

December 2020
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SAINTS ALIVE



ALL SAINTS

The Parish Magazine
of All Saints' Parish Church,
Cheadle Hulme

INFORMATION PAGE

SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00am Holy Communion (2nd in month)
10.00am Parish Eucharist
6.30pm Evensong

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Holy Communion

Thursday 10.00am.
Holy Days to be announced.

Matins

Daily at 9.00am.



CONFESSION AND SPIRITUAL COUNSELLING

By arrangement with the Clergy.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR BAPTISMS, BANNS AND WEDDINGS

All enquiries to Rev'd Janet Bacon (485 3455).

MOTHERS' UNION

Corporate Communion 10.00am on the 2nd Thursday in Church. Details of all meetings are in Saints Alive and weekly notices. See Notice Board.

MENS' SOCIETY

Monthly meetings on the 1st Thursday, September to May, at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room.
Chairman: Mr Bradley Torbitt (486 9387).
Secretary: Mr Mike Parry (485 7886).

FRIDAY CLUB

Fortnightly meetings on Friday evening usually in the Meeting Room at 7.30pm. Open to women of all age groups. Chairman is Lily Mitchelhill (485 5187) Secretary is Julia Ball (440 8647)

JAMES GROUP

The James Group exists to encourage the Church's ministry of healing, and the practice of regular intercession for the sick. The branch meets monthly to say an Office of Intercession: there is also a monthly Corporate Communion. For further information please contact: The Secretary: Pat Yates (485 4546).

BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

Secretary: Mrs Julia Ball (440 8647).

UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS

Cubs: (7th Cheadle Hulme) Meet on a Friday 6.30pm - 8.00pm at Thorn Grove.
Andrew Thompson
email:andy.thompson@cheadlescouts.org.uk

Beavers: (7th Cheadle Hulme)
Meet on a Friday 6.00pm - 7.15pm in the Parish Rooms. Mrs J. Metcalfe
jacquie.metcalfe@cheadlescouts.org.uk

Brownies: (11th Cheadle Hulme)
Meet on a Monday 6.00pm - 7.15pm at Thorn Grove.
Jo Taylor
brownow11thcheadlehulme@yahoo.com

Rainbows: (2nd Cheadle Hulme)
Meet on a Monday 6.00pm - 7.00pm



Our Reader, Michael Aiers writes...

From Psalm 4: *Many are saying, 'Oh, that we might see better times!': Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord.*

Psalm 4 forms part of Night Prayer and, in verse 4, we daily make this prayer, a prayer which I am sure has been on the lips of most of us throughout the past year. Have we seen 'better times', has the Lord smiled upon us, has our prayer been answered? How do you see 2020? For me 2020 has been a wonderful year in many ways. It began in a blaze of colour as the blossom trees came into flower in the Spring, a true delight for the eyes, and it is now signing out with the glorious colours of the Autumn leaves, glowing richly when the sun shines on them. And 2020 has not just been a feast for the eyes; the garden has also been very fruitful. We have enjoyed bumper crops of fruit and vegetables, from strawberries early in the year through to raspberries and apples, the last of which were picked last week.

Yes, the year has also had its downsides, of which we are all too well aware, but why should we let them blind us to the many blessings we have received? As the various fruits in the garden came into season, and we enjoyed them, I was reminded of my childhood when the choice of fruit and vegetables available in the shops was dictated by the natural seasons. Advances in agricultural technology, refrigeration and international transport now enable us to enjoy the fruits and vegetables of our choice whenever we want, we no longer have to wait for them to come into season, they are always available on the supermarket shelves. Has this, I wonder, disconnected us from the natural world, the natural rhythms of nature, and seduced us into believing that the natural world is now securely under our control? The current pandemic has shown us that we are far from being in control of nature and has reminded us that we ourselves are just part of, and subject to, Earth's natural processes. The virus has been spread around the world by us humans, and it continues to be passed on through human contacts. That this train of transmission can be broken was demonstrated as long ago as 1665 when the village of Eyam so heroically isolated itself to prevent the plague from spreading to the surrounding area. I was also encouraged to learn that the Earl of Devonshire, and other less wealthy neighbours, ensured that the villagers were kept supplied with the necessities of life during their isolation.

We are commanded to love our neighbours and how better to do that in these difficult times than by (a) doing our utmost to ensure we do not pass on any infection and (b) helping those who, for whatever reason, are isolated and in need of help, just as they did. The restrictions of 'lockdown' may feel irksome but, when seen as our efforts to protect our neighbours, they become a positive expression of love for our neighbours along with our helping of those in need. I certainly consider it yet another blessing of 2020 that so very many people have been prepared to inconvenience themselves for the sake of those around them.

How have you found 2020?

Best wishes, Michael

**COPY DEADLINE FOR JANUARY - DECEMBER 6TH
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Christmas and St Luke's Gospel

It is to St Luke's wonderful gospel that many Christians turn as the year draws to a close and Christmas approaches, for it is to St Luke that we owe the fullest account of the nativity.

Luke alone tells us the story of Mary and the angel's visit to her, and has thus given the Church the wonderful Magnificat of Mary.

Luke alone tells us the story of Simeon's hymn of praise, thus giving us the wonderful Nunc Dimmittis. Imagine an Anglican evensong without the Nunc Dimmittis.

Luke alone tells us the story of how the angels appeared to the shepherds and how the shepherds then visited the infant Jesus. So – imagine Christmas cards and nativity scenes every year without the shepherds arriving to visit baby Jesus. Imagine school nativity plays without our children dressed as shepherds or sheep. So – thank you, Luke!

