

December 2012 / January 2013

Sunday 2nd December	Advent Sunday
9.15 am Holy Communion	Swilland
11.00 am Family Service	Otley
6.30 pm Advent Carols	Swilland
Sunday 9th December	Advent 2
9.15 am Holy Communion	Ashbocking
11.00 am Family Gift Service	Clopton
Sunday 16th December	Advent 3
9.15 am Holy Communion	Otley
11.00 am Carol Service	Swilland
6.30 pm Carol Service	Otley
Sunday 23rd December	Advent 4
9.15 am Holy Communion	Clopton
6.00 pm Carol Service	Ashbocking
Monday 24th December	Christmas Eve
4.00 pm Crib Service	Otley
6.00 pm Carol Service	Clopton
11.30 pm Holy Communion	Otley
Tuesday 25th December	Christmas Day
9.00 am Holy Communion	Swilland
10.30 am Christmas Praise	Ashbocking
10.30 am Christmas Praise and Holy Communion	Otley
Sunday 30th December	Christmas 1
9.15 am Holy Communion (BCP)	Otley
Sunday 6th January	Epiphany
11.00 am Benefice Service	Otley
Sunday 13th January	Baptism of Christ
9.15 am Holy Communion	Clopton
11.00 am Family Service	Ashbocking

HOUSE GROUPS: We have two benefice house groups, to which all are welcome. The daytime group meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at 2.00pm at Penny Clark's house (Cherry Bank, Otley). The evening group meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 8.00pm at Karin Upson's (16, Spring Park, Otley). New members are always welcome.

Sunday Bible Readings

2nd December : Advent Sunday

Jer.33:14-16 1Thess.3:9-end Luke 21:25-36

9th December : Advent 2

Mal.3:1-4 Phil.1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6

16th December : Advent 3

Zeph.3:14-end Phil.4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18

23rd December : Advent 4

Micah 5:2-5 Heb.10:5-10 Luke 1:39-45

24th and 25th December : Christmas

various

30th December : Christmas 1

1Sam.2:18-20,26 Col.3:12-26 Luke 2:41-end

6th January : Epiphany

Is.60:1-6 Eph.3:1-12 Matt.2:1-12

13th January : Baptism of Christ

Is.43:1-7 Acts 8:14-17 Luke 3:15-17,21-22

Prayer for the month

Give me a pure heart that I may see you,

A humble heart that I may hear you,

A heart of love that I may serve you,

A heart of faith that I may abide in you.

To love life and people as you love them – for the sake of their infinite possibilities,

To wait like you, to judge like you without passing judgment,

To obey the order when it is given and never look back – then you can use me – then perhaps you will use me.

And if you don't use me – what matter.

In your hand, every moment has its meaning, its greatness, its glory, its peace, its co-inherence.

Dag Hammerskjold 1905-61

LETTER FROM GRAHAM HEDGER

It must be Christmas because the magazines are calling their November issue 'Christmas edition'. It's all about preparation. When I was young and growing up with parents running the corner shop, I always enjoyed the trip to the Cash and Carry in August or September when shopkeepers were tempted with the 'must have' toys for their Christmas displays. As an 11 year old, I was the retail adviser to my parents on what children might want.

Nowadays, the preparation for Christmas starts a lot earlier in the retail trade and even in church. As we finish one Christmas season we write up our notes on what went well and what ideas we might use another year.

Preparation is the theme of December as we journey through the four Sundays of Advent, celebrating the themes of the early Old Testament writings; of the prophets who foretold the coming of a special person; of John the Baptist who prepared the way for Jesus and of Mary his mother. Then on Christmas Day the anticipation turns into joy as we celebrate the birth of Christ.

I've always enjoyed Advent, not just because it is the lead up to Christmas, but because of the great message of God's love, care and concern for humanity. From the foundation of time we were created for relationship with God, and despite our wayward paths and actions, God always desired to draw us to himself. Each Sunday in Advent, and each time we light one of the Advent candles, we are reminded of that love and preparation.

So come and join the celebration. Elsewhere in the Church Times you will see what services have been planned. There is something for everyone. I look forward to seeing you at one or many of those services.

