



Christ Church Ainsworth Parish Magazine



Away In A Manger
(Photo courtesy of Kat Sowden)

Serving the Community
www.ainsworthparish.org.uk

December 2020

Price 50p

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At the time of going to print it isn't yet clear whether lockdown 2 will be lifted as planned, allowing us to return to worshipping in church. Our church building is COVID-secure, so hopefully once again you will soon have the option to choose either to attend worship physically, or to continue to worship with us on Facebook. When church reopens you can choose to:

Join us at 10.30.am on Sunday in church for a shortened service of Holy Communion, or 6.30pm on Wednesday in church for Mid-Week Praise (posted later on facebook).

Please be aware that there will be no communion at Mid-Week Praise, the communion on Sundays will be bread only and there will be no singing.

To ensure that our church remains COVID-19 Secure, we will be using PowerPoint and not handing out service books. If you prefer, you are welcome to print and bring along your own order of service, taking it with you at the end. For the Sunday service follow the link and download:

<https://1drv.ms/b/s!Aurx6pWvMgOaiNRVqS5vumpPHqT6cw?e=YJZcpp>

To worship on line, join us at 12 noon on Sunday on our Facebook Page for midday worship or 7.30pm on Wednesday for Mid-Week Praise

<https://www.facebook.com/ChristChurchAinsworth/>

Please note we are also offering a number of 'seasonal' services / worship opportunities throughout Advent and the Christmas period.

A few words from the Vicar

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

Well, December is upon us already!

Despite the restrictions, and despite the ill-informed comments of various pundits, Advent and Christmas are not cancelled this year. Sure, things will be different, but there are multiple ways we at Christ Church can help you to get your spiritual bearings at this special time of year.

Just because things are different, just because we meet in cyberspace rather than in our church building, this does not mean we cannot make use of Advent to prepare spiritually for the Christmas celebration.

So, what do we have in store for you?

Light in the Darkness: Join us on Zoom for a 4-part Advent course helping us to reflect, at the darkest time of the year, on our calling to be Lights for Christ. The aim is to reflect upon our experience during an extraordinary year which is now drawing towards its close. We meet on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm, beginning on 1st December. Email me at vicar@ainsworthparish.org.uk to register and receive the Zoom link.

Our Christingle Service: will be livestreamed on our Facebook Page at 4pm on Sunday 6th December. During the service Revd Debra will talk about the symbolism of Christingles and show you how to make one. You will need your own components: orange, red tape (or substitute), 4 cocktail sticks, lots of soft sweets or raisins (no jelly babies please!), foil, candle (careful!) or glowstick.

If we are allowed back in church by then, everyone is invited to bring their Christingles with them to a special Mid-Week Praise on 9th December. Otherwise, take a photo and post it as a comment to the livestream. Of course, you could do both.

To donate to the Children's Society, follow this link <https://thyg.uk/CUSO41728> or place your donation in an envelope marked Christingle 2020 and post it through the vicarage letterbox (cheques payable to 'The Children's Society').

Scratch Nativity: This is a fun event for families on Zoom at 7pm on 18th December. We will allocate the parts on the night, so we are not expecting a polished performance! Dress up as a character if you like ... and bring your own wine! Email me for the Zoom link.

Our Carol Service: will be livestreamed on Facebook at 6.30pm on 20th December. An opportunity to sing along to some of those favourite carols in the privacy of your own home.

The Longest Night: A quiet, reflective service for anyone for whom this might be a difficult time of year, for example, due to bereavement, loss, a relationship breakdown, loneliness etc. This will be livestreamed on Facebook at 7pm on 21st December (the Winter Solstice).

Around the Crib: This year we will premiere a video on our Facebook Page at 2pm on Christmas Eve. This is a delightful service intended for little ones.

Midnight Communion: 11.30pm as usual in church on Christmas Eve. If, by then, we are still prevented from worshipping in church, this will be replaced by a Midnight Reflection at 11.30pm hosted on our Facebook Page.

Christmas Day: We will premiere a video of our Christmas Day service at 12 noon on Facebook. You are welcome to join in at a time convenient for you at any point during the Christmas break.

Other possibilities for you include:

Cairn of Remembrance: Although our Season of Remembrance has ended, you are still welcome to bring a stone in memory of a loved one and place it on our 'Cairn of Remembrance'. This can be found at the flagpole corner of the church building. Feel free to decorate your stone if you wish.

Also, when passing through the churchyard, you are welcome to pause by the cairn for prayer and reflection.

Advent Calendar: We can provide a set of handy thoughts to share with children each day as they open the doors on their Advent Calendar. Again, email me for a copy.

Tree of Christmas hope: This is for children and adults. There is a small 'tree' (bush really) several yards behind the flagpole. You are welcome to tie 'gift-tag' prayers to its branches and lay painted stones depicting Nativity characters around the trunk. However, please bear in mind this is Lancashire and it rains a lot, so if you can laminate your prayer, so much the better!

Phew! After that lot, I plan to put my feet up for a while!

God Bless

Dave

Editor's Spot ...

Welcome to the December 2020 edition of Christ Church Ainsworth Parish Magazine, which seems to be more packed than ever with reports, articles, updates and snippets of information.

It seems impossible that already we are drawing towards the end of another year, 2020 has certainly been a year to remember, but maybe not for the best reasons!

Although some of our traditional Christmas activities may have to be a little different this year, 'the reason for the season' remains unchanged, and there are so many ways in which we can celebrate.

