



£1

The Parish Magazine

The faithful love of the LORD never ends!

His mercies never cease.

Great is his faithfulness;

His mercies begin afresh each morning.

Lamentations 3v22-23 (NLT)

FEBRUARY & MARCH 2024

www.melthamparish.co.uk

**Christmas Events
from around the
Parish.**



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Nature forms us; sin deforms us;
School informs us;
Christ transforms us.

– Anon

VICAR OF THE PARISH OF MELTHAM CHRIST THE KING

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Prayer for Growth

God of Mission
Who alone brings
growth to your
Church,
Send your Holy Spirit
to give
Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow
in numbers,
In spiritual commitment
to you,
And in service to our
local community,
Through Jesus Christ
our Lord.
Amen.



A note from the editor ...

Hello!

Welcome to our first February / March Parish Magazine. What a busy couple of month's it is going to be. Not only the start of Lent but Holy week and Easter too. Rev'd John has had to be very organised! So head over to the centre pages to see what services and events are in store!

Not only Easter but as the first edition of 2024 we also have a round up of events over Christmas too. (Pgs 30/31) There is a bumper update from the teams at the Crossroads (pg 10/11) and also what the choir is upto on pg 13. There really is something for everyone this month and I hope you enjoy it.

Please continue to give me your updates/poems or something you would like to share with others. They really do help make this a great read.

The deadline of the April/May magazine will be:

Monday 18th March 2024

Please send submissions via:

melthamparishmagazine@gmail.com

or

via the vicarage letterbox.
(150 Huddersfield Rd, HD9 4AL)

God Bless,
Fiona.

Meltham Prayer Chain

Meltham Prayer chain has representatives from every church in Meltham and serves to pray for any need or difficulty.

Confidentiality is always respected.

If you would like to ask for prayers to be said, please contact

Christine Rolls 340342

Hester Deacon 657069



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Letter from your Vicar

Christmas or Easter, which one is your favourite?

Of course, for many people the instinctive reaction is probably Christmas. Christmas is by far the biggest event of the year in our country and in much of the western world. Christmas is certainly the biggest consumer event of the year and is often referred to as “the saviour” of many retailers with billions of pounds being spent. Santa is a very busy man and mum and dad must help out though, it has been noted that if you were to take Christ out of Christmas all you would be left with is “M&S”.

There can be no doubt that the joy and fun of Christmas is a wonderful thing and that it is rightly enjoyed by all generations not just children. This year in Meltham there was a great deal of joy and fun and it was wonderful to have so many people come and join us at our Church events. I thank God for the success of all these events, but I am also extremely grateful to all the many people who gave up their time to help make them happen.

Whilst Santa is a very busy man, I read recently that in America they produce 5 million marshmallow chicks and bunny’s a day in preparation for Easter. I can only try to imagine how many chocolate eggs are being produce in our world right now.

In the Church at this time of year the joy and fun of Christmas begins to be replaced by the anticipation of Easter. Easter comes with more complex thoughts and feelings than the very natural joy of Christmas. There is the triumphant entry on Palm Sunday, Jesus’ last meal with his friends, Judas’ betrayal of Jesus, crucifixion and death on Good Friday, hopelessness and despair on Saturday, followed by resurrection hope and victory on Easter Day. I am grateful that we have Lent to think about these things and prepare ourselves.

Without Christmas there could never have been Easter but without Easter there would have been no point to Christmas. When the Son of God came to us at Christmas, he fully understood why he had come. For the Christmas Messiah to be our saviour, for the joy of Christmas to become a reality, the cross and resurrection of Easter had to happen. Jesus’ mission had to be completed.

This year Lent begins on Ash Wednesday the 14th of February, and we will be holding a service to help people mark the start of this period of preparation in St Bartholomew’s at 7:30pm that evening. I encourage you all to seek a fuller joy of both Christmas and Easter this Lent and if you would like to mark the start of that period by joining us at this service on Ash Wednesday you will be very welcome.

God bless

Reverend John Dracup (Vicar)





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GOING GREENER - Moving towards an Eco Church

'And God saw that the world and all that was in it, was very good.'

Genesis Ch 1v 31

I know it's late, but may I wish you all a Peaceful and slightly Greener New Year!

