

OFFICIAL

# December 2025 THE DIARY OF ST MARY'S DROYLSDEN



***A welcoming all-age community growing  
and sharing God's love.***

**Rector**

**Reverend Cath Hewison      0161 370 1569**

**Associate Minister**

**Reverend Nancy Alexander**

**Church Wardens**

**Pat Catterall**

**0161 370 0039**

Beth Cutler

0161 376 9407

*Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your souls before him;  
God is a refuge for us.  
Psalm 62: 8*

## **December Services 2025**



**7<sup>th</sup> December - 10.30am – Christingle Holy Communion**

**Isaiah 9: 2-7 and John 15: 7-17**

**14<sup>th</sup> December - 10.30am – Holy Communion**

**James 5: 7-10 and Matthew 11: 2-11**

**21<sup>st</sup> December - 10.30am – Holy Communion**

**Romans 1: 1-7 and Matthew 1: 18-25**

**21<sup>st</sup> December – 6.30pm – Carol Service**

**24<sup>th</sup> December – 3pm – Crib Service**

**24<sup>th</sup> December – 11.30pm – Holy Communion**

**Isaiah 52: 7-10 and John 1: 1-14**

**25<sup>th</sup> December - 10.30am – Christmas Day Holy Communion**

**Isaiah 62: 6-9, Titus 3: 4-7 and Luke 2: 1-20**

**28<sup>th</sup> December – 10.30am – Holy Communion**

**Hebrews 2: 10-18 and Matthew 2: 13-23**

# Please join us for Tea and coffee in the Church Room after the service

## Sir Christmas and the Captain of Revelry!



Ever since I was young, my family had 'stockings' to leave by our beds for Father Christmas, and even my parents had stockings to open on Christmas morning. Traditions are hard to shake, and we still tend to give each other 'stocking presents' opened first thing in the morning with a cup of tea before breakfast.

Some kind of Father Christmas figure has been part of our Christmas traditions for many hundreds of years, though it has changed dramatically over the centuries. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a Christmas character known as *Captain Christmas* would oversee the feasting and revelry in aristocratic houses. They also had a carol about *Sir Christmas*, who sounds a lot more gentlemanly!

Santa Claus was initially drawn from the veneration of St Nicholas, the 4<sup>th</sup> century Bishop from Turkey. In the Netherlands he was celebrated by leaving gifts for children on the night before his celebration day on 6<sup>th</sup> December. It was said that Sinterklaas (St Nicholas) went through locked doors, and down chimneys to leave gifts in children's shoes. (Sounds familiar, doesn't it?)

Over the years these two traditions merged and took on the more family-friendly version we know today. It is interesting that over such a long period, a personal Christmas character who sums up the heart of the season (whether in revelry or gift-giving!), has remained a strong part of our Christmas traditions.

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What would it mean for us to show the generosity, humility, hope and love of God seen in the birth of Jesus as real-life 'Sir Christmas' (or Miss, Mrs Christmas) in our families, and in our communities?

A very happy Christmas to you all!

*Rev Cath* (ho, ho, ho!!)

## **Christmas Services**

**7<sup>th</sup> December - 10.30am – Christingle Holy Communion**

**21<sup>st</sup> December – 6.30pm – Carol Service**

**24<sup>th</sup> December – 3pm – Crib Service**

## **Christmas Eve**

**24<sup>th</sup> December – 11.30pm – Holy Communion**

## **Christmas Day**

**25<sup>th</sup> December - 10.30am – Holy Communion**



## **Christmas Trees**

Many of you will remember that over the last couple of years, St Mary's School children have been decorating our church windowsills with beautiful Christmas trees.



The children are getting creative again this year with trees decorated to represent the Nativity so look out for them coming soon.

## **Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)**

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Please don't groan, I know it's only December, but the APCM is booked for Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026,

Would anyone responsible for preparing a report for the meeting kindly have them to me by **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026**.

Don't worry there will be plenty of reminders going forward.



Thank you

Christine

### Mid-Week Informal Holy Communion

An informal mid-week service of Holy Communion is being held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month at 6.30pm just before the Mother's Union meet. **Please note that there won't be a Communion service on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. The next service will be on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January.**

Everyone is very welcome, especially those who find attending services at the weekend difficult. If you know anyone who may be interested in attending, please pass on the information.

