help us to embrace your promise of second birth and resurrection,
and live it out even here on earth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King.

Sam Hargreaves



New Year

God Bless You

Is there ought that I can wish you, that has not been wished before?
Shall I wish that health and gladness be increasing more and more?
Or perhaps that you will be happy and all sadness stand apart?
No, I'll simply wish "God Bless You", and I wish it from my heart.

Written in 1949 by Annie Blake, a farmer in Cashel, Ireland



Loving Father, our faith is in you:
we trust in your plans for a future
where we will thrive in showing love
to those we seek to serve.

Saviour Christ, our faith is in you:
we trust in your plan for a future
where we will bear eternal fruit
as we follow your commands.

Holy Spirit, our faith is in you:
we trust in your plan for a future
where we will be filled with power
and guided in every truth.

We place our future in your hands.
May we continue to enrich the lives
of those around us
for future generations.

© Mothers' Union

Epiphany

The Journey of the Magi revisited



So we got there, - eventually,
Delayed by issues at the border crossings,
strip searches, sniffer dogs, suspicious officials
flanked by hard-eyed young men totting guns.
They questioned us: Were we smugglers?
Might the costly spices we'd brought as gifts be banned substances?
And what of the gold?
Was it to finance arms smuggling, insurrection or business bribes?
Did we stick by this cock and bull story about following a star?
Why didn't we use satnavs?
Why this obsession with astrology?
"A star portending the birth of a Jewish Ruler!"
That alone nearly got us arrested.
But they let us go, their racial prejudices trumped by their conviction
that we were harmless crazies bent on a wild goose chase.
Finally, we reached journey's end, despite
that last unnerving interview with Herod,
honey tongued, but with ill disguised murder seething in his eyes.

Was it all worth it to discover by starlight
a poor couple's boy child in a tiny shack?
Well, let me say this: On our first entering in
we glimpsed majesty in his piercing gaze,
an awesome moment compelling worship.
He needed no court flunkies, no smooth talking press secretary,
no trumpets, hype, or cameras.
A human child, he manifested a wisdom welling from the depths of the eternal
silence.
Here, we sensed, we had touched divinity;
Now for us life would never be the same.
Home we went another way and found another life.

©Don Dowling *With apologies to T.S. Eliot.*

The Baptism of Christ

In the wilderness, John preached, and everybody wondered
Was he the Christ, come to show us all God's love?

I'm not him, John explained, he's mightier than me
Do up his sandals? It's a job that I'm not worthy of.

I baptise with water. But he will use God's Holy Spirit.
And drench you with that fire from above.

Then Jesus came along and John cried, "Look, he's here!
God's chosen, the one I've spoken of!"

Then Jesus was baptised, and he bowed his head and prayed.
And God's Spirit came upon him like a dove.

Then a voice called out from heaven, "I am well pleased with you.
My son, the special one I love."

Bob Hartman



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Lord Jesus, who prayed that we might all be one,
we pray to you for the unity of Christians,
according to your will,
according to your means.
May your Spirit enable us
to experience the suffering caused by division,
to see our sin and to hope beyond all hope.
Amen.

Prayer by the Chemin Neuf Community



Men of the Benefice

Our latest meeting of Men of the Benefice was on Monday 28th October at The Towler. Our theme this time was British sitcoms and a discussion around some of the comedies that were listed in a recent survey of top 40 British sitcoms of all time. We discussed our favourites, and those we didn't like, and also recalled some of our lasting memories of them. There was also a brief quick fire quiz asking us to name catchphrases and characters. We discovered that we all had different tastes and we also now know what would be the Vicar's specialised subject on Mastermind.....

We will next meet on Friday 6th December for an end of year meal at La Dolce Vita Italian on The Rock at 7.30pm and a list will be available at the back of both Churches for this.

Our first meeting of 2020 will again be at The Towler on Monday 27th January at 8.00pm. Normally at this meeting we would put together a schedule of events for the year so if you have any ideas then please come along. New members welcome.

