



PENHILL BEACON

Penhill Benefice Church Magazine



 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Leeds

Dec 2025 – Jan 2026

The Penhill Benefice is committed to show the love of God and the saving grace of Jesus. We share together as the body of Christ, in prayer, worship, ministry and fellowship. In the power of the Holy Spirit we are called to mission and outreach and to be a support and comfort in the community.

Churches of the Penhill Benefice

St Andrew's, Aysgarth. St Oswald's, Castle Bolton. St Margaret's, Preston under Scar. St Mary's, Redmire. Holy Trinity, Wensley. St Bartholomew's, West Witton and the Mission Room at Thornton Rust.

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Vicar's Letter

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter there is no doubt that, in our current context, that these are deeply challenging and difficult times for us all. When we are surrounded by fear and suffering, it can be hard to feel hopeful and as we approach winter with its shorter days accompanied by cold, ice and often snow, it can be a challenging time for many. Even so there are also many points of light in the coming weeks and months ahead.

Christians, during the next couple of months, keep the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. For many, the family traditions of Advent Candles and calendars, Christmas presents and family gatherings are an important point in the year.

Advent for Christians is a season of expectation and preparation, as the church prepares to celebrate the joy of the birth of Jesus, God with us.

Advent season falls at the darkest time of the year and we use symbols such as candles and Christingles to remind us that as we pray 'Maranatha' – 'Our Lord Come' – just as with the rhythm of nature, we are assured that it will soon be Christmas and we will celebrate again the joy that comes with a birth of a baby.

At his Birth Jesus was also called Emmanuel. It is a word that appears in lots of Carols. It means 'God is with us', sharing our darkness and our struggles, bringing comfort and joy. It is the source of our hope. As the bible says: "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5)

Then Epiphany in January, a time to celebrate different elements in the story of Christ's birth; starting with the visit of the far travelled magi, wise men from the east. Then as Epiphany draws to a close, the season of joyful celebration of Christ's birth that began at Christmas ends with Candlemas. The baby who was manifested to the magi at birth is now recognised by Simeon and Anna, as he is presented in the temple. Even though there is much darkness around us, let us remind ourselves that just as with the nature that surrounds us – that we will emerge from this darkness and new creation will burst forth. So let us shine in the darkness of this winter, let us be kind to ourselves and others and let us focus on what brings us joy!

Whilst writing I also want to draw folks attention to our 9.30am phone service, which is a service of Morning Prayer. It offers a reflection and prayers on the set readings for the day and an opportunity to join together with others who often are unable to physically get to church, either because of distance, decreasing mobility or even the bad weather. It's open to anyone who has access to a phone, landline or mobile and it's free! We can provide service booklets so you can join in and these are available from Christine – just give the Benefice office a ring or an email and we can get this to you. OR just join us on most Sundays at 9.30am.

Telephone number 0333 0110 946 enter room number **61337190#** and the PIN **7450#**

Also, 2026 will see a year of celebration as we mark 20 years as The Penhill Benefice – a journey that starts on January 4th 2026, at our services across the Benefice. More events to come just look out for them!

In the meantime may God bless you and all those whom you love this Christmas time, and we hope to see you at one of our Christmas or Epiphany services.

Yours in Christ *Penny*

Christmas Cemetery And Grave Tributes

Christmas wreaths made with a mix of seasonal foliage, decorated with dried fruits and natural items available to pre-order. For further information contact Helen M:07922015955, E:bagsandblossoms@gmail.com.



We ask that you are mindful of the environment and kindly remove cellophane and ribbon when placing fresh flowers at the graveside of loved ones in our churchyards.

Church Flowers at St Bartholomew's, West Witton

Thank you to all the ladies who participated on the flower rota this year, and for keeping the church looking so nice. It is really appreciated. I will be doing the **2026 rota** over Christmas and if I don't hear otherwise I will take it you are all happy to continue. Many thanks. *Valerie Alsop*.

The Deadline for Feb - March 2026 edition of the Penhill Beacon is **Thursday 8th January 2026** Please Email articles to: penhill.benefice@btconnect.com or telephone the office.

Dates for your Diary...



Church Coffee Morning

10.30am -12 noon

Redmire Village Hall



Wednesday 3rd December (Christmas Coffee)

Wednesday 7th January

Church Afternoon Tea

1.30-4pm Redmire Village Hall

Wednesday 17th December Christmas Party

2-4pm, Wednesday 21st January

Benefice Prayer Fellowship

7.30pm, Aysgarth Institute **Tuesday 27th January**

Deanery Prayer Meetings

11am - 12noon, East Witton Parish Room.

