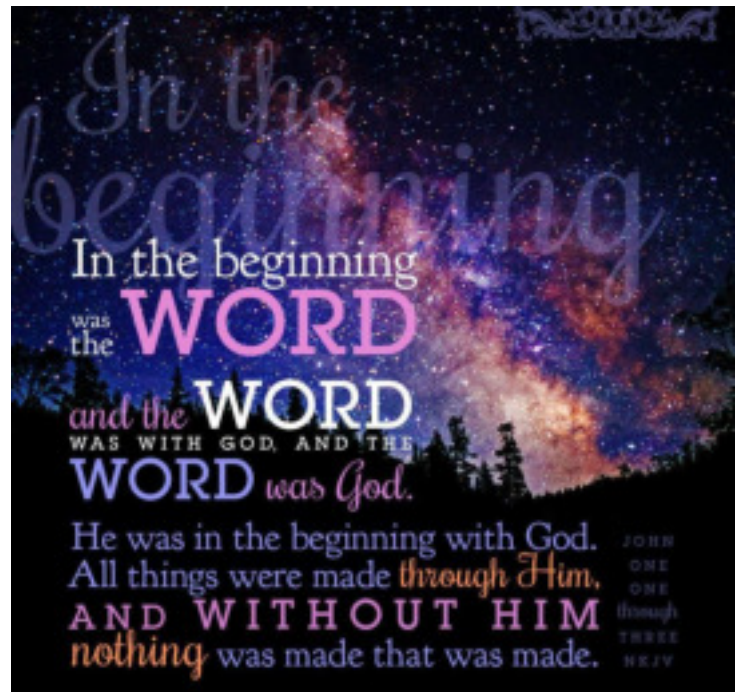


**SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT
7 FEBRUARY 2021**

Today's Gospel Reading (John 1: 1-14) is so well known that many of us could quote it by heart. Powerful words indeed:

“The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world ... to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God ...”

This coming week, may our lives be filled with the love and light of Christ as we share His blessings, giving thanks for those who continue to connect with others, helping each other through the difficult times and bringing cheer in the darker days.



PUBLIC WORSHIP is STILL PAUSED: Our church buildings remain closed for Public Worship, but we hope our wider church family feels connected, supported ...and able to support others. We hope we can gather to worship soon, but we do not know when that will be. Please do keep your church council, the clergy and each other in your prayers, and let us know if there is anything more we could do that might help. God bless.

News from our Team Rector, Peter Reiss:

Lent - We will be running a Lent Course on Prayer: different approaches to prayer; different ways of praying; resources to help us pray; we hope it will excite, encourage and resource us as individuals and as churches. It will be available online and we will distribute it to those who are not on-line. There will be family resources and lots of ideas and help.

Ash Wednesday (17 February) – We do not (yet) know if we will be able to mark the start of Lent together, though we suspect not (sadly). There is a suggestion that people who would like to, could have a short service to pray at home with (or without) imposition of ashes. Please could you let the clergy know if this is something you would like so we can provide what you could use by way of liturgy. Many may feel they should mark it rather differently given the situation and our isolation.



A REMINDER to you for the *CALL to DAILY PRAYER* at 6pm each evening to pray for our nation.

In response to reaching the terrible milestone of 100,000 deaths from COVID-19, the Archbishops invite all to call on God in Prayer. More than ever, this is a time when we need to love each other. Prayer is an expression of love.

We remember before God those who have died and we pray that God's love will surround all who mourn them, now and always ...



Gracious God, as we remember before you the thousands who have died, surround us and all who mourn with your strong compassion. Be gentle with us in our grief, protect us from despair, and give us grace to persevere and face the future with hope in Jesus Christ our risen Lord. Amen.

Wishing a very Happy 80th Birthday to **Grace Cheeseman** (St. Andrew's Church, BX), who celebrates her special day on Friday 5th February. And also to **Kath Pearson** (Christ Church), whose birthday was on 3rd February. *The Lord bless you and keep you...*



Although our Church Services are currently paused, we include here the list from our Parish for those in our prayers:

If you know of others to be included, please contact me. DH
(Grateful thanks to David Rushton for providing the names from his record of the Book of Remembrance.)

