

February
2026



WEST MOORS PARISH MAGAZINE

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St Mary's Parish Church of West Moors BH22 0JF

Magazine contributions for March 2026

By or before Sunday 8th February

[**gillianmaryclarke@hotmail.com**](mailto:gillianmaryclarke@hotmail.com)

**Happy moments, praise God.
Difficult moments, seek God.
Quiet moments, worship God.
Painful moments, trust God.
Every moment, thank God.**

FROM THE VICARAGE

Did you know that Epiphany isn't just one day in the church's calendar, but is in fact a whole season?! Every year, in this darkest time of January and early February, the church celebrates the light of Christ leading the way just as the star of Bethlehem led the way for the magi.

Epiphany means 'manifestation' or 'revealing' – essentially the Epiphany celebrates God making himself visible to everyone who comes looking for him.



The Gospel we hear on the feast of the Epiphany is a familiar one. It tells of the long journey made by the magi – the wise men, traditionally thought to be three – as they search for a newborn king. Guided by a star they could only follow at night, they set out on a journey marked by faith, hope and no small amount of uncertainty. One wonders whether, along the way, there were moments of doubt or frustration – the ancient equivalent of “Are we nearly there yet?” After many miles, these weary travellers must have felt a sense of relief when the star led them to Jerusalem. Surely their journey was almost over. In fact, as we know, the most challenging part was still to come.

In many ways, the journey of the magi mirrors our own spiritual journeys. We might wish for a clear route through life – a spiritual sat-nav that takes away wrong turns and delays – but that is rarely how things work. While God does indeed lead us, the road is often winding and unpredictable. At times, most of us experience a sense of being lost, struggling to find direction or to get our lives back on track.

The story of the magi also reminds us that even our best-laid plans may need to change. The magi had a clear idea of where a king should be found, but after their encounter with Herod they were required to change direction and head for Bethlehem instead. Later still, warned in a dream, they returned home by another route. It is a useful reminder that faith requires attentiveness and flexibility – a willingness to listen and respond when God invites us to take a different path. And, finally, the magi show us that our extraordinary Saviour is most often found not in the places of power or expectation, but in the ordinary, humble spaces where God chooses to dwell.

In this season, where winter draws gradually to a close, like the Magi we look for a light to lead the way. Jesus, the light of the world, promises to be that light for us – making visible all of the things that have been hidden from us until now.

And so, like the magi, we walk on—trusting that the light we follow will lead us not only to Christ, but deeper into the life God is calling us to live.

With blessings,

Rev Lizzie

A.M.H

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FESTIVE TEA@3

What a lovely afternoon we had with carols from the Church choir and a visit from Father Christmas and his trusty Elf, who gave everybody a present!
Thank you to Brookview who provided a beautiful Christmas cake.



AND A FESTIVE SATURDAY BREAKFAST



Thanks to a
great team!!



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BAPTISM

A joyful occasion for the Melville family – and the family of St Mary's Church – as Rory was baptised.



THANK YOU

I would like to say how grateful I have been for all your thoughts and prayers this last year. I have felt included and warmed throughout.

My faith has been greatly strengthened and I am now recovering well from my operation.

With many thanks to you all. **Margaret Parrish**

And a thank you from **Winton Salvation Army** -

On behalf of Winton Salvation Army, we would like to thank you for your bags of wonderful, knitted items, and shoes for the homeless. You are so very kind.

Thank you for your continued support. We really appreciate it.

May we take this opportunity to wish you blessings this Christmas and in the New Year.

May God bless you,

James Hill C. S. Hill

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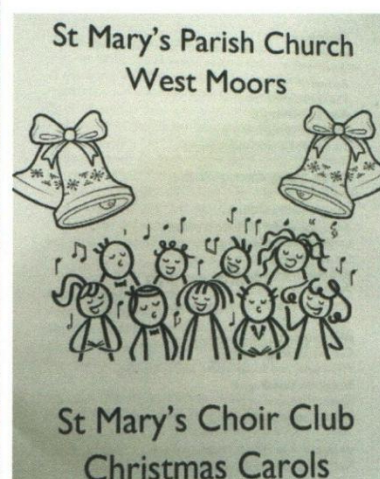


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MU theme for 2026 – “Join US and JOIN IN”.

Meeting on the third Monday of the month at 7:30pm in the Church Hall.

Dates for the diary

Thursday February 5th ‘Wave of Prayer’ at 10.30am

Saturday February 7th ‘ COFFEE MORNING’ 10am to 12pm, In the Church Hall.

