

# ST. JOHN'S CHURCH DONISTHORPE

# GRAPEVINE

DECEMBER 2025



## TOY SERVICE

Sunday December 7th 10.00am



## CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Sunday December 14th 6.00 pm

# Follow The Star



## MIDNIGHT COMMUNION

11.30pm Christmas Eve

CHRISTINGLE at St. Johns

4.00pm Christmas Eve



## DECEMBER SERVICES GROUPS AND EVENTS ACROSS THE WOODFIELD TEAM.

(all starting at 10am unless otherwise stated)

Saturday Dec. 6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>St. John's Prayer Group (at Winnie Meadow's home)</b>
Sunday Dec. 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (MP) Toy Service,</b> Measham & Snarestone (Holy Communion) Normanton (Morning Worship), Packington (Breakfast Church at 10am and Christingle at 4pm), Sweepstone (MP)
Tuesday Dec. 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Coffee &amp; Chat Fellowship Group meeting</b> Memorial Service at Measham at 6pm.
Sunday Dec. 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe Holy Communion at 10am. Carol Service at 6pm,</b> Packington, (Instant Nativity - Toy Service), Measham, (Toy/ Breakfast Church), Appleby (Holy Communion), Norton, (Celebrating Christmas)
Sunday Dec. 21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (MP)</b> Measham, Carol Service Sweepstone, & Normanton (HC), Appleby (Sunday People) Packington (Carols 6pm).
Thursday Dec. 18 <sup>th</sup>	Norton (Celebrating Christmas).
Sunday Dec. 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (MP)</b> Appleby (HC) Measham (Carols Lay Led), Packington (Songs of Praise)
Tuesday Dec 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Christingle Making in Church 10am – 12 mid-day -Volunteers Welcome</b>
Christmas Eve	<b>Donisthorpe, Christingle 4pm &amp; Midnight Communion 11.30pm</b> Measham (Christingle 4pm) Packington (Crib Service 4pm & Midnight Communion 11.30pm) Appleby (Carols 6pm), Sweepstone (Carols 4pm) Norton (Midnight Communion 11.30pm)
Christmas Day	Normanton & Appleby (Family HC at 10am)
Sunday Dec. 29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>United Team Service - Holy Communion at Measham</b>

### MORNING WORSHIP and TOY SERVICE– Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December at 10 am.



Come along to our Toy Service. We'll have a mixture of singing, listening, and prayer. We will be receiving toys (preferably new) to go to the Marlene Reid Centre in Coalville for distribution to children who might not otherwise get Christmas presents.

Can you help? If so, bring them along to the service or leave them in church which is open in the daytime. Please don't wrap the presents as the Marlene Reid needs to see what they are in order to distribute wisely! Wrapping paper is always welcome though.

### CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December at 6 p.m.

Come along and sing the great Christmas carols and to hear again the story of that first Christmas. And there will be refreshments to follow! Who could resist?



## IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE - IT'S CHRISTINGLE TIME!



The ever popular Christingle service will be on Christmas Eve at St John's – 4 p.m. start.

If you've not been before, give it a try, it's a lovely way to start Christmas 'proper'.

The service lasts about 45 minutes and is great fun for all ages.

The Christingle – an orange with a candle, red ribbon and fruit and/or sweets – is a symbol of God's love for each one of us and for our world.

Through Christingle, we hear the message of Jesus' love.

We also remember children in need and our collections at these services go to support the work of the Children's Society.

Christingle making will be at 10am to noon on 23<sup>rd</sup> December in church. Volunteers will be welcomed.

If you can't manage this service at St John's, then there are Christingle services at:

Holy Rood Church Packington at 4 p.m. on 7<sup>th</sup> December; or if St Laurence Church Measham is more convenient for you then it's there too at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

**and then at**

### **11.30pm - IT'S MIDNIGHT COMMUNION.**

Following later is the Traditional Midnight Eucharist Service. A very special time and a favourite; which many love for its special mood and for welcoming the birth of the Christ child at midnight itself.

**There will be no Christmas Day service at St John's.** but you will find Christmas Day worship at 9.30 am at Normanton-le-Heath or 10am at Appleby.



## **TREEFEST – CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL 2025**

Treefest this year will be staged at Moira Centenary Methodist Church DE12 6AJ from Friday 5<sup>th</sup> Dec until Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> 3pm – 7pm each day rounding off with a carol service amongst the trees 6,00pm - 7pm on the Sunday. Light refreshments available and Christmas Fayre with tombola and fun activities on Friday and Saturday. Entry by donation.

