

PRAYER FOR THE MONTH

Lord Jesus, master of light and darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

In our business, show us quiet spaces where we may hear your voice;

In our anxiety, may your coming be all that matters.

We long for your presence and your kingdom where our joy will be complete.

As your people walking in darkness, we seek your light.

And so we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Joel Mason

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES

ASHBOCKING

On November 5th twelve energetic members of the church met to clear leaves and weeds and trim the hedges in Ashbocking churchyard. We worked for two hours and, despite the sudden showers of rain, completed the task, helped along by tea, coffee and bacon sandwiches supplied by Adine Shrankel. Thank you to all who came and helped.

The following day a group of us went to St Andrew's, Melton, to support Janice Williamson on her confirmation, and William Napper on renewing his baptismal vows. Congratulations to them and the thirteen other candidates.

There was an almost full church at the Remembrance Day Service which was an emotional reminder of the futility of war. Derek Pheasant kindly displayed his exhibition of WW1 memorabilia with many references to local families. He stayed in the church until 4pm to allow time for people to study the display and we are very grateful to him. His hard work was much appreciated.

The Ashbocking baby group is going well despite quite a few mums now having to return to work. The last meeting enjoyed a demonstration of Neals Yard products and Stephanie Andrews-Pearce kindly donated the money she earned from hosting the event to the 'loo fund' at the church.

We are grateful for all funds raised for proposed church kitchenette and toilet and an area at the back to host group activities. The church is primarily for worship, but has many possibilities for other uses too. Watch this space for future fund raising initiatives.

Christmas is now at the forefront of planning and hopefully you will have received details of services through your door in Ashbocking. We shall be carol singing through the village on Thursday 15th December starting at 6pm from the Crockery Barn and finishing at the Nelson crossroads. We hope to sing from Andrew Gaught's trailer. Please do join us. Carol sheets will be provided, but please bring a torch and a high-vis jacket if you have them. We aim to round off the evening joining Swilland carol singers for refreshments at the Moon and Mushroom.

On December 11th at 4pm we invite all those who love singing, ages 8ish - 80+ and anyone who can play an instrument, to a rehearsal in church for the carol service on December 18th (also at 4pm). Enthusiasm, not perfection, is the only qualification required. Please ring me (890836) or Marcus Peel from Pantiles (890114) for further details. Marcus is a keyboard player and an organist and has kindly agreed to lead us at the rehearsal. Even if the choir and music group is not for you, then please join us for the candlelit service, which is always very special; there will be refreshments afterwards.

The Christmas Day service is at 10:30am with a nativity and Communion. Everyone welcome. The church will be decorated on Saturday 17th at 10am followed by cleaning at 2pm. All hands on

deck would be appreciated, as well as donations of finger-type food for the carol service.

The coffee-morning will be on December 2nd at Hawthorns, The Green, Ashbocking, IP6 9JX, 10am until 12. Mulled wine will be on offer too! We look forward to seeing you.

We wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Linda Pollard

Church Cleaning John and Linda Pollard/ Volunteers

“GOING DEEPER” HOMEGROUP

We meet at Manor Farm to study the Bible, pray, and encourage each other to “go deeper” in our faith in Jesus together.

We meet every **1st & 3rd Wednesday 10.00am till 12.00**

For more details, call Jan or Jon Bates on 01473 892605

CLOPTON

The Remembrance Sunday service was held at the 493rd Bombardment Group memorial. Nearly sixty people gathered for the service led by James Hall. Wreaths were laid by Richard Taylor for the 493rd Bomb. Group and by Chris Angwin for the parish council. The service was followed by wonderful home-made refreshments in the Debach Airfield education centre. A big thank you to Richard and Prilly Taylor and to Adrian and Julie Yallop and family for making this such a special occasion.

The final hobbies morning of 2016 will be held in the village hall from 10am until noon on Wednesday 7th December. Everyone is welcome and you do not need to live in Clopton or indeed to have

a hobby, just come for the friendly chat, tea and coffee and plan your hobbies for 2017!

On Wednesday 21st we will be holding our Christmas coffee - morning hosted by Della Hughes and Anne Pryke. This is always a special time so please do join us between 10am and noon.

If anyone can help decorate the church with greenery and candles, we shall be glad to see you there from 10am on Thursday 22nd. Offers of evergreens would be very welcome.

