



**All in
this
together
for God**



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

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2023

Price 20p

Please do not come to church if you have any COVID symptoms

Do wear a mask if it makes you feel more comfortable

Hand sanitiser will be available for you to use

Parish Worship in February

Service on Thursday February 2nd

Holy Trinity 3.30pm - Eucharist

February 5th – 3rd Sunday before Lent

United Service 10.30am - Eucharist at St James'
with Archdeacon David Sharples

Service on Thursday February 9th

Holy Trinity 3.30pm – Service of the Word

February 12th – 2nd Sunday before Lent

St James 9.30am – Eucharist

St Gabriel's 9.30am – Eucharist

St Michael's 11.00am – Eucharist

St Peter's 11.00am – Eucharist

Sunday Afternoon at St James – 4pm

Services on Thursday February 16th

Holy Trinity 3.30pm – Evening Prayer

February 19th – Sunday next before Lent

St James 9.30am – Service of the Word/Morning Prayer

St Gabriel's 9.30am – Eucharist

St Michael's 11.00am – Eucharist

St Peter's 11.00am – Service of the Word/Morning Prayer

Service on Thursday 23rd February

Holy Trinity 3.30pm Evening Prayer

February 26th – 1st Sunday of Lent

Shared Service at St Gabriel's 9.30am – Eucharist

Shared Service at St Michael's 11.00am – Eucharist

Sunday Afternoon at St James 4.00pm

Service on Thursday, March 2nd

Holy Trinity 3.30pm Eucharist

March 5th – 2nd Sunday of Lent

United Service 10.30am – Eucharist at St Peter's

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" and "I am the Good Shepherd"

February is, I think, a strange month. It's short with only 28 days; it's a let-down after Christmas, Epiphany and Candlemas the great church festivals; in church seasons we go into Ordinary time (the liturgical colour is Green). The weather in the UK is dull and cold and even though the daylight hours are increasing we still seem to be in very dark times. Added to that we have the 'cost of living crisis', strikes, covid and flu. A very depressing state of affairs.



Writing this I was reminded that music takes a great part in the Christian faith. A modern hymn by Bernadette Farrell reminds us that in dark times Christ is our light and addresses many of the issues we are wrestling with today.

1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

3. Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

5. Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to
belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

Chorus

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered
today.

In ordinary time, we have the opportunity to learn, grow, explore the Christian story, and rekindle our discipleship and mission through the readings set in the lectionary, in particular the Psalms.

In the Scriptures, people used the Psalms to encourage themselves in times of difficulty, for hope and peace. They sang the Psalms of Ascent as they walked up to Jerusalem for Jewish festivals. A psalm is set each day in our lectionary readings, but on Sundays, in our services currently, we rarely read the set Psalm of the day. Perhaps it is something we could do ourselves at home.



The Psalm most people know is Psalm 23. David the shepherd boy's Psalm is very familiar and is read at all kinds of services. We sing it to different tunes Crimond, Brothers James Air (my school song), the Vicar of Dibley theme tune, and the more recent new Stuart Townend version with the much loved and heart felt chorus

And I will trust in You alone,
And I will trust in You alone,
For Your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.



acknowledging that God is always there embracing us in his unconditional all-encompassing love and that we can Trust in God alone. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, carries us on his shoulders when we are tired and weary.

As The Good Shepherd Parish we have a deeply rooted faith in Jesus the Shepherd.

But are we five flocks rooted in vital aspects of God's kingdom

- ✠ St Michael and All Angels along with St Gabriel's - the Angel messengers
- ✠ St Peters and St James - the disciples
- ✠ Holy Trinity the foundation of our faith Father Son and Holy Spirit God three in one

or are we aspiring to become a single flock to fulfil the Gospel message of loving our neighbour and sharing Gods love mercy and peace.



Sheep have much to teach us. I love the sight of new lambs gambolling along - a sign of creation and new life. In a recent farming programme about Shepherds in Wales, the key to gathering in the sheep was teamwork. Sheep are very caring mothers and will even 'adopt' a lamb from another mother. They also accept other animals into the flock. There are many different breeds of sheep varying in size and colour but they can be kept together as one flock and they know and follow the Shepherd.

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me."

How do the sheep know the shepherd? Do they sit down with charts, like WWII airplane spotters, memorising the silhouettes of shepherds and hired hands, so that they can tell one from the other? They know the shepherd by just being with him. That's all. The sheep know the shepherd because he's always there. He's there in the green pastures, he's there beside the still waters - and he's also there in the dark valley, when it's harder to see him.

CONGRATULATIONS!

To Mark Howarth on completing his Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.
Very well done on this brilliant achievement!



Psalm 23 is unusual because it suggests an individual rather than communal relationship with God - The Lord is MY shepherd. But the Psalm is for everyone and everyone experiences the same love and care from God. By trusting God and accepting Christ as our light we can feel safe and loved in our personal faith. But this is not exclusive to us and we are encouraged to share that trust and love with others, living out our faith in the local community.