Mondays 1st December & 5th January

Wensleydale Filling Station

7pm at Thornborough Hall, Moor Road, Leyburn DL8 5AB

Friday 12th December Advent and Christmas Celebration

Worship led by Dave and Sarah Clark

No meeting in January

Contact: 07714 204024 mikehirst3@gmail.com

Prayer and Praise Live!

7pm at Chantry Hall, North End, Bedale, DL8 1AF

No meeting in December

Friday 23rd January – Steve Madsen (Lay Reader) All Welcome!

For more information email lindajc54@outlook.com

Wensley Camerata

under conductor Martin Budgett will perform

Handel's Messiah

Holy Trinity Church, Wensley

6.30pm, Saturday 13th December

Book tickets £25 each from valerie@boltonestate.co.uk



Benefice Advent Reflections

Tuesdays December 2nd, 9th and 16th

Time: 7.30pm at Aysgarth Institute

The York Course "Who am I" by Nick Baines.

Christingle Benefice Service



10.30 am on Sunday 14th December

A Holy Communion Service

St Mary's, Redmire. All welcome!

Mary's Meals: There will be opportunity to continue donating any left over foreign currency, accumulating piles of copper coins or obsolete UK currency into collection boxes in the churches. The money raised will help Mary's Meals feed desperately hungry children across the globe. Every 10p is enough to provide a hungry child with a nutritious meal in school.

Little Facts: Mary's Meals now reaches 3,000,000

a wonderful achievement- roll on the next million.

One of the earliest recipients of a meal and thus an education is himself now a University Lecturer.

Christmas Coffee Morning in aid of The Children's Society

10.30 am on Thursday 18th December

Cote Gill, West Witton. DL8 4LT.

£5.00 There will also be a raffle.

Everyone is welcome



This is my Theatre 'A Christmas Carol'

7.00 pm on Thursday 18th December

at Holy Trinity Church, Wensley

Tickets: £16 each. Details and ticket info: thisismytheatre.com

*Packed with charm, cheer and, of course, plenty of carols,
our production is sure to spread joy and warm hearts this Christmas!*

Reflection and Prayer for December and January



When we consider what we might pray for in December 2025 and January 2026 those of us who are Christians may find our minds full of thoughts of the birth of Jesus, and the importance of not forgetting the true meaning of Christmas. Others may find celebrating Christmas this year difficult following the death of someone precious, money worries, anxiety or depression or a crisis of faith whilst others are conscious of family breakdown, and so the happiness we long for, whether believers or not, may be elusive. Our prayers are active: involving *doing things for others*.

Mondays – St David said ‘do the little things’ and small things matter. Look at those people around you – *really look* – *can you see anxiety, sadness, unshed tears, loneliness?* Concern is not nosiness, but extending the hand of friendship. Be the person who smiles, looks into his/her eyes and says ‘*How do you feel today?*’

Tuesdays – Listen – we have *two* ears and *one* mouth for a reason. Some people have no-one who listens to them. Be the person who does and says ‘*Have you got time for a chat?*’

Wednesdays – if you see someone who looks careworn, or sad please smile – a real smile that reaches your eyes. You may be the only person who smiles at him/her that day and if you aren’t, remember no smile is ever wasted. *Smile with your heart*

Thursdays – the stranger at the bus stop, in the queue at the post office, or who is sitting quietly in church may not need the benefit of your knowledge of dahlias, but asking how he or she is and waiting for an answer may be what is needed. *Start a conversation*

Fridays – Don’t judge. You will rarely know the whole story. Listen – there may be no-one who listens. *Be that person*

Saturdays – Look back on your week. What have you learned about yourself or others that you can take into next week.? *Trust yourself*

Sundays -Tell the Lord about your week and your hopes for next week. Listen carefully to his response. *He might lead you where you’ve not been before.*

Church Services: In case of bad weather, please check our website penhillbenefice.co.uk/services for updates. **Phone services:** dial 0333 0110 946 and enter room number 61337190# and PIN 7450# (Local charges apply)

Everyone is Welcome to Attend our Church Services

Sunday December 7th

- 9.30 am Telephone Service
- 9.30 am Holy Communion, St Margaret's, Preston under Scar
- 9.30 am Morning Prayer, St Mary's, Redmire
- 11.00 am Holy Communion, St Andrew's, Aysgarth
- 11.00 am Holy Communion, St Bartholomew's, West Witton

