



Holy Trinity



St.
Gabriel

The Parish of The Good Shepherd, Ashton-under-Lyne



St. James



St. Peter



St. Michael and All Angels

AUGUST 2021

Price 50p

Editorial

August is the month when schools are off and many of us go on holiday. This year will be very different, with many opting for a 'staycation'! The good news is that Jesus offers us a true rest: 'Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.' (Matthew 11: 28-29). Are you feeling tired or burdened and in need of a holiday? Jesus invites you to spend it with Him!

The Invitation: Our holiday destination is Jesus Himself: 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened.' We can come just as we are, with all the burdens and sadness we carry from the last 18 months. Jesus doesn't offer a 'quick fix' to deal with our issues; He simply offers Himself!

The Promise: Jesus promises us the gift of refreshing, sustaining and everlasting rest. When we go on holiday, we usually look forward to doing very little and yet this is not the kind of rest Jesus offers. His rest involves taking up His yoke and learning from Him! A yoke was the wooden collar that ran across the shoulders of a pair of oxen to enable them to work the fields. Jesus says: 'My yokes fit well. They do not rub your neck and shoulders. Come to me and get yoked to Me. Make an act of loyal obedience and trust in Me. And you will find a deep peace and satisfaction that you could never find anywhere else. I have come for you!'

What's so amazing about this holiday is that you can get rest by simply staying at home!

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The views expressed in articles in this magazine are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Parish of The Good Shepherd. The editor reserves the right to amend articles as appropriate, for editorial purposes. Please consider writing something for the magazine yourself! And, if you have any comments to make on the Magazine you can contact the editor, Roger Farnworth on 0161 330 2771 or talk to a member of your DCC or PCC who will pass on any comments that are made.

Contents

	Page
The Times They Are A-Changing - Revd Pat Lodge	3-5
August Services – Services information	6
The Queen Visits Manchester Cathedral / Eco Church-Towards Zero Carbon	7-8
Book Reviews / IQ – Barry Bowden	9
Parish Notices	10
Contact Details	11



The Parish Prayer

Father God, whose Son came to bring love and peace to the world, help us to grow in faith and share our hope and joy with all whom we meet, so that we can work together to build your kingdom in Ashton, welcome new people into our churches, and be relevant to those around us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

www.goodshepherdashton.org

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The times they are a-changing!

I wonder how many of you remember the Bob Dylan song, "The Times they are A-Changing"?

It was written and released in 1964 and was an attempt to create an anthem for the time in which it was written, but later, when questioned as to the message behind this particular song Dylan was to say, "I didn't mean "The Times they are A-Changing" as a statement. It's a feeling." So often over these last months this song title has come into my mind and has run alongside the way I feel our lives have been, and still are, changing as a result of the times that we are currently living through.

Well now we know that the Covid restrictions have been lifted, despite the rising infection rates, and we are told that, with care and common sense, we can begin to get back to some sort of normality. It feels as if we've talking about getting back to normal - or a new norm - for months and I have often thought about quite what we mean by that. I cannot see that the end of restrictions will feel like we are stepping back into a normality that we remember, or were used to.

So many people have lost loved ones, either to the virus itself or to other illnesses over the last 18 months or so, and, for them, that will mean forging a new, possibly lonelier, but certainly very different path from the one they travelled before. Whilst the virus has been restricting access to doctors and hospital care, something that we in this country have always taken for granted, we have had to become more used to telephone consultations or email discussions about our health and, from reports in the newspapers, that way of working may well continue - a new norm, perhaps.

So many words and terms have become second nature to us over the period of the pandemic - lockdown, asymptomatic, contact tracing, herd immunity, PPE, physical distancing, self- isolation, social distancing, super spreader and so many more - even pandemic was not a word that was regularly in our vocabulary. But look how easily we use these words now - and just see how much of the terminology connected with the pandemic relates to our relationships with each other. Human beings are social animals. Isolating and distancing

ourselves from each other is not normal for us and yet we've had to make it so in order to safeguard our own and each other's health. Greeting each other with an elbow bump doesn't mean the same as a rib-squashing hug somehow but we've had to think about the possible dangers of touching each other in a way that we've never needed to do before. We are used to looking at each other's faces when we speak - seeing a smile helps us to gauge the tone of the conversation. That doesn't work when people are having to wear masks.

All these strange words have become actions and ways of being that are now normal to us. How easy will it be to go back to what used to be normal - will people step back from us when we go to give them a hug or will be people now be constantly aware of 2 metre distances? We've lived for so long by three word phrases - "Hands, Face, Space", or "Stay Alert, Control the Virus, Save Lives". It was an understandable way to get a clear message across in a way that couldn't be misinterpreted. When the restrictions are lifted will we need a new three-word phrase to move our lives into the new normal and what would those words be, I wonder?