I was watching 'Pointless' a few weeks ago whilst making tea and the category of questions was titled – 'The Lazy Persons Guide to Saving the World'. My ears immediately pricked up! That sounds like something I might find useful. I went on GOOGLE and there it was – 'The United Nations', no less, so it must be good

There are four levels to aim for, starting at Level 1, which quite frankly I hope we are well past! Things to do from your sofa –

Use technology to stay informed on Green Matters – loads of good stuff on the 'net. Stop paper bills, pay on line. Try go paperless, using emails & texts where you can. 'Share' and don't just 'Like' any good articles you discover relating to Climate Change and the environment, you'll reach many more people.

I realise you may have to get up, but turn off the big light when you're watching TV. Use an extension cable with several sockets & turn them all off when you go to bed. Turn the thermostat down a couple of degrees, close the doors and throw a cosy blanket over your knees – it's nice to snuggle!

Draw the curtains, use the sausage dog draught excluder thing – they really do help. Wear a jumper or cardigan – nice! I find fingerless gloves very useful- I can still type or use the remote whilst keeping my hands warm.

Well, that wasn't too bad. **Level 2** requires a little more effort, but it's really a reminder of stuff we should all be doing as a matter of course by now!

Let your laundry dry naturally in the air and not in the tumble drier.

Take short showers. Bathtubs require gallons more water than a 5-10 minute shower.

Eat less meat, poultry and fish – go veggie more often.

Freeze fresh food and leftovers if you don't have time to eat it before it goes bad

Recycle, recycle, recycle as much as you can & buy goods with minimal packaging.

Replace old appliances with energy efficient models and light bulbs.

Get a rug - carpets and rugs help keep your house warm

Use eco friendly detergents and cleaning products. Don't bother to rinse your plates before using a dishwasher if you have one.

If you have the opportunities and the means, install solar panels to your house. This will reduce your electricity bill in the long term.

With thanks to the United Nations

Keep up the good work – God bless us in our efforts,

Jenny x

CROSSROADS CENTRE



The Crossroads shop continued to be busy throughout December with many items of clothing going for £1 or less.

A programme of refurbishment then began in the shop The first phase being done over the Christmas break. LED strip lighting has replaced the old strip lighting and the bays have been painted with new sign work added which has improved the working environment for staff. A disused toilet was capped off and shelving is to be built to extend the storage space. Plastering work was done in the kitchen and adjacent storage area and the kitchen units and a sink were replaced. Vinyl flooring has replaced old flooring that was becoming unsafe in the kitchen and toilet areas. A new till area has been installed and racks taken down from behind windows to allow more light into the shop. A blind has been purchased to cover the back of the children's display window to be used during cashing up and when the shop is closed.

Displays have been repositioned to create a men's clothing and accessories area and the women's accessories have been repositioned next to the women's clothing.

Windows and doors will be replaced over the coming months subject to planning permission and finally a new carpet will be laid.

The aim of the refurbishment is to provide a safe, warm environment for staff and customers, reduce energy bills, and enable the shop to be sustainable over the next few decades with increased security.

The foodbank has been extremely busy, and we are pleased to welcome some new volunteers. Food parcels were particularly generous over the Christmas period and were given out to 69 foodbank clients along with a Christmas hamper. 41 hampers were also delivered to families suggested by 3 local primary schools as well as 30 Christmas dinners being supplied. Reverse advent calendars throughout November and December from Meltham Methodist and Wilshaw churches yielded food for Christmas and beyond. The Holme Valley Lions donated 4 generous vouchers, and Ali at Meltham Barbers gave away 15 free haircuts. Taylor Transol gave a very generous food donation, Meltham Church of the Latter Day Saints collected a wonderful array of foods, a resident of Meltham wishing to remain anonymous did an enormous online shop to be delivered at the foodbank, Morrison's Community Giving Tree was for the foodbank's benefit and finally Meltham Under 15s made a generous donation of food.

Carols in the Park supported the foodbank with money raised at the event also Richard Styan asked that donations were given to the foodbank in lieu of presents for his 100th birthday. As the project develops so the generous folk of Meltham dig deep in order for us to help more people in our community.

The Crossroads Centre continues to be manned from 10am to 1pm Monday to Friday with an additional 2 hours to 3pm on Wednesdays when Chris our debt and

benefit advisor sees his clients. Nigel continues to be busy offering free legal advice on a Thursday morning,

Grants to increase the number of services that Crossroads can offer have been applied for and received. A Health Inequalities Grant was applied for, to help fund a Health Fair which took place on Weds 17th January at the Centre in collaboration with the Carlile Institute. Health professionals and local groups gave advice and groups from Meltham provided information and advice on ways of keeping healthy. Despite it being a very cold and snowy day we were pleased to welcome those able to brave the icy conditions.

