

## Notices

Instructions to access the live stream for services:-

- Navigate to the main St Mary's Woodkirk Facebook page.  
[www.facebook.com/stmarywoodkirk](http://www.facebook.com/stmarywoodkirk).
- All scheduled lives will be pinned at the top of the page and you can join them by clicking on them at the time that they start.
- Alternatively a link to the live will also be published on our **A Church Near You** page
- Find the event taking place and click on "More about this event" this will automatically take you straight to the live service on Facebook.

If you wish to make a donation to the work of this church or if you wish to pay your weekly collection via our bank account then the details are given below:-

Yorkshire Bank Morley  
Sort Code 05-01-31  
Account – Woodkirk PCC 31405751

Thank you - Sharon



## WELCOME TO ST MARY'S WOODKIRK

 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Leeds

*Engaging with God  
Engaging with Each Other  
Engaging with the Community*

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021**

**10.30am Said Holy Communion – Epiphany**  
(Service In Church and streamed via Facebook live)

*Instructions to Connect given in column 4*

### Services for next week

Mon 9.00am	Morning Prayer streamed as above
Tues 6.00pm	Evening Prayer streamed as above
Weds 10.00am	Said Holy Communion In Church and Streamed as above
Thurs 9.00pm	Night Prayer/Compline streamed as above
Fri 9.00am	Morning Prayer streamed as above

### Next Sunday's Services are as follows: -

10.30am Baptism of Christ - Said Holy Community  
(Service In Church and streamed as above)

## FOR YOUR PRAYERS

From our Parish Prayer Diary: Local Schools and Teachers  
From our Church Prayer Diary : Uniformed Organisation

We pray for Baptism Families, Wedding Couples and  
Funeral Families.

### Those who have asked for **prayers for healing**:

Kevin, Richard, Grace, Betty, Lionel, Frank, Nicole, Simon,  
Faith, Alfie, Bree, Beryl, Marlene, Philip, Christine, Jillian,  
Brian, Margaret, Jerry, Louise, Mark, Cyril, Sandra, Renee  
and Rev'd Andy Myers.

The family and friends of those who have recently  
died: Freda Stabler

And those whose **anniversaries** fall at this time:  
Frederick John Stubbs

**VICAR:** Revd. Sharon Wilkinson 07539 466724  
*Email: vicar@stmarywoodkirk.org*  
**READER:** Dawn Tattersfield 07840 739239  
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**EDITOR:** Dave Townsend 07745 301746  
*Email: dave@stmarywoodkirk.org*  
**CHRISTENINGS** can be booked by contacting:  
**BAPTISM CO-ORDINATOR:** Barbara Tate  
*Email: barbara@stmarywoodkirk.org*  
**WEDDINGS** can be booked by contacting our:  
**WEDDING CO-ORDINATOR:** Gail Townsend 07792  
975814  
*Email: gail@stmarywoodkirk.org*  
**CHURCH WEBSITE:** [www.stmarywoodkirk.org](http://www.stmarywoodkirk.org)  
**FACEBOOK:** regular updates about life at St Mary's  
can be found on our Facebook pages:  
*St Mary's Church, Woodkirk,  
and Friends of Woodkirk Churchyard.*  
**TWITTER:** tweet us and follow us @stmarywoodkirk

Scripture Readings for the coming week:-

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January – Said HC –In Church and streamed live**

Isaiah 60:1-6

Matthew 2:1-12

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January – Morning Prayer – streamed live**

Psalms 89:1-37

John 2:1-12

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January - Evening Prayer – streamed live**

Psalms 97

Colossians 3:12-4:1

**Weds 6<sup>th</sup> January – Said HC – In Church and streamed live**

1 John 3:22-4:6

Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25

**Thurs 7<sup>th</sup> January – Night Prayer/Compline – streamed live**

Psalms 16

Titus 2:11

**Fri 8<sup>th</sup> January – Morning Prayer - streamed live**

Psalms 46

1 John 4:7-21

The Government made a further announcement on Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> December and as expected we remain in Tier 3, therefore, the Government and Church of England Guidelines remain the same for now. Masks must be worn in church unless you have an exemption that is on the Government's list. Please sanitise your hands on entry and exit. Only one bubble per pew please. When the service has finished please stay in your pew until a sidesperson indicates it is okay to leave. Unfortunately, there will be no singing inside of church at this point in time. Communion will be offered in one kind only. If you are isolating or have any COVID symptoms then please do not come to church at this time.

