

Hello everyone,

As we come now to the fourth Sunday of advent, followed by our Christmas services, we pray that the next week may give us a fresh glimpse into the wondrous events of that first Christmas. May we be inspired to share Christ's light with all those we meet over Christmas and for those we do not see, we can pray, especially for those who are lonely and for anyone who may feel isolated from the celebrations happening around them.

Readings and notices for the Christmas season are below to take you all the way through to the New Year. **The Woodfield Team Office will be closed between Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December and Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January.**

*With blessings from the Woodfield Team for a joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.*



#### **Upcoming Services:**

This Sunday there will be 10.00am services of Holy Communion at Appleby, Morning Prayer at Donisthorpe, and Carols & Readings at Measham and Packington.

#### *Christmas Eve (24<sup>th</sup>):*

- at 4.00pm there will be Christingle at Measham, a Crib Service at Packington, and Carols at Swepstone;
- at 6.00pm there will be Christingle at Donisthorpe and Carols at Appleby;
- and Donisthorpe, Norton, and Packington have Midnight Communion at 11.30pm.

#### *Christmas Day (25<sup>th</sup>):*

Holy Communion will be held at Appleby and Normanton both at 10.00am.

On Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December we have Baptisms at Appleby and Norton, and a united Team Holy Communion service at Donisthorpe.

On New Year's Day, Packington have Poems and Prayers at 11.30am followed by Soup, Pudding and a glass of wine from 12.00noon.

On Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> January at 10.00am there will be services of Holy Communion at Measham and Snarestone, a Baptism at Appleby, Morning Prayer at Donisthorpe, Normanton and Swepstone, and Morning Worship at Packington.

### 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 22<sup>nd</sup> December - the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Eternal God,  
as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,  
so we wait for his coming in glory;  
bring us through the birth pangs of this present age  
to see, with her, our great salvation  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

### Reading for 22<sup>nd</sup> December - Luke 1.39-55 New International Version (UK)



#### **Mary visits Elizabeth**

<sup>39</sup> At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, <sup>40</sup> where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> In a loud voice she exclaimed: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! <sup>43</sup> But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!'

#### **Mary's song**

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said:

'My soul glorifies the Lord

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

<sup>48</sup> for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is his name.

- <sup>50</sup> His mercy extends to those who fear him,  
from generation to generation.
- <sup>51</sup> He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;  
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
- <sup>52</sup> He has brought down rulers from their thrones  
but has lifted up the humble.
- <sup>53</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things  
but has sent the rich away empty.
- <sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel,  
remembering to be merciful
- <sup>55</sup> to Abraham and his descendants for ever,  
just as he promised our ancestors.'

### **Prayers for today:**

We pray:

Lord Jesus, God's gift to us on that first Christmas, you were born to Mary and Joseph to share with us in all the experiences of life. We come to you now, trusting that you will understand the needs of the world, your church, and the people for whom we pray.

- Holy Jesus, by being born one of us, and lying humbly in a manger, you show how much God loves the world. Son of Mary, you know us and love us, you share our lives. Born for us, Son of God, given for us, help us to know you, to worship and to serve you.
- Loving Jesus, you were born in a stable but worshipped by angels and shepherds alike. Be with all who are lonely, and with all who feel distant from celebrations. Be for them and us a living hope that lightens our hearts.
- Lord, our Creator and Sustainer, the wise men brought myrrh, frankincense, and gold. We have nothing of our own to bring so we bring you what you have given: our lives for your life.
- Jesus, as you healed the sick, bring healing to those in our families who are ill today. In lives afflicted by pain, illness, distress or grief bring comfort, hope and the courage they need for today and every day. We pray for those having to travel to hospital for treatment or surgery and for those who love them and care for them.
- For those who are mourning, lead them gently through this time of darkness. Let the light and peace of your enduring love ever shine in both their and our hearts, until we reach our home in heaven, and see you on your throne of glory. We pray for those who have gone before us, especially any we know who have recently died and are now on that journey to you.
- Lord Jesus, in your compassionate understanding of what it is to be human, hear our prayers. May we play our part in your response to bring joy, love and hope into the lives of those for whom we have prayed. May God, who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, bless us and fill us with peace. In your name we pray,

**Amen.**

## Collect for Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Eve

Eternal God,  
in the stillness of this night  
you sent your almighty Word  
to pierce the world's darkness with the light of salvation:  
give to the earth the peace that we long for  
and fill our hearts with the joy of heaven  
through our Saviour, Jesus Christ.  
**Amen**

## Reading for 24<sup>th</sup> December - Luke 1.67-79 New International Version (UK)



### **Zechariah's song**

<sup>67</sup> His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

<sup>68</sup> 'Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,  
because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

<sup>69</sup> He has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David

<sup>70</sup> (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

<sup>71</sup> salvation from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us -

<sup>72</sup> to show mercy to our ancestors  
and to remember his holy covenant,

<sup>73</sup> the oath he swore to our father Abraham:

<sup>74</sup> to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,  
and to enable us to serve him without fear

<sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

<sup>76</sup> And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,

<sup>77</sup> to give his people the knowledge of salvation  
through the forgiveness of their sins,

<sup>78</sup> because of the tender mercy of our God,  
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven

<sup>79</sup> to shine on those living in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the path of peace.'

## Collect for Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Day

Lord Jesus Christ,  
your birth at Bethlehem  
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth:  
accept our heartfelt praise  
as we worship you,  
our Saviour and our eternal God.  
**Amen**

## Reading for 25<sup>th</sup> December - John 1.1-14 New International Version (UK)



### **The Word became flesh**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

<sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - <sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

## Collect for 29<sup>th</sup> December - The First Sunday of Christmas

God in Trinity,  
eternal unity of perfect love:  
gather the nations to be one family,  
and draw us into your holy life  
through the birth of Emmanuel,  
our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Amen**

## Reading for 29<sup>th</sup> December - Luke 2.41-52 New International Version (UK)



### **The boy Jesus at the temple**

<sup>41</sup> Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. <sup>43</sup> After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. <sup>44</sup> Thinking he was in their company, they travelled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup> When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. <sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup> When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, 'Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.'

<sup>49</sup> 'Why were you searching for me?' he asked. 'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?' <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>51</sup> Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

## Collect for 5<sup>th</sup> January - Epiphany

Creator of the heavens,  
who led the Magi by a star  
to worship the Christ-child:  
guide and sustain us,  
that we may find our journey's end  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

## Reading for 5<sup>th</sup> January - Matthew 2.1-12 New International Version (UK)



### The Magi visit the Messiah

<sup>2</sup> After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.’

<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> ‘In Bethlehem in Judea,’ they replied, ‘for this is what the prophet has written:

<sup>6</sup> “‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> He sent them to Bethlehem and said, ‘Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.’

<sup>9</sup> After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup> On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.