Warm and Welcoming Wednesday also qualified for a grant from the West Yorkshire Mayors Fund and continues to meet with refreshments and home-made soup is also now provided.

Sleeping bags, duvets, kitchen items and blankets are also given out as well as warm clothing from the shop when requested.

The Sustainable Sewing Bees continue to meet on Fridays using fabric and haberdashery from the shop to make items to sell for the Crossroads project and often just to chat together and enjoy sewing.

The Centre continues to be a meeting place for local groups such as Craft and Create who meet at the Centre on Thursdays. A ukulele group meets one afternoon a week and the WI occasionally use our facilities.

Outlookers, a service for the visually impaired, meet every 2nd Tuesday of the month and is open to anyone needing support through sight impairment.

The Grant's Committee continues to meet once a quarter. Grants to those experiencing hardship are prioritised over local groups but all applications are considered with an experienced chair of the committee approaching applicants via telephone to ask for more information when necessary.

As always we thank you for your prayers and support and look forward to 2024 and the opportunities, we will have to support those in need.

Alison Howlett Crossroads Trustee

Sue Priestley



What's so special about Jesus?

It is with great sadness that Rev John Radcliffe died at the end of last year. However he was a man that wanted everyone to know more about Jesus. So as Lent begins, it is a good time to look at why Jesus was so special. The following helps to focus our thoughts and it written by the Revd Dr Herbert McGonigle.

The gospels record that people were astounded by many of the things that Jesus said. Even His enemies, intent on trapping Him, admitted: "No one ever spoke the way this man does." (John 7:46) Furthermore, "the crowds were amazed at His teaching, because He taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law." (Matthew 7:28-9)

For in Jesus, we find something without precedent in the span of human literature. While urging humility on others and while giving the impression of the ultimately humble person, Jesus' teaching and claims are basically *egocentric and completely focussed on Himself*. In ordinary life, that would get a person labelled as crazy or as a megalomaniac!

Just think of the few astounding claims Jesus made about Himself. "I am the Resurrection and the Life." (Jn 11:25) "I am the Bread of Life." (Jn 6:35) "I am the Light of the World." (Jn 8:12) "I am the Good Shepherd." (Jn 10:7,9) "...whoever lives and believes in Me will never die." (Jn 11:26) And – most staggering of all - "anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father." (Jn 14:9)

CS Lewis comments on the inescapableness of Jesus' uniqueness: "There is no half-way house, and there is no parallel in other religions."

That Jesus cannot be ranked among a pantheon of religious leaders or prophets becomes further obvious when one reflects further on His claim of being at both the beginning and at the end of Creation and of History. He said: "I am the First and the Last" (Rev 1:17), as well as : "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Mt 28:18).

Clearly the disciples accepted this, as John begins his gospel with these words: "In the beginning was the Word (Jesus) and the Word was with God and the Word was God... Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made....The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.... and in Him all things hold together." (Col 1:16,17)

When we look at what Jesus goes on to say about the end of history, we are even more startled, as when He said of any person who follows Him: "I will raise him up at the last day." (Jn 6:40) This was the local carpenter, remember! And when we note that throughout the Bible final judgement is a function reserved to God alone, it is astounding to register that Jesus says of Himself: "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son authority to judge because He is the Son of Man." (Jn 5:26—27)

Yes, between Creation and the end of History stands Jesus. That also means, of course, and we note it with comfort, because everything in between is His also.

During Lent, why not spend some time thinking about these claims of Jesus?

Gone are the days sadly of us going out carol singing around the village in the run up to Christmas, but we were however able to go and sing for the residents down at Greenacres Care Home.



Amongst the residents was life long choir member David Earnshaw who has now retired from singing in the choir. We invited David to sit amongst the choir and sing along with us, as it just didn't feel right that he was sat in the 'audience'. We took the opportunity to thank David for his dedication to the church and for his 75+ years of singing in the choir and presented him with some framed paintings of scenes from around Meltham which had been painted by John Mitchell. We sang all the well known carols and the residents also sang along - it was

nice to bring some Christmas cheer for them all and to see them joining in. We ended the night by singing 'Good Night dear friends' and David duly obliged in leading us in with the 'Good Night'. It has to be said, a good night was had by all. It was certainly a lot warmer in there rather than going out singing in the streets!

We are currently looking at the feasibility of possibly singing Stainer's Crucifixion this year, probably on Palm Sunday (24th March). Please let myself or a choir member know if you would be interested in taking part and able to join us.

