

*Oswald's  
Outlook*





## Preparation Time

I can't fail to get excited when the Christmas lights begin to appear in the shop windows and on our high streets, heralding the arrival of the festive season. It is perhaps, an over-used statement when we observe that it seems to get earlier each year, but as I write, the lights are up and on in the streets of Wensleydale and we have only just finished with Remembrance.

I confess that the lights and the decorations will be up very early in the Vicarage this year but with a particular reason. Our daughter who lives in Lincoln, is due to give birth to her first child and this joyful occasion is set to take place just a few days before Christmas Day; so ... even though the gathered family will feature a GP, she prefers not to travel 'up North', so the Clarks are going to do Christmas a month early. We're all very excited about it, even if another grandchild is destined to be born outside the hallowed boundaries of 'God's own county'.

The imminent birth of a child always brings with it great anticipation, preparation and excitement and we are no different in that respect, but as last year we had a grandson born on New Year's Day, we're looking forward to another season of rejoicing. As for now; the preparations of expectant parents that speak of love, continue.

The arrival of God's son on earth was also planned so very carefully. Over 600 years before Jesus was born, prophets were already recording key facts about his life. Many of these form important parts of the Old Testament in the Bible and refer to where he would be born, who his mother would be, where he would live, why he was coming, key moments in his life and the very manner of his death. I have always found this level of preparation by God fascinating, awesome and exciting. It's there. It exists. The inescapable documentary evidence was written down centuries before it took place as a witness of God's promise and his love and it is in our hands. I wonder what we might choose to do with that incredible knowledge as we see and hear the events of that world changing event shared with us once again?

I do hope that we may see you at some of the many different events and services taking place in St Oswald's this Christmas. It would be our very real pleasure to welcome you there and to share with you the joy and the reality that Jesus isn't just for Christmas .... He's for every day of our lives!

May the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas.

Rev Dave.

## **View from the Pew.**

So the season of reflection and nostalgia is well under way, shorter days, curtains drawn early and the scent of wood smoke on the crisp air. All the array of autumnal glory providing the perfect backdrop for Michaelmas daisies and the last lingering roses. And it seems everything in the garden is lovely. Until we peel back the layers of our lives, in preparation for the celebration of the Birth of Jesus, and we are in reflective mode.

And indeed, there will be much to celebrate and much cause for joyful family reunions and a sharing of love and goodness. Even when so many of us have real anxieties about the future, in a world where our leaders and those who govern us, see fit to fuel conflict, and even hatred. And where injustice and poverty on an industrial scale are rife, and the mental health of so many is clearly challenged. There is no wonder we feel out of control and powerless to make a difference. Except, we are not powerless. As followers of Jesus, we have the phenomenal power of prayer, as powerful as the actions that might be prompted by that act of prayer. There is no greater inspiration for our prayer pattern than the prayer Jesus gave us, "Our Father..." "To find time for quiet when we can hear what He is prompting us to do., and to be channels for His Love and Mercy is a good beginning. Goodness and positivity are not simply ploys to control badness and hatred and evil. They actually work! Goodness breeds goodness, and the more we can attempt to put goodness into our everyday lives we may see evidence of an improved society. A smile eventually brings a smile in return. It is salutary that we find good in often unexpected places, kindness and generosity from those who apparently have often drawn the short straw in life. We all know what it feels like when we have to have the last word in a conflict, when what is needed is less pride and more collaboration, kindness doesn't have to pretend- it just is .Where good is, love is, and God is!

Our prayer from St Matthew's is for the dale in all its utter beauty of the changing season, for all those we love, and for all those we know will have no one to love them, and that our Advent journey will be filled with His love, and His Grace and Mercy be with us all. Have a peaceful Christmas!

God Bless  
Lesley x

**Lesley Coates Jones.**

**“The Upper Dales Sunday School** continues to meet at 4pm every Sunday around the benefice and combines with the main church services for The Gathering at Hawes on the first Sunday in the month and the Family Service at Askrigg on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month when we are getting a strong congregation and wonderful participation from the children. The Harvest Festival was a truly celebratory service and the children made bread animals which were then eaten hot, with enthusiasm! We are all looking forward to the Advent and Christmas activities and details will follow.”



### **The Christmas Tree Festival**



Elizabeth Fawcett is organizing the Christmas Tree Festival as Liz C is unwell with a bad shoulder and neck. She is overseeing and helping so that she is in a position to do it next year. Instead of a concert, Elizabeth is going to do a “Songs of Praise Carols” for people to choose their favourite carol for a big sing along with a bring and share supper.

### **Advent Windows**

Elizabeth Fawcett would like to thank those who have volunteered to decorate windows for Advent, making our village look festive & bringing many visitors. The windows are always a wonderful part of Christmas in Askrigg.

