



Holy Trinity



St.
Gabriel

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



St. James



St. Peter



St. Michael and All Angels

December 2019

Price 50p

Editorial

It's gonna be a lonely Christmas'. The pressure to have fun with friends and family is real over the Christmas period. In fact, over nine million people in the UK say they're always or often lonely. (Red Cross).

The true meaning of Christmas is that Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be with us. The separation we may feel from others is nothing compared to the distance that God has already gone for us.

Here are 5 tips for helping those who are lonely:

Take time to talk - Take time to talk to an older person this Christmas, at the supermarket, pub or on a walk. Just saying hello can make a big difference to someone who's lonely.

Give someone a call - Take the time to speak to friends and family that you won't be with this Christmas. A short phone call can have a big impact.

Give a neighbour a card - Ring the doorbell and give your neighbour a Christmas card. Start a conversation and make a connection.

Having a party? - Hosting a Christmas party or meal? If you know somebody who might be alone, invite them to join you!

Pray for Others - If you hear of someone who's on their own, pray for them. Pray that God will show you how to respond!

'The most important thing I can tell you is that we are never alone when we know Christ.' (Billy Graham).

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 Archbishops write....

This month, instead of a front article from our Vicar or Curate, we have a letter written by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to all parishes, offering some prayerful guidance to us all as we journey through this particular season of Advent which includes a General Election.

As we approach this General Election, we also herald the season of Advent, the birth of Jesus Christ and the reminder of his return as our judge. In Christ's birth God chooses to come and live among us, intervening in our imperfect world, and offering the hope of life reordered and restored. At his return he promises the setting right of all things. It is time to set aside apathy and cynicism and to be people of hope.

We often forget that our political leaders face huge responsibilities and challenges, and these come with personal sacrifices too. In our prayers for this election we should be thankful for those who put themselves forward for public service and ask that they will seek the common good and justice. We should take part, as important



decisions are being made that will affect us all. That includes fulfilling our democratic duty to vote. As followers of Jesus Christ each of us is called to honour the gift of truth, both to speak it and to seek it. We all have a responsibility to speak accurately, to challenge falsehoods when we hear them, and to be careful to separate facts from opinion.

Offering facts and opinions should be done with humility and in love. People who hold different political views are not our enemies. Two people can look at the same facts and in good faith interpret them very differently. Issues need to be debated respectfully, and without resorting to personal abuse. We should engage responsibly, especially on social media. If we leave our echo-chambers and make a conscious effort to listen to people and ideas we disagree with it will help us understand where others are coming from in this election period, even though we may disagree vehemently. As Christians, in recognising God's image in others who are not in our

own image, we can start to build relationships that bridge political divides.

We will be praying for debates that seek to unite rather than divide, to bring us together and to rebuild trust in each other, in our institutions, and in our politics. As Jesus did, through his birth in poverty, his actions and words and his warning of judgement for those who seek only their own wellbeing, we must put the vulnerable and those on the edges of society first. Taking part in a democracy is a privilege and a responsibility, so let us be guided by a love for our neighbours, near and far, and seek that common good that truly benefits us all. That includes justice for the oppressed, protection for the persecuted, and a commitment to combat climate change and adapt to its effects. It also includes a just economic system, open and encouraging to aspiration and ambition, supportive of those who struggle.

We call on all standing for election to reject the language of prejudice and not to stoke stigma or hatred towards people on the grounds of their religion, their culture, their origin, their identity or their belief.

Several groups, especially in Jewish and Muslim communities, feel threatened and are in much anxiety. No individual or community in our shared society should have reason to lack confidence in their belonging or security, so parties must make it an absolute priority to offer positive reassurance and avoid anything that increases the perception of fear.

Let us seek the wisdom and guidance of our Heavenly Father, the source of all wisdom, who inspires us as we wrestle to address the questions and challenges of our time and is both authority and judge over all human beings. May His wisdom and His vision guide our debate, campaign and vote, for those who will be elected as our representatives.

As we head into the season of Advent, as Christians, let us be filled with hope and call on Him, who is the ever-present guardian and final judge in our nation and in our politics.

In the Name of our Risen Lord, who was and is and is to come.

Amen.

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby
Archbishop of York, John Sentamu

What's On?



