

2023

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St John the Divine



*Bless this day,
All plants and creatures,
All people near and far.*

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Mary Magdalene ~ the woman with a past

On 22 July, Christians commemorate probably the most unlikely saint in the Bible, Mary Magdalene. There was something in her background that has always fascinated people. All we are told about her 'past' is that Jesus had cast 'seven devils' out of her, but on that slender evidence she has become the patron saint of 'fallen women'.

Some see her as the woman 'who was a sinner' who washed Christ's feet with her tears at a respectable dinner party. Of that person Jesus remarked that 'she had been forgiven much' and consequently 'loved much'. Whether she was that woman or not, the description perfectly fits her. No one who has heard or read it could surely fail to be moved by her tearful encounter with the risen Jesus in the garden on Easter morning, the man she had taken to be the gardener revealing Himself in one word, Mary, as her beloved Teacher.

Good stories get embellished over the centuries. She has been John the Apostle's fiancée until he left her to follow Christ. In art and literature she has become an alluring, sexual figure, disapproved of by the mother of Jesus. There is no historical evidence whatsoever for any of this. In fact, the Gospels suggest the two Marys were close in their shared devotion to Jesus.

187 ancient churches in Britain are dedicated to her, and a college at both Oxford and Cambridge. Whatever the details of her story, we cherish it because it shows that having a 'past' is no reason not to have a future.

Parish Pump News Service

This month

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

The Vicarage

Dear Friends

'God Calls Everyone' is the title of a book written by my boss in the Diocesan side of my job. With the summer months giving many of us a little breathing space, this is the perfect time to reflect upon God's calling on each of us personally. God calls us, no matter who we are, rich or poor, young or old, big or small.

There are loads of bits in the Bible where it talks about God's calling of individual characters, and we tend to assume therefore that God only calls 'super people' rather than people like us. But Psalms like 139 remind us that God formed each of us, as we are, and therefore we all matter to Him, not just the 'super Christians.'

We are formed by God and called to follow Jesus (Mark 1:15 for example) and be a part of God's people. God's people, are in turn called by God – 'I have called you by name, you are mine.' (Isaiah 43:1) This is a holy calling (2 Tim 1:9), where we are set apart to serve God within the world, being unashamed of our testimony of how God's Good News has saved us.

So, all of us are formed and loved by God, called to his people and his service. As God's people we are called collectively to the worship, service and witness of God. But each of us as individuals is also so important to God that He calls us individually, assigning us a life to lead. 1 Corinthians 7:17 says, 'Let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him.'

It is an amazing thought that God not only knows us but calls us. This leads us to contemplate an amazing question raised with Queen Esther in the Bible – ‘Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.’ (Esther 4:14). For Esther, the sense is that God had put her in just the right place at the right time to fulfil his purposes. Consider... God has also brought each of us into this place – which may be work, leisure, village, commute, office, friendships, family - at this time, perhaps for such a time as this?

Perhaps, given all this, over this summer you might want to reflect upon the sense in which we are all called to follow Jesus, the sense in which as a member of God’s people, the Church, we are corporately called to serve God’s purposes for his creation, and then, perhaps most intimidatingly, the sense in which God may be calling each of us, individually, in our place at this time. Who knows where that call may lead...

If you want to talk about it further after the summer, please let me know.

Steve

FROM THE REGISTERS

FUNERAL SERVICES *We commend into the hands of Almighty God:*
30 June Mary Marston R.I.P.

A View from The Pews by Dominic Hall

Some people go to the gym and workout. Others go to the gym and need the help of a personal trainer. Yet more go to the gym and enrol in classes with other people. Don't panic – this is not a precursor to me launching a fitness video! It seems to me that fitness and goodness have a lot in common. Some people are good people without the need for a guiding structure to their lives.

I was challenged the other day as to why I go to church. I was told, reassuringly, that I have always been a good person so why do I need religion to be good? The truth is I had an excellent upbringing with strong moral guidance. Once my parents divorced, we didn't go to church. Throughout my teenage years and on to university I didn't feel the need to go to church to 'be good'. I still don't.

Being good is not something you can pick up exclusively in church. Of course, churches and religious places around the world are full of people who have a sure knowledge of how to be good and can point others in the right direction. It is also a truth that there are many people who do not follow a religious path but who are still good people. A further and much more uncomfortable truth is that there are some people who hide their hate, cruelty and evil behind the garb of a religion.

