

April - May 2025

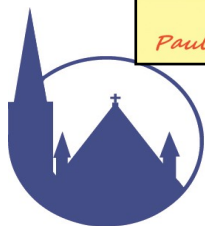
Number 706

The Messenger

The magazine of the Bridge Church, Otley

Risen Christ,
you filled your disciples with
boldness and fresh hope:
strengthen us to proclaim
your risen life and fill us
with your peace,
to the glory of God the Father

Paul Judson



The Bridge Church

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH IN OTLEY

The official Magazine of the
Bridge United Reformed Church, Otley
Minister:- Reverend Jason McCullagh
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Messenger letter

Dear Friends,

The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." I certainly felt that recently as I prepared to depart from Rome following my visit there as part of the Roman Catholic / United Reformed Church Dialogue Group. Following URC policy to not fly if other means of transport are available, we made this trip by train. We left Rome, on time, at 7:30am and travelled to Milan, then from Milan to Zurich, then from Zurich to Paris and then from Paris to London arriving, on time, at 10:30pm. The journey was a delight, the views, especially through the Alps, were breathtaking, I read, worked, talked, slept, and ate. It all reminded me that, sometimes, the journeying is more important than the destination!

We have now concluded our Lenten journey, a reflective journey that prepares us to celebrate Easter. Lent is a journey in which we go without, we take up, we make amends, we pray. Lent is journey of self-examination in which we seek to draw closer to God. Now, we embark on a new journey - the journey of Holy Week. This is a short journey that begins on Palm Sunday and moves through each day of the week ending on Holy Saturday. Holy Week is not an easy journey. It begins in celebration but is then shaped by anger, generous hospitality, teaching, betrayal, trial, death, mourning and desolation. It is not an easy journey, but it is a journey that we must make if we are to truly understand the Christ we seek to follow.

With the dawn of Easter Sunday, a new journey begins. An empty tomb heralds a moment of life-changing excitement -

resurrection! When we embrace resurrection, a new life begins! Now we live a life of possibility, of hope, of forgiveness, of courage, of love - without condition or restriction. We live as Easter people!

Our whole life is made up of a series of journeys, some may be made by train, others are more spiritual. There is no greater spiritual journey than the one we make from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. This journey shapes our faith, gives it meaning and grounds it in the reality of our lives. I pray that you will have the courage to take the first step that is required to make this journey. I pray that that first step will lead you through a Holy Week that touches your soul, an Easter celebration that fires your heart, and a resurrection life that brings you abundant joy.

All that this requires is one step towards God!

With love,

Jason



The
**United
Reformed
Church**



**MINISTER'S REGISTER:
10th FEBRUARY – 13th APRIL 2025**

FUNERALS

10th March

Mrs Muriel Roast The Bridge Church
 Lawnswood Crematorium

PREACHING PLAN
14th April – 8th June 2025

Monday 14th April – Holy Week

The Reverend Jason McCullagh
12 Noon – Meditation
7pm – Meditation

Tuesday 15th April – Holy Week

The Reverend Jason McCullagh
12 Noon – Meditation
7pm – Meditation

Wednesday 16th April – Holy Week

The Reverend Jason McCullagh
12 Noon – Meditation
7pm – Meditation

Thursday 17th April – Maundy Thursday

The Reverend Jason McCullagh
8pm – Tenebrae

Friday 18th April – Good Friday

The Reverend Jason McCullagh
10:30am – Meditation

12 noon – Churches Together Prayers – The Chevin Cross

Sunday 20th April – Easter Sunday

Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Reverend Jason McCullagh
Luke 24. 1-12

Sunday 27th April – Second Sunday of Easter

Taste and See Service

The Reverend Jason McCullagh
John 20. 19-31

Sunday 4th May – Third Sunday of Easter

Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Reverend Jason McCullagh
John 21. 1-19

Sunday 11th May – Fourth Sunday of Easter

Mrs Helen Windsor

Jason is leading the Yorkshire Synod's Youth Gathering

Sunday 18th May – Fifth Sunday of Easter

The Reverend Geoff Ellis

Jason is on holiday.