This is the last time that I will be writing as Priest in Charge. The planning and preparation is over and in January we become a new benefice (the legal term for a group of parishes) and Canon Clare Sanders becomes our Rector. Although we have been a relatively short time in the benefice I want to thank everyone for making us welcome, and also to thank all those who make the churches such a good place to be. Without all the

hard work and dedication of the many volunteers, we would not be able to do all the marvellous things that we do or have such welcoming churches.

Of course I'm not going far away. Clare has asked me to continue to be involved in the wider benefice, so from time to time you may find that I'm taking a service in one of the churches.

Wishing you every blessing for Advent, and the Christmas season.

Crib Service 24th December

As always we will be having our popular crib service on Christmas Eve at 4.00pm in Otley church. Just as last year we will be doing a '**scratch nativity**' during the service. Yes, literally without rehearsal, without a script, we will put on a nativity play. To make it work we would like as many children (of all ages) to come dressed for the event. Come dressed as a shepherd or a wise man, or wise woman. Who knows you might even be invited to be someone else. During the service we will sing parts of lots of songs and carols, recount the Christmas story and bless the crib. If you have any questions then give me a call.

'Out with the old and in with the new' 6th January

That is the cry that many of us come up with around January 1st. To celebrate the New Year, and capture the theme of the Epiphany we will be holding a special 'benefice' service on **Sunday 6th January** in Otley church at 11.00am followed by lunch in Otley village hall. We will celebrate changes in ministry: Jane and Catherine have come to the end of their training and will become assistant priests in the benefice, and I will be laying down my responsibilities as priest in charge. In order to prepare for this event we need to know whether you wish to attend, and whether you would like to contribute to the lunch - bread, savoury item, dessert, etc. Please phone Nigel Crowley (890546) or David Papworth (890091).

Confirmation

There will be a confirmation service on Easter **Eve 30th March** at Grundisburgh church. We already have several people who have said they are interested in being confirmed. If you would like to know more, or think you would like to join the various groups that are preparing for confirmation, please speak to either Catherine or Jane.

Rev'd Graham Hedger

LETTER FROM CLARE SANDERS

At the end of each year as January approaches, it's often the case that people look back and review the past twelve months and what has happened. This year in these four parishes, there has been much to celebrate and give thanks for, Graham's ministry with you as Priest in Charge, Jane and Catherine's ministry and the completion of their training period as priests – now fully fledged!

As well as looking back, it is good to look forward and for our churches 2013 will be a time of change..... in January, we will become the Carlford Benefice of 8 parishes – Ashbocking, Boulge, Burgh, Clopton, Grundisburgh, Hasketon, Otley and Swilland. We will also be working co-operatively with our neighbouring parishes Gt and Lt Bealings, Culpho and Playford. In many ways, there won't be any great changes – Graham won't be with us in a leadership role during January, February and March, but he will be with us to worship. Jane, James, Catherine and Fred will still lead your worship and I will also be joining you for some services, as will Wendy Gourlay, who is our curate, training in the way that Jane and Catherine have been doing for the last 3 years.

BUT and it is a very big but! Clergy do not make a church. It is all of us together who make up the Church, the Body of Christ. We are all baptised into one body. We are all commissioned through our baptism to ministry, every single one of us.

Therein lies the BIG challenge ahead, of growing together, and serving together. We all have something to offer. I am hugely looking forward to sharing in ministry with others and seeing us all grow in understanding of the call that God has in our lives.

Catherine will be the contact priest for Ashbocking and Jane will fulfil the same role for Clopton and, Swilland. Both will share pastoral care for Otley. My role as the full time stipendiary priest will be one of oversight and support, but it is Jane and Catherine who will be your parish priests. They were called to ministry as "Local Ordained Ministers" – called out by you, the people of these parishes, to be the ministers of the Gospel in these villages

One of our first ventures as the new benefice will be to hold a listening skills workshop on **Saturday 19th January**. I did the course last year and

was really impressed - teenagers learning how to be there for friends; adults learning how to listen to their teenagers and, for some, to their elderly parents. Listening is a very real ministry we can all offer to each other; it costs nothing, but the gift of time and an ear. More about that elsewhere.