Goodness, I believe, comes in two basic forms. The willingness to do what is morally right even if it might not be personally beneficial. The giving of time and resources to help others with no expectation of reward or remuneration. What is interesting is the words 'morally right'. Who decides on our morals? More importantly, who decides that one set of morals are superior to a different set of morals?

These are deep philosophical issues, and I don't have the space here to explore them deeply. I would make a simple observation. Everybody in the world has a history and a culture unique to them. We interact with the world as individuals and only when we are sure in our own skin can we become outward facing and put our morality to the test.

So, if you have ever looked after another person and given them what they need, if you have ever contributed to a scheme to help others lead better lives, if you have ever got involved to alleviate someone's suffering then it seems to me you are a good person.

Prayer Points



This summertime, let's spend some time thanking God for all his good gifts to us, as well as praying for those who are going through difficult times....

Summertime thanksgiving

Lord, we thank you for our beautiful village, for the wonderful Yorkshire countryside, and for this season of sunshine and warmth. Thank you for gatherings of family and friends, holidays, BBQs and long days in the sun.

Spend some time now thanking God for the particular blessings he has given you.

Holiday prayers

We pray for all those on holiday or going away, particularly teachers, that they would be refreshed and rejuvenated, and enjoy special times with family and friends. Please watch over them as they travel, that their journeys would go smoothly and they would come and go safely.

We also pray for those struggling at this time, who are missing loved ones, feeling alone, dealing with illness, or are the victims of hate or violence. Please draw near to them and surround them with your love and protection.

And finally... we end with this Celtic blessing for a summer day:

Bless this day,
All plants and creatures,
All people near and far.
Bless the flowers
That sing praise with their beauty,
The grass that cushions my step.
Bless those who stand
With loved ones who are sick, with friends or family who are lost.
Bring healing, bring wholeness.

Bless our bodies,
Our hearts, our hands,
That we may be blessings
To all we meet.

(Beth A. Richardson)

With thanks to Elaine Proudlove for this month's Prayer Points

‘WHAT’S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?’

With the recent death of music legend Tina Turner, I’ve had the lyric ‘What’s love got to do with it?’ ringing round my head. As someone who has been working in the environmental field for some years, love does not come up much in eco conversations, in volunteer roles or job descriptions, but I think it should.

Tina’s song has made me reflect on the things I love. There is coffee and chocolate for starters. Swallows swooping and diving as they return in spring, the smell of honeysuckle on a warm summers evening or the feeling of sand between my toes on the beach. Then there is my family and friends of course.

At times this can be a painful list to run through, as our changed climate is impacting on almost everything I love; declining coffee yields due to rising temperatures, disrupted seasons in the UK impacting birds and plants; beaches being lost to rising sea levels along our Yorkshire coastline; and what does a 2.7C warmer climate look like for my family’s future?

As a Christian, there is another kind of love to reflect on. My love for God and his love for me. Or should I be a bit less self-obsessed and widen that out to Christ’s love for the whole world? John’s gospel tells us ‘For God so loved the *world* that he gave his one and only Son’. God’s love is for the whole cosmos – everything.

My love leads me to grieve over the environmental destruction that I see all around me, but I know that Jesus also weeps for the loss of the very created order that he has made to worship and glorify him. From bird song to

beaches, all creation points to our awesome God and brings him joy. Every lost species, whether it is an unsightly insect or a wildlife poster pin up, says something about how humanity relates to God and what we think about his love.



In Jesus' time the close intertwined love between people, nature and God would have been obvious. He lived in an indigenous people culture, not a post-industrial western culture like our own, where we have become divorced from our natural surroundings.

'Things look so bad everywhere, In this whole world, what is fair?' Now I have the lyrics of Steve Windwood's song *Higher Love* reverberating in my head, 'Bring me a higher love'. We can find that higher love in Jesus' death and resurrection for the redemption of all things. His sacrificial love for the whole of his creation. Can we think big enough to grasp a gospel that includes the renewal of the whole of creation? What does that mean for all the things I love? The song continues 'Think about it, there must be higher love, Down in the heart or hidden in the stars above, Without it, life is wasted time, Look inside your heart, I'll look inside mine.'

Is it time to look inside our hearts and be inspired by Jesus' higher love?