What makes it so amazing is that Luke was not a Jew! The man who wrote the fullest nativity story, and indeed more of the New Testament than any other single person, was a Gentile!

Joseph and his Amazing Journey

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world... And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David. (Luke 2 1-4)

What a year we have had! But I suppose Joseph had had a demanding year as well. Having learning that his betrothed was pregnant due to divine intervention, he then learned of the Roman government's demand for a census.

These Bible verses show Joseph being a good citizen. Leaving home for a long journey in order to please the government would not have been welcome, but Joseph complied and obeyed the law.

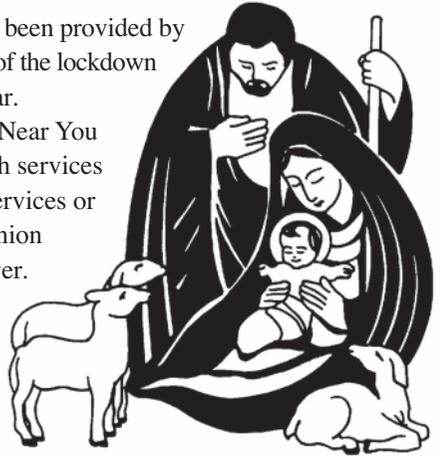
This year the situation is reversed. Millions of us want to make a long journey, to visit our loved ones across the UK. But this year, because of coronavirus, the Government is asking us to stay at home.

The Romans had censuses for a good reason: to help them run the business of the empire. This Government has restrictions in place for a good reason: to help slow the spread of a deadly virus.

Following government rules and laws it not always easy or pleasant but as Christians we should be good citizens. As always this is a light-hearted guide to a complicated subject. If you are going home for Christmas, get proper advice – and have a Merry one.

Going to church in the coronavirus pandemic

More than 17,000 online services and events have been provided by Church of England churches since the introduction of the lockdown and restrictions on public worship earlier this year. Figures from the Church of England's A Church Near You website, which allows people to search for church services and events, show that more than 17,000 online services or events are now listed, including Sunday Communion services, Bible studies and morning or night prayer. Many of these services take place regularly and this figure represents a snapshot of the likely total number.



The statistics do not include the Church of England's national online weekly services broadcast on Sundays and shared on Facebook and YouTube. There have been nearly three million views of the national online services and posts about the weekly broadcasts have been seen 23.6 million times. Contributors have included the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Duke of Cambridge and Pope Francis. The national online services are being watched by a wide range of ages and around one in five people viewing go to church infrequently or not at all.

Other figures in the report show that official Church of England apps from Church House Publishing – the most popular being Daily Prayer, or the Daily Office of morning, evening and night prayer – have been used more than seven million times so far this year, up from five million in 2019. Church of England social media posts have been seen 86 million times so far, nearly double the total for last year.

The growth in online services has been helped by the Church of England stepping up its digital training programme for congregations. More than 4,200 vicars and local church leaders have taken part in remote digital training courses so far this year, four times the number as in 2019.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said: "At a time when many have felt isolated and fearful, Church of England parishes and clergy have broadcast thousands of online church services and events, seeking to bring comfort and hope to their communities.

We know that tens of thousands of those tuning in will never have had contact with their local Church of England parish before and may never have heard the Christian message. Their welcome presence is a sign of the great hunger we all have for spiritual meaning in our lives."



Green grow'th the Holly

A music manuscript from about 1515 and attributed to King Henry VIII has the words:

*Green grow'th the holly,
So doth the ivy,
Though winter blasts ne'er so high
Green grow'th the holly.*

The next three verses take us through spring, summer and autumn, so this is clearly not a Christmas carol, unlike the familiar 'The Holly and the Ivy'. What may not be known is that holly and ivy are two of the very few native evergreen trees, and in past times must have been especially popular in providing greenery during winter months.

With its shiny spiky dark green leaves, holly is surely one of the most easily recognised trees in this country. Though often bushlike, holly can grow up to ten metres high with a straight trunk and pyramid shape. It is dioecious, meaning each tree is either male or female, explaining possibly why the one in your garden never has any berries!

Nowadays we associate holly with Christmas wreaths and garlands, cards and carols. Pre-Victorian times saw holly branches used as Christmas trees, with the spiky leaves representing Christ's Crown of Thorns and the red berries as drops of blood. Holly brought into the house was regarded as protection against evil spirits and as a refuge for good 'faeries' who would guard the residents of the house in return. It is interesting to note that where no person or animal brushes by a holly, the leaves lack all spines except the one at the tip. This includes upper leaves on mature trees. A bit like people – be nice and they won't be scratchy!

Back to 'Green grow'th the Holly'. The final verse ends:

*The God of life can never die,
Hope! Saith the holly.*

How wise. Where would we be without hope?



