

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS

14th - 21st December 2025

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	Dipton	9.00am	People of the Partnership; Mary McDermott
	Stanley	11.00am	People of the Partnership; The McGough Family
	Dipton	4.15pm	Family of Parishes Carol Service
Monday 15 th December	Dipton	9.30am	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Sacrament of Reconciliation until 9.55am
		10.00am	Bob Fullerton (SVP)
Tuesday 16 th December	Stanley	10.00am	Celebration of the Word and Holy Communion
NO MASS ON WEDNESDAY			
Thursday 18 th December	Stanley	12noon	Requiem Mass for Aileen Smith
Friday 19 th December	Dipton	9.30am	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Sacrament of Reconciliation until 9.55am
	Stanley	10.00am	NBF
		2.30pm	Carols around the Tree with St Joseph's School (in Church)
Saturday 20 th December	Stanley	9.30am	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Sacrament of Reconciliation until 9.55am
		10.00am	Lesley Liddle
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	Dipton	9.00am	People of the Partnership; Maureen Emerson
	Stanley	11.00am	People of the Partnership; Rose Taggart & Francis & Wallace Ormston
	Stanley	3.00pm	Craghead Colliery Band

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Monday	Weekday of Advent
Tuesday	Weekday of Advent
Wednesday	17th December (O Wisdom)
Thursday	18th December (O Adonai)
Friday	19th December (O Root of Jesse)
Saturday	20th December (O Dawn of the East)
M = Memorial	F = Feast
S = Solemnity	

PARISHES CALENDAR THIS WEEK

This Sunday	Christmas Tree Festival (Dipton) Carol Service (Dipton)
Monday	Journey in Faith (Stanley)
Thursday	Elf - Ticket needed (Stanley)
Friday	Carols around the Tree (Stanley)
Saturday	Church Cleaning (Stanley)
Next Sunday	Craghead Colliery Band (Stanley)

Finance - 7th Dec 2025

Offertory Total

Standing Order

Advent Alms

STANLEY

£468.53

£197.25

£86.00

DIPTON

£116.82

£172.85

£57.85

Future Collections: 14th December - Christmas Flowers
24th/25th December - Christmas Offering
28th December - Diocesan Levy

Prayer for the Jubilee Year

Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity
and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.
Amen

Franciscus

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO NEED HEALING IN OUR FAMILY OF PARISHES...

Margaret Convey, Maureen Dixon, Doreen Bailes, Norman King

GETTING YOUR CHILD BAPTISED

If you or a family member is looking to have your child baptised, please collect the leaflet 'Getting your child baptised' from the back of church. This policy of how we access the Sacraments of Initiation is applicable across the Pontop Partnership. Please read the leaflet carefully before returning the attached application *in person* to your parish priest at the end of Mass.

A GENTLE REMINDER...

Please remember to switch off your mobile phone
(or put it on silent) when coming into Church.

We show reverence to Jesus present in the Tabernacle.

Please talk to God before Mass and one another afterwards.

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.
Be our defence against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

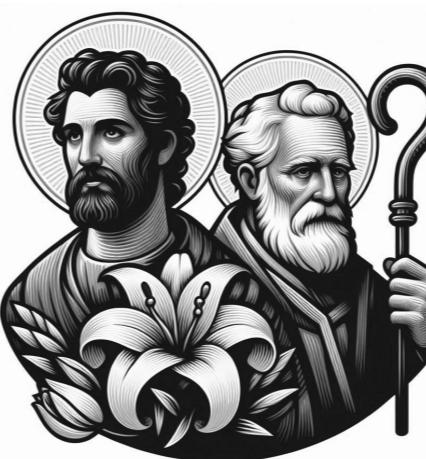
Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
a registered charity 1143450

The Parishes of

SAINT JOSEPH, STANLEY



SAINT PATRICK, DIPTON



St Joseph's Presbytery
Thorneyholme Terrace
Stanley, DH9 0BL

01207 299 012

www.stanleycatholic.org

stjoseph.stanley@diocesehn.org.uk



Father Shaun Purdy

Parish Priest

pp.stjoseph.stanley@diocesehn.org.uk



Reverend Paul Nichol

Parish Deacon

07906 489 152



Melissa Gillespie

Parish Administrator



Office Hours

Tuesday - Friday
9.30am - 3.30pm



Everyone in the Church has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of those who worship in our Church or who join us for any activity facilitated by Church members. If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or adult at risk, information is available on the noticeboards at the back of our Churches.