Are you trusting in him alone shining as a light for Christ in our single flock?

Revd Sheila Cant





St Gabriel's Church Place of Welcome / Warm Space

Free refreshments and activities

Beaufort Road, Ashton Mondays 9.30am – 12noon

NEW: Every 3rd Monday each month, St Gabriel's will be open 9.30am - 4.00pm, offering lunch followed by activities and entertainment!

Crux - Manchester Diocese Magazine

Crux is issued 5 times each year and is now available electronically on the Manchester Diocese website. Just type Crux into the search box.

Prayers

These prayers are based on Psalm 23. King David (who wrote the psalm) was a shepherd when he was younger, and he learned a lot about being content in God's care.

Lord, you are my shepherd, I lack nothing.

You have given me much, dear Lord. Please help me to be contented, not always yearning for more, more, more.

You make me lie down in green pastures, you lead me beside quiet waters, you refresh my soul.

Faithful Spirit, in this stressful time, may I follow you in peaceful paths and lie down beside still waters, resting in your care.

You guide me along the right paths for your name's sake. Good Shepherd, may I learn to hear your voice and to follow where you lead, for you always lead me along right paths.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Mighty Saviour, you have conquered darkness and have brought me to live in your light. Help me to see that light when all around me seems dark.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Gracious Father, you invite me to share in your banquet as a dearly-loved child. Thank you for accepting me and welcoming me home.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in your house, my Lord, forever. Eternal Lord, thank you that you knew me before I was born, you are with me through every day of my life, and I can live with you, now and for ever. Amen

First lambs of the year 2023 Anglesey



Contact Information

Parish Safeguarding Officer : – Moira Wilson – moira_watt@hotmail.com

Wardens and Ministry Team:

Parish Wardens: Tina Howarth 07411 773336, Les Smith 07780 386169

Holy Trinity: Judith Hilton 344 5440, Les Smith 07780 386169

St James: Tina Howarth 07411 773336,

St Gabriel's: Sandra Kiy 07740 766687

St Michael's: Michael Winterbottom (Chair of DCC) 07753 987124

St Peter's: Carol Farnsworth 07847 361294 , Phil Bowden 07807 346891

Revd Sheila Cant 07929 440791 sheila.cant@btinternet.com

Revd Pat Lodge 07986 759405 mrspelodge@gmail.com

Cath Sheldon (ALM) 07702 137596

Admin

Jan Ratcliffe – Parish Treasurer 07734 695117 jr1.goodshepherd@gmail.com

3rd Ashton (St James) Scouts

RACE NIGHT 2023

Saturday 11th March

Doors open 7pm First Race 7.30pm

Tickets: £5 Adults £3 Children

Includes Supper!

Contact Tina: 07411 773336

Is God calling me to some sort of Christian ministry?

If you feel called to some sort of ministry in the church it will be with the minister's support. Some areas of ministry are developed primarily at the local level, but for other



ministries, the selection and the training are done through the diocese. Others feel called to explore a different call, maybe to support local projects, to help at a night shelter, or a Sure-Start project, or a youth project run in the community. After all the call to be salt and light in the community means we should be out beyond the church walls, and where people meet the need is greatest.

If you believe that God may be calling you to ordained or Reader ministry, please contact the Director of Vocations [Nick Smeeton](#). Nick works with a team of colleagues, who together will help you explore your sense of call. See also the document [Exploring a Vocation](#).

FINDING A MENTOR

The Church of England can put you in touch with a mentor who you may find helpful if for are at any stage on the journey towards ordained vocations. A mentor is a knowledgeable friend to accompany you along the way. All the Mentors are volunteers who are passionate about supporting future clergy. Your Mentor will not be making decisions on your process or be your advocate.

For more details and to apply for a mentor, visit the [CofE website](#).

FOUNDATIONS FOR MINISTRY

[Foundations for Ministry](#) is a lay training course for anyone who wants to find and grow in the ministry to which God is calling them. FFM is a part-time lay training course run by our diocese which is suitable for anyone who wants to serve God in the church and in the world. People may go on Foundations for Ministry to explore many different kinds of Christian ministry:

- serving God where they are at work, in the family, in the community
- specific roles within the church
- ordained ministry
- licensed lay ministry (Readers, Church Army).

For more information, please contact [Jamie Mackenzie](#).

St James on Sunday Afternoon

Fun family worship



2nd, 4th and 5th Sunday of the month at 4 pm

What do we do? We learn about the love of God.

How do we do that? Through games, activities, craft, worship and prayer.

What else do we do? For those who wish, there is Eucharist on the 2nd Sunday of the month. We enjoy some food together, too.

Who's it for? For families – we've had babies up to teens all together.

All welcome

Come and see for yourselves – you'll be really welcome!



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Our churches have promised to serve only
Fairly Traded Tea and Coffee and to work for justice for the world's poor