

# **The Parish of St Paul, Kersal Moor and St Andrew, Carr Clough**



## **Christmas Magazine 2025**

## A Christmas message from the Leadership Team:



As the season of Advent begins we wait in a spirit of hopefulness for what Christmas and the New Year will bring. There are so many things to wish, hope and pray for at this time. We pray that all the wars and conflicts that we hear about constantly on the news would stop. We long for a future when all will live together in harmony and justice. We each have our own hopes and expectations for what is to come- for healing for those of us who need it; for a happier and more positive New Year for everyone in 2026; or just for a continuation of all that has been good for us and our friends and families in 2025. We long for these hopes to be fulfilled.

Our hope this Christmas is that God will answer our prayers and bring us a minister who can meet our parish needs and lead us to fulfil all that He wants us to do in this place in His name. For many years the words of Jeremiah 29:11 written on our Youth Room wall have inspired us to keep going in good times and in the not so good: 'For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.' We know that God has plans for us, and we know that He will continue to give us the inner strength to persevere which has sustained us over the past 6 years. As we look towards the Christmas season we shouldn't expect an instant resolution to the problems that we face, but we rejoice in the knowledge that the 'good news of great joy' comes again to all the earth, and we join with the angels in their song of praise: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.' In the meanwhile, a big thankyou to everyone who contributes in so many ways to the life and work of our two parishes: it's much appreciated.

Our thanks go to Revd Daniel, Anna and the children for their ministry in this parish over the past three years. We wish them well as they settle into their new home in Littleborough, and our prayers are with Daniel as he begins his ministry as head of Clergy Development for the Diocese of Manchester.



Christmas is coming!



*25 Days of Faith* an Advent Calendar for you to follow: no chocolate but much food for thought!

<p>Day 1</p>  <p>'Be still and know that I am God' Psalm 46:10</p>	<p>Day 2</p>  <p>Thank God for one blessing in your life today</p>	<p>Day 3</p>  <p>'The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want' Psalm 23:1</p>	<p>Day 4</p>  <p>Pray for someone in need</p>	<p>Day 5</p>  <p>'Let your light shine before others' Matthew 5: 16</p>
<p>Day 6</p>  <p>Write down one thing you are trusting God with</p>	<p>Day 7</p>  <p>'With God all things are possible' Matthew 19:26</p>	<p>Day 8</p>  <p>Take 5 minutes for quiet prayer or reflection</p>	<p>Day 9</p>  <p>'The joy of the Lord is in my strength' Nehemiah 8:10</p>	<p>Day 10</p>  <p>Thank God for creation around you</p>
<p>Day 11</p>  <p>'Cast all your cares on him because he cares for you' 1 Peter 5:7</p>	<p>Day 12</p>  <p>Read a favourite psalm aloud</p>	<p>Day 13</p>  <p>'Do everything in love' 1 Corinthians 16:14</p>	<p>Day 14</p>  <p>Share kindness with someone today</p>	<p>Day 15</p>  <p>'The Lord is near to all who call on Him' Psalm 145:18</p>
<p>Day 16</p>  <p>Write a short prayer of gratitude</p>	<p>Day 17</p>  <p>'For with God nothing shall be impossible' Luke 1:37</p>	<p>Day 18</p>  <p>Listen to a worship song that lifts your heart</p>	<p>Day 19</p>  <p>'The Lord will fight for you: you need only be still' Exodus 14:14</p>	<p>Day 20</p>  <p>Reflect on what Christmas truly means to you</p>
<p>Day 21</p>  <p>'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me' Philippians 4:13</p>	<p>Day 22</p>  <p>Thank God for His faithfulness this year</p>	<p>Day 23</p>  <p>'Peace I leave with you: My peace I give to you' John 14:27</p>	<p>Day 24</p>  <p>Pray for peace and joy in your home</p>	<p>Day 25</p>  <p>'For unto us a Child is born' Isaiah 9:6</p>



## *Readings for the Advent and Christmas Seasons*

**Sunday 30 November (Advent 1):** Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 24: 36-44

**Wednesday 3 December:** Psalm 7; Matthew 15:29-37

**Sunday 7 December (Advent 2):** Isaiah 11:1-10; Matt 3:1-12

**Wednesday 10 December:** Psalm 62; Matthew 15:1-20

**Sunday 14 December (Advent 3):** Isaiah 35:1-10; Matt 11:2-11

**Wednesday 17 December:** Service of Lessons and Carols at St Paul's- the usual 9 readings

**Sunday 21 December (Advent 4):** Isaiah 7:13-15; Luke 2: 1-20

**Wed 24 December (Christmas Eve):** Is. 52: 7-10; John 1: 1-14

**Thur 25 December (Christmas Day):** Isaiah 9: 2-7; Luke 2: 1-14

**Sunday 28 December:** Jeremiah 31: 15-17; Matthew 2: 13-18

**Wednesday 31 December:** Psalm 102: John 1: 1-18

**Sunday 4 January (Epiphany):** Isaiah 60: 1-6;  
Matthew 2: 1-12



*Love came down at Christmas  
Love all lovely, love divine*

## Christmas Services and Events at St Paul's

Sunday 30 November 10am **Advent Sunday: Holy Communion and lighting of Advent Wreath**