Monday February 16th ‘A Craft Evening’ at 7.30 pm, to prepare for our Fund Raiser.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL

I hope you all had a Joyful Christmas, sharing precious time with family and friends. At the Eucharist we are asked to remember Jesus and I am sure as we gathered together friends and family, those not now with us are remembered; I know our family did.

Memorable times are celebrated by meeting together for a meal as at Christmas, Easter, Birthdays and Anniversaries and in our family just lately Graduations. Our MU branch celebrated Christmas with a sharing meal and the various Home Groups marked Christmas with shared meals.

Other faiths mark important events with meals together. During the Holy month of Ramadan the Muslims have the Iftar meal to mark the end of each day's fasting. And at the end of Ramadan the feast of Eid al-Fitr is celebrated. Jewish families meet together every Friday evening for the Shabbat meal at the start of their Sabbath day. Other festivals of Passover Seder and Rosh Hashanah are celebrated by eating sweet foods. Hindu festivals of Diwali and Holi are marked by the eating an abundance of sweet and savoury dishes. The Buddhists focus on vegetarian foods at festivals such as Vesak. The central feature of Sikhism is the Langar, a free communal meal served to all regardless of background. Langar embodies equality, service and community values celebrated daily especially at the festival of Vaisakhi.

Throughout the world there will be many celebratory services and meals within the Mothers' Union this year as we mark the 150th Anniversary of the founding, by Mary Sumner, of the Mothers' Union. Here at St Mary's we will have a service in June and in February we will launch our fund-raising event to mark the anniversary.

I would like to thank everyone for the support you give us at our events, and if at any time you think one of our speakers would interest you, do come along and join us - you would be most welcome.

Blessings to you all

Mary Hurdley

Personal Prayer of Mary Sumner.

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee; and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken. Whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe, or the life I live. Amen

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Lent Appeal 2026

The Lent Charity for 2026 has been chosen.
This year we will be supporting High Mead Farm at Longham.

High Mead Farm is a Community Therapy Farm. Staff and volunteers offer a day service to people living with mental health issues, physical disabilities, addiction, Alzheimers and dementia, brain injury, vision and hearing impairment, autism, children excluded from school, Parkinsons disease and learning difficulties.



HIGH MEAD FARM

A CHANCE TO GROW

High Mead is especially important to us at St. Mary's as our own Chris Scott is a valued member of staff here and will be delighted to work together with us. Please visit High Mead Farm shop to stock up with their delicious local produce and meet the friendly animals and staff!

To give to this year's Lent Appeal please either put a donation in an envelope clearly marked '**Lent Appeal**', (cheques payable to PCC West Moors). Or you can make a direct payment using the following bank details (but please put as the reference '**Lent Appeal**.')

PCC West Moors
Sort code 30-93-25
Account Number 00207915

THANK YOU!

THE FRIENDSHIP GROUP

All ladies in West Moors and surrounding areas who have been widowed, whether recently or a long while ago are very welcome to come along for a cuppa and chat. It's a great social time together.

The group was launched in March 2025 and has a steady number attend. A couple of extra activities - a cream tea in the summer and a Bring & Share Christmas lunch - have been enjoyed by all.

We meet on the 2nd Friday each month at 2pm in The Hall at St Mary's Church, Station Road, jtn with The Avenue
Do invite others to come along.

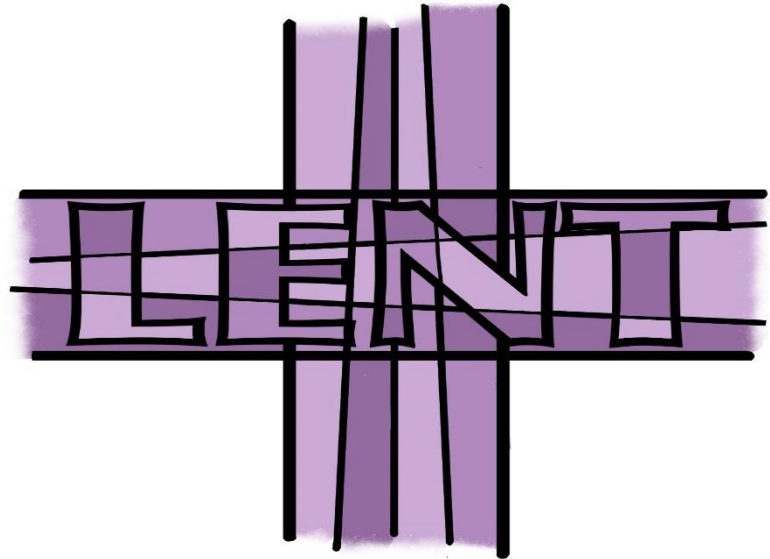
For more information contact **Lynne on 07485 294 507**

