



Holy Trinity



St.
Gabriel

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



St. James



St. Peter



St. Michael and All Angels

May 2020

Price 50p

Editorial



A virtual meeting of the Environmental Working Group discussed Eco Church awards, the energy footprint pilot and saved an estimated 0.02 tonnes of carbon dioxide by meeting online.

By the time the diocesan Environment Working Group (EWG) held its first meeting in March, chaired by the Bishop of Bolton, people had been asked to work from home wherever possible to help prevent the spread of coronavirus. The group is tasked with implementing our environmental policy, including our commitment to becoming an Eco Diocese. It has also acquired responsibility for progressing the recent General Synod resolution calling upon all parts of the Church of England to work towards net zero emissions by 2030.

Circumstances determined the decision to meet online. Yet nine return journeys into Manchester city centre, totalling more than 120 miles, were saved. Based on journeys made by public transport, a carbon footprint calculator suggests that 0.02 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent were saved. Had the journeys been made by the average petrol car, this figure would have risen to 0.04 tonnes.

Since the meeting, the day upon which Government announced travel restrictions, the impact on the environment is already evident. Wildlife appears in towns, night skies are darker, and pollution levels drop in cities across the world. We are learning to be Church for a Different World, and in the midst of our fear and uncertainty a green blade of hope emerges.

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.



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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Ascension and Pentecost

We are heading into May and Easter Day is behind us. We continue our celebrations of Easter right through the month of May until Ascension Day on 21st May and Pentecost on 31st May.

Things are unusual this year, very unusual, and we do not know when our current circumstances will change. There is a real sense for some of us of being very much alone, cut off from those we love, unable to indulge the passions which usually consume us, whether it be sport or hobbies or, well, almost anything. And we are also unable to attend church.

There is something, in the story of the Ascension which reflects our current circumstances. It is the moment that finally the future becomes real. The Ascension begs a question: ... What exactly is happening as Jesus goes into heaven?

Is it a triumphant finale, the final victory parade? When at last Jesus goes home to the Father, to be paraded through the streets of heaven in victory - much like Liverpool FC were hoping that at about this time they would have been driving around the streets of Liverpool in triumph. Is it the time



when Jesus welcomed into that indescribable unity which is the Trinity of the Godhead - back home at last?

Or is it a moment of desertion? The disciples have only just received Christ back among them after his death and now cruelly he is taken from them into heaven. A renewed relationship is abruptly ended!! A commission is given and then the bombshell is dropped. "Listen!" says Jesus, "I have a job for you to do - to be my witnesses throughout the known world." "Great, Lord, when do we get down to business, when do we work out the strategy, when do we provide the corporate plan of action, when do we do our Mission Action Planning?" ... "Not us, not me!" says Jesus, "You! I'm going away and you'll never see me again this side of heaven!" Are they to be left on their own, without hope, struggling to come to terms with a new reality?

Or is this, actually, rather than desertion, the point at which followers become leaders, children become adults? Is this, primarily, the point where Jesus followers can no longer hide behind a leader and have to begin to make important choices themselves?

For all the participants in this story, this must have been a confusing moment. A time which carried so much emotion - parting from friends, losing a friend and leader, going home ...

All sorts of mixed emotions were in their hearts that day, just as very mixed emotions fill our hearts at the moment

In the end, all of those scenarios above have more than a grain of truth to them. ... Christ **is** going home in victory. A job well done. ... He **is** leaving behind a ragged group of followers who must have felt deserted. ... Yes, he did promise the Holy Spirit as helper and guide. But what's a Spirit when you've had real flesh & blood to relate to?

And, perhaps most crucially for us, Jesus **is** asking this ragged group to stand up for themselves. To be what he knows that they can be with the Spirit's strength - a missionary band that will turn the world upside down within a century.

You may well recognise this prayer of St. Teresa of Avila

*Christ has no body now but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which He looks compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

It is about this that the Ascension speaks to us today. Of course we celebrate a job well done, the earthly part of Christ's mission over. But most of all the Ascension reminds us that we are the ones that count - between now and eternity God has left his concerns, his mission in our hands. And as we approach Ascension Day, in the midst of all the uncertainty that we feel and face at the moment, it behoves us to commit ourselves again to serving to God - to discovering his way and walking in it, to being his hands, eyes and feet here in Tameside, in Ashton-under-Lyne.

And as we work these things out, we continue to pray for the coming of Christ's kingdom here on earth.....



Revd Roger Farnworth

Parish Notices

From the April registers:

Funeral:

We pray for the families and friends of:

Frances Tucker

There were no baptisms or weddings in April.

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The Church of England has published a leaflet giving five tips to help people feeling lonely at this time:

Pray. Light a candle, if safe, and pray for hope, faith and strength to keep loving and caring for each other during this time of struggle.

Talk about how you feel. This may be difficult if you are self-isolating, but do use the telephone, internet, and social media. If you need to contact a counsellor this can be arranged by your GP, or via local agencies, or privately. [Samaritans are there](#) 24 hours a day, every day, and it's free to call them on 116 123.

Focus on the things that you can change, not on the things you can't.

Look after yourself – physically, emotionally, spiritually. Plan in things that you enjoy at regular intervals during the day – a TV programme, a phone call, a book, a favourite dish, a game.

Look after others. Even if only in small ways, but do what you can: a smile, a kind word, writing a letter or an email.

More information is on the Church of England website.



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