

A warm welcome to

The Parish of Christ Church, Lancaster

Sunday 24th December 2023 *Christmas Eve*

Sunday 31st December 2023 *First Sunday of Christmas*

Vicar: Revd Carol Backhouse 01524 942105

1 East Road, Lancaster, LA1 3EE

www.christchurchlancaster.org.uk Facebook: @ChristChurchLancaster



a vibrant, inclusive
worshipping
community

**Everyone is welcome to join in
prayer and worship this week:**

Today - 24th December

No 8:30am *Holy Communion*

10:30am *Parish Eucharist*

4pm *Crib Service*

11.30pm *Midnight Mass*

Christmas Day

8.30am *Said Eucharist*

10.30am *Festal Eucharist with Carols*

Friday

9.30am *Holy Communion*

(Lady Chapel)

Next Sunday - 31st December

No 8:30am *service*

10:30am *Parish Eucharist*

*(With thanks to Rev'd Keith Brockbank for
leading this service)*

*Wishing you
the spirit of Christmas
which is PEACE
the blessing of Christmas
which is Hope
the heart of Christmas
which is Love*

Children's Church

Every Sunday of term time
during the 10.30 service for
KS1/2 children

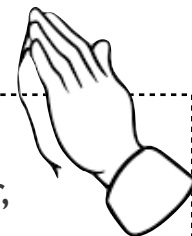
Contact: Mrs Julie Tinnion 07749
489623 for more information



Please ask the Stewards for directions and assistance.

Please send items for inclusion in this newsletter to Jacqueline Stamper by Thursday lunchtime. Many thanks.

Please remember in your prayers:



Those who are sick:

Youngblood McCray, Ernie Wilson, Thomas Platt, Yan Connell, David Foster, Susanna Michaelis, Juliann Dougherty, Lucas Calvert, Ron Holmes, Peter.

Those who have died recently: Annie Lee, Sue Widden, Stephen Gardner.

Those preparing for Baptism: Ada Grace Birkby

Parish Cycle of Prayer:

For those who live and work on Firbank Road, Derwent Road

For our King and government.

For the families who received the gifts from our Toy Service and Christingle.

For those attending our forthcoming Pilgrim Course, and for Mingle on Mondays.

Zoom Prayer:

Tuesday 9th January is the next meeting of Prayer4 - 30 minutes of prayer, at 4pm every fortnight. There'll be a short Bible reading, some music, some stillness, and space to pray for the people and places on your heart - all from the comfort of your own sofa. Zoom details: [https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8069459310?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8069459310?pwd=cVJI ZDlnNXF2dDVFVThVa0Z0VWE5dz09)

[pwd=cVJI ZDlnNXF2dDVFVThVa0Z0VWE5dz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8069459310?pwd=cVJI ZDlnNXF2dDVFVThVa0Z0VWE5dz09). Meeting ID: 806 945 9310

Passcode 942105

Thought for the Week

“No priest, no theologian stood at the manger of Bethlehem. And yet all Christian theology has its origin in the wonder of all wonders: that God became human. Holy theology arises from knees bent before the mystery of the divine child in the stable. Without the holy night, there is no theology. “God is revealed in flesh,” the God-human Jesus Christ — that is the holy mystery that theology came into being to protect and preserve. How we fail to understand when we think that the task of theology is to solve the mystery of God, to drag it down to the flat, ordinary wisdom of human experience and reason! Its sole office is to preserve the miracle as miracle, to comprehend, defend, and glorify God’s mystery precisely as mystery.” *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

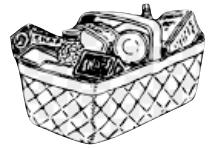
Meeting up

The clergy are available for pastoral support and spiritual direction, so please don't hesitate to be in contact. If you or someone you know is going through a difficult time or is seriously ill, please let us know as soon as possible, to arrange prayers, home communion, a hospital visit, or anointing of the sick. If you would like us to pray for you, or for someone you know, for any reason, please email your request to prayer@christchurchlancaster.org.uk or text the Prayer Chain on 07980 351855. Please ask the person's permission if you'd like them included in the weekly notices.

In Other News...

