

August - September 2026

Number 714

The Messenger

The magazine of the Bridge Church, Otley



The Bridge Church

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH IN OTLEY

The official Magazine of the
Bridge United Reformed Church, Otley

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Dear all,

And just like that, six months have passed. It feels like only yesterday that I was thanking you for welcoming me into my role as Children and Families Support Worker. My probation period is now complete, and I am looking forward to being formally welcomed at the Harvest Festival Service in September. Thank you for your prayers and encouragement as I have settled in; they have truly strengthened me. I hope you will continue to pray for me and support the new ventures and plans that emerge as my role unfolds. I continue to pray that this appointment will prove fruitful in the day-to-day life of The Bridge Church here in Otley, in ways I cannot yet imagine.

Recently, as part of my role, I attended a URC Youth and Children Support Workers Synod retreat at Ampleforth Abbey. It was a whole 24 hours away from the usual day-to-day tasks and chores — no cooking, tidying or working — wonderful!

I felt very privileged to have time to reflect, meet others who work and volunteer across the Synod, and explore our values in such a beautiful setting. It was a real gift to worship, pray and learn there. Although we had our own conference room, there was also an opportunity to join the community of around 30 Benedictine monks in their rhythm of prayer. I ended one day and began the next with prayer and reflection on Psalms and Bible passages, in a place where Benedictine prayer has been offered for over one hundred and twenty-five years. That sense of long, faithful prayer rhythm left me feeling rooted, calm and reassured of God's faithfulness through the years.

During one of our sessions, we used a pack of 50 cards, each printed with a positive value. The task was to discard some cards and discern which values felt most vital in our everyday life and work. It was much harder than it first sounded. At

first I thought I'd be concentrating on values such as Generosity, Activism, Intuition, Growth, Compassion, Hope, Collaboration, Integrity or Justice. I quickly set aside the card marked "Heritage" without much thought about it. However, as the session continued, I realised this was something God was nudging me to explore during my retreat.

I found myself reflecting on Christian Heritage: my personal journey as a Christian, within my own family, within our community and town, and across the wider history of Christianity in the British Isles. God has remained faithful through the highs and lows of the worldwide Church for over 2,000 years. I was reassured that His faithfulness continues today at The Bridge Church and in the town of Otley today and that there is much work to be done in engaging families in that experience and opening up the hope and comfort that is found through a relationship with Christ and within a church community.

The Church has never disappeared from society; Christian voices are still heard in many areas of life. For me, it is important that we continue to share this heritage and faith in a loving God, especially with those who struggle with Church, feel rejected by the Church, or wonder whether Church is still relevant today. The community at The Bridge shows how much it is still needed and relied upon within the life of Otley.

I look forward to journeying with you as we explore God's plans for families at The Bridge Church over the next three years. I hope to hear your thoughts, visions, ideas and inspirations for children and families connected with the church. I am planning some dates to meet to start this process off. I hope you can support me by coming along and sharing your ideas. Some questions that we could consider are "Can we invite more families to experience the Church's heritage and discover its purpose within the community?" and "Can the Church become more relevant to families in Otley today?". It is exciting to be part of that unfolding story, where heritage helps shape the future and opens doors to exploring our own faith and spreading hope and love in the community. I'm looking forward to working more closely with you all.

Many blessings for your summer plans,

Ailsa

Children and Families Support Worker

THE BRIDGE CHURCH
PREACHING PLAN
9th August – 11th October 2026

Sunday 16th August – Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost

Jason is on holiday.

The Service will be conducted by the Reverend Michael Mewis

Sunday 23rd August – Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Sacrament of Baptism and Songs of Praise

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

Sunday 30th August – Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Jason is on holiday.

The Service will be conducted by Gordon Justham

Sunday 6th September – Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

Exodus 12. 1-14

Sunday 13th September – Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Harvest Festival Parade Service

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

Psalm 24. 1-2

Sunday 20th September – Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost

Jason is on holiday.

The Service will be conducted by the Reverend Mirella Moxon

Sunday 27th September – Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Taste and See – World Wildlife Day

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

Genesis 6. 18-20

Sunday 4th October - Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

Exodus 20. 1-4, 7-9, 12-20

Sunday 11th October – Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Jason is preaching elsewhere in the Yorkshire Synod
The Service will be conducted by John Eveleigh

MINISTER'S REGISTER

1st June – 30th July 2026

FUNERALS

22nd June - Mrs. Jessie Eager - Rawdon Crematorium

26th June - Mrs. Jean Jackson - The Bridge Church

29th June - Mrs. Joan Wiseman - The Bridge Church

8th July - Mr. Gordon Parker -Cottingley Hall Crematorium

9th July - Mr. Maurice 'Brad' Bradshaw - Rawdon Crematorium

30th July - Mr. John Carter - The Bridge Church



Prayer Breakfast



OTLEY CHURCHES TOGETHER

PRAYER BREAKFASTS

SATURDAY 5th SEPTEMBER
8am at The Bridge Church

&

SATURDAY 3rd OCTOBER at
Otley Parish Church

*Come and enjoy breakfast and
fellowship with Christians from
around the town.*

News of the Family

100th Birthday

Our congratulations and very best wishes go to Edwin Webster who celebrated his 100th birthday on the 31st of July. Edwin and his family have had a long association with the Bridge Church over the years, and he will be known to many of us. We hope you enjoyed however you celebrated such a special milestone birthday.