David Robinson

SATURDAY WALKING GROUP



Our scheduled walk on 2nd November was meant to be from Owd Betts to Waugh's Well above the Edenfield Moors. However bad weather both before and on the day meant a decision was taken the day before to cancel. We have though planned a walk on Saturday 7th December, which includes areas around

Bacup, Waterfoot & Rawtenstall. The walk includes two recently restored railway tunnels, now with lighting. It is expected that we may even find an establishment somewhere for lunch. Please meet at either St. John with St. Mark Church Hall at 9.00am or Christ Church Lych Gate at 9.15am and transport will be organised accordingly.

Best foot forward, David Robinson

Sunday @ Seven



We meet for our regular Sunday evening informal worship.

Do come and join us – it lasts about an hour
tea/coffee + cake/biscuits.

You will be most welcome!



**December 29th at 7pm
at Christ Church Hall**

*“ My time is in your
hands ” - Psalm 31*

**January 26th
at 7pm
at Christ
Church Hall**



*“ New heart and new
spirit ” - Ezekiel 18:31*



On Wednesday 13th November our Open Group meeting was led by Reverend Paul Sanderson who broke from tradition and gave us an illustrated talk entitled 'Two Go Mad in Scotland'. This was an excursion he had taken with friend Peter the Summer before last and was a trip across Scotland on train, bus and also ferry, made possible thanks to a ticket that allowed travel on all methods of transport. The journey across Scotland actually began in Carlisle before heading across the border.

Paul's talk was made up of some great photographs and amusing anecdotes of some of the occurrences. There were a couple of silent video clips of the train journey, which, in the absence of sound leads for the projector we were asked to imagine watching with dramatic music in the background.

Some of the situations included an encounter with a gentleman at a railway station who almost managed to consume the liquid contents of the buffet trolley during a long delay there and a bus shelter which served as Paul and Peter's accommodation for several hours following another long delay to get to Inverness. The trip was well planned with light luggage and B & B's booked at the end of each day, albeit the stays in which were sometimes very brief due to long days and not returning until 11.00pm.

Some of the landmarks featured included the fantastic colourful houses in Portree Bay and also a pie shop where Paul and Peter purchased a steak and black pudding pie, which looked filled to the brim. (Steak and haggis was available if preferred). There was also a feature on IBM station, which had served the computer manufacturing plant in Greenock. The station is now disused, following the closure of the plant, which remains derelict. Some of the more stunning images were of the architecture of Wemyss Bay railway station, regarded as one of Britain's best railway stations.

This was an entertaining and amusing talk and it's quite apparent that Paul and Peter had a great time, saw some great sights and fared well with the weather also. Thanks to Paul for sharing this with us.



NEXT MEETING OF THE OPEN GROUP

The Open Group meet for a Christmas get-together on Wednesday 11th December at the earlier time of **7.00pm** for some food, drink and hopefully a bit of fun.

In the meantime, we wish all across the Benefice of Walmersley Road a peaceful and Happy Christmas and all the best for New Year.

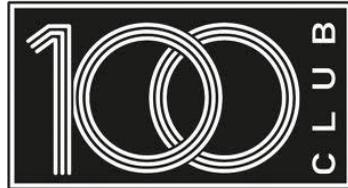
The Open Group will not meet in January.

David Robinson

OCTOBER 2019 WINNERS

1st Prize – Ray Smith

2nd Prize – Eileen Smith



CONGRATULATIONS TO BOTH

Churches Together in Bury

This group represent most of the Christian Churches in Bury, regardless of denomination, and seeks to make known the love of God to the people of Bury.

Events this year included the Good Friday Walk of Witness, Party in the Park and Carol Singing at the Market. The group also supports the Christians Against Poverty initiative in the borough and also the group from Open the Book which goes into schools enacting bible stories.

Currently our Chair is David Andrew but it has to be said that as a benefice we are not well represented, either at the meetings held 6 times a year or at many of the activities. So why not come along to Bury URC, on Parsons Lane, on Monday 20 January for the group's AGM? You will be very welcome (No commitment!!) and look out in the magazine for details of events.

Bury Deanery leader Julie Lancaster spoke to us about Nightstop. She and her husband offer a room in their house for homeless young people to spend usually just one night. She brought with her Ryan, a young man who has stayed with them. He gave a moving account of how he became homeless and how, thanks to people like Julie, he has been able to turn his life around.

