

**United Benefice of Skipton, Christ Church
with Carleton, St Mary**



Newsletter

January 2026

Weekly Services

Christ Church

Sunday at 9.30am – Eucharist

Wednesday at 9.30am – Eucharist

St Mary's

Each Sunday at 11.15am

3rd and 5th Sunday – Bread Wine and Worship

2nd and 4th Sunday – Parish Eucharist

1st Sunday of each month -

8am BCP Communion

11.15am Family Praise

Contact Details

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JANUARY LECTORY READINGS

Thursday 1 January Naming and Circumcision of Jesus	Numbers 6.22-27; Psalm 8; Galatians 4.4-7; Luke 2.15-21
Friday 2 January	1 John 2.22-28; Psalm 98.1-4; John 1.19-28
Saturday 3 January	1 John 2.29-3.6; Psalm 98.2-7; John 1.29-34
Sunday 4 January 2nd Sunday of Christmas	Jeremiah 31.7-14; Psalm 147.13-21; Ephesians 1.3-14; John 1.[1-9]10-18
Monday 5 January	1 John 3.11-21; Psalm 100; John 1.43-end
Tuesday 6 January Epiphany	Isaiah 60.1-6; Psalm 72.[1-9]10-15; Ephesians 3.1-12; Matthew 2.1-12
Wednesday 7 January	1 John 3.22-4.6; Psalm 2.7-end; Matthew 4.12-17, 23-end
Thursday 8 January	1 John 4.7-10; Psalm 72.1-8; Mark 6.34-44
Friday 9 January	1 John 4.11-18; Psalm 72.1, 10-13; Mark 6.45-52
Saturday 10 January	1 John 4.19-5.4; Psalm 72.1, 17-end; Luke 4.14-22
Sunday 11 January The Baptism of Christ 1st Sunday of Epiphany	Isaiah 42.1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10.34-43; Matthew 3.13-17
Monday 12 January	1 Samuel 1.1-8; Psalm 116; 10-15; Mark 1.14-20
Tuesday 13 January	1 Samuel 1.9-20; Canticle: 1 Samuel 2.1, 4-8 or Magnificat; Mark 1.21-28
Wednesday 14 January	1 Samuel 3.1-10, 19-20; Psalm 40.1-4, 7-10; Mark 1.29-39
Thursday 15 January	1 Samuel 4.1-11; Psalm 44.10-15, 24-25; Mark 1.40-end
Friday 16 January	1 Samuel 8.4-7, 10-end; Psalm 89.15-18; Mark 2.1-12
Saturday 17 January	1 Samuel 9.1-4, 17-19, 10.1a; Psalm 21.1-6; Mark 2.13-17
Sunday 18 January 2nd Sunday of Epiphany	Isaiah 49.1-7; Psalm 40.1-12; 1 Corinthians 1.1-9; John 1.29-42
Monday 19 January	1 Samuel 15.16-23; Psalm 50.8-10, 16-17, 24; Mark 2.18-22
Tuesday 20 January	1 Samuel 16.1-13; Psalm 89.19-27; Mark 2.23-end
Wednesday 21 January	1 Samuel 17.32-33, 37, 40-51; Psalm 144.1-2, 9-10; Mark 3.1-6
Thursday 22 January	1 Samuel 18.6-9, 19.1-7; Psalm 56.1-2, 8-end; Mark 3.7-12
Friday 23 January	1 Samuel 24.3-22a; Psalm 57.1-2, 8-end; Mark 3.13-19
Saturday 24 January	2 Samuel 1.1-4, 11-12, 17-19, 23-end; Psalm 80.1-6; Mark 3.20-21
Sunday 25 January Conversion of Paul	Jeremiah 1.4-10; Psalm 67; Acts 9.1-22; Matthew 19.27-30
Monday 26 January	2 Samuel 5.1-7, 10; Psalm 89.19-27; Mark 3.22-30

Tuesday 27 January	2 Samuel 6.12–15, 17–19; Psalm 24.7–end; Mark 3.31–end
Wednesday 28 January	2 Samuel 7.4–17; Psalm 89.19–27; Mark 4.1–20
Thursday 29 January	2 Samuel 7.18–19, 24–end; Psalm 132.1–5, 11–15; Mark 4.21–25
Friday 30 January	2 Samuel 11.1–10, 13–17; Psalm 51.1–6, 9; Mark 4.26–34
Saturday 31 January	2 Samuel 12.1–7, 10–17; Psalm 51.11–16; Mark 4.35–end