Simon Ball



David is pictured on left hand side of the middle row - despite it being taken over 60 years ago(1958), he remembers it well. David said, it was taken at choir rehearsal on a Thursday night, and he had been away on National Service on the Isle of Wight. He had to rush back to Meltham to get to the church in time for the photo being taken, arriving just in time at the last minute. He quickly put on his robe which had been put out ready and waiting for him, got in position and the photo was taken!

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References and quotes available



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Mobile: 07789161232

(I am registered deaf, so texts or WhatsApp are preferred)

Update from Bell House Care Home

The residents shared an advent service in December, hearing the Christmas story told the 'Yorkshire' way which included lots of actions making everyone giggle. We also sang all the favourite Christmas carols most of which the residents knew by heart. Later in the month we were happy to join St Mary's carol service via zoom and joined in with the readings and the singing, laughing at Rev John in his pixie Christmas jumper.

The January service reflected on the new year ahead, we considered Philippians 3: 7-14, as Paul wrote about pressing on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Jesus Christ, is calling us. We considered the promise that God makes to us through Revelation 21, to wipe away every tear, death, mourning, crying and pain, making all things new.

We finished our reflections by sharing this poem:

A New Year's Poem by William Arthur Ward

Another fresh new year is here ...
Another year to live!
To banish worry, doubt, and fear,
To love and laugh and give!
This bright new year is given me,
To live each day with zest ...
To daily grow and try to be
My highest and my best!
I have the opportunity,
Once more to right some wrongs,
To pray for peace, to plant a tree,
And sing more joyful songs!

Jacqueline France



Care Home Services

Greenacres - 1:30pm for 2pm start

Tuesday 13th February - Songs of Praise
Tuesday 27th February - Holy Communion.
Tuesday 12th March - Songs of Praise
Tuesday 26th March - Holy Communion



Helme Hall - 1:30pm for 2pm start

Friday 1st March - Holy Communion
Friday 29th March - Holy Communion

These services are popular with the residents and it would be lovely to have a couple of helpers to help support these events.

Please get in touch with Rev Denis Shields if you can be of help.

Weekly Parish Services for February & March

As last year, due to heating costs, up until April there will be a Sunday church service at 9.30am & 11:15am weekly.

These will be as follows for **February**:

4th St Bart's Family Sunday 9.30am and St Mary's Wilshaw (HC) 11:15am

11th St James' (HC) 9:30am and St Mary's Wilshaw (SoW) 11:15am

14th St Bartholomew's 7.30pm, Ash Wednesday Communion

18th St Bartholomew's (HC) 9:30am and St Mary's Wilshaw (SoW) 11:15am

25th **Parish Communion 10:30am** - St Bartholomew's Church

Then also for **March**:

3rd St James' Family Sunday 9.30am and St Mary's Wilshaw (HC) 11:15am

10th St Bartholomew's (HC) 9:30am and St Mary's Wilshaw (SoW) 11:15am

17th St James' (HC) 9:30am and St Mary's Wilshaw (SoW) 11:15am

24th **Parish Communion 10:30am** - St Bartholomew's Church

31st **Easter Sunday**, - All four Churches will be open at their usual times.

Please keep an eye out or follow us on the Church facebook page: '**Parish of Meltham - Christ the King**' for updates on services and events.

Please Note:

- The first Sunday In the month (9:30am) will be a Family Sunday service where people of ALL ages can join in the fun.
- The fourth Sunday of the Month will be a Parish Communion Service. All are welcome to share a light lunch together after the service.

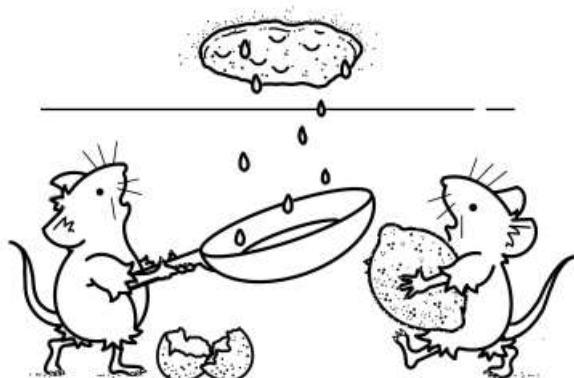
Pancake Party

Once again The Parish of Meltham will be hosting a Pancake Party on **Shrove Tuesday (13th February) from 3.30pm - 5pm**

Come along to the Church Hall (opp St Bart's Church) and share your pancake creations.

Children must be accompanied so the grown up's can join in the fun too.

And it's Free!



Lent Groups

The Lent groups will begin week commencing 19th February
They will be for a series of 5 weeks and you are welcome to join any group.

