

December 2021
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SAINTS ALIVE



ALL SAINTS

The Parish Magazine
of All Saints' Parish Church,
Cheadle Hulme

Our Regular Weekly Services

At the moment these are, until further notice:

Sunday at 10.00am Parish Communion. At 6.30pm Choral Evensong on the 2nd Sunday of each month and Said Evensong on the 4th Sunday. On Wednesdays the church is open for private prayer at 12.00 noon, followed by Holy Communion at 12.30pm, after which everyone is welcome to stay for a chat and to share a bring-your-own-lunch.

Arrangements for baptisms, banns and weddings, confession and spiritual counselling is by arrangement with the Clergy.

We understand that for many this is still a difficult period. If you would like prayers or simply a conversation please contact me: Rev Sarah on 0161 485 3455, or email: @allsaintschadlehulme.org.uk. Alternatively, call one of our wonderful Churchwardens, John Ackerley 0161 486 1419 and Janet Ashman on 0161 485 7969.

Christmas at All Saints' Church

Saturday 11th December

10.00am Christmas Coffee Morning

4.00pm Christingle Messy Church – an informal interactive service for families

Sunday 19th December

6.30pm Carols by Candlelight – a chance to sing some of our favourite carols

Christmas Eve

4.00pm Crib Service – a service for families to come to and hear the Christmas story

11.30pm Midnight Communion Service

Christmas Day

10.00am Holy Communion Service





VICAR'S LETTER

Dear friends,

Advent is here! This week we lit the first candle in the Advent Wreath as we began our journey of waiting and preparing ready for the big day. The season of Advent is about quietly preparing for the arrival of God with us in the person of Jesus. As Christians we are still preparing for the second coming of Jesus when this world will end, and a new heaven and a new earth will begin. That anticipation of what is to come can often overshadow the journey that we take to get to the main event. In the lead up to Christmas Day there is so much that is needed to be achieved before the big day to make the big day happen. We buy and decorate big trees for inside the house – something my Dog still can't understand. We buy gifts to give to our friends and family. We get in those extra treats because it's not quite Christmas unless you have eaten your weight in chocolate (if there are any children reading this on Christmas Day, you're allowed to eat chocolate for breakfast!). There are carol concerts, Christmas parties, nativities to watch, films to check out and the list goes on and on. There is so much to do that during the period of waiting and preparing we are too busy running around to make time to be still enough to encounter God. I encourage you this Advent season to make time to seek out God, to perhaps give a moment of thanks for Jesus, for him coming to earth to show us how to love God and to love each other. Or perhaps a moment to pray about the hard things we see in this world. Or perhaps to make space to encounter God for the first time. The beauty of making space for God is that it can happen whilst you are standing in a queue at M&S or if you are sitting down on the sofa for five minutes before someone disturbs you. This advent and this Christmas let's make space to encounter God as we remember the heart of Christmas, Jesus.

Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Luke 2:11-12

May your Advent and Christmas be a time of peace, love, and joy. May you encounter God in a new way, and may you be blessed this season.

Revd Sarah Hancock

**COPY DEADLINE FOR JANUARY - DECEMBER 6TH
ALL COPY TO THE EDITOR PLEASE**

Operation Christmas Child 2021

For quite a few years we, at All Saints, have collected gift-filled shoeboxes to contribute to Operation Christmas Child. Shoeboxes that have carried a message of love and joy to children in many parts of the world who would otherwise have received nothing at Christmas.

This year we are not having a shoebox collection at All Saints. However, Operation Christmas Child is still going ahead and should you wish to contribute, you can do so online.

Visit www.shooboxonline.samaritans-purse.org.uk to select the range of gifts to be packed in your box.



Hope

Replace your worry with hope.

And fulfil your hope with action.

Send positive thoughts to your most troubling situation.
Soon you'll find yourself starting to act on those thoughts.

Instead of worrying about the worst that could happen,

Allow yourself to hope for the best that can happen.

In your mind, make the most positive outcome real.

Hope for the best, with passion, conviction and faith.

For when you do, you'll begin to see real,

Workable ways to get there.

There is no situation so desperate that it cannot be turned around.

Always, there is a place and a purpose for hope.

Hope for the best, and let that hope push you forward.

With hope in your heart, you're well on your way.





Birinus – an apostle to the English



Thousands of our churches are currently involved in various mission initiatives across the UK. If it is tough going at times, we should spare a thought for poor Birinus, a priest from Lombard, who was sent here on his own 14 centuries ago. Pope Honorius I gave him the daunting task of being the apostle to Wessex. It was about 635 that Birinus first sailed across the Channel. He planned to convert all of Wessex, and then press on into the Midlands, where no Christian preacher had ever yet been. But once he began ministry in Wessex, Birinus found the West Saxons so pagan that he decided he better just stay and concentrate on them. So Birinus began his

ministry, endlessly travelling around Wessex, and preaching to whomever he encountered. Gradually he became known, and his message began to seep through.

