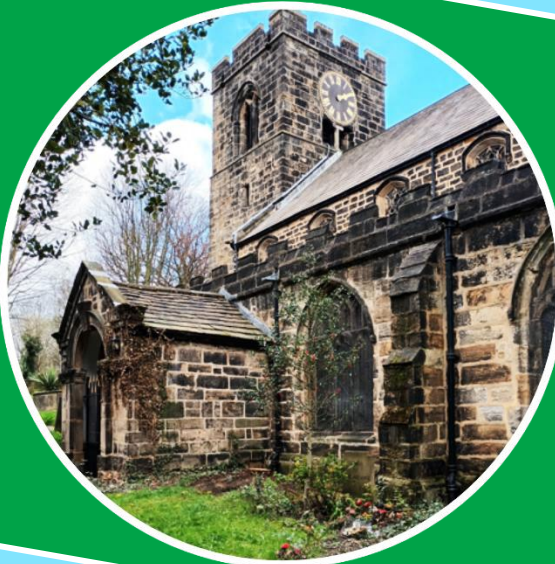


OCTOBER 2025

IN TOUCH

£1



Otley Parish
CHURCH

Key Information

VICAR

Revd. Aaron Kennedy
01943 462240
vicar@otleyparishchurch.org

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Sarah McCormack

CHURCH OFFICE

“The Chestnuts”, Burras Lane, Otley LS21 3HS

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday - Thursday, 9.30am - 3.00pm
(hours may vary occasionally)

OFFICE TELEPHONE

01943 465927

EMAIL

info@otleyparishchurch.org

CHURCH WEBSITE

www.otleyparishchurch.org
*see our website for details of Church services
and a link to our streamed services on YouTube*

FACEBOOK: @otleyparishchurch

X (TWITTER): @otleyallsaints

CHURCH BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS

Account name: Parochial Church Council of Otley
Account No: 10088811 **Sort code:** 20-37-13

Gift Aid: *if you are a tax payer, please consider signing a Gift Aid declaration which is available on the Church website or from the Treasurer, Tony Pike.*

IN TOUCH

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Our Vision

Otley Parish Church
is:

***“A Place
for Everyone,
with Christ
at the Centre”***

Our vision as a church is to see the healing, grace and salvation of God come to the town of Otley and beyond! We believe that with Christ at the centre of our personal, family and church life, we will see his Kingdom come in the world around us.

All are welcome!

Otley Parish Church

Kirkgate • Otley • West Yorkshire • LS21 3HW

Vicar:

Reverend Aaron Kennedy

Registered Charity Number 1153498

DEAR FRIENDS

Letter from Aaron



Light in the Darkness

As October arrives, the seasons shift. The days shorten, the evenings draw in, and many of us feel the change not only in the air but in our spirits too. Autumn can be beautiful: the trees clothed in reds and golds, the harvest gathered in, the crisp brightness of a morning walk. Yet the fading light also carries a weight. For some, this is simply part of the rhythm of the year. For others, the longer nights can bring a heaviness of heart - a reminder that we long for light.

It is into this longing that the words of Jesus come with hope: *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”* (John 8:12). His promise is that no matter how long the night or how deep the shadow, his light is stronger.

But Jesus also says something even more astonishing to his followers: *“You are the light of the world”* (Matthew 5:14). He not only shines into our darkness but also calls us to reflect his brightness. His Spirit makes us light-bearers in the

world. This feels especially important in October, a month when many carry hidden struggles.

For some, the darker days affect mood and energy. The lack of light can leave us weary or low in ways that are hard to explain. If that's you, take comfort - Christ is with you. Even if you feel you are walking in the shadows, you are not alone. As Psalm 139 says, *“even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you”*. His presence is steady, even when our own strength feels fragile.

For others, October can be heavy as we approach the season of remembrance. The Church calendar brings us to **All Saints' Day** (1st November) and **All Souls' Day** (2nd November). All Saints', after which OPC is named, celebrates the “great cloud of witnesses” who have gone before us in faith. Their lives shine like beacons of God's grace. All Souls', however, is gentler and more personal: it is a time for

remembering those we have loved and lost. For many, it brings grief close to the surface again - the ache of absence, the memories that never quite fade.

If that is your journey this autumn, then know this: the light of Christ shines even here. The gospel does not promise that grief vanishes, but that it is held within God's love. *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it"* (John 1:5). In Christ, death itself is conquered. Those who have died in him are safe in his presence, and we who remain are comforted by the hope of reunion and the promise of eternal life.

So, whether your struggle this season comes from the darkening days or from the weight of grief, take heart: Christ is the Light of the World, and his light is for you.

