



Holy Trinity



St.
Gabriel

The Parish of The Good Shepherd, Ashton-under-Lyne



St. James



St. Peter



St. Michael and All Angels

February 2020

Price 50p

Editorial

Love in action!

With the approach of St Valentines' Day, let's ask: what is God's love language? '*Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*' (1 John 3:18). God's love is expressed in the word *agape*, which is exclusively found in the New Testament. Greek has a number of words for love, but *agape* is defined uniquely by Jesus. '*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.*' (1 John 3:16) It provides the model for how we should love others.

Agape love is self-giving: it is ready to put the other person first, just as Jesus gave His life for us on the cross by dying in our place. Are we generous with our time, words, money and service to others?

Agape love takes the initiative: are we ready to show love to those who don't deserve it? Do we have eyes of compassion to see the needs around us and a heart to reach out to them?

Agape love is intentional: are we ready to get close to those in need around us, irrespective of what time we have or how we feel?

The story is told of Jesus asking a little child, '*how much do you love me?*' The child replied '*lots and lots and lots!*' They then asked Jesus how much He loved them. Jesus stretched out His arms wide and said '*I love you this much*', as they nailed Him to a cross.

If you would like to submit an article, we would love to hear from you!!

The views expressed in articles in this magazine are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Parish of The Good Shepherd. The editor reserves the right to amend articles as appropriate, for editorial purposes. Please consider writing something for the magazine yourself! And, if you have any comments to make on the Magazine you can contact the editor, Roger Farnworth on 0161 330 2771 or talk to a member of your DCC or PCC who will pass on any comments that are made.

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The Parish Prayer



Father God, whose Son came to bring love and peace to the world, help us to grow in faith and share our hope and joy with all whom we meet, so that we can work together to build your kingdom in Ashton, welcome new people into our churches, and be relevant to those around us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

www.goodshepherdashton.org

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Our Magazine this month is due out on 2nd February. This day is known as Candlemas or 'The Presentation of Christ in the Temple'. It is an important festival in the Christian year.

It is the natural climax, after 40 days, of the Christmas and Epiphany season. It is an important turning point in the Christian year. It is a bitter-sweet moment. It is a time of joy – the revelation of Christ in the temple, the greeting by Simeon and Anna all call for rejoicing. But the prophetic words of Simeon, which speak of the fall and rising of many, of a sword that will pierce Mary's soul - they are not words which cause rejoicing - they point us forward, they lead us on to think about the Passion and Easter.

Hidden among our favourite readings through the Christmas season and Epiphany are several pointers to the suffering of Jesus - but none come with greater clarity, none are more potent than the words of Simeon which we listen to on 2nd February. It is as though they form a fulcrum or a pivot point - the point on which the scales hang - on one side of the scales is the Christmas story, on the other, Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

It is as though, up to 2nd February the scales have weighed more heavily on the Christmas side, but today some weight has been transferred and the scales begin to tip towards Christ's Passion. Liturgical colours change - the white of Epiphany gives way to the green of ordinary time through the Sundays before Lent, and then to penitential purple as Ash Wednesday takes us into Lent.

Up to the Presentation, to Candlemas, as we have been reading from the Gospels, we have been looking back, looking back towards Christmas. Epiphany is the time in which we hold onto the story of Christ's birth, savour the truth of it, grasp once again that this is the Messiah not just for the Jews but for the whole of creation. Today, and throughout coming weeks, we choose to turn our gaze away from Christ's birth and begin to contemplate what is ahead. ... The fulfilment of all that Christ's birth means. ... Christ's Passion and the Cross.

Christ's ultimate destiny intrudes now on our celebration of Christmas and Epiphany and we are called to turn our backs on Christ's birth and begin the long journey to the Cross.

BISHOP DAVID'S EPIPHANY LETTER



07 January 2020

Dear sisters and brothers,

Epiphany can, all too easily, collapse into a tale about stars, strange gifts and exotic visitors. It becomes then a story about people very different from ourselves, living in an age far distant from our own. Yet Epiphany is the moment when God's Church affirms its belief that Jesus Christ must be made known to all humanity, and when it reasserts its calling to facilitate that revelation.

The extent of our commitment to, and faithfulness in, this mission will never wholly be captured in Church Attendance Statistics, nor in the levels of Parish Giving we can achieve in order to deploy resources to the work. But it would be complacency in the extreme to imagine that simply arranging

and doing things as they have been done and arranged for the last few generations will of its own fulfil the Epiphany task to which we are being called.

These are times of change in God's Church, and the Diocese of Manchester must not be laggardly in embracing change. There are signs of good new growth in our parishes, schools and chaplaincies - from the blossoming of Messy Church, to the increasing willingness of our people to explore vocations to ordained and lay ministries; from the Antioch Network, setting up small, relational congregations in some of our poorest parishes, to the Children Changing Places project across Bolton.

