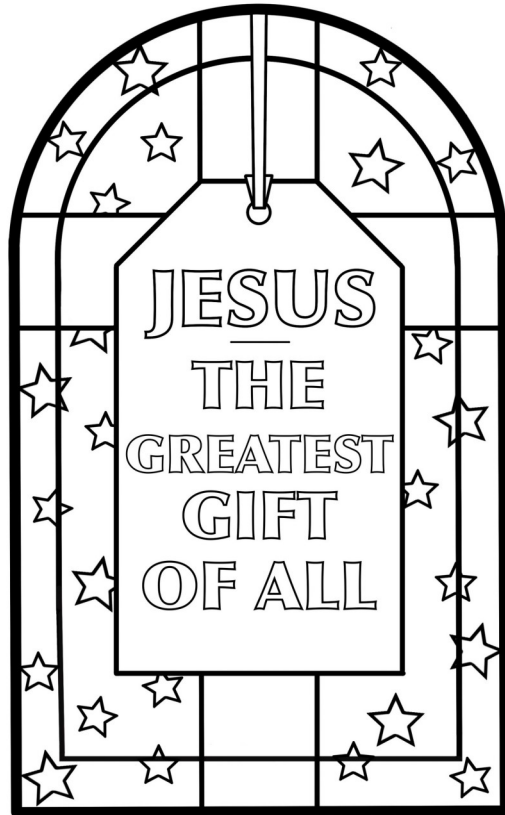


2024/
2025

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MENSTON
PARISH CHURCH
St John the Divine



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Contact Kathryn Lindsay BSc(Hons)

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Phone 01943 872716

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*If you would like to subscribe to the Magazine regularly please contact
the Parish Office (872433) to arrange delivery.*

*A Very Happy Christmas and
peaceful New Year to all our
readers and advertisers.
Thank you for your continued
and much valued support.*



Copy for the FEBRUARY magazine is due by **Sunday 12 January 2025**. Please email copy to both editor and Parish Office (office@stjohnmenston.org.uk) or leave copy for typing with the office.

This month

P6 A View from the Pews

P7 Prayer Points

P10 A View from the Pavement

P16 PCC news

P17 MU News

P18 A Good Read

P20/1 Bible Bites & Quiz

P22/3 Notices

The Vicarage

Friends

This time of year, can lead to much reflection.

I wonder what 2024 has held for you?

I wonder what you are looking to in 2025?

I can imagine that whatever has been or will be, is a mixed bag of real life. Some times of joy and success, and some times of stress and fear.

Our reflections on the past, and our fears and hopes for the future can prevent us from living in the blessing of today.

But in Jesus, the past is forgiven, dealt with.

And the future is taken care of.

He releases us to live today.

John 3:16 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'

John 10:10 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'

With the past forgiven, and the future taken care of, we are released to be present. To notice the blessings we have. To rest in them, to enjoy them, and to share them, day by day, moment by moment.

I hope that is the sort of present you get this Christmas.

It's the one Jesus can give you.

Blessings,

Jo

GIFT SUNDAY ~ 8 December

This year, we are supporting two charities on Gift Sunday:

Homeless not Helpless - providing practical support to homeless people and those in need in Bradford.

Christmas can be a very special time, but it can also be extremely difficult for those less fortunate and on the streets. Homeless not Helpless are asking for donations of gift bags with the following items; voucher for Greggs (or similar outlet that offers a hot drink/food), small torch, hat, gloves, chocolate.

We will collect these during both services
Sunday 8 December.

Zarach - a Leeds-based charity on a mission to end child bed poverty.

Hundreds and thousands of children across the UK are facing the prospect of a Christmas sleeping on the floor, on cushions, in broken beds, or crowding into single beds with multiple siblings. Zarach is asking for monetary donations to pay for beds, mattresses, pillows, duvets, and bedding essentials to create a warm, comfortable sleeping space for a child. Please give via their website <https://zarach.org/#donate> or via the collection jar or electronic device at the back of church during both services
Sunday 8 December.

