

CHRIST CHURCH, SOWERBY BRIDGE

# WEEKLY NEWS



## *Arise, shine*

### **MATTHEW 2.1-12**

Isaiah 60 begins with the author calling the Israelites to 'Arise, shine'. They are to be given a light, which is the glory of the Lord. But they are also told that this light will be theirs, one that nations and kings will come to. In Matthew, the wise men are drawn by a shining star to Jesus, the light of the world.

This week, at the beginning of the Epiphany season, we explore what it means for us to arise and shine in our communities, and consider how we might reflect God's light, which is revealed most fully in Jesus, to those living in darkness.

## *6th January - Epiphany*

On 6th January we celebrate Epiphany – the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus. But who were these Wise Men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were called kings – by a church father, Tertullian.

Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three – to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing – and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the 8th century, the Magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

Sunday 4th  
January 2026  
Christmas 2  
Epiphany

### **FIRST READING**

ISAIAH 60.1-6

### **PSALM**

PSALM 72

### **SECOND READING**

EPHESIANS 3.1-12

### **GOSPEL**

MATTHEW 2.1-12

### **SERVERS**

ANTHEA GEE

GRAHAM LAMB

### **FIRST READING**

GLENIS MCCARTHY

### **PSALM**

REBECCA LUMB

### **SECOND READING**

ANTHEA GEE

### **INTERCESSIONS**

ALYSSA HARGREAVES

### **SIDES PERSON**

JANET TURNER & JANE  
MUNDAY

### **JUNIOR CHURCH**

TBC

## *Collect Epiphany*

Creator of the heavens, who led the Magi by a star to worship the Christ-child: guide and sustain us, that we may find our journey's end in Jesus Christ our Lord.

## *THIS WEEKS HYMNS*

### **Processional**

Unto us a boy is born

### **Gradual**

We three Kings

### **Offertory**

See him lying on a  
bed of straw

### **Communion**

How deep the  
Father's love for us  
What child is this

### **Recessional**

VIDEO

## *Epiphany for Today*

*This month we celebrate Epiphany, the occasion on which we remember the Magi from the East following a star to find the baby Jesus: 'Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews?' (Matthew 2:1). At the start of a New Year, in an uncertain world, we can be asking the same question. The gifts the Magi offered point us to how Jesus can answer our concerns and worries: 'they bowed down and worshipped Him...and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.' (2:11).*

*The gift of gold reflects that the Magi saw in the baby a king, destined to rule over us all. In this coming year we need to remember that Jesus is on the throne, the seat of power and authority in the whole universe. Will we crown Him king of our lives and dedicate all that we are and do to Him?*

*The gift of frankincense reflects that the visitors saw not just an earthly king, but God in human flesh. Incense symbolises the prayers of God's people and so this gift reminds us that God is worthy of our worship and prayer. Will we offer our praise and prayer, as we seek God to guide us through the uncertainties of this coming year?*

*The gift of myrrh reflects that these astrologers saw beyond the baby's birth and life, to His death which would secure life for all. Jesus was offered myrrh on the cross and was a spice used in His tomb.*

*As we face challenges in the future, we can be confident that Jesus knows and understands our experience. Are we ready to trust Him in everything?*

*'Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice! Heav'n sings Hallelujah: Hallelujah the earth replies.' ('We Three Kings').*

## *Church of England weddings at historic low*

*The Church of England conducted fewer weddings than ever in 2023, as the number of people in England and Wales getting married in religious ceremonies has slumped to a new low.*

*In 2023, 23,004 marriages were recorded by the Church of England and Church in Wales, according to recent data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS). It is the lowest number since the 1830s, except for 2020, when churches were closed during the pandemic.*

*In total, 216,901 weddings of opposite-sex couples took place in 2023. The majority (184,428) were civil ceremonies. There were 32,473 religious weddings, of which 70 per cent were held in Anglican churches.*

*The Bishop of Manchester, Dr David Walker, told the Daily Telegraph: "We want to reassure couples that they don't have to be churchgoers to have a church wedding, they don't need to be christened, and we welcome couples who already have children."*



