

Parish News

St Mary's Church, Woodkirk

December 2025



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Who's who at Woodkirk

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Elected Members of the Parochial Church Council:

Gary Mortimer, Neal Pinder-Packard, Dawn Tattersfield, Richard Bowes, Barbara Tate, Gail Townsend, David Townsend, Brian Gledhill, Sandra Gledhill, Cath Oakes, Doreen Coates.

In this Month's Magazine:

Features:

Page 8	Vicar's Letter
Page 13	A reflection on Psalm 25
Page 23	Woodkirk Walkers
Page 26	Do to Others as you would have them
	Do to You
Page 30	Advent Reflections
Page 35	The Greatest Preacher
Page 38	More than Sparrows

Also this Month:

Page 12	Advent and Christmas Dates/Services
Page 22	Foodbank
Page 34	December's Recipes
Page 37	Toy Collections
Page 38	Bible Sayings
Page 39	Church Mouse Tales
Page 40	Albert's Quiz
Page 42	Quiz Answers
Page 43	Parish Registers
Page 48	Diary and Services

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Welcome!

Enjoy reading this Parish magazine and, if you wish to know more about Church Groups, please get in touch with the Movers and Shakers - their names are on the inside front & inside back covers. Service times are on the back page. You'd be most welcome to join us. May God bless you and all whom you love.

Parish News by Post

This magazine can be delivered monthly by sending a minimum donation of £18 a year to cover magazine costs including post and packaging to: Margaret Longden, 64 Woodkirk Gardens, Dewsbury WF12 7JA. Call Margaret on 01924 473064. It's a brilliant gift for friends or family living near or far. Cheque's to Woodkirk PCC please.

Web site & Twitter

Further news and pictures of what is happening at St Mary's can be found on our web site located at: www.stmarywoodkirk.org
Copies of the magazine can be downloaded from the web site from the middle of the month of publication.

We are on Twitter: twitter.com/stmarywoodkirk

Wheelchair Access

A wheelchair is available to help people move easily between the church and Dewsbury Road. Just ask.

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if you wish to pay your weekly collection via our bank
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Vicar's Letter

In the Christian year, few seasons hold the quiet depth of Advent. It is a time often overshadowed by the busyness of December, yet the Church calls us—week by week, candle by candle—to slow down, to watch, and to wait. In the Church of England's liturgy, Advent begins not with sentimentality but with a solemn prayer: *“Give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light.”* This is the heart of the season: preparing ourselves to encounter the Light that comes into the world, a light the darkness cannot overcome.

We wait, not for an abstract idea or a seasonal feeling, but for a person. Advent stretches our imagination back to ancient longing and forward to the final fulfilment of God's kingdom. It gathers up our hope, our brokenness, and our need for salvation. And at its centre stands the Christmas story—the story of a child who grew to become the man Jesus, the one who walked the dusty roads of Galilee, who healed, taught, forgave, challenged, and who in the fullness of time went to the Cross for the redemption of the world.

Advent's opening weeks do something remarkable: they begin not with the baby in the manger but with the promise of Christ's return. The lectionary readings remind us that we live between the times—between the first coming of Christ in humility and His second coming in glory. It is a season in which the Church dares to proclaim that history has a direction, that God's purposes will one day be fully revealed, and that Christ will come again to “judge the living and the dead”.

In a world that often feels fragmented, uncertain, and weary, this message is not one of fear but of hope. The Advent scriptures ask us to lift up our heads, to stand ready, to recognize that God has not abandoned His creation. The Collect for the First Sunday of Advent reminds us that God's grace enables us to live “in the time of this mortal life” with faithfulness, courage, and expectancy.

Advent is countercultural in the best possible way. Everywhere around us, Christmas seems to arrive earlier each year. Decorations appear in the shops before the leaves have fallen from the trees; familiar songs fill the air long before December begins. Yet the Church keeps something precious by resisting that rush. Advent honours the slow work of God and the slow healing of human hearts.

The prophets knew this rhythm. Isaiah's great cry—"Comfort, *O comfort my people*"—comes to us like a warm cloak against winter winds, yet that comfort came only after long waiting. John the Baptist's call—"Prepare the way of the Lord"—still echoes with urgency. In our own time, Advent invites us to create space for silence, prayer, and reflection, to acknowledge our longing for Christ's transforming presence.

When Christmas finally arrives, it is all the more radiant for having been anticipated. The Church's liturgy shifts: after weeks of purple, the white and gold of celebration burst into view. We sing with joy, we kneel at the crib, and we hear once again the story that has shaped centuries of faith.

At the centre is the astonishing claim that God took on flesh. The eternal Word did not appear in splendour but was born to a young mother in a borrowed stable, laid in a manger because there was no room for Him elsewhere. The angels proclaimed peace; shepherds hurried from their fields; wise men travelled far in search of the child who was both ordinary and extraordinary.

The baby in Mary's arms was vulnerable, dependent, and utterly human. Yet He was also Emmanuel—God with us. He did not remain in heaven, distant and unapproachable, but entered the world in poverty, identifying Himself with the least, the lost, and the lowly. Even before He spoke, His very presence proclaimed God's love.

Yet the Church never separates Christmas from the Cross. The incarnation and the crucifixion form one continuous expression of God's saving purpose. The baby wrapped in swaddling clothes would one day be wrapped again—this time in grave clothes—after giving His life for the world He came to redeem.

Jesus grew into the man who spoke of the kingdom of God, who welcomed children, who ate with sinners, who challenged injustice, who healed the sick, and who called disciples to follow Him. His ministry revealed the heart of the Father. And His death revealed the depth of God's love—a love poured out “for us and for our salvation”.

