



**SAINT
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CLARKSFIELD**

December 2019

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Services at St Barnabas' Church

Sunday	9:30 am	Parish Worship
Monday	2:30 pm	Prayers in the vestry
Tuesday	10:00 am	Holy Communion (said)

First Tuesday of each month: Service of Holy Communion at Moor Haven Nursing Home on Ripponden Road, starting at 2:00 pm.

Baptisms and marriages by arrangement with the Vicar.

Please submit items for the January 2020 magazine by 15 December. Please e-mail files to paulmonk111@gmail.com

People at St Barnabas' Church

Vicar

The Revd Dr Paul Monk
St Barnabas' Vicarage, Arundel Street, Clarksfield, Oldham OL4 1NL
Tel: (0161) 624 7708

Assistant Curates

The Revd Denise Owen (and Vicar of St Thomas' Church Moorside)

Tel: (0161) 652 0292 and E: therevd.dowen@yahoo.co.uk

The Revd Jane Hyde

Tel: (07734) 886 893 and E: janehyde10@hotmail.com

Lay Reader

and Warden Mr Peter Haslam (0161) 345 0215

Administrator Miss Sarah Gura (07708) 714 813

Treasurer Ms Gisele Onwumere

Parish Hall bookings The Vicar (0161) 624 7708

Letter from the Vicar

Many people treat the Christmas story as an annual event to accompany the Christmas TV, mince pies and carols. Seen this way, the Christmas story becomes an end in itself, to be forgotten as soon as January appears.

Again, we can think of Easter as another stand-alone story. Jesus' atoning sacrifice becomes a different seasonal item to accompany the eggs and chocolate. It is not. Rather, it's more like an illustration of God's supreme for us.

The problem is the way we live: we are always too busy. With preparation and publicising; visiting and services; doing and being; and the form-filing that accompany all aspects of life, we become so busy that we concentrate on the small details but exclude the bigger picture.

Before we start the rush and expense of Christmas, let's re-remember the bigger picture. Christianity, when authentic and true to itself, always focuses our attention on the way God makes himself accessible to ordinary people like us. In this light, the bigger picture becomes very simple: Jesus came to earth as a human being in order that we could see what God is truly like. Jesus went to the cross to remove our sins completely and utterly, to clean us from the sins that separate us from God and his love. This way, we can recognise God when the blinds between us and him come down.

Enjoy the beauty of Christmas. Enjoy the tinsel and the glitter. Enjoy the presents and the fun. Enjoy the sight of wonder in children's eyes. But also try to remember that we celebrate the birth of a baby thousands of years ago because he enables us to come close to God. Now that *is* a present worth celebrating!

Wishing you all a joyful and peaceful time of great love this Advent and Christmas:

PAUL

Church and Parish news

Sylvia Kershaw

We great sadness we announce the death of Sylvia Kershaw. She was a prominent member of the Church for many years, and she led the Sunday school, Scouts, and the Amateur Dramatic Society. More recently she created and led the *Spotlight Amateur Dramatic Group*. She will be greatly missed.

Carol service

Our annual carol service occurs on Sunday 15 December at 6:00 pm. We'll be joined by the Soul Inspiration Gospel Choir and the Tame Valley Brass Ensemble.

Christingle service

It's a service of magic and candlelight, soft voices and the anticipation of a joy-filled Christmas. Our Christingle service occurs in Waterhead Church, starting at 4:00 pm.

Midnight Mass

It feels like the world has stopped. There is no sound but the expectancy of waiting for Christmas. And we assemble in the hushed beauty of Holy Trinity Church, awaiting the birth of our Lord and Saviour in a manger.

Our midnight starts occurs in our sister Church of Waterhead (OL4 2JQ). It starts at 11:30 pm and ends about 12:30 am. All are welcome.

Christmas Day

Our Christmas Day service starts at 9:30 on Wednesday 25 December. It will be a joyful family service. All are welcome.

The Advent forerunners

There are many themes of Advent. We celebrate a different idea each week of Advent in order to draw out the bigger pictures.

One of the most popular concerns the 'forerunners' of Jesus—people and groups who discerned that someone was coming, and did so long before Jesus was born into first-century Palestine.

The theme of forerunners allows us to explore the themes of Advent and their competing demands of incarnation and judgement. The aim is for our faith to grow.

