

2025

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MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2025 are due to be collected this month. The cost of the magazine remains at *£1 per copy - £10 for the year.*

Subscriptions will be collected by the person who delivers your magazine. Payment can be made by:

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Please add the reference ***'MAGAZINE and your surname'*** so that the Treasurer can keep track of magazine payments and let the person collecting subscriptions know that you have paid this way.

Thank you for subscribing to the magazine during 2024. We hope that you will continue!

Please contact the Parish Office if you wish to arrange a **postal delivery**. This will include a charge to cover second class postage which will be £8.50 for the year.

If you know someone who might like to receive the magazine please ring the Parish Office (872433) to arrange delivery.

	This month	P14 PCC news
P6	A View from the Pews	P15 Menston MU news
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Copy for the **MARCH** magazine is due by **Sunday 9 FEBRUARY**. Please email copy to both editor and Parish Office (***office@stjohnmenston.org.uk***) or leave copy for typing with the office.

The Vicarage

Friends

I am writing this just after all that snow and ice has finally thawed.

I hope you have managed to stay safe and warm, and have not been too frustrated by the weather wreaking havoc on our plans and routines! More days indoors with the kids because of schools being closed was not how I planned to start January, and I really don't like travelling in the snow!

But winter is not all dark and cold and inconvenient. Last night the cold weather meant clear skies and the children and I were spotting constellations of stars as we got home and there was the most amazing huge orange full moon. A winter spectacle, as in summer, they are not awake when the stars and moon come out.

Walking back from church this morning, the path was slippery, but the birds were singing cheerfully, and the sun was shining. Blue skies and birdsong are not only the preserve of summer and can be enjoyed from a window.

And whilst we may feel far from spring, any keen gardeners amongst you will know that the seemingly barren is not dead. Before the last leaves fell, the buds of the next cycle of life were already there.

The seasons we experience give us Spiritual insight into how it feels to live a mortal human life. Some seasons are easier than others, some we prefer, some remind us of times gone past, some cause us to wonder about the future. The human life is a mixed bag, but even in the times we most fear or dislike, God is ever-present and still at work.

Just like the stars the birds and the buds, there is joy and hope to be found in all seasons of life, if only would raise our eyes to see, open our minds to notice, reach out to connect.

It is my firm belief that God knows and loves each one of us. But we choose how much of a relationship we want to have with him.

We can treat him like a safety net. Like grown up children leaving home, exploring their independence, not calling for weeks, only to run home when trouble strikes. He understands, and he is ready and waiting.

We can treat him like an impersonal figure of authority. Someone to stay on the right side of and not bother unnecessarily. Like a teenager keeping their head down at school and staying out of trouble. He understands your efforts and fear.

We can treat him like a punch bag, throwing all our anger and frustration at the world at him for not sorting it out and then giving him the silent treatment. Like a teenager who is finding out how big the world is and how small they are. He can take it. But what if there was another type of relationship?

But what if we chose to get to know him and to stay in touch? Like a grown up child who has a parent they trust and rely on. Someone they check in with, take advice from and enjoy being with. That's what He hopes for.

Through bible reading, prayer, worship and fellowship together and serving others we can draw close to God. Whatever season we are in, he is there with us.

Don't let the natural season of life deter you from the truth of God's deep love for you.

Don't let your circumstances, your frustrations or your fears mislead you.

Your heavenly Father loves you, is around you, is waiting for you, and longs for you to draw near.

That's the who and why of Jesus.

May you have that Epiphany this year, and draw close.

Blessings to you all,

Jo

A View from The Pews by Dominic Hall

I hope by the time you read this that the ground under foot is a little softer, the air on your face is a little warmer and the nascent shoots and buds are breaking through the earth and popping through the branches on the trees.

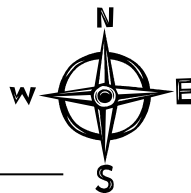
The dog days of Winter present a challenge for us all. Yes, the mornings are not quite as forbidding and the evenings are a bit lighter, but it is still chilly, the sky tends toward interminable grey and the media is full of the idea that this is the saddest time of the year. Yet, I find there is much to be thankful for at the end of January and through February. We cannot rely on the bright lights and rich food we may have fallen back on at the end of the year and it is too cold for slow days and long drinks by a pool. However, the shoots and buds bring forth not just the thought of colour and new life but also that most precious of human commodities – hope.