Sunday 25th May – Sixth Sunday of Easter

The Reverend Sam Sheehan

Jason is preaching elsewhere in the Synod

Sunday 1st June – Seventh Sunday of Easter Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

Acts 16. 16-34

Sunday 8th June – Feast of Pentecost All Age Service

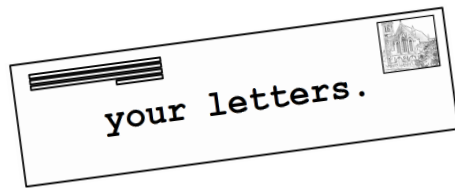
The Reverend Jason McCullagh

Acts 2. 1-21

Hollybush TCV—Church Charity News

We all got a bit giddy recently at the grand unveiling of the Hollybush Project's new bucket barrow! Traditional barrows can be a bit heavy and cumbersome for group gardening, so this is going to make a huge difference - a big thanks to the funders that enabled us to buy this exciting bit of kit.





Dear Friends

I would like to express my thanks to all the church for your very generous donation on my retirement as Church Treasurer. We are in desperate need of new garden furniture, so I will be spending the money on providing comfy seats for sitting outside in the summer months (I hope this summer is better than last!). Anne also sends her thanks for the beautiful flowers which she received.

I have been Treasurer for over 35 years and a serving elder for 52 years so it is a big change for me. It felt very strange last Sunday sitting in the pews before worship, rather than being in the Vestry, and going to shake the minister's hand at the end of worship rather than collecting the offertory plates from the front!

It has been an enormous privilege to serve as Elder & Treasurer of the Bridge Church and I thank you all for the support which you have given me, and for all the good wishes I have received on my retirement. I will still be around undertaking all my other responsibilities, so I am not disappearing!

Alison and her team are taking over from me and I wish them well as they shoulder those responsibilities.

Again, many thanks and best wishes.

Andrew Howard

Dear Friends

I would like to say thank you to the ladies who baked a lovely cake on the occasion of my 100th birthday. Everyone said how lovely it looked and tasted.

I had a lovely party and it was good to have my family around me, my son lives locally, my brother and family from down south and my sister who came over from Australia. I feel a bit of a fraud because I don't feel 100!

I did write earlier but didn't get to send it in time, then I broke my phone and couldn't ring anybody, and then finished up in hospital.

I am now feeling much better so I hope to see you all again very soon. I would also like to say thank you for the lovely flowers I received.

Joan Wiseman

(we were delighted to see Joan worship with us recently and also to see her presented with a certificate commemorating 80 years of membership!)

Dear Friends

I would like to say thank you for the best wishes and thoughts; sent and prayers offered since late November following my hip replacement operation. As I was recovering from that my younger sister - Marjorie - was discharged home from St. James Hospital with a maximum care package. The flowers received from church have been greatly appreciated.

Marjorie never really recovered from the varied illnesses with which she had been diagnosed; she died in her sleep on March 9th. Her funeral is being held at Rawdon Crematorium in early April. Your continuing thoughts and prayers are appreciated as Wes and I are involved in helping our extended family in the coming weeks.

May you all continue to enjoy the blessings of God in your journey of faith.

Jennifer Kennedy

NEXT MESSENGER

Material for the next edition of the Messenger should be in the hands of the Editor by Sunday, 22nd June and will be available for collection on Sunday, 8th June 2025

If possible, please send by e-mail to:

messenger@otleybridgechurch.org.uk

A promotional poster for the Yorkshire Sculpture Park Big Day Out. The background is light blue with a sun in the top left, clouds, and birds. The text is centered and reads: "SATURDAY 17 MAY" in yellow, "YORKSHIRE SCULPTURE PARK" in large green letters, and "BIG DAY OUT" in large, colorful block letters (B is green, I is red, G is yellow). In the top right corner is the logo for The United Reformed Church Yorkshire, which features a stylized cross and the text "The United Reformed Church Yorkshire".

SATURDAY 17 MAY

**YORKSHIRE
SCULPTURE PARK**

**BIG
DAY OUT**

A chance to visit the Yorkshire Sculpture Park has been organised by the Synod for all URC churches. We are invited to join for a day of activities for all ages.

Tickets for the day are £5.50 for adults over 26, 19 -25 years £3.50 and under 18"s are free. Activities are provided from 10.30a.m.-2.30p.m.

If you would like further information please see John Eveleigh or Isobel Evans

SALEM CINEMA

You are warmly invited to come to the movies!

Salem Cinema takes place at 7pm on the last Saturday of each month at Salem Church Hall. The films are recent and there is an interval with refreshments.

There will be a cinema on 29th April and 31st May.
If you would like to know what the films are, or if you would like a lift, please speak to Jason.

