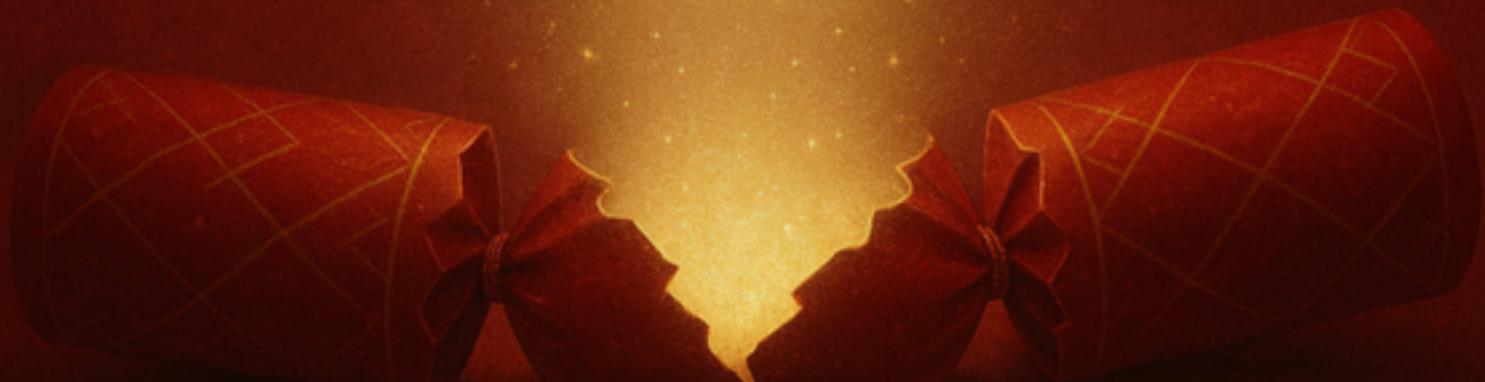


# Christmas Is Full Of Surprises

**A Surprise Visit For Joseph**

**14th December 2025**



**Salendine Nook Baptist Church**

[snbch.org.uk/christmas-2025](http://snbch.org.uk/christmas-2025)



# Welcome

In today's Service we will be looking at: **Matthew 1 v. 18 – 25**

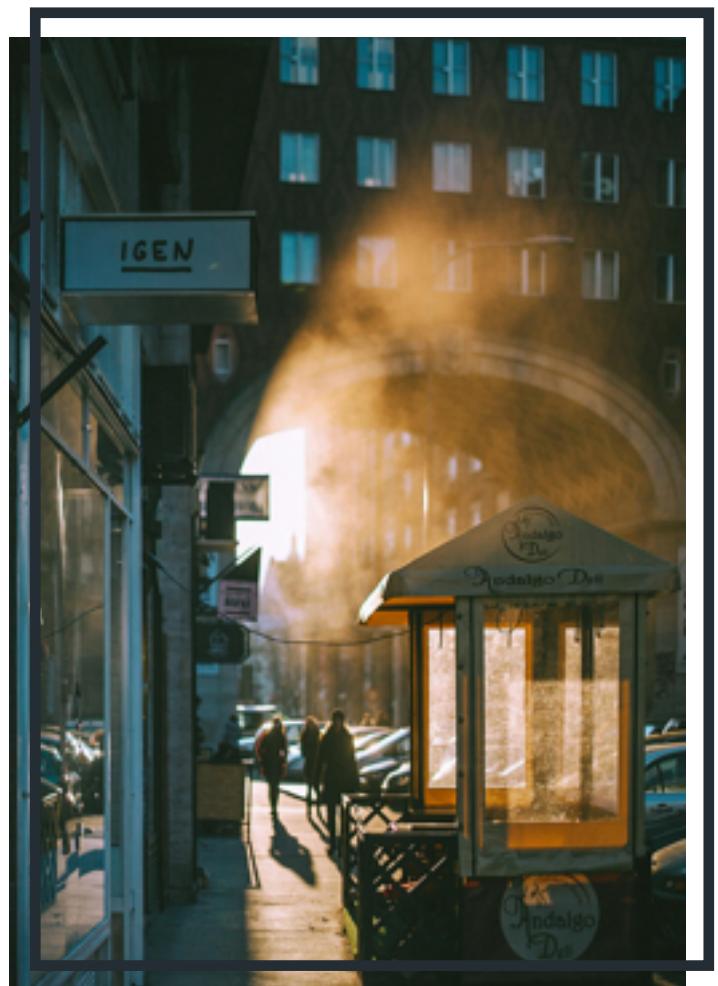
The theme for our service today is: **Christmas Is Full Of Surprises – A Surprise Message For Joseph**  
**We also welcome to our service this morning:**

