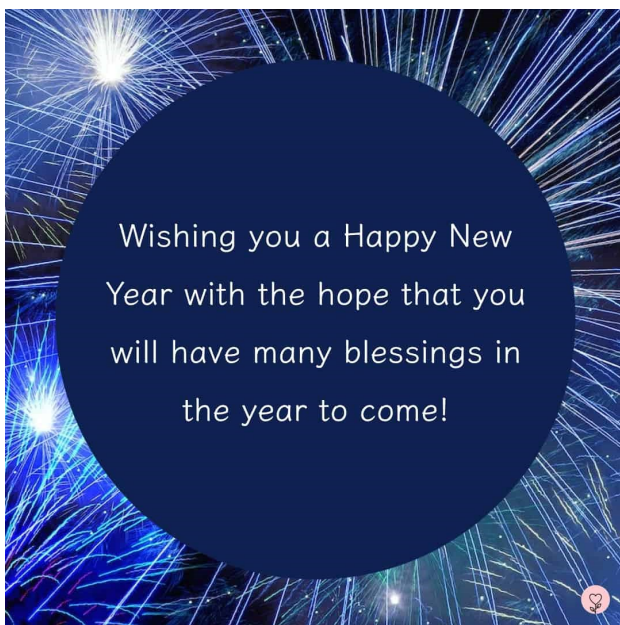


Parish News

St Mary's, Woodkirk

Happy New Year

January/February 2023



**And that Hope is in the birth, death
and resurrection of Jesus Christ**

**Worship Online at:
[Facebook.com/stmarywoodkirk](https://www.facebook.com/stmarywoodkirk)**

www.stmarywoodkirk.org

Who's who at Woodkirk

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Weekly News Sheet:. Email: Dave@stmarywoodkirk.org
Magazine Articles by the 20th of the month.
Contributions for the Weekly News Sheet
by Thursday evening please.

Elected Members of the Parochial Church Council:

Gary Mortimer, Neal Pinder-Packard, Dawn Tattersfield, Laura Mortimer,
Barbara Tate, Gail Townsend, Sandra Gledhill, David Townsend Brian Gledhill

If you enjoy the magazine— a donation of 60p really helps to keep it going!

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**Do not be afraid to face
life. This New Year has a
lot of promises for us.
Trust God and everything
will be fine.**

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Welcome!

Enjoy reading this Parish magazine and, if you wish to know more about Church Groups, please get in touch with the Movers and Shakers - their names are on the inside front & inside back covers. Service times are on the back page. You'd be most welcome to join us. May God bless you and all whom you love.

Parish News by Post

This magazine can be delivered monthly by sending a minimum donation of £12 a year to cover magazine costs including post and packaging to: Margaret Longden, 64 Woodkirk Gardens, Dewsbury WF12 7JA. Call Margaret on 01924 473064. It's a brilliant gift for friends or family living near or far. Cheque's to Woodkirk PCC please.

Web site & Twitter

Further news and pictures of what is happening at St Mary's can be found on our web site located at: www.stmarywoodkirk.org

Copies of the magazine can be downloaded from the web site from the middle of the month of publication.

We are on Twitter: twitter.com/stmarywoodkirk

Wheelchair Access

A wheelchair is available to help people move easily between the church and Dewsbury Road. Just ask.

Fear ends where faith begins

Vicar's Letter

Well here we are another New Year, another new beginning where generally in the lead up to New Year we think about making positive changes in our lives—only to find that by mid January those positive changes have become a chore and they gradually fade into obscurity until next year.

I wonder how many of us have made the same commitment to change for the last 5 years but have never seen the benefits because we didn't stick at it.

I often have conversations with people about faith and many start out with, “but do you really believe in Jesus?” After admitting that I do really believe in Jesus, I go on to state that I can't prove Jesus to them but I can tell them how Jesus changed my life. How deeply shocking it was to discover the depth of God's love for me (for everyone) and the sacrifice of His son Jesus upon the cross to save me (and everyone who calls on his name).

We would then have a couple of conversations and I would throw down a challenge. Why don't you come to church for a period of time? Why don't you see for yourself? If you came once a week on a Sunday for 26 weeks, 26 hours that may just change your life forever. What have you got to lose?

Now it isn't that church is the only place to meet God—it isn't but what church is, is the people who go week in and week out, the faithful, who will welcome and accept you just as you are.

Welcome and acceptance in today's world is rare. We only have to look at those on the margins of society, those different from ourselves and we see all the negative statements and images in the media.

Church should not be like that. Church as in the people should be a safe and welcoming place, where you are accepted, where

friendships are built, where tea and cake become the conduit for belonging.

It is that feeling of belonging to something, of being valued for who you are that is at the very centre of Jesus' teaching and God's love for us.

Faith often comes over time but it is belonging that centers us and once we step out in faith to say yes to Jesus' call on our lives it is that recognition that our lives now belong to Him.

Invitation is so important—I have searched, I have found, now go and tell. Jesus invites us to come and see, to ask the question what can I (Jesus/God) do for you? The discovery of an all loving, all powerful, ever present God that can and will change us over time BUT first of all we have to recognise Jesus as the Messiah, as the Name above all names. We have to claim that relationship with Jesus and step out in faith and say Yes, Lord! I want you in my life, change me and mould me to be more like you. And when we have found that Kingship, we are sent, go and tell—go and tell what you have found (your experience), invite (come and see for yourself), stay awhile, be accepted, share tea and cake and belong—the nature of hospitality.

So this New Year, let us be brave, come and see, even if your not sure—even if you believe in something but its not God, even if you say your are spiritual and its not God, come and see and you just never know. God wants to change your life, but He can only make the offer—it is your decision to say yes, your decision to say that Jesus, you are my Saviour and I want you to be in my life. I am sorry for all my past faults. Turn me towards you, be my guide and my stay now and forever.

At that point the Holy Spirit will do His work in you and you will notice changes, some you will like and some you won't like BUT in the end all will bring much joy to you.

