

December 2023 - January 2024

Number 698

The Messenger

The magazine of the Bridge Church, Otley



The Bridge Church

The United Reformed Church (URC) in Otley



The official Magazine of the
Bridge United Reformed Church, Otley
Minister:- Reverend Jason McCullagh
Telephone: 01943 465509
Email: jason.mccullagh@otleybridgechurch.org.uk

Messenger letter

Dear Friends,

*"O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by:"*

Here is a Christmas Carol that is greatly loved by many people. A carol that creates an evocative picture of Christmas. In the stillness of the night, in peace and in tranquillity, Mary gives birth to her firstborn son. The image of a peaceful Bethlehem has caught people's imagination over the years and many of the things we associate with Christmas reflect this. Carols celebrate it and Christmas cards depict it. Look at the cards you receive this year, if you are lucky enough to receive one with a religious picture then it is likely to show a beautiful nativity scene, snow settling on the rooftop and around the stable, ox and ass standing silently by the crib, perhaps a robin sitting on a nearby tree. Christmas cards convey an image of peace because that is what we want for people at Christmas, but it is not the reality of Bethlehem. Bethlehem is a town in Palestine, in the West Bank, and since 2002 has been surrounded by 'a security wall'. This year Palestine and Israel are scarred by violence. As I write 1,200 Israelis have been murdered and 14,500 Palestinians have been murdered. The little town of Bethlehem does not lie still this Christmas, there is no dreamless sleep for its inhabitants.

As we enjoy our Christmas celebrations this year, in a land of peace and plenty, let us not detach our celebrations from the reality of the people who live in Bethlehem. Not only do the beautiful Christmas card images of the Nativity not reflect the Bethlehem we know today, neither do they reflect

the Bethlehem of the First Century! Bethlehem was a place of tension. Palestine was occupied by the mighty Roman Empire, the inhabitants lived under severe military rule and, as we hear in St. Luke's version of the Christmas story, the occupying army were forcing every family to return to their ancestral town so they could be counted. Bethlehem was crowded and tense and, in this town, Jesus was born. Not in a room but in a stable, not in a bed but in a borrowed manger, not in peace but under occupation. Whilst he was still young, he was taken out of his land and lived as a refugee, for violence threatened to deprive him of his life. This is the world in which our faith is grounded.

*"yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight."*

Through Jesus, the Light of God shines into the world. Into a land of strife, confusion, suffering, and fear Jesus comes as a light of hope. This Christmas we worship against the backdrop of a world in which there is much violence and destruction, a world in which many of us continue to struggle with the cost-of-living crisis, Jesus creeps into this world.

*"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven:
no ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still, the dear Christ
enters in."*

This Christmas let us celebrate the reality of incarnation and welcome Christ into our hearts for when we do we invite the God of love into our hearts and when love rules our hearts nothing can conquer it.

Enjoy the images that have become so associated with Christmas for they point to what we long for, enjoy the opportunity to eat and drink with those you love, enjoy the opportunities to party with friends, but never let us forget that the message of the Incarnation is about so much more than those things. The message of the Incarnation is about hope where there is despair, light where there is darkness, and love where there is hatred.

*"O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today."*

I wish you a peaceful Christmas with your loved ones, strength for those who will have an empty seat at their table, and justice for all those in our world for whom this Christmas will be celebrated against the backdrop of violence.

*We hear the Christmas angels the great tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Immanuel."*

With love,

Jason

*'O Little Town of Bethlehem'
Philip Brooks (1835-93)*

PREACHING PLAN

10th December 2023 – 11th February 2024

Sunday 10th December – Second Sunday in Advent

Parade Service

Reverend Jason McCullagh

Mark 1.1-8

Sunday 17th December – Third Sunday in Advent

Service conducted by the Reverend Mirella Moxon

Jason is helping with Junior Church.

Wednesday 13th December – 7pm

Top-Ten Carols

Wednesday 20th December – 7pm

Carols by Candlelight

Sunday 24th December – Fourth Sunday in Advent

Reverend Jason McCullagh

Luke 1.26-55

Crib Service - 4pm

Midnight Communion – 11:30pm

Christmas Day – 10am

Christmas Celebration

Sunday 31st December – First Sunday of Christmas

No Service at The Bridge

2:30pm – Joint Service with Salem URC - Reverend Mirella Moxon

Jason is on holiday.

