

HAPPY NEW YEAR !

Prayer for the month

God of life, renew our January spirits with the first snowdrop;
God of light, illuminate our January darkness with lengthening days;
God of fire, warm our January hearts with the growing heat of the sun;
God of power, strengthen our January limbs with nourishing winter fare;
God of peace, calm our January anxieties with the beauty of a clear, frosty dawn;
God of truth, direct our January resolutions through the long evenings' reflecting and planning;
God of love, use our January lives to bring your love to all you have made.

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES

ASHBOCKING

In early December we had a festive coffee-morning at Nel and Rex Perry's home, choosing the carols for the carol service and deciding the form of service. Frankie Alexander Holland, the grandson of Keith and Jayne Rowley-Evans of Feoffee Farm Drive, was baptised in church on a cold 14 December morning.

The church looked beautiful for the carol service on 21 December. It had been decorated by many - the Ellis family with the tree, the Bulloughs with lights and crib, the Mitchells and Brays with candles and greenery, Adine with gorgeous vases, and many others. We listened to readings from the King James Bible and sang carols, accompanied by Fred, as we celebrated Christ's birth and gave thanks for the blessings that the church has received during 2014. More than £37,000 has been raised and the work on the roof and

tower will start this month. (Please note services will not be affected). 66 people joined us for the service and one highlight was Glenn playing the guitar and the children singing 'Away in a Manger' at the front of the church.

We also dedicated the new prayer and book corner. Linda Pollard has made lovely cushions for us to sit on and there is a book of individual prayer cards that can be taken away. You can also leave a prayer request in a new box. Books have been donated by the Childs family.

40 people attended the Christmas day service, where we staged a 'scratch' nativity and were fortunate that the Wilson and Beaumont older 'children' were prepared to join in to support the Mitchell and Andrews-Pearce youngsters. We had the most glamorous wise men ever seen in Ashbocking, four angels, a shepherd, an innkeeper and fortunately a Mary and Joseph. Tim Dorney played the organ very successfully. Afterwards, 18 people stayed for a short communion service, which was followed by mulled wine and refreshments. Many thanks to all who have worked so hard to make these services so successful.

I will be leading an Exploring Confirmation group starting this month. Everyone is welcome. We are being hosted by John and Linda Pollard, at Hawthorns, The Green, Ashbocking. The dates of the evenings are: all Mondays, January 12 and 26, February 9 and 23, March 9 and 23, April 13 and 27, all from 7.30 to 9.30pm. The confirmation will be in late May. Please call me with any questions on 07801 342336 or email Catherine.beaumont@otleyhall.co.uk

Catherine Beaumont

CLOPTON

THANK YOU to the many people who have given of their time, generosity and talents during a memorable December at St Mary's.

The Ormiston Trust was delighted with the car-load of presents we gave them from our Gift Service on 14th December. Thank you to all who gave such lovely toys and gifts.

Ten stalwarts sang carols around the village before Christmas and collected £150.54 which has been sent to the East Anglia's Children's Hospice in Ipswich. Thank you to the carollers and to the people who gave so generously.

Thank you to all who made the church look so beautiful for the Christmas Eve Candlelight Carol Service at which it was great to see so many people. Thank you to the readers and to 'Joseph' and the 'Angel'! It was good to hear the Otley ringers before the service. The collection of £229.75 has been sent to the 'Children's Society'.

James led our Communion service on Christmas Day and Tom Rogerson played the organ which was really appreciated. It was lovely to have such a large congregation for our first Christmas morning service at the church for many years.

The bellringers who have been training under David Stanford would like to thank him for all his patience and for sharing his knowledge in a way that has made learning to ring fun and enjoyable. The Clopton band rang together for the first time before the communion service on Christmas Day. They will welcome anyone interested in having a go to see if they would like to learn too.

The first craft-morning for 2015 will be held in the village hall from 10am until 1pm on Wednesday 7th January. The January coffee-morning is on Wednesday 21st from 10am until noon. As several 'regular' attenders were unable to join us at Christmas we are going to celebrate the New Year, so please bring any goodies left over from Christmas! June Hughes and Doris Main will host.

The Holy Communion on Sunday 8th January at 9.30 will be held at my home, Thamaniya, Shop Road.

Doris Main

Church cleaning
Church flowers

Doris Main
Charmaine Williams.

OTLEY

We celebrated Christmas here with three services, all well-supported. The church was full for the service of lessons and carols which took the traditional form. Despite people dropping out through illness, Sue Wilkins's choir sang, including a carol specially composed by Sue, and the Ladies Handbell Ringers, led by Helen, rang - a joyful Christmas sound. A collection of £302.40 was taken which, with the addition of GiftAid, means that £189 will be sent to both Age UK and The Children's Society. 44 people attended Midnight Communion which was conducted by Bishop John Waine. The church decorations and the candles looked wonderful, so thank you to everybody involved, and also to the Ellis family for the gift of the enormous Christmas tree.

