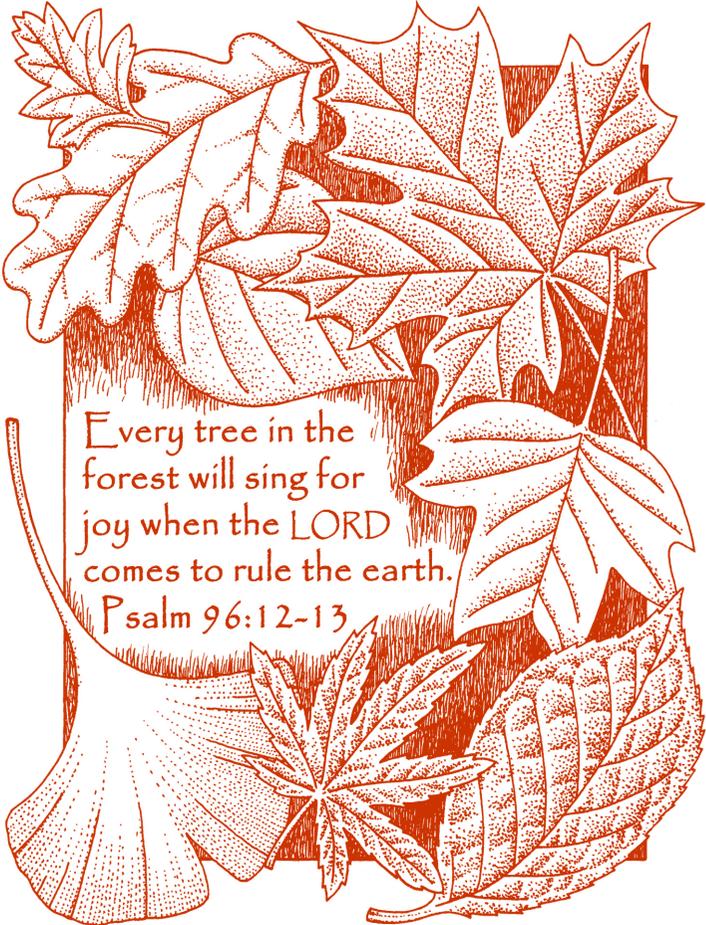


2020

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MENSTON
PARISH CHURCH
St John the Divine



From the Editor

Thanks to the willingness of the magazine distributors, we were able to print and deliver the magazine this month - the first time since the March edition. This is a reduced format web version containing all the main articles of interest.

My sincere thanks to all those who have contributed articles.

Stay safe and well.

Jan Alexander, Editor



Copy for the NOVEMBER magazine is due by **Sunday 13 October**. Please email copy to both editor and Parish Office (office@stjohnmenston.org.uk) or leave copy for typing with the office.

A View from The Pews by Dominic Hall

Over the summer it has become increasingly clear that communities across the world are becoming more fractured and fractious. In the USA, the throes of an election in the midst of racial disharmony have plunged many into hyperbolic outrage that cannot be good for their blood pressure. The world has watched in alarm as protestors in Belarus are removed from the streets and taken away in vans to locations unknown. I am writing this the day after a young Iranian wrestler has been executed for an unproven crime during a peaceful protest. Add to this the ongoing pressures of the struggle to contain the pandemic and we appear to be sitting, once again, on a tinderbox of public disquiet.

It occurs to me that at these times where the world seems so febrile it is crucial that we remember our commonality.

Last evening I watched the Last Night of the Proms from the Royal Albert Hall. This is an event normally as traditional and inoffensive as it can be, but it has not been exempt from controversy this year. Whether you take the view that it is patriotic tradition or jingoistic codswallop I would suggest that it is through the music that we are bound in a shared identity. We know the National Anthem, Rule Britannia and Land of Hope and Glory as we know old friends. We might not sing or hear them very often but there is comfort in knowing they are there.

It reminds me of a conversation I once had with my mother. The Church was going through a period of reflection – concerned that it should be relevant in the ever changing 21st century. I expressed the view (one I still hold even in the pews) that the Church should be there for when we need it and how we need it. That might be attending the carol service, a wedding, a funeral or a christening or regular worship. It could be that the Church gives a sense of belonging, community and identity. That it exists through, war, hardship, loss, pandemic and all manner of concerns facing the world is a reassuring light in dark times. Of course, it is not a one way street and we should reciprocate with a sense of mission.