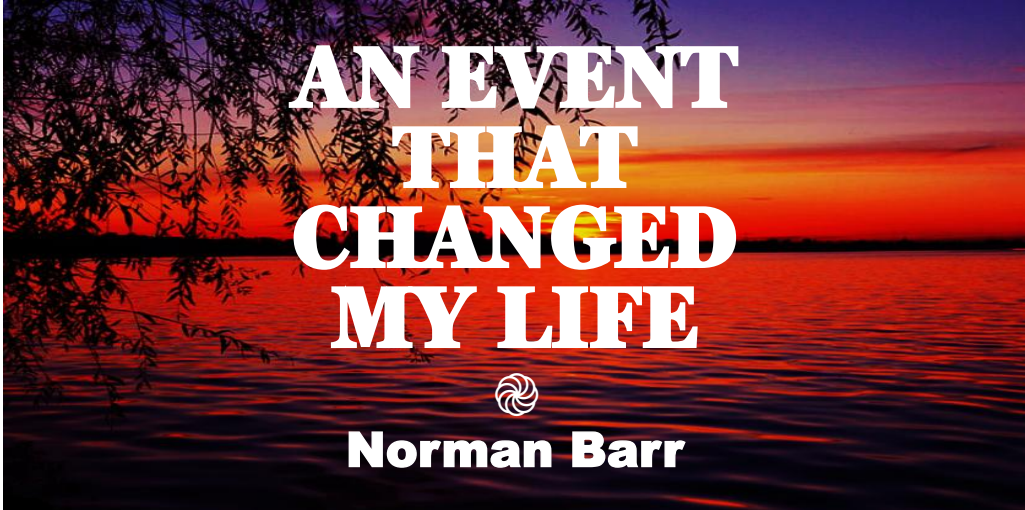
And remember too that Jesus calls us to be light bearers. For some around us, October is a dark month. That might be because of seasonal low mood. It might be because of bereavement or loneliness. It might be for reasons unseen. As his people, we are invited to carry Christ's light into those shadows. Sometimes that will mean words of

hope; sometimes it will simply mean a quiet presence, a kind gesture, or a prayer. Even the smallest light - like a candle flame - can make all the difference in the dark.

So, this October, let us look to Jesus, our Light and our Life. And let us ask how we might share that light with others: encouraging the weary, comforting the grieving, and shining with hope until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts.

"Lord Jesus Christ, Light of the World, shine in our darkness. Bring hope to the weary, peace to the grieving, and strength to your Church, that we may walk as children of light. Amen."

AARON KENNEDY - Vicar of Otley Parish Church



AN EVENT THAT CHANGED MY LIFE



Norman Barr

WAY back in the spring of 1968 when I was about to qualify as a 'Scottish' Chartered Accountant, I began to look at job adverts in accountancy publications. In the 'English' magazine I saw a small advert for a Christian organisation based in London. I showed this to my then girlfriend, Eileen. Later we married, and just last month in September 2025, we celebrated 56 years of marriage. Eileen encouraged me to apply for the job, which in those days was by writing a letter. The reply came back apologising that the advert had appeared in the magazine a month later than planned and that the post was now already filled. I showed this to Eileen and said, 'so much for guidance!' Eileen then said, 'What about the PS (postscript for those who don't write letters anymore!)?' I said, 'I don't know that organisation'. The PS said, 'We know of another organisation looking for an Accountant - the London City Mission.'

To cut a long story short, working with the London City Mission for forty years was my one and only job as an accountant and I had a very fulfilling career with them.

An Event that Changed YOUR Life?

We would love to hear about an event that changed your life and which you can give thanks to God for.

Please contact our Editor, Stephen Hey stephenhey01@mail.com who will give you some guidance.

Creation Care

A monthly column for us to share environmental and sustainability ideas

Creationtide or the Season of Creation, is the period in the church calendar, from 1st September to 4th October, dedicated to God as Creator and Sustainer of all life.

This Season of Creation, the Church of England has asked us to pledge to make the Great Switch for Creation and take a small but impactful step towards our net zero mission. Otley Parish Church already buys green electricity but households switching their domestic tariff to a green energy one is a small but powerful step that we can **all** consider, reducing our environmental impact.

