

February 2026

THE DIARY OF ST MARY'S

DROYLSDEN



*A welcoming all-age community growing
and sharing God's love.*

Rector

Reverend Cath Hewison 0161 370 1569

Associate Minister

Reverend Nancy Alexander

Church Wardens

Pat Catterall 0161 370 0039

OFFICIAL

Beth Cutler

0161 964 9106

*Let us therefore approach the
throne of grace with boldness, so
that we may receive mercy and
find grace to help in time of
need. Hebrews 4:16*

February Services 2026



1st February - 10.30am – Holy Communion

Hebrews 2: 14-18 and Luke 2: 22-40

3rd February – 6.00pm – Informal Holy Communion

8th February - 10.30am - Holy Communion

Romans 8: 8-25 and Matthew 6: 25-34

15th February - 10.30am – Holy Communion

2 Peter 1: 16-21 and Matthew 17: 1-9

18th February – 7.00pm – Ash Wednesday Holy Communion

22nd February – 10.30am – Morning Worship

Romans 5: 12-19 and Matthew 4: 1-11

Monday 23rd February – 12noon Fellowship Lunch and Holy Communion

Please join us for Tea and coffee in the Church Room after the service

Looking to God in Lent

The Lord is near to all who call upon him. Psalm 145:18.

We seem to be in such very uncertain times, with new crises on our newsfeed almost every day at times. Perhaps it's especially helpful that we are about to enter the season of lent, when we are particularly encouraged to look to God. The traditional Church practices of prayer,



fasting and almsgiving during Lent help us to direct our attention away from ourselves, towards God. Whether we fast in some way, take up a new time of prayer or give to charity all these can help us to remember that we are not meant to be able to do everything ourselves. But that God is the one who gives us life, and we all (that's all people, everywhere) really do need God's help, wisdom and strength. And only that, but he is ready and

waiting to be all the strength, wisdom and help that we need.

Whether you're feeling unsettled at world events or challenges in your family or personal life, I encourage you to take up one of the practices of prayer, fasting (giving something up), or giving to others, and use it to be intentional about looking towards God. Something simple that is manageable in your life is much better than something huge that is hard to keep up.

With prayers for a holy Lent for us all,

Revd Cath

***The Ash Wednesday Holy Communion across the parishes
in Droylsden will be at St Mary's on 18th February at 7pm***

Mid-Week Holy Communion

An informal mid-week service of Holy Communion is being held on the 1st Tuesday of every month at 6.00pm. **The next service will be on Tuesday 3rd February**



Everyone is very welcome, especially those who find attending services at the weekend difficult. If you know anyone who may be interested in attending, please pass on the information.

Prayer Tree

If you are new to church, our prayer tree is located at the back of the church, next to the Book of Remembrance. There are pens and cards to write your prayers and prayer requests on. Please be assured every card left is prayed over with faith, courage and strength that each one is heard no matter how small.



Tea and Toast Drop In

Tea and Toast Drop In. Every Wednesday morning from 9am during term-time. Everyone is welcome, come along for a chat and a chance to meet someone new.

Fellowship and Holy Communion



The fellowship lunch and Holy Communion Service for February will be at 12noon on Monday 23rd February.

The service in January is on 26th January.

Bible Study Groups

Bible study groups meet in the Emmaus Room twice a month on Tuesday evening or Thursday afternoon to which everyone is welcome.



These are informal groups and the studies usually include a video to watch then questions for discussion followed by a brew and a biscuit or slice of cake.

If anyone is interested in joining one of the groups, or would like more information, please have a chat with Charlotte or Stephanie (Tuesday group) or Christine, Pat or Jim (Thursday group).



Next Meeting – Tuesday 3rd February

Speaker – Cath Hilton, Rochdale Archdeaconry President

Speaking about The Mothers' Union

Everyone is very welcome, this is a great opportunity to find out about the work of the organisation.

Please keep an eye out for things that are coming up to celebrate our 150th anniversary on the new notice display in the church room near the kitchen.



Subs must be paid to Barbara Walton at this meeting £33.00

The Sunday Group

The Sunday morning children's group is now running on two Sunday's a month, the 2nd and 3rd Sundays.

All children of primary school age are welcome to come along. Sessions will be held in the Church Room at the back of church.

Kathryn



Craft Group

The Craft Group is a friendly group, meeting every Monday during the school term time in the Emmaus Room from 1.30pm.

Novice knitters are always welcome so if you'd like to learn or improve a new skill for the new year, please have a chat with Rosemary or Rev Lorraine.

