

APRIL 2026

# IN TOUCH

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**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 Martin



### The walk up to the cross

Our son Calum is about 6 feet 6 inches tall. He has always been very long – even as a baby. If you walked through a domestic door carrying him across the front of you (like a baby), you had to bang either his head or his feet on a door post – or go through sideways. Later in life he liked being carried on a papoose on our front – this was OK, until you had to do the washing up, which would always result in him getting an impromptu foot washing. Hold onto this thought of a very tall child.

As the years went by the children became able to ascend the Chevin 'mountain', as it was initially called, the erection of the cross was an excuse every year for a Sunday afternoon pilgrimage up the slopes. As we set off from our home the cross is barely visible – its top looks like a straight stick amongst the trees. Up Station Road we would trek, over Birdcage Walk, up the narrow path/stream and onto the slippery cobbles above Johnny Lane, then over into the woods with the cross now being entirely invisible. At this point we would always begin

on the Chevin mountain summit, he was to count the stairs up to the top of the woods to help keep up motivation levels. At the top of the woods, as the route opens up onto the Bilberry moorland, the debate would begin about the number of steps we had ascended. We could never agree on the exact number. (which is obviously 241 – check it!). Do you count the places where a step had obviously once been? Do you count the single step between the cobbles and the woods, or is this more a boundary marker than a step? As concentration wanes it is easy to count a step as a step, rather than just a step. It was clearly easy for us to disagree about something as black and white as the number of steps (which is 241).

As you move out of the woods onto the moorland, suddenly the now huge cross, which had been as small as a stick, comes into plain view. Excitement levels rise and counting is no longer needed – there is now a single goal. One

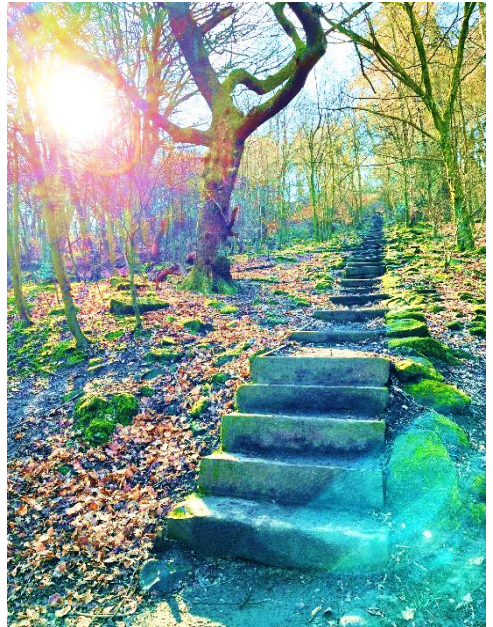
year, when I breathlessly caught up with Calum leaning back against the huge cross with his arms outstretched – he called out: “Look how small I am”. Of course, his height had not changed, but relative to the cross he was suddenly very tiny.

At this point we could move from the Chevin into any number of sermons.

God had to take Job through a similar humbling, rescaling process, because he was “righteous in his own eyes” (Job 32:1). After all the theological debate between the friends, God finally speaks directly to Job (Ch 38). I will pick some of the best bits... God said: “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundations? (vs 4)... Can you loosen Orion’s belt? (vs 31)... Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom? (Ch 39 vs 26) After 2 bruising chapters bringing Job to measure next to God – Job comes to his senses and put his hand over his mouth... “ I have no answer – I will say no more” (Ch 40 vs 5). Stand any one of us next to God and we realise our size and our relative lack of wisdom.

Coming back to the cross for my last few words. There are all kinds of ideas about the significance of the death of Jesus on a cross. To name

but a few – its significance as the victory over death and over evil – its significance as a demonstration of God’s love, to move us to repentance – its significance as a kind of substitution for us, Jesus somehow stepping in to face the punishment for sin instead of us. All can be argued from the Bible. When I have read books on this to try to ‘sort it out’ in my own mind, each of these ideas and all other ‘contenders’, helped me to appreciate yet another dimension of the significance of the cross. To choose only one idea would be as limiting as just counting steps instead of fully appreciating the beauty of God’s creation all around us.