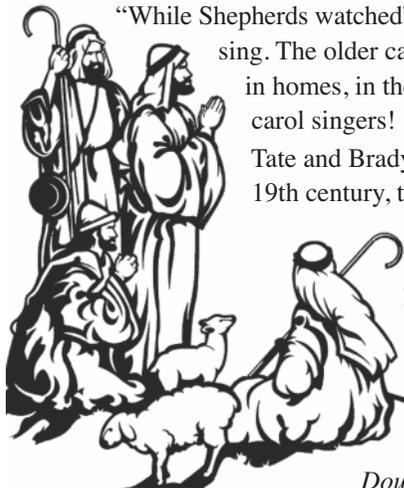
While Shepherds Watched

A Christmas carol service would not be complete without a rousing rendition of “While shepherds watched their flocks by night”. Its simple rhyming words and memorable tune make it easy to sing (and also, I seem to remember, easy to parody!). But if we were able to drop in on a Christmas service in the early 18th century, it would be the only carol we would hear. It was written by Nahum Tate, born in 1652, who was Poet Laureate in 1692 and a prolific playwright who re-wrote some of Shakespeare’s plays (his “King Lear” has a happy ending!). After the Reformation the Psalms were sung in vernacular languages, instead of



Latin, so that everybody could join in the worship; metrical translations encouraged congregational participation and, in England, Sternhold and Hopkins’ Psalter emerged as the standard used in churches. But in the late seventeenth century Nahum Tate collaborated with Nicholas Brady to produce a “New Version” of the Psalter. Tate wrote some of the new metrical translations, including “As pants the hart for cooling streams” (Psalm 42), still in our hymnbook alongside the newer, and lovely “As the hart pants for the water”. Like the “Old Version”, Tate and Brady’s “New Version” of the Psalter contained metrical renderings of the canticles, the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed. And it included certain hymns for use in services, but the only one intended for Christmas was

“While Shepherds watched”, so that was the only carol the congregation could sing. The older carols, many adapted from pagan origins, were sung in homes, in the inn, and of course, by “waits” - we call them carol singers!



Tate and Brady’s metrical Psalms continued in use until, in the 19th century, the “prose” versions of the Psalms, as in the Bible, replaced metrical versions in Anglican worship.

The century also saw the writing of many new hymns, including carols, and they became an essential part of Christmas. The first recorded “Carol Service” took place in Truro in 1880. “As shepherds watched” is still a favourite with us all, children young and old.

Eglantyne Jebb – founder of 'Save the Children'

Here is a modern-day saint whose compassion and determination has saved literally millions of lives. Eglantyne did not begin as an obvious 'mover and shaker' of people. Born in Shropshire in 1876, she grew up in Ellesmere, studied history at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford, taught at Marlborough, and then resigned as she was not physically robust. Eglantyne moved to live with her mother in Cambridge, and it would have been so easy to settle for a life of peaceful obscurity. But she was a Christian, and at Oxford she had developed a passion for social concerns, so this compassion now drove her to take action. She began in 1906 by publishing research on the poverty she'd found in Cambridge. Then in 1912 the Balkan Wars broke out, and Eglantyne left



Cambridge for Macedonia. Her months among the refugees led her to decide that long-term constructive aid was more effective than short-term handouts.

The First World War left Eglantyne horrified by the prolonged Allied blockade on Germany and Austria-Hungary, which even after Armistice meant starvation for millions of civilians, especially children. And so in 1919 Eglantyne and her sister Dorothy Buxton helped found the 'Fight the Famine' Council, which wanted to end the blockade and establish a League of Nations.

One day during a rally in Trafalgar Square, Eglantyne was arrested for distributing a leaflet showing starving children which read: "Our blockade has caused this – millions of children are starving to death." She ended up in court and was fined, but the judge was so impressed with Eglantyne's commitment to children that he himself paid her fine. His money became the first donation to Save the Children, the new charity just set up by Eglantyne and Dorothy. Save the Children was officially launched at the Albert Hall in May 1919, with the aim of helping the starving civilians of central Europe. It was a success, raising £400,000 in that first year alone. When in the autumn of 1921 Russia was facing famine, Save the Children chartered a cargo ship, the SS Torcello, to carry lifesaving food and medical supplies to Russia – saving hundreds of thousands of lives. By 1922 Save the Children had become one of Britain's biggest charities. Eglantyne's Declaration of the Rights of the Child, written in 1923, was adopted by the League of Nations the following year. The present-day UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is derived from it. But ten years of running Save the Children had sapped Eglantyne's fragile strength, and she died in Geneva in 1928, aged only 52.

Reflected Faith Series: Grace for all

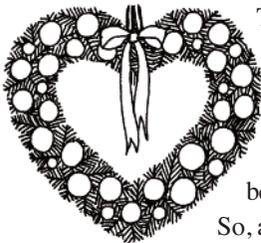
Last month we thought about one key element of gathered worship – the Welcome. It is for everyone, regardless of how they look, or dress, their faith or their behaviour. This month, being the month of Advent and Christmas, let's focus on Grace.

God, in Jesus, did not wait for us to become perfect or reach up to Him but rather He came to us, in the daily mess of our lives; as and where we are.

I recently heard someone say: 'God's nature is goodness', and the Bible confirms that this is true. He cannot help it. That's what He is. He is goodness, and grace, and forgiveness, and faithfulness, and all those wonderful attributes that come from

the pure essence of love. It's what we strive for – to be more like Him every day.

Then our welcome to others will also be full of grace, His grace, and not guided by our own likes or prejudices. Instead, we can reach out to others spontaneously, from a heart of love.



This Advent and Christmas it will probably be harder to welcome people into our times of worship. Virtual is not the same as actual, and actual will include facemasks. But that does not mean that we should give up on reaching out to those who visit our church. This year, more than ever, they may need us. Many will be lonely this Christmas, far from their families.

So, although our normal church services may be disrupted, we have to remember that services are not the church; WE are the church. In what has been a truly extraordinary year, perhaps we can each of us find a lovely informal way of sharing our Christmas joy with anyone whom God sends our way.

This month: Have a think about what it is about Christmastime services that people love. How can we distil that into a socially distanced service or meeting, a virtual experience or into an envelope or maybe a box to their doors?

