

December 2024 - January 2025

Number 704

The Messenger

The magazine of the Bridge Church, Otley



The Bridge Church

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH IN OTLEY

The official Magazine of the
Bridge United Reformed Church, Otley
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Messenger letter

Dear Friends,

What would you like for Christmas? This is a question that I often get asked by my family and my friends and my answer is almost always the same! I much prefer to ask the question. The giving of gifts symbolises appreciation and love, and there is great enjoyment in thinking about and buying such gifts. There is no lack of choice for ever since the nights started to lengthen the shops started to brighten with the coming of Christmas. Chocolate, toiletries, plants, books, games, toys, clothes, experiences, whatever you can think of you can probably find! I hope that you get something you like for Christmas.

What would the world like for Christmas? We live in challenging times, violence scars so many lives, people suffer from lack of food and water, women struggle to reach their true potential, children are left orphaned, the climate crisis looms large over everything. What would the world like for Christmas, and can we play a part in giving it what it would like?

This year our Advent worship will be based around the four candles that we will light. The lighting of candles symbolises light piercing the darkness, the Advent candles symbolise that light getting stronger and stronger. It is the symbolism of these candles that will shape our worship. On Advent Sunday the candle symbolises hope, on the Second Sunday of Advent it symbolises love, on the Third Sunday of Advent it symbolises joy and on the Fourth Sunday of Advent it symbolises peace. These themes help us to prepare for, and to understand, Christmas.

Each Sunday in Advent we will explore what each one of these looks like, how they have been expressed in Scripture and how we can make them a reality in the world in which we live. What we prepare for in Advent, and then celebrate at Christmas is God's gift to the world, God's plan for the world for when we celebrate Christmas Day, we celebrate the birth of a child in whom the fullness of God resides. In him hope, love, joy and peace are conveyed through his every word and every action. By shaping of our lives in the shape of his we can give hope, love, joy and peace to the world.

None of this easy, it requires prayer, reflection, commitment and courage but, I hope, you will find joy in this Advent journey, love in the celebration of Christmas, and peace for the year ahead. If you do, remember it is then your task to share that!

With love,

Jason

MINISTER'S REGISTER
1st October – 30th November

BAPTISM

13th October Ruby Veronica Grace Butler

FUNERALS

9th October Mrs Brenda Swift The Bridge Church
Otley Cemetery

15th October Mr Keith Stokes Rawdon Crematorium

4th November Mrs Mavis Hogg The Bridge Church

The Editors would like to wish all readers a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and best wishes for the New Year. We would also like to thank all our editorial contributors and also Peter who kindly prints each edition of The Messenger

PREACHING PLAN

15th December 2024 – 9th February 2025

Sunday 15th December – Third Sunday in Advent Gift Service Parade

Reverend Jason McCullagh
John 3. 7 - 18

Sunday 22nd December – Fourth Sunday in Advent

Reverend Jason McCullagh
Luke 1. 39 - 55

Sunday 29th December – First Sunday of Christmas

There will be no Service at The Bridge today but a Joint Service at Salem at 2:30pm led by Mr John Eveleigh. Jason is on holiday.

Sunday 5th January – Second Sunday of Christmas Sacrament of Holy Communion

Reverend Jason McCullagh
Matthew 2. 1 -12

Sunday 12th January – First Sunday of Epiphany

Reverend Jason McCullagh.
Luke 3. 15 – 17, 21 -22

Sunday 19th January – Second Sunday of Epiphany

Reverend Jason McCullagh
John 2. 1 - 11

Sunday 26th January – Third Sunday of Epiphany Taste and See Service

Reverend Jason McCullagh.
Luke 4. 14 – 21

Sunday 2nd February – Fourth Sunday of Epiphany Sacrament of Holy Communion

Reverend Jason McCullagh
Luke 4. 21 – 30

Sunday 9th February – Fifth Sunday of Epiphany

Jason is leading the Synod's Sabbath Gathering.
The leader of this Service is still to be arranged.

News of the Family

Baptism

On Sunday the 13th of October we celebrated the baptism of Ruby Veronica Grace Butler, baby daughter of Nick and Natalie. Ruby was supported by friends and family who had travelled some distance to be with her for her special day and it was good to welcome all. Ruby had also kindly provided biscuits and cake to share with everyone over coffee, which was very much appreciated! It is also good to have Ruby, Nick and Natalie joining us for Sunday morning worship.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

On the 21st of October 2024 Joan Wiseman celebrated her 100th birthday, an amazing achievement! We were all fortunate to have Joan and her brother and sister-in-law with us in church on the 20th of October to see her cut her cake and share in fellowship with us afterwards. We hope you enjoyed all your celebrations Joan, for a very special birthday.