Wedding Anniversary

Margaret and Richard Thompson recently celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary, having been married on the 29th of July 1966. Their wedding was held at Trinity Congregational Church in Woodhouse Lane, which is a mirror image of the Bridge Church architecturally. Apparently, it was a truly momentous day with everyone being on tenterhooks as it was the day before England played in the World Cup football final!



We send love and congratulations to you both, and we hope you enjoyed celebrating your special anniversary.

New Arrivals

Happy news for Dorothy Clegg, who became a Great Grandmother for the fourth time when Olivia Alice Clegg was born on the 25th June 2026 at Airedale General Hospital.

Education

A few of our young people are having changes in their school lives from September, including Alex Paterson, George Bettie and Lilia Richardson, who are all starting at Prince Henry's Grammar School. Alex is moving from Askwith Primary School, George from The Whartons, and Lilia from Ashfield. Also, it will be a big day for Maisy Read when she starts at St Oswald's C. of E. School in Guiseley, having completed her time at a Pre-School in Horsforth.

We wish all our young people well as they start their next school year, whether they are moving schools and getting to make new friends in new places, or just moving up a year.

Do please continue to pass on any items of good news you wish to share in The Messenger to any of the Pastoral Elders.

Margaret Armitage.

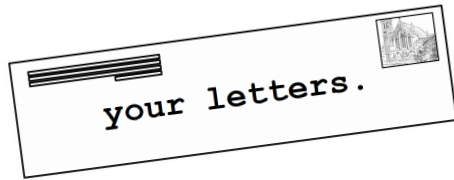


BRIDGE CHURCH PROJECT AWARDED MAJOR GRANT

The Bridge Church is pleased to announce that The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded a grant of £250,000 for the project that they have been developing. Entitled 'Breathing new life into our church, community and environment for a sustainable future', the project seeks to engage the community in a significant heritage and environmental programme and will enable the church to replace its 126-year-old roof on the sanctuary building and install solar panels on the church hall.

Using money raised by National Lottery players, The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports projects that connect people and communities with the UK's heritage. Our project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to ensure that we deliver an innovative community engagement programme and the significant capital project.

John Eveleigh, Church Secretary said 'we are so grateful to The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and we are now looking forward to delivering this exciting scheme, in partnership with our local community'.



Dear Friends

We would like to thank everyone at the Bridge Church for all your kindness and support during Mum's recent illness and subsequently, our bereavement. With special thanks to Margaret Armitage who gave support throughout and to Jason for a lovely funeral service. Mum would have been delighted that so many people attended the service and wake afterwards.

With sincere gratitude

Elaine, Wendy & Andrew Jackson



**The Bridge Church are supporting English Heritage's
Heritage Open Days again this year, and we plan to
have the church open on:**

SATURDAY 12th SEPTEMBER (10am – 4pm)

&

SUNDAY 13th SEPTEMBER (Noon – 4pm).

If you can help steward the event or serve refreshments,
please sign up (sheet in the north transept)

TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO

Just over 200 years ago Salem Chapel, Otley was opened. The congregation finally had a home of their own. The new chapel had to be licensed by the County Magistrates who granted permission on 13th May 1826 for it to be a 'preaching house by those who are of the persuasion commonly called Independents.' The church had no minister at the time. They had to wait a further three years before they were in a position to call a minister.



The newspaper, The Leeds Intelligencer, reported the occasion.

Leeds Intelligencer Thursday 26th May 1826

"The new Independent Chapel was opened at Otley, yesterday week, by the Rev. James Parsons, of York, in the morning; by the Rev. Mr Scott of Cleckheaton, in the afternoon; and the Rev. R.W. Hamilton, of Leeds in the evening; on which occasion the collections made at the three services, amounted to £76 8s 5d."

My Notes:

James Parsons (1799-1877) was minister of Lendal Chapel, York & ordained on 24th Oct 1822. Lendal was replaced by Salem Chapel, York.

Rev James Scott, minister in Cleckheaton

Rev RW Hamilton (1794-c1848), minister of Albion Chapel, Leeds – later replaced by Belgrave Chapel.

'Yesterday week' was presumably Wednesday 18th May 1826. The Chapel was licensed by Magistrates on 13th May 1826.