### Prayer Tree

You may have noticed that a new prayer tree is now located at the back of the church, next to the Book of Remembrance. There are pens and cards to write your prayers and prayer requests on. Please be assured every card left is prayed over with faith, courage and strength that each one is heard no matter how small.



### Tea and Toast Drop In

Tea and Toast Drop In. Every Wednesday morning from 9am during term-time. Everyone is welcome, come along for a chat and a chance to meet someone new.

## Fellowship and Holy Communion



**There will not be a fellowship lunch and Holy Communion on 29<sup>th</sup> December.**

November's service will be Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November at 12noon, everyone is very welcome. If you know of anyone who would like to come to this service, please let them know.

## Bible Study Groups

Bible study groups meet in the Emmaus Room twice a month on Tuesday evening or Thursday afternoon to which everyone is welcome.



These are informal groups and the studies usually include a video to watch then questions for discussion followed by a brew and a biscuit or slice of cake.

The group meeting on Thursday's is starting a new study looking at The Apostles Creed, we meet at 1.30pm and this new study will start on 4<sup>th</sup> December. Everyone is very welcome to join in.

If anyone is interested in joining one of the groups, or would like more information, please have a chat with Charlotte or Stephanie (Tuesday group) or Christine, Pat or Jim (Thursday group).



**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December**





## Christmas Meal

**Subscriptions are now due by 31<sup>st</sup> January £33.00 – please see Barbara Walton**

Wanted for emergency toiletry bags for Tameside Hospital:

- Small tubes of toothpaste
  - Faceclothes
- Mens disposable razors

Please speak to Pat, Maureen or Christine

## The Sunday Group

The Sunday morning children's group is now running on two Sunday's a month, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays.

All children of primary school age are welcome to come along. Sessions will be held in the Church Room at the back of church.

Kathryn



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Another year of shoebox making, giving shoebox fillers and OCC Coffee Morning and Donations comes to an end but as you read this in our Church Diary the boxes will be checked and packed into large boxes down in Coventry, Samaritan's Purse HQ. From Coventry they will be transported by lorry to Eastern Europe countries, possibly a majority to Ukraine, or shipped to West Africa. When they arrive in the country, plans will be in place to transport them to the many locations in their country, which maybe churches, schools, orphanages, hospitals or the homes of needy families.

Our Coffee Morning in early October raised £129.71 and the OCC Donations Box had £164.40 at the end of October, making a total of £294.11 which is sent from St Mary's to Samaritan's Purse for OCC.

We had 70 Shoeboxes collected and taken for their onward journey, along with thousands of other boxes, to help make children happy and thankful that someone has made a Christmas Box for them.

After receiving a shoebox gift, children have the opportunity to enrol in The Greatest Journey - 12 fun and interactive Bible lessons, where they get the chance to discover who Jesus is and how to begin their own journey of faith.

Thank you to all who have given and helped in anyway in this year's Operation Christmas Child.

John Sporne & team



## The Tree in the Window

In the little window stands a tinselled Christmas tree,  
Gay with candles, red and gold, a lovely thing to see.  
Lighting up the grim surroundings for the passer-by  
With a glow that warms the spirit and delights the eye.  
To the ugly street there comes the hint of holy things,  
A flash of glory in the gloom, a rush of angel winds.  
The heart is touched by something that is strange and mystical,  
And faith returns, the faith of childhood, new and wonderful.  
This is what we need today, so shine out little tree!  
Give us back what we have lost: faith, hope simplicity.

Ann Holland

## Remembrance



Our poppy display looked brilliant. What a legacy we are creating. A huge thank you to all the knitters. BUT don't put away your needles yet! I will be asking for more next November so that it is bigger and better.

I didn't count how many we made- probably around 120. Other displays around the country had over 1000 poppies.

If you have now discovered or renewed your love of knitting, there is a lovely wool warehouse shop (SK14 4QG) in Hyde near the Village Hotel and it has another branch on Mostyn Street in Llandudno (LL30 2NL). I'm not on commission but they have a good range at very reasonable prices.

Kathryn



***Merciful God,  
You remember every life lived,  
every pain suffered and every grief endured;  
and you hold those memories forever safe  
in your heart of love.  
We lift before you loved ones who have died,  
in times of peace and of war,  
trusting them to your loving care.  
And also today, we remind ourselves, and each other,  
that nothing said or done in love will ever perish,  
because you are God of the living,  
in whose presence all may flourish eternally.***

***Amen***

### **St Mary's CE School Remembrance Service**

On Remembrance Day I was privileged to be able to attend the school Remembrance Day Assembly.

