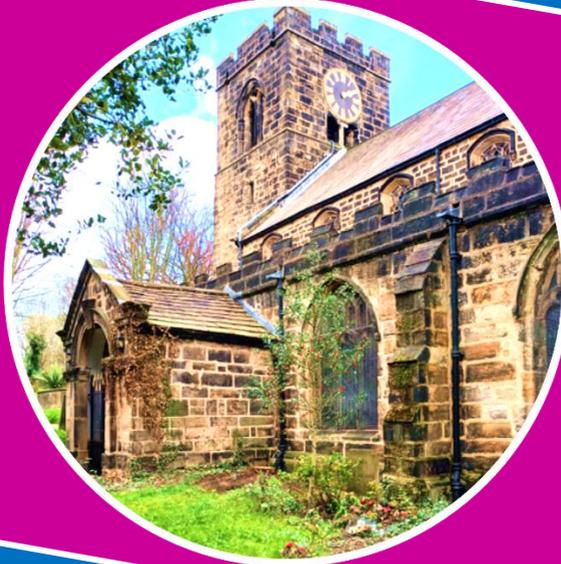


MARCH 2026

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

CONTENTS

March 2026

- 03** Dear Friends
- 05** Farewell Maria
- 08** In the Hot Seat
- 11** St George's Crypt Chaplaincy
- 13** Carbon Net Zero
- 15** My Favourite Bible Verse
- 16** Religion According to Kids
- 17** Family News
- 21** What's Your Favourite Hymn?
- 23** After School Club
- 24** Come Worship with Us
- 25** Prayer Ideas for Everyday Christians

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



Living a Holy Lent: Grace that Accepts, Truth that Transforms

Holiness is not a word we major on. Grace, quite rightly, sits at the very centre of our preaching, praying, and worship. And yet the gospel never allows us to choose between grace *or* holiness. As the Gospel of John tells us, Jesus was *full* of grace *and* truth – not 50/50, but 100/100. Lent, then, is a gift: a special season which we dedicate to recovering that same fullness.

Everything begins with grace. Before we think about effort, discipline, repentance, or growth, we must establish the sheer wonder of what God has already done for us. The holy God – utterly pure, just, and righteous – loves us despite our sin. Knowing that we could never finally deal with the true cost of our guilt, God did not stand at a distance and demand improvement. He came to us in the flesh. As 2 Corinthians puts it with staggering clarity: “He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us”. Jesus freely took upon himself the punishment we deserved. This is total grace – undeserved, unearned, and unrepayable.

But the verse does not stop there. Christ bore our sin, Paul says, “so *that we might become the righteousness of God*”. And here we encounter a holy tension at the heart of the Christian life: God’s full acceptance of us as we are, and God’s determined purpose that we should not remain as we are. Grace and truth. Acceptance and transformation. Justification and sanctification.

Justification answers the question: *How am I put right with God?* The answer is glorious and simple. In a moment – when we trust in Jesus and his self-giving death on the cross – we are legally declared righteous. Our sins are forgiven. The verdict is pronounced in advance of the final judgement: “*Not guilty*”. This is sheer grace. No probation period. No earning our place. We are justified once and for all.

Sanctification answers a different question: *What happens next?*

Having been declared righteous, we now begin to be made righteous. This is the gradual, lifelong work of the Holy Spirit in us, shaping us into the likeness of Christ. Holiness is not the price of God's acceptance; it is the fruit of it. Lent, therefore, is not about trying to make God love us more, but about responding to the love he has already lavished upon us.

In the "grace corner" we find God's unconditional welcome: we are loved, forgiven, and included because of Jesus alone. In the "truth corner" we find God's holy purpose: that every part of our lives – our habits, desires, speech, relationships, and use of power – be surrendered to Jesus. A holy Lent lives in that tension, refusing both *despair* and *complacency*.

