

JUNE 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](https://www.facebook.com/otleyparishchurch)

X (TWITTER): [@otleyallsaints](https://twitter.com/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



Following the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in mid-May I have, with the consent of our congregation at Otley Parish Church, begun my fourth year as Churchwarden.

I have to say that I find it a great honour, and I really enjoy the journey of adventure serving our Lord in Otley. On June 4th it's the Archdeacon's Visitation where I will be sworn in for another year. In that service I will promise: *"I solemnly and sincerely declare, before God and his people, that I will faithfully and diligently discharge the duties of the office of Churchwarden, for the parish in which I have been chosen, during the period of my appointment"*.

Churchwardens are chosen by the people of the parish to represent them. At the same time, they are officers of the bishop.

The duties of a Churchwarden are varied, but in the Churchwarden's Yearbook there is a lovely phrase that says, *"In extreme circumstances to maintain order in the church and*

churchyard, wardens have the authority to effect citizens arrests". Fortunately, it hasn't come to that yet in Otley, although I have quickly learned to always expect the unexpected in a town centre location.

People often ask me what does a Churchwarden do? I often answer, tongue in cheek, that it's all the jobs that nobody wants to do. In essence it is looking after the fabric of the church, its contents, ensuring services are held regularly and importantly upholding the incumbent and their family in the discharge of their ministry.

This is most likely my final year serving you as Churchwarden and I must say that I have felt very supported by you all. If you are thinking of taking on Churchwarden duties, please come and talk to me, Barry, Aaron or any past warden. It would be really good to have more churchwardens to help Barry and

me share the journey of adventure of serving our Lord in Otley. In March I had the new experience of the Quinquennial (five yearly) Inspection of our church building, its contents and the book keeping records. Carl, our church architect, looked thoroughly in every nook and cranny, and we even climbed onto the tower roof which afforded great views over Otley on a chilly spring morning. We discovered that the tower roof drains were silted up and needed an urgent cleaning. The old mantra taught to me by Barry quickly kicked in - that is, keeping water out and getting water away preserves the building! The work was done even before Carl's report arrived in April. Looking after a Grade1 listed building is indeed an adventure.

Our church is about the people of God, but the building is where the people of God meet. Jesus the Good Shepherd says in John's Gospel chapter 10 - *"Very truly, I tell you that anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep"*. Jesus goes on to say, *"Very truly, I*

tell you, I am the gate for the sheep... whoever enters by me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture.... I am the Good Shepherd, I know my own and my own know me".

Our church building is the sheepfold, and it's there for everyone including those that are still yet to come. Jesus says, *"I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and there will be one flock and one shepherd"*. Hence our church mission:

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

Maintaining our building is at the heart of our mission in Otley.

TOM RAPER – Churchwarden at Otley Parish Church



IN THE HOT SEAT

Hello Mark, 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 1987 in Northampton but spent most of my childhood in North Wales.

Where did you go to school?

I went to primary school in St. Asaph in Wales and secondary school in Chester.

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

I went to medical school at Newcastle University. I then continued living in the North East for 17 years.

When and where did you meet your wife, Victoria?

I met Victoria on a paediatric rotation at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle during a discussion about a sleep study report. A few weeks later we spent a whole afternoon at a summer BBQ chatting and getting to know each other (much more interesting topics than sleep study reports!) and started dating shortly after.

What is your occupation and where do you work?

I work at Leeds Children’s

Hospital as a paediatric anaesthetist.

Do you have any brothers and sisters?

I have two sisters: Kate who lives in Chester and Charlotte who lives in Gloucestershire.

How many children do you and Victoria have, what are their names and how old they?

We have 3 children: Edward, 10, a keen basketballer, George, 8, who loves science and Oliver, 2, who is obsessed with trains (including the wooden train set at the side of the church). If they could, they would all spend every weekend riding on roller coasters!

Do you live here in Otley or somewhere else?