**Huddersfield Wind Band**

We hope that you will be able to engage with everything that has been produced for today's service and that you would be able to **Rejoice In Knowing That Jesus Is The Greatest Surprise We Can Receive**

# Music Video

Chris Tomlin – Holy Forever



# Call To Worship

## Psalm 33 v.1 – 5 NLT

Let the godly sing with joy to the Lord, for it is fitting to praise him.

Praise the Lord with melodies on the lyre; make music for him on the ten – stringed harp.

Sing new songs of praise to him; play skilfully on the harp and sing with joy.

For the word of the Lord holds true, and everything he does is worthy of our trust.

He loves whatever is just and good, and his unfailing love fills the earth.

# Opening Prayer

Loving Heavenly Father, as we wait in expectation, help us today to recognise your presence within us, and around us even when we don't see it.

Be with us as your people, in our worship, joined by your Spirit.

As we focus on you on this third Sunday in Advent, help us to see glimmers of your hope, joy, love and peace, even when we feel as though darkness closes in.

You, our God, are worthy of all our praise, you, our God are worthy of all our love, you, our God, are worthy of all our lives, not because you require it, but because you first loved us.

We praise you that whenever your people have found themselves in despair, you have made yourself known to them, transforming lives and redeeming all. Be with us all as we wait for your coming. For we ask these things in Jesus name.

**Amen**

# Song Suggestion

See Amid The Winter's Snow



# I Am Joseph

I am Jospeh, carpenter,  
Of David's kingly line,  
I wanted an heir; discovered  
My wife's son wasn't mine.  
  
I am an obstinate lover,  
Loved Mary for better or worse,  
Wouldn't stop loving when I found  
Someone Else came first.  
  
Mine was the likeness I hoped for  
When the first-born man-child came.  
But nothing of him was me. I couldn't  
Even choose his name.  
  
I am Jospeh, who wanted  
To teach my own boy how to live.  
My lesson for my foster son:  
Endure. Love. Give.



Find the following words in our Christmas wordsearch

TRUSTED  
JOSEPH  
MARY

TOGETHER  
LISTENED  
OBEYED

DREAM  
ANGEL  
MARRIED

BABY  
PROPHECY



# Lighting The Third Advent Candle



## A PRAYER FOR THE Third Sunday of Advent

Joy-filled Giver of Life,  
let the anticipation of your birth  
fill us with overflowing joy.  
May our excitement and anticipation  
be a sign to the world  
that you are always near.  
Amen.

# Bible Reading

**Matthew 1 v. 18 – 25 NIV**

## **Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son**

18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, 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. 21 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.”

