

CHRIST CHURCH, SOWERBY BRIDGE

WEEKLY NEWS



Hope refreshed

ISAIAH 42.1-9

Isaiah prophesies to those in exile about God's chosen servant, who will bring justice, light and freedom from captivity to the nations.

We explore the hope that God gave to all people in his Son, Jesus, whose baptism we mark today, and how we might share God's hope with those who are in desperate need of it.

Peaceful mind

The Bible tells the story of Jesus and His disciples in a boat. The wind blows, the waves rise, and the disciples are stressed. Like them, we also get hit by storms in life. Like them, we can't control what comes our way. But like them, we can know that Jesus is also with us.

Why not take a moment to ponder these promises:

In peace I will lie down and sleep, for You alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety. (Psalm 4:8)

The Lord gives strength to His people, the Lord blesses His people with peace. (Psalm 29:11)

For God is not a God of disorder but of peace – as in all the congregations of the Lord's people. (1 Corinthians 14:33)

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

Collect Epiphany

Heavenly Father, at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son: may we recognize him as our Lord and know ourselves to be your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

THIS WEEKS HYMNS

Processional

Gradual

Offertory

Communion

Recessional

Going from Strength to Strength - even in January

Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion. (Psalm 84: 5-7)

January can be a grim month! Back to work after Christmas, dark days and early nights. Colds, sniffles and bugs, then the bills, renewals and invoices come in. There is not much going on in church, as Candlemas is not until February.

I like the psalms, as they are written from personal experience. This one is a belter and has been called one of the sweetest psalms. I suppose January could be a type of 'valley of Baca' or veil of tears, meaning a difficult time to get through. The psalmist encourages us to look for wells and pools of water even in the dryest desert.

Many people have debt or other problems. Perhaps the church could set up a group to support members or look for local sources of advice, foodbanks or help.

January may be cold, costly and dark but there are things to look forward to: snowdrops, bulbs and days beginning to lengthen and at least the stress of Christmas is past!

Be smart - don't keep up appearances

If you are struggling with money as the New Year begins, you are not alone. Too many of us are using our credit cards as almost permanent extensions of our bank account, instead of as highly expensive loans.

So, this year, think about how just small changes could help you. For example, simply deciding to take your own sandwiches, and skipping lunch and coffee 'out' could save you £25 a week - that is £100 a month, or £1,200 a year - enough to pay off a big chunk of your heating bills.

Eating alone 'bad for pensioners' health'

Pensioners who eat at home alone are more likely to suffer from poor nutrition and health.

So says new research. It has found strong links between dining solo and diets of poor quality, with fewer fruit, veg and meat. This can lead to weight loss and frailty.

Researchers at Flinders University in Australia are instead highlighting the importance of community-based initiatives - such as neighbourhood meal groups, intergenerational dining programmes, or local café partnerships to mitigate the harms of eating alone.

As one researcher explains, "Food is more than the nutritional benefit it provides. Sharing a meal is an important social activity that can influence appetite, dietary variety, and overall well-being for older adults."

In your prayers this week....

Alyson Healey; Maralyn
Pawson; Vanessa Starsmore.



This weeks flowers are
Christmas Flowers

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

I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving. - OW Holmes

It is not so much of our time and so much of our attention that God demands; it is not even all of our time and all our attention; it is our selves.
- C S Lewis

We are not always doing the most business for God when we are the busiest. - John Henry Jowett

If we are taken up with our own personal needs, or if we are looking for position and status in the church, we shall be of little use to God. - David Watson

