

## 'KEEP IN TOUCH', Winter 2022

Copy by, but, if possible, before 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022

All contributions welcome. **Maximum** length: 500 words!

### ROBIN REDBREAST

**Goodbye, goodbye to Summer!**

For Summer's nearly done;  
The garden smiling faintly,  
Cool breezes in the sun;  
Our Thrushes now are silent,  
Our Swallows flown away, --  
But Robin's here, in coat of brown,  
With ruddy breast-knot gay.  
Robin, Robin Redbreast,  
O Robin dear!  
Robin singing sweetly  
In the falling of the year.

*William Allingham (1824 - 1889)*

*Contributed by Chris Greaves*

### KEEPING YOU 'IN TOUCH' IS

Name .....

Address .....

Tel.No. ....

# 'Keep In Touch'



*Wanlip Flower Festival 2022*

## AUTUMN 2022

***CHURCH & VILLAGE***

***BIRSTALL & WANLIP***

## THE PARISH OF BIRSTALL AND WANLIP

<b>Rector</b>	The Revd Amanda Digman 251 Birstall Road, LE4 4DJ revamandadigman@me.com	07803-625049
<b>Hon Asst. Priests</b>	Revd Kerry Emmett, 1 Chamberlains Field Canon Anne Horton, 8b Copeland Road Revd Robin Martin, 22 Sycamore Road Revd Michael Webb, 31 Bramley Road	3194736 2677942 07971632268 07813144645
<b>Churchwardens</b>	Mrs Debbie Shephard, 41 Roman Road Mr John Borrajo, 8 Hallam Avenue Mrs Corinne Aldis, 15, The Oaks, Acorn Close Mrs Doreen Wilson, 13 Poplar Avenue	2673262 2209289 3482984 2674680
<b>Deputy Wardens</b>	Mr Tony Bloxam, 17 Sandgate Avenue Mrs Mary Bruce, 1 Hallam Avenue	2675381 07759602426
<b>Licensed Reader PTO</b>	Mrs Lesley Walton, 16 The Crossways	2674995
<b>Pastoral Assistants PTO</b>	Mrs Doreen Wilson, 13 Poplar Avenue Mrs Gill Pope, 26 Blenheim Road	2674680 2675086
<b>Safeguarding Coordinator</b>	Mrs Annette Marshall annette.marshall8@gmail.com	
<b>Sunday School</b>	Mrs Rose Parrott rose.parrott@btinternet.com	07811662235
<b>Church Office</b>	Mrs Sheryl Jupp, Church Office, Church Hill email: stjames.birstall@btconnect.com; Sheryljupp@hotmail.co.uk	2671797
<b>Treasurer</b>	Dave Owen, Church Office, Church Hill email: stjames.birstall@btconnect.com	2671797
<b>Bell Tower</b>	'Normal' practice night Thurs. 7pm, but not currently	
<b>Wanlip Church Hall Bookings</b>	Mrs Liz Davison	2671252
<b>Editor of Keep in Touch</b>	Canon Anne Horton, 8b Copeland Road rahorton@outlook.com	2677942
<b>Editorial Team</b>	Mrs Lesley Walton lp.walton@ntlworld.com	

*The views and opinions of those who have submitted articles to 'Keep in Touch' belong to them alone and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the wider church.*

## From the Church Office

Hi. I hope you are keeping well and were able to enjoy the summer.

I will be in the church office on Tuesdays and Fridays between 9am and 1pm. If you have a notice you would like putting in our weekly Information Sheet please email it to [stjames.birstall@btconnect.com](mailto:stjames.birstall@btconnect.com), and/or [sheryljupp@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sheryljupp@hotmail.co.uk). (I would prefer to receive it twice than not at all) If you don't have access to the internet, please could you leave your notice on my desk or post it through the church letterbox which is at the bottom of the glass doors.

If you are unable to get to church please contact Amanda or one of the Churchwardens. (*Contact details on page 2*)

I will continue to send the sheets out digitally, but, if you no longer wish to receive them, will you let me know so that I can take you off the distribution list. Thanks.

