

PRAYER FOR THE MONTH

Dear God,
I hold up all my weakness to your strength,
My failure to your faithfulness,
My sinfulness to your perfection,
My loneliness to your compassion,
My small pain to your agony on the cross.

Keith (a prisoner on a life-sentence and adapted from a prayer on the wall of his cell)

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES **ASHBOCKING**

After the busy Christmas season of carols, nativities and services, January in Ashbocking began with the baptism of Isaac Andrews-Pearce at the family service on the 10th; 9 weeks old and completely oblivious to the proceedings, he slept through the whole thing!

The church was full of friends and family, with several young children who particularly enjoyed the portrayal of Jesus' own baptism, acted out by members of the congregation. This was followed by a hunt around the church for cards with baptism-related words, which were then explained by Catherine Beaumont. The sun shone and it was beautiful service to welcome Isaac into the Church and into our community.

Our next service is a family service on Valentine's day the 14th February, at 11:00; all are welcome. The service will be followed by coffee/tea and biscuits.

This month's coffee-morning will be on February 5th at Linda and Mick Ellis's home, Dormers, The Green, Ashbocking. If you require a lift please do let me know, tel. 890836. It was lovely to see some of our older residents at the December meeting, swelling numbers to around twenty.

We are going to be concentrating on the repair of the chancel roof this year and this is going to require considerable fund-raising. Ideas are evolving, so watch this space for details

Linda Pollard

Church Cleaning Mike and Sue Surridge with Brenda Mitchell

“GOING DEEPER” HOMEGROUP

We have moved to **Manor Farm** across the road on the Green, at **Ashbocking**, where we have plenty of room to welcome any newcomers. We study the Bible, pray, and encourage each other to “go deeper” in our faith in Jesus together.

We meet every **1st & 3rd Wednesday at 10.00am till 12.00**

For more details call Jan or Jon Bates on 01473 892605

CLOPTON

Plans are under way for our flower festival on 28th to 30th May. The theme will be 'My Favourite Book'. We already have ideas for fourteen displays, but need another ten! It would be great if anyone from the benefice could help us - you don't need to be an expert flower arranger; we are nearly all amateurs. If you would like to help please contact me on d37main@gmail.com. We would also like help with serving refreshments if you could spare an hour or two on any of the days. Donations of cakes would be appreciated.

The February coffee-morning will be at the village hall from 10am until noon on the 17th and will be hosted by Beryl Birchmore and Doris Main. Please come and join us.

The work on Clopton's bells was completed in September 2013 and by the end of that December they had been rung 15 times by 38 different people. In 2014, as more people found out that they were ringable again, they were rung 74 times by 84 different people. They were rung 56 times by 67 different ringers in 2015, several bands coming quite a distance to ring. More peals have been rung since the restoration than in the previous one hundred years, the most recent

being those to celebrate the Queen becoming the longest-serving monarch and to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

The first taster session for aspiring ringers was in November 2013 and we now have a regular band of learners, with one achieving her first quarter-peal in December 2015. David Stanford is taking the learners through the 'Learning the Ropes' programme and most have achieved their Level Two and are working towards their Level Three. They meet on Fridays at 7.30pm and more beginners are welcome; just come and watch to see if you would like to learn. None of this would have happened without the generous support of people in the benefice and the willing team of volunteers who worked so hard to remove and then re-hang all the bells, thus saving us thousands of pounds. Thank you all!

Doris Main

Church cleaning

Audrey and Chris Barker

Church flowers

Beryl Birchmore

OTLEY

Following the Otley tradition, the bellringers rang out the old year and rang in the new, sustained by refreshments at Chris and Audrey's Barker's home, and included Jimmy Wightman who was determined to ring for a few minutes. That is wonderful news. It is a wonderful experience to hear the bells at dead of night on New Year's Eve. In addition to the regular band, Matt Newson rings when he is home from university and Fred Woods is learning. If anybody else would like to give it a try, you would be very welcome - at the church at 8 o'clock on a Wednesday evening.