Then a great breakthrough occurred: the King of Wessex, Cynegils, asked Birinus for instruction in the Christian faith. His daughter was going to marry Oswald, the Christian king of Northumbria, and for political reasons Cynegils now wanted to convert. So Birinus taught and baptised Cynegils and his family, and in return they gave him the Romano-British town of Dorchester as his see, and Birinus became the first bishop of Dorchester.

It was an excellent strategic move: Dorchester was on a main road and river in the centre of an area of dense Anglo-Saxon settlement. From his new 'headquarters', Birinus spent his last 15 years going on to build many churches around Wessex, and to baptise many people. Towards the end of his life Birinus dedicated a church at Winchester, which later became the ecclesiastical centre of the kingdom. (There is no record of Wessex bishops at Dorchester after 660.)

Any lesson in all this? Bloom where God plants you, and be faithful to your calling, however tough things may look at first, and however obscure the place. Birinus' obedience and faith planted Christianity in a key part of Britain, and so helped shape British history for centuries to come. His feast day is celebrated on the 3rd December.





Daily Hope phone line receives more than 550,000 calls

Daily Hope, a free phone line which offers prayers and support for callers, receives nearly 20,000 calls every month. The service, which was launched during the Covid-19 lockdown, has spent more than 7.15 million minutes on more than 550,000 calls. The phone line originally launched in April 2020, only to continue in response to ongoing demand once restrictions were eased.



Daily Hope set up by the Church of England nationally, has also been supported by Connections, a Missional Programme to older people based at Holy Trinity Claygate in Surrey and the Christian charity Faith in Later Life.



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

Over the year and a half of service, Daily Hope has continued to encourage people across the country and beyond including Australia, Japan, and the United States.

Since the phone line launched, users have been able to listen to a range of audio, including the Church of England's national weekly service, hymns and daily prayer. Many have messaged Lambeth Palace to express their thanks for the introduction of the phone line, particularly for elderly people.



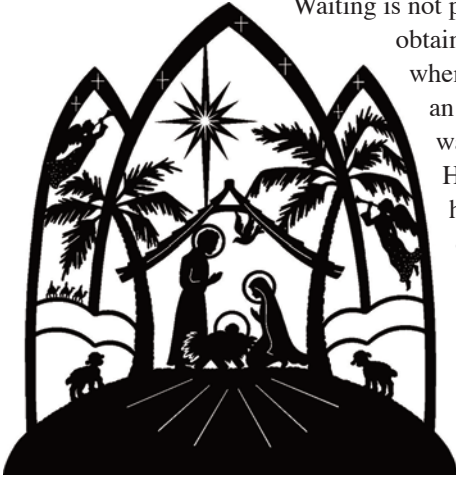
Happy Christmas

Everyone involved in Saints Alive would like to wish our readers a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.





Advent



Waiting is not popular in our culture, when so much can be obtained simply at the press of a button! Advent, when we wait for the coming of Christmas, is also an opportunity to learn what it means to be waiting for the promised return of Jesus.

He says: 'It's like a man going away: he leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

Therefore, keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back' (Mark 13:34-35).

We live between Jesus' first and second comings and this parable reminds us of the need to watch and wait, as disciples living

faithfully for Him. It reminds us of two kinds of waiting: passive and active. Imagine you're at the railway station, awaiting the arrival of a train. On the platform a man is asleep, as he thinks there is plenty of time before the train arrives. He is passively waiting. There is also a small boy on the platform who is excited about the train coming. He can't sit still and constantly looks down the track to see if the train is coming. He is actively waiting, for he expects the train to arrive at any moment. Advent gives us a choice: how will we wait for Jesus' coming? Passive waiting doesn't require much attention on our part.

We can live our Christian life pre-occupied with our own concerns, rather than looking to God. But, active waiting involves an eager expectation, as we await Jesus' return or simply look to him coming to us today.

All we want is to be found faithful as His disciples. There is nothing more important than being ready to meet our Master!



Commission on Reimagining Care proposes set of values



The Archbishops' Commission on Reimagining Care has launched a consultation on a set of values, informed by Christian theology and ethics, that it thinks should underpin a vision for care and support in England.

As well as consulting on these new proposed values, the Commission is also asking for people's views of what is good and what is difficult, challenging or missing about care and support currently.

The Commission on Reimagining Care has been charged by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to develop a radical and inspiring long-term vision for care and support in England, underpinned by a renewed set of values and

principles, drawing on Christian theology and ethics. The focus of the Commission is on adults with disabilities and those with care and support needs in later life.