Prayers of Intercession

Hear us dear Lord, as we pray for the sick, the suffering, and those in need. Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Our prayers and thoughts at this time are especially for:

Yvonne Ashmore; Charles Hill; Chris Maden;
...and any others known to us.

For our community: **Staff and workers of Fortalice and Urban Outreach;**

We also pray for the departed:

Joyce Richardson; Evelyn Kennedy; Ken Sharpe; Captain Sir Tom Moore;

We remember too those who mourn, that You may provide comfort and help in their loss and sustain them through their grief.

Hear us as we remember those who have died in the faith of Christ; according to your promises, grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

**Elsie Handley; Christine Howarth; Patricia Cannon; James Weaver;
James Charnock; John Charnock; Annie Symons; Winifrid Doyle;
Patricia Head; Cissie Holgate;**

You are the Alpha and the Omega; may we one day rejoice with you in heaven.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and all the human family to your unending love. Amen.



On Tuesday (2 February ~ Candlemas), we were saddened to hear of the death of the 100-year old hero of Lockdown who, by walking one hundred laps of his garden had raised over £30 million for the NHS.

Mark Davies, Bishop of Middleton, posted these words on the death of Captain Sir Tom Moore:

***Giving thanks for this truly inspirational man.
May light perpetual shine upon him. R.I.P.
Praying for his family in their great loss & for all
who mourn the loss of loved ones.***

***Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant
depart in peace.***

A message from Reverend Carol Hayden:

Dear all I hope this finds you well. Just a quick update as to where we are with public worship during these difficult times.

I will be looking at our risk assessment this coming week. We then have to decide if it is safe for us to reinstate public worship. I am conscious that it is nearly a year that we have been in some form of lockdown. I miss seeing you all very much. However your safety - and that of your family and loved ones - is of the utmost importance.

Across the team we will be providing lots of resources for Lent, Holy Week and for Easter should we not be able to meet in person.

I am also conscious that not everybody has access to online material so, wherever possible, I will post out resources. Please could you let me know as soon as possible if you would like to receive hard copies of any materials. Ring me on 01204 587150.

I have been trying to ring as many people as possible. If I haven't called you yet and you would like to chat please give me a ring.

I hope and pray that you are all coping as well as you can and I look forward to the day that we can all be together again.

With love and prayers Reverend Carol.

Our Team Rector, Canon Peter Reiss is unwell, hence there is no message from him this week. We wish him a speedy recovery; our thoughts and prayers are with him as he (hopefully!) tries to take things easier in the coming days... God bless you, Peter ❤️🙏

We are grateful to you, Peter, for your loving care to us all across the Turton Moorland Team. Please now take care of yourself as you shake off this nasty winter bug.

May we remind you of something quoted a few weeks ago in this letter:

Taking care is one way to show your love.
Another way is letting people take care
of you when you need it.

Our wonderful church friend and skilled artist, Ken Holt, has sent a self portrait, with the caption:

'Hope to get back walking soon.' We hope so too, Ken 😊!!



The Boy, the mole,
the fox and the Horse



Charlie Mackesy

In the meantime, here are some positive images from the artist **Charlie Mackesy**, author and illustrator of the brilliant and motivational book: **'The Boy, the mole, the fox and the Horse.'**

Charlie M has been sharing thought-provoking and powerful drawings on social media...

One day



...and cake is always guaranteed to cheer me up ...!!!!



"Well hello"



A reflection on this Sunday's Gospel reading from our Reverend Chris Jamieson:

JOHN 1, 1-14 *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.'*

What a wonderful statement, what a joy to be able to declare this to the world. This introduction to John's gospel is different from the opening verses of Genesis. There it says, 'In the beginning... God.' Here, in John's gospel, we have the words 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.' God and the Word are intimately connected and they have been since the very beginning. This is part of the mystery of our faith 'the Word was with God and the Word was God.' God the Father and God the Son are one with God the Holy Spirit intricately and miraculously united into one being.