On Christmas Eve at 6pm we will be holding our annual carols by candlelight service. This will be followed by mulled wine and mince pies. We look forward to seeing everyone!

A very joyful Christmas to you all and a happy and healthy 2017.

Doris Main

Church cleaning
Church flowers

Beryl Birchmore
Sue Emmerson and all

OTLEY

The Community Council fireworks evening on 5th November went very well, with lots of families enjoying the display. The team on the field was coordinated this year by Ian Beaumont, who has taken over from Mark Robinson. They coped well with the windy conditions. As before, Elmers in Kesgrave selection of fireworks provided excellent value. Chris Gilbert did a roaring trade selling glowsticks, and the head-mounted glowing propellers were also a big hit. Karin Upson and helpers provided hot dogs, soup and hot chocolate, and the evening was dry. Thanks to all those who contributed to the event and to those who supported it in preference to Christchurch Park or private events. The cost of the fireworks and insurance means that profit from the event is very small, so numbers are critical.

More than 100 people attended the service at the war memorial opposite the shop on Remembrance Sunday. This was also the tenth anniversary of the erection of the memorial, and it was good to have Geoffrey Mason and John Jay present, whose idea it had been, and who had organised the funding and overseen the project. It is a fine monument.

The Otley Scouts, Cubs and Beavers were on parade with their banners, and we were also glad to welcome members of the Witnesham and District Royal British Legion, who paraded their banner and laid a wreath. The service was led by Clare Sanders, and Peter Rogerson read the roll of honour. For every name read out, a poppy cross was planted by children from the primary school - Callum, Jake and Brendan. Wreaths were laid on behalf of the Scouts, Cubs and Beavers, Otley Parish Council, St Mary's Church, the Friendship Club, the Royal British Legion, the Princess of Wales's Royal Regt. (for Lieut.Col. Geoffrey Mason) and the Essex Regt. (by James Kelly). John Jay read the Exhortation, James Kelly spoke the Kohima Epitaph, and Richard Chaston of Otley Scouts gave the reading. Guy Nicholls from the Ipswich Hospital Band sounded the bugle for Last Post and Reveille, Sue Wilkins played the hymns on the keyboard, and Mike Bullock provided the sound system and the sombre music before the service began. Thank you all. This occasion is well commemorated here.

A week before, Jane and Catherine led a service in church for All Souls, to remember those from the benefice who had died recently and to comfort the bereaved families.

Mary Hunt has retired as a trustee of the Otley Church Preservation Trust after sixteen years, many of them as treasurer, so we do thank her for her sterling work! At a recent trustees' meeting, we presented her with a gift voucher and a bouquet of flowers. Martin Liddell has become a trustee in her place.

The Otley calendar produced by the OCPT has been a great success and 150 copies have been sold (at the time of writing, there are a few remaining at the Post Office). Some are being sent all over the world, so lovely photographs of our village will be enjoyed in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the USA, France, Germany, Spain, Malta and Namibia, as well as England, Wales, Scotland, the Isle of Man and Jersey - quite amazing. Tess Papworth particularly wants to thank everybody who has bought them and says the response has been overwhelming. The combined sales of calendars and Christmas cards has resulted in a profit of more than £600 for the Trust. There are still some cards available.

The Grand Christmas Draw and coffee morning will take place in the village hall on 10th December at 10.30am and draw tickets are on sale now. We have some great prizes.

From January the monthly coffee-mornings will revert to the second Thursday of the month, with the Friendship Club meeting on the first and third Thursdays after their winter break in January and February. The Community Lunch will move to the fourth Thursday; the cost will be £6 for two courses, and you must let Linda know during the previous week if you will be attending (tel. [01473 890312](tel:01473890312)). Meanwhile the Christmas community lunch will take place at the White Hart on 15th December. There will be no coffee-morning in December and the first of the New Year will be held on 12th January at 16 Spring Park, the home of Karin and Brian Upson.

To add to last month's notes, the Harvest collection sent to Farm Africa amounted to £162-98. Thanks to a grant of £850 from the OCPT, we were able to install metal guards across the louvres in the tower to prevent damage to the bells by birds, and also repair and install new locks in the church. With hard work by Jonathan Ellis, David Montgomery and Richard Treloar, the Bedwell tomb

opposite the porch has been made safe, and the path re-gravelled, funded by a generous grant of £500 from the parish council.

Congratulations to Joan Lane who has just celebrated her 95th birthday, and looks as fit as ever. The Friendship Club arranged a party for her.

