

## **Welcome to the United Benefice of St. Helen, St. Mary and St. John the Baptist**

It's great to gather together as the Body of Christ in this beautiful part of Derbyshire. Though we have differences, we have one Lord, one Faith and one passion for the Gospel. May we spend time this morning praying together and sharing fellowship.

All are welcome to take part fully in our services. If this is a Service of Holy Communion, you are very welcome to receive Holy Communion at the appropriate time. (Gluten free wafers are available. Just ask anyone leading the communion.)

**Our Worship today, 24<sup>th</sup> December, Fourth Sunday of Advent,  
and Services for the next two weeks.**

### **St. Helen's**

<b>24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve</b>	<b>11.00am</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>
	<b>4.00pm</b>	<b>Family Service/Crib Service</b>
	<b>11.30pm</b>	<b>Midnight Communion</b>
<b>25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day</b>	<b>11.00am</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>

### **St. Mary's**

<b>24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve</b>	<b>10.00pm</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>
<b>25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>

### **St. John's**

<b>25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day</b>	<b>9.00am</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>
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### **NB**

**Next Sun. 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. United Benefice Service, St. Mary's 10.00am**

**Tuesday and Thursday morning prayers will recommence week beginning 7<sup>th</sup> January, as will the Home Groups.**

**Prayer:** Fridolin Wieschhues, Robert & Margaret Pearse and family, the Hopper family, the Parnell family, Tony & Marie Thrower, Stan Codd, Dennis Roberts, Dorothy Ash, Stephen Porter, Anne & Susan ChinChen, Lindsey Wilson, Andrew Brown.

Please let Pauline know of anyone you would like to put on the list, and also when someone's name can be removed. For St. Mary's, please pass names to David Gadsby (734922) and for St. John's to Marion Bowler (650261).

**Wedding,** Thurs.28th December

A Christmas Week wedding for Tim and Yvonne. Please keep them in your prayers, as they begin the next stage of their lives.

**Funeral of May Cafferty,** St. Helens, Thurs.,28<sup>th</sup> Dec.1.30pm.

We hold in our prayers the family of May Cafferty, who was 106 years old. As you can imagine, May outlived many of her contemporaries. So if anyone is free, please come and pray for May and her family.

## Looking Ahead...

**Joint Service at St. Mary's, 31<sup>st</sup> Dec.,10am.**

The last United Benefice service of 2017 is next Sunday (New Year's Eve) at St. Mary's. Remember that whenever we have a family or a joint service, it is at **10am**.

**A cancellation**

Please note that **Ecumenical Holy Communion** at Darley Dale Methodist Church, Mon. 8<sup>th</sup> Jan., **has been cancelled**.

Do check in future pew sheets for the new date and try to support. It's so enriching for Christians to pray together.

**Intimate Worship** - Our first meeting of 2018 will be **Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> Jan.** We will then be meeting on the second Sunday of each month on a regular basis.

**Messy Church** – Please note that the date of Messy Church has been changed. It is now **Mon., 29<sup>th</sup> Jan.** For details, see Margaret.

### **Pulse**

This is an evangelical ministry to help young people, children and their families to come to know God. The Pulse Team will be training a few of our congregation to help lead a special day.

The **training session** is arranged for **Mon. 5<sup>th</sup> Feb., 7pm to 9pm.** The **Pulse day itself** will be **Mon. 19<sup>th</sup> Feb., 10am - 3pm.**

### **Young People**

Let's keep our young people and their families in our prayers. Please be open to inviting young people from your neighbourhood to our Family Service on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month, alternating between St. Mary's and St. Helen's. Over Christmas and New Year we pray also for our schools, and for their work in 2018.

### **A Very Big Thank You**

I cannot possibly name everyone who has helped over Advent and Christmas. So many people have been faithful to our services, holding our communities and our world in prayer. Thanks also to everyone who cleans, arranges flowers, welcomes people pastorally to our services or helps with refreshments and music. I also want to thank those who simply and quietly come to pray. Thank you all for your goodness.

### **Churchwardens & Coordinators**

I'm very much aware of the pressure on those who undertake the ministry of churchwarden and coordinators. Please remember in prayer those who serve our parishes so well.

This coming year there is much to do to serve God and His people, but everything we undertake must be rooted in prayer.

### **Some Quotes to help us think**

1. Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is that God so loved the world. The perfect gift is that He gave His only Son. The only requirement is to believe in Him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life.
2. The Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity – hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory – because at the Father's will Jesus became poor, and was born in a stable so that thirty years later He might hang on a cross.
3. Christmas celebrates the awesome and amazing fact that God is grander, wiser and more mysterious than we could have ever imagined.
4. Christmas is not a myth, not a tradition, not a dream. It is a glorious reality.

### **A Thought for Christmas and New Year**

Iron Maiden, the great British Heavy Rock group, sang a song in the 1980s about 'time always being on your mind'. It was a song about the worries, angsts and fears of what we need to fit into time. As we celebrate Christmas and New Year, stress levels are very high. Abuse, divorce proceedings, breakups and even deaths are more prevalent around this time of the

year. As a community of faith, we need to rediscover God's Time in our lives.

Sometimes we experience our time as empty. We hope that tomorrow, next week, next month or next year the real things will happen. But occasionally we experience the *fullness* of time. It is when we feel that time stands still, that the past, the now, and the future are one. It happens when everything is present where we are. It is the moment when God, we, and all that is, come together in total unity. This is when we experience God's time.

'When the completion of the time came' (that is, in the fullness of time), 'God sent his Son, born of a woman' (Galatians 4:4), and in the fullness of time God will 'bring everything together under Christ, as head; everything in the heavens and everything on earth' (Ephesians 1:10). It is in the fullness of time that we meet God. As we celebrate once again His birth into our time, we remember that Jesus the Christ is now with us always. Jesus is in many ways the completion of time. He is the one who walks through time with us, until we finally meet our Father in heaven.

Let us use the skills of Christian mindfulness to help reduce our stress. Let us be aware of Christ walking with us, and live our time to the fullest. To quote the literally character, Father Brown, 'everyone is redeemable'. This means that in the joy of Christmas we can once more spend and enjoy time in the presence of God. After the rush towards Christmas there is often a drop, as things slow down. Let us all use this slowness and stillness to be in Christ. Let us allow the Babe of Bethlehem to bring us a deep sense of joy, love, hope and peace. But most of all, in that stillness, may we be deeply aware of God's love for each one of us.

Please take this pew sheet home for details of what is coming up and also for prayer.