



January 2026

**The monthly magazine of the Emmanuel Benefice,
Berry Brow Methodist Church, and Netherton Methodist Church.**

Feel free to take home





Making paper plate decorations at the Craft Workshop



Making Christingles at the Craft Workshop

January 2026 Church Services

Sundays:

4 th January (Epiphany)	10.00 am	Holy Communion at Armitage Bridge Church
	10.00 am	Covenant Service (Rev. Tim Francis) at Netherton Methodist Church with Berry Brow Methodist Church
11 th January (Baptism of Christ)	10.00 am	Holy Communion at Armitage Bridge Church
	10.00 am	Morning Service (Mrs Kate Colenutt) at Netherton Methodist Church
	10.30 am	Morning Service (Rev Philip Barnett) at Berry Brow Methodist Church
18 th January	10.00 am	Lay-led service at Armitage Bridge Church (Week of prayer for Christian Unity)
	10.00 am	Morning Service (Mr Paul Bussey) at Netherton Methodist Church
	10.30 am	Morning Service (Rev Fran Nunn) at Berry Brow Methodist Church
25 th January (Conversion of St. Paul)	10.00 am	Holy Communion at Armitage Bridge Church
	10.00 am	Morning Service (Rev Richard Oldroyd) at Netherton Methodist Church
	10.30 am	Morning Service (David Brook) at Berry Brow Methodist Church

* Please keep an eye on the Netherton MC Facebook page if the weather is snowy or icy – we'll update on there if we have to cancel services or events. <https://facebook.com/NethertonHuddersfield>

Every Wednesday at St Paul's, Armitage Bridge.

9.15 am - Morning Worship, 30 minutes of worship and prayer.
All welcome.

Every Thursday - Christian Meditation, 5.30 pm, at various people's homes until clocks go forward next Spring. Please contact Rev. Debby for details, Tel: 07762236986 - all welcome.

January 2026 Readings

Sunday 4th January	– Isaiah 60:1-6 & Matthew 2:1-12
Sunday 11 th January	– Isaiah 42:1-9 & Matthew 3:13-end
Sunday 18 th January	– Readings to be confirmed
Sunday 25 th January	– Acts 9:1-22 & Matthew 19:16-end

CONTACTS

Web page: www.theemmanuelteam.org.uk

Ministers

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Assistant Clergy:	Revd David Kent	01484 324049
	Revd Canon Debby Plummer	07762236986
	Revd Canon Angela Dick	01484 982057
Methodist Minister:	Revd Tim Francis tim.francis@methodist.org.uk	01484 703955 07443 338697

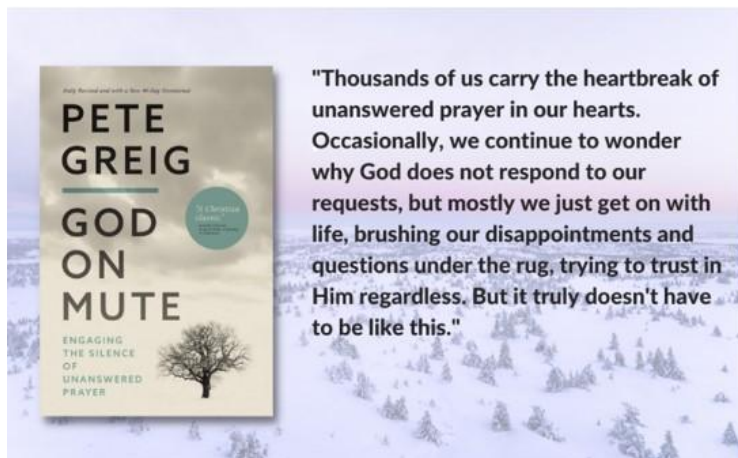
Churchwardens

Armitage Bridge:	Pamela Thomas	01484 359270
	Tony Crawshaw	01484 284479

Safeguarding Officers

Armitage Bridge:	Pamela Thomas	01484 359270
Berry Brow:	Carol Waters	cmwaters53@gmail.com
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A VIEW FROM THE CLERGY – Rev. Frances Nunn



unanswered
prayer
the prayer course II

Save the Date – 2026 Lent Course begins in February.