Joan is also celebrating being in membership here at The Bridge Church for 80 years, after being received as a member of the then Congregational Church on the 3rd of December 1944 and has been an active member ever since.

Also, Christine Beaumont will celebrate being a member here for 60 years, after being received into membership on the 1st of December 1964.

Our love and congratulations go to you both.

Do please pass on any good news you would like to share with any of the Pastoral Elders.

Margaret Armitage.

Otley Brass Band Christmas Concert

The Bridge United Reformed
Church, Otley

Join us for our annual celebration of Christmas
classics and festive favourites

Saturday 14th December
7.00pm

Tickets £10
on the door

Raffle tickets
also available



The Bridge United Reformed Church, Bridge Street, Otley, LS21 1RW

BIBLE STUDY

During 2024 we have spent a lot of time, on Sundays and Wednesdays, looking at stories from the Old Testament. We have heard from Exodus, Jonah, Ruth, Samuel and the Psalms.

Now I offer a series of Bible Studies looking in more detail at the Old Testament. I still need to work on the details of each study, but I offer the dates to you now and, if this interests you, I encourage you to keep an eye on the Notice Sheet for further details.

Session One

Tuesday 4th February 2:30pm and 7:30pm

Session Two

Wednesday 12th February 2:30pm and 7:30pm

Session Three

Tuesday 25th February 2:30pm and 7:30pm

Session Four

Thursday 6th March 2:30pm and 7:30pm

Session Five

Wednesday 12th March at 2:30pm

Thursday 13th March at 7:30pm

I hope you will be able to join me.

Jason

NEXT MESSENGER

Material for the next edition of the Messenger should be in the hands of the Editor by Sunday, 26th January and will be available for collection on Sunday, 9th February, 2025

If possible, please send by e-mail to:

messenger@otleybridgechurch.org.uk



We continue to enjoy our monthly get togethers with interesting speakers and excellent food.

By the time you read this we will have had our pre-Christmas celebration with the Ukeladies group. There will have been some sing along music and some carols.

We had the 'Ladies Please Choir' at the November meeting; they always get a very enthusiastic reception from our members and they never disappoint.



Happy Christmas to everyone especially our kitchen volunteers who provide such excellent meals.

We will meet again in the New Year—but not the first Wednesday which will be New Years Day, but on January 8th

Enid and Mike Taylor

TASTE AND SEE SERVICES

Our 'Taste and See' Services will continue to be offered in 2025.

Thank you for engaging with this new style as enthusiastically as you have.

The next 'Taste and See' Services will be held on:

Sunday 26th January
Sunday 23rd February
Sunday 23rd March

If you feel that you can help by either chairing the discussion group or offering a creative activity, please get in touch with me so I can share more of what these themes will be.

Jason

Young Peoples Pages

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke chapter 2 verses 1-7

The Roman Empire charged the countries it had invaded taxes, based on the number of people and what they earned.

Emperor Augustus gave orders that all people in the Empire were to be registered so they could be taxed.

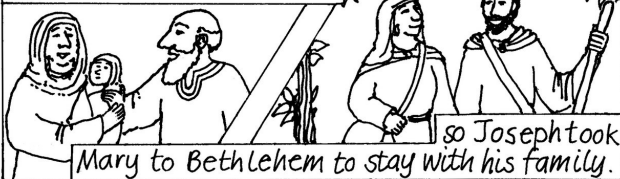


This census was before Quirinius became Governor of Syria * (* whose own census started riots - Acts 5:37)



When the order came, Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth.

But Joseph was descended from King David, who had been born in Bethlehem...



so Joseph took Mary to Bethlehem to stay with his family.

Come and meet everyone!



A normal home in Bethlehem.



Stable with mangers

Doorway of home

Animals were kept inside at night

Everyone lived and slept in the living room

Room added for guests and visitors

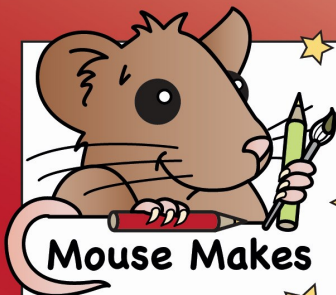
While they were staying there, Mary's baby was born.



There was no space in the guest room to put a new baby!