A View from The Pews by Dominic Hall

Before you know it, here we are in the season of dried fruits!

There are many reasons to enjoy the Christmas season. First and foremost is the miraculous story of the Nativity and the promise of salvation born into the world in that dirty and dusty stable over two thousand years ago.

For me, a close second is the abundance of dried fruit laden treats. Mince pies, stollen, Christmas cake and Christmas pudding are always welcome additions to my Christmas larder – not that they stay there long. If you're looking for a gift, then an elasticated waistband trouser is very welcome!

A few years ago, I started making Delia Smith's Christmas pudding. It is an utter joy. A bit of light chopping, some bingo wing reducing stirring and the patience of Job as the mix steeps overnight bring happiness and anticipation of the feasting to come. The question is why these foods bring such joy and why they only make an appearance at Christmas (well, onwards from September in my local supermarket!)?

I think the answer to the question is twofold: memory and rarity.

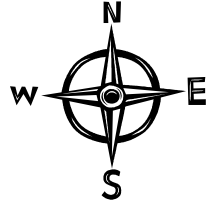
In the good old days of my youth, mum would bake endless batches of mince pies in the lead up to Christmas. The more she made, the more I ate. Honestly, if it weren't for a decent metabolism I would probably have my own postcode! Nanna would make both a Christmas cake and pudding, though we had to wait for our annual Boxing Day trip to Somerset to sample these delights. Thankfully, neither of my brothers were fans of these treats so I could negotiate with my younger brother – he would eat the icing and I could have his cake.

Why these rich and boozy foods should appeal to a seven-year-old me, I cannot answer. All I can say is that I have always liked them and, expanding waistline notwithstanding, I always will.

This brings me to the second point of the answer: rarity. For a thing to be a treat it cannot happen very often. That these foods are only available around Christmas, if you show appropriate restraint, is part of what makes them so delicious. When you walk into a kitchen in which these are being prepared and smell the booze-sodden fruit, it unleashes all the other feelings of love, hope and joy that are synonymous with the Christmas period. Sadly, it feels too often that love, hope and joy are themselves rarities in our world. When that seems to be the case, I can recommend a mince pie, slice of stollen or a hunk of Christmas cake to restore all three.

I hope you all have a wonderful, fruit-filled Christmas.

Prayer Points



ADVENT

Give us ears to hear, O God,
and eyes to watch,
that we may know your presence
in our midst during this holy season of joy
as we anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ.
Amen.



CHRISTMAS

Loving Father,
help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.



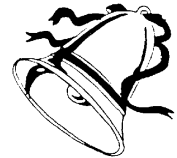
Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.

Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

Robert Louis Stevenson

A NEW YEAR

Lord, You make all things new
You bring hope alive in our hearts
And cause our Spirits to be born again.



Thank you for this new year
for all the potential it holds.
Come and kindle in us a mighty flame
so that in our time, many will see the wonders of God
and live forever to praise Your glorious name.
Amen

With thanks to Jan Alexander for this month's Prayer Points

Eco Church

Christmas Jumper Swap



There is still a chance to donate your unwanted Christmas jumper or jumpers! Boxes will be at the back of the church, the library and Cornerstone cafe. Do encourage friends and family to donate ASAP. Then come along to the Swap at the **Christmas Lights Switch On event at Kirklands on Saturday 7 December**. Stalls run from 1-3pm but the event goes on until later.

We want to increase the use of Christmas jumpers before they are recycled or sent to landfill so if you want a new look for your Christmas party this year, come along on the 7th and find a new (to you) one! The swap is organised in conjunction with '**Recoup**' the UK's leading authority on recycling plastics and resource efficiency.

Communal Christmas Card post box



It is almost time to write your Christmas cards! If you would like to send one card to all your friends at St John's please make use of the post box at the back of church. You will be saving the Earth's resources! Cards will be displayed on the Baptistry screen.