Check out the various services and initiatives being offered throughout Advent and the festive season, with so many different things going on there is surely something out there for everybody.

Enjoy this month's magazine, and please do your best to keep safe and well. As always, please keep your reports and articles coming in by the second Sunday in the month, to ainsworthmagazine@gmail.com.

Alison

Christmas Wreaths

The Church Yard Team are able to continue supplying wreaths this year, the cost is £9-95 per wreath.

How to order:

By envelope only – please write your name and contact details on the outside of an envelope, along with the name of the grave on which you would like the wreath to be placed. If you would like to collect the wreath, please write "To be collected" on the envelope.

Enclose your payment, cash / cheque (cheques made payable to Ainsworth Parish Church) in the envelope.

Envelopes can be posted into the box situated at the rear of church, or they can be posted through the letterbox at the Vicarage, the first house on Ainsworth Hall Road (opposite Ainsworth Church & Community Hall).

The wreaths will be placed on the graves on Wednesday 16th December. **Wreaths for collection can only be collected on that day between 09.30 – 11.00.**

Please note that we **cannot deliver wreaths.**



Advent Bible Study

Advent is a really important time in the Christian calendar; the word “Advent” is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning “coming”. During the 4th and 5th centuries Advent was a season of preparation for the baptism of new Christians at the January feast of Epiphany; during this season of preparation, Christians would spend 40 days in penance, prayer, and fasting to prepare for this celebration; originally there was little connection between Advent and Christmas.

By the 6th century, however, Roman Christians had tied Advent to the coming of Christ, but the “coming” they had in mind was not Christ’s birth in the manger in Bethlehem, but his second coming as the judge of the world. It was not until the Middle Ages that the Advent season was explicitly linked to Christ’s first coming at Christmas.

Advent symbolizes the present situation of the Church, as God’s people wait for the return of Christ in glory to consummate his eternal kingdom. The Church is in a similar situation to Israel at the end of the Old Testament: waiting and hoping in prayerful expectation for the coming of the Messiah. Israel looked back to God’s past gracious actions on their behalf in leading them out of Egypt in the Exodus, and on this basis, they called for God once again to act for them. In the same way, the Church, during Advent, looks back upon Christ’s coming in celebration while at the same time looking forward in eager anticipation to the coming of Christ’s kingdom when he returns for his people. (*Ref Christianity.com/advent*)

Reading the Bible is about connecting with God and his presence with us. Things change when God’s word is involved; it brings light from darkness and joy from sorrow. In these uncertain times the Bible is more crucial than ever and can be of significant help to us. During this season of Advent, why not make a resolution to read a few verses from the Bible on a regular basis? Sometimes this can feel a bit daunting, but there are many resources available on line or from the Bible Reading Fellowship to help you to get started.

In addition, the BRF offers a variety of books ranging from prayers and meditations on the rhythm of the Celtic year, to “Come and See”, a study of the life of Peter, and “The Bible Doesn’t Tell Me So”, which challenges the use of the Bible in validating domestic abuse.

Visit brf.org.uk to see the books and Bible reading notes available or contact Jane Lord on 0161 764 1551.

News From The Diocese – A Year Of Prayer

As the diocese prepares for new deanery arrangements and reflects on the proposal for Mission Communities, it seems there is a wonderful opportunity to underpin the journey with prayer.

Over the course of the next year, the Diocese of Manchester invites you to walk with us in prayer as we champion hope during this time of transformation and uncertainty.

Each month we will explore prayer on a different theme, shaped by a three-fold invitation to:

PRAY - to worship God where we are and as we are

ACT - to make a practical response to God's love

BE - to rest in the company of God.

Visit www.manchester.anglican.org/news/2020/10/21/year-prayer/ for more info.

The Children's Society

Christingle has always been about the community coming together to celebrate the start of the festive season in our beautiful Church. I always feel it is the best way to begin the Advent period, as it brings hope to children and young people in vulnerable circumstances. This year, spreading hope is more important than ever.

Although it is not possible for us to have our usual Christingle service this year, Vicar Dave has organised an online service, which will be livestreamed at **4.00pm on Sunday 6th December**. If you want to join in, here is what you will need:

- 1 orange,
- 4 cocktail sticks,
- 1 small candle (a birthday cake one will do),
- 1 square of tin foil,
- Red electrical tape (or red ribbon or a strip of red paper)
- Soft jelly sweets (Haribos thread onto cocktail sticks really well) or fruits such as grapes or raisins.

If you don't want to make your own Christingle orange, you can still join in with spreading hope, joy and light by having a candle to hand which you can light at the appropriate time.

I hope as many people as possible will take part in the Service. We can all understand how difficult life has been in lockdown, but for

some children, they have been trapped in an abusive home with no escape. There are children struggling because of poverty, which has been made worse as some parents have lost their jobs or been forced to try and manage on a reduced income. There are others who have suffered with anxiety or depression as they have been away from the support of friends and the safety net of teachers who can offer help.

Your Christingle donation could help children and young people who are in these dark and difficult situations regain hope for the future.

This festive season, let's embrace technology as a means of keeping in touch with family and members of the congregation, and as we do this, remember those children not as fortunate.

If you can donate to the Christingle appeal, please follow this link to make your donation <https://thyq.uk/CUS041728>

If you are not able to join our local Christingle Service on 6th December, you are invited to the Church of England National Christingle service for The Children's Society on Sunday 13th December. Feel the magic of Christingle on a grand scale in this nationwide service. It will be streamed onto Facebook and YouTube - you can find out more by visiting:

churchofengland.org/ComfortAndJoy

May I wish everyone a very Happy Christmas, even if it is a little different this year. I hope it won't be too long before we can all come together in Church. I for one will never underestimate again how much I value face to face conversations and how much I have missed giving and receiving hugs from friends and family.