**St Mary's 'Coffee Pot' is open each Friday
from 2pm – 4pm**

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY, TUESDAY 6TH JANUARY 2026
**SOLEMN MASS AT CHRIST CHURCH, 7.30PM
(BENEFICE SERVICE)**

RIPON CATHEDRAL
THURSDAY 8TH JANUARY 2026, 1.00PM
ORGAN CONCERT

by
ROBERT MARSH
Refreshments from 12.30pm
Free admission; retiring collection

United Benefice of Skipton Christ Church with Carleton St Mary
February 2026 Newsletter

Please send any Notices/articles for the February edition to
christchurchstmarysoffice@gmail.com before 26th January.

Thank you.

Christmas Day sermon at York Minster

Archbishop Stephen gave the sermon during the Festal Eucharist at York Minster on Christmas Day. This follows in full

“The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.”

- John 1. 9-11

On the road out of Chelmsford towards where I used to live in a place called Margaretting, there is a very long dual carriageway. Several miles long. Therefore, if you want to go anywhere, you have to travel in the direction of the traffic on your side of the road. Which sometimes means going a mile or two in the wrong direction.

At one end of this dual carriageway was the house where I used to live. At the other end was a large Tesco superstore. At Christmas a few years ago, well a few days before Christmas, my wife and I were shopping in the said branch of Tesco's. Later that same afternoon I was presiding at Nine Lessons and Carols in Chelmsford Cathedral. I needed to get home before the service to change into clerical attire and collect my robes. We had plenty of time. Or so we thought. When we came out of Tesco's, the car park was completely gridlocked. There had been an accident on the exit slip road, and none of the cars that day were going anywhere. Once I had worked this out, Rebecca stayed with the car and I had either to walk to the cathedral, sans robes, or walk home to collect them. And, I still thought I had enough time to do this but underestimated the length of the dual carriageway I now had to walk down. And about halfway, realising I was probably going to be late for the Service, I saw a couple coming out of their house to get into their car. I knew that they had to drive in the same direction as I was going and therefore had to almost go pass my front door. Smiling, and looking as cheerfully unintimidating as I could muster, I gestured to them in what I thought was a friendly way, and began to ask them whether they might be able to help me.

Written on their faces was blind panic and terror. A stranger is talking to us. They couldn't get into their car fast enough. They drove away quickly, honking their horn at me. I wouldn't be surprised if they dialled 999.

Let's be clear, I don't really hold it against them. They didn't know who I was. My 'day-off' attire is, I admit, moderately scruffy. And the mantra 'stranger danger' is drilled into us from a very young age for good reasons.

But I am still troubled by the experience. What does it tell us about ourselves? Especially at Christmas, where at the heart of the nativity and the gospel that flows from it, there are so many stories of exile and welcome, in the letter to the Hebrews there is even the injunction that in welcoming strangers we might be entertaining angels (see Hebrews 13. 2) or then Jesus' stern warnings about what we do or don't do to those we encounter who are in need.

We have become, I can think of no other way of putting it, we have become fearful of each other, and especially fearful of strangers, or just people who aren't quite like us. We cannot see ourselves in them. And we, therefore, spurn a common humanity. Yes, of course, it is good and sensible for us to warn our children against the fearful strangers they do not know, and I really don't blame that couple for feeling a bit frightened of me that day, but I do worry, when our first instinct on encountering someone we don't know, is fear, and when, in order to keep the fear at bay, we build walls around ourselves, trying to secure a world where no stranger can get in, so that even when Jesus himself knocks at the door, like the good sensible people of Bethlehem itself, we politely refuse him. There is only room for us. For the medicine we so need in our world today to overcome this fear is Christ. And we know as we come close to him, we also come closer to each other. And we see and experience each other differently. We discover a common humanity in all our rich diversity. And then, and only then, we find a way of living in peace.

I visited Bethlehem this year. It was very quiet. Too quiet, because there just aren't pilgrims visiting at the moment; and the Christian communities who live there, and who rely on the income that pilgrims bring, are really struggling. Representatives of the local YMCA who do amazing work with persecuted Palestinian communities in the West Bank gave me a present as I left. It was a beautiful olive wood carving of the nativity scene: Mary, Joseph and Jesus in the stable on one side of the carving; the three Kings making their journey to Bethlehem on the other.