Rev'd Clare Sanders

FFY The youth group (FFY) will be meeting from 7pm to 9pm on **December 5th and 19th**. There will be a Christmas party on **19th December** so the cost will be £3 for food drink and party games.

We need adults to join us to help run the management committee. We meet every two to three months and help the group plan the events. If you are interested, please speak to Michelle on 890269 or me on 890264.

Rev'd Catherine Beaumont

Deanery Synod Meeting

Thursday 14th March 2013 in Clopton Village Hall about finance.

Speaker: George Woodward, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance. Have questions ready!

Church Times

Subscriptions for next year remain at £7 and are due in January.

Contributions to January's edition, which we hope will reach you in the week of the 14th, should be sent in by **28th December** please.

Thank you to all our contributors and advertisers, and to you for reading in 2012.

James Hall

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES

ASHBOCKING

Our Remembrance service on 11th November was taken by Rev'd Fred Wood and the church was beautifully decorated by Brenda - thank you.

Our Carols by Candlelight service this year is on **Sunday 23rd December** at 6pm followed by the now traditional minced pies & mulled wine. On

Christmas Day we will be holding a family Christmas Praise service at 10:30am. We look forward to welcoming members of the village and visiting family and friends to all of our services.

Duncan Bray

CLOPTON

The Ladies Group on **6th December** will hold a social evening with “Try and Share” Christmas recipes. Bring a sample of one of your favourite recipes for others to taste and a copy of the recipe.

The Clopton Christmas party is on **December 8th** in the village hall from 7pm until 10pm. It promises to be great fun for all the family; ring 737758 for details.

On the **9th December** we have our annual gift service at 11am. All donated books, toys and games, new or in excellent condition, will be taken to the Ormiston Trust to be given to children at Christmas.

We shall be carol-singing around Clopton on **Thursday 13th December** starting at 6pm from Thamaniya, Shop Road. All money raised will go to the Children's Hospice. Please come and join in.

Anne Pryke and Della Hughes will be hosting a **Special Christmas coffee- morning** on **Wednesday 19th December** from 10am until noon in the village hall. This will be a fun morning.

Our Carols by Candlelight service is at 6pm at the church on Christmas Eve. There will be mulled wine and mince pies afterwards.

Finally, we wish everyone a very joyful Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Doris Main

Church flowers December
Cleaning for December

Sue Emmerson and all
Beryl Birchmore

OTLEY

At the family service in November, Graham dedicated the new public address system and hearing loop. We have purchased these as a result of the very generous bequest made by John Fosdike, and they will prove to be a great bonus for the church, particularly at the festivals and larger services. The Fosdike family lived in Otley for years, and some of them were present. John had lived in Lincolnshire for the last forty years but he was keen to remember the church in his will, and his ashes are buried here. The signing choir from Ipswich Deaf Church also took part and we were glad to welcome them. They now have a monthly service at the St Nicholas Centre in Ipswich.

On Remembrance Sunday we gathered at the village war memorial on a beautiful autumn day, to remember those who had died in war, recently or long ago, and especially the men from Otley. Graham led the sombre service, Peter Rogerson read the roll of honour, John Jay spoke the words of the Exhortation, and Lieut.Col. Geoffrey Mason read the Kohima Epitaph. The Scouts and Cubs were on parade with their banners, and wreaths were laid on behalf of the parish council, the church, the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, Otley School, the Bowls Club, the Royal British Legion, the Friendship Club, and the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. Schoolchildren also planted poppy crosses around the memorial, one for each name. Many people attended, including a lot of families.

The Poppy Appeal raised £910 for the Royal British Legion. This year it was organised by Victoria Hook and she wants to thank everybody who helped.

The Fireworks Evening was a great success. There was a super display, and hot dogs and soup, hot chocolate and cream were very popular! The evening raised £300 for the community council, and their next event will be the Christmas dinner/dance on 8th December.

We now know that the grand total raised by The Otley Mile last March for Sport Relief was £2,856.77. This is a wonderful result, so congratulations to everyone who took part and to Penny for organising the event. The next one will take place in the spring of 2014.

Our cyclists in the Sponsored Bike Ride raised £340, half of which goes to Otley church, and half to the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust. Thank you to those who cycled, and those who sponsored.