Saturday December 13th

- 2.00 pm Carol Service, St Oswald's, Castle Bolton

Sunday December 14th

- 9.30 am Telephone Service
- 10.30am Holy Communion Penhill Together *Christingle Service*, St. Mary's Redmire

Saturday December 20th

- 2.00 pm Carols at Thoraby Village Hall

Sunday December 21st

- 9.30 am Telephone Service
- 9.30 am Holy Communion, St Margaret's, Preston under Scar
- 11.00 am Carol Service, St Andrew's, Aysgarth
- 3.00 pm Carol Service, Thornton Rust Mission Room
- 3.00 pm Carol Service, Redmire Village Hall
- 6.00 pm Carols & Readings, St Bartholomew's, West Witton
- 6.30 pm Carols at St Margaret's, Preston under Scar
- 6.30 pm Carols & Readings, Carperby Institute



Wednesday December 24th CHRISTMAS EVE

No Telephone Service

- 3.30 pm Crib Service, St Mary's, Redmire
- 4.00 pm Crib Service, St Bartholomew's, West Witton
- 8.00 pm Holy Communion, St Mary's, Redmire
- 11.30pm Midnight Communion, St Andrew's, Aysgarth



Thursday 25th December CHRISTMAS DAY

No Telephone Service

10.00 am **Christmas Communion,**
Holy Trinity, Wensley

11.00 am **Christmas Praise,**
St. Andrew's, Aysgarth



Sunday December 28th

9.30 am Telephone Service

9.30am Holy Communion, St Bartholomew's, West Witton

11.00 am Morning Prayer With Baptism, St Andrew's, Aysgarth

December Mid-Week Services: St Bartholomew's, West Witton

Holy Communion at 9.30am on **Thursday 4th & 18th December**



The 'wise men' followed a star that led them to baby Jesus.

Matthew calls them 'Magi', the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. In the third century they were called kings by a church father, Tertullian. Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three to correspond with the gifts

given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing and embalming. Since the 8th century, the Magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

Sunday January 4th **EPIPHANY**

9.30 am Telephone Service

9.30 am Holy Communion, St Margaret's, Preston under Scar

9.30 am Morning Prayer, St Mary's, Redmire

11.00 am Holy Communion, St Andrew's, Aysgarth

11.00 am Holy Communion, St Bartholomew's, West Witton

The church buildings will be blessed with the 'Chalking the Door' tradition as we begin our 20th Year anniversary as the Penhill Benefice.

Sunday January 11th

9.30 am Telephone Service

10.30 am Holy Communion Penhill Together,
St Bartholomew's, West Witton

Sunday January 18th

- 9.30 am Telephone Service
- 9.30 am Holy Communion, St Margaret's, Preston under Scar
- 9.30 am Holy Communion, St Mary's, Redmire
- 11.00 am Holy Communion, St Andrew's, Aysgarth
- 11.00 am Morning Prayer, St Bartholomew's, West Witton

Sunday January 25th

- 9.30 am Telephone Service
- 9.30 am Holy Communion, St Bartholomew's, West Witton
- 11.00 am Morning Prayer, St Andrew's, Aysgarth
- 3.00 pm Evening Prayer, Thornton Rust Mission Room

January Mid-Week Services: St Bartholomew's, West Witton
Holy Communion at 9.30am on **Thursday 8th & 22nd January**

JOURNEY WITH MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship)

Many who have heard of Mission Aviation Fellowship associate their work with Africa but 80 years on from its foundation MAF are asking "How do we become more effective leading up to our 100 year anniversary?" MAF serves roughly 2,500 remote communities and one thing they want to do is double their effectiveness by reaching twice that number of isolated people across the globe.

The final leg of our journey with MAF therefore takes us to some far-flung places you may not associate with MAF flights. This is a whistle –stop tour to catch a glimpse of some places you can only reach by small planes. First, we will leave Papua New Guinea and stop in Arnhem Land, then on to Timor-Leste, Kalimantan, Myanmar and Nepal.