*Take care  
Sheryl*

## FUNERALS

Died	Funeral		
31/05/22	10/06/22	Samuel (Jim) Jackson	St James/Gilroes
06/07/22	03/08/22	Isabel Hibberd (Knifton)	St James/L Crem
25/07/22	16/08/22	James Garner	St James/L Crem
08/08/22	22/08/22	Anne Murphy	St James/Greengate Cemetery
09/07/22	23/08/22	Di Walker (Skipper)	St James/L Crem

**Rest Eternal grant unto them, O Lord  
And let light perpetual shine upon them.  
Amen**

## AWAY DAY

This is Saturday,  
Saturday only.  
Change here for Sunday  
and the weekend.

First Class accommodation  
is to be found in the lounge  
at the rear of the house.

The Buffet Bar is now open.  
Sandwiches, snacks, hot and cold drinks.  
Self-Service only.

Here is a special announcement:  
There will be no relief service today.

This is Saturday.  
Saturday only.  
The woman now standing  
in front of the mirror  
will leave on the 8.02.

This is the Inter-Mittent Service  
departing from Boredom at 8.02  
and calling at Bliss, Freedom, Happiness and Joy,  
arriving at Boundless Pleasure  
not a moment too soon.

This is Saturday.  
My once a year away day.  
I apologise for any inconvenience  
this may have caused.

*June Crebbin*

## OLD NICK'S COFFEE SHOP

**Old Nick's Coffee Shop** first opened on March 18th 2014, the third Tuesday of the month. It was a project that John and I wanted to try out, to encourage people to come along and meet a friendly face, and not just someone they already knew. It was never intended to be 'Church' led or 'Village' led, just somewhere to have a drink and a homemade cake at a reasonable price. The idea was not to make a profit, but to break even. Having said that, any monies spare have been donated to The Children's Society, pew cushions for the Church, tables and chairs for the Hall, and donations towards the upkeep and heating of the Hall. A very useful, happy project ensued.

The other thing was that I love baking and there is only so much a husband can eat without gaining too much weight!! So the Coffee Shop was a good outlet for my energy. Every month we have many people coming from all over, and sometimes nowhere to sit! We have weathered the storms. We served coffee in the main Hall when we had the kitchen refurbished, which was much needed! I still think of the kitchen as my baby - it's better than my kitchen at home!

Then *COVID* hit. Everything closed down on Monday at 6 pm on the night before Coffee Shop. I had to rearrange everything and make use of my freezers to store the freshly baked cakes, which I subsequently gave to people when it was right to do so. With all the rules and regulations it was a long while before we could re-open.

And then another devastation. John passed away. Having thought and prayed long and hard I decided to have a 'one off' event in December to judge the response. And I am so glad that I did. It was another roaring success and we continue to go from strength to strength! One day I may even go back to having the Church open for a short Act of Prayer during the morning, something John enjoyed leading.

A very big thank you to everyone who helps in any way.  
I couldn't continue without you all.

*Julie Ward*

## RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS



It was the end of June when I began writing for the autumn issue! What was uppermost in my mind, and still is, is the absolute need to care for each other, to look out for each other, to support each other and not to judge each other.

I began writing as the issues of abortion, Covid, homosexuality and war continued to be discussed on the international and church stages, and especially over social media. Some of these have been quite heated debates and some people have been hurt and upset. So in case anyone is worried about anything, I want to say that whatever your choices or situation, you can find a welcome in our church. Only you and God know exactly what has gone on in your life, and I guarantee that whatever you talk to me about, I will not be shocked or angry or disappointed. No one has ever lived your exact set of circumstances, and so no one can judge you – it's all between you and God, who loves us unconditionally and couldn't love us any more or less. What we are here to do, is to support you and support each other, as we work out our ways forward with God – God who loves each of us, no matter what. God who wants us to be whole and is ready with open arms to accept us, forgive us\* when we need it, and free us from things like shame, hopelessness, fear and the confusion of the world. My priority, and hopefully that of all of us, is to help people on their journey with God, wherever that has taken them so far, to wherever the next step is.

***\*Forgiveness is pronounced on everyone at confession on Sundays, but there is also a separate rite of confession, one to one with a priest, if you ever feel this would be helpful. This is confidential, although there are a couple of things we would have to report, so, if meeting a priest for confession, please don't blurt it out before we can explain!***

## NEWS FROM OUR FRIENDS AT ST THERESA'S CHURCH, BIRSTALL

### Confirmation 2022

Twelve of our young parishioners were confirmed by Bishop Patrick on the 24th June.