Susan Campbell, local secretary for The Children's Society

Archdeacon's Annual Visitation Service 2020

Each year, throughout the Church of England, parishioners elect Churchwardens to represent them and to work with their Parish Priest to enable Christian mission and ministry within their individual Parishes. The Archdeacon, as the Bishop's representative, must then admit the newly elected or re-elected Churchwardens to office – something which is done at the Archdeacon's Annual Visitation Service.

The swearing in of Churchwardens is a legal requirement and usually an Annual Visitation Service is held within each Deanery to enable clergy, PCC members and Parishioners to support their chosen

candidate, but how to do that in the midst of a global pandemic and a national lockdown? The answer of course – by ‘Zoom’.

The Archdeacon’s Visitation Service is always an uplifting occasion as it is a reminder of just how many people are willing to ‘stand up and be counted’, not just churchwardens, but PCC members, Sidesmen and women, and all the many others who are active within their church communities. Visitation by Zoom was a slightly different, but no less uplifting experience, as people came together from the safety and comfort of their homes to affirm their faith and their commitment to their roles.

During the Visitation service, Archdeacon Jean Burgess based her address on Psalm 27, a psalm of great courage and inspiration. It begins:

‘The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?’ (Psalm 27:1)

King David wrote this particular Psalm at a time when he had many troubles and things seemed to be very dark. In the first part of this Psalm, David alludes to his ‘enemies’ and some of the things they have done, however he doesn’t ask for trouble to come to his enemies; his aim was for God to bring light to his own life, not punishment or retribution to others.

The second part of the Psalm focuses on David’s prayer to God concerning his situation.

He asks God to hear him when he calls and to have mercy on him and answer him. David asks God not to hide from him and reminds God that He has been his help before, and he doesn’t want to be forsaken now.

David asks God to teach him His way and to lead him in a plain path and concludes by turning his enemies over to God instead of trying to deal with them himself.

‘I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.’
(Psalm 27. 13-14)

In the current climate when so many things seem dark, and challenging and difficult to comprehend, these words written so long ago are indeed an encouragement and an inspiration.

Alison Hartley (Church warden)

PCC Report

The November PCC meeting was once again held via 'Zoom'; who would have thought that 'Zoom meetings' would become such an integral part of our lives in such a short space of time. Had it been suggested this time last year, I'm sure that many people (myself included) would have brushed away such a ridiculous suggestion, but now we regularly and confidently click the link, 'test audio' and 'join with video' – the wonders of modern technology!!

As this was the first time the PCC had met since the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, there was a considerable amount of admin to be worked through – minutes to be approved, information to be disseminated and updates to be given. From the various reports it is very clear that whilst a lot of our normal activities may be temporarily curtailed, a huge amount of work is still ongoing at all levels. A big thankyou to all who continue to work so hard to ensure that we are able to fulfil our obligations both at Parish level and as part of the wider picture within our Diocese.

Although we have a good team of willing volunteers at Christ Church Ainsworth, we are always on the look out for others to join in and help out; not only do 'many hands make light work', but we all have different life experiences and different life skills which we can bring to our various roles – this wide range of individual qualities and talents is hugely important in ensuring that we continue to grow and evolve as a church and a community rather than becoming 'stagnant' or stale. If you find that you have a little time on your hands and would like to get more involved, please do get in touch – we'd love to hear from you!

Finally, as this strange year draws towards a close, PCC members would like to wish all at Christ Church Ainsworth a happy and healthy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Alison Hartley

Just A Thought ...

A goal without a plan is just a wish.

Notices, Acknowledgements & Announcements

2021 Church Diaries

2021 Diaries are ready for collection from the back of church. You are welcome to collect one for a friend unable to attend worship in church. For a donation, we can post a diary to you.

Christmas Wreaths

As in previous years the churchyard team will be selling Christmas Wreaths; see article on page 6 for more info / ordering details.

‘Light In The Darkness’

This is a 4 part Advent course being run via Zoom on 4 consecutive Tuesdays throughout December. E-mail vicar@ainsworthparish.org.uk for more info.

Tree Of Christmas Hope

This initiative is aimed at adults & children. There is a small 'tree' several yards behind the flagpole in the churchyard. You are welcome to tie 'gift-tag' prayers to its branches and lay painted stones depicting Nativity characters around the trunk. Please bear in mind this is Lancashire and it rains a lot, so if you can laminate your prayer, so much the better!

Scratch Nativity

Friday 18th December; 7pm via Zoom

Why not join us for this fun event aimed at (but not exclusive to) families. Parts will be allocated on the night, so we are not expecting a polished performance! Dress up as a character if you like and bring your own refreshments! Email vicar@ainsworthparish.org.uk for the Zoom link.

Cairn of Remembrance

Our ‘Cairn of Remembrance’ can be found at the flagpole corner of the church building. Although our Season of Remembrance has ended, you are still welcome to bring a stone in memory of a loved one and place it on the cairn. Please feel free to decorate your stone if you wish to.

Daily Hope

This is a free phone initiative which offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.



The line is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 and has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

Around The Organisations ...

Ainsworth Scout Group

Ainsworth Scout Group hopes everyone has a safe and family centred Christmas time, despite all the current problems.

We look forward to seeing a New Year when we can meet face to face and enjoy real Scouting with all members of the group.