This is why the story of Christmas is not merely sweet but profoundly radical. It proclaims that God did not simply send a message but came Himself. He came to shoulder our burdens, to share our humanity, and to take upon Himself the sin and suffering of the world. The same love that led Him to the manger led Him to the Cross. And the same power that raised Him from the dead gives us hope that He will come again in glory.

Advent and Christmas are not only events in the life of Jesus; they are seasons meant to shape our discipleship. In the Church of England's liturgy, we pray for hearts ready to receive Christ, not only as the infant of Bethlehem but as Lord and Saviour in every part of our lives. To keep Advent faithfully is to let God search us, refine us, and renew us. It is to pray, in the words of the Advent Collects, for grace to live as children of the light. It is to practice hope when hope feels costly, and to bear witness to the One who brings peace in turbulent times.

To celebrate Christmas faithfully is to remember that God still comes to us—in Scripture and Sacrament, in prayer and hospitality, in the faces of our neighbours, especially those in need. The Christ who once lay in a manger now invites us to recognise Him wherever He may be found.

As we journey through Advent toward Christmas, we travel the road from promise to fulfilment, from expectation to joy. We prepare not only for a season but for a Saviour—the child who became the man who gave His life on the Cross and who now reigns in glory.

May we, like Mary, make room in our hearts.
May we, like the shepherds, draw near in wonder.
May we, like the wise men, offer our gifts.
And may we, with the whole Church, proclaim the good news that the light has come, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Come, Lord Jesus.



Wishing you all many blessings this Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

Sharon

St Mary's Church Woodkirk ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS



**St Mary's Church would like to warmly invite
you to our Christmas services and events**

Weds 26 th November	Holy Communion	10.00am
Sunday 30 th November	Online Advent Reflection	7.30pm
Weds 3 rd December	Holy Communion	10.30am
	Holy Communion	10.00am
	Online Advent Reflection	7.30pm
Friday 5 th December	Christmas Tree Festival in Church	4pm-8pm
Saturday 6 th December	Christmas Tree Festival in Church	10am-6pm
Sunday 7 th December	Christmas Fair in Parish Centre	10am-2pm
	Holy Communion + Toy Festival	10.30am
	Christmas Tree Festival in Church	12-4pm
Weds 10 th December	Family Carol Service	4.00pm
	Holy Communion	10.00am
	Online Advent Reflection	7.30pm
Sunday 14 th December	Family Nativity Service + Toy Festival	10.30am
	Blue Christmas	4.00pm
Weds 17 th December	Holy Communion	10.00am
	Online Advent Reflection	7.30pm
Sunday 21 st December	Holy Communion	10.30am
	Carols by Candlelight	4.00pm
Christmas Eve		
Weds 24 th December	Holy Communion	10.00am
	Christingle Service	3.00pm
	Christingle Service	5.00pm
	Midnight Mass	11.30pm
Christmas Day		
Thurs 25 th December	Christmas Family Holy Communion	10.30am
Sunday 28 th December	Holy Communion	10.00am

For more information visit www.stmarywoodkirk.org

I really enjoy reading the Psalms—Psalm 25

Have you ever felt like life was like riding a massive never ending roller coaster? We talk about going through seasons of life - - - that means we have those good seasons, when we seem to be on a winning streak. Everything we do, seems to work out . . . but then without warning, the bottom drops out and we can't win, it's lose, lose, lose. So, we change up a few things, we change our schedule, we change our work, we change the way we get dressed in the morning, we do everything we can to change our routine - - hoping that something will kick in for us.

Have you ever felt that way? I think most of us have been there. Even in the midst of a single day, we can be on that roller coaster. It starts off great, then we spill the coffee, but after a while we get over it, and the day improves, then we get a flat tire, change it, forget about it, we have a great lunch meeting, then it starts to rain, and you left your windows down! It happens - - doesn't it?

Well, this reminds me of a Psalm in which David seemed to be on a roller coaster ride, and it was impacted him in all ways - - spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically. It is **Psalm 25**. I would like to take us through various parts of it, so we can see what's going on with David - - and we'll see some of his roller coaster ride. The Psalm starts:-

1 To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

2 O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me.

David starts out praising God. He is reaffirming his trust in the Lord. It is to you, O Lord, you only that I lift up my soul. It is only to God that David gives praise and prayer. He continues by reminding God, it is only in you, God that I trust. There is no other way to worship. My hope, my eyes, my trust, my heart, they are given to you, Lord.

And because I worship you and you alone, Lord, David makes these requests – don’t let others shame me, don’t let them mock me and make fun of me - - AND don’t let my enemies be victorious over me, don’t let them celebrate my destruction. That’s what David is saying. It’s a petition to God - - it’s a deep prayer to God. There may even be a little doubt for David. Lord don’t let this happen, then in the next verse David affirms that this won’t happen. It’s part of our roller coaster ride of faith. He said - indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

Do you hear the confidence in David? In the previous verse it was a request, a prayer, Lord, don’t let this happen. Now, it’s like David is saying, “WOE!! Wait, nobody who waits for the Lord, nobody who says the Lord is mine will be put to shame. I believe, I trust in the power and strength of the Lord.

Don’t we do that sometimes. We go through our rough patches. We doubt a little. Not total doubt, just a little wondering . . . ‘God, can you really heal me? God, can you really give me the strength I need? God, can you help me?’ We ask, but sometimes as we ask, we still aren’t really sure God can or will give us the answer we hope for.

And while we may not get what we hoped for. David is affirming in the end; you will not be put to shame. You will be lifted and those who ultimately pursue you will be put to shame. Sometimes it’s part of that roller coaster of faith. We believe, but we still kind of doubt a little.

It’s important to note that 3 times in this Psalm David states that he will wait for the Lord. He said it here in verse 3. He said it again in verses 5 and 21 :-

5 . . . for you I wait all the day long.