The Commission began work in June 2021 and is due to publish a final report in September 2022. The Commission has recently published a draft set of values which draw on Christian theology and ethics. These include concepts that are not usually heard in policy discussions about care such as flourishing, loving kindness, empathy, trust and justice.

Mary-born Lord, humble us so that we also might say, 'Let it be with me according to your word.' Stanley Hauerwas

The incarnation was a necessary means to an end, and the end was the putting away of the sin of the world by the offering of the body of Christ. Thomas Hewitt

The Christian story is precisely the story of one grand miracle. C S Lewis

Christmas is the day that holds all time together. Alexander Smith

Filling the world, He lies in a manger! Augustine





Amazed!

Some people like surprises. The pleasant ones, anyway!

When we look at the Christmas story, it is full of surprises. Mary didn't expect to be chosen by God to give birth to His Son. Joseph was surprised and shocked that his fiancée was pregnant. The couple thought they would start married life together in Nazareth, but political circumstances forced them to go to Bethlehem and then into Egypt.

The Bethlehem shepherds were surprised and frightened by the heavenly choir and an angel with a marvellous message. Later, they rejoiced at seeing the Saviour – a new born baby in a manger.

The Wise Men were surprised to see a unique star, and so they followed it all the way to Jerusalem. They thought a royal birth would be in a city and in Herod's Palace. They were surprised again, to be redirected to a remote village called Bethlehem. Herod too was surprised that a new king had come, and felt his position and authority were being threatened.



What is most surprising is that God had planned the coming of Jesus thousands of years before it happened.

Prophets had told of His coming and their hearers were waiting for Him to appear. But still they were surprised when the Messiah came, for He did not come as a conquering hero but as a suffering Servant.

Jesus came to save people from their sins. He came to restore a broken relationship and bring His people to a glorious Home. The biggest surprise? It was also done for you and me!

“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” (1 John 5:11)



Music for the Messiah

Have you noticed that, in the Christmas story, singing is featured on three occasions? Firstly, after Mary was given a message from the angel Gabriel, and was visiting her elderly and pregnant relative, Elizabeth. Mary was so overwhelmed with happiness at the forthcoming miraculous births, she started to sing.

Over the years, her words, known as The Magnificat, have been set to music by various composers. The hymn Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord is one example of it. Of course, we don't know Mary's melody line, but her words express God's promise that He would rescue His people and through them save the world. Mary sings of God's mercy and benevolence on the helpless, the humble and the hungry.

Months later, in the fields of Bethlehem, shepherds were confronted with an angel and given an incredible message: the Saviour, the Messiah had been born. This was followed by a host of angels who could not help but sing glory to God. Later, the shepherds saw the baby Jesus. They then returned home: not in silence and awe, but in song. They were overwhelmed with an encounter with Almighty God! Heaven and earth had been brought together. They simply couldn't stop themselves from praising and glorifying God.

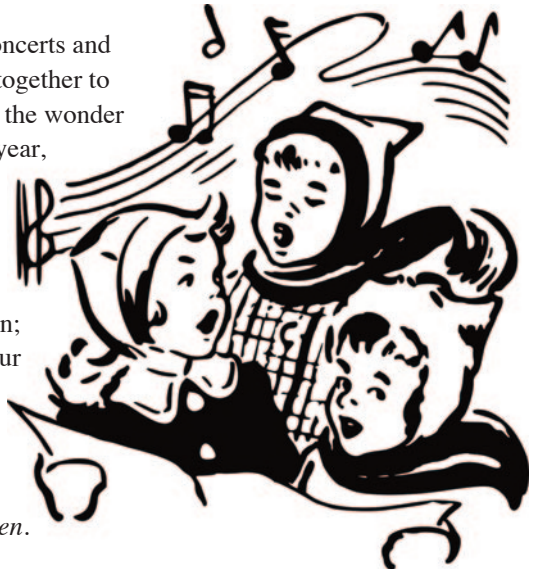
For Mary, the Shepherds and the Eastern Men too, that first Christmas brought in a time of hope: hope for the helpless, pardon for the guilty, and forgiveness for the conscious stricken. Good news for those who had had nothing but bad news!

From that time on, people have tried to express their gratitude, thanks and wonder at God's love and mercy. Over the centuries, countless poets and musicians have composed music for us to sing. At no other time in the year, is so much music used to describe and express one moment in history.

Traditionally, December is a time for concerts and services of Christmas music. We come together to sing carols and other songs that express the wonder of God's Gift to us. Unfortunately, last year, the coronavirus restricted or even cancelled our musical festivities.

This month, we may be in a better position to worship together.

Jesus has given us hope; forgiven our sin; and continues to impart faith and heal our spiritual wounds. Isn't that something to always sing about? O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!