Bill White – Group Scout Leader

Beavers

As we cannot have face to face meetings, we are keeping in touch with the Beavers with Friday evening Zoom meetings. Those who participate are enjoying the experience and recently we have made 'bonfire' pictures using leaves and drawings of fireworks. There were some very colourful pictures. We also had a 'sock puppet' evening which produced some very funny faces and we held a 'fitness' night so that the Beavers could finish off some of their badges. We also had a paper aeroplane competition. A Zoom Christmas party with games and eats is going to be interesting but it will certainly be FUN!

Merry Christmas to all the Beavers and a big Thank You to all the Young Leaders for their help with Beavers.

My sincere thanks to go to Ruth (Rabbit) and Aled (Badger) for all their time and effort in organising the Zoom meetings which has been a big help in keeping the Beavers happy.

Rikki

Cubs

Everyone is still working hard each Friday evening to achieve badges by completing tasks on Zoom. The Cubs have now completed the Home Safety and Communicator Activity Badges. Finding the gas and electricity can only be good for them as they grow up and have properties of their own.

The four boys due to go to scouts after Christmas have been working extremely hard to complete all the sections of their Chief Scout Silver Award as we cannot meet face to face to help them. I hope that we will be able to announce their success in next month's magazine.

It was great to see so many of our group stood at the door in uniform on Remembrance Sunday. If you saw the Video Stacey put on our Facebook page, I am sure there was not a dry eye in the room.

The current situation makes us think that we will be continuing to meet like this into the New Year, but we will keep everyone up to date.

Keep safe everybody

Baloo

Scouts

Well the last couple of months have seen the Scouts busying away on Zoom again. The leaders had already decided to leave it until new year before we even thought about meeting face to face, but the 2nd lock down has stopped that.

In early October we gave out another bag of goodies to all the Scouts. This bag included Astronaut Pudding, dream catchers, orange balloons with lights for Halloween, sweets, chocolate and spiders (plastic of course). It also included the instructions on how to build bubble rockets. This is because the Scouts have now started working towards their Astronautics badge. We are learning about meteorites, what astronauts eat, the effect of gravity, building a satellite and making rockets. I'm looking forward to seeing the results!

We do have a camp booked at the end of January and the leaders have our fingers, toes, eyes and everything else we possibly can crossed, that we will be allowed to attend. This event will be our annual Christmas Camp.

May we take this opportunity to thank you all for your support over the year and wish you a very Merry Christmas.

From Stacey, Ben, Aled, Mollie and George

Scouts Austria 2022 Fundraising Committee

As you are aware, our annual Christmas Markets coach trip has had to be cancelled, but the committee are working away behind the scenes thinking of ways to help us fundraise.

We had a recycled clothing collection planned for 15th November, but with the announcement of a further lockdown, this was quickly brought forward to 1st November and we managed to fill some parents' cars with bags donated from both parents and you brilliant people from the

village. We had 40 bags in total and made just short of £200. We will be doing another one after Christmas so if you all get new clothes for Christmas, keep your old ones for our collection!

We are also holding a Christmas Raffle:

- 1st Prize - Brand New 32Gb iPad (8th generation) WiFi
- 2nd Prize - Chocolate and Sweet hamper
- 3rd Prize - Park Cakes Hamper

Tickets are on sale at £5 each. If you would like to buy a ticket please contact me on group.ainsworth@praws.gmnscouts.org.uk and I will point you in the direction of your nearest ticket seller.

There are lots of other fundraising ideas in the pipeline so watch this space - we will keep you posted.

12th Radcliffe Brownies

The Brownies completed the Engineering Badge with a poster about their favourite experiment, and a little bit about a female engineer connected with that particular branch of engineering. They also continued working on the Skills Builder Badge started before the summer break and, after looking at some famous monuments, and using junk items they had in the house, they made a monument of somewhere or something they wanted to remember. Their monuments were quite imaginative with Rialto Bridge, Stonehenge, a reminder of Florida, a model of a model village(!), Blackpool Tower, pandas, a much loved pet, Apollo 11 and so many more - the owls joined in with monuments for the Angel of the North and Doctor Who's Tardis and Brown Owl used an origami cat from a previous week's activity to make her own monument!



During the half term, Lily-May gained her Mindfulness interest badge; Sofia her Dancing interest badge and her “Be Well” theme award; and Eloise her Languages interest badge and her “Skills for my future” theme award. This meant that both Sofia and Eloise have achieved their Brownie Bronze award, Well done!

Polly, Brown Owl



Building Hope and Confidence

NO MORE 1 in 3

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is an international campaign. It takes place each year from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) until 10 December (International Human Rights Day).

Throughout the campaign, Mothers' Union joins with around 6,000 Organisations from approximately 187 countries who participate in the campaign, to raise awareness of, and call for an end to, gender-based violence in all forms and in all societies.

As part of the campaign this year we will be holding our first Global Day which is centred around the disturbing figure that “1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced domestic or sexual abuse” and that Mothers' Union, as a leading women's organisation, believe this to be unacceptable.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign is an extension of the day-to-day grassroots work of Mothers' Union. We work alongside communities to help end gender-based violence and to support those affected by it, every day of the year.

Many members are taking an active part in the campaign with demonstrations, lobbying of influential people, their MPs etc. as well as local support for victims. There are various resources on the MU website including the format of a letter to your MPs. However, even though we may not feel as if we are doing anything, we can be observant, raise awareness of GBV and above all, pray for victims and those who are working to end GBV. You may have read that domestic abuse has increased markedly during the restrictions placed on us all during the pandemic.

