**Update 06/12/20 –THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**Our church building is COVID-secure, so you can either attend worship physically or worship with us on Facebook:**

**Sundays:**

**10.30am in church for COVID-secure Communion**

**12 Noon for live-streamed midday worship on our Facebook Page**

**Wednesdays:**

**6.30pm Mid-Week Praise (posted later on Facebook)**

**To join us on Facebook, follow this link:**

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)***

**Bible Reading** for Sunday 6th December: Mark 1.1-8

Our **Christingle Service** will be livestreamed on our Facebook Page at 4pm **this 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’).

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

**Planning to attend our church building for worship? The following COVID-19 Secure restrictions apply:**

* **Unless you are legally exempt, you must wear a facemask**
* Our seating capacity is normally limited to 28 downstairs but can be increased slightly when members of the same household/bubble attend together. There is also limited capacity (15) upstairs.
* Services are basic and short.
* Everyone must gel their hands as they enter the building.
* There is a collection plate on the font, but this will not be passed around.
* Worshippers are expected to remain 2m socially distant from each other, unless from the same household / bubble. This means sitting down promptly (where the paper is on the pew) and no gathering in the aisle or immediately outside the main door for a chat.
* **When worshippers enter, they must sit in the next available pew, filling from the front and from the wall, taking care not to touch any part of the pew as you move along. There must be no heading for that favourite pew!**
* **Everyone (except the presiding priest) will remain seated throughout each service. Unfortunately, this means any children attending must also remain seated throughout the service.**
* There is no singing.
* A PowerPoint version of the order of service is projected in church. A version is available to download (Sunday only), but is not available to collect on the way in.
* A Track & Trace QR Code is displayed at the entrance for those worshippers who have downloaded the NHS T&T app. Others are asked to complete a registration form each week. The forms will be destroyed after three weeks. A GDPR compliant privacy notice is posted inside church.
* We leave from the rear pew first.
* The toilet is for emergencies only, and anyone using it is expected to spray disinfectant on all surfaces they have touched.

The Church of England advises that certain groups of people may be at increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19, including people who are aged 70 or older, regardless of medical conditions. Whether you wish to accept the increased risk attached to attending worship with others, or prefer to continue joining with us on Facebook, is entirely your decision.

Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) should not join us at 10.30am due to the risk that they pose to others; they should self-isolate at home immediately with other members of their household.

***Advent & Christmas Activities***

**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!

**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

**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 the Vicar 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 e.g. due to bereavement, loss, a relationship breakdown, loneliness etc. This will be livestreamed on Facebook at 7pm on 21st December (the Winter Solstice).

***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. These are both crucial ministries in our church, necessary for the efficient functioning of this parish. However, please do not assume that the clergy team will cover building maintenance and finance until such time as these vacancies are filled – we do not have the time!

**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)

Interested? Simply contact the Vicar to start the ball rolling, with a view to applying for the 2022 course.

***Previous Notices:***

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

**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!).

**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.

**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: Wyn Steel, 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.**