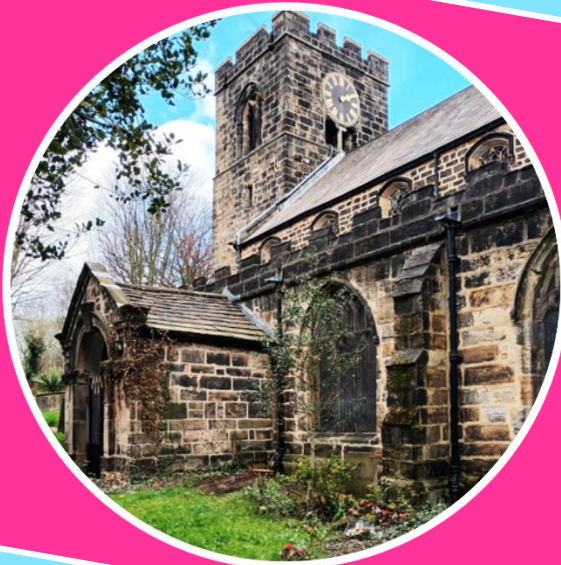


NOVEMBER 2025

# 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](http://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 Tom*



### **A Place for Everyone, with Christ at the Centre**

On 10th October I had the privilege of representing our church at the Leeds Civic Trust Blue Plaque unveiling, in honour of Elizabeth Garnett who was a remarkable 19th Century social reformer born and raised here in Otley. Her father, Joshua Hart, was the local vicar who consecrated the Navvies Memorial. There were about forty five people present including our local MP, Otley's Mayor, representatives from Yorkshire Water, the chaplain of the Industrial Christian Fellowship (who had travelled from the Midlands) and a few of our own congregation.

During the course of the proceedings when we heard about Elizabeth's life and work it occurred to me that our church's vision of "A Place for Everyone, with Christ at the Centre" is what Elizabeth was working for back in the 19th Century with the Navvies. The modern infrastructure we

enjoy today - the railway lines, railway tunnels and reservoirs within our locality are testimony to the Navvies hard labour in poor conditions. Elizabeth's work led to a transformation of their living and working conditions, all beginning when she established a mission to the Navvies at Lindley Wood. (You can find more details in the Wharfedale Observer's report - front page of the 16th of October edition.)

Today our church continues to work with people who can be judged harshly by wider society, as the Navvies were, for example by our 'Open House' run by Barry and Glynis. We try to live out our vision of "A Place for Everyone, with Christ at the Centre" and welcome everyone who visits. I often give a copy of 'In Touch' as part of welcoming new visitors to church so they can see what we do. We all need to welcome visitors and strangers as we would welcome Jesus himself, putting their needs

before our own and treating each one as a royal guest.

To help in making Jesus known better to others who are seeking Him through us perhaps it's useful to remember and think about the seven "I Am" statements of Jesus. They can all be found in John's gospel and are: I Am The Bread of Life (John 6:35), I Am The Light of The World (John 8:35), I Am The Gate (John 10:9), I Am The Good Shepherd (John 10:11), I Am The Resurrection and The Life (John 11:25), I Am The Way, Truth and The Life (John 14:6), and I Am The True Vine (John 15:1).

In last month's 'In Touch', Aaron mentioned that Jesus calls us to be light bearers. We can all do this by making Otley Parish Church a place for everyone offering hope and encouragement to all we come across. Let's all "shine our light before others so that they may see the good works and give glory to the Father in Heaven" (Matthew 5:15).

By keeping Christ at The Centre, we can confidently expect to see growth in our church here in Otley. Hope, encouragement towards

each other; love and shining our lights in the dark months ahead promises new birth and beginnings just as autumn moves into winter and winter then turns into spring. We can all play our part in building God's Kingdom in the here and now to ensure that for many more years to come we have A Place for Everyone, with Christ at the Centre.