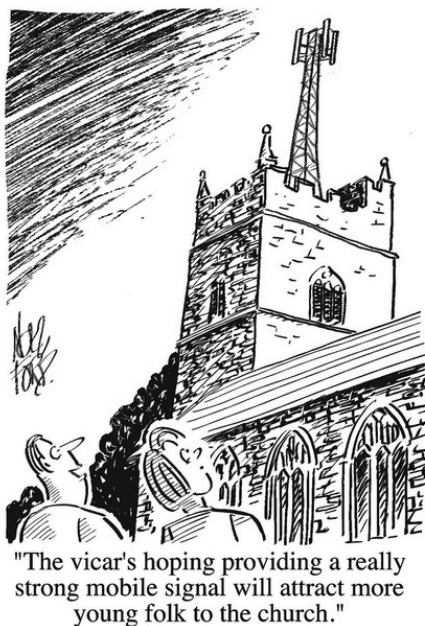
# *In your prayers this week....*

Alyson Healey; Maralyn Pawson; Vanessa Starsmore.



This weeks flowers are Christmas Flowes

If you would like flowers in church either in memory of a loved one or to celebrate a special day please speak to Angela W



## *Quotes*

Life is too short for us to do everything we want to do; but it is long enough for us to do everything God wants us to do. - Anon

The future belongs to those who belong to God. This is hope. - W T Purkiser

## **From the Parish Prayer list:**

The Area Dean, Revd. Robb Sutherland;  
The Halifax and Calder Valley Deanery;  
Bentley Mount; Boggart Lane; Bolton Brow; Bridge Street; Bright Street; Burnley Road; Byron Avenue; Byron Street.



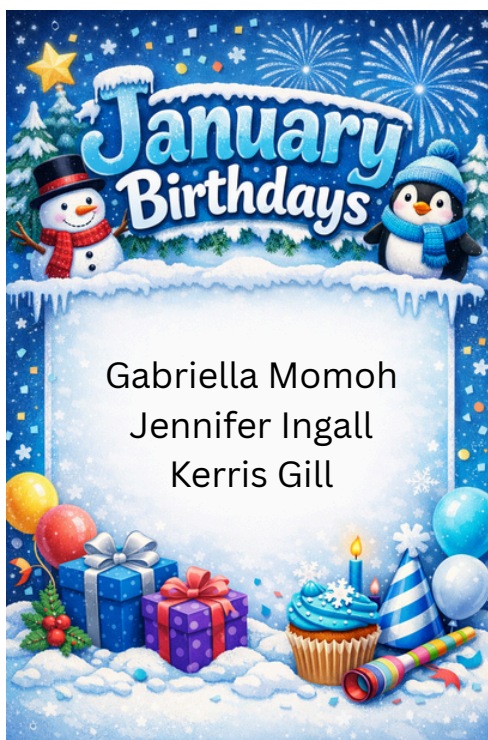
Stop using aluminium foil for cooking wherever possible; use a container with a lid that can be reused.

Aluminium is a rare metal and its extraction and purification uses a lot of energy.

if you have partly burned candles to dispose of Dave Gill would be happy to take these off you.

Before putting out Christmas cards for recycling, keep back those which can be cut and used for next years gift tags or hand crafted Christmas cards.

Blessed are those who remember that God gave that world into our care.



## *Next week*

SUNDAY 11TH JANUARY 2026  
EPIPHANY 1

### **FIRST READING**

ISAIAH 42.1-9

### **PSALM**

PSALM 29

### **SECOND READING**

ACTS 10.34-43

### **GOSPEL**

MATTHEW 3.13-17

### **SERVERS**

### **FIRST READING**

### **PSALM**

### **SECOND READING**

### **INTERCESSIONS**

### **SIDES PERSON**

### **JUNIOR CHURCH**

TBC

## *DIARY*

### **Monday**

9:30 Morning Prayer in church

### **Tuesday**

10.00 Coffee Morning  
11.30am Midweek service of Holy Communion  
1pm Craft and Chatter

### **Wednesday**

5.45 Bible Study

### **Thursday**

6.30 BCP evening prayer

### **Friday**

### **Saturday**

10am Coffee Morning  
5pm Film night

### **Sunday**

10.30am Worship at St Pauls

# *Look Back Look Forward*

Happy New Year to you all. I hope you had a great Christmas and are ready for 2026. I am writing less than a week after the big day and it already seems like so long ago. All the build up adds to this of course but also the change in mood from pre-Christmas, to post-Christmas. It is in fact still Christmas and the 25<sup>th</sup> December marks the start and not the end of Christmas. So please do keep that Spirit of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love with you.

We had a busy December this year. We had the Bolton Brow and Christ Church carol services as usual and this year we were also joined by New Road School. All the services were fantastic and well attended. It is wonderful knowing we have great schools in our area who want a connection to the Church.

