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PARISH CHURCH
St John the Divine



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*A Very Happy Christmas and
peaceful New Year to all our
readers and advertisers.*

*Thank you for your continued
and much valued support.*

*Steve's last services at St John's will be on
Sunday 7 January.*

*Farewell arrangements will be published
later via the Parish Notes and website.*

Copy for the FEBRUARY magazine is due by **Sunday 14 January 2024**. Please email copy to both editor and Parish Office (office@stjohnmenston.org.uk) or leave copy for typing with the office.

This month

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The Vicarage

Dear Friends

This will be my last parish magazine article as vicar of St John's. It's therefore a really difficult one to write. I feel a mixture of gratitude to you all for supporting me and my family over the last six and a half years, I feel gratitude to God for all that I've had the privilege of seeing him do in Menston, and I feel hope for the future. I pray that the interregnum will bring God's choice of vicar to our parish.

When the apostle, Paul, signs off his letter to the Romans in the New Testament, there are three themes. One is a commendation or greeting for certain people, another is personal instructions relating to the church, and the final theme is what is called a doxology – a final liturgy of praise to God. So writing this final magazine article, please allow me to follow his example.

Firstly then, commendations and greetings. May I thank each of you for making our time in Menston such a happy period. It has been a privilege to be the vicar of a church and a village which is welcoming and supportive. I pray that you will welcome the next vicar as you welcomed me. Please can I thank, and commend to you all the churchwardens who have served during my time here – Jonathan, Roger, David and Hilary. They have each been a support and an encouragement. I also want to thank Andrew, our Associate Priest, who has been the best clergy colleague I could have wished for – his spiritual and practical wisdom, encouragement and patience mean so much. We have also been blessed by two dedicated treasurers, three PCC secretaries and two parish administrators whilst I've been here, all of whom in their own way have furthered the ministry of God in our community. I have been particularly grateful for the support of those who deal with safeguarding, both in the parish and at diocesan level too. St John's is a place where so many people do so much to support the work of God, from those who deal with buildings and churchyards, to those who deal with services and crafts. This is a credit to the Church. Thank you. Please continue to serve God into the future.

Secondly, Paul gave personal instructions relating to the churches he wrote to. Obviously when I am gone there will be changes, which is only right and proper. Nothing remains frozen in time. In my time in Menston, St John's have shown themselves to be a church family who cares for their wider parish and longs for everyone to know Jesus. Please do not lose this. May every change bring people closer to God. As Paul says in his section of personal instructions in Romans 16, let us not be people who serve 'our own appetites', but whose 'obedience is known to all.' Let us be people who are 'wise in what is good and guileless in what is evil.' Great things have happened in the last six and a half years at St John's. We are quite literally a church on a hill. Let us always be a beacon where faith shines out to those around and where we search for God's lost sheep in our parish to help them find their home in God.

And so finally, Paul's doxology. Perhaps you might want to read Romans 16:25-27. As I sign off as vicar, I hope it is similar to the way I started. At my licensing service back in 2017, I requested we sing one of my favourite hymns, 'Immortal Invisible.' The reason I picked it is that it is a hymn all about God's greatness; a greatness that is so hard to describe that we can only resort to metaphors and images that we know aren't enough and yet these are all we have. This is the God we serve: a God so great we cannot find the words; a God so loving that he transcends all our ideas and ideals; a God so self-giving that every single moment we have is God-given; and a God so forgiving that he spent himself to bring us home. Our only response can be to worship. We worship as a people struggling for words and failing to comprehend the incomparable vista of God. In many ways helpless, therefore, yet we worship in the presence of God's Spirit through whom we are enabled to worship freely. Our words may fail to describe even a fraction of God, and yet they are taken and presented to the God of ultimate glory so that through the Spirit, and as the body of Jesus Christ, we are caught up in the life of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. May we always be people who are found worshipping God, 'through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever. Amen.'

Steve

A View from The Pews by Dominic Hall

In the run up to Christmas – the period we know as Advent – there are many distractions and plays on our time. I want to take some of that time here to reflect and ask a seemingly simple question. What on earth is Advent for?