One of the best illustrations of this comes from the Christian mathematician John Lennox. He points out that Christianity is unique among the world's religions because we receive our qualification at the *start* of the course. A university student works for years in the hope of being awarded a degree at the end. In Christ, the order is reversed. The moment we place our trust in Jesus, we are given the

qualification: righteous, holy, accepted, included, because of what he has done. Only then does the course of study begin – the long, grace-filled journey of discipleship.

Every other religion places acceptance at the end of human effort: enlightenment, paradise, or approval must be achieved. With Jesus, acceptance is the starting point. And because it is secure, we are finally free to change.

So a holy Lent is not about self-improvement, but about surrender. Not about earning grace, but about cooperating with it. We fast, pray, repent, and reorder our lives – not to become God's children, but because we already are. Grace gets us in. Truth makes us new. And the wonder of the gospel is that, in Christ, we are given both.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron', with a stylized, geometric shape to its left.

AARON KENNEDY - Vicar of Otley Parish Church

Farewell Maria

WITH OUR LOVE AND PRAYERS



THIS MONTH, we say goodbye to Maria O'Hagan, our fantastic and much loved youth worker.

Like many churches post covid, our youth work offer had folded. Aaron had the inspired idea to approach 'Missional Generation', a local organisation who amongst other things equip and resource churches with their youth work. Through 'Missional Generation', Maria started working for us part time, supporting the redevelopment of our youth groups (and so much more!) alongside a team of passionate volunteers.

Maria came to Leeds as a student studying maths and music (some of you may remember her incredible harp playing one Christmas!) and then spent

a year as an intern at St George's Church in Leeds working with the children and young people's ministry before joining Missional Generation as a Pioneer Children and Youth Worker. She originally hails from Kingston upon Thames, but thankfully for us regards Leeds as her second home now.

Whilst working for OPC, Maria has overseen and supported the development of our youth work, from nothing to an informal regular Friday evening gathering (known for its nerf wars, endless snacks, and deep debates), Sunday morning youth provision (known for its hot chocolate, school chat and bible study) and more recently, a Sunday evening discipleship group, supporting our young people to go deeper in their relationship with Jesus as they navigate their teenage years. Maria has worked so hard to resource these groups, planning sessions, bringing game ideas, and above all, making sure young people always feel incredibly welcome in OPC. Most people who volunteer in the youth team do so on top of busy family and work lives so having someone to support and resource our groups has made a world of difference.

However, Maria has done much more than this! In addition to the above, she has:

- mentored and supported young people in lunchtime groups at All Saints Primary School and Prince Henry's secondary school in Otley
- run assemblies and shared the Bible with children at All Saints Primary school
- supported the Youth Drop-in at the Bridge Church on Tuesday afternoons, a real ecumenical effort supported by members of several churches in Otley (including OPC) and Mark Atkins of Leeds Faith in Schools
- developed a "Detached Youth" ministry with Aaron, regularly meeting and speaking to young people in Otley about what matters to them
- planned and provided a fantastic children's programme at our parish weekend away
- supported the resurrection of Messy Church, seeing between 30 and 70 children and families be welcomed into church celebrating God's love through the medium of famous children's characters
- supported and organised a beautiful multi-age nativity service which two of our young people described as "one of the best things I've ever been involved in at church"
- been involved in confirmation classes and ongoing support for children and young people who have chosen to be baptised or confirmed.

This is all alongside her work for Missional Generation which has included organising residential events for young people across Leeds and Bradford where worship, connection and encouragement abound.

Children need trusted adults outside their family to confide in and to support them through their teenage years, enabling them to create a firm foundation from which to explore the world. We have prayed from the start that in our youth work at OPC, our young people will come to feel accepted and at home with us, no matter what is happening at the time in their lives, and that they will find reliable, trustworthy adults who will take an interest in them and gently point them to Jesus. Maria has a wonderful ability to help children and young people feel at ease; the way in which we have seen our young people open up about their lives and values in groups is a real testament to this. Her gentle, kind manner and consistent approach to befriending our young people is key to why we have seen growth across all of our groups and been blessed to see young people choose to be baptised or confirmed.