22 All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

# Song Suggestion

Once In Royal David's City



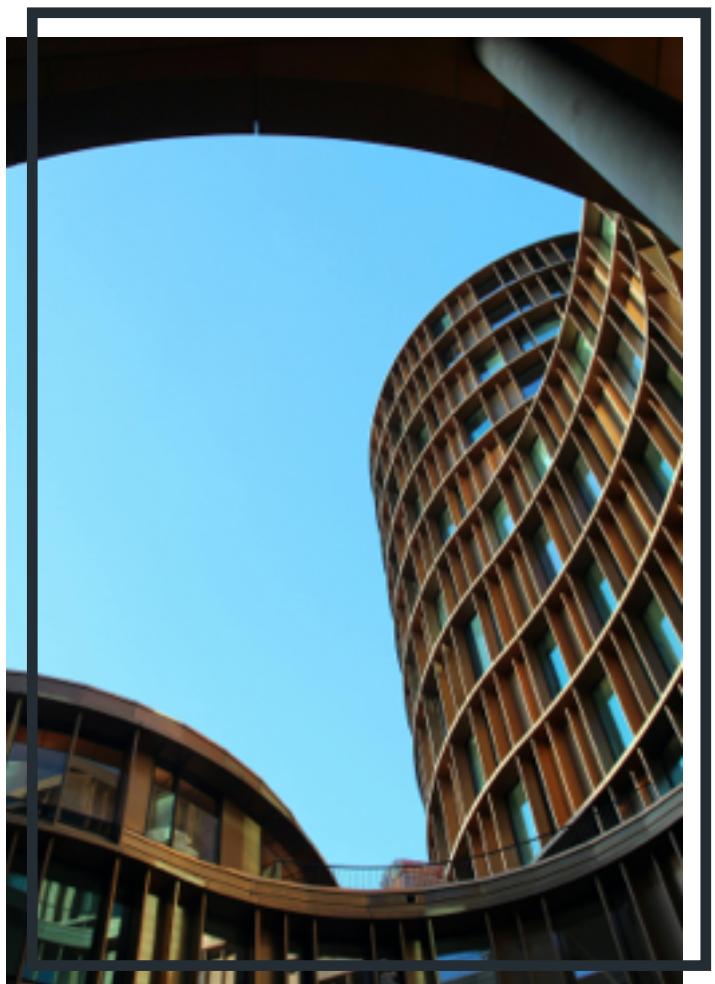
# A Dream that Changed the World

## Matthew 1:18-25



# Song Suggestion

Away In A Manger, No Crib For A  
Bed



# True Or False

## Christmas Quiz

Many prophets long ago told of Jesus' birth. (True)

Mary and Joseph lived in Bethlehem. (False)

Mary and Joseph didn't know that their baby was going to be special. (False)

Mary and Joseph were married when Jesus was born. (False)

Jesus was born in a palace. (False)

It was snowing when Jesus was born. (False)

Jesus' bed was a cattle trough. (True)

Everyone in the world knew that God's special baby had been born. (False)

Mary's son's name would be Jesus which means 'Holy One'. (False)

The name Jesus means 'God will save his people from their sins'. (True)

An angel spoke to Mary about having a son. (True)

Mary was told she'd find Jesus under an apple tree. (False)

The son would be a long-distance relative of King David (the one who killed Goliath). (True)

Mary didn't believe God would use her in such a way. (False)

God picked Mary because she wanted to be rich and famous. (False)

Mary would become pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit. (True)

Jesus was both God and human. (True)

Jesus was actually Joseph's son, and turned into God later. (False)

Jesus would be king of a kingdom for the whole of his life. (True)

There were three wise men. (False)

The wise men followed a star. (True)

According to the Bible the names of the wise men were:

Casper, Melchior and Balthazar. (False)

There was no room for Mary and Joseph at the inn. (True)

Jesus was laid to sleep in the hay. (True)

An ox and donkey watched over the Baby Jesus. (False)

# Church Together

## Thought

You may not be aware of this though, but there are three versions of the Christmas story. There's the Gospel account found in Matthew, where we get Joseph's dream and the wise men and the star in the East. Then there's the Gospel account that is found in Luke, where we get the shepherds and the angels and the fact that there was no room in the inn. And then there's the Gospel According to Hallmark, the card makers, in which we get an assortment of all the above including the wise men, the shepherds, a host of angels, lowing cattle and a partridge in a pear tree. The Hallmark version of Christmas is the most popular one because it gives us the whole nine yards, but it's not true to the text of the true Christmas. Combining Matthew and Luke is like mixing Shakespeare and Chaucer. They're similar, but not quite the same.

As we continue our countdown to Christmas, and our theme this year of: Christmas Is Full Of Surprises, I wanted to take a moment on this Third Sunday in Advent to consider the surprise message that was given to Joseph and the revealing of Jesus to him personally. We hear a lot about Mary. She was, after all, the mother of Jesus, the only person constant in the life of Jesus from the cradle to the grave. But what do we know about Joseph? In all the New Testament he never utters a word. Yet, he's one of the principal figures in the Christmas drama. Tradition has it that Joseph was a simple man of an

honourable trade: A carpenter from Nazareth. Sometimes you see Sunday school pictures showing him in a wood shop making furniture. But 'carpenter' in Joseph's day referred to a wide range of trades. Joseph could have just as easily worked with metal or stone, as with wood. In any case, craftsmen worked with strong shoulders and callused hands. They were educated by apprenticeship. Their place was respectable but not on one of the higher rungs of the social ladder. Jesus' father was neither a rabbi nor a scribe nor one of the civic leaders. He had but two qualifications to play a part in the Christmas drama – he was a descendent of David and, for whatever reason, he was God's choice. In that regard, Joseph is someone with whom we can all identify – a common man who dared to be obedient to God's will for his life.

