

A large, leafy tree in a field with the sun shining through its branches. The sun is positioned in the center-left of the frame, creating a bright glow and lens flare. The tree's branches are thick and dark, with dense green foliage. The background shows a line of trees and a clear sky. The foreground is a grassy field.

**SAINT  
Barnabas  
CLARKSFIELD**

**January 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 February magazine by 15 January. You can 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

Mr Peter Haslam (0161) 345 0215

Administrator Miss Sarah Gura (07843) 178 762

Wardens Mr Ian Hulse (0161) 622 1124  
Mr Peter Haslam (0161) 345 0215

Treasurer Ms Gisele Onwumere

Youth-Club leader Rachel Graham (07775) 444 291

Parish Hall bookings The Vicar (0161) 624 7708

Sacristan Mrs Marion Partington

# Letter from the Vicar

Tuesday 1 January signals the start of the New Year, 2019. We will celebrate and make resolutions: we promise to be a new and better person. In fact, the Church year started about a month ago at the start of Advent, and the tax year starts on 6 April. The school year started in September. Again, the new legal year starts with the Hillary term on 11 January.

In a sense every day represents a new start because each day we wake into a new date and put aside the previous day. Every day is an opportunity to reinvent ourselves and right the wrongs of the previous day. If we truly put the previous day behind us, we can strive afresh with new intentions, new methods and ambitions, toward a new self in a new relationship with God. The only thing that does not change is God Himself.

If we live this way, living one day at a time, we will probably grow faster into love and holiness than if we plan days or years ahead. We'll also find it easier to forgive and move on from past hurts.

So, paradoxically, my resolution and promise to myself for the New Year is to start each day with a resolution and promise rather than saving everything for New Year's Day.

Wishing great love, joy and peace in each and every day of 2019:

PAUL

# Church and parish news

## Christmas

A big thank you to everyone who helped over the Christmas season with decorating the Church, catering, playing, tidying ... We are all very grateful.

## Youth Club

With very great sadness, we announce the closure of the Church's youth club. It started in 2010. It's closing because we have failed to attract the grants on which it depends.

## From the registers

**Funerals** Dorothy Bradbury at Oldham Crematorium on Monday 3 December.  
David Setterfield at Oldham Crematorium on Tuesday 4 December.

## Michelle Hacking

Congratulations to Michelle Hacking on receiving her doctorate, at a ceremony in Liverpool on Monday 3 December.



The Magi gaze in deep wonder at what they see:  
heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God  
in man, one whom the whole universe cannot  
contain now enclosed in a tiny body.

Peter Chrysologus

What are you doing, O Magi? Do you  
adore a little Babe, in a wretched  
hovel, wrapped in miserable rags?  
Can this Child be truly God? ...  
Are you become foolish, O Wise Men ...  
Yes, these Wise Men have become  
fools that they may be wise.  
St Bernard of Clairvaux



'Go on! Do that Bishop thing where you move  
diagonally!'

# 2019 dates for your diary

Tuesday 5 March	10:00 am: Service for <b>Ash Wednesday</b> .
Sunday 31 March	9:30 am: Service for <b>Mothering Sunday</b> .
Sunday 14 April	9:30 am: Service for <b>Palm Sunday</b> .
Thursday 18 April	Service for <b>Maundy Thursday</b>
Friday 19 April	9:30 am: Service for <b>Good Friday</b> .
Sunday 21 April	9:30 am: Service for <b>Easter Day</b>
Friday 14 June	7:00 pm: annual <b>Confirmation service</b>
Sunday 9 June	9:30 am: Service for <b>Pentecost</b> and later the <b>Whit Walk</b> .
Sunday 10 November	9:15 am: Service of <b>Remembrance</b> .
Sunday 15 December	6:00 pm: <b>Carol service</b> .
Wednesday 25 December	9:30 service for <b>Christmas Day</b> .

## Bible readings for January

### Sunday 6 January

#### Epiphany

First: Isaiah 60:1-6  
Epistle: Ephesians 3:1-12  
Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

### Sunday 20 January

#### Third Sunday of Epiphany

First: Isaiah 62:1-5  
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11  
Gospel: John 2:1-11

### Sunday 13 January

#### The Baptism of Jesus

First: Isaiah 43:1-7  
Epistle: Acts 8:14-17  
Gospel: Luke 3:15-17,21-22

### Sunday 27 January

#### Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

First: Nehemiah 8:1-3,5-6,8-10  
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a  
Gospel: Luke 4:14-21

These readings come from the Revised Common Lectionary.