Andrew Howard

Women's Meeting

On Monday 1st June we had Gill Hunter MBE to talk to about her 'life in Malawi'. Gill studied at Hull University, her choice as she failed French, and Hull was one of the universities that would accept you without a foreign language. After a short spell at home, her wanderings began - she was in a kibbutz, then went to Bombay, and then Australia. On her return to England she taught at Nottingham Boys High School.

Once again her travelling began; travelling to Nigeria where she played golf and taught in a school. Eventually her work took her to Malawi, a very poor country about the same size as England. She also hitched-hiked to the Victoria Falls. She came back to England, but returned to Malawi two years later, she taught there and said it was a joy to teach the young people as they were so keen to learn. This was part of her two years Voluntary Service Overseas. She lived in a little bungalow and all the roads were like dirt tracks.

All in all, Gill has ventured backwards and forwards to Malawi six times. The last time was in 2022, where she met one of her students who had just recently retired! She helped with charities and schools and had obviously made it her life's ambition to educate young people there, many who have gone on to have high powered jobs. A very interesting talk!

Pam Bradley

On Monday 15th June we held our final meeting of the season. We welcomed Unity Ukes, a group of Ukelele and other instrument players and singers. We were thoroughly entertained with very well known songs from the 50's, 60's and more recent tunes including Tommy Steele, The Eagles, Freddie and the Dreamers, The Searchers and of course Elvis Presley.

We joined in singing, tapping our feet and even wanting to get up and dance because we knew the songs and they brought back happy memories.

As always, we ended our last meeting with fresh cream cake and strawberries, as well as homemade shortbread biscuits

and pieces of chocolate cake. We have had a very good year with a variety of speakers thanks to our Secretary Sylvia Sutcliffe who always had a long list of speakers to contact. She has retired now but will be always welcomed as a member as will Dorothy Clegg, our "birthday card" member.

We look forward to our first meeting on 7th September 2026 and extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to join us.

Carol Smith

Children and Families - Next Steps

Everyone's ideas are needed!!

Come and join me for just one or two or all four of these meetings – I'd like to meet with as many people as possible:

Tuesday 4th August 7pm Large Hall
Tuesday 11th August 2pm Large Hall
Monday 17th August 2pm Large Hall
Thursday 10th September 7pm Large Hall

Come and share your ideas, thoughts and dreams (and hear some of mine) for the Bridge Church and the Community of Otley. Let's think about ways to support families and develop existing work within the Bridge Church and beyond. Each meeting will take about an hour. If you can't make a meeting but have ideas, please talk to me or email your suggestions.

Many Thanks,

Ailsa Cummins
Children and Families Support Worker
ailsa.cummins@otleybridgechurch.org.uk

A DAY OF JOYFUL SINGING

IN April, Bilton Grange URC, Harrogate, generously hosted an amazing and uplifting musical event attended by members from all eight of our Mission and Care group churches.

We were all probably rather apprehensive of how the day would unfold and if our contribution, however small, would be acceptable. We need not have worried! After an opening prayer we were magically and ably lead by Mike Leigh, a trained opera singer turned Anglican priest. Jason and Mike had met whilst ministering in Scarborough and were part of 'the Singing Vicars' group.



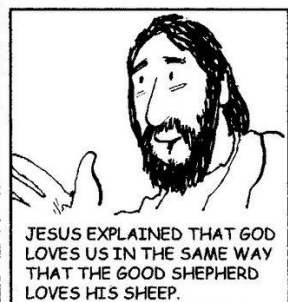
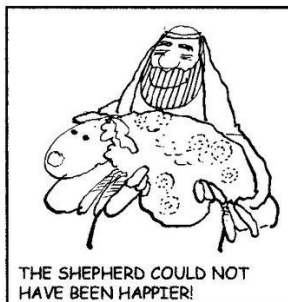
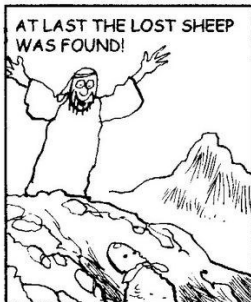
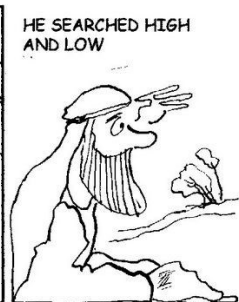
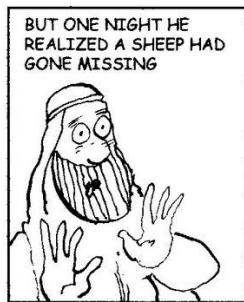
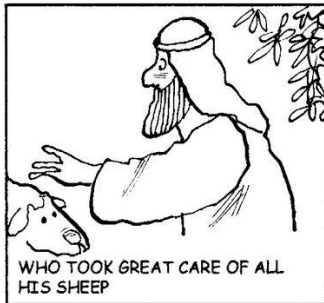
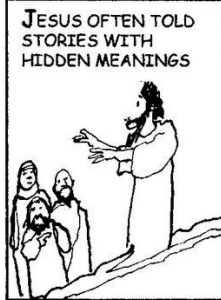
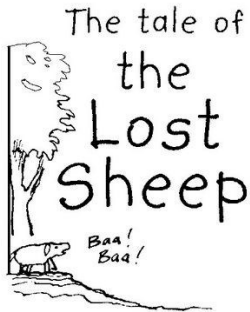
Chairs were arranged in a circle around the room and Mike encouraged us to wriggle and shake and move around to shed our stresses, strains and tensions. Once seated he limbered up our voices with a number called 'Bella Mamma', familiar to some of us. By singing this as a round with three different voice parts we began to appreciate the effects of harmony and the depth of resonance that combined voices could produce.