21 . . . for I wait for you.

How many times have we placed our trust in God, made requests of God, believed God could 100% do what we’ve asked . . .

THEN we take back our prayers and say, "Hold on God, I think I have a plan which will take care of my problems. Let me get back to you if this doesn't work out!" How many times do we do that? We're not willing to wait on the Lord. We want immediate gratification. We make our requests known to God and we want God to be that magical genie and give us everything we want. But we know that is not how it works, but we do it anyways.

So, another lesson we can learn from David is the ability to wait on the Lord. To wait on the Lord's timing. To wait on the Lord's answer. It doesn't mean you stop praying and asking. You keep on asking until you believe you've been given an answer.

Now, this can be a little tricky, because we often wait to hear an audible response from God, and you might, but you also might get the answer from another person, or from a scripture reading, or a song or a sermon. It could be life events give you the answer. God will answer in his way He chooses, we need to be alert and attentive to God so that we hear His answer!

Now, David reaffirms his faith in God, stating :-

5 Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.

This leads David to make another request of God in verses 6-7. He wrote :-

6 Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!

David asks God to remember His mercy, His constant and steady, never-ending love. They've been there forever and will continue forever, but now David is struggling again . . . He asks God not to remember his sins from his youth.

How often have our sins from the past come back on us like a sudden case of the flu. I know!! That's not appealing, but that's how it hits. No warning, just suddenly it happens and . . . well . . . I won't go into detail.

It happens at night, when we get in bed. It's quiet, except in our minds. Our minds isn't turning off, maybe we are replaying the events of the day or the past week and some incident pops up again. Or something reminded us of our sinfulness. It happened years ago, but we can't let it go.

David knows God is gracious, loving and forgiving. I'm sure David asked for forgiveness, after all, he's a man after God's own heart. But during this dark time, he's being reminded of his sinfulness. So, he prays, Lord, take these sins away from me, according to your faithful love, blot these sins away. David is asking, praying, Lord, reassure me, grant to me confidence that I am really forgiven, because I'm really struggling.

Do we hear that great news? We need to believe it is real and true. God does forgive us of our sins when we ask from the heart! If not, then why did He send Jesus to die for us? That would be totally absurd.

Maybe the issue is that you are really struggling to forgive yourself for something you did. So many of us have been there. We believe God forgave us, but our real struggle is holding onto our own sinfulness and not letting it go, trusting that God has already let it go.

Eventually, David turns back on that roller coaster ride and falls into major despair. Listen to his words to God :-

16 Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.

17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses.

18 Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins.

19 Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me.

Again, you get the sense that David is overwhelmed with fear and anxiety. He is calling on God for protection. He's afflicted, he's surrounded by his enemies. He's in trouble and David is calling on God.

In this we can sense this back-and-forth nature of what's going on in David's heart and spirit? He's struggling to move forward. It's like he takes 2 steps forward and 1 backwards.

This is the 3rd time David has asked for forgiveness. Maybe we're holding onto some of that sin as well. David makes the request again, "Lord, take away my sins. Can you see there are so many who hate me and are out to get me."

David cries out to God :-

20 Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me! Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.

21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.

Again, we see David's willingness to wait for the Lord. He prays, guards his soul. Not his mind, not his body. But David wants his relationship with God to be right. So, during our troubles, while the enemy is pursuing us, while the bills are adding up, while the kids are struggling, while our health is worsening, while our jobs are ending .. Lord - guard our souls!

Why guard the soul? So that we do not turn away from God. For some people, when the times get tough, it's easy to blame God, to turn our back and find some other type of God we can believe in, someone or something we believe will not fail us. Yet, God has promised never to fail us, never to forsake us, even during our worst seasons of life.

So, guard our souls, protect us from our enemies . . . and protect us from ourselves.

In verse 8, David said:-

8 Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He instructs sinners in the way.

9 He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble His way.

You see, it's so important to be humble, to practice humility. The humble person is a willing learner. They are not a know it all, they want instruction and knowledge. They seek wisdom. That is a person who can be led by God, because they are open to His teaching.

How often do we seek to learn from others? How often are we willing to admit we don't have all of the answers? That's so important for us to see in David's request to God. Lord, I'm a king, I'm the most powerful man in the world . . . but Lord, I'm nothing without you. So, grant to me your wisdom and understanding so I can better worship and honour you.

So, at this point, David asked:-

21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.

It has been written :- “An infinite God can give all of Himself to each of His children. He does not distribute Himself that each may have a part, but to each one He gives all of Himself as fully as if there were no others.”

How comforting to know, God in His power and grace, is always with each of us.

And David's final words to the Lord is a prayer, not for himself, but for the nation.

22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

Whatever troubles the nation was experiencing, David wanted redemption for the people. Psalm 25 is a little of a roller coaster ride of faith. It's a powerful Psalm because David's journey reminds us of our own journey.

Know that God loves us! He created us and called us to be His child! Even in the ups and downs of life, God has promised us if we wait on the Lord, we will experience the power of the Lord.