Monday 8pm - 6 Woodland Walk

Tuesday 2pm - St Bartholomew's Church

Wednesday 11am - Meltham Methodist Church (tbc)

Thursday 2pm - Meltham Baptist Church (tbc)

Speak to Rev John Dracup for more info or just turn up!



Holy Week

- Monday to Friday daily devotional 8am - 8.30am, at St James' Church
- Maundy Thursday Communion Service, 7.30pm at St James' Church
- Good Friday Service of Witness 11.30am in St Bart's Churchyard, followed by soup lunch at the Methodist Church.
- Good Friday, Hour at the Cross, 3pm at St Bart's Church. A time of reflection.
- Saturday Easter Trail 10am - 3pm starting on the Greenway (see details below)



Easter Weekend

Saturday Easter Trail, Grab a coffee and start at any time from 10am to 3pm at the Morrisons end on the Greenway and follow the trail of the Easter story all the way to St James' Churchyard and if you complete it, you will be rewarded!

Light refreshments will be available in the church for a well earned rest afterwards.

Sonrise Service, 6:30am, Crock Crowing Stone, Wessenden Head Road (time to be confirmed, but be there before the Sunrise)

HE IS RISEN! Join together for this very special time. It really is worth getting up for! The time is approximate so be there before the sunrises. A short reflection focussed on the discovery of the empty tomb for about 20 minutes. Wrap Up Warm!

Then afterwards come and warm up with bacon butties & cereal in the Church Hall, (across from St Barts Church)

Easter Sunday - All 4 churches will be open and ready to celebrate His victory!



Tel. 01484 859229 E: secretary@hdfhs.org.uk W: www.hdfhs.org.uk

Facebook: [huddersfieldfamilyhistory](https://www.facebook.com/huddersfieldfamilyhistory)

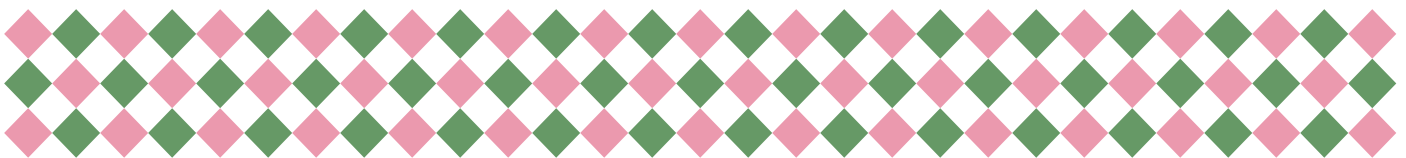
Instagram: [huddersfieldanddistrictfhs](https://www.instagram.com/huddersfieldanddistrictfhs)

Twitter (X): @HDFHS01

Did you know that you can find help to research your family history, and that it is right on your doorstep? The Huddersfield & District Family History Society have a suite of computers with access to Ancestry and FindmyPast and many willing and experienced volunteers to assist you at their research room in Meltham.

We are based in the modern building to the right as you go up to Greens End Garage, just after the Parish Hall on Greens End Road. We have an extensive family and local history library, with a range of books on the subject larger than any you will find in libraries around Kirklees. We can help with research in any part of the UK or beyond. If you feel like taking the first steps to what can be an addictive hobby, these are our opening times:

Monday to Thursday & Saturday	2.00 pm to 4.30 pm
Wednesday also	10.00 am to 12.30 pm
Friday	10.00 am to 12.30 pm



FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

Weddings - A gift of God in Creation & a means of His grace

Baptisms - *We welcome you into the Lord's family*

Grace Mae Bailey

Funerals - May they rest in peace

Doreen Williams, Hazel Barnes, Anne Johnes,
Rev John Radcliffe, Barbara Sheard

Anyone wishing to have their loved ones names included in the book of Remembrance at St Bartholomew's please contact:

Jean Collison : Telephone 851816

(there is a small fee of £5 for church expenses)

To contact Rev John Dracup T: 07983937132 E: parishofchristtheking@gmail.com

200 CLUB :
December & January Winners

233	£200	Mrs S Crowther	132	£50	Mrs M Haigh
334	£10	Mrs E Meacham	068	£10	Miss B Hirst
931	£10	Vacant Number	814	£10	Mrs C Charman
786	£10	Vacant Number	536	£10	Mrs A Halstead
584	£10	Miss B. Hirst	131	£10	Mrs M Haigh
594	£10	Vacant Number			

Want to join the 200 club?