How we navigate through this time of year is often guided by faith. We know that just over the horizon, we are already glimpsing the reflection of Lent and the extreme emotions of Easter. Hope. We know also that those planning a wedding in the Summer will be looking to find, book and secure venues, outfits and entertainments around this time. Hope. We know that people will be looking to book holidays and trips for later in the year at this time. Hope.

To quote the old Mamas and Papas hit, ‘...the darkest hour is just before dawn.’ So it goes with the year. We need these dreary days of late Winter as a coda between the artificial brightness of the Christmas season and the verdant glory of the flowers, shrubs and trees. Life, in all its forms, is about contrasts. It would be an awful life if we felt sad or depressed all the time. It would be equally unrewarding if our days were full of unremitting happiness and joy. We need the rhythms and cadences of life – both in colour and emotion – to make us appreciate the good and know that the bad is temporary.

While late January and February are in themselves some of the most miserable weeks of the year, they bring with them all the hope of looking to the future. While we may have to wait a few more weeks for the season of Spring, it is at this time of year that hope springs eternal!

Prayer Points



A winter prayer of the Missionary Society of St Columban

Dear Lord, when days are cold and wind can pierce
Remind us of the warmth of our love.

When days are short, dawn comes late
and dusk arrives early
remind us that in the darkness
Your light still shines.

When the flowers of spring still lie hidden in the earth,
when leaves are off the trees and the world can seem bleak
Remind us that Easter is but a short time away.

And when in our lives we feel as if we are experiencing
a season of winter, reach out to us with the power
of your resurrection so that we may feel
the warmth of your love and see your light
that alone can take away the darkness of our soul. Amen.

A prayer for joy and peace on Valentine's Day

Philippians 4:7. 'And the peace of God which transcends all
understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus'

Lord, We ask You to fill our relationships with joy and peace.

May we celebrate each moment together
and cherish the simple joys of companionship.

When life gets busy help us to slow down
and appreciate each other.

Grant us the ability to bring peace into each other's hearts
and to build an atmosphere of warmth and kindness.

May we always find joy in our shared experiences
and peace in Your presence.

We thank You for the love You have given us. Amen.

With thanks to Hilary Feathers for this month's Prayer Points

ECO CHURCH NEWS

Christmas Jumper Swap

Thank you to everyone who participated in any way. We were given 69 jumpers (57 for kids) and we re-homed 37 and took the rest to a charity shop. There were good conversations about recycling and use of the earth's resources and there was great enthusiasm to support the initiative.

Although not asked for, people were keen to donate towards the jumpers and together with the Marble Game, this raised £53 for church funds.



The Eco Church Group and Climate Action Menston were supported with resources from Recoup which is the UK's leading independent authority on plastics resource efficiency and recycling. It is hoped that more schools and community groups will make use of the learning from our event and a *how to* guide is being prepared based on our experience.

Post Box Also, thank you to everyone who made use of our communal Christmas card postbox and for the festive display created. Such schemes help save resources and help us with our Eco Church Award.

Eco quiz for all ages

Our next event will be our quiz evening on Saturday 8 March from 4-6pm with supper.

Eco tips for February

- 1 Enjoy texting: at 0.014g of carbon dioxide a text it's a very low carbon cost way to communicate.
- 2 Think before you click: each web search requires energy on your computer, laptop or 'phone and more at the server



Stay and Play

St John's Stay&Play group, held on Friday mornings in the Parish Room, are running a holiday group in the February 1/2 term called

'BIG Stay&Play'.

We will be inviting school aged children and families, plus our regular 0-4 year olds and family's to join us for some free family fun!

Jen Sheppard

(Continued from page 8)

finding the webpage for you, costing 4.5g CO₂e a time. Just 10 searches a day adds up to 16.5kg CO₂e a year.