LECTIONARY

FOR

FEBRUARY

Sunday 1 February Candlemas Mal 3.1-5 Hebrews 2.14-end Luke 2.22-40
Wednesday 4 February 2 Sam 24.2,9-17 Mark 6.1-6a
Sunday 8th February Second Sunday before Lent (Green) Gen 1.1-2.3 Rom 8.18-25 Matt 6.25-end
Wednesday 11th February 1 Kings 10.1-10 Mark 7.14-23
Sunday 15th February The Sunday Next before Lent Exodus 24.12-end 2 Peter 1.16-end Matthew 17.1-9
Wednesday 18th February Ash Wednesday Isaiah 58.1-12 2 Corinthians 5.20b-6.10 John 8.1-11
Sunday 22nd February First Sunday of Lent Genesis 2.15-17 Romans 5.12-19 Matthew 4.1-11
Wednesday 25th February Jonah 3 Luke 11.29-32
Sunday 1st March Second Sunday of Lent Genesis 12.1-4a Romans 4.1-5,13-17 John 3.1-17



The JOY of the LORD

Ten of us gathered at the Greenhouse Christian Centre for the Advent Quiet Day morning was set aside at the end of November before the usual business that takes us to Christmas.

JOY being at the centre of our thoughts we reflected :

Step 1: on **Advent JOY** being grounded in **Thankfulness** : for the advent of Jesus and looking forward to His second coming. Joy being the outcome to the Good News of the Gospel of God's love, grace and action in the world. Thankfulness is the first step to deep inner joy.

Step 2: to **Draw Near** to God : a conscious decision to intentionally action our faith. 'Rejoice in the Lord always.'

Step 3: to Direct our **Mindset** : To seek God's ways to help us make spiritual, moral and other decisions? To walk in His way.

The **JOY of the Lord**. A choice. A decision. The value of knowing Him through the power of the Holy Spirit, in all circumstances.

A beautiful time and space for us all to reflect, think and pray.

LENT COURSE

There will be four meetings for our Lent Course this year,
all at **4pm in the Church Hall.**

We will be following the course **Generous God; Generous People** with four study sessions on the following dates, each lasting about an hour and a half.

22nd February 1st March

8th March 22nd March

**The 'Generous God,
Generous People'
resources have been
written to help us reflect
on what it means to live
as generous Christians.**

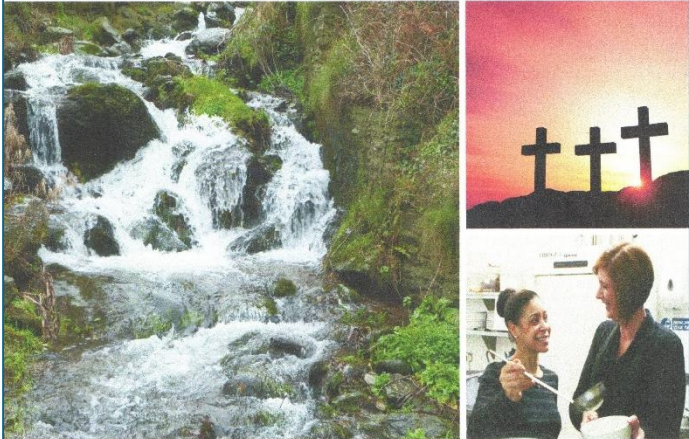
Using a variety of activities, including group discussion, bible study with extracts from Mark's gospel, worship and refection, we will explore together the following areas.

- Generous God; feeding the soul
- Generous people; giving from the heart
- Jesus-focussed living; priority setting
- What is important; living for God and neighbour.

Do come along for a relaxed, informal gathering
with coffee and biscuits and good fellowship!

Bring a friend – all are welcome!

Generous God Generous People



Four Bible study sessions from St Mark's gospel
exploring who Jesus is
and how we can respond
to his love by living generous lives

ASPECTS OF ROMANTIC LOVE

God obviously approves of romance – after all, putting Adam and Eve alone together in the Garden of Eden was His idea.