Café Church at St James' Church

Weds 11th December 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

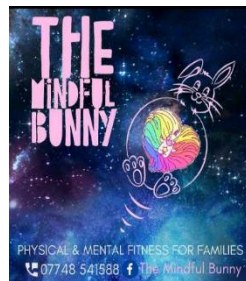
The Mindful Bunny

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, will return from their summer break on Monday 9th September from 6.30pm until 8.00pm.

Our exciting news is that from Monday 7th October a new Rainbows group will also be starting and will run 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.



Biscuit

As we were putting out biscuits for Father Christmas on Christmas Eve, one fell on the floor. When I picked it up and placed it back on the plate, my four-year-old was horrified. "You can't do that!"

"Don't worry," I assured him. "Father Christmas will never know."

He shot me a suspicious look. "So, he knows if I've been bad or good, but he doesn't know the biscuit fell on the floor?"





St Gabriel's Christmas Fair

12noon – 2.30pm

Sunday 1st December

Great variety of Christmas stalls,
Father Christmas Grotto,
dance, music and songs.
Hot and cold food and drinks
Everyone Welcome!



Christmas Concert

With St John's Mossley

Brass Band

7.30pm Friday 13th December

St James' Church

Tickets £5 adults

£3.50 Children

Refreshments on sale including:

hot dogs and mince pies

also raffle prizes

Contact Tina 07411 773336



Choral Evensong

6pm Sunday 1st December

at St Michael's Church

Traditional service with beautiful
music, sung by an enhanced choir.

All welcome!



Carols by Candlelight

A Civic Carol Service of

Nine Lessons and Carols

6.30pm Sunday 15th December

St Michael's Church

With refreshments afterwards



Good Shepherd Crosses

These beautiful wooden crosses

– handmade in Ecuador –
are available at £5 each.

2.5" x 1.75" and very light

Please order with Roger

News about the Archdeacon of Rochdale

After many years of faithfully servicing the Diocese of Manchester as priest and then Archdeacon of Rochdale, the Venerable Cherry Vann has been elected as the next Bishop of Monmouth and will be moving in early December. We give thanks for the way in which she has blessed us in our parish during her time as Archdeacon and pray for her as she takes up her new post in the New Year.

Bishop David has announced that instead of appointing a new archdeacon the roles of the remaining three archdeacons will be reorganised. In due course, the Venerable David Sharples will become the new Archdeacon of Rochdale, whilst remaining a residentiary canon of the Cathedral. David knows our archdeaconry well so we believe that this will be a very good appointment. Please pray for all our Archdeacons (David, Karen and Jean) as these changes to their ministries take place.

Changes to deaneries

There are also plans to reorganise the deaneries in our diocese, reducing them from 20 down to 7. To serve these new larger deaneries, the proposal is for Area Deans to become full-time posts rather than the current arrangement where an



Area Dean has to fit in their duties around their parish ministry. In this new scheme, our deanery (Ashton) would join with Oldham East and Oldham West deaneries. Bishop David describes the need for these changes, saying: “We are clear that in making these changes, we are drawn by hope and faith, not driven by fear. Our belief is that this is where God is leading us. We also believe that it’s no longer an option to do what we have always done. God is calling us to do new things, and in so doing is leading us into a new place. Making these changes will mean that we are better able to face the challenges all around us and make the positive and sometimes difficult changes we know have to be made to ensure we have vibrant and growing mission and ministry at parish level.” There is currently a consultation process underway and everyone is being encouraged to make their views known. To do this, there is an online survey at

www.surveymonkey.com/r/S9L9563

News from St Peters CofE School

Courageous Advocates Day

At St. Peter's CE School Ashton, we look at prominent figures from across the globe, both past and present, who have faced injustice and overcome barriers in order to help others for the greater good.

We have a dedicated 'Courageous Advocates Day' on an annual basis where the children use the 'Little People Big Dreams' book series to reflect on what injustice some of these courageous advocates have faced and how they have changed the world for the better. These are:

Reception - Jane Goodall, Year One - Mother Teresa,
Year Two - Muhammad Ali, Year Three - Emmeline Pankhurst,
Year Four - Ava Lovelace, Year Five - Stephen Hawking
Year Six - Gandhi.

In September 2019, our Artist in Residence worked with our pupils to create a large outdoor mural to celebrate Hope, Aspiration and Courageous Advocacy.