- 3 Switch to using a green search engine on the internet such as www.ecosia.org which plants trees to absorb the carbon emissions from your web searches.
- 4 Email with care: an email generates 4g CO₂e and a large email with lots of attachments up to 50g. Don't stop communicating, but think before you copy everyone in!

If you are interested in joining the eco group, do get in touch. Marilyn, Catherine, Sally , Matthew and Jen.

Commuters at Menston blessed with free drinks to warm early mornings

A team from St John's spent a very cold week in December serving free teas, coffees and hot chocolates to early morning commuters heading to Leeds and Bradford at Menston station.

Our innovative vicar, Jo, wanted to be with the commuters on the cold dark mornings and offer some cheer to them. Over the week the team brewed 18 litres of coffee and 21 litres of tea, with tea being the most popular.

While giving the drinks out conversations were had about people's work, the stresses of the morning and their football teams.

Revd Jo said: "*We were inspired by a free church doing this at Horsforth station about ten years ago, when I was a commuter – it felt lovely to receive something when it happened to me.*"

We spoke to early morning commuters, often with their headphones in and heads down. They were not ready for a vicar in a Santa hat offering them a brew! But most people smiled and said thank you, whether or not they had one.

We thought it was about the teas and coffee, but really it was about being present and being with people. The drinks gave us a reason to be there and to interact with them.

Getting up in the dark at 6am was really quite eye opening, as none of us wanted to do that ourselves, so we knew a bit of what they were going through - getting ready for a 7am train in the second week of December is grim! But we were with them in it, and they could see and know that."

The activity caused quite a stir, with people all along the line curious about what was happening at Menston, and several sharing their free drinks on social media.



Jo said: “Someone asked me for help with purchasing a ticket, assuming I was with Northern Rail. I said, no, I'm a vicar, and we laughed and she said, say a prayer then! We agreed automated ticket machines are beyond prayer!”

It was interesting to be offering something people needed and wanted for free, and see the responses this got. Some were reluctant, some hesitant, some distrusting, some confused, some questioning why. Tea and coffee on a cold morning is an easy offer, and still people struggled to accept and trust the offer easily - so too with the gospel.

But I am encouraged, that it's our culture that breeds wariness of something good and loving for free. It's not that the Gospel itself is especially suspicious to people, but anything good and free in this world is. Whilst that's sad, it should embolden us to keep offering, and keep us being present.

Something being good and free is sadly noteworthy. But let's shock and surprise people with what we have to offer this Christmas and in 2025, we might just warm their hearts.”

Courtesy of the Diocesan News website

Worship this month

2 Feb The Fourth Sunday of EPIPHANY
Readings: Hebrews 2: 14-end; Luke 2: 22-40
Reader: Dorothy Slater

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

9 Feb The Fourth Sunday before LENT
Readings: 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11; Luke 5: 1-11
Reader: Jan Alexander

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

16 Feb The Third Sunday before LENT
Readings: 1 Corinthians 15: 12-20; Luke 6: 17-26
Reader: Peter Wilbraham

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

23 Feb The Second Sunday before LENT
Readings: Genesis 2: 4b-9, 15-end; Luke 8: 22-25
Reader: Jane Pratt

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

2 Mar The Sunday next before LENT
Readings: Exodus 34: 29-35; Luke 9: 28-36
Reader: Jenny Steele

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

MID-WEEK SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

9.30am *Thursdays: 6 / 13 / 20 / 27 February / 6 March*

ASH WEDNESDAY 5 March

Details of this service marking the beginning of Lent for will be in the Parish Notes.



Should the Churches agree on a common date for Easter?

That is the question for the leaders of the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches, as 2025 marks the 1,700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea.

Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople believes that 2025 is a 'golden opportunity' for Catholic and Orthodox believers to finally agree on a joint date for Easter, because this year also brings a 'fortunate alignment' of the Easter dates of both churches. 'It is indeed regrettable that 1700 years later, we are still debating this issue,' he says.

Any agreement would only pertain to the date of Easter's celebration. It would not involve any joint liturgical practices. Those would require ecclesial communion between the churches, something which does not yet exist.