Jemima Parker
Diocesan Environment Officer

ECO CHURCH GROUP

Walk to church on 2nd July? ~ In June, we asked you about how you travelled to church and on Sunday 2 July we are encouraging everyone who can to either walk/cycle rather than adding to carbon emissions. If you live too far away to walk, then please park at Kirklands and be ready to walk to St John's at 9.10am (for Zest) and at 10.15am (for the 11am service). Your reward will be 'foot' biscuits served at coffee time as well as the chance to buy from the cake and craft stall as it is the 1st Sunday in the month. Baking on that stall tries to follow the LOAF principles of local, organic, animal friendly and fairtrade so please do give your support. All these actions do make a difference!

As many of you will be aware, the Church of England has committed itself to net zero carbon emissions by 2030. It and other denominations have committed to take their investments out of fossil fuels or to divest from companies whose actions are not consistent with the 2015 Paris Agreement of keeping temperature rise as close to 1.5C as possible.

Information from A Rocha who run the Eco Church award scheme, sets out that there are 50,000 local congregations in the UK and most have buildings and land. If the majority took concerted action to cut their carbon emissions and became nature friendly, it would have a direct impact and visibly demonstrate what is possible, encouraging actions by others.

Andy Atkins, the CEO of A Rocha, goes on to say, 'if a quarter of the 3-4 million churchgoers adopted low carbon lifestyles and committed to speaking up for change - in their workplace or with their MP- it would accelerate change in business and politics at the national level. The church's scope for positive impact is breath-taking. Backed with prayer and obedience to God, it could deliver change and hope beyond our early expectations!'

So there is a challenge - adopting low carbon lifestyles (such as walking to church) and speaking up for change - are you up for that?

Eco Church next meets on **Thursday 7 September 7.45pm.**

Climate Action Menston

Thank you to those of you who wrote *Letters to Tomorrow*. Let's hope that they have some influence!

By the time, the magazine is published, we will have had the AGM and heard about the various working groups. We plan further meetings for the Zero Carbon energy group and also those interested in Travel and Transport issues. Do get in touch if you want to get involved in either of those.

The **Sustainable Business scheme** is still operating - do look out for the blue stickers in the windows of local businesses - they are showing their commitment to taking climate action.

For further information about CAM and to contact us see: <https://climateactionmenston.org.uk/enquiries/> or ring Marilyn on 874220.

July / August Eco tips - money and disposables

Spend less money! Just about every pound we spend has environmental costs (except investing in environmental projects). So with wealth comes more responsibility.

1. Donate to charities that alleviate the effects of climate change, as well as being compassionate to our local, global and generational neighbours it can save you 500kg CO₂e a year.
2. Move your bank account to an ethical bank who invests your money in low carbon, ethical, environmental projects, such as the Triodos Bank. Ethical Consumer (like *Which?*) provide independent advice www.ethicalconsumer.org
3. Move your pension, if you can, to an ethical environmental provider who is not investing your money in fossil fuels. Ethical Consumer (like *Which?*) provide independent advice. www.ethicalconsumer.org
4. Single-use plastic and single-use styrofoam are sourced from fossil fuels and contribute to climate change. In a season of picnics and busyness, try to remember to 'BYOC' (Bring Your Own Container or Cutlery) for your summer snacks instead of buying disposable items. Think reusable lunch boxes or **beeswax wraps**.

If you would like to get involved in Eco Church issues, please do get in touch. *Eco Church team: Marilyn, Sally, Catherine, Jeanne-Claire, Matthew and Jen.*

Worship this month

2 July **The Fourth Sunday after TRINITY**
Readings: Romans 6: 12-end; Matthew 10: 40-end
Reader: Diane Beaumont

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm 6pm Service ~ Romans 6
7-8pm The Den

9 July **The Fifth Sunday after TRINITY**
Readings: Romans 7: 15-25a; Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-end
Reader: Elizabeth Leopold

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist
7-8pm The Den

16 July **The Sixth Sunday after TRINITY**
Readings: Romans 8: 1-11; Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23
Reader: Heather Greig

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist
6-00pm 6pm Service ~ Romans 7
7-8pm The Den

23 July **The Seventh Sunday after TRINITY**
Readings: Romans 8: 12-25; Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43
Reader: David Machin

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist
6.30pm The Den @ 'Release' ~ Ilkley All Saints