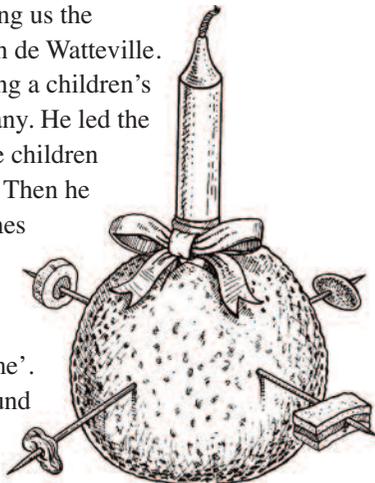
Human nature is like a stable inhabited by the ox of passion and the ass of prejudice – animals which take up a lot of room and which I suppose most of us are feeding on the quiet. And it is there between them, pushing them out, that Christ must be born, and in their very manger He must be laid. Evelyn Underhill

Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents for a minute and look around. Anonymous

Christingle – a generous present from the Moravians

It is the Moravians whom we have to thank for bringing us the Christingle. Especially one Moravian clergyman: John de Watteville. On 20th December 1747, John de Watteville was taking a children's service in his Moravian church in Marienborn, Germany. He led the children in some hymns and read out verses which the children themselves had written to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Then he explained to the children that true happiness only comes through knowing Jesus. Jesus, said John de Watteville, "has kindled in each little heart a flame which keeps burning to their joy and our happiness".

John de Watteville then went on to illustrate that 'flame'. He gave each child a little lighted wax candle, tied around with a red ribbon. He ended his service with a little prayer: "Lord Jesus, kindle a flame in these children's hearts, that theirs like Thine become".



The visual aid was a great success with the children; for the Marienborn Diary for that day concludes: "hereupon the children went full of joy with their lighted candles to their rooms and so went glad and happy to bed".

The candle and red ribbon were remembered the following year, and the following after that. The years came and went, and as the Moravians began to travel beyond Germany, so they took the custom with them: to Labrador, to Pennsylvania, to Tibet and Suriname, to the Caribbean and South Africa. In each country the Christians adapted it for their own use.

No one knows for certain when the word 'Christingle' was first used with regard to the custom. No one even knows where the word 'Christingle' comes from. Some people say it is from the old Saxon word 'ingle' (fire), meaning 'Christ-fire or light'. Another theory is that it derives from the German 'engel' (angel), meaning 'Christ-angel'.

In any event, the symbolism of Christingle gradually developed, until today the Moravians in the British Province use an orange, representing the world, with a lighted candle to represent Christ, the Light of the World. Nuts, raisins and sweets on cocktail sticks around the candle represent God's bounty and goodness in providing the fruits of the earth. Red paper, forming a frill around the base of the candle, reminds us of the blood of Christ shed for all people on the cross at Calvary.

In Moravian churches, the Christingle Service is usually held on the Sunday before Christmas or on Christmas Eve. The website for the Moravian Church says: "We are glad that the Moravian Church has been able to make this contribution to the wider Christian world."



Christmas can't come too early

Every year it happens. I hear Christians lamenting how 'Christmas comes earlier every year.' Since this September (or before!) supermarkets, shops and garden centres have been selling Christmas jumpers, socks and pyjamas and all kinds of other seasonal merchandise. Should we be annoyed or exasperated? Should we have gone around reminding people that it's much too early for tinsel and mistletoe?

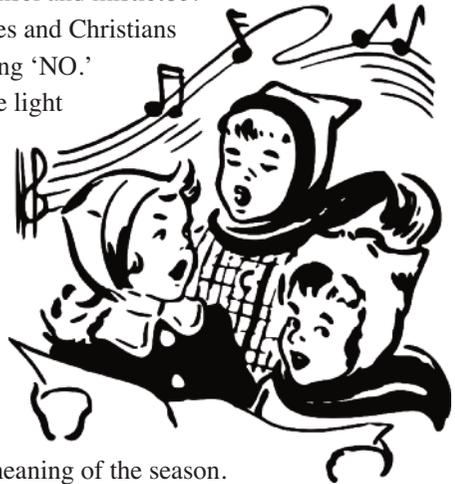
This year, of all years, the answer from churches and Christians of all denominations must surely be a resounding 'NO.'

As people began looking to Christmas for some light in the gloom of the pandemic – and hard-hit businesses desperately need to increase their income and chances of survival – it sounds a woefully wrong note if the Church is saying 'hold back, it's not time yet...'

Because Christmas is that time of year when increasing numbers of people want to come to church services and share in the story of the new-born King. It is when carols are played in shops, and there are openings to speak of the meaning of the season.

Churches might not be able to host big indoor carol services this year, but the challenge is how we take the Christmas message out into the streets and neighbourhoods around our buildings.

This year has been one like no other for millions of people, with little prospect of better news into the New Year. So we need to be declaring the Christmas message of hope and light and joy in the darkness. And to be doing so at every opportunity. *(Cont on page 10)*





(Cont from page 9) But also, we need to be doing so with sensitivity and care, for the many who will find it hard to be celebrating this pandemic year, and with the prospect of large family gatherings in doubt because of Covid 19 regulations.

Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell wrote in his 2009 book ‘Do Nothing Christmas is Coming’, “Christmas is one of the most joyful times of the year. It is also one of the most stressful. It is laden with expectations. It is often overtaken with grief. It might be the season of good will, but it can feel like the last straw on an already overburdened camel.” He added ruefully, “Wise men would not ride this one.” Archbishop Cottrell is right that Christmas has to be approached sensitively, that we need to take care in how we celebrate, that for many people who have lost loved ones and livelihoods during this traumatic year, Christmas will not be easy.