The children were asked what they knew about how Remembrance Day was commemorated and why people wear poppies and their significance.

The pupils from Year 6 recited a beautiful poem. Every single young person respectfully observed the two minutes silence and as always were a credit to the school and their parents/carers.

The assembly ended with prayers remembering fallen soldiers everywhere and to the end of war.

Well done everyone, you should be rightly proud.

Christine



## Christmas Crafts

At the November meeting, Kathryn Hampson presented a crafting opportunity for the second year and we all joined in making Christmas crafts. Everyone really enjoyed the evening (my grandchildren were very impressed when I showed them what I'd done the following day). Thank you, Kathryn,

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During the passed year we have had a tour of St Mary's Primary School, talks about the Holy Land at Easter, the traditions of Shrove Tuesday, learned more about the young men on the church war memorial, hospital chaplaincy and much more.

Do you have an interesting job or hobby that you would like to tell us about? If so please let us know (speak to Pat) please.

**2026** is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mothers' Union. Watch out for any special events happening during the year on the noticeboard near the kitchen door and if you would like more information about Mothers' Union and would like to join us please have a chat with Pat, Maureen or Christne.

# Warrior of our Hearts

She stood for us through every storm,  
With hands that healed and kept us warm.  
A warrior not with sword or shield,  
But love that never chose to yield.

She fought for joy, for peace, for grace,  
With quiet strength and steady pace.  
Her battles won, her courage shown,  
She built a life, a loving home.

Now seventy-nine years strong and true,  
She steps into year eighty's view.  
A nanna's hug, a great-gran's smile,  
Her legacy runs deep and wide

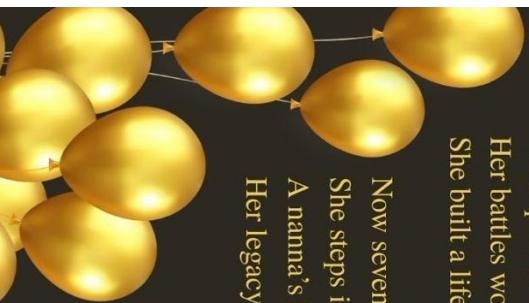
Through generations, still she stands,  
With wisdom shaped by gentle hands.  
Our warrior mum, our guiding light—  
You've made the world more kind, more bright.



Happy Birthday Joan

79 on the 11th of December 2025

Love, all the family.







Christmas Band  
Concert

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>  
December 2pm

St John's Castle Band

At

St Mary's Church  
Droylsden

Tickets available from  
Church soon  
priced £5.00  
including

Mulled wine and  
mince pies after the  
performance



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### The Craft Group

Used to knit in the past, but family all grown up? Or perhaps you knitted some poppies for Kathryn's Remembrance Service display and had forgotten how much you used to enjoy it? Or perhaps you've always intended to learn?

St Mary's Craft Group, organised by Rosemary Johnston, mainly knit for different charities (but there's no compunction to do so). The neo-natal unit at Tameside (and other hospitals) are always in need of knitted baby beanies, baby blankets and mother and baby bonding squares (for when mum and baby need to be separated for medical reasons). Members also knit for the Christmas shoe-box appeal or other charities supplying clothing to those in need.

It's so good to use our skills to help others and happy to help beginners.



The group meets on **Monday afternoons during school term-time**, in the Church's Emmaus room. We're a small group meeting at **1 p.m. until around 2.30 – 3 p.m (during school term time)**. While most are knitters, some sew or do other crafts. Bring that unfinished piece or try something new.

You're most welcome to join us!

Rosemary and Rev Lorraine

## **A Community Prayer**

Let us be generous,  
In thought, word and deed,  
Sharing a smile with a stranger  
Or helping a neighbour in need.  
Treating all others respectfully,  
May we keep an open mind.  
Leaving no place for prejudice  
And plenty of time to be kind.  
Let us hunger for understanding,  
To grow in wisdom each day,  
And where there is grief or conflict,  
May we help peace find a way.  
By Laura Tapper  
Submitted by Rosemary Johnston



Who wouldn't want 25% extra free?!



January 2026 not only marks the start of a new calendar year but also a new financial year in the life of the church.

