





St. Gabriel

The Parish of The Good Shepherd, Ashton-under



St. James

Ashton-under-Lyne



St. Peter



St. Michael and All Angels

December 2016
Price 50p

Editorial

Have you ever wondered where many of our Christmas traditions come from? A surprising amount of our modern Christmas celebrations can be traced back to the well-loved story of 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens. When you read 'A Christmas Carol', you discover almost a template of the 'ideal Christmas' which we still hold dear today. Dickens seems to have selected the best of the Christmas celebrations of his day (he ignored some of the odd excesses) and packaged them in such a way as to give us traditions that we could accommodate and treasure – more than a century later. So, for instance, in A Christmas Carol, Christmas is a family day, with a family-centred feast. In a home decorated with holly and candles the characters enjoy a roast turkey, followed by Christmas pudding. They give their loved ones presents. Scrooge even gives donations to charity.

And all the while outside, there is snow and frost, while church bells ring, and carol singers sing, and hope for mulled wine. In 'A Christmas Carol' there is even a Father Christmas – in the shape of Christmas Present. Only the Christmas tree itself came later, when Prince Albert imported 'a pretty German toy' that won the heart of the English court, and hence the rest of Victorian society.

We wish you all a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas

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

The views expressed in articles in the magazine are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Parish of The Good Shepherd. 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.co.uk

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Advent 2016

by Revd Roger Farnworth

Almost 27 years ago now, at the end of 1989, Jo's brothers, Simon and Chris, went to Berlin for the New Year Holiday. They went out to join in the celebration of the destruction of the Berlin Wall.

The Wall was probably the most potent symbol of oppression in Europe. Its destruction was an obvious symbol of the major changes which were then taking place in Europe.

I don't know what you remember of those times – it's disturbing to realise that it all happened nearly 30 years ago. My strongest memory is of the feeling of unbelief – "Is this really happening?"

It was hard to believe that the world order that I had grown up in - that of a Cold War stand-off between two superpowers - was seemingly coming to an end. Something that even just months before those amazing events at the end of 1989 seemed impossible.

This same seeming impossibility surrounded the Jewish people in the centuries before Christ. They'd been longing for a Messiah - someone who would change the course of history for ever. They were so often disappointed, different men came promising what they could not deliver. Israel felt the mocking eyes of others as they clung

onto this seemingly vain hope of a glorious Messiah, someone who would bring in Israel's golden age. Everything pointed against it. Israel was a pawn, a minor league nation caught in the ebb and flow of the politics of the real powers.

Advent encompasses two things: firstly, we remember, we enter into something of the feelings of the people of Israel as they waited for their coming Messiah. We wait with them. They waited 500 years from the first promises made to them. We set aside the month of December - but we do wait for the coming of the Christ child. Unlike them we know for sure that he will come - for we've read the story before.

But we are in other ways just like them. For we impose our expectations on him - we know what the Christmas story is all about – we've got the story neatly packaged - if it wasn't we wouldn't be able to cope. We need the story to be constant, unchanging because life is too busy, too pressurised at this time of year. "Let's stick to the routine," we say, "enjoy the celebrations, and hopefully have time to relax in January!"

If we're not careful - if we don't make the time to reflect, to listen, to wait - we'll miss the Christ-child. We'll not see the miracle of God in human form. Just as most of Israel missed its Messiah, so God's grace will pass us by. Advent is our time to centre ourselves before Christmas, to focus on the Christmas story; to grasp that God's Son, the Christ, God incarnate, Emmanuel, God with us, Jesus, is coming and he is coming for us, for me.

Secondly Advent is about looking forward, not to Christmas, but to Christ's Second Coming. Something that seemed to Jesus to be so immediate.

We have our questions - raised at different times with different intensity. Why has it been so long? Has God forgotten us? Is Jesus never coming back? Were we intended to take it literally? Was Jesus mistaken? Is it important to believe in the Second Coming?

How similar we must be to the people of Israel awaiting their Messiah.

While we may be able to ignore the issue. Christians in other parts of our world, where the need is more pressing, will ask their questions with greater intensity. Where the church is under persecution, living under totalitarian regimes! Hear their cry, "When will Christ return? When will we be released from torture, from oppression, from darkness?"

How similar to those nations waiting year after year under then tyranny of Communism. Seemingly without hopeyet in 1989 there was a dramatic change. What was unbelievable, happened. The wall came down.

Similar, but different.

Yes, we wait for something that is, in one way, no more than a promise - a promise to be taken on trust - Christ will come again. But we also have something of the reality on deposit. In our shared meal of communion we look back to the realities of Christ's first coming - his death and resurrection. And we also look forward to that heavenly banquet in which we will all share - a meal that Jesus promised to eat with us in his Kingdom.