Mike introduced us to a range of songs, not all in our own tongue. They each had a mission and a theme like fighting for freedom from oppression and Apartheid in South Africa, or the hope for freedom from slavery on the plantations of the West Indies and Southern USA. Amazingly, with Mike's leading voice and guidance, we mostly managed to remember our part, enjoy the rhythms, and blend together to produce some beautiful sounds. What an experience - so rewarding working as a team.

If you have the opportunity to join a similar event in the future do go and share the experience. You would feel the benefit I'm sure. Singing can change how we feel and can make the world seem a better place. God Bless.

Tricia Cooke

Young Peoples Pages



Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 7: 1-10, Matthew 8: 5-13

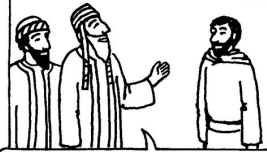
When the Romans invaded Israel, they used soldiers to keep order. For the centurion in Capernaum it was more than just a job...

The centurion had a young servant who was in great pain and dying.



When he heard that Jesus was near, he asked the town leaders to ask Jesus for help.

The leaders told Jesus..



This man deserves your help. He loves our people.

He has even built us a meeting place!



This could have been a tricky situation, for Jews never went into the houses of non-Jews.



But Jesus said..

I will go and heal the boy.



But the centurion knew that, as a Jew, Jesus could not go into the houses of non-Jews so as Jesus got near, he sent some friends to him.



He says he isn't worthy enough for you to come to his house.

But he says he understands authority and knows you have it. You only have to say so and his servant will be healed

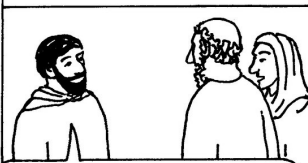


Jesus was amazed!



I have never met anyone in Israel with as much faith.

He said to the friends...



You may go now. What he has believed has happened.

When the friends got to the house they found the servant completely healed!



THE TRUE VINE

Who is the vine?

John 15:1

What does Jesus ask us to do?

"Go and bear

John 15:16

What happens to the branches that do not remain in the vine?

Thrown into the

and

John 15:6

How many times does Jesus use the word **FRUIT**?



READ
John 15:1-17

What does Jesus command?

To one another.

John 15:12,17

How many times does Jesus command us to **LOVE** one another?

H T H R O W N A W A Y
I R A B I D E W I S B
D U F R U I T F U L U
N E R A J S I A M J R
C V U N F C U T V P N
L J I C W I T H E R S
E O T H O P J E S U S
A Y V W R L C R O N V
N G A R D E N E R E I
O S F J E S I S W S N
E R E M A I N F I R E

JESUS • I AM • TRUE • VINE • FATHER
GARDENER • FRUIT • FRUITFUL
BRANCH • PRUNES • CUT • WITHERS
CLEAN • THROWN AWAY • FIRE • BURNS
REMAIN • ABIDE • DISCIPLES • JOY

i	s	v	p	g	z	k	u	s	c	j	q	g
l	d	p	w	a	c	l	r	q	c	e	a	h
m	p	i	o	h	r	z	u	u	s	s	l	a
c	l	c	r	i	p	p	l	e	d	u	l	r
v	a	k	t	p	r	i	e	s	t	s	o	v
s	n	e	h	m	a	s	s	t	a	w	w	e
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t	e	w	a	n	b	b	y	n	n	e	a	i
r	e	h	d	i	r	b	u	h	l	o	v	n
i	p	n	w	h	e	a	t	a	a	p	i	g
c	i	f	m	k	a	t	e	n	w	l	d	o
k	x	o	o	b	d	h	b	d	s	e	t	q

allowed

healed

harvesting

sheep

kindness

plans

question

wheat

disciples

Sabbath

break

people

rules

trick

Jesus

priests

crippled

bread

Pharisees

David

picked

hand

worth

laws



We have had some excellent speakers this year, all very different but most interesting. Followed of course by some excellent food.

