

Dear Friends

What a strange Advent/Christmas this is for us all. The normal Christmas festivities are no longer in full flow. The music is silent at the Christmas parties. The hustle and bustle of the Christmas markets is no more... and yet in the midst of the silence, we find ourselves watching and waiting for a light that shines as brightly today as it did 2,000 years ago. Jesus has never and will never desert us, whatever life may throw our way.

Each one of us have a choice this year, and each one of us has to do our own risk assessment. The desperate need to see loved ones we've barely seen this year is inevitable. Yet at the same time there's a word of caution for us all, we want to see our loved ones for many Christmases to come, so each one of us must try and stay safe, and protect others around us.

The NHS have done an amazing job this year and we will always be grateful for the hard work and loving dedication of the nurses and doctors who have saved so many lives. They, like you, will remain in my thoughts and prayers and may I wish you all a very Merry Christmas. May you truly know that you are not alone this Christmas, and God will always remain close at hand in our hearts and minds.

So, let's take time aside to remember a baby we now know would change our world forever... the same baby who will continue to light up and illuminate our world forever... the same baby who, bit by bit, will continue to transform each one of our lives with love, forgiveness, wholeness and healing... the same baby who would one day grow up and be willing to sacrifice the life he so dearly loved in order that one day we may see and believe that God is real right here amongst, us right now.

Amen

Huw

Rev Huw Thomas

Thank you received from Delamere School

We've received a lovely thank you message for the £402.50 donation we sent to Delamere School, which was 50% of what was raised by our church community during 'Generous July'. It read as follows:

"Thank you so much, what a lovely surprise! We are currently fundraising towards some equipment for our new hydrotherapy pool that is being built and also for a new swing for our field & this money will go towards these projects. Any money we raise or that we receive in donations has a direct benefit to all our children and we really do appreciate your support".

Let The Light Shine at 2 p.m. on Saturday 19th December

Are you looking for somewhere to reflect quietly during the build up to your Christmas celebrations during Advent? Then, please watch and wait with us inside St Michael's Church. Let The Light Shine is a service of prayers, readings, music and silences, and it will be led by Rev Huw and Bill Pye.

Diocesan Nine Lessons and Carols, 7 p.m. on Wednesday 23rd December

Please join us for a digital service of Nine Lessons and Carols. We have spent this year at a distance from one another, so come along and share the comfort, joy and togetherness of Christmas with choirs, musicians, and readers from across the diocese.

Join the service live at 7pm on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ManchesterDiocese/live

Or YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/manchesterdiocesevideo

Or watch the service in your own time!

Online Christmas Carol service, 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve

Please join us for our extra special Online Christmas Carol Service. It will be a fun occasion for people of all ages to join in with. This will be a Zoom service, but it will also be streamed to [Facebook Live](#) and uploaded later to our [YouTube channel](#). The service will include:

- the nativity story
- a Christmas carol jukebox
- and lots of Christmas jokes

So, have your mince pies, Christmas cake, snacks, and a glass of something nice at the ready.

Doorstep Carols, 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve

Why don't you and your neighbours get involved in this wonderful national event?

You'll be able to join with other doorsteps from across the nation this Christmas to sing carols together, and spread some much-needed cheer! Carols on the Doorstep is spreading far and wide as more local radio stations come on board.

It would be great if we could add streets from across Flixton, and you can do this by becoming a street coordinator in the run up to the 24th of December. There's lots of information available on the website, including carol words and sheet music.

www.doorstepcarols.co.uk

Socially distanced Midnight Mass, 11.30 pm. on Christmas Eve

We are holding a beautiful Midnight Mass service, inside St Michael's Church, starting at 11.30 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Full details can be found here

<https://fb.me/e/6WMwrLpKo>,

Online Midnight Mass service

If you'd like to attend an online version of this extra special service, please join Manchester Cathedral's service via Facebook Live, or listen to it live on BBC Radio 4.

<https://fb.me/e/24YS6o8ly>

Advent and Christmas Services at St Michael's

You can also find the details of our Advent and Christmas service information on our website www.stmichaelsflixton.org/christmas, Google calendar

www.stmichaelsflixton.org/calendar, and A Church Near You page

www.achurchnearyou.com/church/15892/

Due to the coronavirus pandemic there may be changes and additions forced upon us, so please make sure you continue to keep an eye on our website and social media pages where any changes will be announced.

Harold Lievesley

Sadly, Harold Lievesley a much-loved member of our congregation died on the 6th December at Salford Royal Hospital aged 85. He will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved him.

Online Advent Reflections and Prayers

Our Ministry Team are recording a series of short weekly reflections for this year's Advent season. They'll be available to watch on our YouTube channel, and via our website, and Facebook and Twitter pages too. Rev Fiona Jenkinson and Rev Alex Clephane have already recorded their versions.