Just because Church remains open please take care and consider if you would be safer watching on line for the time being. Please follow Government Guidelines if you are in a vulnerable category. Your safety is paramount and we are so close to getting vaccines that all risks should be minimised. I fear things are going to get worse before they get better with the new variants and it is likely even when vaccinated we will still have to mask and keep our physically distancing for some time.

[Christmas Card Gifting to Church](#)

Thank you so much for your donations in lieu of Christmas Cards which raised £465.00.

[Acts of Kindness](#)

Thank you to all those who have donated food to the foodbanks. The need is greater this year than ever. Covid has hit families hard and so we will continue to support our local foodbanks as much as we can. If you are able to

support your local foodbanks when you go shopping by purchasing a couple of extra items this would be greatly appreciated I am sure. These could be collected from you (COVID securely) or they can be left at the Church on Weds/Sun Services or left at the Vicarage (anytime). Please do not hesitate to contact if you need anything (07539466724).

**The Final Advent Reflection on the Christ Candle**

The Christ candle is in the centre of the Advent Wreath because the Christ candle reminds us that Jesus is the centre of Christmas. The four outer candles are all important, but they only make sense with Jesus at the centre. Yes, Christmas is a time of hope, peace, joy and love, but once again, this is only because of Jesus.

**There is no real hope without Christ**

Jesus is the centre of Christmas because there is no real hope without Christ. When we looked at the advent candle of hope, we saw that hope in Christ gets you through the waiting. We saw that hope in Christ helps you go the distance. And we saw that hope in Christ does not disappoint. All real hope in the world is centred on Christ. We also learned that the whole advent season is all about hope and anticipation. It's about the people of the Old Testament waiting all those long years for Christ to come. And it's also about us who are waiting and longing for Christ's return. God promised to send Jesus the first time, and he did. God has promised to send Jesus a second time, and he will.

Christmas is all about hope because it's all about Christ. Because God sent his Son into the world, you and I have hope. We have hope for today because Christ is with us. We have hope for tomorrow because Christ will never leave us. And we have hope for eternity, because Christ is coming back to take us to be with him forever.

Too many people live without hope today because they live without Christ. And so that's the first reason Jesus is the centre of Christmas, because all real hope is found in him. There is no real hope without Christ.

**There is no real peace without Christ**

Jesus is the centre of Christmas because there is no real peace without Christ. Once again, when we looked at the advent candle of peace we saw that Jesus brings peace with God – that Jesus came to save us from our sins so that we could be restored to right relationship with God. We saw that Jesus brings peace with self – that when you trust Christ, you enjoy a wonderful peace in your heart, a personal peace that is unlike anything you can find in the world. We saw that Jesus brings peace with others – that when you put Christ first and pray for your relationships, Jesus reconciles those relationships and allows you to live in peace with those around you. And then finally we saw that Jesus will bring peace on earth – that when Christ returns he will rule over this world in peace. All wars and conflicts will cease and even the world of nature and

animals will be at peace with each other. All true peace in the world is centred on Christ.

Our world is sadly lacking peace today because our world is lacking Christ. The religious leaders of this world won't bring you peace. The political leaders of this world won't bring you peace. The pop psychologists of this world won't bring you peace. All the drugs and medication in the world won't bring you real peace.

Only Jesus brings true and lasting peace. He is the Prince of Peace. He is the Saviour who came to bring peace between you and God. He is the coming King who comes to reign in peace over all the earth.

The angels who announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds out in the fields sang songs of peace on earth, goodwill towards men. And so that is a second reason Jesus is the centre of Christmas, because Jesus brings peace. There is no real peace without Christ.

### **There is no real joy without Christ**

There is no real joy without Christ. When we looked at the advent candle of joy, we saw that Jesus brings the joy of salvation – that there is no real joy without salvation, and no real salvation without joy. We also saw that joy leads to proclamation – good news is for sharing – and that joy leads to praise. We saw that all true joy in the world is centred on Christ.