The Church is built on a rock, a solid and timeless foundation; a beacon of hope and encouragement; unwavering through the trials of life. A correspondent writing about the Biden v Trump election used a phrase that I think captures my thoughts more clearly, *‘It is the victory of preparedness over paranoia; of perseverance over pessimism.’*

The Vicarage

The church building has been open again for public worship on Sundays for a while now. And every week, without fail, that I've led the service it has felt like the most significant part of the whole thing has been the intercessions (for those who don't speak 'church', the intercessions are the bit of the service where we pray for ourselves and our world).

This is no surprise, perhaps, because at a time when we feel threatened, confused or anxious the most natural thing is to pray, or at least to 'really mean it' when we do pray! It feels like we are praying hard, and praying really 'big' prayers at the moment as we look at our world, our country, our village and our friends and loved ones.

I'm assuming therefore, that it isn't just at church that you pray. I'm assuming that in response to all you see around you, you are always bringing things to God. It is our Christian privilege and duty.

And so, I'm asking you to continue. But I'm also asking you to remember to give thanks too, and to take pleasure in God's blessings even at this difficult and uncertain time. 1 Thessalonians says:

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Over the past couple of months, the church has undergone some big and bold changes – re-opening for public worship in increasingly 'normal' ways, and seeking to rethink

what we did before. This process will continue and in this, I ask for your prayers. The leadership of St John's will need them so decisions can be bold, but not reckless - guided by God.

This in addition to your 'normal' prayers for those who do not yet know Jesus, those who need our help, those who lead us and teach us and those we love and care about.

Normally in these little articles, I try to say something uplifting or challenging, but I don't recall explicitly asking for something before. I do so now. I ask for your prayers for all the world, for our country, for our village, for those who need our help, and for St John's parish church and others like us.

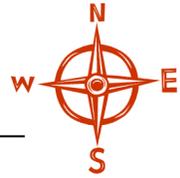
As you pray, please give thanks for how things have developed and the amazing blessings we have from God, but please pray as often as you are able. In return, I promise to keep praying for you.

Thank you.

Steve



Prayer Points



We are all exhausted with Lockdown.

Especially the elderly who were exhausted before it started!

We fear losing - Our faculties

Our bodily strength

Our self discipline

Our independence

Our companions

MANY WOULD EXCHANGE PLACES

- ◆ Homeless Refugees on the streets of Lesbos
- ◆ Girls for sale to husbands who can pay most for them
- ◆ Wives ignorant of how to avoid pregnancies
- ◆ Mothers who cannot feed, clothe or educate their babies
- ◆ People living under a tyrant, helpless & hopeless

WHAT WE CAN DO

- ◆ Keep in touch with the world through News, Books & Charity Information
- ◆ Pray regularly with the assurance that prayer works
- ◆ Research trustworthy Charities doing work we would do, if we could
- ◆ Donate money we have saved staying at home to long term Charities.

Disturb us, O Lord

when, with the abundance of things we possess,

we have lost our thirst for the water of life;

when, having fallen in love with time,

we have ceased to dream of eternity

and in our efforts to build a new earth,

we have allowed our vision of Heaven to grow dim.

In the name of Him who pushed back the horizons of our hopes

and invited the brave to follow. Amen

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

ROOF APPEAL ~ What's happening!

Our target ~ £102,000

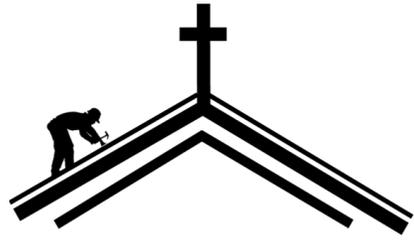
Income to 30/9/2020

Received so far

£26,815

TOTAL

£32,148with Gift Aid



We are still short of our fundraising target so it is not too late to donate either by

- BACS to: Menston PCC 40-22-28 A/C 40572640
Reference (most imp) : Roof + surname
- or cheque payable to Menston PCC. Send to the Treasurer, Hillcrest, Kelcliffe Lane, Guiseley, Leeds LS20 9DE or post through the Parish Office letterbox. If you are a taxpayer please consider Gift Aid. A gift aid declaration form is available from the Treasurer if he does not already hold your details.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising events are currently cancelled due to the ongoing issues associated with Covid-19. Definite events will be notified in good time via the Parish Notes and magazine.