Not only are God and the Word 'of one being' but it is through this eternal relationship that life was brought into being. And this was no ordinary life but the life that was the Light for all humankind. The Word came as both life and Light, and even though there was darkness, the darkness was not able to overcome the Light.

The narrative now turns from heaven to earth when we meet John who was sent to bear witness to the Light. He stresses from the very start that he is not the Light but that he has come to reveal the Light to others. John bore witness to the Light, and this Light was in fact the creator of the world, but the Light was not accepted or even recognised by many people on earth. The creator was present, God was, and is present, on earth and the people did not, and still do not, acknowledge him.

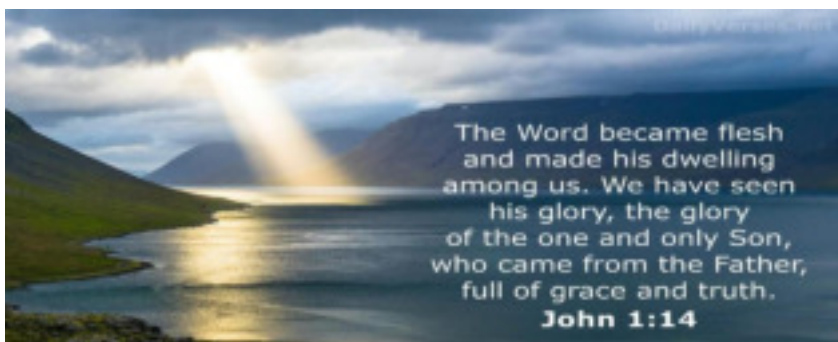
The Light is universal and is available to all people; no one is left outside of its illuminating power. We see this total inclusivity throughout the gospel story 'God so loved the world' not just some of the world or a chosen few but the world - the whole world - including everybody in it. 'When I am lifted up I will draw **all** people to myself'. Again not just some people but **all** people, no one is to be excluded. However, even with this inclusivity, there is a decision to be made. God, the Light of the world, is available but some people still prefer to live in darkness.

But the choice is there; and for all 'who received him... he gave power to become children of God.' We are given this incredible gift the ability to become children of God. We can't do this on our own we need to recognise the Light, to believe in the name of Jesus and then it is only possible through the grace of God himself.

In our reading, we come then to what may be one of the most significant verses in the Bible. ***'And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.'*** A clear statement that God became man, God became fully present in human form. God was Emmanuel... **God with us.**

John declared the truth of the gospel, he bore witness to the Light but in verse 14 it says that we have also 'seen his glory' so we too have a responsibility to bear witness to the Light. We have received 'grace upon grace' so we have a duty to share this grace with others. God has given us so much through the gift of Jesus that surely the very least we can do is share that gift with those around us.

The opening verses of John's gospel are a call to mission, a sending out. John was sent to prepare the way for Jesus and Jesus was sent as the defining example of missionary



undertaking. He came to bring life and Light and we are called to take this message out into our communities. God supplies the grace we need for this task but we need to listen to his directions, to his plan for our mission. As we set out on a new and challenging year let us make the opening verses of John's gospel our rallying cry for outreach and mission in our area. 'The Word was with

God and the Word was God.' God, in Jesus came to live among us in human form; he was prepared to come down from heaven for our sake so we too need to be prepared to take his message of salvation to all with whom we come into contact. We need to put our trust in the Word, the Light of the world, and go out like John to bear witness to that Light. ~ *Chris J* ~



Jennifer Thompson, from our St. Andrew's Church family, responded last week to the 'Parish News', sharing this beautiful scene she'd photographed ...and revealing that she had 'felt God's whisper whilst taking it'. Jennifer added the message: "Have a great day, stay safe and God bless."

