

# The Benefice of Harton

# The Circular



Spring 2026  
February March April

*News and views in our benefice and communities*

Sand Hutton   Claxton   Flaxton  
Gate Helmsley   Upper Helmsley   Bossall  
Buttercrambe   Howsham   Harton  
Whitwell-on-the-Hill   Crambe   Foston  
Barton-le-Willows   Thornton-le-Clay

The colour cover of this edition of The Circular  
is sponsored by Vanessa and Dot Mills.  
The beautiful photograph was taken by Vanessa

## From Rev Nigel.....



It seems to me that the world is a rather darker place presently than it was just a fairly short time ago. I don't mean just in terms of short days and long nights, although that in itself can be quite depressing, and for some, even debilitating. But international politics is passing through a risky phase, with numerous conflicts on-going, and international brinkmanship on a scale not seen since the days of the Cold War.

Unless we isolate ourselves from the TV, media and the internet, we cannot avoid knowing about the troubles of the world, and it is all rather worrying. I am left wondering why all this is happening when the world is facing a climate crisis that is accelerating beyond scientific expectation. Why are political leaders acting as they are when what is most needed is joint and swift action on reversing climate change?

Maybe I worry too much. At the time of writing this article I am a day past a birthday, and I have lived long enough to see how things can and do change, in our lives and in the world around us, sometimes for the worse and sometimes for the better. We certainly must accept that nothing in this world stays the same.

As we move away from the darkness and cold of winter into the growing light and warmth of a new Spring, perhaps we should let our inner light, our optimism grow with it. There are passages in the Bible which teach us about the inevitability of change, but also the constancy of our loving God.



*"Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal,"*

2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

I think it is also worth remembering that for every piece of bad news we receive, and the media loves bad news, there are quite possibly many more good things happening in the world and closer to home in our own communities.

Here in your own local community the ten churches of the Harton Benefice are being active beyond just providing church services. Our Youth and Families worker, Rachael Tearney, is running a number of new events: a drama group at Sand Hutton Village Hall, a monthly drop in, Club Capernaum, on the third Wednesday of each month, 6.00-7.30pm at St Mary's Sand Hutton and a Zoom Book Club. Email: [HYPDrama@yahoo.com](mailto:HYPDrama@yahoo.com) for info and Zoom invite. Also, look out for the Boots & Brunch family walks. Further information about these and other events within the benefice can be found in the forthcoming events section.

There will also be a number of All Age Worship services designed to include families and younger people/children. These will happen variously across all our churches throughout the year.

Please do look at our benefice website for up to date information about all this and other things that are going on across the benefice.  
[www.sandhuttongroup.org.uk](http://www.sandhuttongroup.org.uk)

All our churches are open during most days of the year. If, as the weather gets kinder, you find yourself wanting to get out of the house but don't want to travel far, why not have a wander in the areas around our churches? Some of the churchyards are worthy of a wander around, and our church buildings are beautiful, historical, interesting, and wonderful places of peace and quiet. Even if you are not a regular church goer, these places are open for you. If you do fancy coming to a service, and I know for some that can be quite daunting, you will be made most welcome. We gather to worship but also enjoy wonderful fellowship, and coffee and delicious cakes!

***God bless you.***

***Nigel***



# Services for the Benefice of Harton

Some services may be subject to change. Please check the website and WhatsApp group or ask a member of the clergy. Contact details are on the back of The Circular

**A Zoom service will be held on the first Sunday of every month at 9.00 am. If you would like to join this service, please let Ian Lyall know and he will send you the link: [ian.lyall2@gmail.com](mailto:ian.lyall2@gmail.com)**

## February 2026

### ***Sunday February 1<sup>st</sup>***

9.00	Zoom Service	
10.00	Holy Communion	Howsham

### ***Wednesday February 4<sup>th</sup>***

10.00	Holy Communion	Flaxton
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### ***Sunday February 8<sup>th</sup>***

10.00	Holy Communion	Whitwell
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### ***Wednesday February 11<sup>th</sup>***

10.00	Holy Communion	Howsham
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### ***Sunday February 15<sup>th</sup>***

10.00	Holy Communion	Gate Helmsley
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### ***Wednesday February 18<sup>th</sup>***

***Ash Wednesday***

7.00	Holy Communion	Flaxton
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### ***Sunday February 22<sup>nd</sup>***

10.00	Holy Communion	Foston
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**Wednesday February 25<sup>th</sup>**

10.00	Holy Communion	Sand Hutton
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**March 2026**

**Sunday March 1<sup>st</sup>**

9.00	Zoom Service	
10.00	Holy Communion	Crambe

**Wednesday March 4<sup>th</sup>**

10.00	Holy Communion	Crambe
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**Sunday March 8<sup>th</sup>**

10.00	Holy Communion	Sand Hutton
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**Wednesday March 11<sup>th</sup>**

10.00	Holy Communion	Flaxton
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**Sunday March 15<sup>th</sup>**



**Mothering Sunday**

10.00	Holy Communion	Flaxton
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**Wednesday March 18<sup>th</sup>**

10.00	Holy Communion	Howsham
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**Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup>**