We will really miss Maria but will be forever grateful for the groundwork she has laid for our youth provision and the way in which she has modelled care and interest in our young people.

Maria has begun a new role with Leeds Faith in Schools (LFIS) which is an organisation many will be familiar with and which OPC supports through its Local to Global Partnership. LFIS began 30 years ago when churches in Leeds came together in response to the Faith in Leeds report to share the good news of Jesus with teenagers across the city. They partner with 8 city schools and support more on an ad hoc basis. LFIS has a key role in mentoring and supporting young people, again providing them with trusted adults who want to support and encourage them at a time of change in their lives. We are so delighted for Maria that she has joined such a brilliant organisation and want to wish her all the best for the future!

Thank you, Maria, for all you have done and for your consistency in leading our young people into relationship with Jesus. Go with our love and prayers to your next adventure!

Katie Mayers
Volunteer Youth Worker

EMMA GANNON



IN THE HOT SEAT



Hello Emma, 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 1979, just squeaking into Gen X by the skin of my teeth, in Magherafelt, Northern Ireland. Due to my dad’s job, we moved a lot in my infancy, but I grew up in and around Ballymoney which is about an hour’s drive north of Belfast and fairly close to the north Antrim coast.

Where did you go to school?

I went to the Model Primary School and then Dalriada, both in Ballymoney.

Did you go to College or University? If so, where was it that you went?

After A-levels, I studied Politics and Sociology at Strathclyde University in Glasgow.

When and where did you meet your husband?

Shaun and I met when I moved to Lewes, East Sussex, in 2004 to work for Christian Aid. He had moved to the UK from Durban, South Africa, to work at the University of Brighton a few years before.

What was your occupation and where did you work?

Shaun and I lived in East Sussex for several years where I worked in communication roles in the non-profit sector. Once Shaun and I moved to Durban, South Africa, in 2010 I continued in that vein, mostly in a freelance capacity to fit around having children. I now work as an Executive Assistant in Christian youth work for a charity in Leeds.

How many children do you have?

We have two lovely boys, Finn who is 14 and Cashel who is 9.

Do you have any brothers and sisters?

I am the oldest of three, with Aaron (the vicar here at OPC) being in the middle, and my brother Niall being the youngest.

Why did you come to live here in Otley?

Shaun, the boys and I emigrated here in 2024 to be closer to family, and we're delighted that Shaun's mum, Mary Gannon, also decided to take the leap and join us here.

When did you become a Christian?

I am so fortunate to have never known a day without Jesus, having grown up with praying

grandmothers, and parents who nurtured faith and encouraged me to know Jesus. I grew up going to Trinity Presbyterian Church in Ballymoney.

Did you worship anywhere before coming to Otley Parish Church? How long have you been coming here?

We have been coming to OPC since we arrived from Durban. Before we emigrated, we attended Grace Family Church in uMhlanga, just north of Durban.

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

I find deep solace in 1 John 4, and am always drawn to verses 7 and 8.

Do you have a favourite Christian hymn or song?

I'm really enjoying the stuff from One Hope Project and Jon Guerra, but "The Greatest Commandment" by The Porter's Gate is a definite ear worm at the moment!

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

It's perhaps not strictly classical but "The Finnish Line" by Colm Mac Con Iomaire is stunning.

What about modern songs or music – anything in particular?

I love disco, Motown, 1960s pop, trad Irish music, 90s lo-fi and rave, choral music and there's a special place in my Gen X heart for Smells Like Teen Spirit.

Can you play a musical instrument?

All the musical ability in our family went to Aaron and Niall!

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

Everywhere is new here for us so we're always keen to explore!

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

If I could be sure of a warm bed, I'd love to visit Antarctica.

A book you enjoyed reading – Christian or general? Any special reason?

I've just finished re-reading PD James' novels and have moved on to re-reading William Trevor's final collection of short stories, 'Last Stories', and have started Lars Mytting's 'The Bell in the Lake', which captivated me from the very first sentence.

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

Reading and drinking tea!
Watching TV and drinking tea.
Listening to podcasts and drinking tea.
Eating cake and drinking tea.
And walking and hiking.

