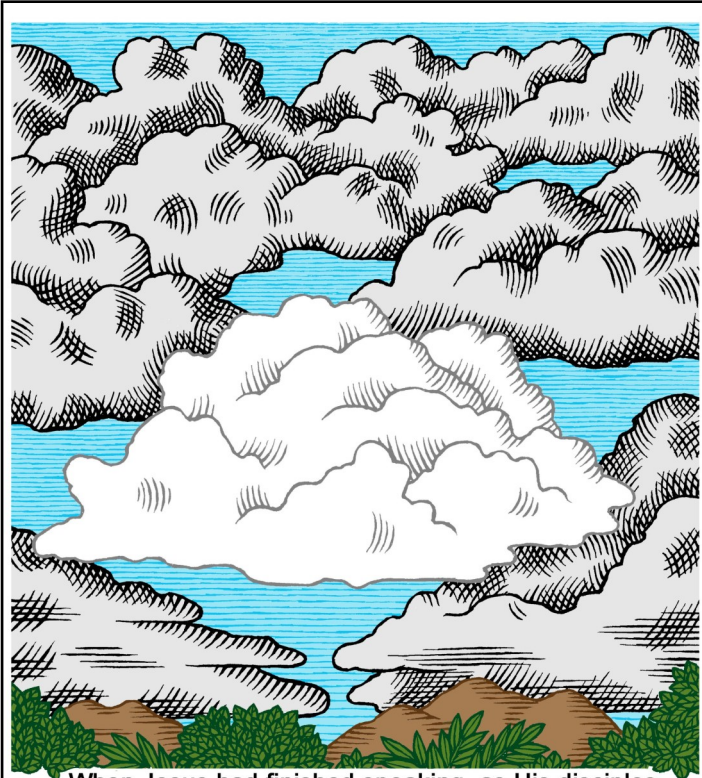


April - May 2026

Number 712

The Messenger

The magazine of the Bridge Church, Otley



... When Jesus had finished speaking, as His disciples watched intently, He was taken up into heaven and a cloud hid Him from their sight. Acts 1:7-9



The Bridge Church

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH IN OTLEY

The official Magazine of the
Bridge United Reformed Church, Otley
Minister:- Reverend Jason McCullagh
Telephone: 01943 465509
Email: jason.mccullagh@otleybridgechurch.org.uk

Messenger letter

My fellow Disciples of Christ,

In the wake of the United States of America's aggressive attack on Iran, we have seen the cost of petrol steadily increase. As a response to this I am trying to walk as much as I can. Walking to work in the morning allows me to reflect on, and pray about, what lies ahead of me. Walking home in the evening, allows me to reflect on, and pray about, what I have done. I reflect on the conversations I have had, the mistakes I have made and, the things that I think went well.

Is walking good for you? AI suggests it is: "Yes, walking is highly beneficial for your physical and mental health, offering cardiovascular, metabolic, musculoskeletal, and psychological benefits." Walking is even better, and even more beneficial, when you walk alongside a friend. There is much to gain when you walk, talk, listen and learn.

That is what happened on that first Easter Sunday evening when two of those who had been walking with Jesus walked away from Jerusalem, and the pain and sadness that the city had brought them. As they walked, a stranger joins them and engages them in conversation and talks scripture with them. They invite the stranger to join them for a meal and when he breaks the bread, they realise who he is. They then turn back to Jerusalem, back to the source of their pain, but not as the people they had been! "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us." they say, with awe and wonder.

I delight in walking, and talking about scripture and theology, as when I do my faith is challenged, affirmed, and deepened. The risen Christ is made real in such encounters. This is what we seek to do as a faith community when we meet to talk about scripture, and when we meet to break bread together. It is difficult to do this alone, it is far more enjoyable, far more rewarding, and far more enlightening when we do it together, when we listen to each other, and when we listen to God. Here at the Bridge Church, we offer many opportunities to do this: Wednesday Communion, where we hear a chapter of Scripture each week, Reform Discussion Group, where we discuss theology, Bible Study, where there is an opportunity to both listen and discuss, and, in the coming months House Groups. These are important spaces in our communal life together, and I urge you to embrace them, so that your faith may be challenged, affirmed, and deepened.

It is my honour to walk alongside you as your Minister, and I look forward to continuing to walk with you in the years to come as, together, we explore scripture, and break bread, allowing God to mould our faith through these encounters. May we, the modern disciples of Christ, say, with awe and wonder, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us."