### Parish Concert

After a hiatus of three years, this year's parish concert was back with a bang. The audience, who filled the church, were treated to a concert of musical items ranging from folk to jazz, from pop songs to musicals. This year, as well as children from Bishop Ellis, we welcomed a choir from Sacred Heart School Loughborough. Both choirs sang songs on their own and joined the adult choirs in two medleys of songs from the shows, supported by a live orchestra. The magnificent sum of £870 was raised which will go towards the purchase of a new keyboard and sound mixing system at St Theresa's. As ever, thanks must go to Chris Lowe for masterminding this highly enjoyable event.



I went round in the morning to discover a Ugandan family of tiny baby, small child and parents there with barely any furniture, nowhere for the baby to sleep and feeling utterly lost. A Leicester contact owned next door. But all their possessions had to be left behind; just a few things in a suitcase ... robbed of money and valuables at the airport.

I'd got Rebecca's crib and other baby things and we became friends over the few months they were here till they moved into Leicester. But a few days after they arrived I came downstairs to find that someone had posted dog dirt through the letterbox. I'd no idea who had done it, and then was very upset to discover in the following days and weeks that various people were not speaking to me .... all because of having befriended my neighbour.

Birstall was an almost totally white neighbourhood then and we had not lived here for long. In those days I was quite shy so I didn't confront anyone ... it was horrible and I was very upset but after some weeks it faded away.

It was a relatively small thing to face up to when compared to that which Jesus' first followers endured, and other Christians in much more hostile places still endure, such as persecution, and martyrdom. It felt anything but at the time.

It reminded me that even here there can be a painful cost to following Jesus. We never know what or when that will face us, but the only way we can do it is in the words of the psalm set for today.

'Protect me O God; I have said to the Lord You are my Lord, my good above all other. Protect me O God for I take refuge in you. You are my Lord, my good above all other.

I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand I shall not fall. You will not abandon me to the grave. You will show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy, and at your right hand are pleasures for evermore.'

*Lesley Walton*

***Often people use this when they know they are dying, which is fine, but why have something on your conscience when we would love to help you be unburdened and finding a way forward?***

When we look at the whole story of the Bible, it is a story of God loving us human beings so much, that he has been willing to put up with all sorts of behaviour and rejection and still keep loving and beckoning us towards him. And, what God does best, is to send us, with our unique sets of gifts and our unique personality, to the people he wants us to help. Sometimes we are the helpers and sometimes we are the helped.

I think God's vision for Israel was not just a land flowing with milk and honey, but a new Eden. A place where everyone could live their best life. A place where neighbouring countries would watch in awe and say 'That's the true God, look what he's doing in that place'. A place where the borders would naturally extend because other cities would want to join. But, like us, the Israelites were humans and they never managed to quite follow God's good rules.

I think the role of churches is the same. To work together to be the people God calls us to be and to support each other on our journeys of faith. And others will see and want to join in.

I really believe that if each of us listens carefully to God and to each other to discover and hone our gifts, we will, as a church, be able to serve God as he intends in Birstall and Wanlip. We will be a place of love and welcome and growth as people see that the God we believe in is real because 'look what he's doing in that place'.

In October, the PCC will be spending a day, thinking and praying about our mission in Wanlip and Birstall. Please pray for us as we do (the date is 8<sup>th</sup> October). We will also consult with the wider congregation, and then we'll share the vision – the ideas that God will give us and see where these churches, together with our ecumenical partners, will travel next on our exciting journey of faith which has so far lasted since at least Saxon times. What a joy and privilege to be part of this next exciting chapter of a very long book!

*Amanda*

## THE FOUNDING OF THE ANGLICAN ORDER OF CISTERCIANS

**‘Vacate et Videte’**

**‘Be still and know’**

***Motto of the Anglican Order of Cistercians (Psalm 46:10)***

One of the main driving forces behind the formation of the Order was the Revd Geoff van der Weegen. He was brought up as a Roman Catholic in Brabant, Belgium, next to a Capuchin monastery, and almost within the sound of the Trappist abbey bells of Koningshoven (Tilburg). As an adult Geoff worked in music publishing and was eventually ordained in the Church of England Anglican Cistercian Association. Geoff went to Mount St. Bernard Abbey for retreats and, in 2000, decided to join the Associates of Mount St. Bernard's. Unfortunately the Association was run by overzealous Irish Roman Catholics who refused him membership because he was an Anglican. So, with the help of the Abbot of Mount St Bernard, Joseph Delargey OCSO, and with other Anglicans who stayed at the Abbey, he formed the Anglican Cistercian Association in order to further a better understanding of the Cistercian charism in their lives. In the end the Association had thirty plus members online. And then, in 2004, with the help of Abbot Ivor Dujardin OCSO of Westmalle Abbey, Geoff wrote a Rule.