The biggest event, though, was the Crib Service on Christmas Eve, held this year in the barn at Warrens Farm, led by Jane, and attended by 140 adults and 60 children. An illuminated star hung over the barn, and inside were two donkeys, two sheep and three goats in a real stable setting. A real baby lay in the manger, surrounded by Mary and Joseph and countless kings, shepherds and angels! It was a wonderful and unforgettable occasion and thank you to Jane, to Ian and Alyson Chilvers, to Mike Bullock, and everyone else for the great amount of preparation it took.

Carol-singing around the village in Jimmy Wightman's shooting wagon took place on a dry mild night (for a change!) and raised £275 for FIND. Thank you Helen for keyboard accompaniment, the shop and the White Hart for welcome sustenance, and all those who sang, drove, collected or gave.

Before that, the Christmas Draw was held in the village hall, with 35 very good prizes, organised by Ruth Farnhill and the social committee, raising £550 for church funds. The next event will be the Otley Quiz on Saturday 28th March. Please put the date in your new diaries; more details will follow.

92 people attended the Christmas dinner-dance and had a great evening. Caterers provided a delicious dinner, dancing went on until late, and a photobooth contributed to the amusement. £1,200 was raised for the Community Council. The school's bazaar was also very successful, raising £900 for school funds. A lot of the children's craftwork was on sale, Father Christmas paid a visit, and the children had a lovely time. Well done, everybody.

The next meeting of the Gardening Club will take place on 12th January when Caroline Holmes's talk is entitled "Permission to Poison - the Poison Garden at Alwrick". Caroline is a well-known garden historian, broadcaster and author, and this will be a very interesting evening.

The first coffee-morning of the year will be held on Thursday 22nd January at Church House, and we look forward to welcoming you here.

Alyson and Ian Chilvers invite you to a charity Burns Night in aid of Age UK Suffolk at their barn at Warrens Farm on Saturday 24 January starting at 7.30 p.m. We will be dancing to Instep after a three course meal piped in by a "real piper". There will also be a bar and a draw. Tickets costing £15.00 are available from Alyson (tel. 737674, 07767775186 or alysonchilvers@btinternet.com) or from Penny at the Post Office. After last year's power-cut Alyson and Ian did say "never again", but they have convinced themselves that lightning never strikes twice and are hopeful that this year we will have electricity and a nice warm barn!

In contrast to the festivities, we are sad to say we have lost three Otley residents over Christmas. Aubrey James has died at the age of 90. He was a regular church-attender almost to the end. His work had been for the Forestry Commission so he would give advice on the ancient trees in the churchyard and its hedging. He was also the last person in the village who had seen action in World War II, taking part in the liberation of the Dutch Walcheren Islands. Mrs Holmes, the oldest resident of Otley, also died, but at home and appreciating three generations of her family around her. And Susie Mellor has died after a very short illness - she was the treasurer of the Gardening Club. We send our sympathy and thoughts to all their families.

We wish all our readers a happy and healthy New Year.

Rose Rogerson

Church cleaning: David and Tess Papworth

Sidepersons' Rota

18th January 9.30am Holy Communion - Nigel Crowley

SWILLAND

Our Christmas Draw raised around £400. Those who attended lunch in the village hall enjoyed having a chat over soup, filled rolls and mince pies. Thank you to all those who helped in any way with this event.

We had a full church for our Carol Service - it was good to see so many people. The children took the crib figures up to the altar and lit the Advent candles.

For the first time for several years a group went carol-singing around the village on foot - from the water tower to the Moon and Mushroom. We hope this was well received and the singers raised £135.20, which was divided between our Organ Fund and St Elizabeth Hospice. The pub was certainly livened up!

16 people attended the Christmas Day service, which, looking back in the service book, was more than average.

I was glad to hear that Kim Shaw hopes to be home shortly having been in hospital and convalescent care for about three months. We hope she continues to improve and returns to full health.

Thank you to all those who have helped with the flowers during the year and with opening and closing the church each day.

Happy New Year to everyone.

Ann Kent

Church Flowers

11th - 18th January

Jackie Williams

5th - 4th February

Margo Barker

8th - 15th February

Ann Kent

Rainfall - November

November was very wet but mild. The rainfall of 4.75 inches just beat May's total, which was 4.50 inches.

