

March Team St John, St Mary, St Peter, St Wendreda

ADVENT SUNDAY, 30th November 2025

Team Rector: Rev Andrew Smith 01354 572117

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Church Services

St Peter's Sundays 8am & 11am; Wednesdays 10am

St Mary's Sundays 9.15am; St Wendreda's Sundays 11am

St John's Sundays 9.30am; Tuesdays 10am

THIS SUNDAY - Joint Choral Advent Service at St John's 4pm

Meditation

Matthew's Gospel today paints a picture which is both fearsome and at times random; one taken, another not; ambiguity over the significance of "now" and some imagined future time; ordinary and extraordinary held side by side. Paul's portion of Romans today speaks of turning from darkness to light and salvation being close at hand. Isaiah gives that yearning for a better world of spears and swords remade as ploughshares and pruning hooks. Isaiah yearned for it, and as we shall read several other passages from this prophet in the season of Advent for the Christian Church yearned for, or sow signs of, their fulfilment in the coming of Jesus, which we celebrate at Christmas. John, in his Christmas gospel that the Church proclaims at Christmas, echoes Paul, announcing that in Christ light has come into the world. And we, like the people Matthew was writing for, see so much that is wrong, painful, or destructive all around us, yet proclaim that Jesus coming into the world has made a difference, and feel the same disappointment and ask the same questions which revolve around, if Christ was the answer, how come we still have some many huge imperfections that raise so many questions.

And then, quite by chance, I came across this imaginative poem, which imagines that another child, a girl was born next door to Jesus at the same time, and how things could have been so different, and imagines a future where all could have been well if the other child had been real.

Away in a Manger by Frances Green

*In the manger next door there's a terrible din
when I'm meant to be getting my sleep,
but they're toasting an end to original sin
and plotting that Herod may weep.*

*For all their carousing, our stall here is quiet-
my coming prompts no social whirl;
my parents are freezing, our lamps shed scant light...
and I think it's because I'm a girl.
Those shepherds and wisemen who followed that moon
arrived to find they'd a choice:
two families out in unheated gloom,
two newborns both equal in voice.
They could have tossed coins, made some pretence,
let history pages unfurl-
but they didn't think twice, didn't sit on the fence...
and I know it's because I'm a girl.
It might have been different, you see, if they'd said,
"Hell, it's time for a woman to try.
We'll see what she makes of this business called life,
of the values that men might deny.
Let's loose her on wars and famines and drought,
on politics, passion and sport.
Will she rise to the challenge, make changes throughout?"
I'm a girl, so I guess I ought.
But I might have said, "No, Let's travel new roads, #
and start in sustainable ways.
Can't we value diversity, share all the loads,
live hopeful and well-balanced days?
Let's not worship hierarchy, status and strength;
let's tear up rule books right now."
But those men didn't listen, strode right past my bench...
past the girl child who wouldn't know how.
Well, let them all party, their boy child on course-
I can't envy career paths like that;
I'm just sorry that two thousand years will endorse
the priorities this night begat.
But the future is female, perceptions will shift-
while we wait through one long, sidelined night...
for those next doors to open, oppressions to lift...
I'm a girl, I suspect that I'm right.*

I find this illuminating and challenging. Not to conclude, as perhaps the poet asks us, that if Jesus has been female all would be well. But, to see that we have misunderstood, or chosen to ignore, or pollute, or corrupt what the

child Jesus means. Humanity has too often chosen darkness; we do quarrel and are jealous. We have too often beaten ploughshares into swords; our nations do make war against nation. That we do all too often divide the world into “them” and “us”, and wish “us” to be redeemed, and “them” to be cast out.

Advent is the time to reflect, and indeed to challenge and question who Jesus is and the significance of his coming to earth; and arriving as a baby born at a particular time and place into a culture and heritage. I don’t know what you would wish to say Frances Green, but I would say “Thank you for the challenging insight” but that that baby born in a manger, who I choose to strive to follow, did indeed come to turn the world upside down in its prejudices, expectations, power structures, meaning of love and so much more. But that the answer to all that is wrong in our world, isn’t to conjure up an alternative Messiah in adjoining manger as the magic answer, but rather to know the one who did come more clearly, to love him more dearly, and to follow him more nearly, day by day. Advent may prepare us to do just that.

Prayers

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son, Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. Amen.

Watchful at all times, let us pray for strength to stand with confidence before the Lord our Maker and Redeemer; that God may bring in his kingdom with justice and mercy:

that God may establish among the nations his sceptre of righteousness; that we may seek Christ in the scripture, and recognise him in the breaking of bread:

(We name those in need we have been particularly asked to pray for)

that God may bind up the brokenhearted, restore the sick and raise up the fallen; that the light of God’s coming may dawn on all who live in darkness and the shadow of death:

(We pray for those who have died recently, and those who died at this time of year)

that with all the saints in light we may shine forth as lights for the world:
Let us commend the world, which Christ will judge, to the mercy and protection of God.

Almighty God, as your blessed Son Jesus Christ first came to seek and to save the lost; so may he come again to find in us the completion of his redeeming work; for he alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

NEXT Saturday 6th December

St John's Christmas Fair

with Choir Singing 10am-1.30pm

Refreshments, Crafts, Children's Activities, Cakes,
Tombola, FATHER CHRISTMAS All Welcome

St Mary's Coffee Morning All Welcome

Saturday 20th December at Roger's 10am-12noon

St Mary's 2 Course Christmas Lunch

Sunday 7th December 1pm in the Parish Room

Tickets £15 from Ruth 01354 650858 or
fundraising@stmaryschurchmarch.co.uk

Draw prizes please!

