

All Saints Rectory, M40 1LR

25th November 2025

Dear Friends,

Greetings from the Rectory as the church year draws to a close, and as we begin to look forward to Christmas. I am pleased to report no further mechanical misbehaviour from my car, although the tyre pressure warning light comes on for no apparent reason, even though the tyres are at the right PSI!

Don't worry, there are some photos later on.

The PCC

Thank you for tolerating my lecture about what the PCC is in the last letter. If you wish to follow its proceedings you can find the agenda, reports and minutes on our pages on A Church Near You. The September meeting is up now that the minutes were approved at our most recent meeting on 11th November.

The hyperlink is here: [All Saints PCC Meeting 19th September 2025 - All Saints Newton Heath - A Church Near You](#)

In January I will be able to report on some of the important work and decisions made at the November meeting. In the mean time you may be able to experience some of them.

Young people's ministry

There is even more progress to report since the September minutes, in terms of worship and voices at least. We have been piloting a "buddy-up" of adults and younger members for the Sunday readings. An adult on the Readers' rota shares or hands over the Sunday readings (or reading in the case of Book of Common Prayer Sundays).

Some very gentle training will be offered for young people, and adults too, who would like to become full servers on Sundays. This means helping the celebrant set up the altar table and assist in the ablutions after Holy Communion is distributed. Think of it as a special and reverend washing up.

Those in the 'serving team', young or old, will have opportunities to meet up with other teams from churches in the area and beyond. We have an audit of the robes we have.

In the New Year, we are likely to be launching something school or Youth Centre-based as an after school club which is principally for the pupils at All Saints School. The working title is "Prayer, Praise and Pizza". The food may well be more wide-ranging than pizza, parents will be pleased to hear, and will of course include salad. Ken Peden, from St John's House in Bury, the diocesan office, is helping us with that. It's at least a start, although for the time being we're not in a position to offer anything on a regular basis for those in compulsory education up to the age of 18. What we will be able to offer is likely to be more social than "catechetical".

I've nothing more to report on adult groups, but I hope that 2026 will see more of us meeting up for worship or socially beyond Sundays.

All Saints Garden

There have been some really good developments there. It's early days in our relationship with Manchester City Council, which is at last engaged with the care and maintenance of the garden. This is legally part of the churchyard, which was closed for burials in 1854. Under the terms of the Local Government Act (s215) Manchester City Council is a joint occupant of the Garden, but it remains church property. The other portion of the historic churchyard, and which remains consecrated ground, which may seem odd, is used during the day in term time as a playground by our school.

Between us, Council Officers and I, have deployed a local volunteer, Claire (you may have seen her in her 'High-Viz' in recent weeks, who loves tidying up and hates overgrowth. Over the last four weeks she has made a huge difference to the frontage (or shop window) of the church. She works in all weathers. We are very, very grateful.

On a calm morning, last Saturday, an ancient tree came down on the north side, and we are awaiting a tree surgeon to remove it. There may be some timber available for seasoning and working. My mother's husband, Roger, has turned two bowls from a log I took down to West Sussex, from one of the ash trees at the front of the church we had to fell in March 2024.

Schools

All Saints

I am always very proud of the school whenever I go in, which is almost daily. It's calm and peaceful at all the right times, and truly joyous when it needs to be. Regardless of the starts our children have in life, we produce accomplished and confident leavers well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Earlier today, Tuesday, I visited Yr 6 in response to their many letters to the Governors to petition them to restore the mid-morning break! Don't worry, we didn't really take it away. This was all part of an exercise in constructing and writing well-reasoned letters. I was impressed by the research which went into them and the cogency of their arguments. They were beautifully presented. Who says the art of letter writing is dead!

As you know, All Saints School is to be completely rebuilt. We have an excellent relationship with the Department for Education which is putting up the many millions of pounds for it. This time the 'church' does not have to chip in anything. There have been some bumps in the road with finding a temporary site for the two years it will take to being down the present building and erect the new one. Plans for the final phase of restoration of our church, and the development of it to complement the school are taking shape too. We will have a fantastic pair of buildings in service of all the people of Newton Heath and beyond.