Mothers' Union support

No More 1 in 3

During October, we had two Zoom meetings. The first was the Manchester Diocese AGM followed by a council meeting. Members have all received some of the reports detailing activities.

The second one was an online gathering of Mothers' Union from around the world and replaced the annual meeting that should have been in Belfast.

We heard about projects from Leeds, Ireland, Myanmar, Tanzania and many others. MU are addressing the needs of their local areas, from holiday hunger for families in the UK to lobbying the UN and governments about gender based violence. Many remote areas are not aware of the dangers of COVID-19 and MU are key to getting safe and accurate information to these rural communities.

We were led in a reflection and in midday prayers by the Rt Revd Dr Emma Ineson, the Bishop of Penrith and Mothers' Union Central Chaplain.

Rebuilding hope and confidence. That is the theme for 2021. How we need that. We're a people of hope with our faith in Jesus. We can always have hope because he's risen victorious from the grave ... The word confidence means 'with faith'. Our confidence in the things that we used to trust have been severely knocked but we can still be people 'with faith'. With faith and trust in our loving living Lord Jesus. With faith in him, we can face anything that lies ahead of us. Perhaps at the end of the day, the only thing that we can really have confidence in is God.

I close by wishing everyone a very Healthy and Happy Christmas and use Bishop Emma's prayer:

We will walk in hope and confidence trusting each other, loving each other and together, we will rebuild the hope and confidence of families and communities everywhere, always reaching out with the light of Christ, and reflecting a life filled with purpose and meaning, grace and love, peace and joy. Amen

Jennifer White
(Hon Sec)

From the Archives – December 1995

Whilst many things have changed beyond recognition since December 1995, it's quite comforting to note that many of the things that we associate with 'Christmas at Christ Church Ainsworth' remain largely unchanged; tweaked or adapted to ensure that they remain relevant to the world and life styles of 2020 maybe, but otherwise largely unchanged.

The Parish Diary for December 1995 began with the Deanery Advent Service which, that year, was to be held at Ainsworth. This was followed by the annual Christingle Service; no less than 3 carol services (Parish carol service, Mothers' Union and Church Women's Fellowship carol service and the day school carol service); a Crib Service; Midnight Communion and a Christmas Day Service. Also listed in the Parish Diary was 'Community Association Carol Singing' and the 'Parish Christmas Lunch' which was to be held at the conference centre at Crawshaw Booth.

Many of the church groups and organisations had Christmas activities planned – Christmas meals, Christmas parties, trips out to various pantomimes – Father Christmas was clearly expected to be making a number of appearances!

In December 1995 an 'Acknowledgement' from Christ Church Ainsworth School reported the recent death of "Mrs. Betty McIntyre, a much loved and respected School Governor" who would be sadly missed. Thanks were expressed to Mrs. McIntyre's family for the donations received in her memory, which were to be used to purchase much needed computer software.

In other news, the Ainsworth Church And Community Hall Committee announced the resignation of their Caretaker, Alan Rule, on the grounds of declining health. Alan had been caretaker at the hall for a number of years and had overseen some fairly major improvement work. As a number of projects were still ongoing the Hall Committee were planning further fundraising events for the following year.

In December 1995 there were 3 Baptisms, 3 Weddings and 2 Funerals recorded from the previous month. The number of Communicants for the previous month was listed as 403 and the collections totalled £1671.

Poems From The Parish (And Beyond ...)

I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day

The words to the poem below were written by the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow on Christmas Day in 1864. In 1872 John Baptiste Calkin, an organist, took a tune he wrote in 1848 and used it as the melody for the poem.

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

I thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th'unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
'There is no peace on earth, ' I said
'For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.'

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men.'

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1864)

Space To Share A Prayer

Father God,
When your precious Son became a tiny baby in a stable in Bethlehem
in poverty and simplicity, you changed our world.
As we imagine those surroundings, we join with the shepherds and
the wise men in wonder and praise.
We thank you for our material lives, praise you for our spiritual lives,
and trust in you for our eternal life. *Amen*

Your Efforts Will Be Rewarded ...

In ancient times, a certain King had a boulder placed on a well used roadway. He then hid in the undergrowth at the side of the road and watched to see if anyone would move the boulder out of the way. Some of the king's wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it.

Many people used the road that day; some loudly blamed the King for not keeping the roads clear, some tutted to themselves as they squeezed past, but none of them did anything about getting the stone out of the way.

Later in the day a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to push the stone out of the road; the boulder was heavy, but after much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded.

Having moved the boulder, the peasant went back to pick up his vegetables, and there he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been.

The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the King explaining that the gold was for the person who took the trouble to remove the boulder from the roadway.

Parish Customs And Traditions

A tradition is defined as an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behaviour (such as a religious practice or a social custom). Britain is full of customs and traditions which have been around for hundreds of years. British customs and traditions are famous all over the world; but some are more unusual than others!

December – Christmas Carols

For many of us, the opportunity to sing or listen to Christmas carols is a big part of Christmas. Carols were first sung thousands of years ago, but these were not Christmas Carols as we know them, they were pagan songs, sung at the Winter Solstice celebrations. The word 'Carol' actually means dance or a song of praise and joy! Carols used to be written and sung during all four seasons, but only the tradition of singing them at Christmas has really survived.

Early Christians took over the pagan solstice celebrations for Christmas and gave people Christian songs to sing instead of pagan

ones, however, not many people liked them as they were all written and sung in Latin, a language that the everyday folk didn't understand.