Happy New Year and God's blessing be upon you. Sharon

Church Mouse Tales.



‘Achoo!’

My friend Hubert, the Black Canon, seemed to be coming down with something.

‘Don’t come too close!’, he advised, raising his hand like a stop sign.

I stopped at the bottom of the chancel steps whilst he sat morosely in the choir pews looking rather sorry for himself.

‘How did this happen?’ I asked, trying to sound sympathetic.

‘I think it was when the children came for the Christingle service – I must have picked it up from them.’

‘Well I hope they didn’t see you – you don’t want to scare the little ones...’

No, no – I stayed in the shadows by the Monk’s door well out of the way, but one small boy on the front pew kept staring in my direction.’

‘Oh – what happened?’

‘I didn’t know what to do so I just smiled at him....’

‘Was that wise?’

‘Well he smiled back.’

‘He smiled back? You mean he could see you!’ I said somewhat aghast at this revelation. Normally no-one can see Hubert – only a very few have.

‘Yes – so I moved further into the corner so he couldn’t see me.’

‘Oh good’, I was relieved to hear.

‘But then, at the end of the service, he turned to his mother and said:

‘I’ve seen Santa!’”

‘So – he thinks you are Santa?’

‘It seems so - but his Mother wouldn’t believe him.’

‘Oh well that’s hardly surprising.’

‘So he brought her right to the front and showed her where I was...’

‘What! So they both saw you?’

‘No – by then I had slipped into the vestry and there was no-one there.’

‘That was a close one Hubert! - you need to be more careful.’ I admonished.

‘Yes you are right - I don’t want to catch another cold!’

‘Indubitably’. I agreed.

Misha

Bishop Nick's Christmas Message

I greet you on the day when we celebrate God's eruption into the world not with a mighty army, not with clanging drums and symbols and great noise and fervour, but in the birth of a tiny baby born in an obscure of the Roman Empire, which was oppressive and challenging and difficult, where life was cheap.

And you might think that sounds very familiar. There are parts of our world today, even on our own continent, where life appears to be expendable and cheap.

At a clergy conference not so long ago we had the great historian Tom Holland and he was emphasizing what he called the utter strangeness of Christianity. Something that by familiarity or enculturation, we've largely lost. But the Christian faith, which is born in one sense in that stable in Bethlehem, is utterly strange for the world in which we live, where its power is seen and will be seen 30 years later, not in the clenched fist or the wielding of a weapon, but in a man with his arms outstretched on a cross saying love is more powerful than death itself.

So born in this vulnerable baby, we hear and we see something very powerful that speaks to us in the complicated world in which we live.

We pray particularly this Christmas for those who are dispossessed, who are marginalized, who are forced to migrate. Those who live with destitution through no fault of their own. Those who have become homeless and yet might see in the utter strangeness of the baby of Bethlehem that he too was someone who had to migrate, someone who was homeless, someone who was a refugee and knew what it meant to be dependent on other people.

So, as we celebrate at Christmas the strangeness of God coming among us, offering the different way and yet not baulking from the reality and the horrors of the world in which we live. As we celebrate, may we also be aware of those whose need is great and pray and care for those who reflect the Christ child born in the stable in Bethlehem all those years ago.

Happy Christmas, and a blessed Christmas as we live out the life of Christ among us."



Lord, Search My Heart

I quite like to walk when I pray. For me, it's practical: I concentrate better and don't fall asleep. A frequent biblical metaphor of the life of faith is "walking with God" (*Genesis 5:24; Deuteronomy 11:22; Colossians 1:10*).

I was walking recently when Micah 6:8 came to mind with the kind of sharp clarity that often proves to be the prompting of the Spirit. It states: *"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"* (Micah 6:8)

Two words stopped me in my tracks: "Love kindness." Do I really love kindness? Or do I mainly love the idea of kindness? I quite often pray, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!"* (Psalm 139:23). He was taking me up on my invitation.

This heart examination continued and spread through the rest of the verse: Do I really "do justice"? Or do I mainly affirm the idea of justice? Is my "doing justice" mainly "not doing injustice" myself, but rarely pursuing justice for others?

Micah 6:8 exposes me: I can love abstract ideas of justice and kindness and neglect their concrete expression. It admonishes me: I cannot "do justice" or "love kindness" without loving real people. It humbles me, which is just what the Doctor ordered, if I'm ready to walk with him.

PTO

I would prefer the command to be: “love justice.” Phrased that way, justice subtly becomes more abstract, and it’s always easier to affirm what’s abstract than perform what’s concrete.

For example, if asked, virtually all people will say they love justice. But probe into how someone is specifically doing justice, and conversations turn awkward quickly. It’s much easier to “love justice” than to “do justice.” It’s much easier to rant against injustice than to take meaningful action to stop it. Ranting costs us little to nothing. Doing justice makes personal, time-consuming, heart-rending demands on us.

That’s why when people asked John the Baptist what repentance looked like, his answers were things such as, *“Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none,”* or, *“Collect no more [taxes] than you are authorised to do,”* or, *“Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your [soldiers’] wages”* (Luke 3:11–14).

Feeling conviction over sin and getting dunked in water was good, but it wasn’t enough. The heart is deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9). Real heart transformation would be revealed in tangible, sacrificial acts of justice. I would prefer the command to be: “love justice.” Phrased that way, justice subtly becomes more abstract, and it’s always easier to affirm what’s abstract than perform what’s concrete.

But the command to “love kindness” pierces to the heart of things. This is far more demanding than merely doing kind things, which can easily be reduced to “occasional kind acts.” Loving kindness demands a deep commitment that shapes all our actions.

We can’t love kindness without loving people. We might be able to get away with telling others we love justice without doing much justice. But it’s very difficult to get away with saying we love kindness if others know us to often be harsh, defensive, self-centred, impatient, irritable, critical, or willing to step on people to get our way.

We wear our love of kindness (or lack of it) on our sleeves.

