

*St Thomas's Osbaldwick and St James's Murton*  
*Churches with a heart - at the heart of our communities*

*An Inclusive Church — All are Welcome*

## Pew Sheet for Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2024

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December— 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**

10am Holy Communion at St Thomas's

*Readings: Micah 5: 2—5a. Luke 1: 39—55*



**Please note that we will not be producing the Pew Sheet next Sunday.**

**Diocesan Prayer diary—This week join in prayer with the church throughout our diocese for:**

**Church of England:** Diocese of Durham, Vacancy in See, Bishop Sarah Clark.

**Scottish Episcopal Church:** Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness, Bishop Mark Strange (Primus).

**Church of Norway:** Diocese of Oslo, Bishop Kari Veiteberg.

**South Africa Diocesan Link:** Archdeacons of St John's Wynberg; Diocese of Cape Town.

Find reflections and daily prayers:

[dioceseofyork.org.uk/diocesan-prayer-diary](http://dioceseofyork.org.uk/diocesan-prayer-diary).

**Prayers and Prayer Pointers**

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December** - You might simply like to use the mantra 'O Come, O Come, Immanuel' as you go about your day, today. Notice that God is present, always, and closer than you maybe often realise.

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December** - Today is a precious day, a final day of waiting, of preparing, of anticipation. - It's often a day that gets lost to busyness and stress though, so our simple encouragement for today is to find a moment, even just a 3-minute-long moment, where you can be still. - Sit, put your feet up, close your eyes, and listen to what it is you think God might be saying to you today.

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Day!** - Christ is here! The incarnation is happening, all around us, and today is the day we celebrate that story. - It is not always an easy day for people, littered as it is with memories and absences, and perhaps with current stress and darkness. - How will the presence of the Christ change and transform you this Christmas day? Can you bring a moment of Immanuel-light into someone else's day?

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> December** - On this second day of Christmas, 'Boxing Day', many countries have traditions of giving gifts to those in need – it may be that the name of the day comes from the 'alms box' that would stand in churches for gifts to the poor (though this etymology is contested). - Today, there are many people living in poverty in our world, and it is likely there will be some in your local community or at least the nearest town. What support networks are in place for them, and are there things you could do to help? - As you pray into issues around poverty and injustice, you might like to look up the work of local charities responding to issues around debt, homelessness, poverty and other issues you are aware of in your local area. Pray for them too, and the work they are doing to respond.

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December** - Living God, on the third day of Christmas, I pray for all who feel isolated in the communities and towns around me. I pray for those in my own family or networks who may be feeling the effects of loneliness during this winter season. God of love, show me how to be an answer to my own prayer – how to pick up the phone, or make a visit, In Jesus, name, Amen.

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> December** - When you have chance today, head outside and look at the sky (ideally not when it's pouring with rain!). Take note of the clouds, of the speed they are moving, of the light the sun is casting, perhaps you can see the moon or some stars if it is after sunset. - Under the vastness of the open sky, reflect on how far away the clouds are, and how much further the sun and the stars are... - As you look at the huge expanse of the horizon, think about how much bigger our Creator is, how the God we worship knows each one of us and yet is also holding the whole universe together. - You may wish to give thanks for the amazing universe you get to be a part of.

## **Collect and Readings for 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**

### **Collect and Prayer for the week**

God our redeemer,  
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of your Son:  
grant that, as she looked for his coming as  
our saviour,  
so we may be ready to greet him  
when he comes again as our judge;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*All readings are from Bible Gateway - NRSV .*

### **Mic 5: 2 – 5a**

“But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.”  
Therefore he shall give them up until the  
time  
when she who is in labour has brought  
forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.  
And he shall stand and feed his flock in the  
strength of the Lord,  
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his  
God.  
And they shall live secure, for now he shall  
be great to the ends of the earth;  
and he shall be the one of peace.

For the word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

### **Luke 1: 39—55**

Mary set out and went with haste to a  
Judean town in the hill country, where she  
entered the house of Zechariah and greeted  
Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s  
greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And  
Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and  
exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you  
among women, and blessed is the fruit of  
your womb. And why has this happened to  
me, that the mother of my Lord comes to  
me? For as soon as I heard the sound of

your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for  
joy. And blessed is she who believed that there  
would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by  
the Lord.”

And Mary said,  
“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of  
his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me  
blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of  
their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their  
thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our  
ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

This is the Gospel of Christ  
**Praise to Christ our Lord**

### **Post Communion Prayer**

Heavenly Father,  
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of the promised saviour:  
fill us your servants with your grace,  
that in all things we may embrace your holy will  
and with her rejoice in your salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Sunday Reflection**

Every week, the Diocese of York offers a new re-  
flection and prayer resource on video, for personal  
use. This week the Rt Revd Dr Flora Winfield,  
Bishop of Selby, reflects on Luke 1: 39—55 for the  
Fourth Sunday of Advent. Find the video at:  
[vimeo.com/dioceseforyork](https://vimeo.com/dioceseforyork).