

The Parish of Timperley

Christ Church and Holy Cross

Christ Church, Thorley Lane, WA15 7AN
Holy Cross, Park Road, WA15 6QG

Sunday 20th December 2020
Advent 4

This newsletter will be emailed each Friday: if you are able to receive emails please ensure the clergy have your email address, then **print this off at home or download it to an electronic device and bring it to church with you the following Sunday/Monday**. There will be copies available in church reserved for those who are not able to download or print this at home.

Sun	Mon	Wed	Thurs
<p>Christ Church open for individual prayer 9.30-11am with short service at 10am</p> <p>Short video reflection online</p>	<p>Holy Cross open for individual prayer 9.30-11am with short service at 10am</p>	<p>10am-11am 'Meet me in the kitchen' Informal chat via Zoom video/ phone link</p>	<p>7.30pm Advent Book group on Zoom – reading 'Those Who Wait' by Tanya Marlow</p>

"Meet me in the kitchen"

Informal weekly chat on "Zoom", every **Wednesday, 10-11am**. Everyone is welcome and tech support can be provided. You can dial in on the phone if you don't have internet access. Email Jenny for the link and phone number.

Contact details and further information

Vicarage	0161 980 4330	
Revd Jim Bridgman	07526243702	revjimb1017@gmail.com
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To receive this newsletter by email each week, please email Jenny or Jim.

Parish Facebook page:	facebook.com/parishoftimperley
Parish blog (for worship resources and more):	timperleyparish.wordpress.com
Parish website (for general information):	http://www.timperleyparish.org.uk/

We take safeguarding seriously

The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in church activities is the responsibility of all of us. Our safeguarding policies and details of where to get help are displayed in each church and on the parish website. If you have any concerns that you or someone else are at risk from harm, please speak to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Aileen Moran, on 07948 795 962, or contact a member of the clergy. If there is immediate danger call 999.

You can see details of all our **Advent and Christmas activities** on the parish blog:

timperleyparish.wordpress.com/xmas

- Walk round the Nativity Trails in the parish
- Share a prayer on the prayer tree at Holy Cross
- Follow the Active Advent Calendar on Facebook
- Access the Church of England Christingle service on the Church of England Facebook page
- Watch the online carol service on the parish blog
- Get ready for an extra **Carol sing-a-long** on Zoom – **6pm on Sun 20th Dec**



Advent and Christmas

We will be holding very short acts of worship on **Christmas Eve at Christ Church at 7pm**, and on **Christmas Day at Holy Cross at 10am**. Due to risks of transmission, neither of these services will include Holy Communion, singing, or opportunities for fellowship. Places **must** be booked in advance by telephoning Jim or Jenny.

Please note **we will not be able to facilitate the exchange of Christmas cards this year**. We would love it if you would instead donate to Trafford South Foodbank, or another charity, in lieu of sending cards.

There will be **no services on Sunday 27th and Monday 28th December** – parishes around the Diocese are encouraged to join in the streamed worship by Chester Cathedral on that weekend. Just search for Chester Cathedral on YouTube. Services will resume on **Sunday 3rd January and Monday 4th January** as we celebrate Epiphany.

If you have picked up a copy of this newsletter in church, please take it home with you and do not return it to the pile.

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Other readings for today – 2 Samuel 7.1-11,16; Romans 16.25-27**Reflection written by Jenny**

Gosh. Was this really good news?! An unmarried woman in one of the most conservative cultures of its time, suddenly pregnant, visited by an angel, and mother to a son who would shake up the world before being executed as a troublemaker. I'm not sure that my response would have been as holy as Mary's! I wonder what else she said and thought, unrecorded by Luke and Matthew.

Our journey through Advent reaches Mary today, as we focus on Mary's "yes" to God. Historically Mary has been portrayed by the Church as meek, mild, obedient and humble. And yet what strength of character it would have taken to bear the pain of carrying the Son of God. I would hazard that Mary was no meek and mild handmaiden, but feisty and fiery; courageous and strong.

This weekend will mark 9 months, almost to the day, since we first entered "lockdown". It also marks 9 months in the Church calendar from the Feast of the Annunciation – to which we return today in the days before we celebrate the birth of Christ. I wonder how those nine months of pregnancy were for Mary? Full of anxiety? Joy? Conflict? Was she ostracised by her communities? How long did it take her to persuade Joseph of her faithfulness? How did she feel travelling with child to the town of his birth? Did she suffer in her pregnancy, with sickness or fatigue? How supported was she by the women of her family, in the lead up to the birth? Did she feel loved or alone? Hopeful or frightened?

I wonder how our own journeys though the past 9 months have been? Few of us will have waited for the birth of a baby! And yet, in one sense, the whole of the Christian life is one of waiting – waiting for the promised hope we have in Christ. At no time are we more attuned to this collective waiting than in the season of Advent. Just as Mary waited and hoped, feared and fretted, so we are called year on year, to stand alongside her in her waiting as we, too, wait for the Lord. And how we might have felt this urgency, impatience and anxiety in this year more than others!

But what really strikes me about Mary's story is this: Mary needed God, but God also needed Mary. Without Mary's "yes", there would have been no birth, no nativity, no saviour, no Christmas. God's invitation, and Mary's assent, heralded an alliance of Heaven and Earth so complete, so perfect, so potent, that it changed the course of history forever.

In all our waiting, what is God's invitation to us? We don't have to say "yes". But in our courageous partnering in God's work, we might just be able to change our own small corners of the world.

Prayers of Intercession compiled by Lynne Aves

Advent is a very special time of preparation and calm waiting for the celebration of Christmas, but in the dash to make sure that everything is just right, sometimes our spiritual preparation can be put on one side.

Lord, prepare us for you coming in our church. Although we have not met in the same way as last year, help us today and in the week to come, to think of and pray for those we usually sat beside, in front of or behind, and for the clergy, when we were last in church, so as to put a spiritual ring around our church family, as we prepare to celebrate your birth.

Lord, in our local area we have many people eagerly preparing for Christmas Day, without any understanding of the significance of your birth for everyone. Help us to show, by our words and actions, love and compassion in action, whenever the situation arises.

Lord, we also pray for the many children and adults in our local area of Timperley and those in our region, who will be without gifts, a "good Christmas dinner" or warmth over the holiday period. Lord we pray that even though it is a huge task, please inspire and empower individuals and those in local government, in local or national charities, to be able to meet 1 or 2 of their needs. We especially pray for anyone who "falls through cracks" for whatever reason this Christmas.

Lord, we pray that you will be with those of any age who are alone this coming week and beyond. Some people don't mind being alone others can be in despair, loneliness can be unbearable, be with them Lord, soothe and encourage, let them know that you are holding their hand.

We pray for people who are ill, at home or in hospital, and those who struggle every day to face pain, immobility or the loss of a life they knew, in a moment of calm stillness, we bring them to you, naming them and loving them in our hearts.

"Advent Lord, come ever nearer. Come to rejuvenate our faith, fortify our social conscience, and open wide our eyes of wonder so that when the Saviour comes, he may steal into our hearts - and find them ready. Come Lord Jesus." *John Pritchard.*

Blessing

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, scatter the darkness from before your path, and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.