Sunday 7th January – The Baptism of the Lord

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Reverend Jason McCullagh

Genesis 1.1-5 & Mark 1.4-11

**Sunday 14th January – Second Sunday after Epiphany
Morning Service**

Service Conducted by Reverend Jason McCullagh and Mr John Eveleigh.

Evening Communion

Reverend Jason McCullagh

1 Samuel 3.1-20, John 1.43-51

Sunday 21st January – Third Sunday after Epiphany

Reverend Jason McCullagh.

Jonah 3.1-5,10 & Mark 1.14-20

Sunday 28th January – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Reverend Jason McCullagh.

Deuteronomy 18.15-20 & Mark 1.21-28

Sunday 4th February – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Reverend Jason McCullagh

Isaiah 40.21-39 & Mark 1.29-39

Sunday 11th February – Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Jason is preaching elsewhere in the Synod.



The
**United
Reformed
Church**





Dear Friends

I would like to thank you all for the prayers, flowers and kind words while have been caring for my lovely husband, Derek. Every time I come into church I feel the love and support you have given me through the difficult time.

Unfortunately Derek has had to move into a care home (Cookridge Court), here he is kept warm and cared for by lovely staff. Although he doesn't recognise myself and the family anymore he seems quite happy and he knows that we all love him and we see him on most days.

Thank you again for your love and support and may I wish you all a Happy Christmas.

Dorothy Heelas

Dear Friends

This is an opportunity to say a big thank you for everyone, you know who you are, who helped me celebrate my 80th birthday celebration at the Bridge Church a very special and memorable one!

Sadly I could not invite more people, but my family accounted for more than 60% of the permitted numbers. I had requested no personal presents but suggested that people could donate to my four nominated charities (including the Bridge Church). I am pleased to say my friends donated £355 in total. I did receive lots of presents, but sadly many presents got separated from cards so unfortunately I cannot write a personal thank you, but I am very appreciative and would like to thank everyone. May I also wish you all a Merry and blessed Christmas and a Happy and joyful 2024.

Diana Davies

Dear Friends

A huge thank you to everyone who has sent me flowers, cards and get well wishes following my recent operation.

Although this is the first part of my treatment I remain positive and am being well looked after.

With love

Janie Tomkinson

News of the Family

60th Wedding Anniversaries

Love and congratulations go to two couples who have recently celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary.

Jacqui and Roger Blackburn were married on the 5th of October 1963 at St Mary's Parish Church in Thirsk, Thirsk being Jacqui's hometown. Unfortunately, they were not able to celebrate on their anniversary due to health reasons, but Jacqui and Roger are looking forward to having a belated celebratory holiday in the Spring.

Angela and Michael Rhodes were married here at the Bridge on the 26th of October 1963. Rev Leon Cooke officiated, and the organ was played by Michael's father Jack Rhodes. We understand Angela and Michael thoroughly enjoyed the celebrations at their party and enjoyed a short holiday afterwards.

We wish everyone a joyful & peaceful Christmas and the Pastoral Elders look forward to receiving lots of good news that you might wish to share through 2024.

Driving Test Success

Congratulations to Noah Dockar who passed his driving test in October. Noah is pictured with his pass certificate (cropped to hide personal information).

Thank you,
Margaret Armitage



MANCHESTER CHORALE CONCERT

On Saturday 28th October the Bridge United Reformed Church in Otley was the venue for the latest concert by the Manchester Chorale as they launched their 2023/24 season with 'Simply Sublime Singing'. Neither the lashing rain, landslides, floods nor road closures stopped them from getting over the Pennines to the Bridge Church. They commented that it was worth it though, "as the church was warm and dry with lashings of tea and coffee, and a very warm welcome and a capacity audience."

The evening started with three sacred pieces, 'Alleluia Psallat' by Peter Aston with words dating back to the 14th century and this was followed by 'Upon Your Heart' a much gentler piece by Eleanor Daley taken from the Song of Solomon and then two anthems by Thomas Weelkes who was quite a colourful character taking up his musical pen towards the end of Queen Elizabeth I reign.

Next was the theme of love with 'Down by the Salley Gardens' a folk song and 'You' by Mary Black a setting of words from the Song of Solomon, this group ended with 'My Spirit Sang All Day' by Gerald Finzi a setting of a poem by Robert Bridges celebrating love.



'Earth Song' by American Composer Frank Ticheli really struck a chord with the choir, as well as reflecting the terrible situation in Ukraine, the words reflected the feelings of many of the choir, particularly during the pandemic. 'Flight' by Norwegian composer Kim Andre Arnesen's first collaboration with Welsh poet Euan Tait, the final message being that music making is the song of new life, as fragile as the fall of a feather.