10.00	Holy Communion	Bossall
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## **Wednesday March 25<sup>th</sup>**

***Sunday March 29<sup>th</sup>***

## *Palm Sunday*

*Don't forget the clocks have gone forward one hour!*

## 10.00 All Age Worship Upper Helmsley

April 2026

**Thursday April 2<sup>nd</sup>**

## **Maundy Thursday**

**Friday April 3<sup>rd</sup>**



## *Good Friday*

## 2.00 An Hour before the Cross Sand Hutton

**Sunday April 5<sup>th</sup>**



## *Easter Sunday*

## 10.00 Holy Communion Gate Helmsley

**Wednesday April 8<sup>th</sup>**

## 10.00 Holy Communion Sand Hutton

***Sunday April 12<sup>th</sup>***

## 10.00 Holy Communion Howsham

**Wednesday April 15<sup>th</sup>**

***Sunday April 19<sup>th</sup>***

***Wednesday April 22<sup>nd</sup>***

10.00	Holy Communion	Flaxton
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***Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup>***

10.00	All Age Worship	Buttercrambe
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***Wednesday April 29<sup>th</sup>***

10.00	Holy Communion	Howsham
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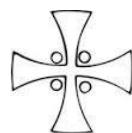
***May 2026***

***Sunday May 3<sup>rd</sup>***

9.00	Zoom Service	
10.00	Holy Communion	Flaxton

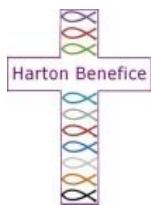
***Wednesday May 6<sup>th</sup>***

10.00	Holy Communion	Sand Hutton
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***Our condolences to the family and friends of***

29 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	Tim Richardson	Flaxton
5 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	Tony Sawyer	Flaxton
7 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	Brian Gillie	Flaxton
10 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	Diane Margaret Wilbourne	Flaxton
6 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	Barbara Tagg	Sand Hutton



## ***Benefice PCC.....***

The Benefice PCC last met on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025. This meeting was reported in the winter edition of the Circular. The next meeting will be on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, and this will be reported in the summer 2026 edition.

***Delyth Harran***

***Lay Chairman***

## ***FORTHCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE BENEFICE.....***



***Now showing regular films on our 150 inch cinema screen in HD or UHD***

***No tickets to buy, any donations to improve the cinema and village hall are gratefully received.***

***Bring your own drinks, snacks and soft drinks available at much less than regular cinema prices!***

***Visit our website by searching for Barton Le Willows Village Hall or scan the barcode***

***Or contact Graham Tel: 07812 151 234  
to get on the email mailing list for up to date listings***





# Cake and Company

We are a group meeting in  
Claxton and Sand Hutton Village Hall

You can join the sessions for as much or as little time as you like. There are things to do but what we do best is just chatting, having coffee or tea and sampling the cakes!

We welcome those who wish to just drop in for the odd half hour after a dog walk, to those just passing by. Children are welcomed if accompanied by an adult.

**Come and join us, it is what it says, cake and company!**

## Forthcoming dates

Tuesday Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm  
Tuesday Mar 3<sup>rd</sup> 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm  
Tuesday Apr 7<sup>th</sup> 2.00 pm- 4.00 pm

Thursday Feb 19<sup>th</sup> 10.00 am-12.00 noon  
Thursday Mar 19<sup>th</sup> 10.00 am-12.00 noon  
Thursday Mar 16<sup>th</sup> 10.00 am-12.00 noon

## CLUB CAPERNAUM



**3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month (Jan 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 18<sup>th</sup> March 18<sup>th</sup>)**

6pm-7.30pm – St Mary's Church, Sand Hutton

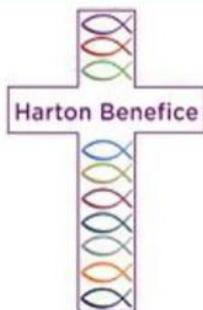
When Jesus was on earth, he spent much time with his disciples at Simon Peter's house in Capernaum. It was a home and a haven for them as they listened to Jesus and learned the lessons they would need to carry out their ministry after Jesus ascended to his Father God in Heaven.

**Club Capernaum is a monthly drop in for adults.**

Come and have a coffee, a tea, a chat, ask questions and find out about the philosophy of Jesus Christ which revolutionized the world.

It doesn't matter if you know nothing of the Bible and the Gospels, if you had faith once, if you've never been to church, if you just want to know more or if you're returning after many years away from the church; we would love to see you.

**Email: [hypdrama@yahoo.com](mailto:hypdrama@yahoo.com)**



# Join our Zoom Book Club!

**Books for:**

**January:**

**Chasing Francis**  
**by Ian Morgan Cron**

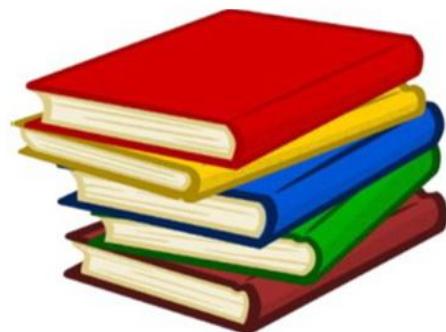
**February:**

**Miracle at Higher Grounds Café**  
**By Max Lucado**

**March:**

**Mere Christianity**  
**by C.S. Lewis**

**For more information contact Rachael**  
**Email: hypdrama@yahoo.com**



**Valentine's Dance**  
**Saturday February 14th 2026**

**From 7.30 pm**

**At Foston and Thornton Le Clay Village Hall**

**Come and enjoy an evening of live music**  
**Dancing optional**

**By York's top duo**

**The Primal Suspects**

**Performing rock and pop classics**

**Ticket includes a light buffet supper**  
**Pay bar and raffle**

**Advance tickets £10 from**  
**Helen Tel: 07900 935 247 or Sue Tel: 07889 524 526**  
**Or Monday morning coffee at the Village Hall**  
**Or on the door £12**