THIS MONTH from Andrew

Writing in his latest book, Richard Holloway, the former Bishop of Edinburgh and the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, invites us to reflect on the harm humans do to each other, and how the stories we tell ourselves to explain our existence are often unkind. He is unapologetic and highlights what he describes as the toxic masculinity in Christianity.

‘Whether or not we acknowledge it, we all live by the stories we’ve told ourselves to explain the mysteries of our existence, the suffering that often accompanies it and the certain death that concludes it. The Christian religion has been one of the most prolific tellers of the stories by which many of us have tried to live, but what story can it possibly tell that will account for the ancient and abiding sorrows of innocent children? This is the big stumbling block that many of us can’t climb over while searching for the meaning of purpose of the universe.’

‘If you need a picture to help you, summon the stunned and bloodied image of Omran. The little Syrian boy pulled from the ruins of a bombed out building in Aleppo in August 2016. How can you forget that image that we saw covered in dust and rubble and blood? Twitching, unsure of what happened to him?’

Speaking about the idea that all deaths are justified without certainty by God, even children, Holloway said: ‘I was never persuaded by the explanations of it, by theologians. They demonstrated to me what has always been for me a weakness in theological systems. A discomfort with uncertainty that impels a compulsion to explain or account for every mystery under the sun. I suspect that this is a consequence of the male domination of religious and political systems down through the ages’.

‘*Mansplaining*’ is a wonderful term created by the feminist writer, Rebecca Solnit, when she had to describe the experience of listening to a man condescendingly explaining something to her that he thinks she cannot possibly understand. It has become a recognised phenomenon, (and I am risking doing it myself when I explain what mansplaining is!). Solnit thinks that it is a result of ‘a combination of overconfidence and cluelessness, a not infrequent combination in the male of the human species’ and according to Holloway it is rife in Christianity.

‘What happened to theology is what men do. They turn these stories into something they can use. It’s another kind of power trip. It is part of this mansplaining thing men do. We are toxically violent about stuff like this. I mean you can even turn theology into a fist. You see it at the moment in the world. Given the right circumstances, the harmless inclination to aggression against a marginal community can lead to the holocaust of six million Jews in Nazi gas ovens, or the persecution of Irish Catholic immigrants in Scotland in the nineteenth century, and in our own day in Britain we have seen the state sponsored persecution of the Windrush generation of West Indian immigrants and the events leading to the Black Lives Matter movement. The effects of which are still reverberating in our divided country today. So we should remember that the stories we tell ourselves can have devastating consequences for other people. We should be careful how we tell them and we should probe them for their implicit hatreds and dismissals.’

Holloway has not been secret about his issues with Christianity and his faith. For the last twenty years or so he has identified as agnostic. However now in his late 80’s when asked if he is still a subscriber to the Christian church, he replied, ‘I remain a member of the Christian church because it keeps the dangerous memory of Jesus alive. But I’m not suggesting that how I tell the story, the Jesus story, should convince anyone else. I’m no longer in the convincing business, the confident mansplaining. It’s just now, this is the story I try to live by. I hope you have one as well, even if it’s different or one opposed to mine, but whatever your story is, I hope it doesn’t make you cruel and I hope it helps you withstand cruelty in others.

‘So there we are then, my answer to the question I began with is, yes I am a Christian, just not a very believing one and I’m fine with that.’

His book is making a lot of sense to me, if you fancy reading it, I would love a conversation afterwards.

Richard Holloway: Stories We Tell Ourselves, Making meaning in a meaningless universe. Published by Canongate Books.

Andrew

The CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Back in February 2020, the General Synod of the Church of England passed a motion to reach net zero emissions by 2030. This is an ambitious target and was pushed by a number of lay people on synod who wanted more urgent action than was being proposed. The feeling was that the Church, ie all of us, needs to bring good news for all creation and so we need to change our behaviour in order to do so.

In Leeds Diocese, good progress is being made - one third of churches use renewable electric or carbon neutral gas; the property team are assessing clergy properties; and the DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee) is about to launch an environmental policy for good maintenance and less use of fossil fuels - only the 2nd Diocese in the country to implement such a policy.

Leeds has also been heavily involved in developing the church carbon calculator and you may recall that in November 2018, I asked for information about travel to church. That information was fed into that study and travel to church is now going to be excluded from the calculator of the church's carbon footprint! It still counts for your own though!

There is a strong appetite for the Diocese to tell of the good work that is happening across the area. Church schools are involved and many lay people have signed up to be volunteer Parish Environment Officers to encourage action and spread the word. So in Menston, we will be reviewing our activities in line using the Eco Church tool and will be aiming for a silver award.