Prior to the interval was a group of pieces by American composer Matthew Harris, setting texts by Shakespeare, his music has been described by the New York Times as smart and harmonically pungent! First 'Sigh No More Ladies' from Much Ado about Nothing, then the slow gentle idyll of young love in spring in 'It was a Lover and his Lass' from As You Like it ending with 'When Daffodils begin to Peer', text from

A Winters Tale.

After being suitably refreshed with drinks and biscuits it was time for the second half of the concert. For the choir's 40th anniversary in 2020, a competition was held and one runner up was Martin Neill with 'Sing for Joy' an exuberant and uplifting piece which expresses how the choir feel about singing. Although not celebratory in style 'Your Words Give Light' by Lydia Jane Pugh is based on Psalm 119. The winner was Jack White with 'When Voices Rise' which is an evocative work, with creative and personal lyrics, featuring the famous Manchester worker bee.

Next was a very exciting song by Rosaphayne Powell using words from the beginning of the gospel according to John. 'In the beginning was the word' and the word was with God and the word was God. There followed a more reflective piece arranged by Rob Wilding – 'Sometime I Feel Like a Motherless Child Walk' and finishing with 'My God is a Rock' in a weary land arranged by Alice Parker. We were then entertained to some Gershwin – 'Prelude' and 'Promenade (Walking the Dog)' by David Robinson on Clarinet and Jill Roberts on piano.

The final group of songs was a little lighter in style with three folksongs of an international flavour. First we travelled to Andalusia for a setting of words by the poet WB Yeats of his poem 'En la Macarenita' or Down in the Macarena where two young people spot each other across the dance floor and end up dancing through life together; then the beautiful Finnish love song 'Tuoll on mum kultani' where the singer is forlorn, waiting for their loved one to return. The set ended with an arrangement of the ebullient 'Rhythm of Life' by Cy Coleman from the 1966 classic musical, Sweet Charity!



All proceeds from the evening were shared between Manchester Chorale and the Otley Bridge Church's Charity for this year which is the Learning Disability Project at the Hollybush Conservation Centre at Kirkstall.



Messy Church

2nd December 2023

In Pictures



Otley Brass Band Christmas Concert

The Bridge United Reformed
Church, Otley

Sunday 17th December
7.30pm

Tickets:
£10 on the door



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Just a reminder of a few forthcoming events open to all

Supper Club - 18th January 2024

Noah Dockar is going to tell us about the Scout Jamboree in South Korea. It is fair to say this talk will be a little bit different to what Noah, and indeed all of us, imagined at the time it was organised! This starts at 7.30 pm with a meal.

T Club Fundraiser - 25th January 2024

Film night- it's a film about a man who goes on a long walk! Tea and cake will be served at 7 pm and film starts at 7.30pm.

Faith, Alive and Active 8th February 2024

Following on from the last meeting where the subject of discussion on the Environment - the next meeting will discuss Sexuality and Gender.

Keep you eye on the weekly notices for more details of these events.

A message from Joan Wiseman who has the distinction of being our oldest member

Thank you for the lovely flowers I have freceived from Church over the weeks when I was in and out of hospital. I am hoping that they have now got me sorted!

I have had to move house and my new address is:

15, Wharfeside
Westgate
Otley
LS21 3AT

Joan did give her new telephone number, but it has too many digits!

Food and Friends

Our monthly meetings continue to be very popular, the food is always excellent and the friends seem to enjoy the company and the speakers. We still have some places available if anyone would like to join us.

The October meeting had a speaker from the SHINE project which operates from St Stephens church in West Bowling Bradford. Sarah gave us a great insight into what the project is about, namely offering support to everyone in need. It seeks to support to the most vulnerable people living in one of the most deprived areas in the UK also to offer help with emotional problems in the form of therapy and weekly social activities. In fact the range of things they offer seems so varied that most problems can be helped either with the food bank or practical assistance in many other areas.



The speaker at the November meeting was David Alred who gave a 'slide' trip through the Canadian Rockies. This most spectacular area of Canada was of great interest to our members especially those of us who have been there and experienced the scenery and wildlife. David was very knowledgeable about, not just the area, but also the plant life and the birds and animals. He is also an excellent photographer and has been there in different seasons so brought an insight into the country throughout a typical year.