FUTURE OF T CLUB

I would like to share with church the decision that was made at our AGM in February.

Due to the declining numbers attending T Club it was decided by the membership that the Summer Dinner in June will be the last ever T Club meeting.

We will not be restarting in September.

This is not a decision that was taken lightly, but we felt we could no longer invite outside speakers due to poor attendance.

T Club does not appeal to younger people and we are unable to attract new members therefore we agreed T Club should end.

Sadly this is the end of an era but hopefully something different will eventually replace it.

Thank you,

Anne Howard

JOAN WISEMAN - EIGHTY YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP

At our morning service on 21st February we were delighted to celebrate Joan Wiseman's eighty years of membership and service to The Bridge Church.

In October 2024 we celebrated Joan's 100th birthday - and a few months later we recognised her 80th anniversary of her becoming a member of the then Otley Congregational Church.

Joan is pictured holding her certificate with our Minister, Jason and Church secretary, John.



Women's Meeting

On **Monday 3rd February** we had a very interesting talk from the Zarach Charity which was founded in 2017 by Bex Wilson, who is a schoolteacher. She started this charity as a result of questioning a 10 year old pupil, who she thought was 'not quite himself'. It transpired that he did not have a bed to sleep on at home!

The charity started in Leeds but has now spread to cover areas such as the Tees Valley, Liverpool and parts of Cheshire.

Several companies - Silentnight, Redrow Homes and Harrisons Beds support the charity by supplying beds, mattresses, bedding and pyjamas free of charge! The charity say that the children's improvement has been amazing,

Amy Green took us ably through the work and story behind the Zarach Charity- a wonderful idea and a real success story!

On **Monday 17th February** we welcomed Kath Padgett to talk about her 'Irish Adventure'. In January 1965, she took part along with her friend Helene Kitching in a competition at Prince Henrys Grammar School. They were surprised when they were announced as the winners.

The prize was a Gypsy Caravan holiday in County Cork in the Republic of Ireland. They flew out in August from Yeadon to Cork, stayed one night in a bed and breakfast and then on to meet 'Bonnie' the horse and started off on their adventure, staying on a farm. They travelled to Cork, the last port of call for the Titanic and on to Blarney, where they kissed the stone! The horse was quite well behaved which was a blessing as they were very inexperienced. On their return they had to give talks to other pupils.

In 2019, Kath went on a cruise which had to be diverted due to storms, and she returned to Cork - her first visit since 1965. it was a very nostalgic occasion for her. It was a very amusing and entertaining talk!

On **Monday 3rd March** we had Mirella to talk to us which was lovely as her 'New Year Message' talk on January 6th had to be cancelled because of the snow.

The title of this talk was 'May contain Turkish Delight' stayed mainly with the original theme, with jokes from Christmas Crackers, Quality Street and of course Turkish Delight. Mirella pointed out that many historic events occurred on March 3rd, including the day that Queen Elizabeth II ascended to the throne!

Mirella told us that she had been to see 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' the day before the snow came, and she pointed out that there were many connections with things in the Bible! We ended with a hymn followed by tea and biscuits, which were not in demand as everyone was full with the sweets!!

On **Monday 17th March**, Jason opened our meeting with a hymn, prayer and a story about Abraham and Sarah. Then we listened to our guest speaker for the day, Denise Adlard, who had come to talk to us about Cicely Saunders. She began her talk by announcing that Jason was her first ever 'warm up' act!! Denise volunteers at Manorlands Hospice in Oxenhope and gave a very interesting, and sometimes amusing talk about Cicely, who was born in 1918 and was responsible for starting the modern hospice movement in 1967. She studied at Cambridge initially and then left and went to London to train to be a nurse. She eventually returned to Cambridge and became a 'Lady Almoner' (A social worker).

She became involved with a Polish Jew, and fell in love, but sadly he died and she then became a 'Born again Christian'. In 1957 she qualified as a doctor and met another Polish gentleman, who was terminally ill and then he too died. She felt the need for a place for people who were dying to peacefully end their days. In 1963 her brother found a site with a building which was deemed suitable for development-

so work began! Eventually in 1967, after raising £185,000 St Christopher's Hospice was completed. The very first modern day hospice opened. A wonderful legacy!

ANDREW HOWARD STANDS DOWN AFTER 35 YEARS AS TREASURER ... NOT FORGETTING 50+ YEARS AS AN ELDER!