Please do go and have a look at the blue plaque next to the Navvies Memorial in Church Lane, and reflect upon the continuing need in our wider society for the Good News of Jesus Christ.



**TOM RAPER – Churchwarden at Otley Parish Church**

# Creation Care

**A monthly column for us to share environmental and sustainability ideas**

The 30th United Nations climate conference COP30 will take place from 10 to 21 November 2025 in Belém, Brazil.

Psalm 24:1 reminds us that, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”

In the lead up to COP30, Anglican churches around the world will be encouraged to advocate for the restoration and protection of the **Lungs of the Earth**. You can find out more about this call to advocacy at:

<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/at-the-un/lungs-of-the-earth.aspx>

Meanwhile in the run up to Advent, we can think about how we chart our progress towards Christmas without costing the Earth. We can start with our advent calendars. We can support overseas farmers by ensuring that our advent calendar, and any Christmas chocolate, is [Fairtrade](#). We will be helping those farmers to make a decent living, and encouraging them to farm in a more ecologically sustainable way with every bite.

***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.***



**heritage open day**  
*at Otley Parish Church*

**September 2025**

**by ALLAN BODDY**

**A QUESTION** that might go through the minds of many people is why we need to have a Heritage Open Day when the church is open every day of the week.

One answer is that on Heritage Open Day it is possible to climb the church bell tower and go inside the Navvies' Memorial enclosure, delights that are only available on that day. Another answer is that a walk round the church without any kind of guidance does not usually bring to life the fascinating story of this amazing building and the people who have worshipped in it over the last 900 years. Telling that story is one of our main aims on Heritage Open Day.

The story we have to tell is amazing and we can learn so much about our locality from what is preserved in our church. The superb quality of our Anglian crosses is evidence of a very important ecclesiastical community supporting highly skilled craftsmen centred on Otley in the 8th and 9th centuries. Other memorials in the church tell us about the landed families who dominated the Wharfe valley and worshipped here in the 16th to 19th centuries - the Fairfax, Vavasour, Fawkes, Palmes and Dyneley families. As the 19th century went on the memorials in the church are evidence of how the landed gentry began to be replaced in wealth and significance

by industrialists like the Fisons and the Garnetts. Our memorials are not, however, just to the wealthy. The Navvies' Memorial uniquely remembers men who laboured in appalling conditions, 12 hours a day for £1-50 a week whilst the Irish Diaspora Memorial remembers the Irish men, women and children who came to Otley to escape starvation as a result of the 1840s Irish potato famine, many of whom were buried in our churchyard in a grave unmarked until 2002.

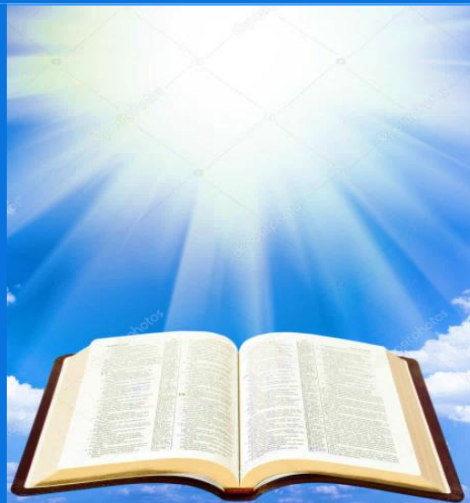
I am delighted that our application for a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund will give us the opportunity to bring alive the many different stories of our church to a much wider audience.



**Allan Boddy of Otley Parish Church talking about the Evangelists' Cross on Heritage Open Day**

# My Favourite Bible Verse

Maggie Lolashvili



*And let us not grow weary while doing  
good, for in due season we shall reap  
if we do not lose heart.*

**Galatians 6:9 (NKJV)**

In an instant gratification world, it's hard to wait to see the results of our labour.

Thirty years ago, I was involved in a small outreach meeting with my church. Week after week we met in the local town hall, but nobody ever came. I began to feel a little resentful of my "wasted" time. I could have been enjoying our vibrant Sunday evening celebration at our church centre.

