



Hello everyone,

Here we are in the midst of Advent, with a very different line-up of Christmas Services. We do have a Carol Service, with singing by 'Octovoce,' a group of 8 singers from University of Birmingham and familiar faces reading the lessons. The Order of Service is included in the pack. It goes live on our YouTube channel from 3pm on Sunday 20th December and we invite you to join the communal viewing either via Zoom or in person as we 'Big Screen' it in the Pastoral Centre. Priority for this is being given to older people and those who haven't got access to YouTube. Numbers very limited to keep it as safe as possible. If you would like to come e-mail or phone Revd Theresa. Contact details on the 'service flyer' enclosed.

We are doing similar with Fr David's **Animated Nativity** at 3pm on Christmas Eve, with priority being given to our Sunday School families.

We hope that everyone who would like to receive **Holy Communion** over the Christmas Octave (which we are defining as 20-27 December) will be able to do so. You do need to book and the Box Office is now open! Please book for only ONE service until 21st December so as to enable as many as possible to attend a service. Going in the 2021, if we are still in Tier 3 we will revert to 'Zoom-only' for Holy Communion until the end of January. If Tier 2 or less (!) we will resume services in church.

Look out for the '**Star of Bethlehem**' due to appear in the sky on Christmas week: Jupiter and Saturn will conjoin together as a brightly-shining 'double planet' for the first time in 800 years. At their closest position, the two planets will appear less than a full moon's width apart - just after sunset on the winter solstice and up until about Christmas Day. To spot them face South West and look low in the sky as twilight darkens. German astronomer, Johannes Kepler, wrote in 1614 that he believed the 'star of Bethlehem' in the Nativity story could have been a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn.

If you miss them why not put on your outing list visit for the spring (!) a trip to see a very different 'Star of Bethlehem' – the largest water colour in the world - to be found in BMAG, Victoria Square, Birmingham.

We keep passing on information about how to keep yourself as safe as possible through reliable sources of information. The Germ Defence web-site is excellent <https://www.germdefence.org/> Well worth a look if you are meeting up with family/friends during the 23-27 December window of opportunity.

Who's been to a party recently?! We are having a **New Year's Eve** party via Zoom starting at 10pm and concluding with a Short Act of Worship c 11.50pm -12.05am, Happy New Year's all round and bed by 12.15am?! We'll use the normal Sunday Morning link and we'll open up the Conference Call line at 11.45pm so that anyone with a phone can join in (I'm just praying that Global technology won't be overloaded.)

We now have a start date of 25th January for the **Interior Porch**, with the hope of the work being completed by the end of June. Why so long? There has to be some initial work before the precise dimensions of the porch can be calculated prior to its manufacture off site. A working group of the PCC is also putting together a draft specification for new church lighting. This was already in the pipeline for 2021 (and making a start on heating too) but the recent 5 year test of the electrics has made it URGENT! For the moment, we are using plug-in flood lights and minimising our use of the overhead lights.

Hopefully, this pack will arrive with you in time for you to be able to accept the invitation to the unveiling of the Community Tapestry Arch which so many of you have contributed to. It's via FaceBook at 3pm on Saturday 19th December. At some point it will be on display in church

May God bless you and all your loved ones, this Christmas-tide and on into the coming year.

With love and prayers,
Canon Janet

13th December 2020