By choosing an ethical green energy supplier, we are:

- Ensuring our church can be a beacon of hope for everyone
- Actively increasing investment in renewable energy
- Supporting ethical companies working hard to reduce carbon emissions and addressing global climate injustice
- Demonstrating our faith in action

What is a green supplier? The Church of England definition is a supplier in the UK whose electricity is supplied directly from 100% UK-based renewable energy sources, backed by the relevant energy certificates and who:

- Has no investment in fossil fuels
- Transparently report their emissions
- Have no evidence of ethical non-compliance
- Is working to support wider decarbonisation

This is an exacting requirement and so far no single company in the UK meets it, but there are suppliers who are working towards this level of supply and websites such as Which? or The Ethical Consumer can point you in their direction as well as this Church of England site

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/creationtide/great-switch-creation>

Why not take a look and see if you can switch?

Look out for more tips in future editions of In Touch or you may wish to share any actions you have taken with the rest of the Parish.

We will continue to pray for God's creation, nature's preservation and the reduction in fossil fuel usage.

What's Your Favourite Hymn?



“IN CHRIST ALONE”

Verse 1

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength,
my song;
This Cornerstone,
this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest
drought and storm.
What heights of love,
what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled,
when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

Verse 2

In Christ alone!
– who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and
righteousness,
Scorned by the ones
He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied –
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.

Verse 3

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world
by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth
in glorious day
Up from the grave
He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost
its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine –
Bought with the precious blood
of Christ.

Verse 4

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry
to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell,
no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand:
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ
I'll stand.

Glynis Milner

tells us why it's her favourite hymn

'**In Christ Alone**' is indeed my choice of favourite hymn. I have often prayed through the words and been soothed by its music. I realised one day that it is a hymn with a beginning, a middle and a wonderful **new** beginning for us all. It has often gently guided me into the centre of God's beautiful grace.

The first line, just seven words, was the reason for my choice - 'In Christ alone my hope is found'.

In **ONLY** our Lord Jesus is the promise of the **HOPE** to be found. He is our cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20), the rock solid structure on which we can totally put our trust. We, through Him, are guided not to build our lives on sand (Mathew 7:24-27). As we live our daily lives, we all live through fierce droughts and storms. We are reminded we have a Comforter (such a beautiful word), a constant companion in a world which seems at times lonely, isolating and fragmenting. It is in Christ's love for us all we can stand on solid foundations.

Stuart Townend's powerful, deep words and Keith Getty's tuneful, gentle, memorable melody weave together Jesus' story - our story as we, with thankfulness, remember Jesus, born **to** us to live **with** us and die **for** us. I realised that this was a

huge reason for my hymn choice. Stuart's words reached into my heart as I visualised the helpless babe, the one who was scorned and the one who carried all our sins, the one who died for you and me. The contrast in that moment of His radiance with the darkness over the earth as he died on that first Good Friday was so powerful an image.

The third verse literally jumps off the page for me, 'then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave he rose again'. Wow - at that point we are in a whirlwind moment of being transported into God's Kingdom, standing with him in victory and those beautiful words echo 'For I am **His** and he is **mine**, bought by the precious blood of Christ'. At this point and through the last verse I sing and cry at the same time - always! We are told we are **free** from guilt, God's forgiven children, we need not **fear** death, it has been **conquered** for us.

Our lives in the last few lines are outlined for us if we only accept Christ's invitation to receive His power within us. We all cry our first cry and God hears us. We all take our final breath **with Christ** within us and until then we can feel safe and secure that no earthly powers can reach the very centre of us because He is ours and we are his forever.

How I Found **MY FAITH**

Kate Hobson

HOW did I find my faith? It's Wednesday 6th August 2025, and I'm on holiday in Bridlington celebrating 'Bridmas'! Yes, Christmas in August. I'm not joking. I made a dress especially for this occasion. Why am I telling you all this, you are definitely asking yourself? Because, back in November 1986 I gave my life over to Christ.

However, it wasn't until the Christmas Eve midnight service that year when I was floored by our Lord, or I found my faith. I was asked to light **ALL** of the Advent wreath candles. It was something I thought would never happen (don't forget I was only 14 years old), as it was always someone well dressed, definitely an adult, and high up in the church (well that's what I thought!). Not that year, it was me as a teenager dressed in a pair of jeans and probably an inappropriate worded t-shirt. I was on a cloud as soon as I was asked.



Back now to being floored by our Lord or finding my faith. As I lit the central white candle a peace came over me and has stayed with me throughout my life, even when I didn't attend church, or didn't talk to God. His peace is always there. I know because of that peace I have a faith; I have a faith that God will answer prayer - sometimes not how I want it answered. I have a faith that God will NEVER leave me or let me down and he will always forgive me.

I've never forgotten that welcomer who asked me to light the Advent wreath candles. He was always kind to me, even when I was sneaking in late. He knew I'd given my heart to Jesus and always asked how life was. He was like an extra uncle for me and the other youths at church. His kindness brought out the best in me and helped me so much in those early years. God was definitely using him that evening.