Arnhem Land is an area about the size of Scotland and Wales combined in a north-eastern corner of Australia and is a legally recognised reserve for 12,000 Aboriginal people, the Yolnu. With MAF we have been allowed access to the reserve and welcomed. Earlier this year unprecedented rainfall led to many communities being cut off by flooding and only MAF planes like ours were able to deliver food and fuel supplies. Accessing healthcare is also facilitated with the use of MAF flights. It is a 93-mile drive over 3 hours along pitted dirt tracks

to a hospital. The Gaiva Community School provides holistic education to those remote communities and finds MAF a huge support in terms of flying between schools and also for their friendship and prayers.

Our next flight takes us to Timor-Leste along with boxes of chicks! A small company is selling chickens as one way, in a remote region, to help families fight malnutrition and poverty. If you live on £1-50 a day, owning a chicken is a good way to provide food for a family, selling surplus eggs and rearing new chicks. Also known as East Timor, the eastern half of the island measures 5,743 square miles, half the size of Northern Ireland and is one of the smallest and poorest places in Asia. It is hot humid and at times very wet. When it got independence from Indonesia in 2002, 75% of the infrastructure was in ruins after years of violence. The UN has slowly helped rebuild most of the capital Dili, however, many problems exist. Malnutrition, hepatitis and malaria are all major concerns and many children die in childbirth or as babies. The only way to travel is with MAF who carry out medical emergency flights several times a week.

We must now fly on to Kalimantan in the Indonesian part of Southern Borneo. Kalimantan is covered by beautiful mountains, snaking rivers and epic forests home to orang-utans in the rich jungle canopy. Not only is the great ape endangered but so too are the vibrant cultures of the indigenous people known as Dayak and many other tribes. It is hot and humid. Seasonal wildfires and active volcanoes threaten. Isolation and poverty among the population is acute. MAF's 2 Kodiak aircraft provide regular flights for partners to bring life changing assistance to the villagers and support to the growing church. Landing on the 2 new airstrips at Padi and Pa'Upan is blind as mountains block the pilots' vision and on approach pilots use checkpoints like an outcrop of rock or a group of trees to ensure the short, fast landing is accurate! The Kodiak can carry 9 passengers and up to 1,500 kg of supplies and the pilots find it reliable for short, difficult airstrips.

When disaster strikes, MAF responds. On 28th March this year a devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck Myanmar. More than 3,600 people have died and many, many buildings collapsed. Deeram Khong, MAF's manager in Myanmar, led the delivery of supplies to Naypyitlaw and installed systems to

provide clean drinking water. The team have distributed hundreds of food packs for families in need. MAF's flights have been invaluable as bridges have shifted and roads collapsed. Pilots flew in relief workers, doctors, pastors and delivered food and medicine.

A similar disaster had struck Nepal on 25th April 2015 when a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit a mountainous region north of Kathmandu. Mountainsides gave way and entire villages were flattened. It is estimated that around 9,000 people died and many lost everything they owned. Roads had disappeared so MAF immediately deployed staff from its Global Disaster Response Team and worked with helicopters to meet the urgent needs of those on the ground. Deliveries of piping to enable fresh water to flow again, 6,000 tonnes of aid was delivered to 177 communities and medical care was brought in. MAF supported the Nepalese people for many months as they began their long road to recovery. They brought hope to people, enabling homes and schools to be rebuilt.

Our present epic journey, which began several months ago, is approaching its end as we return to MAF headquarters in Folkestone. So 80 years on from the 1st flight in 1945, it is encouraging to see how MAF is embracing the future. Aviation continues to be a lifeline for isolated people. Now several young African personnel are now trained as pilots, engineers and ground staff. MAF is embracing new technology with fuel-efficient systems, sophisticated simulators for training and even exploring the use of drones. MAF remains utterly vital to the future of the next generation.

Most importantly, however, is your generosity in supporting MAF's flights, giving MAF the opportunities for pilots, engineers, managers and key staff to make a transformational difference in the nations where MAF operates. A gift to MAF may help a dentist reach a clinic or fly a patient to hospital. Always MAF's focus is on building God's kingdom and prayer support is vital. If you would like to receive occasional online short bits of information about MAF's current work, please phone me with your email address, Liz Piper 01969663747. Gifts to MAF can be sent to MAF UK, Castle House, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone CT20 2TQ or by phone 01303 852819 or securely online to www.maf-uk.org/fflgive Thank you.

Harvest Charity Collections: Thank you to everyone who donated at the recent Harvest Services in the Benefice. The following totals sent to date are Aysgarth: £292.60 to Caring for Life. Preston under Scar: £60 to Mary's Meals. Redmire: £170 to MAF. Thornton Rust: £87.10 to RABI the Farmers Charity. West Witton: £153 to The Addington Fund.