## Letter from St Thomas' Church

Happy New Year, everyone! This is the first time I've written for your magazine, but I hope most of you are familiar with me by now. I'm Vicar at St Thomas', Moorside, and also Assistant Curate here at St Barnabas and Holy Trinity.

Paul and I have 'swapped' churches a few times already, and plan to do that again this year. It has always been a real joy for me to be with you on Sunday mornings and during the week. Every church is different and does things slightly differently, and every church has its own character, and those things only add to the richness of our experience in prayer and worship. The Church (with a capital 'C') is meant to be a place of mutual prayer and support, a place where people meet God in word and Sacrament, and in each other too. I have found that to be the case at St Barnabas and Holy Trinity and I hope you've found the same.

As Christians we should feel comfortable in every church we walk into and, of course, especially in those churches with which we have a special connection like the one St Thomas, St Barnabas and Holy Trinity share. It is right to feel a loyalty to our 'own' church, but it is equally right to feel a loyalty to, and to attend events at, other churches. We attend church in order to worship God with our sister and brother Christians, and to be uplifted and supported by God and them. We can do this in each and every church.

We are moving towards a closer working and worshipping relationship in many ways in our churches, and I hope you see that as an opportunity to get to know people and to draw closer to God. God offers us opportunities to learn and pray and enjoy each other's company, but it is up to us to take them.

So, please say 'Hello' the next time you see me and stop for a chat if you have the time. Even more importantly, please pray for me and for everyone at St Thomas, as we pray for you and for Paul. That is the best way to draw together under God; the best way for all churches to flourish.

Revd Denise



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## Curate's Corner

It seems like only a few weeks since I arrived and yet, by the beginning of January, I will have been with you for six months!

Revd Paul's words — that my learning curve would be practically vertical — have certainly rung true. Even after three years of training ('on the job' in Rochdale, and on placements in Collyhurst and Droylesden) leading the first part of services, visits to Moorside care home, assemblies at Littlemoor school, home communions, interactive sermons for the all-age congregation on a Wednesday evening at Waterhead, scripture breakfasts, and the food co-op at St Barnabas (part of ministry here in this corner of Oldham) were all quite new to me. Coupled with these experiences, I also felt a little 'homesick' as I adjusted to new patterns of work and study, and in the first weeks of getting to know you all.

As a non-stipendiary curate, I have had the luxury of time to pace myself, making the most of opportunities for study, prayer and quiet days away, to re-charge my spiritual batteries. I am all too aware, however, that time is a precious gift, not always available so freely to those who minister in parishes full-time. In all this, not only has Jesus has been my constant strength and stay, but also I have had the very good fortune of working with a training incumbent who has guided and supported me on every step of my journey so far. Paul has treated me as a colleague in every sense; I have felt valued, and have appreciated his careful and sensitive direction which has given me much confidence.

For the past three months, in particular, I have been increasingly aware of how happy I am in finding a home with you all, and I reflect that this is because I have felt welcomed and accepted so quickly by my new family. For this you have my heartfelt gratitude.

They say 'Time flies when you're having fun', but that's not exactly true. Time flies when you are engaged, involved, and doing something you love.

As I contemplate the next six months leading up to my 'priesting' service, I give thanks to God that he has brought me to this place.

Revd Jane

### WORDSEARCH

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It might have been just someone else's story,  
Some chosen people get a special king.  
We leave them to their own peculiar glory,  
We don't belong, it doesn't mean a thing.

But when these three arrive they bring us with them,  
Gentiles like us, their wisdom might be ours;  
A steady step that finds an inner rhythm,  
A pilgrim's eye that sees beyond the stars.

They did not know his name but still they sought him,

They came from elsewhere but still they found;  
In temples they found those who sold and bought him,  
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground.

Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice  
To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.

## Epiphany, Malcom Guite

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“I've got you down for flood, frogs, ice, locusts and hail ...  
would you like any flies with that?”  
(with apologies to Exodus 7-12)

The Book of Ruth is named after its central figure, Ruth, who became the great-grandmother of King David and an ancestor of Jesus (Ruth 4:21–22; Matt 1:1,5). It is one of only two Biblical books bearing the name of a woman; the other is Esther.

The author of this literary gem focuses on Ruth's selfless devotion to her mother-in-law Naomi (1:16–17; 2:11–12; 3:10; 4:15) and her future husband Boaz's kindness to them both (chapters 2–4). The book seeks to underscore the importance of faithful love among God's kingdom people.