Fran will be running the 24/7 Prayer Course II throughout Lent, described as 'An opportunity to process life's most painful questions.' Over 5 weeks we will explore the topic of unanswered prayer, between 6-7pm at St Paul's Armitage Bridge on the following dates:

Wednesday 25th February: God on Mute: Engaging with the silence.

Wednesday 4th March - Maundy Thursday – How?

Wednesday 11th March - Good Friday – Why?

Wednesday 18th March – Holy Saturday – Where?

Wednesday 25th March – Easter Sunday – When?

The companion book for this course is Pete Greig's 'God on Mute,' should you wish to go deeper.



Junior Church is now on the 1st Sunday of the Month – this month 4th January.

Save the Date! Saturday 7th February 2026 4-5.30pm @ St Paul's - Junior Church Big Birthday Party! All welcome as we share our one big birthday celebration for everyone. For more details speak to Melody and Sam – our junior church leaders.



Midweek Life Groups: Highlighted on the feedback board last Autumn was a desire to see midweek discipleship groups reintroduced. Our hope is to launch these after Easter. A Life Group is one that meets regularly for fellowship, prayer and exploring the Bible together, usually hosted in someone's home. If you are interested in hosting or helping facilitate a group between April and July, please speak to Fran.



While for us in the west it may seem the Christmas season is well and truly over, for other Christians around the world – especially in the eastern orthodox tradition - Christmas is only just beginning, celebrated alongside Epiphany!

We too remember the Magi's visit to Jesus. These curious, wise men from the east – observing the movement of the stars, pondering what the shifts and changes in the world around them might mean – compelled to travel from their own land and culture in search of a new king in Judea. Their search causes a stir, not least in the palace of Herod!

When they find Jesus – in all his humility and poverty – they recognise him as the one they have been searching for – however unexpected it might be. The Epiphany, the manifestation of Emmanuel **God with us**, is revealed - echoed in Isaiah's message: *'Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. 'Lift up your eyes and look about you: all assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to*

you, to you the riches of the nations will come. Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord.’ (Is60:1-6)

I wonder what impact their pilgrimage to find Jesus had on the Magi as they returned home. I wonder what impact this past Advent and Christmas season has had on us – do we sense the call afresh to Arise, shine for our light has come as we proclaim the praise of the Lord? As we begin this New Year and move on in our own journey of faith, may we hold onto our own Epiphany of Emmanuel - God with us.

Have a blessed 2026!

Fran.

Letters from Paul the Apostle

We now have two more responses to David’s challenge to write as if St. Paul were talking to Armitage Bridgeans today – so here are the 3rd and 4th letters

‘To all God’s people in Armitage Bridge, Newsome and South Crosland, including the Church leaders and helpers.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give us grace and peace.

I thank God daily for each of you who, like me, has been chosen to be a servant of God.

I must remind you that you have all been blessed with many gifts and talents; use them to the glory of our Father, spreading the news of God’s kingdom and caring for those less fortunate than yourselves.

I exhort you to make time in your busy lives to listen to what God is saying to you; do not turn a deaf ear.

Try to live your lives treating others as you wish to be treated, and as you wish God to treat you.

Mindfully appreciate beauty in the people and places you encounter each day. Use the Earth's resources with care and consideration for all other people. Encourage others to do the same.

Most of all, my brothers and sisters, I urge you to love one another.

Finally, may the Lord be with your Spirit and may God's grace be with you all.'

Helen Hales

...and the fourth letter:

'I pray for you and ask that you believe in the Lord and have faith. Remember God is wise and strong. He gives everyone here a skill from the spirit. Use it wisely to work together and in agreement. Remember all people are equal and valued so behave in a Godly manner and show forgiveness.

Think of, and remember the honest, the just, the pure, the lovely, the good and the virtuous. Speak of these to set an example to yourselves and others, as a fight against the wickedness in the world and to provide strength. Speak of peace and be shielded by faith.

The Grace of the Lord be with you all.'

Anonymous

DIARY DATES FOR THE NEW YEAR

Warm Welcome at Berry Brow Methodist Church

Weekly on **Tuesdays** from 12.30 pm onwards – recommencing on 6th January, with quizzes and fellowship.