Eventually, we held a special service and although only a few people came, one person wonderfully gave their life to Jesus.

The faithful perseverance, prayers and expectation of the team yielded results. (I take no credit with my poor attitude). God's timing isn't our timing as He sees the bigger picture. I'm so glad he does, because the person who got saved was my mum!

JAN McINTYRE



## IN THE HOT SEAT



Hello Jan, 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.

**Where were you born and where did you grow up?**

I was born in Leicester, but have an Australian accent because my parents migrated to Australia with me on the £10 passage. We arrived there around my second birthday. We lived in a migrant hostel in Melbourne for over two years. Moving out of that Nissan hut accommodation, we then lived in a couple of different Melbourne suburbs.

**Do you have any brothers or sisters?**

I have one younger brother, Michael, who lives in Western Australia with his wife. He is a retired four-wheel drive mechanic, and now works on his daughter and

son-in-law's massive farm, driving the massive machinery.

**Did you go to college or university?**

Instead of the final year of high school, I attended a technical college to begin my Associate Diploma in Private Secretarial Practice. That led to a job as a stenographer (typing and shorthand) at Peter McCallum Cancer Clinic in Melbourne City.

**When did you meet your husband?**

I met my husband to be, John McIntyre, when I was 16 years old, through my friend Robyn's boyfriend, who was best friends with “Mac”. It all came together one night when I didn't want to be alone

at home with my dad and younger brother, so accepted Robyn's invitation to her house. Mac taught me how to play pool and drove me home. He was four years older than me, and drove a Volkswagen Beetle.

### **What other jobs have you done in your life?**

I left my job at the Clinic in Melbourne City when Mac and I went to the Solomon Islands (where his parents were missionaries) for half a year. He had finished his theological training (Bachelor of Divinity by correspondence with London) and wouldn't be ordained for a few months. It was an opportunity to see the church in another culture.

Mostly my "job" has been house and clergy wife. But also, field worker for a home care group (cleaning house and giving personal care), integration aide at a primary school, school cleaner, and café staff. Now I am Trainee Leaf Master General to Keith Wilson here at Otley Parish Church.

### **How many children do you have?**

I have three children – Jessica (living in Sydney), Paul (with his wife, Yuko, and their seven-year-old son, Jintaro, living in a small city close to Tokyo) and Lisa (living here in Leeds - close enough for adventures often!) The others, of course, are obviously too far away for frequent adventures but earlier this year, I had time with Jessica in Sydney, and we visited Paul and his family together in Japan, followed

by Jessica introducing me to her favourite places and friends in South Korea.

### **Why do you still live in the UK?**

The reason I now live here is because my husband passed away in June 2014 and I had to decide where to live as we had been in clergy housing in Victoria, Australia, where he was Bishop of Gippsland. I was always considering returning to my country of birth. England has always called me, and I've visited here many times. One fateful day, just hours after cheekily and earnestly praying to God, "Please, just tell me in which country I should live", my son announced, "I think you should move to the UK". When I questioned myself about this a day later, I "heard" my husband say, "Go for it!", and also asked myself - "What more straightforward answer do you want from God?!" My daughter in Sydney urged me that I often said, "If I had my druthers (my preferences), and didn't have to consider any factors, if the opportunity came to live in England, I would be on the plane the next day!"

Lisa was already in Leeds, so helped me research and house hunt, with a focus on Yorkshire as she loves it here. When we entered the building in which I now live here in Otley I met Sara, one of my future neighbours, I was instantly excited and hopeful. I moved into my flat on 5th November 2022. If you look up on Boroughgate, a statue of Elvis has pride of place in my first-floor window!

## **When did you become a Christian?**

I have basically always attended church and was baptised by full immersion at The Church of Christ. However, when I was 17 or 18, dating Mac, he played guitar in a group that led youth services at an Anglican church. I started reading 'The Cross & The Switchblade' by David Wilkerson. One day, while reading in the car, waiting for the service to begin, I felt a great call from God to fully turn to Him.

