

Comfort and Joy



The Church of England is running a Comfort and Joy campaign this year and included in this will be on-line services throughout Advent and the Christmas period and a "Nine Lessons and Carols" feature running from Christmas Day to 2nd January. This will give a daily carol, reflection and prayer to cover the Christmas season. Check out the churchofengland.org website.

Getting in the Spirit of Christmas



Advent Jigsaw

Make this for someone you think would appreciate it. First get a jigsaw (at least 200 pieces). Make the jigsaw up then split it into 25 joined sections. Starting with a section near the middle wrap up each section of puzzle pieces in Christmas paper and number them 1 to 25 making sure that each successive number is for a group of pieces that fit onto a previous number section. Put these in an Advent Calendar - or hide them round a room - or drop them through the letter box of a friend each day from 1st to 25th December.

For an Instant Christmassy Feel

Change the wallpaper on your phone, tablet or computer to a Christmas theme or use a family picture from a Christmas gone by. When you switch on say "Happy Christmas to me and everyone around the World!"

Lighting Up

Put your Christmas lights up earlier than usual and take them down later - this would be a good year to show a bit of sparkle.



Have a lit candle on your meal table every evening - or even make yourself a fresh table decoration with a candle for each week of advent. Before you eat say "Thank You for light and other good things in my life."

Wear your flashing-light Christmas jumper just for the fun of it, do not wait for the big day.

Advent Reckoning

Traditionally the first of January is the time to make new resolutions for the New Year but the church's year starts with Advent Sunday - this year on 29th November. This is sometimes used as a time to reassess our levels of giving, both time and money, for the next year.

This year many families will be eking out a reduced income to provide the necessities, but others may have a surplus and an annual reckoning day when we think about how much to commit to giving next year and where that giving should go is a useful exercise. Children could be involved in nominating the sort of charity they would like to support.

Every charity has suffered a fall in donations in 2020 and there is no lack of worthy causes, locally, nationally and internationally, among others:

Local: Trussell Trust Foodbanks, Ashgate Hospice, etc

National: Crisis at Christmas, Salvation Army, Children's Society, Church Army, Mind, Samaritans

International: Christian Aid, Save the Children, Water Aid, Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, etc

And so many more - and there are volunteering opportunities with many of these too.

You can view this **amber news** on the **amber churches** website and there are free printed copies in churches and local shops. If you would like a copy delivered, please let us know and we will try to oblige. Send news for inclusion in next month's issue to info@amberchurches.org.



amber news

For the amber churches of
Ashover, Brackenfield, Handley and Wessington
working and playing together, with God, for people
December 2020

Church Services in December



Sunday 6th December

9.15 am Brackenfield Holy Communion
10.45 am Ashover Holy Communion

Sunday 13th December

10.45 am Ashover **All Age Christingle Service**

Sunday 20th December

9.15 am Wessington Holy Communion:
With Christmas in Mind
10.45 am Ashover Holy Communion

Christmas Eve 24th December

On-line All Age Christmas Celebration
To view go to www.amberchurches.org

Christmas Day 25th December

9.15 am Brackenfield Christmas Holy Communion
10.45 am Ashover Christmas Holy Communion
with Archdeacon Carol

Sunday 27th December

There will be no services

Sadly there can be no carol services in churches this year but everyone is invited to go on-line and sing along on Christmas Eve with our **Christmas Celebration**. It will be available from YouTube channel *All Saints Ashover For Amber Churches* which can be reached via our website
www.amberchurches.org



Merry Christmas

May your days be
merry and bright with
the light of God's love.

Contact Information

Church Wardens

All Saints Church Ashover: Nev Stanley 01246 826980
Holy Trinity Brackenfield: Nigel Rogers 01773 836137
St Mark's Church Handley: Fran Roberts 01246 865389
Christ Church Wessington: Rita Buckley 01773 835 633

www.amberchurches.org
info@amberchurches.org

Message from the Ministry



Dear Friends

As we get to this time of the year Christmas seems to crop up in the conversation fairly often. This year has certainly been an extraordinary year in all sorts of ways, to put it mildly – I think the first time I heard Christmas being discussed on the radio was actually during August! I quite understand the problems of a Christmas under 'pandemic rules' for the retail and hospitality industries who have been hit so hard since March. I also appreciate the differences that are likely to affect families – no large gatherings around the dinner table, being unable to see grandchildren opening their gifts, playing 'silly' games, and all the other things that make up our own 'traditional family Christmas'. It's also going to be very different in church too. Although we don't yet know precisely what we shall be able to do, or not do, we can be pretty certain there will be no big services so: no Carol Service; no Crib Service; no Midnight Communion. Where does that leave us?