Crafty Chatterers at Berry Brow Methodist Church

This group recommences on 6th January and **fortnightly** thereafter, from 9.30 am – 12.30 pm

'The Bread and Butter Thing'

Every week from 11.45 am, at Berry Brow Methodist Church - volunteers are always welcome.

South Crosland Coffee Mornings

On the second Saturday of each month at **South Crosland Junior School, Moor Lane, Netherton**, funds are raised for a selected charity each month.

The December monthly community coffee morning held at South Crosland Junior School, raised an excellent £264.00 for the homeless charity Crisis. It was a lovely festive morning and the generous donations of cakes and homemade Christmas gifts were gratefully received.

Many thanks to all who supported and contributed to the event. All are welcome at future events held at South Crosland Junior School.

All are welcome at future events:

10th January – School funds (to help with the coffee morning running costs)

14th February – Prostate Cancer UK

14th March – British Heart Foundation

Netherton Methodist Church Coffee Morning

Everyone is welcome to join us for our coffee morning on **Saturday 31st January, 10 am -12 noon**. Bacon sandwiches and friendly conversation – bring your friends and family to enjoy a cuppa and a chat.

Pop-up Shop dates for 2026

The 2026 pop-up shop dates are booked and will be held at Newsome Scout Hut on the following Saturdays, 10am-1pm:

28th February

30th May

22nd August

7th November (Christmas Extravaganza)

EVENT REPORTS

Christmas Craft Workshop

Saturday 6 December saw another extremely successful event at St Paul's Church.

23 children and their families joined in with a variety of well-planned, hands-on, creative activities, which included making:

- Table decorations
- Christingles
- Tree decorations – plates
- Christmas Angels
- Christmas baubles
- Christmas cards
- Cake decorating
- Felt scene/play dough/jigsaw

Those who attended were supported by a team of 24 adult helpers who led each activity, provided refreshments, and welcomed our visitors. The proceedings were accompanied by a range of festive music provided by Alan on the piano.

At the end of the morning, Fran led a short worship session which involved singing the Christingle Song.

Many thanks to all who helped prepare and lead the different activities, and to Melody Hirst who planned the whole event with her usual flair.

Andy Pugh

Christingle Service

The annual Christingle service took place at Armitage Bridge on 7th December, with a gratifyingly full church. The service was led by Rena and the talk by Janice. There was enthusiastic participation especially from the younger members of the congregation. We even had help with the prayers from James, Gabe and Thea! Add to that the music group and it was a really uplifting service. When all the Christingles had been distributed, the congregation spread around the walls of the church, lit the Christingle candles and, as is traditional, sang 'Away in a Manger', with the lights down. It felt truly magical. Many thanks are due, of course, to those who helped make the service work so well, with special mention perhaps for the children from South Crosland School, who came down to church on the previous Friday to 'load up' the oranges with the goodies, candles and ribbons. There are a couple of photos from the service towards the back of the magazine.

Carol Service – 17th December

Church was full once again for the traditional Carol Service at St. Paul's, in spite of miserable weather. The regular carols and readings were superbly supplemented by the choir, whipped into shape by Debbie, whose songs were performed, with the able assistance of Robin Bowles on piano. After the service, we enjoyed Gillian's secret recipe mulled wine with the ubiquitous mince pies and other goodies – a real treat! Thanks to all for their contributions in making the event such a warm and friendly occasion.

Warm Christmas Cheer at the Warm Welcome

A great time was had by all at the last Warm Welcome of the Year. Every seat was full and everyone was obviously ready for a good time, with Christmas jumpers aplenty in view. We were once more graced with donations of a variety of hot food and cake and crackers

served by our devoted and efficient volunteers!! When everyone had had their fill, and adorned with paper hats, we were joyfully led in an abundance of Carols by the ever effusive Debby. The joy didn't end there! We were then treated to a sophisticated game of pass (or take) the parcel. It was so lovely to hear the laughter and see the smiles on the faces of everyone. (Although there were some who didn't want to give away their prize.)

