

Hello everyone,

As the weather remains cold and the nights are long and dark, please pray for those who are struggling to pay their bills and are worried about keeping warm this winter. Please pray for national initiatives, like Warm Spaces, and for local charities like the Marlene Reid Centre who continue to receive toys for distribution to local children to help as many families as possible to share joy in hard times this Christmas.



### **Services this week:**

This Sunday 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.

### **Looking ahead:**

Packington have midweek Communion at 10.00am on Wednesday followed by a funeral in church.

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

Appleby have Community Lunch in the Church Hall from 12.30pm too.

Later on Wednesday, Packington have Carols at the Bull & Lion Pub with the Salvation Army Band at 7.00pm.

Kids Kingdom Baby & Toddler group meet for the last time in 2024 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 for its final meeting of the year.

At 6.30pm, Norton have their Celebrating Christmas evening with professional musicians leading the carols and poems and mulled wine and mince pies to fuel the singing.

Packington's Community Choir are also performing at Donisthorpe Church at 7.00pm on Thursday.

On Friday, Packington have a Coffee Morning in church from 10.00am.

Next Sunday (22<sup>nd</sup>) 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.

Please keep an eye out in next week's notices for services and events after Christmas.

### 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.*

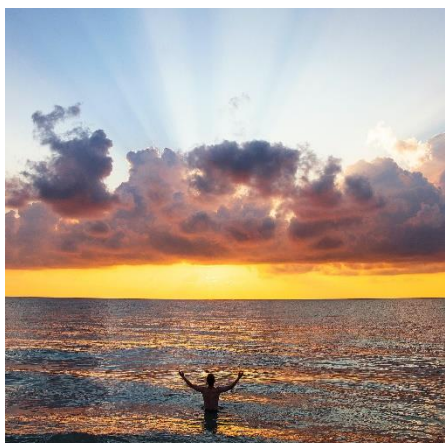
*We pray this in the power of your Spirit, to the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord.*  
**Amen.**

### Collect for Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December - the Third Sunday of Advent

God for whom we watch and wait,  
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son:  
give us courage to speak the truth,  
to hunger for justice,  
and to suffer for the cause of right,  
with Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

### Reading for 15<sup>th</sup> December - Luke 3.7-18 New International Version (UK)



<sup>7</sup> John said to the crowds coming out to be baptised by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup>Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup>The axe has been laid to the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.'

<sup>10</sup> ‘What should we do then?’ the crowd asked.

<sup>11</sup> John answered, ‘Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.’

<sup>12</sup> Even tax collectors came to be baptised. ‘Teacher,’ they asked, ‘what should we do?’

<sup>13</sup> ‘Don’t collect any more than you are required to,’ he told them.

<sup>14</sup> Then some soldiers asked him, ‘And what should we do?’

He replied, ‘Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely - be content with your pay.’

<sup>15</sup> The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. <sup>16</sup> John answered them all, ‘I baptise you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.’ <sup>18</sup> And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.

### **Prayers for today:**

We pray:

Everlasting God, as we continue prepare for Christmas, help us to make space in our busy lives for time to be quiet where we can, through prayer and reflection, to appreciate the wonder of your love. As we revisit the story of Jesus’ birth through our Advent worship deepen our joy, invigorate our prayers and our praise, and help it to challenge the way that we live our lives.

- Your son taught us to look out beyond our own needs and worries to those that we live amongst. Knowing that it is more blessed to give than to receive, any good therefore that we can do, or any kindness or abilities that we can show to others, help us to do it now and not defer or neglect it.
- Faithful Lord, drive away despair from our politics, revive our dreams of justice and truth, restore our passion for what is good and right. We pray for all those who lead our nations of the world and for those in authority that they may always work for peace and for the good of their people. Grant us and them the courage of John the Baptist that we may constantly seek the truth and speak out in the face of injustice and wrongs.
- Loving Father, we pray for those whose children cannot take part in Christmas celebrations because of the expense; those who put themselves into debt attempting to meet expectations; those who may have to use foodbanks for a Christmas meal. We pray for those worried about choosing between heating and eating this winter, and for those for whom there is no choice as they are without shelter and food altogether. Help us to do all that we can through our prayers and through our giving to local and international charities that are helping those in need.

- Compassionate God, bring healing in mind, body and spirit to all who are troubled. In lives afflicted by pain, illness, distress or grief bring comfort, hope and the courage they need for today and every day.
- For those who are mourning, lead them gently through this time of darkness into the light and peace of your enduring love. Help us to look forward with patience and confidence to that time when we will join you in the peace of eternity. We especially pray for any we know who have recently died and are now on that journey to you.
- During this season of Advent, as we move towards the festivities of Christmas, we pray that peace will flow from all of our actions and interactions this week. 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 our God.
- Father, thank you for your promise to hear our prayers and provide for us. We offer you our prayers and ourselves, that we may play our part in your response. Our hearts desire the warmth of your love, and our minds are searching for the light of your Word. Increase our longing for Christ and give us the strength to grow in love, that the dawn of his coming may find us rejoicing in his presence and welcoming the light of his truth.

**Amen.**