Parish Christmas Services



Wednesday 4th December

7.00pm – Christingle Service at St James’

Sunday 8th December

11.00am - Christingle Service at St Peter’s

Sunday 15th December

6.30pm - Civic Carol Service at St Michael’s

Sunday 22nd December

9.30am - Nativity Service at St Gabriel’s

4.00pm - Carol Service at St Gabriel’s

4.00pm – Mince Pies & Mulled Wine at Holy Trinity

5.00pm - Carol Service at Holy Trinity

Tuesday 24th December - 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

11.30pm - Holy Communion at St Peter’s

11.30pm - Holy Communion at St James’

Christmas Day

9.30am - Family Communion at St James’

10.30am - Holy Communion at St Michael’s

10.30am - Holy Communion at St Peters

Sunday 29th December

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

No midweek services between 26th December and 1st January inclusive

World Scout Jamboree Report

We started at Arrivals at Manchester Airport on July 20th, where at least four UK Contingents gathered to start our trip to the World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia. Before arrival in West Virginia, it had been arranged for us to have a day in New York, walking around observing many sites such as: Trump Tower, 5th Avenue, Time Square and Broadway. We eventually gathered at the 9/11 memorial where we got on a ferry to continue our journey to our camp.

We finally arrived at the Jamboree sight after much travelling on the 22nd of July. We started to set up our campsite (with the help of some of our American counterparts) and our Jamboree had officially started. We spent our first day getting to know the sight, making new friends and starting to do our swaps, thankfully in glorious sunshine.



The opening ceremony began after a short wait with a Drone display, where I only just started to see the real scale of the whole event. It was fantastic, 50,000+ people gathered together all sharing the same interest. Scouting. As the camp went on, I got to try many new activities such as: Diving, Live pistol shooting, Clay pigeon shooting, canopies and best of all trying new food and learning about the new cultures. The camp continued and we went on going to the base camp bashes (lots of dancing and shouting) dancing outside of campsites and trying new things.



Eventually, culture day came around. A day where you get to go around trying out new cuisine all around the world and learning all about their nations and what they did that was interesting about their country. At the end of the two weeks the final closing ceremony was a magnificent firework display and a laser show. We then packed up our tents and headed to Maryland Washington to stay in universities.



We did a tour of Washington, then watched the Baltimore Orioles and the Toronto Blue Jays baseball game and then had tour of the fire station followed by a nice meal at a restaurant.

We then flew to Canada and travelled to our final destination in Calgary at Scout Group where stayed for 3 days. We went for a hike to Spray Valley Provincial Park then we had a barbecue dinner cooked by a five star chef on a barbecue looking like a train. Then on the next day we went to Kneehill County along with a visit to Royal Tyrrell Museum, a dinosaur museum, then

went to Drumheller Bridge. To finish the night off, we had a camp fire. Then it was time to fly back to Manchester.

By Mark Howarth 3rd Ashton

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Food for Thought - from Barry Bowden

We have truth crucified and goodness buried, but we have kept going with this conviction: That truth crushed to earth will rise again.

Martin Luther King

Jesus came preaching The Kingdom – what arrived was The Church.

Alfred Wise

Fear is the only constant, but there is a truth that offers profound courage to every believer who finds it.

Anon

St John's Advent Events

St John's Advent Service of Light

A quiet reflective candlelit service

6pm on Sunday 1st December



Stations of the Nativity

Tues 3rd, Tues 10th, Tues 17th December 7.30pm and Wed 4th and Wed 11th December at 12noon. It is a tradition at St John's that during Lent we pray the Stations of the Cross and journey through Jerusalem. Join us on this Advent journey to Bethlehem as we contemplate the many signs and wonders along the way that pointed us towards the birth of Christ our Saviour. As we consider these signs and wonders there are many viewpoints along the way. Slow down. Take a look. Listen. Breathe. Expect.



Meet St Nicholas!

4.15pm Tuesday 10th December

Refreshments from 3.30pm

St Nicholas will be here to tell his story.

Please bring a present for St Nick to give to the Booth Centre - Men's toiletries, hats, gloves and socks, cakes, biscuits and chocolates or financial donations.



Blue Christmas

3.00pm Sunday 15th December

This is a quiet, contemplative service for those of us who will find Christmas difficult this year perhaps because of bereavement, illness, separation, or life simply being different than it once was. There will be an opportunity to light candles and write names or situations we are praying for on our Christmas Stars Prayer Tree. Refreshments after the service. All are very welcome.