In times gone by, one could guarantee fog at some point during the winter months which was caused by the smoke from coal fires and industrial chimneys and very still conditions with no wind to blow it away. When I say fog I am not referring to heavy mist, which goes as fog these days, but to real pea-soupers, where at times one could only see a few yards. Driving in these conditions was very difficult; there were no fog lights or heaters, although on some vehicles the front windscreen would open to give more vision. In the days when my father used a horse and trap to go to Ipswich market, if there was a fog on the return journey, he would let the horse make its own way back as it knew the road so well and

always got home safely. Will we have cars with the same intelligence one day?

A happy New Year to you all.

Russell Ling

Jesus

If I could package faith into one parcel
And collect all hope into a single can –
If I could roll all love into one heart-ball
And commoditise it in a living man
I'd already have a fully detailed label
Prepared before the world itself began -
And it would have one name -
And that name – JESUS -
At the centre of God's universal plan
To take the world along the course
God's surge of love provoked
Till wholeness flows through everything
With God's Spirit of life unyoked.

Sam Doubtfire

The Leprosy Mission - Restoration

We hear through the prophet Jeremiah that God can restore health and heal wounds (Jeremiah 30: 17). As a Christian charity inspired by the love of Jesus Christ, The Leprosy Mission tends physically and emotionally to each leprosy-affected person it serves. One by one, it nurses their wounds, restores them to health and helps heal emotional scars caused by the stigma surrounding this ancient disease which remains a modern-day reality.

Leprosy is a disease of poverty. It can impact on every area of a person's life: health, education, employment, marriage prospects and relationships with family and community. The Leprosy Mission helps to restore lives destroyed by leprosy by providing the rehabilitation, schooling, job prospects, housing and sanitation

required to lift a person from poverty and enable them to be self-sufficient.

In many parts of the world today, the disease continues to carry a great stigma. Many people with leprosy-caused disabilities suffer terrible discrimination. They can be regarded as 'cursed' and forbidden from collecting water from the common tap. The Leprosy Mission works to educate their communities, teaching them that leprosy is a mildly-infectious and curable disease and not a curse for life.

On Sunday 25 January – World Leprosy Day 2015 – please pray for the many millions of people globally who, today, struggle with the physical and emotional scars left by this cruel disease, leprosy. If you can, please give a gift of hope and restoration to The Leprosy Mission England and Wales so that it can continue its life-changing work across Asia and Africa.

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Biblical Cooking

If you can prepare this dish without looking up the references in the Bible, you should be on Mastermind! It is suggested the Authorised Version is used.

Ingredients :

1 - ½ lb of Judges 5:25 (end);

2 - ½ lb of Jeremiah 6:20;

3 - 1 tablespoon of 1 Samuel 14:25;

4 - 3 of Jeremiah 17:11;

5 - ½ lb of 1 Samuel 30:12;

6 - ½ lb of Nahum 3:12 (chopped);

7 - 2 oz of Numbers 17:8 (blanched and chopped);

8 - 1 lb of 1 Kings 4:22;

9 - 2 Chronicles 9:9;

10 - a pinch of Leviticus 2:13;

11 - 1 teaspoonful of Amos 4:5

12 - 3 tablespoons of Judges 4:19

Preparation: Mix 8, 9, 10 and 11, and put them aside. Beat 1, 2 and 3 to a cream. Still beating add 4, one at a time. Then add 5, 6 and 7 and beat again. Then add 12. Bake in a low oven for 1½ hours

Smile Lines

New Year's resolution - A congregation was disappointed when one of its number, who had quit smoking a few weeks before, suddenly began again, and just before the beginning of Lent, at that. Taking him to one side, the minister explained that the point of Lent was to give something up, not start something. 'Oh yes, I know,' said the man. 'But you see, I decided to give up my New Year's resolution.'

Home Schooling - Most older folk were home-schooled as well as actually attending a school...

Our mothers taught us TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE: "If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning."

Our fathers taught us RELIGION: "You better pray that that will come out of the carpet."

Our mothers taught us LOGIC: "If you fall out of that swing and break your neck, you're not going to the shops with me."

Our fathers taught us MORE LOGIC: "Because I said so, that's why."

Our mothers taught us about CONTORTIONISM : "Just you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"

Our fathers taught us about the science of OSMOSIS: "Shut your mouth and eat your supper."

Our mothers taught us about BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION: "Stop acting like your father!"

Our fathers taught us about ANTICIPATION: "Just wait until we get home."

Our mothers taught us about ESP: "Put your sweater on; don't you think I know when you are cold?"

And finally, our fathers taught us about JUSTICE: "One day you'll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you!"

Bible

A father was approached by his small son, who told him proudly, "I now know what the Bible means!" His father smiled and asked him to explain. "It's easy. It stands for Basic Information Before Leaving Earth."

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