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

This is the world's most difficult question and I'd have a different answer every day of the week, but today's answer is; a heaping platter of freshly caught white bait, fried and with plenty of lemon for squeezing, and then a Levantine feast of tabbouleh, falafel, sticky chicken cooked over a real fire, flatbread, salads, pickles and chillies, and garlicky yoghurt sauce. And if I had room (I'm sure I would), a generous slice of my Nana's lemon meringue pie.

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

This is the world's most difficult question. Can I take Shaun? If you pressed the point and I really had to be on my own, I'd take all the Sherlock Holmes stories and lots of tea bags too.

Which one word best describes your life right now?

Changing!

What does a Chaplain do at St. George's Crypt?

by Martin Hird



AS PART OF MY TRAINING to become a Licensed Lay Minister I needed to do a placement, and chose to do this with the Chaplain to St. George's Crypt, a well-known charity in Leeds.

The Crypt offers care, compassion and hope to the homeless, the vulnerable and those suffering from addiction www.stgeorgescrypt.org.uk. Previously I had contact with people using the charity's emergency accommodation and their hostels when I used to work as a Community Mental Health Nurse in Leeds, but I was now interested to understand the role of a Chaplain in a charity like this. The Chaplain - Andy - made me very welcome, and generously contributed extensively to my training by his patient and gentle questioning about my own sense of vocation during my placement there.



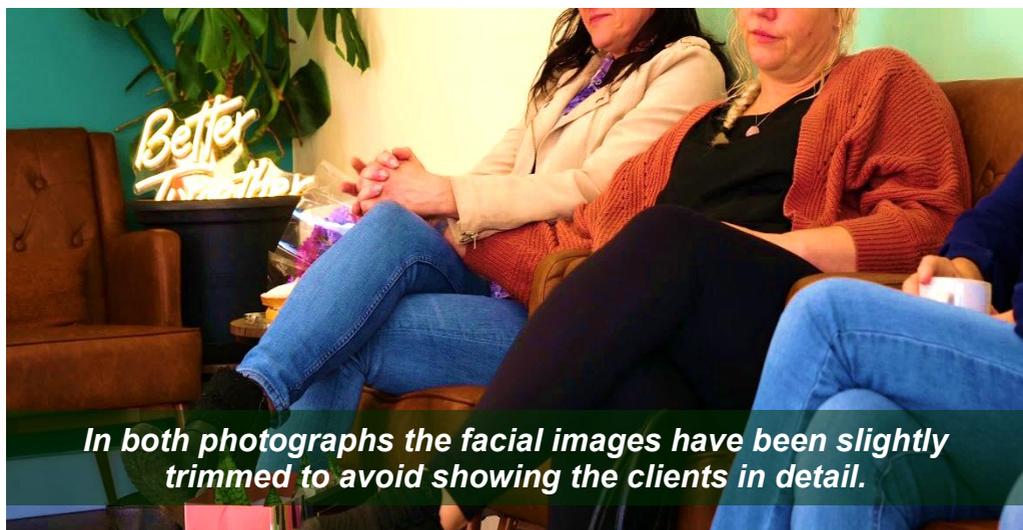
After I had completed the course, Andy asked me to consider returning to the Crypt in a voluntary capacity to serve as a Chaplain to the Crypt's drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation project - Growing Rooms - which is the only residential abstinence-based drug and alcohol recovery programme in Leeds. They work with 20 men and 16 women in 2 largely

separate groups in intense programmes which each last from 12-18 months. While on the programme the men and women do group and individual work centred on the Narcotics Anonymous (NA) 12 Step programme (I will come back to this later in the article). They also do voluntary work somewhere across the many parts of the charity's services, for example working in one of their shops or working in the busy kitchen which provides daily cooked lunches for people who need this in the city centre of Leeds.