Elsewhere in the magazine you will find a review of ‘Touching Cloth’ by Fergus Butler-Gallie. He takes us through his first year after ordination by looking at the key moments in the church year. Advent, he points out is not a time for feasting and cavorting – despite what the pubs and shops would have us believe. Butler-Gallie explains, ‘With Advent...the waiting – and what we gain from it – is exactly the point.’ Advent is a time for preparation, both physically and emotionally, and anticipation of Christmas.

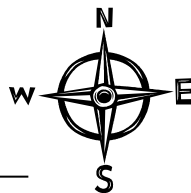
We know what, or rather Who, is coming at the end of Advent and our job in that month is to prepare for His coming. So how do we do that? It seems to me there are two main focus areas – home and self. When welcoming a new-born babe into our homes we take time to prepare. If the babe is ours we will decorate and furnish a ‘nursery’, child proofing with stair gates and cupboard locks can come later but it is still part of the preparations. If the babe is to visit regularly – grandparents for example – we might buy some toys and little furniture to entertain and accommodate the infant.

In Advent (and the time at which this happens varies), houses are decorated with Christmas trees, tinsel, lights and sparkly things as if encouraging through light, the light to come into our homes in the shape of Jesus – the light of the world.

Preparing ourselves is a little more introspective. The periods of Lent and Advent afford us the opportunity to look at our faith and undergo a spiritual refresh. Specifically at Advent, I think we have a chance to think about planning and preparation. Are we ready to receive the joyous news of the lowly birth of a King? Have we considered the message of communal generosity exemplified by God giving his Son to the world?

This time of preparation allows us to pause, reflect and ready ourselves. That is not easy in and amongst the parties, shopping, decorating and cooking. I hope you have time this Advent to prepare well for the challenging truth of Christmas.

Prayer Points



In the Northern Hemisphere December and January are the coldest and darkest months of the year. But 2023 has been a dark year for the world; continuing war in Ukraine, the Middle East, Sudan, Yemen among many. The numerous wildfires, earthquakes and floods destroyed hundreds of lives.

Nationally we struggle with social unrest and frustration and here at St John's we face a period of uncertainty with the departure of Steve, our vicar, in January.

AND YET ... during these two months Christians observe three liturgical seasons which we celebrate with love, joy and songs in our hearts.

ADVENT

The season of waiting, anticipation, expectation.

'Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free.'

CHRISTMAS

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

'Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Let earth receive her King.'

EPIPHANY

The manifestation of God in the world by the visit of the Magi.

'Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,

Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid.'

When evil darkens our world, give us light.

When despair numbs our souls, give us hope.

When we stumble and fall, lift us up.

When doubts assail us, give us faith.

When nothing seems sure, give us trust.

When we lose our way, be our guide!

That we may find serenity in your presence

and purpose in doing your will. Amen

John D Rayner

With thanks to Kathy Roberts for this month's Prayer Points

Eco Church

Reaching the Silver Award back in September did feel quite a milestone but there is still much more to do!



The Den have been praying for the drought in Ethiopia and we would very much like those people who lead intercessions to pray for the climate emergency in the intercessions. A Rocha, the charity who run the eco church award scheme, say the following: *Praying for the earth shouldn't be a niche activity for a particular time or place, or for particular kinds of people (eg The 'eco-faithful'). It should be an 'ordinary' and everyday part of the public and private prayers of all Christian people.*

For those serving coffee, there will be a pot in the kitchen for the used coffee grounds and filter papers. Please make use of that and the eco group will then arrange to compost the contents.

Next year, we will run another Family Eco Quiz and a Prayer Walk and possibly Beat the Bounds so do look out for further details. In the meantime, Christmas is nearly here, so:-

Christmas Jumpers

Could you donate a pre-loved Christmas jumper, for an adult or child? Are you looking for a different Christmas jumper this year? If so, help is at hand!

The Eco group are sharing a stall with the craft group at the Christmas lights switch on at Kirklands on Saturday 2 December from 1-4pm and we will be selling pre-loved Christmas jumpers for adults and children for a suggested donation of £1. School Christmas jumper day is 15 December so you will be in time for that!



If you wish to donate a jumper, please give to Catherine or Marilyn or bring on the day.

Communal Christmas Card post box

It is almost time to write your Christmas cards! If you would like to send one card to all your friends at church please make use of the post box at the back of church. You will be saving the Earth's resources! Cards will be displayed on the Baptistry screen.