If you would like to receive this newsletter by email, please contact the office.



LISTEN TO THE WORD

14TH DECEMBER 2025 - GAUDATE SUNDAY

Isaiah 35: 1-6, 10 | Psalm 145 | James 5: 7-10 | Matthew 11: 2-11

Advent is a time for watching. To everything there comes a time; in springtime the crocus and the daffodil tell us that summer is on its way, in autumn the falling leaves and the migrating birds tells us that winter is near. Advent is about watching for the signs of the times; we watch in hope, in anticipation and in joy. Today is Gaudate Sunday. This is the day when we take a break from the long preparation for the coming of the Christ Child and rejoice that He is so near.

When you live in a country which is nearly all desert you watch for the signs of nature. Crops will only grow if the seed is sown at the right time and if rain and sun will follow the sowing and bring forth a harvest. The people of Israel had waited a long time. They had the vision of Isaiah, which we share today, to sustain them through the long dry spell of history when nothing would grow and their nation suffered from powerful enemies. Isaiah's words are full of the joy of dreams being fulfilled; the coming of Christ was that fulfilment, but how would the people know that He is the Messiah?

John the Baptist was imprisoned because he spoke out against the actions of King Herod. During his time in prison, he must have felt depressed and disillusioned. He loved the freedom of the open air, the wide clear skies of the desert places. He must have felt like a bird caught in a cage, deprived of his freedom. In his despair he asks for a sign that the Messiah was indeed walking the land. When he is told that the blind see, the deaf hear and the lame walk again he recognised the words of Isaiah in the work of Jesus, the one he baptised in the Jordan and John is then content to wait in joy for the coming of the Kingdom.

James asks us to be patient; Christ will be along soon, don't despair but be prepared. Patience is a gift that is sorely lacking in our world of today; we want everything and we want it now. We need to find a way to enjoy the waiting; to be good to ourselves and our neighbours just for today is not sufficient. We must find a way to make goodness a way of life.

Prayer is meant to be simple. We do not need to fill our prayers with words. It would be good to begin each day with a simple sentence so that we can walk, in those words, with the Lord all day.

Sunday Lord, Strengthen my hands so I may hold those who need me today.

Monday Lord, Open my eyes so that I may see those who are in need.

Tuesday Lord, Open the door to my heart so that I may share my love with others.

Wednesday Lord, Open my ears so that I may hear the cries of the poor.

Thursday Lord, Help me to pray today

Friday Lord, Give me patience for those who need me to help them today.

Saturday Lord, help me to see the good I have done this week.

Amen.

- David Frank.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)

THE ORDER OF MASS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 4 OF THE HYMN BOOK

First Reading

Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;
it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who have an anxious heart,
'Be strong; fear not!
Behold, your God will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Sion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm *Ps 146(145):6c-7. 8-9a. 9b-10. R Mt 5:3*

Response: Come, Lord, and save us.

It is the LORD who preserves fidelity for ever,
who does justice to those who are oppressed.
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the LORD who sets prisoners free.

The LORD who opens the eyes of the blind,
the LORD who raises up those who are bowed down.
It is the LORD who loves the just,
the LORD who protects the stranger.

The LORD upholds the orphan and the widow,
but thwarts the path of the wicked.
The LORD will reign for ever,
your God, O Sion, from age to age.

Second Reading

James 5:7-10

Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Verse

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;
he has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor.

Gospel

Matthew 11:2-11

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according Matthew
Glory to you, O Lord.