And like doing justice, loving kindness is costly. It almost always requires loving people in ways that place their needs and preferences ahead of our own. We can't love kindness and love selfishness at the same time. So, God tests our hearts by making kindness not merely things we do, but something we love.

He exposes us only to set us free to walk as Christ walked - doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God.

Gail



On behalf of Leeds South and East Foodbank I want to thank you for your support during 2022. Your donations of both Food and Money have helped us to feed the hungry in our Community.

Nine years ago, when we opened our doors, we fed 1000 people in our first year. In the first six months of 2022 we fed over 10,000 people. We expect this Winter to be unprecedented.

From our Trustees, Volunteers and Staff, we wish you a very Happy New Year.

Barbara

Big RSPB Garden Birdwatch **27th -29th January 2023**



Well hello there.

It's that time of year again when I am looking for hardy souls who would be able and willing to spend an hour in the Churchyard at the end of January.

One of the simplest ways we can measure our environmental impact is by checking up on wildlife. This year will be about the 4th or 5th time we have taken part in the RSPB Birdwatch and year on year we are seeing more and more birds.

Thanks to Dave and the Beavers and Cubs, we installed some new birdboxes last year and we know for definite that one of them was being used, let's hope some more little birdies have decided our Churchyard is just the place for them to settle.

If you can spare an hour during daylight hours from Friday 27th to Sunday 29th January then please contact me dawn@stmarywoodkirk.org or tel 07840 739239.

Don't worry if you don't know a crow from a chaffinch or a blue tit from a blackbird, I can provide a lovely coloured guide to help you.

If you want to take part but just in your own garden that would be good too, just get in touch and I can supply you with the guide and then I would be happy to submit your results online when I do the church one.

I claimed top spot last year when I spotted the churchyard woodpecker, let's see if we can spot more birds this year.

Many thanks

Dawn

Schools in Church for Christmas

Hi there

One of the more pleasant aspects of being a church fire warden is that one gets to attend the events that our wonderful Primary Academies hold in St Mary's at Christmas.

This year, Blackgates Primary Academy held two concerts, one for years 2, 3 and 4, then a second one for years 5 and 6.

Family and friends attended to support their youngsters, who you could tell, had practised their socks off to put on two lovely concerts with much joyful singing and some lovely readings by pupils.

We also held a bit of a Christingle session with the four stages of making a Christingle, with the children remembering what the different parts of the Christingle meant.

Then on the Thursday evening it was the turn of Westerton Primary Academy with the young musicians from the School orchestra showing how well they had practised by playing beautifully a selection of carols and Christmas songs.

Then the year 3 /4 choir sang two lovely songs, and as always when the schools sing, they introduce new songs. On this occasion, a song by Monica Scott called Prince of Peace which was really beautiful and with the lights dimmed was so very atmospheric and moving. The words were as follows...

*Peace be still, still, still
On this night, heaven's light,
Peace (Hallelujah), Peace (Hallelujah)
Prince of Peace, healer of men
Peace again. Peace*

*Peace is here, Angels near,
Shepherds meek, Wise men seek,
Peace (Hallelujah), Peace (Hallelujah)
Prince of Peace, healer of men
Peace again. Peace*

*Peace on earth, Saviours birth
Heavenly peace, we will keep
Peace (Hallelujah), Peace (Hallelujah)
Prince of Peace, healer of men
Peace again. Peace*

Prince of Peace.

We were then entertained by the string group who played two songs for us, followed by the woodwind group playing a lovely rendition of the Snowman classic 'We're walking in the air'.

Our last school in church was the whole of Hill Top Primary Academy who walked up to school on their last day of term, accompanied by staff, parents and helpers.

The service was led by the very able Year 5 pupils and we started with a very jazzy new song (well new to me anyway!) the chorus words were;

*Hear the bells ring out as we all shout,
It's a wonderful time of year.
Choirs are singing, Songs that are bringing
Joy to all who hear.*

*'Rejoice, rejoice', the angels say
'Celebrate this Christmas Day.'
Join in sing along, Join in sing along,
Join in sing along, Sing up, it's Christmas!*

I'd just about got the hang of it by the last verse! But the children sang beautifully and really enjoyed it.

Year 5 pupils then narrated the Christmas story with some pupils in costume, the Donkey was awesome, as was the soloist who sang the first verse of O Little Town of Bethlehem so beautifully.

The whole school sang two lovely songs just before everyone joined in with Jingle Bells and Wish you a merry Christmas, and I thought the words were so lovely, I have included them here.

As always, the children led so well, ably assisted by staff and helpers, and a great big thanks to the adults who had obviously practised with the children over many weeks to provide a really lovely service.

The two songs are these;

Come to the manger on Christmas Eve, alleluia.

Come to the manger all who believe, alleluia.

God has sent his own Son down,

Spread the message all around,

There's a new King in town!

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Come to the manger you shepherds and Kings, alleluia.

Come to the manger on angels' wings, alleluia

Come and join the gospel choir,

Raise your voices higher and higher,

We can set the world on fire!

Alleluia, alleluia.

Come to the manger from every land, alleluia (alleluia).

Come to the manger o'er sea and sand, alleluia (alleluia).

Come and worship here today,

Kneel before the King and pray,

Join together now and say,

Alleluia (alleluia), Alleluia (alleluia),

Alleluia

Then this lovely softer song ...

Follow that star

From wherever you are

Follow that star

From wherever you are

It burns like an ember

It's the heart of December

So follow that star.

Follow that light

Let it lead through the night

Follow that light

Let it lead through the night

It shines like a beacon

To the faith that you're keeping

So follow that light.

It burns like an ember

It's the heart of December

It shines like a beacon

To the faith that you're keeping

So follow that star, follow that star

So follow that star, follow that star

Follow that star.

With very grateful thanks to all the staff and pupils, family and friends for their lovely concerts in school this Christmas, it was wonderful to see and hear you, and we look forward to your future festive concerts in 2023.