The latest drama/dinner produced by The Otley Players was "Who Killed the Vicar?" The acts of the play alternated with the courses of the dinner, over which the audience was encouraged to discuss whodunnit? It was excellent. Both performances were sold out; Wendy Sheppard had cooked a delicious meal, and great fun was had by all. The next dates to note are **8th/9th February** when Junior TOPS will be producing "Summer Holiday".

Our Christmas Draw and coffee-morning will take place in the village hall on **1st December** from 10.00am. Tickets have been on sale for several weeks but there are still some available and we have some great prizes.

The next monthly coffee-morning will be held on **Thursday, 13th December** at The Spinney in Chapel Road, the home of Ray and Barbara Johnson, where you will receive a warm welcome.

The next meeting of the Gardening Club will be on **10th December** when Ian Seager will be speaking about "Climbing Plants". Ian is a garden designer and lectures on plants and garden history in the UK and overseas.

Arrangements for Christmas can be found at the front of the magazine. Please note that the carol service will be a little way before Christmas, on **16th December**. Carol-singing around the village on the tractor and trailer will take place on **Monday, 17th December**, starting at 7.00pm from Spring Park. The Scouts will again be distributing Christmas cards for you - to Otley addresses only - and you will see their postboxes in the post office. They will be holding their Christmas Bingo in the village hall on **20th December** and tickets must be bought beforehand from the village shop.

We wish all our readers a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Rose Rogerson

Church Flowers
Church cleaning
Brasses

Advent/Christmas everyone
David and Tess Papworth/Brian and Karin Upson
Betty David

Otley Village Diary

- 1st December** Christmas Draw and Coffee Morning - St Mary's PCC
1st December Christmas Bazaar at the School - School PTA
1st /2nd December "A Christmas Carol" by the Micawber Theatre Company (which includes Callum Hale), with puppets, masks and music , at 6.30pm. 'Fast-paced and fun.' Tickets £6 adults, £3 children, book through micawbertheatre@gmail.com
6th December Christmas Dinner - Friendship Club
6th December Clairvoyant Evening - Under 5s
8th December Christmas Dinner/Dance - Community Council
19th December Children's Christmas Disco 4.00-6.00pm, children up to the age of 10 - Under 5's
20th December Christmas Tea Party - Friendship Club
20th December Christmas Bingo - The Scouts

Otley Church Sidesmen's Rota

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|--|----------------------|
| 2nd December | 11.00am | Family service | Mrs. K. Upson |
| 16th December | 9.15am | Holy Communion | Mrs P Crowley |
| 16th December | 6.30pm | Carol Service | Church Wardens et al |
| 24th December | 4.00pm | Crib Service | Church Wardens et al |
| 24th December | 11.30pm | Holy Communion | Mr. D. Papworth |
| 25th December | 10.30am | Christmas Praise
and Holy Communion | Mr D Papworth |
| 30th December | 9.15am | Holy Communion (B.C.P.) | Mr D Papworth |

Otley Hall Quiet Days: 7th Dec – Canon Christopher Chapman – Christ be our Light. An advent day of deep silence.

Tel. 890264 or email: enquiries@otleyhall.co.uk

SWILLAND

Sadly, Hilda Smith passed away on 29th October and her funeral was held in Swilland church on 5th November. She had been in poor health for some time, but had remained at home until shortly before her death. Hilda was a great supporter of Swilland church, though latterly she had been unable to come to services. She looked forward to the magazine and read it avidly from cover to cover. She was a very kind person who never spoke ill of anyone. She was very proud of her family and will be

greatly missed by her daughter, Pauline, her son, Alec, her grandchildren, and all who knew her. We send them our sympathy.

Christmas Draw - 1st December

This will take place in Witnesham village hall at 1.00pm. Filled rolls, soup, mince pies, tea and coffee will be available from 12 noon. There will be stalls for cakes, biscuits, preserves and produce, books and gifts. Do come and support us. Draw tickets will still be available on the day.

Christingle Service - This will be held at Candlemas on **20th January** at 11.00am when we will be collecting for the Children's Society.