We now live in Cookridge (which I understand is a long way away from Otley!). We struggled to sell our house in Newcastle when I secured a job here and we were desperate for us all to live together after I had worked away for 2 years. We had 9 excellent months renting a bungalow on St David's Road here in Otley, before we moved up the road to Cookridge. This was just 4 days before Oliver was born.

When did you become a Christian?

I became a Christian in 1997 during a campfire worship session at a Christian youth camp on the Llyn Peninsula in North Wales. I still remember the moment I clearly gave my life to Christ.

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

I worshiped at Holy Trinity in Jesmond for most of my time in Newcastle. Victoria and I attended there together after we started dating and Edward and George were brought up in the church there. We visited OPC during a church search when we moved to Otley. We felt so welcomed that OPC was the first and only stop on our church search.

Are you involved in any way here at OPC?

I am lucky to play bass in the music group at church. We have such amazing musicians and singers here; playing in church is a real privilege.

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

Psalm 139 v 14. "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." It is amazing that the creator of the universe also created us all as

individuals. It is exceptionally humbling to know that we are all created in the image of God and this is the main motivation for me in my career.

Do you have a favourite Christian hymn or song?

“Be thou my vision”. It’s a true classic.

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

My favourite classical piece is Chopin’s Nocturne in E Flat Major. Maybe it’s a clichéd choice but incredibly beautiful on every listen.

What about modern songs or music – anything in particular?

I have a wide taste in music but particularly like rock music (or anything I can play along to with my bass). My favourite band are the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

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

We are loving exploring Yorkshire as a family. We need to explore more though before we have a favourite place.

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

Our dream family holiday is a

large trip to Australia, and I would love to explore more of Africa.

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

I have a short attention span outside of work and would love to read more but embarrassingly read rarely.

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

We love weekend theme park trips with the boys. I like to swim, run and walk in the hills to relax (and of course play bass!).

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

I would not limit myself to 3 courses. You cannot beat a home cooked roast meal (beef with Yorkshire puddings of course). My granny’s (a proud Yorkshire woman) was always my favourite meal but with Victoria’s roast dinners as a close second.

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

I would struggle to live without music.

Which one word best describes your life right now?

Family

Second **BIG OTLEY** *Sings* CONCERT

SATURDAY 27TH JUNE

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KIRKGATE, LS21 3HW**

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- 🎵 Northern Heart Trio
- 🎵 Rock and Pop Choir Otley

- 🎵 Joe Reed
- 🎵 Silvertones Choir
(Wings Academy)
- 🎵 Terrie Ford & Melody Reed
- 🎵 SingMeanwood!
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- 🎵 Sally's Army

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**&
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F A R E W E L L

DESTIN & ELIZABETH

Destin and Elizabeth's English Adventures

WHAT an experience! Six months in little old Otley! My husband, Destin, and I had the most amazing opportunity to live in Otley from October to April. We got to experience fun fall days, many rainy winter days, and the lovely transition to beautiful spring before we headed back home to Washington State. We got married in August last year so this time in England has been very formative for our marriage. It was also extremely special to set up our very first home here together!



You may be wondering what brought these newlywed Americans to Otley in the first place? My dad is actually a born and bred Yorkshireman from the small village of Farnley near Otley. My

parents have a house in Otley's Burras Lane that needed a bit of refurbishment, so we jumped at the opportunity to help out. Destin is very savvy with all things practical (which I'm sure is partly why he received my dad's blessing!). We re-decorated everything, ripped up old carpet in exchange for hardwood, renovated the bathroom, re-carpeted the upstairs, fixed ventilation issues, and Destin even rebuilt a stone wall in the back garden! We were kept busy but still had time for lots of fun. We explored all around Yorkshire, including Brimham Rocks, Fountain's Abbey, York, Leeds, and many of the beautiful places in the Dales. We also enjoyed exploring other counties too such as Northumberland, Lancashire, Cumbria and Durham. We were also able to travel to France, Spain, Ireland and Scotland. Each trip provided us with a chance to learn, eat lots of food and make new memories.