The group support the Mothers' Union by knitting dozens of beanie hats and blankets for the neo-natal unit at Tameside Hospital – thank you ladies.



Lifeshare at Christmas project

Once again St Mary's St Johns Castle Band and personal friends have supported the project, donations of clothing and toiletries were given as well as the funds which enabled me to buy

78 hats

95 pairs of long warm socks

40 pairs of gloves

27 pairs of underpants

108 toilet rolls.

Out of the £302.37 I collected three is almost £50 left and Debbie (a member of one of our prayer groups) and her husband Jim Dunne, who run the Lifeshare volunteers will let me know what their needs are and I will use this money to buy what is needed for the weekly Lifeshare Breakfast project that runs all year round every Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning.

Once again, we made a difference, so thank you all so much, as I write this on New Years Eve the temperature has struggled from minus 2 degrees to plus 2 degrees it's freezing, so all the above items are really

needed.

I wish you all a healthy and peaceful new year

Barbara



Building our Church

As this picture shows, the church is more about building up people, than bricks and mortar, as the Bible says we are being built together as a holy temple in which God lives. However, we are also called to be stewards of the building that has stood as a witness to God's loving presence among us in Droylsden since 1848.

The PCC has two big challenges (and opportunities) with the church building that we are trying to move forwards this year. The first is the problem of water leaking through the roof, making the wall damp behind the eagle in church, and the second is the development of a new kitchen and toilet space to make our church building better suited to serving our church and our community as we share the wonderful good news of Jesus with those around us.

Both of these require the advice and permission of the Diocese and so plans can take a while to filter through. Throughout this year we will be sharing more about how you can be involved in praying and fundraising.

Through gifts, legacies and the proceeds from the sale of St John's Church we have a good start on raising the money needed, but initial estimates suggest we will still need to raise more than £60,000 for the

redevelopment plan. We hope to raise this through fundraising, and hopefully, successful grant applications.

Please do join us in praying for the PCC and the building team, for those making funding applications (and those who read them!), for all the financial support we will need, and for a smooth process with all the advisory and regulatory committees we need to go through.

And, do let us know if you have any good ideas for fundraising!

The film Four Weddings and a funeral or for me Four Funerals (December and January) and a wedding (April)

This is more often the case as we get older. Over Christmas I watched the programme about Chris Hoy. He was talking about his cancer diagnosis and the news it was terminal. He said that we all have a terminal diagnosis from the moment we are born. This made me stop and think. People often start thinking of a wish list when bad news happens but shouldn't we have a daily list and live every day to the full then? We can never live a day again. Only God knows his plans for us and our futures.

Thank God for your life so far and until the day we meet Him live your best life.

Kathryn

Wanted! Unwanted Foreign Coins

If you have any unwanted foreign coins lying about the house I will happily take them to Nat West Bank Ashton, who have a collection box in aid of Willow Wood Hospice.

Barbara



Sunday Club

"Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these" Luke 18:16

Sunday school started in Britain in 1780's as an outreach for poor children who were working 12 hours a day 6 days a week. This meant that they couldn't attend school and consequently not taught to read. Christians wanted the children to learn to read so Sunday schools were created.

I like it when we get sweets

There were safe and fun places to develop relationships with trusted adults, meet other children and hear stories from the Bible. The same is true today but sometimes there are interesting questions about what it means for them.

It's fun

Since September we have met

twice
a
month
(2nd
and

We do lots of
drawing and
colouring

More people would be
good like it was at
Christmas and could play

3rd Sundays) for school age children. We

look at a passage from the Bible and then do activities to make it 'real' to the children. Lots of sticking, colouring, games (when there are enough children) treats and thoughtful insights from the children. It is ideal if children attend both sessions as they do build upon each other, but it is not essential.

Many people attending church today started out with Sunday school and some even met their future spouses!

Sunday club plants seeds of faith which come to fruition in later life.

If you would like to help and be a member of the Sunday Club Team, please speak to Kathryn



Droylsden & District Foodbank 2025

Droylsden & District Foodbank has now been in operation since December 2013.

As a reminder this is What **we do**

We exist so everyone can be free from hunger.

Trussell is an anti-poverty charity and community of food banks. We work together to ensure no one in the UK needs a food bank to survive, while providing food and practical support to people left without enough money to live on.

For Droylsden & District Foodbank 2025 has seen an increase of over 9% in the number of vouchers fulfilled and the number of people fed.