So they made a snug bed for Jesus in one of the mangers.





Mouse Makes

"Jesus said,
I am the ____ Y
and the ____ U ____
and the ____ I ____."
No one comes to the Father
except through me."

John 14:6

"The child to be born
will be called
H ____ , the
____ of ____"

Luke 1:35

"For unto you is born
this day a
S ____
who is
____ R ____
the ____ R ____"

Luke 2:11

THE GREATEST GIFT

"She will bear a son,
and shall call his name

for he will save his
people from their sins."

Matthew 1:21

"Jesus said,
I am the

and the life."

John 11:25

B L I G H T L O
R A Y W O J J R
E M M A N U E L
A B Y J E S O
D S A V I O U R
S A V R J S D

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

JESUS
—
THE
GREATEST
GIFT
OF ALL!

P R O P H E T I
R E D E E M E R
I E M I L I G
E M E S S I A H
S R M E G F T
T E A C H E R E

E V E R L A S T I N G
K I N G O F K I N G S
I N K I G W F D O U
S E S O N O F G O D D
S E W O C O U W O R D
C O U N S E L L O R U

EMMANUEL • MESSIAH

REDEEMER • KING OF KINGS • WORD

SON OF MAN • EVERLASTING • SHEPHERD • PRIEST • PROPHET • TEACHER

LIGHT • BREAD • VINE • DOOR • LAMB • COUNSELLOR • CHRISTMAS • GIFT

Find the words from the Bible verses too!

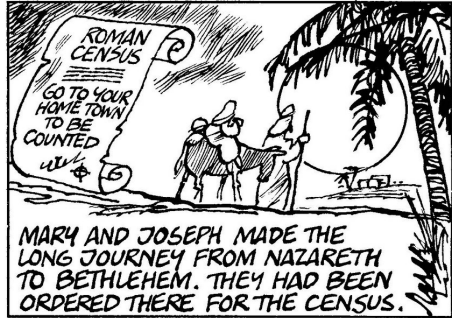
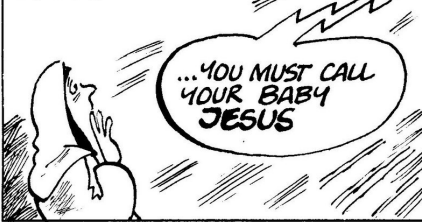
Dec24 © deborah noble @ parishpump.co.uk

A Very Special Baby

JESUS WAS BORN ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR JERUSALEM.



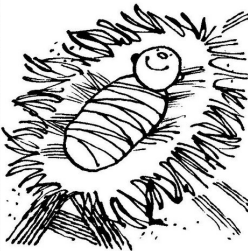
AN ANGEL HAD TOLD MARY SHE WOULD HAVE A VERY SPECIAL BABY.



BUT THE TOWN WAS FULL



...WHICH IS WHERE JESUS WAS BORN.



SHEPHERDS IN FIELDS NEARBY RACED TO SEE THE BABY.



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD THEM WHERE JESUS HAD BEEN BORN.

WISE MEN CAME FROM THE EAST. THEY TOO WANTED TO SEE JESUS. THEY HAD BEEN GUIDED BY A STAR.



BUT MARY, JOSEPH AND BABY JESUS SOON HAD TO ESCAPE TO EGYPT...



...AS KING HEROD WANTED JESUS DEAD!!

WORDSEARCH

h	k	n	h	t	h	f	a	m	i	l	y
s	t	a	b	l	e	n	e	b	d	h	m
g	p	z	u	c	j	h	g	s	a	n	a
e	m	a	n	g	e	r	u	y	v	b	r
y	v	r	c	l	u	i	e	r	i	r	y
w	o	e	h	e	n	s	s	i	d	o	v
b	j	t	r	i	r	t	t	a	j	o	p
v	e	h	r	y	p	b	a	u	o	m	b
b	s	i	u	h	o	m	e	x	s	s	e
f	u	l	i	v	i	n	g	d	e	q	a
q	s	e	m	p	i	r	e	w	p	s	n
v	i	s	i	t	o	r	s	s	h	n	u

baby

living

Nazareth

Quirinius

family

bed

Mary

Bethlehem

everyone

home

visitors

Augustus

space

Joseph

Empire

guest

born

David

room

Jesus

manger

Syria

taxes

stable

In the last Messenger we published an article by Canon Paul Hardingham who writes for Parish Pump (a resource the Church subscribes to). He is currently writing about the Gospels - this month it is Mark's Gospel

An Introduction to the Books of the New Testament: Mark

Mark is the second of the synoptic gospels, along with Matthew and Luke. Traditionally this gospel is ascribed to John Mark, a close associate of Peter. It was written for Gentile readers, probably in Rome during Nero's persecution of the church (c AD 64-7).