Perhaps we need to think in terms of 'back to basics'. What does Christmas really mean to us? What does it mean to you? To me? Because, be under no illusion, 25th December 2020 will be Christmas Day, whatever we do, however we choose to celebrate it, or not. So, why should we want to celebrate Christmas? Many would say, because it is the day Jesus was born – well, maybe it was, but probably not, however, it is the day on which the Church celebrates the birth of Jesus, or to put it another way, the Incarnation of Christ, the time God took on our human nature in the form of Jesus. And that is certainly something to celebrate!

Perhaps we could all take this prayer by Sharon Jaynes to heart this Christmas:

"Dear God, Sometimes I get too caught up in the Christmas commercialism. OK, a lot of times. Today, I'm going to refocus my heart and remember why I'm celebrating this wonderful day in the first place. I'm celebrating Jesus today and every day because! In Jesus' name, Amen."

May I take this opportunity to wish you all an extraordinary and blessed Christmas, Jenn

(Revd Jenn Willis joined the Amber Churches Ministry Team in 2016. Jenn had previously fulfilled many roles at Wingerworth Church finally becoming a locally ordained minister. In 2015 Jenn walked from Wingerworth to Canterbury to raise money for the church.)

From the Registers

ASHOVER

Funerals

Maureen Jordan, aged 86, service held in Ashover Cemetery on 24th November. A long time resident of Kelstedge, Ashover, Maureen moved to Morton Grange Care Home where she died on 12th November.

Annice Mary Cooper, aged 88, service held in Ashover 30th November. Known as Mary, she was born in Ashover before moving to live in Holymoorside.

BRACKENFIELD

Funeral

Michael Alison Burton, service held 11th November followed by interment in Brackenfield Church Yard.

Michael Burton was born in Brackenfield but lived in Wessington.

Posada



The Posada figures of Mary, Joseph and the donkey who have moved around Ashover parish in recent years during Advent will not be able to come into people's houses this year but children at Ashover School will be welcoming them instead.

Finding a way to Remember

Wessington

Due to the lock down Christ Church was unable to hold the Remembrance Sunday service, when the Bishop of Derby was going to attend. Keeping to Covid-19 rules, three people were invited to lay the Poppy wreaths, Derbyshire County Council, Christ Church and Wessington Parish Council all accepted. People drifted in from the village and socially distanced while a short reading from the Service Sheet took place and the two minutes silence was observed. It was felt that, even in this strange world the men of Wessington and all who fought in the two world wars were honoured.

Brackenfield

Brackenfield held an impromptu Cenotaph service at 11 am on the 8th November. Only the Chairman of the Parish Council and a Churchwarden were to be present to lay wreaths on behalf of the Parish and the Church. The word must have got out because we had 12 people attending the simple 10 minute ceremony which included the laying of the wreaths, a short prayer, a reading of a poem composed by Gladwyn Turbutt and then the 2 minutes silence.

Ashover

A Remembrance Service was recorded in Ashover Church and Churchyard and can still be viewed on the YouTube channel *All Saints Ashover For Amber Churches*. Wreaths were presented on behalf of the church, the children of the church, the Parish Council and the District Council.

St Mark's Zooms Away

Fran Roberts, Warden at St Mark's, reports "We at Handley had a successful week when we managed to hold our PCC meeting on Zoom. This was a new experience to one or two of us but it worked out really well and we had fun doing it, especially when we were practising to iron out any problems.

"Although this would not be ground-breaking for many, it was a considerable achievement for our group and involved help from family members and becoming more familiar with tablets and laptops. It proved a very positive experience and we all thoroughly enjoyed 'meeting' together.

"It is certainly a great way to keep in touch and, being in these extraordinary times, it has made us all realise what a blessing technology is and that where there is a will, there is always a way."

Chocolate Truffles

Melt 6 oz each of good quality plain and milk chocolate over a bowl of hot water then add 2 egg yolks, 1 oz butter, 1 tbsp rum (or brandy, Grand Marnier etc) and 1 dsp double cream.

Stir until thick enough to handle, cool slightly, form into balls then roll in grated chocolate or cocoa powder.

Leave overnight then put into paper cases and pack into gift boxes.

Good for last minute presents - provided you have enough chocolate in the house!