Revd Dave celebrated Holy Communion at our November meeting and this was followed by a homemade soup and parkin supper enjoyed by all.

In December we are holding an Advent reflection and our second meeting will be our Christmas meal at the Red Hall.

On Sunday 1st December there will be an Advent Service hosted by Bury Deanery. Everyone is welcome at All Saints' Church at 2pm. The Diocesan Advent Service starts at 1.30pm on Thursday 4th December at St Ann, Manchester.

There will be no meeting on the first Wednesday in January (New Year's Day) and on the 15th we start our new year programme with Holy Communion. It would be good to see some new faces.

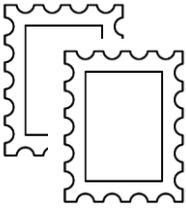
The branch hopes everyone has an enjoyable Christmas and a happy and peaceful 2020.

Bob Taylor,
Branch Leader

A THOUGHT FROM ST AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, WITH RELEVANCE AT THIS SEASON OF THE YEAR:

"GOD IS ALWAYS TRYING TO GIVE GOOD THINGS TO US, BUT OUR HANDS ARE TOO FULL TO RECEIVE THEM."





Little Voice

Our continued response to the appeal for used stamps, both old and new, British and foreign, has been magnificent!

After collecting and sorting all the stamps which have been kindly placed in the tin at the back of church, they are sent off to the organiser and chief sorter.

Little Voice aids and provides a home for street children in Ethiopia, by selling stamps to collectors.

Please keep collecting and removing any stamps from your post (leaving about one cm. or half an inch of envelope around them) especially at this Christmas time, and search out any old stamps you may have tucked away in a drawer or even old stamp albums.

Many thanks again,

David Peters



Looking Ahead.....

We may only just have arrived at Advent, however Betty Roe from St. John with St. Mark found an old newspaper cutting recently, which she wanted to share with us during this Christmas & Epiphany season magazine.

The article reported on the late amateur weather forecaster Mr William Foggitt and his Jasmine Tree outside his front door in Thirsk, Yorkshire, which appeared to stop blooming if a sign of snow and ice was on the way. However one of Mr Foggitt's favourite sayings was based on the traditional halfway mark of winter, which happens to be Candlemas Day, 2nd February. "If Candlemas Day is cold & clear, there will be two winters in that year. But if Candlemas Day is mild or brings rain, winter's gone and won't come again".

Now we will have to wait until we have put away all the decorations and nativities for another year before we see how accurate a pointer to the weather pattern that is, but it may be worth keeping a mental note to remember to see what the weather is doing when you attend Church on Sunday 2nd February.

THIS MONTH'S EVENTS

Men of the Benefice

END OF YEAR MEAL

La Dolce Vita, The Rock

Friday, 6 December 7.30pm

*Please put your name on the list in either church
if you would like to go*

CHRISTINGLE SERVICES

CHRIST CHURCH:

Monday 2 December

ST.JOHN with ST.MARK:

Wednesday 4 December

Both services at 6.30pm

Please bring a toy
for a local child in need.

Toys will be distributed via the
local Salvation Army &
Wood Street Mission



CAFÉ CHURCH 2019



Christ Church

10.30am, 8 December

10.30am, 26 January

St.John with St.Mark

10.30am, 15 December

10.30am, 23 February

ALL CAFÉ CHURCH SERVICES
ARE HELD
IN THE CHURCH HALLS



Christmas get-together

Wine, cheese & nibbles
Friday 13th December – 7.30pm
150 Walmersley Road

BACON OR SAUSAGE SANDWICHES

SATURDAY 14th DECEMBER from 10am
£3:50 including tea or coffee
(or 50p a cup)

books cakes chocolate tombola
and other festive stalls

in the Hall at Christ Church, School Lane



Third Thursday Light Lunch

at CCW Hall
12 noon - 1pm

The next lunches will be on **19 December** and **16 January**

As always there will be no set charge – if you are able, please give a donation but if you can't just come and enjoy the food and fellowship.

YOU will be most welcome.

There really is such a thing as a 'free lunch'!!