All of this travelling and sightseeing was phenomenal, but the best part of living in Otley were the people. Saying goodbye is never easy, but it was especially hard saying goodbye to the people we met here. One of the biggest ways we were able to meet people was by getting involved in Otley Parish Church.

We attended regularly on Sundays, helped with the two churchyard work days (thanks again Keith!), and even joined the Alpha course. We got to see God working in so many people's lives. God is faithful and our time in Otley reflects that truth clearly. Although we had moved to a place where we only knew a few people, God brought us into a church where we were loved, and could learn, grow, and be inspired by the testimonies of many.

Our time in Otley was too short, but certainly not lacking in amazing experiences. Now we are home and figuring out our next chapter of life. Although we may not know what our future holds, we can rest assured because we know that the creator of our future is in control. We are excited for this next chapter of our lives, and we hope to return to Otley soon! We miss you all very much! May God bless you all and the town of Otley.

Until next time...

Elizabeth and Destin Daniel



FAMILY NEWS

AT OTLEY PARISH CHURCH

Congratulations!



AMIE SMITH and CHRIS DENING

were married at a local Registry Office.

Here at Otley Parish Church during our morning service
on Sunday 10th May

there was a special thanksgiving for their marriage.



Congratulations!

**Geoff Park and Kate Howorth
became engaged
on Saturday 25th April 2026
at Embleton Bay, Northumberland**



SAM MAYERS

**celebrated his 2nd birthday
on 23rd April 2026.
He is the son of Katie and Rick,
and brother of Daniel.**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



CHRISTINE HOPKINSON

**celebrated her 65th birthday on 21st March 2026.
She was born in Hinkley, Leicestershire, in 1961.**

A family gathering was arranged in the Peak District for a special celebration of Christine's birthday. Seen here in the photo (front row) is Christine and her husband Colin, with grandchildren (left to right) Immy (6), Ivy (20 months) and Lyra (8). On the back row (left to right) is David (Christine & Colin's son), Rachel (David's wife), Sarah (daughter of Christine & Colin) and Alex (Sarah's husband)



JANE FERNANDES

celebrated her 70th birthday
on 9th April 2026.

She was born in Horsforth, Leeds, in 1956.

HELEN'S STORY

with introduction by Glynis and Barry Milner

IN MARCH THIS YEAR we returned to Calais and Dunkirk with Focus4Hope, and the dental team. Our friend Helen, a dental professional, joined us for the first time. She has kindly put together her reflections of her time there in treating refugees.

I was part of a small dental team - three dentists, a dental nurse, a hygienist and myself - working together to provide care for people living in extremely difficult conditions. Having previously taken part in an aid trip to Africa, where we set up clinics in schools and mainly dealt with dental pain, this experience felt very different. On this occasion, we had what felt like real luxury - a former ambulance that had been fully converted into a dental unit. It was even CQC approved, allowing us to provide proper clinical treatment in a safe environment. However, the scale of need quickly became apparent. The ambulance alone was not enough. Treatment extended into a gazebo, using a portable recliner, and when that filled I found myself seeing patients outside, on what they said was a simple camping chair. It wasn't ideal, but one of the biggest lessons you learn in these settings is to adapt.

Each morning began with triaging patients. Communication was often through gestures, smiles and the help of other refugees who spoke some English which certainly made me realise how limited we can be in languages ourselves. Patients were given numbers and would wait patiently for their turn. For many, just having a chair to sit on was a comfort in itself. Despite the environment there were moments of lightness. Music played in the background, lifting spirits, and one volunteer even danced with the children. There was a sense of calm and respect that I had not expected, even humour at times.