30 July **The Eighth Sunday after TRINITY**
Readings: Romans 8: 26-end; Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52
Reader: Dorothy Slater

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm 6pm Service ~ Romans 8
7-8pm The Den

6 Aug The Ninth Sunday after TRINITY
Readings: Romans 9: 1-5; Matthew 14: 13-21
Reader: Jan Alexander

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm 6pm Service

13 Aug The Tenth Sunday after TRINITY
Readings: Romans 10: 5-15; Matthew 14: 22-33
Reader: Peter Wilbraham

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist

20 Aug The Eleventh Sunday after TRINITY
Readings: Romans 11: 1-2a, 29-32; Matthew 15: 21-28
Reader: Jane Pratt

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm 6pm Service

27 Aug The Twelfth Sunday after TRINITY
Readings: Romans 12: 1-8; Matthew 16: 13-20
Reader: Jenny Steele

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist

3 Sept The Thirteenth Sunday after TRINITY
Readings: Romans 12: 9-end; Matthew 16: 21-end
Reader: David Mercer

9.30am Zest
11.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm 6pm Service

MID-WEEK SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

9.30am Thurs: 6/13/20/27 Aug: 3/10/17/24/ 31/ Sept 7

A GOOD READ by Dominic Hall

Summer is upon us already. Whether you are going to be by a pool, in your garden or grabbing a couple of hours respite from the children, I have a couple of book suggestions you might find enthralling.

There has been a trend in recent years to retell the myths of antiquity from the point of view of the women. In **'Stone Blind'** Natalie Haynes addresses the story of Medusa and her Gorgon sisters. However, her book does an awful lot more than that. Weaving several strands together, Haynes takes us into the world of mythical women and shows how they have been made bit part players in a world of men. Medusa is revealed not as a hideous evil creature, but a wronged child raised by fiercely loving sisters. Their difference poses a challenge to men and inevitably, the men fall short in their understanding.

English literature loves a good murder mystery. The best ones are often set in sleepy villages and, curiously, centred on the church! **'Murder Before Evensong'** by Richard Coles continues that tradition. Canon Daniel Clement tries to cope when a decision divides the parish. Before long murder is afoot and the Canon must do all he can to solve the mystery and keep the congregation together. A deliciously comforting murder mystery!

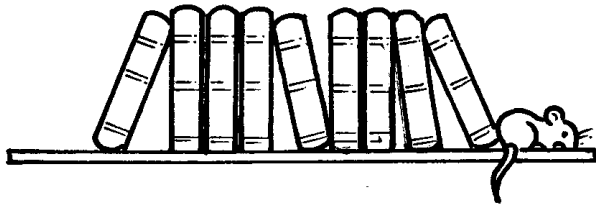
Of course, death is not always fun. In **'Isaac And The Egg'** by Bobby Palmer we meet Isaac Addy who is grieving deeply for his wife. One evening he decides to end his life but is distracted by a strange egg-shaped creature. Isaac takes the creature home and what follows is a surreal tale of the effects of grief and the power of hope. This book is

undoubtedly strange, but it has a quiet power that is immensely rewarding.

'Lessons In Chemistry' by Bonnie Garmus explores the world of science in the 1960s. Sort of. Elizabeth Zott works at a science institute but is fired by a misogynistic boss. Rather than roll over, Zott finds a position as a TV cook. Instead of the traditional cook however, Zott explains her recipes by looking at the scientific composition of the food and the chemical reactions cause by the cooking process. This is an empowering and uplifting tale that reminds us 'when life gives you lemons; make lemonade'.

Each time I come to write A Good Read there is a book about the Second World War. This time it's **'The Escape Artist'** by Jonathan Freedland. It is the true story of Rudolf Vrba, one of the very few Jewish people to escape successfully from Auschwitz. The tale brings a new perspective to life in the death camp and the struggle to publicise the horrors to the world. It is difficult today to comprehend the lengths to which the wilful destruction of humanity was kept secret. Freedland's account of Vrba's extraordinary tale is thrilling, moving and hopeful. It is also incredibly important.

I hope you have found something interesting to read here and that you have a tremendous summer.



PCC Notes *Iain Johnson*

The first meeting of the newly elected PCC, held on 22 May 2023, began with celebrating Communion and asking God's guidance and support in our deliberations.