UP AMONGST THE ANGELS!



The Church of England has set a target for churches throughout the country to achieve Carbon Net Zero by the year 2030. Since May 2023 Otley Parish Church has had a small team looking at how we can achieve this goal (see <https://www.otleyparishchurch.org/net-zero>).

One of the quick wins identified for us was to get the ~~celestial~~ (oops!) clerestory windows working properly again so they can be opened and shut. Quotes were obtained but, gulp, they were rather pricey so, bigger gulp, the group decided it was time to don hard hats and take to the heavens themselves! DIY would mean that not only could the windows be fixed but other works high up could also be undertaken.



Before we could do that, we had to take measurements - how high up was needed and how wide was the main door? Why? Because we needed to hire a scissor lift for a week in August. Our team then set to work.

Brave 'aeronauts' Tom and Dave, put on hard hats, mounted their steed and sailed upwards (sorry for the mixed metaphors!). Once in the celestial heights, the windows were fixed with obstructing plaster chipped off ("watch out down below!"), new putty applied, angel faces dusted and admired (did you know there are 14 angels and some have crowns on?), years of dust and cobwebs removed (have you spied the now non-dusty speaker straps?), lights dusted, adjusted and a few re-fixed (Ken donned a hard hat for a ride skywards).

Meanwhile down below, the rest of the team (AKA the ground support crew) dusted and cleaned and dusted and cleaned, and dusted and cleaned all week! Many spiders were made homeless, the cobwebs on the cross on the rood screen banished, cobwebs under the chair seats removed and all chairs vacuumed, walls swept of dust, some tombs and plaques dusted and... and... the dust was endless!

- Martin expertly wielded the longest dusting broom known to man.
- Tricia (and Ruth) became cobweb spotters and dusters extraordinaire clearing up as dust came down from the skies and then clearing up again as more dust came down.
- Ken, expert electrician, securer of loose cables and duster (everybody got a turn or two or three or four at that!).
- Norman, Trevor and Chris brandished more dusters and brooms along with shifting chairs and... yes, dusting.
- Barry drove the carpet cleaner in the parish room.
- The most important member of the ground crew was Pauline who came each day with home baked goodies and made teas and coffees for us all!



In amidst the dusting and busyness Carl, the diocesan architect, came and borrowed a hard hat to be elevated towards the heavens to inspect the church roof. Also, a couple of heating contractors came to have a look at the existing heating system and consider more carbon friendly alternatives - they didn't need hard hats to visit the 'dungeon' down below, otherwise called the boiler room.

We hope that you have now noticed the differences including lack of draughts from above and, in particular, the fresher smelling church. The team's work alongside 'Operation Clean and Sort' which Jackie ran for three mornings over the summer to reorganise the Vestries and Mezzanine plus deep cleaning the lower levels of the church building, means OPC is now very spick and span. Huge thanks to all involved, especially our two intrepid ~~astronauts~~ (oops!) aeronauts.

PS. If you want to keep our church looking lovely and fancy joining the cleaning rota, have a word with Barry, and if you want to get involved with CNZ work then have a chat with Norman.

PRAYER MINISTRY

After each of our 10.30am Sunday Services we offer 'Prayer Ministry' – an opportunity to be prayed with in confidence by two members of our trained team. This also takes place during Communion.

You'll find the prayer ministers (wearing badges) each week in the front left corner of the church, near the organ pipes.

Whether you are carrying something heavy, giving thanks, or simply longing for God's peace, we would love to pray with you.

You can find out more in the leaflet at the back of the church or on our website:

https://www.otleyparishchurch.org/Groups/450384/Prayer_Ministry.aspx

We are also praying for more people to join the team. If you feel God may be calling you to this ministry, please speak to Kevin Keefe or Aaron Kennedy. Anyone exploring this ministry will be supported with prayer, training, and a process of discernment, so that together we can be confident this is the right fit.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving at Harvest Time

As we come to harvest time, we thank You God for all the colours and fruits that harvest brings from the crops in this country and crops sent from overseas.

How rich we are in the harvest that You bless us with.

We thank You God, for all who sow, cultivate and gather; for those that transport and sell the harvest crops. Thank You God for the giving of the harvest. *Amen.*



MARY HUBY



IN THE HOT SEAT

Hello Mary, and thank you so much for joining us here “In the Hot Seat”. Many of us know you by sight but may not really know much about you, so it will be lovely to read more about you now.