Sunday 14th December 4.30pm in St John's
G&S concert All Welcome

WINTERWONDERLAND

at St John's 5-8pm

Wed 17th, Thurs 18th Fri 19th December

Twinkling lights & Beautiful Decorations

Santa's Grotto £3 per child

Illuminated Walk £3 adult, £2 child

Festive Music & Carol Singing.

Christmas Craft Stalls & Activities Refreshments

Leading Intercessions: workshop early 2026.

Please contact Revd Jenny if you are interested

First Thursday Christmas meal on Thursday 4th
December at the conservative club 7pm for 7:30pm.
All welcome - partners, friends

St John's Church Activities

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

9.15-11.15 St John's Tots;

Tuesday

10am Midweek Communion Service

Study Group 11-12 **Next Dec 9th**

Study Group 7pm-8.30pm; Film The Chosen

Wednesdays Community Hub in Hall 12-2

Thursday 1st Thursday Social Group (see above)

Friday Choir Practice in Church

Regular Church Activities at St Peter's

Tuesday

10am-12noon Knit and Natter;

1st St Peter's MU 2.30-4pm 3rd Deanery MU

Wednesday

10am Midweek Communion Service

1st Study Group 7.30-9pm **Next Dec 3rd**

2nd Wed Christian Aid Lunch Hall 12-1pm

ADVENT SUNDAY 30th Nov

Welcome to St John the Evangelist,
St Peter & St Mary Churches
in the March Team

Regular Sunday Services

St John 9.30am Sung Communion

First Sunday of each Month

9.30am Wholeness Service with Laying on of Hands

Next MESSY CHURCH Christmas Eve 1-3pm

St Mary 9.15am Traditional Sung Communion

St Peter 8am Holy Communion

11am Sung Communion

THIS WEEK, Last Sunday Sunday Club 11am

TUESDAY St John's; 10am Holy Communion

WEDNESDAY St Peter's; 10am Holy Communion

Zoom services Sunday 5.15pm Team Service

Thursday 8.30am Morning Prayer

Team Rector: Rev Andrew Smith 01354 572117

andrew.marchurch@gmail.com

*All enquiries about Weddings Baptisms etc to Andrew
Baptisms; 12.30 St Peter; 2pm or later St John St Mary*

Team Leader in Mission Ruth Clay 07905950849

RevRuth.marchchurches@outlook.com

Clergy; Jane Rees 463284, Anthony Chandler 652894,

Jenny Webb 650855, Mother Jane Dicker 661099

Readers; Hannah Taylor 661712, Stewart Piper

BAPTISMS

12.30pm St Peter's Arabella Gertrude Ward,
Dennis Daniel Ward, Luca Abel Edward Paul Ward

FUNERAL

Wed 17th 12.30pm Fenland; Betty Hart

Next Week, December 7th, Advent 2

Isaiah 11 v1-10, Matthew 3 v1-12

Thanks to those who supported the Snowman
Performance

NEW Years Mind Books

Please include names of those they would like
remembered in prayers in 2026.

ADVENT CHORAL SERVICE

THIS Sunday 30th November

4pm St John's

All Welcome

Christmas Edition of WINDOWS Magazine

is now available. Thanks to Allan and contributors.

Prayers, Collects, for this week

People of God; awake !

The day is coming soon when you shall see God face to face. Remember the ways and works of God, God calls you out of darkness to walk in the light of his coming. You are God's children.

Lord make us one as we walk with Christ today and for ever. Amen.

God of majesty and power, amid the clamour of our violence your Word of truth resounds; upon a world made dark by sin the Sun of justice casts his dawning rays. Keep your household watchful and aware of the hour in which we live. Hasten the advent of that day when the sounds of war will be for ever stilled and the darkness of evil scattered, and all your children will be gathered into one. We ask this through him whose coming is certain, whose day draws near: your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament, Isaiah 2 v1-5

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

EPISTLE, Romans 13 v11-14

Brothers and sisters, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

CAROL SERVICES

Sunday 21st December

3pm St Mary's 4.30pm St John's
6.30pm St Peter's

Gospel of Matthew 24 v36-44

Jesus spoke to his disciples: 'About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

Prayer after Communion

Holy Thief, stealing away our false insecurities and idle vanity: awaken us from the dull sleep that clings to empty fear and vacant routine; unfold on us the time of crisis when love of truth floods a thirsty world; through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come. **Amen.**

St Peter's Christmas Tree Festival

Friday 12th – Sunday 14th December

Refreshments and Trees

Open Fri 12th 12noon-8pm,
Sat 13th 9.30am-5pm Sun 14th 12noon-3pm
ends with **CHRISTINGLE** Sunday 14th 3pm

All Welcome

Individuals or Organisation invited to enter a tree and sign up to help please in the many ways needed

Donations for Contents of Hampers welcomed

See Christmas Events newsletter for more info

Anyone interested in singing in the choir Carol Service at St Peter's please let James know asap

CHRISTMAS EVE Wed 24th December

10am St Peter's; Holy Communion

1-3pm St John's; Messy Church Nativity

4pm St Peter's; Crib and Carol Service

9pm St John's; Midnight in Bethlehem! Communion

11.30pm St Peter's; Midnight Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY Thurs 25th December

Communion Services at usual Sunday times

8am St Peter's

9.15am St Mary's

9.30am St John's

11am St Peter's