Once again, when the angels announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds, they not only sang songs of peace in the sky. They proclaimed good news of great joy for all the people. After the shepherds went to Bethlehem and found Jesus in the manger, they were so full of joy they ran out into the night to tell everyone that Christ was born. They couldn't wait until morning! And they were so filled with joy in sharing that good news of Christmas that they returned glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

This world offers a lot of entertainment, a lot of excitement, a lot of thrills, but very little joy. Joy is deeper than happiness. Happiness is temporary and dependent on circumstances. But Jesus offers you a joy that transcends your circumstances. Christmas is not always a happy time for people. Especially if we have lost someone close to us, it colours the season for us. But Jesus offers you a joy that will sustain you even in your deepest sorrows. True joy doesn't mean you will never be sad. It means that even in your saddest hours, God is with you, you can trust him, and therefore you can have joy. And so that is a third reason Jesus is the centre of Christmas, because Jesus brings a joy that is deeper than happiness and even deeper than our sorrows. There is no real joy without Christ.

### **There is no real love without Christ**

And then the fourth reason Jesus is the centre of Christmas is that there is no real love without Christ. When we looked at the advent candle of love, we saw Joseph's love for Mary as he looked out for her best

interests even when he thought she had been unfaithful to him. We saw Mary's love for Jesus as she wrapped the baby in swaddling clothes and laid him in the manger. We saw God's love for sinners in sending his own Son into the world as a sacrifice for our sins. And we saw our love for others which is a natural response to God's love for us. When we say that there is no real love without Christ, we're not saying that you can't love your family or be loving towards others unless you're a Christian. There are many people who do not follow Christ who are still very loving people. But what we are saying is this: whether you realize it or not, your love for others is only possible because of Jesus, because Jesus is the Son of God. And you cannot experience or express fullness of love without Christ.

The Bible tells us that God is love, and that all love comes from God. Before God ever created the world, there was God and there was love. God loved his Son Jesus, and Jesus loved God the Father. God and Jesus both loved the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit loved the Father and the Son. God is love because from all of eternity there has always been a perfect relationship between the three persons of the Trinity – one God, three persons in a perfect relationship of harmony and love.

When God created the world, that love God has for himself in the persons of the Trinity spilled over onto us. It's like tracing a stream back to its source. You hike through the woods following the stream for hours until you find the lake or spring that is feeding the stream. When you see any act or expression of love in this world, and you trace it back to the source, you will always find God. God is the source of all love in this world. Every act of love in this world finds its source in him. God is love, and all love comes from him.

The story of Christmas is all about love, because Christmas is all about Jesus. The Bible says: "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

The baby born in Bethlehem grew to be a man. He lived a perfect life with no sin. He went to the cross and died a horrible death. And the Bible tells us why he did all this. He did it for you and for me. God sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. That's why he came. That's why he lived. That's why he died. And that's why he rose again – so he could be our Saviour forever and rescue us from sin and Satan and death.

This is how God showed his love among us. He sent his Son. And so that's the fourth reason Jesus is the centre of Christmas, because God is love, and all love comes from him. There is no real love without Christ.

### **Story**

Let me close with a story to help us pull all this together. One of the things I miss about living in the Vicarage is a fire in the fireplace. There's something about a fire in the

fireplace that is so soothing, so pleasing, especially around Christmas time.

What is it that people love about a fire in the fireplace? It's the whole experience, isn't it? The light that the fire sheds, the warmth that the fire brings, the scent of the burning wood and the crackling of the embers – these all combine to make it such a beautiful experience. But you can't have all those things without the fire. The things we love about the fire come from the fire, and the fire is at the centre of the light, the warmth, the scent and the crackling.

It's the same with Christ at Christmas. We all want hope, peace, joy and love, but some people seem to want them without Jesus. It's like wanting the light, warmth, scent and crackling of the fire in the fireplace without the fire. It doesn't work that way. Just as the fire is central to all the good things about the fire, so Christ is central to Christmas. Hope, peace, joy and love come from him. He is the centre, and we only enjoy the good things of Christmas because of him.

And so in future as you watch the Christ candle burning in the centre of all the other candles, remember that Christ is central. He is the reason for Christmas. He is the one who brings true hope, peace, joy and love for us all.

And so to finish may I take this opportunity to thank you all for your support, for the friendship and fellowship we have shared. I hope you all have a blessed and peaceful New Year that comes from knowing Christ.

If anyone needs anything please do not hesitate to contact myself or Gail.