Mark unveils Jesus' public ministry with the words: *'the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God'* (1:1). The gospel provides a succinct and vivid account of Jesus' ministry, concentrating on what Jesus did rather than what He said. Mark moves quickly from one episode to another, often using the word *'immediately'* which is characteristic of his gospel.

For Mark, understanding the true identity of Jesus is fundamental to his gospel. Jesus asks the disciples, *'Who do people say I am?'* (8:27), to which Peter replies, *'You are the Christ'*. This is evident in Jesus' role as teacher, the call for discipleship and the account of Jesus' death and resurrection, which occupies the last third of the gospel.

A key verse which helps us to understand the nature of Jesus' mission and how we might live in the light of it is: *'Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'* (10:44,45). As the Suffering Servant, Jesus gave His life on the cross, that we might know and share his love.

Mark is understandably in a hurry to tell us about Jesus: the one who reveals the truth of God to us, that we might live in reality not ignorance!

GETTING TO KNOW GEOFF SWIFT

This month we are delighted to feature one of our longest serving members who has fulfilled many roles within the Bridge Church, including being a serving elder for over 50 years. He is still very active and is the current chairman of the Supper Club

Can you briefly outline your early faith journey?

I grew up in Otley with mum and dad & two brothers and a sister.

My parents did not go to church but sent us to Sunday School in the town. Junior school had some influence as it was a Church of England school with a religious Assembly.



The real influence on my faith was being at my mother's bedside when she died. At the end she spoke about Leon Cook the Minister of the then Otley Congregational Church and she also sang a hymn. It was tradition at that time go to church the following Sunday after the funeral, which I did and have been doing ever since, being joined by my future wife, Anne shortly after.

What is your favourite memory of the Bridge Church?

This would be my ordination as deacon in 1966, with the hymn 'Just as I am thine own to be'.

What is your favourite hymn and why?

This would have to be 'Abide with Me'. I was in the crowd at a football match at Elland Road, when King George 6th died in 1952 when this hymn was sung.

How would I like to see the Bridge Church develop?

The only way the church would develop would be for more young people to be involved. This would no be easy, there are plenty of young people coming on our premises, with

uniformed groups, parents and toddlers & messy church so there is potential there. Tapping into it is difficult with an ever increasingly secular society.

Can you tell us something about working career?

I started work at 15 leaving Prince Henry's with a School certificate, equivalent to O levels. I obtained a job at an Ilkley engineering company as an apprentice engineering draughtsman for a five year period with a day a week & two nights at Leeds College of Technology. After passing the necessary exams I had a two year break doing National Service obtaining the rank of sergeant. I then returned to the same company eventually becoming a project designer.

I then moved onto sales, selling the equipment I had spent 25 years drawing, building & designing. As the company never exported less than 50% of its products this involved a lot of travel overseas to most countries in Europe, Scandinavia, USA and in later years we became involved in south east Asia which involved travelling to China, Taiwan, Malaysia. Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand & India.

What are your hobbies?

I go to an Art School once a week and play bowls, outdoor in summer, indoor in winter. I am also a member of the Singing for Fun group.

What is your favourite place in the United Kingdom?

This would have to be the Lake District.

What is your favourite place abroad that you have visited?

This would be Singapore.

Which three people would I invite to a dinner?

As dinner is food it is also about conversation so I would invite Richard Burton and Joanna Lumley; the two richest male & female voices I know. I would also invite Nelson Mandela just to be in his presence would be a privilege.

Women's Meeting

John Preston came to speak to us on Monday 7th October about the conservation volunteers at the Hollybush Centre. This charity caters for adults with learning difficulties who normally attend two days per week and is also the charity that the church is supporting.

The adults attending carry out a range of activities such as growing food, looking after flower beds, cooking, crafts and woodworking within a community setting which includes a café! They also attend events such as a garden bird watch; John himself was involved with the RCPB and the British Trust for Ornithology, which was founded in 1933 and has 60,000 volunteers. The BTO track birds, usually early morning, they ring birds traditionally and some are satellite tracked. It is amazing to follow the migration of some birds over the thousand of miles they can travel. We can all follow the lives of birds in our gardens, parks and open areas!