Details of the services for Christmas can be found in the centre of the magazine. There will be no carol singing around the village this year, but there will be plenty of opportunity at the carol service on Sunday 18th December at 5.30pm (please note the change of time). We wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas.

Rose Rogerson

Village diary:

- 3rd Dec. Christmas Bazaar - at the primary school
- 8th Dec. Christmas Dinner - Friendship Club
- 10th Dec. Christmas Draw and coffee morning - St Mary's PCC
- 10th Dec. Christmas Dinner/Dance - Community Council
- 14th Dec. Wreath making with Sue Courteney - Under 5s
- 15th Dec. Christmas Community Lunch at the White Hart
- 15th Dec. Christmas Tea party - Friendship Club
- 16th Dec. Christmas Bingo - Otley Scouts

Church flowers: none in Advent/Christmas everybody

Church Cleaning: Kate Watson/Karin and Brian Upson

Sidepersons:

4th December	11.00am Advent Praise	Angela Treloar
18th December	5.30pm Carol Service	Pauline Crowley
24th December	4.30pm Crib Service	TBC
24th December	11.30pm Midnight Service	David Papworth

COME & CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS AT ST MARY'S OTLEY

You are warmly invited to join us at our Christmas services in the church: -

Sunday 4th at 11.00 am – Family Advent Praise

Sunday 18th at 5.30 pm – Carol service

Thursday 22nd at 10.00am – Crib service rehearsal

Saturday 24th at 4.30pm – Crib Service

Saturday 24th at 11.30 pm – Midnight Communion



All Souls Remembering Service – 6th November

At the start of November over 30 people gathered in Otley church to remember loved ones who have died, in a simple service of hymns, readings and an act of commemoration. It was appreciated by all who came along and we shared refreshments and conversation afterwards. Thank you to all who took part. Several people asked for a copy of a poem that was read. I don't know the source but came across it at a funeral. I hope others find it useful too.

Jane Hall

"Listen" he said, gently.

"If I gave you a gift - something rare and special,

*Something so priceless and beyond compare that it was unique,
Something that you would always love*

*Something that was to be yours forever –
And if, when I gave you this gift, I placed it in a casket
To make it look more important....which would you
Value the most? The gift or the casket?”
“The gift” she mumbled, swallowing back tears.
“The gift!” the old man said gently
“The body is only a casket. Let it go! Keep the gift!
I will always be with you. We love each other. We cannot lose
each other.
Whenever you walk on the beach – I will be there.
Whenever the rain falls or the sun shines, when the first swallow
Comes and the bird sings – I will be there.
When darkness fills your mind and the days seem long and
Wearisome, remember me! I will be there, waiting for you at the
Other side”*

Would you like to be the Local Recorder for Otley?

The Suffolk Local History Council (SLHC) runs a Local Recorders scheme throughout Suffolk, to ensure that the ‘present’ is adequately recorded at a local level for the ‘future’. This is not about researching the past, but about noting changes as they occur in the parish now. The Otley Local Recorder notes significant happenings in Otley and collects local leaflets and newspaper cuttings, as well as photos of village events. You don’t need to be a historian or have any qualification other than an interest in Otley.

Recorders receive a copy of the SLHC Newsletter and are invited to the annual meeting day for Local Recorders. At the end of each year, Recorders are asked to submit a short summary of the activities in their parish. These reports are deposited at Suffolk Record Office and become available to future researchers together with the collected items.

Contact me to find out more, or email records@slhc.org.uk . You can also read about the guidelines for being a Local Recorder by visiting www.slhc.org.uk and clicking on 'Recorders'.

Sally Whiffing

Otley Primary School

Pupils at Otley Primary School are getting excited about a visit from a very important guest. Father Christmas has managed to fit us into his busy schedule and is going to be a guest of honour at the School Christmas Bazaar on Saturday 3rd December 11am until 1pm. Year 5 & 6 children will be running several fun games and there will be lots of stalls from tombola, raffle, crafts and PTA run games. Father Christmas will be in his grotto and children can get their requests in early. Refreshments available including bacon rolls. Free entry.

Otley Christmas Bingo

Feeling lucky? Christmas Bingo is back! Friday 16th December at 6.30pm in Otley Village Hall. Entry tickets are £1 and available from Otley Village Stores and Scout Leaders. A great night of family entertainment with refreshments, including mince pies and mulled wine, and a raffle with fantastic chocolate prizes!! Everyone welcome.