The Olive Branch Foodbank

During this Christmas school holiday, the foodbank is in great need of tins of curry, chilli con carne, pies, meatballs, hotdogs, stewed steak, tuna, salmon, pork, corned beef, ham, fruit, rice pudding, custard, tomatoes, sweetcorn, carrots, peas, kidney beans, chickpeas; biscuits, crisps, multipacks of cake, cereal, jam, pasta sauce; packs of hot chocolate, coffee, tea, sugar, cordial, longline juice, and many types of toiletries (shampoo, shower gel, toilet rolls, etc.) Or you can give money for them to buy what is needed:



<https://www.the-olivebranch.org.uk/donate/>

Emergency Short Term Refugee Accommodation

RAIS Lancaster will be asking people in local churches to help find short-term accommodation to prevent new refugees suddenly becoming street homeless. (Help with additional costs is available). More information will be made available early in the New Year.

Eco-Group Thought/Action for the Week



If you can, make one of your Christmas gifts a donation to one of the many charities who work with those around the world affected by extreme weather events. Then after Christmas, remember to recycle your unwanted Christmas gifts and wrapping paper - or put away to re-use next year!

Donations for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Donations of washing powder, laundry liquid, men's toiletries, men's hats and gloves needed. Please leave donations in the box at the back of church for RAIS.

Recycling at Christ Church

The next collection of crisp packets, used toothbrushes, plastic bottle tops, toothpaste tubes, and blister packets of tablets will be on the first Sunday of each month.

Giggle (or Groan) of the week - suggestions welcome!

- Q. What's the difference between the Christmas alphabet and the normal alphabet?
A. The Christmas alphabet has Noel.



Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Advent:

God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.'

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

(No psalm this week).

Romans 16.25-27

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

*This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.***

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke 1.26-38

Glory to you, O Lord

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

*This is the Gospel of the Lord **Praise to you, O Christ.***

Prayer after Communion:



Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Scripture Readings for our Worship 31.12.23:



Collect for the First Sunday of Christmas:

Almighty God,
who wonderfully created us in your own image
and yet more wonderfully restored us
through your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,
so we may share the life of his divinity;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Isaiah 61.10 - 62.3

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.
For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.
The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

(No psalm this week).

Galatians 4.4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

*This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.***

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke 2.15-21

Glory to you, O Lord

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

*This is the Gospel of the Lord **Praise to you, O Christ.***

Prayer after Communion:



Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: help your Church to live as one family, united in love and obedience, and bring us all at last to our home in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Community at Christ Church:

Toy Service

Thank you from the Salvation Army who have shared our collection of toys with local families this Christmas.

Help Needed!

Julie Tinnion will be taking a sabbatical from leading Children's Church in the new year. We need help to cover the 4-week gap. Materials will be provided, and all helpers will need a church DBS check. Please see Rev'd Carol.

Christingle

Thank you to everyone who supported both our Christingle Services - here and with Christ Church Primary School. Thank you for all the donations for the work of the Children's Society - a great effort!



Starting in the New Year

On Tuesday 9th January at 7.30pm in the Vicarage, everyone welcome as we begin *Pilgrim - A Course for the Christian Journey*. Whether you're new to church, or wanting to go deeper, this 6-week course will help us think about what it means to turn to Christ. Please ask Rev'd Carol if you'd like more info - why not invite a friend?.

Also starting in the New Year!

On Sunday 21st January at 4pm in Church, we're beginning *Godly Play*. This is a way of sharing Scripture stories, and helping children wonder about their faith, using a Montessori approach, with crafts and a snack to share too. It's free, and especially suitable for primary age children (accompanied by an adult please). We'll meet every month on the 3rd Sunday. If you can help, or would like to come along, please pick up a flyer, and ask Rev'd Carol if you're curious.

Thank you

... to everyone who has shared their time, talents and prayers to make this Christmas festival such a special occasion! There is a myriad of behind the scenes tasks which make the services possible and help welcome our guests. Thank you!

Hall for Hire - Don't forget that the Hall is available for hire, especially at weekends and during the day. £24/first hour and £12 for each subsequent hour/part-hour. Please contact Pat on hall@christchurchlancaster.org.uk 07980 351855 for more info.

