

**Christ Church Walmersley
and
St John with St Mark Bury**

The Church of England on Walmersley Road



December 2023/January 2024



CHRISTMAS SERVICES



CAROL SERVICES

Sunday 17 December
at 6.30pm
in both churches

24th December – 4th Sunday of Advent

9 am and 10.30 am Morning Services as usual

HOLY COMMUNION SERVICES

Christmas Eve

7.30pm at St John with St Mark

11.30pm at Christ Church



Christmas Day

10.00am in both churches

New Year's Eve

9.00am traditional language, at Christ Church

10.30am Joint Service, at Christ Church

Please note:

there will be no midweek services between Christmas and New Year

The Word made flesh

December is a very busy month. There are three seasons in one go. There is the remnant of the season of Remembrance, followed by Advent with the culmination of Christmas. And there are three different colours, beginning with red for the remembrance of the saints, moving to purple for Advent, then we have the culmination of white for Christmas. And the hymns change. In Remembrance-tide we sing *For all the saints*. In Advent we sing *Lo, he comes with clouds descending*. And at Christmastide we sing *Once in royal David's city*. The hymns change according to the seasons.



Let us begin our examination by looking at the season of the Kingdom, dominated as it is by Remembrance Sunday. The Kingdom season is a time of remembering. We remember the dead and give thanks for their lives. We remember the saints, giving thanks for their witness to God. We remember those involved in war and we pray for peace.

The remnant of the Kingdom season lasts for only a few days before we move into Advent. In Advent, we are waiting and searching and getting ready. In Advent, we are waiting for the coming of God and his Kingdom. We are searching for God's Kingdom. We are praying that we may be made ready for the coming of the Kingdom of God and so we pray that we may be fit for the coming of that Kingdom. Advent is a time of repentance, a time for us to be ready for the repentance and forgiveness of sins.



Then comes Christmas, whose meaning has been obscured by the festival of greed and consumption. We have lost sight of the meaning of Christmas, as children badger parents for the latest expensive toy or gadget. Christmas is the time in which the Word is made flesh and dwells among us, full of grace and truth. The Word of God is spoken in the coming of Jesus of Nazareth and the Word of God is seen in the life of an ordinary human being. Jesus comes to us as a baby, vulnerable and hidden from the sight of ordinary human beings, as Jesus shares a life hidden in Nazareth. As Jesus grows up, grows into the fullness of his calling, to be a preacher and teacher. Eventually he falls foul of the political authorities and is put to death on the cross. On the third day he is raised from the dead and enters into the glory of the Resurrection. At Christmastide, we remember birth, death and resurrection all in one go.

In the coming of Christmas this year I am looking forward to a festival of peace and hope. The world seems to have entered into a spasm of hatred and violence, which seems to have no end. The war in Ukraine continues without respite. The war in Gaza seems to have no end with countless bodies lined up to be buried. As the Israeli forces surround al-Shifa hospital and aim to destroy what they think are Hamas fortifications, many civilians are caught up in the blood-letting and fury of the Israelis.

Let us pray that we may be peace-seekers waiting upon the peace of God and we pray that we may seek the Kingdom of God in all its ways and means. May we find in Jesus, the Word made Flesh, that loving peace.

Keith



INTERMENT OF ASHES

5 Nov Nancy Hall
9 Nov Dennis Dutton



"I am the resurrection and the life....."

Flowers in church

At Christ Church

Dec 3 In loving memory of Jennifer Melling and Mary Illsley
Dec 10 Vacant
Dec 17 Vacant
Dec 24 The Congregation
Dec 31 Mr & Mrs R Nicholls, in memory of their parents
Jan 7 In memory of Clifford Hawkins
Jan 14 Mr & Mrs J McDermott, in memory of their daughter
Carol
Jan 21 In memory of Jim Melling
Jan 28 In memory of John Green

If you would like to donate towards the cost of the flowers in church for a specific week, perhaps in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a special event, please speak to Hazel Bamford (Christ Church) or Rosemarie Ashworth (St John with St Mark).



