

St. Aidan's Church Dec 24th

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'The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.'
(John 1:5)

**At the heart
of Christmas**



This is the final update for 2021. This year has been a time of uncertainty, and we do not know what is around the corner. But God understands uncertainty, what it is to be poor and hungry and on the edge of things. It was in the midst of uncertainty that Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem. Praise God that no uncertainty can take us away from God, who was born into a world of great insecurity. Praise God that His love can overcome our uncertainty and pain. So at this Christmas time I pray that you will be able to find a moment of quiet to reach out for the presence of the living God to give you peace and hope. Lay hold of eternal life as Christ is born once more into your heart.

This update contains an extra page to share the Christmas greetings from the Church Charity Card. Please print it off and share with other church members who may not receive an update. There will be a few printed copies available in church on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day for those without email.

We have received a Christmas Card to 'everyone at St. Aidan's, Wishing you a Peaceful Christmas and New year, with our love and prayers' from our Hub clergy and partners - Jeremy and Sue, Sue and Mike.

Services:

You will again be asked to complete contact details on a Track and Trace form when attending any service until further notice.

The time of the **Crib Service** on Friday Dec 24th has been changed to **4.30pm**. Children (and Adults) are invited to dress up as **an Angel, a shepherd or a wise man!** We will be placing the nativity figures in the crib, though there will be a slightly different approach to this, and there will be some audience participation! There is currently still plenty of spaces, but if you wish to attend please pre-book by ringing Roy on 894738 on Wednesday or Friday after 9.30am.

You **do not** need to prebook for the Communion Service on Friday Dec 24th at 8.30pm, or for the Morning Worship on Sunday Dec 26th at 10am.

There are services to which you are invited on **Christmas Day** - Morning Worship at St. Andrew's at 9.30am, Holy Communion at St. Peter's at 10.00am or Holy Communion at 10.30am at St Thomas', Ashton There is also a Holy Communion at St. Thomas' on Christmas Eve at 11pm to which you would be most welcome.

There is no Wednesday morning service on December 29th. The next midweek Holy Communion Service at St. Aidan's is on Wednesday 5th January at 10am.

In **January** the usual pattern of services is anticipated with the addition of a Christingle Service at 10am on Sunday January 9th. We do not know what restrictions may be imposed by Government, but we do not expect church services to be prohibited. We will take all needed precautions in respect of our members to keep each other safe. I would remind you that you should not attend a service if you have any symptoms of Covid, and it would be a courtesy to take a Lateral Flow test before attending.

We are struggling to fill the rotas for **stewards** at our services, both at 10am and at 4pm. If we cannot expand the team we may need to reduce the services to one each week. This would be most retrograde step. Our safety depends on sanitising after each service. If you would be willing to act as a steward at least once a month, or simply like to know more please talk to Helen or Peter Hughes. 01744 732890. We are extremely grateful to the team who assist by cleaning church midweek. Thank you!

News from **School** –

Willowbrook's '**Light up a Life**' was marked on Monday 20th December. It was a very moving service in which the Key stage 2 children sang, read a script provided by Willowbrook and generally remembered Mrs Ravenscroft and those we know who have died. If you wish to view this you can use the link : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSIUNYGx03o>

It has been a very hard term for staff and pupils at school with the outbreak of Covid in school. Some teachers were covering their own classes in school, and on line, and providing cover for other classes at the same time! They have been resourceful and inventive. Many planned events had to be cancelled or reorganised. They must be exhausted! Please pray for our school staff to have the rest and recuperation that they need over the Christmas Holidays.

If you wish to have information included in the **magazine** please send to me by the **3rd** Wednesday in the month - last edition of this newsletter contained an error! I am still collecting and sending the articles for St. Aidan's to the editor, but I wish to hand this over to someone with more free time as soon as possible – could you help? Please contact me (Helen Steele).

A reminder that St Aidan's is a drop off centre for food items for the **Hope Centre Food Bank**, (the Trussel Trust) which support families in short term crisis living within St. Helen's. If you know a family in financial crisis because of redundancy, illness or other unexpected event, who is unable to buy food please let Helen Steele know. There is a plastic box in the Narthex for donations of non-perishable food and toiletries when church is open for services. A full list of items required is on the noticeboard in the Narthex, and includes tinned fruit, UHT milk, Long-life juice, tinned tomatoes, packets of pasta in sauces and noodles, but **not** dried pasta or tins of beans please. Biscuits and snacks and toiletries would also be welcome! We thank everyone who has responded so far – it has been a wonderful response.