Each of the four Sundays of Advent centres on a different forerunner. They offer us a way to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ. They are:

Week one	The patriarchs and the people of God
Week two	The prophets
Week three	John the Baptist
Week four	The Virgin Mary

These themes are far-reaching.

- 'The Patriarchs' asks us to focus on Abraham, our father in the faith, and the way his spirituality lives on through us.
- 'The Prophets' gives an opportunity to reflect on the way the birth of the Messiah was 'foretold', and who and what to expect.
- John proclaimed the Saviour and paid the ultimate price for his faithfulness.
- Mary bore Jesus in her womb and we are to let Christ come to birth in our hearts, minds and soul.

2019 dates for your diary

Sunday 15 December 6:00 pm **Annual Carol Service** in the Church.
Tuesday 24 December 4:00 pm **Christingle Service** at Waterhead Church.
Tuesday 24 December 11:30 pm **Midnight Mass** at Waterhead Church.
Wednesday 25 December 9:30 am Service for **Christmas Day** at St Barnabas.

2020

Sunday 5 January 9:30 am **Epiphany and Annual Covenant Service.**
Saturday 22 February 9:30 am **School of Prayer** (workshops and talks).
Sunday 22 March 9:30 am **Mothering Sunday.**
Sunday 12 April 9:30 am **Easter Sunday.**
Sunday 14 June 9:30 am **St Barnabas' Day and Annual Gift Day.**

New placement student

I'm Darren Quinlan. I'm 53 years of age and married with two children. My eldest has just started a first year at university and my youngest is in year six.

I was brought up in a large Roman Catholic family with seven brothers and one sister. I have been worshiping in Anglo-Catholic churches for the last eight years. I was welcomed into the Anglican Church in May 2018 by Bishop Mark of Middleton.

I was a detective in a homicide and major-investigations Unit. I'm also an accredited Senior Investigating Officer, in road deaths, cold-case review and counter corruption. I took a secondment to the Home Office in 2004 and stayed there, I'm part of a team that investigate breaches of Article 2 and 3 of the Human Rights Act, Article 2 being the right to life and Article 3 being inhumane treatment and torture.

My faith makes me who I am and gives me the strength to deal with the things I see or hear about. Without my faith I would not succeed in my current role.

I'm really excited about my placement at St Barnabas' and Holy Trinity and looking forward to meeting each of you. God Bless for now, enjoy the uplifting period of Advent and have a wonderful Christmas.

Bible readings for December

Sunday 1 December 2019

Advent Sunday
First: Isaiah 2:1-5
Epistle: Romans 13:11-14
Gospel: Matthew 24:36-44

Sunday 15 December

Third Sunday of Advent
First: Isaiah 35:1-10
Epistle: James 5:7-10
Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

Wednesday 25 December

Christmas Day
First: Isaiah 52:7-10
Epistle: Titus 2:11-14
Gospel: Luke 2:1-14

Sunday 8 December

Second Sunday of Advent
First: Isaiah 11:1-10
Epistle: Romans 15:4-13
Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

Sunday 22 December

Forth Sunday of Advent
First: Isaiah 7:10-16
Epistle: Romans 1:1-7
Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

Sunday 29 December

First Sunday of Christmas
First: Isaiah 63:7-9
Epistle: Hebrews 2:10-18
Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23



'Flying on eagle's wings was not as cool as Norbert thought it might be.
(With apologies to Isaiah 40:31.)

The principal idea behind Advent is expectant waiting. It invites us to await the coming of Christ. Indeed, this sense of waiting explains the name of the season, for *adventus* is Latin for 'coming'.

Advent often gets incorporated into Christmas under the continual, relentless pressure to celebrate a commercial Christmas. We give in too soon. Preparing for Christmas from mid-September makes it harder to sustain an appropriate sense of attentive watchfulness. Indeed, the pressure grows as the adverts appear at an ever-earlier date. It can feel impossible to concentrate on Advent while keeping the focus away from Christmas. Many Churches avoid the pretence altogether by the end of Advent and celebrate its fourth Sunday with a nativity event involving the Sunday-school children acting out the characters of the story, with carols and a party. In these ways, we lose any sense of hope in response to hype, adverts and the monotony of the Christmas songs and jingles. The antidote to this bludgeoning is to celebrate Advent as a separate and distinct liturgical season. We enhance Christmas in direct proportion to our celebrating Advent appropriately before Christmas starts properly.