What struck me most was how varied oral health was. Some people had maintained their teeth remarkably well but the realities of camp life - limited access to water supplies and routine - made consistent care difficult. When we handed out over 200 dental packs, people only took what they needed, often stepping back to allow others to benefit. Even tissues I gave patients to spit into were carefully saved for another use. It was a humbling reminder of how little is wasted.

I tried to create a sense of privacy by tucking my chair to one side of the gazebo, though this often drew a small crowd. It became clear that even watching treatment was a form of stimulation in a place where there is so little to occupy the day.

There were also personal moments that will stay with me. One patient, Jeremiah, was waiting patiently to see the dentist but kept glancing towards a food distribution point. When I asked if he had eaten, he said 'no'. I encouraged him to get some food, though he was reluctant to leave in case he missed his turn. After some reassurance, he returned with a pasta dish. He told me he was a chef back home and missed cooking deeply. He was curious about British food, and when I described a traditional Sunday roast with Yorkshire puddings on the same plate, he found it quite amusing. He even looked it up on his phone, asking me to explain each part and said he hoped to cook it one day if he made it to England.

Another small but striking moment came when offering desensitising treatments, which came in a variety of flavours. With so few choices available in daily life, even this small decision became significant. One man, Jok, carefully considered each option before calling his wife over to help him decide. Together they chose cherry. The thought and excitement over something so simple felt incredibly moving - something we would normally take for granted.

The conditions could be harsh. On the first day the cold was biting. I layered up in a thick coat, thermal socks and a hat, while the woman I was treating wore thin socks and flip-flops. It was a stark contrast that stayed with me.

As a team, we worked hard to provide emergency care - extractions, pain relief, oral hygiene advice, fluoride treatment for children, and scaling, which many patients referred to as 'washing my teeth'. Even in discomfort, there was resilience and humour. One group of men, having had teeth extracted, jokingly asked if we could 'put them back'. When I said 'no', they laughed and pointed to a friend, saying it was a shame, as he could have used them. He responded with a wide, toothless grin.

Despite the hardship, what I experienced was not chaos but dignity. Calmness, Respect, Moments of Connection and even Joy.

It left me reflecting deeply on how fortunate we are - not just in access to health care, but in the everyday choices we rarely notice, such as what we eat, how we care for ourselves, the comfort of routine, warmth, and security.

This experience was a privilege. It's one that will stay with me, not just as a dental professional but as a person.

We thank Helen for this heartfelt contribution for our In Touch magazine. The work in Calais, Dunkirk and many other places in the world reflects this from Jeremiah, Chapter 30 verse 17: 'I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,' declares the Lord, 'because you are called an outcast for whom no one cares.'

Like Helen, let us choose to care.

Glynis and Barry Milner



NO MOW MAY has become a fashionable slogan with conservationists over recent years. They are urging us to leave lawns and other grass areas undisturbed in May for the wildlife and wildflowers. If so, why were 12 of us mowing in our churchyard the Saturday morning before this May's Rogation Sunday?

I've been told not to say that Leeds Council nearly threw us under the bus stop, but they did stop mowing our churchyard at short notice this spring. This is because of a long running debate about whether it is closed for burial or not. The Scribes, Lawyers and Historians are still debating this. I notice though that there are no graves after about 1865 when Pool Road Cemetery opened and the churchyard was full.

While the debate has simmered over recent years, Leeds has done a good job on the mowing front. They have kept the Kirkgate end short for appearances, but have left the Wildlife Friendly Otley wildflowers by the Burras Lane wall. Last year, with agreement by Tom, our Churchwarden, they left the whole west end for wildlife until late September. Holly blue, orange-tip, speckled wood, and peacock butterflies have already graced the area this year. Later, Emperor dragonflies, hedgehogs and bats may begin to turn up too.