Our vision of *Church for a Different World*, now backed up with some clear objectives under our three headings of nurturing, growing and serving, continues to enable us to attract funds from beyond the diocese to test out and support new ways of fulfilling the Epiphany Commission. We will have further plans to share in this coming year. What is clear however is that adding new things alone will not suffice. We

will need to find more effective ways of doing some of the things we have always done. And, to apply a gardening metaphor, there will need to be pruning alongside feeding and watering, if we are to grow, and grow healthily.

As I write, our consultation on deaneries and Area Deans continues. I am grateful to all who have contributed via the on-line survey, through letters, or via deanery meetings, and would encourage those who have not yet responded to do so.

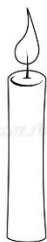
Whilst structural changes may not achieve mission in themselves, they can often be the release mechanism that allows mission to flourish. We need to equip ourselves to support our parishes, and other local expressions of mission, in ways that enable ideas to emerge and be tested; and for clergy and lay leaders to feel they have a part to play in a mission not confined to the boundaries of a single benefice.

Just before Christmas, I hosted two suppers at Bishops court for our ordinands in training and their guests. We have some very gifted and exciting people preparing for ordained ministry among us. Some of them are already in placements in our parishes, as they train on a part time or contextual course. We can expect financial support

from the national church in order to allow us to increase the number of stipendiary deacons we have customarily been able to take. But then we shall all need to work with them, both to benefit immediately from their skills and talents, and to ready them for incumbency level posts in due course. Those of us who are long in ministry, and have nurtured them thus far along their journey, will have much to share from our experiences and the wisdom that comes from many years of practice; yet we will need to guard ourselves against the temptation to inculturate them for the church of bygone times.

As with many dioceses, especially in the Northern Province, our financial situation is not healthy. Until Parish Share levels increase at least in line with inflation, we are effectively committing ourselves to a progressively smaller church. We receive a generous subsidy of over £2Million each year from the national church; support provided to sustain mission and ministry in places that count among the 10% most deprived parishes in England, and 45% of our parishes fall in that category.

But that money does not fully cover the gap, nor does it allow for the fact that many parishes outside of these poorest areas are also not at present paying



the full costs of the ministry they receive. We will work hard in 2020 to help churches with their Giving programmes. Alongside this it is becoming ever more pressing that action will have to be taken on a larger scale in order to find alternatives to those of our buildings that are the most costly to run and maintain, and where the parishioners can never expect to cope with the bills.

Many of you will have seen the video we produced in 2019, setting out something of what we believe God is calling us to. I know, from many comments, that it has been very well received. It shows churches across our range of traditions being blessed by God as they serve, nurture and grow. Above all else, this should give us confidence that the seeds of the renewal of our Church are already planted and growing in many places. Indeed, the growth in lay ministries, exemplified by our highly successful ALM scheme, combined with both the sterling work of many parish lay officers, and the rapidly developing understanding across the diocese of what lay leadership means, all help us see how we can embrace the future God is sending us.

Our Epiphany challenge will be met partly by encouraging every Christian to play their part in making Christ known and partly by simply learning how to replicate in our own contexts the good we can see going on nearby. We do not have to become other than what we truly are. We just need to inhabit our traditions and contexts in ways that are already proving fruitful elsewhere within the Manchester area.

May God bless you as you walk alongside him, in the Power of the Spirit and in Union with Christ through this Epiphany season. A season that is no mere remembrance of things long ago and far away, but our present and local calling - to make Christ known to all, in the places in which we live and minister.

+David Manchester



St Gabriel's Place of Welcome Christmas Party

Visitors to St Gabriel's Place of Welcome began Christmas celebrations a couple of days early with a special party on Monday 23rd December.



We were really grateful to Asda for making a very generous donation to allow this to happen – in the photo below you can see our cheque for £275 being presented to us by the Asda representative.



On the day we played games, pulled crackers, ate and drank lots of festive treats and everybody went home with a card and gift. We also enjoyed being entertained by Dobcross Youth Band who introduced us to all their instruments and then played many festive tunes for us to listen to and sing along with.



A big thank you must go to them, to Asda and to all the volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this a very special event at a very special time of year.

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Ash Wednesday - 26th February

St James' Church - a service with ashing at 1.30pm
 St John's Church - a united service with ashing at 7.30pm

Lent Group

12noon Wednesdays, 4th March to 8th April
St James' Church

Revd Ben Brady will be leading this group – the theme will be
 "Welcome as an Inclusive Church"
 Please bring your lunch!

What's On?