When were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born in 1956 and was brought up for my first 18 years on a farm called ‘Neuaddlwyd’, in Montgomeryshire in Mid-Wales. My Dad was English, my Mum Welsh, but we were an English-speaking family.

Do you have any brothers or sisters?

I have three much older brothers, Bobby, John and Phillip, so I was an ‘afterthought’, but reassured by my mum that was not an ‘accident’!

Where did you go to school?

My first school was Tregynon County Primary School. I later moved onto Newtown High School, a large comprehensive. I was good academically at school but very involved with musical activities. I enjoyed singing in the choir and small vocal groups - we had an excellent music teacher. We sang and competed at local and national Eisteddfodau (music festivals). I also played in the Montgomeryshire Youth Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra of Wales for a good many years.

Did you go to College or University? If so, where?

I studied the violin and piano at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. I did the Performers' Course which, looking back, was quite a 'narrow education' and very competitive, but I enjoyed the excitement of living in London.

What was your occupation and where did you work?

My first job was in the BBC Concert Orchestra based at the Golders Green Hippodrome in London. You may remember a Radio 2 programme called 'Friday Night is Music Night' with David Jacobs. The funny thing is I used to listen to this in the bath on a Friday night as a child and now I was playing in it! After Katherine was born, I was a 'stay-at-home' mum for a few years. Later I started teaching peripatetic violin, part-time, for Artforms, (Leeds Music Service) which I continued doing until 2018. I was particularly proud of teaching Whole Class Violin to a Reception Class at St. Margaret's Horsforth. One of those 5-year-olds is now a private violin pupil studying for her Grade 8. I am still teaching the violin! - now for Prince Henry's and Otley primary schools. I have always kept my playing going, playing in local freelance orchestral concerts, a wedding quartet,

leading 'Leeds Haydn layers', 'Summertime' a local folk/rock band for a while, and now 'Crooked Willow' at All Saints!

When did you meet your husband, Chris?

It was around the same time that I met my husband, Chris. We both ended up living in a shared 'studenty' house in Finchley. Chris was tutoring whilst trying to finish his Geography Ph.D. Our relationship developed when we decided to try to cultivate the overgrown back garden in Finchley. I was keen to escape London by then and secured a job at Opera North in Leeds. I was now a 1st Violin and enjoyed playing all the lovely opera tunes. Chris (a Yorkshireman) and I moved up to Leeds and lived in Chapel Allerton to start with. We were married in Wales in 1983.

When did you become a Christian?

I became a Christian in 1982 in Leeds. I had been to Chapel and Sunday School as a child but found it boring and stopped going at about the age of 12. Now I was searching and was very influenced by the film "Ghandi" and the lifestyle of Chris's sister and brother-in-law, Elisabeth and Gordon. He was a vicar in Halifax. Our first house was in Burley in inner-city Leeds, and we joined St.

Matthias Church there, a very lively church and were there for about the next 30 years!

How many children and grandchildren do you have?

We have 2 children, Katherine and Matthew. Katherine is a social work manager in Wakefield and Matthew is studying for a Ph.D. in Sport Science at Leeds Beckett University. Katherine and Sam have 2 children, Thea 5 and Jacob nearly 3 years old.

Wednesday is our grandparent day - they are a great joy to us, but we are happy to hand them back after tea. Even the dog looks exhausted when they leave!

Why did you come to live here in Otley?

We moved to Otley from Cookridge in 2014 as we had always enjoyed outings to the town. We felt at home here at Otley Parish Church and quickly settled here. I love living in Otley - I think it is a great community, and I love being surrounded by all the countryside.

Is there anything you've really struggled with in life?

For many years I have struggled with anxiety and depression, which started after the birth of my children. I almost don't like looking

back as it was such a struggle at the time, especially the relentlessly painful feelings every morning and my difficulties socialising. Also, being on medication meant I felt in a bit of a 'haze' a lot of the time. It goes without saying that it was very hard for Chris and the children. Getting well has been a long, gradual process. I picture it like an old-fashioned weighing-scale where gradually positive experiences and emotions have outweighed the negative feelings and thoughts until the balance has tipped.

It has mainly been God-given simple things that have helped me, such as: being in nature, swimming, walking and camping trips; growing things – first, flowers for Katherine's wedding and then vegetables on the allotment; enjoying my music-making and teaching children; the arrival of grandchildren; working with a very patient therapist; good listeners and people who've prayed for me at Church.

I think it has taken me to about the age of 60 to really accept myself and to feel that I'm okay as I am. During the time of Covid, I was able to wean myself completely off anti-depressants and it is wonderful now to wake up in the mornings feeling well and alert.

Do you have a favourite verse of Scripture? If so, what is it?