We can believe that Christ will return.

Things that people dream about, do happen. Christ Second Coming is no more impossible than the collapse of the Berlin Wall felt to a divided Europe, a divided Germany. The seemingly impossible is possible with God.



Christ will come again. Alleluia!

Roger



Ask, Seek and Knock

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Luke 11:9)

Please choose one focus for each week of the month or pray for all of the following issues throughout the month, as you prefer. There is a prayer at the end to draw it all together if you're unsure how to start or finish your prayers.

This month:

- Please pray for our Christmas services, that people may come, feel welcome and discover afresh the love that God has for us all, as shown by the birth of Jesus.
- Please pray for families for whom spending at Christmas will put them into financial problems. Please also pray for those for whom Christmas is a lonely or painful experience.
- Please pray for all the shops that are hosting nativities in Ashton town centre. Pray that the nativities will be a reminder of the real reason for Christmas to those that are shopping in our town.
- Spend a moment to make a list of those that you know who are ill or in need of God's healing touch at this time. Please pray for God to heal them, take away pain and get rid of any illness and disease.

Lord, we offer you our prayers. Hear us as we bring our concerns to you and help us to place them into your hands in confidence that you will hear us.

Amen ***************

Christmas Prayer by Daphne Kitching

Father,

Thank you for creating us and for loving us so much that you sent Jesus to become one of us and to be our way to you. This Christmas may we know the love, peace, comfort and joy that only you can give, no matter what our circumstances. And may we reflect your light and love in this dark world to bring glory to you. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

ChurchLive brings worship to the smartphone generation!

A year-long project allowing people to access live streamed Church of England services on mobile phones has attracted more than 40,000 viewers.



ChurchLive was a scheme launched by the Church of England in partnership with Twitter UK. The project broadcast a range of church services via Twitter's Periscope app – from traditional carols to a blessing of the surf at Hove Beach in Sussex and a service in a tent at Glastonbury Festival.

A total of 53 churches took part, broadcasting around 60 hours of worship. On average, each service has been viewed on around 750 screens, including mobile phones, laptops and tablets, or at least 40,000 screens over the year.

The project provided a first taste of worship, prayer and preaching for people unfamiliar with Church of England services.

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Advent Eucharist

7.30pm Tuesday 6th December 2016 Christ Church - Manchester Road, Denton M34 3RA



You met us in your Son and brought us home

Bishop Mark invites parishes from across the Rochdale Archdeaconry to an Advent Eucharist to celebrate the gift of Reconciliation. The Address will be given by The Revd Canon Marcia Wall During the Eucharist there will be the opportunity to celebrate the

Sacrament of Reconciliation, to receive anointing, the ministry of prayer,

or to speak to someone in confidence.

For further information please contact pabishopmark@manchester.anglican.org or 01706 358550

Saint for the month:

7 December Lazarus of Bethany – back from the tomb

Some people have near-death experiences....

Lazarus should be their patron saint. Except that
he went all the way, and died for four days. He was
quiet in his tomb and the mourners of Bethany were in full swing - before
Jesus called him back to life. (See John 11: 1 – 44.)

What happened next to Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary? The New Testament never tells us, but there are some clues from early church history and legends.

It seems that Lazarus became very popular with the early Christian Church because he was living evidence that Jesus could bring people back from the dead. It also seems that Lazarus was NOT popular with the local Jews, for the very same reason. They wanted to forget Jesus, and here Lazarus was still walking around, talking about resurrection...

So eventually some exasperated Jews decided to act. According to an early Eastern tradition, they placed Lazarus and his sisters into a leaky boat and set them adrift in the Mediterranean.... where the little boat carried them safely to Cyprus. Here Lazarus became bishop and lived for another 30 years.

Another, later, tradition has it that the boat had no rudder or oars, but still bore them safely to Gaul, where Lazarus founded a church and became the first bishop of Marseilles, so to speak... until he was martyred under Domitian (81-96AD).

Either way, second time round, Lazarus stayed dead. But it was thought he was still at work. By the late Middle Ages, anyone who had a vision of the after-life knew just whom to thank for this 'postcard from heaven' – St Lazarus!

The USPG-supported **Let My People Go** programme was set up by the Church of North India to help families from marginalised Alit communities set up income generation projects.



Sumathi's story:

"No-one will say again I should stop my daughter's education"

Life was difficult for Sumathi and her family. Her husband, a daily wage labourer, struggled to earn enough to feed the family, and Sumathi was struggling to do all the work in the home – this is a household without any home conveniences.