USPG - United Society Partners in the Gospel - share, through their updates, the impact of climate change across the world for the communities they work with. These are our neighbours and we support this work through our giving but we also need to consider our everyday actions and our opportunity to lobby for change. The climate crisis is an emergency like Covid 19. We now need to act in a similar way.

If you would like to get involved, please do contact me.
Marilyn Banister 874220 or marilyn@banisters.org.uk

SUPPORTING FAIRTRADE

After a decade of sourcing cocoa and sugar for KitKat bars in the UK and Ireland, Nestlé have informed Fairtrade that they no longer plan to buy Fairtrade cocoa and sugar from some of the world's most vulnerable small scale farmers.

For Fairtrade cocoa and sugar farmers, the timing is terrible. With the global health and economic crisis threatening their future, co-operatives representing 27,000 farmers now face losing almost £2m of Fairtrade Premium each year. The decision to stop buying cocoa and sugar on Fairtrade terms means fewer schools, water pumps, health centres and the end of many other essential services.

'As Fairtrade producers, our voice is heard and taken into account. We are treated with the respect and dignity we deserve. Stopping the relationship with Fairtrade is to silence our voices.'

The Ivorian Fair Trade Network chose to speak out because Fairtrade offers these farmers a secure, fairer income and the power to decide how to spend that



income. We're deeply disappointed Nestlé have failed to promise farmers that this income and their decision-making powers will be protected in future.

Last year, saw a 23 per cent increase in Fairtrade cocoa sold in the UK. Over 50,000 Fairtrade supporters told the UK government that all cocoa farmers deserve a Living Income.

Ten years of Fairtrade KitKat has made a big difference to those on the ground. That Nestlé chose this period of global crisis to break the relationship between KitKat and Fairtrade is hard to hear for the producers who produce cocoa that brings so much pleasure and joy to others.

Fairtrade Foundation

St John's continues to be a Fairtrade Church. We can show our support for Ivorian cocoa farmers by signing a petition to Nestlé urging them to change their policies.

www.change.org/p/ulf-mark-schneider-nestle-global-ceo-keep-kitkat-fairtrade

Outreach Group

OCTOBER ... remembering ELIZABETH FRY

The prison reformer and philanthropist Elizabeth Fry died 175 years ago, on 12 October 1845. She was widely admired during her lifetime and after, and was depicted on the British £5 note between 2001 and 2016.

She was born into the family of a wealthy Quaker banker, John Gurney, in Norwich in 1770. She rededicated her life to Christ at the age of 18 and devoted herself to helping the downtrodden. This she continued to do after her marriage to London merchant Joseph Fry, and while giving birth to 11 children.



She was a minister of the Society of Friends from 1811 and travelled in England and Europe inspecting prisons and writing reports that were highly influential, transforming gaols from 'pits of indecency and brutality' to more orderly places with a new interest in reform. She was admired by both Queen Victoria and Florence Nightingale.

Early on she made frequent visits to Newgate Prison in London, suggesting radical improvements that were adopted both there and in other prisons. She read the Bible to inmates and gave Bibles away, combining social work with proclamation of the Gospel in a way that inspired future generations. Her insights also led to the Prison Reform Act of 1823.

Some people make the world a better place for hundreds of thousands of others.

... and when Oxford accepted women

A century ago, on 7 October 1920, Oxford University allowed women to become full members and study for full degrees for the first time, and the first 100 women were admitted.

Women had been attending lectures, taking examinations and gaining honours since the 1870s. Four women's colleges were established in those years – but no woman had been allowed to graduate and receive a degree although between 1904 and 1907 the so-called 'steamboat ladies' travelled to the more liberal University of Dublin to graduate.

The 1920 decision was retrospective, and so at the first ceremony at which women were able to graduate more than 40 women did so. The first was Annie Rogers, who had achieved first class honours in Latin and Greek in 1877, and first class honours in Ancient History in 1879. She graduated on 26 October 1920.

Despite this leap forward, a quota limiting the number of female Oxford students to fewer than a quarter of the men was not removed until 1957, when the Warden of Wadham College, Sir Maurice Bowra, described it as 'foolish and finicky' and declared that women were a 'civilising influence'. Cambridge University did not give women equal status until 1947.

... and it was

80 years ago, on 9 Oct 1940 that during the Blitz, a German bomb destroyed the high altar of St Paul's Cathedral in London. Later that same month on 31 Oct, the Battle of Britain ended.