Living Advent Calendar. Filling our villages with light and joy! Take a walk around Carperby, Thoraby and West Witton during December to see the lovely illuminated numbered windows!

Posada Journey. During December knitted figures of Joseph and Mary (and the well behaved house trained donkey!) will once again travel around West Witton looking for shelter re-enacting Mary and Joseph's journey.

Follow the Star: A Christmas Trail in Ripon Cathedral **22nd December – 5th January**

Experience the wonder of Christmas by following the stars on our festive Christmas Trail. Journey through the Cathedral discovering the joyful Christmas story and meeting the characters of the Nativity. This Trail is free of charge.

Come and join us!

Ripon Cathedral Pilgrimage Boxing Day

A cherished tradition that has been celebrated for over 45 years. It begins with a service of Holy Communion at Ripon Cathedral at 9:30 am and concludes with a carol service in the abbey's cellarium. The pilgrimage follows the footsteps of the original founders of Fountains Abbey, who set out from Ripon the day after Christmas in 1132 AD. Participants can enjoy the scenic route, through the Studley Royal Deer Park and the illuminated ruins of Fountains Abbey. The event is free to join and is a chance for community engagement and reflection.

The Bereavement Journey



Time: 9.30am – 11.30am Tuesdays 3rd February – 17th March.

Are you grieving the death of a loved one or struggling with the long-term effect of loss? Join us for a seven-session weekly course at Thorpe Prebend House, High St. Agnesgate, Ripon HG4 1QR. Topics include: Attachment, separation and anxiety. Impact of the pain of bereavement. Adjusting to change. Anger and guilt. Coping with others reactions. Please email fionapearman@riponcathedral.org.uk or tel. 01765 603462 for more information. *There is no charge for this course.*

Chalking the Door – An Epiphany Tradition

Have you ever noticed a mysterious series of letters and numbers which looked like a mathematics equation, inscribed in chalk over a doorway at your church or at the home of a friend – and wondered “What is that?”

It’s called “Chalking the Door” and is a Christian tradition, to ask for God’s blessing on your home and for everyone who enters it throughout the coming year. There is no formal way for “chalking the door” and it can be a wonderful activity to do at homes and at churches. If you’re blessing your home, gather your whole household. Those who live alone may consider inviting a friend or neighbour. This is usually done at the Epiphany Service if you’re blessing your church building.

You will need any colour chalk! (Sidewalk chalk is a sturdy option).

A board or cardboard if you don’t want to write on the actual door.

Gather together to say an informal (using your own words) or formal prayer. Examples: *“May all who enter this door be welcomed with peace and loving kindness. May all who leave this door be blessed and manifest the peace and loving kindness wherever they go”.*

Or: *“Loving God, bless this household. May we be blessed with health, goodness of heart, gentleness, and abiding in your will. We ask this through Christ our Saviour. Amen”.*



Write the inscription – Take turns with those present to write on or above the outside of the door: **20 + C + M + B + 26**

The numbers represent the current year.

The “+” signs represent the Cross of Jesus.

The letters can stand for the traditional names of the Three Magi—Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar—or the Latin blessing “Christus mansionem benedicat,” which means “May Christ bless this house”.

May the “Chalking of the Door” be a blessing to all who read it on a front door and a blessing to all who decide to “chalk the door” this year.

Some of this text is taken from © June Maffin [@soulistryjune.bsky.social](https://soulistry.com)

Telephone Directory

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Email: julieivesontherapy@gmail.com Mob: 07825467508. In person at Leyburn Arts & Community Centre, The Old School House, Richmond Rd, Leyburn DL8 5DL. Online via Microsoft Teams or Telephone. I offer a safe and confidential space to explore your personal issues.

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www.yoredalehouse.com info@yoredalehouse.com Open 10.30am to 4.30pm February to November. Closed Monday and Tuesday. Licensed village tea room. Homemade food. Breakfast, light lunches and clotted cream teas.

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www.whiterosecandles.co.uk whiterosecandles@btinternet.com Open Feb to Oct Wed-Sat: 10am-4.30pm. Nov/Dec: Wed-Sat 10am-Dusk until Christmas. If making a special journey it is wise to ring and check details. Church candles are one of our specialities, also dinner, pillar and aromatherapy candles. All made in Wensley. Commissions accepted.

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