The Church expresses its sense of waiting for Jesus within two complementary viewpoints: first, we await our meeting with Jesus as a new-born baby in a crib at Christmas time. This is the subject matter of the incarnation and requires preparation to avoid any sense of Christmas becoming 'samey' — the annual rehearsal of a familiar and now over-sentimentalised story.

The second and related theme of Advent revolves round the idea of Jesus returning to earth as Lord and judge. We call this return, 'the second coming.' The scriptures assure us of his return at the end of time, or at the end of our individual lives on earth if a mortal believer should die sooner. The readings and liturgies of Advent look forward

not only to Christ's birth, but also to his final coming. The Church sometimes calls him Christ *pantocrator* — a Greek title representing Jesus as the ruler of the universe. One of the principal challenges of Advent is our modern reluctance to confront the implications of divine judgement.

Several classic Advent hymns explore these ideas. For example, the first verse of Wesley's well-known 'Lo! he comes, with clouds descending' concludes by saying 'Christ the Lord returns to reign.' Another famous Advent hymn is 'O come, O come, Emmanuel,' which derives from a twelfth-century hymn translated. And 'Emmanuel' is a Greek title for Jesus meaning, 'God is with us'.

Advent is a penitential season, although the importance of this theme is less than either 'expectation' or 'dread'. We repent of everything that will displease Jesus on his return. The prayers can usefully underpin the penitential feel of the season, as do the prefaces and choice of hymns, if chosen wisely. For these reasons and more, Advent has long been known as 'the lesser Lent', which also explains the omission of the Gloria in all its possible forms. That Advent falls during the darkest weeks of the year can enhance these ideas, as can the natural symbols of Advent, which include darkness and light.

Fasting in December could pre-date Christmas, for example as a preparation for the Celtic festival of Beltane. Alternatively, it might simply reflect a pragmatic rationing of food during the bleak days of mid-winter. Fasting as an explicit practice for Advent started in what is now France during the fourth century. Later, the Church in Rome made the Advent fast mandatory and introduced stricter rules on Church attendance before Christmas. The Eastern Orthodox call their preparation for Christmas the 'Nativity Fast'. It starts the day after the Feast of St Philip the Apostle (14 November) and lasts 40 days until 24 December.

What is Advent?



The Advent wreath

Introduction In mediaeval times, Advent was observed as a fast during which the Church directed its thoughts to the second coming of Christ. To emphasise the penitential aspects of Advent, they called the season 'lesser Lent'. In more modern times, Advent is more generally seen as the lead-up to Christmas. The Advent wreath reminds us of the approach of Christmas.

The Advent wreath is also sometimes called an Advent 'ring'. We don't know when the idea first arose. Some sources suggest origins among German Lutherans in the sixteenth century. With more certainty we can say that the Advent wreath entered Britain in the nineteenth century.

Concept The Advent wreath requires five candles. We light one candle during the service for the First Sunday of Advent, two on the Second Sunday, etc. We light the final, fifth candle on Christmas Day.

We usually light a candle at the beginning of the service so the flames light the entire service. Otherwise, through most of the service the congregation see an array of unlit candles, which looks odd.

Arrangement The traditional arrangement is erected on a circular board or stand. The circle represents God's infinite love. The base is covered in holly or some other seasonal greenery. The choice of evergreen leaves represents the hope of eternal life brought about by the Incarnation. More to the point, perhaps, only evergreen leaves are easily found during Advent!

The candles rise up from the foliage of the base. The first four candles are arranged to form a simple square with the fifth placed in the centre of the square and generally a little higher.

Colours The central candle is white but no consensus exists about the other candles' colour. In one tradition, the first four candles are red. In the second, all four are violet. But in the most popular tradition, three of the candles are violet while the fourth is pink. These colours correspond to the liturgical vestments for the Sundays of Advent and follows the liturgical colour for the penitential seasons.

Jesus: the reason for the season

The Bible often describes Jesus as ‘the Son of God’. That title needs explanation because it’s so huge.

Jesus lived on earth as a human being during a very short period of human history (between approximately 4 BC and 29 AD). That period started when his mother Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit and ended after his Ascension, when he returned to Heaven.

Despite his unusual conception, the Bible is always keen to demonstrate that Jesus was fully human. Like us, he grew from a baby, became a teenager, and thence grew into adulthood. It also describes times when he needed sleep, food and warmth, just as we do. It also displays him as having the full range of human emotions: he wept, was angry, and so on. And he could be killed and die.

And this God–man had a perfect understanding of what it’s like to be human, which is surely what the whole thing is about.