The NA 12 Step programme takes the men and women through a spiritually based process of change and development, centred on their relationship with God as they understand God. You will be able to find details of these 12 Steps on the internet, rather than me using up too much space listing them all in this article. I visit the projects every Friday over in Armley, alternating between the men and the women. On these visits I 'hang out' and try to build good relationships with all the clients and staff. Hearing their stories is inspirational as they battle to overcome a potentially overwhelming range of life challenges and traumas. I also do a range of things, including leading a communion service and facilitating spiritual focused discussions. For example, recently I led a discussion with the men on NA Step 3 which is: "We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him". I am finding the preparation each week for the sessions personally beneficial, as they often take me into unfamiliar territory in my own walk with God. Because the clients may have a different understanding of God to me, I need to be creative in how I facilitate the discussions and not assume anything about how they each understand God. I am encouraged that the men and women at Growing Rooms are appreciative and very responsive within the sessions and services. Moreover, it was wonderful that over 20 of Growing Rooms' clients were confirmed last year in a service led by Bishop Arun. What's more, a new queue is already developing this year for confirmation.

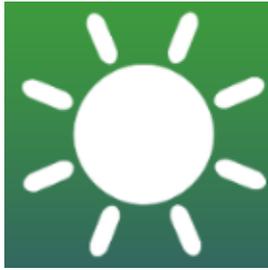
I am now preparing a discussion on Step 4: "We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves" – I am first of all doing this inventory for myself which is a challenging process.

● *I would be happy to talk more with individuals, both about Chaplaincy and about the wider work of the Crypt. Your prayer and support will be welcome!*



In both photographs the facial images have been slightly trimmed to avoid showing the clients in detail.

CARBON NET ZERO



Heritage, Community and Climate A sustainable Future for Otley Parish Church

• *An update from our Carbon Net Zero Group* •

Good News

In October last year we received the very encouraging news that our 'Expression of Interest Application' to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) had been accepted and that we had the 'green light' to proceed to the Grant Application Stage (Stage 1). Nevertheless, we do need to remember that this is merely the beginning of a long and involved application process that may take 2 to 4 years. The NLHF has encouraged us to include additional works that might help us grow and widen use of the building by the community.

With the help of Carl Andrews, the church architect, and Irving Patrick Consulting, our fundraising advisers, we are currently working on the Stage 1 application and anticipate submitting it in late May for a response in September 2026. This application will incorporate various enhancements in addition to roof replacement and its insulation. For example, we are considering how to improve access to the Mezzanine area with a view to enabling its use by our church groups and the Otley community. A complete re-vamp of the surface drainage for the whole church site is also being incorporated.

Local Fundraising Activity

The first main local event was the Autumn Fair on 27th September last year when we raised a very credible £2,000. The large number of volunteer helpers on stalls, with refreshments etc., once again showed

how supportive the OPC members are. The pre-Christmas event raised a further £1,200 and other initiatives, including a couple of post-concert collections, have also added several hundred pounds to the roof fund.

Please check our weekly Notice Sheet for more events this year. The first of these will be a charity market stall under the 'Otley Buttercross' on Saturday 4th April. As last year, there will be a call for volunteers to help on the day.

Once again, can we encourage you to pray over the next few months as we develop and submit the next application to the NLHF? If you feel able to make further donations to the **ROOF FUND**, please do so by bank transfer, cheque or cash, clearly referencing "**ROOF FUND**".

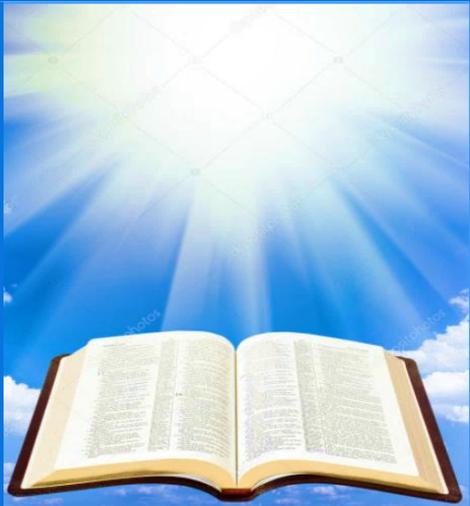
Bank Details: Parochial Church Council of Otley
Sort Code: 20-37-13
Account Number: 10088811
Reference: Roof Fund