Vanessa Osbourne

Otley and District Gardening Club

We have enjoyed a very interesting start to our club season this year, with September's talk by Rodney Tibbs revealing to us some secrets of the Cambridge colleges' Fellows' gardens. These hidden gems are often within easy walking distance of the city centre, yet remain largely undiscovered by most Cambridge visitors. They are usually reserved for the enjoyment of the Fellows, but generally do have a few open days every year for the well-informed explorer to seek out a tranquil floral haven among the city hustle-and-bustle.



In October the club's patron Matthew Tanton-Brown, always a very popular and entertaining visitor, hosted a lively and amusing "Gardeners' Question Time", and November's meeting saw Simon White of the famous Peter Beales' Nurseries share with us his expert knowledge of rose-growing and pruning, a subject that can strike fear into the heart of even the most confident gardener.

December's talk by Sue Courteney on "Floral Christmas Decorations From Your Own Garden" will kick-off the festive season for us, before our winter break until March.

The Reluctant Gardener

The Dafta Awards (A Murder Mystery) The Otley Players **18th/19th November 2016**

With dreadfully corny names and such an implausible plot, this murder mystery could have been played purely for pun-based laughs asking for only limited acting skills from the players. Au contraire, acting ability was fully tested as the players were required to stay strictly in character as they mingled with the audience as if joining fellow award nominees at a ceremony. 'Nominating' unsuspecting members of the audience was a nice touch which established the required relationship between cast and audience. Cast members visited the tables one by one and the audience used thoughtfully provided prompts to elicit facts from the characters. Other clues to temperament and possible motives were given by scenes enacted by the players before, between and after the three courses of a wonderfully tasty dinner provided by Lorraine Sutcliffe and her team.

As each character visited a table there was obviously a temptation to converse with them as friends or acquaintances, but the replies were always unflinching from the character who would give only information to which they were party - but quite willing to 'do the dirt' on others! This was where the skill of the actor was fully tested whether they portrayed a bereaved husband (well done, Rob Gilbert as Ben Pozin –I'm almost sure I saw real tears), a sizzled,

uncaring, ambitious-beyond-her-talent, has-been actress (brilliant, Vanessa Ling as Crystelle Chandelia), an actress with a gambling problem and debt (very convincing, Sue Courteney as Nicole De Limelite), an embittered stunt man wanting revenge for a dead brother (bravo, Mark Robinson as Ivor Sixpack) or a scheming director smarting from the failure of her last film and the dangerous cost-cutting that had maybe cost a life (well done, Hayley Gavin as Helene Scapp).

As usual there were plenty of clues and not too many red herrings. The case was there for the solving as James Hall as Inspector Wood ably summed up for the audience. Even though I failed miserably to see the wood for the trees (well done those teams who did) I had a thoroughly enjoyable evening and look forward to TOPS' next production.

Graham Hudson

SWILLAND

Christmas Draw - Do join us for soup, filled rolls, mince pies and coffee from 12 noon on Saturday 3rd December at Witnesham village hall. Our Christmas Draw will take place at 1 pm. Please ensure all counterfoils, money and unsold tickets are returned before that date. There will be tickets available on the day. Gifts of prizes will be gratefully received.

Carol Singing - This will start Gina Wilden's house, 7 High Road. We will meet at 5.45 pm. for refreshments. We will then sing at most houses ending up at the Moon and Mushroom. Do join us - it will be great fun.

Carol service - 11.00 am on Sunday 18th December

Christmas Day service - 9.30 am Holy Communion

May I wish everyone a very a Happy Christmas!

Ann Kent

Flower rota

1st January

Ann Kent

8th - 15th January

Gill Reidy

22nd - 29th January

Jackie Williams

5th - 12th February

Margo Barker

RAINFALL – OCTOBER

This is the fourth consecutive month when rainfall has been less than two inches and after a relatively long period of dry weather' the soil was very dry and quite hard. Despite this, autumn drilling was completed in good time and there was enough rain to germinate the seed, aided by the fact that the soil was still warm from the plentiful sunshine earlier. Many fields are green once again, but it is noticeable that where large trees overhang, the earth is often bare, which shows how much moisture the trees take up. The month's rainfall was 1.1 inches with the year's total now 22.85 inches. Unless we get a flood, annual rainfall looks to about average.