Tom chose the day for us to mow wisely. Rogation is when the Church remembers and prays for agriculture and the natural world in general. Tom, Ruth, Martin, Stephen, Barry & Glynis, Jess, Chris, Christine, Colin, Jan and I gave of our best to mow, strim, edge, rake and bag the grass on certain areas while leaving others alone. This differential mowing will, hopefully, look good, and be good for wildlife and be easier to maintain in future. Glynis's coffee & biscuits sustained us as ever, but we look to the Holy Spirit at Whitsun to give us even more power over the summer.

Want to learn more? Otley Walking Festival's "Otley Parish Church - Inside and Out" – a very short walk on Friday 3rd July at 7.30 pm, will give you the full works. Discover Otley Parish Church's fascinating heritage and natural history of the Church grounds. www.otleywalkingfestival.co.uk

Keith Wilson, Man of the forest (Old Welsh & Pictish), LMG

What's Your Favourite Hymn?



“Raise a Hallelujah”

I raise a hallelujah in the presence of my enemies
I raise a hallelujah louder than the unbelief
I raise a hallelujah my weapon is a melody
I raise a hallelujah Heaven comes to fight for me

I'm gonna sing in the middle of the storm
Louder and louder you're gonna hear my praises roar
Up from the ashes hope will arise
Death is defeated the King is alive

I raise a hallelujah with everything inside of me
I raise a hallelujah I will watch the darkness flee
I raise a hallelujah in the middle of the mystery
I raise a hallelujah fear you lost your hold on me

I'm gonna sing in the middle of the storm
Louder and louder you're gonna hear my praises roar
Up from the ashes hope will arise
Death is defeated the King is alive

Sing a little louder In the presence of my enemies
Sing a little louder Louder than the unbelief
Sing a little louder My weapon is a melody
Sing a little louder Heaven comes to fight for me (Repeat)
Sing a little louder

I'm gonna sing in the middle of the storm
Louder and louder you're gonna hear my praises roar
Up from the ashes hope will arise
Death is defeated the King is alive

KATE HOBSON

tells us why this is her favourite hymn

When I was asked to write this, Oh Heck came to mind - what do I choose... 'My God Is So Big'? The song I sing is in my mind when I'm at the dentist or at a hospital appointment. 'In Christ Alone' is the song I belt out when we sing it in church (apologies to those who have heard me!). So, I took to my many Spotify playlists.

I first heard 'Raise A Hallelujah' at the beginning of 2020. It was part of the music playlist for that year's Spring Harvest in Harrogate. My time off was confirmed at work, my ticket and hotel room was booked and paid for, and I was so excited! I was ready to spend a few days to be with other like-minded people and make new friends. However, we all know how 2020 ended up - a year of cancellations and heartache.

I listened to this song and sang along most days in Covid and believed that 'Up from the ashes hope will arise'. As the years have moved on the meaning of this song has changed for me.

My God is with me in the middle of my fight, my storm, and Heaven comes to fight for me.

When life gets tough, I find it hard to sit and read His word, and my prayers turn to silence. However, I can sing my heart out 'My weapon is a melody... I'm gonna sing in the middle of a storm, louder and louder... Fear you've lost your hold on me'.

Up until February this year, I'd never sung this song with anyone. I longed to sing it with others. I was at a Ladies Conference, 'Activate Your Life' and as soon as Sue Rinaldi, the worship leader, started playing the opening chords my heart leapt. Over 100 ladies, some with hands raised high, some with tears in their eyes, and some of us with tears running down our faces were singing this hymn of praise and believed that God loves us unconditionally and will let Heaven fight for us. Our weapon is a melody, you're gonna hear my praises roar... and boy did that room roar!

MY 100K BIKE RIDE

by Jeanette Wight



Jeanette Wight

I chose to do a 100k bike ride for *Local to Global*, OPC's charity, by way of thanks for the kind welcome when I first arrived here and the work of the Alpha team, and hoping that something useful might come out of a few months of focused cycle training, alongside the 11 weeks of the Alpha course, and the actual day of the cycle challenge.