Neighbours advised Sumathi to send her eldest daughter to work to supplement the family income, but Sumathi insisted that both her daughters and her son would continue at school, believing that education might offer them a better future.

Then Sumathi heard about a self-help group for women being set up in her village, Durgabati in West Bengal. She joined and met other women who were also yearning to change their circumstances. The group facilitator encouraged the women to consider how they might improve their income and empower their community. Sumathi and four new friends decided to undergo training in organic vegetable cultivation – after which they shared what they had learned with the other women in the group.

Inspired, the group decided to work together to start growing aubergines. In November last year, the women took out a lease on a plot of land, bought seeds and equipment, and set to work, taking it in turns to sell the produce at the local market.

They quickly earned enough to cover the cost of the lease, and within four months they were selling around 60kg of aubergines a week – their income exceeded the cost of their initial investment and they were all earning extra money for their families. Exhilarated by their success, Sumathi and her friends are now encouraging others to do the same by talking about the success and challenges they faced at community forums.

Now Sumathi's group is expanding, planting chillies, cabbages and other vegetables. Life is finally a little easier. Sumathi said: "No-one will say again that I should stop my daughter's education and make her earn money. I'm very happy and thankful to those who trained and supported us in our work.

A Season for joyful song (1)

in the Cathedral besides the Dean and some of the clergy, and the choristers, young and old, that performed the beautiful evening prayer.'

There may have been few attending evensong in the 1850s, in that description by the novelist, William Thackeray. But today such cathedral worship is an important part of the life of the Church of England, and as such, much valued, not just by those able to attend in person, but also by those who are able to listen in on the radio. That weekly broadcast on Radio 3 now attracts an audience of 250,000 people.

In September of this year the BBC celebrated 90 years of outside broadcasting with Choral Evensong from Westminster Abbey. On 7 October 1926, all those years ago, the BBC began broadcasting this service from the same Abbey. It is a Vespers, and in 2005 the Holy Cross remarkable achievement - the longest Liturgy from the Danilov Monastery running outside broadcast in its history!

Those years have seen many variations: Evensong once a week on Thursdays in the 1920s, twice weekly in the 1930s, moving to the Home Service in the years of World War II, and then to Radio 3 in 1967. In April 1970 with the BBC's

There was scarce a score of persons reorganisation, there were 3 months without Choral Evensong, asking for its return. Later in that year broadcasts began again on Wednesdays at 4pm.

> It has been 90 years of variety and change. In 1993 the first girls' choir sang Evensong from Salisbury Cathedral. In 2002 Evensong was relayed from Trinity Church in New York on the first anniversary of September 11. Then in June 2006 there was even a Jazz Evensong. Amid all this variety, at the heart of the service is the Book of Common Prayer Evening Prayer, bringing to listeners a wealth of choral and organ music, settings of the psalms and canticles, special anthems and more popular hymns.

But it is not just Anglican cathedrals and important churches that have taken part. There have been broadcasts of Roman Catholic in Moscow.

Izaak Walton, in his life of George Herbert of 1670, wrote that the poet said his time 'spent in prayer and cathedral music elevated his soul and was Heaven upon Earth.' We would echo those thoughts as we give thanks for this rich tradition of prayer and praise.

In a famous hymn, Herbert says that listening to Christian music from no door can keep out the worship of our God and King. Thanks to broadcasting no door can keep out the weekly offering of music and scripture as we tune our radios and become an extended congregation

across the centuries. Thank you to the BBC for making this possible and for letting the glory of this music transport our lives and move our hearts to praise the Lord.

A Season for joyful song (2)

Many people like to sing. No matter what we sound like, there can be a stirring within us on special occasions that prompts us to sing.

In the Christmas story, singing is featured on three occasions. When Mary visited her elderly relative, Elizabeth, she was so overwhelmed with happiness at the forthcoming miraculous birth of her Son, that she burst into a flow of praise.

Her words are known as The Magnificat, and they have been set to music by numerous composers down the years. Mary recalled God's promise that He would rescue His people and, through the Messiah, save the world. So Mary sang of God's mercy and benevolence on the helpless, the humble and the hungry.

The next 'song' came from the angels, on the night of Jesus' birth. They appeared to the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem, and were full of the glory of God. 'Peace on earth', 'goodwill toward man'.

The final 'song' in the Nativity story came from the shepherds, who

hurried to see the new-born baby. They were so overwhelmed by the implications for Israel, that they sang praises to God as they returned to their sheep.