BIBLE READINGS FOR DECEMBER & JANUARY

Dec 3 **1st Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 64.1-9 1 Corinthians 1.3-9 Mark 13.24-end

Dec 10 **2nd Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 40.1-11 2 Peter 3.8-15a Mark 1.1-8

Dec 17 **3rd Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-end 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24 John 1.6-8, 19-28

Dec 24 **4th Sunday of Advent**

2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16 Romans 16.25-end Luke 1.26-38

Dec 31 **1st Sunday of Christmas**

Isaiah 61.10-62.3 Galatians 4.4-7 Luke 2.15-21

Jan 7 **Epiphany**

Isaiah 60.1-6 Ephesians 3.1-12 Matthew 2.1-12

Jan 14 **2nd Sunday of Epiphany**

1 Samuel 3.1-10 Revelation 5.1-10 John 1.43-end

Jan 21 **3rd Sunday of Epiphany**

Genesis 14.17-20 Revelation 19.6-10 John 2.1-11

Jan 28 **4th Sunday of Epiphany**

Deuteronomy 18.15-20 Revelation 12.1-5a Mark 1.21-28

or Candlemas

Malachi 3.1-5 Hebrews 2.14-end Luke 2.22-40

Feb 4 **2nd Sunday before Lent**

Proverbs 8.1, 22-31 Colossians 1.15-20 John 1.1-14

Interregnum Notes

*The Bury Mission Community currently hosts a weekly service of Compline (night prayer) on Thursday at 9.00pm on Zoom. If you are interested in joining this, please contact David Robinson, Barbara Taylor or Ian Banks who can forward the Zoom link.

* Many thanks to our ministry team and to visiting ministers who are ensuring that our usual services are continuing throughout our vacancy.

* The Ministry Team (clergy and the Licensed Readers) meets every month – normally on the second Tuesday evening. If you have an issue that you would like them to discuss, please contact one of the team.

* Regular attenders to church are encouraged to join our planned giving scheme. If you would like to do so or would like some further information, please speak to one of the treasurers.

* Both churches now have the facility to accept donations and giving by bank card. Please ask for guidance.

* Porch Boxes are always in need of food and toiletries especially in the current financial situation. A box is available at the back of both churches and there are lists of the items most needed. Also welcome are any 'bags for life' you can spare as the charity gives out around 80 bags each week. Thanks to those who support local families in need.

* Contributions for the magazine are always welcome. Please send to wrub@live.co.uk or contact Barbara Taylor or David Robinson. The deadline for the next issue will be 14th January.



May you be filled with the wonder of Mary,
the obedience of Joseph,
the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the determination of the magi,
and the peace of the Christ child.

The PCCs

Summary of Christ Church PCC meeting – 8 November

1. Opening prayers were led by the Lay Chair.
2. Minutes for the 9th of October were approved.
3. The change to the long stop date in the Contract which had been approved by the PCC was actioned by signatures from the Lay Chair, the secretary and the warden. The documents had been returned to the diocesan registrar.
4. The treasurer had circulated the finance report and summary. The treasurer brought to the attention of the PCC that we were running at a monthly deficit at the moment. There were no unusual items of expenditure in the previous month.
5. Mission Community: the zoom link for Compline is hosted by different churches each Thursday evening at 9pm. Please ask if you wish to join.
6. The faculty for the extension to the garden of remembrance is continuing to be worked on.
7. The safeguarding officer reported that safety resources are online on the diocesan website. Rise Up is a Mothers' Union campaign against domestic abuse for us to support. The Church of England safeguarding development plan is online.
8. The churchwarden Jennifer Wood had obtained a document from Barclays bank in connection with the Baldingstone Trust fund, this was being completed and will then be sent back to Barclays.
9. In the property group report the trimming of the hedge and footpath on Springside Road had been completed by Tower Forestry and the council had been informed. The tree had been removed from the tower and the church architect had been approached to review the possible damage to the stonework on the tower.
10. Fund raising and social: there was an update regarding the Christmas Tree Festival.
11. The pastoral committee report was presented to the PCC. It was proposed that Christmas cards be distributed again this year which was agreed.
12. It was noted that the Guides 80th birthday party was well attended and enjoyed by everyone.

Churches Together in Bury

It wasn't far to go for the recent meeting of this group, hosted on this occasion at Christ Church. Sadly, I was still the only representative from our two churches.

We heard from Mike from **Red Door**, a great initiative within our own boundaries, currently with 312 individuals registered with them. People sleeping rough but also those sofa surfing and sleeping in cars get lots of help – breakfast, shower, laundry, lunch, as well as advice and links to those who can help them to move forward. It is well worth looking at the website CaritasSalford.org.uk

Suggested ways in which we can help:

- coats, shoes, socks, underwear – male and female
- funds
- volunteering – especially Wednesdays and Fridays
- prayer

Don't miss Tristan Sherwin's comments on the initiative in the **Millgate Shopping Centre** at the end of October on the next page.