**MARTIN HIRD – Licensed Lay Minister**



Jesus  
is  
Risen

**HE'S ALIVE!**

*Easter Cross, The Chevin, Otley*

# THE CROSS OF CHRIST

## A Reflective Service for Good Friday



All churches in Otley are welcome to join us for “The Cross of Christ” reflective service on Good Friday evening which will be led by Otley Parish Church choir.

The service will include congregational singing, readings and anthems. The choir will be supported by a visiting singer from the Bridge Church and another from the Methodist Church.

**GOOD FRIDAY**  
**3rd April 2026 at 7pm**  
**Otley Parish Church**

## Otley Parish Church

# **HOLY WEEK and EASTER SUNDAY SPECIAL SERVICES**

*Each to be held at Otley Parish Church unless otherwise shown*

### **PALM SUNDAY 29 MARCH**

10.15am: Blessing of the Palms and Short Procession  
Meet at the main church gate in Kirkgate  
10.30am: All-age Service of the Word

### **MONDAY 30 MARCH**

9.00am: Holy Week Morning Prayer  
4.30pm: Holy Week Evening Prayer

### **TUESDAY 31 MARCH**

9.00am: Holy Week Morning Prayer  
11.00am: Service of Holy Communion  
4.30pm: Holy Week Evening Prayer

### **WEDNESDAY 1 APRIL**

9.00am: Holy Week Morning Prayer  
4.30pm: Holy Week Evening Prayer  
7.30pm: Stations of the Cross – a time of reflection

### **MAUNDY THURSDAY 2 APRIL**

9.00am: Holy Week Morning Prayer  
4.30pm: Holy Week Evening Prayer  
7.30pm: Communion Service with Stripping of the Altar

### **GOOD FRIDAY 3 APRIL**

10.00am - 11.30am: Messy Church  
12 noon: Good Friday Midday Service at the Chevin Cross  
2.00pm: Good Friday Liturgy  
7.00pm: "The Cross of Christ" – A Reflective Service for Good Friday  
led by Otley Parish Church choir  
The service will include congregational singing, readings and anthems

### **SATURDAY 4 APRIL**

9.00am to 5.00pm: Prayer Vigil – Praying for Awakening

### **EASTER SUNDAY 5 APRIL**

7.00am: The Chevin Cross Early Morning Service  
(Churches Together in Otley)  
10.30am: Easter Celebration Service  
with Holy Communion and Baptism

# How I Found **MY FAITH**

## Tom Wyatt

**M**Y MUM DIED in an accident when I was 9 years old and I was raised by dad who talked to me about God. Despite not going to church he had a strong faith.

I got baptised as a Methodist at the age of 20 but had no understanding of what it meant to give my life to Jesus. It just felt like the right thing to do. I'd always suffered with anxiety but in my 20s it got bad and I turned to alcohol to cope. When my dad, a believer, died from

alcoholism I lost faith in a loving God. Sin, alcohol and anxiety became my masters. I became an alcoholic. I started going to AA meetings in 2017, but I couldn't stay sober. However, a seed of agnosticism was planted in me.

In 2021, I got sober and began to believe in some kind of God, a Christian God seemed a stretch! By 2023, though I remained sober, I was plagued with anxiety & chronic fatigue. I was trapped in



suffering, separated from God, with no hope, peace or meaning. At the same time, I was getting my dad's ashes buried on the 10th anniversary of his death. I got out the note he had left me saying what he wanted on his headstone. He wanted the words "God is love". I'd read these words before; this time they hit me differently. The words wouldn't leave me. Eventually, with no hope left and suffering crushing me, I cried out to God and asked Him what to do and he answered - "abandon yourself to me".

