

22nd Dec 2024 - 5th Jan 2025



It is really easy isn't it, to look around us at the situation, circumstances and conditions of the world and go with the flow? At this time of year especially we can all get so caught up in the busyness of what needs to get done, we often forget the importance of what God might be saying...which I have often found to be a bit different to the way of the world!

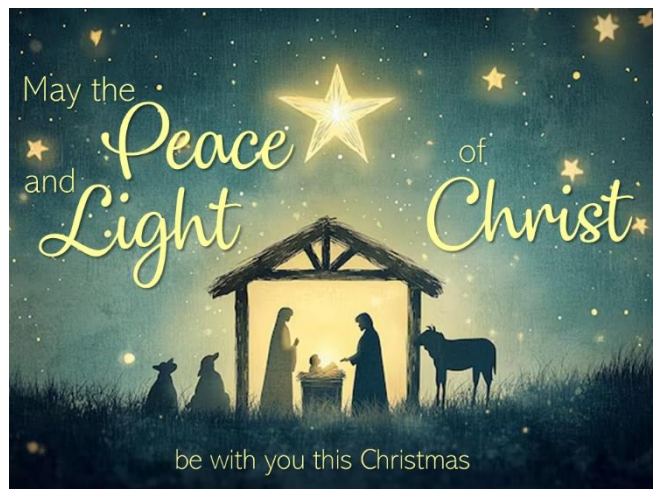
As we consider 'Do not be afraid', what is the message in Joseph's encounter with the angel?

Mary was clearly a God-fearing young lady (around 14 was plenty old enough to be married in those days) and Joseph would have been aware of that. When we remember that any marriage was a contract between the men of the family and that, as they were both from the same town, Joseph would have known who she was, perhaps it was because of this, as well as his being a man of honour, that he made the decision to 'divorce her quietly'.

The small-town gossip in Nazareth was likely full of speculation and accusation. The Law of Moses said Mary should be taken to the city gates and stoned to death. Joseph was a man of conviction. He was honour bound to obey the law of Moses. What was he supposed to do now?

There were many around who would have been more than happy for a public execution of this young woman who had become pregnant outside of marriage – and if Joseph denied it was his child, then Mary was fair game for this to happen. Remember the woman taken in adultery? (see John 8) The world at that time was far from kind to women....

Perhaps the fear of 'man' was at the heart of Joseph's decision 'to divorce her quietly'... 'what will others think? Who is the father anyway? What will happen if I marry her anyway and ignore the rumours'. Trying to work out what to do I am sure set his mind going round in circles... At this point '...an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."



Once he woke up ... no doubts are recorded, no 'did that really happen?' just a simple: '..he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.'

Lord, may I hear your voice in the midst of all things this Christmas and let it be to me according to your word.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFSW9VRmHTc>

Maggie

Please pray for...



Iris Thomas, John Panter, Andy Morton (Debra Deeley's son-in-law) Catherine Smith would like to thank everyone for their continued prayers for Colin. .

Please let the Church Office know if you would like your name to be added or removed from this list.

Thank You

Thank you SO much for all your donations to the Women's Refuge in Stoke. The gifts will make such a big difference to the women and their children by letting them know they are thought of and cared about. Blessings to you all. Carol Corney

AV Desk

As Mike Rushworth steps down from operating the sound and visuals desks and from managing the AV desk rota, we now need more volunteers to help on the desk. Full training will be given. Please contact Elaine Cook for more information or, better still, to volunteer.

Messy Church

There is no Messy Church in January. Our next session will be on Tuesday 4th February 3.30pm. We are still looking for one or two more to join our Messy Church catering team. Please talk to Catherine McBride or David Lake if you can help.



Services are in St Mary's Church unless otherwise indicated

Christmas Services

Sunday 22nd December

9.00am BCP Holy Communion

No 10.30am service

7.00pm St Mary's Carol Service in church

Christmas Eve

5.00pm Christingle

11.15pm Midnight Communion

Christmas Day

No 9.00 service

10.00am Christmas Communion

Sunday 29th December

No 9.00am service

10.30am CW Holy Communion Songs of Praise

Readings: Psalm 148 1-6 Colossians 3. 12-17

Service

Sunday 5th January

9.00am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am CW Holy Communion

Readings: Isaiah 60. 1-6 Matthew 2. 1-12

The 10.30 service will also be on Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85337124930?pwd=NFdMTzRMR2JXbXRoSctVRS9PSkZXdz09>

Meeting ID: 853 3712 4930 Password: 867888

No Zoom Morning Prayer on Christmas Day or New Year's Day

Thursday 10.00am BCP Holy Communion

No service on Boxing Day. Next service 2nd January.

Songs of Praise

On **Sunday 29th December**, our 10.30am service will be a service of

Songs of Praise. Please let us know your requests of carols, hymns or songs by email to Catherine by **Monday 23rd December**.

Good News Stories

We'd love to share some stories of what God has been doing in our lives. If you have an encouraging story you'd be willing to share on a Sunday morning, please let Catherine know.

SWAP SHOP

Saturday 8th February from 10.30 am in the Parish Rooms. Donations will be gratefully received, as well as helpers please.



Foodbank Items Needed

Stock Items urgently required.

Cartons of Long-Life Fruit Juice; Biscuits; Small Jars of Coffee; Sponge Pudding / Slab Cakes.

We have plenty of—Cereals; Pasta; Rice; Tea; Baked Beans.

If you need to contact the Foodbank, please call **01630 654007** (not the one in the church directory). The trolley at the back of church is now in use and donations are gratefully received.

Churches Together Special Meeting

There will be a special meeting of Market Drayton Churches Together on **Tuesday 14th January at 7.00pm in St Mary's Church**. There will be some important discussions about the future of our Churches Together group and also about the future of Christians Against Poverty in Market Drayton. Please do make every effort to attend.

Prayer Link

Requests for prayer can be made to our dedicated 'Prayer Link' team. Please contact Elaine Mason 07846715620 nickjgmason@gmail.com or Carol Corney 01630 653137 or 07932 642246 candjcorney@gmail.com - or speak to them in person. If you love to pray for others, why not think about joining the team

Christmas Holidays & Office Hours

The office will be closed from December 20th and will open again on 30th December when Elaine returns from leave. Helen will return to the office on Monday 6th January. Catherine is available until the 29th December and then on holiday until the 6th January.

Staying in Touch

Please either leave a message or send an email and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Church Administrator: Helen Hughes

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Website: www.stmarysmarketdrayton.org.uk

Facebook: @StMarysMarketDrayton

Parish Rooms FB: @TheParishRoomsMD

Operations Manager: Elaine Cook

E-mail: opsmanagerofstmarys@gmail.com

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If you do not wish to continue to receive these newsletters, please let us know.