# Lent Lunches

12.30 – 2PM

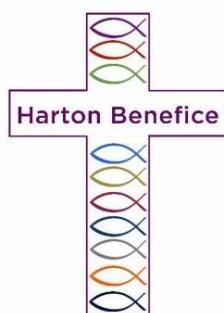
*Join us for a simple lunch  
of soup, bread and cheese*

Thu 26 Feb – Orchard House, Gate Helmsley

Tue 10 Mar – The Pavilion, Howsham

Mon 23 Mar – Aldby Park, Buttercrambe

Free – no booking needed



Donations in aid of Ryedale Special Families  
<https://www.ryedalespecialfamilies.org.uk/>



## Spring Drama

with The Harton Youth Players HYP



## HARTON BENEFICE DRAMA CLUB

Sand Hutton Village Hall, Mondays 4.30-5.30pm. 6-11yrs

We will explore the wonderful stories of the Bible and other Christian tales  
Parents welcome to stay and relax in the waiting room with a cuppa.

*For details please email [hypdrama@yahoo.com](mailto:hypdrama@yahoo.com)*

# BOOTS & BRUNCH



JOIN US FOR A WALK, TALK and FAMILY FUN

**SATURDAY 28<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**Meet starting point, St John's Church, Howsham 9.30am  
HARTON BENEFICE**

**Buttercrambe, Crambe, Gate Helmsley, Upper Helmsley Foston, Flaxton, Whitwell,  
Sand Hutton, Howsham, Thornton le Clay, Claxton, Barton le Willows, Harton**

We'll be walking around the Benefice, taking the footpaths and Bridleways wherever possible. Come along, phones in pockets, hear the Thought for the Day, walk and talk, share Brunch with us as we explore our surroundings.

There will also be a **TALE on the TRAIL!**

Friendly dogs, dogs must be kept on leads. Circular walks approx. 1hr

**EMAIL: [hypdrama@yahoo.com](mailto:hypdrama@yahoo.com)**

***News, views and information from around the parishes.....***

## ***YOUTH AND FAMILIES WORKER***

***Rachael Tearney***



The Spring term holds many great events and exciting developments but first a little about the Autumn and Christmas term and all the wonderful things we shared across the Harton Benefice as Christmas approached.

We had an absolutely amazing time at the Narnia Party as we wrapped up Drama Club for 2025 in November. Children enjoyed the Narnia Feast with Hot Chocolate, Faun's Favourite Iced Buns and Turkish Delight as well as the scavenger hunt, quiz and dancing.

The schools performed wonderful Nativities and Christmas Concerts in December. Children worked very hard and staff brought them all together to

help the children showcase their skills. We had narration, acting, singing and live musical performances. It was lovely to see so many parents and families at these events.



Our Crib Service on December 24<sup>th</sup> was genuinely standing room only, with congregation seated in the choir stalls and I myself perched on the last fold up chair in the building. A huge thank you to all those who helped with this beautiful service.

Children from both Sand Hutton and Foston schools helped create the Holy Angel Trail by making beautiful cardboard angels. I visited both schools and we had a

fantastic time sticking on wings, halos and woollen hair.

The Angels were hiding in the churches throughout the Christmas holidays holding letters which spelled out Christmas Carols. My thanks to everyone who helped make this event so enjoyable.



I have collected all entrants forms from the shoe box post boxes and prizes will be given out at our next All Age Worship.

All Age Worships this term will be at 10am on January 25<sup>th</sup> at St Botolph's Bossall and at St Peter's, Upper Helmsley on Palm Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. Families and children are welcome to join us for worship, crafts, drama and refreshments. Please be aware, unfortunately there are no toilets in either church.

**Drama Club** has started again and if you are interested in joining this free club please email [HYPDrama@yahoo.com](mailto:HYPDrama@yahoo.com) . The club is held on Mondays after school at Sand Hutton Village Hall, 4.30-5.30pm for children aged 6-11yrs.

**Boots n Brunch** will be back on Saturday 28th March when the weather has improved a little. We will be leaving from Howsham Church on a walk and returning to the church for Brunch afterwards. Please join us, again email me if you'd like to know more.

We have two new events for 2026 – **Zoom Book Club** – This is a book club for adults - you can find details of the selected books on our website. You can join anytime, it is not too late.

**Club Capernaum** will open on January 21<sup>st</sup> – this is a monthly drop in for adults at St Mary's Church, Sand Hutton 6pm-7.30pm. If you are curious about Christ, interested in the Christian philosophy and want to know more or would like to join us for fellowship and a cuppa please come along.

As I travelled around the benefice collecting Angels, I was pleased to see the bulbs pushing their way through the frozen ground in our Prayer Garden in Upper Helmsley churchyard. The Spring will let the space flourish and I look forward to seeing you at some of our upcoming events as we move into 2026 with hope in our hearts and space in our lives to reach for and find out about Christ and how he can enrich our lives.

To join the mailing list and for any information regarding children and family events please email me, Rachael, at [hypdrama@yahoo.com](mailto:hypdrama@yahoo.com) You can follow us on [Instagram @HartonYouthPlayers](#)

***from Sister Margaret Ann CSPH***



*The Feast of the Epiphany*

*My Dear Friends,  
Greetings from Bossall*

Christmas and New Year are great occasions for catching up with families and friends, perhaps you don't see so often, and spending quality time with them over the festive period. I hope it has been a happy time for you all.