But a large grey wall bars their way, separates them from Christ. They are prohibited from entry. They can't get to Jesus. They are being turned away. It was sobering to see this wall for real on my visit to the Holy Land and we were stopped at various checkpoints and intimidated by Israeli militias who told us that we couldn't visit Palestinian families in the occupied West Bank.

But this Christmas morning, here in York, as well as thinking about the walls that divide and separate the Holy Land, I'm also thinking of all the walls and barriers we erect across the whole of the world and, perhaps, most alarming, the ones we build around ourselves, the ones we construct in our hearts, and of how our fearful shielding of ourselves from strangers, the strangers we encounter in the homeless on our streets, refugees seeking asylum, young people starved of

opportunity and growing up without hope for the future, means that we are in danger of failing to welcome Christ when he comes.

We don't mind kneeling at the representations of the Manger that we make in our churches and in our homes, like the beautiful nativity scene here in York Minster, but we don't kneel and adore his presence in others, especially the poor and the excluded, the vulnerable and the abused. Worse, we often end up blaming the poor for their poverty the jobless for their lack of work, the homeless for their lack of shelter, and the refugee for the war that forced them from their home or the climate change that devastated their land. Even in the Church which bears Christ's name, we have not always put the needs of the vulnerable first.

Therefore, this Christmas and especially at Christmas, we must find ways of balancing the needs of keeping everyone safe and yet at the same time seeing and adoring the face of Christ in the face of strangers, and especially in the faces of those who are in need; and then, dismantle, tear down the walls, which in keeping strangers out, keep Christ out as well. Then see and celebrate that in finding and seeing Christ and coming to the manger we see ourselves and our world as it is meant to be. Please make no mistake about it, Christmas is worth celebrating. I have a very big and lovely turkey waiting to go in the oven when I get home and lots of other lovely things on ice, and I will be rejoicing on this happy day. But I will also be trying to remember what this day means for me, for you, for our troubled, fearful and confused world. The God who makes himself vulnerable in the gift of this vulnerable child places the smallest, the least, the most fragile at the centre of his kingdom. He is the God who welcomes strangers - shepherds, magi, why even thee and me.

The doors to the Church of the Holy Nativity in Bethlehem are very small. It is impossible, and I mean quite literally impossible, to step inside that Church without bending low. It's as if the entrance itself is saying, in order to enter here you must be smaller and you must be humbler and you must be ready to receive the gifts of this Christ as yourself, as a little child and with a trust that is all so easily lost to us.

But this child, this Christ-child, this beautiful Saviour, our dear Lord Jesus Christ, has come to find us. To show us our true humanity. To lift us up, and to help us see each other and smile in loving recognition.

Oh, come let us adore him.

Amen

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People are coming to faith amidst the 'darkness' of conflict and crises around the world - Church of England bishops' Christmas messages

Increasing numbers of people are turning to the Christian faith amid the crises facing the world, Church of England bishops remark in Christmas messages highlighting the “liberating” power of the nativity story.

The **Bishop of Rochester, Jonathan Gibbs**, speaks of hearing the stories of people in their 20s and 30s who had little or no previous connection with the Church, coming to faith.

“Something is going on or rather, God himself seems to be up to something – way beyond what we as Christians have been doing to share the message of the gospel with the people around us,” he says.

“Humanly speaking, I believe this is happening because people have begun to realise that the things in which they had placed their hopes – things like ever-increasing prosperity or the ability of science and technology to solve all our problems – have started to crumble in the face of economic crises, global pandemics and climate change.”

The **Bishop of Gloucester, Rachel Treweek**, speaks of a yearning for “certainty” but also “mystery” in a time of turbulence and anxiety in the world.

“As I have listened this year to the voices of children, young people and adults across this diocese; the voices in Westminster, and indeed in prisons; and the voices across the wider world whether on visits or simply through the media - I believe there is a yearning for certainty amid the turbulence, anxiety and uncertainty, and the endless messaging of crises,” she will say in her Christmas Day sermon.

“But I also perceive a yearning for mystery – a reaching out for something beyond ourselves and how things appear to be.”

The **Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner**, speaks of joyful celebrations of baptisms and confirmations in his Diocese and new congregation members at Chichester Cathedral.