A 100k bike ride is not a big deal for many people, especially if it is a lovely calm day and if you are fit and have trained well for it. But, with a broken foot last summer, twisted

ligaments in the other ankle, and a few other incidents all of which kept eating into the training programme, I was under-prepared with only 2 weeks to go. Then, a knee injury just 5 days before the ride threatened to stop me. With sponsorship already given though, I had no choice! but to go ahead and ride!!

I was accompanied by David Robinson, from All Saints' Church, Farnley, in the Washburn Valley, and my very tall son-in-law Luke Solomon. David was the one to thank for the challenge as he said - "*I WILL RIDE IF you go on your road bike, not electric*". So, having ridden an e-bike for 3 years, I negotiated - to half and half, starting on the road bike!

Saturday of the 100k was the worst of cycling weather. Icy winds, non-stop rain all morning, a short let-up and then more driving rain. I had intended to swap onto an electric gravel bike at lunch, but I was so cold that I decided to leave that in the van, and pedal harder on the faster road bike.

David and Luke made sure I finished, acting as wind breaks, pacers and passing me encouragement by the bucket load, no matter how cold they were. An inner tube change was needed on Luke's bike. We had laughs along the way too, but mainly when eating - under protective cover!

The ride was brilliantly organised by Ripon Rotary Club. The well marshalled route took us from Bishop Monkton near Ripon through Roecliffe, across the River Swale, south to Brafferton and Helperby, through Raskelf, Easingwold, Stillington, Marton in the Forest and then to Sheriff Hutton for a lunch stop. Then it was Sutton-on-the-Forest, Huby and over the A19 to Tollerton, Newton-on-Ouse, crossing the River Ure via Aldwalk Bridge, Great Ouseburn, Marton cum Grafton, Arkendale, Ferrensby, Copgrove, then back to Bishop Monkton Village Hall for hot drinks and CAKE!! We averaged a speed of about 12.5 mph over the 100k, swinging back in under 5 hours of battering by the elements.

We had the luxury of two back up crews - Chevin Cycles mechanic, Paul, who was offering support for all riders all day, and carrying the electric bike for me, and beaming grandchildren and daughter Gilly, who was entirely responsible for my riding in shorts. *Never* will I listen to her again about cycling attire!

Thank you for the enthusiastic encouragement from so many people. And a big thank you to all who have already donated to *Local to Global*, and to others who might be intending to do so. It is very much appreciated by the charity, details of which are below.



The day of the charity ride

***Left to right:* Luke Solomon (Jeanette's son in law), David Robinson from All Saints' Church Farnley, Jeanette Wight**

Local to Global is the name given to the group set up in 2015 by Otley Parish Church. The name denotes our interest in supporting a local charity together with one overseas. We are currently focussing on **Leeds Faith in Schools** and **Kisiizi Hospital** in Uganda.

Leeds Faith in Schools (LFiS)

For 20 years, LFiS have provided Schools Workers at Prince Henry's Grammar School here in Otley as well as at another 9 schools in and around Leeds. Work in Otley includes 1:1 mentoring, boys groups, a lunchtime club as well as the after school drop-in youth club at the Bridge Church.

LFiS seeks to be a Christian presence in the schools, living out the vision of being 'Good News' to the school, its students and staff.

Kisiizi Hospital, Uganda

This is a Church of Uganda hospital situated in a remote valley seven hours' drive south-west from the capital city of Kampala. The local people are mainly poor subsistence farmers and some travel more than 80 miles seeking hospital care. The hospital has a small income from the Uganda Government. Patients have to pay for their care, but the hospital keeps fees to a bare minimum. Over the years the hospital has evolved and developed many ministries to support the community.

If you would like to know more or become involved with the Local to Global group, please contact Tricia Merrick here at OPC:

merricktricia@gmail.com

Please note that any money raised through donations or events is split evenly between the two charities.

Would you like to sponsor Jeanette for 'Local to Global'?