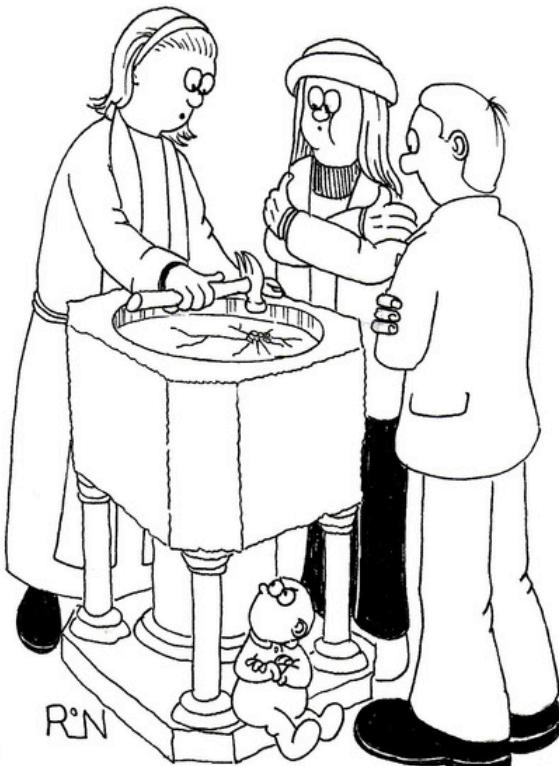
From the Parish Prayer list:

Ward Councillors, Dot, Adam and Simon Calderdale Council; All Community Support Groups; Grove Street; Greenside Gardens; Hanover Street; Height Green; High Fields; Hill Crest; Hill Crest Avenue; Hill Top.



When making a cup of tea or coffee, only boil the amount of water that you need. You waste electricity (and money) heating water you won't use.

Blessed are those who start small.



The boiler only worked if the Verger switched it on

Next week

SUNDAY 11TH JANUARY 2026
EPIPHANY 1

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 49.1-7

PSALM

PSALM 40:1-12

SECOND READING

1 CORINTHIANS 1.1-9

GOSPEL

JOHN 1.29-42

SERVERS

GRAHAM LAMB

PETER HENRY

FIRST READING

REBECCA LUMB

PSALM

PAUL HEALEY

SECOND READING

GRAHAM LAMB

INTERCESSIONS

DAVE GILL

SIDES PERSON

JACKIE GILL

KEVIN HENRY

JUNIOR CHURCH

TBC

DIARY

Monday

9:30 Morning Prayer in church

Tuesday

10.00 Coffee Morning and digital cafe

11.30am Midweek service of Holy Communion

Wednesday

Thursday

6.30 BCP evening prayer

Friday

Saturday

10am Coffee Morning

Sunday

10.30am Holy Communion

Journeying in 2026

It is January, and the adverts for summer holidays are hitting our TV screens again. But have you ever considered a walking holiday with a spiritual side to it, here in the UK? If so, Journeying might be a website well worth visiting (<https://www.journeying.co.uk>).

Travelling through beautiful landscapes to places where for centuries people have felt especially close to God – sacred places, places of pilgrimage – Journeying holiday groups are small, perhaps a maximum of 12 including two leaders who stay with the group throughout.

There is a family feel and a sense of community, with everyone is accepted just as they are. The days are not crowded with activity, allowing space and time for reflection.

The origins of Journeying lie in pilgrimage, and Celtic spirituality is a thread woven through all that they do. Their purpose is to enable guests to venture out, leave the every-day and connect with God in Creation, in each other and in themselves.

Each holiday has a rhythm of gentle prayer; morning and evening and occasionally when the group are out, perhaps by a mountain stream or on a hillside. All who feel the informality and ambience of the holiday will help nurture their own spiritual journey, are warmly welcomed.

The 2026 programme includes holidays with long walks, short walks and some with elements of retreat:

The Island of Anglesey. 24th– 30th April;

Llŷn Peninsula, North Wales. 16th – 23rd May.

Caldey Island Pilgrimage retreat, West Wales. 4th– 8th June

Grasmere and Lake District. 14th – 19th June

Monasticism in the Wye Valley. 6th – 11th July

Canterbury, England. 17th– 24th August

Tenby and the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path. 12th– 19th September

Late Summer in Oxfordshire. 22nd– 25th September

More info at: www.journeying.co.uk

Science and Miracles

We live in a world where we can expect the sun to rise tomorrow and the milk to pour out of the bottle when we tilt it over our cereal. But for God, the properties of matter and the biological processes that we know and read about in text-books are simply the usual ways He works. If He chooses to do something unexpected to demonstrate something about His character, His relationship with us, and His purposes, then He will.

A group of 14 UK-based science Professors wrote to the Times in 1984, saying that “We gladly accept the Virgin Birth, the gospel miracles, and the Resurrection of Christ as historical events. We know that we are representative of many other scientists who are also Christians standing in the historical tradition of the churches.” For the non-believer, I would suggest a thought experiment: if God exists, why should He be bound by the same laws of physics as us?