Ruth is a history book, and is placed between Judges and 1 Samuel because it is set 'in the days when the judges judged'. That time was characterised by moral and religious decay, oppression by foreign powers and national disunity. The book describes a rare time of peace between Israel and Moab.

Before the main story commences, we learn of an Israelite family from Bethlehem — Elimelech and his wife Naomi, and their two sons Mahlon and Chilion. They had emigrated to the nearby country of Moab. Elimelech's sons married Moabite women: Mahlon married Ruth and Chilion married Orpah. Elimelech later died.

Naomi's two sons later died in Moab (1:4), maybe following disease or famine; the book tells us the Moabite harvest had failed.

The book starts with Naomi returning to Bethlehem. She told her daughters-in-law to leave her and return to their respective mothers and re-marry. Orpah reluctantly left; but Ruth was defiant, and said to her mother-in-law Naomi, 'Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me' (1:16–17). That a foreigner from Moab shows this amount of love shows the truth that participation in the kingdom of God is decided, not by blood or birth, but by conformity of life to the will of God.

For more information, please visit

<https://www.biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-ruth>

<http://biblescripture.net/Ruth.html>

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-story-of-the-book-of-ruth>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Ruth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ruth)

Her devotion to her mother-in-law marks her a true daughter of Israel despite being a gentile and a worthy ancestor of David. Further, her place in that ancestry shows that all nations will be represented in the kingdom of David's greater Son.

Ruth and Naomi returned to Bethlehem just as the barley harvest was starting. They were by now totally destitute so, in order to support herself and her mother-in-law, Ruth went to the fields to glean. (Leviticus comes to life here, with its injunction to leave part of the harvest for the needy, and with all of its concern and compassion for the underprivileged within society.) By chance, the first field Ruth visited belonged to a local grandee called Boaz. He was kind to Ruth because he knew of her loyalty to her mother-in-law. Later, Ruth told her mother-in-law Naomi of Boaz's kindness, and the way he let her glean in his field through the remainder of the harvest season.

We then learn that Boaz was a close relative of Naomi's husband and legally obliged to marry Mahlon's widow, Ruth, in order to carry on his bloodline. He agreed to do so.

Boaz and Ruth then married and had a son, who was named Obed. He was 'the father of Jesse, the father of David' (Ruth 4:13–17), that is, the grandfather of King David.

The book of Ruth is a Hebrew short story told with considerable skill. It is unexcelled in its compactness, vividness, warmth, beauty and effectiveness. Most striking is the contrast between the two main characters, Ruth and Boaz: the one is young, foreign, destitute and a widow, while the other is middle-aged, well-to-do and an Israelite securely established in his home community.

### Ruth fact file

**Author** The author is unknown. Some Jewish traditions suggest the prophet Samuel, but that idea is unlikely because the mention of David (Ruth 4:17,22) implies a later date. The Hebrew and literary style used in Ruth suggests it was written during the period of the monarchy.

**Period described** The time of the Judges, so 1320s BC.

**Main theme** How a gentile woman became one of the ancestors of Jesus.

**Key verse** 1:16–17, where Ruth says, 'Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me'

# The Book of Ruth

Mother Teresa was born on 26 August 1910, in Skopje, the current capital of Macedonia. She was baptised the following day as Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu.

She received her first Communion at the age of five and, later, said she felt a love for souls that began that same day.

At the age of eighteen, she joined the Sisters of Loreto, an Irish community of nuns with missions in India. There she received the name Sister Mary Teresa after St. Thérèse of Lisieux. After a few months' training in Dublin she was sent to India, where, on 24 May 1931, she took her initial vows as a nun. Sister Teresa was assigned to the Loreto Entally Community in Calcutta and taught at St Mary's School for girls.

On 10 September 1946, during the train ride from Calcutta to Darjeeling for her annual retreat, Mother Teresa received her 'inspiration', her 'call within a call'. In a way she would never explain, she somehow knew Jesus' desire to love and care for human souls. A desire to satiate His thirst became the driving force of her life. Over the course of the next weeks and months, a series of interior voices and visions further revealed Jesus' desire for 'victims of love' who would 'radiate His love on souls.'

The suffering and poverty that Teresa saw outside the convent walls had made such a deep impression on her that in 1948 she won permission from her superiors to leave the convent school and devote herself to working among the poorest of the poor in the slums of Calcutta. In August 1948, she dressed for the first time in a white, blue-bordered sari. *Sister* Teresa became *Mother* Teresa.