With thanks

Dawn

Save your Stamps for the RNIB



Hi there

If you remembered to save the postage stamps from your Christmas cards this year, please do bring them to me in church and I will arrange to post them on.

I know it seems that less and less correspondence is undertaken by post, mainly being birthday and Christmas cards, but if you can keep any that you receive they can help raise much needed funds.

The stamps we collect are sold by weight, and by raising funds in this way, the RNIB can carry out their vital work helping to break down the barriers that stop people with sight loss living life to the full.

When I checked the RNIB website, I also noticed that they collect old and foreign currency. Now I gather odd bits of foreign currency which find their way into our children's society collection boxes, where they have been received by collectors unnoticed in their change, I have previously deposited these in charity collection jars in banks etc, but am delighted that I can send them to the RNIB.

So if you've got some random drachma or some local currency from your travels to non euro currency countries, please pass these to me too, all gratefully received.

With thanks
Dawn

Help available at the Numbers below...

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0808 800 5000
(24hrs)

National Domestic Abuse Helpline
0808 2000 247
(24hrs free)

Mind
0300 123 3393
(Mon-Fri 9-6)

Victim Support
0808 168 9111
(24hrs)

Cruse Bereavement
0800 808 1677
(Mon-Fri 9-5)

ChildLine
0800 1111
(24hrs)

Action on Elder Abuse
0808 808 8141
(Mon-Fri 9-5)

Respect - Men's Advice Line
0808 801 0327
(Mon-Fri 9-5 or 8pm)

Samaritans
116 123
(24hrs free)

National Centre for Domestic Violence
0207 186 8270

Pastoral Care

Telephone Calls—We understand times are difficult—please know we are here if you need anything. Gail Townsend is our Pastoral Minister and she regularly telephones those who are unable to leave their homes at this time. If you would like Gail to give you a weekly call then please do not hesitate to contact her on 0113 252 8710.

Baptisms—If you wish to make an enquiry or book a Baptism please contact Barbara Tate on 07792 211095 in the first instance. Barbara will then arrange to visit you and book your Baptism into our Diary.

Weddings, funerals, Ashes, or the reading of banns—in the first instance please contact our Verger who co-ordinates these events. Our Co-ordinator is Gail Townsend on 0113 252 8710 or email: gail@stmarywoodkirk.org.

Notice Sheets—If you would like to receive a copy of our weekly Notice Sheet via email—then please drop me an email giving me permission to add you to the list. My email address is vicar@stmarywoodkirk.org

Please note we are GDPR compliant and take great care of your private information.

PROMOTE LIFE TOGETHER

Church isn't a place. Church isn't a thing. It isn't an instable indefinite indistinct idea. Church is life together. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the famed and profound German pastor and theologian of the middle of the last century, in his book entitled *Life Together* wrote, "The community of the Spirit is the fellowship of those who are called by Christ; human community of spirit is the fellowship of devout souls. In the community of the Spirit there burns the bright love of brotherly service: Of course, he goes on to describe the antonym to the true community of the Spirit. Namely, the community of the flesh that is present wherever humans interact in community. The aim of highest aim of ministry in the local church ought to connect with the highest and most profound principle of the Christian life — to be united with Christ. Life together in the local church is perhaps best described as life united and uniting with Christ together.

The local fellowship of believers is best understood as a collection of those whom God has called out from the world, the *Ekklesia*, the called out ones, who jointly reach into the unseen in prayer, in sacrament, in worship, in fellowship, compelled by a desire to grasp the hand of God that has gripped their heart in Christ. Everything about our ministry is rightly aimed at facilitating, cultivating and the life together of the community of the fellowship of believers.

The highest aim of all Christians and certainly the deepest meaning in fellowship comes when talking is geared toward cultivating life together. How do we do it? How do we move teaching beyond words to a collection of individuals to tools for cultivating life together? How does the leader nurture life together with words when life together is really done with the hands? Here are a few principles gleaned from Bonhoeffer's tiny but monumental work coupled with some practical insights from this brilliant man on the journey of faith.

Teaching to Promote Life Together

1. Whenever humans enter into community, whether it is in the name of Christ or otherwise, there is always going to be a rampant tendency for the strong to overtake the weak. We

are to put others before ourselves in practical daily real life ways.

“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honour.” (Romans 12:10 ESV) These are not fanciful words pointing toward some unattainable goal. They are the command of Scripture. Although — because of our imperfection — we will need to outdo one another in forgiveness as well.

Bonhoeffer writes “Here is where the humanly strong person is in his element, securing for himself the admiration, the love, or the fear of the weak. Here the human ties, suggestions, and bonds are everything, and in the immediate community of souls we have reflected the distorted image of everything that is originally and solely peculiar to community mediated through Christ.”

Power monopolizing in the local church is a distortion of the incarnate community doing life together. We are a kingdom of servants, not a kingdom of kings.

2. Don't teach to a clique — in fact, don't have a clique. A

member of our faith community recently said to my wife, “You and Pastor aren't like our last few pastors. You don't have a clique.” Her reply was simple and crucial for the pastor who wants to cultivate life together in his church. She said, “We serve and love the church, not any special interest group within the church.”

Whether you are a pastor, a deacon, an elder or anyone in any form of active regular church leadership go out of your way to do life together with the Body of Christ, not just those people who appeal to your flesh in some way — be it your ego, your budget, your vanity, your pride, or just your liking.

3. Preach as one sharing bread with brothers. Preaching the Word to those with whom you share life together is vastly different than preaching the word to a random group of people. Bonhoeffer's words in this area are no less valuable. “Brotherly pastoral care is

distinguished from preaching by the fact that, added to the task of speaking the Word, there is an obligation of listening.” Life together in genuine community necessitates that preaching become a two way street — active cultivation of the soul of the listener and genuine brotherly affection toward the one speaking.

Just as the preacher delivers a message of hope to those whom he is in actual communion in Christ with, the listeners give a heart’s audience to the shepherd who walks the fields with them and is ready to wake in the night to defend them from the wolves and wild beasts. When genuine Christ-centered community is cultivated in the local church preaching becomes a shared experience.