On New Year's Day I was speaking to Phil, the husband of a very dear friend of mine. He came asking all sorts of questions about creation generally and this wonderful planet of ours and what man is doing for it today. Where God fits into all of this. He went on to talk about life and death and what becomes of us at the end. About the Church with all its problems today, and what is faith.

Some quite difficult questions and I had to admit that I don't have all the answers. But clearly a man, I believe, searching for the truth. What a wonderful God-given opportunity it was to be able to witness to a Saviour who loves each and every one of us, whoever we are and whatever we have done in our life, good or bad.

I say to you all, don't miss any opportunity you may be given to talk about your faith and what God means to you and does in your life day by day. And

if you are searching for answers and wanting to know more, don't be afraid to ask. It is by sharing our own experiences that we may, often unknowingly, lead another into the light which is Christ Himself. That is how the family of God will grow here on earth if we are prepared to share. Tell your own story of faith and be pleased to share all your own experiences of what God has done for you over the years. Or even what you would like our Loving Heavenly Father to do for you in the coming days of 2026.

I wish you all a very happy New Year, filled with hope and peace as we learn from the Christ Child born for us all. Emmanuel – God with us.

With love and continual prayers for you all.

Margaret Ann  
+ CSPH

### ***Amen Christmas Shoebox Appeal 2025***

#### ***Thank you.....***

An enormous thank you for the family shoeboxes given by our local community and the schools at Sand Hutton and Warthill and the kind monetary contributions received towards transport - all so gratefully received in Romania in December and personally distributed by Amen Charity team and local church partners. Here are some photos and also some messages which you can see more of on the AMEN Facebook page videos per this link.  
<https://www.facebook.com/share/1DKc7TgJkv/>





*Some of the recipients of your generosity*



## BARTON LE WILLOWS



As apples were ready very early this year, there was apple pressing in the village hall garden in the afternoon of 21<sup>st</sup> September.

This has become pretty much an annual event, although usually in October. As many people's apples were smaller this year, owing to the drought, it was a very good way to use them up.

It was an enjoyable afternoon with lots of tea, apple crumble and apple cakes. The younger helpers were delighted to be involved in the process and everyone

was very pleased by the yield. We've found that the juice freezes well.

We held a Winter Market in November. Despite a cold and rainy night loads of people came, which was lovely.

We had an emphasis on local business and supplemented the offer with a "Made in YO60" stall, filled by the Crafters Group and donations of jams, jellies, chutneys, knitted Christmas tree decorations, pottery, packs of home printed Christmas cards and mince pies etc. People enjoyed the donated cakes and mulled wine and there were some activities for children.

It was great to see Sloemotion, Ryedale Vineyards, Handmade by Charlotte and Anita's pop up bakery from Harton all in one place. We want to continue to celebrate local talent next year so let the Village Hall Committee know if you'd like to be involved

There were many other stalls but the prize for stamina has to go to the Alpaca Retreat who stood outside in the wicked weather so that people could meet the Alpacas - who are lovely.



Don't forget to visit our Facebook page or the village hall website [bartonlewillowsvillagehall@weebly.com](mailto:bartonlewillowsvillagehall@weebly.com) to see what's on.

Yoga sessions are restarting and the parent and toddler groups are continuing to run, as well as the bi-weekly cinema.

There are also contact details for booking the hall and flyers for forthcoming events on the noticeboard.

## ***BUTTERCRAMBE***

Our last service was our Harvest Festival at the end of October. As always it was very well attended by the Benefice and many who live out of the Benefice but have links with Aldby Park. Thank you to Reverend Rachel Benson for taking the service and Peter and Ellen Stott for leading the choir. Lunch was enjoyed afterwards at Aldby Park and donations of £500 were split between Next Steps, a mental health charity in Ryedale and St John's Buttercrambe.

## BOSSALL

We had Midnight Mass at St Botolph's with a really good gathering, which was lovely. As always, the choir lifted the service despite such a small group. They all look fabulous in a variety of hats for the occasion!

We have installed an interpretation board to the side of the lychgate, giving a brief history of the church as well as information about the wildlife in the churchyard. We hope it will encourage people to come into the church to see the interior and to take one of the booklets, which explain various parts of the church and its history in a lot more detail.



This was the last task required for the lottery funding. We think it is wonderful addition to St Botolph's.

## CRAMBE



Things have been fairly quiet in Crambe since the last edition of the Circular. We have had two services and our biggest event of the year the Celebration of Christmas by Candlelight on the Saturday before Christmas. It was lovely to welcome back the 200 Singers who have sung for us over the last few years. This year we also welcomed Edward Caswell who played the organ for us. As always, the service was very well attended and everyone was in good voice. Most of the congregation gathered at Crambe House following the service for refreshments and good fellowship.

In the run up to Christmas the village turned out for the annual visitation of Father Christmas on his sleigh. There was the added bonus this Christmas as he was a very familiar figure!?

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and peaceful 2026.

## Remembering

Thank you to Jenny and Jean who decorated the church so beautifully with poppies and memorabilia in remembrance of lives lost and maimed in wars past and present.

A short service of Remembrance was held on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at the church lychgate. Poems, readings and prayers were read out by all in attendance. Grateful thanks to Dick (Blackford) for leading the singing.