In 2016 the Archbishop of Canterbury held talks with Coptic Pope Tawadros II in Cairo, when he hoped that a unified date for Easter might be achieved within ten years. He commented that, for the C of E, either the second or third Sunday in April would be acceptable.

Parish Pump News Service

PCC Notes ~ Judith Knaggs

Jo welcomed everyone to the meeting on 26 November which was followed by a biblical reflection and prayer.

FUND RAISING Thanks were extended to Peter & Sue Wibraham and all who helped with the November quiz and supper evening. A grand total of £811 was raised for church funds. Thanks also to all who helped to raise £860 (£500 to the Yorkshire Air Ambulance and £360 to St John's) at the November Nostalgia Night held in Kirklands..

GENEROUS CHURCH

WORKING GROUP Thanks to an anonymous donation, a Collec Tin has been purchased to allow card payments in church.

FINANCE UPDATE The role of the Parish Administrator was discussed, including salary and working hours. The role currently has flexible hours with a set time on Thursday mornings in the Parish Office. Treasurer to research pension details. To be reviewed in six months. Jo and the Treasurer met to consider the Parish Share and Mission Giving for 2025 onwards. Various options were put to PCC and after careful consideration, it was decided on a top up payment of £4,000 for the Share, £3,000 for our charity partners (£1,000 each) leaving around £4,000 for 2025 seed money.

CHURCH LEAFLETS have been refreshed and were circulated at the Kirklands Remembrance Day Service and during December giving details of forthcoming Advent and Christmas services.

CHURCHYARD Tarmac work by Belmans will commence shortly to repairs the sloping path. A grant has been obtained from the Parish Council for this purpose. The lamp on the entrance gate will be repaired in due course.

CHURCH HIRE for event bookings will be discussed in more detail at the January PCC meeting.

BLESS THE STATION Jo and members of PCC gave Christmas greetings and handed out free tea and coffee to commuters between 7 and 8.30am on Menston station on 10/11 and 12 December. See article on page 10 & 11.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The possibility of providing tea/ coffee after the 11am Eucharist service in the new year was discussed. Jo is to ask the congregation for their views before a definite decision is made.

The PCC Away Day will be held on Saturday 15 March.

The next PCC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 28 January.

The meeting ended with prayer.



This month:

4 February 2.15pm AGM followed by social activity
(It is hoped we will have a good attendance at our AGM as we look ahead to our plans for the coming year).

Our first meeting of the year on 7 January had to be cancelled due to bad weather. Subscriptions have not yet been collected so we do not know our membership numbers at the moment. Hopefully we will maintain a sufficient number to enable our group to continue functioning for some time yet.

MU Wave of Prayer – January 2025

This is the annual time of year when MU branches in the Leeds Diocese meet in their branches to pray for our link branches across the world. Due to the freezing conditions this year, when members could not safely venture out, this activity has been very much disrupted.

Here at St John's, an individual member worked through the service sheet at her home, at the appointed time on 10 January covering our link dioceses in other parts of the world, as follows:

- **Hanuato'o in the Solomon Islands** where the 6 major islands and 900 smaller islands to the East of Papua New Guinea face the daily challenges of flooding, rising sea levels, cyclones and food and water shortages. MU workers have to travel by boat to deliver their education and parenting programmes.
- **Kibungo in Rwanda** which is a beautiful area with hills, small rivers, streams and lakes, and famous for its banana production. However, it has been badly affected by the Covid

(Continued on page 16)

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pandemic, leaving many families female-headed and struggling to survive.

- **Lesotho** (a landlocked country surrounded by South Africa) which has one of the world's highest rates of HIV-Aids infection resulting in a large number of child-headed households because both parents have died of the disease. Drug abuse and gangsterism are also big problems which MU workers and members attempt to address.
- **Ogbomoso (Nigeria)** where the main economy is agriculture, mostly cashew plantations. Gender Based Violence is a big concern and MU workers try to improve the roles of women and girls through parenting, education and health programmes.
- **Etche (Nigeria)** where the population is made up of a variety of ethnic groups and cultures. They have very little in possessions or wealth, even though the Etche land holds the record as one of the few oil-producing areas in the volatile Niger Delta Region. MU workers focus on improving the lives of women and girls as once again GBV is a strong concern.