December - Eco Christmas ideas

1. *Be creative in the gifts* you give this Christmas; make sure your desire to be loving is not damaging the environment.
2. Buy as much *locally produced, in season food* and particularly vegetables as you can. Try not to over cater and waste food.
3. *Why not reuse your wrapping paper*. Take a bit of care unwrapping your presents (it adds to the gift experience), save the paper and reuse next year.
4. *Enjoy the feast of Christmas!* Don't forget to *recycle your rubbish*. Don't waste unwanted presents, find new homes for them through the charity shop or on ebay.
5. Get ready with your *environmental New Year's Resolution*. How will you care for creation in the coming year?

January – In the kitchen

1. Never put warm or hot food into the fridge or freezer as this will make the fridge work extra hard to try and keep it cold; always allow food to cool down first.
2. Use a bowl to wash up rather than a running tap and save £25 a year in energy bills. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-quick-wins
3. When making a cup of tea, only boil the amount of water that you need. You waste electricity (and money) heating water you won't use.
4. Stop using aluminium foil for cooking wherever possible; use a container with a lid that can be reused. Aluminium is a rare metal and its extraction and purification uses a lot of energy.
5. Eat less meat, particularly red meat; producing 1kg of beef produces the equivalent CO2 to you driving a 300 mile round trip while leaving all your lights on at home.

If you would like to join our local eco church group, Jen, Sally, Matthew, Catherine, Jeanne - Claire and Marilyn, do get in touch.

St John's CHURCHYARD: part 3

Access to the burial records on-line now gives ample scope for local historians to research their family history and the lives of other Menston residents. A quick scroll through the Burial Register reveals names of many long standing Menston families which could inspire further research. I've picked out just a few of the names that struck a chord with me. Plenty left to research!



Of the 1,179 names in the Burial Register, there are 143 infants aged from 1 day old to 12 months; 74 aged 13 months to age 10; 11 aged 11-16 years of age. A total of 228 - nearly 20% of all the burials. The majority of these deaths occurred between the late 1880s to around 1920. Cause of death is sadly not part of the Burial Register.

Amongst these childhood deaths are 2 of the children of the Revd William Dutton who served as vicar of St John's from 1876 to 1882. Thomas died as an infant in February 1881 and his older brother William in 1882 aged 3. The children were buried by their father in the same grave plot which lies on the left hand side of the main church path as you go up steps. There is no headstone. These must have been incredibly difficult burials to conduct. His last two years as vicar were blighted by ill health.

Revd Thomas Dunscombe, vicar of St John's from 1904 - 1910, also had a very difficult burial - that of his wife Bessie Dunscombe. She died in 1907 aged 37. Her grave is on the right hand side of the main path as you go up the steps and is marked with a headstone (D175) - *'the beloved wife of the vicar of this parish fell asleep in Christ October 3 1907'*.

Two closely connected Menston families were the Whites and the McKinleys. Altogether there are 12 White and 14 McKinley names recorded in the Burial Register. James McKinley (A108) was manager at the Menston Bleach Mill and was very involved in the early life of St John's. In 1875 he was one of the signatories who wrote to the Bishop of Ripon requesting that Menston became a separate parish from Burley. He was an early churchwarden and a prominent member of the Vicarage building committee. Richard White (B75) married James McKinley's daughter Catherine. Their 4th child, Daisy, died at only 3 days old and is buried in the churchyard and remembered on her parent's headstone.

Thomas White, Richard's brother, was a coal merchant, married to the redoubtable Eliza. To supplement the family income, Eliza 'took in washing'. She was obviously very capable and the business grew. Thomas

died suddenly in 1898 (A107) and Eliza carried on the 'laundry' business from 2 Church View, opposite the church entrance. This is now the home of Mike and Jane Pratt. Menston grew rapidly and became a desirable place to live with the building of new, grander houses close to the railway station. The need for a village laundry was by now well established and it moved to larger, purpose built premises on what is now Rombalds Court. Eliza lived until 1947. The White family became known as the 'The Laundry Whites' and the laundry closed in 1960.

A link between the White and Ryley families was established with the marriage of Eliza's niece Marjorie White to Stanley Ryley in St John's in 1926. The Ryley family were also prominent members of St John's and are buried in a substantial grave in the Memorial Garden. Many of us will remember two of their sons, Michael and Peter, members of St John's choir. Michael Ryley was an architect and designed the Lady Chapel and Vestry extension, opened in 1970.