We come alongside people with the news that the baby born in the manger grew up to be the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief, who experienced suffering and bereavement. God, born as Man, who shared our pain as well as our celebrations, ultimately died on a cross to rise again. Our mission is to bring a message of hope, and to do so with love, humility and sensitivity to a hurting disorientated world – one that’s eager for light in the gloom.

Lines from Invocation of Peace

*Deep peace, pure white of the moon to you;
Deep peace, pure green of the grass to you;
Deep peace, pure brown of the earth to you;
Deep peace, pure grey of the dew to you,
Deep peace, pure blue of the sky to you!
Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.*

By Fiona Macleod (19th century visionary and romantic)

Everyday Christmas

(Mal 4:2, Mt 1:23)

*Light a candle,
Look into the light,
Pray.*

*Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings*

*As the flame rises,
Smooth, bright,
Know the comfort of Christ
In the carol speaking
Afresh.*

*Bringing Jesus
Into heart and prayer.*

*Emmanuel, God with us.
Light of the world,
Out of the stable
Into our situations.*

*Because of Jesus
Christmas is everyday.*

*The Lord is here.
Hallelujah.*

Daphne Kitching



Christmas Foretold

*From untold glory to a manger of straw
Who could imagine such a thing?
From Eternity stepping down into Time
With very few to welcome Him in.*

*Mary and Joseph, shepherds and wise men,
In His mother's arms the Baby lies,
Scripture describes these amazing events
As prophecy unravels before our eyes*

*The Books of the Bible all tell of His
coming*

*His life, His death, redemption's plan,
The King of glory revealed in God's Word
Touching our earth in the form of a Man.*

Megan Carter





The Story is still the same!

‘Christmas may look different, but the story is still the same!’ That’s the message for Christmas in 2020. Coronavirus will make our celebrations this year look very different from usual. However, the message of the baby born in Bethlehem is still relevant!

In one nativity play, the highlight was to illuminate Jesus, with a light in the manger, when all the other lights were turned off. At the appropriate time, all the lights went out, including the manger one. The silence was broken when one of the shepherds loudly whispered: ‘Hey, you turned off Jesus.’ Of course, nobody can turn off Jesus this Christmas!

The angels announced, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.’ (Luke 2: 10,11). The birth of this baby brings great joy and good news for everyone! As the king of the universe, He has come as our Saviour. In an uncertain world, He offers joy and hope, because He holds this pandemic in His hands. This is a real cause for joy!

‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests.’ (Luke 2:14). We may feel anything but peace amid the anxieties over our current circumstances. How can a Jewish infant born to a peasant family in first century Palestine bring peace to our lives today? Jesus established peace with God through His death on the cross. Trusting the Prince of Peace for our lives brings God’s peace amid the huge uncertainties we face. As the carol says, ‘Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her King.’



Hope amid uncertainty



‘Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call Him Immanuel.’ (Isaiah 7:14)

This promise to King Ahaz in 8th century Judah is fulfilled in the coming of Jesus at the first Christmas: ‘God with Us’ (Matthew 1:23). Ahaz faced the military threat of Syria invading Israel, but Isaiah tells him not to panic. He can trust God, who is in control of the nation.

For us, Coronavirus brings deep uncertainty as we come to another New Year. We live with the threat from the virus, economic uncertainty, separation from family and friends, the loss of loved ones and the anxiety that isolation brings. Yet the message of Immanuel brings hope, as it did for Ahaz! Christmas changes everything forever! God has declared in Christ that He is with us and for us, not absent from or against us.

His love is larger than our sin, fears or guilt:

‘If God is for us, who can be against us?’

(Romans 8:31). As we prepare for the most unusual Christmas ever, let’s not forget:

God with us means that He is on my side and by my side. In the uncertainties of life I am never alone.

God with us means that everything will work out according to His plan. My life isn’t just a series of meaningless occasions or mistakes.

God with us means that even when others show they are not there for me, God is.

God with us means when circumstances change, He will give me the strength I need.

God is with me: He isn’t far away, but has made the journey into my world. Here is the hope for the future, once we get past the trees, gifts, turkey stuffing and pudding!



Living in Love and Faith

The Church of England’s Living in Love and Faith teaching resources have been recently published. They explore questions of human identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

The resources, commissioned by the House of Bishops, include a book, a series of films and podcasts and a course. They will initiate a process of whole Church learning, that will contribute to the Bishops’ discernment of a way forward in relation to questions of human identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

Advent Course 2020

‘Light in the Darkness...’

You are invited to join a new four-part Advent course called Light in the Darkness which will be run by our Pastoral Workers, Clare Russell and Linda Ackerley, on zoom.

Traditional Advent themes are present, however, its main aim is to help us reflect on the past year and to look forward as we enter a new season and a new year.

The four parts are based around four words which have been central to many people’s experiences during 2020 – Distance, Safe, Trust, and Normal.

The course will be held on Tuesday evenings, 7.30pm – 8.30pm, beginning on Tuesday 1 December and run for 4 weeks, finishing on Tuesday 22 December.

This is an informal course and everyone is welcome. If you would like to join, please email Clare or Linda at: clare.russell3@ntlworld.com or Lindaackerley1@gmail.com



The current Lockdown is due to end at 12.01am on Wednesday 2 December.