An update on the local work of **Christians Against Poverty** highlighted a lack of befrienders – do you know someone who could be a listening ear? Do you have any skills useful for the new Money course they hope to start? Or could you drive someone to Bolton where there are some great life skills courses available? Demand is so great at present that a new referral is unlikely to be visited before February – a long time for someone who is desperate.

The feedback from the Millgate Centre following last year's **Carol Singing** was overwhelmingly positive – could you spare a couple of hours on 16 December?

Please note the date for **Prayer in the Park** on 18 May 2024 – said venue being Clarence Park, so once again something on our doorstep.

If you would like to know more about this lively group please have a word with me.

Barbara Taylor

Taking Time to Remember

Tristan Sherwin and Dan Harris are chaplains from Churches Together in the Millgate Shopping Centre. Mainly they are developing relationships with staff working in the centre and beginning to make contact with those in shops. However, on All Hallows Eve, with the blessing of the Millgate management they made an opportunity for shoppers, as Tristan writes:

They may appear to be mere ribbons. But each one represents a person or, in most cases, a number of persons who are loved and no longer with us.

It's been a humbling day, as Dan and I have offered people the opportunity to remember through the simple act of tying a ribbon. An act that has given people some breathing space, and provided an opportunity for them to recall and retell something about those they have lost. We've heard many heartbreaking stories today, as people of various ages have spoken about the death of loved ones of various ages: cancer, miscarriage, murder, fatal accidents... tragedies that have indiscriminately deluged lives, leaving a flotsam of emotions and circumstances in their wake.

Again, it's been a humbling day. Grief is a wound many carry. Yet, as someone described it today, 'something I've squashed down and rarely talked about.' Needless to say, ancient wells have opened, as tears have flowed during the past six hours. Surprisingly, what started as a conversation about loss occasionally flowed into further sentences about the other bruises people carry; bruises, again, that have been rarely spoken about.

'Thank you', has been a repeated refrain of today's conversations. 'Thank you for doing this'; 'Thank you for listening'; 'Thank you for giving me time to talk.'

If you were someone who stopped and talked with us today, thank you. It's been a privilege to be an ear. Our hope is that we've managed, in some way, to model God's ear towards you.

May God grant us all ears to hear, and hearts willing to listen."

A slightly longer version of this also appears with photos on the website of Churches Together in England (CTE.org.uk)



Are you ready?

Are you ready? How many times have we said that to children and got the answer 'In a minute.' And the minute has become two or three or even five and we've been almost out of the door before they've started putting their shoes on. But it's not just children who put off getting ready. We might not take so long to get ready to go out but there are other things we're never ready for, however long we have to prepare, and God's coming is one of them.

All through Advent we hear the question 'Are you ready?' - ready to meet God, to sit at his table, to see him face to face and know his love in all its glory and wonder. And if we're honest we have to answer 'No'. We aren't ready to look all that love in the face. We talk about God's love and sing about it with gusto but when it comes to getting up close and personal to that love it's a different matter. We realise our love has been a very pale shadow of God's love and we're ashamed at how poor our loving has been. So when we hear about God coming again we just push away the thought of meeting God who sees through us and all our excuses and deceptions, who sees us as we really are – eager to talk about love but reluctant to let it shape our lives.

But the really good news is that God knows exactly what we're like and still loves us. He knows we want the Second Coming to be postponed indefinitely but it makes no difference to how much he loves us. And loving us as he does he wants to help us know his love, to feel it in our bones, to want it filling our lives – he wants us to be partners in his dance of love. He's not bothered that we can't dance at the level of Strictly – his dance is different, there aren't any complicated steps, we just have to hold his hand and step out in time to the music.

There's no point in saying 'We're not ready.' We'll never be ready, never feel good enough, loving enough, to meet God on our terms. But he's happy with us as we are, he wants us, needs us to be his partners in his dance of love. We may fumble our way through the dance to begin with, but by holding his hand we'll get better, and in time we'll want to reach out to other people who don't feel ready to meet God and taking their hands to draw them into the dance of love.

Reflection by Revd Ian Butterworth for an Advent service 2022

25th Bury (Christ Church) Guides

We were visited by organisers from Bury Homeless Project and heard about the challenges they have to deal with, and how many people they help on a daily basis. We asked lots of questions and were shocked at how many children our age are affected and don't have the things we take for granted. The leaders gave us all £1 and set us a challenge to grow our pound to raise money for the charity. After activities including baking cakes and washing cars, we raised a total of £115.50, which has been passed on to BHP.