We look forward to another visit from the Ukeladies at our December meeting which will be our Christmas celebration. So hopefully a few Christmas jumpers and hats will be worn.

Enid Taylor

Young Peoples Pages

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

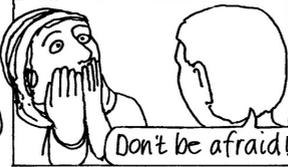
It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 1: 26-56 & Matthew 1: 18-25

In Israel, about 2000 years ago, a young woman, Mary, was going to marry Joseph. The weddings were in two stages.

In one year we will complete our wedding



Then God's messenger angel came to see Mary.



Don't be afraid!

You will have God's baby, and call him Jesus, 'God saves', because he will save people



from what they do wrong.

How can this happen?



With God, nothing is impossible.

Your cousin Elizabeth, who couldn't have children, is now 6 months pregnant.



Mary visited Elizabeth.



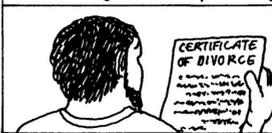
When Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant, he was very upset



This will bring shame on me and my family.



He always did what was right so he decided to end their marriage, but quietly.



But the angel came to him in a dream.

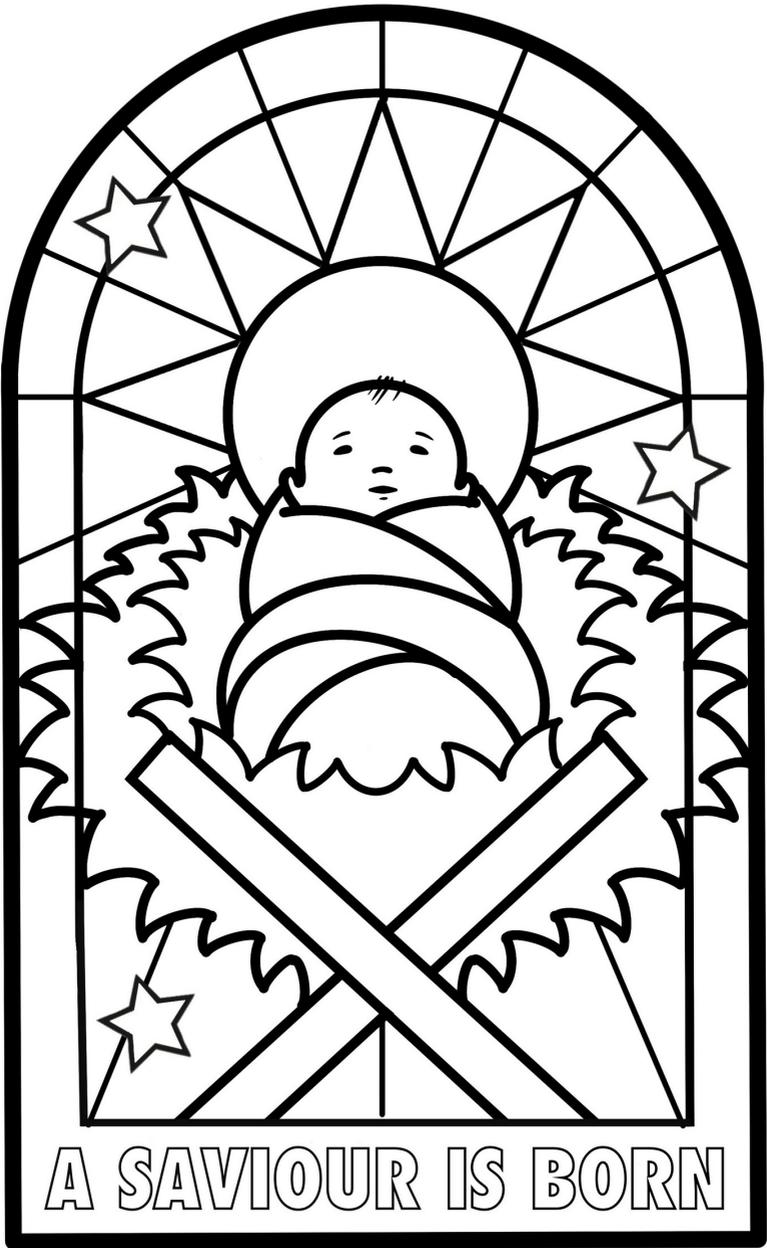


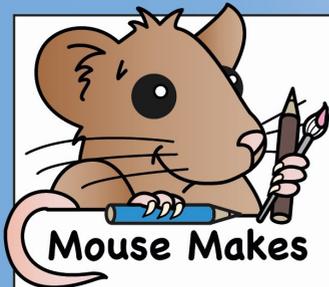
Don't be afraid to marry Mary. The baby is God's, and you will call him Jesus.