Russell Ling

SMILE LINES

Over Christmas

I asked a friend of mine what he would be doing over Christmas. He told me he reckoned he would be doing a lot of work on "aqua-thermal treatment of ceramics, aluminum, and steel under a constrained environment." I was astonished – and baffled. In further conversation, I learned that he would be "washing dishes with hot water under his wife's supervision."

The Everlasting Turkey

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me
I've bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.
On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard
As we tucked into our turkey – a most delicious bird.
On the third day of Christmas people came from just next door,
The turkey tasted just as good as it had done before.

On the fourth day of Christmas came relations young and old
We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.
On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes scurried,
But we were nice and warm inside, and had the turkey curried.
On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died.
The children fought and bickered – we had the turkey rissoles
fried.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince
When he sat down at table - and was offered turkey mince.
On the eighth day of Christmas, the dog had run for shelter,
For he'd seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of alka-seltzer.
On the ninth day of Christmas, by lunchtime dad was blotto,
He knew that bird was back again, this time as a risotto.
On the tenth day of Christmas we were drinking home-made
brew,
Anything to help us face that steaming turkey stew.
On the eleventh day of Christmas our lovely tree was moulting,
And with chilli, soy and oyster sauce, the turkey was revolting.
On the twelfth day of Christmas we had smiles back on our lips,
The guests had gone, the turkey too – WE DINED ON FISH AND
CHIPS.

O COME, O COME IMMANUEL

Come, *Immanuel*, God with us to be.
Come down from paradise and occupy
this dirty stable of humanity.
Come and live rough, as we do: come and die.

Come and be lonely as an orphaned child.
Come to where grief is harvested and stored.
Come to where empty aged minds run wild.
Come to the hospice and the cancer ward.

Come, flee from tyrants as a refugee.

Come, be betrayed by those you counted friends.
Come and be tortured with no amnesty.
Come as the means to justify all ends.

Come and be broken like a Christmas toy.
Come, be completely human—then we'll know
your sorrow may bring hope of lasting joy
and God above is *God with us* below

THE WORD MADE FLESH

Sometimes words are not enough
for everything we have to say.
Words can't beat like a heart.
A verb won't sweat or bleed.
A noun doesn't get thirsty.
An adjective cannot feel pain.
Something gets lost
in translation into words.
So when God
needed to express
a love deeper than words
he used body language
of a kind not known on earth before.

From wordsout by Godfrey Rust

FOOTNOTE

Thank you to all Church Times readers, contributors, advertisers and printers in 2016. We hope you will continue to support us next year, when our prices will remain unchanged. January's edition will be delayed because of the holiday and may we please have contributions by 29th December. Letters, ideas, requests, criticisms are always welcome. We wish you a Christ-filled Christmas and New Year.

James Hall, Amy Waspe, Ruthie Bullock



NATIVITY PLAY

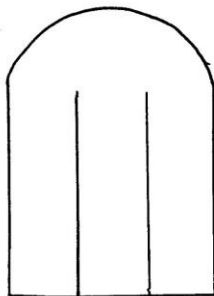
To see the story of the first Christmas through the eyes of little children makes it fresh and new. I like the story of the little boy who so wanted to be Joseph but was picked as the inn keeper instead. All went well until the nativity play started and Mary and Joseph arrived at the inn. The boy playing the innkeeper greeted them with 'Come in Mary love, there's plenty of room for you, but Joseph can get lost!'

Mary may insist that her teddy is the Baby Jesus, the angels may trip over their robes made from sheets, but every nativity play shows the wonder of the story of the first Christmas when the son of God was born a baby, like us. Tea towels used as shepherd's headdresses and angels' haloes made from wire coat hangers only serve to underline the humanity of it all. A baby born in a stable – a simple story that changes the world.



LOTS OF LOVE

Time to make some Christmas decorations? Cut out two shapes like the pattern below, one in red card, one in green card. Don't forget to cut the slits.



Interlock the 2 shapes by weaving the strips under and over their opposite



colour. This will give you a heart shape. Use a little glue to hold them together if needed. Punch a hole in the top at the centre and thread with cord to hang your decoration. You can make lots in different colours and decorate them with sequins or stickers too. Nice symbols of love to decorate your Christmas.

The Cat's Christmas Hymns:

Oh, Come All Ye Fishful
Silent Mice
Joy to the Curled
The First Meow



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