Love,

Jason



The
**United
Reformed
Church**



THE BRIDGE CHURCH
PREACHING PLAN
19th April – 14th June 2026

Sunday 19th April – Third Sunday of Easter

Jason is preaching elsewhere in the Synod
The Service will be conducted by Mr Gordon Justham

Sunday 26th April – Fourth Sunday of Easter
Taste and See Service – World Earth Day

The Reverend Jason McCullagh
Isaiah 45. 1-8

Sunday 3rd May – Fifth Sunday of Lent
Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Reverend Jason McCullagh
1 Peter 2. 2-10

Sunday 10th May – Sixth Sunday of Easter
Service at 5pm

Members of Junior Church and The Reverend Jason
McCullagh
Standing up for Justice

Sunday 17th May – Seventh Sunday of Easter

Jason is leading Junior Church
The Service will be led by Mr John Eveleigh

No Evening Communion.

Sunday 24th May – The Feast of Pentecost

Jason is on a Training Sunday
The Service will be led by Mrs Sheila Ackerman

Sunday 31st May – Trinity Sunday

The Reverend Jason McCullagh
Matthew 28. 16-20

Sunday 7th June – Second Sunday after Pentecost
Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Reverend Jason McCullagh
Matthew 9. 9-13, 18-26

Sunday 14th June – Third Sunday after Pentecost
Parade Service

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

MINISTER'S REGISTER
1st February – 31st March

BAPTISMS

15th March Dougie Alexander Hardcastle

FUNERALS

20th February Mr Dennis Taylor Rawdon Crematorium

4th March Mr Howard Cox The Bridge Church

19th March Mrs Daphne Potter The Bridge Church

Faith
Alive!

Our meeting that addresses contemporary issues – the meetings for the remainder of the year are as follows;

Thursday 9th July – 7pm Judy Rogers, Yorkshire Synod
Racial Justice Advocate 'Racial Justice in Action'

Thursday 12th November – 7pm Rev Simon Cross 'The Quiet
Revival'

Prayer
Breakfast



OTLEY CHURCHES TOGETHER

PRAYER BREAKFAST

**Saturday 2nd May 8am –
9.15am
Otley Parish Church**

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

News of the Family

Baptism

On Sunday the 15th March 2025, Dougie Alexander Hardcastle was baptised. Dougie is the son of John and Samantha Hardcastle, and they have been coming to some of our Messy Church sessions. It was good to welcome them, together with their friends and family.

Birth

Happy news for Liz Wilkinson who has become a Great Grandmother for the fourth time, with the birth of a baby girl Nayeli on the 24th of March 2026 weighing 6lb 6oz. Also for Claire who is therefore a Great Auntie again.

Birthday

Belated birthday greetings to David Hollings who was 60 on the 7th March. David celebrated his special day with a holiday in Florida! We hope you had a wonderful time and had a very happy birthday.

Do please pass on any good news that you would like to share to one of the pastoral elders.

Thank you,

Margaret Armitage

NEXT MESSENGER

Material for the next edition of the Messenger should be in the hands of the Editor by Sunday, 31st May and should be available for collection on Sunday, 14th June, 2026.

If possible, please send by e-mail to:

messenger@otleybridgechurch.org.uk

We have previously had commentary on books of the New Testament by Canon Paul Hardingham - he has also done similar articles about Old Testament books ...

What's the Big Idea? An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Psalms

This month we continue our examination of a selection of books from the Old Testament.

'The Psalms have a unique place in the Bible, because most of the Scripture speaks to us, while the Psalms speak for us' (Athanasius of Alexandria).

The Book of Psalms contains 150 prayers or songs of praise, the majority (73) attributed to David, although some were composed later. They were mostly composed for liturgical worship. There are songs of praise, in which people joyfully express praise for God's work of creation and sustaining (e.g. 135 & 136). In others, the psalmist recounts a desperate situation and gives thanks for God's answer to his prayers (e.g. 30 & 116).

There are a significant number of psalms of lament, both individual (e.g. 3-7; 22) and communal (e.g. 44), which begin with a cry for help. Some express deliverance from sin (51 & 130), or point to the certainty that the Lord has heard their prayer (7, but contrast 88). The theme of trust is central in many psalms (23, 62 & 91).

The 'royal psalms' (e.g. 20, 21 & 72) point to the promised Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus. There are also psalms teaching wisdom (e.g. 37, 49); 'torah' psalms, focussing on the law of the Lord (e.g. 1, 19 & 119), and psalms which celebrate the history of Israel and God's faithfulness (e.g. 78, 105 & 106).

The psalms can help us in our own prayers, by providing us with models to follow, as they express our own deepest feelings as we approach God: *'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul'* (Psalm 23:1-3).

Women's Meeting

On Monday 2nd February Jason opened the meeting and then introduced Roger Smallwood, whose title of the talk was 'Is it a Jug?'. I was fascinated by this title and it proved to be a fascinating subject. About forty years ago Roger's father started collecting 'Puzzle Jugs'. After his dad had passed away, Roger took over around 8 years ago.