As Mac was a member of clergy from early in our married life, I always went to his churches, including travelling around with him to diverse services while he was a bishop. He had a down-to-earth approach to church - a favourite description of mine came from a friend and fellow clergyman from the indigenous community, who said "he knew how to put his faith into overalls".

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

The story of the Good Samaritan has so many teachings within it. I particularly like the concluding response to Jesus' question about who the neighbour was: "The one who showed him mercy" and Jesus' response: "Go and do likewise".

## **Do you have a favourite Christian hymn or song?**

I love the simplicity of both 'The Pearl of Great Price' and 'Because He Lives' - the first is gentle, and the second rousing with a touch of Gospel style. But perhaps most of

all, 'Be Thou My Vision', with its Irish and St Patrick origins. I have a fondness for Ireland, where I went exploring my husband's family heritage several times with him.

## **What music do you like?**

I couldn't say a favourite band or genre - the best way to describe my taste in music is that I like something with a bit of edge. I have many fond memories connected with music from throughout my life. Driving into Sydney with Metallica on the stereo, '*The Stolen Child*' by The Waterboys introduced me to W.B. Yeats and a whole new world. Also, a Hothouse Flowers concert this year where a friend and I were appropriately given flowers by a stranger on our way there! Having a migraine whilst seeing 'The Cure', yet it still somehow was one of the best concerts I've ever experienced.

## **Can you play a musical instrument?**

I don't play myself, but I attend the Irish and folk sessions at pubs around Otley, with a favourite being that at The Junction, where I have made good friends whilst sitting around enjoying the atmosphere and the music. Finding the music scene here is just another reason I was so pleased to have picked it for my home.

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

It's so vast and giving, that wherever I go brings its own delights. Nearby, I always choose to take visitors to The Strid from

Barden Tower to Bolton Abbey - but, then again, I don't really need to go out of Otley, with the river and the Chevin right here.

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

Anywhere, if I'm going with friends or family. I wouldn't say that I have a great wanderlust or avid desire to go to any specific places (apart from the relocation back to my home country, as already mentioned). What I most enjoy is people inviting me to join them in places that they want to share with me - it's always a special experience for me to learn about a place with someone who has a love for it and knowledge of it.

**A book you enjoyed reading – Christian or general?**

I enjoy autobiographies the most (with biographies as a close second-runner). I think when people write their story for themselves, it has a particular ring and authenticity to it. Hearing people's stories (if well-written!) offers insight, inspiration, challenge and humour. Recently, I have enjoyed reading Jarvis Cocker, Bono, Sinéad O'Connor, Nick Cave, and David Mitchell.

**Do you have a hobby or something you enjoy doing to relax?**

It might sound obvious, but I always enjoy reading. I've already mentioned my love of listening to music - either to jump around to or dream off too. I love being in the centre of town to watch people going about their lives. I spend lots of time with friends but also enjoy just taking in the world around me and random encounters with people.

**What would be your favourite meal – 2 or even 3 courses?**

It's a bit silly, but on rare occasions I've ended up with dinner just being one or two glasses of wine and one or two packets of crisps. Most memorable in recent memory, was at the pub at the hotel where I stayed in Manchester on the night before my flight to Australia. For me, it's about where I am, and the chance for a chat, rather than what I am eating.

**If you were to spend a whole year on a desert island on your own, what luxury item would you take with you?**

Probably a radio, so I can keep a connection to the outside world.

**Which one word best describes your life right now?**

Grateful.



**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.**

# What's Your Favourite Hymn?



## **“MAY THE MIND OF CHRIST, MY SAVIOUR”**

### **Verse 1**

May the mind of Christ, my Saviour  
Live in me from day to day,  
By His love and power controlling  
All I do and say.