Enquiring further, Jennifer shared:

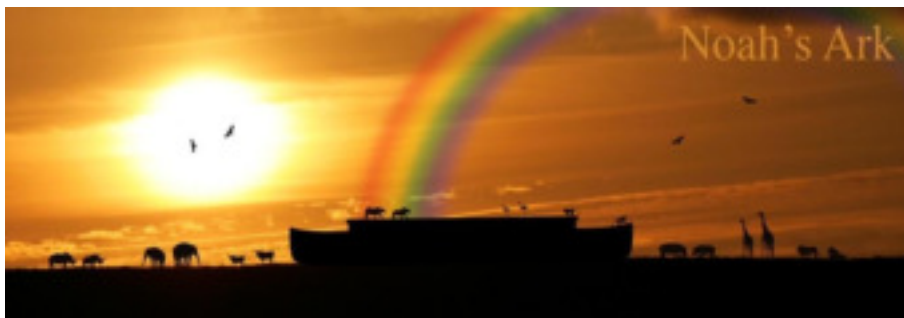
"I felt a whisper of hope, and the tree signifies a Christian with good roots standing firm through a tough cold winter,

although it is not yet time for flowers, leaves and fruit to show. We are rooted in God's love and will stand firm and true to him, and there is hope soon we will be fruitful. It also links to the parable of the sower and the seeds: the good knowledge of God's love sown in good soil to form strong roots and be taken hold of and followed to produce a strong tree bearing good fruit and ultimately yielding more crops. It's all there happening and there is hope for the future at this time."

LISTEN FOR THE
WHISPER OF GOD:
"DO NOT FEAR
FOR I AM WITH YOU."

LUKE 4:10

Jennifer also added: "One thing I felt this week relevant to this time we are all going through: When the last raindrop fell and the floods had ended, Noah still had to wait on his Ark. He waited and he prayed. It was only in God's timing that land was finally found, a rainbow of hope made and time to disembark and start anew.....



Many of us are wishing for these waters to recede; for this season to end. But they shall only do so on God's timing. It's all part of his plan. So wait and pray. Eventually we will be free and hopefully God has spoken to us and we will all start, anew"

Hope you have a lovely day and God blesses your works today ☺. Jennifer Thompson.

Two weeks ago, Reverend Carol spoke of **Psalm 139** and of how the Psalmists were able to momentarily remove their 'masks' and be loved unconditionally. Last week, on one of my favourite Facebook Pages (Limping to Jerusalem), there was a post about Paul's journey, which struck a chord:

"Paul was a man who trusted in his religious pedigree: a Pharisee of Pharisees of the tribe of Benjamin, etc... Yet, until the Lord confronted him on the road to Damascus, these outward things masked his true nature. Confronted by Christ, Paul not only saw God's glory, he saw his own deep sinfulness. His opinion of himself was crushed; his outer man, broken. We too are on a journey. We too mask our fallen nature. Yet, a time will come when, in His mercy, the Lord will confront us. As He faced Paul on the road to Damascus, He will meet us on the road to DE-MASK US."



~Francis Frangipane~

Andrew Sackville, a keen photographer and friend of Julia & Mark Head, has been in touch to share his photographs of some of our beautiful stained glass windows in Christ Church Walmsley. You may have seen some of our windows in the backdrops to the online service led by Peter Reiss last Sunday. (Attached to today's e-mail is the complete set, of which a taster on this page):

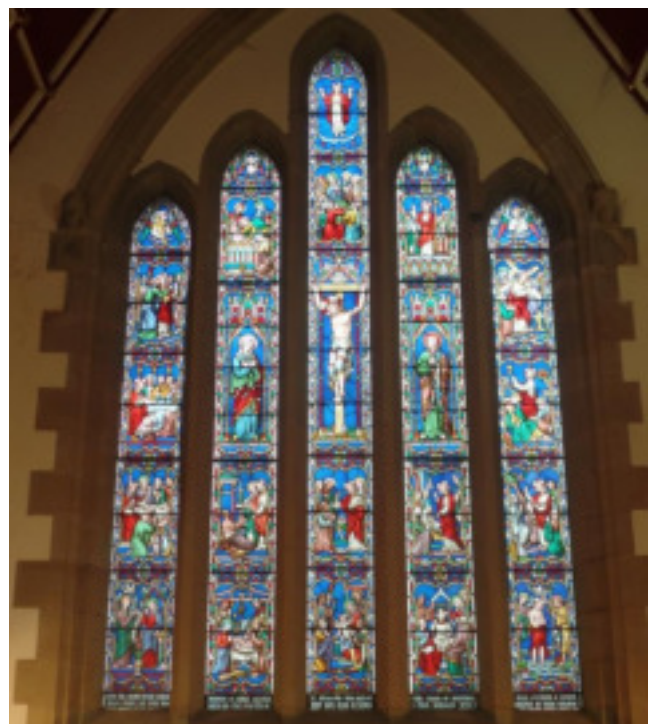
Andrew writes: 'Stained glass 277': Staying in Lancashire, today we visit Christ Church Walmsley, just to the North of Bolton, and part of Egerton. My friends from the Cantique Chamber Choir will recognise the church, since we performed a concert there together with a group of local singers a few years ago. (*The memorial Concert for Margaret Ribchester.*)