Some of the jugs were large, some small, some tactile and some are heavy and they all had many holes in them! The problem is to be able to drink from them without getting wet! They have different inscriptions but many say 'Come drink your fill, but do not spill!' Roger has about fifty jugs in his collection. He bought some during Covid, mostly online, the process varied but most were between £60 and £100. They tend to be mass produced in Torquay and Barnstaple.

Very recently on 'The Great Pottery Throw Down' on Channel 4 they were asked to make a puzzle jug. Vintage Puzzle Jugs started in the 13th Century. We were invited to try out the jugs, using water of course - many did! A very interesting talk - the question still remains 'Is it a Jug?'

On Monday 16th February we had Anne Howard to talk to us about her and Andrew's holiday from Anchorage to Banff. They left the UK by plane across the Atlantic, before boarding a smaller one to take them to their cruise ship. They also travelled by coach before joining a magnificent train with glass sides and roof! All modes of transport covered.

They also stayed in some B & B's in between looking for Bears! They finally got lucky and spotted some in trees and others on the ground. Glaciers were a major highlight of their trip, there are about thirty in that part of the country! A really interesting talk about a truly magical holiday. We all enjoyed journeying with them

On Monday 2nd March Andrew Howard came to talk to us. His subject this time was 'Newall' - an area many of us live, or used to live there when we were younger! The talk began

when the area was just fields, then it went on to when there were large stone mansions; Ashfield House (now apartments), Belmont (now Newall Grange) and still a family home!

Newall Close which was demolished and blocks of flats were built, just the coach house remains which is now named 'Newall Hall', which is also now apartments. The Yew Tree Pub was a farm, the hospital (not the new build) was a workhouse, and guess what it is now - houses and apartments!!

There were many slides of the river in flood - especially Farnley Lane and Bridge Avenue; fortunately the 'Flood Defence Scheme' seems to have been a success, touch wood!

It was a very interesting afternoon, thank you Andrew you have taken us back in time on many occasions with your interesting and nostalgic talks!

On Monday 16th March, unfortunately our programmed speaker was ill. Fortunately, Margaret Thompson stepped into the slot and gave an hilarious talk about her 'Nile Cruise'. We also learned about how to get out of an hot air balloon without a ladder.

On a more cultural note we did hear about how she saw lots of monuments, relics, palaces and artefacts; Mohammed was a very interesting and handsome guide! He also came to her rescue when she happened to trip and fall.

Margaret was so funny and her talk was over well before we were ready for it to end. Thank you for standing in at such short notice and making us all laugh - a real tonic!

Pam Bradley



The Christmas Day lunch is a big event to organise and prepare for, but it is always worth all the effort. We started planning at the beginning of October, first with a meeting with Jason to decide, using our experience from last

Christmas, how to make it as good again as it was last year. Then writing copious lists and collecting as much as possible in advance. The shopping for supplies starts in November and we order and collect the fresh supplies closer to the day when we have the final numbers.

We put a sign up list in church for anyone wanting to attend. Then asked at the Parish Church Open Door group if there were any people there who needed company on Christmas Day. Also, we contacted the Otley Action group for any names of people who might like to attend. We can cater for 40 people on the day and in the event, we managed to feed 47 people, some of whom we were not expecting (due to a misunderstanding) however we managed. Thanks so much to the wonderful volunteers who gave their time and efforts on the day, they were very organised and cheerful making the day so enjoyable for everyone. It was a great team effort.

We would also like to thank everyone who donated towards the cost of the meal this was very much appreciated and your generosity was overwhelming.

Our thanks to everyone for the help and support hopefully we can do the same again next Christmas !!!

[The above has been repeated as it did not fully appear in the last issue of 'The Messenger'.]

In January we had Denise Adlard telling us about the history of Patrick Bronte which gave an insight into the early lives of his famous daughters and Branwell his only son.



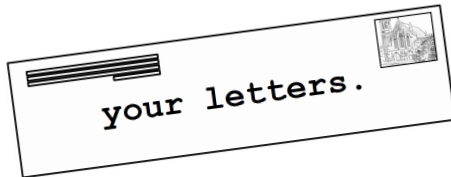
In February Steve Daley gave us the History of 'The Worth Valley Steam Railway' and the work that the volunteers do to keep this part of the railway alive.

In March Martin Sunderland brought his short films along. Always entertaining and 'different'; they do produce very professional films.

This month Malcolm Johnson is to tell us about being 'Famous for 12 Minutes'

We all continue to enjoy our friendly monthly meetings with excellent food, provided by our volunteers

Enid Taylor



Dear Friends

I would like to say thank you very much for the beautiful flowers you have sent me. They lasted for three weeks, they were wonderful!

Joan Wiseman

BIBLE STUDY

This Spring, Jason will offer a lecture course exploring The Episcopal Bishop of Washington, Mariann Edgar Budde's, book 'How we learn to be brave'. The first three sessions have already been held.