The history of the Israelites began with three great romances: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Rachel. The on-going history of Israel was deeply affected by later romances: Esther and King Xerxes, David's love affair with Bathsheba, and Solomon's marriage to hundreds of foreign wives. There is even an entire book in the Old Testament devoted to the love of a man and woman: the Song of Solomon!



When we reach the New Testament, we find real love between Joseph and Mary (even when Joseph thought Mary had been faithless, he did not want to harm her). St Paul, though himself a bachelor, nevertheless spent a lot of time urging Christians to love and be kind and faithful and considerate to their spouses. He even wrote 1 Corinthians 13 – the great love chapter that is read at millions of weddings worldwide 2000 years later.

Down the centuries ever since, romantic love has been critical in shaping history (Anthony and Cleopatra), in shaping cultural ideals (King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table). Some of our favourite stories are built on romance. (Puccini's *Tosca*, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*.)

People make amazing sacrifices for love. They defy their family, forsake their culture, and turn their back on wealth and position, just to be with their loved one. (King Edward VIII and Mrs Simpson.)

People give their loved ones amazing gifts. The most extravagant is probably the gift of the Shah Jahan, who built the Taj Mahal in India for his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal.

Today, romance is still alive and well in Britain – last year we sent about 25 million Valentines to each other.

And what of the future? Well, just as the Bible begins with a love story, so it ends with one. And *you are involved!* For actually the greatest Love Story of all time is that between God and his people.

Christ is described in Revelation as our heavenly Bridegroom, and the Church is His beloved Bride. He has given us the most expensive present of all – Himself. And, just as in all the best romances, the story will end with the bride and groom getting together at last, so at the End of Time, Christ will return for His Bride.



All are welcome to the **Forget me Not Service**



A short gentle service followed by
tea and cake

**Sunday 15th February 2026
3pm**

**St Mary's Parish Church
Station Road, West Moors**



We look forward to seeing you.

For more information contact
Revd Lynne Morris 01425 477470

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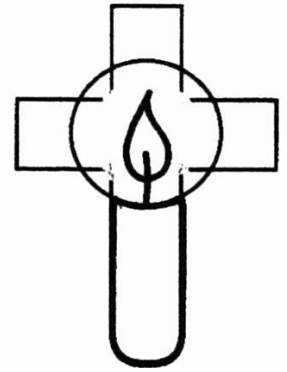
A joyful occasion and a warm welcome with companions from Sturts Farm, families and friends. Great singing – and delicious cake!



CANDLEMAS, THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2nd February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself.

In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to 'present Him to the Lord'. At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.



So, where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day - hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.

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Greek yoghurt is high in protein, with up to 10g of protein per 100g. That's about double the protein of low-fat yogurt or Greek-style yogurts. What's more, it is a 'complete' source of protein, with all nine of the essential amino acids that our bodies can't make by themselves.

Greek yoghurt boosts your gut health. Its natural probiotics encourage a wider array of beneficial bugs to live in your gut. That means less inflammation, and probably fewer cancer-causing chemicals.

Greek yoghurt contains the minerals potassium and magnesium, which can help to both support and regulate blood pressure.

Greek yoghurt provides calcium. This can contribute to greater bone density and even re-build bone tissue if we are older or have been injured.

Greek yoghurt includes the B vitamins – thiamine (B1), riboflavin (B2) and cobalamin (B12). These help support memory, critical thinking, and our problem-solving skills.

Geraldine Cole (01202 870635) martin.colem@btinternet.com

Rosemary Dunning (01202 871616) prm.dunning@outlook.com

Julie Hardman (01202 894881) juliehardman@rocketmail.com

Susan Yates (07759 151201) Susanyates1603@icloud.com

A very busy end to the year of fundraising for The Children's Society and again, another busy start to the New Year. We as a committee wish all our readers and supporters a very Happy New Year for 2026.

St Mary's First School Christingle service was held the day before the end of term in Church. Revd Lizzie and Geraldine went into St Mary's School to help the top year children make their own Christingles for the Christingle service. All the School children had collected coins in their cardboard candles which, together with a retiring collection at the service, raised the amazing amount of £188.00. Thank you to all the children and parents/grandparents for their support to help raise this incredible amount. Our Christingle Service here at St Mary's Church also took place at the beginning of December during our Hall@4 Service. We all made our own Christingles to light and we raised £92.72. Thank you to Revd Lizzie for her help with both services.