A series of 4 '**Angel Stories**' from the Christmas story are available on our church Facebook – suitable for children and the young at heart! Do have a look. Facebook.com/BillingeStAidansChurch

I share again a poignant poem sent in by Jennifer Berry last year:

The road is long it's often said
By those who seem to know
With twists and turns and ups and downs
There seems so far to go.
And when you feel its too hard.
The night goes on and on.
Your body aches, your spirit's weak .
You cannot see the dawn.

Call out for help, a simple prayer.
Will comfort and protect you.
Healing powers on angels wings.
Will wrap his love around you.
And with this love comes strength and trust.
You know you can continue.
To walk your road with Faith renewed.
That God is always with you

Congratulations go to Patricia Martin, Roy Thompson and Lesley Hughes who all have a birthday this week and to Philip Stott and Yumiko Peers next week.

Prayer for the Parish

If anyone needs to be added to our prayer list please let Helen or Margaret Stott know. The family must give permission for any name to be added to the list. The list that has been on these updates is also used in church services.



Please pray by name for Lorraine Webb, May Carnforth, Sue Fulford, Yvonne Cumberbirch, baby Janie May, Tracey-Ann Napier, Hazel Guilford, 7 year old Elizabeth Isherwood, Alan Chadwick, Kathleen Winstanley, Mary and Geoff Hall, Reena Winstanley and Andrew. And we remember the bereaved – the family and friends of Ann Houghton and John Cunliffe.

For confidential prayer needs contact Jennifer Berry for the Mother's Union Prayer circle (01942 389715).

Please pray for

- Peace and Goodwill throughout the world this Christmas
- that the Spirit of Christmas will be experienced through those activities by all who attend services in church this Christmas
- protection for all from the new variant of Covid and from the anxiety that this brings to many
- that all will remain safe in their celebrations of Christmas whether at home or in travelling
- that those who remain shielding and in isolation may never the less feel loved and valued in their homes
- those who fear a difficult Christmas because of financial difficulties or still mourning the death of a loved one
- all those who must work over the Christmas period, that they may know Christ's presence in unexpected ways, and be blessed in serving others
- all those within the NHS and the care sector and their supporting networks who are treating the sick and injured, the elderly, the infirm and those in end of life care, that they are protected from infection, get the rest that they need and the strength to continue to serve
- those who are exhausted, mentally, emotionally and physically

Collect for Christmas Day

Almighty God, you have given us your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

May God bless you all at this time, may Jesus be born anew in your hearts, May the Holy Spirit give you peace and joy in this Holy Season.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS



The charity Christmas Card for 2021 is supporting St Helens Young Carers

The following extend their Christmas greetings with their personal messages

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| <i>Colin & Julie Phillips</i> | <i>Happy Christmas and all our love for the New Year</i> |
| <i>Esther & Errol</i> | <i>All our love and best wishes for a Happy Christmas to All our friends at St Aidan's</i> |
| <i>Philip & Margaret Stott</i> | <i>Wishing you All a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas, with our love</i> |
| <i>Kath Milligan</i> | <i>Wishing all my friends at St Aidan's a Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year</i> |
| <i>Roy & Dorothy Thompson</i> | <i>Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a Safe New Year and God Bless you all</i> |
| <i>Joan Roberts</i> | <i>Wishing everyone a truly magical and wonderful Christmas and may God be with you all in the New Year</i> |
| <i>Barbara Goulden</i> | <i>Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year. May God bless you all in the New Year</i> |
| <i>John, Rose & Helen Widdop</i> | <i>Wishing Everyone a Happy and Blessed Christmas</i> |
| <i>Lesley & Peter Hughes</i> | <i>Have a Blessed and Happy Christmas everyone. Hope 2022 is a good year!</i> |
| <i>Pauline Griffiths</i> | <i>A Blessed Christmas to all my Church family of St Aidans. May 2022 be a better year for us all!</i> |
| <i>Jean & Roy Breeze</i> | <i>Wishing all our Church friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year. Hope the baskets will be back next year.</i> |
| <i>Helen & Richard Steele</i> | <i>Wishing you all God's Peace, Hope, Love and Joy in this Christmas Season.</i> |
| <i>Peter & Lorraine</i> | <i>Wishing everybody a Very Merry Christmas and all the Best for the coming year. God Bless us All</i> |