An Anglican Cistercian monastery had existed at Ewell since 1966 but it had closed down in 2004 under Fr Ælred Arnesen OC. In 2010 Geoff, with the help of a small group of Anglican priests and the support of the Abbot and Community of Mount St. Bernard's Abbey, approached the Archbishop of Canterbury asking for his opinion concerning the founding of an Anglican Order of Cistercians. Rowan Williams replied that he thought it was a great idea and told Geoff to get in touch with the *‘Advisory Council on the Relations of Bishops and Religious Communities’*. The Council recommended that Abbot Stuart Burns OSB act as consultant. Geoff founded the order at this point and was immediately joined by two Anglican priests, the Revd Ronald Partridge and the Revd Phillip Barrett.

Paul, writing to the Galatians, contrasted lives lived following Jesus, freedom and love of neighbour as oneself, as opposed to a life of self centredness. But it may be a very costly choice. In some parts of the world it is a life or death choice but for us, the real danger is probably apathy and faith becoming a token.

These are challenging readings about making choices, but I imagine they may feel a long way from our own experience. Most of us have decided to follow Jesus, confirming decisions made at our baptisms, but it's not a literal life or death decision.

We live in a tolerant country and the danger of that is apathy; a place where we can become comfortable and apathetic about our own following of Jesus and about the injustices and suffering in our world.

We don't see many wayside pulpits these days but one of the best known ones must be 'If you were on trial for your faith, is there enough evidence to convict you?' It is an important question. We are reminded by Amanda's daily prayer postings of the suffering and injustice all around us and the need for prayer and action.

We should be very thankful that we don't literally face life or death for following Jesus. I used to have fantasies of being prepared to suffer for it when I was in my teens in the early '60s. When the militant atheist Russian state invasion of the west seemed a real threat, I was quite convinced that I'd be prepared to die for my faith. But I'm not at all sure that I really was prepared to see it through!

And I've not had to make many choices that involved putting my faith on the line since, unlike many of Jesus' disciples after the resurrection. They faced persecution, hardships and death for Christ.

But one I won't forget, and this is trivial compared to what others endure now for the sake of Christ, was when Idi Amin evicted the Asian population from Uganda in the '70s. Many of them came to Leicester because of contacts in the city.

The house next door was empty, but one night I woke up to hear a very small baby crying.

## GOING UP TO JERUSALEM

### A SERMON BASED ON LUKE 9:51-62

You might think the readings today are more suitable for Lent but they're chosen because the weeks after Pentecost are focused on our own journey of discipleship, of following Jesus. Today we're on a journey with Jesus who had reached the critical point in his ministry and decided it was time to travel to Jerusalem, knowing he faced almost certain death. 'Set his face' means He was firmly determined. Jesus had upset the Jewish authorities by sitting loose to their rules and regulations and mixing with unholy and unclean people. They also feared he might stir up rebellion that would bring the Roman authorities' wrath down on them. The Romans were always on the lookout for signs of trouble amongst the Jews; they were afraid of bringing retribution from Rome and disgrace for Pilate should things get out of control. Going up to Jerusalem was a dangerous decision.

We too are invited to go on a journey if we claim to be followers of Jesus. And we are mostly just as imperfect as were Jesus' disciples. Witness the fiery James and John calling down retribution on that Samaritan village. It's a bit surprising that it had been decided to seek hospitality from such a village in the first place, given the hostile relations between Jews and Samaritans. The disciples had signed up to something that might lead them to excitement, fulfilment, opposition and unknown situations they couldn't imagine. It was an open-ended contract. As his disciples today, we have only the assurance that Jesus is with us through his Spirit, enabling us to be faithful to his call. Not to turn back after responding. A serious and life-changing decision.

Our other readings today, 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14, Galatians 5:1,13-25 are also about people being called by God and their response. Elisha, the Old Testament prophet, was chosen by God to succeed Elijah. Elisha, however, wanted to fulfil his sacred family obligations before leaving home and family. Nonetheless, Elisha agreed to follow Elijah.

These three priests are recognised as our Founding Fathers, mirroring the fact that the Cistercians as a whole recognise three founding Fathers: Robert, Alberic and Stephen. Our founding Fathers continued to meet at Mount St Bernard Abbey for regular Chapters.