You can watch them by visiting a [special YouTube playlist we've created](#).

Christmas in Flixton

Linda from Flixton Fellowship Church kindly provided this email update, which was included in the last edition of this newsletter. However, I have underlined in the text below the activities what they have planned for this coming weekend:

For the weekend of 19th/20th Dec, angels will be put around the Flixton Rd/Irlam Rd areas and the Nativity will be near the entrance to the walled garden behind Flixton House.

Our prayer is that this Christmas will be memorably good for the people of Flixton!!

The plan is that this will be a surprise for folk, so we are asking folk not to post anything on social media until the relevant Saturday. At this point we will advertise the Nativity viewing (separately for each weekend) using the M41ers and Next-door networks as well as individual messages.

If anyone from St Michael's is willing to offer help, here are the tasks:

- Help to hang up angels on each of the Saturday mornings. This will involve meeting at the location at 6.30am. The more folk we have to help, the quicker you can get back to bed ;)*
- Help to erect the gazebo and nativity scene and lighting. This will involve meeting at the location asap after the morning service, no later than 1pm. We could really do with some men for this please.*
- Help to erect the second gazebo and set out a sanitisation station as well as leaflets. This will involve being at the location at 1pm.*
- Stewards - wearing a high-viz vest (can be provided). This involves being at the nativity scene location at 1.30pm to receive instructions for queue management, which will be for the 2-hour period of the nativity viewing.*
- Give out leaflets at the nativity scene. This will involve being at the location from 1.30pm until 4pm.*
- Help to clear up at 4pm.*

Donna is coordinating helpers, so anyone offering should let her know how they can help and on which dates. Her email is: donnaallen480@yahoo.co.uk and her phone number is: 07984 696060.

Online Christmas shopping

If you are wondering how difficult this is to get started, easyfundraising is probably the best place if you are an online shopping novice. Plus, you'll have access to over 4,400

shops (including Amazon). Please watch these short videos from easyfundraising demonstrating how 'easy' it is to raise money for our church using a computer <https://youtu.be/Q9fPOZ6zm8I> or an app <https://youtu.be/sxgtWTjGwMg>

There are some great examples of how this is raising money for St Michael's. A member of our congregation recently bought a new office chair from Viking via easyfundraising. This resulted in a £6.26 donation for our Church. Another has renewed their home phone and broadband contract from PlusNet and this will result in a £13.50 donation.

Thanks to everyone who has chosen to support St Michael's Church.

Sunday morning services – Zoom, Facebook Live and YouTube

We have an extra special guest for our online service on the Fourth Sunday of Advent 11.30 a.m. on Sunday 20th December. The sermon has been especially recorded by Bishop Mark Ashcroft, Bishop of Bolton. You'll be able to sing three beautiful Advent hymns - 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel', 'A great and mighty wonder', and 'Hills of the North, rejoice'.

You'll be able participate in this service via Zoom using your electronic device, mobile phone or landline. This service will also be available to watch via a simultaneous broadcast using Facebook Live, and later on in the day via our YouTube channel. The service is accessible by a PowerPoint presentation which is shared on the screen.

If you'd like to attend our Zoom services, please subscribe to our full email newsletter at www.stmichaelsflixton.org/emailnewslettersandaskingforhelp

Friday night prayer with Rev Fiona

Rev Fiona's night prayer services are taking place on a weekly basis at 9 p.m. each Friday. You can watch live, and comment if you wish, by visiting our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/StMichaelsFlixton

You can watch previous week's recordings on our [YouTube channel](#).

Other prayers and reflections

Members of the St Michael's Ministry Team are planning other prayerful, reflective and other meditative activities which we'll make available to you all via our website, social media pages, and YouTube channel. They can be found also found within these dedicated YouTube playlists:

- www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMGlwLyxfaMj7d9sf_Op6dU0PgPxDVDvp
- www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMGlwLyxfaMh_Y19OSR86EESMcVv7_BfQ

Latest coronavirus information and how this affects services being held inside St Michael's Church building

Rev Huw has requested that you all regularly 'keep an eye on' the latest advice being issued by The Diocese of Manchester and The Church of England on the current coronavirus situation. You can do this in the following ways:

- [Diocese website](#)
- [Diocese Facebook page](#)
- [Diocese Twitter page](#)
- [Church of England website](#)
- [Church of England Facebook page](#)

Using and setting up Zoom

Zoom can be found by visiting their website <https://zoom.us> and clicking on the 'sign up it's free' button'. Once you have completed this process, please follow the steps on the image shown on the next page.

Alternatively, online help and guidance is available via [Zoom](#) or [Gadgets Now](#). Zoom can be used via your computer, tablet, and mobile and landline phones (for audio only), and there is a downloadable app to use as well.