Gail

St Mary's Church Woodkirk



Welcome to this child friendly
carol service which closes our
Christmas Tree Festival
Sunday 7th December
At 4.00pm



St Mary's Church, Woodkirk

Community Christmas Tree Festival

Come and see our Christmas Tree's
decorated by our local community

Festival Opening Times

Friday 5th December 4pm to 8pm

Sat 6th December 10am to 6pm

Sunday 7th December 12pm to 4pm

For more information visit www.stmarywoodkirk.org or follow us on facebook
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ST MARY'S, WOODKIRK

CHRISTMAS

FAIR 2025

Saturday 6th

December

10am to 2pm

Lots of Stalls, bargains and
a tasty Cafe

All Welcome

For more information visit: www.stmarywoodkirk.org

St Mary's Church, Woodkirk

Blue Christmas



A Service for those who find this
time of year difficult

Sunday 14th December 4.00pm

★ ST MARY'S CHURCH WOODKIRK

Carols by Candlelight

NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS



SUNDAY 21st DECEMBER

4PM

JOIN US IN CHURCH OR ON
FACEBOOK LIVE

For more information visit www.stmarywoodkirk.org or follow us
on facebook www.facebook.com/stmarywoodkirk/



As we come into the season of Advent and the Joy of Christmas creeps in, please remember those who struggle to feed their families or give gifts to their children. Whilst this is a time of shopping and gifts, please spare a thought for those in need. At this time our local Foodbank is asking for supplies of Tinned Fruit and Vegetables, UHT milk, Long Life Juice, Rice Pudding and Custard along with those little treats that we all take for granted.

Donations can be left in church or at the Vicarage. I will make sure that they are delivered to the Foodbank warehouse.
Many thanks. Barbara

Woodkirk Walkers – The Muddy One.

For our latest walk, we stayed local and headed off towards Gawthorpe across muddy fields, with Sharon's faithful hound Teilo the collie dog leading the way (but not sure where we were going). We were down to three – just myself, Richard and Gary daft enough to head into the swamp. Luckily the rain held off so we didn't get wet – just rather muddy.



We sett off down the hill and up the ABC steps before turning right along Baghill Road and descending to the farm. As we headed out over the fields away from the farm at Baghill, two giant poodles came bounding over to see us – or more specifically Teilo. For those who don't know, Teilo isn't good with other dogs and tends to shy away – up to the point where he feels trapped and then he goes on the offensive as it were. The giant poodles bounded over to him – one on each side – so he was surrounded. I called out soothing words with everything crossed that world war three wasn't about to start, but to my surprise Teilo stayed calm and allowed them to have a sniff – and suddenly they were gone – bounding off again. We never saw the owner – and we could see a fair distance - so heaven knows where they came from. We breathed a sigh of relief and continued for another mile or so until another dog walker - this time with a pack of 5 dogs – all barely under control, came towards us. Teilo looked apprehensive but again kept his cool and it passed by without incident. Good boy!

We reached Gawthorpe village and stopped by the Maypole for a quick breather (see picture). Maypole Green is the finish line for the famous annual Coal Carrying race. It started in April 1963, and competitors run from the Royal Oak pub on Owl Lane and finish by the Maypole. The Men carry 50kg of coal for 1012 metres, with women carrying 20kg. Children can compete in a fun run of 100 yards – no coal required!



We turned right and headed along the road passing the Water Tower.

Gawthorpe Water Tower is no longer in use, it is now a listed building and features on the Historic England website. It says: 'It has a strikingly elegant neoclassical design executed in reinforced concrete that is atypical in its level of detailing and aesthetic treatment.' So there.

After a short debate – shall we or shan't we? Our next stop came at Chidswell Farm Shop, where we were able to buy some very nice meat pies and sausage rolls to keep us going for the final stretch.

Just around the corner from the Jet garage there is an option to go back into the muddy fields or stay on the pavement all the way back to

church. We opted for the muddy fields (obviously) but then a few hundred yards further the track went into a dip where water and mud had collected. It was too late to turn back so we pressed on through ankle deep mud and out the other side. Finally, through the woods and back onto Heybeck Lane. The way back across the fields from here means climbing over a style – and Teilo doesn't do styles – so we stuck to the roads for the last half a mile or so, completing about 5 ½ miles in total. Very enjoyable (as long as you like mud).



Thanks also go to Lizzie who had just turned up at Sharon's and saw the state of Teilo and, along with Sharon, gave him a good wash down, leaving me to beat a hasty retreat!

Dave

NB from Sharon. It took ages to wash the mud off Teilo but he had a great time! Woof woof.

Do to others as you would have them do to you.

At the beginning of November Rev Sharon preached on Luke 6:20-31, the passage about Blessed are you who are poor...blessed are you who hunger...woe to you who are rich, woe to you who are well fed...; explaining that the blessings were not spiritual wishful thinking nor the woes curses or threats but that it was God taking an opportunity to turn the world the right side up again.

The blessings reminded us that when the world is the right side up the hungry will be filled, tears will be wiped away and the excluded will be embraced. In terms of the woes, whilst these aren't curses or threats, God is giving us a warning; be careful if you have all these things, have money, are well fed, don't get too comfortable.

We need to remember to not get so comfortable that we forget our need of God. These gifts are temporary, we cannot take them with us. Remember the farmer who had such a bountiful crop, (Luke 12) he built a bigger barn but then that night his life was taken and so his bigger barns did him no good at all. Here we are being challenged by Jesus. He is saying, be honest about what you rely on. Is it God? Or is it whatever makes you feel secure? Jesus says don't be so comfortable that you forget your need for God.

When we consider our situation, we have worked hard, maybe saved a bit, provided for our families, why should we not have comfort, and there's nothing wrong in enjoying the comforts you have, but don't rely on these things, don't forget that whilst we may be comfortable, we still need God in our lives.

And Jesus then provides us with some suggestions of actions we can take, something practical, something challenging, something unmistakably Christ-like. Jesus tells us to love our enemies; "...do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

And much like the Disciples probably did, we start thinking, "Oh Lord... couldn't we just stick with the blessings part?" Because loving our enemies isn't natural. What comes naturally is irritation, retaliation, giving people what they "deserve."

But Jesus is inviting us into something bigger than that natural instinct. He is inviting us to live as children of God—to treat others not as they treat us, but as God treats us, with mercy far beyond what we deserve.

Jesus isn't giving us a new set of rules to follow grudgingly. He's describing what happens when the kingdom of God takes root in our hearts. When we allow God's grace to shape our relationships. When the way God loves becomes the way we love.