At our Annual General Meeting our Church Treasurer, Andrew Howard, stepped down from the role - he had held the position for 35 years! Andrew is also stepping down as a serving elder - a role he has carried out for over fifty years.

Jason paid tribute for the years of dedicated service and thanked Andrew on behalf of the church. Jason presented a gift from members, and flowers to Anne in recognition of her support over many years.

Andrew reminisced about some of the challenges that he has had to handle as Church Treasurer including: a major fire, the pandemic, complications with bank closures and new Charity Commission rules and regulations.

Andrew will remain actively involved with the church including preparing the weekly notices, looking after the archives and remaining as a member of the Building Commission.



We had a good crowd in for the April meeting of Food & Friends.



A few hours of fellowship, coffee, chat, a talk from a guest speaker and, of course a lovely hot meal.

Food & Friends meet on the first Wednesday every month - from 10.30am.

Young Peoples Pages

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Lk 22:1-13, Mt 26:14-19, Mk 14:10-16

It was just before Passover, when Jews celebrate God rescuing them from Egypt. Jesus and his disciples were in Jerusalem..

The Chief Priests were plotting



How can we get rid of Jesus?
He always has crowds around him.

Jesus' disciple Judas came to them...



I could help you.

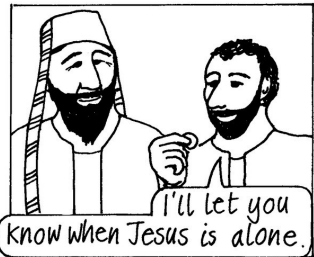
We'd be happy to pay you



How much?



30 silver coins happened to be the same amount that had to be paid as compensation to the owner if a slave was killed Ex.31:32



I'll let you know when Jesus is alone.

Meanwhile, Peter and John asked Jesus...



Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal?

Go into the city and follow the man carrying a water jar to his home

They did, and asked the house owner



Our teacher wants to know where he can eat the Passover meal with his disciples

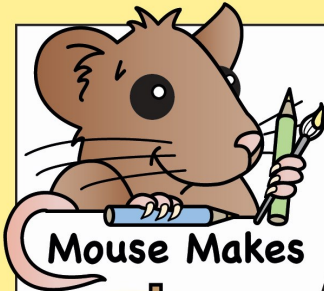


Peter and John got the meal ready



That evening, Jesus and his 12 disciples went to the room to eat the Passover meal.





Mouse Makes



On the cross Jesus opened wide his arms for us.
Jesus put an end to death by dying for us,
and showed us the resurrection to
come by His raising to new life!



Jesus is risen!

The angel said:
"Jesus ...is not here, for He
has risen, just as He said."
Matthew 28:6

Jesus is here

Jesus said:
"Where two or three
come together
in my name I am
there with them."
Matthew 18:20



READ the story of
the resurrection in:
Matthew 28:1-10
Mark 16:1-19
Luke 24:1-49
John 20:1-29
and 21:1-14



REDEEMER
EASTERPI
SAVIOURS
ULTIMJAE
RIEDELIN
RVJESUSS
EEWBSPEP
CCLOISSN
THOSANNA
IRROHYEU
OIDNPWS
NSGOTELL
KTAFOAIO
IYOGJCFR
NUJOYEEB
GOODNEWS



Jesus will come again!

Jesus said:
"I will come back
and take you to
myself so that you
will be where I am."
John 14:3



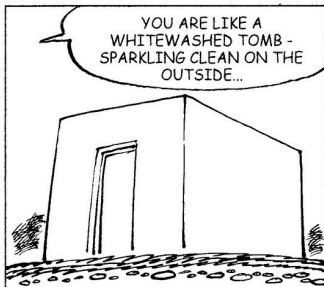
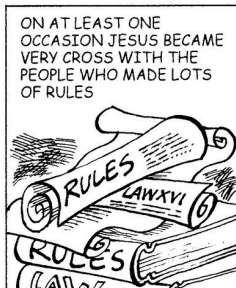
JESUS • ALIVE • RISEN
LORD • SAVIOUR • KING
RESURRECTION
PEACE • NEW LIFE • JOY • GOOD NEWS • GO TELL • EASTER