Our speaker on April 1st was Malcolm Johnson describing his learning to drive at the age of 50+. A tale of both courage and tenacity where he persisted and against all the odds succeeded. He had never felt the need to drive before because he was a keen runner and, although his work took him to various locations he always used public transport and ran to complete his journey. Then the distances got too great for this method so he took up a challenge to learn to drive in one week for a television programme. It all went pretty badly really, so much so that by the time his test day arrived his nervousness disappeared. He just 'went for it' and to his, and his instructor's amazement he passed. He is now a competent driver and has no regrets about taking a very public challenge.

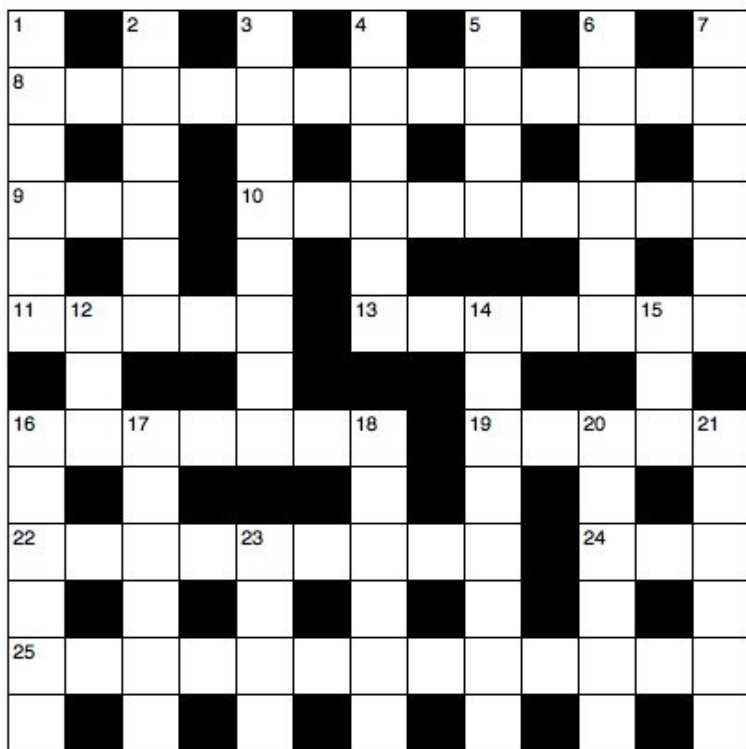
In May we welcomed a speaker from the Yorkshire Air Ambulance. This very interesting, and surprising talk, explained that this organisation is completely funded by public donations. It is now a very sophisticated service offering specialist care under very testing conditions. The costs of providing this service is huge, the equipment and professional staff are equal to hospital care even on occasions performing urgent surgery en-route.

Our June meeting was all about the activities at The Bridge Church, presented by John Eveleigh and Colin Whittaker. It is wonderful to see how much goes on here and how welcoming the church is to the people of Otley. We have many groups that meet here as well as our own activities that happen thanks to the many people who volunteer to organise them.

At our July meeting we welcomed the Prince Henry's Senior School Choir who had just completed a tour in the Lake District. The programme was amazing and very professional. Many thanks to the staff but mostly to the students who give up their own time to practice a very polished performance. They all seem to enjoy coming to sing for us and we all, both ourselves and the choir, hope to welcome them again in December for a Christmas programme.

Enid Taylor

BIBLE CROSSWORD



Across

8 One of the titles given to the Messiah in Isaiah's prediction (Isaiah 9:6) (6,2,5)

9 International Nepal Fellowship (1,1,1)

10 Single (1 Corinthians 7:27) (9)

11 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's seminal book about Soviet prison camps, The — Archipelago (5)

13 Treachery (2 Kings 11:14) (7)

16 Of India (anag.) (2,3,2)

19 'God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the —' (1 Corinthians 4:9) (5)

22 Follower of a theological system characterized by a strong belief in predestination (9)

24 'Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms to—the ropes' (Jeremiah 38:12) (3)

25 They brought together all the elders of the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 4:29) (5,3,5)

Down

- 1 The season when kings 'go off to war' (2 Samuel 11:1) (6)
- 2 Simon Peter's response to Jesus by the Sea of Galilee: 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a — man' (Luke 5:8) (6)
- 3 Beaten with whips (1 Kings 12:11) (8)
- 4 'You shall not — adultery' (Exodus 20:14) (6)
- 5 Encourage (Hebrews 10:24) (4)
- 6 Service of morning prayer in the Church of England (6)
- 7 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and — — him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving' (4,2)
- 12 Run(anag.)(3)
- 14 Member of 17th-century party that denied the right of autonomy to the Church (8)
- 15 'We will triumph with our tongues; we—our lips'(Psalm 12:4) (3)
- 16 Earnings(1 Corinthians 16:2)(6)
- 17 'I rejoice greatly in the Lord that—you have renewed your concern for me' (Philippians 4:10) (2,4)
- 18 How Paul described Philemon (Philemon 1)(6)
- 20 Multiple territories under the rule of a single state(Daniel 11:4) (6)
- 21 'You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women,— to Israel's guilt' (Ezra 10:10) (6)
- 23 This month(abbrev.)(4)

The Scarecrows return!