We also had our Nine Lessons and Carol Service with Rev. Canon Hilary joining from the Minister. We also had the Friendly Brass Band joining us which was fantastic. We then had our Christingle service which is always a highlight, with the wonderful circle of light.

We had our first Blessing of the Crib service on Christmas eve which we will continue doing going forward. This was followed by our Midnight Mass service with Rev. Jeanette and a Christmas Day Holy Communion.

As I look back at these services – Nine lessons, Christingle, Blessing of the Crib, Midnight Mass, and Christmas Day Communion and how beautiful and unique they are. We think about journeys during Easter but I would encourage you if you can to journey with us through all these events next year I really do think it helps with personal and theological reflection.

Looking forward we have our joint service with St. Paul's Methodist Church on the 11<sup>th</sup> January so please do join us for that. January is generally a quitter time, but we will be doing visits during the month so please do let us know if anyone else needs a home visit.

We will be having our Morning Prayer, BCP, and Bible Study throughout January so please do join us for those if you can.

*Rev. Tommy*

# *The Seven Deadly Sins: Pride*

Our new series looks at the 7 Deadly Sins, a list compiled by Pope Gregory 1 in AD 590 to describe the nature of sin. This month we consider pride, ‘the beginning of all sin’ (Augustine).

Pride is preoccupied with self and denies the need for others or God. We see it present in the first sin, when Adam and Eve wanted to become like God (Genesis 3:5).

What does pride look like? Jesus told the story of two men, a Pharisee and a tax collector, who went to pray in the Temple (Luke 18: 9-14). The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people, robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ (11,12). He illustrates how pride is essentially putting ourselves in God’s place and believing we can run our own lives. It’s subtle and self-deceptive and eats away our lives: ‘Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.’ (Proverbs 16:18).

So how do we deal with pride? The answer is humility. The tax collector stood at a distance ‘he would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” (13). This man was right with God, because he acknowledged his sin and his need for forgiveness. Humility is being realistic about ourselves, and acknowledging our total dependence on God. We develop it by giving ourselves wholeheartedly to God and repenting of our desire to do things our way: ‘Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up.’ (1 Peter 5:6).

‘Humility is not in thinking less of yourself, but in thinking of yourself less’ (Rick Warren).

## *“The suffering in Sudan is almost unbearable” - Bishop of Leeds*

The situation in Sudan is “so dire that ‘urgent’ does not do justice to the need for action,” the Bishop of Leeds, Nick Baines, has warned in his final speech in the House of Lords.

Bishop Nick, who is retiring, used his last appearance in the House after more than a decade to secure a debate on the worsening humanitarian crisis in Sudan.

He highlighted mass killings, sexual violence, starvation, and the displacement of millions, with non-Arab Africans among the primary targets.

Bishop Nick also emphasised the lack of attention to Sudan in western media and called for stronger UK leadership in diplomatic, economic, and military efforts to end the conflict, protect civilians, and ensure accountability for atrocities.

Bishop Nick said: “The suffering in Sudan is almost unbearable, the worst humanitarian catastrophe on the planet, and it is neither new nor simply a phenomenon of only the last three years. Whatever the causes of and motivations behind the current conflict, it is civilians—women, children, young men and vulnerable ethnic groups—who are being targeted and abused in the most inhumane ways.”

Warning that inaction will exacerbate refugee migration, generational trauma, and cycles of violence, he stressed that Sudan’s plight demands immediate, coordinated global intervention.



### **Important Notice for Next Week**

Please note that there will be **no service at Christ Church on Sunday 11 January.**

Instead, we will be **joining with St Paul's Methodist Church** for a **Covenant Service**, beginning at 10.30 am. We warmly encourage everyone to come along and share in this special joint act of worship.

### **Prayer List Update**

Our prayer list has now been updated.

If you know somebody who would like us to pray for, please speak to Anthea or Peter.

### **Mothers' Union – Wave of Prayer**

Each year, Mothers' Union members around the world join together in a Wave of Prayer, a special time of prayer that travels across the globe, uniting people in faith, hope, and love. It is a powerful reminder that we are part of a worldwide fellowship, praying for families, communities, and the work of Mothers' Union everywhere.

This year, our local Wave of Prayer will take place on Friday or Saturday (date and time to be confirmed). We are currently waiting for confirmation from the MU Branch Leader, and full details will be shared later this week as soon as they are available.