It costs just 25p per week (£13 pa). For more info please contact either:
 Michael Farrel 07768258257 m.farrellphd@btinternet.com
 David Earnshaw 341968, Cath Moulson 850171

St Bartholomews Flowers

Flowers have been placed on the communion table in St Bart's Church by:

4th Feb	Mr & Mrs B Gregory		3rd March	Lent No Flowers
11th Feb	Mr & Mrs F Kaye		10th March	Mothering Sunday/Lent
18th Feb	Lent No Flowers		17th March	Lent No Flowers
25th Feb	Lent No Flowers		24th March	Lent No Flowers
			31st March	Easter Day

Flowers are a lovely way to remember loved ones or to celebrate that special occasion. If you would like to put flowers on the Communion table in church we do have dates available if you would like to.

Please contact:
 Catherine Moulson (850171)

Saturday Coffee Mornings

9.30am - 12pm at Meltham Church Hall, hosted by local organisations.

3rd Feb - W. Yorks Dog Rescue	2nd March - Church Hall
10th Feb - Probus	9th March - Hospice
17th Feb - Stage Co. 	16th March - St Mary's
24th Feb - CLOSED (See Methodist Church)	23rd March - Womens Fellowship
	30th March - Christian Aid
6th April - Meltham & Meltham Mills Band	

DIMPS

by Ville

**11 Station Street
Meltham, Holmfirth
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tel. 01484 850960**

JUST FOR FUN!

By Denis A

I dreamt that the Grim Reaper visited me and said "I'm Death". I replied "That's ok. I'll speak a bit louder".

A few years ago I went carol singing, I walked around lots of homes but nobody gave me any money at all. Still, people are busy at Easter.

I went down to town to the Bank and said to the cashier. "Can I make a withdrawal?" "Certainly" she said, so I walked out again.

On another occasion I went to the doctors & said, "I think I picked up an infection when I went swimming in the sea, I've got a swelling under my shoulder." The doctor said "I'm not surprised, You're still wearing one of your armbands."

When I was in business I used to travel by train to London on a regular basis and made sure I was never late for my appointment with my client. On one occasion the train was very late so I asked the train driver. "Why is the train so late today?" He answered, "Sorry, I got side tracked."

As a young man, I was quite a good athlete. Once in a 100metre race as we approached the finishing line, a child threw an apple across the track. I got hit with an apple seed which resulted in me being pipped at the post.

I once went to a Chinese restaurant in Huddersfield and said to the waiter, "These noodles are too crispy" He replied "I'm not surprised, you are eating the chopsticks".

Feeling a 'but down' one day I went into a pub and ordered a whisky as a 'pick me up'. The barman asked "Neat?" "Yes" I replied. "Then tuck your shirt in your trousers" he said.

Enough is enough. God Bless one and all. Denis A.

Modern Day Parable

Rev'd Martin and Ginny Crompton had a wonderful weekend at Scargill recently and while they were there they heard this story and wanted to share it with you all:

An elderly couple watched with interest as new neighbours moved in. They were watching some days later when the young wife put her washing out on the line. 'Disgusting,' said the old wife to her husband. 'I'd be ashamed to peg my washing up when it was still covered in dirty patches. She must be using the wrong powder.' The same thing happened the following week, but the week after when the young wife put out her washing it was spotlessly white.

'That's better,' said the old lady to her husband. 'Did you go round to tell her which powder we use?' 'No,' he replied. 'I just cleaned our windows!'

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St Mary's Report

Comprehension was never my strong point at school so please bear with me as I try to squeeze a lot of news into a small space. On Friday 24th November we enjoyed a fundraiser in the Sunday school. Kim spoke about different cocktails and we sampled some of these (or mocktails for those who were driving) along with a three course meal. Money raised was shared between the Church and the Village hall.

On Sunday 26th November we had a service of Holy Communion and we're reminded to " Get ready for the coming of Jesus" The following Sunday was Advent Sunday when Jacqueline reminded us to keep watch but to face the future with hope.

On Sunday 10th December Rev John led the Carol service when a full church enjoyed singing carols and listening to the Christmas Story through the letters of the alphabet. It was good to welcome the residents from Bell House who joined us on zoom and it was a Joy to hear Georgie Lindley sing "O Holy Night" and to enjoy a trombone solo by Jonah Dunn. Fellowship continued in the Sunday school as we enjoyed a Christmas supper.

Christmas Day saw a service of Holy Communion and a chance to hear a dramatised reading by Elizabeth and Peter before heading home for our Christmas dinner. There was no service at St Mary's on the last day of the year but we were able to join in with the United Parish Communion at St Bartholomew's.