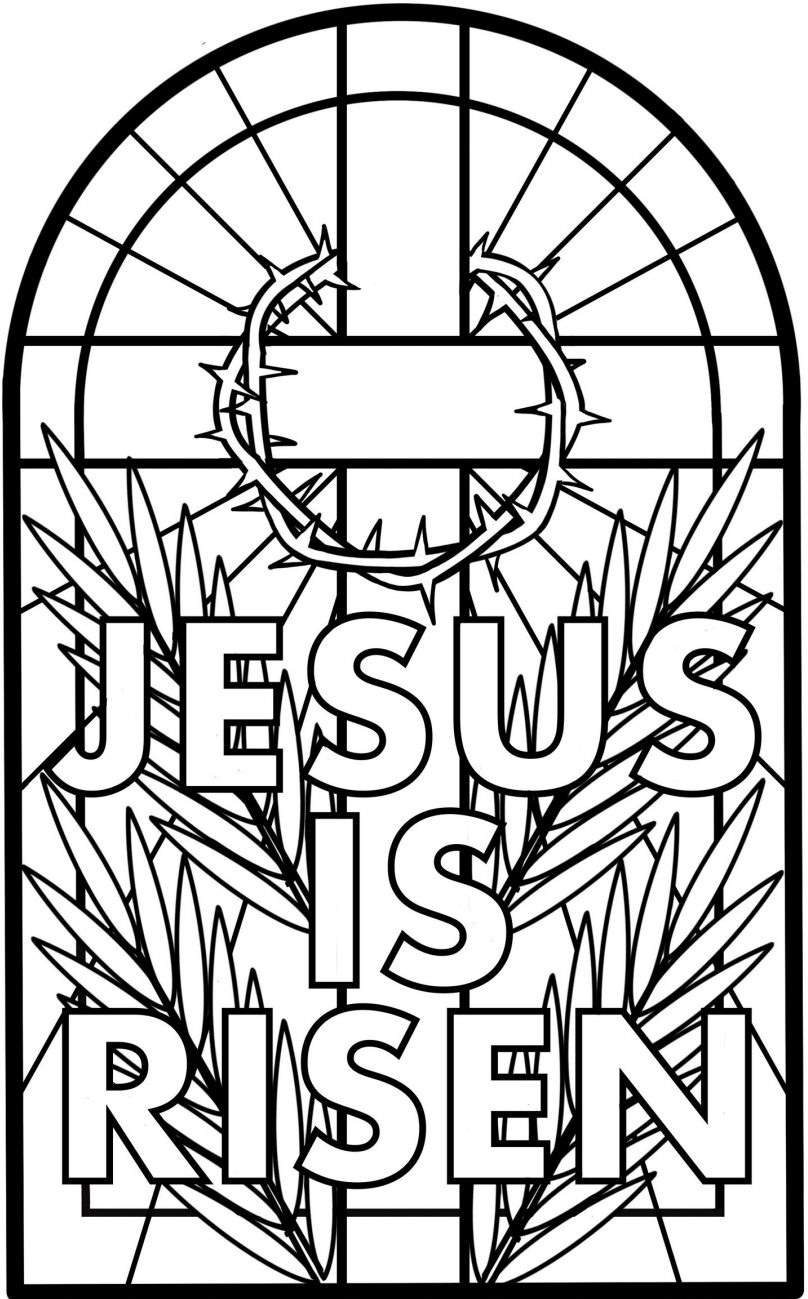
MESSIAH • REDEEMER
CHRIST • SON OF GOD
HOSANNA • PRAISE



"Some tough talking"



See Matthew 23.23-27



This is the final short commentary on the gospels written by Canon Paul Hardingham taken from Parish Pump.

What's the Big Idea? - An Introduction to the Books of the New Testament: John

'John's Gospel is like a pool in which a child may wade and an elephant can swim. It is for the beginner in the faith and for the mature Christian.' (Leon Morris).

The Apostle John is usually credited with the authorship of this Gospel, writing in Ephesus at the end of the First Century. His purpose is *'that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.'* (20:31). Throughout he stresses the deity of Christ and presents Jesus as the Son of God.

In the prologue (1:1-14) Jesus is presented as the pre-existent and incarnate Word of God revealed by the Father. It also highlights how He has come as light into the world, so that those who believe in Him will not remain in darkness (12:46).