Bells, the music bordering nearest heaven.

Charles Lamb

The laws about Christmas

And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. Luke 2:7

Bethlehem was busy that first Christmas. This year Christmas Day is on a Saturday, and we get two Bank Holidays on the Monday and Tuesday. There are some peculiar legal rules about Christmas that are more significant when Christmas Day falls on a normal working day.

The courts are closed, so you could not go to court if you wanted to. No writ, warrant to enforce a judgment or order is allowed on a Christmas Day. So, while you may pretend you are not at home to unwelcome relatives, you do not have to hide from a court officer wanting to evict you or take your goods.

Curiously, there is no law to say you cannot work on the big day. The only law that protects shop workers is the Christmas Day (Trading) Act 2004, which imposes a ban on Christmas Day trading for large shops, over 280 square metres in size, in England and Wales.

If you get bored on Christmas, you can eat as much as you like, but you cannot go outside and shoot pheasants or any other game. The Game Act 1831 makes it illegal.

Christmas has other particular laws around it. It is against the law to sell Christmas crackers to anyone under 12, because of the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015, s.31. Also, and this is frustrating for many, it is against the law to make or use a slide from snow or ice in the metropolitan area, under the Metropolitan Police Act 1839. This, as always is a light-hearted comment and you should always take proper advice. Spare a thought and a prayer for those who are homeless or fear the knock on the door from a bailiff or debt collector. If you need advice or help, don't hang about, contact someone, one of the debt charities like Christians Against Poverty.



The great work of St Columba

It was 1500 years ago, on 7th December 521, that St Columba, an Irish missionary who spread Christianity in Scotland and the North of England, was born in what is now County Donegal.

Columba – also known as Columcille – was one of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland, who studied under St Finnian in his monastic school, Clonard Abbey. He was also a great-grandson of the Irish King Niall, and he was said to have left Ireland primarily because he had caused considerable bloodshed at a battle stemming from his illegal copying of the Gospels.

But he became a missionary after he landed on Iona – a tiny island off the west coast of Scotland and, with his 12 followers, built a Celtic church and established a monastic community.

Iona quickly became known throughout Europe as a missionary centre and school: it turned into a place of pilgrimage for centuries to come – and still is, though none of Columba’s original buildings have survived. His cell and outlines of the original monastery were uncovered by excavations in 1958 and 1959.

He spent much time in Scotland, but Columba’s final years seem to have been spent mainly on Iona, where he was already revered as a saint. He is now the patron saint of Derry. He and those associated with him spread the gospel more than any other religious pioneers in Britain.

In the Irish language his name means “dove”, which is the same as Jonah in Hebrew. The word ‘columba’ is also Latin for dove.



Christmas Presence

(Isa 9:6, 7:14)

Unto us a child is born
To us a son is given...
And you will call Him Immanuel,
God with us.

Jesus, God actually with us.
God's greatest gift,
Born into weakness and vulnerability,
Sharing life's raw reality,
Family rows, family rejoicing,
Broken relationships, broken hearts,
Grief and great suffering,
Rejection and injustice,
Despair and death.

Yet through it all still the gift goes on
Revealing God's grace and power
And peace to overcome.
This is a gift that cannot be wrapped,
That will never break
Or pass its sell-by date.
This is Jesus, the greatest gift.
Receive God's Christmas presence
And walk on with Him.

Daphne Kitching



The Word of Light

The Word was in the beginning
The Word was with the Lord;
When the worlds were set to spinning
By that same Almighty Word.
Not a thing that was created
Was made without His will,
And His pow'r has permeated
Our world, and does so still.

In Him was life, and light eternal
To all men He gives His light;
Shining in the gloom nocturnal
Shines like day within the night!
And to men in sinful starkness
The Word in glory comes –
And the deep surrounding darkness
To the Word of Light succumbs!

Though by Him the world was moulded
When He came unto His own,
Yet mankind, in sin enfolded
Their Creator they disowned.
But for those who do believe Him –
Who see that He is right –
He makes those who do receive Him
Into Children of the Light!

Nigel Beeton

What I learned about Church as an ecosystem by looking after a woodland

I jointly look after a small woodland with some friends. It has been a huge learning curve finding out about a whole new area of knowledge and gaining new skills. As I reflected on what leads to a flourishing woodland, it turns out that mixed ecology is right at the heart of that: it creates resilience. This got me thinking about the Church as an ecosystem like a woodland.

The environment is abundant

A forest is an environment teeming with life in abundance, appropriate to the part of the world it is in – trees, shrubs, plants, fungi, birds, mammals, insects, bugs, butterflies. A healthy, biodiverse woodland or forest flourishes with multiple layers and a diversity of species. There are ancient trees at the top of the canopy – like oaks or beech soaking in the light. There is a middle layer of hazel or hawthorn for example, and then shrubs, ferns and smaller plants that appear in different seasons. There are different mixes of trees in different parts of the forest.