So Joseph and Mary completed their marriage.







Mouse Makes

EPIPHANY is the time in the Church year that we remember when the 'wise men' or 'Magi' followed a star that led them to the Christ child Jesus. They bowed down, worshipped him and left *three* special gifts.



Where was Jesus born?

Luke 2:1



What three gifts did the wise men give Jesus?



and -----

Luke 2:11



Who was the king?

Luke 2:1

Where did the wise men come from?
the -----

Luke 2:1



How were the wise men warned not to return to Herod?
In a -----

Luke 2:12

What had the wise men seen?

a -----

Luke 2:2



C H I L D S T A R J D K
J E S U S W A E B O B I
E S R E J O I C E Y O N
W H A C H R I S T H R G
S E E E O S J C H U N O
Y P L A U H R U L E R L
G H I S S I T H E R O D
I E M T E P I P H A N Y
F R A N K I N C E N S E
T D R S W I S E M E N E
S M Y R R H D R E A M I



Look up the Bible verses, fill in the blanks, find them in the word search then look for the words opposite.

JESUS
WISEMEN
WORSHIP
SHEPHERD
KING • JEWS
CHRIST • CHILD
BORN • RULER
ISRAEL • REJOICE
JOY • HOUSE • MARY
GIFTS • EPIPHANY

How many other words can you make from the letters in EPIPHANY?

The tale of the Two Sons

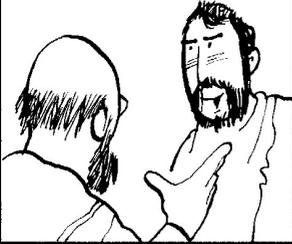


JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



HE ONCE TOLD A STORY ABOUT A FATHER WHO HAD TWO SONS.

THE FATHER WENT TO HIS OLDER SON AND ASKED HIM TO WORK IN THE VINEYARD



'NO I WON'T!' SAID THE OLDER SON...



...BUT THEN HE CHANGED HIS MIND AND WENT AND HELPED.

THE FATHER THEN WENT TO HIS YOUNGER SON AND ASKED HIM TO HELP IN THE VINEYARD TOO.



'OF COURSE I WILL!' SAID THE YOUNGER SON. BUT HE PROMPTLY FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT...

...AND DIDN'T DO A STROKE OF WORK!



'WHICH ONE DID WHAT HIS FATHER WANTED?' ASKED JESUS...



'WHICH DO YOU THINK IT WAS?'

THE SECRET LIFE OF A HOUSEGROUP

Where are they? Daphne looked at the clock, it was turning 10, and we both wondered.

It was the morning of the Housegroup and it was meant to be starting right then. I went outside to investigate. I could see 4 people walking up the street, puzzled.

We've been to the right flat but in the wrong building! Oh dear! Anyway, ushered inside, coats off, armchairs chosen and we were ready to start – the ice had already been broken.

We read the prayer from our book together, hopefully meaning every word (though, thankfully, the minister wasn't there to check up) and we began to think about the subject for the session.

After brief remarks and a few thoughts going quietly around in a few heads a question was put out. A couple of moments later a rather tentative response was made which got the session going and more followed. There was a look at a short passage from the bible. Then the pattern of question, thought response, verbal comment, opportunity to agree/ disagree/ modify/ say nothing/ make a wisecrack/ digress continued.

After everyone had said what, if anything, they wanted to say we changed tack. Time to consider where we'd got: inevitably, some of what had been said was familiar stuff but, equally inevitably, some of it wasn't, occasionally unexpectedly so. Then a prayer from the book and, if wanted, some others, too.

Coffee and biscuits emerged, and more day-to-day chat about this, that and church. Eventually, coats on and home time.

A couple of hours spent with some like-minded folk, some known well and others a little: pleasant? interesting? useful? Time will tell.

In the quiet when all had left: x and y seemed very nice – Yes, worth getting to know, don't you think?

Malcolm Wainwright

Do more. Learn more. Be more.



Aged 14-18 and want to explore the great outdoors? Alongside your new friends, you'll master new skills and try things you'd never get the chance to do at home or school such as raft building, kayaking, climbing, or hiking. You will have the freedom to choose activities you would like to do. We meet Monday evening at 7:15pm in the Otley Bridge Church Hall.