Some church leaders say that the missing jewel of the modern church is worship. This may be true to a large extent. I would suggest that if worship is missing it is because incarnate community is rarer still. Gathering people together and preaching at them doesn’t develop a community of people doing life together.

What I’m driving at is adopting an active bent toward developing church cultures that inherently know the difference between going to church together and being the church together. It’s the difference between sitting next to someone in a pew whom you’ve never met and being Acts 2:44 churches. “And all who believed were together and had all things in common.” (ESV) If it’s true that everything rises and falls on leadership, how are our churches supposed to learn to do life together if we don’t live it out and proclaim its value from the pulpit?

When we preach with a focus to cultivate life together, to nurture incarnate community rather than simple gatherings of people, “We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God. God will be constantly crossing our paths and canceling our plans by sending us people with claims and petitions.” Cultivating incarnate community, being the Body of Christ rather than just a place where people may gather to discuss matters about the incarnation, is risky.

But surely it’s better to risk being what God calls His Church to be than to stick with a sure thing that falls so terribly short of His glory. It is far better to chance life together in community than to stick with life miles apart in the next pew.

Gail

South Leeds and Morley District Scouts Carol Concert



It was a privilege to attend the District Scouts Carol Concert held in Church on the 8th December.

Scouts read the Christmas Story interspersed with favourite traditional carols.

We had a very enthusiastic group of parents/former scout members singing at the back and everyone enjoyed joining in with 'Sweet Child of Mine' (no not the Guns n Roses version) which was sung to the tune of Sweet Caroline and which sang about the Angel Gabriel's visit to Mary.

Many family and friends came to support this event, and the collection taken was kindly donated to the East Window Fund and raised just under £150 which was fabulous.

Some Scouts were given awards during the service, which was really lovely

Thank you to the South Leeds and Morley District Scouts for holding their Carol Service in Church, for all who read so well, for the 'choir at the back', and for the generous donation to the East Window Fund.

Dawn



Christingle Services at St Mary's Church



Over 300 people over 2 Christingle Services came to church on Christmas Eve. Thank you to those who made 200 Christingle Oranges. A wonderful time was had by all especially in the candlelit church singing Away in a Manger. We also raised over £250.00 for the Children's Society to help other children who are less fortunate.

Planets, planets everywhere!

Hi there

As we all age, there are some things we must finally accept we may not be able to achieve in our lives, for example, I think it is highly unlikely I will ever head into space!

However just recently, planets and the cosmos seem to have been all around me.

On the 28th December, there was a grand tour of the Solar System in the night sky, as all the planets were visible at the same time. Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn were visible with the naked eye with Uranus and Neptune could be seen through binoculars or a telescope. I must confess, I didn't go out to see them, but it brought to mind other 'planetary' things.

For example, the song 'The Servant King' by Graham Kendrick where in the third verse it says *"Come see His hands and His feet, the scars that speak of sacrifice. Hands that flung stars into space, to cruel nails surrendered"* then we have the words of the Iona Community Service we use on a Wednesday which, within the Eucharistic Prayer include the words...

*And grateful as we are for the world we know,
and the universe beyond our homes, we particularly praise you,
whom eternity cannot contain,
for coming to earth and entering time in Jesus.*

Then, during our Holy Communion Service on New Year's Day, Rev Sharon, during her sermon was talking about how the New Year often heralds change, some make New Year's resolutions, some start a diet or look at how they can make changes in their lives and she said...

*“It is fair to say that we live in a time of uncertainty and change, our natural reaction is to perhaps try and resist it, trying to cling to what we know, and whilst we might understand the desire to avoid change for the sake of change we should not forget that as Christians we are the products of both continuity and **cosmic, earth shattering change**”*

Everything seemed to be pointing me to the stars, and I found a number of bible references, the first being of course in the Creation Story in Genesis, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

Then in Isaiah 40:26 it says “Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing”. Then I found this in Psalm 8 3-4 “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?”

And this I think, brings home to me the humility I feel at being lucky enough to be chosen by God to be a Christian. I’m nothing special and amongst these amazing planets, amongst a world full of people, you and me have been chosen to be part of God’s family.

And finally, if any more confirmation was needed to remind us of the wonder of our relationship with God, our final hymn on New Years Day was the song sung to the tune of Danny Boy the words of the first verse as follows:

*I cannot tell why He, whom angels worship
should set His love upon the sons of men,
or why, as shepherd, He should seek the wanderers
to bring them back, they know not how or when.*

Not only are we lucky to be part of God’s family, but in Jesus we have the Good Shepherd, who, no matter how often we ‘err and stray like lost sheep’ he will seek us and bring us back with great rejoicing.

No we may not get the chance to head into space, and our images of the solar system may be limited to images online or in books, but one thing we can be certain of as we head into the unknown of another New Year is that God's love for us is constant, that Jesus will walk with us, and in the words of the second verse of that hymn

But this I know, He heals the broken-hearted,
and stays our sin, and calms our lurking fear,
and lifts the burden from the heavy laden,
for yet the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is here.

Happy New Year, with love
Dawn xx

Trees—Joyce Kilmer (1913)

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.
A tree whose mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet
flowing breast;
A tree that looks at
God all day,
And lifts her leafy
arms to pray;
A tree that may in
Summer wear
A nest of robins in
Her hair;
Upon whose bosom
snow has lain;
Who intimately lives
with rain.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Sally

BURN'S **NIGHT** **QUIZ**



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Life and times of Jacob

Jacob was one of the great patriarchs of the Old Testament, but at times he was also a schemer, liar and manipulator. Jacob and his twin brother, Esau, were born to Isaac and Rebecca after 20 years of marriage, when Isaac was 60 years of age. Rebecca was uncomfortable during her pregnancy and went to inquire of God why she was suffering. She received a prophecy that the twins were fighting in her womb and would continue to fight all their lives, even after they became two separate nations. When the time came for Rebecca to give birth, the firstborn, Esau, came out covered with red hair, and his heel was grasped by the hand of Jacob, the second born. The boys displayed very different natures as they matured” Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a simple man, dwelling in tents”. Moreover, the attitudes of their parents toward them also differed: “And Isaac loved Esau, and Rebecca loved Jacob”.