Tuesday 2 December 1.30pm **Time Out for Christmas 1**

Sunday 7 December 10 am **Holy Communion for Second Sunday of Advent**

Wednesday 10 December 10am **Holy Communion for Advent**  
Guest preacher: Canon Noel Proctor



Friday 12 December 9.30am **St Paul's School Christmas Service**



Sunday 14 December 10am **Holy Communion for 3rd Sunday of Advent**



Tuesday 16 December 1.30pm **Time Out for Christmas 2 - meal**

Wednesday 17 December 10am **Service of Lessons and Carols** with the choir

Sunday 21 December 10am **Nativity service**  
3pm **Ladies Christmas afternoon tea**



Wednesday 24 December **Christmas Eve**  
3pm **Christingle Service**

11pm **JOINT Midnight Communion**



Thursday 25 December **Christmas Day** 10.30am **Family Holy Communion**

Sunday 28 December 10 am **Morning Praise for Holy Innocents**



## Christmas Services and Events at St Andrew's



Sunday 30 November

11am **Advent Sunday; Holy Communion and lighting of Advent Wreath**

Sunday 7 December

11am **Morning Praise for 2nd Sunday of Advent**

Sunday 14 December 11am **Holy Communion for 3rd Sunday of Advent**

Tuesday 16 December 6pm **Parish Family Carol Service**  
with our uniformed organisations



Sunday 21 December 11am **Christmas Holy Communion**

Thursday 25 December **Christmas Day**  
11am **Christmas Day Reflection**



Sunday 28 December 11am **Holy Communion**

### Parish Events

Mondays 1, 8, 15, 22 December 7pm Advent course St Paul's

Tuesday 2 December 7pm Carol-Singing at Brook Court

Thursday 25 December 10.30am Service at Broughton House

*O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*



## *Christmas customs - the origins of some of the ways in which we celebrate Christmas.*

Why 25 December? No one knows the real birthday of Jesus! No date is given in the Bible, and the early Christians argued over when it should be celebrated. The first recorded date of 25 December was in 336, during the time of the Emperor Constantine, the first Christian Roman Emperor. An early Christian tradition said that the day of the Annunciation was on March 25th. Nine months after that is 25th December! The Winter Solstice, the shortest day, happens on 21 December in the Northern Hemisphere. The days start getting lighter and longer and the nights become shorter. People had a mid-winter festival to celebrate the sun 'winning' over the darkness of winter. The Romans thought that the Solstice took place on December 24th/25th. The emperor Aurelian created the 'Birthday of the unconquered sun' also called 'Sol Invictus' held on 25 December. The Jewish festival of Hanukkah takes place at about the same time. Jesus was a Jew, so this could be another reason that helped the early Church choose 25 December for the date of Christmas.



Boxing Day on 26 December first became a public holiday for most of the UK in 1871. It's also St Stephen's Day- the anniversary of his death as the first Christian martyr. He was associated with charitable giving and so in the Middle Ages, it was the day when the alms boxes- collection boxes for the poor often kept in churches- were traditionally opened and the contents distributed to poor people. In the Netherlands the boxes were earthenware and made in the shape of pigs, and that's where we get the term 'piggy bank' from.



Christmas Carols were first sung in Europe thousands of years ago, but these were not as we know them. They were sung at the Winter Solstice celebrations, and the word Carol actually means a dance or a song of praise and joy. Because Christmas was celebrated at the Solstice, the songs became celebrations of the birth of Jesus. Originally they were in



Latin so most people couldn't sing them, until St Francis of Assisi used them to accompany his Christmas crib nativity plays, and soon they began to be translated into the language of the people. The earliest ones were entertaining rather than religious and often added to the Christmas story e.g. I saw three ships, and they were sung at home not in church. In fact they weren't allowed to be sung in church for hundreds of years. Apart from 'While shepherds watched' and 'Hark the herald angels' virtually nothing else was sung in church until Victorian times when Sandys and Gilbert went round collecting the songs sung in pubs- and the church decided to make them respectable! The service of 9 lessons and carols helped out with this, starting at Truro Cathedral in 1880 and then made popular at Kings College Cambridge.