After a slight delay because of Covid, Susan Preston and her husband Chris went on a Peruvian journey. Susan spoke to us about this on Monday 21st October.

The journey began at sea level, in Lima, which has an enormous population of 11 million, where they get no rain and very little sun! They climbed higher and higher as they travelled to Colcar Canyon where they saw Condors, then by train to Puno (Lake Titicaca), the floating island with around 200 people living there. The men and boys knit and the women and girls weave - they start at around 5 years old.

They then took a ten hour journey by rail to Sacred Valley where they joined a family, eating and drinking with them. Eventually, the highlight of the trip was a trip by bus to Machu Pichu where they saw Chinchillas and Llamas, which act as lawnmowers, keeping the walls and ruins clear! A very interesting afternoon which concluded with tea and cake from Joan Wiseman's 100th birthday!

On Monday 4th November we had a very interesting afternoon as Christine Shepherd took us on her solo coast to coast walk from St Bees to Robin Hoods Bay. During her

preparation for the walk she slipped and broke her thumb/ arm and during the walk as was known as the lady with the 'pink pot'! At the very start of the walk she dropped her phone into the sea - so no working phone! It took 16 days with stops at B&Bs and hotels along the way. The length of each part varied from 12.5 miles to 23 miles, weather was often misty on high ground. The section from Orton to Kirby Stephen was the shortest section of the whole walk but also the hottest day, unfortunately she ran out of water! A little miracle happened when she visited a beautiful church in Orton on Ascension Day, her phone started up again!! Most of the walk was lovely, with birds song, waterfalls, woods and rivers, but on Day 11 she had to cross the busy A19, where she had to make a run for it! Eventually on Day 16 they enjoyed a lovely walk and finished at Robin Hood's Bay.

We had Andrew Howard once again on Monday 18th November, this time the subject was 'Leisure and Recreation in Old Otley'. As usual it was fascinating to see slides with photographs dating back to the 1850's to the 1920's. It was interesting to see Bridge Avenue in the days before Wharfemeadows Park and that the land downstream was allotments! Tittybottle Park was there first and there were photographs of concerts with around 300 in attendance and music was provided with a gramophone.

Another significant observation was that men wore hats for all sporting events. The members of the swimming club caused a chuckle, as both male and female were very similar in their all in one costumes—some were quite revealing!

Of course there were many pubs, some of which disappeared many moons ago. There were many churches, some now demolished or turned into flats. A very interesting series of photos were taken up Church Lane where there was a theatre, Japanese gardens and leisure facilities which are now home to a car park. The Mechanics Institute was a wonderfully imposing building when built—unfortunately it is now a very sad sight. All in all I thought it was a very intriguing afternoon. The talk was followed by Tea and Biscuits and home made cakes as it was my birthday!

Pam Bradley



NEW MEMBERS

During our service on 1st December we were pleased to formally welcomed Angela and Roger Pashley and Mike Taylor into membership of the Bridge Church.

Pictured with Mike, Angela and Roger are their elders, Tina and Barbara, our Minister, Jason and Church secretary, John.

JOAN WISEMAN'S 100TH

At the beginning of our service on 20th October we had the pleasure of celebrating the 100th birthday of our longest serving member, Joan Wiseman.

Joan, pictured with our Church Secretary, John Eveleigh, and her brother and sister in law, became a member of the Bridge Church in 1943!



Joan cut the first slice of a cake made in her honour, which was shared with the whole congregation over coffee after the service.



VICTORIAN FAYRE 2024

Once again the Bridge Church held it's usual Chocolate Tombola and Mulled Wine stall at the Otley Victorian Fayre.

We think we had a record amount of chocolate donated with 320 prizes- a fantastic effort by all.

The mulled wine didn't prove to be as popular this year probably due to the weather being much milder. Thank you very much to all those who helped or donated!

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 16th - The 'Ladies Please Choir' will entertain.

January 6th - New Year Message - Rev. Mirella Moxon.

January 20th - Children's favourites in the 1960's and beyond - Malcolm Johnson.

February 3rd - Partnering with schools to give every Head a Bed - Zarach Charity

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

January 8th and February 5th.

T Club - 4th Thursday of each Month

December 19th - Candlelight Carol Service.

January 23rd - Film (TBA) and Tombola Church Charity Fundraiser

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

December 12th - Christmas dinner.

January 16th - A Traveller in France - Bernard Sutcliffe.

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

13th January, 27th January, 10th February

Messy Church - 1st March.

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