

OFFICIAL

# January 2026

## 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

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Beth Cutler

0161 376 9407

*Let us therefore approach the  
throne of grace with boldness, so  
that we may receive mercy and  
find grace to help in time of  
need. Hebrews 5:16*

## January Services 2026



**4<sup>th</sup> January - 10.30am – Holy Communion**

**Ephesians 3: 1-12 and Matthew 2: 1-12**

**6<sup>th</sup> January – 6.30pm – Informal Holy Communion**

**11<sup>th</sup> January - 10.30am - Holy Communion**

**Acts 10: 34-43 and Matthew 3: 13-17**

**18<sup>th</sup> January - 10.30am – Holy Communion**

**1 Corinthians 1: 1-9 and John 1: 29-42**

**25<sup>th</sup> January – 10.30am – Morning Worship**

**Acts 9: 1-22 and Matthew 19: 27-30**

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January – 12noon Fellowship Lunch and Holy Communion**

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

## God's Light in the Darkness

Early in the New Year, when the Christmas tree has been taken down, and the decorations put away, we move from the Christmas story of a child born, of angels singing and shepherds visiting, to the tale of Magi – wise men travelling from the East, in search of a newborn king. We read of their meeting with King Herod in Jerusalem, and the confusion and jealous panic of Herod that ended with a massacre in Bethlehem.

In a dream the Magi were told not to return to King Herod but to go home directly, thereby protecting Jesus. Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt to live as refugees, only returning to their home when it was revealed to them in a dream that Herod, who'd sought Jesus' life, was dead.



How little the times change.

It is a complex story of human greed and hunger for power, but also of God's great, expansive love, his power to reveal, to guide and to protect.

I wonder how the lives of those Magi were changed following this whole extraordinary experience? They must surely have never been the same again.

As we see much of the same situations in our world today, let us pray for all those caught up in such dreadfully similar situations, that they too may know the amazing, saving love of God, and that his light will shine brightly in the darkness we humans seem so good at making.

Rev Cath

## 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

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



The fellowship lunch and Holy Communion Service for November will be at 12noon on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January



There will not be a service in December.

## 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.

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).



**There will not be a meeting in January, however subs of £33.00 are now due by 31<sup>st</sup> January. Please give them to Barbara Walton**

## 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



## **Susan Marsh MBE**

For many years I have had the privilege of calling Susan my friend, a friend who supported me 100 percent in all I tried to do

Although Susan was involved with a great many causes, she always found the time to listen and if possible, give me material help if that was what was needed.

Over many years this was the case for Lifeshare, Sue has always been sympathetic where the homeless and rough sleepers were concerned, so much so that besides the donations of food which were very regular, birthday presents requested from her family were often breakfast cereals and other food needed to help the Lifeshare breakfast project, always with the reminder not to buy Weetabix because it took too much milk.

Family celebrations always included a box for donations rather than presents, very often these were for Lifeshare, who were very grateful.

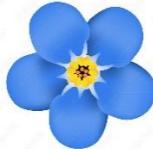
Lifeshare at Christmas Susan would become a collection point for knitted hats, and of course there was also a food donation from Susan, Eric and Stephen which for many years included 100 bars of chocolate which were very well received.

This is just a snapshot of Susan's very generous nature.

Thank you Susan for your friendship as well as your support, I miss you as do many folks, I will never forget you.

Rest in the Lord my friend, yours was a race well run

Barbara



## Thank You

Thank you to Mr Tranter for his donation of our Christmas tree in memory of his dear wife Mary, and much-loved son Robert.



## A Thought About Mark's Gospel

### Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

Every time I have read this in Marks Gospel, I have always been left wondering why Jesus reacted the way he did by cursing the tree when he must have known it was not the right time for the fruit.

Reading the Daily Bread (a Bible study I order through the gift stall for three of us) I think I have found the answer. After each daily reading there is an explanation, and the explanation is.

*Jesus's expectation of finding something to ease his hunger was because before figs appear, the trees produce Taqsh small knob like fruits that, though edible soon fall off to make way for mature figs and of course his hope was for finding some to eat and finding none it was*

*obvious although the tree was in full leaf it was barren and would not produce any fruit.*

The reading goes on to the next day when Jesus cleared the temple of money changers and traders, who I think he thought were just as fruitless for God.

Barbara Walton

### **Carols at Christmas**

In December I was privileged to attend several concerts and services which included Christmas songs and carols.