We give the name ‘Incarnation’ to this mind-boggling event of God becoming human. The word literally means the ‘en-flesh-ment’ of God — Jesus is God wrapped in a human body.

In several places the Bible suggests that Jesus is both God and man, but each example needs a bit of explaining. The most dramatic instances refer to ‘The Word’. The most famous is John 1:14, ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.’ The Nicene Creed describes it with the words:

**For us and for our salvation,
he came down from heaven,
he became incarnate from the Holy Spirit
and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.**

The Incarnation ended when Jesus returned back to Heaven—‘back’ because he first entered the physical world *from* Heaven. That’s why Sirach 24:8 (in the Apocrypha) describes the Incarnation with the beautiful phrase, ‘The Word leapt from heaven to earth’.

Jesus was active in Heaven before the Incarnation. Colossians 1:16 shows him as being somehow instrumental in forming the world.

It’s our job as Christians to live with God within us, which is a different but related form of Incarnation. It also helps if we ask God (through prayer) to help us to understand these things in our souls.

Gold for the manger bed

**Gold for a manger bed,
Jesus enshrining;
straw where he lays his head,
softly reclining;
so small and still he lies
as on his infant eyes
high in the darkened skies
the stars are shining.**

**King and Creator see,
whose hands have wrought us;
Saviour and shepherd he,
who loved and sought us;
our God in human frame
who to a lost world came
and on the cross of shame
so dearly bought us.**

**Gold for a monarch’s state;
all things sustaining;
High Prince and Potentate,
death’s dread disdain;
to him the ransomed raise
unceasing hymns of praise,
through everlasting days
in glory reigning.**

**Words © Timothy Dudley-Smith.
These words can be sung to the tune of ‘To be a Pilgrim’.**

Saint Nicholas is the most popular name for Nikolaos of Myra, a saint and bishop in the Greek Orthodox Church. He was born in 270 AD and died on 6 December in 346 AD.

Nicholas was bishop of Myra (a city we now call Demre, in Lycia, in modern-day Turkey). Because of the many miracles attributed to him, he is also known as 'Nicholas the Wonderworker.'

Nicholas had a reputation for secretly giving gifts, for example putting coins in the shoes of those who left them out for him. Later legends tell of these gifts multiplying miraculously; and of him giving an unbelievable number of gifts in a very short time.

Nicholas' reputation for performing miracles became so great that his relics were stolen in 1087 and — many years later — re-appeared in Bari, in south eastern Italy. According to legend, his bones were stolen by Italian sailors during the eleventh century and taken to the crypt of the Basilica di San Nicola on the southeast coast of Italy. For this reason, he is also known as St Nicholas of Bari.

To commemorate the date of his death, St Nicholas' Day is usually celebrated on 6 December. It became a festival for children in many European countries and was celebrated by the giving of gifts. The idea of Santa Claus (the name comes from the Dutch for Saint Nicholas 'Sinterklaas' — literally 'saint claus') and thence Father Christmas derives from these stories of a wonderful giver of gifts.

St Nicholas is the patron saint of more things and more places than virtually any other saint. For example, he is the patron of sailors, merchants, archers, children and even thieves! In many countries, he is also the patron saint of students. He is the patron saint of places as diverse as Aberdeen and Liverpool. In 1809, the *New York Historical*

Society retrospectively named Santa Claus the patron saint of New Amsterdam, the old name for New York City.

The relics of most of the saints were divided and thence spread over numerous churches in several countries. By contrast, St. Nicholas is unique insofar as most of his bones were preserved in one place: the crypt in Bari.

A facial anthropologist at the University of Manchester analysed the bones and, using modern software simulations, created a modern reconstruction of the long-dead saint. The real Nicholas was barely five feet in height and had a broken nose. We now have a human face on Santa's original namesake. Incidentally, his nose probably suffered during the persecution of Christians under the Roman Emperor Diocletian.

In December 2009, the Turkish government formally requested that the Italian government return Nicholas' bones to his native land.