70 years ago, on 7 Oct 1950 that Mother Teresa founded what would become the Missionaries of Charity, in Kolkata, India.

Parish Pump News Service

WHY ENGLISH IS HARD TO LEARN

A bandage is *wound* around the *wound*.

The *sewer* dropped her needle down the *sewer*

The dump was so full it had to *refuse* more *refuse*.

There is no time like the *present* to *present* a
present.

I did not *object* to the *object* being placed beside me.

They had to *subject* the *subject* to a series of tests.

The insurance was *invalid* for the *invalid*.

There was a *row* among the oarsmen on how to *row*.

The two men were too *close* to the door to *close* it.

Upon seeing the *tear* in the painting, I shed a *tear*.

How can I *intimate* this to my most *intimate* friend?

On our farm we *produce* the best *produce*.

To help with planting, the farmer taught his *sow* to
sow.

With thanks to Margaret Day

BOLTON ABBEY

Around us space is curved
Enfolding and maternal;
Broad arcs of stone
That shelter, poise, caress;
Yet thrusting high, huge columns lift our longing,
Stir the heart to seek you here. How is presence
Shaped by silent stone? or caught in songs that flow
From beck to river midst bright fields of praise?

Within us space is twisted;
Cares elbow, jostle, push, compete.
Trapped in time's constriction,
Voices shrill will deafen,
Voices sweet distract us, still
Slaves by habit, tied to dry routine.

Lord, from the turmoil of our fears,
From dark waves of desperation
From the quicksands of stagnation
Save us; quicken longing, waiting, vigil;
By words that pierce and bless,
By acts that sear and strengthen,
Bid storm and stress obey you: 'Peace, be still'.
Then from this gracious ark send forth your dove.

Joyce Simpson

Music and Singing

Many churches are holding Sunday, weekday and pastoral (Baptism, Wedding and Funeral) services again in their buildings.

However, for most of us no singing is allowed; and this often means no music is being played.

Whilst the churches were closed, one of the key things about worshipping together that people missed was the communal singing and the listening to the organ or other instruments.

How dangerous is it therefore to sing in church, when it comes to spreading coronavirus? The answer is - about the same as it is to speak loudly in a pub.

Researchers at the University of Bristol have found that speaking loudly and singing generate about the same amounts of aerosol droplet – tiny particles of liquid – which are thought to carry Covid-19. Of course, the louder you sing or speak, the more the aerosol droplets.



If we look at the time taken to sing in each service (approximately a third of the whole service) we can see the level of importance churches give to singing together.

So, although we understand the science behind the ‘no singing rule’ (breath is exhaled more forcibly so reaches further) it is still very strange to be in our normal church buildings but not to be able to sing.

Singing hymns and songs helps us to learn about our faith, to pray and to express our praise – but what is it about singing *together* that lifts our hearts in our time of worship? There are plenty of said responses during most services, but they don’t have that same *lift!* Is it the physical breathing aspects, the sounds we aim to make, or indeed the way our voices join and blend together?

There are many exhortations in the Psalms to the people to come together, 'singing with joy and thanksgiving'. All through the Bible there are passages telling of times of singing: of musicians leading processions towards a place or time of worship.

The Bible also talks about a time to put down our instruments and refrain from singing. Let's hope and pray that our time for restraint will pass quickly and we will soon

rejoice together with thanksgiving, joyful and loud singing!

How can WE best sing to the Lord at the moment? Have a look for suitable videos to join in with their singing, a recording if that's not possible, or even a hymn book. It is usually easier to sing along with a video of people singing than to a recording alone.

Parish Pump News Service

GREEN TIPS for OCTOBER

There are so many things we can do to live lives that are just and fair and that respect this beautiful world God has made.

- ◆ Keep curtains closed when it gets dark to stop heat escaping.
- ◆ Before packing away those summer clothes, go through them and determine which items to keep, which items to repurpose into something else (cleaning rags, craft projects, etc) and which to donate. Keep those jumpers, socks and extra, warmer layers close for when you're tempted to turn up the thermostat (keeping you and your home warm but your costs and impact on the planet down).



Small actions on our part DO make changes.

Outreach Group

Reshaping the Future

Sadly, Mary Sumner house has been closed since March and the decision has been taken to reduce the staff by one third in the future, but work has still been going on in the background since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Urgent Appeal launched in April has raised £815,000 from members so far, which will help to cover lost income to the MU and enable important work to continue, and the new 'Thank You Key Workers' appeal (see September magazine) is well under way.