At the Epiphany service at the beginning of January, the stained glass window just inside the door was dedicated to the memory of John Fosdike, after its restoration. The window had been leaking badly so it was removed, the stained glass panels cleaned, and the lead renewed. The substantial cost was funded entirely from the generous legacy left by John to the church, as was the previous installation of a stainless steel window guard. We were very pleased

that John's brother Bernard and his wife Cathy were able to join us for the service.

I have reviewed the visitors' book, but I was horrified to find that a large number of pages have been torn out, covering the last eight years. However, since July 2015 the church has received about forty visitors, from as far afield as Houston, Texas; Toronto, Canada; France and Australia. Some were visiting graves, others were walking, one was a scaffolder working on the tower, and a group came from the University of the Third Age for a conducted tour by Richard Treloar. Several remarked on how peaceful the church was, and two commented on the 'interesting' altar frontal, which was worked by Phyllis Rowell, who still takes this magazine.

TWAM (Tools with a Mission) are again appealing for tools etc. to send to Third World countries, and there is a particular need for bicycles and non-electric sewing machines. If you have anything in this line surplus to requirements, you can take it to the TWAM depot on the Hadleigh Road industrial estate in Ipswich.

The next monthly coffee-morning will take place on Thursday 25th February at 15 Spring Park, the home of Philip and Betty David, where you will receive a warm Welsh welcome.

Rose Rogerson

Otley Quiz Evening

The ever popular annual St Mary's Quiz will this year take place at Otley village hall on Saturday 27th February. Doors will open at 7pm and questions will commence at 7.30pm. Tickets will cost £10 per head and teams can be made up of up to eight people. The ticket price includes a yummy jacket-potato supper and something sweet. There will be a bar and a raffle. So that everything can be prepared for this unbeatably entertaining, and sometimes challenging, evening, please ring me on [01473 890543](tel:01473890543) to book your places.

Ruth Farnhill

Village diary

5th/6th Feb.

"Aladdin" - Junior TOPS

27th Feb. Quiz Evening - St Mary's PCC
Church Cleaning 1st Week - David and Tess Papworth
3rd Week – Richard and Angela Treloar

Sidespersons' Rota

7th February 11.00am Holy Communion Karin Upson
21st February 9.30am Holy Communion Richard Treloar
28th February 4.30pm Evening Prayer at Countryside, Otley

Otley and District Gardening Club

The next meeting is Monday February 8th, when our guest speakers will be Sarah Cook and Jim Marshall. Their talk is entitled "Horticultural Snippets"

SWILLAND

Our organ is fully restored! Many thanks for the generosity of those who made this possible. Fred Woods played it for our service on 17th January and it was a joy to have it back. At the end of the service Fred played Love Changes Everything and Clare and Catherine sang with him - it was wonderful. The organ restorers have told us that the organ will benefit from regular playing. If there is anyone who would like to go and play it between services, please contact a member of the PCC.

The In Touch magazine is now being delivered to every house. Thank you to David and Julie Steyner, Barbara Lines and Gina Wilden for doing this.

Flower Rota - There will be no flowers in Lent.

Ann Kent

RAINFALL – DECEMBER

December had very similar weather to November – mild, damp and dull, but less wind and rain. December's most notable achievement was that it was the warmest ever recorded. There was apparently one December during the 1930s when the temperature came very close to the one that has just passed, which goes to show that it is not exceptional to have unusual variations. The rainfall in December

was 1.50 inches, half that for November. The total for 2015 came to 24.80 inches which is about average for Otley. How different it has been in the north and west of the country!

Russell Ling

A RELAXED SUFFOLK COASTLANDS PILGRIMAGE

Twenty-two of us travelled to the Holy Land in October on the pilgrimage planned and led by Jane Hall, and supported by Catherine Beaumont. The party included 6 from Otley, 3 from Clopton, 4 from Grundisburgh, the Rev'd Joy Rapley (our priest a few years ago and now retired), and others from Ipswich, Debenham, Bury St Edmunds and a couple from Derbyshire. During the first few days we visited many places of biblical interest including Nazareth, Cana, where some couples renewed their wedding vows, Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee. There we sailed on the type of fishing boat used at the time of Jesus and some of us swam in the lake.