This kind of love changes things. Even the little everyday decisions:

What if, instead of keeping score, we tried forgiving first?

What if we chose patience when someone frustrates us?

What if we saw those who irritate us as people God delights in?

This doesn't mean we accept abuse or allow harm—Jesus isn't telling us to be doormats. He is showing us a way to live that breaks the cycle of hatred and hurt. Love that stops insisting on "my rights" and begins to ask, "How can I show Christ here?"

Often, when we let God's kingdom take root in our hearts, our actions look small at first—like choosing not to snap back in anger, or giving generously without expecting thanks. These are everyday acts of rebellion against a world that says, "Look after yourself."

Jesus invites us to live in a world shaped by mercy—"Do to others as you would have them do to you."

Jesus looks at us—not to shame us, but to call us. He blesses the broken-hearted and he warns the comfortable. He invites us all to shift our weight—to rely not on wealth or reputation or success, but on the God whose love is unshakeable. And then he says: go and live that love. Share that blessing. Let the grace you have received overflow into the lives of others—especially those who seem hardest to love.

Because that is where the kingdom becomes visible. That's what God intended from the beginning, and that's where we discover that the blessings Jesus promises aren't just for the future—they begin now, as his love works through us.

Love and blessings

Dawn

Pastoral Care

Telephone Calls—We understand times are difficult—please know we are here if you need anything. Gail Townsend is our Pastoral Minister and she regularly telephones those who are unable to leave their homes at this time. If you would like Gail to give you a weekly call then please do not hesitate to contact her on 07792 975814.

Baptisms—If you wish to make an enquiry or book a Baptism please contact Barbara Tate on 07792 211095 in the first instance. Barbara will then arrange to visit you and book your Baptism into our Diary.

Funerals & Ashes - in the first instance please contact our Verger who co-ordinates these events.

Our Co-ordinator is Gail Townsend on 07792 975814 or email: gail@stmarywoodkirk.org.

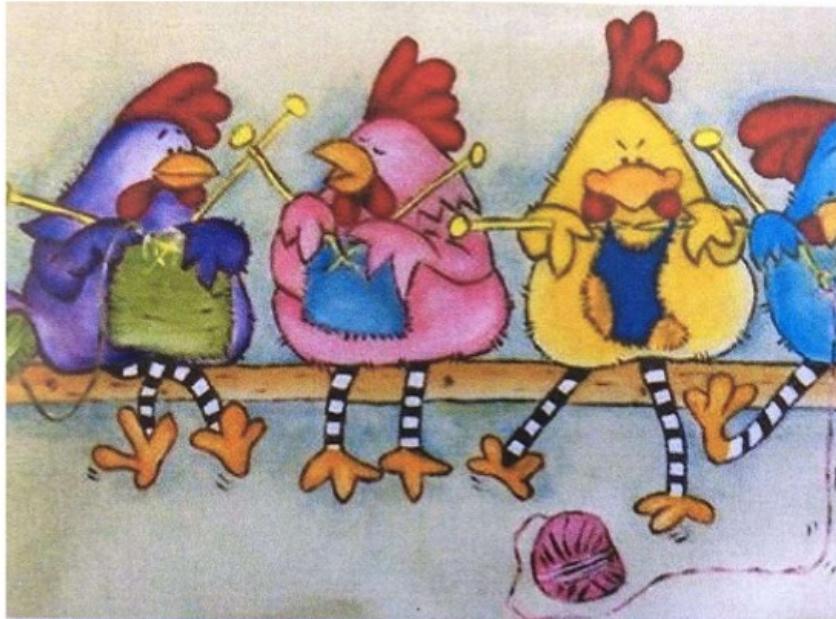
Weddings and Banns

In the first instance please contact our Vicar or Church Warden Gary Mortimer on 07740 760556 who co-ordinates these events.

Notice Sheets—If you would like to receive a copy of our weekly Notice Sheet via email—then please drop me an email giving me permission to add you to the list. My email address is vicar@stmarywoodkirk.org

Please note we are GDPR compliant and take great care of your private information.

St. Mary's, Woodkirk



Come along and join us for a

“Knit & Natter”

(or just a natter!)

Wednesday 1.00pm-3.00pm

St. Mary's Parish Centre

Contact: Dawn Tattersfield 07840739239

Advent Preparations

Towards the end of November I attended an ‘Advent Reflection’ event for Lay readers (LLM). It was a gift of time to myself when I would think about the coming of Advent.

I always try to join Rev Sharon’s online Advent reflections, they keep me grounded amongst all the busyness of the build up to Christmas, and so when this event was advertised I felt I would like to attend.

There were about a dozen of us, gathered in Holy Trinity Church on Boar Lane in Leeds. If you have been to the Trinity Centre in Leeds it’s the church that is almost part of it, and it is a church I have never been in. We gathered and were told about the format for the session. It was only 90 minutes long but we had a small act of worship/prayer starting with the ‘Advent Antiphons’. Now before you all ask, I’ll tell you...I looked it up and an antiphon is “a short sentence sung or recited before or after a psalm or canticle” so there, now you know!

There were seven of them in Latin... and although you may be sat there thinking “I’ve no idea what they are” we all know them in their amalgamated form as the hymn ‘O come O come Emmanuel’. We then went to a number of prayer stations, areas where we had either activities to complete or quiet time to focus.

I’ve been to any number of training courses, events and ‘quiet days’ (yes believe it or not, and I managed to stay quiet too ha ha), and the quality of the prayer stations can vary quite dramatically. I must tell you, these were really good. There were only four of them which gave you time to engage with them.