Once again the scarecrows have made the grounds of The Bridge Church their home for the summer. We have some returning friends as well as many new ones! We even have a celebrity sat on one of our benches - is he on his way back to his birth town - is he lost - or just decided that Otley is better? Does the Wise Owl in the tree have the answer!



Mrs Jean Jackson

*The Reverend Jason McCullagh delivered this eulogy for Jean.
It was written by her family.*

Jean Mary Bardsley was born in Halifax on 10th April 1943 and lived in Elland with her mum, Olive, dad, Geoff and older brother, John. Due to the nature of Geoff's job as a police constable, the family moved several times during Jean's childhood and lived in Wetherby, Pateley Bridge and Castleford when Geoff retired from the police force due to ill health. With Olive's help, Geoff subsequently ran a number of small businesses: a smallholding in Tyresal, a cafe in Laisterdyke, a shop in Delph and a bingo hall in Bradford which necessitated a move to Burley-in-Wharfedale.



As a result of these various moves, Jean attended several different schools. Her primary school years were spent at Bridgehouse Gate School in Pateley Bridge where she took the 11+ when she was only ten and subsequently went to Harrogate Grammar School for a short time. She then attended Pontefract High School and Pudsey Grammar School where she took her O Levels when she was only 15. Jean intended to do her A Levels, but when the family moved to Delph, she couldn't face moving to yet another school, so she left school at 16 and got a job as a Tax Officer with the Inland Revenue in Oldham where she met her future husband, Ted.

She also met Jean Ardern and Christine Taylor who became lifelong friends. They all loved reminiscing about their time in the Revenue as it was a great working environment with lots of laughs. It's also the place where Jean acquired the lifelong nicknamed 'Span' (short for Spaniel as her hair style at that time looked like Spaniel ears!). Jean married Ted on 5th March 1966 at the Parish Church in Burley-in-Wharfedale, where Jean's Mum and Dad were living. The newlyweds bought a house in Royton. Elaine was born in Oldham on 20th December 1966 (Yes, there is just nine months between the two events - Ted always joked they were too late going to the Family Planning Clinic!) Subsequently, Ted got a job in Leeds and the family moved to Otley to be closer to Jean's Mum and Dad.

After so much moving around in her earlier years, Jean remained in Otley for 56 years living in the same house on St Clair Road. Wendy was born on 10th March 1969, and Jean and Ted spent the next 18 years raising the girls and enjoying family life. They

became involved in the PTA at the girls' primary school and Jane took Elaine and Wendy to the Bridge Church in Otley where they attended Brownies, Guides, Kingfishers and Sunday school. Jean attended church services regularly as well as various social activities at the church and subsequently became a church member. In later life, Jean always looked forward to Women's Meeting, Food and Friends and the Memory Café.

Jean's Christian faith was important to her throughout her life and the church provided support and friendship through some difficult times when she was caring for Ted who unfortunately had issues with his mental health for many years and then later was diagnosed with dementia.

Andrew was born on 14th May 1990 when Jean was 47. He came as something of a shock, even to Mum's GP who assumed she was going through the menopause! Although unplanned, Andrew is a very welcome and much-loved addition to the family and was adored by Jean and Ted who were dedicated to helping him grow, develop and reach his full potential. They were both very proud of the man he has become.

In 1996, Jean sadly lost her much-loved brother John to leukaemia at the age of only 56, little knowing that she would many years later also be diagnosed with a form of blood cancer.

Although Jean had a busy family life, she found time to make lots of friends and also to enjoy an active social life. She was a Tawny Owl, (or 'Twany' Owl as one of the brownies called her on a Christmas card!), for the Brownie Pack at the Bridge Church for about 15 years alongside Lois Barltrop and Tina Johnson. They went on a number of fun-packed Pack Holidays to Wales and Northumberland.

When Ted had to give up work due to his ill-health, Jean had a number of part-time retail jobs and latterly worked as a ward clerk on an elderly care ward at Wharfedale General Hospital for around 15 years, a job she remembered fondly. She retired at 60, however continued to be very busy.

In her retirement, Jean joined the Otley Townswomen's Guild where she was Treasurer for many years. She had made lots of new friends and particularly enjoyed the walking group's weekly hikes, often bringing up the rear chatting with Heather Dorling. She also enjoyed the Gardners' Group, Lunch Club and Knit and Natter (in Jean's case more nattering the knitting!).