On 7th January we celebrated the Feast of Epiphany. Lay Reader Jacqueline France led the service and Rev Judy was celebrant. We learnt that Epiphany means " showing" and God showed His Son Jesus to the rest of the world. The following Sunday there was a Service of the Word. Rev John reminded us that through Jesus we are made God' s own children - how special is that. On 21st January there was no service at St Mary's to allow us to attend the Churches Together Covenant Service at Meltham Methodist Church. (See below)

Our thanks go to all who lead our worship and all our readers, musicians, technicians and those who lead prayers and provide refreshments. Thanks also to those join us in church and on zoom. May we take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy and peaceful New Year.

Churches Together Covenant Service

What a wonderful time of worship and fellowship we shared on Sunday 21st January as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Christians from all six Meltham churches came together for the Covenant Service. Rev Andrew Marchington (Methodist minister) led the service, Rev John Dracup (Vicar of Meltham) led the prayers and Rev Tim Mountain (Baptist minister) led communion.

Jane Collins reflected on the Meltham Mustard Seed project which grew from tiny beginnings in 1990 to what it is today - a project that is now able to sustain itself out in Kyema, Uganda. Rev Andrew gave us all a mustard seed to remind us just how small a mustard seed is. It was good to share communion all together and to continue our fellowship over a cuppa. Our thanks go to Meltham Methodist Church for making us so welcome.

TURNING EIGHTY

By Pam Murgatroyd



I am turning eighty this week and it's not very funny for me
Because every time I have to laugh, I pass a little wee.
This can be quite embarrassing and those like me will see,
It's even worse when you're not at home but gone out for your tea.

Our stairs in Oldham used to creak so we climbed them really slow,
But now no stairs we need to climb as we live in a bungalow.
So now it's my knees that are creaking when I get up from my chair,
And if you don't actually see me, you'll hear me walking there.

My eyes have never been so good but my teeth are still my own
And I'm lucky to have a husband so that I don't live alone.
My family keep me on my toes, but I like to speak my mind,
I don't always think before I speak but I don't mean to be unkind.

I've been to many places, seen many sights and more,
That now are only memories, more than I had before.
I started school in Germany, we've had a house in Spain,
But now I've let my passport lapse, I won't go abroad again.

To highlight the occasion and improve on the event,
I heard from the Pensions Office in a letter that they sent.
The postage was one pound twenty for a weekly rise they're giving me,
But I really don't know what to do with this extra 25 p

I don't sleep for very long at night, I'm up early every day,
But then I have to Granny nap, it is old people's way.
I'd never thought that I'd get old, I don't feel it in my head,
But I think of the alternative, if not old, I could be dead.



Helme Ladies Report

21st November was our last talk of the year, so it had to be a good one!! Well, it was, we had Kath Heaney of Meltham Wildlife Rescue, she always has plenty to talk about and is also very interesting. We were told that she had had to cut back and just look after birds after spending winter 22/23 inundated with Hedgehogs. If they are under a certain weight they will not survive going into hibernation, so they have to be kept warm and fed. There are lots of Hedgehog rescue places, but not enough looking after birds. The birds could be any, from a Wren to a Buzzard, but also wild fowl, Swans being the largest. We had plenty of stories to keep us entertained, all very interesting.

On Wednesday 29th November, Helme Ladies had a trip to the theatre in Bradford. It's easy – bus to town, bus to Bradford and vice versa. We were going to see 'Jesus Christ Superstar' at the Alhambra, it makes a good day out. What a fantastic show, the singing, the music and dancing were all excellent. I saw it about 30 years ago, but couldn't remember much about it, but it is different now, more modern but they couldn't change the story. We had a very enjoyable day.

5th December was our annual Carol Service, so we were very glad the snow had gone, but it didn't make it any warmer in church. Helme Ladies have held a Carol Service and lunch in Helme Church for many years, long before I joined them, so we had to go ahead with one this year even though there was no heating in the church. The service consisted of readings and carols with the piano played by Jean Collison and prayers led by the vicar. The lunch was vegetable soup with bread and followed by a hot pudding with tea or coffee. A raffle was also held with lots of prizes. I would like to thank all the people brave enough to attend and all the Helme Ladies who made the lunch go smoothly.

December 12th was a very misty and damp day, but not to worry, we were going out to Christmas Lunch. The Beaumont Arms at Netherton was our destination, because we know the food and welcome is always good. Well, we were not disappointed, there was Turkey or Beef with all the trimmings as well as a choice of starter and pudding. Everyone caught up with all the gossip and what was happening over the Christmas period. When we left the mist had become thicker, but we didn't mind as we had had a wonderful time and very good food.

