**Update 29/11/20 –THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**Sadly, until Tuesday, our church is closed for public worship. However, subject to clarification of the recent Government announcement of its ‘COVID-19 Winter Plan’, we expect to reopen for public worship on Wednesday 2nd December at 6.30pm for Mid-Week Praise and at 10.30am on Sunday 6th December for COVID-Secure Communion.**

**Otherwise, please join us on our Facebook Page**

**at 12 noon on Sundays for midday worship and**

**at 7.30pm on Wednesdays for Mid-Week Praise.**

**https://www.facebook.com/ChristChurchAinsworth/**

***NB: If you are not on Facebook, you can still watch the service – when it says “Log in” “Create New Account” simply click “Not Now” (which is below these two options) (but see below)***

**Bible Reading** for Sunday 29th November: Mark 13.24-37

If you missed any of our livestreamed services, some of them can be found on our website https://www.ainsworthparish.org.uk/online-worship.html or our YouTube Channel

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1kRCPBIymPoDSyhH9CZYrw

The Prayer Book Society lists some churches livestreaming BCP services: https://www.pbs.org.uk/churches-and-services/-1

***Advent Activities***

**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 help us reflect on 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 Revd Dave (vicar@ainsworthparish.org.uk) to register and receive the Zoom link.

**Advent Calendar:** Some handy thoughts to share with children as they open the doors on their Advent Calendar. Email Revd Dave for a copy.

**Tree of Christmas hope:**This is for children and adults. There is a small 'tree' (bush really) several metres behind the flagpole upon which you can hang ‘gift-tag’ prayers and lay painted stones depicting Nativity characters around the base. However, please bear in mind this is Lancashire and it rains a lot, so if you can laminate your prayer, so much the better!

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.

Assuming we are 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’).

**Cairn of Remembrance:** Although our Season of Remembrance has come to an end 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.

**Children:** Here are a few simple Advent ideas for parents and children:

* You could reflect on the past year and count your blessings:
https://churchofenglandchristenings.org/after-a-christening/counting-blessings/
* Sing some favourite carols (such as ‘Away in a Manger’) at bedtime
https://churchofenglandchristenings.org/after-a-christening/carols-at-bedtime/
* On a dark, clear night go for a walk, and look up at the sky in awe at God’s wonderful creation
https://churchofenglandchristenings.org/after-a-christening/dark-nights-and-starry-skies/
* Share some thoughts around the theme of ‘Comfort & Joy’ each day as you open the doors on your Advent Calendar.
https://1drv.ms/b/s!Aurx6pWvMgOaiPZ9mz-KgxXkhCHLDQ?e=Vy3ykB

***New or Amended Notices:***

**Churchwarden & Treasurer:** We are praying for a second Churchwarden to focus upon building issues, plus a new Treasurer to take over from Geoff who, sadly for us, is moving in a month or two.

**Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs)** We are looking for volunteers to become ALMs. ALMs are lay people active in church life, who have been identified by their parish as having a particular gifting, vocation or calling to lay leadership. They work collaboratively alongside the Vicar and the wider ministry team,  with a distinct focus on growing, nurturing and serving the wider parish community. Areas of ministry include: Children & Families; Community Outreach & Social Action; Digital Church & Online Media; Ecology & Creation; Mission & Evangelism; Parish Admin, Finance & Governance; Pastoral Outreach & Listening; Prayer & Spirituality; Worship & Liturgy; Youth Work. Further details can be found by clicking on this link: [Diocese of Manchester | Authorised Lay Ministry (anglican.org)](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmanchester.anglican.org%2Fdevelopment-and-training%2Falm%2Flayministriesalm.php&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cbeb97510589f43f4b2b708d89228b079%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637420050736110382%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=VY1vqTgdInc2%2BpUlHJ6bZ3lGCIoRJMeiWxdQEPHAzqg%3D&reserved=0)

Unfortunately, the deadline for applications for the 2021 course is Sunday 6 December 2020, so you will need to contact the Vicar urgently if you feel this is definitely your calling. However, rather than rush, you may feel that it would be better for you to spend time in prayer and discernment. If so, simply contact the Vicar to start the ball rolling, with a view to applying for the 2022 course.