This was changed by St. Francis of Assisi when, in 1223, he started his Nativity Plays in Italy. The people in the plays sang songs or 'canticles' that told the story during the plays. Sometimes, the choruses of these new carols were in Latin; but normally they were written in a language that the people watching the play could understand and join in with. The new carols spread to France, Spain, Germany and other European countries.

When the Puritans came to power in England in the 1640s, the celebration of Christmas and singing carols was stopped. However, the carols survived as people still sang them in secret. Carols remained mainly unsung until Victorian times, when two men called William Sandys and Davis Gilbert collected lots of old Christmas music from villages in England.

Each year Classic FM compiles a list of the top carols 'as voted for by our listeners'; here's what the chart looked like in 2019:

1. *O Holy Night*

In 1847, Placide Cappeau, a Wine Seller from Southern France, was asked by the local parish priest to write a festive poem to celebrate the church organ's renovation. Cappeau felt it should be accompanied by music, so approached his friend Adolphe Charles Adams. Adams' text reflects on the birth of Jesus and of humanity's redemption.

2. *Silent Night*

Originally written in German, 'Stille Nacht' was composed in 1818 by Franz Xaver Gruber with lyrics by Joseph Mohr and was translated to English in 1859. During the World War I Christmas truce of 1914, the carol was sung simultaneously by English and German troops.

3. *In the Bleak Mid-Winter* – Gustav Holst version

Based on a poem by the English poet Christina Rossetti, this carol was written sometime before 1872 in response to a magazine request for a Christmas poem. The poem became recognised as a carol after it appeared in The English Hymnal in 1906, with music by Gustav Holst.

4. *In the Bleak Mid-Winter* – Harold Darke version

There are a number of different settings to this carol, but you're probably most likely to hear Harold Edward Darke's setting as the choir of King's College, Cambridge use it every year at Christmas.

5. *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

The lyrics of this popular carol were written by Charles Wesley in 1793, and set to a tune by Mendelssohn.

6. *O Come All Ye Faithful*

It is unclear who first wrote the music or lyrics to this hymn. Possible candidates include King John IV of Portugal and John Francis Wade, while composers Handel and Gluck have been suggested as the brains behind the melody.

7. *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

Sung at both Advent and Christmas, this hymn originates from Latin but was translated to English in 1861. The music for the hymn was composed in such a way that both the English and Latin words can be used interchangeably.

8. *Coventry Carol*

This carol can be traced all the way back to 16th-century England. The lyrics refer to the 'Massacre of the Innocents' by King Herod, who in an attempt to ensure the death of the baby Jesus, ordered the death of all male children under the age of two in Bethlehem.

9. *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

Following a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Rector Phillips Brooks wrote the text to this hymn after he was inspired by the view of Bethlehem from the hills of Palestine. Three years later in 1871, his church organist Lewis Redner wrote the melody for the local Sunday school children's choir.

10. *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

The lyrics for this carol were written by Massachusetts pastor Edmund Sears and refer to ideas of war and peace. The most common musical setting was adapted from an English melody in 1874 by Arthur Sullivan. (Ref: classicfm.com)

If you usually enjoy singing at a Carol service it might be worth checking out www.whychristmas.com this year. It's one of the largest Christmas information websites on the web and was launched 20

years ago by James Cooper – a self-confessed ‘Christmas Nut’, and Christian. There’s a huge amount of info to be found here, but the last section contains an online Carol Service (approx 35 mins long) where you can listen to the carols and / or join in!

Time For A Smile

A mother asked her 9 year old what he had learned in Sunday School. He said “Our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. At the Red Sea he got the army to build a pontoon bridge and everyone got across safely. Reinforcements then arrived to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved.”

“Is that really what you were taught?” asked the mother. “Not really,” said the boy, “but if I told it the way the teacher did, you’d never believe me.”

A vicar waited in a line of cars to fill up with fuel. It seemed as though everyone had the same idea, but eventually he moved alongside a pump, filled up and went inside to pay. The very polite attendant apologised profusely for the long wait. “It seems everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip” he said. The minister smiled ruefully and replied, “Yes, it’s the same in my business.”

A woman was seated next to a clergyman on an aeroplane. During a period of terrible turbulence, she asked, “Can’t you do something about this awful storm?” The minister replied, “Sorry madam, I’m in sales, not management.”

Strap Lines

A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing and suffers nothing, is worth nothing.

Beware of a clear conscience; it may be the result of a bad memory.

Children seldom misquote you; in fact, they usually repeat word for word what you shouldn’t have said.

A luxury becomes a luxury if you recognise it as something you don’t need, but can’t do without.

The Extended Parish Puzzler

Christmas Word Search

Can you discover 12 Christmas words in the grid below?

L	Y	R	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S
G	J	C	D	E	E	L	B	A	T	S	H
N	O	M	A	R	Y	P	G	T	T	D	N
E	S	F	N	W	I	I	D	A	J	R	A
M	A	N	G	E	R	N	R	W	U	E	C
E	L	K	E	Y	I	D	O	R	E	H	P
S	F	E	L	C	N	U	P	N	I	P	N
I	X	V	B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M
W	O	T	N	D	S	J	L	B	C	H	R
T	L	B	A	B	Y	J	E	S	U	S	L

(Answers on page 25)

How many crosses?

As you would expect, there are a number of crosses and images of crosses to be found within our church; each month we'll be including a photo and asking, 'Where can this cross be found?'