Advent Carols - **1st December** at 6.30pm.

Family service with Carols - **16th December** at 11.00am - Coffee, tea and mince pies will be served at the end of the service.

Christmas Day - Holy Communion at 9.00am.

Our quiz was held on 17th November. It was well supported with 10 teams. Excellent questions were set by Gill Reidy and the victors by a small margin, were Kate and Phil Hatch's team. We made a total of £198 including the draw. Many thanks to all those who took part and thank you for the contributions to the draw and food. It was a most enjoyable evening.

Ann Kent

Church Flowers

2nd December

16th December

23rd / 30th December

7th December / 14th January

Gill Reidy

Church will be decorated for Christmas

Ann Kent

Jackie Williams

Rainfall – October 2012

The least said about October, the better; it was a miserable month with rain on at least 15 days giving us 3.50 inches. The total for the year to the end of October is now 22.50 inches, which is about average for Otley.

The year 2012 is beginning to replicate 1946. It remains to be seen if the winter of 2013 will be similar to 1947, when we had heavy snow, which the wind blew off the fields onto the roads, giving a depth of up to 4 to 5 feet in places. The snow-plough to clear the roads in Otley was kept at Wood Farm on Ipswich Road by Lorrie and George Hunt. It was a wooden plough with two long heavy boards hinged at the front so that it could be folded together when meeting traffic. The snow-plough was pulled by a tractor with one man behind to close the boards if necessary. Normally they were kept apart by an iron bar.

Because of the depth of snow, in some places the plough was unable to clear the roads and in these situations the only way to obtain a passage was to shovel the snow by hand. As there was only a limited amount of work on the farm that could be carried out in these weather conditions, farm-workers were used for this job. One has to remember that heavy diggers were not easily available just after the war. The freezing conditions lasted about three months; more next time.

Russell Ling

Pray for the folk next door

Have you ever considered praying for your own neighbours? That is the aim of a new national initiative, Neighbourhood Prayer Network (NPN). It was launched at the recent National Day of Prayer at Wembley (which drew Christians from 114 of the 124 post code districts from around the UK).

NPN wants to encourage Christians throughout the country to commit to praying for the people along their own street on a regular basis. Regular prayer for our neighbours, and the willingness to give them practical help where possible, is something any Christian can do. It responds to Jesus' commandment to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. So far over 500 streets across the country are being prayed for each day by the Christians who live on them.

For more details on how to sign up, and to receive a book to help get you started, please visit: www.neighbourhoodprayer.net

Christmas: Why does it begin at midnight with Holy Communion?

The hour was first chosen at Rome in the fifth century to symbolise the idea that Christ was born at midnight – a mystical idea in no way hindered by historical evidence! No one knows the hour of his birth. Certainly in recent times, Holy Communion at midnight on Christmas morning has proved popular with modern families. One British writer pointed out its “domestic convenience” in 1947: “for where there are children and no servants, husband and wife may be unable to communicate at any other time.” (So things don’t change, then!)

Where did Christmas stockings come from?

No one is really sure, but a story is told of St Nicholas, a bishop who lived in the 4th century, who may have started the custom by accident. St Nicholas was of a wealthy family, and of a generous heart. As Christmas approached one year, he wanted to help a poor family whom he knew, but he did not want them to know it was him. So he climbed up on their roof on Christmas Eve and dropped some coins down the chimney.

The next morning the coins, to the great surprise of the family, were found in the stockings of the ladies, who had hung them to dry by the fire the night before. Every year after that they put out their stockings, in the hope that some more money would fall into them. They told the story of this amazing appearance to their friends and neighbours, and the custom caught on.

What Does God Want for Christmas?

Presents can be a real problem, when we want to give those we love something they really want. But what about God? What would he want from us this Christmas? What’s a suitable gift to celebrate the birthday of Jesus? What do you give someone who not only has everything, but who actually made everything?

