



Claire Sherman

Claire is a Reader in the Maghull and Melling Team of Anglican Churches made up of St Andrew, St James, St Peter and St Thomas.

She was a secondary school teacher who also worked for Connexions before starting her own women's fitness business. After becoming a Reader in the church in 2005, she has led worship in church services and now that she has retired wants to be more involved with the team within the church and to work with the community. The recent events surrounding the pandemic have emphasised to her that it is more important than ever to demonstrate acts of kindness and friendship towards people who need all the support they can get in such difficult times.

Having a strong faith and using that drive to express that in support of the wider community has helped her focus on identifying what she can do for others, working as part of the team of clergy and volunteers within the church. The pandemic has helped her appreciate even more her good health, strong marriage and close relationships of family and friends and made her more determined to help those who may not have these things to see them through the crisis.

In practical terms a lack of meetings and church services has led to her helping develop alternatives. Claire has participated in preparing a weekly worship service which can be accessed via the website [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com). There is also a phone network between churches to keep communication going to ensure different churches are aware of the resources available to them which can be shared across the community. Claire has been part of the team which has created a prayer tree, two prayer gates and a prayer trail spread around the four churches to allow people some quiet space for contemplation whilst observing social distancing. There is a video of the prayer trail at St Andrew's on Facebook.

Claire has been involved in knitting hearts which go to hospitals to show support for NHS workers and bereaved families. Claire has been part of the Check in and Chat service provided by Sefton CVS and the May Logan Centre which allows people who are isolated at present to be buddied up and enjoy friendly chats helping to prevent a sense of loneliness and keep their spirits up.

Claire feels that there have been lots of rewarding little moments in the range of her volunteering activities. The sense of working as a team and all pulling together as a team in such trying times feels like a blessing. Her advice to anyone thinking of volunteering would be "Don't think too long and give what you can. You'll be amazed at what you get back in return".

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