At that time: When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'

And Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.'

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.'

'What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,

"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you."

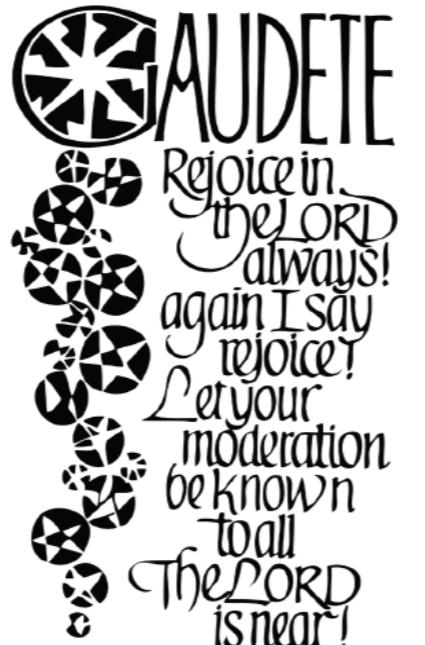
'Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- ☒ Is the message of the First Reading encouraging or threatening?
- ☒ Think of the most annoying person you know. Does God love him or her?
- ☒ What healing can I do to spread the Kingship of God?

Taken from The Sunday Word - Henry Wansbrough, OSB.



PARISH EVENTS - DATES FOR THE DIARY

Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th December 1pm - 4pm - Christmas Tree Festival at St Patrick's in aid of family of parishes funds.

Sunday 14th December - Carol Service at St Patrick's Church at conclusion of Christmas Tree Festival.

Sunday 21st December 3.00pm - Craghead Colliery Band Christmas Concert in St Joseph's. Proceeds to family of parishes funds.

Friday 30th January 2026 - Back by popular demand - an evening with Take This at Dilton Club. More details to follow...

BAMBINELLI SUNDAY

THIS Sunday, Gaudete Sunday, is also known as Bambinelli Sunday. This was started by Pope St John Paul II, in which in encouraged people to bring the Baby Jesus from their crib to be blessed. Next Sunday, please bring your Baby Jesus to be blessed. If you don't have a Baby Jesus, the Piety stalls in our Churches have Nativity related items for sale.

FAMILY OF PARISHES CAROL SERVICE

THIS Sunday we have our Family of Parishes Carol Service at 4.15pm. Please do come and join us for this service at the end of the Christmas Tree Festival

CHRISTMAS CANDLES IN MEMORY OF LOVED ONES

We ask that you return your Christmas Candles in memory of loved ones this weekend. This will help Melissa get all the candles ready before she goes on annual leave for Christmas. Thank you for your cooperation.

CHRISTMAS MASSES 2025

The Christmas Masses are at the following times this year:

Christmas Vigil	4.00pm	St Joseph's
Christmas Vigil	6.30pm	St Patrick's
Christmas Morning	9.30am	St Joseph's

CРАГHEAD COLLIERY BAND CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Tickets are now on sale for the Christmas Concert with Craghead Colliery Band, which takes place on Sunday 21st December at 3.00pm. Tickets are £5.00 (under 11's free) which includes mulled wine and mince pie. Get yours today.

CHILDREN'S FILM NIGHT - ELF

On Thursday 18th December at 6.00pm in St Joseph's meeting room, we will be showing the Christmas Film Elf. This is for children accompanied by an adult. There is no cost and treats will be provided. All you need to do is collect a ticket from the back of Church, spaces are limited.

TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH

St Mary's, Blackhill, are offering a Christmas lunch on Christmas Day in their Church Hall. Doors open at 11.30am, A three course meal is available along with fun and friendship. All they ask for is a donation. For more information or to reserve a place, please contact Kevin on 07986 561 532 or kevin.walls1957@gmail.com

LOVE CHRISTMAS

Recently we launched the 2025 Love Christmas campaign. It is across the whole partnership this year and collection envelopes are available in all our churches. With the help of your generosity we aim to make Christmas a little bit better for those across our community who need a helping hand. Last year we distributed "Love Christmas Dinner" bags, Toiletries gift bags for young people living in temporary accommodation, Gift bags for adults with learning needs and lastly, helped the mothers of the children in our local Women's Refuge with something extra for Christmas. Your generosity helped to make a big difference to a lot of people, please be as generous as you can this year.