“A new generation attending Chichester Cathedral have shifted the atmosphere,” he says.

“Buggies now take their place alongside the Zimmer frames, to the delight of everyone.”

Several bishops highlight the peace and comfort of the Christian message amid the struggles and “grittiness” of life, drawing inspiration from the figures of Mary and Joseph.

The **Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher**, reflects on the powerful image of Mary cradling her new born son, Jesus.

“A young mother, full of wonder and humility, holds God incarnate in her arms,” he says.

“Around her is darkness, fear and uncertainty, yet into the brokenness of her world and our world comes this flicker of joy.”

Meanwhile, the **Bishop of Hereford, Richard Jackson**, reflects on the figure of Joseph, whose actions were marked by kindness and wisdom.

Discussing the sheer complexity of the world’s problems, he speaks of the need for wisdom, adding: “This is the wisdom that acted through the righteous kindness of Joseph, this is the wisdom of love.”

He adds: “This is the heart of the Christmas message. May we all know its liberating and revelatory power afresh this year.”

The **Bishop of Peterborough, Debbie Sellin**, reminds us Jesus was born “to humble parents in a place far from home” who would themselves soon have to flee from danger, becoming refugees.

“The baby born in a manger was the Son of God who chose to leave the splendour of Heaven to live among us and share the reality of life,” she says.

“We can take comfort that he knows when we are struggling, he has experienced that himself, and that there is nothing that we can’t take to him now and ask for his comfort and peace.”

The **Bishop of Newcastle, Dr Helen-Ann Hartley**, encourages people to think about the nativity story afresh. In her message, she draws from the words of a scriptwriter on a long-running TV drama who explained that the longer the show was on air, the more people got to know the characters and became “invested” in it.

She challenges people to view the familiar story of the nativity in a similar way, gaining fresh insights no matter how many times they hear it.

“Whatever your perspective on Christmas might be, and whether it will be turkey with all the trimmings or something else, be open to the possibility that the Christmas story might surprise, delight, and challenge you in new and even small ways,” she says.

The **Bishop of Exeter, Mike Harrison**, adds: “In the Christmas story we see joy bursting through in the midst of a time of oppression and darkness; in Jesus’ teaching we find the foundations of a remarkable transformation when people take that teaching seriously; in following Jesus we find people reshaped, and small groups committed to his way turning an empire upside down.”

And the **Bishop of Coventry, Sophie Jelley**, speaks of the “fresh start” that comes from the forgiveness that God offers.

“However challenging life might be and whatever direction we are trying to find or head towards, we are invited to find our place in the world through these three simple words - God with us,” she says.

“That means we are never alone, it means we can know the forgiveness God offers and we can always have a fresh start wherever we are and whatever we have done.”

The **Bishop of Burnley, Joe Kennedy**, speaks of how over 2,000 years, “billions of people” have found their hopes fulfilled and fears cast out.

“So, as we look to the future – in our communities, on the international stage, in each of our lives – we know that life is complex and ambiguous: sometimes beautiful and glorious; sometimes fractured and anxious,” he says.

“And this is why Christmas matters: the best news we shall ever hear is that 2,000 years ago, at the birth of Jesus, the light overpowered the darkness.”

The **Bishop of Lichfield, Michael Ipgrave**, says how putting goodwill into action can light “a thousand candles in the darkness”.

“In an era where we are rightly concerned about those who are weaponising and politicising Christian faith, perhaps the antidote is instead to weaponise goodwill,” he says.

“As a feeling on its own it will achieve nothing, but if we let the feeling prompt us to action it can light a thousand candles in the darkness.”

The **Bishop of Bath and Wells, Michael Beasley**, also speaks about huge challenges both here and around the world “more than any person, government, nation or even the global community seem able to overcome”.

“God is the only one big enough to deal with the concerns we have,” he remarks.

The **Bishop in Europe, Robert Innes**, adds: “We human beings have an extraordinary capacity to mess things up. In all of this, Christmas is a true source of hope.”

The **Bishop of Dover, Rose Hudson-Wilkin**, expands on the theme, reflecting on the “darkness” of global conflicts.

“As we prepare to celebrate Christmas 2025, we are rightly reminded that the true gift from God in this season comes as light, love, joy and peace,” she says.

“Light shining in all the dark corners and overcoming evil; love being the solid foundation that we build on; joy bringing us true happiness and peace filling us with real contentment and hope.”