If you would like to sponsor Jeanette there are a couple of ways. The best and probably the easiest is via Bank Transfer:

Account Name: Parochial Church Council of Otley
Sort Code: 20- 37-13
Account Number: 10088811
Reference: Jeanette

You can also donate with cash via the Red Wall Safe at the back of the church, but please put it into an envelope and mark it 'Jeanette'.

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

8. Prayer as participation in God's purposes

Priesthood

The idea of the 'priesthood of all believers' is dear to many Christians. Sometimes it is thought of only in the context of Christians meeting together, which is legitimate but incomplete.

*You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy **priesthood**, offering spiritual sacrifices... a chosen people, a royal **priesthood**, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him.*

[1 Peter 2:4-9]

This is set in the context of the mission of God's people. Peter borrows the language of God as he spoke to Israel. They were to carry a message for *all the earth* by being a priestly nation:

*You shall be a special treasure to me above all people; **for all the earth is mine and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.***

[Exodus 19:5-6]

THE PARABLE OF THE THREE FRIENDS

Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him."

And suppose the one inside answers, "Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything." I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need".

[Luke 11:5-8]

I think this is an interesting illustration of priesthood. Firstly, however, it is worth noting that it is sandwiched between the Lord's Prayer, before, and Christ's teaching about 'asking, seeking and knocking' - for 'gifts, finding, and doors to be opened' - afterwards. Then he teaches that, when asking for the Holy Spirit, we will find the heavenly Father

consistent, principled and reliable. Locating the parable here suggests Luke would have us understand that these prayer teachings are missional; prayer in the context of concern for others not just ourselves; prayer for God's purposes to be done.

In the story, there is a 'go-between friend'. He takes the need of friend 1 to another – friend 2 – and is particularly insistent because of his loving concern. As with the 'Parable of the Persistent Widow' [Luke 18:1-8], we are not to conclude that God is truculent and 'hard to get' – just out to make things difficult. These parables are intended to encourage us that, where things are difficult – which is common, not to say usual, especially when praying for others – persistence is needed. I think, also, that sometimes God does allow testing of our intentions to see whether we 'really mean it' when we say we are seeking.

So, we might think of prayer as priestly, taking our privilege and responsibility as a 'go-between' seriously. God does hear our prayer as we bring people's needs 'up' to him and blessing 'down' to others. As we thus pray let us always remind ourselves that Christ is THE High Priest – the highest and unique and irreplaceable mediator.

Here is a priestly prayer:

Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart... they will receive blessing from the LORD... the generation of those who seek him.

[Psalm 24:3–6]

Stewardship in prayer

"God will not give me anything I can't handle. I just wish He didn't trust me so much." – Mother Teresa.

The Bible clearly shows that God committed stewardship (which might be translated as household management) of the earth to the human race and stewardship of his Old Testament purposes to Israel.

Jesus taught stewardship to his disciples in the Gospels. There are many ways in which God trusts His people:

- ❖ to steward our God-given gifts
- ❖ to seek to understand the times and therefore act wisely
- ❖ to exercise godly, worshipful and gospel influence in society

The prayerful priesthood of believers – enquiring, listening, asking and interceding – is fundamental to understanding and growing our sense of responsibility as agents of his purposes.

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

TRIUMPH!

A silhouette of a person standing on a beach with arms raised in triumph against a sunset sky. The person is centered in the lower half of the frame, with their arms raised high. The background is a vibrant sunset with a gradient from blue at the top to orange and red at the bottom. The ocean waves are visible at the bottom of the frame. The word 'TRIUMPH!' is written in large, yellow, outlined letters across the middle of the image, with the person's arms appearing to reach up towards the letters.