The charter of her new Missionaries of Charity was to love and care for those persons nobody else was prepared to look after. It soon included a hospice; centres for the blind, aged and disabled; and a leper colony.

Mother Teresa began to send her Sisters to other parts of India, then opened a new house in Venezuela, followed by foundations in Rome and Tanzania. Then,

starting in 1980 and throughout the 1990s, Mother Teresa opened houses in most of the former communist countries, including the former Soviet Union, Albania and Cuba. By 1997, Mother Teresa's Sisters numbered nearly 4,000 and comprised 610 foundations in 123 countries. Her co-workers now number over a million.

In 1979 she received the Nobel Peace Prize for her humanitarian work. She received many other prizes, receiving each 'For the glory of God and in the name of the poor'.

In order to respond better to the spiritual needs of the poor, Mother Teresa founded different types of community, starting with the Charity Brothers and contemplative branches of first Sisters, then Brothers.

After many years of deteriorating health, she died on 5 September 1997, aged 87. The Roman Catholic Church beatified her in October 2003 and proclaimed her a saint in September 2016.

The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread.

Mother Teresa

For more information, go to:

<http://www.mohterteresa.org/about.html>

<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1979/teresa/biographical>

[https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Mother\\_Teresa](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Mother_Teresa)

# Mother Teresa



Consider the three wise men in the Christmas story. Or should it be the three 'wise' men?

The only Gospel account to mention these men is Matthew 2:1–12. The Church has since invented vast fictional 'biographies' to flesh out the story, but we know essentially nothing about them. Indeed, we are only guessing when we say there were three of them, which has always been assumed because the men left three gifts, of gold, frankincense and myrrh (Matthew 2:11).

But were they 'wise'? The early Church was unanimous in calling them astrologers and magicians, that is, people who foretold the future by studying the movements of stars and planets. Astrology was always strictly forbidden within Jewish society: all references in Scriptures to astrology assume the practice was completely forbidden. Furthermore — just like today — the success of astrologers in predicting the future was pitiful. Isaiah 47:13–15 ridicules the ability of astrologers to predict the future, and passages in Daniel say the same (Daniel 2:4:7, 5:7). Perhaps the wise men were sometimes unwise.

In fact Matthew's Gospel does not use the word 'wise' at all, but 'Magi' — the meaning of which is now wholly lost. The more understandable word 'wise' was substituted centuries after Matthew wrote his gospel, during severe persecution of the Church by the Roman Emperor Diocletian (who reigned 284 to 305).

Some historians suggest the Church changed the word 'Magi' to 'wise men' as an act of gentle irony. Picture the scene: a blood-thirsty dictator clings to power at all costs. King Herod is known to have killed so many members of his own family that his Roman overlord Caesar Augustus once famously said he would prefer to be a pig in Herod's household than one of Herod's family. And then imagine

someone requesting an audience with the dictator, and saying, 'Please tell me where I can find the person who could topple you as King!' Mt 2:16–18 describes how the Magi's actions led to one of the worst acts of persecution in the Middle East for generations: the killing of all local boys aged under two.

Now scroll forward to the reign of Diocletian, when death was the penalty for being a Christian. When the Christians of that later century heard the story of the Magi in Matthew 2, it must have triggered a wry smile, a laugh of gentle irony, for they knew what it was like living under a foreign dictator. They would understand how misjudged were the Magi's actions.

So, to defuse and make safe the story of the Magi, they gently mocked their naiveté by nicknaming them 'the wise men'.



# The three 'wise' men?

The idea of a covenant between a Christian and God appears frequently in the Bible. John Wesley, who founded the Methodist movement, wrote a 'Covenant Prayer' to be read aloud once a year at a special service. He held his first service on Monday 11 August 1755, at the French church at Spitalfields in London. It was attended by 1800 people.

Wesley attributed it to the English puritan Joseph Alleine (1634–1668), but he wrote it through the lens of his own Churchmanship. We don't know the words of his original Covenant Prayer, but many think its words will have been similar to those Wesley published in his 1780 pamphlet *Directions for Renewing our Covenant with God*.

This idea of a covenant between a Christian and God was basic to John Wesley's understanding of Christian discipleship. He saw the relationship with God in Covenant as being like a marriage between human beings (both as a community and as individuals) on the one side and God in Christ on the other (cf. Ephesians 5:21–33). Later versions incorporated words from the wedding service: Christ is 'my Head and Husband, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, for all times and conditions, to love, honour and obey thee before all others, and this to the death'.