Christmas cards People have been sending Christmas greetings to each other for hundreds of years. The first one that looked a bit like a Christmas card was given to King James I of England (who was also King James VI of Scotland) in 1611. The custom of sending Christmas cards, as we know them today, was started in the UK in 1843 by Sir



Henry Cole. He was a civil servant who had helped set-up the new 'Public Record Office' now called the Post Office and wondered how it could be used more by ordinary people. He had the idea of Christmas Cards with his friend John Horsley, who was an artist. They designed the first card and sold them for 1 shilling each, a lot of money then. About 1000 were printed and sold. The new Post Office was able to offer a Penny stamp because the new railways could carry much more post than the horse and carriage and a lot faster. Soon they could be posted in an unsealed envelope for a halfpenny - half the price of an ordinary letter. By the early 1900s, the custom had spread over Europe and had become especially popular in Germany. The first cards usually had pictures of the Nativity scene on them. In late Victorian times, robins and snow-scenes became popular.

Christmas crackers were first made in about 1845-1850 by a London sweet maker called Tom Smith. He had seen the French 'bon bon' sweets on a visit to Paris in 1840. He came back to London and tried selling sweets like that in England and also included a small motto or riddle in with the sweet. But they





didn't sell very well. Legend says that one night, while he was sitting in front of his log fire, he became very interested by the sparks and cracks coming from the fire. Suddenly, he thought what a fun idea it would be, if his sweets and toys could be opened with a crack when their fancy wrappers were pulled in half. Not true: he bought the recipe from another cracker maker named Brocks- but it sounds good! Tom Smith's son Walter introduced the hats into crackers, possibly inspired from Epiphany cakes from Europe which had a paper crown on the top. The company built up a big range of 'themed' crackers. There were crackers for Suffragettes, war heroes and even Charlie Chaplin! The Royal Family still has special crackers made for them today.

Christmas Cakes were originally Twelfth Cakes eaten at the parties on Twelfth Night. They were more like Italian Pannetone.



They had a bean or pea cooked in them and the finders became the King or Queen of the Twelfth Night party. When Twelfth Cakes became Christmas Cakes, the custom of putting tokens into a dish moved into the still 'alcoholic' Christmas Pudding; and Christmas Cakes also

became a 'nicer' dish which could be served at afternoon tea which was very popular with middle and upper class Victorians.

Christmas pudding originated as a 14th century porridge called 'frumenty'



made of beef and mutton with raisins, currants, prunes, wines and spices. It was more like soup and was eaten as a fasting meal in preparation for the Christmas festivities. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century frumenty was changing into a 'plum pudding', thickened with eggs, breadcrumbs, dried fruit and given more

flavour with the addition of beer and spirits. The word 'plum' could also mean dried plums like prunes and also raisins and currants. It became the customary Christmas dessert around the early to mid 1600s, but along with other celebrations of Christmas, it was 'banned' by the Puritans in the 1640s. In 1714, King George I re-established it as part of the Christmas meal, and by Victorian times, Christmas Puddings had changed into something similar to the ones that are eaten today.

Turkey By 1720 there were about 250,000 turkeys being farmed every year in Norfolk. They came originally via Constantinople in turkey (hence the name), but also from The Netherlands . They became 'fashionable' to eat for Christmas in the UK in the 1840s and 1850s. In 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens published in 1843, the Cratchit family first had a goose, but at the end of the book Ebenezer Scrooge gives them a turkey, because it was bigger and more 'important'. Queen Victoria first had a Turkey at Christmas in 1851. Even Mrs Beeton published a turkey recipe for her middle-class audience. But it wasn't until after WWII, when farming became more efficient and so food cheaper, that turkey became the 'traditional' Christmas meal in the UK, rather than beef or goose.



## News and Events

### **'Three Women and a Baby' Advent Course**

Monday 7pm St Paul's led by Rev Lisa Battye

1 December: *Elizabeth*

8 December: *Mary*

15 December: *Anna*

22 December: *Jesus*



**Shoe Box Appeal** Many thanks to everyone who contributed so generously to the sending of 103 shoeboxes to the Link to Hope organisation. They will go to needy families in Eastern Europe. You are all stars! Thanks Eileen

**Parish Carol Service** 16 December 6pm at St Andrew's. This year's focus is on our **uniformed groups** of guides, brownies and rainbows. Come and join this family celebration. Mince pies will be served!