A poppy wreath was hung by the Roll of Honour plaque followed by 2 minutes silence at 11.00am. A poppy posy and cross were laid at the war grave of Private T. Walker.

## Toy Service

Once again we had a fantastic response for the Salvation Army Christmas Appeal. Thank you to the Flaxton community and to those across the Benefice who gave so generously. A representative from the Salvation Army came to collect the gifts on the Monday morning following the service and left with a very full car. Below is a letter of thanks from the Salvation Army.

### *Dear Friends*

*I wanted to write and express our sincere gratitude for the very generous donation of Toys, presents and cash donations as part of your church Toy Service.*

*As you know these went towards our work in York and North Yorkshire this Christmas. You will be pleased to know that such donations went towards the costs of our Toy Appeal and Christmas Hamper provision for families in need and those people who are suffering from homelessness in York.*

*In total we provided presents to over 500+ families, 900+children and some 3500 presents in total. We also distributed 25 food hampers to rough sleepers in York and another 12 hampers to families who were struggling this Christmas.*



*People's kindness and generosity is never taken for granted and so whilst I say thank you, I do so on behalf of those for whom your generosity made Christmas a little bit more special this year, whilst recognizing your own grief at this time.*

*Thank you.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Andrew Vertigan, Major*

### **Service of Nine Lessons and Carols**

It was good to welcome everyone on a very cold evening for our ever popular service of Nine Lessons and Carols. A huge thank you to all the readers and to Juliet, Les and the Flaxton Singers for the music and singing and to those who provided refreshments following the service.

### **Grateful thanks and appreciation**

On behalf of the members of the Parochial Church Council, clergy and visitors, thank you to the following people who quietly help to keep the church a welcoming place for all: - churchyard maintenance team, decorating the church for festival services, cleaning the church inside and out, organists, putting out the refuse bins, opening and closing the church.

### **In remembrance**

**Tim Richardson**, Malton and Flaxton. Cremation at York Crematorium with A Celebration of Life service in church at a later date. Tim lived in Malton but had a Flaxton connection having brought up his family there. His son still lives in Flaxton.

**Tony Sawyer**, Flaxton. Service in church prior to service at York Crematorium.

**Brian Gillie**, Flaxton. Service at York Crematorium

**Diane Margaret Wilbourne**, Flaxton. Service at York Crematorium

### ***FOSTON***

Our church was full for the Christmas Eve all age worship and Christingle service. The church was looking very festive and it was wonderful to share this celebration with so many people. Many thanks to Rachael and John for all their hard work helping to make this event such a success.

We are always looking for volunteers who would like to support our lovely historic church in any way. This could just be helping with some routine

cleaning, putting flowers on the altar or by supporting our events. Please speak to any member of the PCC or message the secretary on 07783031815 if you are interested.

**We are currently looking for two volunteers to deliver The Circular in Thornton Le Clay. After this edition, copies will be available in the Village Hall or in Church and will only be delivered if specifically requested by contacting Linda Fothergill on 07809115250. Your support would be much appreciated.**

Our church is open 24/7 if you want to have a look round.

### **Foston and Thornton Le Clay Village Hall**

We would like to remind you of our upcoming events. Everyone is very welcome and you can generally pay on the door.

Our soup and pud lunch will be starting again on the last Wednesday in the month. The first lunch will be held on Wednesday 28th January at 12pm. The cost is £5, all are welcome, come and meet friends and neighbours and enjoy a lovely homemade lunch.

On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February we would like you to join us for a Valentine's Dance with pop duo Primal Suspects. The tickets will cost £10 if bought in advance or £12 on the door and will include a light supper. A pay bar will be available and we will be holding a raffle. Doors will open at 7.30pm and we will shortly be circulating details of how you can purchase tickets. In the meantime, tickets will shortly be on sale at coffee mornings and soup and pud lunches.

Weekly coffee mornings have restarted – Mondays 9am to 11am. Drop in for a chat, coffee and cake.

The History Group hope to meet on the first Wednesday of the month from 10.30 until 12. There is a nominal charge of £2 to include coffee. Amongst other projects, the group is looking at a document written by Len Dickinson who was a blacksmith who many will remember living and working at The Forge in Thornton Le Clay.

## **GATE HELMSLEY**

We wish you all the best of everything for the New Year 2026.

November and December were very busy months for the church and the village hall, with much happy socialising and fundraising. At the end of November, we were entertained to music and dancing by the popular Steve Cassidy band. Thank you to those who provided the beautiful buffet supper and all those who supported the evening. Over £900 was raised for St Mary's Church.

The following weekend saw the annual church Christmas Fayre, held at Orchard House. We were pleased to have a couple of new stalls this year. The stall of beautifully packed Christmas gifts put together by Debbie Black and Anna Sawkins – thank you both – was a great success. And it was good to welcome Michaela Severs with her hand-made and beautifully crafted cards, sold in aid of Ryedale Special Families and cancer charities.

The fayre was extended online through December and raised over £1,300 for church funds, our best year yet. We are grateful to all who supported the event in any way, especially those who baked cakes and everyone who helped on the day.

On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December we had a good congregation in church for the annual village carol singing, which was greatly enjoyed by everyone. Thank you to Sister Margaret Ann, who, with help from both children and adults, set up the Christmas crib and talked us through the story of Christ's birth. Thank you all for your generosity in donating £123 in aid of St Leonard's Hospice; and many thanks to Mandy and Charlie for organising the refreshments, which were very much needed after all that singing.