January 2nd was the first Helme Ladies of 2024, with a quiz and food brought by the ladies. The quiz was a simple one if you know all the chocolate bars and sweets, i.e., fasteners became Chocolate Buttons. It was all great fun with everyone copying from each other, so it was no surprise that one table got them all right. The food followed with tea or coffee, there was everything from pork pie to Christmas cake, so something for everyone. We all went out into the rain with good wishes for the New Year.

Upcoming Events:

Feb 13th Bag Whist
Feb 27th Quiz

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Forest Church Christingle

After a very wet week leading up to December 23rd, Saturday dawned no different. In November, Rev'd John had suggested we hold a different Christingle service this year, a forest one... outside!! Yes outside in December. I won't say here what I thought at first, but after talking to Jacqueline from Wilshaw church, I began to change my mind. Well, it couldn't be any colder outside than it is at Helme church with a broken boiler, so let's go for it.

Jacqueline had everything planned so we went ahead. The oranges were ordered, candles, tape and collection boxes on their way and sweets & raisins sorted. Good to go. All we needed was a fine day, a church full of people and our prayers answered.

The service was due to start at 4pm but at 3.45pm there didn't appear to be any other people present except for those designated to help. BUT 5 minutes later, the door opened and kept opening to admit more and more children and parents. We were overwhelmed!

The service started inside as we sang "Hark the Herald Angels sing" followed by Jacqueline explaining what the children had to do. I.e Pick up an orange from the porch then follow the route map given to parents to pick up the items to make up the Christingle from the various stations outside. An explanation sheet was also given out by the helpers manning the stations. The weather was better than expected but everyone was well wrapped up and most came in wellingtons or boots.

Christingles were assembled inside the church and when everyone was back in their pews, the candles were safely lit, Church lights turned out and we all sang "Away in a manger".

It was magical and a lovely atmosphere. Jacqueline gave a short talk about the meaning of the Christingle and where all monies collected would be sent, namely to the Children's Society.

Prayers were said, followed by the Lord's Prayer and finally welcome drinks of hot chocolate were served and enjoyed by one and all.

There were over 80 people in church with lots of children and the collection totalled £90. A wonderful effort.

I would like to say a big thankyou to all those who helped in any way. It was certainly a great success and a lovely start to Christmas celebrations.

Janet Rocket.



Heaven Sent!

The Crossroads community craft and create group were very busy folding books to make Angels and Christmas trees to sell and our efforts made £1,500 for Kirkwood Hospice. We helped other groups to earn money for their charities like Crisis, Teams 4 You and the Church hall, by making and giving large angels for 'name the Angel' and doing stalls at Christmas. We gave Angels to decorate the church too. All in all we loved doing it but making such a large amount for the Hospice and others was a bonus for us.



Jill Horsman

On Saturday 2nd December a wonderful Christmas Market took place at Meltham Church Hall. The community came together and it was great to see lots and lots of bright and attractive stalls and lots of happy people. The children were excited to meet with Father Christmas and to receive a gift and the market was well attended. At 4pm that same day the Christmas lights were switched on with Meltham and Meltham Mills Band leading the singing of carols. What a joyful day.



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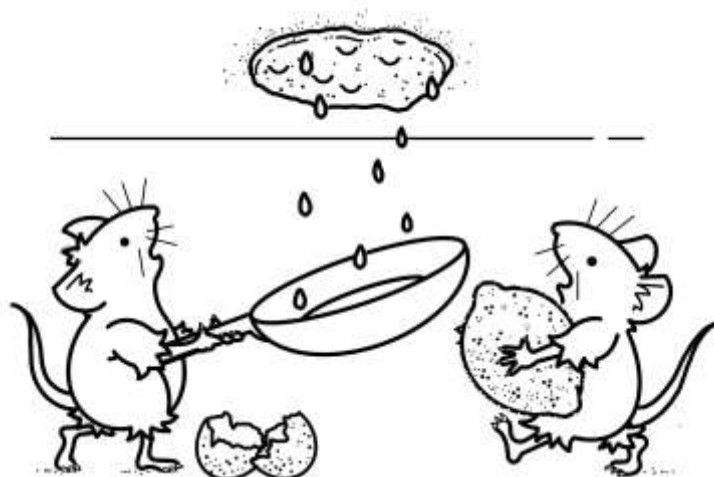
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