Throughout the pilgrimage we stopped for readings, prayers and time for reflection. We moved on to Jericho, said to be the oldest city in the world, then to the river Jordan and had a service on the river bank. Bethlehem was very different from the traditional Christmas-card scenes. There we stayed in a pilgrim hotel 200 yards from the church of the Nativity, which stands on the site where Jesus is reputed to have been born.

In Jerusalem we visited the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane as well as a number of churches. We walked past local market stalls to see the Western Wall. We also visited historical sites, including Qumran where the Dead Sea scrolls were found and where some of us took the opportunity to float in the Dead Sea itself. On the Sunday morning we attended the bi-lingual (Arabic and English) service in St George's, the Anglican cathedral.

Jane was a marvellous leader and our Palestinian guide, Joseph, was very knowledgeable of the history and biblical significance of the

places we visited. He said that if we could remember 5% of what he told us he would be very pleased.

The pilgrimage was not all historical and biblical. When in Bethlehem, we visited an orphanage caring for abandoned babies and small children. We also visited an international centre promoting Palestinian culture

Israel, a country with over 3000 years of history, is a very complex place and the presence of armed police and soldiers on the streets was prominent. This did not cause any significant change to our programme and Joseph ensured we did not get into any potentially dangerous situations, but it was a constant reminder of the deep divisions and distrust that exist.

The pilgrimage was a wonderful experience. It was very well organised by Jane and Catherine, we travelled with old friends and made new ones and it will be something to remember for a very long time.

Philip David

SMILE LINES

Giving up for Lent

At the end of the vicar's pre-Lent sermon he suggested that, as an example to the rest of the village, the congregation should worship in an unheated church for the whole of Lent. As they made their way into the chill Sunday air the vicar asked one what she had decided to give up for Lent. "Church," she replied firmly.

Judgement?

The preacher was a few minutes into his sermon when, without warning, about twenty square feet of thick and decayed Victorian plaster fell from high on one wall and crashed into a group of empty pews below. As the dense fog of dust began to settle, and it became clear no one was injured, the minister prepared to resume his sermon. Then he paused, and looked heavenward and in a slightly pained voice, asked: "Was it something I said?"



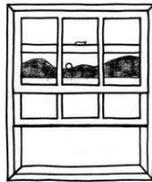
HYMNS

When you come to church you hear hymns. Hymns are songs of praise to God. Some are very old and some, like the ones you may sing at school, are new.

Have you ever wondered who wrote the hymns we sing? For example, one hymn writer was Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander, the wife of the Bishop of Londonderry. She wrote a book called 'Hymns for Little Children' which was dedicated to her godchildren. The book was published in 1848 and contained hymns that we know well today; 'All Things Bright and Beautiful', 'Once in Royal David's City' and 'There is a Green Hill Far Away'.

It is said that she wrote the last hymn because of the view from the Bishop's palace. The house looked out over the city walls to the green hills in the distance.

So the words we sing today come from the view that Mrs Alexander had from her window.



HYMN TITLES

All the following hymn titles have some words missing – can you fill in the blanks. All the hymns are from Mission Praise and the answers are below.

1. While ____ watched
2. Lead us, ____ ____, lead us.
3. Away in a ____
4. Forty days and ____ ____
5. Hark! The ____ ____ sing
6. ____ has broken
7. ____ night, ____ night
8. There is a ____ ____ far away
9. We plough the ____ and scatter
10. Amazing ____

Didn't your teacher say your singing was heavenly?

Well, she did say it was like nothing on earth.



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- Answers:** 1. While shepherds watched
2. Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
3. Away in a manger 4. Forty days and forty nights 5. Hark, the herald angels sing 6. Morning has broken 7. Silent night, holy night 8. There is a green hill far away 9. We plough the fields and scatter 10. Amazing Grace.