JANUARY EVENTS

JOINT BENEFICE SOCIAL EVENT

Chinese New Year celebration 2020
To mark the start of the year of the Rat



Friday 24th January from 7.00pm to 10.00pm
St. John with St. Mark Church Hall

May not be Chinese food at this stage depending on local establishments but for now please add the date to your diary



Churches Together in Bury

Carol Singing

Bury market

(opposite UpMarket Cafe)

10.30 am-12.30 pm

Saturday 21st December

**Please join us to sing about the real meaning of
Christmas amidst the bustle of Christmas shopping**

(Please do not think you have to commit to the full two hours)

WHAT'S ON IN DECEMBER

Sun 1		Advent Sunday Services as usual
	2.00pm	Deanery MU Advent Service (All Saints')
Mon 2	6.30pm	Christingle (CC)
	7.30pm	Study: Advent for Everyone (150 W Rd) <i>4 weeks</i>
Wed 4	6.30pm	Christingle (SJM)
	7.30pm	Mothers' Union (CC)
Thu 5	2.00pm	Study: Advent for Everyone (CC Hall) <i>4 weeks</i>
Fri 6	7.30pm	MOB End of year meal (La Dolce Vita)
Sat 7	9.00am	Walking Group
	7.30pm	Band Concert (CC)
Sun 8		Second Sunday of Advent Services as usual with
	10.30am	Café Church (CC)
Tue 10	9.15am	School Service in Church (SJM)
	8.00pm	Young Farmers' Carol Service (CC)
Wed 11	2.30pm	Priory Highbank Carol Service
	6.30pm	Mothers' Union (Red Hall)
	7.00pm	Open Group (SJM Barritt Room)
Fri 13	7.30pm	Girls' Out Alone (150 Walmersley Road)
Sat 14	10.00am	Bacon and sausage butty morning (CC Hall)
Sun 15		Third Sunday of Advent Services as usual with
	10.30am	Café Church (SJM)
Mon 16	2.30pm	School Christmas Fair (SJM School)
Wed 18	9.15pm	School Service in Church (CC)
Thu 19	12noon	Light Lunch (CC Hall)
Sat 21	10.30am	Carol Singing with Churches Together (Market)

Sun 22 **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Services as usual

12.30pm Baptism (SJM)

6.30pm Carol Service (SJM)

For Christmas Services see dedicated pages

Sun 29 **First Sunday of Christmas**

Early services as usual

10.30am Joint Service (SJM)

7.00pm Sunday@Seven (CC Hall)

WHAT'S ON IN JANUARY

Sun 5 **2nd Sunday of Christmas**

Services as usual

Mon 6 7.30pm PCC (CC)

Wed 8 7.30pm Bury Deanery Consultation (All Saints)

Sun 12 **The Baptism of Christ**

Services as usual

Wed 15 7.30pm Mothers' Union (CC)

Thu 16 12noon Light lunch (CC Hall)

Thu 16, Fri 17 & Sat 18 Panto (SJM) – Please see back page

NB - No 7.30pm service of Holy Communion on Thu 16

Sun 19 **2nd Sunday of Epiphany**

Services as usual

Mon 20 7.30pm Churches Together in Bury (URC)

Wed 22 7.30pm Deanery Synod (SJM)

Thu 23 8.00pm PCC Meeting (SJM)

Fri 24 7.00pm Chinese New Year (SJM)

Sun 26 **3rd Sunday of Epiphany**

Services as usual

10.30am Café Church (CC)

7.00pm Sunday@Seven (CC Hall)

Mon 27 8.00pm Men of the Benefice (Towler)

THIS JANUARY, THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF ST JOHN WITH ST MARK PRESENT:-

SNOW WHITE & THE SEVEN DWARFS



THURSDAY 16TH & FRIDAY 17TH JANUARY AT 7.30PM

SATURDAY 18TH JANUARY AT 2.00PM & 7.30PM

TICKETS PRICED AT £5.00 FOR CHILDREN & £7.00 FOR ADULTS.

For Ticket Sales Call 0161 761 6592 Or Email stjohnwithstmarkpanto@gmail.com

ST JOHN WITH ST MARK

CHURCH HALL ~ PARKINSON STREET ~ BURY ~BL9 6NY