The dates are as follows Tuesdays at 2.30pm or Wednesday at 7.30 pm:

Session Four: Tuesday 14th April and Wednesday 15th April

Session Five: Tuesday 21st April and Wednesday 22nd April

Session Six: Tuesday 28th April and Wednesday 29th April

Session Seven: Tuesday 5th May and Wednesday 6th May

THE STORY OF A HYMN

John Newton was born in London in 1725. His mother was a devout Christian and taught him the Scriptures, but she died when he was 7 years old. Aged 11, he went to sea with his father. In the company of sailors, he became rebellious to everything his mother had taught him.

Aged 19, he was press-ganged into the navy and suffered many hardships. He was put onto a ship involved in the slave trade and began trading for slaves along the west coast of Africa. On one of these voyages, he came across Thomas a Kempis's "Imitation of Christ", the seed of a conversion". The ship almost foundered in a storm, but John surmised that God would not be merciful to him because his past sins were too great. However, the ship was saved. He began to read and study the Bible, and pray for God's guidance for him.

Wanting to enter the Church, he was ordained to serve in London at the age of 40. He met John Wesley and began to preach, and write hymns. Together with William Wilberforce, he joined the movement to abolish slavery. One of the hymns he wrote, "Amazing Grace", has become one of Christianity's most well-loved hymns. He died at the age of 82.

John Newton was a recipient of God's grace, which saves any sinner who turns to Him.

Liz Wilkinson

LENT CHALLENGE

Once again the Bridge Church have decided to support the Shine Food Bank project in West Bowling, Bradford. As usual the response from the church fellowship has been tremendous. As we go to press the proceeds have not yet been delivered, but we are certain that they will be gratefully received and put to good use.



Thank you to all who have contributed to this worthwhile cause..

Young Peoples Pages

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Samuel 8:1-10:1, 17-24

Samuel had been a good leader of Israel
but he was now old. The leaders of the
twelve tribes came to talk to him...

We want a king like all
the other countries



God told Samuel
It's not you they are
rejecting but Me.



If you have a king, he will
take your sons to be his
army and your daughters to
work in his palace.

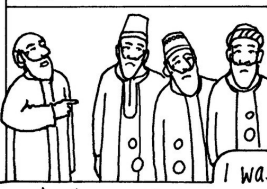


He will take the best of
your land, your crops
and your animals



We still want a king.

Samuel sent them home.



I was
hoping he would choose me..

Saul and his servant were
looking for some donkeys
that had run off.



They decided to ask
Samuel to ask God
where the donkeys were



God told Samuel that
Saul was to be the
king



Samuel called everyone to a
meeting and told them that
God had chosen a king.



God told them that Saul
was to be their king...



but Saul was hiding.

He's behind the luggage.

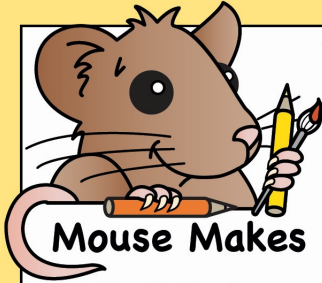


and they found Saul.

The people cheered!



Long live the King!



Mouse Makes

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Spirit of _____
Genesis 1:2

The _____
of the Father.
Acts 1:4

The Spirit of _____
A _____
Romans 8:15

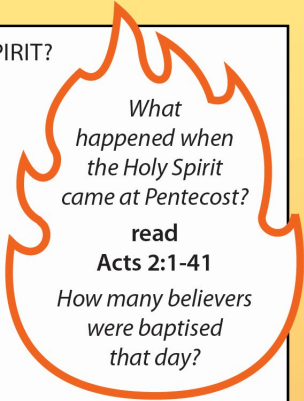
H _____
John 14:26

The Spirit of _____
John 16:13

The Spirit of _____
Acts 16:7

The Fruit of the Spirit
Galatians 5:22-23

___ O ___
___ Y ___
___ C ___
___ T ___
___ I ___
___ N ___
___ S ___
___ N ___



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

Look up the Bible verses and fill in the missing words. Look for them in the word search then look for these words below.