Eventually, I obeyed! I emailed Aaron here at Otley Parish Church and he came to see me every week. I had lots of doubts and questions, but Aaron assured me the answers were there if I looked for them. I embarked on a mission to find out if Jesus was real. What I found astonished me. I was blown away by the historical, scientific and philosophical evidence for Jesus! And experiential evidence soon followed, and I began to experience Jesus! I immediately started telling anyone who would listen about Jesus! Jesus is real, he is alive today and he loves me! I fully surrendered to Jesus and later I renewed my baptism at OPC. God has blessed me with gifts of teaching, pastoral care and evangelism and he has put these to use by guiding my path to lead Alpha courses at Church. There is nothing more beautiful than to see others coming to faith.

You may ask if I still experience doubt? Of course I do, but I doubt with faith! I ask questions, I pray, I read and I learn. Though much of my suffering has not ended, hope has been restored. Hope that lies fully in Jesus. And I cannot wait for what he has in store for me. I have developed a deep love for theology, philosophy and Christian apologetics - I hope to formally study these in the future, if God wills it for me! Peace x

## **How did YOU find YOUR faith?**

**It would be lovely if you would consider writing about how you found your faith. Please give it some thought and maybe pray about it too. Then, if you'd like to, please have a word with our In Touch Editor, Stephen Hey.**



# FAMILY NEWS

AT OTLEY PARISH CHURCH



## CONGRATULATIONS SIMON ON YOUR 70th BIRTHDAY

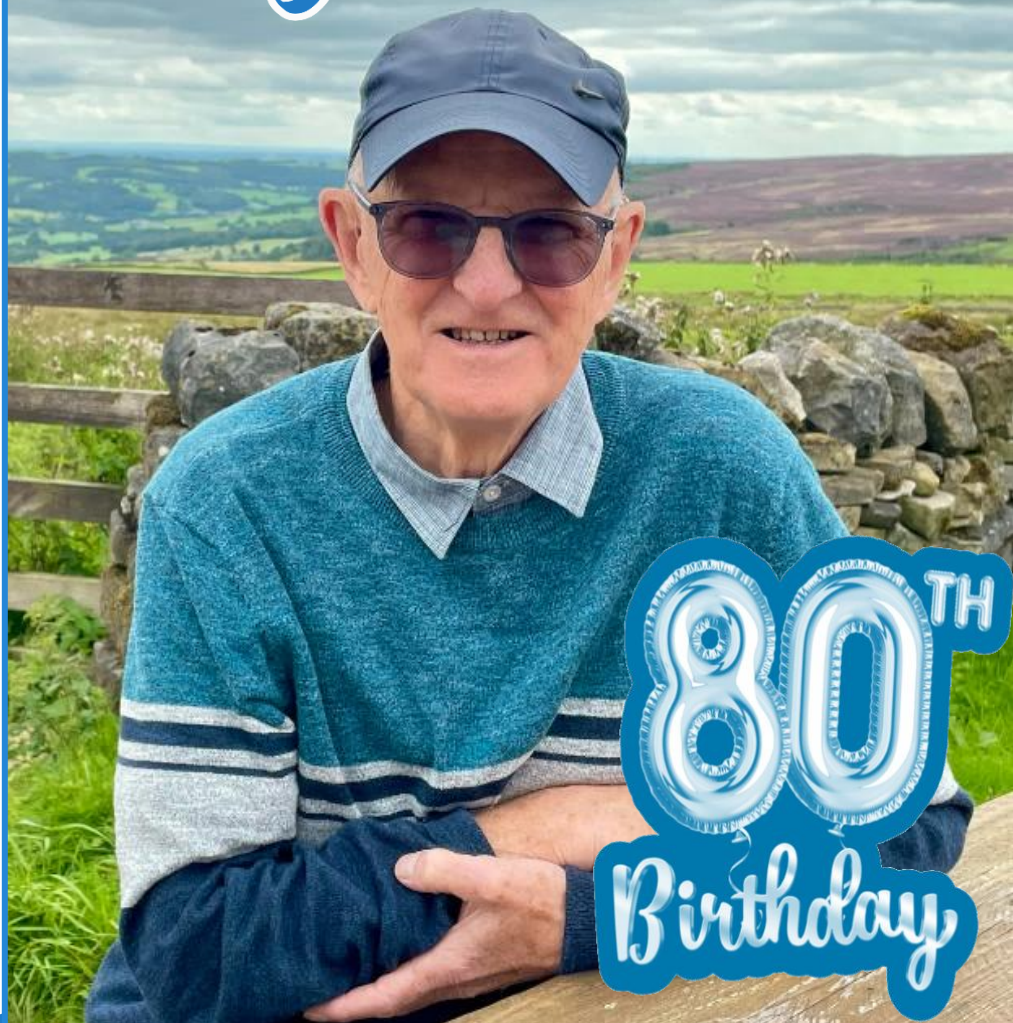
Simon Browning celebrated his birthday this year on 13th February.