Many thanks to Revd Lizzie - we had a lovely Crib Service on Christmas Eve and the children dressed up in nativity costumes before the Service. We had lots of Kings and Angels as well as Mary and Joseph and shepherds. The children were keen to put the figures in the manger. This was followed by a visit from Father Christmas which they all enjoyed. A collection at this service raised £75.10 together with the donations given for the Christmas Card (stars) Board in the hall (£45.00). The Children's Society Christmas cards were all sold this year to the value of £302.70. Thank you for your support in ordering or buying them from our stalls. A stall after our Sunday service before Christmas raised £70.80. Again, thank you to everyone for your kind support.

Our committee will be meeting for the AGM and to plan the 2026 programme of fundraising events; the first of which is a coffee morning which will take place in St. Mary's Church Hall, on Saturday the 11th April 2026 between 10.00 am and 12pm. At this time the house boxes, which many of you have, will be collected in for their annual counting during April. If you are not able to bring your box to the coffee morning we shall be collecting them in Church also.

A prayer written for The Children's Society by Rev Liz Green, team vicar Plympton:-

Heavenly Father, Your son Jesus Christ came as a light to the world. We lift before you all children and families living with darkness or despair because of their mental health, and for all those who support them. We know that you want abundant, joyful life for all your children. Bless the work of the Children's Society as they advocate for inclusive and comprehensive mental health support for children and young people across the UK. Give strength to young carers who support loved ones struggling with their mental health. Help us all to see ourselves with the love, compassion and grace you see us with. Amen.

Love and God's Blessings,

Geraldine Cole/Rosemary Dunning/Julie Hardman/Susan Yates

BISHOP STEPHEN'S LETTER

It is rare to have the Feast of Candlemas, February 2nd, so close to the start of Lent, Ash Wednesday 18th February. With Easter very early this year, it means that there are only fifteen days between the end of the Christmas cycle and the start of the season of reflection, abstinence and study. Not much time to change gear!



Or to use a liturgical description, only two Sundays of Ordinary Time. The name 'ordinary Time' comes, not from the fact that some days are just plain 'ordinary', but that all time is ordered as part of the divine nature. Our telling and re-telling of the Christian Year is not merely a nostalgic rehearsal but the re-living of the truths that shape our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Seeing life, and in particular living a Christian life as an expression of sharing in the divine nature is therefore anything but ordinary. If we believe that we are all created in the image and likeness of God, then how we live our lives can only ever be extraordinary, regardless of what happens to us. If God sees us and our 'ordinary' lives as a gift of himself, how are we to respond? I often wonder what God thinks of us when he sees what we do with this unbelievable gift.

The Christ-child was cared for by Mary and Joseph at his Presentation in the Temple (2nd Feb) cared for and carried. In Lent, we seek to care more for ourselves with a sacred sense of self-care. How different might this be if we see ourselves as uniquely held by God, whatever the world thinks of us, and, even as we try to better ourselves, see ourselves as a gift, created in the image of God. Yes, this means you.

Psalm 139.13-14

*You are the one who created my innermost parts;
you knit me together while I was still in my mother's womb.
I give thanks to you that I was marvellously set apart.
Your works are wonderful-I know that very well.*

+Stephen, Bishop of Salisbury

Christmas 2025

St Mary's First School & Nursery

Christmas was a very exciting time at school this year with lots of different activities taking place across December. Here is a snippet of some of the festivities the children enjoyed!

Christmas tree decorating



Christingle church service



Y4 Carolling in the community



A visit from Father Christmas



Nursery children posting their letter to Father Christmas



Nativity performance



FROM THE SIDELINES at ST MARY'S

Louise Collins, Stuart Stebbing

Church Wardens

Debbie Brown, Paul Brealey, Christine Nutland

Assistant Wardens



Loving God, Loving West Moors

This is the first magazine publication for 2026.

A time to reflect back over the last year and to look forward to the year ahead.

I recall the immortal hymn :

The Church's One Foundation; One Lord, One Faith, One Birth.

The special services in December were inspiring with many of the community of West Moors attending a service or services to celebrate the birth of Christ. Advent Praise had a larger attendance than the previous year. The school choir fully embraced Christmas with their heartwarming singing. We give thanks to all the helpers, support from their families and friends to make the service so successful in a full church. Special thanks for Rev'd Lizzie who masterminded the event and Paul Barber the choir trainer. Nine Lessons and Carols was equally popular enticing over 100 attendees from the local community. Thanks to the readers and extended choir for their valuable input and to Valerie Robertson for her valuable contribution conducting the choir and arranging the anthem. The church of St Mary's has drawn people into worship, singing and embracing the Christian spirit.