IF IT DOES AND IF OUR CHURCH IS ALLOWED TO OPEN FOR WORSHIP... then we will be holding a short Eucharist on that day at 10am. If not, then we will be open as usual for private prayer 10.00am - 1.00am.

On that day we will be remembering Claud Metson. His funeral and burial will be held at 10.30am at Christ Church Woodford where he was a Lay Reader for many years. Due to Covid restrictions attendance has to be by family invitation only but we will be praying for them and giving thanks for the time Claud spent with us here at All Saints.

Some of Anonymous’s greatest quotes

Believe in God and you’ll believe in miracles. Believe in the baby of Bethlehem, and you’ll experience one. Anonymous

In Jesus Christ heaven meets earth and earth ascends to heaven. Anonymous

Love is what’s in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents for a minute and look around. Anonymous



The history of Christmas

The Bible does not give a date for the birth of Jesus. In the third century it was suggested that Jesus was conceived at the Spring equinox, 25th March, popularising the belief that He was born nine months later on 25th December. John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, encouraged Christians worldwide to make Christmas a holy day in about 400.

In the early Middle Ages, Christians celebrated a series of midwinter holy days. Epiphany (which recalls the visit to the infant Jesus of the wise men bearing gifts) was the climax of 12 days of Christmas, beginning on 25th December. The Emperor Charlemagne chose 25th December for his coronation in 800, and the prominence of Christmas Day rose.

In England, William the Conqueror also chose 25th December for his coronation in 1066, and the date became a fixture both for religious observance and feasting.

Cooking a boar was a common feature of mediaeval Christmas feasts, and singing carols accompanied it. Writers of the time lament the fact that the true significance of Christmas was being lost because of partying. They condemn the rise of ‘misrule’ – drunken dancing and promiscuity. The day was a public holiday, and traditions of bringing evergreen foliage into the house and the exchange of gifts (usually on Epiphany) date from this time. In the 17th century the rise of new Protestant denominations led to a rejection of many celebrations that were associated with Catholic Christianity. Christmas was one of them. After the execution of Charles I, England’s Puritan rulers made the celebration of Christmas illegal for 14 years. The restoration of Charles II ended the ban, but religious leaders continued to discourage excess, especially in Scotland. In Western Europe the day for exchanging gifts changed from Epiphany (6th January) to Christmas Day.

By the 1820s, the significance of Christmas was declining. Charles Dickens was one of several writers who sought to restore it. His novel *A Christmas Carol* was significant in reviving merriment during the festival. He emphasised charity and family reunions, alongside religious observance. Christmas trees, paper chains, cards and many well-known carols date from this time. So did the tradition of Boxing Day, on 26th December, when tradesmen who had given reliable service during the year would collect ‘boxes’ of money or gifts from their customers.

In Europe Santa Claus is associated with the bringing of gifts. Santa Claus is a shortening of Saint Nicholas, who was a Christian bishop in the 4th century in present-day Turkey. He was particularly noted for his care for children and for his generosity to the poor.

By the Middle Ages his appearance, in red bishop’s robes and a mitre, was adored in the Netherlands and familiar across Europe. Father Christmas dates from 17th century England, where he was a secular figure of good cheer (more associated with drunkenness than gifts). The transformation of Santa Claus into today’s Father Christmas started in New York in the 1880s, where his red robes and white beard became potent advertising symbols.

In some countries (such as Latin America and Eastern Europe) the tradition attempts to combine the secular and religious elements by holding that Santa Claus makes children’s presents and then gives them to the baby Jesus to distribute.

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A SMILING WELCOME

A Personal memory of Claud Metson

I was venturing into the unknown, as I walked into All Saints Church for the first time in 2018. I had just moved into a new location, I had left good friends behind and I was feeling very much at sea. It was hugely comforting to be met with a warm welcome and to be made to feel at home at All Saints. Among those who greeted me, then and on subsequent Sundays was Claud Metson; always smiling, with a friendly word, and often a bit of self-deprecating humour. I fell into the habit of sitting in the same seat and it was reassuring to be met with the same friendly welcome from the pew behind every Sunday.

Later I discovered Saints Alive, the parish magazine, and I began to read Claud's regular articles. He wrote, in an informal style, about the situations and events that make up our lives - birthdays, gardening, holidays, wedding photos in the rain. I share his memories of the days when the Spitfire was the fastest aeroplane yet invented, and space travel was only to be found in the pages of H G Wells. When he wrote about travel and holidays, there was the sense that perhaps the best part was coming back to the comfort and security of home. And Claud's articles were all grounded in his Christian faith. In March this year, at the beginning of Lent, he reminded us that although Lent is a season of penitence and prayer, and levity is not appropriate, we are encouraged to "Rejoice in all circumstances". I treasure my personal memory of Claud, and would like to record my gratitude to him for the smiling welcome he gave me when I joined the congregation of All Saints.

Douglas Scarisbrick

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ALL SAINTS CRAFT GROUP

The Craft Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 2.30pm in the Church Meeting Room. We learn new skills and practise old ones. Tea/coffee, biscuits and good company are always on offer. **Please join us when meetings begin again.**

All are welcome. For further details please contact Frances Pickett on 0161 439 8890.



All Saints' Website and Facebook

 Keep up to date with news and events on the All Saints' website. Find out about our charity work, community groups and listen to recent sermons.



Please contact Sarah Ball on: comms@allsaintsheadleholme.org.uk with any stories and updates.

Find All Saints' on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/AllSaintsCH/> and "Like" us to get notifications about our news and events.