Wesley recognised that people need to grow in their relationship with God. He emphasised repeatedly that God's grace and love prompts and seeks to transform us, and so we should continually seek and pray to grow in holiness and love.

Over a number of years, Wesley gradually saw the need for some regular ceremony which would enable people to open themselves to God more fully. He looked for some means of helping them to hear God's offer and challenge ever more deeply and to allow God to prompt and enable them to respond.

Wesley's first service came from the Puritan tradition of pastoral and spiritual guidance. He therefore insisted that his own Covenant Service be located in a framework of pastoral care, preaching and guidance.

That framework dealt with the corporate needs of a particular society of Christian disciples and, within that, with the needs of all the individuals within that group. It therefore linked personal devotion with corporate worship.

Although Wesley's early covenant services were not held at any particular time of year, in British Methodism the custom soon developed of holding Covenant Services near the beginning of the New Year.

I am no longer my own but yours.

Put me to what you will,

rank me with whom you will;

put me to doing,

put me to suffering;

let me be employed for you,

or laid aside for you,

exalted for you,

or brought low for you;

let me be full,

let me be empty,

let me have all things,

let me have nothing:

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things  
to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

you are mine and I am yours. So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth,

let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

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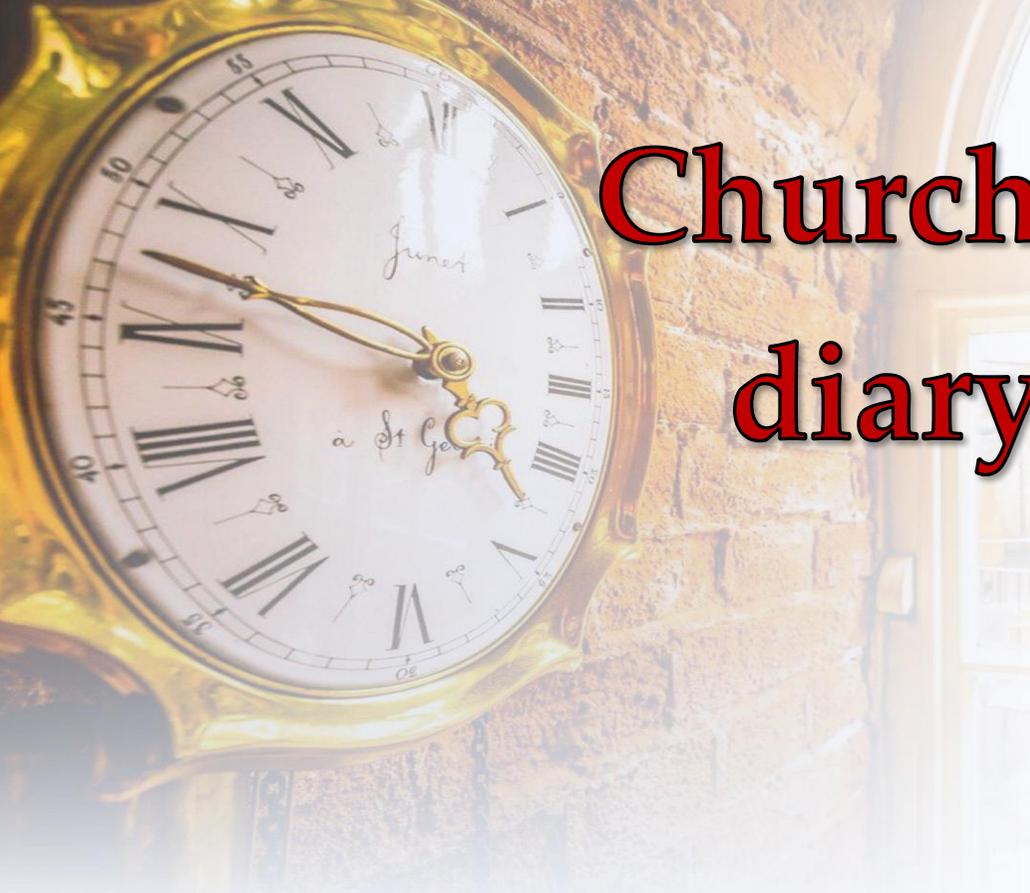
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# Church diary