Each year, we rely on the generosity of our congregation for their stewardship and donations from visitors to be able to contribute to the upkeep of our church building, as well as helping to fund our clergy and the various groups and services we hold – without your gifts, we would struggle to deliver those activities to the fullest.

We are truly grateful for all the gifts we receive, especially in the current economic climate, so we need to maximise the donations we do receive. The easiest way is to ensure as many of us as possible donate via the envelope scheme or via standing order **AND** have completed a **Gift Aid Declaration Form**. If you are a UK taxpayer and you haven't already

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done so, please complete the form which allows St Mary's to claim **25p from HMRC for every £1 you donate**. So, if you gift **£10** per week, we can claim an additional **£2.50** from the tax man! This will not cost you any extra money!! Forms are available in church – please ask me, Pat or Beth.

It is important that as many donors gift aid, where possible, because the amount we can claim back against the amount donated is uncapped. Donations made on the contactless machine can also be treated in the same way. If you are a UK taxpayer, please complete a gift aid declaration when prompted on the machine (you only need to complete it once) when you donate, and every payment you make thereafter on the same card will be recognised and treated as a gift aid donation. If anyone needs any assistance with this, please do give me a shout.

Any money given on the plate during the offertory hymn, donations via the contactless machine and money given via the envelope scheme by non-taxpayers is also eligible for 25p from every £1 donated but there are restrictions, and it is capped at £8,000 per annum. This year, we reached the £8,000 threshold and therefore lost out on the tax relief against £1,200 which is **£300** this was a great shame. Naturally, we want to capitalise as much as possible on your precious donations, so this was a frustration and one we want to avoid this year.

Many of you gift via the envelope scheme; the new envelopes for 2026 will be available to collect in the church room from early December. If anyone does not currently have an offertory envelope and would like a box, please let me, Pat or Beth know, as there are several boxes currently unassigned.

If you are a taxpayer and wish to donate via standing order, where your donation is paid directly into the church bank account at a frequency to suit you, please speak to me.

If you have any questions about any of this, please do speak to me; always happy to help.

Charlotte (Gift Aid Officer)



### Thursday Study Group

It has been mentioned earlier in the diary that the Study Group that meets on Thursday afternoon's is going to study The Apostles Creed next.

As we were coming to the end of our study of influential women in the Bible, there was a lot of umming and ahing about what to look at next, during the summer the Church of England had set up some studies about the Nicene Creed but when we came to find them, it turned out they were only for the period of Pentecost and were not available now. I had a look online and still we couldn't decide exactly what to do but kept going back to the Creed.

At November's coffee morning Ann Holland gave me an envelope with what she calls "diary fillers", small articles to fill a gap in the diary. When I got home and opened it, inside was the following article about the Creed. A God Moment if ever there was one! Our new study starts on 4<sup>th</sup> December at 1.30pm in the Emmaus Room. Everyone is welcome, if you are interested let me have your email address and I'll send you a copy of the study notes. The group is informal, discussion often entertaining and you'd be surprised how often you will think "*I knew that*" but it's nice just to have it confirmed that you really "*knew that!*" There's always a choice of cake and a brew afterwards!

Christine



## Consider The Creed

As often as Christians may worship and pray  
Remember – consider each word that we say!  
We give thanks with joy that from sin we are freed  
And mindfully utter the words of the creed:  
In on God, the Father, we truly believe,  
All things made in heaven or earth He conceived:  
Of all things Creator, both seen and unseen,  
And all things that will be, or are, or have been,  
One Lord we believe in, He's God's only Son  
Begotten, Eternal, with God he is One.  
He's True God from true God, True light from true light,  
The Word of creation, Our Lord Jesus Christ.  
He came down from Heven, our salvation plan  
Incarnate from Mary, was fully made man,  
Then by Pontius Pilate He was crucified  
And for our salvation He suffered and died.  
The scriptures foretold it; He rose as God planned.  
Ascended to Heaven and sits by God's hand.  
He will come in glory and will judge us all  
Then never, no never shall His kingdom fall.  
We believe in the Spirit, for all life He gives  
With God and with Jesus in oneness He lives;  
From Son and from Father the Spirit proceeds

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He's glorified, worshipped in words and in deeds  
Christ's church we believe in, all following Him  
One baptism for the forgiveness of sin.  
The dead resurrected; a new world to come  
Believe in the Father, the Spirit, the Son!