**Ladies' Christmas Tea** at St Paul's on 21 December at 3pm. Please book your seats in advance. £5.00 to Anthea Darlington



**Mrs Jane Tyers**, St Paul's School's Headteacher, retires at the end of term, and we bid farewell to her at the school Christmas service on 12 December. Mrs Tyers has been head for the past 17 years, during which time the church and school have had a close and positive

relationship. She has been an excellent head: we shall miss her greatly and wish her a happy 'retirement'- she'll still be busy! We look forward to welcoming the new Headteacher, Mr Paul Puckey, in the New Year.

## *Readings and Prayers for the Season*

Please use these O Antiphon prayers for your Advent meditations

### **O Wisdom**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>Day theme</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Monday 1	Proverbs 2.1-11	Wisdom alive	Human wisdom is learning to care about justice and equity and faithfulness.
Tuesday 2	Psalms 90	Wisdom in tough times	God's love is able to give lasting meaning and joy to everything we do.
Wednesday 3	1 Corinthians 2.1-11	The Spirit of Wisdom	We must live and be shaped by wisdom.

### **O Adonai**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>Day theme</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Thursday 4	Exodus 3.1-6	Close	God is always calling us to come close.
Friday 5	Exodus 6.1-8	Free hands	God is always stretching out his hand to set us free.
Saturday 6	Exodus 24.12-18	Other	God is distinct from us, yet chooses to draw near to us.

### **O Root of Jesse**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>Day theme</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Sunday 7	Isaiah 11.1-9	A sign among the peoples	Jesus is the unfailing sign of God's faithfulness.
Monday 8	Romans 15.7-13	Kings will shut their mouths	Injustice seems to flourish, but Christ will bring perfect justice and peace.
Tuesday 9	Isaiah 42.1-9	Deliver us	We wait, not in despair, but in expectation, living justly and humbly.

### **O Key of David**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>Day theme</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Wednesday 10	Isaiah 22.20-23	Key to freedom	Christ's coming brings the gift of freedom.
Thursday 11	Revelation 3.7-8, 10-13	The door is open	Freedom in Christ means we can be bold and take big risks for our faith.
Friday 12	Psalms 89.19-29	Freedom fighters	God raises up the lowly and gives them freedom.

## O Morning Star

Day	Text	Day theme	Summary
Saturday 13	Psalms 27.1-8	No fear, not afraid	Jesus is the bringer of light in whom we can confidently trust.
Sunday 14	Malachi 4.1-2	Be healed, be free	Jesus gives us light that is warm, that heals and makes us free.
Monday 15	Revelation 22.12-14, 16-17	Everyone, anyone	Jesus invites everyone into this light: it is a gift for any who wish to take it.

## O King of the Nations

Day	Text	Day theme	Summary
Tuesday 16	Isaiah 2.2-4	The peace-bringer	Jesus came to bring peace to all nations, including us.
Wednesday 17	Ephesians 2.14-22	The wall breaker	Sin was the dividing wall between us and God, but Jesus' death destroyed it.
Thursday 18	1 Peter 2.4-10	The foundation	Jesus invites everyone to be united as 'God's own people'.

## O Emmanuel

Day	Text	Day theme	Summary
Friday 19	Isaiah 7.10-15	God with us	Christ comes to the world to testify to truth and call us to be truthful.
Saturday 20	Psalms 80.1-4	God, our only help	Christ brings light that exposes our weakness and our need.
Sunday 21	Matthew 1.18-23	Come to help us	The answer to centuries of hope and need comes as a human child.

## Magnificat (The Song of Mary)

Day	Text	Day theme	Summary
Monday 22	Luke 1.46-50	Praise! Magnify!	Through Mary's song, we are connected to the eternity of God.
Tuesday 23	Luke 1.51-53	Radical	Mary's vision of a new and just society foreshadows the mission of Jesus.
Wednesday 24	Luke 1.54-55	Vision	The Magnificat connects all the Antiphons, putting a Christ-centred view into the life of the Church.





Susan Edmondson, wife of Bishop Chris Edmondson our former Bishop of Bolton, trained as a Spiritual Companion in Manchester with Eileen, Anthea and Anne Rockley, and joins us on our annual retreat to St Joseph's, Formby. She gives us permission to use the following poem written by her.



The Lord asked Elijah: What are you doing here?

WHAT am I doing here?

Lord, I thank you that I have heard the call to follow you, but I want to know what the real purpose of my life is, what is my calling, my unique responsibility? What is my reason for getting up in the morning?

*The Lord says: I have called you, I will not forsake you. I will show you the path for your life. May the eyes of your heart be enlightened so that you know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance and his incomparable great power for those who believe.*

What AM I doing here?

Lord, I thank you that in you I have life in all its fullness but how do I live that life? How do I learn to be and to become?