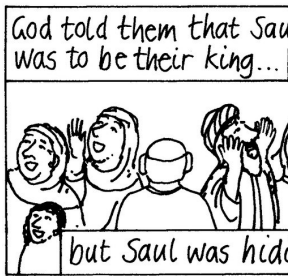
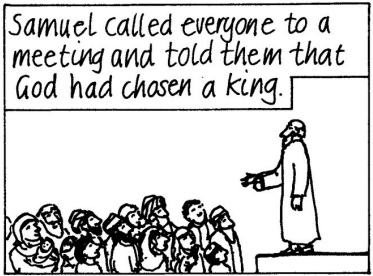
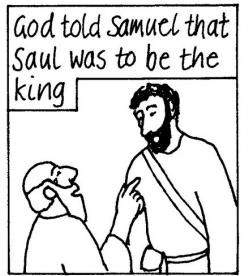
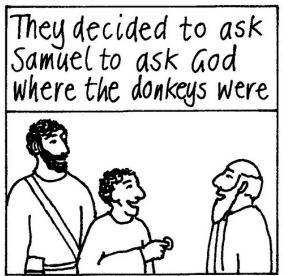
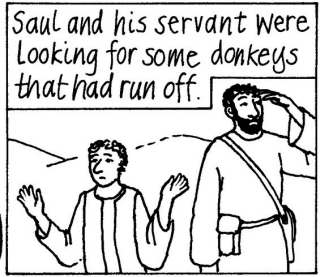
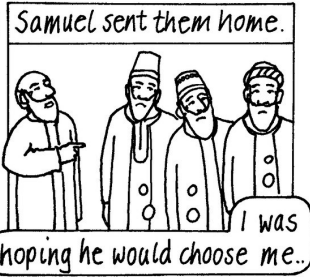
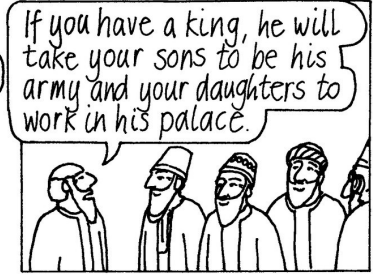
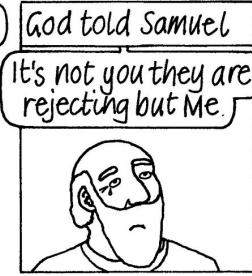
HOLY • SPIRIT • COUNSELLOR • COMFORTER
ADVOCATE • TEACHER • LORD • PROMISE
GLORY • GRACE • FAITH • DOVE • FIRE • WIND

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Samuel 8:1-10:1, 17-24

Samuel had been a good leader of Israel but he was now old. The leaders of the twelve tribes came to talk to him...



WORDSEARCH: A PRAYER FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

Lord, we pray for the conflict in the Middle East, and how it is damaging the lives of so many millions of people. You, Lord, make wars cease to the end of the earth; You break bows, shatter spears, and burn shields with fire [Psalm 46:9]. Through Your Holy Spirit, move upon the leaders of the nations to de-escalate this crisis. We hear of wars and rumours of wars (Matt. 24:6), but You Lord are our rock, our fortress and our deliverer. Our hope is in You. Let Your name be exalted among the nations; may You be exalted in the earth [Psalm 46:10]. *Kyrie eleison – Lord have mercy.*



Middle
East
Conflict
Pray
Damage

War
Cease
Earth
Break

Bows
Shatter
Spears
Burn
Shields

Fire
crisis
many
Lives
millions

Lord
Our
Rock
Fortress

Hope
Kyrie
in
You
mercy

Mrs Daphne Potter

The Reverend Mirella Moxon delivered this eulogy for Daphne.

It is no surprise that Daphne chose The King of Love my shepherd is as one of her hymns for today rejoicing as it does in the unfailing goodness of Jesus. And she knew we would recognise her in the final request in that hymn:

*'Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house forever.'*



Some years ago, Daphne came to talk to me about today. She hoped that at her funeral we would remember her within the context of this Christian Community which meant so much to her just as she meant so much to us! So it is that I stand before you to celebrate her Christian Life amongst us and to rejoice in God's Eternal Love for her and for each one of us and therefore to fulfil her request.

As far as I am concerned, Daphne's earliest Church date goes back to 1949 to the FYCs. There may be some of you here today who belonged to; The Fellowship of Young Congregationalists commonly known as The Youth Club of its day. (Jennifer Dyson, John Parker?). I believe The Revd. Willam Johnston may have been minister here then. Daphne's father was a choir member in those days, and I am told he and Daphne took part in some hilarious antics with a ladder at one of the concerts at church. These concerts in the 1950s included some very funny sketches. She would have enjoyed the laughter. By February 1952 Daphne became a member of this church. The Revd. Leon Cook would have officiated and Daphne; up until her death, was our second longest serving member.

Six full time ministers have served here during her membership including Geoffrey Tillison, Philip Hanson, Tony Gardiner, and our beloved Jason. Daphne began as a Congregationalist and ended as a United Reformist.

Life got in the way sometimes of course and there were

gaps, but she never gave up her membership or her deep connection with the community here. I have talked to people about her, and certain things are on repeat.

Her style: always so immaculately and smartly dressed. Everyone who has complimented her style has reminded me that Daphne's father was a tailor. Her hair was beautifully styled. She was a hairdresser after all! Everyone spoke of her great sense of humour and some remarked that her humour could be dry. She could also be very direct! And she had a certain tone.