Amen

Thank you, Ann,  
Christine

### **Look For the Beauty**

In September I went to Benidorm. Yes, it has the New York skyscraper skyline and you might catch a stag/hen do walking down the street. I saw a bunch of people dressed as bananas. But Benidorm is not all this. The beaches are cleaned and sand smoothed every day. The promenades washed in the early hours and even ATMs are wiped down. The buses (€1.60 local journeys) and trams (€9 for a 90 min journey to Alicante) run to time and everyone is happy to help you. Also fantastic clothes shops, market and coffee shops. (I don't work for the tourist board!) My first day saw turtles being released on the beach which had been born on the same beach a year ago.

There are two lovely bays with a lookout headland separating the two. It was on this that I stood admiring the view of sea, the island rock, sunshine and buildings. Whilst I was standing here there was a guitarist busking and he played 'what a wonderful world', which certainly got me thinking. How often do we stand and really look at our surroundings, especially in our own neighbourhood. Most people on the headland were tourists taking photos. Have you taken a photo where you live? If you

were a tourist here, what would you photograph? The canal area? Tram stops? Shopping Centre? Church (not when the flowers are out!)?

This is a busy time of year but ....

### **Leisure**

What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.

By William Henry Davies

Kathryn

**Our Christmas Remembrance tree**



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In the lead up to Christmas you are invited to decorate a Christmas tree with red baubles in memory of a loved one or as a thank you for blessings received.



For a small donation you can write your message on a bauble and hang it on the special Christmas tree in church.

The bauble and pens will be provided and we hope that the tree will be a focus of remembrance and

thanksgiving for past joys and memories.

All donations will go to church funds and you are welcome to take the baubles home as Christmas passes and the new year begins.

## Christmas Fair Proceeds

Nobody can have failed to notice that one corner of the church is cordoned off following water ingress and plaster falling from the wall. This problem has now shown itself in the vestry (the other side of the wall) and is now in urgent need of repair. "A simple process", some might say – "so get it done!" Sadly, this isn't necessarily the case. Churches are required to obtain a faculty from the Diocese which is like obtaining planning permission from the local council, a long, drawn out process and although the Parochial Church Council (PCC) obtained estimates of the cost to carry out the work, the Diocese are still to issue them with the relevant faculty.

In the meantime, clearly things are getting worse, but the PCC's hands are tied, and it is possible that the cost of repairs will rise as a result. As

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a consequence, we would like to designate the proceeds from the Christmas Fair towards funding these repairs and any possible grant funding will also be explored.

St Mary's Church, PCC

St Mary's Church, Droylsden

# Christmas Fair

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December

9.30am – 2.00pm

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Gifts, Crafts, Books,  
Tombola, Refreshments  
and much more.

Everyone Welcome



Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December

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**From 3.15pm – 5pm**

# **Messy Advent**



**Come along and join in with free crafts, songs  
and light refreshments**

**All Primary School children welcome with  
their parents / carers**

**A picture to colour for Advent**

**Read Micah 5: 2 and Matthew 1: 18-25**



Deadline for the diary is always the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of the month unless there are school holidays when articles are required as soon as possible please.

***Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this diary, without YOU it wouldn't be possible. If you would like to contribute to future publications, please contact me by email:***

***[christine.withers12@talktalk.net](mailto:christine.withers12@talktalk.net)***

***Telephone 0161 371 8825***

**Who we are:**

**St Mary's Church Website is**

**[www.stmarydroylsden.co.uk](http://www.stmarydroylsden.co.uk)**

**Parochial Church Council:**

**Pat Catterall and Beth Cutler (Wardens), Charlotte Burrows, Joyce Cox, Paul Davies (Secretary), Kathryn Hampson, Ann Holland, Jim Smith, Barbara Walton.**

**Deanery Synod Representatives:**

**Susan Marsh, Stephanie Rigg, Christine Withers**

**Sides People**

**Maureen Allison, Elaine Burrows, Carole Clayton, Joyce Cox, Julie Farrow, Gaynor Kirby.**

**Treasurer: Kathryn Hampson, Electoral Roll: Lindsay Artingstall**

**Church Flowers and Bookstall - Details from Church**

**Mothers Union - Details from Church**

**St Mary's Church of England Nursery and Primary School**

**Head Teacher, Mr C Quinn - 370 3948**

**250th Manchester Scout Group**

**Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers - 07973739041**

**5th Droylsden Brownie Guides - 339 0016**

**Rainbow Pack - 301 4251**

**St John's Band - 285 3583**