This term we have been focusing on the Be Well theme in our programme. We have learnt how to administer emergency first aid, including the recovery position, bandages and slings; taken part in fitness activities and made face packs, foot soaks and hand exfoliators as part of a pamper night. Emma from Empathy Holistic Buddies CIC spent an evening with us.

During the session we took a journey along the river and into the mountains to explore our emotions, concentrating on breathing and doing some self and peer massage.

We celebrated our 80th birthday by holding a joint event with the Brownies. It was lovely to invite past Brownies, Guides and Leaders back to spend time with us and reminisce. We all wrote memories and added them to the tree and sang a variety of campfire songs. It was fantastic to welcome Joyce Grindrod who joined Brownies when the unit first opened. Joyce cut the cake, along with Lily Moss who is the current youngest Brownie. Thank you to everyone who donated to our raffle, tombola and cake stall. We raised £425 which has gone to Waddow Hall Trust, to purchase 4 bricks, in their fundraising attempt to save the centre where we have camped many times.

A Guide scarecrow joined a Leader and Brownie for the church scarecrow festival. They sat around the campfire toasting a marshmallow as that is our favourite place to be.

We made felt poppies, which we wore on our uniform at Church Parade on Remembrance Sunday.

December will bring the church Christmas Tree festival which will showcase our tree, with homemade decorations; we will be attending and participating in the Christingle service and finishing the term with a visit to Rock Up climbing wall.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and look forward to more activities in 2024.

Please see the back page for more from our 80th birthday celebrations.

Rose Taylor

ST JOHN WITH ST MARK BROWNIES

Well done to two of our Brownies who have received their silver award. Amelia & Connie have worked hard on the Brownie programme completing various Skills, Builders, & Unit Meeting Activities. Their next goal is the gold award, which they hope to complete soon.

Congratulations from all the Brownie Leaders.



Follow the Star

This year's Christmas theme from the Church of England builds on last year's when we were encouraged to invite others to come with us to 'follow the star'.

Again this year there are materials we can share with our families and friends.

"Follow the star, come join in the fun!
Christmas is coming, the countdown's begun..."

There is an Advent calendar which is a fun way for children and their families to mark Advent and celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. It tells the story of how – and why – Jesus came to be born in Bethlehem. Free daily activities are also available from the Church of England via cofe.io/AdventCalendar

From Christmas Day there will be a series of daily reflections. At our Christmas services we shall be giving everyone a bookmark with details of how to access these, or simply go to the website and sign up.

Our Archbishops, Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell, have issued this invitation which we have used on our Christmas card, which is being delivered around our benefice (Could you help with this distribution?)

"The shepherds were astonished to find the night sky filled with angels singing God's praise. And before long they were singing, too. ... Centuries later, singing is still central to how many of us celebrate Christmas.

"We invite you this Christmas to follow the star, journey to the manger, join the song and come into the presence of Jesus Christ."

So come along to our Christmas services – but think who you could bring with you too. Or could you introduce any children to the Good News of Jesus' birth, with a rhyming Nativity story?

A Christmas Creed

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small.

I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

I believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible:

I believe in the one who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I believe in God who gives us the best of himself. I believe in Jesus, the son of the living God, born in Bethlehem that night, for me and for the world.

from www.christmas-day.org



QUIET MOMENTS FOR DECEMBER

The Advent Hope

In this season of Advent, inspire us to be people of hope.

Encourage us not to be greedy for material possessions, but for justice and truth.

Enflame us with a love for others, which crosses boundaries of race, religion and nationality.

Stir within us a desire to fight for the integrity of creation and appreciate the immense beauty of the earth.

Be with us, Lord, at this time, that we may be a people of hope.

Amen.



Susy Brouard/CAFOD

The Advent Journey

Advent God,
we journey with you,
to Bethlehem's stable and a new-born King,
ears attuned to the song of angels,
eyes alert for Bethlehem's star.

Forgive us if on our journey
we are distracted
by the tempting offers
of this world.

Keep our hearts aflame
with the hope
of Christmas,
and the promise
of a Saviour.

Amen

John Birch



The Advent Peace

Lord Jesus Christ,
we await your coming,
We wait filled with hope,
knowing your light will shine in the darkness.
We wait anticipating your peace,
believing that one day it will fill our world.
We wait embracing your love,
may we reach out to share it with our neighbours.
We wait with joy,
bubbling in us in expectation of your birth.
Lord we wait,
come soon and fill us with your life.