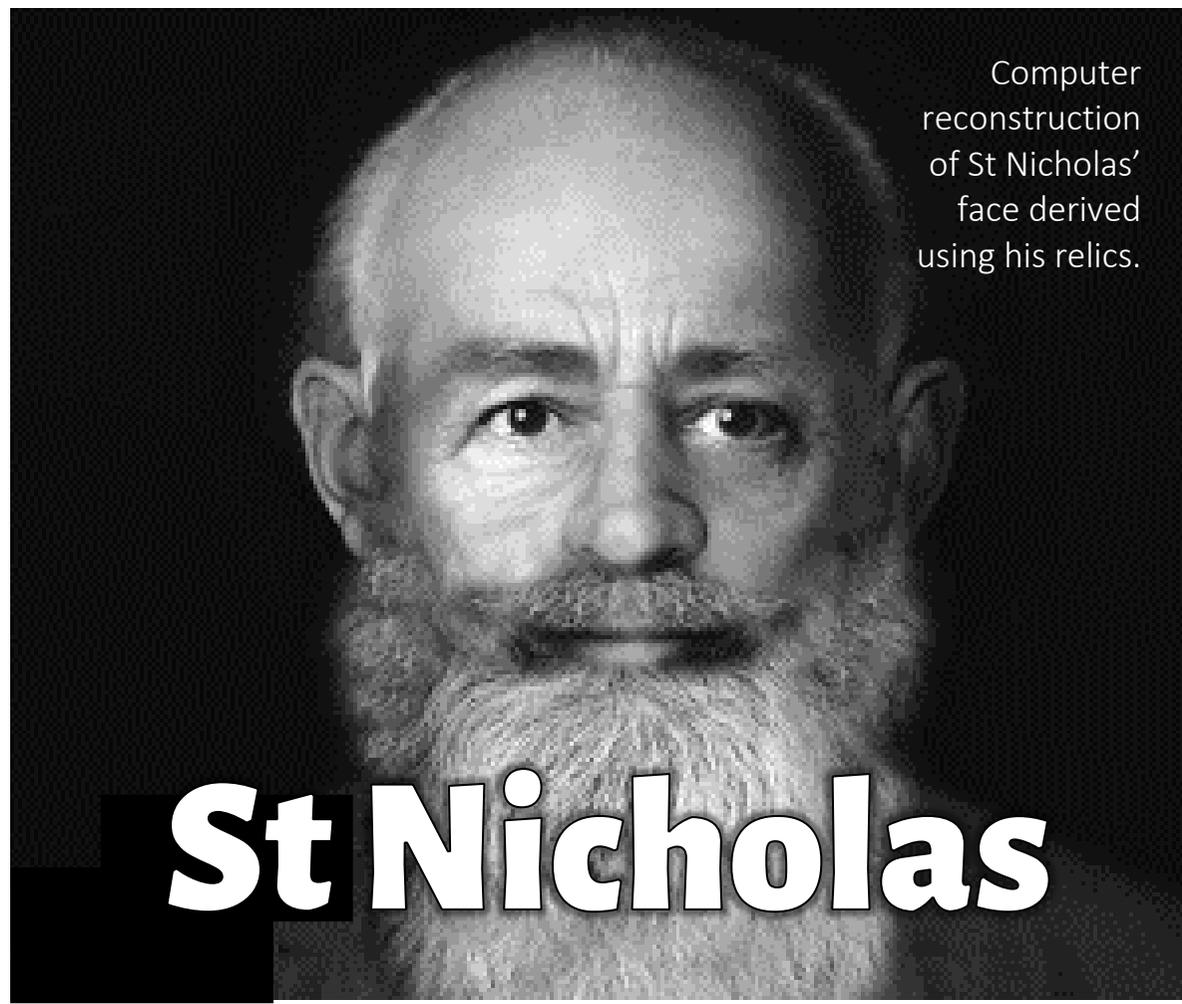
For more information, please visit the following sites:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-30354994>

<https://www.whychristmas.com/customs/fatherchristmas.shtml>

For a good description of the transformation from 'St Nicholas' to 'Father Christmas':

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2018/12/131219-santa-claus-origin-history-christmas-facts-st-nicholas>



Computer reconstruction of St Nicholas' face derived using his relics.