An MU prayer to finish:-

O Lord, give mankind the desire and knowledge to take a more balanced care of our environment which is God-sent: to deep clean the waters and seas, to slow the melting of ice, to preserve the rainforests for the birds and bees and the creatures yet unseen, to love and consider the needs of all and not only man's selfish needs. Amen

Marjorie Boddy & Ann Dixon

COMMUNITY NEWS

Climate Action Menston

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 26 February at 7.30pm in Kirklands when we will be hearing about the '**Incredible Edible**' project. Do join us. All are welcome. Our website is <https://climateactionmenston.org.uk/> or contact *Marilyn 874220*.



Menston 2025 Heritage Project

2025 Bradford City of Culture launched on 10 January and it was great to meet lots of Menston people on the train as we braved the cold to be a part of this significant event.

In Menston, the trail is at the design stage and we are applying for funding for a computer etc for the Heritage Room. Once we have that, we can start cataloguing all that has been given so far.

Next meeting is on Tuesday 25 February at 7.30pm in Kirklands. Do come along if you are interested in getting involved.

Marilyn



Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

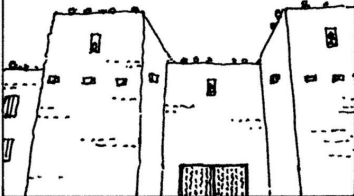
It can be read in the Bible in
Joshua chapter 6 verses 1-27

Joshua led the Israelites across the
river Jordan. They camped near the
town of Jericho and prepared to fight.

The people in Jericho
locked the town gates.



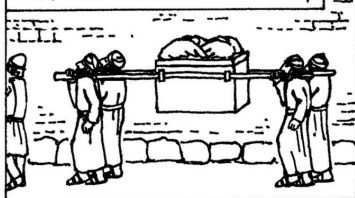
They thought they were safe.



God told Joshua
what to do.



On the first day, the priests
carried the sacred chest,



they blew trumpets,
and walked round
Jericho once.



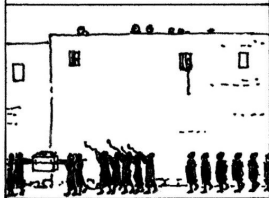
The army followed
not saying a word.



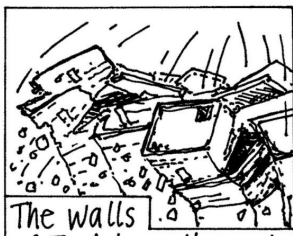
They did this
for 6 days.



On the 7th day they
walked round 7 times.

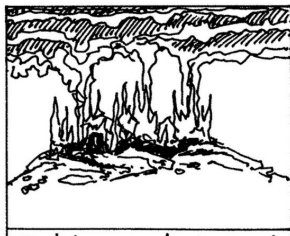


The army gave a victory shout!



The walls
of Jericho collapsed.

The army rushed into
the town and
captured it.



Jericho was destroyed.

NOTICE BOARD

ALTAR FLOWERS

2 February Judith Knaggs
23 February Marjorie Boddy

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday 5 February. In accordance with Church of England tradition there will be no flowers in church from then until Easter Day.

If you would like to ***sponsor*** the flowers for a week in the coming year, perhaps to remember a loved one or an anniversary, please add your name to the list in the porch. If you are unable to arrange them yourselves speak to Jan Alexander - a member of the church flower team will be happy to either do them for you or help you to do them yourself. Vases are quite acceptable containers.

A new flower rota will be placed in the church porch next month. Sincere thanks to all who have provided the lovely altar flowers during the last year - they really help to enhance our worship.

Jan Alexander

FROM THE REGISTERS

HOLY BAPTISM We welcome into the Lord's family:
19 January Spencer Hewitt

FUNERAL SERVICES We commend into the hands of Almighty God:
2024

2 December Charlotte Wood
10 December Joyce Hutton

2025
6 February Liz Downs R.I.P.



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Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss
events; small minds discuss people. *Eleanor Roosevelt*

If you can't shine, at least twinkle!



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