Acquiring birthright

As Isaac aged, he became blind and was uncertain when he would die, so he decided to bestow Esau’s birthright upon him. He requested that Esau go out to the fields with his weapons (quiver and bow) to kill some venison, Isaac then requested that Esau make ‘savoury meat’ for him according to the way he enjoyed it the most, so he could eat it and bless Esau. Rebecca overheard the conversation, and realised prophetically that Isaac’s blessing would go to Jacob, since she was told before the twins birth that the older son would serve the younger. She quickly ordered Jacob to bring two kid goats from their flock so he could take Esau’s place in serving Isaac and receive his blessing. Rebecca made the savoury meat that Isaac loved. Before she sent Jacob to his father, she dressed him in Esau’s garments and laid goatskins on his arms and neck to simulate hairy skin like Esau’s. Disguised as Esau, Jacob entered Isaac’s room. Surprised that Esau was back so soon, Isaac asked how it could be that the hunt went so quickly. Jacob responded, ‘Because the Lord your God brought it to me.’ Isaac was suspicious, and demanded that Jacob came close so he could feel him, and smelled him as he leaned in for a kiss. Isaac asked him “Art thou my very son Esau and Jacob answered simply ‘I am’’. Isaac finally accepted the person in front of him was Esau. Isaac then gave Jacob his blessing.

When Esau returned Isaac was shocked that he had been deceived, yet he acknowledged that Jacob had received the blessing. Having made Jacob a ruler over his brother Isaac could only promise 'By your sword you shall live, but your brother you shall serve, yet it shall be that you are aggrieved, you may cast off his yoke from upon your neck'. Esau still hated Jacob for receiving his blessing that his father Isaac had unknowingly given him. He vowed to kill Jacob as soon as Isaac died. Rebecca heard about Esau's plan, so she ordered Jacob to travel to her brother Laban's house in Haran.

Jacob's Ladder

Near Luz on route to Haran, Jacob experienced a vision of a ladder, reaching into heaven with angels going up and down it. He heard the voice of God, who repeated many blessing upon him, coming from the top of the ladder. It is said that the ladder represented the exiles the Jewish people would suffer before the coming of the Messiah. Jacob feared that his descendants would never be free of Esau's domination, but God assured him that the End of Days, Edom too would come falling down. In the morning Jacob awakened and continued on his way to Haran.

Jacobs's Marriage

Arriving in Haran, Jacob saw a well where shepherd's were gathering their flocks to water them and met Laban's younger daughter Rachel, who was working as a shepherdess. He loved her immediately, and asked for her hand in marriage in return for working seven years for Laban, Laban agreed to the arrangement. The years passed quickly and Jacob asked Laban for his wife. However, Laban switched Rachel for her older sister Leah as the veiled bride. In the morning when the truth became known, Laban justified his action, saying that in his country it was unheard of to give a younger daughter before the older. However, he agreed to give Rachel in marriage as well if Jacob would work another seven years. After the week of wedding celebrations with Leah, Jacob married Rachel, and continued to work for Laban for another seven years. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, God opened Leah's womb and she gave birth to four sons rapidly: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Rachel, however, remained barren.

Rachel gave Jacob her handmaid Bilhah, in marriage, so that Rachel could raise children through her. Bilhah gave birth to Dan and Naphtali. Leah then gave her handmaid Zilpah to Jacob in marriage, Zilpah gave birth to Gad and Asher. After this Leah gave birth to Issachar, Zebulun and Dinah, Jacob's first and only daughter. Then God remembered Rachel, who gave birth to Joseph and Benjamin. After Joseph was born Jacob decided to return home to his parents. Laban was reluctant to release him, as God has blessed his flocks on account of Jacob. Laban asked what he could pay Jacob, Jacob suggested all the spotted, speckled, and brown goats and sheep of Laban's flock would be his wages. As time passed, Laban's sons noticed that Jacob was taking the better part of their flocks, and so Laban's friendly attitude towards Jacob began to change, God told Jacob that he should leave, which he and his wives and children did without informing Laban. Before they left, Rachel stole the teraphim, considered to be household idols, from Laban's house. In a rage Laban pursued Jacob for seven days. When he caught up with him God appeared to Laban in a dream and warned him not to say anything good or bad to Jacob. Laban told Jacob he had come to claim the teraphim back, not knowing of the theft, Jacob told Laban to search the tents, when Laban arrived at Rachel's tent, she hid it by sitting on it, she told them she could not get up as it was her time of the month. Jacob and Laban then parted with a pact to preserve the peace between them.

Journey back to Canaan

As Jacob neared the land of Canaan, he sent messengers ahead to his brother Esau. They returned with news that Esau was coming to meet him with an army of 400 men. With great apprehension, Jacob prepared for the worst. He engaged in earnest prayer to God, then sent on before him a tribute of flocks and herds to Esau, "a present to my Lord Esau from thy servant Jacob". Being left alone with God a mysterious being appeared. When the being saw that he did not overpower Jacob, he touched Jacob on the sinew of his thigh and as a result, Jacob developed a limp. Jacob then demanded a blessing, and the being declared that, from then on, Jacob would be called "Israel". Jacob asked the being's name but he refused to answer. There are differing views as to whether the being was a man, an angel, or God. Afterwards, Jacob named the place Penuel meaning "face of God" saying "I have seen God face to face and lived". In the morning Jacob assembled his 4 wives and 11 sons, placing the maidservants and their

children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. Some say that placing Rachel and Joseph at the rear Jacob was showing how much he favoured them. Esau's spirit of revenge however, was apparently appeased by Jacob's bounteous gifts of camels, goats and flocks. Their reunion was an emotional one. Esau offered to accompany them on their way back to Israel, but Jacob protested that his children were still young and tender. Jacob suggested eventually catching up with Esau at Mount Seri. Jacob actually diverted himself to Succoth and was not recorded as rejoining Esau until, at Machpelah.