During 2025 we fulfilled 773 vouchers from 420 unique households. The average number of visits from each household was therefore 1.72. From

this average figure we can see that for many families we are the answer to a short-term crisis. There are some households that need longer term support, but this is in exceptional circumstances. There were 327 first time referrals and for these families making the initial step to ask for support will have been a big decision. The referral agency they spoke to will have understood their individual circumstances and offered additional support where appropriate.

The total number of people fed was 1872 which included 741 children.

The main reasons for clients requiring the support of the Foodbank continue to be changes and delays to welfare benefit payments. Other reasons include low income, debt, ill health, homelessness and domestic abuse.

To help clients receive additional appropriate support Droylsden & District Foodbank is working alongside Tameside South and Longdendale Foodbank to offer the services of an advisor from Citizens Advice. Appointments are made with clients when they receive their food for a CAB advisor to ring them and help in the areas of housing, debt, benefits, bereavement etc. This is a voluntary scheme but clients who have used the service have benefited and, in many cases, no longer need to use the foodbank. As the contract period for this service will come to an end during 2026, we are currently working with the other Tameside food banks to seek grants to enable this valuable support to continue for our families.

The permanent collection point in Tesco Droylsden is well supported by shoppers. The annual national collection at the store provides a boost to our stock levels and in 2025 we collected 743kgs of food which is a 25% increase on the 2024 collection.

The local churches continue to support us with donations as do the local schools at harvest time and Christmas. Businesses and individuals also donate food and personal hygiene items during the year. A local company donates toilet rolls on a regular basis.

During the year the foodbank has received a generous grant to purchase food to support our work in the local community.

The stock recorded into the warehouse during 2025 was 9,930 kgs and stock out was 13,492 kgs. As donations do not cover our demand, we purchase additional food items and in 2025 the weight of food purchased was 2,500kgs.

One of our major challenges during 2025 has again been the status of the warehouse where we both store our food and distribute to our clients. The rear of the unit, which is the distribution area, has suffered from a badly leaking flat roof. Tameside MBC worked to fix the problem and we hope to have rectified the problem. This has not been an easy task, but we are grateful to the various Tameside departments for their support.

We are also working with the landlord of our unit to find an alternative site for our warehouse and distribution centre which we hope will remain within Droylsden precinct. This has been an ongoing project for more than 2 years.

After 12 years the Droylsden & District Foodbank continues to be supported by the community and remains an integral part of emergency food provision throughout the area

2025 has been a challenging but rewarding year for all connected to the foodbank. Wider publicity has thrown a spotlight on food poverty and the cost-of-living challenges. Droylsden & District food bank will continue to serve those in need in our community.

A huge thank you goes to our many volunteers who work tirelessly to maintain the weekly service we provide to our clients. Their dedication, support for each other and sense of humour defines our sessions and without them 1872 people, including 741 children would not have been fed.

Alongside Trussell we look to a future where all can afford the essentials and there will no longer be a need for foodbanks in the UK.

Thank you to all at St Mary's who have supported us in any way during the year. Please continue to pray for our work, clients and volunteers.

If anyone would like to visit our sessions or consider being a volunteer or Trustee, please speak to Pat.

If you know anyone who may be in need of support with food, please ask them to ring the 'Help through Hardship' freephone number **0808 208 2138**. **'Help through Hardship'** is a collaboration between Trussell and Citizens Advice to offer food and additional support to those in crisis.



Our vision and mission

For 150 years, Mothers' Union has supported communities worldwide. We want to see a world where everyone prospers; we actively pursue this through prayer and faith in action. Our movement seeks to bring about justice, challenge prejudice, and advocate change.

We aim to show our Christian faith by supporting the sustainable transformation of communities around the corner and around the world. We do this by helping to nurture strong relationships at all levels, promoting peace and reconciliation locally, nationally and globally.

Whatever the need in their communities, no matter how big or small, Mothers' Union members are there to help providing support and love, free of judgment.

A global movement

We are a diverse and inclusive community present in approximately 84 countries around the world, working together for a future where everyone

has the opportunity to thrive. Our members are not all mothers, or even all women – they are female and male, single and married, parents and grandparents, young adults expressing social conscience and older adults volunteering in their local community.

Mothers' Union provides a network through which they can serve Christ in their community, through prayer, financial support, and actively working in programmes and projects that meet local needs.