He was born in Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, in 1956.

Simon is a great Parkrunner.

In April last year he completed his 100th, and his target is to reach 150 Parkruns by his 71st birthday!

# *Congratulations!*



**NORMAN BARR**

celebrated his 80th birthday  
on 27th March.

He was born in Glasgow in 1946.



## **RACHEL WILSON**

celebrated her 70th birthday on 9th March. She was born in 1956 at Jessops Hospital, Sheffield.



**ALEX McNAIR**

celebrated his  
94th birthday on  
8th March 2026.

He was born  
in Glasgow in 1932.



# HOW DO YOU FEEL

## here at Otley Parish Church

Safe? Welcome? Nurtured? Respected? Heard?

**During the enquiry into abuse that has occurred in faith communities over the years, a survivor of abuse giving evidence said:**

“I need the church to understand what happened, to remember correctly, to discern where responsibility lay. It is a really brave church community that decides to face abuse head on.”

As our Church’s Safeguarding Lead, I want that to be the case for OPC – that safeguarding becomes part of our DNA – an expression of love for one another and of commitment to the gospel.

It is important then to understand that everyone who comes to our church for services or to attend another group in the building feels **safe, welcomed, nurtured, respected** and **heard**. And if not, why not? If we understand where any problems or barriers lie, we can try to do something to change that.

To that end, questionnaires have been going out to Open House, Rascals, Sunday Club and the Youth group. Now, it is the turn of our whole congregation.

The questionnaire is on our church website from where it can be completed and returned. There is an option to add your name or to return the form anonymously. [www.otleyparishchurch.org/safe](http://www.otleyparishchurch.org/safe)

If you are not confident about doing things on line or do not have access to the internet, hard copies will be available. These can be returned in person to me or Aaron, or can be posted in the wall safe at the back of the church either with your name or anonymously.

I really hope that you will take the time to complete the questionnaire and to answer honestly. We all have a responsibility for safeguarding - we need to be a listening church, and the outcome could make a real difference.

*Thank you.*

**Jenny Liston**  
**OPC Safeguarding Officer**

# What's Your Favourite Hymn?



## **“IF I WERE A BUTTERFLY”**

### **Verse 1**

If I were a butterfly,  
I'd thank You, Lord, for giving me wings,  
and if I were a robin in a tree,  
I'd thank You, Lord, that I could sing,  
and if I were a fish in the sea,  
I'd wiggle my tail and I'd giggle with glee,  
but I just thank You, Father,  
for making me, me.

### **Verse 2**

If I were an elephant,  
I'd thank You, Lord, by raising my trunk,  
and if I were a kangaroo,  
you know I'd hop right up to You,  
and if I were an octopus,  
I'd thank You, Lord, for my fine looks,  
but I just thank You, Father,  
for making me, me.

### **Chorus**

*For You gave me a heart,  
and You gave me a smile,  
You gave me Jesus,  
and You made me your child,  
and I just thank You, Father,  
for making me, me.*

### **Verse 3**

If I were a wiggly worm,  
I'd thank you, Lord, that I could squirm,  
and if I were a billy goat,  
I'd thank you, Lord, for my strong throat,  
and if I were a fuzzy wuzzy bear,  
I'd thank you, Lord, for fuzzy wuzzy hair,  
but I just thank You, Father,  
for making me, me.