Café Church at St James' Church

Weds 12th February 1.45pm

*Informal worship with
tea, coffee and a chat.
Everyone is welcome*



A Place of Welcome

St Gabriel's Church open their doors **every Monday morning from 9.30 till 12.00** to invite people from the community in to our building to enjoy a **free** drink and refreshments. This is not just for church members but for everybody in the neighbourhood who would like to come along.

We hope that people will come along to socialise and just enjoy each other's company. During the morning we aim to provide simple entertainment such as a quiz sheet, some armchair aerobics, bingo, craft activities etc. We are sure that some of you may even have your own skills to share!

However, none of these are obligatory - you may prefer to just sit and chat - and that is perfectly fine! There is no charge for anything – all welcome



St Peter's Church Designated Red Cross Drop-in Centre

**For Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Thursdays 10.00am – 2.00pm**

The Red Cross will be providing grants to Refugees and Asylum Seekers who meet eligibility requirements. Also providing ESOL classes; a hub for other organisation such as NHS, Action Together etc; and a signposting service to other organisations. Refreshments available
All are welcome!



Scouts Please!

3rd Ashton Scout Group are looking for new members
10^{1/2} yrs to 14 yrs.

We meet every Tuesday
at 7.15pm to 9.00pm
at St James Church.

For more information contact Tina
Group Scout Leader - 07411773336
or tina@dah.co.uk

The Mindful Bunny

Children's Yoga for 3-9 yr olds at St Gabriel's

This is a children's yoga class starting with breathing techniques and taking your child on a story-themed yoga journey as they go from pose to pose, with fun but relaxing games or mindful colouring to end the session.

Children may come in their pyjamas ready for bed if they wish as this relaxing class is guaranteed to calm them and prepare them for a good night's sleep.

£5 per session (parents may also take part for just £1)

Contact Caron on 07748 541588 to book your place



Rainbows at St Gabriel's Church

16th Ashton Brownies, based at St Gabriel's Church, meet on Mondays 6.30pm until 8.00pm.

Our Rainbows group runs alongside the Brownies from 6.30pm until 7.30pm. Rainbows is for girls from the age of 5yrs to 7yrs and Brownies is for those from 7yrs to 10yrs.

Anyone who may be interested in joining either of the groups, should please contact Sharon Oldham on 07795 957114.





Can you spot our two new ALM's in this photograph?



'Children around the World' St Gabriel's Christmas Presentation

On Sunday 15th December St Gabriel's congregation were entertained with a Christmas presentation called 'Children around the World'.

St Gabriel's Junior Church, Brownies and Rainbows came together to tell us how children in other countries celebrate Christmas. We heard all about Christmas traditions in Poland, China, Malawi, Ecuador, Ireland and Australia and thoroughly enjoyed the Christmas songs whilst we learned some very interesting facts.

Well done to all the children for this superb joint effort!





Choral Evensong

6.30pm Sunday 23rd February

St Michael's Church

with augmented choir

Taking place as the day draws to a close and lasting around 45 minutes, Choral Evensong is an opportunity for people to take a moment to pause from their busy lives and reconnect with their spiritual lives.

All are most welcome.

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World Aids Day

1st December 2019

The UK Aids Memorial Quilt

The quilt panel exhibited at the cathedral was one of the 42 panels which make up the UK Aids Memorial Quilt, each individual section commemorates someone who died from HIV-related illnesses, lovingly made by partners, friends or family. There is a moving testimonial with each panel.

It is now a scientific fact that people living with HIV on effective treatment and with an undetectable viral load, cannot pass the virus to anyone else.

Undetectable = Untransmissible

With early diagnosis and effective treatment, people with HIV today can expect to have a near normal lifespan.

God bless us all, Amen.

Barry Bowden

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Book Review: Reflections for Lent 2020



By Steven Croft, Christopher Herbert and John Pritchard, CHP, £4.99

Reflections for Lent is designed to enhance your spiritual journey through the forty days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday (26 February – 11 April 2020). Covering Monday to Saturday each week, it offers reflections on readings from the Common Worship Lectionary, written by some of today's leading spiritual and theological writers.

It is ideal for individuals and groups seeking Lectionary-based reflections for use during Lent and Holy Week, or for anyone wishing to try Reflections for Daily Prayer before committing to a year's worth of material. It also features a simple form of morning and night prayer and a guide to Lent by David Hoyle.

News from St Peter's CofE School



St.Peter's CE Ashton holds a week long project called 'Aspirations Week'. During the week, we reflect on our St.Peter's Mindset, Mustard Seed Vision, Christian Values and personal qualities such as resilience, team work, determination, focus and drive. We also encourage the children to think about how they will contribute to their local and wider community when they are older - both through paid and voluntary work.