~ written by Christine Sine

Virgin (inspired by Luke 1:38)

As if until that moment
nothing real
had happened since Creation
As if outside the world were empty
so that she and he were all
there was — he mover, she moved upon
As if her submission were the most
dynamic of all works: as if
no one had ever said Yes like that
As if one day the sun had no place
in all the universe to pour its gold
but her small room

~ written by Luci Shaw



Christmas greetings



As, together, we hear again the Good News of Jesus coming into the world, we wish you all a Christmas full of joy and a New Year full of hope.

Barbara and Nigel

May this season be full of light and laughter
for you and your family.
From all the Guides and Leaders at Christ Church



We wish you all the very best for the Christmas season and thank you to all who have supported the work of Christian Aid this year.

The Christian Aid Team

Our very best and warm wishes to everyone in the United Benefice this Christmas and New year 2024. We give thanks for our church music which stimulates and heals.
Love Tricia and Geoff



The Choir and Organist at St. John with St. Mark would like to take the opportunity to wish all across the United Benefice a very Happy and Blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year



I would like to wish everybody within the Benefice a very Merry Christmas and a hope-filled 2024. May the joy of the nativity be in your homes this season.
David Robinson xx

Wishing you all the peace, hope and happiness of Christmas.

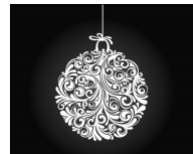
Mothers' Union



Wishing you peace and joy this Christmas and through the coming year

Barbara and Bob

Happy Christmas and New Year from June and Ian. Thanks to everyone for their love and support this year. X



Wishing you peace and joy at Christmas

Margery and Alan

Merry Christmas and the happiest of New Years
Jennifer and John



QUIET MOMENTS FOR JANUARY

As a new year begins, let us dedicate ourselves anew:

Lord of yesterday, today and tomorrow,
we gather at the beginning of a new year
in a mixture of hope, anticipation, fear, excitement, and expectation.

We do not know what the year holds for us.

there are things we are afraid of:

worries about health and family, job security and finances.

There is much to look forward to – weddings or anniversaries or baptisms,
holidays to enjoy, friends to laugh with.

Lord God, the coming year is full of uncertainty and hope.

Whatever the year holds for us, though,

we trust You, and we place every day of this year in your care

knowing that, as in the past, You are with us,

caring for us with constant love.

And so Lord, we place ourselves into your keeping

and dedicate our lives to your service

through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour. **Amen.**

Ian Elston

*At Epiphany, remembering the gifts brought by the wise men
to Jesus, we thank God for the gifts we each have received.*



God you have given each of us many gifts,

but sometimes we cannot recognise what gift we have to share,
so we hide it under a bushel.

God you remind us that all gifts are needed,

but sometimes we let ourselves be convinced
that some gifts are more special than others.

God you call us to work, to live, to love together as parts of one body,

but sometimes we decide that membership in the body is
limited by our understandings.

God, for the times we have ignored or mislabelled Your gifts,

for those times we have cut another off from the body,

we offer words of repentance, we ask for forgiveness and grace. Amen

<http://worshipofferings.blogspot.ca>



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is marked each year from 18th – 25th January:

Lord Jesus, who prayed that we might all be one,
we pray to you for the unity of Christians,
according to your will,
according to your means.
May your Spirit enable us
to experience the suffering caused by division,
to see our sin
and to hope beyond all hope.
Amen.

from Prayerist.com

Our Gospel readings for January look at some of Jesus's miracles. Here is a prayer to a miracle-working God:

Lord of the nations, you display your power in all the world. You are the miracle-working God. You turned water into wine. You restored sight to the blind and made the deaf hear. You made the lame walk. You healed the sick and raised the dead. You conquered death in your resurrection.



Everything you touch is powerfully transformed. Let me know that powerful touch in my life. Give me the strength to follow you. Lord, bless me and keep me, make your face shine upon me. Turn your face towards me and give me peace. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

from connectusfund.org

We marked All Saints' Day with Holy Communion in the Hall. Harvie Nicol presided and drew material from the Celtic tradition.

David Riggs talked to us about the changing face of Bury with key events from the early 18th century until around 1900. It was interesting to see from his slides the development of the town, from just one street, The Rock.