Even those of us who had been to Midnight Mass at St Botolph's Bossall on Christmas Eve were up bright and early on Christmas morning for the 10.00 am service of Holy Communion at St Mary's. It helped that we were summoned by a full peal of the church bells thanks to Claire, Dan and Neil.

The service was led by Reverend Rachel Benson. Rachel, we really appreciated your being with us for this special service. The church was full, with many visitors as well as local parishioners. This made for a very happy atmosphere, enhanced by fellowship after the service with mince pies and mulled wine.

Over Christmas and until Epiphany there was a "Holy Angel Trail" in each of the benefice's ten churches. Prizes for working out the names of the carols

will be given out at the next service of All Age Worship which will be held at St Botolph's Bossall on 25<sup>th</sup> January. Thanks to Rachael Tearney for organising this trail and for all the work she does as Benefice Lead for Children and Families.

The next Sunday service at St Mary's will be on 15<sup>th</sup> February at 10.00 am. This service will include a baptism. We will also have a special service on Easter Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April.

Please get in touch (with Delyth Harran on 01759 372215) if you would like to do some voluntary work for the church. We are looking for people who could be part of the church cleaning rota and the church flower rota. As we only have a service every six weeks or so, the work is not very demanding. We would appreciate your help as we do with all those already involved in helping with church activities.

## **HOWSHAM**

A very Happy New Year to everyone. We have had a very quiet winter season due to ill health and the cold weather!

The carol service went very well after a few hitches! Thank you to everyone who helped decorate the church so beautifully. The children sang very well and also Molly, the soloist, and the three Kings!

Thank you also to the readers. We met at the Pavilion afterwards for mince pies and mulled wine.

We have several services coming up and two weddings this year.

Our annual cake and plant stall will be on Bank Holiday Monday May 4<sup>th</sup> from 9.30 am on Howsham Bridge.

Our next service is on February 1<sup>st</sup> with the choir; we are always so grateful for all the work put in by Ellen and Peter, and realise how lucky we are to have them.

## **SAND HUTTON and CLAXTON**

We wish all readers every joy, happiness, comfort and peace for 2026.

St Mary's PCC would like to say a huge thank you to all who supported our "Gifts for Christmas" event in early November. There were beautiful gifts to purchase, a host of delicious refreshments and a very special atmosphere. A magnificent £3,084 was raised for church funds for which we really are most appreciative. Our very special thanks go to the incredible, talented team of ladies who crafted and created all kinds of wonders; to those who prepared the mouth-watering delicacies for the kitchen and to all the volunteers.

The Advent carol service was held on 7<sup>th</sup> December – another lovely occasion. Our grateful thanks go to the members of the Benefice choir and their musical director Peter Stott, not only for the wonderful music on 7<sup>th</sup> but also for their commitment, preparing and singing at Benefice services throughout the year. Thanks also to those who read lessons or helped in other ways.

It was with great sadness that we heard recently of the death of Barbara Tagg. Barbara lived in Sand Hutton for many years. She was known and loved by many of us and we extend our sincere condolences to all the family.

### **ST MARY'S CHURCH: ROOF RENOVATION APPEAL**

St Mary's Church is a Grade II listed building of rich historical and architectural interest, built in 1840 by Salvin and remodelled by Hodgson Fowler in 1885.

The Nave roof is the original roof from that time. The nails securing the original Westmorland slates are corroding and failing, a process known as "nail sickness". As the nails corrode, slates are increasingly becoming loose, slipping and falling off the roof. In addition the ridge has deteriorated with areas of open joints. The roof structure underneath the slates is made up of sarking boards and rafters but there is no overlying membrane. If the roof issues are not addressed, the loss of slates will allow rainwater to penetrate. Persistent water ingress will cause the underlying structure to become damp and rot, weakening the overall structural integrity of the building and damage to the interior.

We have undertaken many temporary repairs to tingle slates as they have slipped and fallen over a period of time but since all the nails on a roof typically age at the same rate, the failure we are witnessing indicates the whole roof is nearing the end of its life and a full Nave re-roofing is required.

St Mary's is run and maintained by the PCC - a small group of volunteers, supported by others who kindly make a regular donation or fundraise.

We receive no direct funding from the Diocese of York (Church of England). This is a major project with huge financial implications. We are in the process of applying for grant assistance but we also need to raise as much money as we can ourselves.

We are committed to ensuring the safety, structure, character, history, heritage and use of our beautiful church both now and for the future.

**Please, please can you help us?**

If so, donations can be made in any of the following ways:

1. **Cash:** in an envelope with your name to: Ellen Stott, 17 Sand Hutton or to Ian Lyall, Ashbourne, Claxton.
2. **Cheque:** made payable to "Sand Hutton Parochial Church Council"
3. **Bank transfer :** Sand Hutton Parochial Church Council; Sort code 05-09-94; Account number 25486848; Reference: Roof Renovation

If you require further information please contact Ellen on 01904 468404 or 07939620613 or ellenstott55@gmail.com.

**Thank you so much for considering our request.**

## ***UPPER HELMSLEY***

We had a lovely service to bless the many shoeboxes for Romania in November. They were transported and arrived safely.

The Stamford Bridge Historical Society donated £200 again this year on behalf of Mary Anne Mackaness as a continuation of the arrangement set up by her mother Jane Herbert for which we are grateful.