December - Eco Christmas ideas

1. *Be creative in the gifts you give this Christmas*; make sure your desire to be loving is not damaging the environment.
2. *Getting ready for the festivities of Christmas*. Buy as much locally produced, in season food and particularly veg as you can. Try not to over cater and waste food.
3. *Wrap and rewrap*. Why not reuse your wrapping paper. Take a bit of care unwrapping your presents (it adds to the gift experience), save the paper and reuse next year.
4. *Enjoy the feast of Christmas!* Don't forget to recycle your rubbish. Don't waste unwanted presents, find new homes for them through the charity shop.
5. *Get ready with your environmental New Year's Resolution*. How will you care for creation in the coming year?

Eco tips for January

1. *Never put warm or hot food into the fridge* or freezer as this will make the fridge work extra hard to try and keep it cold; always allow food to cool down first.
2. *Stop using aluminium foil* for cooking wherever possible; use a container with a lid that can be reused. Aluminium is a rare metal and its extraction and purification uses a lot of energy.
3. *Eat less meat*, particularly red meat; producing 1kg of beef produces the equivalent CO₂ to you driving a 300 mile round trip while leaving all your lights on at home.

If you would like to join our local eco church group, Jen, Sally, Matthew, Catherine, Jeanne - Claire and Marilyn, do get in touch.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Climate Action Menston (CAM)

By the time you read this, we will have had our 'Green Drinks' event and had a chance to share ideas and actions.

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

We are pressing on with sorting out the archive material we have been given and documenting it. *The Trail* is in progress and we hope to publish shortly. Thanks to everyone who has got involved in this project inspired by Bradford being the City of Culture 2025.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 15 January 7.30pm in Kirklands. Do come along if you are interested and can give some time to this project. For more information, contact Marilyn on 874220.



FRIDAY 13TH DECEMBER - 7PM

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BY THE



fairfax singers

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A VIEW FROM THE PAVEMENT

As a subscriber to this magazine, I always read Dominic's View from the Pews with considerable interest, so I was intrigued to read the editor's caution. (*Page 3 November edition*).

Only that morning I had been told of the tragic passing of a friend and colleague who, quite unexpectedly as far as we were aware, had taken his life with an overdose.

Dominic's thoughts helped me come to terms with the grief and I was able to offer some comfort to my colleagues. The only advice I presumed to give was:-

- First to try to maintain your own wellbeing and fitness. Should you not do so, then you will not be able to give the support to his family and friends that I know you wish to give.
- Accept help if offered
- Ask for help if necessary. Not everyone understands or wants to know!

We must all learn to listen more, recognise when help and support is appropriate - as Robin Williams shrewdly points out, many people find it difficult to ask and often hide their plight.

Dale Smith, Craven Park



CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

Ever wonder where many of our Christmas traditions come from? A surprising amount of our modern Christmas celebrations can be traced back to the well-loved story of 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens. When you read 'A Christmas Carol', you discover almost a template of the 'ideal Christmas' which we still hold dear today.



**Sunday 8th December - 9.30am & 11am
Gift Services**

Services of worship and thanksgiving during which we collect gifts for families in Leeds and Bradford who need our support.



**Saturday 14th December - 2pm
Zest Christmas Workshop**

Join us at St John's for Christmas crafting and an informal family service. Christmas fun for all ages!



**Thursday 19th December - 7pm
The Longest Night**

A reflective Christmas service for all who find this time of year difficult.



**Sunday 22nd December - 4pm
Carols by Candlelight**

Sing classic Christmas carols and listen to the Christmas story by candlelight.



**Christmas Eve - 4pm
Crib Service**

Come along and hear about the wonder of the first-ever Christmas! Why not come dressed as your favourite nativity character? Great for all the family.



**Christmas Eve - 11.30pm
Midnight Communion**

Join us for a traditional Midnight Communion as we enter Christmas Day.



**Christmas Day - 10am
Christmas Communion**

Bring your guests and join us as we celebrate the joy and hope of Christmas!