***Previous Notices:***

**Prayer for the Nation:** The Archbishops have invited every Christian and person of goodwill to pray at **6pm every day**, for the duration of Lockdown 2.0. Here is a weblink to some prayer resources: https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches/call-prayer-nation. Also, here is a link to a simple printable prayer booklet Prayer Booklet.

This material is intended simply as one tool to enable participation. The hope is that individuals and worshipping communities make these times of prayer their own. There is no desire to be directive in this, rather simply to encourage all to be united in Prayer for the Nation.

**Composted leaf mould:** The Churchyard Team have lots - please help yourself (it is free, but a donation to the Churchyard fund is always appreciated). It is in the compound at the back of the new grave section on the far right of the Church (you will need to bring your own bags and a spade!).

**Feedback Needed:** Mention was made in a discussion group recently that, without a Facebook account, it is no longer possible to join livestreamed worship as described above. It is unclear whether this is correct. So, if this applies to you and you are unable to join us in this way, please email the vicar. We will then explore other solutions.

**Parish Christmas Card:** As in previous years, we will be inviting people to share their Christmas greetings in our ‘Parish Christmas Card’, unlike previous years, the 2020 Parish Christmas card will be in PDF format. For those who are unfamiliar with the concept, usually the centre pages of the Parish Magazine are laid out in a greetings card format. This is always an excellent way to share the warmth of the festive season; but in the current situation when we've been unable to come together for so long, it seems even more important to reach out in this way.

Previously we've asked for a small donation (gift aided if possible) for your Christmas greeting to be included within the card, however we are well aware that many individuals and families are experiencing significant financial pressures as a result of the pandemic & ongoing restrictions, so this year we're focusing on friendship and fellowship - if you are able or wish to make a donation to church funds it would be greatly appreciated, but it is absolutely not compulsory.

If you haven’t taken part previously, please do consider it. All greetings should be e-mailed to ainsworthmagazine@gmail.com no later than Sunday 22nd  November.

**Christmas Wreaths** We are able to continue supplying wreaths this year. Cost £9.95 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 and seal it. Envelopes can be posted through the letterbox at the Vicarage, the first house on Ainsworth Hall Road (opposite Ainsworth Church and Community Hall). The wreaths will be placed on the graves on Wednesday 16th December and they can only be collected on that day between 09.30 - 11.00. Please note that we cannot deliver the wreaths.

**2021 Diaries:**  For a donation, we are happy to post a diary to you.

**Giving:** Although public worship at Christ Church is restricted, there are still significant bills to pay. Not least of these is the Parish Share. This is the common fund to which all parishes contribute, and from which most clergy receive their stipends, including our vicar. Because giving to this and other churches has declined significantly since the lockdown began, payments into the common fund have almost dried up. Yet, despite this situation, all clergy continue to minister, and all are committed to doing so. None have been furloughed.

Ministry is not cost-free. Therefore, if you normally make your offering via the envelope scheme or by placing cash on the collection plate, please consider setting up a standing order or making a bank transfer (contact Geoff Whittle on 01204 385452 or geoffreywhittle@btinternet.com). Otherwise, if you can do so safely, please drop your offering through the Vicarage letter box. (NB setting up a standing order or making a bank transfer **does not** involve giving us your bank details.) And, if you can afford to make a special donation, please consider doing so!

*‘The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.’ (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)*

**Porch Boxes:** During lockdown it is not possible to receive donations for Porch Boxes in Church. However, if you shop at any of the following, they have somewhere to receive donations: ASDA (Radcliffe; Pilsworth & Bury); MORRISONS (Whitefield & Ramsbottom); TESCO (Bury & Ramsbottom) **OR we can still support Porch Boxes through a donation: A cheque made payable to “The Porch” sent to Michael Perrin, 14 Kenmore Avenue Bury BL8 2DY or Bank transfer to Account number 81643089  sort code 09-0155  account name The Porch or Online** **https://porchboxes.wordpress.com/**

**Please hold in your prayers:**

**The sick**: all who are ill, especially for: Alan Clifford, Nora Tudge, Dorothy Fairclough, Deborah Sandercock-Pickles, Margaret Turner, Stella Burkey and Louise Singleton.

**The bereaved:** All who have lost loved ones. May they find healing, peace, strength, and courage to face the future.

***“The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16)***

**Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.**