Last month's photo was of the Remembrance Day antependium (the cloth you'll see hanging from the bookrest on the pulpit). The final cross in this series is a really tricky one; any idea where this cross can be found? (Answer in next month's magazine).



Christmas Carol Quiz

1. Why did the world in solemn stillness lay?
2. Where were all the shepherds seated?
3. When did frosty winds make moan?
4. How many ships came sailing in?
5. Who looked out on the Feast of Stephen?
6. Where did the lowly cattle shed stand?
7. Of all the trees that were in the wood, which one bore the crown?
8. What went by above thy deep and dreamless sleep?
9. What did the wise men see when they looked up?
10. Who or what should journey onwards with your precious load?

((Answers on page 26))

First Lines ...

If D T H W B O H = Deck the halls with boughs of holly, can you work out the rest of these Christmas Carols?

1. D D M O H
2. S N H N
3. H T H A S
4. O C A Y F
5. O H N
6. W S W T F B N
7. I C U A M C
8. G K W L O
9. G R Y M G
10. T H A T I

(Answers on page 27)

(Answers to Christmas Word Search: Angels, Baby Jesus, Bethlehem, Christmas, Herod, Magi, Manger, Mary, Shepherds, Stable, Star, Wisemen.)

Who's Who

Vicar	Revd Dave Thomson Christ Church Vicarage Ainsworth Hall Road. Ainsworth BL2 5RY vicar@ainsworthparish.org.uk Twitter @Vicar_Dave	01204 398567
OLM	Revd Elaine Larkin 1 Greenside. Ainsworth. BL2 5SE elaine.larkin.el@gmail.com Revd Debra Johnstone	01204 388762 01204 399630
Churchwarden	Alison Hartley	07952 709041
Church Treasurer	Geoff Whittle	07976 443165
Secretary of the PCC	Vacancy	
Organist	Jenny Johnson	07734976978
Gift Aid & Freewill Offering Secretary	Carole Butler	07982 316388
Parish Child Protection	Peter Holden	01204 596938
Church Hall Booking	Geoff Hampson	07910817577
Church Lottery	Judith White	07812074776
Magazine Editor	Alison Hartley	ainsworthmagazine@gmail.com
Magazine Secretary	S Varnom	0161 761 5686
Magazine Adverts	June Brooks	01204 527244
Primary School Head	D Gerrard BA(Hons)PGCE	01204 527484

Services

Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
	10.30am	Family Service 2 nd Sunday Family & Parade Service
	12.00pm	Baptisms (Except 2 nd and last Sunday)
	6.30pm	Evensong (Book of Common Prayer)
		2 nd Sunday Holy Communion (Book of Common Pray)
		Healing Service (see Parish Diary)
Weds	6.15pm	Mid-Week Praise

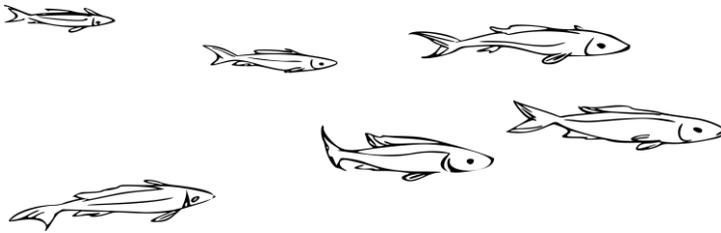
Home Communion is available for anyone unable to attend Church due to illness or frailty
Arrangements for Baptisms, Marriages, Banns of Marriage and Funerals Contact Revd Dave Thomson

(Answer to Christmas Carol Quiz on page 25: 1) To hear the Angels sing; 2) On the ground; 3) In the bleak midwinter 4) Three 5) Good King Wenceslas; 6) In royal David's city 7) The Holly 8) The silent stars 9) A star 10) Little donkey.

Who's Who For Church Organisations

Mothers Union	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday of the Month at 7.30pm Branch Contact Jean Eddleston	0161 761 2147
Sunday School	Sunday at 10.25am in the Church Hall Jan Burrow Vicky Howcroft Swift	0161 761 1958 07789 432103
Altar Flowers	Kathy Armstrong Rand	07748 020743
ABC First Steps Toddler Group	Fridays 10.00am - 11.30am Church Hall Anne Flowers Or Jennifer White	01204 382214 07964 587694
Group Leader	Bill White group.ainsworth@praws.gmnscouts.org.uk	01204 595378
Beaver Scouts	Friday at 6.00pm in the Church Hall Leader Valerie Watts	01204 398634
Cub Scouts	Friday at 7.00pm in the Church Hall Sean Butler	07843 233056
Scouts 14 th Radcliffe	Fridays at 7.30pm in the Church Hall Leader Stacey White scouts.ainsworth@praws.gmnscouts.org.uk	07742 610281
Explorers	Wednesdays 7.30pm in the Church Hall John Turner	01204 381590
Rainbows 12 th Radcliffe	Thursday at 5.45pm to 7.00pm in the Church Hall Rainbow Guider	
Rainbows 16 th Radcliffe	Thursday at 4.30pm to 6.00pm in the Church Hall Janet Kay	01204 525739
Brownies 12 th Radcliffe	Thursday at 7.00pm to 8.15pm in the Church Hall Brown Owl Polly The church's one foundation; Ryder	07437 519045
Brownies 16 th Radcliffe	Thursday at 6.15pm to 7.30pm in the Church Hall Sarah McAnulty	07955373623
Guides 12 th Radcliffe	Thursday at 7.45pm in the Church Hall Captain Emma Lee	0161 764 2243

Answers to First Line quiz: 1) Ding Dong merrily on high; 2) Silent night, Holy night; 3) Hark! The Herald Angels sing; 4) O Come all ye faithful! 5) O Holy night; 6) While shepherds watched their flocks by night; 7) It came upon a midnight clear; 8) Good King Wenceslas looked out; 9) God rest ye merry gentlemen; 10) The holly and the ivy.