In August five year olds will be getting ready to start school, eleven years olds will be getting ready for moving on to high schools, and older students to colleges and universities. Usually, we celebrate these new stages in their lives and so we should - but perhaps this year we should also pray for them to feel strong enough, and hopeful enough, to be able to face these massive changes after the difficult year that they have experienced, with so much time spent out of their normal educational routine. Normality for them will probably feel very different indeed from what has gone before just recently.

So how does our faith help us to greet the promise of this new norm?

I think we have to accept the reality that the pandemic isn't over just because the restrictions have been lifted. We have to recognise that this is something that the world must live with as we each forge our own normality for the future and, as Christians, we know that we're not having to face this on our own. As it says in Joshua 1:9. "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

When it all feels too much, and things don't seem to be getting any better, remember Psalm 46:1-3. "God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

Some of my favourite and most comforting words are to be found in Jeremiah 29 - "'For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." These words remind me that I am constantly in God's hands, that he knows his plan for me and that I just need to trust that he will guide me in the way that he wants me to go - and over the past 18 months these have been very much in my mind and will continue to be as we go forward.

We must remember, too, that in all that has happened we have much to thank God for - the doctors and nurses and their dedication to healing, the scientists who have

worked so hard to find vaccines in an incredible time, the emergency services who've kept things going, our teachers who've learned new skills to teach in the classroom and on Zoom to keep our children's learning as much on track as they can, delivery men who've filled our shops and brought things to our doors, our clergy for filling the spiritual gap that closed churches has opened up, neighbours, friends and community volunteers who have done their best in difficult circumstances to look after those who needed support - so many people!

So, yes, as Bob Dylan said, 'The Times They Are A-Changing'. We may not be going back to what we always used to consider as our normality but we can step forward, in faith, to embrace the new norm, whatever that might be in the sure and certain knowledge that God is with us.

"And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." *Matthew 29:20*
Rev'd Pat Lodge



August Services

At the time of printing, we do not yet have any guidance on the changes which will come into effect for places of worship after 19th July. Given that this is the case, we do not intend to make any changes to the arrangements for services in our churches until after Sunday 26th July.

A cautious approach is likely to be taken in any guidance that we receive in due course, so we have taken the decision not to move the Sunday services around our churches in August.

The current guidance is that we are required to keep services as short as possible, follow social distancing rules and all government restrictions and safety advice. Also, it may be necessary to change or cancel any of these services at short notice should government or local guidance change.

Please check our weekly sheets or with your wardens for up-to-date information.

Please note that those who are extremely clinically vulnerable/shielding, or who have symptoms of a continuous cough or a high temperature or loss of or change to sense of smell or taste, should not attend church.

Sundays

9.30am Holy Communion or Morning Prayer St Gabriel and St James

11.00am Holy Communion or Morning Prayer St Michael and St Peter

St James on Sunday Afternoon 4.00pm 8th, 22nd, 29th August

Thursdays

3.30pm Evening Prayer or Holy Communion Holy Trinity

Please be aware of the need to maintain social distancing and wear your mask in church unless you are exempt from doing so.

We shall continue to send out, either by post or email, a weekly sheet containing prayers and readings for each Sunday and the readings for the following week.

The weaker we feel, the harder we lean on God. And the harder we lean, the stronger we grow.
- Joni Eareckson Tada

From the Diocese

The Queen visit Manchester Cathedral

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II last visited Manchester Cathedral for the Maundy Service in 2007. She was accompanied by her husband Prince Philip.



On 8th July, Her Majesty visited Manchester Cathedral to mark the 600th Anniversary Celebration of the Collegiate Church. We are enormously grateful and pleased that Her Majesty came to mark our special anniversary and to celebrate with the people of Manchester.

Manchester has experienced many changes over the centuries and today we are a modern, diverse and exciting city. We are a city of hope and prosperity for everyone who lives here. And our Cathedral sits as the spiritual heart of this great city and we pray that we may continue to serve the people of this region for another six hundred years.

We thank Her Majesty for her visit and wish her well. We are also very proud to showcase our rich history as a Cathedral and the diversity of our city.