St Nicholas



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Carol Service

Sunday 15 December at 6:00 pm

with the Soul Inspiration Gospel Choir
and the Tame Valley Brass

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Holy
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Midnight Mass

Christmas Eve

Service starts at 11:30 pm

All are welcome

Holy
Trinity
WATERHEAD

Christingle Service

Christmas Eve at 4:00 pm

All are welcome

holytrinitywaterhead.co.uk

**SAINT
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Christmas Day

Celebration and Eucharist

Service starts at 9:30 am: all are welcome

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Curate's Corner

M	I	D	N	I	G	H	T	B	A	T	A
A	A	D	V	E	N	T	N	E	S	F	M
S	S	H	H	C	I	N	E	T	D	F	B
S	S	O	R	C	X	T	V	H	S	S	R
T	G	X	Y	L	O	H	D	L	A	A	O
N	F	H	J	K	B	O	A	E	L	M	S
E	V	E	N	K	I	M	Y	H	O	T	E
C	F	D	H	L	R	A	H	E	H	S	G
O	A	S	O	F	T	S	P	M	C	I	N
N	H	O	J	E	H	N	O	J	I	R	D
N	E	H	P	E	T	S	L	K	N	H	A
I	B	R	E	G	N	A	M	L	U	C	Y

All the following words in the grid relate to events, saints days, holy days in December, and elements of the Christmas story.

Advent, Ambrose, Ass, Bethlehem, Birth, Christmas, Eve, Boxing Day, John, John of the Cross, Lucy, Manger, Midnight Mass, Nicholas, Ox, Stephen, Thomas

I don't know about you, but I always dread the question: 'What do you want for Christmas?' I find that nowadays, I neither want nor need anything in particular, and thinking about gifts for older friends and family, also often leaves me in a quandary.

Various brochures and catalogues popping through my door have given me the impetus to try and find ethical and/or eco-friendly gifts this year.

I can sponsor a donkey, polar bear or tiger, or buy chickens, goats, bicycles, water pumps (and even toilets) in far away places in the names of family and friends.

I can purchase handmade toys, ornaments, clothing, tea cosies, and jewellery to benefit artisans in poorer areas of the world. Then there are Fairtrade items like chocolate, fudge, biscuits, candies, tea and coffee. If I want to contribute to saving the planet in my buying choices, I can source 'green' toiletries, bamboo toothbrushes, re-usable drinking straws, beeswax food wraps, travel cups made of rice husk, bug hotels and seeds for wild flowers that will encourage insects to thrive in the garden.

As well as all this, I can buy charity Christmas cards and eschew the usual glossy Christmas wrapping paper and ribbon in favour of gift bags made from Indian newspaper (£3.95 for ten) or use plain brown paper and twine (and biodegradable sellotape if I can get it).

I suppose what I really 'want' for Christmas is what all people want: peace on earth; justice, freedom and a fairer share for all; a greater respect for our earthly home; and (as a Christian) for more people to realise that on that first Christmas day, God gave us the best gift of all.

The gift, without price, that I can re-commit to offering the Christ child this Christmas is best summed up in Christina Rossetti's famous words,

What can I give Him, poor as I am? ... If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part; ... Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.

Revd Jane



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Church diary

- Sunday 1 9:30 am: Service for **Advent Sunday**.
- Monday 2 2:30 pm: **Prayers** in the vestry.
- Tuesday 3 10:00 am: **Holy Communion** in the Church.
2:00 pm: **Holy Communion** at Moor Haven Nursing Home.
- Weds 4 9:00-10:00 am: **Scripture breakfast**.
- Sunday 8 9:30 am: Service for **the Second Sunday of Advent**.
- Monday 9 2:30 pm: **Prayers** in the vestry.
- Tuesday 10 10:00 am: **Holy Communion** in the Church.
- Weds 11 9:00-10:00 am: **Scripture breakfast**.
- Sunday 15 9:30 am: Service for **the Third Sunday of Advent**.
6:00 pm: **Annual Carol Service** in the Church.
- Monday 16 2:30 pm: **Prayers** in the vestry.
- Tuesday 17 10:00 am: **Holy Communion** in the Church.
- Weds 18 9:00-10:00 am: **Scripture breakfast**.
- Sunday 22 9:30 am: Service for **the Fourth Sunday of Advent**.
- Monday 23 2:30 pm: **Prayers** in the vestry.
- Tuesday 24 10:00 am: **Holy Communion** in the Church.
4:00 pm: **Christingle Service** at Waterhead Church.
11:30 pm: **Midnight Mass** at Waterhead Church.
- Weds 25 9:30 am: Eucharist for **Christmas Day**.
- Sunday 29 9:30 am; Service for **the First Sunday of Christmas**.
- Monday 30 2:30 pm: **Prayers** in the vestry.
- Tuesday 31 10:00 am: **Holy Communion** in the Church.
- January 2020
- Weds 1 **New Year's Day**, so no scheduled activities.
- Sunday 5 9:30 am: Service for **Epiphany**.



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