St Wilfrid's

Twice, we were unsuccessful in appointing a new Head Teacher to replace Mrs Brereton who moves on to a larger school in the New Year. Mrs Clarke, the Deputy Head Teacher, will be holding the reins until the right person is found to be the new Head. Please may I ask for your prayers for her, all the staff, and the governing body on which I serve.

Harvest Thanksgiving

This was very well supported with gifts of non-perishable foods, and toiletries which we are able to donate to the Salvation Army in Failsworth. We are very grateful to Catherine for taking the gifts there.

Remembrance

Now, more than ever, it's important never to forget the two World Wars, and the huge sacrifices made by the combatants, as well as those left at home. In the end these were not the 'wars to end all wars'. Two of them we see on our TV screens and news-feeds all the time. Israel/Gaza and Russia/Ukraine are but two of the major armed conflicts in our world today. The Sudan, ravaged by civil war, is the place of the greatest humanitarian crisis on the planet. Our Remembrance Sunday service in church was well-attended, and the civic act of Remembrance at the Peace Garden on Armistice Day (11/11/11) even more so. The numbers are heartening, just as long as that spills over into the lives of peace we live in our homes and on our streets.

Civic Service, Dedication Festival and Celebration of Stewardship

Our service on Sunday 16th November, was long in the planning, and one of the most important occasions in my fifteen years here. It celebrated who we are, and encouraged to become what God would have us be. We were honoured by the presence of the Lord Lieutenant, The Lord Mayor, The Dean of Manchester, and the Bishop of Bolton, who celebrated and preached. He is known for his writing on stewardship, which is not just code for money, but the proper phrase for reflecting on what we have been given and what we should give back in thanks to Almighty God. I might add, they say we should give until it feels good! It's not too late to return your pledges of money, and time and talents. Front and centre were the

leaders of tomorrow. Seven of our younger members were either robed or had speaking parts, or both, and not forgetting the operator of our mighty organ. Thank you. It was wonderful also to have our prayers led by the Pupil Chaplains from our school, and for Mrs Flatman to read the Epistle.

Special thanks to those who gave up their participation in the service, 'front of house', so that we could enjoy the wonderful buffet prepared by Esther. Thanks, too, to the team of florists who left no part of the church unadorned. Here's a selection of photos, some of which you may have already seen on our Facebook page.



Christ the King, Sunday 25th November

Two weeks of joy, as we admitted Ola to Holy Communion now that he has risen 7.



Looking ahead.

Newton Heath Civic Christmas Tree Grand Switch On.

The Lord Mayor will be arriving at 4.30 pm to switch the switch at 5.00 pm. There is plenty to do before then.

Sunday 30th November *Advent 1*

10.00 am Parish Sung Eucharist and the lighting of the Advent Crown

Sunday 7th December

10.00 Toy Service

Please bring as you are able gifts of new toys which we will pass to *The Manchester Mission*

Sunday 14th December

Gaudete Parish Sung Eucharist followed by parish brunch

Please sign up for this; and bring and share. NB The Rector will prepare one main for everyone.



on

Thursday 18th December

7.30 pm Greater Manchester Police Male Voice Choir

This promises to be a belter. GMPMVC is back by popular request, and they had such a good time here in July they asked if they could come.



Sunday, 21st December

10.00 am Sung Eucharist

3.30 pm Crib and Christingle Service (with a bit of *Blue Christmas*)

NB last year we restored the Christmas Eve Crib service for 3.00 pm by popular request, and worked hard on a new imaginative format, but no-one came other than the people taking part. The Rector has redesigned the Christingle Service to include the new Crib Service, which will begin the event.

There will also be an opportunity in a quiet moment to light a candle as a visual prayer for something which may lay heavy on your heart.

Christmas Eve 8.30 pm

The First Eucharist of Christmas

Followed by mulled wine and mince pies

Christmas Day

10.00 am Festal Eucharist

Sunday 28th

Holy Innocents

10.00 Holy Communion (BCP) sung

NB no 9.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) said



Please make every effort to come to as much as you can, and especially to make your communion either on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, or both.

With all good wishes and every blessing,

Handwritten signature of The Reverend Andrew Wickensm.

The Reverend Andrew Wickensm LL.M, FRSA, ARCM
Rector, Newton Heath