

Hello everyone,

As we move through advent and have Toy services at some of our churches, please pray for local families who are struggling at present and that our gifts of toys and money will reach children who would otherwise have nothing.



### Services this week:

This Sunday we have Toy/Nativity services at Packington and Appleby, and a Toy Service in Breakfast Church at Measham all at 10.00am, and later on at 6.00pm Donisthorpe have 'Carols and Christmas Trees'.

### Looking ahead:

Swepstone's Christmas Tree Festival continues in church this weekend (Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December) from 10.30am until 4.30pm. Admission is free and light refreshments will be served.

Donisthorpe is also holding a Christmas Tree Festival in conjunction with the community group this weekend (Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December). The church will be open daily from 3.00pm to 7.00pm and there will be refreshments and tombola for children and adults.

Activeage meet again at 11.00am in Measham Church Hall on Wednesday.

Packington & Normanton Ladies' Group have their Christmas Lunch in the Memorial Hall at 12.30pm on Wednesday.

Kids Kingdom Baby & Toddler group meet on Thursday morning from 9.00am to 11.00am in Appleby Church Hall.

Packington's 'Come and See' for school years 7-9, is later on Thursday at 3.45 to 5.00pm.

Norton Village have a Christmas Coffee Morning on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> from 10.00am to 2.00pm in the Village Hall with refreshments and craft stalls with gifts and decorations.

Next Sunday (15<sup>th</sup>) there will be 10.00am services of Holy Communion at Donisthorpe, Measham and Swepstone, and Carols at 10.00am at Normanton. Later on at 6.00pm there will be Carol services at Snarestone and also Packington with Bishop Saju joining us.

Further ahead on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December, Norton have their Celebrating Christmas evening with professional musicians leading the carols and poems and mulled wine and mince pies to fuel the singing.

### Woodfield Team prayer

*God our Father, you long to draw all people into your love.*

*Increase in number your church throughout the Woodfield Team; deepen us as followers and learners of Christ; and give us courage to share the good news of your kingdom.*

*We pray this in the power of your Spirit, to the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

### Collect for Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December - the Second Sunday of Advent

Almighty God,  
purify our hearts and minds,  
that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as  
judge and saviour  
we may be ready to receive him,  
who is our Lord and our God.  
Amen

### Reading for 8<sup>th</sup> December - Mark 1.1-8 New International Version (UK)



#### John the Baptist prepares the way

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, <sup>2</sup> as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

‘I will send my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way’ -

<sup>3</sup> ‘a voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
“Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.”’

<sup>4</sup> And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the River Jordan. <sup>6</sup> John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt round his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> And this was his message: ‘After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup> I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.’

## Prayers for today:

We pray:

Everlasting God, as we journey through this season of Advent seeking to make our paths straight for His coming, we bring before you the needs of our world, our church, our communities, and ourselves:

- Almighty God, your servant John the Baptist called people to change the way they lived and to prepare themselves for the coming of your son. Raise up, we pray, prophetic voices in our own time. Enable us to discern the truth which draws us closer to you. We pray for all those who teach, preach and minister to the congregations here in the Woodfield team. May they be as fearless in proclaiming the truth as your servant John, and may we be ready to adapt and change in response.
- Creator God, we pray for our world and the problems faced by so many of your children, especially for all who live under conditions of war and terrorism and the poverty which comes in its wake. We pray for peace, reconciliation, and healing in places of conflict and trouble.
- We pray also for those in our own country who are struggling to feed their families and are worried about paying their bills, those who have lost their jobs, are on low incomes and are dependent on food banks. We pray for those worried about choosing between heating and eating this winter. Bless all working to meet their needs and fill us all with compassion and a willingness to share what we have with those in need.
- Father God, help us to remember those who are isolated and forgotten. It is hard to feel alone during a season that celebrates togetherness. Open our eyes to those around us who are lonely so that we may extend our hands and hearts to them with compassion. Give us the confidence to step up and embrace the outcast. Most of all, dear God, we ask that you extend your love to them. Be their comforter, their shelter, and their refuge.
- Merciful God, may your blessing be upon all those who are sick, in pain, anxious or troubled. We ask you to be close to those passing through dark places, and to those undergoing treatments at home or in hospital. We give thanks for all who are working to treat them at one of the busiest times of year for our Health Services. Give them the strength, courage, and stamina to look after well those in their care.
- Loving God, give rest to those who have gone from our lives to be with you. May they now live the life eternal and rest in everlasting peace in your presence. Comfort the bereaved with the knowledge of your loving presence in this, their time of greatest need.
- Holy God, we ask you to help us make time for true preparations this Advent. In the midst of the rush of life, help us find inner quietness and an awareness of your presence. As we wait for your plan to unfold, give us the patience we need. Remind us of the hope and peace we can access when we take time to still ourselves before you and remember that you are God.

**Amen.**