Church Open

**Saturday Coffee Mornings have been postponed
for the immediate future.**



MEN'S SOCIETY

Monthly meetings on the first Thursday, September to May, at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room (unless otherwise stated). After the talk there is a short question and answer session followed by tea, coffee and biscuits.

Due to the implementation of measures to combat the Coronavirus pandemic all meetings have been cancelled. Further details will be posted when available.

Although this group is attended by men, if you are interested in hearing any of the speakers you will be most welcome to come along.

Chairman: Bradley Torbitt (0161 486 9387)

Secretary: Mike Parry (0161 485 7886)

Christmas throughout the Christian world



For nearly four weeks leading up to Christmas Christians recognise a period called Advent. It means ‘coming’. It is a time of spiritual preparation. ‘Coming’ refers to Jesus’ first coming as a baby, but it also looks forward to a day when Jesus is expected to return in triumph at His ‘second coming’ to establish perfect justice and a new order of peace.

Originally Christians marked Advent as a time when they refrained from excessive eating and drinking. Then Christmas Day reintroduced them to the joys of feasting. Christmas celebrations lasted for 12 days, with gifts exchanged as a climax at Epiphany (6th January). Today, however, Advent is more likely to be associated with accelerating festivity, with the days following Christmas something of an anti-climax until ‘twelfth night’, on which decorations are removed. Many Christians worldwide are trying to revive the spirit of Advent by setting aside time to pray and address global poverty.

Christmas Day is celebrated as the anniversary of Jesus’ birth, although the actual date is not known. Most Christians celebrate it on 25th December. However, the Orthodox Church (the ancient churches in Eastern Europe and parts of Asia) follows a different calendar and celebrates on 7th January. Christians make a point of taking communion on Christmas Day. Many make it the first thing they do as the clock strikes midnight. On 6th January the Christmas festival continues with a celebration of Epiphany, which means ‘the appearance’. Christians remember the visit of wise men (magi) to Jesus, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Christmas tradition of exchanging gifts originally honoured these men, who were the first non-Jews (Gentiles) to worship Jesus. It forms a reminder that in Jesus God was giving Himself for the benefit of the entire world. Orthodox Christians use this day to recall the baptism of Jesus as a grown man. The significance of Jesus being baptised was that He identified Himself with human beings in all their need. They mark the day by praying for God’s blessing on rivers, wells and water sources.

Christmas has never been just an escapist festival for Christians. Those who treat it seriously recognise that not all the world is able to face the days with frivolity or joy. The day after Christmas, Boxing Day, was historically marked as the feast of St Stephen. He was the first man to be put to death rather than give up his belief that Jesus was God.

And two days later a day remembering the Massacre of the Innocents recalls Herod’s attempt to destroy Jesus by killing all male babies in Bethlehem. Although not so widely marked as Christmas Day, it gives Christians the opportunity to pray for children in today’s world who suffer as a result of the actions of adults.



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“God is with us in our pain and fear” Bishop of London’s message of hope

The Bishop of London, Rt Revd Sarah Mullally, has said that despite this being a time of “great uncertainty and challenge” as the world struggles to “overcome a devastating pandemic that has cut short earthly lives, destroyed livelihoods, and separated us from the people and activities we enjoy,” yet still “we are not without hope.”

Speaking recently in St Paul’s Cathedral, she said: “Through word, prayer, song and symbol, we are reminded that God’s love for us can never be destroyed. God is with us in our pain and fear and will lead us to a yet more glorious day.”

Bishop Sarah also praised the ongoing work of the “real heroes and heroines at work in intensive care units, the Emergency Department, oncology and elderly care wards.”

These people have been “giving their all, and are continuing to give their all, because we are still very much in the midst of the Covid pandemic.” “Yet,” she went on, “The hope we have in our hearts as Christians is eternal. Hope that is in Christ will not be disappointed.”



More than £10m in grants to sixty six churches and cathedrals



The Church of England has welcomed the award of grants from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England for grants amounting to £10.7m to 66 churches and cathedrals across the country.

A total of 16 cathedrals and 50 parish churches will receive grants under the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage. The grants will support churches and cathedrals, which would normally welcome millions of visitors each year, in ensuring organisational viability, covering costs incurred by Covid-19, and allowing for business planning and job retention.





"Nice idea, Amelia, but I don't think that the Angel of the Lord Zooming with the shepherds would have the same dramatic effect."



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Parish Calendar and Registers

SERVICES

Most of our services are of course 'on hold' at the moment, but services of Holy Communion were able to resume on Sunday July 19th at 10.00am.

These were shorter than usual, but a sermon, prayers and a reading have now been added. As you know, we are unable to sing together in church, but Trevlyn will be playing the organ.

Private prayer sessions will continue on Wednesdays from 10.00am to 11.00am. Please follow the signs, social distancing and recommended hygiene whenever you are visiting. More details are available on our website.

ALTAR FLOWER ROTA DECEMBER 2020

- 6th Mrs P. and Rev. J. Bacon - In memory
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13th Mrs J. Tansley
20th -
24th CHRISTMAS EVE
25th CHRISTMAS DAY
27th -

*If you wish to discuss any aspect of
church flowers including wedding flowers
please contact Frances Pickett
(0161 439 8890)*

CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

We give thanks for the lives of the following:

Dec 2 Claud Metson
at Christ Church, Woodford

A Christmas Prayer

Lord, as I enter into the fast-paced season ahead, help me walk slowly and quietly. Let me stop and listen to the angels sing of the greatest news ever told. Let my heart, mind and soul join the chorus. "Glory in the Highest!! The Messiah has been born!"