Supporting Christ Church

Supporting Christ Church - One-off Gifts

If you would like to make a one-off donation to the church as an offering, to pay a fee, or as a gift to regular funds, you can give through our 'Give a little' page: <https://givealittle.co/campaigns/f63a0655-b270-4d05-bf35-3994747785d0> This will also give you the option to Gift Aid your donation (if you pay tax in the UK), enabling the church to get an extra 25p back from the taxman for every £1 you give.



Supporting Christ Church - Regularly

Christ Church is now taking part in the Parish Giving Scheme, which enables you to give regularly by Direct Debit, and to easily review how much you give depending on circumstances. Online at www.parishgiving.org.uk Or by telephone 0333 002 1271 Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm. For any of these methods our PGS code 030603240 ensures that your gift goes to our church.

Special Appeal - Doorways and Windows

You may be aware that the stonework around the porch is deteriorating, and has been shedding pieces of masonry. We *urgently* need to re-mortar the porch to make it safe and weathertight for decades to come. There are also several of our unique and historic windows which currently do not have protection from stones, pellets, weather, etc - and need a polycarbonate shield fixing. This combined work will cost around £8000. Whilst we can apply for a grant towards some of the work - please will you help by making a donation to the Church Repair Fund? Thank you!

PCC

.... meets on the 10th January. We'll be talking about recycling collections, sound insulation in the Hall, and a request to become a Fairtrade Church, amongst other things. Please let Rev'd Carol or Julie Buckley have your ideas and suggestions for discussion. Please keep your PCC in your prayers, and share this prayer for our church:

Lord God, Together with you by our side, we can bring growth to our Church. Send your Holy Spirit to give us good planning, wise actions, joy in worship and our welcome, the right words when we speak to others. Help our Church grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you, and in service to our local community, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Christ Church Choir

..... sings at the 10.30 service about once a month, plus other special occasions, and practises in church on Thursdays at 7 pm for an hour. New members always welcome; if you're not sure, come along and give it a try for a few weeks! Have a word with Clive or contact him via

cliveshaw54@gmail.com



Key contacts:

Vicar: Rev'd Carol Backhouse..... 01524 942105 revcarolbackhouse@gmail.com
Churchwarden:Ms Jacqueline Stamper
01524 64083
churchwarden@christchurchlancaster.org.uk
Priest with PTO and Choir Contact:Rev'd Clive Shaw
cliveshaw54@gmail.com
Lay Reader:.....Dr Pat Allen
reader@christchurchlancaster.org.uk 01524 39552
Parish Safeguarding Officer:Sue Taylor
safeguarding@christchurchlancaster.org.uk 07547 717060
Children's Church Leader.....Mrs Julie Tinnion
children@christchurchlancaster.org.uk 07749 489623
Parish Secretary:Mrs Julie Buckley
buckleys@live.co.uk 01524 37229
Hall Bookings:.....hall@christchurchlancaster.org.uk 07980 351855
Christ Church SchoolMiss Emma Simpson 01524 60955

If you would like to receive the notices by email, please contact Jacqueline Stamper.

Mingle on Mondays this autumn/winter

This space for warmth, welcome, food and fellowship started up last month, We're open from 11:30 am - 2 pm each Monday (taking a fortnight's break over Christmas and restarting on the 8th January). If you're able to help set up and host, even occasionally, or if you can make soup or cake, or shop for bread and other supplies and bring them along on a Sunday, ready for the Monday, please sign up on the rota at the back of church. Please claim expenses - no-one should be out of pocket. Please pray for all who will come and all who will host, and do please encourage people to come along and enjoy a warm welcome! Thank you.

New Year Planning!

Have you got some great ideas for events and activities at Christ Church in 2024? If so, please come along to a planning meeting on the 14th January after the 10.30am service



Eco-Church Talk at Christ Church

Plastic Packaging in People's Lives: What happens to our plastic recycling and why? 7pm - 8.30pm on Tuesday 16 January 2024 Presentation & discussion led by our very own Dr Clare Mumford, Senior Research Associate, Lancaster University - everyone welcome, please bring a friend!