The first one was ‘The joy of the promise’ and was a reflection on Mary. Mary totally surrendered to God’s will, her response was nothing short of miraculous. It reminded us that faith is a miracle, and Mary’s faith showed complete trust in God without hesitation.

It encouraged us to stop and reflect in awe and wonder, and posed the question; “Where is your heart and mind as Advent approaches?”

I sat and pondered this and recognised how full my days and my head get with everything leading up to Christmas, and there and then committed myself to spending 10 minutes every day in Advent in a quiet time with God. I came back to a saying I used to have on my wall at work “You will never find time to do anything, you must make time”, and so I will make time for God this Advent.

The second prayer station provided Psalm 80 and talked about restoration. Psalm 80 is a cry to God for His restoring grace. When we speak of God’s grace, at what level are we seeking His grace; on the surface, a slight tweak, a reshuffling of priorities, or a deep clean into the depths of our hearts and minds? What restoring do you feel you need when you read the words “Restore us O God, let your face shine, that we may be saved”?

The activity with this station was interesting, it was building blocks, one task asked you to add to the ‘wall’ of things that we felt would help us with our restoration and the other was a row of stumbling blocks, the things that get in the way of our restoration to God’s grace. The interesting thing was that whilst I recognised that time with God in quiet reflection or prayer would be something that would help me, the stumbling blocks were not put there by others but mainly put there by me! My stumbling blocks were all to do with not ‘having’ time, busyness etc. I had already recognised that I have difficulty ‘finding’ time, and that I need to prioritising ‘making’ time. I am my own worst enemy!

I sat a while and pondered about the ten minutes I was committing myself to spend with God in quiet reflection or prayer and I wondered if like me, you were concerned that if you set time for prayer you perhaps wouldn’t know what to say (not usually a problem for me!) and I reasoned that if we don’t know what to say, then it would be helpful to sit in silence... “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

The next station talked about the shepherds who of course were the

first to be visited by angels glorifying God and informing them of the Saviours birth. There were three images, if there is space, Rev Sharon will have included them, but what struck me was the journey the shepherds made, not only physically, but metaphorically speaking as well.

The first image shows a lone shepherd with his sheep, it is quite a dark image and this reminds us that some of us may be in a dark place, but then the second image is of the heavenly host appearing to the shepherds, all glory and wonder and amazing light.

We may never see a multitude of angels, but I was reminded of the well known words from John' Gospel 1:5 “ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it”. Mankind has suffered many troubles, many times of darkness, as we ourselves may have done, may be suffering at the moment, but remember God's light continues to shine and the darkness has not overcome it.

The final image shows the shepherds visiting the stable to see the baby as foretold by the angels, then the shepherds "...they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them." (Luke 2:17-18).

The shepherds went on a journey, from literal darkness to amazing light and then told everyone about their witness, the light shone through them sharing the light of Christ.

The last prayer station I sadly didn't spend much time on as I'd taken time at the other three, but it was about poetry to do with the Christas story, there were a number of poems shared and again if Rev Sharon has space, the one that resonated with me was this one from Jesuit Tony Horan;

If you look for me at Christmas, you won't need a special star;
I'm no longer just in Bethlehem, I'm right there where you are.
You may not be aware of Me, amid the celebrations.
You'll have to look beyond the stores and all the decorations.

But if you take a moment, from your list of things to do,
And listen to your heart, you'll find I'm waiting there for you.
You're the one I want to be with, you're the reason that I came
And you'll find me in the stillness, as I'm whispering your name.

The shepherds three images (as mentioned in my article)



The Lone Shepherd in the darkness



The heavenly multitude



Visiting the Holy Family

Dawn

December Recipes

Hi everyone

Well here we are, another December is upon us. I don't know about you but I'm sure I'm going to be dashing hither and thither over the next few weeks so I've chosen some meals for one for this month's focus.

Mushroom Risotto

Tuck into a plate of nutty risotto with button mushrooms, fresh parsley and sharp Parmesan cheese.

Ingredients

1 stock cube, a small red onion,
1 tbsp olive oil, 1 clove garlic,
60g button mushrooms, sliced,
75g risotto rice, 50ml white wine,
½ tbsp butter, 1 tsp parsley,
chopped, 15g fresh Parmesan cheese,
grated, 250ml boiling water



Method

1. Crumble the stock cube into the boiling water and stir until dissolved.
2. Heat the oil in a saucepan or deep frying pan over a moderate heat. Add the onions and garlic, and fry for 5 minutes until soft. Stir in most of the mushrooms, season with salt and pepper and continue to cook for 6-8 minutes until the mushrooms are tender and soft.
3. Add the rice into the pan and cook for 1 minute coating it in the juices and oil. Pour over the wine and let it simmer and reduce. Over a medium heat, pour in a quarter of the vegetable stock. Simmer the rice stirring often to avoid sticking until the rice has absorbed all the liquid.
4. Add the same amount of stock again and continue to simmer and stir until the stock is absorbed. Repeat.
5. Add the final quarter of stock and stir until absorbed. The rice should be soft and tender. Take care not to let the rice stick. If the rice is still undercooked add a little boiling water and simmer for a few more minutes.

6. In a separate small frying pan, heat the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp oil over a high heat. Fry the remaining mushrooms for 4-5 mins until golden. Set aside to garnish with later.

7. Add the butter and give it a good stir. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese and fresh parsley before serving with the golden mushrooms on top.

Mozzarella and roasted tomato toast

Fancy a piece of pizza, but don't want to nip down to the local takeaway? Make your own margherita-style toast to satisfy your cravings.

Ingredients

3 slices sourdough bloomer
1/2 x 200g pack mozzarella
slow roasted tomatoes
chopped parsley leaves (optional)

Method

Toast the slices of six-seed sourdough bloomer. Scatter over the mozzarella and slow-roast tomatoes, shaking off excess oil. Grill on a medium heat for 4-5 mins until the cheese has melted, then top with chopped parsley leaves, if you like.