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WITH
ST JOHN'S, MENSTON

www.stjohnmenston.org.uk



Worship this month

1 Dec ADVENT SUNDAY

Readings: Jeremiah 33: 12-16; Luke 21: 25-36

Reader: Glenys Prince

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

8 Dec The Second Sunday of ADVENT~ Gift Sunday

Readings: Malachi 3: 1-12; Luke 3: 1-6

Reader: Dominic Hall

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

15 Dec The Third Sunday of ADVENT

Readings: Zephaniah 3: 14-end; Luke 3: 7-18

Reader: Wendy Thornhill

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

22 Dec The Fourth Sunday of ADVENT

Readings: Micah 5: 2-5a; Luke 1: 39-45

Reader: Diane Beaumont

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

4.00pm Carols by Candlelight

24 Dec CHRISTMAS EVE *Reader: volunteer for 11.30pm*

4.00pm Crib Service

11.30pm Midnight Communion

25 Dec CHRISTMAS DAY *Reader: volunteer*

10.00am Christmas Communion

29 Dec The First Sunday of CHRISTMAS
Readings: 1 Samuel 2: 18-20, 26; Luke 2: 41-end
Reader: Heather Greig

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

5 Jan EPIPHANY ~ Methodist Covenant Service

9.30am Zest

10.30am *Covenant Service at Menston Methodist Church*

12 Jan The BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Readings: Isaiah 43: 1-7; Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22

Reader: Elizabeth Leopold

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

19 Jan The Second Sunday of EPIPHANY
Christian Unity Service

Readings: Isaiah 62: 1-5; John 2: 1-11

Reader: Julie West

9.30am Zest - joined by Menston Methodist Church

11.00am Parish Eucharist - joined by Menston Methodist Church

26 Jan The Third Sunday of EPIPHANY

Readings: Nehemiah 8: 1-3,5-6,8-10; Luke 4: 14-21

Reader: David Machin

9.30am Zest

11.00am Parish Eucharist

MID-WEEK SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Thursday **December: 5 / 12 / 19 / NB: there will be no**

9.30am **communion service on Thursday 26 December.**

January: 2 / 9 / 16 / 23 / 30

PCC Notes ~ Jan Woodland

The PCC met in October. Jo began the meeting with a welcome, biblical reflection and prayer.

COVENANT SERVICE at Menston Methodist Church has been confirmed as Sunday 4 January, so no 11am service at St John's. The Methodists will join us on 19 January for the week of Christian Unity. The invitation will include both Zest and 11am services.

FINANCE UPDATE Treasurer Iain Johnson had produced a new spreadsheet summary which was very well received. *Bank balance* at the end of September 2024 was £22,897.50. The over spend amount for the year so far was - £3,856.42 but will be reduced in October following an expected Gift Aid payment of £2,500. Jo and Iain will meet to consider the whole financial picture of the parish.

Generous Church Working Group The donation station is ongoing but can only be used for purchases. An anonymous donation to purchase a Collec Tin, allowing card payment donations to be made whenever the church is open, has been received. Jo proposed that the Generous Church group should form a new group or Finance Strategy Sub Committee, to try to boost our income and reduce our costs. PCC members were asked to consider volunteering.

A possible Stewardship campaign sometime in 2025 was discussed.

Church leaflets, including information about legacies, are to be refreshed.

The feasibility of hiring the church out as a venue in order to help increase our income was discussed. Staffing and insurance would need to be considered.

The porch roof tile has been fixed.

Churchyard The Parish Council covered the cost of having the churchyard grass cut. Bradford Council will take over the mowing in the spring. Church volunteers will continue to maintain the flower beds and Garden of Remembrance. Bradford Council have also secured the gravestones.

A quote for repairing the sloping path has been received. A grant application will be submitted to the Parish Council.

Safeguarding information posters have been put on the back of toilet doors in church and the Parish Room to allow people who need a private space to note down contact details.

Future PCC Meetings Jo proposed that PCC meetings are reduced to every other month during 2025, with extraordinary meetings if required in between and sub-committees to report back more efficiently on specific topics. Legally we only need to meet 4 times a year.

The meeting ended with prayer.

See pages 12/13 for full Christmas service details.