Abbot Stuart suggested that they ought to try living according to the Rule that Geoff had written in 2004 for a year, and be open to the Holy Spirit to see where they were led. At this point they officially entered their novitiate, helped by Abbot Joseph Delargey OCSO and the monks of Mount St Bernard's Abbey.

The first episcopal visitor was appointed, the Rt. Rev. Mark Sowerby, and the new order's 'Governing Documents' were written. These comprised of a Rule, adapted from the 2004 rule, a Charter, which dealt with day to day governance, and a Customary, indicating the way the Cistercian life should be lived.

Our three Founding Fathers made their simple vows on 8th September 2011 in the Oratory of Mucknell Abbey, Ronald taking the name of Ælred. In March 2014 the Rt. Rev Tony Robinson, then Bishop of Pontefract, now of Wakefield, was invited to become the episcopal visitor.

An important event took place on Wednesday 6th November 2013, the day after our patronal feast day of Our Lady of Hailes: the Council granted the new order, making them an official community of the Anglican Communion.

On Friday 26th May 2017 Br Philip (taking the name Br Christian), Br Ælred and Br Geoff (Br Bernard) made their Solemn Profession in the Crypt Chapel of Lambeth Palace, They made their solemn vows for life in the presence of the Most Reverend the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby and our Episcopal Visitor, the Rt Revd Tony Robinson. There they received their white cowls, confusingly the name for the white robe, not just the hood. Since then the order has grown to include a Simply Professed brother, three Novices and four Postulants, one of whom will enter the Novitiate in September. Along with a number of enquirers.

*Michael / Br. Aidan OC*

## THREE QUALITIES OF JESUS' LEADERSHIP

After reading, Matthew 20: 20-28, I've been reflecting on three qualities of Jesus' leadership: purpose, integrity and humility. The mother of James and John approached Jesus and asked him to give her sons seats on his left and right when he became King. Jesus didn't respond to her question, rather turned directly to her sons.

The first quality of Jesus' leadership is **Purpose**.

He asks James and John if they can do what He will do. Without knowing what that really meant, they replied 'Yes of course we can'. Only Jesus knows, however, what His purpose is. It is to bring us into a right relationship with God the Father. To do that He knew He was going to die for our failings and for the wrong things we do which separate us from God. And Jesus trusted God to give Him the courage to 'drink this cup' and so complete His calling. We know now, however, that even though Jesus died for us, God raised Him, and that through His Spirit we are able to continue His purpose and to share the good news of a life that can be transformed by God's love.

The second quality of Jesus' leadership is **Integrity**. Jesus demonstrates by both word and deed His integrity. He speaks of His Father's love and He demonstrated that love by the miracles He did, healing the sick, forgiving those who fail, restoring joy to peoples' lives and reaching out to the most disadvantaged in society. We see that love too in the way that Jesus speaks to James and John. He doesn't laugh at them or lose his temper with them. He has real concern for them. Because He knows that one day, because they love Him. they will follow His example.

Jesus also recognises how His other friends are feeling - really angry. But Jesus doesn't respond in kind, rather He talks to them all about what it really means to follow Him and to be His friend. And with the Holy Spirit's help we too can live lives shaped by integrity. We will fail sometimes, but Jesus always loves and forgives us if we recognise our failings.

## LEICESTER'S LINK DIOCESES

### Please pray for the peoples of THE DIOCESE OF KITETO, TANZANIA

Among the bishops attending the Lambeth Conference is Bishop Isaiah of Kiteto in Tanzania. His people have also been struggling with Covid, and the diocese has been in the forefront of tackling vaccine hesitancy locally, not least because they have had pastors and their families suffering from the mystery illness they could not previously name. They have hosted government vaccinators and sponsored health education on local radio stations. Their farmers in particular have been coping with the effects of climate change, not least the growing unpredictability of the rainy seasons.

### THE DIOCESE OF MOUNT KILIMANJARO

Bishop Stanley is focussed on planting churches that plant churches in DMK. So far around 350 churches have been planted in rural areas. Early in the year extreme weather conditions caused significant damage to some church buildings. We are asked to pray for finance so these buildings can be repaired and their congregations can worship inside once again. Pray for the churches who are trying to help their people overcome Covid vaccine hesitancy.