Jacob returned to Bethel, where he had another vision of blessing. Jacob then made a further move while Rachel was pregnant. Near Bethlehem, Rachel went into labour, and died, as she gave birth to her second son Benjamin (Jacob's twelfth son). Jacob buried her and erected a monument over her grave, "Rachel's Tomb", just outside Bethlehem, this remains a popular site for pilgrimages and prayers to this day. Jacob then settled in Migdal Eder. When Isaac died at the age of 180, Jacob and Esau buried him in the Cave of the Patriarchs, which Abraham had purchased as a family burial plot.

Jacob in Hebron

The house of Jacob dwelt in Hebron, in the land of Canaan. His flocks were often fed in the pastures of Shechem as well as Dothan. Of all the children in his household, he loved Rachel's firstborn, Joseph, the most. This made Joseph's half brothers' jealous of him and they ridiculed him often. Joseph even told his father about all of his half brothers' misdeeds. When Joseph was seventeen years old, Jacob made him a long coat of many colours, seeing this, the half brothers began to hate Joseph even more. At this time Joseph began to have dreams that implied that his family would bow down to him. When he told his brothers about these dreams, it drove them to conspire against him. When Jacob heard of these dreams, he rebuked his son for proposing the idea that the house of Jacob would even bow down to Joseph. Yet Jacob contemplated his son's words about these dreams.

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Seven Year Famine

Twenty years later throughout the Middle East a severe famine took place which lasted seven years. It crippled nations. The word was that the only kingdom not effected was Egypt. In the second year of famine when Israel (Jacob) was about 130 years old he sent ten of his sons to Egypt to buy grain, Benjamin Rachel's second born stayed with him, in order to keep him safe. Nine of Israel's sons returned stockpiled with grain on their donkey's. They told their father they had been accused of being spies and their brother Simeon had been taken prisoner. Then Reuben the eldest mentioned that they need to take Benjamin to Egypt to prove that they were honest men, hearing this Israel became furious with them, he could not understand how they were put in a position to tell the Egyptians all about their family. When the sons opened the sacks of grain they saw that the money they had taken to buy the grain was also in the sacks, and they became very afraid. It turned out that Joseph had recognised his brothers. When the House of Jacob had consumed all the grain, the sons where sent back to Egypt with Benjamin and the money that had been put into the sacks.

When the sons of Israel (Jacob) returned after their second trip, they came back with twenty additional donkeys carrying all sorts of goods and supplies. When their father came to greet them, they told him Joseph was still alive and was governor over all of Egypt, and he wanted the house of Israel to move to Egypt. Jacob could not believe what he was hearing. So Israel and his entire house of seventy gathered up all their livestock and began their journey to Egypt. Israel stopped at Beersheba for the night to make a sacrificial offering to his God. But God had reassured him not to fear that he would rise again, and God would be with him, he would prosper, and would see his son Joseph who would lay him to rest. The family met up with Joseph and Jacob wept. Joseph took his family to meet the Pharaoh of Egypt. The family were given pastures in the land of Ramses where they lived in the province of Goshen. The house of Israel acquired many possessions and multiplied exceedingly during the course of seventeen years, even through the worse of the seven year famine.

Final Days

Israel (Jacob) was 147 years old when he called for his favorite son Joseph and pleaded that he not be buried in Egypt, he requested that he be carried to the land of Canaan to be buried with his forefathers and not long after Israel became ill losing his vision. When Joseph came to visit his father, he brought his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Israel declared they would be heirs to the inheritance of the house of Israel, then Israel laid his right hand on the younger Ephraim's head and his left hand on the eldest Manasseh's and blessed them. However, Joseph was displeased that his father's right hand was not on the head of his firstborn, so he switched his father's hands. But Israel refused saying, 'but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he.' A declaration he made, just as Israel himself was to his firstborn brother Esau. Then Israel called all of his sons in and prophesied their blessings or curses to all twelve of them in order of their ages.

After Israel died and his family including the Egyptians, mourned him seventy days. Israel was embalmed and a great ceremonial journey to Canaan was prepared by Joseph. Israel was buried in the cave of Machpelah, the property of Abraham he bought it from Hittites.

GAIL

ALBERTS ONLY 'D' QUIZ

All the answers begin with 'D'.

- 1) What nationality was the writer Hans Christian Andersen?
- 2) Who starred with Rock Hudson in the 1959 film "Pillow talk"?
- 3) With which form of entertainment is Wayne Sleep associated?
- 4) What was the name of the rabbit in "The Magic Roundabout"?
- 5) In which cartoon series did Bron Greenback and Penfold feature?
- 6) Who was the villainous driver in "Wacky Races"?
- 7) Which French town is famous for producing mustard?
- 8) Which group had a 1960's hit with "Glad All Over"?
- 9) Muskie and Vince assisted which cartoon law enforcer?
- 10) In Britain what are red. Roe or fallow?
- 11) What football team is nicknamed "The Rams"?
- 12) Which group had a 1981 hit with 'Romeo and Juliet'?
- 13) In Enid Blyton's 'Famous Five' stories which character's name begins with 'D'?
- 14) The Americans play a game named "Checker's" but what do we call it?
- 15) Who plays football at the Keepmoat Stadium?
- 16) Which State in the USA is the only one beginning with "D"?
- 17) What is the Capital of this State?
- 18) Who won the 1989 best actor Oscar for his role in "My Left Foot"?
- 19) Who had a 1960's hit with the song "Mellow Yellow"?
- 20) Which 1967 film starring Rex Harrison and Anthony Newley is based on a story by Hugh Lofting?