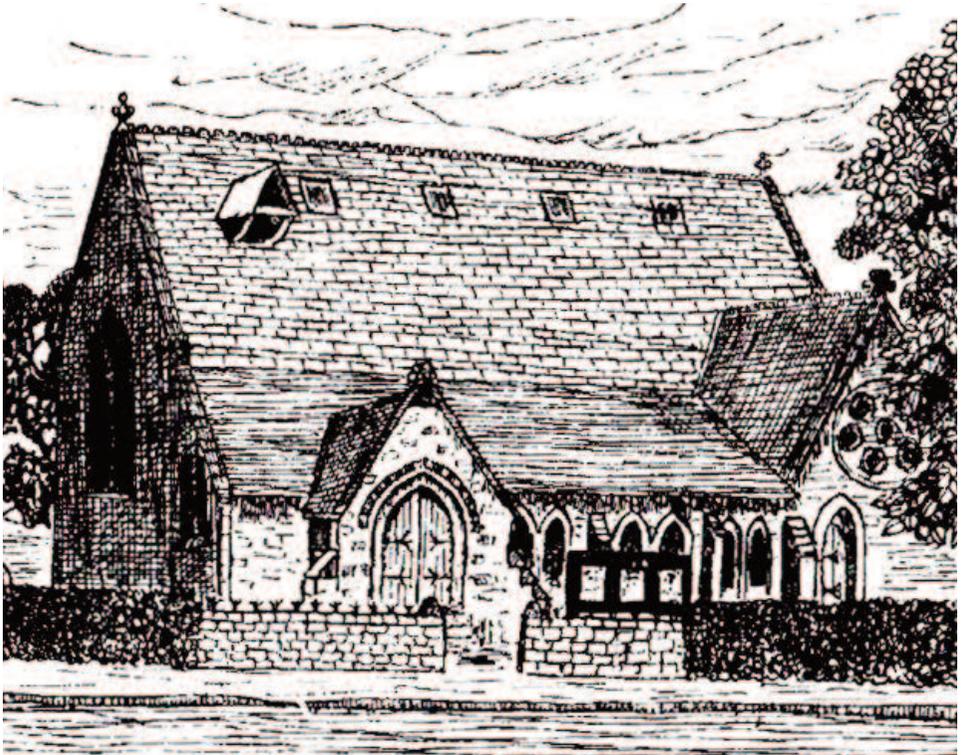
Among all the bright sparkling lights and cheery holiday tunes, let my spirit travel once again toward Bethlehem to honour and worship Jesus, my King, The Prince of Peace, the Lord of Hosts, Mighty Counsellor, Son of God, the Lamb.

All Your love, mercy and power somehow made flesh in the tiny form of a humble baby born in a manger. Let me worship the only one who is worthy to take our sin away and open the gates of all eternity!

Daphne Kitching

We're keeping our Coronavirus updates page on the All Saints website as current as possible. Keep checking there and on the All Saints Facebook page for further news.

If you know anyone who needs shopping; prayers or simply a conversation please call Rev Janet on 0161 312 4683 or our Churchwardens Janet Ashman 0161 485 7969 and John Ackerley 0161 486 1419.



Christian Stewardship

The Parish practises the principles of Christian Stewardship in its giving for the work of God. If you are interested to learn more about it please contact the Recorder, Kate Hughes (485 1010), the Vicar or the Churchwardens. The giving of time and talents is encouraged, If you wish to help in some capacity in the Church services or organisations, in improving or maintaining the Church fabric or grounds, or in visiting and helping the sick or housebound, please speak to the Clergy or the Churchwardens.



All Saints Cheadle Hulme

PARISH DIRECTORY

Clergy: *The Rev'd Janet Bacon, All Saints Vicarage, 27 Church Road SK8 7JL (485 3455)
The Rev'd Janet Owens (Retired) (312 4683)

Readers: Mrs Pat Yates (485 4546)
Mr Michael Aiers (439 7692)

Church Wardens: *Mrs Janet Ashman (485 7969)
*Mr John Ackerley (486 1419)

Deputy Wardens: *Mrs Julia Ball (440 8647)
*Ms Sarah Ball (07966 146746)

Organist: Miss Trevlyn Thomas (485 8026)

Sacristan: *Mrs Janet Valentine (439 8203)

P.C.C. Vice Chairman and Treasurer: *Mr Jeremy Valentine (439 8203)

P.C.C. Secretary: *Mrs Linda Ackerley (486 1419)

Planned Giving and Gift Aid Secretary: *Mrs Kate Hughes (485 1010)

Mainly Music Co-ordinator and Child Protection Officer: *Mrs Clare Russell (486 9304)

Church Room Bookings: Mr Neville Ashman (485 7969)

Parish Rooms Bookings: Ms Joanna Parsons, Parish Room Cottage, Church Road, SK8 7JB
(485 2596)

Electoral Roll Officer: Dr David Jones (01625 850997)

Parish Magazine Editor: Mr Rhys Davenport (485 6772) Email: seed.design@mail.com

Website and Social Media: *Ms Sarah Ball Email: comms@allsaintsheadleulme.org.uk

Parish Magazine Secretary and Treasurer:
Mrs Chris Spencer (485 8282)

Deanery Synod Representatives: *Mrs Julia Ball (440 8647)

*Miss Irene Walton (439 6096)

P.C.C. Members are marked* Other members

Mesdames: L. Bacon, M. Epps, C. Jones, L. Karuku, F. Pickett, S. Stone