New Noticeboard

During our 150th Anniversary year we hope to have lots of different and inspiring speakers at our meetings, please keep an eye on the new noticeboard by the kitchen door. Our speaker on 3rd February is Cath Hilton, Rochdale Archdeaconry President so if you'd like to find out more about Mothers' Union, please feel free to come along. Everyone is very welcome. We also hope to join together with St Mary's School on one or two projects as they celebrate their 150th Anniversary too.

Have a word with Pat, Maureen or Christne if you would like to know more.

The Mary Sumner Prayer

All this day, O Lord,

Let me touch as many lives as possible for thee; and every life I touch,

Do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through the words I speak,

the prayer I breathe, or the life I live.

Amen

Mary Sumner: (M.U. Founder 1876)

APCM Reports

Please remember all APCM reports must be with me by March 1st at the latest.

Thank you.

Christine

Give it a Thought

As the saying goes, “a puppy is not just for Christmas,” just as the elderly and people on their own are not “just for Christmas.”

The winter months can be very difficult and people can’t get out and about as easily, so give a thought for the elderly and lonely people on their own. Give them a call, ask them over for a cuppa or perhaps drop them a line, it’s lovely getting something through the post. It means so much to them and also it makes us feel good. It helps with mental health, making each day a bit special.

Live life to the full and let’s spread a little happiness around, give someone a smile when you’re on the bus or tram and in the shop.

God Bless

Ann Holland

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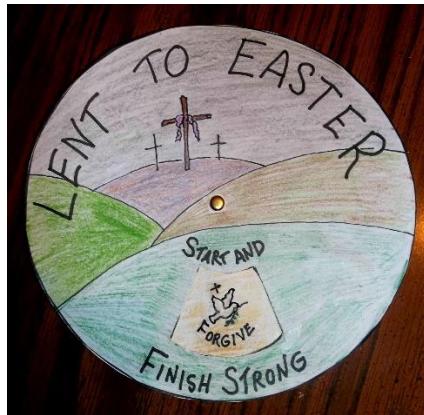


Thursday 19th February

From 11am – 12.30pm

Messy Lent

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**Come along and join in with free crafts, songs
and light refreshments**

**All Primary School children welcome with
their parents / carer**



We work to **transform lives**

Where there is a need – for refuge, a home, for health care, for education, for justice and human rights – we, with our partners, respond, helping those of all faiths and none. We currently work with Christians in Egypt, Iraq, Israel, and Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, supporting health, education and community projects, which bring vital services to those at risk of marginalisation and exclusion.

We work in **partnership**

Partnership is at the centre of Embrace's vision of transformation. We support, enable and partner with the Middle East's Christians as they work to transform lives and restore the dignity of the most excluded and marginalised communities. As the Arab saying goes, 'there is bread and salt between us'. It means we sit at the table as equals, in an alliance of fellowship.

We currently have over 40 courageous, inspired, creative and skilled partners in the region. All are working to transform lives; all are inspired by the Gospel.

Egypt

In Egypt, the 10 partners we support are currently running projects providing:

- Women's empowerment
- Education
- Mother & baby healthcare
- Social inclusion of people living with disabilities

Iraq

In Iraq we currently support three partners. These concentrate on providing:

- Livelihoods support
- Healthcare
- Climate change awareness

Lebanon

We support 9 partners in Lebanon, who primarily run projects providing:

- Education

- Livelihoods support
- Humanitarian assistance
- Specialist disability services
- Women's empowerment

Israel and Palestine

We support 19 partners in Israel and Palestine, who run projects providing:

- Primary healthcare
- Specialist disability services
- Education
- Reconciliation
- Human rights advocacy

Syria

In Syria we currently support two partners. These concentrate on providing:

- Healthcare
- Wellbeing and psychological support

For more information check out the Embrace website
<https://embraceme.org>

Lord God,

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Thank you for the plans you have for our hope and future. We pray for the young Christians in the Middle East who seek skills, direction, and opportunity. Strengthen these future leaders with confidence and resilience, and bless those who teach, support, and invest in them. Remind us too to trust your plans for our own lives, even when the path ahead is unknown.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