Little Fishes

The First Christmas Day



Thanks to Lily-May Sowden (age 7) for our cover picture this month

Advent & Christmas

The word 'advent' means 'coming'. Advent is a really important part of the Christian calendar and marks the start of the Christian year. Advent starts on the Sunday nearest to the 30th of November, it is the period of time immediately before Christmas and is all about preparing to celebrate Jesus' birth. Advent is also a time for preparing for Jesus' return; it's a time to be joyful, but also a time for us to say sorry to God for all of the wrong things that we do and to ask Him to forgive us.

During Advent, an Advent Wreath is often placed in church. The wreath is made from a circle of evergreen plants like holly and ivy; the circle symbolises God with no beginning or end; the evergreen is a reminder that God does not change; the holly also represents the crown of thorns that Jesus wore when he was crucified. Four candles are fixed round the circle with another in the middle. The 1st candle is lit on Advent Sunday, then on each Sunday throughout Advent an extra candle is lit, the middle candle is lit only on Christmas Day.



What do the Advent Candles stand for?

 The 1st candle is the candle of Hope, so prayers on this day focus on hope. This candle also reminds us of some of the really important people in the Bible; people like Abraham and Moses.

The 2nd candle is a symbol of God's Peace, reminding Christians of the Prophets who said that the Messiah would be born.



 The 3rd candle is the candle of Love, and represents John the Baptist who baptised Jesus.

The 4th candle is the candle of Joy and reminds Christians of Jesus' mother, Mary.



 The 5th candle reminds Christians of the birth of Jesus.

The First Christmas Day

A long time ago, in a land far away,
The story began of the first Christmas Day.
The Emperor had ordered the counting, by hand,
Of all of the people who lived in his land,
So Mary and Joseph had left Galilee
And travelled for miles over land and by sea.
As Mary was pregnant, a donkey she'd ride,
While Joseph walked on, keeping close by her side.
On reaching Judea, the crowds were immense,
There were so many strangers, the noise was intense;
But Judea was not journey's end yet for them,
They travelled right on 'til they reached Bethlehem.
And there, Joseph looked for a place they could stay,
But still had no luck, as the sun left the day,
For all he could hear through the noise and the din
Was, "Sorry my friend, there's no room at the Inn!"
But then, one Inn Keeper took heed of their plight
And called, "You can sleep in my stable tonight,
There isn't much room, but it's clean and it's dry;
The cows there are friendly; the rent isn't high."
So Mary laid down near some sacks full of corn,
And later that night, baby Jesus was born.
As family and home were a long way away
They wrapped Him in cloths in a manger of hay.
The night air was cold, as the moon brightly shone,
And the cows, and the sheep, and the donkey looked on.
Now up in the hills on that cold winter's night,
The shepherds, at work, saw a wonderful sight;

The Angels appeared, then the hills all around
Rang out with their song - what a heavenly sound;
They said, "Leave your sheep, all you shepherds must go
To visit the babe in the stable below."
Meanwhile, in the East, by the light of a star,
Three kings also travelled from countries afar;
Their crowns were bejewelled, their cloaks lined with fur,
They brought with them gifts; gold and incense and myrrh.
So they all came to see Jesus, there in the hay,
To worship and wonder - that first Christmas Day.

(AL Hartley)



Christmas prayer

Gentle Jesus born this day
In a manger filled with hay.
We your Christmas children be -
Help us now your love to see.
Gentle Jesus, come today
Be our shepherd, Lord we pray.
Gentle Jesus, come this hour
Fill us with your love and power.
You fell asleep in Mary's arm
God kept you safe from all alarm.
Gentle Jesus, come today
Be our Shepherd now we pray - Amen

(Douglas Raymond Rose)

Christmas Angel Craft Idea

You will need:

- 1 saucer or small plate
- 1 plastic spoon
- 2 pieces of white paper
- 1 small piece of silver or gold tinsel
- Felt tip pens
- Sticky tape or glue

Here's what to do:

*Place the saucer upside down on 1 of the pieces of white paper, then use a felt tip to draw round it and make a circle.

*Ask a grown up to help you to cut out the circle.

*Next cut a straight line that goes from one edge of the circle to the middle.

*Curl the circle round to make a paper cone, then use the glue or tape to stick it in place; this will be the angel's dress.

*Use the felt tips to draw the angel's face and hair on the plastic spoon, then push the handle of the spoon down into the top of the paper cone.

*Take the 2nd piece of white paper and fold it into a fan.

* Pinch the middle part of the fan together and glue or tape it to the back of the paper cone - this will be the angel's wings.

* Use the small piece of tinsel to make a halo to go on your angel's head.

* You could also use some glitter to decorate your angel's dress and wings.

When your angel is all finished why not put her at the top of your Christmas tree.

Next month - Epiphany

If you enjoy colouring in, why not colour the picture below. Whilst church is closed you could get a grown up to e-mail it to ainsworthmagazine@gmail.com Each month we'll choose 1 picture to go on our front page. Closing date Sun 13th December.

Where Shall We Find The Baby King? Follow The Star ...



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