My first concert was on the 1<sup>st</sup> December at the Bridgewater Hall. The concert raises funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Young Lives vs Cancer is the only charity in the UK with specialist social workers who provide tailored support to children and young people with cancer, and their families. They help them to navigate the emotional and practical impact of cancer. And they stop at nothing to make their voices heard and their unique needs understood, so they can get the right care and support at the right time. The concert is led by the Manchester and Districts Hospital Choir. The choir sing less familiar songs and the audience have the opportunity to sing along to more traditional carols. The rendition of the Twelve Days of Christmas is always chaotic as we all try to remember which action we should perform on which verse. The concert also includes two school choirs who perform magnificently on stage. This year we enjoyed the singing of St Anne's R.C Primary School Audenshaw. We are hoping that St Mary's school will be invited to sing in 2026 - watch this space.

My next carol service was on 3<sup>rd</sup> December at Coronation Street. I had the honour of being invited to the Royal Foundation of the Prince and Princess of Wales 'Together at Christmas' Community Carol Service for my work with Droylsden & District Foodbank. It was hosted by the Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester. We sang four very traditional carols

and were entertained by Bollywood dancers, the junior section of an amateur operatic society and the drum section of the Air Cadet band. Bishop Mark told the Christmas story and its meaning through 'pass the parcel' with the winner getting to share the box of Celebrations with us all. We then enjoyed a tour of the Street walking along the famous cobbles.



Making our Christingle at the service is always a challenge but standing around the church with our candles lit reminds us of the joy Christ's birth brings to us all.

I enjoyed the traditional carol services of Aldwyn Primary School and it is always a joy to see so many children and their families singing and hearing again the Christmas story. My association with Aldwyn's carol service goes back over 65 years when I too came to church and read a part of the Christmas story.

St Mary's School carol service in church was joyful with some great moves by the children and staff as they included actions to many of their songs.

St John's Castle band concert is always an opportunity to sing along to familiar carols after enjoying music from Christmas films.



Our own church carol service, with the schools Christmas trees lit means the true start of the Christmas celebrations for me.

I hope you were able to join us for one of our Christmas services or events. If you rested at home, I hope you found a television or radio programme to join in to your favourite Christmas carol.

As we enter a new year with its challenges but promises of hope and love, I am reminded of a song the choir sang at my first concert at the Bridgewater. Let us pray that the wild bells will 'Ring out the old, ring in the new'.

*1 Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.*

*2 Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.*

*3 Ring out old shapes of foul disease,  
Ring out the narr'wing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.*

*4 Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.  
Amen.*

Pat



The Mothers' Union will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year, marking a significant milestone since its founding by Mary Sumner, the young wife of a clergyman, ministering in a small village in Hampshire, in 1876. The name "**Mothers' Union**" sounds stuffy and unappealing these days; however, we are not just open to mothers in this modern age, but

everyone both female and male. We have a laugh and enjoy some very interesting talks by various visiting speakers.

Mary Sumner believed that women, regardless of class or status, could come together in faith to support one another and strengthen family life within the Church.

From that single spark of an idea, a global movement was born – and Mothers' Union has grown to 4 million members across 84 countries. As we look to the future our members will continue working to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities around the world. At the heart of everything we do will remain our unwavering belief that faith and compassion can transform lives.

***As we look ahead to this remarkable milestone, we invite you to be part of it. Whether you're passionate about social justice, prayer, community outreach, or simply want to connect with people who care, there will be a way for you to join us and join in.***

Look out for the new Mothers' Union information leaflets, check out the new noticeboard display near the kitchen in the church room and watch for more information appearing in the coming diaries.

#### **The Mary Sumner Prayer**

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.

#### **The Mothers' Union Prayer**

Loving Lord, we thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

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We pray for families around the world. Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

### **Craft Group**

The next meeting of the craft group will be on 12<sup>th</sup> January in the Emmaus Room at 1.30pm.

### **The New Calendar**

It is good to throw away the old calendar with its all too familiar picture and to hang something fresh on the wall. How clean and bright the new calendar looks! It seems to symbolise the high hopes of this new new morning of a new year.

But as I flick through the crisp new pages of the months I am suddenly aware of the strange mystery of the future. These pages with their neat rows of dates represent unlied time, the promises of seasons not yet some to fulfilment, days not yet granted, days that are still God's secret.

Ann Holland

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**A Picture to colour**

**Read Matthew 2: 2 - 12**



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**

**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:

**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**