### **Verse 2**

May the Word of God dwell richly  
In my heart from hour to hour,  
So that all may see I triumph  
Only through His power.

### **Verse 3**

May the peace of God My Father  
Rule my life in everything,  
That I may be calm to comfort  
Sick and sorrowing.

### **Verse 4**

May the love of Jesus fill me  
As the waters fill the sea;  
Him exalting, self-abasing,  
This is victory.

### **Verse 5**

May I run the race before me,  
Strong and brave to face the foe,  
Looking only unto Jesus  
As I onward go.

### **Verse 6**

May His beauty rest upon me,  
As I seek the lost to win,  
And may they forget the channel,  
Seeing only Him.

**Author: Kate B. Wilkinson © 1925**

# Anne Simkins

## tells us why this is her favourite hymn

**‘May the mind of Christ, my Saviour’** has been a favourite hymn of mine since childhood. I love the clear yet profound words, which, set to a lovely tune, are easy to memorise. It reads as the heartfelt prayer of one longing to live life in all the fulness offered to us through Jesus. It was written in 1912 by Kate Barclay Wilkinson and is her only known hymn. Little is known about her life, but she worked among girls and young women in London and was connected with the Keswick Convention Movement

The hymn was not published until 1925. Maybe until then it was the writer’s personal prayer, perhaps shared with, or taught to, those she cared for? I love that when it was first published it was in a hymn book for children – Golden Bells (some may remember that name!).

The verses are a wonderful and worthy Bible study leading us to the many blessings and resources available to us through the life of Jesus: **Verse 1**, from Philippians 2:5, is a prayer for a Christlike humble attitude. **Verses 2-3** are from Colossians 3:15-16. The word of Christ is for our teaching and

encouragement and the peace of God our Father is for our living as members of His body. **Verse 4** references Isaiah 11:9 and the vision of a world filled with the love of Jesus. In **Verse 5** we are led to the well-known verses in Hebrews 12:1-2 and the picture of life as a race, looking towards our Saviour who has gone before us.

A clear thread through all these verses is a prayer that all these wonderful truths might be an ever-present reality in every part of life: “in all I do and say”, “day to day”, “hour to hour” and “in everything”. This is surely God’s heart for us all.

In some publications verse 6 is omitted. Maybe this is to end with an ‘onward’ note, and yet it feels that, to the writer, it was the most important. It reminds us that all the blessings available to us are that others might be blessed. God’s love and peace spread through us, his channels; trusting that ‘the lost’ may be found and given hope. What a calling and a privilege!

John and I chose this hymn for our wedding – making the words plural. In re-visiting it I have been challenged afresh to make this my prayer each day.



# FAMILY NEWS

AT OTLEY PARISH CHURCH



## **Vivienne**

Vivi was born in Leeds on 30th April 2025.  
She is the daughter of our church member Abi.



**Confirmation Service at Otley Parish Church  
on Sunday 21st September 2025  
led by The Bishop of Kirkstall, Arun Arora.**

**Adults Confirmed: Stephanie Brown, Kyle Mettrick, Natalie Oxley, Tom Wyatt**

**Youth Confirmed: Phoebe Bonnett, Sophie Bonnett, Charlie Cooper, Finn Gannon,**

**Phoebe Pettinger, Arron Scallon, Chloe Scallon, Tabitha Smith**



## **FIONA WILLIAMS**

Fiona celebrated her 70th birthday  
on 2nd October.

She was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1955

# Leaf Master General's Yearbook

## A Tale of Adversity and the Wonders of God's Creation



Keith Wilson – Leaf Master General  
Jan McIntyre – Trainee Leaf Master General

**W**HEN I APPOINTED MYSELF as Leaf Master General in October 2024, (reporting of course to Tom as Churchwarden and de facto Leaf Master Regis), I was only in my early 70s so quite naive still. I thought that like the War, Leaf Patrols would be all over by Christmas so that I could sit back in my Vain Glory and receive praise from everyone for having done a good job. How wrong I was! Nearly one year on I have battled through two or three leaf patrols per week in each of the seasons.