As usual my camera came with me to record the stained glass before we started our rehearsal for an evening concert.

The Church itself was built in 1839-40; and is quite a large church situated at the top of a small knoll. It has some fine stained glass. The oldest glass predates the Church; and is a small hand-painted coat of arms window now located somewhat incongruously in a late 20th century lavatory.

The fine East Window dates from 1872, and is from the firm of William Wailes, a leading glass maker at the time. There are two good windows designed by Burne-Jones for the firm Morris & Co in 1889. You can recognise these windows by the two large figures in each of the windows, with small associated scenes below, surrounded by floral glass.

Many of the other windows are by the firm Ballantine & Gardiner, and date from the 1890s. Enjoy.



Bill Braviner posts a different #MorningPrayer each day, sharing blessings of abundant life and light. Amen.

Fill us, Lord, with love for you and for the light you shine into our lives and our world. Give us hearts full of desire to share that light with others, to draw them into your love, to share your blessings of abundant life; not to judge or condemn, but to inspire.



A TRIBUTE TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE DIED

by Jennie Webster

**The Corona virus has taken you away from all your loved ones, friends and colleagues
But your spirit lives on and your loving memory as your candle shines so brightly.
Because you have now gone to Heaven where the Corona Virus is no more and you are in the arms of an Angel where no evil can touch you.**

**Remembering you're a hero in our loving hearts and in our loving memory.
GOD BLESS YOU, MAY YOU REST IN PEACE.**

Jo Woods has been in touch this week ☺:

“Several years ago, at an open day in a lovely old Church in Kent, I was perusing a collection of parishioners’ favourite prayers. Amongst all the long and flowery ones: ‘**Good Morning, God; What do You have planned today? Can I help?**’ This is now my favourite morning prayer.” ~ *Jo Woods*

And Kath Grieve sent me her ‘Thought for the Day’:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful
face,
And the things of earth will
grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and
grace.

“Yesterday’s Sunday sheet quoted Peter on the importance of turning our eyes on God in these difficult times. It reminded me of a chorus we used to sing in Sunday School: ‘Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look straight in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.’” ~ *Kath Grieve*

(See the link in the cover e-mail for a version of this recorded in 2010)

A Morning Prayer
Lord help me to remember
that nothing is going
to happen to me today
that You and I
together can't handle.
Amen.

Love and blessings, Reverend Carol Hayden,
Dawn Hitchen - *Church Warden*
+ *Authorised Lay Minister for Pastoral Care*
Angie Foster – *Assistant Church Warden*

Iain Stewart - *Church Warden*

**We wish you FAITH, HOPE,
PEACE, JOY and LOVE.**

If you need to speak with a church representative, please contact:

Dawn Hitchen dawn@walmsleyparish.org or telephone 304142.

Angie Foster angie@walmsleyparish.org or

Reverend Carol: revcarol@walmsleyparish.org or 01204 587150. Thank you.

PLEASE REMEMBER: For those who don't have internet or social media, do check out the Church of England free phone line: ‘**DAILY HOPE**’. Friends continue to tell me that they have enjoyed this resource. Please do use it.

The Church of England free phone: ‘DAILY HOPE’

0800 804 8044 to listen to hymns, reflections and prayers.