St Mary's Church, Droylsden

Coffee Morning

Saturday 7th February

9.30am – 11.00am

OFFICIAL

In the Church Room



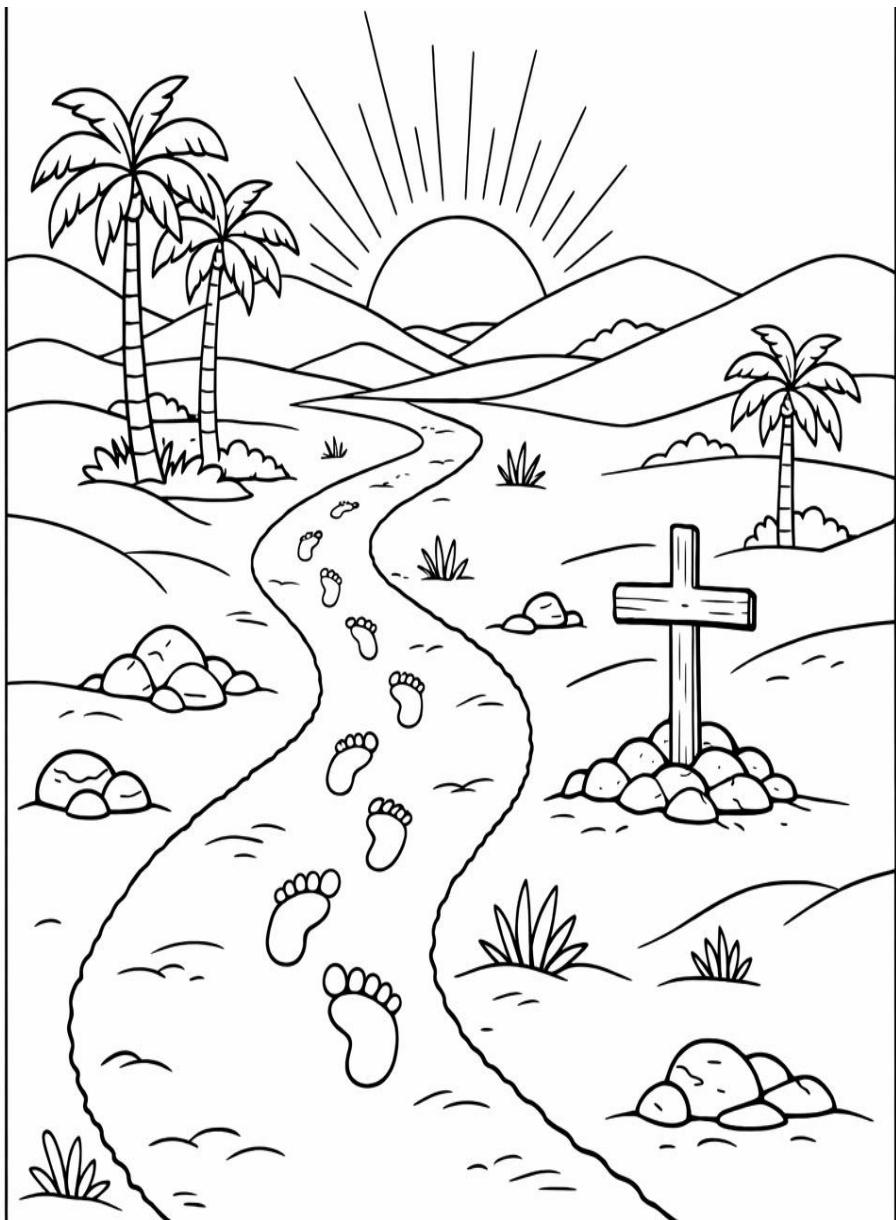
All Welcome

Proceeds to Embrace The Middle East



Jesus Journeyed Through the Desert

Read Matthew 4: 1-11



Deadline for the diary is always the 2nd weekend of the month unless there are school holidays when articles are required as soon as possible please.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this diary, without YOU it wouldn't be possible. If you would like to contribute to future publications, please contact me by email:

christine.withers12@talktalk.net

Telephone 0161 371 8825

Who we are:

St Mary's Church Website is

www.stmarydroylsden.co.uk

Parochial Church Council:

Pat Catterall and Beth Cutler (Wardens), Charlotte Burrows, Joyce Cox, Paul Davies (Secretary), Kathryn Hampson, Ann Holland,

Jim Smith, Barbara Walton.

Deanery Synod Representatives:

Stephanie Rigg, Christine Withers

Sides People

Maureen Allison, Elaine Burrows, Carole Clayton, Joyce Cox, Gaynor Kirby.

Treasurer: Kathryn Hampson, Electoral Roll: Lindsay Artingstall

Church Flowers and Bookstall - Details from Church

Mothers Union - Details from Church

St Mary's Church of England Nursery and Primary School

Head Teacher, Mr C Quinn - 370 3948

250th Manchester Scout Group

Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers - 07973739041

5th Droylsden Brownie Guides - 339 0016

Rainbow Pack - 301 4251

St John's Band - 285 3583