We held a fundraiser in Gate Helmsley village hall with a shuffleboard competition in conjunction with the pop-up pub run by Claire and Dan Sykes (grateful thanks acknowledged) and raised £596.

The new bulbs sprouting in the peace/prayer garden in St Peter's churchyard remind us that Spring is not so far away...!

God's blessings to all of us 

## WHITWELL



### ***A Busy Winter at St John's***

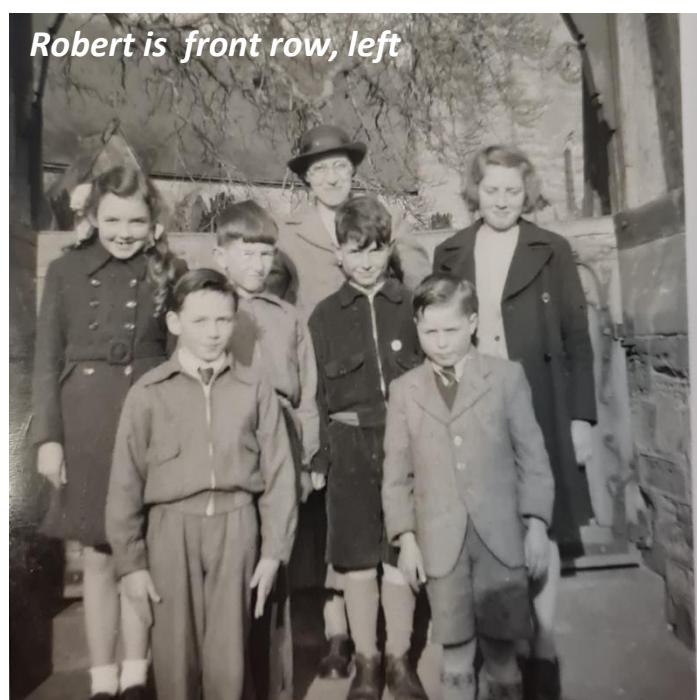
We have had a very busy winter at St John's. It began with a deep clean of the church—amazing how many cobwebs can accumulate! The difference is remarkable; the church feels much lighter now that we can actually see it properly again.

We then decided to make changes to the back of the church to create more space and a more usable area for meetings and gatherings. As there is no other communal space in the village, the church plays an important role for everyone. We have also installed some new church pew seat cushions, which have made sitting much more comfortable.

To help us plan for the future, we sent out a survey to all villagers asking for suggestions on how the church could be used for a wider range of events. We had a very good response. Our Christmas drinks and mince pies event was well attended, and we discussed the survey results together. There was lots of enthusiasm and several offers to help set up a book exchange or book club, a coffee morning, and a mother and toddler group. The overall consensus

was to encourage these regular groups, as well as to host occasional music events, lectures, or talks. Please check the notice board regularly for updates, with activities likely starting in early spring.

Sadly, we have also had to remove several diseased trees from the churchyard. Our lovely horse chestnut trees along the village street had become extremely dangerous due to disease and rot, and we were only able to save one of them. Strong winds in early December also brought down a large fir tree on the south side of the church, causing some damage. Once all the debris has been cleared, we hope to plant some mature trees and restore the churchyard to the high standard we are proud of.



Finally, we had a lovely and unexpected visit one day from a charming man called Robert French. He now lives in Haworth but was brought up in Whitwell and had come to visit his mother's grave. Anthea discovered that his best friend, Glynn, once lived in her house, The Forge! Robert later sent a wonderful letter about his memories of Whitwell, which is now in the church for anyone to read, along with some photographs —including one of a fancy-dress

cricket match and a village play. He was so appreciative that St John's is still open and so well cared for.



## NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS.....

### *Sand Hutton C of E Primary School*



Hello and Happy New Year from all of us at Sand Hutton C of E Primary!

We had a very busy but exciting Christmas period in our school supported by staff and our very active PTA.

Christmas celebrations began with a wonderful wreath making evening in school which was so well attended and thoroughly enjoyed. Everyone went home with something special to decorate their door. This was followed hot on its heels by the annual Christmas fair. Due to rather unpleasant weather we had to bring those celebrations inside; with the exception of Father Christmas in his grotto. For those who might be worried about him, he is used to far worse weather than that! The evening was an incredible success and raised money that our children will benefit from later in the year.

We then went on to have Christmas Dinner and parties and a wonderful Rock Assembly and workshop which both our schools were able to enjoy together on the last but one day of term.

Of course, I must not forget the true meaning of Christmas and our two magical nativity performances in our beautiful church. As ever these were well attended not least by so many of our ex-pupils. It was a truly amazing event. Thank you to everyone who made this possible and to the PTA for their refreshments before the evening performance.

Currently, we are already looking ahead, not just to this term but to the start of the next academic year as the deadline for reception starters for 2026 approaches. We are fortunate that we are predicting a strong cohort for this academic year. However, if for whatever reason, you haven't yet chosen your child's school for September or you would just like to have a look around, please contact the school office on 01904 468308 to make an appointment. We can also arrange for you to view our other school, Warthill C of E Primary too.

Finally, if like me you are having a bit of a spring clean, please don't forget the two recycling bins in our school car park. Should you arrive and find them full, let Claire know in the school office and we may be able to store your item briefly. This provides us with a funding stream and for this we are always grateful.