However, decisions have been taken to change the way members are informed of all aspects of their involvement with the MU in the way of distribution of various publications. Changes will take place at the start of 2021.

Families First Magazine

This current quarterly magazine which members subscribe to on a personal basis, will be replaced with a twice-yearly publication for all active members. It will be included in the MU subscription and delivered direct to members' homes.

Families Worldwide

This is going to be replaced with an annual prayer diary, enhanced with additional reflections and prayer resources, and the first one will be received at the end of 2020 for the start of 2021. From then on, the annual prayer diary will be included with the second edition of the new publication (see above) each year.

It is hoped that with these two new publications reaching all members in Britain and Ireland directly, it will enable members to engage and share more stories of what we are doing with each other, motivate and inspire one another, and help us grow God's kingdom together.

Covid 19 Update

At present, there are no guidelines regarding when and how we will be able to restart our meetings at St John's. Meanwhile, we hope and pray that all our members are keeping safe and well, and that the most vulnerable have the support of family, neighbours or community volunteers if needed during these unprecedented times.

Marjorie Boddy & Ann Dixon

ANGELS UNAWARE

One of those surveys which some newspapers love to publish claimed recently that a large number of British people believe in angels – almost as many, in fact, as claimed to believe in God. They didn't tell us what people meant by 'angels'. I suspect quite a few were thinking of young children who die, who are often now said to be 'angels' 'up there'. They're not, of course. They are transformed human beings.

Be that as it may, when Christians celebrate the feast of St Michael and All Angels later this month, there will be many of us, inside and outside churches, who will wonder exactly what or who we are celebrating.

Most simply, the word in the New Testament means 'messenger'. An 'angel' is a being who brings to us God's message or his help. In the Bible angels are variously described. The familiar notion of wings and flight comes from a vision given to Isaiah in the Temple when he was being called as a prophet. The angel Gabriel, who told Mary that she was chosen to be the mother of the Messiah, is not described at all, but his words are recorded in detail. Angels speak to people in dreams (Joseph, the husband of Mary, for instance) and Jesus spoke of 'angels' who particularly care for children ('guardian angels').

Most people, even very devout ones, have never knowingly encountered an angel, I guess. However, the New Testament tells us that in 'showing hospitality to strangers' some of us have 'entertained angels without knowing it'. Clearly wings and eyes of flame are not obligatory. Just human care. 'Oh, go on, be an angel and make me a cup of tea!'

Canon David Winter, Parish Pump News Service

Covid-19 Humour

The Covid-19 pandemic has been especially stressful for the Flat Earth Society.

They fear that the social distancing measures could push people over the edge.

NOTICE BOARD

OCCASION CHOIR OF YORK

The concert planned for 28 November as part of the roof fund appeal is now **postponed** until a date in 2021 to be announced as soon as possible. Apologies, but it will happen and hopefully will be worth waiting for! *Geoff Druett.*

SUMMERTIME ENDS

A reminder that the clocks go **BACK** one hour on *Sunday 25 October.*



Honey, honey!

If your grannie gave you honey when you had a cold, she was right.

Research published in The British Medical Journal has found that honey is especially good for treating upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs) such as the common cold.



Honey has anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory properties. These do better at soothing your cough and sniffles than any of the over-the-counter remedies. In fact, URTI sufferers who were given honey suffered their symptoms for up to two days **LESS** than those who did not use honey.

All good news, especially as honey is cheap, readily available, and has virtually no side effects.

Light Up St John's – Floodlight Sponsorship



Now that the dark winter nights have arrived this is a very special way to mark an anniversary or simply to give thanks. The cost is £5 per evening which helps to cover the costs of floodlighting the church from dusk until 10.30pm.

Contact the Parish Office to make arrangements: 872433 or office@stjohnmenston.org.uk.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 24: 44-51, Luke 12: 40-46

Jesus warned his disciples to be always ready for his return at the end of time by telling the story of two servants

The good servant



My master could be away a long time; I will work as if he was here.



When the servants came for their food, he had it ready



He made sure everyone got their full amount every day



Then his master came back



Well done!

I am putting you in charge of everything I have



The bad servant



My master could be away a long time; I can do what I want!



When the servants came for their food, he chased them away!



He had friends come round, and they ate and drank as much as they liked.



Then his master came back



and punished him.

Jesus said