This is a great opportunity to mention our regular helpers: Pam, Astrid, Angela, Alison, Christine, Catherine, those who have helped with quizzes and our regular chefs, Rosalie, Gillian, Astrid, Ian, Pam, Tony, Cath, Debby, our brothers and sisters at Hall Bower and those who I have omitted because of my aging memory! A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO YOU ALL. Everything is much appreciated. Also a big thank you to those who attend. It would not be so much fun without you. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the team.



Armitage Bridge Ringers – News From The Belfry

Our peal output has slowed down over recent years. Our last 2 successful attempts being March 2022 and November 2017. Covid was to blame for most of the gap, plus a couple of attempts were lost for various reasons. It was then, with a sense of relief we

managed to get back on track this November and completed our peal.

The attempt was arranged by Alison McCormack who rings at St. John The Baptist, Penistone. The band also included Simon Kemp from Guiseley and 16 year old Dylan Smith of Doncaster Minster. All the participants are from Yorkshire, however this peal was to be rung for "The Society Of Royal Cumberland Youths".

Lorraine, Simon, Alison and I have been elected members for a number of years with Sally and Dylan joining fairly recently. The SRCY is a non-territorial ringing organisation that has its roots in London. A prominent 18th century London ringing Society, known as the "London Scholars ", rang the bells at Shoreditch church as William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland and 2nd son of George II, passed by on his return from the Battle Of Culloden in April 1746. Victory was hailed everywhere with "Cumberland" being shouted out, therefore the "London Scholars" changed their name (Royal was added in the 1870's), holding their first meeting in the Guildhall Library on September 6th, 1747.

The Society attracted many of the great ringers of the time, at this time all men, with records of significant achievements of the time being housed in many London churches. These men were strong characters who not only pushed back the early frontiers of ringing but managed to fall out with each other on a regular basis. As we know from previous accounts in "Focus", money, beer and reputations being major factors in these arguments.

The society flourished and in the middle of the 19th century a team of handbell ringers toured America for 12 months in what was described as "The Greatest Show On Earth". We are not sure that would be quite true but they did ring the first peal in the USA at Christ Church, Philadelphia. In 1896 the first female member was elected and welcomed into the society, Mrs George Williams. At this time women were still barred from ringing organisations which were all typically male only. Mrs Williams did go on to become the first lady to ring a peal. The SRCY took a bit of a dip in the 20th century as most of the powerhouse ringers were going on to a better place.

Both WWI and WW2 took its toll on the number of available ringers. Slowly but surely a recovery has been occurring over the decades with the society having 3 principal towers – St. Martin-In-The-Fields, (HQ) Shoreditch and Christ Church, Spitalfields. However “The Cumberlands” are not the only active ringing Society of this type. There is a strong healthy rivalry between “The Cumberlands” and “The Other Society” (Oliver is a member), founded in 1637. The bellringing landscape has dramatically changed over the last 100 years. Ringing societies are organised over larger geographical areas and ringers move around much more. These organisations fulfil critical roles in the exercise providing opportunities for ringers all over the world to challenge and improve themselves. One could accuse such societies as being elitist, but it is worth bearing in mind that most members ring regularly at their own churches for Sunday Service and are often in positions of responsibility in their own areas offering expertise and leadership.

Here is how our recent peal appeared in the Ringing World:-

Society of Royal Cumberland Youths

On Sunday, 16 November 2025 in 2h 38mins

Armitage Bridge, West Yorkshire, St Paul

Tenor: 9–2–20 in G

5040 Surprise Minor (7m)

720 each; Durham, York, Beverley, Surfleet, Bourne, Ipswich, Cambridge

1 Alison McCormack

2 C Sally Austin

3 Lorraine M Trebble

4 Simon Kemp

5 Alan M Trebble

6 Dylan M Smith ©

First peal of Minor, most methods in a peal, and as conductor, also first as conductor for the Society – 6

Birthday compliments to Alison McCormack.

Rung for the Society's Peal Weekend.