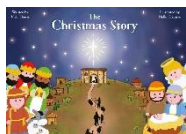
St John's Church, Kings Road, Hurst, Ashton-u-Lyne OL6 8EZ

Free gifts for festive shoppers

Families shopping this festive season will receive two great giveaways telling the Christmas story. HOPE Together, Bible Society and Speak Life are working with The Entertainer toy stores to help customers appreciate the reason for the season.

The Entertainer chain is the UK's largest independent toy retailer and each store has a nativity scene in its shop window at Christmas. This year, The Entertainer nativity scenes will feature the popular Happyland characters as Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, the Wise Men and the Shepherds.

To tie in with these nativity scenes, Bible Society is producing a special Entertainer edition of its Christmas booklet. Each family shopping for Christmas in The Entertainer stores will receive a copy.



Shoppers will also be given a copy of the *Christmas HOPE* magazine, also featuring a centre-spread with the Happyland characters telling the Christmas story. This 32-page magazine is packed with topical features to inform, challenge and entertain readers. This year's *Christmas HOPE* cover features Tom Hanks, 'the man behind the honours'; the new *Cats* movie; Allison Becker: the world's best goalkeeper and Street Pastors 'keeping party-goers safe this Christmas'.

As well as featuring the nativity scene in shop windows and giving away *The Christmas Story* booklets and *Christmas HOPE* magazines, The Entertainer stores

will screen a specially-made Happyland nativity animation which is being made by the Speak Life team. The animation will be available on social media and to download for use in schools and churches.

All the Christmas resources are also available for churches to order and will be available from the end of October on the HOPE Together website hopetogether.org.uk/Christmas. The *Christmas HOPE* magazine is an ideal giveaway for churches visiting homes carol singing or to invite local residents to Christmas events.

Will you get a 'thanks' for your Christmas presents?



After Christmas, what? Just blank silence? Or a 'thank-you' note for that gift?

A survey by the insurers Ecclesiastical has found that 60 per cent of 25-to-34-year-olds said they would NOT write a thank-you note because they found writing uncomfortable, or were embarrassed by their handwriting, spelling or grammar, or just did not know what to say. It seems that saying 'thank you' can be the hardest word for many in this age-group.

Yet people who receive written thankyou notes for their gifts say that the letters make them so much happier for having gone to the trouble of choosing and sending a gift. And even a personal 'thank-you' via social media is much welcomed.

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December 2019 - Parish Sunday Services

See page 10 for our Christmas Services

Advent 1	9.30am	St James	Holy Communion + Baptism
Sunday 1 st December	9.30am	St Gabriel	Holy Communion+Junior Church
	11.00am	St Peter	Baptism & Service of the Word
	11.00am	St Michael	Holy Communion + Baptism
Advent 2	9.30am	St James	Holy Communion
Sunday 8 th December	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
Advent 3	9.30am	St. James	Family Communion
Sunday 15 th December	9.30am	St Gabriel	Holy Communion+Junior Church
	11.00am	St. Peter	Holy Communion
	11.00am	St. Michael	Morning Prayer
Advent 4	9.30am	St James	Holy Communion
Sunday 22 nd December	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

Christmas 1 - Sunday 29th December

10.30am - United Service of Holy Communion at St Gabriel's Church

(there will be no other services in the Parish on this day)

Regular Weekday Services

Note: NO MIDWEEK SERVICES BETWEEN 26TH 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 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 November registers:

Baptism

Alyssia Ann Lowe

There were no weddings or funerals in November

+++++

Are politicians the oldest profession?



A surgeon, an architect and a politician were arguing as to whose profession was the oldest. Said the surgeon: "Eve was made from Adam's rib, and that surely was a surgical operation."

"Maybe," admitted the architect, "but prior to that, order was created out of chaos, and that was an architectural job."

"But," the politician pointed out in triumph, "somebody had to have created the chaos first!"

Good advice

If you have a lot of tension this Christmas and you get a headache, do what it says on the aspirin bottle: 'Take two aspirin' and 'Keep away from children.'

+++++



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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 December for inclusion in the next Magazine - address and telephone number on page 18.



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Fairly Traded Tea and Coffee and to work for justice for the world's poor