The heart of John's narrative contains 7 *signs* or miracles, which demonstrate who Jesus is and demonstrating His transforming power over creation and people: turning water into wine (2:1-11); healing the royal official's son (4:46-54); healing the paralytic (5:1-18); feeding the 5000 (6:1-14); walking on the water (6:16-21); healing of the man born blind (9:1-41) and raising Lazarus (11:1-44).

After these signs, the story moves into the upper room discourses followed by the story of His death and resurrection. The whole Gospel is a revelation of the glory of God's only Son, who comes to reveal the Father and then returns in glory to the Father. It can be well summed up in the famous verse: *'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 3:16).

In the next edition we will include similar commentary on the book of Job from the Old Testament

INCLUSIVITY AT THE BRIDGE CHURCH

One of the topics discussed at a recent elders meeting was how inclusive is the Bridge Church for neurodiverse members of the community. Colin Whitaker found this item and thought it worthy of publication.

Autistic people are indispensable members of the body of Christ. During neurodiversity celebration week, Triona Brading shared her experience of church as an autistic Christian – and tips for making church a place autistic people feel welcome

Church has always been a part of my life, having grown up with Christian parents and grandparents. It was a stable and routine part of my week, and I found it incredibly disconcerting if we were ever away on a Sunday.

I am autistic. Routine and predictability can bring a lot of comfort and peace in a world that sometimes feels difficult to navigate. I love church – and not just for the routine! I would say that church is one of the places in which I am most truly myself and feel surrounded by people who love and care for me. There is so much that is brilliant about church, and so much that is difficult as an autistic person. There is so much that is brilliant about church, and so much that is difficult as an autistic person

One of my biggest sensitivities is to noise. For some autistic people our brain doesn't distinguish which auditory information is most important, so we hear all sounds at the same volume. In contrast, someone who has a typically developed brain will hear the important information with background noise reduced. When you can't differentiate between the multiple sounds and voices in a room, it takes a lot more time to understand what someone is saying, as well as feeling physically painful.

This makes conversation in a noisy environment such as pre or post church service challenging and exhausting. It's not just at church itself; I was in a café with friends after church and had to ask them to repeat themselves several times until I ended up just smiling and hoping that fitted with whatever they were telling me. The same day I stared blankly at someone who asked how I was, and then carried

on with what I was doing. My brain had not turned the sounds that left their mouth into comprehensible words, and so there was a long delay between their question and my response.

I have also been known to think that someone is speaking another language to me, when in fact it is just that my auditory processing has been completely overwhelmed in that moment. The first time this happened I raised my frustration at this rudeness, much to the other person's confusion! Now I understand what is happening and can usually explain that I am struggling to process sound.

There is also so much socialising involved in church life – another area that is a challenge for autistic people. It's a myth that autistic people don't want social interaction; though some of us prefer time alone, we are all humans and made for relationships by a relational God. This doesn't mean that socialising is always easy. It is part of the diagnostic criteria for autism that we have social communication difficulties.

I have learned ways to manage over the years, as well as becoming increasingly confident that, with my core identity firmly rooted in Christ, I have the freedom to appear different to others at times, and I don't need to mask (hide my autistic traits in order to appear neurotypical).

This means that there may be times when I politely explain that I am hitting the end of my capacity and I am going to move to a more practical or less conversational task such as packing down chairs. It also means that if I misunderstand a joke, take something too literally or forget to use the correct tone of voice (very easy to do when you are tired and there's a lot of sensory input all around you) I know this does not affect my status as part of the church family or, more importantly, as a child of God. My moments of weakness allow others to show grace and make it very obvious that all I do is done in God's strength and not my own. My moments of weakness allow others to show grace and make it very obvious that all I do is done in God's strength.

If you are looking to make your church a place that autistic people can feel safe, welcomed and loved, begin with these tips:

- Get to know us individually. Our diagnosis might communicate some key information, but it can't possibly tell you everything about who we are.
- Think about our sensory needs. You might not be aware of it but the sensory environment could be a barrier to our worship and belonging.
- Be aware of our social needs. We are made for relationships just like you.
- Be aware of our spiritual needs. Teach us, disciple us and pray for us.
- Show grace. Like you, we need it.
- These tips apply to autistic people with all levels of support needs, which is why they are a brilliant springboard to get you thinking. My experience will be different to the experiences of others, and it is so important to remember that every autistic person bears the image of God and is an indispensable member of the body of Christ.
- If you would like to know more, organisations like Through the Roof are great sources of information and support. As a Roofbreaker disability champion, I have released some autism and neurodiversity videos to support churches in understanding and supporting autistic individuals.