Now talking of tone ... everyone spoke of Daphne's wonderful alto singing voice. What a gift God gave her. She sang God's praise thousands of times in this building in the choir and latterly in Singing for Fun which she supported from the outset. I am told she was very helpful to those who could not read a score. Not a surprise as she was a kind and helpful person.

What a super tribute Singing for Fun paid her when they sang Thank you for the Music on hearing of her death: a song she had voiced so beautifully in one of their concerts. Daphne was part of the Seated Chorus in every Family Church Production here at The Bridge and there will be photographs. She gathered others in her car to bring them to rehearsals. Doreen Green, Sybil Shepherd, Maureen Birch. And I must say it has been quite lovely to hear names and recall beloved members of this church who are no longer with us. Daphne's name has been associated with so many of our dear departed.

Her ministry of Music, as someone described it, was a very social thing. Daphne had many friends here and, in the Fairfax Singers, and Guiseley Amateurs some of whom were part of this fellowship too. What fun they had. What great performances they have given and how good it is that the Fairfax Singers have come to sing in tribute to Daphne today.

One great friend from this church and Otley Town was Christine Campbell. Christine was Mayor of Otley in 1985/6 and she chose Daphne to be her Consort. I googled that to see if I could find a photo and sadly found nothing! But I am quite sure that Daphne faithfully did her duty, really looked the part and revelled in the honour.

As well as having a gift for singing, Daphne played the piano and was an invaluable pianist at The Women's Meeting, a role she guarded zealously I am told. She also played for Food and Friends. Her musical gifts, her sociability, her care for others and sense of humour were much appreciated in all the organisations she joined and over coffee on a Sunday morning.

Later as we sing Think of a world without any flowers, the words highlighting so many things Daphne treasured, we think of a world without Daphne, but we give thanks that we have known her and shared our faith and hope and love with her over the years, and we thank God for her gift of music so joyfully and faithfully shared with us.

Now no doubt she will be singing a new song in heaven in celebration of God's redeeming love made known in Jesus. She will be seated for sure with a chorus: a chorus of immaculately robed angels and I am quite certain she will be among friends.

Au Revoir Daphne Darling!

Daphne Potter died on 20th February 2026 aged 92 years. Her funeral service was held at The Bridge Church on Thursday 19th March 2026.

THE BRIDGE CAFÉ: UPDATE

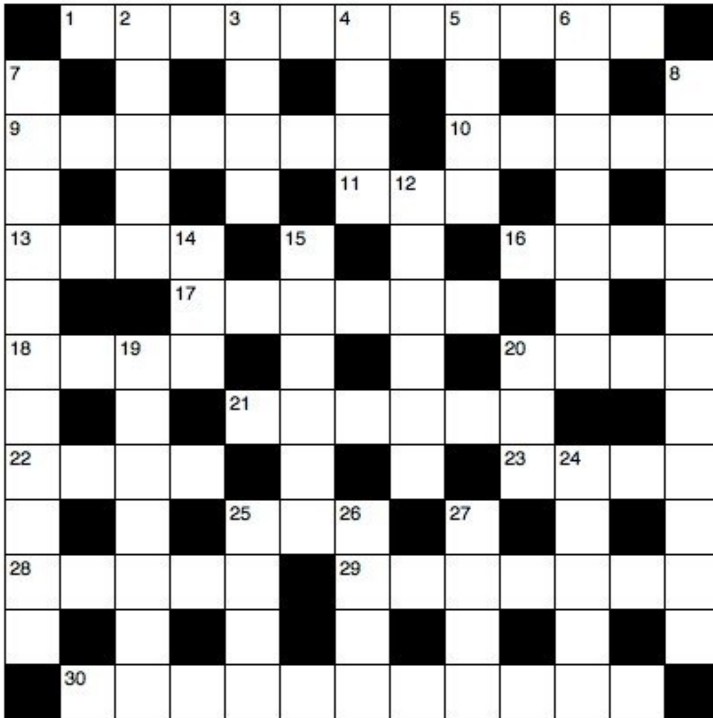
Margaret Hollingrake who has been one of the joint coordinators at The Bridge Café since 2017 has decided to step down from the role. She will however continue to be a volunteer at the café.

The Bridge Church is grateful for Margaret's unstinting service to the café. Margaret (on the right) is pictured with Sally Thompson, one of our Cafe volunteers who presented Margaret with a 'thank you' gift.



We are delighted that Susan Wright has agreed to step up to become a coordinator at the café.