Following the approval of the previous meeting's minutes the Treasurer gave a financial update and whilst these are in good order it was noted that inflationary pressures and the reduction in reserves following roof repairs, income needed to increase to maintain the longer term financial health of St John's.

To this end the PCC discussed and agreed to progress with registering with the Parish Giving scheme, approved by the Church of England. The Parish Giving scheme is an easier method for parishioners to give to the work of our church, although current methods of giving via standing orders, giving envelopes and other methods of giving would continued to be gladly and gratefully received.

The PCC went on to discuss Fabric maintenance issues including continued appeals for volunteers to help mow the churchyard, along with reports on the repair and full restoration of the lanterns above the front door and removal of the wooden gates at the bottom of the sloping path which had fallen into disrepair.

Reports were also received on Outreach with the next meeting of the Outreach Group scheduled for 4 July and an Eco Committee update stating that the *grow your own project* was proceeding well.

Further discussion was had on working toward a silver Eco-Church award, including consideration of green investment and promoting personal life style changes more friendly to our natural environment.

This first meeting of the new PCC's year was closed with prayers and the date of our next meeting set for 26 June 2023.

This month:

Tuesday 4 July

This is the date of our annual summer outing, which this year will be a visit and lunch at the 'Caring for Life' charity farm and restaurant near Cookridge. Lunch has been booked for 12.30pm and we have had offers from the few car drivers we have to give lifts to other members as required. Our Social Secretary Dorothy Slater has been busy recently contacting members to arrange the lifts, but if you need to speak to her for any reason her number is 879536.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We would like to offer our thanks to member Mrs Sallie Finch for hosting an Open House with strawberry tea at our last meeting in June. The original plan to be in the garden had to be abandoned because of an unexpected chilly and overcast day, but we had a good time indoors instead, enjoying Sallie's hospitality and fellowship with each other.

We have our usual summer break during the month of August, but will meet again on Tuesday 5 September at 2.15pm. The Committee are meeting soon to hopefully plan a programme for the coming year, which will be just one meeting each month from now on on the first Tuesday.

Many thanks to all current members of our MU group for your continued support, which is very valuable if we wish to keep functioning.

Marjorie Boddy & Ann Dixon

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Ruth chapters 1 and 2

When famine came to Bethlehem, Elimelech took his family to the nearby country of Moab. The two sons married local girls.

But Elimelech and his sons died, leaving Naomi, Orpah and Ruth as widows.



Naomi told her daughters-in-law she was returning to Bethlehem.



Go back to your parents' homes.

The girls cried, and Orpah left, but Ruth stayed.



I will stay with you. Your people and your God will be mine.



So Naomi and Ruth went back to Bethlehem.

Call me 'Mara' not 'Naomi' * because God has made my life bitter.



*'Naomi' means 'Pleasant' 'Mara' means 'Bitter'

It was the start of the barley harvest. Poor people were allowed to glean - to pick up the ears of grain that had been dropped. Ruth went out to glean.



She picked a field, asked if she could glean, then worked hard



The field's owner, Boaz, arrived

Who's that girl?



That's Ruth, who came from Moab with Naomi.



Boaz told Ruth she was welcome to work in his fields.

He told her to join his workers at lunch-time, and made sure she had more than enough to eat.



Ruth worked hard and took home a huge bag of grain.

I worked in Boaz's field.



He is a near relative!

Ruth worked all through the barley and wheat harvests in Boaz's fields.



NOTICE BOARD

CALLING all CRAFTERS

First Sunday of the month in the Parish Room 10.15 - 11am. Can you knit, paint, stitch, bake or create something we can sell on the stall? The more the merrier! Please help if you can and give your items to Angela St John, Sue Lee or Andrew. Proceeds to church funds.
*Next craft stalls: **Sundays 2 July & 6 August.***

2025 MENSTON HERITAGE

GROUP Information gathering is continuing apace with articles now about the school,

the mills, the churches added to the menston.org website. We will be starting to think about how to present the information as a trail and in what format. Please see the menston.org website for further information and dates of future meetings.

If you are interested in joining us, have a word with Marilyn or ring 874220.

The next meeting of the Menston 2025 Heritage Group is Monday 18 September at 7.30pm in Kirklands.



ALTAR FLOWERS

2 July	Jane Pratt
16 July	Judith Knaggs
30 July	Elizabeth Leopold
13 August	Elizabeth Leopold
27 August	Jane Pratt



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