*The Lord says: you must learn to live in the present moment, using it and enjoying it, confident that in me you live and move and have your being. Be still and know that I am God.*

What am I doing here?

Lord, I thank you that you, the Lord of all the universe, want to be my friend and companion. But who am I to deserve that? Who am I that you are mindful of me?

*The Lord says: I created you in your inmost being, I formed you in your mother's womb. I love you and I have chosen you, so just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him and overflowing with thankfulness.*



What am I DOING here?

Lord, I thank you that you have given me work to do, people to care for, tasks to fulfil. Sometimes I don't know what to do next, when to say yes or no. Sometimes I am overwhelmed, indecisive, reluctant. How do I know what I should be doing?

*The Lord says: I will give you the strength and the wisdom that you need, and whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the father through him*

What am I doing HERE?

Lord, I thank you for your provision of home, shelter food and possessions. But is this really the right location? Why have you called me to this place?

*The Lord says: You must bloom where you are planted. Look around you, rejoice in your surroundings, I am there in that place. If you love me, you will obey my teaching. My father will love you and we will come and make our home with you.*

The Lord said to Elijah: What are you doing here? Then he said: Go back the way you came

So may I by the grace of God...tentatively follow my calling day by day...learn to savour the present moment...continue to discover my true identity...complete the tasks set before me...love the place where I live.



*A prayer for the Advent season*

*Gracious God, as the days grow shorter and the nights grow longer, we turn our hearts toward the promise of Your coming. In the quiet waiting, plant seeds of hope within us. In the rush of the season, grant us the gift of stillness. May Your light break into our darkness, guiding our steps with peace and joy. Teach us to welcome You not only in the manger, but in the faces of those we meet each day. Prepare our hearts, Lord, so that when You come, You will find us ready— watching, trusting, and rejoicing in Your love. Amen.*



## Stewardship – our future funding

As 2026 rapidly approaches, we need to be thinking about how much it costs to keep our churches open, and how far our current income is meeting that need. Our Parish Share continues to rise; at St Paul's we have lost many of our generous givers over the past few years; and since Covid we no longer have the long-term rentals like Kumon and Slimming World which contributed financially: times have changed and they are not coming back. It's lovely and warm at St Paul's now, but this came at a cost. We are living beyond our means. Please think and pray over the Christmas period about what we can do to increase our income. So many of you give so much of your time and energy to serve the church that it's a hard ask, but we have no choice if we are to continue our Christian witness in this place and provide a focus for worship, community and outreach for so many people. For more information on our current situation and giving, talk to David Martin or Robert Hambelton.



## Our next Rector – we need your views

The PCC has now met with the Archdeacon to begin planning the recruitment process for our next incumbent. A small group is reviewing our Parish Profile- the 'all about us' document- to set out who we are, what we believe our mission to be, the opportunities and challenges facing this parish, and the sort of person we are looking for to lead us into the future. What would YOU like to expect from our next Rector? The PCC would love to hear your ideas and suggestions before the Section 11 planning meeting, which is where we form up our requirements, choose our representatives on the interview panel and go out to advertisement. This will take place in the New Year. Speak to any of the Leadership Team after any service- or send an email or text to Eileen as PCC Secretary or Anthea as Parish Administrator.





## **Service Details and Useful Contacts**

### **Weekly Sunday Services:**

**St Paul's** - 10am, **St Andrew's** - 11am

Children's Groups run alongside the services in St Paul's: children's activities are provided at both churches

### **Weekday Services and Events:**

**Tuesday at St Paul's** – Bible study and seasonal courses 7pm

**Tuesday at St Paul's** – Time Out group 1.30pm fortnightly

**Wednesday at St Paul's** - 10am Holy Communion; 10.45am Coffee Morning

### **Clergy:**

Revd Mike Dyson tel 0161 792 1098 [beardandsandals@hotmail.com](mailto:beardandsandals@hotmail.com)

Revd Andy Smith tel 07496726669 [smudger1275@gmail.com](mailto:smudger1275@gmail.com)

Revd Hilary Shedlock

### **Others**

For details about occasions and small groups: Eileen Booth PCC Secretary  
[eileenchris5@gmail.com](mailto:eileenchris5@gmail.com) 0161 792 9960

For Newsletter, parish information and bookings for both churches:  
contact Anthea Darlington [awdarlington@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:awdarlington@hotmail.co.uk) 0161 792 1780

### **Parish websites**

St Paul's [www.achurchnearyou.com/church/15877](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/15877)

St Andrew's [www.achurchnearyou.com/church/15878](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/15878)

**Facebook page** St Pauls Kersal and St Andrews Carr Clough