Answers on Page 41

Dates for Your Diary

)	
Jan 8th	10.30am Holy Communion—Ephiphany—All Age
Jan 11th	10.00am Holy Communion
Jan 15th	10.30am Holy Communion
Jan 18th	10.00am Holy Communion
Jan 21st	6.00pm Burns Night Meal and Quiz
Jan 22nd	10.30am Holy Communion
Jan 25th	10.00am Holy Communion
Jan 29th	10.30am Holy Communion—Presentation of Christ in the Temple—Candlemas
Feb 1st	10.00am Holy Communion
Feb 5th	10.30am Holy Communion
Feb 8th	10.00am Holy Communion
Feb 12th	10.30am Holy Communion
Feb 13th	10.00am Holy Communion
Feb 19th	10.30am Holy Communion
Feb 22nd	10.00am and 7.00pm Holy Communion Ash Wednesday
Feb 26th	10.30am Holy Communion
March 1st	10.00am Holy Communion
March 5th	10.30am Holy Communion

How do I join an on-line Service?

If you are not so familiar with the on-line world but you would like to join one of the services, here's some good news! It's easy!

Go to: facebook.com/stmarywoodkirk

Then select 'Videos' from the side bar.

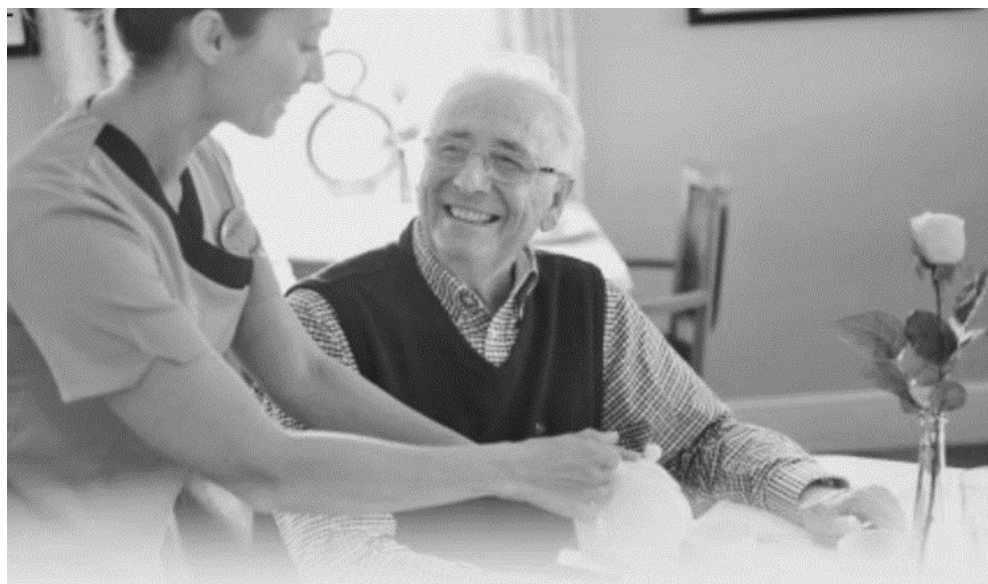
To join a 'Live' service look for the right time on the Diary page. You can also view previous services from the same location.



QUIZ ANSWERS for Albert's Only D Quiz

1)Danish, 2) Doris Day, 3) Dancing, 4) Dylan, 5) Dangermouse,
6) Dick Dastardly, 7) Dijon, 8) Dave Clark Five, 9) Deputy Dog,
10) Deer, 11) Derby County, 12) Dire Straits, 13) Dick,
14) Draughts, 15) Doncaster Rovers, 16) Delaware,17)Dover,
18) Daniel Day Lewis, 19) Donovan, 20) Dr. Doolittle

A very big thank you to Albert!



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FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

BAPTISMS—

There were no baptism during the month of January and so we will pray for those families who have baptisms booked in February.



DEATHS



We give thanks for the lives of all those who have died within our Parish:

Jean Thompson

Ian Green

WEDDINGS

We pray for all who are preparing for marriage in the coming months



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01924 475048 for more
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What's on (please contact the leaders for further information)

ABC Group Adults, Babies and Children
Wednesday 9:30-11:00am (Term time)
Nikki Esberger 07932026419
Thursday 9.30-11.00am (Term time)
Charlotte 07972217528

Line Dancing 1.00-3.30pm Tuesday
Contact Helena 07719946917

Knit and Natter—come and enjoy help with crafts or just chat
Wednesday 1.00-3.00pm

Pilates Wednesday 7.00- 8.00pm
Contact Erin Blake

Young at Heart 1st & 3rd Thursdays 2:00pm
Sally Shaw 07963610708

Rainbows Thursday 5.30 - 6.30pm
Ruth Osenton-Brown 01924 607393

Brownies Thursday 6.30 - 7.45pm
Hannah Tombling 01924 501892

Beavers Friday 5:00pm to 6:15 pm
Joanne Rutledge 07950 580877

Cubs Friday 6:30pm to 7:45 pm
Marianne Ingham 07778 542302

Scouts Friday 8:00 pm to 9:30 pm
Trevor Holdsworth 0113 253 0927

Explorer Scouts Friday 7:45 pm to 9:30 pm
Chris Ingham 07816 517838

Diary and Services this Month

Sunday Services.

Each Sunday there will be a Holy Communion Service at 10.30am in Church as well as Online.

Weekday Services

Mondays 9am	Morning Prayer	On Line
Tuesdays 6pm	Evening Prayer	On Line
Wednesdays 10am	Holy Communion	
	in Church & On-line.	
Thursdays 9pm	Night Prayer	On Line
Fridays 9am	Morning Prayer	On Line

Special Services in Jan & Feb:

Sunday 8th January 10.30am Epiphany
Sunday 29th January 10.30am Presentation of
Christ in the Temple—Candlemas
Wednesday 22nd Feb 10.00am/7.00pm
Ash Wednesday

Please see Page 41 for details of how to join a
streamed service