CHRISTMAS CRIB OFFERINGS

Our Christmas Crib offerings this year will go to the Friends of the Holy Land. This charity supports the Christian Communities in the Holy Land who are struggling because of the conflict taking place. The collection will open on Christmas Eve and close on Sunday 1st February. A basket will be by the crib.

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

Of your charity, please pray for the repose of the souls of **Bob Fullerton, Maureen Emerson and Aileen Smith (of Doncaster)**. Aileen's Funeral Liturgy will take place on Thursday 18th December at 12noon in St Joseph's Church. Bob's Requiem Mass will take place on Monday 22nd December at 11.00am in St Joseph's Church. Maureen's Requiem Mass will take place on Friday 2nd January at 10am in St Joseph's Church.

CHURCH CLEANING - ST JOSEPH'S

Church cleaning will take place on Saturday 20th December after 10.00am Mass. Please do come along and help clean the Church ready for Christmas. Refreshments will be provided.

CAROLS AROUND THE TREE

On Friday afternoon at 2.30pm, there will be a service of Carols around the Tree with St Joseph's School in Church. Mrs Urwin, the staff and pupils invite you to join them for this special service to mark the end of the term.

APPEAL FOR LOURDES MEDICAL TEAM

2026 The Diocesan Pilgrimage relies on the generosity of nurses, student nurses, Health Care Assistants, and those working in care to help with the Accueil Pilgrims whilst in Lourdes. We would be grateful if parishes would be able to advertise in their newsletters this important aspect of the Pilgrimage. If anyone would like further information, they can contact the Lead Nurse, Michele Hall via email at lourdes@diocesehn.org.uk If the person leaves their contact details, these will be passed on to Michele who will be in touch.

NEURODIVERSITY AND OUR FAITH RESEARCH

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales and Birmingham Newman University are conducting research into Neurodiversity and our Faith. If you are an adult neurodivergent Catholic or a caregiver of a neurodivergent Catholic, they would like to hear from you. Your experiences will help them to become more inclusive and responsive to your needs. To find out more and to complete the short surveys, please visit: www.godwhospeaks.uk/neurodivergent-catholic-surveys/

THE BUGLE

Fr John Bagnall's new comic The Bugle is now available to buy at the back of church (£5).

PROUD CATHOLICS

Proud Catholics is hosting a Christmas Mass on 16th December at 7:30pm at St Andrew's RC Church, 9 Worswick Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 6UW. We invite you to join us!

THANK YOU

St Patrick's December coffee morning raised £119.05 for church funds.

HOLY ISLAND SVP VINYNES CAMPS SUMMER 2026 VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

We would love to have more volunteers help out at our weekly SVP Summer Camps on Lindisfarne. Helping is a really great thing to do and you would need to be prepared to give a week of your time over the Summer holidays, have high levels of energy, patience, a sense of humour, be a team player, flexible and good at communicating with adults and children. If you would like to volunteer or know someone who would be great please look at our website - applications for volunteering in 2026, open in December: <https://svp.org.uk/microsite/ozanam-camp>

PILGRIMAGE TO OUR LADY OF KNOCK

25 - 29 May 2026 with Gillingham Coaches. 5 days/4 nights (Belfast, Bundoran, Knock and Belfast). £640pp sharing double room; £790 single occupancy. Full day at Shrine with Mass, guided tour and prayer opportunities. 2 half day visits included: Belfast Titanic Museum and Cong 'Quiet Man' village, Mayo. Optional evening Mass at Clonard Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. Contact Michael: 07787 726 306; Lestrine: 07778 656 662.