A brief mention of the Wigglesworth family, 8 of whom are buried at St John's and related in some way to the world famous evangelistic preacher Smith Wigglesworth, born in Menston in 1859. Every few years the office receives requests for information or visitors from America keen to visit his grave - not in St John's but Nab Wood, Shipley.

The Jennings family (B37) are also well remembered. Wilfred Jennings died of pneumonia one week after the ending of WW1. He is buried in France but remembered on a plaque erected by his fellow soldiers (B33). Jeffery Jennings was killed in action 16 February 1945 aged 27 years.

Listed on the WW1 Memorial in the Lady Chapel are the names of 19 nurses who served. Two of these are Marjorie and Minnie Rimmington. Their grandfather founded Rimmington's Chemists, still in business on Bridge Street, Bradford. The family lived on Farnley Road and then at The Beeches, now an Abbeyfield Home. In 1916 Marjorie was stationed as a nursing sister in Malta and cared for thousands of wounded men from the Gallipoli and Salonika campaigns. She died in November 1966 and is buried in the family grave marked by a large stone cross (D138). Her sister Minnie served as an army driver in the later stages of the war.

I make no claims to be a historian just someone fascinated by St John's graveyard, although that sounds a bit morbid! I hope the ready availability of the records is a help to those searching their family history.

Jan Alexander

The numbers in brackets refer to the Headstone Inscription database.

The Laundry Whites' by Michael Ayrtton: 'Echoes of War' Menston Parish Church

WHERE CAN I PUT ELEVEN PIPERS? by Dominic Hall

Sprouts on! Tree trimmed (well, decorated as I am not American!). Mince pies warming in the oven. Another tradition of the season is to brave the shops or battle the internet to find gifts to give family and friends as a token of our love.

The original Christmas gifts were, of course, gold, frankincense and myrrh but I want to look at another famous list of gifts associated with the Christmas season. In the popular song '*The Twelve Days of Christmas*' the singer is in receipt of an increasingly large and bizarre range of gifts. I tried to research why the different gifts were given in the song, whether there was some significance to FIVE GGGOOOLLDD RINGS et al. There is no definitive agreement on this and it turns out there are many discrepancies in the versions that appear.

The song first appeared in a 1780s children's book called 'Mirth Without Mischief'. In this version, we have four colly birds. Colly is a regional word that means 'coal black' and identifies blackbirds – it is thought that the word for a collie dog has a similar derivation. The appointment of the people in the song is also in conflict with later versions. Here there are nine drummers, ten pipers, eleven ladies and twelve lords. It makes sense as the ladies and lords are probably further up the social pecking order than the musicians.

The version we know today derives from baritone Frederic Austin who published his version in 1909. The key differences being the replacement of colly birds with calling birds (generic songbirds) and mixing up the people so there are now nine ladies, ten lords, eleven pipers and twelve drummers. Typical of a musician to boost the standing of his own! As with similar folk-based songs, there are many other versions whose deviations are more telling.

Versions from the 1870/80s have as the first gift, 'some part of a juniper tree' – because who doesn't want a smelly twig for Christmas!

In various versions there are 'hares a-running', 'boys a-singing', 'cocks a-crowing', 'bears a-baiting', 'bulls a-beating', 'ships a-sailing', 'bells a-ringing', 'lambs a-bleating', 'ladies spinning' and 'men a-mowing'. A version from 1858, published in '*The Caledonian*' talks of fifers a-fifing to give a Scottish bent to proceedings.

The regional and social variations show that Christmas and her traditions have no singular ownership. There is not a 'correct' way to do Christmas. In that, it is a feast we celebrate in our own ways and that provides us with a rich, cultural heritage that celebrates the best of us.

I hope you all have a delightful and joyful Christmas.