His place in the Christmas story, of course, is that of Mary's husband. According to Matthew, Joseph and Mary were 'betrothed', but not yet married. The biblical writer, William Barclay, explains that there were three steps in a Jewish marriage: **The engagement**, which was often arranged by the parents through a matchmaker when the boy and girl were children; **the betrothal**, which was a formal ratification of the marriage – to – be, usually done a year before the couple was married; and **the wedding itself**, which lasted a whole week, at which time the marriage was consummated. During the betrothal, the couple was legally bound to each other so that, if the man died before the actual wedding took place, the woman was considered to be a widow. They were referred to as husband and wife, though they refrained from having sexual relations.

It's at this stage, the betrothal, in their relationship that

Joseph had a big surprise thrust on him, he learned that Mary was pregnant and, though Scripture is not specific at this point, it's safe to say Joseph probably blew a gasket. Like any husband – to – be, Joseph would've been beside himself to learn that his fiancé was pregnant. He would've been angry and upset, to say the least.

After all, if Mary were pregnant, the only explanation would've been that she'd been unfaithful, in which case, he had a legal right to have her stoned to death.

It's at this point that Joseph proves his faithfulness, first to Mary and then, more importantly, to God. According to

**Matthew 1 v. 19**, when Joseph learned that Mary was pregnant, Matthew writes: 'Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly'.

Joseph was a man of quiet strength. He was a man of integrity, true to his convictions. Yet, he was compassionate and considerate of others. He found himself in a no – win situation. He couldn't, in good conscience, go on with the wedding; yet he couldn't bring himself to humiliate Mary either, much less put her to death. Breaking off the relationship, but not making a big deal of it, seemed to be the most honourable thing to do, and if Joseph's part in the Christmas story ended here, we could understand and respect him as a man of faith.

But there's more to it than that, an even bigger surprise that was to be revealed. According to Matthew, Joseph had a dream in which an angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him that the child in Mary's womb was of the Holy Spirit and that he should become the father to the child. It would be tempting for us, reading the story some two thousand years after the event to simply to say: 'Well,

there you have it'. The angel explained everything. But then, we've all had dreams, haven't we? And we know how bizarre and elusive dreams can be. There doesn't seem to be too many people who make major life decisions based on what they think they saw or heard in a dream. Do you?

Yet, according to Matthew, Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.

**Matthew 1 v. 25** says: 'But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus'.

And then, in one further act of faithfulness and obedience to God, Joseph publicly named the child. Matthew says simply, 'he named him Jesus'. In so doing, he claimed the child as his own and gave him the benefit of a noble ancestry, making him a descendent of the house of David. Because of the faithfulness of Joseph, Jesus would have a father and Joseph would have a place in the drama of God's salvation for all mankind.

To the world, the faithfulness of Joseph may seem foolish, but to those who are willing to follow his example and surrender their wills to the will of God, the faithfulness of Joseph is not simply a way of pleasing God; it's a way of fulfilling your own life's destiny and it doesn't come as a big surprise. When we are faithful to God, he then reveals the most wonderful gift to us, the gift of his son – Jesus.

As Jesus was revealed to Joseph, may we too during this season of Advent, have Jesus revealed to us. May our Christmas not be about receiving surprise presents, but may it be about Jesus being the surprise for us as he becomes our Lord and Saviour.



# Tithes, Gifts & Offerings

If you feel that you are able to, then please keep on giving to the work of the church here at Salendine Nook, with a generous and cheerful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you and share in the finances of the church.

# Prayers Of Intercession

## **As we come to the Lord in prayer on this Third Sunday in Advent, we pray:**

Loving Heavenly Father, we come to you this morning as a people who are waiting: waiting to celebrate Jesus' birth; waiting to see what this day and every day holds as Your blessings for us; and waiting to see whom we can bless with Your love or from whom we may receive a blessing.

Loving Lord, we come to you today with our needs and our worries, our hopes and our dreams, because You have invited us to come when you said: 'Come to me, all you who labour and are over burdened'.