## **REFLECTION**

*The following is a sermon preached by Canon Christopher Cox at Evening Prayer at Packington*

*On Epiphany 6<sup>th</sup> January 1985 Text: Isaiah 49: 7 – 13 and John 2: 1 – 11.*

*He outlines lessons that we might learn from The Wisemen as we follow our own star in our search to find Jesus for ourselves. I've taken it from his short book 'Echoes From The Pulpit Sermons in Retirement 1983 - 1993'. It's a bit of a blast from the past but still valuable teaching and still relevant. Also it's a tad early for The Wisemen who don't come around in the church calendar until January time but we will meet them in all the nativity plays, carol services, Christingles that we will attend over the Christmas period. For those of you who might remember Canon Cox it could be quite nostalgic* **Blessings Derek Tomlin.**

## **THE OBJECT OF THE SEARCH**

The spate of Holiday Programmes, Travel Brochures and Ads. On TV has led me to recall past Summer Breaks - including a week on North Yorkshire Moors. There, a 20th century 'blot on the landscape' the Fylingdates Early Warning Station.

Modern Man has spent billions of pounds since the Last War in putting objects into Space. Some to our great gain - telecommunication and weather satellites, linking nation with nation, enabling us to watch events around the world, and giving us more accurate forecasts.

c) At the same time, as this week's Geneva Talks begin, we find ourselves facing the real possibility of a Star-Wars situation. How important it is to keep track of all the things that Man has put up in the HEAVENS. All round the world there are highly trained experts keeping their eye on the sky. 'Watch this Space' has taken on a new meaning.

### **God's Initiative:**

a) 2000 years -even 40 years ago -it was very different Everything 'out there' was recognised as God's.

b) 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His Handiwork' (Ps. 19)

Men Searched the skies for revelations of His activity, watched that Space for signs of His coming.

c) That search was the nightly occupation of the Magi, whose journey to Bethlehem is much in the minds of Christians today.

God had put a new Star into orbit to lead them to the showing forth (Epiphany) of Himself in the child born to Mary.

The first fundamental truth to be learned from the Story is that in our search for Him, GOD always takes the initiative. Before Men, however wise, could start their quest, He acted. 'In the beginning God'. 'In the beginning was the word'.

d) Our search is only possible because He is there to be found. We can only begin to understand because He has given us the power to do so. We can only pursue our search because He has placed the clues that will lead us to the Treasure.

Let us grasp this truth afresh as we continue our journey .

The initiative both in our search and in our Salvation lies with Him.

'We love Him because He first loved us'.

#### **Use God-given Talents:**

a) If God has made the first move, it is for Man to respond That Star was on the Astrologers' horizon. They were now to use their powers of observation and deduction.

b) By using their God-given talents they were able to discover the clue that was to lead them to the Christ.

c) They found God 'in the everyday' (everynight?). Retreats, Quiet Afternoons, special occasions have their place -but it is as we get on with our job throughout the coming months, using all that God has given us, that we may 'see His Star'. He is ahead of us and we shall see proofs of His Presence and signs of His guidance as we go on our way.

#### **Sources of Guidance:**

a) The story of the Magi's Pilgrimage also shows that we must use our ability to enquire from others and learn from their knowledge and experience. The natural place to look for a Prince was Jerusalem.

There they were helped on the road to Bethlehem by the Scriptures and the understanding of them possessed by others.

c) Those Wisemen were humble enough to ask their way. We need the help of others too. I remember meeting a Hospital worker in Leicester who described herself as 'a human signpost' directing people to X-Ray Dept. Out-patients etc. We need such people -to be such people, as we Search, not the Sky but the Scriptures in the coming months.

#### **Conclusion:**

a) As we have thought before this Christmas. The Magi were led to The Unexpected. A lowly place in a little Town. It must have been tempting to think there had been some mistake. Yet they worshipped and presented their gifts.

b) So often Life doesn't turn out in the way we anticipate -this is as true of our spiritual experience as it is of anything else.

Those men had responded to God's Initiative, used their faculties, sought help and advice and been prepared, finally, to recognise God's Son in the Unexpected.

c) There will be many things in 1985 that will surprise us, events we cannot foresee. experiences we do not anticipate.

If we set out from tonight determined to seek and do His Will in our daily lives, we can prove the truth that 'God meets us at every corner' and we can discover more of His Nature and His Purpose. His Mercy and His Love as He reveals Himself to us in the Familiar and the Unexpected.

#### **LUNCH LIGHT FELLOWSHIP GROUP**

##### **PLEASE NOTE:**

Lunch Light fellowship group will be taking a holiday break this month and so they will not be meeting, but they will be back to normal in the New Year.

Look out for dates in next Grapevine