Christmas

at St John's

Sunday 17 December
2.00pm

Carol Service

Sunday 24 December
4.00pm

Nativity Service

Sunday 24 December
11.30pm

Midnight Communion

Monday 25 December
10.00am

All-age Christmas
Service with optional
Communion

In addition to our regular services.
For more information visit our website:
www.stjohnmenston.org.uk



Worship this month

3 Dec ADVENT SUNDAY

Readings: 1 Corinthians 1: 3-9; Mark 13: 24-end

Reader: *David Machin*

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

tbc 6pm Service ~ Romans 16

tbc The Den

10 Dec The Second Sunday of ADVENT~ Gift Sunday

Readings: 2 Peter 3: 8-15a; Mark 1: 1-8

Reader: *Dorothy Slater*

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

tbc The Den

17 Dec The Third Sunday of ADVENT

Readings: 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24; John 1: 6-8, 19-28

Reader: *Jan Alexander*

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

2.00pm Carol Service

24 Dec The Fourth Sunday of ADVENT

Readings: Romans 16:25-end; Luke 1: 26-38

Reader: *Peter Wilbraham*

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

CHRISTMAS EVE *Reader: tbc*

4.00pm Nativity Service

11.30pm Midnight Communion

25 Dec CHRISTMAS DAY

Reader: *tbc*

10.00am *See previous page for details of all Christmas services*

31 Dec The First Sunday of CHRISTMAS
Readings: Galations 4: 4-7; Luke 2: 15-21
Reader: Elizabeth Leopold

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist

7 Jan EPIPHANY
Readings: Ephesians 3: 1-12; Matthew 2: 1-12
Reader: David Mercer

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist

14 Jan The Second Sunday of EPIPHANY
Readings: Revelation 5: 1-10; John 1: 43-end
Reader: Jane Pratt

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist
tbc *6pm Service / The Den*

21 Jan The Third Sunday of EPIPHANY
Readings: Revelation 19: 6-10; John 2: 1-11
Reader: Jenny Steele

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist
tbc *Ilkley All Saints ~ Release*

28 Jan PRESENTATION of CHRIST in the TEMPLE

9.30am Zest
10.30am *Covenant Service at Menston Methodist Church*

MID-WEEK SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Thursday December: 7 / 15 / 21 / **NB: there will be no**
9.30am **communion service on Thursday 28 December.**
January: 4 / 11 / 18 / 25 / Feb 1

PCC Notes ~ Sally Smith

The meeting was held via Zoom on Monday 23 October 2023. We started the meeting with prayers .

Finance

The Treasurer updated us on the church finances. The bank balance for the end of September was £32,825.82. Monthly income was £6,529.29 and expenditure was £8,068.33. Expenditure was a little higher than normal due to the quarterly electricity and water bills arriving. There has also been an overcharge for gas, which will be refunded over the coming months. We continue to have a monthly income deficit.

The parish giving scheme is now up and running and we have our first person signed up.

The final roof payment of £5,888.52 is now due and will be paid this month.

Churchyard Closure Update

We are awaiting a form from Bradford Council.

Outreach

The Outreach Group have outlined some issues with the current process for charitable giving. Steve will review past notes to see what was previously agreed. The PCC will discuss the issues raised at a future meeting.

ECO

It was agreed that Steve would formally announce the church's achievement of reaching the ECO silver award. There will be an announcement in the Parish Magazine and the local newspaper.

The church Christmas card box will be placed in church in December.

A Christmas jumper swap will take place at the village Christmas light switch on. This will take place on the 2 December at Kirklands.

Safeguarding

The policy was reviewed and adopted unanimously. Due to Steve's departure It will be updated in January to reflect changes.

Interregnum

Mike Coe, the Area Dean, will attend the November PCC to answer questions about the upcoming interregnum.

Roger Banister will share an old parish profile with the PCC.

The interregnum will be discussed in more detail during the PCC away day on November 4.

The meeting was closed with prayers.



This month:

December 5 2.15pm Advent Miscellany in church followed by tea and mince pies in the Parish Room

2024

January 2 2.15pm *Subscription afternoon, including afternoon tea and Quiz

*Advance notice – the Treasurer has been notified that the Central MU Subscription will increase by £3 this coming year. This is to cover funding the work of the Mothers' Union nationally and overseas, and the total subscription also contains an amount for Leeds MU Diocese to fund their projects. It is hoped members will appreciate how important their membership is in supporting this work.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Bradford Area Mothers' Union have recently become supportive of two charities in our Diocese and branches who wished to help took donated items along to two recent area meetings.

- A large number of male refugees are living in the Parkway Hotel, Leeds, and goods being requested are clothes, shoes, toiletries, old 'phones & ipads/laptops, backpacks, suitcases, and Christmas gifts. The Refugee Organiser was present at one meeting to talk about the charity and appeal for help from the Mothers' Union.
- The Bradford Doulas Project supports pregnant women from 6 weeks before birth to 6 weeks after and will attend the birth to offer support if needed. They supply toiletries to an average of 130 women per year, and our members were generous in bringing these items to the second MU meeting, which the Area President delivered personally to one of the Bradford hospitals later.