A personal message from The Dean of Manchester the Very Rev. Rogers Govender in welcoming Her Majesty, reads:

"It is my great pleasure, on behalf of the Cathedral Chapter and the wider Cathedral Community to warmly welcome Her Majesty to Manchester Cathedral to mark the 600th Anniversary of the Collegiate Church. The Collegiate Church (Cathedral in 1847) has served the people for six centuries and continues to be the spiritual heart of our beautiful city and Mother Church of the Diocese of Manchester. May God the Holy Trinity be praised for this house of prayer for all the nations!"

Eco Church - Towards Net Zero Carbon

Diocesan Synod passed a motion in March 2021 declaring a climate emergency and calling for all churches to work towards achieving net zero emissions by 2030. In passing the motion, Synod recognises the overwhelming scientific evidence that climate change is proceeding at a rapid rate, laments the devastating human and societal impacts of climate change and seeks to build on a motion passed by the General Synod of the Church of England that calls for progress towards net zero.

Why not hold your own Climate Sunday service before COP26 in November? Resources to help are available at www.climatesunday.org. General Synod has called upon all parts of the Church of England to work to achieve year-on-year reductions in carbon emissions in order to reach net zero by 2030. It's a big ask! Where can churches committed to the care of God's Creation begin?

The Energy Footprint Tool is an important resource as we measure progress towards net zero. As part of the Online Parish Returns System, the Tool enables your church to identify its carbon footprint, and its energy efficiency.

It surveys churches on:

- Sources of energy used in church building(s)
- Church energy usage
- Building size and person hours

Where data is held elsewhere, for example attendance or building footprint, boxes are pre-populated. A guide to estimating usable floor space and visitor numbers is provided. You need only provide energy bills for 2020. (The calculation takes into account the circumstances and lockdown of 2020.) On completion of the survey you receive carbon emission figures and energy efficiency scores for your church building and links to tips for reducing emissions, saving you energy and money.

As the Church of England develops Practical pathways towards net carbon zero, if churches only do one thing, they are encouraged to complete the Energy Footprint Tool each year.

More information is available on the Manchester Diocese website -click on Home/Our Faith in Action/Eco Church

Are you willing to become an Eco-Champion for your church?

If so, please speak with your Warden.

Book Reviews

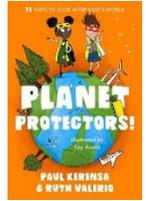
Continuing the Eco-Church theme!

Planet Protectors – 52 Ways to Look after God’s World

By Paul Kerensa and Ruth Valerio, SPCK, £6.91

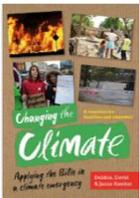
This is a good book for summer reading. It is a fun, fact-filled book for 7-to-9-year-olds that offers 52 ‘empowering’ ways to become Planet Protectors that look after God’s world.

The book is a blend of interesting facts, Christian theology and practical tips on how to help the environment by living sustainably. The ideas for looking after the world include cycling more, choosing fair-trade, taking shorter showers, and recycling. Children will love taking up a different challenge each week.



Changing the Climate: Applying the Bible in a climate emergency

By Debbie Hawker & David Hawker, and Jamie Hawker, £9.99



This book considers a series of Bible passages, to show the Bible’s relevance to environmentalism, and how we can all play our part in limiting the negative effects of climate change. The climate crisis is one of the most important issues of our time, threatening lives and livelihoods. The Bible teaches us that God the creator put humans on the Earth to take care of it; to show love to all, and to care for the poor and vulnerable.

IQ

Apparently, there are four main memory banks - long and short term, recognition and recall. But, for a variety of reasons, our IQ ranges from not too clever to Genius. So all understanding of anything is individual, including The Bible, our manual for life, as it should be.

But we don’t need a common-sense degree to understand Jesus’ message of oneness, humility, love peace, harmony, grace, mercy, equality, family, friendship, serving etc.

Wisdom is not how much we know, but what we know and do with it for the greater good.

God bless us all

Barry Bowden

Parish Notices

From the July registers:

Baptisms

We rejoice with the family and friends of:
Cali Violet Howarth-Handley

Funerals

We pray for the family and friends of:
Kathleen Edgar Fernando Rodrigues Christelo.

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Free national phonline bringing worship and prayer

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, recently launched a free national phonline to bring worship and prayer into the homes of those without access to the internet.

Daily Hope, which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 – offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England.



*A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers*

CONTACT DETAILS

CLERGY: (*usual day off)

Revd Roger Farnworth, Team Rector (*Tues.)

The Vicarage, Westbury Street, Ashton OL6 9NL

330 2771

Revd Sheila Cant, Associate Priest

336 1566

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is a Fair Trade Parish. Our churches have promised to serve only
Fairly Traded Tea and Coffee and to work for justice for the world's poor