I love Psalm 84 - especially 'Even the sparrow has found a home and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young - a place near your altar....' I remember visiting the small white church overlooking Mwnt Beach near Cardigan. There was an instruction to leave the door ajar so that a swallow could fly in and out to her nest. 'How Lovely is thy Dwelling Place' is a favourite Christian song also based on this psalm - it is set to a lilting Scottish melody.

Do you like classical music, do you have a favourite piece?

Beethoven Symphony No.6 - 'The Pastoral' - is one of my favourite classical pieces. I'm interested in all sorts of music, especially folk music, but not too keen on jazz.

Do you have a favourite part of Yorkshire that you like to visit?

I like the countryside and the river around Burnsall and Grassington.

A book you enjoyed reading?

I'm not very good at sitting still to read but I enjoyed 'English

Pastoral' by James Rebanks, a book about farming and the environment. I enjoy children's stories and love reading to the grandchildren.

Is there somewhere you'd like to go on holiday, where you've not been before regardless of expense?

I've always wanted to go island-hopping in the Scottish Islands. I've done part of the Camino de Santiago in Spain and been walking in Romania, so would love the opportunity to do another adventurous walking holiday somewhere.

What would be your favourite meal?

I love most food but not goat's cheese! I would probably choose a home-cooked meal with plenty of fresh vegetables, but I am partial to a nice piece of fried fish from the fish and chip shop, and I love Yorkshire Pudding.

Which one word describes your life now?

It will have to be six words I'm afraid - 'Making the best of every day'.



We would love YOU to be IN THE HOT SEAT.

Why? Because we may know you by sight but not really know much about you, and we would love to know more about you. Please have a word with our editor, Stephen Hey.

My Favourite Bible Verses

Emma Kennedy



“I pray that according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fulness of God.”

Ephesians 3:16-19 (NRSV)

I think it is because this group of verses are so full of vibrant, whole-hearted and enthusiastic encouragement that I find myself coming back to them again and again - as a prayer for myself and my loved ones, and as a blessing to pass on to those in need of a reminder of how utterly and totally they are loved by the Great I Am.

Life can be hard; sometimes it can feel like a real slog just to get through our days with body and soul intact! And sometimes life is confusing; there seems to be no reason why certain things do or don't happen and we can be left reeling and discombobulated. In those pinch moments (or days, weeks, months perhaps) I find it helpful, indeed essential, to return to the anchoring reality and infinite mystery of Christ's love.

I keep returning to this passage - like a cornerstone, or a north star, and find just enough grace to keep going, and with just enough confidence that, despite my feelings or circumstances, the vibrancy and assuredness that characterises this passage is true for me as it was for original readers, as indeed it is for anyone whose heart yearns for their true home.



FAMILY NEWS

AT OTLEY PARISH CHURCH



HAPPY BIRTHDAY PHOEBE!

Phoebe Pettinger (*left*) celebrated her 10th birthday on 12th August 2025. She was born in Leeds in 2015. She's the daughter of Katherine and Tom, and older sister of Connie (*right*).

18

HAPPY BIRTHDAY NATALIE!



Natalie Bowman celebrated her 18th birthday on 18th August. She was born at Harrogate Hospital in 2007. After very successful A-level results this year, Natalie will be going to Nottingham University next year to study Veterinary Medicine (her dream since she was about 6!).

Congratulations!



BARBARA NICHOLLS

celebrated her 75th birthday on 11th September 2025.
She was born in Bury, Lancashire, in 1950.
The day after her birthday she and her husband, David,
celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary.
CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU BOTH!



MOLLY STURT

Molly died very peacefully on 28th August 2025 at Wharfeside Care Home in Otley at the age of 83. She was born in Romford, Essex, in 1942. Molly was a member of Otley Parish Church for about 12 years and was involved with children's groups/activities and wrote articles for 'In Touch' about our *Local to Global* charities.



★ Congratulations! ★

**KATE AUTY
and
JAI SRIVASTAVA**

**were married
in the summer of 2025 at
St. Stephen's Church,
Dulwich**

Kate is the daughter of Tricia Auty,
a member of Otley Parish Church.
Tricia's husband Dave recently helped
with the cleaning and repairs high-up
amongst the angels here in our church!



Hannah Sharpe • Dave Auty • Kate Auty • Jai Srivastava • Tricia Auty • Michael Auty



MY DEVOTIOAL THOUGHTS

Tricia Merrick

MY VERSE

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV

MY THOUGHTS

1971 is remembered as an outstanding year in the annals of popular music. I was 14 years old and one song I particularly liked was “Amazing Grace” by Judy Collins which spent a total of 67 weeks in the charts. Back then I was unfamiliar with both the hymn and the bible verses that it’s based upon.