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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Canada Years... The Beginning

WE WENT BACK TO CANADA FOR SIX WEEKS in the following year, 1975, and stayed with Cyril and Shirley. What joy! During that time, they took us on holiday to Prince Edward Island, home of the Heritage Centre of Anne of Green Gables. We stayed in a cabin near Cavendish Beach where the sand was an amazing shade of red. What a beautiful place. The island is quite small, so our time was spent each day either driving to different places or just relaxing, barbecuing, and having wonderful conversations. It was a completely different world to the one back home. Shirley and I got on so well, Cyril and Tony did too. After our trip to Prince Edward Island we still had a few weeks in Saint John, and this was spent enjoying time all together, meeting Shirley's family, her mum and dad, brother and two sisters, and many of their friends. We went to the Tavern some of the time, and it was lovely to have the two children around at home, with days filled with lots of laughter, and trips out to 'New River Beach' a crowd of us with the food, drinks and barbecue on the go!

The time to go home came too quickly, and by then we had been thinking maybe we could emigrate and live here permanently. How wonderful that sounded. Both Cyril and Shirley were quite prepared for us to come over and stay with them; they offered both of us jobs. Tony could work at the Tavern, but he was also very good at general maintenance and as a painter and decorator. I would look after the children and the household, as Shirley worked full-time as did Cyril. A chance of a lifetime! So, we came home and made plans! We were hoping that with Tony's Aunt Mabel living in

Canada that would help our application, only things were not as straight forward as we thought and on reflection, we started packing a bit too soon!

I remember applying to Manpower for a work permit. At the same time as packing and selling up with nothing confirmed, we thought we could do it from Canada. We had no savings, and no proper qualifications regarding work. My dad was concerned about us going, I knew he would miss me, but he didn't say so. My mam, when I told her I may not see her for quite a while if we settled over there, was already distracted and on her way to catch the bus to bingo. She shouted ta-ra! as she ran to catch it and didn't look back.

We eventually sold up, left work and flew back to Canada in 1977. This was a wonderful time in my life, although we struggled with work permits. Manpower would only issue temporary ones. We didn't have the money up front to secure any kind of permanent status, so Tony had to keep returning to England, whereas I stayed permanently working for Shirley at home and Cyril at the Tavern for the next two years, earning enough to pay for Tony's flights back and forth and his living expenses.

My life was idyllic. Canada was an amazing country to live in, and with the kindness of our new found friends I felt very privileged; they made my Canadian experience memorable. The house was made of wood, as many were in New Brunswick, quite large with a basement that included a table tennis and snooker table. Outside there was a good sized swimming pool, and across the street was a lake where Shirley and I walked around most early evenings - special times!

I was blessed to be taken on fabulous holidays during my time there. We stayed in a cabin by the ocean at Bar Harbor across the US border in Maine. The sunsets were beautiful, we barbecued and drank beer, and after a week we drove to New Hampshire and the white mountains. Lovely times. In the autumn we went around the Cabot Trail in Nova Scotia, where the leaves of the maple trees were amazing, so bright and colourful. It was like looking down on masses of bouquets of flowers of every colour! The winters were magical, and the snow came down thick and fast with temperatures below 30C. No one ventures out in the car until the snow plough clears the roads. The St John river freezes so solid we could drive the car on it and watch the fishermen cut a block of ice out and fish through it! Snow was waist high,

so we went sledging and built igloos and snowmen and laughed even though our faces were freezing. Even at Christmas, special family times in Canada, Cyril took us all out to the woods to choose and cut our own Christmas tree! There were many more fabulous times in those two years, and this was my idea of heaven.

But you know, somewhere along the way, even the life I was living, wonderful though it was, I missed my dad. I wanted him to be here to experience all of the places and people that I was. I was writing long letters to him every other day, detailing every joy, every move, every place with maps, diagrams, postcards and photos of my life here. He knew everything I was doing and seeing, and I know he loved to receive them. He saved them all and kept every letter I sent.

•Chapter 9 of “Fear... Lies... Despair... Triumph!” will be published in the September 2026 edition of In Touch.

Previous chapters of Lesley’s book can be found on our church website 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

13 June

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