Professor Christine Done is an Astrophysicist at the University of Durham. In the book *True Scientists, True Faith* (Monarch, 2014) she writes: “Even when I was an atheist I used to get cross at discussions...on how all Jesus’s miracles could be physically explained. To me, once you have believed in a God, a supernatural being, then it’s obvious that supernatural stuff could happen, since any God who can make the physical universe and its laws can presumably suspend those laws in any time and way He chooses.”

There are also miracles which appear to be a case of wonderful timing. The wind blew all night and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry land, for example. The biblical writers don’t seem especially interested in distinguishing between wonders that seem to break the usual rules of how things happen and those that don’t.

Many in Jesus’ audiences were not won over by His wonders. Most of the people in the crowds who ate the food He produced out of nowhere were quite happy to turn on Him when the religious authorities decided He was dangerous. We can only make sense of something unexpected, such as an answer to prayer for healing, in the context of a growing relationship with God. The exciting task for a Christian is to explain what this interaction looks like, and to demonstrate what ‘your kingdom come’ looks like in our communities. God works through us in words, works and wonders.

Written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

What makes snow stick?

Depending on whether you are a child with a sleigh or an adult trying to drive home, snow is either your friend or your foe. And sometimes snow can be hard to understand....

Matt Taylor of the BBC Weather, recently named a couple of reasons as to why snow behaves in the way that it does. For instance:

Ground temperature plays a massive part when it comes to whether snow sticks or not. When the weather has been relatively warm, the ground will store some of that warmth and melt the snow more quickly. This happens faster on roads and pavements than on grass, which transfers the heat from the ground more slowly. Sunshine helps melt snow, and any snow covered in dirt and debris will melt even quicker, as the darker surface absorbs the warmth from the sun more readily.



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.

Fresh from the word 2026

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

Church Flowers

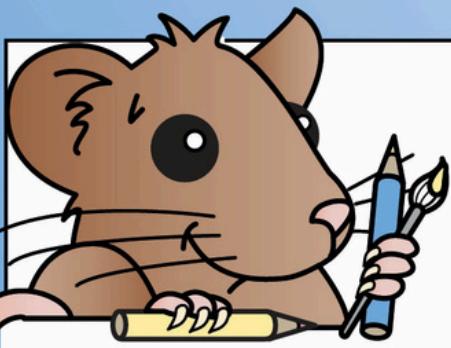
If you have ever wondered how our flower rota works, it is actually very simple. The flowers in church each Sunday are given as a gift – an offering from members of the congregation.

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.



Mouse Makes

DID YOU KNOW?

Stars shine different colours, the colour we see depends on the temperature of the star. The hottest stars shine blueish-white, then yellowish-white, yellow, orange and the coolest stars shine red.

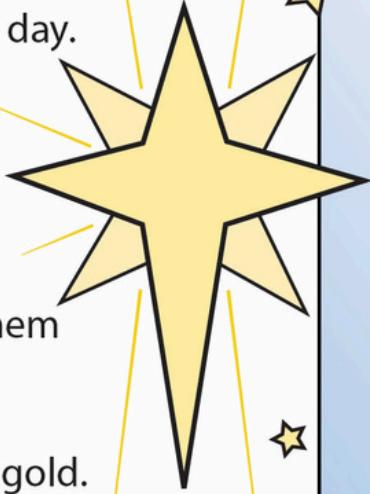
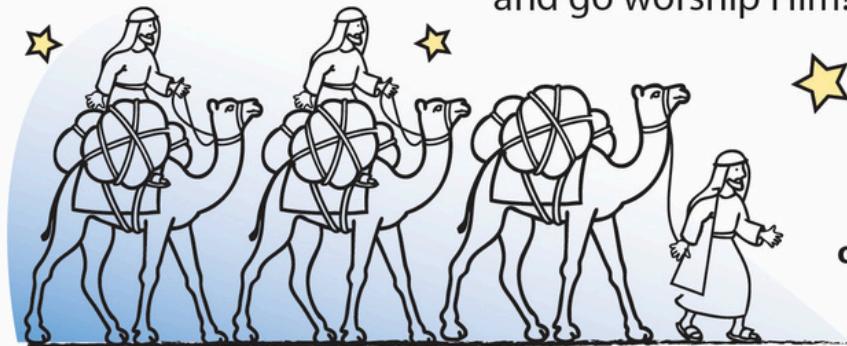
WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

The Wise Men came from a land far away, they had seen a star that shone brighter than day.