Since becoming a Christian in 2023, I’ve heard these verses explained in more detail and I think they are one of the most succinct and amazing descriptions of how salvation in Jesus works. Grace can be described in many ways - the acronym ‘God’s Riches at Christ’s Expense’ is a brilliant definition. It’s a gift that we haven’t worked for and often don’t deserve. All we need to do is accept that we’ve sinned, ask for God’s forgiveness and decide to live the rest of our lives following Jesus and obeying his commandments. That’s not always easy but knowing God loves me and admitting I need his support helps me whenever I falter.

MY PRAYER

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for giving your life for me and taking the punishment for my sins. Forgive me, and may I never take this gift for granted. By the power of the Holy Spirit help me to live my life according to your word in goodness and love, so that others may come to know the same hope through faith. Amen.



out of the mouths of babes

This was written by an 8-year-old named Danny Dutton, who lives in Chula Vista, California, USA. He wrote it for his third grade homework assignment, to “explain God”. I wonder if any of us could have done as well, and even with someone offering to publish it for us? Miracles do happen!

EXPLAINING GOD

One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grown-ups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way He doesn't have to take up His valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.

God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times besides bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because He hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in His ears, unless He has thought of a way to turn it off. God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So, you shouldn't go wasting His time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.

Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't any who come to our church.

Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of Him preaching to them and they crucified Him. But He was good and kind, like His Father and He told His Father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said O.K.

His Dad (God) appreciated everything that He had done and all His hard work on earth, so He told Him He didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So, He did. And now He helps His Dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones He can take care of Himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.

You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.

You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God. Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides, the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.

If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.

But you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and He can take me back anytime He pleases.

And... that's why I believe in God.

Kindly submitted for IN TOUCH by Liz Heffer (OPC)



PRAYER IDEAS *for* **EVERYDAY CHRISTIANS**

John Simkins

Introduction

Church history shows us that there have been times when a sense of the need to pray has come upon the 'wider church' and the outcomes are well recorded. These have been the most effective when 'ordinary' Christians have taken up God's call: 'people movements'.

In recent years, again, there has been a strong emphasis on the need for the church to rediscover prayer.

Prayer is something for all Christians to be engaged in, and a normative part of their life.

My hope in writing this is to encourage every Christian to embrace prayer as a natural part of daily life; knowing 'God with us' and praying for others we connect with.

I first wrote this in 2013 in response to a request from a leaders' training programme in Devon to speak on prayer. We were about to move from Exeter to Yorkshire. For several years we had been involved in connecting with Christians in the city and helping to steer some united prayer. This is what shaped the substance of what follows, together with some editing after helpful comments from others.

John Simkins
Otley Parish Church

Prayer Ideas for Everyday Christians
is a book of eleven chapters
each of which will feature in future editions of In Touch



1. How we pray is an expression of our understanding of God

What is God like?

God has set up reality in such a way that he has chosen to relate with us and respond to us through prayer. Growing in our understanding of God is vital, and how we think of prayer needs to be viewed through this lens. It is one of the biggest challenges to us theologically. For example, if we believe that the 'highest thing' (attribute) of God is his power to control, then logically our prayer is one of passivity, praying *your kingdom come, your will be done* from a submissive disposition.

On the other hand, we might believe that God does not pre-determine everything and human freedom to choose is a major factor. That would lead us to understand we have a more active role to play. That which moves God to 'move mountains' because he loves us so, also moves him to move us to cooperate with him in prayer.

So then, let us open our hearts and minds, ready to adjust to God's disclosures of his characters and ways.

Fear...
Lies...
Despair...

TRIUMPH!

by LESLEY NOBLE



Introduction

I was born in 1949 and had a poor childhood filled mainly with fear, lies, loneliness and despair, which impacted my life in a negative way for the first forty years. Then, between 1991 and 1993 my healing process began.

I feel the need to tell my story with the hope that anyone reading it may be encouraged if they ever thought things would never get better for them in their own lives.

I found it very therapeutic when starting to write this book. One of the main wonderful things is that, in the end, I know that for all my past I've not only been forgiven, but I have also learned to forgive.

A STORY TO BE TOLD... TO ENCOURAGE... ALL IS WELL



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Rebel with a Cause

LIVING at Cross Gates in Leeds brought me lots of anger and frustration, although for some of the time there was normality thanks to down to earth common sense from dad. I really don't know how much he knew about the relationship between me and mam, but I told him on one occasion when I was 14, that I didn't like her. He always defended her in a kindly way.