Diversity is important

Diversity is important because if you have a monoculture you risk losing everything if a disease or pest attacks. You don't want just big trees – the diversity is of size as well as variety. The forest is interconnected and interdependent – one thing affects another, and, in many ways, they need one another.

By imagining church as forest, I do not mean 'a church' – I am thinking about everything that is connected to Christ and communicates Christ. In that environment are denominations, festivals, bookshops, retreat centres, podcasts and their associated communities. At the top of the canopy might be a big city centre church, a cathedral, a church network, or a retreat centre. Then there are lots of mid-size trees, like congregations or youth networks.

Finally, there are lots of small ones – people meeting in small groups, sharing meals in homes, a parent and toddler group, spiritual direction, or praying via a WhatsApp group.

(Continued on page 13)



(Continued from page 12) The wider environment of Church will flourish if it is diverse. When the environment is abundant, the seeds of the Gospel are in multiple places. Growth is not a technical or mechanical process of models that can be delivered. It is more likely to take place by paying attention to what's going on and working with what's there and trying to add diversity. And the more interdependent it is the better.

To regenerate a forest, light is the key

Leadership is more like gardening or woodland management. God is at work regenerating in the most surprising of places. What is critical is letting God's light in – God is central.

A denomination is part of the forest, a large congregation part of the ecology which can be great gifts seeding other things. But the forest is by no means simply big churches –

that would be a poor environment. It's tempting for big churches to think it's all about them and sometimes other parts of the forest are invisible to them. But so much of church is meeting in small groups, in homes, in coffee shops, online in ways that are invisible.

Two thirds of the Church ecosystem in the West does not even gather in congregations. People now navigate church very differently from how they used to perhaps because of digital media. It is possible, for example, to have attended something big or middling for a season and then be in a small

group and be resourced through a phone app, a festival and a community online gathered around a podcast. This is all part of the forest. Life teems in all sorts of places and especially at the edges between things, a key insight from permaculture. To regenerate a forest, light is always the key. *Jonny Baker*

About Jonny

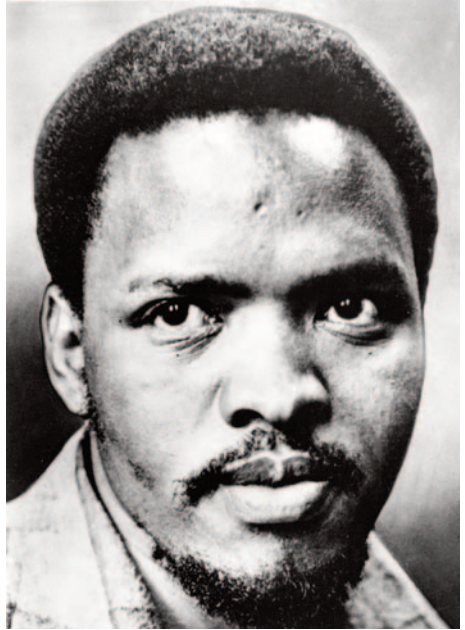
Jonny Baker is Director of mission education at Church Mission Society and involved in training pioneers in mission.

He is the author of several books, including *Pioneer Practice*; *The Pioneer Gift* and *Pioneering Spirituality*, and the co-author of *Imagining Mission* (with John Taylor) on which the ideas from this blog are based.



Steve Biko – speaking out on behalf of blacks

Steve Biko, the South Africa anti-apartheid activist, was born 75 years ago, on the 18th December 1946, in King William's Town. He was a founder of the Black Consciousness Movement, and he was beaten and left for dead by state security officers in 1977, aged 30. He was raised in his family's Anglican Christian faith, though his father died when he was four. Later, he was seen by many Africans as a Jesus figure, speaking for the oppressed and having compassion for them. Many view the film *Son of Man*, made in 2006 and the first film about Jesus with an all-black cast, as reflecting much of Biko's life.



Biko, full name Bantu Stephen Biko, felt that the Black Consciousness Movement had to renew Christianity and make it relevant to black Africans. He rejected violence as a means of achieving his ends and was known for his bravery, disregarding consequences for himself. Expelled from high school for political activism, Biko moved to St Francis College, a liberal boarding school in Natal, and then went to medical school, where he became involved in the multiracial, moderate National Union of South African Students, which spoke up for black rights.

Quickly dissatisfied, he helped to found the all-Black South African Students' Organisation in 1968, and became its first president. Its principal aim was to encourage black people to recognise their inherent dignity and self-worth. Four years later he was one of the founders of the Black People's Convention, an umbrella organisation.