The star was a sign of the birth of a king, so they followed that star to pay homage to him.

They found him in Bethlehem as the prophets foretold, they gave him three gifts: myrrh, frankincense and gold.

The star led to Jesus our saviour and king, let us join with the Wise Men and go worship Him!



Read the story of the Wise Men in *Matthew 2:1-12*

S	B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	J	O	I	Y
T	K	J	E	S	U	S	K	I	N	O	W	W	C
A	G	O	E	P	I	P	H	A	N	Y	O	I	V
R	I	U	M	E	S	S	I	A	H	G	R	S	I
K	F	R	A	N	K	I	N	C	E	N	S	E	S
I	T	N	G	O	L	D	M	Y	R	R	H	M	I
N	S	E	I	J	V	S	I	G	N	B	I	E	T
G	O	Y	A	C	H	R	I	S	T	C	P	N	M

Can you find these words in the word search?

WISE MEN • MAGI
STAR • SIGN
JOURNEY • BETHLEHEM
VISIT • JESUS • MESSIAH
CHRIST • KING
GIFTS • GOLD • MYRRH
FRANKINCENSE
WORSHIP • JOY
EPIPHANY



Find us on
www.christchurchsb.org.uk



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

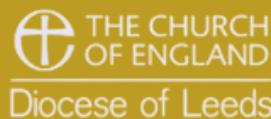


Once connected
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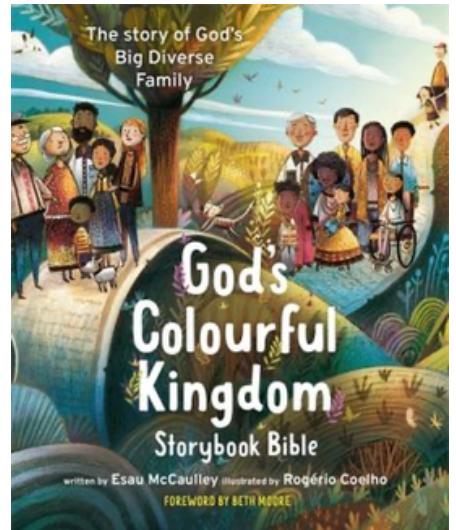
Captions* will appear once
the Service / Event starts.

*Captions are auto
generated and will include
errors



God's Colourful Kingdom Storybook Bible - the Story of God's Big Diverse Family
By Esau McCaulley. SPCK £11.99

This book tells the story of God's love of ethnic diversity and his concern for the poor, His justice and His compassion. It includes 16 Old Testament stories and 15 New Testament stories, guiding children and their parents and carers to discover God's overarching story of grace and His intentional design for a diverse church that cares about the vulnerable. Several of the stories are not traditionally included in storybook Bibles, providing new reflective opportunities for families.



Smile Lines

The puppy

A clergyman was walking down the street when he came upon a group of about a dozen boys, surrounding a small puppy. Concerned lest the boys were hurting it, he went to investigate. One boy explained, "We just found this puppy, and we all want him. So, we've decided that whichever one of us can tell the biggest lie will get to take him home." The minister was taken aback. "Don't you boys know it's a sin to lie? Why, when I was your age, I never told a lie." There was dead silence for a moment. The minister thought he had got through to them.

Then the smallest boy gave a deep sigh and said, "All right, give him the dog."



Church News 2026 Year A

Registered Charity 1131180

CCLI License Number 295704

Revd. Tommy Daglish

The Vicarage, 62 Park Road, Sowerby Bridge, HX6 2BJ.

07378 517 835 Email: vicar@christchurchsb.org.uk

Churchwardens

Mr. Peter Henry 07720 745 230 peter@christchurchsb.org.uk

Mr Dave Gill 07400 373 902 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.**