### THE DIOCESE OF TRICHY-TANJORE

The diocese is part of the Church of South India. Their bishop, Dr D Chandrasekaran, has been at the forefront of encouraging local churches to distribute food parcels to needy families in their communities. Parishes in the diocese have been able to offer them significant financial support. CSI will celebrate its 75th anniversary this year.

**The God of life with guarding hold them,  
The loving Christ with guarding fold them,  
The Holy Spirit, guarding, mould them,  
Each day and night of life uphold them. Amen.**



## THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION FOREST

### LAMBETH CONFERENCE 2022

About every ten years, all the bishops from the world-wide Anglican Communion meet together in Canterbury. This August some 650 Anglican bishops and their spouses came together, and a significant topic in their discussions was the launch of a new environmental initiative, the **Anglican Communion Forest**. At the beginning of the conference, a tree was planted in the garden of Lambeth Palace, the first act of what, it is hoped, will become a global movement of reforestation and habitat renewal.

Bishops are being encouraged to launch initiatives in their dioceses which help to preserve and regenerate the ecosystem; this need not necessarily be tree-planting, but could include restoring grasslands, or taking action to prevent the destruction of the rainforest. The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of the scale of the climate emergency, saying that it was most especially an emergency for the world's poorest and most vulnerable. A Kenyan climate campaigner who was also on the panel at the press conference said that she was living on the front lines of the climate crisis and called on faith leaders to press for disinvestment from fossil fuels. She said that we have to demand world leaders to do what they can.

In a formal message of encouragement to the delegates at the Lambeth Conference, Her Majesty the Queen said that the Lambeth Conference was taking place 'at a time of great need for the love of God in a changing world ... Climate change is a particular threat to the lives and livelihoods of many people and communities, not least the poorest and those less able to adapt and adjust. I was interested to know that the focus of your programme is reflection and dialogue on the theme of the environment ... It is my heartfelt prayer that you will continue to be sustained by your faith in times of trial and encouraged by hope at times of despair ... May God bless you in your ministry and service in his world'.

*Canon Anne*

The third quality of Jesus' leadership is **Humility**.

Jesus knows that He is under His Father's authority. And that His work isn't about promoting Himself, it's about showing people how God the Father loves them. So He tells his disciples what true humility means.

It doesn't mean looking to be top dog, or expecting to be given places of honour, it means rather expecting to be a servant, just like Him. He tells them that they mustn't be like others who think they should be served because they're important.

'No', said Jesus, 'I came to serve, and that's what you must do too.'

### THERE ARE THREE QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

Purpose, Integrity and Humility.

Without integrity, our purpose may be achieved, but only through lying or cheating to reach our goals.

And without humility, our purpose can be self serving and we can trample on others to achieve our ends.

*Corinne Aldis*

### A Prayer For Humility

O Thou, who in almighty power wast weak,  
and in perfect excellency wast lowly,  
grant unto us the same mind.

All that we have which is our own is naught;  
if we have any good in us it is wholly thy gift.

O Saviour, since thou, the Lord of heaven and earth,  
didst humble thyself,  
grant us true humility, and make us like thyself;  
and then, of thine infinite goodness,  
raise us to thine everlasting glory;  
who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost  
for ever and ever.

*Thomas Cranmer, 1489-1556*

## ECUMENISM

### AND WHY IT MATTERS TO ME

I 'discovered' ecumenism as a curate in Cambridge. We were part of an informal ecumenical group of churches, and I enjoyed our various experiences of worshipping together, especially the annual Seder meal offered by our local United Reformed Church.

In 1986 I looked for a job in Leicester diocese, and was encouraged by Archdeacon David Silk to apply for a job at the (then ecumenical) Church of Christ the King, Beaumont Leys. While at Christ the King, I remember going to annual ecumenical conferences at Swanwick with my colleague, the Revd. Terence Byron. For me this was a totally new world.

Life moved on. I was ordained deacon in 1987, and priest in 1994. By then I had a diocesan job with responsibility for Adult Christian Education and Reader Training. I was given a housing allowance and bought my house in Birstall. When we were priested, however, in addition to my diocesan work, I was appointed priest in charge of Swithland, which meant moving into the rectory.

In 2000 the parishes of Swithland, Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves came together as a joint benefice. I became their rector, giving up my diocesan job, and serving in that benefice till I retired. Whilst there, I enjoyed working and worshipping with the Methodist and Baptist churches in Woodhouse Eaves. We set up an ecumenical forum, which still flourishes.