Following the excitement of the scarecrow festival we are now preparing for the Christmas Tree Festival. We hope you find our tree and the accompanying display we are planning both attractive and informative.



We are focussing on the subject of domestic violence – not an attractive topic but a horrifyingly common one. One in three people will suffer during their lifetime, so you will know people who are hiding this knowledge from their

friends. We hope to show some ways in which we can raise awareness of the issue.

On December 6 we welcome everyone (at 2pm in the Hall) to an Advent Reflection, led by Margery Spencer.

Then on January 3rd you are invited to join us for a post-Christmas Interlude. Have you room for another mince pie? Do you have any After Eights left? Bring what you have, and enjoy a light-hearted chat – 2pm in the Hall at Christ Church.

On Advent Sunday (December 3) we shall join with others in Bury and Rossendale Deanery for our annual Advent Service. Do come along to Emmanuel Church Centre at 2pm. Ask if you would like a lift.

The Diocesan Advent service will be held the following morning, 4 December at 11am at St Ann's Manchester, doubtless followed as usual by delicious mince pies from Slattery's!

Bob Taylor, Branch Leader

Men of the Benefice



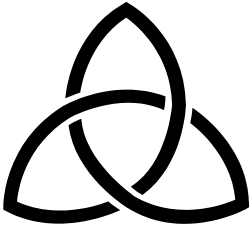
The Men of the Benefice met on Monday 23rd October at the Towler for what was supposed to be a quiz set by Colin Rigg. Unfortunately a low turn out due to holidays, meetings or absence meant that there was little point in participating in the quiz. Apologies to Colin and others who were disappointed, however the quiz will be saved for a future meeting. We did though use the opportunity to proudly display our certificate of participation in the Christ Church Scarecrow festival in October and then spent the evening in conversation.

The MOB are meeting again on Wednesday 29th November at Christ Church for a talk by Colin's brother David on historic Bury. David emigrated to Australia in 1969 and is staying in Bury for a while, so it will be good to hear of his memories. There will obviously not be a meeting in December. It is being considered as to whether we need to move some of our meetings away from the pubs due to ease of presentation. This will likely result in a change of day if other venues are used. We will discuss this over the coming weeks and provide updates on weekly sheets.

In the meantime, the MOB would like to thank all who have joined us or led evenings in 2023 and wish everybody across the Benefice a happy and peaceful Christmas. Hope to see you in 2024.



David Robinson



The Open Group

The Open Group met on Wednesday 8th November for an interactive evening based on the Mothers' Union 'Big Idea' theme. This was an initiative previously tried at Mothers' Union and Barbara suggested that the same could work for the Open Group. After considering the idea and how it works, I thought it may be worth having a go, although I was unsure how people would react and participate. I was completely wrong to be doubtful.

For those of you who have not joined in the game before, then the idea is to think of as many mission-based activities for our Churches you can think of with the aid of (possible) unrealistic resources. For those who have not played before, then I will not spoil it too much by telling you what was on offer. However, by the end of the evening we had created some quite novel ideas, which had some element of mileage to them. We split up into three teams of three, each of which had three scenarios and the results were interesting, thought provoking and of course sometimes hilarious. But to sum up, it would be quite reasonable to think that the following could happen in our Churches:

Providing food for the homeless in a community setting; a dance group to aid our worship; activity days out; Christian gift stalls; an Easter festival with entertainment; aiding our older members to access online worship.

The overall consensus was that the evening was productive as well as fun and the focus was very much on community and how we can bring the wider community to our Church. Maybe if Mission is a theme for 2024 then one or two ideas from this and the Mothers' Union evening previously could be considered.

The Open Group will meet on Wednesday 13th December between 6.00pm and 6.30pm in the Barritt Room for our Christmas get-together. In the meantime, I would like to thank everybody who has attended or led a session during 2023 and wish everybody across the Benefice all the best for Christmas and New Year on behalf of the Open Group. David Robinson





**CHURCHES TOGETHER
CAROL SINGING IN THE MILLGATE CENTRE**

Saturday, 16 December, 12 noon - 1.30pm near T J Hughes

Everyone is welcome to take part, and do share with others as we spread the Good News in our town.



CAROL SERVICES

**Sunday 17 December
at 6.30pm**

**in both parishes
for ALL the family**

**Readings, music, songs
for Christmas**

Christmas Tree Festival

at Christ Church
on Saturday, 2nd December,
10 am to 2 pm

Entrance £2 per adult, children free
Refreshments available

ALL ARE WELCOME



LIGHT LUNCH

Come and join us on the third Thursday of every month for a light lunch. A chance to enjoy a chat in the company of friends.