**Author: Brian M. Howard, 1975**

# MARGARET PARKIN

## tells us why this is her favourite hymn

### **I didn't need to think about it when asked to write something until I started to think about it!**

When you have been involved in worship for as many years as I have and in a variety of settings, you will realise that I have heard and sung countless hymns and worship songs from childhood till now. My choice of favourite hymn can change almost daily depending on each day's situation. Choosing "My Favourite Hymn" was a bit like being a castaway on the Desert Island Discs programme, where having listened to a range of personal favourites the castaway is allowed to choose only one. Which one should I choose? I have gone for one which I haven't yet heard at Otley Parish Church. A challenge maybe!

"If I were a butterfly" was composed, especially for children, in 1975 by Brian. M. Howard, a highly regarded Christian composer. His songwriting is intended to give God's people a new sense of joy, heartfelt worship and a deeper experience of the love of God.

It takes me back to the 1980s when I was working as a house parent at Hilton Grange Residential Special School situated at the top of

Pool Bank. Mary Spybey, the deputy Head of Care, and mother of Anne Raftery, a member of our church, created and conducted a children's choir and I was the pianist. This children's praise song is best sung with some gusto and wacky actions. It brings back special memories of my time with them and puts a smile on my face whenever I hear it. The chorus is the best bit for me - *For You gave me a heart, and You gave me a smile. You gave me Jesus, and You made me your child, and I just thank you, Father, for making me, me!*

The song itself was a way of introducing the Creation story and nowadays it challenges me about my responsibility for caring about God's creation. It reminds me of the damage being done to people and property far away from our land. And that last line alone reminds me of God's care and love to me throughout many years. Even during the bad times, He has never deserted me, although I have not always kept as close to Him as I should have.

I am trusting Him for the future and say, "Thank you Father for making me". What might it remind you to say "Thank you" for?



**T**OM AND I set the date for our final winter Pruning Party and Leaf Gathering day as 21st February, to be before March and bird nesting time. By coincidence it fell in the first week of Lent too. As the name suggests the term originates in old English, Dutch, German and Norse for both Spring and the lengthening of days. As Christians, we know it as a time of contrition, fasting and prayer, reflecting Jesus' time in the wilderness and the build up to Easter.

On the pruning day, more springlike than late winter, 16 of us after a prayer from Tom, set to work with enthusiasm at 10am on the wild west end of the Churchyard and the more formal areas too. Old hands worked alongside new recruits. We had some apologies too, both prior and retrospective, from a few who forgot. Hence, we can draw on a solid crew of about 25 now, showing the regard for the Church and Churchyard.

At half-time there was no Glynis and Barry to make excellent coffee



and chocolate biscuits as usual (they prune too) as they were on half-term grandparent duty in London. So, my wife Rachel stood in with weaker coffee and plain biscuits. I ate

**Left to right: Keith, Trish, Dave, Brenda, David**

no biscuits myself knowing that I would be off Lent tomorrow, it being Sunday. Years ago, two Irish Catholic tea ladies in Bolton convinced me (easily) that Sundays do not count in the 40 days of Lent. It has made Lent a lot easier for me ever since.

Suitably refreshed we then carried on until 1pm. The leaf lifters built up the pile from the size of Mount Pisgah to which it had fallen since November. That is the only mountain that I can climb nowadays! Their efforts raised it to Penyghent which is a respectable mountain / Dales fell. On the ivy, Viking Brenda and American Destin attacked two dense piles of ivy that they made last time to reveal three old graves. Stephen with his small chainsaw on a pole trimmed some ivy off a few trees and stumps, to help their stability. I was reminded, however, that formal training and a Certificate is needed for a chainsaw. Hence, we will be back to all hand tools next time. Sou, David, Tom, Jeanette and Susan..., all pruned well with hand tools.

