The St Mary's Spark

Advent 2026
Issue 01

Your faith · Your friends · Your community

Hello, St Mary's!

Christmas is coming! The school is getting ready for its Nativity, and there's excitement in the air.

But before Christmas comes something very special: **Advent.**

Advent is the four weeks when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. It's a time for hope, peace, joy and love, a and you don't need to do anything extraordinary to make a difference.

This Christmas, let's spread a little light wherever we go.



Meet Mary: The girl who said YES to God!

Our church and school are named after Mary. She was a young woman in Nazareth when an angel called Gabriel appeared with extraordinary news. She had been chosen to be the mother of Jesus!

Mary didn't know exactly what the future would hold, but she trusted God and said yes.

Did you know?

- Mary's name is honoured in churches and schools all over the world.
- Our church is called St Mary, Star of the Sea. This reminds us that Mary helps guide us towards Jesus, just as a star can guide sailors.
- On 8 December, Catholics celebrate the Immaculate Conception, remembering that Mary was specially blessed by God from the very beginning of her life.

Mary's message for you:

You don't have to be the loudest, bravest or most confident person to do something wonderful. Sometimes courage begins with one small yes.

Read Mary's story in Luke 1:26–38.

The Gospel in 60 Seconds

A Very Special Visitor – Luke 1:26–38

An angel visits Mary with news that will change the world. She has questions, but she listens, trusts God and accepts the extraordinary role He has been given.

What can we learn? Sometimes doing the right thing takes courage. We can all say yes to something good.

Think about it: What's one brave or kind thing you could say yes to this Advent?

Faith in Real Life: The Kindness Countdown

Advent isn't just about counting the days until Christmas. It's about preparing our hearts.
Here's your challenge: try four little acts of kindness, one for each week of Advent.

- **Week 1 – Hope**
  Encourage someone who's having a difficult day.
- **Week 2 – Peace**
  Be the first to make up after an argument.
- **Week 3 – Joy**
  Do something thoughtful to make somebody smile.
- **Week 4 – Love**
  Help someone without being asked or expecting a reward.

Small actions can make a big difference!

Discover Your Parish

Did you know there's more happening at St Mary's than Sunday Mass?

- **Chat 'N Do.**
  Wednesdays, 1-3pm in the parish hall.
  A chance to get together, chat and enjoy activities.
- **Sunday Tea & Coffee**
  After the 10am Sunday Mass.
  A friendly opportunity for families and parishioners to meet.
- **Bible Study**
  Thursdays at 2.15pm in the parish hall, except the last Thursday of each month.
  Explore Scripture together.
- **RCIA**
  A welcoming programme for adults exploring the Catholic Faith.

What's Happening at St Mary's?

Thu 3 Dec	**Agape, 6.30pm** A special opportunity to gather in prayer at St Mary's Church.
Fri 4 Dec	**School Sparkle Day** Wear something festive, colourful or sparkly, to school. There's no need to buy anything new.
Tue 8 Dec	**Nativity and Carol Service, 7pm** Join the school community at St Mary's Church for a beautiful evening celebrating the Christmas story.
Thu 17 Dec	**Stella Maris Carol Service, 6pm** Christmas carols at St Mary's Church, followed by a buffet in the parish hall.
Thu 24 Dec	**Christmas Eve** Carols and Christmas Mass at St Mary's Church, 7.30pm.
Fri 25 Dec	**Christmas Day** Celebrate the birth of Jesus. Mass at St Mary's Church, 10am.

Please check the latest parish bulletin and school communications for any changes.

The Spark Challenge

Design Your Own Advent Star!

- Draw and decorate a star.
- Inside it, write one way you can bring hope, peace, joy or love to someone this Christmas.
- You could display it at home, share it with your family or give it to somebody. who needs cheering up.

A question for you:
If you could introduce one new activity for young people at St Mary's, what would it be? We'd love to hear your ideas!

A Little Advent Prayer

Dear Mary,
Help us to be brave when things feel difficult, kind when others need us, and willing to say yes to doing good. Guide us closer to Jesus this Advent and help us share His love with everyone we meet.
Amen.



Next edition: Lent 2027