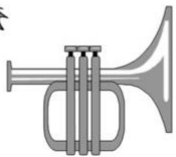
Lunch is served 12 noon – 1pm.
Christ Church Walmersley Hall,
School Lane, BL9 5LP

There is no charge – though, if you can, a donation toward costs would be appreciated. Any profit will go to charity or church funds.

It would be great to see you!

Please note that in December this will be the second (not third) Thursday. So come along on 14 December, then 18 January.

St James' Tower Street Heywood OL10 3AB



Invite you to

Beer & Carols



with Blackley Brass

**Sing Along to your favourite Christmas Carols & Songs
with a licensed bar & Banktop Brewery real ale.**

The Christmas story with chocolate. Christmas jumper competition.
Teddy Tombola. Raffle. Refreshments on sale. Santa.



**Friday 15th December at 7pm
Its free, no tickets needed, just come along**

Join us as both churches commit to praying daily for our community here in the Diocese of Manchester.

CHURCH
FOR A
DIFFERENT
WORLD



Our Diocesan Prayer of Thanksgiving and Hope

Living and Loving God,
as your pilgrim people in Manchester Diocese
we thank you for the great commission
with which you have entrusted us:
to love and serve, and to bring
our parishes, schools, chaplaincies,
and all our communities
into new life in Jesus Christ.

Through your abundant love
lead us into your Kingdom
and grant us the trust to follow you;
meet our weariness, our griefs and fears
with your tender and comforting Spirit
that we may greet the promise
of each new day with joy and trust.

Teach us to pray in faith, hope and love,
that we may go out into your world
confident in your wondrous mission
and full of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

If you wish to be a follower of the Transforming Prayer Community, please see the Diocesan Website or there may be some leaflets available at the back of our Churches. By doing this you will receive regular weekly reflections, themed prayers and possibly ideas for groups and Sunday School. Here is a recent Remembrance reflection from Revd John Evans, Curate of St Anne's, Clifton and St Thomas, and Deanery Transformation Support Officer for the Deanery of Oldham and Ashton:

"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:13.

As we come into a time of reflection and remembrance, this verse from John 15 comes to mind annually and being an ex-military man really resonates with me. It brings to mind the sacrifice that men and women through the ages have made to keep us and the world from tyranny, and I imagine during these times of conflict there have been many occasions when someone has literally given their life to save a friend. Jesus also paid the ultimate sacrifice, he gave his life for his friends, and for the whole world, for the forgiveness of sins. So, as we remembered this weekend those who have paid that price, we also remember every day the price that Jesus paid for our salvation. As we thank Jesus every day in prayer for our salvation, do we give thanks in prayer every day for those that paid the price for our freedom and our way of life today?

ST. JOHN WITH ST. MARK 100 CLUB

November 2023 draw winners:

1st Prize £15.00 – (4) Ray Smith

2nd Prize £10.00 – (41) Wendy Kier



Congratulations to both

How far would you go?

Prayer Reflection

(inspired by the visit of the Magi in Matthew 2:1-12)

What do you read for signs of God's presence?

Does your interest go down as well as up?

Can you spot a good investment?

Have you outsourced your spirituality?

Do you call in consultants to tell you where the Christ might be found?

Do you really want to know?

How far would you go to see God?

Would you come down to the ground floor lobby?

As far as the Metrolink station?

As far as Altrincham?

Would you stand all the way?

Would you switch off your phone in the stable?

How much would you spend on presents?

Would you give Christ a golden hello?

10% of pre-tax earnings?

A tip for the markets?

A few more stables and a Derby winner?

Would you buy shares in his suffering
or sell him cheap when the market falls?

How far would you go to oppose God?

Who would you kill? and how many?

Is your intelligence good?

Do you know which safe house the Christ-child is in?

Do you ask how many others are in the building?

In whose game are you a pawn?

Do you play for Herod or leave by another route?

Do you expect a good return?