On 18th August, 1977, he and a fellow activist were detained at a roadblock and jailed in Port Elizabeth. Nearly a month later he was found naked and shackled outside a hospital in Pretoria, more than 700 miles away. He died the next day of a massive brain haemorrhage.



The Annunciation to the Shepherds

'In that region there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock'

In the Old Testament shepherds were greatly valued and treated with respect. Patriarchs, prophets and kings had all tended sheep. Job, a rich man, owned 14,000 sheep. David was tending sheep when he was called by God and anointed by Samuel.

But as the Israelites settled in towns and cities and turned to farming, attitudes towards the shepherds changed. As the New Testament opens, shepherding had become a dirty, lonely life, away from civilisation. Shepherds could not observe the daily rituals of their faith, and so they had a low status in society, looked down upon by orthodox Jews.

But out in the countryside with just the hills and the plains and the open air, St Luke tells us that it was there that God's message was proclaimed and heard. Cities and towns had walls and barriers, as Bethlehem has today. But in the fields at night, there were shepherds, watching and alert, ready for any eventuality. And so, they were the first to hear of the birth of a Saviour.

'The Annunciation to the Shepherds' is a painting by Sano di Pietro. We know little about this Italian artist apart from some dates. He was born in Siena in 1406 and died there in 1481. But he has left us a legacy of beautiful and sensitive paintings. As we look at this scene, we see the human details: two shepherds huddled by the fireside with their dog, all three looking up to see the angel, and a spear by the side to ward off thieves and predators. The sheep are safely in their pen, black and white fleeces huddled together for warmth. In the sky the angel appears, bearing an olive branch in one hand and with the other pointing to Bethlehem in the distance.

Luke has already told us of another annunciation, with Gabriel visiting Mary. Artists loved to portray this scene and often showed a lily, the symbol of purity, in their paintings. Here there is the olive sprig, a symbol of peace to reinforce the angelic message of peace in the birth of the Saviour. Luke goes on to tell us how Jesus brought new meaning and peace to all those like the shepherds who were nobody in the eyes of people, but everything to the eyes and heart of God.

Jesus in His teaching often turned to the theme of sheep and shepherds, with parables about lost sheep, gates to the fold, and hiring shepherds. Just as the faithful shepherds were prepared to give their lives to protect the flock, so Jesus the Good Shepherd gave His life for the world – a death that would bring the peace and reconciliation shown in that olive branch held by the angel. At this Christmas time we rejoice with the heavenly host to proclaim the birth of this Prince of Peace and we commit ourselves to that work of peace and shepherding. Howard Thurman wrote these words:

'When the song of the angels is stilled, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among the people, to make music in the heart.'

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Loving, Almighty God, thank you that You came into the darkness of this broken world on that first Christmas night, pouring in your Light, in the person of your Son, Jesus. Lord, so much of our world seems dark, still. So many dreadful things we can't make sense of: the on-going pandemic, acts of violence and injustice against good people – innocent people, child poverty, employment problems, broken relationships... so many difficulties. It's easy to feel overwhelmed.

Lord, help us to focus on you this Christmas. Open our eyes to see your bigger, eternal picture. Help us to hear afresh the Good News that nothing and no-one can ever extinguish your Light. Jesus overcame the troubles of the world by His death and resurrection.

Father may we re-connect with you, through Jesus, this Christmas and know the Love, the Joy and the Peace, which are your Christmas gifts to us, as we trust Him.

We pray in Jesus' wonderful name, Amen.

Daphne Kitching



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ALL SAINTS CRAFT GROUP

The Craft Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 2.30pm in the Church Meeting Room. We learn new skills and practise old ones. Tea/coffee, biscuits and good company are always on offer. **Please join us when meetings begin again.**

All are welcome. For further details please contact Frances Pickett on 0161 439 8890.



All Saints' Website and Facebook



Keep up to date with news and events on the All Saints' website. Find out about our charity work, community groups and listen to recent sermons.



Please contact Sarah Ball on: comms@allsaintsheadleholme.org.uk with any stories and updates.

Find All Saints' on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/AllSaintsCH/> and "Like" us to get notifications about our news and events.



Church Open

**Saturday Coffee Mornings have been postponed
for the immediate future.**



MEN'S SOCIETY

Monthly meetings on the first Thursday, September to May, at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room (unless otherwise stated). After the talk there is a short question and answer session followed by tea, coffee and biscuits.

Due to the implementation of measures to combat the Coronavirus pandemic all meetings have been cancelled. Further details will be posted when available.

Although this group is attended by men, if you are interested in hearing any of the speakers you will be most welcome to come along.