Lorraine and Alan

Charity Donations Update

- Milk Bottle Tops – the current total raised, by the collection of plastic milk bottle tops, for Yorkshire Cancer Research is £14,045. Helen and Ian ask that we pass on our thanks for supporting Gabe and Thea in this and quite importantly, request that only milk bottle tops are included in the collection.
- Sweet tub recycling – many will recall the recycling campaign through the Greene King pub chain, which turns clean empty confectionary tubs into new products, with proceeds going to Macmillan Cancer. In 2025 they collected and recycled over 240,000 tubs raising £10,916 for the Macmillan Cancer Support. We ourselves submitted 68 tubs (that's a lot of chocolate!) and we already have about the same amount in our garage now. In 2026 the collection dates are 1st January to 15th of February, so please keep and bring your tubs (full if you wish) to St. Pauls and we will pass them on.

Alan and Lorraine

Poetry Corner

Over the last few months there have been regular poems submitted for publication. This month as a special treat, there are two very different examples. The first, 'Magnificat in the Gutter' was found by Ian Hales and is a very different take on Mary's hymn of praise.

Magnificat in the Gutter

Found a Bible in the foodbank queue, someone left it wedged in the radiator.

Fell open to Mary's song—The 'Magnificat', they call it.

Sounds posh.

But it hit different.

Like prophetic fire packaged in a lullaby.

*She's a girl—young, pregnant, shamed,
unseen by priests, invisible to Caesar.*

*And still she sings.
Not soft. Not safe. But fierce,
like she's seen through the lies of empire and lived to tell the tale.
'He has scattered the proud.'
Good. Because the proud don't see me.
Not the bank manager. Not those who hoard wealth.
Not the judge who fills out the form and moves on.
'He brings down the mighty from their thrones.'
I've seen thrones—not gold ones, but high-rises full of profit
built on broken backs, courtrooms where the suits smile while we get
time, boardrooms where they hoard.
Mary's not playing. She's preaching.
Like Hannah before her, like the midwives in Egypt,
like that woman in Revelation screaming against the Beast.
And here I am, in a cold flat with mould on the ceiling, shaking
through another night, and I wonder— 'Is she singing for me?'
Because if God lifts the lowly, I qualify.
If God feeds the hungry, my belly's ready.
If God remembers mercy, I've got a list of things. I can't forget.
They sing this song in cathedrals—robed choirs, golden processions.
But I think she sang it in a whisper, mud on her sandals,
blood in her veins, a heartbeat like revolution.
If that's true, then maybe this old book ain't a fairy tale after all.
Maybe it's a manifesto from the margins.
Maybe God's already here—
in the cracks, in the cold,
in the cry of a girl who dared to hope
in the shadow of empire.
And maybe
so can I.*

Rev'd Jon Swales, 2025

The second poem is offered by David Kent and in it's own way, also thought-provoking.

The Oyster

There once was an oyster, whose story I tell;
Who found that some sand had got into his shell;
It was only a grain, but it gave him great pain;
For oysters have feelings, although they are plain.

Now, did he berate the harsh workings of fate,
That had brought him to such a deplorable state?
'No,' he said to himself, 'since I cannot remove it,
I'll lie in my shell and think how to improve it.'

The years rolled around as the years always do,
And he came to his ultimate destinyStew.
Now the small grain of sand that had bothered him so,
Was a beautiful pearl all richly aglow.

This tale has a moral, for isn't it grand,
What an oyster can do with a morsel of sand?
Think what we could do, if we'd only begun,
With some of the things that get under our skin!!!

And how about a verse or two to think about in the New Year?

Isaiah 43: 18-19

'Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?'

2 Corinthians 5:17

'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.'



Christingle Service



Christingle Service

And finally...from the editor – my grateful thanks to all contributors to Focus over the last year or so. Without you, there is no magazine, so please keep articles coming and I'll do my best to include them. Apart from that, all that remains is to wish you all a Happy New Year.

Closing date for February 2026 issue: Tues. 20th January 2026

Copy contact details to Graeme Williams at

williamsgraeme400@gmail.com or Tel: 07805875379

This magazine may be read on-line in full colour. If you would like a copy, please let Graeme have your email address to be included

Stop Press Notice: Bishop Smitha warmly extends an open invitation to the Annual Epiphany Celebration service, at 2.30pm on Saturday 24th January at Huddersfield Parish Church. 'This is for anyone in the area to come and honour the work of our angels without wings - otherwise known as volunteers -who enable mission and ministry in a myriad different ways in the Huddersfield Episcopal Area.'