BIBLE CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Overpowered (Deuteronomy 11:4) (11)
- 9 'The — are mantled with corn' (Psalm 65:13) (7)
- 10 'Each man—a sword to his side' (Exodus 32:27) (5)
- 11 On the death of Jesus the curtain in the temple was torn from— to bottom (Matthew 27:51) (3)
- 13 Stagger (Isaiah 28:7) (4)
- 16 'Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought—and doesn't do it, sins' (James 4:17) (2,2)
- 17 Stir up or provoke (Acts13:50) (6)
- 18 Burden (Luke11:46) (4)
- 20 'As far as the east is from the—, so far has he removed our transgressions from us' (Psalm 103:12) (4)
- 21 Sign (Luke23:38) (6)

- 22 'After that, Jesus poured water into a basin and began to—his disciples' feet' (John 13:5) (4)
- 23 The nature of the seven ears of corn which swallowed up the good ears in Pharaoh's dream (Genesis 41:23) (4)
- 25 Has (anag.) (3)
- 28 'This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, — sons' (Genesis 10:1) (5)
- 29 'I will...make them drunk, so that they...sleep for—and—awake' (Jeremiah 51:39) (4,3)
- 30 Paul said of him, 'he often refreshes me and is not ashamed of my chains' (2 Timothy 1:16) (11)

Down

- 2 Worth (Matthew 13:46) (5)
- 3 'A bruised — He will not break' (Matthew 12:20) (4)
- 4 'Suddenly a great company of the heavenly — appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (4)
- 5 Slip (anag.) (4)
- 6 'Take an awl and push it through his — — into the door, and he will become your servant for life' (Deuteronomy 15:17) (3,4)
- 7 Bountiful (2 Corinthians 8:2) (11)
- 8 'Therefore, as we have —, let us do good to all people' (Galatians 6:10) (11)
- 12 Acquire (2 Timothy 2:10) (6)
- 14 Container cover (Numbers 19:15) (3)
- 15 'He...became obedient to death, even death on— — !' (Philippians 2:8) (1,5)
- 19 Refrain (1 Peter 2:11) (7)
- 20 'She began to—his feet with her tears' (Luke 7:38) (3)
- 24 One who worships Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva (5)
- 25 'Give to everyone who—you' (Luke 6:30) (4)
- 26 'I lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my—come from?' (Psalm 121:1) (4)
- 27 One of those whom the Lord said would be taken from Jerusalem and Judah as judgment on them (Isaiah 3:2) (4)

OUR HERITAGE - ANNIVERSARIES

When looking after the church archives and exploring the church's history you quickly realise that anniversaries are important. The Bridge Church, over the last 205 years, has always taken the chance to have a celebration to commemorate some event. We have celebrated the founding of this place of worship in 1821, by having special celebrations in 1921, 1926, 1971, 1996 and 2021. I do think celebrating the 105th anniversary in 1926 was pushing it. There may have been earlier celebrations but the church records are a bit sparse for the 19th century.

We have commemorated the new church building (opened in 1899) in 1924, 1959 & 1999 and, of course we celebrated the east window's centenary in 2018 (2 years early, but who cares!). Sunday School anniversaries were, of course, celebrated each year. Fifty years of Junior Church was celebrated in 2010. The Church itself had an annual celebration, usually in October. Which particular anniversary this commemorated is unknown (Society of Independents in 1821, the first chapel in 1826 or the new church building in 1899?). T Club & Supper Club commemorated their 50th Anniversary in 2018. I am sure there are many others not documented. I haven't even started on national celebrations such as Coronations & Jubilees.

What format did all these celebrations take? Well, of course, there was usually an act of worship with some eminent preacher leading worship, which in the earlier days would probably last several hours (worshippers in those days must have had strong constitutions). All these events would provide 'refreshments' and the ladies of the church must have been very busy catering in the cellar kitchens (it was well into the 20th century before they were allowed above stairs).

What church celebration would not be worthy of its name without a bazaar or sale of work? These also had the benefit of raising funds. Sometimes these had to be held in the Mechanics Institute because they were too large for the church hall. I can't list all the different 'events' but we knew how to celebrate and we continue to do so!

I have picked out one item which was part of the 150th anniversary of the church in 1971. It is a table cloth signed by all (or most) of the people at the celebrations (which lasted for a week). After everybody had signed the signatures were embroidered so they would last. An image of the spire on the cloth was also created by Ann Marsden. I have counted the number of signatures and they total 242 (or thereabouts). An image of part of the cloth is shown here. Most of them are no longer with us, although I reckon there are 43 who are still alive and continuing to celebrate.



The second picture is the Centenary celebrations of the church in 1921 in the Large Hall. Lady Duncan is the seated lady and the other lady is believed to be Mrs O.H. Wade of Bradford, the great granddaughter of William Ackroyd. You can see the organ which used to be in the hall.