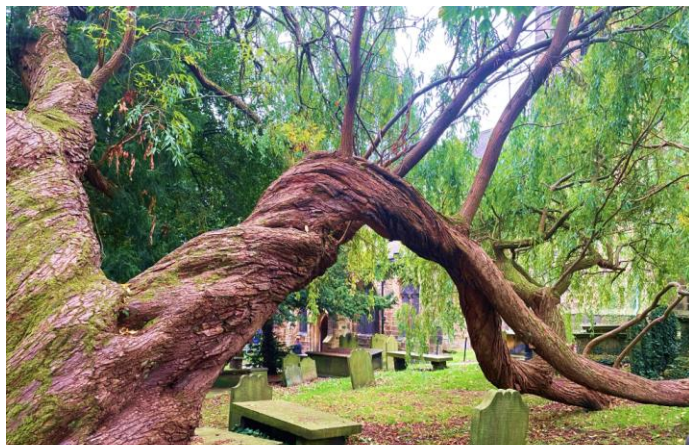
What went wrong? Firstly, as a retired forester I knew that trees can be divided into deciduous and evergreen. Horse chestnuts are very deciduous and shed their leaves early, thus making a nuisance of themselves before the others are ready. The sycamores and cherries are much more obliging, shedding on course around the end of October. The big, old, twisted willow was much more problematic, holding onto its leaves well into December. Maybe it knows that it was voted Otley's favourite tree and wants to show off!

Willows anyway are rare in churchyards. There is a legend that Christ's cross was made from willow. Also in an old folk song, the boy Jesus curses the willow to be the first tree to perish at the heart. This is because his Mum has smacked him with some willow twigs for being naughty at football. I wouldn't take either too seriously, but they reflect that the tree was held in awe by people. Firstly, on the wet river banks it had the ability to grow quickly then fall over, but strike new roots and a tree from a branch or cutting. People knew also not to plant it too close to buildings because of its powerful roots seeking water. More positively though its bark was known as a pain killer from which aspirin was eventually developed. Also, in the 1990s the anti-cancer drug, Taxol, was developed from yew leaves.

Just after Christmas, leaves were forgotten for a while as unusually for nowadays a blizzard swept in from the north. Fortunately, Tom was on hand with some grit, and I converted from Leaf to Snow patrol. My 30 year old plastic and wood snow shovel (from when we lived 700ft high in Haworth) had been my weapon of choice for leaves but soon converted to snow again. Also, my Thor's lump hammer was good for smashing bottle ice in thawing and freezing snow, particular on the pavements. A plumber parked at the old Vicarage declared us the best footpaths in Otley.

Horse chestnuts, cherries, sycamores, and the willow all provide flowers for bees and insects for birds in the Spring. The willow has had black honey bee and tree bumble bee nests in it. The other half of the trees that make the Churchyard woodland are evergreen, namely holly, yew and a blue cedar. The holly, as well as being famous for giving its name to Holly Willoughby, like the yew, has massive historical and symbolic significance. Both symbolise eternal life, and were planted at religious sites even prior to Christianity. 'The holly and the ivy when they are both full grown, of all the trees that are in the wood the holly bears the crown. Oh, the rising of the sun and the running of the deer...'

This favourite carol points to other forgotten facts about holly. Firstly, before turnips were invented for winter animal feed, the tops were cut off holly (less prickly) to feed cattle and deer, particularly in the royal hunting forests. This is



**The Crooked Willow - 170 years old  
and Otley's favourite tree**

why there are still lots of farms called Hollins etc. Secondly, before plastic, bobbins, holly or needle wood was cut to make bobbins for cotton etc which were hard, white and smooth. In 1802 in the Needwood forest in Staffordshire, where my ancestors were black-smiths, they cut down 186,000 holly trees to make bobbins for Lancashire's cotton mills.