Tom, our Churchwarden and Leaf Master Regis, reckons that we have reached the right balance for wildlife, heritage and visual amenity now. He was pleased to hear a tiny gold crest too. In July, students from Prince Henry's School come and prune paths behind the graves and water the wildflowers and fruit trees. On 3rd July Chris Huby and I will

lead a short Walking Festival walk round the Church and grounds looking at the history and wildlife. Learn, for example, why trees like the big Crooked willow are rarely planted in churchyards.



*Left to right: Paul, Maria, David, Jeanette, Susan*

***Many thanks and blessings to you all who helped.***

**KEITH (Man of the forest) WILSON**

# **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*



## **6. Prayer by all for all**

**Some may have a call to emphasise prayer and, in so doing, inspire and equip others, but the New Testament never suggests it is a specialist ministry for a few experts.**

### **Prayer saturation**

*Hypocrites – love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others.*

*[Matthew 6:5]*

*The teachers of the law – for a show make lengthy prayers.*

*[Luke 20:46-47]*

God does not require the gift of fluent articulation or long prayers. We need to find ways of encouraging those who consider themselves inarticulate. As indicated above, only in this way will we develop an 'every Christian' / 'whole church' sense of mission.

I like this triplet:

**Little prayers matter**  
**Simple, persistent prayers work**  
**Everyone's prayers count**

*Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything...'*

[Mark 12:43-44]

We can apply this principle beyond financial giving to other areas of Christian life. Like Jesus, we can rightly value things that are apparently 'small' by this-worldly standards. Those gifted and experienced can make it their aim to be servant-kingdom examples and encouragers of others who feel they have little to offer.

Every Christian is valued by God wherever and whoever they are, and is potentially:

- ❖ A 'priest' – by prayer to bring people and places to God and God to people.
- ❖ A 'missionary' to express Christ's life in character, presence, deed and word.
- ❖ A stone in their pond to make ripples wherever they are!!

**'Little Prayers' by Amy Carmichael**

"Sometimes we are very much disappointed with ourselves because we cannot pray proper prayers, only little ones that hardly seem to be prayers at all. I have been finding much comfort in the little prayers of the Gospels. They could not be more little.

There was Peter's, "Lord, save me", and the poor mother's, "Lord, help me"; and sometimes even less, no prayer at all but only the briefest telling of the trouble; "My servant lieth at home sick"; and less than that, a thought, and a touch, "She said within herself, if I may but touch..." Again, we hear of just a feeling, "They were troubled", and a cry, "They cried out for fear" – that was all, but it was enough.

Often in the throng of the day's work and warfare, there will not be time for more than a very little prayer – a thought, a touch, a feeling, a cry – but it is enough; so tender, so near, is the love of our Lord.”

## Prayer by every Christian

### EVERY PERSON

*I urge, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people... This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

[1 Timothy 2:1–4]

The implication is that if *all people* and their settings are to be influenced and ‘reached’ this requires all God’s people to be involved.

Thinking of ‘The Parable of the Talents’ in Matthew 25:14-30 NKJV makes me believe that this is a time for the ‘one talent’ people. Only by everyone participating can the job be done.

### EVERY DAY

*One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life.*

[Psalm 27:4]

*Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life.*

[Psalm 23:6]

There is a need for us to find, and if we are pastoral, help others to find, our “*all the days*” ways of relating to God.

### EVERY PLACE

*Therefore, I want men everywhere to pray... also women...*

[1 Timothy 2:8–9]

*When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, ‘Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.’ He was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven’.*

[Genesis 28:16–17]

God is everywhere but the knowledge of God is not. Our Christian heritage teaches us that there is no place where he is not, but we often compartmentalise our lives, forgetting that he is present and approachable *everywhere*.

## **EVERY SITUATION**

*Do not be anxious about anything, but **in every situation**, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

[Philippians 4:6-7]

*The king said to me, 'What is it you want?' Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king...*

[Nehemiah 2:4-5]

Perhaps, for many of us, the idea of praying or being prayerful in the midst of ordinary life is a new way of thinking. But it is exceptionally relevant in our current world of busyness. We need to find a 'theology' for being the church when we are not 'at church'.