Autumn Fair at Otley Parish Church on 27th September 2025

My Favourite Bible Verse

Erika Twichell



*Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.*
(Psalm 51:8 ESV)

This verse has taken on a new meaning to me over the last couple of months as I recover from a broken tibia. Joy and gladness would not characterise my first response to the limitations of this sobering reality – I was angry. I grieved my independence. I was annoyed. I had to slow down. I had to stop. I had to accept my brokenness, both in body and spirit. Psalm 51 reminds us that our brokenness is welcomed, even desired, by God. It is a sacrifice that pleases Him, “a broken and contrite heart you will not despise”.

As we journey through this Lenten season, let us remember to offer ourselves, broken and contrite, to the Lord, trusting we will receive the joy and gladness of the Resurrection.



Religion According to Kids

Kids were asked questions about the Old and New testaments. The following 10 statements about the bible were written by children. They have not been retouched or corrected. Incorrect spelling has been left in.

1. In the first book of the Bible, Guinness, god got tired of creating the world so he took the sabbath off.
2. Adam and eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was Joan of the Ark. Noah built an ark and the animals came on in pears.
3. Lots wife was a pillar of salt during the day, but a ball full of fire during the night.
4. The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.
5. Sampson was a strongman who let himself be led astray by a Jezebel like Delilah.
6. Samson slayed the philistines with the axe of the apostles.
7. Moses led the jews to the red sea where they made unleavened bread, which is bread without any ingredients.
8. The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up to mount cyanide to get the ten commandments.
9. The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.
10. Moses died before he ever reached Canada then Joshua led the hebrews in the battle of geritol.

Source of feature unknown – submitted by Margaret Shippey (OPC)



FAMILY NEWS

AT OTLEY PARISH CHURCH



WENDY and PETER HIPWELL

**Peter very sadly died on Tuesday 3rd February 2026
at the age of 95.**

**Peter and Wendy were married in Upper Dean,
Cambridgeshire, way back in 1958.**



CHRISTINE NUTTER

**Christine was born on 20th December 1950
at St. Winifred's Maternity Home in Ilkley.**



CONGRATULATIONS CLEM!

Clem Kennedy was 5 years old on Tuesday 27th January. He was born in London in 2021.



John celebrated his 80th birthday on 2nd February. He was born at Sorrento Maternity Hospital, Moseley, Birmingham, in 1946. He then worked there as an Obstetrics House Officer in 1971.

What's Your Favourite Hymn?



“BE STILL FOR THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD”

Verse 1

Be still for the presence of the Lord,
The Holy One is here
Come bow before Him now,
With reverence and fear
In Him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord,
The Holy One is here.

Verse 2

Be still for the glory of the Lord,
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire,
With splendour He is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord,
Is shining all around.

Verse 3

Be still for the power of the Lord,
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal,
To minister His grace
No work too hard for Him
In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the Lord,
Is moving in this place.

Author: David J Evans (born Dartford, Kent, 1957)

MARGARET TURNER

tells us why this is her favourite hymn

“Be still for the presence of the Lord” was written by David J. Evans in 1986. It is a contemporary hymn calling worshippers to stop striving and recognise the holy, powerful, and healing presence of God. Based on Psalm 46:10, it encourages quiet reverence, acknowledging that God is actively working, offering grace, and worthy of worship.

‘Be still’ has two obvious overarching messages. The first is that God is always present with us and we should never diminish his majesty. He is ‘*the Holy One*’. He is ‘*our radiant King of light*’ whose glory shines all around us. His power is at work everywhere. Our response to this great God should always be one of ‘*reverence and fear*’ - that is, of deep awe. The second message is to appreciate God’s awesomeness, but we just have to be still and let his Spirit speak to us. Stillness is not a blank mind but a reverent attention to God, listening out for what he has to say to us.