I retired from full time ministry in 2014, and moved back to my house in Birstall and to worshipping with you in this parish. I was so pleased to discover that ecumenism was alive and well and flourishing here, and have rejoiced ever since to be part of our ecumenical life together in this place. Thank you, all of you, for your part in my story!

Canon Anne

## THANK GOD FOR ZOOM!

The last three years have meant so many instances of not seeing family and friends, particularly when they live at a distance. So I was overjoyed the other day to receive an email from my American friend, Dr Roberta Klein, who said 'Let's zoom!' We first met in 1986 at the University of Kent in Canterbury, at a summer school. We were on a course studying the English novel. I remember discovering *Middlemarch* by George Eliot that year. And we have done other courses together since.

As an English language and literature teacher in a secondary school near Washington, D.C. Roberta has been a great help to me and a great encourager with respect to working on our church magazine. She kindly proofreads 'Keep in Touch' for me every quarter. She spots all the grammatical errors that I haven't noticed myself! She also enjoys keeping in touch with what's going on in the UK, and in our neck of the woods here in Leicestershire. So Zoom we did, for a good hour.

What did we talk about? Lots of things. Families, friends, and the state of our nations! And books we have enjoyed reading. It was such a joy to catch up with each other.



The photograph is of Roberta (on the right) with two of her fellow English teachers. It's such a lovely photo and it makes me smile.

I entitled this article 'Thank God for Zoom'. What I really want to say, however, is 'Thank God for friends and for still being able to keep in touch'.

Canon Anne

## THE SCREAM!

Edvard Munch 12 December 1863 - 23 January 1944

Since March 2020 we have endured so many changes to our ways of life, and as I write this, the shenanigans surrounding the present Government are enough to make anyone hold their heads and perhaps scream!

Edvard Munch's painting *The Scream* may be the only one of his numerous paintings of which people are aware. But there is a landmark exhibition of his atmospheric paintings at The Courtauld in London until 5th September this year: 'Edvard Munch's Masterpieces from Bergen'.



In 1905 the wealthy mill owner Rasmus Meyer bought the first of many of Munch's paintings, an Impressionist-inspired painting of a young woman, called 'Morning'. It was painted in 1884 when Munch was only 20.

This began Meyer's collection, which in due course consisted of 44 paintings and more than 100 prints, landscapes, portraits and later avant-garde works. Describing the latter in a journal, Meyer said that he had 'finally taken leave of Impressionism and Realism'.

It was Meyer's children who honoured their father's wishes by donating the bulk of his Munch collection, including a collection of traditional Norwegian art, to the city of Bergen, with the condition that they be kept together and housed in a purpose-built gallery. In March 1924 the handsome neo-baroque building was finally inaugurated.

Rita Richards

## FATHER TOM'S SERMON

Wanlip 17th July 2022

This Sunday's first reading is taken from the book of Genesis 18:1-10. The Lord appearing to Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre. Abraham offers his guests the best of hospitality. Of course, Abraham was not aware about who his three guests really were. Their parting gift to Abraham and Sarah was the promise of a son. What a splendid gift! Priceless! The promise of God was kept alive in Abraham with the gift of a son.

There are many references to hospitality in the Old Testament. The examples of prophet Elijah receiving hospitality from the poor widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17-18) and of Elisha being hosted by a wealthy Shunamite woman (2 Kings 4:8) spring to mind. The story of the Shunamite woman is very heart-warming, and we can only marvel at the wonder of God's work taking place through the prophet Elisha.

In today's Gospel (Luke 10: 38-42) we find Jesus already on His way to Jerusalem, guided by the Spirit, to give up his life for the salvation of his people. On his way, Jesus pays a visit to Martha and Mary. Martha and Mary give Jesus a great welcome and extend super hospitality. Jesus accepts their hospitality very graciously. At one point, however, Martha complains to Jesus that, because of his conversation with Mary, she is being left to do all the serving by herself (v.40). Jesus chides her gently: 'Martha, Martha, you worry and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one. It is Mary who has chosen the better part.' (v.41)

The key to the Christian life is setting priorities. Jesus the Christ first, then everything else. The only way really to learn that lesson is to spend some time every day 'sitting at the feet of Jesus.' God is the one thing necessary, and not just one of the many things we do. Then everything in our lives is in harmony, and the cares of life will not distract us or take a toll on us.