This month:

3 December 2.15pm Advent Miscellany in church led by Jo, our Vicar, and hopefully with members of Guiseley MU.

At our last meeting in November we enjoyed a talk by Mrs Gill Peterson on her time in the Brazilian jungle many years ago when, as a trained teacher, she spent six months teaching the children of American missionaries who were working out there translating parts of the Bible into the local language. As well as living with the English-speaking community, she interacted with the local natives and learned about their lives and joined in with their activities. She had many amusing stories to relate concerning the challenges she faced in the jungle, such as floods, lack of transport, long treks on foot, and the occasional tarantula or other specimen of wild life to confront!

16 Days of Activism

This campaign by the Mothers' Union is held every year from 25 November to 10 December, to highlight the awareness of physical and/or sexual violence against women. Bradford Area of Leeds Diocese are planning an event on Tuesday 26 November at 11.30am in St Paul's Church, Kirkgate, Shipley, BD18 3EH. Local MU members will be meeting outside the church with placards before going inside for a time of prayer. Other churches are being asked to display placards during the 16 days.

2025 - 7 January 2.15pm Subscription Afternoon – with 'bring & share refreshments'. Members are asked to bring along a favourite baking recipe with a few samples for others to enjoy.

We wish all our members a Happy Christmas and New Year, and look forward to continuing our fellowship together at St John's for as long as we are able.

Marjorie Boddy & Ann Dixon

A Good Read by Dominic Hall

As the nights get darker, it is a perfect excuse to curl up on the sofa with a good book. You might find some of the following to your taste, I hope so.



After a life in broadcasting, there is little that David Dimbleby doesn't know about the media landscape. In *'Keep Talking'* Dimbleby gives us an insight into the world he has known for nearly seventy years. His thoughts on the BBC and wider public service broadcasting deserve to be heard and he writes with the assured calm and wit we have come to expect from a titan of the industry.

In *'The Listening Service'*, Radio 3 broadcaster, Tom Service, looks at how music works and finds themes that go across genres and help develop our understanding of how essential music is to our lives. The book is potted episodes of his radio programme and contains recommendations of recordings to increase our knowledge and experience. Each chapter includes a QR code link to the full corresponding Radio 3 broadcast.

My war related book this time is Daniel Finkelstein's astonishing account of his family's extraordinary survival through the grip of Nazism and Soviet communism. *'Hitler, Stalin, Mum and Dad'* tells a tale of good luck, bad luck, hardship, struggle and survival with energy, verve and not a little pride. We know the story will be dour and heartrending, but it is also inspirational and ultimately hugely satisfying to know the strength of ordinary people.

The UK is a land speckled with churches. Peter Ross writes about some of the more interesting churches in our land

(Continued on page 19)

and equally the interesting people involved with them. In *'Steeple Chasing'*, Ross introduces us to the builders, preservers and protectors of these important buildings as well as some of the traditions born from the people who have lived, worked and worshipped in them.

My final recommendation is *'I, Julian'* by Clare Gilbert. It is the story of Julian of Norwich told in the first person. The telling is so vivid you can hear Julian's voice from nigh on 700 years ago as fresh as if she were sitting next to you.

What we know of Julian is somewhat limited, but Gilbert has researched the time and area around Norwich to breathe vitality into this tale. There is trauma and heartbreak but also love and hope – which in many cases makes it a perfect book for a dark winter's night.

I hope, as ever, there is something here for you to enjoy and I am always happy to take recommendations for future books to read. There are currently only nineteen on my 'to read' pile!

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

Did you know that mince pies have been traditional English Christmas fare since the Middle Ages, when meat was a key ingredient? The addition of spices, suet and alcohol to meat came about because it was an alternative to salting and smoking in order to preserve the food. Mince pies used to be a different shape – cradle-shaped with a pastry baby Jesus on top.



Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

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

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

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



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



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

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



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

Come and meet
everyone!



A normal home in Bethlehem.