To find out more, please visit our website:

Put your skills to use, learn new ones,

otleybridgechurchscouts.org.uk

#SkillsForLife

Copyright 2018 The Scout Association Registered Charity numbers 306101/SC038437



Scouts

Otley Explorers
Bridge Church



The frost came out to bring some winter magic to the Festive Fair at Hollybush Conservation Centre on Sunday 26th November. There were lots of goodies on offer and it was the perfect day to combine a day out to Hollybush with a walk along the canal.

The barn was beautifully decorated by Green Gym volunteers. The Hollybush Project have made Medlar jelly (which we can confirm is delicious), the Whittlers have been making snowmen, gnomes and reindeer, oranges have been drying, and it has all been feeling rather festive for a grey November afternoon.

As well as delights made by our volunteers, there were lots of local crafts people selling their wares, so it was good to get down to Hollybush, explore the gardens, have a generous portion of cake from the café and get ahead with Christmas shopping.

We never stop being amazed by the wonderful creativity of The Hollybush Project volunteers. This lovely group were at the Hollybush Festive Fair showcasing their festive crafts, delicious chutneys and jams, Hollybush grown plants and recycled woodwork projects. What a multitalented bunch!

We are hoping that we will have a visit from Hollybush to our morning service on Sunday 17th December and there should also be some items for sale afterwards, so don't forget to bring some extra money with you on the day.



Women's Meeting

On October 9th the topic for our meeting was 'Cruising along the Rhine' it was created by Marie and Eric Sandhurst and was presented by Eric himself. The cruise started in Basel and finished in Amsterdam. It was a Viking cruise and there were 227 passengers on board. Unfortunately, there were a couple of problems as the water level was extremely low.

The cabin was like a bedsit, transformed each evening into twin beds during the evening meal. 95% of the people on board were from the USA. The food was excellent, and the Black Forest Gateau was to die for (especially as we were passing through the Black Forest in Germany at the time)! Strasbourg was a triumph as the narrator saved wood, and the more wood you had in your house the wealthier you were. The cathedral in Strasbourg was the tallest in Europe was the tallest in the world until 1800.

Next port of call was Heidelberg, where there is a most enormous castle, there are forty castles in that area, some are ruins, some homes and some are hotels. The next stop was Koblenz, it was festival season and there is a cable car there, this is where the Rhine meets the Moselle. Next stop was Cologne, home to another massive cathedral - a barge got stuck on a sandbank and the boat could not turn around!

Kinderdlik in the Netherlands was wonderful as the windmills have to turn their sails into the wind once a year and they happened to be there at the time! This was the first of many river cruises for the Songhursts'.

Our next meeting on the 23rd October, we were treated to a lovely afternoon by the Wharfedale Male Voice Choir; led by their wonderful and humorous conductor, Paul. They all looked dapper in their royal blue dickie bows. They commenced with a selection from 'South Pacific' followed by a selection of songs of peace, very appropriate! A member then recited a poem about the Battle of Hastings, which was very amusing. They then sung a couple of 'world premieres', A Small Part of the World and Bohemian Rhapsody. Another member read a few quotes, some we had heard before and some not!

Then Peter Roberts sang and played his guitar to the Ballad of Bethnal Green, and we were asked to join in the chorus! Then another member read a poem 'Joyce the librarian', absolutely hilarious. They finished off with 'Chattanooga Choo Choo', 'Rhythm of Life' and 'Softly as I leave You'. It was a lovely choice of songs, brilliantly accompanied by their pianist, Pat. They certainly earned their tea and biscuits afterwards.

At the meeting on 6th November, Jackie and Bob Lawrence presented 'Women at War; The Barnbow Story'. The year was 1914, the start of the First World War, and Britain was not prepared, Asquith was Prime Minister at the time and two individuals named Firth and Beckett proposed that a munitions factory should be built in Leeds. The decision to build the factory at Barnbow was made in 1915. The site was huge and covered 400 acres. When it was built, 130,000 women came looking for work there. They were paid a basic wage of 28 shillings (£1.40 in current money) per week and with overtime they could earn over £2, which was good money in those days. Most of the women travelled to work by train, the majority from the Leeds area and York.