We come praying for the Church throughout the world today and we especially pray for all who bear your name in places where it is dangerous to do so. Sustain and strengthen them by your grace, we pray. We come, as well, with prayers for the Church in this country and for this our congregation here at Salendine Nook. We pray that we may all benefit from the various gifts offered in service to you Lord Jesus; that in faith and unity we may be constantly renewed by your Holy Spirit into acts of mission, mercy and love.

We come to you this morning Gracious Lord, praying, too, for peace in our world, and for an end to violence and hostility. May there be peace in our homes and in our hearts so that we may live and work together in harmony and with genuine concern for one another.

As we continue to pray, we come with prayers for our families, friends and neighbours, that we may serve and love one another as Jesus first loved us. Help us to make our homes patterns of your love, places of mutual trust and forgiveness, places of true sharing and caring, of deep joy and peace; and unite us all, one to another in the circle of your love. May we bring your Good News to others.

We also bring before you in our prayers all those who need you the most today. We pray for those who are anxious, sorrowful, or in any kind of need or distress; we pray especially for those who are known to us personally today.

Also help us to remember in the quietness of our hearts others who are dear to us. We know that you love them and know their every need far better than we do. We ask that you do for them as you see best and bless them with your love and peace.

Merciful Loving God – as we wait ... hear these, our prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**Amen**

# Song Suggestion

Angels From The Realms Of Glory



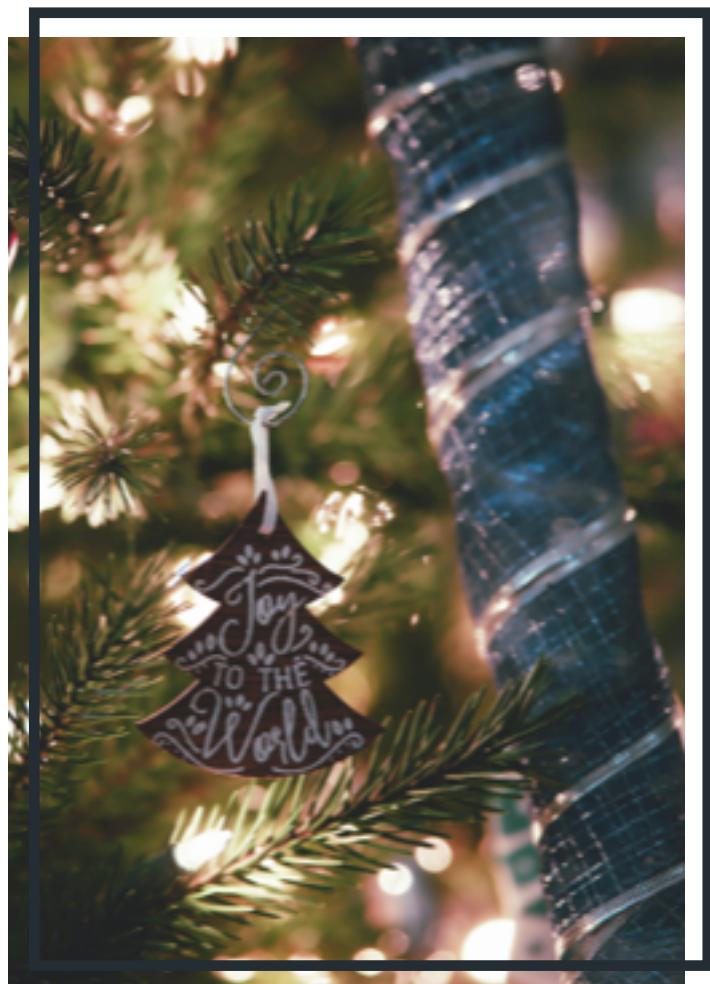
# The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in Heaven  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power  
And the glory, forever and ever.  
**Amen**

What is Christmas without  
Jesus? And without Him what is  
there to celebrate? What can be  
the reason for this special  
Christmas season Without the  
greatest gift the heav'nly  
Father ever gave

# Song Suggestion

Joy To The World, The Lord Has  
Come



# Blessing

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May the Lord bless you and keep you.  
May the Lord make his face to shine  
upon you, and be gracious to you.  
May the Lord lift up his countenance  
upon you, and give you peace.

**Amen**