For me it reminds me to stop, listen, to let go, cease striving, and drop defences to trust in God’s power, rather than just being quiet.

The song calls for awe and bowing down, recognising the sanctuary as

‘*holy ground*’. It reminds me that the Lord is present to ‘*cleanse and heal*’ and to ‘*minister his grace*’, emphasizing that no situation is too difficult for Him. It also serves to remind me to pause the *busyness* of daily life to focus on God’s glory that is ‘*shining all around*’.

These days I seem to be continually rushing around and, in a way, forgetting what God is actually saying. I get tangled up with each day being full of things to do within God’s work but not pausing to listen to Him and what He wants me to do. All around me is noise, rushing, talking and generally forgetting that you need quietness and peace in order to hear what God is saying. He is within us and around us, even when we are not aware of Him.

It is unfortunate that experiencing stillness and peace is very difficult in our fast-paced world. Our lives are filled with things around us such as mobile phones and communication of every kind. There is no clarity in our lives when we are caught up in a constant swirl of activity and so to restore balance, we have to be still. It is only when we are silent and still, that we expose the really important things God is saying to us.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

The After School Club is for young people aged 11 to 14. We meet every Tuesday in term time between 3pm and 4.30pm in The Bridge Church Hall, Otley, and enjoy a youth club style atmosphere with table tennis, table football, board games, crafts and team games. It provides a safe fun space for them after school and includes free drinks and snacks.

The sessions are run by a trained youth worker, from Leeds Faith in Schools, who is assisted in the hall and kitchen by volunteers (DBS checked) from the local churches and community.

This project is run by 'Otley Youth and Community Centre', a charity which was set up by the local churches in Otley. It brings young people together in a safe, fun and accepting environment where the youth leader and volunteers try to build relationships with the young people through the activities provided.

We have recently received grants from *Otley Town Council*, *National Lottery* and *Sarah Jackson Community Wish* which we are very grateful for and will allow us to run the club until at least summer 2028.

If you would like to volunteer at the club, please contact David Evans on 07580 732743.





Otley Parish Church Services in March

Each 10.30am service is live streamed to YouTube:

www.youtube.com/@otleyparishchurch

Sunday 1st	8.30am	Holy Communion This monthly service of Holy Communion is based on Common Worship, with a short talk
	10.30am	Service of the Word Sunday Club (KS1, KS2 and pre-schoolers)
	6.00pm	ACTIVATE Lively, informal and reflective worship <i>(followed by pizza, tea & coffee)</i>
Sunday 8th	10.30am	Service of Holy Communion Sunday Club (KS1, KS2 and pre-schoolers) OPC Youth Group (school years 7-13)
Sunday 15th	10.30am	Service of the Word Sunday Club (KS1, KS2 and pre-schoolers)
Sunday 22nd	10.30am	Service of Holy Communion Sunday Club (KS1, KS2 and pre-schoolers) OPC Youth Group (school years 7-13)
Sunday 29th	10.30am	Service of the Word for Palm Sunday

Our Midweek Services in March

Every Tuesday	11.00am	Holy Communion A short service with no hymns <i>(followed by light refreshments)</i>
Every Monday to Thursday <i>except in school holidays</i>	4.30pm	Evening Prayer There will be a variety of approaches to prayer; also, a reflection on a Bible passage, and time for silence to pray for others

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*



5. Keeping our prayer in the spirit of grace

This is to encourage us, inwardly and openly, thoughtfully and vocally, to engage our privilege and right as Christians to both listen and speak to our God.

Rest

Because it is so important that prayer is not thought of as primarily laborious, I would like to encourage us to remind ourselves often to enter into a disposition of inward 'rest'. The psalmists, at times, seem to speak to themselves, calling on their own souls to be at peace! Not sweating but trusting.