Chairman: Bradley Torbitt (0161 486 9387)

Secretary: Mike Parry (0161 485 7886)



What a Christmas

The Bethlehem manger, shepherds, wise men, Jesus, Mary and Joseph – it’s all so familiar to older people, who are shocked to hear that younger generations may be hazy or ignorant of them. Aren’t they part of everyone’s education?

Yet the first Christmas was restricted to just a few. What 21st Century Christians proclaim as the most significant event in history began in a remote corner of the Roman Empire, without the pomp and publicity we associate with kingship and power. What modern media have called ‘The Greatest Story Ever Told’, escaped everyone’s attention in first century Palestine.

This year, Christmas is going to be a busier celebration than last year, but probably not yet back to the normal fuss we usually make each December. The streets will be crowded, but shops may struggle with supplies. Parties will take place, but many people will feel reluctant join in. Family gatherings are allowed again, but the vulnerable may hesitate. Christmas services will be held, but as singing has the potential for droplet and aerosol transmission, music will be muted this year. A Christmas without many carols!

Many will struggle to hold their ‘usual’ Christmas. Yet God does not neglect us. This may be the very opportunity to rekindle or deepen our faith in what really matters about Christmas. Away from the hordes, perhaps completely alone this Christmas, we may sit quietly and allow our heavenly Father to draw near to us. We may picture Mary inviting us to gaze with her at her Son, born to save us from our sins. In the silence of our imagination, we may join the chorus of angels announcing His birth to the shepherds:

*“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests.”*

It was that chorus which inspired an American Minister, Edmund Sears, to write the Christmas hymn, ‘It Came Upon a Midnight Clear’. Sears, troubled by the world’s turbulent history and failure to hear the Christmas message, was himself recovering from a breakdown. Written in 1849, his words have a timeless ring about them:

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring;
Oh, hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.*





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Church launches consultation to get to net zero carbon in just nine years



The Church of England is consulting dioceses, cathedrals, national institutions, parishes, schools, and other interested parties on a proposed route map to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

The draft route map suggests how all parts of the Church of England can make changes together, in order to achieve the ambitious target set by General Synod in 2020: to be net zero carbon 20 years ahead of the Government's targets.

It includes recommendations for building maintenance, heating and the availability of specialist advice for each, setting alongside how the central Church and dioceses can offer support. The draft net zero carbon route map was written by a sub-committee of the Church of England's Environmental Working Group, chaired by the Bishop of Selby, Dr John Thomson. He said: "God's creation is in crisis, and there is an urgent call to address this at every level of our global community. Synod has set an ambitious target. We recognise this will be challenging, however many adaptations can also be made simply and quickly, such as switching to a green energy provider, filling gaps in windows, and changing lightbulbs, all of which can help to reduce energy costs. I encourage individuals and communities to engage with these consultation proposals and to think at every level what can be done to be part of the change. We need to safeguard and care for all of God's creation."

The Government has committed to a target of net zero carbon by 2050, with an interim target of a 78% reduction, set in April 2021.

Anyone can respond to the consultation online before the closing date of 28 February 2022, with responses particularly requested from Dioceses and Cathedrals.





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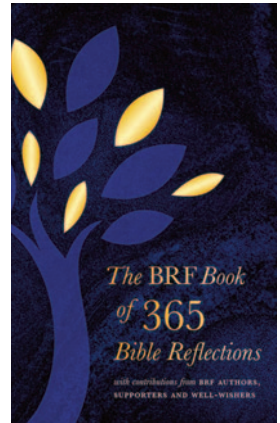
Here's an astonishing claim. John 3:16 appears on everything from fridge magnets to sports stars' faces. But what does it actually mean? And how does it relate to you and me?

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The BRF Book of 365 Bible Reflections

Compiled by Karen Laister and Olivia Warburton, BRF, £14.99

This special anniversary collection is a celebration of the Bible for BRF's centenary year of 2022. Bringing together a fantastically wide-ranging writing team of authors, supporters and well-wishers from all areas of BRF's work, this resource is designed to help us go deeper into the story of the Bible and reflect on how we can share it in our everyday lives, including sections which lead us through the Bible narrative as well as thematic and seasonal sections, it is the perfect daily companion to resource your spiritual journey.