Once a month, on a Monday morning, Jean enjoyed getting together with the "Trouble Club", a group of friends who had known each other since their children were young. Jean, Ann, Pat, June, Sally, Dorothy and Pam would meet at a local cafe for a catch up and to share their troubles.

After Ted died in 2024, Jean and Andrew moved to Pool-in-

Wharfedale to be nearer to Elaine and Wendy. Jean was very happy there, making some new friends with her neighbours and at the lunch club at Wharfedale Court.

Jean was a kind and loyal friend and maintained friendships for many years. She was very sociable person who enjoyed the company of others and of course, a good chat, usually quite a long one as those of you who ever bumped into her in Otley will know! Jean developed a number of health issues as she grew older but always soldiered on and rarely complained. In March this year she was diagnosed with CNS lymphoma, a very aggressive and cruel type of cancer, and her decline was rapid but even through those last difficult weeks, she dealt with her illness in her own inimitable way before dying peacefully at Wheatfields Hospice.

Jean Jackson died on 31st May 2026 aged 83 years.

Her funeral service was held at The Bridge Church on Friday 26th June 2026.

Mrs Joan Wiseman

The Reverend Jason McCullagh delivered this eulogy for Joan. Joan wrote the eulogy and her family made a few additions.

Joan Brumfitt was born, at home, Poplar Cottage, Crows Lane, Otley, on 21st October 1924. Her parents were Harry and Mildred Austin, who, in 1926, founded Otley Cycle Club. Joan was the oldest of three children, her sister Sheila came along ten years later, and her brother David followed ten years after that. Joan attended North Parade School. Joan worshipped at the Parish Church until some friend brought her here and she was received into membership on 3rd December 1944. For the last five years she has been our longest serving church member, something we were very proud of, and I think she was too! She was honoured in 1994, when she had been a member for fifty years, and in 2024 when she had been a member for an incredible eighty years!



She held almost every role within the Women's Meeting, and she had great fun with Winnie Green visiting the sick. They would take some time getting round the list and only managed one or two a night, but if they wanted to know what was going on they would visit Mrs Meakins, the late Christine Campbell's mum, who would supply them with all the news! She cooked for the Men's Supper

Club, she was also involved in the Day Centre from the beginning and later she became a regular at Food and Friends, which she greatly enjoyed especially as it enabled her to meet up with her friend Doreen.

In 1945 she met Alfred North Wiseman at a dance, whilst he was at home on leave. They were married here on 19th June 1947, a marriage that lasted until Alfred's death on 4th January 2009. Sadly, Joan's father died a week before her first wedding anniversary. Alfred and Joan had two children, Susan born in 1950, and Robert in 1951. At first, they lived with family until moving into their first home on Kineholme Drive, before moving to West Busk Lane, where Joan would live for the next 65 years, until moving into Wharfeside Care Home.

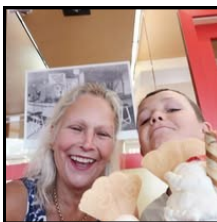
During the war years Joan worked for Compton Parkinsons in Guiseley, assembling parts for the Pluto Pipeline, under the ocean, for supplying fuel to the Normandy beaches, although she did not know that at the time! She would cycle over the Chevin to work, and back, every day! She also worked at Sinclair's and Oppenheimer's. For eighteen years she volunteered at St John's Ambulance, eventually becoming their Divisional Officer. It was the skills she learned through the St John's Ambulance which led her to work as a nurse at Otley Hospital. She also volunteered at Otley's Over 60s Club where she enjoyed Keep Fit – sometimes she even led it!

She also enjoyed eating out, which was latterly a challenge to Robert as her descriptions, and directions, to the pubs that she wanted to eat at left much to be desired!

Her sister, Sheila settled in Australia and Joan made five trips to see her, two on her own after Alfred died, the last trip when she was 90!

*Joan Wiseman died on 29th May 2026 aged 101 years.
Her funeral service was held at The Bridge Church on Monday 29th June 2026.*

SCARBOROUGH TRIP



We continue with articles by Canon Paul Hardingham about Old Testament books ...

An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Ecclesiastes

'Meaningless! Meaningless!' This is how the book of Ecclesiastes begins (1:2), as it examines the futility of human experience *'under the sun'*. The author is named as *'The Teacher'* (1:1, Hebrew *qoheleth*), traditionally identified with King Solomon. Although focusing on life in the physical world, the book ends with, *'Fear God and keep his commandments'* (12:13).

Ecclesiastes reminds us of the limitation of human wisdom, which cannot find meaning and purpose without God:

Our strivings *'under the sun'* can only lead to disillusionment (1:5–11). Therefore, we need to accept the life God gives us and enjoy it to the full.