Whilst our heavenly Father does indeed give us the privilege of participating in his purpose, he will never pass over his own 'head-ship' responsibility as our 'senior pastor' / older brother. This makes our grace-supplied life feel like an 'easy yoke' and a 'light burden':

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and **I will give you rest**. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and **you will find rest** for your souls.
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

[Matthew 11:28-30]

Nearness

What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him?
[Deuteronomy 4:7]

Whilst there are times when it is good to shout with exuberance, he really isn't far off so as to need the volume up! The interface between our hearts and his is thin!

*The Lord is **near** to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*
[Psalm 145:18]

It has become popular to talk about 'intimacy' with God. I like to think of his immediacy.

Jesus said: *Surely, I am with you always...*
[Matthew 28:20]

Reverence

In thinking of God as 'close friend' we might slip into treating him as 'our old mate'! Alongside that sense of his closeness, we must hold very dear the important truth that he is, indeed, our senior, our older brother, our great high priest, the Son among the sons. Respect and honour, which amount to the worship of a kneeling heart, then become natural.

Humility

Some - were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else. Jesus told this parable:

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: "God, I thank you that I am not like other people – or even like this tax collector". But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

[Luke 18:9-14]

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 the next edition of **IN TOUCH** we must hear from you no later than:

Saturday

14 March

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

editor@otleyparishchurch.org

Key Contacts

ASSOCIATE MINISTERS

Revd. Roger Dedman 01943 467540 rogerjdedman@gmail.com

Revd. Colin Hopkinson 01943 514113 cchopkinson@aol.com

Revd. Phil Moon 07889 813030 familyofmoon@aol.com

Revd. Rachel Wilson 01943 968902 revrachel.wilson@gmail.com

LICENSED LAY MINISTERS

Jackie Hird 07443 424733 hirds@phoncoop.coop

Martin Hird 07712 714830 hirds@phoncoop.coop

CHURCHWARDEN

Tom Raper 01943 461567 thomas.raper@btinternet.com

ASSISTANT CHURCHWARDENS

Martin Hird 07712 714830 hirds@phoncoop.coop

Kate Hobson 07719 883431 esther30kate@yahoo.co.uk

Kevin Keefe 01943 466177 kevin@keefe.org.uk

Barry Milner 01943 462472 barrynglynis.milner@outlook.com

Barbara Nicholls 07747 848074 babs.nicholls@gmail.com

LAY PASTORAL MINISTER

Margaret Turner 07772 066073

margaretandstephenturner@gmail.com

PCC TREASURER

Tony Pike 07977 463562 treasurer@otleyparishchurch.org

PCC SECRETARY

Barry Milner 01943 462472 barrynglynis.milner@outlook.com

BAPTISM CO-ORDINATOR

Glynis Milner 01943 462472 barrynglynis.milner@outlook.com

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Jenny Liston 07743 330264 jenny@otleyparishchurch.org

CHURCH WEBSITE MANAGERS

Ken Dale and Kevin Keefe webmaster@otleyparishchurch.org

IN TOUCH EDITOR

Stephen Hey 01943 969624 editor@otleyparishchurch.org

Group & Activity Contacts

BABY RASCALS / LITTLE RASCALS

Eileen Barr 01943 464382

Jean Boddy 01943 466182

BELL RINGERS

Julia Thornley 07979 957394

Jenny Liston 07743 330264

CARBON NET ZERO

Norman Barr otleybarrs@gmail.com

CHURCH CHOIR

Pam Beck pam.beck@hotmail.co.uk

CRAFTYNUTS CRAFT GROUP

Lynne Barber 01943 466493

FLOWER ARRANGING

Val Tait 01943 464032

LOCAL TO GLOBAL

Tricia Merrick merricktricia@gmail.com

MUSIC GROUPS & WORSHIP TEAM

Rick Mayers richardmayers87@gmail.com

LADIES FELLOWSHIP

Val Tait 01943 464032

OPEN HOUSE

Barry Milner barrynglynis.milner@outlook.com

STEEL MAGNOLIAS

Shirley Parker shirleyparker@btinternet.com

SUNDAY CLUB

Mary Pike sundayclub@otleyparishchurch.org

YOUTH GROUP

Katie Mayers youth@otleyparishchurch.org

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