The **Bishop of Dudley, Martin Gorick**, add that it has been a “hard year” for many and for the world.

“I hope that the joy and peace of the Christ Child will be God's gifts to you as well as to me this Christmas time,” he says.

Meanwhile the **Bishop of Salisbury, Stephen Lake**'s message takes the form of a video shot at Salisbury District Hospital, in which he speaks to one of the chaplains, Steve Hawkes, who will be working on Christmas Day.

Bishop Stephen says: "My prayer at Christmas is for all those who will rejoice in these days, but at the same time, will find them often difficult times as well."

In his message the **Bishop of Portsmouth, Jonathan Frost**, thanks clergy and lay volunteers in his diocese for all they do.

He says: "Bless you as you continue in the way of Jesus. Bless you. When energy flags, just lean on him afresh, ask for his grace and his strength to keep on taking a step towards those around you, just as God in Christ, in Mary's Child, takes a step towards the world, hears our cry and comes alongside us to love us into life."

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Please support



Christian Aid is on a journey. We are building a world free from poverty, and based on dignity, equality, justice and love.

Our understanding of how to address and eradicate poverty is based on three pillars.

- Poverty – We reach those most in need, in some of the hardest to reach places around the world.
- Power – We challenge the systemic and structural causes of poverty by holding those in power to account.
- Prophetic voice – We speak truth to power and build local and collective agency

To be part of our global movement for change, please visit:

<https://give.christianaid.org.uk/donate/>

Skipton Food Bank

This is a list of standard items that we use to make up our food parcels. All items should be in good condition, unopened and not past their *use by* or *best before* date. This is a list of what currently is included in our food parcels

Food

- Tinned meat
- Custard
- Tinned fruit
- Instant Coffee
- Tinned Rice Pudding
- Jam/Marmalade
- Jars of Pasta Sauce
- Tinned veg, e.g. Sweetcorn, Peas, Carrots
- Rice
- Tinned spaghetti
- Tinned tomatoes
- Tinned Fish
- Quick cook meals – noodles, rice & pasta
- UHT milk
- Pasta
- Soup
- Beans
- Cereal

Toiletries

- Toilet roll
- Soap
- Shampoo
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Shower Gel
- Sanitary Products

We also collect

- Dog food
- Cat food
- Nappies (large size 5 or 6 most helpful)
- Baby wipes
- Household cleaning items and washing powder

Our heartfelt thanks. Together, we are able to provide much needed support to many households in Craven.



Mary's Meals currently works in 16 of the world's poorest countries, feeding over 3 million young children one good meal every day in their place of education. They are asking you to donate any left-over foreign currency or obsolete UK currency that you may have lying around. Just bring any foreign or old coins/notes to church by 31 December and we will pass them on. The money raised from this initiative will help Mary's Meals bring hope to more desperately hungry children across the globe. Every 10p is enough to provide a hungry child with a nutritious meal in school.

Mary's Meals would like to thank you for your continuous support & prayers.

Mary's Meals UK

Units 10-13, Claremont Centre, 39 Durham Street, Glasgow, G41 1BS, Scotland



Foundation Craven

(part of the [Inspire North](#) charity group)

Foundation Craven delivers the following services in Craven District Council - Skipton and surrounding areas:

- **Resettlement and Community Safety Scheme (RACS):** A high performing short term support service working with offenders who have the highest need and pose the greatest risk to themselves and the community.
- **North Yorkshire Young People's Pathway:** This service offers young people the necessary support, advice and mediation to enable them to stay in their present accommodation. Where it is not possible for someone to remain at home, we have a variety of accommodation options to suit their needs.
- **Mental Health Scheme:** This service takes referrals from many places, including the Community Mental Health Team, GP, hospitals, substance misuse agencies as well as self-referrals, for those with a severe and enduring mental health diagnoses. We offer a mixture of floating support and accommodation based supported housing.

Contact Email Craven@foundationuk.org Website: <https://www.foundationuk.org/>

Telephone: 01756 701195

Foundation Craven welcomes donations of:

- Food items
- Household goods
- Soft furnishings (beddings, towels, cutlery)
- monetary contributions can be made online at <https://www.foundationuk.org/donate/>

or in the office across the road from Christ Church, at:

The Carriage Works, 3-5 Cross Street, Skipton BD23 2AH

(hours: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).