We send Christmas and New Year greetings to all our members, and look forward to another year of fellowship together at our branch at St John's.

Marjorie Boddy & Ann Dixon

A Good Read by Dominic Hall



Christmas is coming. The goose is getting fat. The shops are all decked out with the same old tat! If you want to avoid the 'same old tat' then there follows a selection of books I have enjoyed this year – you might like them too!

'Touching Cloth' by Fergus Butler-Gallie (*see page 7*)

recalls his first year after ordination in a parish in Liverpool. Each chapter follows a period in the church year, explaining its purpose and some of the rituals, and includes Butler-Gallie's experiences in Liverpool. This is a funny, thoughtful and touching account of a young priest's life though, set as it is in Liverpool, some of the language is somewhat robust.

The greatest love story ever told, no, not the Beckhams but Romeo & Juliet, is known almost by osmosis by British people. In **'Fair Rosaline'**, Natasha Solomons has set herself the task of turning the story on its head. Rosaline is seduced into a relationship with Romeo at the beginning of the tale, events take a dramatic turn and she ends up trying her best to prevent Juliet falling for a man she sees as little more than an abusive philanderer. The story is told with verve and wit and charm. If you put your 'O' level knowledge to one side this a great 'curl up by the fire' read.

Later on in the seventeenth century, Charles II sent people off in pursuit of the regicides of his father. In **'An Act Of Oblivion'**, Robert Harris tells the thrilling tale of the pursuit of two signatories to the royal death warrant across the burgeoning colonies of New England. The real-life figures of Colonel Edward Whalley and his son-in-law, Colonel William Goffe, are on the run from the forces of the Crown in the shape of the fictitious Richard Nayler. As with all of Harris' novels the characterisation, scene-setting and pacing are first rate. A thrilling read that will leave you fully satisfied and with a good knowledge of this dark period in our history.

You might remember a few years ago, John Boyne published the sensational 'Boy In The Striped Pyjamas', a heartbreaking tale set in Auschwitz. Well, he has followed this with **'All The Broken Places'**, in which we are reacquainted with Gretel – the daughter of the camp

(Continued on page 19)

Dear Friends,

First of all Andrew and I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone for their thoughts, prayers and get well wishes that he has received. It is a difficult time right now so we thought it might be helpful to let everyone know the current situation.

Andrew is waiting for neurosurgery on his back. He has been told by the hospital that this is their only thing that will make a difference. He is on the waiting list, but due to the NHS circumstances right now, it is a very long list and we have been advised this will probably mean waiting until next Spring!

In the meantime he has been deemed 'unfit for duty' and therefore is not able to do the formal work that he is licensed to do, at Bradford University, here at St John's and also the Open Table work in Bradford. You can imagine this is very frustrating for him. He has some better days than others, and is taking high levels of pain medication. Obviously he will come to church when he is able, but will not be able to do the things that he normally does.

It is very kind of people to ask regularly how he is, but frustrating when we have to reply 'not much different, but thank you for asking', or 'well he's still waiting for his operation'. Your prayers mean a lot to him, but it is going to take some time before he is literally 'back to normal'.

The other Sunday when he helped to cover for Steve, proved that he has a long way to go, and the operation can't come soon enough.

With grateful thanks,

David and Andrew.

commandant. Now in her eighties and living in quiet solitude in Paris, Gretel is witness to a violent argument between young parents that she is determined will not affect their son. Told, as ever, with Boyne's wonderful narrative skills this is a deeply affecting meditation on the power of redemption.

I hope you have a wonderful and joyful Christmastime.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

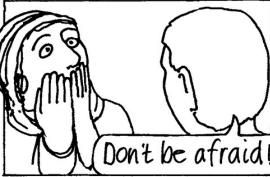
It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 1: 26-56 & Matthew 1: 18-25

In Israel, about 2000 years ago, a young woman, Mary, was going to marry Joseph. The weddings were in two stages.

In one year we will complete our wedding



Then God's messenger angel came to see Mary.



Don't be afraid!