Please hold this event in your prayers and do join us if you are able once the details are confirmed.

### **Carol Singing at Tesco, Sowerby Bridge**

One of the customers who heard us singing Carols in the foyer at Tesco and also accepted a knitted angel posted her delight and thanks on the Sowerby Bridge Chit Chat facebook page saying 'the singers were so good....lovely to hear them. Also thank you to whom ever knitted the angels.

Also a big thank you for the knitted angels donated from Christ Church.

### **Fresh from the word 2026**

If you would like a copy please speak to Peter. Each book is £15.00

### **Church Flowers**

If you have ever wondered how our flower rota works, it is actually very simple. The flowers in church each Sunday are given as a gift – an offering from members of the congregation.

A flower rota is displayed on the noticeboard in the Community Room, showing all the Sundays of the year. You are welcome to add your name at any time.

Flowers may be placed in church in memory of loved ones, to mark personal celebrations, or for church festivals and special occasions. They bring beauty to our church and greatly enhance the atmosphere of our worship space.

We also have a flower fund, and anyone is welcome to contribute. Donations may be given to celebrate birthdays, wedding anniversaries, or other special events.

Our Flower Co-ordinator is Angela Wilkins. Please speak to her if you would like to arrange flowers in church for a special occasion.



# CRAFT & CHATTER

A welcoming craft group for everyone



Formerly **Knit & Natter**

Our much-loved group is now **Craft & Chatter**, so **anyone** who enjoys **any kind of craft** is warmly invited to join us.



Knitting



Crochet



Sewing



Drawing



Or simply come along  
for a friendly chat



## WHEN

Every other Tuesday  
1.00 – 3.00 pm



First meeting: Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January



## WHY NOT POP IN?

Bring your craft... or just yourself.  
If nothing else, come along for a chat —  
**you'll be very welcome.**



Find us on  
[www.christchurchsb.org.uk](http://www.christchurchsb.org.uk)



Using your smart device,  
scan the QR code to join  
'Hebrews Coffee' Wi-Fi



Once connected  
scan the QR code  
below



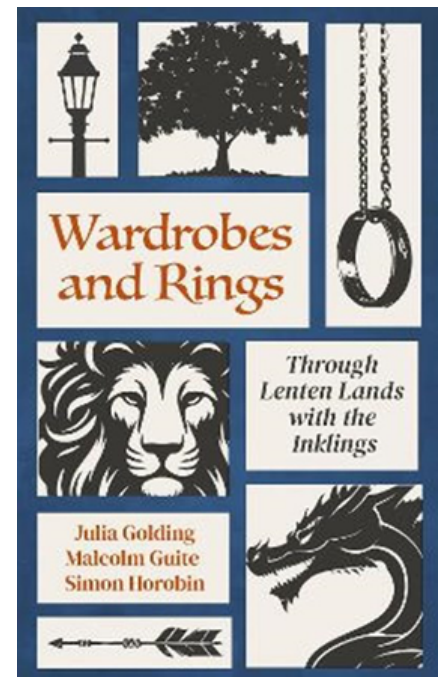
Captions\* will appear once  
the Service / Event starts.

\*Captions are auto  
generated and will include  
errors



*Wardrobes and Rings - Through  
Lenten Lands with the Inklings*  
By Julia Golding, Malcolm Guite, and  
Simon Horobin, Canterbury Press,  
£12.99

Drawing on the work of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien,  
as well as friends of the Inklings such as Dorothy  
Sayers and T.S. Eliot, this book explores through their  
eyes a faith which is tinged with seriousness,  
creativity and joy. Using their fiction, poetry, and  
essays, the book offers daily readings and reflections  
on the cross and resurrection, helping you to  
rediscover Lent through the lens of imagination-  
infused faith.



*Smile Lines*

**Softly**

A churchwarden went to the Police Station wishing to see the burglar who had slipped in and out of the church during evensong. "You'll get your chance in court," said the Desk Sergeant.

"I don't want revenge," said the man. "I want to know how he got out of the service early without the vicar noticing. I've been trying to do that for years!"



Church News 2026 Year A

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Mr Dave Gill 07400 373 902 [dave@christchurchsb.org.uk](mailto:dave@christchurchsb.org.uk)

**Ordinary people Sharing God's love in our world.**  
**Growing in faith. Living by prayer. Loving God's word.**  
**Living Loving Learning.**