Wisdom is given to those who please God (2:26). Such wisdom cannot solve all problems (1:16–18), or secure enduring reward (2:12–17). We cannot control our immediate future, resulting in uncertainty (6:12), and there are difficult questions about life and death itself (9:1–3). In response, we need to understand our human limitations before God.

God has ordered all things in their time; things we cannot change or fully anticipate: *'There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven'* (3:1–15).

However, the world is not fundamentally chaotic or irrational, as it is ordered by God: *'He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.'* (3:11). We should remember our Creator when we are young before the infirmities of advanced age stop us from enjoying the good things of life (12: 1–8).

In summary, Ecclesiastes shows us how to live meaningfully and joyfully by placing God at the centre of our life, while trusting and obeying our Creator.

THE ALPHABET OF EXCUSES NOT TO GO TO CHURCH

I would like to go to church but:

A is for Auntie who will come to tea.

B is for the Bed that won't release me!

C is for the Car for we do need fresh air.

D is for Dinner that Mum must prepare!

E is for Extremes both to high or too low.

F is for my Feelings, when they're right I go!

G is for Garden much nearer God's heart.

H is for my Husband who won't play his part!

I is for Intruders who sit in my pew.

J is for the Jealousy shown by a few!

K is all that Kneeling that tires me so much.

L is for the old Language, its so out of touch!

M is for Money, they always want more.

N is for the New Tunes we've not heard before!

O is for Overtime - its double time on Sunday.

P is for the Preparing, I must do for Monday!

Q is for Queer noises that come from the choir.

R is for the Rector, who should really retire!

S is for Sermon's, as dull as can be.

T is for the Tele, I really must see!

U is for the Unfriendliness that I always find

V is for the Voice of the woman behind!

W is for Weather - the rain or the snow

X is for the (E)xtras too busy to go!

Y is for the Young Rowdies that sit at the back.

Z is for Zeal, and that's just what I lack!

This was submitted by Nesta Burton. Nesta found this poem written in her mothers handwriting and believes that her Mother actually composed it!

NEXT MESSENGER

Material for the next edition of the Messenger should be in the hands of the Editor by Sunday, 27th September and should be available for collection on Sunday, 11th October, 2026.
If possible, please send by e-mail to:

LEEDS FAITH IN SCHOOLS AT PRINCE HENRY'S

Leeds Faith in Schools has had a long relationship with Prince Henry's Grammar School in Otley, employing workers to be in the school for around thirty years. This work has always been supported by Otley Churches Together, and, for our part, The Bridge Church has always made an annual financial contribution to LFiS to support this on-going work.



Up until recently the school has funded the work in the school, but the school's management informed LFiS last summer (2025) that from the academic year starting in September 2026 the school would be withdrawing funding. As a result, Churches Together rallied round and secured enough funding (about £7000 per annum) for the work to continue from September this year – which is great news.

However, the Otley Youth and Community Centre (OYCC) charity which oversees the Youth Drop-In which runs every Tuesday afternoon in term time in our church hall, has taken on the responsibility for attempting to put the on-going work in the school on a sustainable footing, and are now attempting to secure the necessary funding for the 2027/28 academic year, and are appealing for individuals in local churches to make a contribution. Would you be able to help?

The OYCC bank details are as follows;
Name - Otley Youth and Community Centre
Sort Code - 08 92 99
Account Number – 65886285

If you can help, you can pay money by bank transfer, or if you would prefer to make a cash donation, please see John Eveleigh, our Church Secretary.

OYCC is a registered charity, and so, if you are a taxpayer, therefore 'gift aid' can be applied to your donation – if you would like a gift aid form, again, please speak to John.

LFiS' work in Prince Henry's is highly regarded, so any support that you can give would be put to very good use.

CHURCH DIARY - AUGUST—OCTOBER 2026

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

September 7th - Opening Service - Rev. Jason McCullagh
September 21st - Three Highland Gardens - Janet
Niepokojczycka
October 5th - My House in Otley as a film set - Anne
Ridgeway.

Food and Friends - 1st Wednesday of each month
at 10.30 a.m.
September 2nd and October 7th.

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

September 17th - Quiz Night led by Gordon Justham

Strictly Social - 4th Thursday of each month at 7 pm
There is no meeting in September

Singing for Fun - alternate Mondays at 7.30 p.m.
14th and 28th September

Messy Church - 19th September.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 8, Prince of Peace. 9, INF. 10, Unmarried. 11, Gulag. 13, Treason. 16, In aid of. 19, Arena. 22, Calvinist. 24, Pad. 25, Moses and Aaron.
DOWN: 1, Spring. 2, Sinful. 3, Scourged. 4, Commit. 5, Spur. 6, Matins. 7, Feed on. 12, Urn. 14, Erastian. 15, Own. 16, Income. 17, At last. 18, Friend. 20, Empire. 21, Adding. 23, Inst.

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