Evergreen is a deceptive term. The leaves don't stay there for ever, they just come down bit by bit all year round. This dry spring and summer, holly leaves, and yew needles/berries have come down in profusion. They soon make the paths slippery. In the winter though, birds from all over will feed on the rowan, holly and yew berries. The latter have poisonous pips, but they just pass through bird's systems. The gold crest, the smallest bird in Europe, is a favourite of the yews and can sometimes be glimpsed or heard there. Britain has only half that of Europe's woodland area, but our wet woods have half of the world's bluebells, mosses and holly. So we are internationally important.

I have enjoyed the leaf work. The first few shovelfuls are easy - it's after several hundred that I start to wobble. I have been buoyed up though by dozens of 'well done' and 'keep up the good work'. Also, I have talked to many visitors about the old willow (170 yrs old), Irish & Navies memorial and Viking grave cover etc. In November last year and February this year we had two pruning parties trimming ivy, brambles and fallen branches with a dozen or so trusty volunteers. Young Gabe from the Vicarage used giant plastic hands to lift leaves. Altogether we piled 42 big bags of leaves to make a compost heap the size of Snowden (Yr Wyddfa). Brenda, with a Viking name and 60% DNA, is a ruthless and efficient pruner like Sou and some others. Please don't mess with them. Martin is so strong that he's broken a set of loppers each time. Stephen worked with power tools to lift leaves and prune high. Barry and Glynis did some pruning but provided good hot coffee too.

In July, students from Prince Henry's School came again to prune ivy and water the planted fruit and native trees as well as the Wildlife Friendly Otley wild flowers, like ox-eye daisies, red campion and purple knapweed by the south wall. The west end grass is allowed to grow long too for wildlife. The students gave a round of applause when they finished. Soon after this a miracle happened! Jan McIntyre, a member of our church, volunteered to help. Immediately, I set her on

as a trainee Assistant Leaf Master. She very quickly learned, and worked with enthusiasm to become ALM. Before long she was sweeping leaves with a besom without touching them. I put a flight restrictor on the besom until October. More in the modern world, Tony, our Church Treasurer, and Tom, our Churchwarden, allowed us to purchase a powerful Stihl leaf blower and sucker. We are still training on it.

The warm spring and summer brought lots of orange tip, speckled wood, and exquisite holly blue butterflies plus big dragonflies, bats and even a hedgehog. Barry saw it and we put water down in case it was thirsty. Now many leaves



**The 1840s Irish Famine refugee memorial stone - Otley took in many of them**

are turning golden as we look forward to Autumn's Glory. Early photos and paintings show no trees in the Church grounds in the 1850s. Like after the Brontes at Haworth they were planted later to help England's woodland cover. Now they give us oxygen, trap carbon dioxide and other pollutants, and provide shelter and shade. Blessed are the coffee makers, cleaners, bell ringers and flower arrangers etc. It takes all sorts to run the Church, but if you would like to help with the pruning party on 22nd November (10am - 12.30pm) or with the leaves, please see me.

***Keith Wilson. MSc Environmental Forestry, 1990. MICFOR. Retired. Leaf Master General at Otley Parish Church.***

**PS.** We have pruned ivy, rose and bramble round the Chestnuts Church office too. At least the name sign is clear now as well as half of the back window that was also covered. In the winter, I fell backwards down the stone steps at the Chestnuts. With lightning reflexes from my Kung Fu training 40 years ago and watching Gladiators on TV, I spun round and grabbed the hand rail to avoid serious injury. We do our best, but the paths can be slippery when wet or icy. Please walk slowly, bend your knees and use the hand rails. Note: Ye of a certain age may know that LMG is fashioned after Vincent Price in the classic film, WFG.