We love to think of 'the word of God' as the seed but it is also worth reflecting on this:

*The field is the world, and the **good seed stands for the people of the kingdom.***

[Matthew 13:8]

**Wherever you are, YOU are God's seed and the prayerful presence of US is a means by which God's presence is brought into our 'real-life' situations.**



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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## Things Are Looking Up!!

### **M**Y MARRIAGE BECAME IRRELEVANT SOMEHOW.

I went through the usual daily routine, but any love or infatuation I had in the beginning had gone, and I lived my life as a single person for the most part, within the confines of an unhappy relationship. There were a few good times, but intermingled with much sarcasm, frustration and anger. During this time my jobs varied as always, but mainly working in upholstery factories as a hand sewer. Then one day in 1974 my brother Dave introduced me to horse racing when he convinced me it was an easy way to make money. He said, “You must back ‘Highclere’ in the classic “1,000gns”, so I did, and the ‘Dead cert’ was a winner by a short head, so a £3 bet brought me £36 and I was hooked, eventually becoming quite good at it. I knew every horse, jockey and trainer at the beginning of the season. For many years I bought the Daily Mirror every morning and the Yorkshire Post every evening and the Sporting Life for many years, and loved every minute of it!

It was also in 1974 when Tony’s uncle Johnny called in to see us. His lovely wife, Kitty, had recently died and he wanted to go to Canada to visit his sister Mabel and her husband, Les, who were living in Dartmouth in Nova Scotia. He didn’t want to go alone though so asked us if we would go with him. I was certainly up for going, and Tony readily agreed, so we arranged to go with him for three weeks later that year.

We arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where Les met us at the airport. The first few days were spent with him and Mabel in Dartmouth. Then they had arranged to take us on a journey to meet friends who were living about 300 miles away in Saint John, New Brunswick. There we met up with Des and

Ida, real characters, very friendly and welcoming. We were much younger than everyone else here, so we were happy when a few days later Des's brother, Cyril and his wife Shirley called in with their two children, Tara aged two and Chelsea, just a few months old. It was great to meet them. We were about the same age. They asked us if we had seen much of Canada. We hadn't at this point as our days were spent indoors, chatting. No one went out very much as they enjoyed socialising, drinking wine and smoking. We were due to go back to Dartmouth the following day, so we were delighted when Cyril and Shirley invited us to go and stay with them for a few days before we went back to Dartmouth. What joy! Mabel and Les were not too happy, and we would have to make our own way back somehow! But we jumped at the chance and said, "its ok – we'll do that". So, uncle Johnny went back with them and we had the most wonderful time feeding the beavers that evening. Then over the next four days they took us sightseeing around the area; it was wonderful getting to know each other. We then hitchhiked back to Dartmouth – it was very easy! It was all quite an experience, and I fell in love with Canada right away.

It was lovely to be invited back again to Canada by Cyril and Shirley and to stay with them for a few weeks. Cyril had previous connections with England through his father who was born here, so he had visited Yorkshire when he was younger in the York and Bridlington areas, so we had something in common! He also sang here in a local band, and jointly owned a Tavern named "Smittys Pub" in Saint John, New Brunswick, the oldest city in Canada. These were the days where all the windows of pubs had to be blacked out, and it was against the law to drink alcohol outside!! There was a fish market there where I was able to buy fresh haddock to cook them "English fish and chips" which they loved! Shirley and I got on so well, but little did I know that this trip would bring some wonderful friends into my life, a dream that I never imagined. We arranged to come back the following year to stay with them, and I felt in my heart that this was where I wanted to be. Happiness! Is this how it feels?!

● ***Chapter 8 of "Fear... Lies... Despair... Triumph!" will be published in the June 2026 edition of In Touch.***

Previous chapters of Lesley's book can be found on our church website [www.otleyparishchurch.org](http://www.otleyparishchurch.org) under the heading "What's On?".

*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**

**18 April**

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