The answer can be found in Micah, a prophet who lived about 700 years before the birth of Christ: ‘He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.’ (Micah 6:8). This Christmas, God is looking for the gift of lives characterised by justice, mercy and humility:

Justice - God is just. He is absolutely fair and righteous in all his dealings. Justice means 'treating people right because you know God.' In the Bible it means caring for the poor, speaking the truth and refusing to take advantage of the less fortunate. For us at Christmas, justice means doing right for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Mercy - This speaks of sharing God's heart by loving the unlovely even when they don't love us back. How has God dealt with us this year? If He has forgiven us, then forgive others. Has God lifted us up when we were down? Then let's seek to lift others. Where God has overlooked our faults, let's overlook the faults of others. If God has been merciful to us this year, Christmas is a time to show mercy to others.

Humility is the opposite of pride. It reminds us that everything we have in life is a gift from God. Although some may have more or less than us, we can still thank God for what we have and do the best with what God has given us. This is the attitude we can reflect at Christmas, when we invest so much time in the presents we give.

God is looking to all these actions arising genuinely from our hearts. As the carol says:

'What shall I give him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would give a lamb.
If I were a wise man, I would do my part.
What shall I give him, I'll give him my heart.'

Organ donation is a 'Christian duty': CofE response to NHS consultation

A response by the Mission and Public Affairs (MPA) Council of the Church of England to the National Health Service Blood and Transplant Consultation on Organ Donation Post 2013 Strategy says: "The Church of England affirms that 'giving one's self and one's possessions voluntarily for the well being of others and without compulsion is a Christian duty of which organ donation is a striking example.'" More details at: www.churchofengland.org/our-views/medical-ethics-health-social-care-poli. While there are 18.9m people on the Organ Donor Register, there are 1,000 people dying each year while on the transplant list.

SMILE LINES

The Holy Family A Sunday school teacher asked her class, "What was Jesus' mother's name?" One child answered, "Mary." The teacher then asked, "Who knows what Jesus' father's name was?" Another child ventured: "Verge?" Confused, the teacher asked, "Where did you get that?" He replied hesitantly: "Well, you know they are always talking about Verge n' Mary".

Visiting Father Christmas A mother took her young daughter to visit Father Christmas in his grotto at the garden centre. He greeted the youngster merrily, and asked: "And what would you like for Christmas?" The little girl stared at him, open mouthed with horror. Then she gasped: "Didn't you get my email??!!"

Church officials Six-year-old Angie and her four-year-old brother Joel were sitting together in church. Joel giggled, sang, and talked out loud. Finally, his big sister had had enough. "You're not supposed to talk out loud in church." "Why? Who's going to stop me?" Joel demanded. Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, "See those two men standing by the door? They're hushers."



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CHRISTMAS LIVE

Sometimes when people tell you a story it doesn't really mean as much as it would if you could see it for yourself. St Francis of Assisi had often preached about that very first Christmas in Bethlehem with the animals round the manger and the baby lying on a bed of straw. But he wanted the story to come alive for his congregation. In the year 1223 he had a brilliant idea and planned a very special surprise for Christmas Eve.

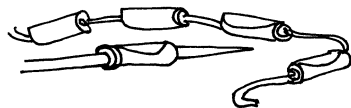
Instead of the sermon in church, Francis led the people to a cave. There, to their amazement, was a manger set out with a doll in it, and all around were real animals who watched while Francis told the old story with a new meaning because people could now see it for themselves. The idea grew each year, soon they used a real baby in the crib (an orphan with no home because someone would then willingly take in the 'Christ-baby'). And still today, churches and homes every-where put up their cribs and wonder anew at the story of God come down to earth, a child like us.

CHRISTMAS BEADS

A nice present to make for someone you love. Cut strips of paper out of Christmas wrapping paper. Each strip 6" (15 cm) long and 3/4" (2 cm) at the widest part. Cut these strips into long triangle shapes so that the tip of the paper is narrower than the base.

Put widest end of the paper strip onto a knitting needle or pencil and begin to wrap it round itself. When you get close to the end, add a very small dab of glue and press it down. Slide the bead off the knitting needle. Repeat. Let the beads dry. Thread the beads onto string or yarn and then tie to make a necklace. You can also make longer lengths into garlands to decorate the Christmas tree.

Use plain colours or the shiny pages of magazines to make beads for all year round.



What did the snowman and his wife hang over their baby's crib?

A snow mobile.

What is claustrophobia?

Fear of Santa.



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