Seafood Pie

Plan ahead by getting frozen ingredients which can be used as and when you fancy, shown to great effect in this seafood pie.

Ingredients

15g unsalted butter
1 tbsp plain flour
150ml semi-skimmed milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ fish stock cube
1 tsp snipped chives
60g frozen sliced leeks
130g frozen cooked seafood cocktail
300g tin peeled new potatoes in water, drained and thickly sliced
20g Cheddar, grated
80g pack Tenderstem broccoli



Method

Preheat the oven to gas 6, 200°C, fan 180°C. Melt the butter in a Small saucepan and stir in the flour.

Cook for 1-2 mins until golden brown, stirring constantly.

Add the milk, a little at a time, whisking until smooth.

Crumble in the stock cube and season with black pepper.

Add the chives, frozen leeks and seafood cocktail and bring to a simmer. Turn off the heat.

Pour the seafood mixture into an individual baking dish or small enamel pie dish and arrange the sliced potatoes on top.

Scatter with the grated cheese and season with salt and pepper.

Bake for 15-20 mins until the sauce is bubbling and the dish is golden at the edges. Let cool for 5 mins.

Steam or boil the Tenderstem broccoli and serve alongside the seafood pie.

Jam Doughnut Cake

And to finish off, a tasty sounding dessert in a cup!

Ingredients

2 tbsp granulated sugar

¼ tsp ground cinnamon

2 tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil

1 large egg yolk

1 tbsp milk

¼ tsp vanilla extract

4 tbsp plain flour

½ tsp baking powder

2 tsp jam, such as strawberry, raspberry or blackcurrant, plus extra to serve (optional)

Method

Mix the sugar and cinnamon together, then spoon 4 tsp into a small microwave-proof mug or cup (about 200-225ml). Mix in the oil, egg yolk, milk and vanilla, followed by the flour and baking powder, until smooth. Spoon the jam into the middle of the mix, then sprinkle 1 tsp of the remaining cinnamon sugar on top. Microwave on high for 1 min, until risen and firm on top. Sprinkle the remaining cinnamon sugar over the top. Serve with an extra spoonful of jam, if you like.





St Mary's Church
Woodkirk

Christingle Services

Weds 24th December 2025

3.00pm

and 5.00pm

**St Mary's Church, Woodkirk
NATIVITY SUNDAY**



All Welcome to our Nativity

Come dressed as a character from the
Christmas Story!! (Whatever your age!!)

Sunday 14th December at 10.30am

TOY COLLECTIONS

In Church on Sunday 7th December and Sunday 14th December we are having a collection of new toys which people kindly buy and donate to the Church for those who are less fortunate. They will be delivered to the Foodbank to ensure that those in need and those local have a little less stress and a little more happiness this Christmas-time. If you are able to help toys can be dropped off at the Vicarage up until Sunday 14th December. Thank you.



Fear not, for I have
redeemed you; I have called
you by name, you are mine.
(Isaiah 43:1)

THE LORD



JESUS
SHOULD
BE YOUR
FIRST
LINE OF
DEFENSE,
NOT YOUR
LAST
RESORT.



JESUS DIED
AND AROSE
TO GIVE US
A FRUITFUL
LIFE – NOT A
FRUITLESS
ONE!
(ROMANS 6)

Search me, O God,
and know my heart!
Try me and know
my thoughts!
PSALM 139:23



The Lord will fight for you;
you need only to be still.

EXODUS 14:14

Church Mouse Tales.

‘It’s time for an important meeting!’ I declared to my friend Hubert, the Black Canon.

Hubert looked up from his comfortable spot in the choir stalls.

‘A meeting?’ He looked at me quizzically.

‘Yes!’, I went on enthusiastically, ‘- we need to plan Christmas!’

‘A plan?’ he looked somewhat perplexed.

‘Yes. Yes!’ I almost shouted in excitement. ‘We need to plan Christmas Day – are we opening presents first or having breakfast?’

‘Presents?’ he repeated, sounding a little vague.

‘Yes! And then Christmas dinner – nut roast obviously – followed by....’

‘Nut roast?’, repeated Hubert, ‘No turkey?’

‘Nut roast is the best thing ever!’ I declared. ‘Then Christmas pudding – no brandy for me – it makes me go a bit funny - but you can have some...’

‘Er – thanks.’ Said Hubert sounding unsure.

‘...and then later we can play some games...’

‘Games?’ said Hubert who seemed to be repeating everything with a vacant expression firmly fixed on his face.

‘You remember Christmas?’ I asked, worried about his state of mind.

‘Well, I do Misha’, he replied, ‘it’s about a child being born and celebrating that in church with your loved ones. Is that what you mean?’

‘Well, er, yes of course! I was just coming to that – I mean we haven’t started the meeting yet, have we? I was just throwing ideas around you know to get our imaginations working....’ I stopped, and looked at the ground, feeling a bit self-conscious.

‘So shall we start the meeting?’ asked Hubert, but I couldn’t look him in the eye.

‘Shall we begin with a prayer?’

‘OK’, I said, ‘but we are having nut roast, aren’t we?’

Misha.



Alberts December Quiz.

1. In the song, what did 'my true love' give on the 9th day of Christmas?
2. Boxing Day is also the Feast of which Saint?
3. There are two Christmas Islands. Which oceans are they in?
4. What is the destination of the Polar Express in the classic Christmas novel?
5. Where in UK does a single snowflake have to be fall to be a White Christmas?
6. In which Christmas pantomime does Buttons appear?
7. In which of 'The Chronicles of Narnia' does Father Christmas appear?
8. Which 17th century English leader banned Christmas?
9. In which country was, and still is, 'stollen' eaten at Christmas?
10. Christmas puddings used to contain coins made of which metal?
11. Which Christmas song has the line: 'Sleigh bells ring, are you listening'?
12. What was the original name for door to door carol singing?
13. What produce is Harrods most famous for at Christmas?
14. Myrtle, Sand and Swamp are all types of which Christmas Bush?
15. Which county is most associate with the Christmas Turkey?
16. Who had a 1960 hit with 'Rocking Around the Christmas Tree?