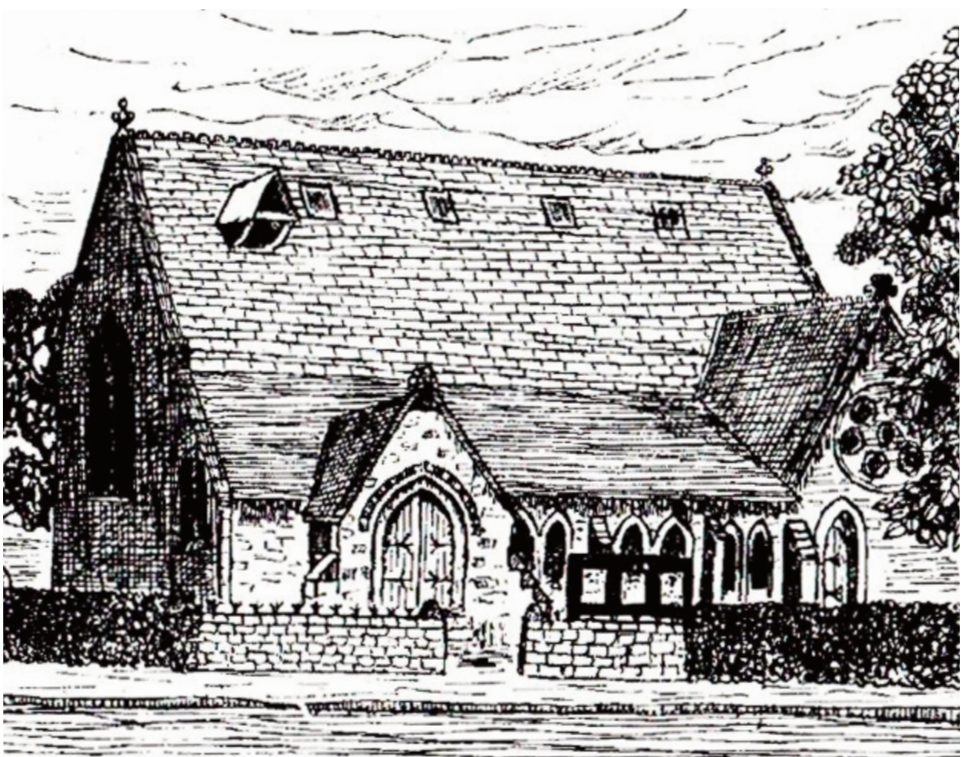


The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness – the path to true Christian joy

By Timothy Keller, 10Publishing, £2.99

In an age where pleasing people, puffing up your ego and building your résumé are seen as the methods to 'make it', the Apostle Paul calls us to find true rest in blessed self-forgetfulness. This short and punchy book shows that gospel-humility means we can stop connecting every experience, every conversation with ourselves and can thus be free from self-condemnation. A truly gospel-humble person is not a self-hating person or a self-loving person, but a self-forgetful person.





Christian Stewardship

The Parish practises the principles of Christian Stewardship in its giving for the work of God. If you are interested to learn more about it please contact the Recorder, Kate Hughes (485 1010), the Vicar or the Churchwardens. The giving of time and talents is encouraged, If you wish to help in some capacity in the Church services or organisations, in improving or maintaining the Church fabric or grounds, or in visiting and helping the sick or housebound, please speak to the Clergy or the Churchwardens.



All Saints Cheadle Hulme

PARISH DIRECTORY

Clergy: *The Rev'd Sarah Hancock, All Saints Vicarage, 27 Church Road SK8 7JL (485 3455)
The Rev'd Janet Owens (Retired) (312 4683)

Readers: Mrs Pat Yates (485 4546)
Mr Michael Aiers (439 7692)

Church Wardens: *Mrs Janet Ashman (485 7969)
*Mr John Ackerley (486 1419)

Deputy Wardens: *Mrs Julia Ball (440 8647)
*Ms Sarah Ball (07966 146746)

Organist: Miss Trevlyn Thomas (485 8026)

Sacristan: *Mrs Janet Valentine (439 8203)

P.C.C. Vice Chairman and Treasurer: *Mr Jeremy Valentine (439 8203)

P.C.C. Secretary: *Mrs Linda Ackerley (486 1419)

Planned Giving and Gift Aid Secretary: *Mrs Kate Hughes (485 1010)

Mainly Music Co-ordinator and Child Protection Officer: *Mrs Clare Russell (486 9304)

Church Room Bookings: Mr Neville Ashman (485 7969)

Parish Rooms Bookings: Ms Joanna Parsons, Parish Room Cottage, Church Road, SK8 7JB
(485 2596)

Electoral Roll Officer: Dr David Jones (01625 850997)

Parish Magazine Editor: Mr Rhys Davenport (485 6772) Email: seed.design@mail.com

Website and Social Media: *Ms Sarah Ball Email: comms@allsaintsheadleulme.org.uk

Parish Magazine Secretary and Treasurer:
Mrs Chris Spencer (485 8282)

Deanery Synod Representatives: *Mrs Julia Ball (440 8647)

*Miss Irene Walton (439 6096)

P.C.C. Members are marked* Other members

Mesdames: L. Bacon, M. Epps, C. Jones, L. Karuku, F. Pickett, S. Stone