Mary, the angels and the shepherds could not help but sing for joy at the coming of the Messiah. They were the first, but not the last! Since the day of Pentecost, hundreds of millions of people have raised their voices in gratitude, thanks and wonder at God's love and mercy in sending Jesus. Down the centuries, countless poets and musicians have composed music to describe a wondrous moment in history. At Christmas, around the world, people come together to sing carols and other songs that express the wonder of God's Gift to us.

So as we sing carols this month, let's remember that they are well worth singing! Jesus has given us hope; forgiven our sin; and continues to impart faith and heal our spiritual wounds. Now isn't that something to sing about?

What's happening?



St. Michael's Open Days

St. Michael's is open every Thursday from 10.30am to 3.00pm The Eucharist will take place as usual at 11.00am Thursdays



Christingle at St James' Church 7.00 Wednesday 6th December

Please come and join us to enjoy this family service where the symbolism of the Christingle helps children (and adults!) to understand the importance of Jesus and the Gospel and its relevance at Christmas time.

By taking part in Christingle, you can enjoy the warmth and vibrancy of this wonderful celebration and play a key part in transforming the lives of thousands of children by giving to the collection in aid of The Children's Society.

Follow Mary and Joseph, with donkey, on their journey!

Mary & Joseph and their donkey will walk around town centre at **2pm**

Saturday 17th December.

Anyone, adult or child, can dress up and follow us. (Angels & Shepherds only)

Meet at St Michaels

at 1.30pm.

Advent Group

7.00pm on Wednesdays at 2a Hutton Avenue, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 6QY 7th Dec; 14th Dec; 21st Dec and 4th Jan All welcome!



Café Church at
St James' Church
Weds 14th December 1.45pm
Everyone is welcome to join us for
informal worship, coffee,
cake & a chat

Christmas Services in the Parish of the Good Shepherd,



Wednesday 7th December

7.00pm - Christingle Service at St James'

Sunday I Ith December

9.30am - Nativity Service at St Gabriel's **6.30pm** - Civic Carol Service at St Michael's

Sunday 18th December

6.30pm – Carol Service at St Peter's **6.30pm** - Carol Service at St James'

Christmas Eve

5.00pm - Crib Service at St Gabriel's
8.30pm - First Communion of Christmas at Holy Trinity
9.30pm - First Communion of Christmas at St Michael's

II.30pm - Holy Communion at St Peter's **II.30pm** - Holy Communion at St James'

Christmas Day

9.30am - Family Communion at St Gabriel's
9.30am - Family Communion at St James'
10.30am - Holy Communion at St Michael's
10.30am - Holy Communion at St Peters

Sunday Ist January

10.30am United Service of Holy Communion at St James' Church (there will be no other services in the Parish on this day)

What does your TV licence cover?

Imagine something unlikely! There is one television programme the whole family enjoy, but everyone sees differently. So - you are resting upstairs and watching it on the portable set in the bedroom. Your partner is still at work and watching it on a laptop in the office.

Your son is at university and watching it on his computer live. Your daughter who lives with you is on the train coming home from a short holiday loaded with dirty clothes and using her mobile phone to see the programme. Your neighbour does not have a television and listens to highlights on the radio. A happy typical family scene!

You are covered if you have a television licence as it includes the whole house. If you have let out a part of your house on a separate tenancy the tenant needs a licence.

Your student son must have his own TV Licence if he watches or records programmes as they are being shown on TV or live on an online TV service, download or watch BBC programmes on iPlayer. If he

shares a house, then one licence is sufficient for the house.

Your partner needs a separate TV Licence for the office if he watches live on an office phone, tablet or computer. Staff or customers do not need a licence if they watch live TV at the business address using their own device, if it is not plugged into the mains, and there is a TV Licence at their home address

Your daughter is covered by your home licence. The neighbour does not need a licence to listen to the radio.

The law changed at the beginning of September. You must have a TV Licence to download or watch BBC programmes on iPlayer – live, catch up or on demand. If you already have a TV Licence, you are already covered.

As always this is a guide and if in doubt get advice. The TV Licensing website has some very clear and helpful advice and a set of FAQs.

http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/

Thoughts from Barry Bowden

A Broken World

If we are God purpose-driven, then we have everything. If we are Self purpose-driven, then we have nothing.

Good and Evil
Accentuate the positive and love one another as
God loves us – eliminate the negative.
Fight against sin, the world and the devil.



Thank Jesus – such amazing love for YOU.

Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus

The teacher asked her Sunday School class to draw pictures of their favourite Bible story. She was puzzled by Kate's picture, which showed four people on an airplane. She asked her which story it was meant to represent. "The Flight to Egypt," was her reply.