The munitions (shells) manufactured were sent direct to France. At its height there were 17,000 people employed there of which 98% were women (the men being engaged in active service). No metals were allowed on the site (e.g. buttons), as the work was extremely dirty and a dangerous environment. The site even had its own Fire Brigade!

On 5th December 1916 an explosion occurred and ripped through a building known as Hut 42, killing 42 women and many more were injured. The event was 'hushed up', but there were two further tragedies before November 1918, when Winston Churchill visited and met the youngest girl who was only 13 years old!

It was an very interesting story, but at the same time it was a very sad one.

On November 20th we had Andrew Howard to present 'Old Otley revisited; Part 2'. We started with slides showing us Printing Machines and how they developed through the ages. Otley being a very important place for the printing industry

and employing people who came to live here because of the industry. For a small market town it became known world wide and there were many large companies which developed in the 19th and 20th century!

We saw lots of slides of the town, Kirkgate, Bondgate, Boroughgate and Westgate, which were recognisable but now much changed. The old cars were interesting and Andrew noted that all the pedestrians wore hats of many varieties, flat caps, boaters, bonnets and top hats.

We saw the two cinemas no longer here, and a slide of the old Mechanics Institute both being built and completed, it is so sad to see it's demise. Finally we saw thatched cottages which was a surprise fo Otley. Once again an interesting afternoon!

Pam Bradley

RECYCLING YOUR USED BATTERIES

The battery recycling unit is now a familiar sight in the Church lobby and, thanks to those people already putting in their used batteries, it is filling up nicely!

Batteries are not a renewable source of energy – they are made from non-renewable resources like lithium and they contain toxic substances. They contain finite resources (precious metals) and they can leak corrosive chemicals.

Recycling spent batteries ensures that some of the materials within the battery can be recovered and reused, and the parts that cannot be recycled can be safely disposed of ensuring that there is no lasting damage to the environment.

We are therefore encouraging you if you are not doing so already, not to dispose of your used batteries in your domestic waste but bring them to Church when you come and deposit them in the recycling unit.

Hilary Eveleigh



OTLEY VICTORIAN FAYRE

Once again the Bridge Church had a stall at the Otley Victorian Fayre with the very popular chocolate tombola and mulled wine.

There was masses of chocolate - some 260 prizes ranging from Christmas boxes to little bags of miniatures, all generously donated by the congregation and organisations associated with the Church.

Ninety bottles of mulled wine were purchased and discreetly delivered to a house in Bramhope about 7.30 am one morning! The delivery driver must have wondered what was going on! The idea was that any unconsumed bottles would be used at other Church events in the lead up to Christmas. Well, best laid plans of mice and men as they say-all the bottles were consumed.



Final figures are not available at the time of writing (the morning after the event and a day before this magazine goes to print), but over one thousand pounds was taken and we estimate that around £700 will have been raised for the Church Charity- a fantastic achievement. A huge thank you for all the donations and those who helped on the day.

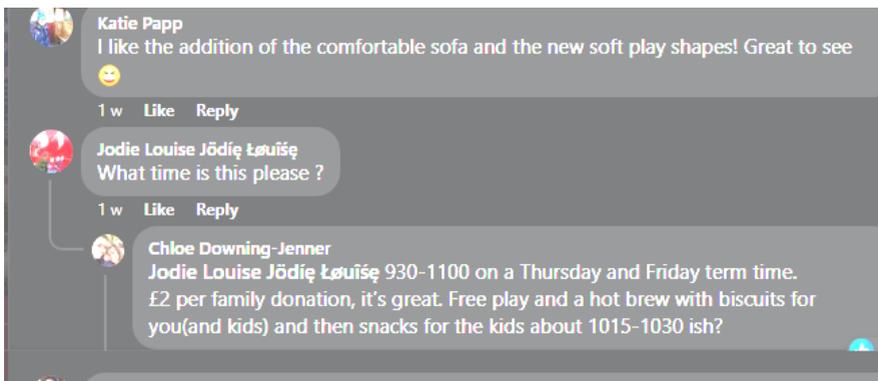
TODDLER GROUP

The Toddler Group produced the following display for Children in Need at a recent meeting!



