



Holy Trinity Church Blacon

Charity number 1180853

20th December 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
As we enter the last few days of preparation for Christmas, usually we are preoccupied with the busy-ness, the commercialism of the season. Most years I am run off my feet, dashing between carol services; crammed into stores doing last minute shopping; trying hard to glimpse something of the Christ-Child amidst all the tinsel. But this year is different, with life full of uncertainties, doubts and fears. Should we travel to visit that relative? Will our loved one be alright on their own over the holiday period? Will they catch the virus? Will we come through it all healthily? Will we survive it financially? But fear and uncertainty is far closer to Mary's experience in our Gospel reading for today. The angel Gabriel is sent by God to this girl's home in Nazareth, to tell her that she is highly favoured, that God is with her. She has been specially picked out by God: why that is, we do not know. But Mary's reaction is fear, perhaps mingled with anxiety. This is all before she hears the big punchline news about having a baby, in spite of being a virgin. God's messenger appearing is enough to cause fear. Daniel reacted just the same in the angel Gabriel's presence (Dan 8:17).

God knows us perfectly, he knows all the secrets of our hearts. When he shows himself, what will he say? Is this ominous news? And the news Gabriel was sent to give to Mary he says is news of God's favour on her life. News that her life would be turned upside-down, she would become a parent before marrying, and the child would be the Son of God. What we know is round the corner, is that she would have to flee for her family's life while the child was still in

infancy. She would also have to watch her son being humiliated and tortured and crucified. This news is salvation for the whole world, what the angel tells the shepherds is Good News of great joy! Mary responds with total obedience – 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' (Luke 1. Her acceptance of what God is calling her too, even though it brings with it huge doubts and anxieties, and a future full of uncertainties and fear, Mary's response to God is 'Yes'. She is the Lord's servant, what He says she will go with. This level of trust, placing her whole life in God's hands, is a good example for us all.

We too are asked to bear Jesus for the world, to people who do not know Him. God does call us to place our lives in His hands, to trust Him that amid all the fears and anxieties of our present age, He knows us and loves us perfectly, and He wants us to trust Him with our lives.

It is scary to hand over the controls of our lives, but if the experiences of 2020 has taught me anything, it is that my own ideas and plans are completely worthless, because anything can change. The only one in control through this pandemic is God, who is the same yesterday and today and tomorrow. He is the one who came among us as a human being, born of the young girl Mary at that first Christ-mass. He calls us to respond to His call with the same obedience and trust as Mary. Trusting Him puts our fear in context.

I hope your Christmas is full of God's love, however you spend it,

With love and prayers, Tina



NOTICES

Holy Trinity Blacon are the living church of our living God, and we continue to be at work here! If you are able, do check the parish website www.holytrinityblacon.org (especially the Coronavirus Support page) or our Facebook page (holytrinityblacon) for updates. Look out for our special Advent reflections videos available each Sunday morning in Advent.

DIARY FOR THE COMING WEEK

Sunday 20 th December FOURTH in ADVENT	9.30am	Parish Eucharist
	5.30pm	Carols on your doorstep
Wednesday 23 rd	5.00pm	Evening Prayer (<i>on Zoom</i>)
24 th CHRISTMAS EVE	6.00pm	Crib service (<i>in church and on Livestream</i>) <i>Gifts received for Save the Family</i>
	11.30pm	'Midnight' Communion service
25 th CHRISTMAS DAY	9.30am	Parish Eucharist <i>in church</i> <i>Minibus is running – let us know if you want a lift.</i>
Sunday 27 th December		<i>Church is closed</i>

HAPPY CHRISTMAS! Rev Tina and Clive wish you and your families a most joyful and peaceful Christmas, and we look forward to seeing you in 2021.

PRAYING FOR BLACON Louise and Tina are taking our exercise particularly along those streets we are praying for each week. Do join us in praying for those residents. *Prayers for week of 20th Dec: Provan Way, Saughall Rd, Westbourne Rd, Cranleigh Cresc. For week of 27th Dec: Palmerstone Close, Meadowside Mews, Highcliffe Ave, Sherwood Rd .*

CHRISTMAS CAROLS On Sunday 20th December 5.30pm church members across Chester are being encouraged to go onto their doorsteps to sing carols – which will also be broadcast on Dee Radio 106.3FM Carol sheets, and card to pass to a neighbour, are available.

CHRISTMAS CLOSURES As decided by PCC, church will be closed on Sunday 27th December. This letter is the last one of 2020, the next will be produced weekend of 3rd January. The Parish Office is closed from 5pm on Tuesday 23rd December, and reopens 9am on Monday 4th January.

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