Fr. Tom Thomas, priest at St Theresa's RC Church, Birstall

## FIFTH SUNDAYS AT WANLIP

There are several months each year which have five Sundays. At Our Lady & St. Nicholas in Wanlip, we try to do something different on these Sundays. We've had Celtic Holy Communion services, a service of Pilgrimage and Celebration, and Thanksgiving services. In July we decided to have a Songs of Praise and to make it part of a special weekend by having a Flower Festival. All hymns for the Songs of Praise were chosen by Wanlip residents and members of the congregation, and they were interlaced with appropriate readings selected by Canon Anne.

The theme for the Flower Festival was the Church's seasonal colours, which are principally Purple, Red, White/Gold and Green. As ever, the imagination and talent of our wonderful flower arrangers rose to the challenge spectacularly.

Each arrangement was accompanied with an explanation about when and why we use each liturgical colour. We also displayed the Wanlip 'Cope' which was created by ladies of the congregations of Wanlip and Birstall churches to celebrate the 600th anniversary in 1993 of Our Lady & St. Nicholas. It features the first liberated slave, Rasselas Morjan, whose grave is on our churchyard.



The Festival was open each day from 11 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., during which time Julie Ward and team offered a welcome in the hall with teas, coffees and delicious cakes. It was a truly joyful weekend and the bonus is that it also raised much needed funds for the church.

*Debbie Shephard*

Whilst the Lunch Club operates under the umbrella of Birstall Methodist Church, we do try to be as independent as possible. Funding is key to our existence and we have received grants from the Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation, Charnwood Borough Council, the Freemasons and Birstall Parish Council. Just recently the *Helping our Community Birstall LE4* group has supplied Christmas Hampers, Christmas lunches and Jubilee souvenirs.

Currently we have thirty members and can welcome more. If you would like to join us, or know of someone that would benefit from the service that we provide, please do get in touch.

A two-course lunch, plus a hot drink costs £7.50  
Transport by mini-bus ( limited availability costs £2.50

A very warm welcome awaits.

*Mary Downs*



**Contact details for Lunch Club: 0792 8864586  
Email: [downs121@btinternet.com](mailto:downs121@btinternet.com)**

## BIRSTALL METHODIST LUNCH CLUB

For almost 50 years there has been a Lunch Club at the Methodist Church in Birstall. We meet on a Wednesday and serve lunches to older members in the community. In the early days teams were set up to work on a four weekly rota and that system still exists today. Although the staff maintained high standards, years ago there were no such things as Health & Safety inspections, Food Hygiene training, Safeguarding & Risk Assessments!

The Lunch Club serves a wide range of people, male and female. Some join through friends, others through referrals, some are housebound, some drive, others walk. Whilst the meal plays a major part, mixing with others and socialising is vitally important. Throughout the year we celebrate the seasons and other national and royal events. Recently we held a special Jubilee Lunch with entertainment.

During the pandemic we kept in touch with all our members and helpers by regular telephone calls and also a monthly newsletter containing quizzes, jokes and news items. Originally the less able were transported by private cars. Now, in order to adhere to safeguarding regulations, transport is supplied by the Syston Volunteer Centre. Andy, our regular driver, is accompanied by an escort each week. You may have seen the maroon mini-bus touring the village on Wednesday mornings.

About 20 years ago things changed and a paid cook was employed. This was an excellent move and today Karen and Ginnie, from the Birstall Royal British Legion, provide excellent meals. A selection of roasts, stews and casseroles, not forgetting the old favourites, such as liver and onions, and cottage pies. Karen's sponge puddings and custard are always very popular.

We have a team of thirty volunteers covering various roles: kitchen assistants, waiters, dish-washing, setting up tables and chairs, mini-bus escorts, meet'n'greet, and socialising. If anyone would like to become part of the team please get in touch with us.

## WANLIP FLOWER FESTIVAL

2022



30th — 31st July 2022

Our Lady and St Nicholas, Wanlip



**Rita Richards, Elaine Moyers**



**EASTER Rita Richards**



**ADVENT Rita Richards**



**OUR LADY  
Marjorie Bonshor**



**FONT  
Marjorie Bonshor  
& her daughter Julia**



**PENTECOST  
Elaine Moyers**



**ST GEORGE AND THE DRAGON Rita Richards**



**ORDINARY TIME Elaine Moyers**



**THE WANLIP COPE**



**LENT Marjorie Bonshor**