Pointing at each figure, the teacher ventured: "That must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. But who's the fourth person?"

"Oh," explained Kate happily, "that's Pontius - the pilot!"

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CASH BOX credit union

Cash Box Credit Union is a community savings and loan cooperative, where members pool their savings to lend to one another and help run the credit union.

You can join Cash Box if you live or work in Tameside; this is our 'common bond'. Cash Box offers a safe place to save your money and somewhere to borrow at low rates of interest.

Find us at www.cashbox.org.uk

Friends of Ashton Parish Church

Why not become a Friend of Grade 1 listed Ashton Parish Church, and be part of this

beautiful Church? Join us on our summer outings and other places of interest. We have an annual lunch, and you are welcome to join in the Friends actives during Heritage Weekend, if you so wish. You would receive three newsletters during the year informing you of our news and also what is happening in the Church. There is an annual subscription of £5.00.

For further details please contact: Elaine Gaskell (Secretary) on 330 5176

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Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 6th December 7.30pm Bishop Mark's Advent Eucharist –see pg 7

Wednesday 7th December 7.00pm Advent Group begins – see pg 6

Wednesday 14th December 1.45pm Café Church at St James' Church

For details of all our Christmas Services, please see page 10



Vernon Shipley

Funeral Directors & Monumental Masons Fairways Pre-Paid Funeral Plans 24 Hour Personal Service

Parish Notices



Baptisms:

We give thanks with the family and friends of: Summer Holden Braiyon Kayle Walter Edwards

Weddings:

We rejoice with the family and friends of:
Alan Weatherhead and Ella Domsalla
Jane Singleton and Jeffrey McDonald

October 2016 November 2016

Funerals:

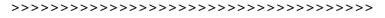
We pray with the family and friends of: Harry Beverley

Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus

The teacher asked her Sunday School class to draw pictures of their favourite Bible story. She was puzzled by Kate's picture, which showed four people on an airplane. She asked her which story it was meant to represent. "The Flight to Egypt," was her reply.

Pointing at each figure, the teacher ventured: "That must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. But who's the fourth person?"

"Oh," explained Kate happily, "that's Pontius - the pilot!"





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December 2016 - Parish Sunday Services

2 nd Sunday of Advent	9.30am	St James	Holy Communion + Baptism
Sunday 4 th December	9.30am	St Gabriel	Holy Communion+Junior Church
	11.00am	St Peter	Morning Prayer + Baptism
	11.00am	St Michael	Holy Communion + Baptism
3 rd Sunday of Advent	11 00am	St Michael	Holy Communion
Sunday 11 th December	9.30am	St James	Holy Communion
banaay 11 becember	11.00am		Holy Communion
		St. Gabriel	All Age Service of The Word
		St James	St James on Sunday Afternoon
4 th Sunday of Advent		St. James	Breakfast Service with Carols
Sunday 18 th December		St Gabriel	Holy Communion+Junior Church
	11.00am		Holy Communion
	11.00am	St. Michael	Holy Communion
Chaistana a Dan	0.20	Ch laws as	Family Communica
Christmas Day		St James	Family Communion
Sunday 25 th November		St Gabriel	Family Communion
	10.30am		Holy Communion
	10.30am	St Michael	Holy Communion

Regular Weekday Services

Note: NO MIDWEEK SERVICES BETWEEN 25TH DECEMBER AND 1ST JANUARY

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 2nd Wed of the month)

Thursday: 11.00am St. Michael Holy Communion

4.00pm Holy Trinity Evening Prayer

CONTACT DETAILS

CLERGY: (*usual day off)

Revd Roger Farnworth, Team Rector (*Tues.)

The Vicarage, Westbury Street, Ashton OL6 9NL 330 2771

Revd Rachel Battershell, Team Vicar (*Mon)

2a Hutton Avenue, Ashton OL6 6QY 292 3224

Revd George Reeves, Team Curate (*Fri)

1 Windmill Lane, Denton M34 3RN 336 1850

Fr Jules Mambu Team Curate (*Mon)

35 Palace Road, Ashton under Lyne 07897697503

THE PARISH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD:

Parish Warden:	Cath Sheldon 18 Essex Road, Debdale Park, Manchester	07702 137596
Warden Emeritus:	Enid Fisher 243 Mossley Road Ashton	308 2795
Chair of PCC:	Roger Farnworth The Vicarage, Westbury St, Ashton	330 2771

PCC Secretary:

Child Protection: Moira Wilson

PCC Treasurer:

Parish Magazine: Roger Farnworth The Vicarage, Westbury St, Ashton 330 2771

Items for the Magazine:

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