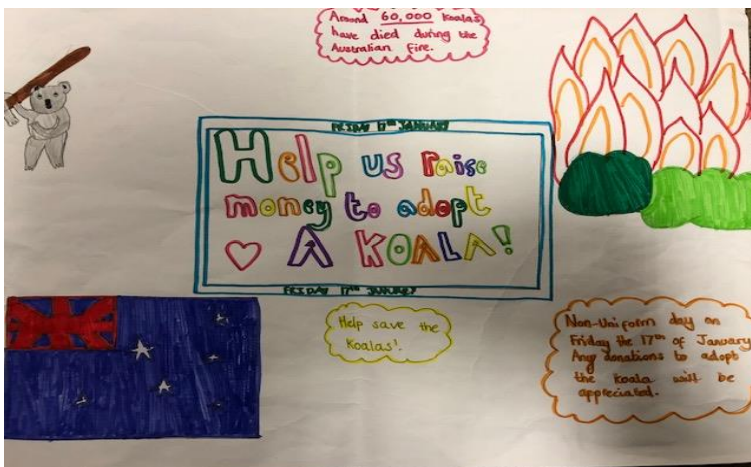


During Aspirations Week 2020, we were visited by a physiotherapist, our local PSCO's, Tameside Council/Library service and J Dickinson and Sons (A waste management company). During our session with J Dickinson and Sons, we looked at recycling and reflected on how we can make a difference to the environment.



During the week, we also worked with our Artist in Residence, Gillian Parish on 'Aspiration's Avenue'. Gillian used our reflections on our faith, career goals and Mustard Seed vision to produce an amazing installation.

The week not only provided us with some ideas for our future careers, but also showed us ways in which we can be valuable and responsible members of society and as we were moved by the Australian Bush Fires, our Ethos Council organised a non-uniform day. Thanks to our supportive community, our Ethos Council raised over £200. All funds raised went towards to the WWF and the Australian Bush Fire Appeal.



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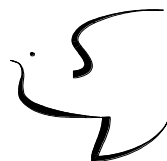
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February Parish Sunday Services



Candlemas	9.30am	St James	Holy Communion + Baptism
Sunday 2 nd February	9.30am	St Gabriel	Holy Communion+Junior Church
	11.00am	St Peter	Baptism & Service of the Word
	11.00am	St Michael	Holy Communion + Baptism
3rd Sunday before Lent	9.30am	St James	Holy Communion
Sunday 9 th February	9.30am	St. Gabriel	All Age Service of the Word
	11.00am	St Michael	Holy Communion
	11.00am	St Peter	Holy Communion
	4.00pm	St James	St James on Sunday Afternoon
2nd Sunday before Lent	9.30am	St. James	Family Communion
Sunday 16 th February	9.30am	St Gabriel	Holy Communion+Junior Church
	11.00am	St. Peter	Holy Communion
	11.00am	St. Michael	Morning Prayer
Sunday before Lent	9.30am	St James	Holy Communion
Sunday 23 rd February	9.30am	St Gabriel	All Age Service of the Word
	11.00am	St Peter	Holy Communion
	11.00am	St Michael	Holy Communion
	4.00pm	St James	St James on Sunday Afternoon

Regular Weekday Services

Tuesday:	12.15pm	St Peter's	Morning Prayer/Holy Communion (followed by optional bring and share lunch)
Wednesday:	1.30pm	St. James	Holy Communion (except 2 nd Wed of the month, which is Café Church at 1.45pm)
Thursday:	11.00am	St. Michael	Holy Communion
	4.00pm	Holy Trinity	Evening Prayer * see above
* (This will be a Eucharist Service on the 1 st Thursday of the month)			

Parish Notices

From the January registers:

There were no baptisms or weddings in January

Marriage Blessing

We rejoice with

Mark and Natalie Clutterbuck

Funeral:

We pray with the families and friends of

Peter Marchant

Kenneth Prescott

Alice Fogg

Joan Hindle

Brenda Austin

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As a child of God, prayer is kind of like calling home every day. - Anon

The most important things in your house are the people. - Anon

When you get tangled up in your problems, be still. God wants you to be still so HE can untangle the knot. - Anon

A grudge is a heavy thing to carry. - Anon

He who dies with the most toys is still dead. - Anon

Faith is the ability to not panic. - Anon

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CONTACT DETAILS

CLERGY: (*usual day off)

Revd Roger Farnworth, Team Rector (*Tues.)

The Vicarage, Westbury Street, Ashton OL6 9NL

330 2771

Revd Ben Brady, Team Curate (*Fri)

400 1556

Items for the Magazine: Please give items for the next magazine to Revd Roger Farnworth by the 15th February for inclusion in the next Magazine - address and telephone number on page 18.



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