

**HOLY TRINITY (OLD ST CLEMENTS) BLACKTOFT
NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2026**



Candlemas – the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple

FEBRUARY 2026 BLACKTOFT CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 8th 9.30am – Morning Prayers - Stewart

Sunday 22nd 9.30am - Holy Communion - Rev'd James

Team Rector:	Rev'd James Little	01430 432056
Churchwarden:	Stewart Calligan	01430 441709
Church Secretary:	Sue Nicholson	01430 441064
Treasurer:	Robert J Thompson	01430 440347

From Revd James Little

Continuing last month's theme of spring flowers:

William Wordsworth's *Daffodils*

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had
[brought:

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Stewart's Observations

Candlemas, which falls on the 2nd of February this year is one of the oldest feast days celebrated by the Christian church. It is also known as the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord Jesus and the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

It is said to be the day when Jesus was presented as a baby at the Temple in Jerusalem, so he could join the Jewish religion. Christians bring candles to church to be blessed. These candles can then be burned during the year.

The fire brigade has been called to many a house fire caused by candles. Never leave a lighted candle unattended and ensure inflammable curtains, dried or silk flowers or paper etc are well away from the naked flame.

The advice regarding the wearing of suitable non-slip footwear in icy conditions still applies as we get many a frost in February.

Climbing on chairs, tables, stools and even ladders can result in life changing falls, so please take extra care or ask an agile youngster to perform the task.

Here endeth the lesson on personal safety!

Gardening tips for February

Flowers, fruit and Foliage in winter.

Winter foliage and architectural shapes helped with dogwoods and their red and orange stems, create fiery accents in winter borders. Evergreen heathers such as *Erica carnea* (alpine heath) bring low-maintenance charm to beds and pots.

Christmas roses are one of February's highlights, with their beautiful flowers in pink, white, and purple. Combine these with carpets of snowdrops, who signal the retreat of winter. Winter aconite are also a sign of spring and I am lucky enough to have all three at Staddlethorpe.

Winter berries add colour to the garden in February and provide a great food source for wildlife. Firethorn and Cotoneaster remain heavy with red and orange berries, attracting blackbirds, thrushes, and other hungry garden visitors. Holly also holds onto its striking berries if the birds have paid a visit.

Malus crab apples such as 'Evereste' and 'Red Sentinel' keep their ornamental fruits well into winter. Pauline has two great trees still full of red crab apples. I liked them so much I have just planted two myself ready for next year. February is also an excellent time to plant blueberries, raspberries, and blackcurrants and/or red currants.

Indoors

As February's weather draws on, bringing a touch of greenery into your home will make you feel better. Orchids and succulents or even a cactus or two are easy to care for and add that bit of interest on the dinner table or a bathroom window etc.

The corn plant or spider plant are easy to care for and help improve indoor air quality.

Try to keep the temperature the same and water sparingly. Dust the leaves now and then or shine them with a spray.

Quick colour

February is an excellent time to start planting instant colour. Primroses, pansies, Christmas roses and heathers or colourful foliage plants that usually last all year round

Alpine heather adds long-lasting colour and supports early pollinators.

Pruning

Apple and pear trees should undergo a winter pruning, maintaining their shape and maximising fruiting for 2026.

February is the perfect time for pruning to encourage healthy growth and improve the shape of your plants. Prune bush and climbing roses, removing dead or damaged wood and cutting back stems to promote vigorous new growth.

For wisteria prune side shoots to two or three buds to help focus energy on flower production.

Recipe of the Month – Healthy Beetroot Soup - Pam

Beetroot improves blood flow, lowers blood pressure, aids digestion with fiber and provides antioxidants with anti-inflammatory and potential anti-cancer properties. It also contains vitamins - folate, C, B and minerals - manganese, potassium. Who can live without this miraculous veg?

Ingredients

- 3 x 250g of non-vinegar pre cooked beetroot or equivalent of fresh
 - 25 g or 1oz of butter
 - 2 large onions, finely chopped
 - 2 celery stalks, finely chopped
 - 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 - 1 tbsp. fresh thyme or dried, plus extra to garnish before serving
 - 350 g or 12oz potatoes, peeled and diced
 - 1 vegetable stock
 - 8 tbsp. crème fraîche
 - 40g root vegetable crisps
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Method

1. Melt butter in a large pan with a lid over a low heat. Add onions and celery, cover and cook for 12min until softened. Add the garlic and thyme, cooking for another minute.
2. Add potatoes and stock, bring to the boil and simmer, for 25min until potatoes are tender. Remove from heat. Add cooked beetroot and juices and blend to a purée. Season to taste.
3. Return to the pan to heat through. Serves 8 but can be frozen, top with 1tbsp crème fraîche, a few vegetable crisps and a sprinkling of the thyme leaves.

Robert's Local History

Scalby Parish

Scalby which is Norse meaning Skalli's farmstead was first settled around the 9th century, on a ridge of high ground on the edge of Wallingfen.