About Triona Brading

Triona is the special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinator for her church network as well as a ministry trainee at her church, St Michael's Fulwell. She is a Roofbreaker disability champion at Through The Roof, where she also uses her experience as an autistic Christian to create content about autism and the church.



The Bridge Church is grateful to have received funding from the Community Fund of National Lottery, in acknowledgement and support of our on-going community work.

**Saturday
26th April
2025
7:30pm**

Doors open at 7:00pm



**Spring Concert
Hebden Bridge Band
at The Bridge Church
Bridge Street, Otley, LS21 1RW**

Admission £10 on the door

Accompanied U16's free

**Proceeds to the Hollybush Project for Adults with
Learning Disability, the church charity this year.**



GETTING TO KNOW GORDON JUSTHAM AND MAUREEN STRINGER

The editors thought it would be a good idea to find out a little bit more about our two recently elected elders , Gordon Justham and Maureen Stringer.

GORDON JUSTHAM

How long have you lived in Otley?

We returned to Otley in July 2022 having moved away in January 1992. We originally moved to Otley from Linlithgow in central Scotland in the autumn of 1983.

What first brought you to the Bridge Church?

The notice board outside the church at the time referred to the creation of the URC by the merger of the congregational church and the presbyterian church in England. Having previously worshipped in the Church of Scotland it seemed logical that we should at least try the Bridge Church.



A favourite memory of the Bridge Church?

I really enjoyed participating in the family church productions. The nativity by Dorothy L Sayers – “He that should come” - was a particular favourite: probably because I played Joseph.

What is your favourite hymn and why?

“At the name of Jesus” to the tune “Camberwell”. I first heard it at a Scripture Union summer camp in the mid 1960s at Arthog by the Mawdach Estuary in mid Wales. It just struck a chord with me and whenever I hear it (or sing it) I can still picture the marquee full of people singing.

How would you like to see the Bridge Church develop?

Worship is an important element of being a Christian.

However Sunday mornings can be difficult for many families. Perhaps we could record the Sunday service and make it available for streaming. I appreciate there would be a number of technical issues to achieving this but I think it should be investigated.

What can you tell us about your working career?

My working life was spent in Financial Services. I initially started as a trainee actuary with Standard Life in their pensions department in Edinburgh before moving to join a Pension's Consultancy firm in Glasgow. After I had qualified as an actuary and became a Fellow of the Faculty of Actuaries I was invited by my employer to move to Leeds. This was in 1983 to run their pension's team in Leeds which, at that time, was based in Rawdon. A subsequent career move took me to Birmingham where I spent the best part of 30 years advising Company's regarding their defined benefit pension schemes.

What hobbies do you have?

Playing Bridge at Ilkley Bridge Club. Doing the Times cryptic crossword and challenging Sodokos. Live theatre and listening to music (classical and opera)

Where is your favourite place in our country?

Anywhere with a nice view: the top of a mountain or a coastal village. I was at the summit of Helvellyn in glorious sunshine but with a very strong wind to celebrate my 70th. Places like Salcombe or Fowey in Cornwall are particular favourites.

Where in the world would you like to visit?

I have been fortunate to travel to many places in the world. The view from Glacier Point in Yosemite National Park, California is truly awesome. However one place I have always fancied going to is Machu Picchu in Peru

If you could invite 3 people to dinner (dead or alive) who would they be and why

Jesus; because I'd really like to meet him in the flesh – its, perhaps, the doubting Thomas within me.

Richard Wagner: - it's never over until the fat lady sings. He had a tremendous talent at writing the librettos and music for large scale operas built mainly around themes from Norse and German mythology. He is not everyone's cup of tea and his personality might be challenging. However I would just like to meet him.

Professor Brian Cox: theoretical physicist and polymath. I am very interested in cosmology and the universe. In particular the concepts of Dark Matter and Dark Energy, both of which are relatively new in our understanding of creation. Brian Cox has the ability to make difficult physics easy to understand.

These three guests at my dinner part would create a lively discussion!!!

MAUREEN STRINGER

How long have you lived in Otley?

I have lived in Otley for just over 2 years. Previous to that I lived in York for 20 years and 34 years were spent in Horsforth, where my 3 children were brought up.

What first brought you to the Bridge Church?