You will have God's baby, and call him Jesus, 'God saves', because he will save people



from what they do wrong.

How can this happen?



With God, nothing is impossible.

Your cousin Elizabeth, who couldn't have children, is now 6 months pregnant.



Mary visited Elizabeth.



When Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant, he was very upset



This will bring shame on me and my family.



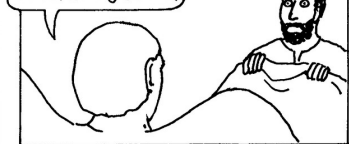
He always did what was right so he decided to end their marriage, but quietly.



But the angel came to him in a dream.



Don't be afraid to marry Mary. The baby is God's, and you will call him Jesus.



So Joseph and Mary completed their marriage.





The BIG SING

Saturday 16 December
11am by the Scout Hut

Come and sing carols accompanied by a
local Brass Band.



Help raise money to
re-develop
the Scout Hut

Bring family, friends,
neighbours!

Seasonal Refreshments will be
served in the Scout Hut following
the singing.



ALTAR FLOWERS

2024

8 January	Jenny Steele
21 January	Jan Alexander
29 January	Judith Knaggs



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

We shall begin to decorate the church for the Christmas services on Friday 15 December - 9.30am. Donations of variegated holly would be most welcome to help decorate the windowsills. Please leave at the back of church by *Thursday 14 December*.

Climate Action Menston (CAM)

On 6 January between 10am-12pm CAM we will be in the library foyer ready to receive your **blister packs** and **crisp packets** for recycling. Please use your recycling bin for other items.

We are encouraging you to bring your **Christmas cards** so you, or others, can make them into gift tags for next Christmas! We will be doing this in the library so please bring your scissors to get busy crafting! Other materials will be supplied. You can keep your own tags or let groups in the village sell them as a fundraiser!

Are you a local business in Menston who would like to join in backing Climate Action? If so, do get in touch and we will discuss what sort of change you could make to be more climate friendly.

Marilyn on 874220

Menston 2025 Heritage Project

The group continues to research various aspects of Menston's heritage and information can be viewed on the menston.org website.

We are working on a route for the Heritage Trail and gathering pictures and stories of how the village has changed over time. If you would be interested in joining us do get in touch for details of the next meeting.

Their finest hour- WW2 objects and stories.

Many thanks to those who contributed their stories for this project. It was a privilege to receive them.

Marilyn Tel: 874220

NOTICE BOARD

GIFT SUNDAY 10 December

As Meadowlea is closed for refurbishment we are not able to donate our gifts there this year. Instead, we are supporting the Food Bank by collecting the following items for their Christmas Parcels at church on Gift Sunday: tinned ham, tinned halal meat, Christmas cake, boxes of chocolate, selection boxes, packs of biscuits, crisps, savoury snacks, custard and hot chocolate. We will also have a jar for cash donations.

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

for 2024 are due to be collected with delivery of the *February* issue. The cost of the magazine remains at *£1 per copy, £10 for the year*. Please make cheques payable to *'Menston PCC'*.

Subscriptions will be collected by the person who delivers your magazine. Thank you for subscribing to the magazine during 2023. Please contact the Parish Office if you wish to arrange a **postal delivery** which will include a charge to cover second class postage.

If you know someone who might like to receive the magazine please ring the Parish Office (872433) to arrange delivery.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

From January the Parish Office will be open every **Thursday** from 9.30am - midday.

Sunday 28 January 2024

we will be joining Menston Methodist Church for their Covenant Service at 10.30am.

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 and helps cover the costs of floodlighting the church from dusk -10.30pm.

16 Dec	Remembering our son with love
24/25/26 Dec	Anonymous
27/29 Dec	A wife, a mum, a grandma - Marie Glennon. With love from all the family.
30 Dec & 2 Jan	For David, love from Cath and all the family
31 Dec/1 Jan	Anonymous
21 Jan	Remembering our son David with love

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



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| ✓ Repair cracks and holes | ✓ Build flat pack furniture | ✓ Power-washing |
| ✓ Joinery | ✓ Replace sealant | ✓ Clear out garage |
| ✓ Put up shelving | ✓ Put up light fixtures | |
| ✓ Hang pictures | ✓ Replace light bulbs | |
| ✓ Help with computers | ✓ Mow lawns | |

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Contact Sarah: 01943 874018 or 07919 566352

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