**Update 21/03/21 – THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

**Our Church Building is COVID-secure, so you can either attend worship physically or worship with us on Facebook**

**(*Worship in Church is allowed during Lockdown*)**

**Sundays:**

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

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

**Tuesdays:**

**7.30pm Lent Devotional – Livestreamed on Facebook**

**Wednesdays:**

**6.30pm Mid-Week Praise - posted on Facebook only (not in Church)**

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

https://www.facebook.com/ChristChurchAinsworth

**Bible Reading** for Sunday 21st March: John 12.20-33

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 (updated 10/1/21):**

* **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.

**(NB School bubbles do not apply in church.)**

* **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 Test & 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.

Some will feel that it is currently better not to attend in person. Indeed, 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 attend worship in church with others, or prefer to join with us on Facebook, is entirely your decision. Our responsibility is to ensure you have the choice.

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 in church due to the risk that they pose to others; they should self-isolate at home immediately with other members of their household.

***New or Amended Notices:***

**National Day of Reflection:** the anniversary of the first lockdown falls on Tuesday (23rd March). This has been set aside as a National Day of Reflection for commemorating loved ones lost due to the pandemic and to support those who grieve.

Please join in the national minute’s silence at 12 noon, following which church bells, including our own, will be tolled. We are also asked to place a lit candle or lantern in our windows at 8pm.

Christ Church will be open for private prayer from 12-1pm.

Our Lent Devotional service on that evening will be replaced by a special service of prayer and reflection. Also, the Church of England has issued a short act of prayer for households and individuals (https://1drv.ms/w/s!Aurx6pWvMgOaiYt\_o7l5osSKDcjcAQ?e=KISoSI).

If you know someone who has been bereaved during the pandemic, Tuesday would be a good day to phone them or send them a card.

**A Passover & Seder Demonstration** has been organised by the Jewish Representative Council in conjunction w ith Bury Council **this Wednesday** (24th March) at 7.30pm on Zoom. You will receive some free food and see demonstrations from schools as well as learn a little bit more about Passover. From a Christian perspective, this could help us place the events of the Last Supper within their cultural context. If you would like to take part, please contact Alan Slater at a.slater@bury.gov.uk or by phoning 0161 253 6544. Alan will send you a Zoom link.

**Palm Sunday (28th March):** Palm Crosses will be available in church next Sunday. Otherwise, try making and decorating your own; bind two lolly sticks together or cut one out from paper. You could even decorate your cross before displaying it in a window. Why not take a photo and post it on our Facebook Page!

**Holy Week and Easter**

*Monday* 7.30pm: Virtual Stations of the Cross (livestreamed on Facebook)

*Tuesday* 7.30pm: Holy Week reflective service (livestreamed on Facebook)

*Wednesday* 6.30pm: Mid-Week Praise (recording posted on Facebook)

 7.30pm: our Lent study course continues into Holy Week (on Zoom)

*Maundy Thursday* 7.30pm: Communion & stripping of the Sanctuary (in church)

 7.30pm: Service of the Word (recording posted on Facebook)

*Good Friday* 10.30am: The Way of the Cross (in church)

 12 noon: Seven Sayings (livestreamed on Facebook)

Easter Sunday 10.30am Easter Communion (in church)

 12 noon Easter Celebration (livestreamed on Facebook)

**Church Electoral Roll:** in preparation for our annual meeting on 4th May, it is necessary to give notice that the Electoral Roll will be closed to additions from 19th April until 5th May. If you were on the Electoral Roll last year, you will still be on it but, if you would like to be certain or join the roll, email vicar@ainsworthparish.org.uk . NB You need to be on the roll to vote or stand for election.

To join the Electoral Roll, you must be baptised and aged 16 or over then either a) live within our parish or, b) if non-resident, have habitually worshipped with us during the last 6 months.

**Annual Report:** also, in preparation for the annual meeting, groups and organisations are invited to send a short report of their activities / experiences during 2020 to

 vicar@ainsworthparish.org.uk for inclusion in the annual report.

***Previous Notices:***

**Treasurer & Churchwarden:** As a congregation, we are fortunate to have so many people who get stuck in to help with the mission of the Church. Too many to mention! Yet, sadly, there are some roles we struggle to fill. Hence, we are still praying for a new Parish Treasurer to take over from Geoff, **plus** a second Churchwarden to focus upon building issues. These are both crucial ministries in our church, necessary for the efficient and legal functioning of this parish. Furthermore, carrying these vacancies unnecessarily raises questions about our viability at a time of reorganisation within the diocese.

You do not need to be an accountant to be our Treasurer; an aptitude for finance is all you need. Also, it is possible to separate the Building Officer role from that of Churchwarden – we have done it before – and Building Officer could be undertaken as a ‘job share’. Of the two roles, the Treasurer vacancy is the more urgent, but it is difficult to foresee how we can function fully for long without either. Want to know more? Contact Revd Dave for a confidential chat. **Sadly, without a Parish Treasurer we cannot pay our bills so, before long, we would cease to function.** **Please do not assume that the clergy will cover building maintenance and finance until such time as these vacancies are filled – we do not have the time!**

**Lent** has arrived and the Lenten fasthas begun. But Lent is not just a time for giving something up, it is also a season for spiritual growth. So, join us on Facebook on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm for a short Lenten Devotional service and on Zoom on Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm for our Lent Bible study course (nothing heavy!). A Zoom link is available from vicar@ainsworthparish.org.uk .

For both the Lenten Devotional and Lent Course we are using resources published by the Church of England in connection with the national campaign: **#LiveLent - Our Story, God’s Story**. Linked to the campaign is the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Lent book for this year, *Living His Story* by Hannah Steele, £7.99 from Amazon.

 https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/028108517X/ref=ppx\_yo\_dt\_b\_asin\_title\_o00\_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1 . There are also some daily reflections, which are free if you download the app or sign up to a daily email here https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/what-we-believe/lent-holy-week-and-easter/livelent-gods-story-our-story-our-lent.

Finally, Lent is often a season of lament, and that is certainly true this year. For this reason, we are leaving our ‘Cairn of Remembrance’ in the churchyard (near the church door) so that anyone can add to it stones in memory of dearly departed loved ones. Spread the word!

**Steppingstones for Growth:** A small group has been meeting over the past few months to discuss Church growth and think about how we might better help others as they seek to grow spiritually. We are utilising some brilliant videos produced by Manchester Diocese. Want to know more? Email Revd Dave for a Zoom link (vicar@ainsworthparish.org.uk ). Our next meeting (via Zoom) is on 16th April.

**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 the income of this and other churches has declined since the COVID-19 crisis began, payments from parishes into the common fund have reduced significantly. Yet, despite this situation, all clergy continue to minister, and all are committed to doing so. None have been furloughed.

The good news is, regular giving at Christ Church via standing orders and planned giving envelopes has, to a large extent, been sustained. **A big thank you to everyone for this fantastic effort.** Unfortunately, other sources of income have reduced significantly but, despite this and unlike many parishes, we still managed to pay our Parish Share in full during 2020 by drawing upon our fast-depleting reserves.

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)*

**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.

**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: Barbara Aspin, Alan Clifford, Betty Lawrence, Nora Tudge, Deborah Sandercock-Pickles, Margaret Turner, Stella Burkey and Louise Singleton.

**The bereaved:** All who have lost loved ones, especially the family and friends of Bridget Hartley. 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.**