17. Father Christmas leaves presents in the UK, who leaves them in Spain?
18. In 'A Christmas Carol', what was Scrooge's first name?
19. What Christmas tradition was made popular by Prince Albert?
20. What pudding features in the song 'We wish You A Merry Christmas?'
21. What type of Christmas food is Buche de Noel?
22. Which female newsreader danced in a Morecambe & Wise Christmas special?
23. Which Christmas symbol was also the nickname for Victorian postmen?
24. What is the common name for the Christmas tradition of the Tannenbaum?
25. How must you stir Christmas pudding to make your wish come true?
26. On which day of Christmas is Epiphany?
27. What were the first artificial Christmas trees made of?
28. In which Christmas pantomime does King Rat appear?
29. What is the name of Scrooge's clerk in 'A Christmas Carol?'
- 30.** How many windows does an Advent calendar usually have?

Answers on Page 42

How do I join an on-line Service?

If you are not so familiar with the on-line world but you would like to join one of the services, here's some good news! It's easy!

Go to: facebook.com/stmarywoodkirk

Then select 'Videos' from the side bar.

To join a 'Live' service look for the right time on the Diary page. You can also view previous services from the same location.



Quiz Answers:

1. 9 Ladies Dancing
2. Stephen
3. Indian & Pacific
4. North Pole
5. London Weather Centre
6. Cinderella
7. Lion, Witch & the Wardrobe
8. Oliver Cromwell
9. Germany
10. Silver
11. Winter Wonderland
12. Wasaling
13. Hampers
14. Holly
15. Norfolk
16. Brenda Lee
17. Papa Noel
18. Ebeneezer
19. Christmas Trees
20. Figgy Pudding
21. Yule Log
22. Angela Ripon
23. Robins
24. Christmas Tree
25. In a clockwise direction
26. 12th Day January
- 6th
27. Goose Feathers
28. Dick Whittingham
29. Bob Cratchet
30. 24

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

BAPTISMS—

Cooper Bernie Ireland



DEATHS



We give thanks for the lives of all those who have recently died within our Parish:

David Woollin

WEDDINGS:

(none this month)

Wedding Blessing:

(none this month)





Lydgate Lodge is a welcoming and beautiful home offering residential and dementia care for older people.

It's a place where kindness defines care - where every action is guided by a genuine desire to support your well-being, offering not just assistance, but thoughtful compassion to help you live better every day.

Please get in touch to find out more about life at Lydgate Lodge and how we can help you to live your best life.



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Couples Welcome

To find out more about Lydgate Lodge and to speak to our friendly team, contact us on:

01924 355 020

A Soothill Lane, Batley, West Yorkshire, WF17 6EZ
E lydgate.lodge@hc-one.co.uk **W** hc-one.co.uk



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Get in touch to discuss your needs and to book an appointment.

To Contact Shirley Tel : 07805 804 015

Parish Centre Rentals

We have space for Groups who may be interested in using the Parish Centre at various times of the week.

Nominal Cost is £75 for 3 hours.

Regular long term bookings negotiable.

Contact: Sally Shaw

01924 475048 for more information.

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OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Leeds

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TINGLEY

What's on

(please contact the leaders for further information)

ABC Group Adults, Babies and Children

Wednesday 9:30-11:00am (Term time)

Thursday 9.30-11.00am (Term time)

Contact: Charlotte 07972 217528

Line Dancing 1.00-3.30pm Tuesday

Contact Helena 07719946917

Knit and Natter—come and enjoy help with crafts or just chat **Wednesday 1.00-3.00pm.**

Dawn Tattersfield 07840739239

Pilates **Wednesday 7.00– 8.00pm**

Contact Erin Blake

Young at Heart 1st & 3rd Thursdays 2:00pm

Sally Shaw 07963610708

Rainbows Thursday 5.30 - 6.30pm

Ruth Osenton-Brown 07805186479

Brownies Thursday 6.30 - 7.45pm

Hannah Tombling 01924 501892

Beavers Friday 5:00pm to 6:15 pm

Joanne Rutledge 07950 580877

Cubs Friday 6:30pm to 7:45 pm

Marianne Ingham 07778 542302

Scouts Friday 8:00 pm to 9:30 pm

Trevor Holdsworth 0113 253 0927

Explorer Scouts Friday 7:45 pm to 9:30 pm

Chris Ingham 07816 517838

Diary and Services this Month.

Sunday Services.

Each Sunday there will be a Holy Communion Service at 10.30am in Church as well as Online.

Weekday Services

Wednesdays 10am Holy Communion
in Church & On-line.

Special Services and Events:

Fri 5th: Christmas Tree Festival. 4pm—8pm

Sat 6th Christmas Tree Festival. 10-6pm
Christmas Fair 10am—2pm

Sun 7th: Christmas Tree Festival. 12-4pm
Family Carol Service 4pm

Sun 14th: Nativity 10.30am
Blue Christmas 4.00pm

Sun 21st: Carols by Candlelight 4.00pm

Weds 24th: Holy Communion 10.30am
Christingle Service 3.00pm
Christingle Service 5.00pm
Midnight Mass 11.30pm

Thurs 25th Christmas Day Communion 10.30am

See all Dates for Advent and Christmas Events
on Page 12

Please see Page 42 for details of how to join a streamed

service