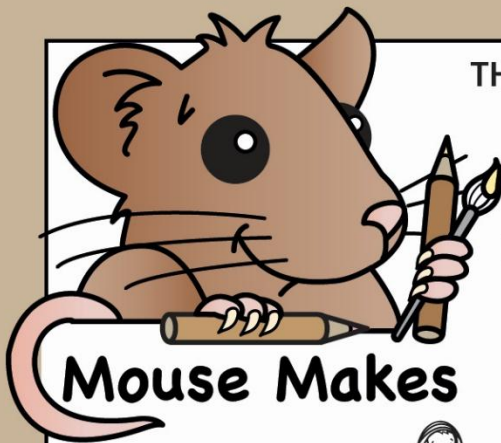
The period from Epiphany to Easter is a quieter time of the Anglican year. As a church we still celebrate our regular events. Tea@3 on the second Thursday of the month, Saturday breakfast on the third week. These events are for the whole community who are fervent supporters. If you have not attended these events come along, people are friendly! On the fourth Sunday the in-between breakfast is in the hall commencing 9am. The Mothers' Union will be having a coffee morning in the hall Saturday 7 February.

Ash Wednesday is 18th February commencing the start of Lent. There will be a 10am service and an evening service at 7pm. There will be two Christian Aid Soup Lunches in the hall on Thursday 26 February and 5 March. Please support these events if possible.

Rev'd Lizzie will be presiding at the services this month so please join us in worship and prayer.

Blessings **Stuart**

The Church's One Foundation; One Lord, One Faith, One Birth.



Read the story in
Luke 4:1-13

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

After Jesus was baptised in the River Jordan where did the Holy Spirit lead him to? v1

How many days was Jesus being tempted by the devil? v2

What did Jesus eat? v2

What did the devil tempt Jesus to turn a stone into? What did Jesus say? v3-4

What did the devil offer Jesus if He worshipped him? What did Jesus say? v7-8

What did the devil ask Jesus to do? What did Jesus say? v9

FIRST TEMPTATION

THE
DEVIL SAID:

"If you are God's Son order this stone to turn into bread."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Man shall not live on bread alone."

Read Deuteronomy 8:3

WE LEARN:

Read the Bible
Learn God's word.



SECOND TEMPTATION

THE
DEVIL SAID:

"I will give you power and wealth if you worship me."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him."

Read Deuteronomy 6:13

WE LEARN:

Put God **first**
Worship *only* Him.

1

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



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

JESUS • BAPTISED • RIVER • JORDAN • HOLY SPIRIT • LED
WILDERNESS • DESERT • FORTY DAYS • HUNGRY • DEVIL
TEMPTATION • STONE • BREAD • WRITTEN • SON • WORLD
KINGDOMS • GLORY • WORSHIP • SERVE • GOD • HIGH
JERUSALEM • TEMPLE • SON • JUMP • DOWN • LIFT • FOOT • LORD • TEST • LENT

THIRD TEMPTATION

THE
DEVIL SAID:

"If you are God's Son throw yourself down, the scriptures say God will take care of you."

JESUS REPLIED:

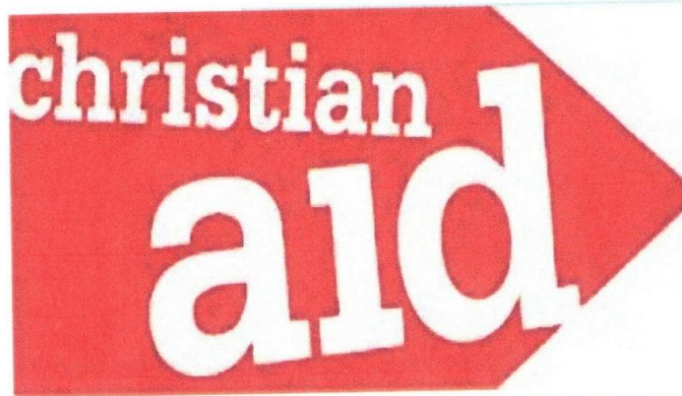
"Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

Read Deuteronomy 6:16

WE LEARN:

God cares, **trust**
Him do not test Him.





St Mary's Church Hall WEST MOORS BH22 0JF

SOUP LUNCHES

Thursday 26 FEBRUARY

Thursday 5 MARCH

12noon—1.30pm

Soup; Bread; Fruit; Tea/Coffee

Fellowship

Collection for Christian Aid — Sudan Appeal

COME ALONG - BRING A FRIEND

ALL WELCOME!