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



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

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



CHURCH OFFICERS' QUIZ

The questions are all anagrams of the names of people who hold office in a church, most but not all of whom are members of the clergy. Can you work them out? Some are easy but others may be more challenging.

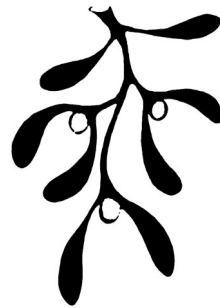


1. ACNON
2. EIIMNRST
3. ACCDEHONR
4. ADEERR
5. AGINORST
6. APORST
7. ACCDEHHNRRUW
8. EEGRRV
9. ABDEENPRRY
10. ABEFFGHINOPRSSU (two words)

Thanks to Heather Greig for another quiz. Answers can be found (upside down) on page 22.

ANOTHER CHRISTMAS TRADITION

Did you know that the word 'mistletoe' means dung on a tree? The Anglo-Saxons thought that mistletoe grew in trees where birds had left their droppings. Mistel means dung.



FROM THE REGISTERS

HOLY BAPTISM

19 January

We welcome into the Lord's family:

Spencer Hewitt

FUNERAL SERVICES

2 December

We commend into the hands of Almighty God:

Charlotte Mary Wood

ALTAR FLOWERS

2025

12 January

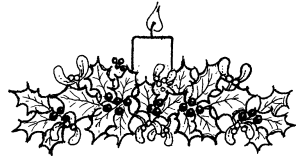
Jenny Steele

19 January

Jan Alexander

2 February

Judith Knaggs



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

We shall begin to decorate the church for the Christmas services on Friday 20 December - 9.30am. Donations of variegated holly would be most welcome to help decorate the windowsills. Please leave at the back of church by *Thursday 19 December*.

Light Up St John's – Floodlight Sponsorship

Now that the dark winter nights have arrived this is a very special way to mark an anniversary or simply to give thanks. The cost is £5 per evening and helps cover the costs of floodlighting the church from dusk -10.30pm.

16 Dec

Remembering our son with love

22-24 Dec

Christmas memories of Marie Glennon, much loved wife, mum and nanna.

31 Dec & 1 Jan

David Boyes (DB) who loved New Year. Loved and missed - Cath and family.

1 Jan

Remembering my father with love on his birthday

21 Jan

Remembering our son David with love

Contact the Parish Office to make arrangements: 872433
or email office@stjohnmenston.org.uk

Church Officers' Quiz answers: 1 Canon; 2 Ministers; 3 Archdeacons; 4 Readers; 5 Organists; 6 Pastors; 7 Churchwardens; 8 Vergers; 9 Prebendary; 10 Suffragan Bishop.

NOTICE BOARD

THE PARISH OFFICE will be open on the following dates in December:

- Thursday 5 December, 9.30am - 12pm.
- Wednesday 11 December, 9.30am - 12pm (please note change of day - the office is closed Thursday 12 December)
- Thursday 19 December, 9.30am - 12pm.

The office is then closed for Christmas and New Year, reopening at 9.30am on Thursday 2 January.

If you need to come into the office but cannot make it on one of the above days, please contact the administrator to arrange another time (office@stjohnmenston.org.uk / 07440 289248).



MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS for 2025 are due to be collected with the delivery of the *February* magazines.

The cost of the magazine remains at *£1 per copy, £10 for the year*. Please make cheques payable to **'Menston PCC'**.

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

- cash
- cheque or
- BACS (Bank Transfer)

Details with the February magazine.

Thank you for subscribing to the magazine during 2024. Please contact the Parish Office if you wish to arrange a **postal delivery** which will include a charge to cover second class postage.

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

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everything!”

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Done Right
•
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- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
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| ✓ Repair cracks and holes | ✓ Build flat pack furniture | ✓ Power-washing |
| ✓ Joinery | ✓ Replace sealant | ✓ Clear out garage |
| ✓ Put up shelving | ✓ Put up light fixtures | |
| ✓ Hang pictures | ✓ Replace light bulbs | |
| ✓ Help with computers | ✓ Mow lawns | |

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