I only had 2s 6d pocket money each week and was desperate to earn money, so took on a paper round as soon as I could. Thankfully as well, the local chemist let me work in the back room filling bottles with hair lacquer every Saturday. At least I was then able to buy some essentials like clothing and toiletries.

I hated school and resented learning, and became quite a rebel, disruptive and playing truant regularly. My one main friend was Val. She lived nearby and we hung around together.

I saved enough to buy my first pair of new cavalry twill trousers when I was 14. I wore them every day for more than a week, then put them to one side for washing. They disappeared, so I asked my mam if she had seen them. She denied it. Then a few days later I met Val and saw that she was wearing my trousers! She told me that mam had sold them to her! I was gutted. Things had been going missing from my bedroom for quite a while, so I put a padlock on the door. But photos, postcards, and small gifts I received from my pen friend in Hawaii still disappeared. I was frustrated and angry. Then my younger brother Ricky told me that mam was unscrewing the lock off the door, taking things, then screwing it back in place. I was furious and totally

overwhelmed by my feelings and didn't know what to do. She was driving me nuts and there was no escape.

I finally left school in 1964 aged 15, and ran out the school gates with elation, and with plans in place to leave home as well. I had applied for a job as a live-in home help. So, I moved to Shadwell in Leeds the following week. This though was almost a 'frying pan into the fire' situation! It was a large posh house, and I arrived with a battered suitcase. My brother Terry who took me there, was dismissed in the doorway and I was ordered by my new employer, Mrs W. to follow her up two flights of stairs to a small drab attic room, very sparse, with a small skylight window. There were two black dresses and a white apron and cap hung up in the narrow wardrobe.



Lesley Noble at 16 years old

The family certainly wanted their pound of flesh! It was very much an upstairs downstairs situation. I had to do absolutely everything in that house. After a few months I'd had enough, but decided to stay on a bit longer because they had rented a house for six weeks' holiday in Jersey, and planned to take me as the skivvy. I had never been out of Leeds, never mind going on a plane, and abroad!! My role was to fetch and carry for them as well as the extended family, and to wash, iron, prepare food and veg daily, lay the tables, take them breakfast in bed! No days off, but I managed to walk down to Rozel Bay most days, and enjoy the sunshine.

When we arrived back in Shadwell I left, and went back home for a while. I then went to work at Bridgecraft, a Leeds-based upholstery firm (hand sewing). Both of my brothers, Terry and Dave, were working there at the time. I also took on an evening job as an usherette at the Shaftsbury Cinema in Harehills on most evenings. It was here that I met my first husband to be, Tony. I was 16 and he was 25! I was besotted - head over heels!! We started going out together. He was very recently separated, and not in a good place. I idolised him and my life changed to pubs and nightclubs! I've never been able to stomach gin since my first drunken experience with him!

● **Chapter 5 of "Fear... Lies... Despair... Triumph!" will be published in the December 2025 edition of In Touch.**

Keep in touch with...

IN TOUCH

We would love you to keep
in touch and tell us what
you would like to see in
YOUR
monthly Church magazine.

Yes, it is yours!

PLEASE do let us know if you have any suggestions as to how we can make **IN TOUCH** even better than it is already. And let us know if you would like to contribute something.

What about contributing to our popular series of **In the Hot Seat** or **My Favourite Bible Verse** or **An Event that Changed My Life** or **My Devotional Thoughts** or **My Favourite Hymn** or **How I Found My Faith**?

Maybe you'd like to write a poem or a prayer or...

We would also love to hear your family news such as birthdays and anniversaries, or anything of interest; also, to see some of your family photographs.

■ Whatever you would like to share with us please bear in mind that for it to be included in next month's **IN TOUCH** we must hear from you no later than:

Saturday

18 October

Please send your articles, thoughts or suggestions
to our Editor:

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WHO ARE WE?

OTLEY PARISH CHURCH – the oldest building in Otley – is at the heart of our town and, for over 1,000 years, people have been gathering here for worship and significant family and community events. *“There is a place for everyone, with Christ at the centre of it all.”*

We are a gathering place for pilgrims on a journey of discovery, kindling hope as we go, helping one another to be more fully alive to the wonders, joys and sorrows of life. We'd love you to share the journey with us.

We want to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to Christ and in service to our local community.

Join us in worshipping God together on Sundays and in daily life; be with us as we study and discern how to use the Bible in the 21st century; learn with us what it is to be 21st century disciples following Jesus and help us, with the other churches in the town, to bring good news to Otley and far beyond.



Otley Parish
CHURCH