

The Parish of Timperley

Christ Church and Holy Cross

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



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Chester

Sunday 10th January 2021
Baptism of Christ

Following the announcement of another national lockdown, the rapid increase in the rate of infection in Trafford, and the continued uncertainty over the new variant of COVID-19, the PCC have agreed to close both Christ Church and Holy Cross until Sunday 28th February at the earliest. This will be in line with the dates for school closures, and will give us time to monitor the situation as it evolves.

Although places of worship have not been closed by the government (as in Scotland), we feel it would be irresponsible and counter-productive to be 'open' when the country is being asked to do all that it can to safeguard each other by staying away. The risk assessments that we produced last year have not taken into account the new variant (as so little is known yet about it), so we can't assume that the buildings are 'COVID secure'.

Through this time of lockdown, we will start a weekly Sunday morning "Zoom" service at 10am every Sunday, **with the exception of Sunday 21st February**. Zoom is very easy to use, as we are finding on Wednesday mornings. Details of how to join are on the attached letter. Please contact us for further help or advice on accessing the service.

We will continue to distribute via email weekly noticesheets with readings, reflections and prayers, as well as seasonal liturgy.

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.

Remember to **share a prayer on the prayer tree at Holy Cross** – perhaps share a prayer for the New Year, or for someone you're thinking of at this time

Contact details and further information

Vicarage	0161 980 4330	
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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/

Genesis 1.1–5

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Other readings for today: Mark 1.4–11; Acts 19.1–7

Reflection written by Jenny

Did you know that even after the longest day in December, winter mornings continue to get darker until we are well into January? This fun fact helps me in the cold darkness of the New Year, and no less this year as we face a very stark winter month.

It feels appropriate then, that the season of Epiphany happens during our darkest mornings. As the sun struggles to rise far above the horizon, we are reminded of the dawning Light that has come into the world for all people. An "epiphany" is a moment of revelation; of unveiling – and it was as the Magi visited the Christ Child that the infant was revealed, or unveiled, as the Light for all people, from all places.

I reflected some weeks ago that the opening of John's Gospel echoes the opening of the whole Bible – and here we have that opening from Genesis: an unfolding of a story which began thousands of years ago, and into which we are still invited to step, and to shape a narrative and an ending.

Our own baptisms are a moment of beginning. A step into discipleship in which we are marked as God's own children, and invited to partner with God in this story of love and salvation. In his baptism, Jesus shared something of his story with God's story, and with our own stories. In this beginning there are resonances of the Earth's own beginning, described through poetry in the Genesis reading, as the Spirit hovered over the waters.

It is to these waters that Jesus returns, at the moment of baptism. A Christmas holiday request from my youngest child was to be allowed to play in the garden sprinkler. The potential for hypothermia informed my decision of "no", but I reflected on the allure of water to each of us. Water refreshes, cleanses, hydrates, washes away, births. This simple element is the source of all life, and so how fitting that Epiphany leads us from the metaphors of darkness and light, towards the act of cleansing and rebirth.

As I reflect on my own discipleship, and on our shared spiritual life, I cannot help but think that we are still at the beginning of our story. We know how things have started, and often, perhaps most of the time, life feels fragile, precarious, and uncertain. But in the perspective of eternity, we are still at the start. With Christ, we still lie within those waters of baptism, awaiting the moment of rising up that so clearly foregrounds the resurrection.

The weeks ahead will once more be tough. Darkness surrounds us. And yet we are still at the start. The best is yet to come.

Prayers of Intercession compiled by Carol Brooks-Johnson

Well, here we are, back in another lockdown. There's a sense of déjà vu – but it's perhaps somewhat more depressing and chilling this time around. It's now colder and darker. And whilst physical and mental health is of huge concern, the economic consequences are frightening. Against this background, it is now, more than ever, crucial for us to try and bring our lives to God in prayer.

LET US PRAY

Dear God, our New Testament readings this morning remind us of Jesus' baptism, and the baptisms of his early followers, when they received the Holy Spirit and began their work following and trusting in you. Help us to feel the power of the Holy Spirit, help us to serve you as those early Christians did and help us to feel strong and confident in our faith.

At this particular time, we pray for those struggling with their health – physically and mentally. Lord, encourage them to seek the help they need. And we pray for those struggling financially – encourage them to seek the help they need too.

We pray for those who have been bereaved.

We pray for those who are there for us in this time of need – for all health care professionals, whether they be on the frontline or providing the invaluable back up support. We especially think of those living and working in care homes.

We pray for all those involved in delivering education – whatever the age of their students.

We pray for the police, all emergency services, security services and the armed forces seeking to keep us safe in difficult circumstances.

We pray for all those providing crucial services to so many, enabling most of us to stay at home – the utility companies, the council workers, the essential shop staff, the delivery firms, the trades personnel and so many more on the frontline that we don't see – but who are working tirelessly.

We pray for those in the Church working to protect their flocks and to ensure that the message of your love is heard wherever we may be.

And we pray for those who govern. Lord, guide them into making the right decisions at this difficult time.

Finally, we pray for the many countries in the world experiencing similar, and worse problems, than ourselves. Let us not forget our neighbours not on our own doorstep but who suffer.

Lord, encourage us to hope. We give thanks for the vaccines which are already being administered. We pray for further signs of recovery and rehabilitation.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. [Romans 15:13]

Amen

Blessing

May God, who led the wise men by the shining of a star to find the Christ, the Light from light, lead you also in your pilgrimage to find the Lord. and the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.