During the 12th century the Bishop of Durham who at that time owned Howdenshire, wished to establish a buffer between his property and the Templar estate of Faxfleet. So, he granted a narrow strip of land along the East side of what is now called Bishopsoil Drain from the Ouse to Scalby, to the abbot of Thornton Abbey, an Augustinian monastery in Lincolnshire and eventually this area was to become the civil parish of Scalby. As this narrow strip of land resembled a tongue, so the access to it from Scalby was called Tongue Lane and is still called that today.

The first thing the abbot did, was to build a Manor house to run his estate. This was where Thornton House is today. In 1539 when Thornton Abbey was dissolved, the estate passed to the Crown and by 1600 the Metham family had acquired it. But George Montgomery Metham was an addicted gambler and in the late 18th century gradually sold off all his farms one by one in Scalby and Thornton Lands to pay his debts.

In 1344 a murder was committed in Scalby of a 'travelling foreigner' – a Welshman called Dafydd by a local miller. In the Poll tax survey of 1379 Scalby's adult population stood at 70, then bigger than Gilberdyke's.

The place adjacent to Scalby is called Cheapside, because originally it was a hamlet of squatters or poor people who had moved out of Scalby and onto what was officially Bishopsoil Common so they weren't liable for any parish assessment. It was first mentioned in the Blacktoft Parish register in 1739.

In the local government reorganization of 1935 the Civil parish of Scalby came to an end, when that part which was North of the railway was put into Gilberdyke parish and South of the railway went into Blacktoft.

Interesting fact for February

The length of February was decided when Julius Caesar revamped the Roman calendar and gave the month 28 days and 29 days. In 713 B.C., February was officially added to the Roman calendar.

The shops are now full of Valentine's cards and gifts as February is of course the month for celebrating love. So, grab your special someone, whoever they might be and embrace all the love that February offers.

Birthstone - February birthdays are represented by the amethyst. This beautiful gemstone is a type of quartz, and ranges in colour from violet through to a deep, rich purple. Traditionally a favourite stone of royalty, the amethyst symbolises stability and courage.

Birth flowers - The birth flowers for February are the violet and the primrose. The violet represents faithfulness and loyalty and is given as a symbol that you can always be relied upon. Primroses come in a range of bright colours including yellow, red and purple, all with distinctive yellow star-shaped centres. They represent youth and young love.

Astrology - The western zodiac signs in February are Aquarius which is until February 19th, and Pisces, which is until February 20th. In the Northern Hemisphere, February is the third month of winter. Meanwhile, in the Southern Hemisphere, February is the last month of summer. Between the North and South Hemispheres, February is the equivalent of August.

The name of February comes from the Latin word "februum," which means purification.

February is the only month where it's possible to go the entire time without having a full moon.

Events - The Chinese New Year usually falls sometime during the first half of February. This year is the Chinese Year of the Horse, which represents energy, independence, impatience and victory. Chinese New Year is celebrated all over England, with particularly spectacular celebrations in cities with large Chinese communities such as Manchester, Liverpool and London.

Saturday the 2nd of February is also World Hedgehog Day, so if you know hedgehogs sometimes lurk around your garden, it might be a good idea to think about a shelter. And don't forget to feed them!

Snowdrop walks can be found at either National Trust or English Heritage sites, which are always worth a visit and provide a little respite from the chilly weather.

Then there's Random Acts of Kindness Day on the 17th.

York is one of our local cities and if you're looking for an event that's both entertaining, and educational, head into the city sometime between Wednesday the 20th and Wednesday the 27th for the historic Jorvik Viking festival.

York once had a rich Viking heritage and it now holds the largest Viking festival in Europe every year during February. Experience historic re-enactments; try your hand at Viking crafts; enjoy a city tour and even take part in a Viking banquet.

Finally, the 22nd is World Thinking Day.

Robert's Brainteasers

Last months answers

Who used to live here, **Half a flexible steed ?**
The Knight's Templar,- **Beside Faxe Fleet Hall**

Who goes to, **Chorley Blokes dig ?**
Children – **Gilberdyke School**

This month's anagrams
Is this the bank manager- **Granny convene the time ?**
Where do you Try **Cuban toasts and flick drabs ?**

Any Other Business

February 2026 Sunday Services Across the Howdenshire Churches

February	Easttrington AM	Blacktoft AM	Wressle AM	Laxton AM	Newport AM	Howden AM	Howden PM
1 February Candlemas	9:30 am Morning Prayer Churchwarden		9:30 Holy Communion James	11:00 Morning Prayer Churchwarden		11:00 Sung Eucharist James	5:30 Ethereal evensong
8 February 2 Before Lent Sexagesima	9:30 Holy Communion James	9:30 Morning Prayer Churchwarden		11:00 Morning Prayer Churchwarden	11:00 Multi-media Anthony	11:00 Sung Eucharist Geoff	5:30 Choral evensong
15 February Next Before Lent Quinquagesima	9:30 am Morning Prayer Churchwarden			11:00 Morning Prayer Churchwarden		11:00 Sung Eucharist James	3:00 Messy Church
Ash Wednesday							7:30 PM Ashing Eucharist
22 February Lent I	6:00 pm Methodist-led Worship	9:30 Holy Communion James		11:00 Holy Communion James	Wednesday 25 7:00 PM Meditative Communion	11:00 Morning Worship Elizabeth	