

The Parish of Timperley

Christ Church and Holy Cross



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

Christmas Eve/Christmas Day

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.

Christmas

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 - search for Chester Cathedral on YouTube. Services will resume on **Sunday 3rd January and Monday 4th January** as we celebrate Epiphany. If restrictions change or tighten over the coming days, we will reassess our current arrangements and communicate this by 2nd January.

“Meet me in the kitchen”

‘Meet me in the kitchen’ will be taking a Christmas break and will return on Wednesday 6th January 2021.

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

Contact details and further information

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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/

**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.**

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

John 1:1-9

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

Other readings for today – Isaiah 52.7-10; Hebrews 1.1-4

Reflection written by Jim

One of our family traditions at Christmas is to have a 'Christmas lights walk', when we walk around at night, looking for the Christmas lights in the surrounding houses. One of our neighbours has a light up star – it flashes three different colours (green, blue, red), and as the colours rapidly change, the star increases in size, until the cycle begins again. They've put up the star I think every year since we've lived in Timperley (and perhaps before our time too!), and it usually faces a place where I pray, so during Advent evenings each year, I wait for the multi-coloured star to appear, to signal the coming of Christmas. This year I think they may have put it up earlier than usual (though I'm not 100% sure – I can't remember much of pre-COVID years!). But there seemed a moment when they had put up other lights, and the star had not appeared! And I felt a bit bereft. Thankfully for me, it appeared later that evening.

The Gospel writer John never had the fortune (!) to encounter electric flashing, coloured light bulbs, but if he had, I'd like to think that maybe he would have described Jesus in that way...As it is, we have to settle for something a lot more poetic: *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.* I realised that that star, shining neon in the darkness of Timperley winter nights, was a symbol of hope for me – a promise of the life, love, joy and peace that God offers at Christmas, in the birth of Jesus. Its constant flickering does little to light up the whole darkness of the surrounding streets, but nevertheless it does not waver, and is a steady presence. The flashing star is surrounded by darkness, but is never enveloped by it, never extinguished by it. So too is the light, the message, of Christ – though there is much darkness in our world, the light of Jesus still burns brightly.

This year, more than ever, we long for light – light at the end of the tunnel, a light to shine through the creeping darkness, a light to give us hope when the darkness envelops us. As I write, it is the shortest day of the year, with daylight seeming to be particularly rationed in 2020 (or maybe that is just the usual Manchester gloom!) With recent events and the changing of plans, it has felt to many that Christmas has been cancelled, and there is much anxiety about what this Christmas will look like. But despite all the external factors, the reason for Christmas can never be cancelled, whether by Puritans or pandemics. Nothing can cancel the fact that Jesus was born 2000 years ago, and continues to bring hope, peace, love and salvation to our world. His birth in Bethlehem brought light into the world, a light that cannot be quenched.

This year, when reading John 1, I was struck by verse 9 in particular: *The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.* Not only is Jesus' light one that cannot be extinguished, it is a light that spreads, that enlightens everyone, it cannot be contained; it is like the creative energy of God, from the beginning of creation: bring life, and form and newness. Sometimes this year, it has

been hard to see light in other people – we have become more divided as a country and a world over the past year. Yet still I believe that the light of Christ can be at work in all people. There have still been acts of great kindness and love even in the most difficult of circumstances, and in these times I believe the light of Jesus was, and is, shining brightly. As we approach Christmas and New year, my prayer for myself, and for us all, is that the light of Christ will continue to enlighten us.

Prayers of Intercession compiled by Neil Provost

Come Lord, your wounded world is yearning for you to come again. Come Lord, your weary world is crying out for you to lift us up out of our despair, our hunger, our thirst for something better, our need for the food that will last. Come Lord, come again, we need to begin again. **Amen**

In a world where worry, not peace, prevails, stir up that good news again. This Christmas, make it real in our hearts. Never have we needed your joy and peace more than now. Thank you for the gift of Jesus, our Emmanuel, the Word made flesh. Forgive us for forgetting that your love never changes, never fades, and that you never abandon the purpose for which you came: to save us from our sinful condition, and to give us life eternal, the joy of relationship with a holy God. Your birth and your death sealed your promise to us forever. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

For those whose hearts are battered by sorrow or broken relationships, for those whose lives know only conflict and confusion, for those whose bodies are tired and tested beyond their ability to endure this year—precious Saviour, draw them close to You. Let them know you are still the same Jesus who was born of a virgin, not in a hospital but an animal barn, laid in a manger of hay. You are still the One sent by a heavenly Father who offered not condemnation for our sins, but love, forgiveness and daily divine fellowship. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

This life is hard, sometimes unbearable; the loss of a loved one who fought the fight against cancer so valiantly; the unwanted divorce that left us wondering if anything in our lives had been real; the pain of infertility that leaves us devastated every single month; the hurt of watching a child walk away from the truth of God's word. There is no end to the painful circumstances we face in this life, but no matter the pain, we always have the thrill of hope, the promise that our Saviour has won the victory. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Lord, thank you for always being with us. Your word says that if we ascend to heaven, or go to the depths of Sheol, or take up wings, or go to the depths of the sea, you are with us. Lord, many people get lonely at Christmas, because they cannot be with loved ones, due to distance, death, disagreement and especially this year with the pandemic. Please help them to feel your presence; comfort them and help them to know your joy. If someone is lonely who does not know you, please send someone to share the Gospel with them. If that person can be one of us, please use them in that way, to be a friend and comfort to the lonely. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Father God, thank you so much for the gift of your Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Lord, it is easy to be stressed during the Christmas Season, and we need help remaining focused on you. While this earth promises temporary happiness and distractions, true joy comes from you. Lord, help us to remember what the bible says, "I will take joy in the God of my salvation". Fill us with the true joy of knowing you, and having a relationship with your Son, and the purpose of His birth, which was our redemption. **Amen**

Blessing

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.