# An **ALPHABET** Prayer

by Lesley Noble

## **“Almighty and Ever Loving God”**

**A**lmighty and ever loving God

**B**efore all of creation your

**C**hristlike presence shines in the

**D**arkness, from the beginning, to

**E**verlasting, to eternity. You are

**F**ather, Son and Holy Spirit.

**G**od of your people, your creation,

**H**appiness and joy radiate

**I**n my soul. Thank you, that you planned this

**J**ourney of faith for me, this path of

**K**indness, joy, blessing and peace. Your

**L**ove fills me to overflowing.

**M**ay I never stray from your side, and

**N**ever doubt that you live within me.

**O**h! Holy Spirit, living in me, I

**P**ray for your world, for your people, your creation,

**Q**uestioning sometimes, but doubting never.

**R**estore me when I fail you, Lord. I know that you

**S**ustain me always, you lift me up, and

**T**ake me back to yourself when I am weak.

**U**phold me Lord, and teach me Lord. I

**V**alue every lesson, every Holy

**W**ord. I believe without

**X**ception.

**Y**ou are the living God. There is

**Z**ero - nothing - that compares with you.

**Amen**

If you have appreciated this Alphabet Prayer, perhaps  
**YOU** would also like to write an Alphabet Prayer  
or maybe an Alphabet Christian Poem?

It would be lovely to include yours in a future edition  
of In Touch.

Please give it some thought and have a go!

# OTLEY CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL *sparkles* AGAIN

**O**NCE AGAIN we will be holding our annual Christmas Tree Festival when the church will be filled with forty Christmas trees beautifully decorated by local groups and charities. Last year the festival raised over £4,000 for the organisations that took part.

The festival starts on **Wednesday December 10th at 12 noon** and will be open from 10am to 5pm for the next three days **finishing on Saturday December 13th.**

From Thursday to Saturday visitors to the festival will be able to get a drink and a mince pie or cookie from the café.

The festival couldn't happen without the army of volunteers we get from the church and the charities. We will need help:

- Setting up on Monday December 8th and Tuesday December 9th
- Meeting and greeting or helping in the café on the days of the festival
- Dismantling the festival on Monday December 15th

Many hands definitely make light work so, please, if you are able, **SAVE THE DATES!**





The festival is organised by Allan Boddy, Barbara Nicholls, Margaret Parkin and Rusty Drewett, with Beryl Hey taking charge of refreshments and Stephen Hey doing programme and poster design. If you want to

help at the festival, please have a word with any of the above.

As in previous years, choirs and music groups from the five Otley primary schools will take part in the festival. There will also be musical contributions from other groups including Prince Henry's Grammar School, Crooked Willow and, for the first time at the festival, Pop 'n' Rock. A particular delight every year is the concert of Christmas music given by the choir of Westgate School and the Chippendale singers. This concert will start at 7pm on Friday December 12th.

Entry to the festival will be free but visitors are asked to bring plenty of coins to put in the buckets of their favourite charities.



● On Sunday December 14th there will be a Christmas Tree Carol Service for all ages starting at 4pm.

# **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*



## **2. Does prayer work and is that the right question?**

### **How do we know prayer works?**

The first answer is that we don't know – that is, in the contemporary sense of rational knowledge. We believe that God is at work and, as we observe, we believe that we are seeing God's hand at work. It cannot be proved but experiencing a storyline in our life or in the lives of others rings true. Narration of such stories may encourage others, with trusting hearts, to become prayerful too.

This could be regarded as a kind of Christian naiveté but – so what! In this childlike spirit we note 'results' from our prayers, whether instant or progressive.

In this faith we experience relationship with God through delay or through answers.

We are in the land of 'promise – trust' which is solid ground or an anchor of the soul – whichever metaphor you prefer!

Perhaps, where our immediate experience is nothing more than the fresh insight which often comes through adversity, we might say, with the theologian P.T. Forsyth, "Our soul is fulfilled even if our petition is not".

*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 interesting; 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**

**15 November**

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

[stephenhey01@gmail.com](mailto:stephenhey01@gmail.com)

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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