Jonny Baker

REGULAR SERVICES

Sunday			
8.30am	3 rd	Holy Communion	St John w St Mark
9.00am	All	Holy Communion (BCP)	Christ Church
10.30 a.m.	1 st 2 nd 3 rd 4 th	Holy Communion Family Service Holy Communion Morning Worship	Christ Church
10.30 a.m.	1 st 2 nd 3 rd 4 th	Holy Communion Holy Communion Morning Worship Holy Communion	St John w St Mark
10.30 a.m.	5 th	Holy Communion	Joint (venue tba)
7.00 p.m.	Final, Sunday @ Seven		Venue tba
Wednesday			
10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion		St John w St Mark
Thursday			
12.30 p.m.	The Gathering		Zoom
7.30 p.m.	Holy Communion		St John w St Mark
Other services as announced.			
Services are from Common Worship unless otherwise stated.			

If you need transport to church please contact the wardens.

Both churches have Fairtrade status



We are members of Manchester's Transforming Prayer Community

Personal details have been removed in our online edition for data protection purposes.

Please contact us through our websites or social media accounts and we will ensure your message reaches the correct person.

Enquiries about baptisms or weddings / marriage banns etc or any other matter, should be made at the Parish Office held at St.John with St.Mark Church Hall, Parkinson Street any Wednesday evening between 6.30-7.00pm.

Lots more info on our websites:	https://ccwalmersleybury.org.uk https://stjohnstmarkchurchbury.com
Check out Facebook	@christchurchwalmersley @stjohnstmark
Twitter	@cofewalmersley
Instagram	cofewalmersley
and YouTube	CofE Walmersley

FOR YOUR DECEMBER DIARY

Sat 2	10.00am	Christmas Tree Festival (CC)
Sun 3		1st of Advent
	9.00am	Holy Communion BCP (CC)
	10.30am	Parish Communion (both)
	2.00pm	Deanery Mothers' Union Advent Service (p22)
Mon 4	6.30pm	Christingle Services (both churches)
Wed 6	2.00pm	Mothers' Union (CC Hall)
Sun 10		2nd of Advent
	9.00am	Holy Communion BCP (CC)
	10.30am	Family and Parade Service (CCW) Parish Communion (SJM)
Wed 13	12.30pm	Mothers' Union Christmas Lunch (Owens)
	6.00pm	Open Group Christmas Party (Barritt Room)
Thu 14	12 noon	Thursday Lunch (CC Hall)
Fri 15	7.00pm	Beer and Carols (St James Heywood)
Sun 17		3rd of Advent
	8.30am	Holy Communion (SJM)
	9.00am	Holy Communion BCP (CC)
	10.30am	Morning Worship (SJM) Parish Communion (CC)
	6.30pm	Carol Service (both churches)
Tue 19	10.00am	Springside School Carol Service (CC)
Sun 24		4th of Advent
	9.00am	Holy Communion BCP (CC)
	10.30am	Morning Worship (CC) Parish Communion (SJM)
		Christmas Eve
	7.30pm	Holy Communion (SJM)
	11.30pm	Holy Communion (CC)
Mon 25		Christmas Day
	10.00am	Holy Communion (both churches)
Wed 27 / Thu 28		No midweek services (SJM)

Sun 31 **1st of Christmas**
 9.00am Holy Communion BCP (CC)
 10.30am Joint Service of Holy Communion (CC)
 No Sunday@Seven

FOR YOUR JANUARY DIARY

Wed 3 2.00pm Mothers' Union (CC Hall)

Sun 7 **Epiphany**
 9.00am Holy Communion BCP (CC)
 10.30am Parish Communion (both)

Sun 14 **2nd of Epiphany**
 9.00am Holy Communion BCP (CC)
 10.30am Family and Parade Service (CCW)
 Parish Communion (SJM)

Wed 17 2.00pm Mothers' Union (CC Hall)

Thu 18 12noon Third Thursday Lunch (CC Hall)

Sun 21 **3rd of Epiphany**
 8.30am Holy Communion (SJM)
 9.00am Holy Communion BCP (CC)
 10.30am Morning Worship (SJM)
 Parish Communion (CC)

Sun 28 **4th of Epiphany or Candlemas**
 9.00am Holy Communion BCP (CC)
 10.30am Morning Worship (CC)
 Parish Communion (SJM)

Mon 29 8.00pm Men of the Benefice – venue/date to be confirmed



Sunday



@ Seven



We next meet for our time of informal worship

January 28th 7pm

Christ Church Hall

'Making Plans'



Come and join us for an hour; or you can be with us via Zoom. Please contact Nigel Silvester or Ian Banks for more details.



Girlguiding



Getting snowed in at Springfield Park



Making friends

Trips to the zoo and singing



Awarding our first Queen's Guide at Walmersley

Going camping