It had been nearly 20 years since I had been involved with any church other than special events. I was a practising Methodist for 30 years, when I moved to York nowhere seemed to suit me. Before I moved to Otley I started taking my granddaughter to Toddlers at the Bridge and the blue door that is synonymous with toddlers. There I met Isobel who introduced me to lots of people. Everyone was so welcoming and friendly. The rest is history.



What is your favourite memory of the Bridge Church?

I think this was when I attended one of the social events that happened. It was such good fun in good company and everyone was so happy (which means a lot in today's

world) Helping with the Scarecrows and Teas on the Lawn.

What is your favourite hymn and why?

The Lord is my Shepherd - because when I have had dark times in my life, this hymn was always one that I would recite to myself! It brought me comfort and made me feel safe and calm.

How would you like to see the Bridge Church develop?

I would like to reach out to others to show them that we are a progressive church and not a stationary one and set in our ways. We are willing to make changes to make others welcome. If only they would step over the threshold and let us show them. (I know it's easier said than done!). If we continue to develop what we already have and encourage others to help us along the way, then I am sure we can move and build on that.

What can you tell us about your working career?

I left school at 14 in July. But as my birthday falls in August. I had to wait until then to start work. I went straight to work the day after. I worked in the upholstery trade. This is where I met my husband, after we married I gave up work to bring up my family. When my youngest child started secondary school I got a job in the primary school that she had just left. I worked there for 26 years. When I first started there I worked with special needs children. I worked with them until they left at 11 so for 7 years. I then thought I would have to get another job, but that was not to be as I moved into another job within school. As time went on things in school changed and I was asked to work in the school's office as support and ended up as Office Manager until I retired.

What hobbies do you have?

My hobbies are quite general really, they are the usual knitting, sewing and crafting. I also love singing and have sung in many choirs. I like to read books that take me on a journey to foreign parts, light hearted and funny.

Where is your favourite place in our country?

My very favourite places are Robin Hoods Bay and Whitby.

When we were younger we used to walk the cinder track to Whitby from Robin Hoods Bay but as the years wore on we had to travel by bus. It is such a peaceful place. You can unwind, relax and forget about everything. It's like being in a little world of your own.

Where in the world would you like to visit?

A place I would like to visit is Canada. When I was in primary school one of my teachers was from Canada and through our Geography lessons she brought it alive.

If you could invite 3 people to dinner (dead or alive) who would they be and why?

Princess Anne, I think she sees a lot but keeps her thoughts to herself. Her faith has helped her through some rough times. Elvis Presley, because despite everything that happened to him I believe he had a great faith.

Ken Dodd, he would bring happiness to the evening. He also was deeply moved by his thoughts on life.

THE BRIDGE CHURCH AGM

We had a great attendance at our AGM in February. Following a superb meal prepared by our Catering Team, and an act of worship, which included a review of the year, we met to consider church business.

Amongst the items discussed were:

- a proposed heritage project for the church
- elected 2 new elders and re-elected 5 others and elected and re-elected our church officers
- received and adopted the Annual Report and Financial Statement.
- appointed and re-appointed members to a range of different roles within the church
- received the Minister's annual report; and
- said 'thank you' to Andrew Howard our outgoing Church Treasurer - for his 35 years service in the role.

A full and very productive evening!

CHURCH DIARY - APRIL - MAY 2025

Weekly events

The Bridge Cafe - Every Thursday at 2p.m.

Parents & Toddlers - Every Thursday and Friday at 9.30 a.m.

Quiet Communion - Every Wednesday at 10 a.m.

Regular Events

Women's Meeting

April 14th - Like Nana Did - setting up an eco-friendly shop—
Jo Lyons .

April 28th - Piano music for Spring - Ros Cunningham

May 12th - AGM followed by tea and cakes

June 2nd - Stories of the Sea in words and song - Barnacle
Phil

Food and Friends 1st Wednesday of each month at 10.30 a.m.

MaY 7TH and June 4th.

T Club - 4th Thursday of each Month

April 24th - Prickly Pigs Hedgehog rescue - Diane Cook.

May 22nd - The Great Glen Canoe Trail - Iain Paterson

Supper Club—3rd Thursday of each month at 7.30 p.m.

April 10th - AGM

May 15th - Bowls Evening followed by buffet at the Yew
Tree.

Singing for Fun - alternate Mondays at 7.30 p.m.

28th April, 12th May, 2nd June

Messy Church - 10th May.

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