Andrew Howard

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1, Overwhelmed. 9, Valleys. 10, Strap. 11, Top. 13, Reel. 16, To do. 17, Incite. 18, Load. 20, West. 21, Notice. 22, Wash. 23, Thin. 25, Ash. 28, Noah's. 29, Ever not. 30, Onesiphorus.
DOWN: 2, Value. 3, Reed. 4, Host. 5, Lisp. 6, Ear lobe. 7, Overflowing. 8, Opportunity. 12, Obtain. 14, Lid. 15, A cross. 19, Abstain. 20, Wet. 24, Hindu. 25, Asks. 26, Help. 27, Hero.

GETTING TO KNOW TINA JOHNSON

What first brought you to the Bridge Church?

I first came to The Bridge Church having being brought by my parents. I then attended with a neighbour, Jean Hodgson and her daughters.



Can you tell us something about your faith journey?

I was involved in church until my early teens, when I drifted away. I still attended church with friends and also when it was church parade and I was not working with brownies. I came back to the Bridge Church following the death of my father.

In my work I assisted chaplaincy with services in the faith room. I was involved in holding services with two great ladies, one a volunteer from the Salvation Army and the other a Quaker! They gave me encouragement to deliver these services, which I continued when they both left. The services were relatively short and included hymns, prayers and bible readings. There were lots of comings and goings as I worked on the dementia ward.

What is your favourite hymn and why?

Like many people I have lots of favourite hymns, but for this time of year I would chose 'Adoramus te domine'.

How would you like to see the Bridge Church develop?

I would like the Bridge Church to attract some younger people, but I think church will change from what we have today.

What can you tell us about your working career?

I started work on a job creation scheme at High Royds. I was working on a ward helping in the kitchen, making bed

and doing laundry. I did occasional help with babies, as there was a small mother and baby unit there. I was encouraged by a sister there to apply for a permanent job, which unfortunately I did not get. I was interviewed for another job the following week which I got. I worked on 3 wards at High Royds as a nursing assistant and activity person and then moved to the Becklin Centre when my ward closed. I then moved to the Mount Hospital and stayed there until I retired last year.

What hobbies do you have?

My main hobby, as everyone will know is girl guiding. I love creating a meeting where the girls have fun and enjoy themselves. This term we made felt flowers for mothers day which Janet and Les Marsden helped with. We made a room in a box, positive pebbles and decorated eggs for easter, easter nests and cards. I also like reading, knitting and crafting.

Where is your favourite place in this country?

My favourite place in this country is here where we live. We are fortunate to have beautiful countryside where we can walk, cycle or climb , etc.

Where in the world would you like to visit?

I would love to visit Rome to see the architecture.

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

The three people I would invite to dinner are;

Elizabeth Fry as she is the first person I read about as a child who worked to help people;

Anne Sullivan who was Helen Keller's teacher, to ask her about her dedication and patience; and

Leonardo da Vinci to speak to him about his inventions.

Strictly Social

Strictly Social opened with a film night at the end of January. Over 30 people came and judging by the laughter enjoyed the film as well as the ice-creams sold at the interval.

52 tickets were sold for the Cheese and Wine charity evening. S&B's Simon and Becky brought several cheeses to talk about and then taste. They didn't charge anything for the evening and if you shopped with them the following weekend you were given a 10% discount! Thank you to everyone for helping in the kitchen, serving wine, selling tombola tickets or just coming and enjoying yourselves. We raised **£410** for the church charity Mercy Ships.

Fish and Chips at the Wharfe Fisheries followed by a Ghost Walk around Otley were March's evening. Spindleshanks McScrew (or Daisy) was our guide for the entertaining walk with spooky tales. George and Paul did have their hands over their ears at least once!

In April we are going to Calendar Girls the Musical at Ilkley Playhouse.

If you haven't been to a Strictly Social evening yet come and join us on Thursday 28th May at 7pm for a fun evening playing cards.

You **do not** need to know how to play Whist- we can explain it on the night!

You **do not** need to find a partner- we can sort that out on the night!

You **do** need to bring a bag containing 5 different items, the total of which must not exceed £5. These items can be anything at all!

We will provide some drinks, some desserts and a guaranteed fun night!
This is an evening for all ages.

Jason and Anne

CHURCH DIARY - FEBRUARY—MARCH 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

- April 13th - Three Highland Gardens - Janet Niepokojczcka.
April 27th - 'Whiteknights' - volunteers motorcyclists supporting the NHS.
May 11th - AGM followed by tea and cakes.
June 1st - My Life in Malawi - Gill Hunter MBE.

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

March 4th and April 1st.

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

- April 16th - AGM
May 21st - Bowls Evening.

Strictly Social 4th Thursday of each month at 7 pm

- April 23rd - Calendar Girls.
May 28th - Whist Drive.

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

13th April, 27th April, 11th May, 25th May, 1st June and 15th June

Messy Church - 27th May.

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