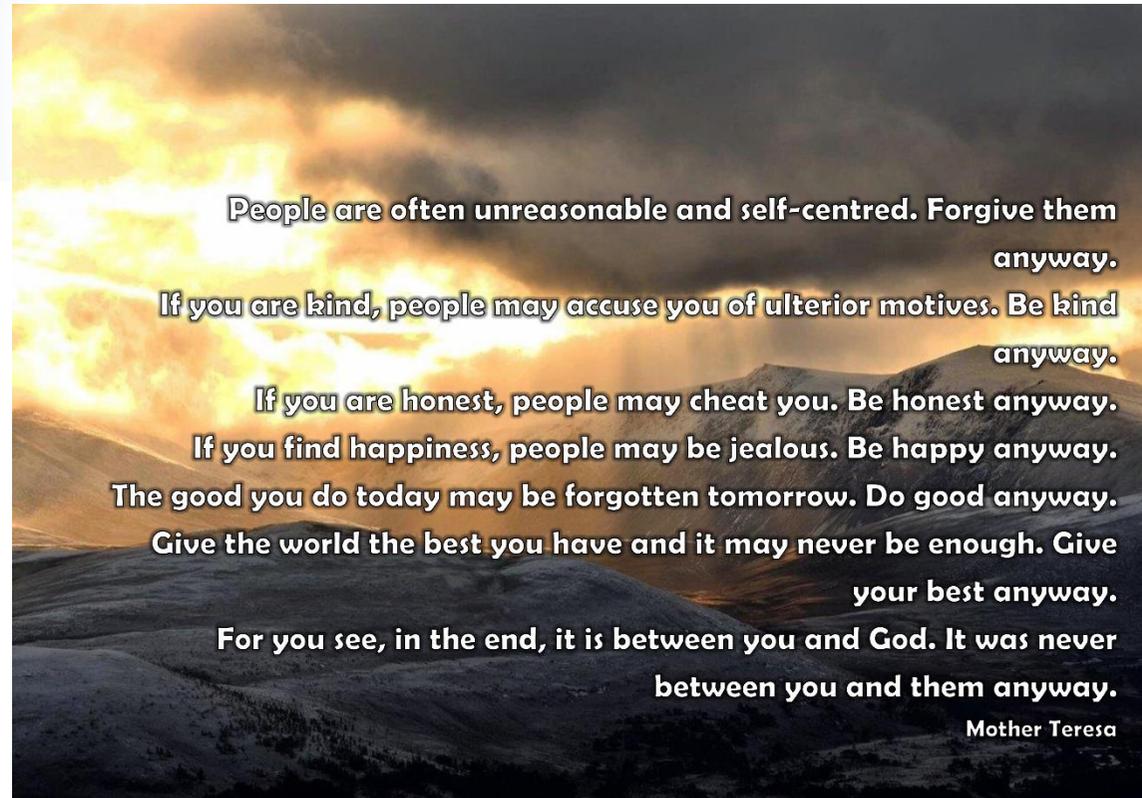
Monday 21 2:30 pm: **No prayers** in the vestry.  
Tuesday 22 10:00 am: **Holy Communion** in Church.  
Weds 23 9:00–10:00 am: **Scripture breakfast**.  
Friday 25 6:00 pm: **Youth Club** in the Hall.  
Sunday 27 9:30 am: Family Eucharist for **the Fourth Sunday of Epiphany**.  
Monday 28 2:30 pm: **Prayers** in the vestry  
Tuesday 29 9:30 am: Eucharist for **Christmas Day**.  
Weds 30 9:00–10:00 am: **Scripture breakfast**.

February 2019

Sunday 3 9:30 am: Family Eucharist for **Candlemas**.

January 2018

Tuesday 1 There will be **NO Holy Communion** today.  
Weds 2 9:00–10:00 am: **Scripture breakfast**.  
Sunday 6 9:15 am: Parish Eucharist for **Epiphany**. The service includes our annual Covenant Prayer.  
Monday 7 2:30 pm: **Prayers** in the vestry.  
Tuesday 8 10:00 am: **Holy Communion** in Church.  
2:00 pm: **Holy Communion** at Moor Haven Nursing Home.  
Weds 9 9:00–10:00 am: **Scripture breakfast**.  
Sunday 13 9:30 am: Parish Eucharist for **the Baptism of Jesus**.  
Monday 14 2:30 pm: **Prayers** in the vestry.  
Tuesday 15 10:00 am: **Holy Communion** in Church.  
Weds 16 9:00–10:00 am: **Scripture breakfast**.  
Sunday 20 9:30 am: Parish Eucharist for **the Third Sunday of Epiphany**.



People are often unreasonable and self-centred. Forgive them  
anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives. Be kind  
anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you. Be honest anyway.

If you find happiness, people may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough. Give  
your best anyway.

For you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never  
between you and them anyway.

Mother Teresa



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