So, Happy New Year again to you all,  
With every best wish,  
Beverley Pawson with all staff and pupils from Sand Hutton C of E

*Kind regards,  
Beverley Pawson*

## ***Foston C of E Primary School***

We are proud to share that FST Federation will now be known as North Yorkshire Rural School Federation and that Langton Primary School is part of this partnership that strengthens opportunities and support for our pupils. Mrs Sarah Moore is the executive headteacher, supported by Miss Katie Stringer, Head of School at Foston and Langton Primary Schools, and Miss Tordoff, Head of School at Stillington and Terrington Primary Schools.



Our autumn term concluded with two special celebrations. Our Key Stage 2 pupils led a magical Carol Service, during which many children proudly performed on instruments they have been learning in school, including the violin, flute and guitar. This was followed by a fantastic Nativity performance presented by our Early Years and Key Stage 1 pupils, which beautifully captured the spirit of Christmas and was enjoyed by all who attended. The festive season was made even more special with a visit from Santa, who came to Foston School complete with a festive grotto, creating memories for the children and adding to the joy and excitement of the Christmas celebrations. Thank you to our PTA for organising this visit.

As we begin the new term, our pupils are already enthusiastically engaged in their learning. In Early Years, the children will be learning about animals and comparing different habitats. In Key Stage 1, pupils will be learning all about Brazil. Meanwhile, in Key Stage 2, the children will be studying Ancient Greece, discovering its history, myths, and lasting influence on the modern world.

If your child is starting school in September 2026, it is not too late to come and look around. We would be delighted to welcome prospective families. We also have nursery places available and accept children from three years old. Our Early Years provision is graded Outstanding by Ofsted, and we are proud of the nurturing and high-quality education we provide.

We are also pleased to share that we now offer wrap-around care from 8:00am until 6:00pm, led by our fantastic wrap-around team, alongside a wide range of extra-curricular clubs that enrich our pupils' school experience. In addition, we warmly invite families to our Stay and Play sessions, held every Monday during term time from 1:30pm to 3:00pm for children aged 2–4 years. All are welcome, and it is a lovely opportunity for young children and their carers to spend time together in our Early Years setting.

We would like to thank the local community for your continued support and encouragement. We value our close links with the church and look forward to sharing more moments of learning and celebration with you as the year progresses.

*With warm wishes,  
Katie Stringer  
Head of School Foston CE and Langton Primary Schools*

## Foston CE Primary School

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## Contact details for the churches in the Harton Benefice

### **Bossall, St Botolph YO60 7NT**

Churchwardens: Christopher and Belinda Fordy

Email: [christopherfordy@fordymarshall.com](mailto:christopherfordy@fordymarshall.com)

Email: [belindafordy@gmail.com](mailto:belindafordy@gmail.com)

Tel: 01904 468682

### **Buttercrambe, St John the Evangelist YO41 1AT**

Acting Churchwarden: Sara Winn Darley Email: [sara@winndarley.net](mailto:sara@winndarley.net)

Tel: 01759 371398

### **Crambe, St Michael YO60 7JR**

Churchwarden: George McNicol Email: [george@scaledrinks.com](mailto:george@scaledrinks.com)

Tel: 07919 326515

### **Flaxton, St Lawrence YO60 7NT**

Churchwarden: Ida Terry Email: [idmt@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:idmt@hotmail.co.uk)

Tel: 01347 878432

### **Foston, All Saints YO60 7QG**

Churchwardens: Currently no Churchwardens have been appointed. In case of need, please contact the Vicar, whose details are on the back cover.

### **Gate Helmsley, St Mary YO41 1NE**

Churchwardens: Delyth Harran Email: [dandmharran@gmail.com](mailto:dandmharran@gmail.com)

Tel: 01759 372215

Sue Hanson Email: [sjhanson50@gmail.com](mailto:sjhanson50@gmail.com)

Tel: 01759 372663

### **Howsham, St John YO60 7PH**

Churchwardens: Gill Littlejohn Email: [simoncklittlejohn@msn.com](mailto:simoncklittlejohn@msn.com)

Tel: 01653 618846

Judy Stephenson Email: [jfs@great-barn.co.uk](mailto:jfs@great-barn.co.uk)

Tel: 01653 618673

**Sand Hutton, St Mary**

Churchwardens: Ian Lyall

Ellen Stott

**YO41 1LB**

Email: [ian.lyall2@gmail.com](mailto:ian.lyall2@gmail.com)

Tel: 01904 468209

Email: [ellenstott55@gmail.com](mailto:ellenstott55@gmail.com)

Tel: 01904 468404

**Upper Helmsley, St Peter**

Churchwarden: Mari Richards

**YO41 1JY**

Email: [mjb.richards1000@gmail.com](mailto:mjb.richards1000@gmail.com)

Tel: 07930 338516

**Whitwell on the Hill, St John the Evangelist YO60 7JJ**

Churchwardens: Janie Bell

Email: [janie.bell@me.com](mailto:janie.bell@me.com)

Tel: 01653 618270

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## The Circular

**Copy deadline for the next edition April 18<sup>th</sup> 2026**

**This will cover: May June July 2026**

**Unfortunately, it may not be possible to include anything received after the deadline**

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**Revd. Nigel Benson**

**Mob: 07983 117865**

**Email: vicarofharton@gmail.com**

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#### **For occasional offices please contact:**

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Marriages	Vanessa Fitzpatrick	07946 855419
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Baptisms	Delyth Harran	01759 372215
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Youth and Families worker Rachael Tearney  
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