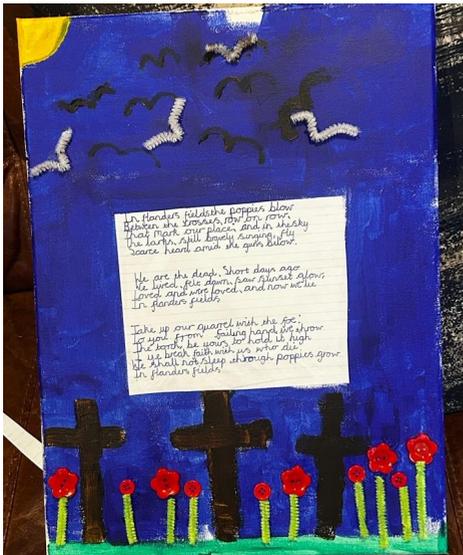
The Toddler Group is a very successful project run by the Bridge Church. It is very much well used by people with young children in and around Otley - and quite often the 'no room at the inn' sign has to be put on the blue door!

Below is something people have said about the Toddler Group



NEW BANNERS

You may have noticed the banners hanging from the balcony in the sanctuary. These three banners depict Advent, Christmas and Epiphany and have been crafted by Gill Mitchell. Please have a look at them for yourselves - no photograph could do them the justice that the naked eye can!



The picture on the left was created by one of our young people, Ella. It is about Remembrance and the poem, which you will not be able to read is the famous 'In Flanders Field' by the Canadian poet, John McCrae.

Well done, Ella!

CHURCH DIARY - FEBRUARY - MARCH 2023

Weekly events

The Bridge Cafe - Every Thursday at 2p.m.

Parents & Toddlers - Every Thursday and Friday at 9.30 a.m.

Quiet Communion - Every Wednesday at 10 a.m.

Regular Events

Women's Meeting

December 18th - The 'Ladies Please' Choir will entertain.

January 8th - New Year Message - Reverend Mirella Moxon.

January 22nd - A Dry Stone Waller's Odyssey - Tracey Blackwell.

February 5th - How Courtyard Planters has grown over the years - Katie Burnett.

Food and Friends 1st Wednesday of each month at 10.30 a.m.

January 10th and February 7th.

T Club - 4th Thursday of each Month

December 21st - Candlelight Carol Service.

January 25th - Church Fundraiser - Film and Tombola

Supper Club—3rd Thursday of each month at 7.30 p.m.

December 14th - Christmas Dinner.

January 18th - **Open Event** - Scout Jamboree South Korea - Noah Docker.

Singing for Fun - alternate Mondays at 7.30 p.m.

8th and 22nd January, 5th and 19th February.

Messy Church - 17th February.

MENU CHURCH

From Sunday 25th February 2024 a new Service will be introduced at the Bridge Church. It will be a Menu Service and, as the name implies, it will give you choices!

The first part of this service will be the same as any other Sunday but when the children go out you will all be invited to make a choice! You will be able to stay in Church and listen to a sermon, go out to a discussion group, or go out to do a craft activity and all three options will be based on the theme for the day.

I intend to continue to deliver the sermon, but I need help with the other two options. If you think you can chair a discussion group or if you feel you are able to offer a craft activity, please speak to me. I will choose the theme and I will work with you, and I will give you plenty of notice! Please let me know as soon as you can if this is something you feel you can help me with. The more volunteers the better!

Many thanks,

Jason

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

The Editors would like to thank all those who have contributed to the production of 'The Messenger' over the past twelve months, and in particular to our caretaker, Peter Burnham who kindly prints and collates the magazine. We would also like to wish everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas and a Happy 2024.

NEXT MESSENGER

Material for the next edition of the Messenger should be in the hands of the Editor by Sunday, 28th January and will be available for collection on Sunday, 11th February.

If possible, please send by e-mail to:

messenger@otleybridgechurch.org.uk

The Bridge United Reformed Church
Bridge Street
Otley, West Yorkshire, LS21 1RW
www.otleybridgechurch.org.uk

Secretary

John Eveleigh
Telephone 07988 802700
secretary@otleybridgechurch.org.uk

Treasurer

Andrew Howard
Telephone 01943 461989
andrew.howard@otleybridgechurch.org.uk

Magazine Editors

Alan and Alison Anslow
Telephone 07956550621 (Alan)
messenger@otleybridgechurch.org.uk

Church Publicity and Website Editor

Colin Whitaker
Telephone 07941 234849

Pastoral Elders

Margaret Armitage - 01943 878062
Tina Johnson - 01943 462540
Chris Beckwith - 01943 463856
Christine Paterson - 01943 467159

Comments and statements printed in the Messenger
are not necessarily the opinions of the Editor or
the Bridge United Reformed Church (Otley)



Find us on  **Otley Bridge Church**

 **@otley_urc**