### **Gregorian Chant Workshop**

On a pleasant Saturday in September a group of people met under the direction of Philip Duffy, an expert in the chant, to rehearse & finally perform the service of Vespers in St Oswald’s church. As usual we had people from as far away as London, from Sunderland, York and from the different dales. This is an annual event & is a rare opportunity to enjoy the chant in North Yorkshire.

Our wonderful band of helpers served a magnificent array of cakes in our breaks & we managed to give £213 to the Tower Fund. If you are interested look out for information about 2020. No prior experience is needed as we always have complete beginners & enough people who are familiar with the chant to help anyone who feels insecure.

**MRK**

## Next Step in Preserving the Tower

Many of you will be aware that our tower is in a very poor state of repair and requires extensive building works to remedy the situation. We have been advised by our church architect that if the work is not carried out, we will lose the tower. The PCC has been faced with the twin tasks of seeking funding to cover the cost and also of securing the necessary permissions to allow for the work to go ahead. We have the permission of Askrigg and Low Abbotside Parish Council and of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. We have also obtained the necessary faculty (permission from the Church of England) for the work to be done.

The building work is projected to cost around £220,000. From donations, Open Gardens in June, Concert Refreshment Takings, Mary Scarr's coffee morning and recent church coffee mornings we have raised in the region of £25,000. Of course, we are approaching grant-awarding bodies for help. The appropriate one that gives the largest awards is the Heritage Lottery Fund and we have been in contact with them.

To be eligible for their funding, we do not just have to repair the tower. They are concerned with preserving and promoting the heritage and with passing it on; engaging more people with the heritage through a programme of activities, learning opportunities, facilities. They would also like to see that we are working in partnership with other organizations such as museums, YDNP, schools, universities, professional story-tellers, IT providers etc. to make such provision. They will fund this aspect of the project and so we need to develop activities for the community and visitors. We have taken advice on this from the Diocese. Examples of Ideas to take forward include

- Creation of Wi-fi hotspot in church for use by local community and visitors; QR panels with information about the grade 1 listed building, its people, memorials and stained glass
- Installation of modern, reliable sound system.
- Tales from the Tower storytelling. Stories from the local community about the families, community and church –various formats – video, audio, written.
- Include school study sessions

- Host concerts, lectures and other groups such as choirs, art group, playgroup etc.
- Wildlife conservation area in churchyard.

However, HLF want more than ideas – they are looking for a plan of how these things will be delivered as well as an idea of their cost. Costs for this part of the project could add another £25,000 to our bid. We intend to liaise with other agencies to work towards detailed plans and costings for this aspect of the project. Applying to HLF for funds is very competitive and so we must have a polished bid that stands out from the rest. We are up against organizations with a large and varied staff base and more resources than we have. The research and finalising of the plans will take time when PCC members will be engaged with other organizations to determine the best outcomes for each of the activities.

We intend to submit our application in good time for the next deadline (March 2020) to allow for dialogue should HLF require any clarification. (We did not receive the faculty in time to apply for the last deadline even if we had finalised our programme of activities/community involvement.) The decision will be known in June 2020. The work cannot begin until all this has been done and tenders have been made.

Many of the bodies that award smaller amounts of money will not do so until they know that the major part has been secured. We continue to need your support in the following ways:

- Fundraising
- Your ideas/suggestions as to how we can include more people in the heritage of our church.
- Offers of help/involvement in facilitating our opportunities/activities.
- Prayer

### **The PCC of St. Oswald's, Askrigg**

Please read the enclosed letter & respond. We need your views to help us on the next step of trying to get grants for the tower.



## Remembrance Sunday

At 9.45am on Sunday morning the muffled bells rang out over Askrigg to mark the beginning of Remembrance Sunday. Andrew Hague had hoisted the Union Flag which could be clearly seen on the tower the Flower Ladies had done a wonderful arrangement of Poppies & the Union Flag in the church & we also had the silhouettes to mark those from Askrigg who had died in the two World Wars. The Revd Vera Sinton conducted a moving service in which forgiveness, reconciliation not retribution were the key themes.

We were saddened that Robin Minnit, a veteran of WW 11 could not be with us as he had been every year previously but were delighted that Norman Fletcher also a veteran of WW 11 was able to be with us along with Geoff Keeble ( Navy) who fought in the Falklands & Rob Stokes (Army) who fought in Northern Ireland, Iraq & Afghanistan. The veterans carried wreaths & a posy of 21 poppies --one for each of the men who had died- & placed them in the memorial corner where a candle had been lit. Vera read the list of the names of the dead & Geoff Keeble read the passage `They shall grow not old`. The Last Post sounded throughout the church & the 2 minute Silence began. Reveille finally broke the silence & the service continued.

A wonderful experience, a full church & after the service coffee & cakes which allowed plenty of conversation. Many people commented on Vera`s sermon & how appropriate they had found it.

I think we did those on the memorial tablets proud.

**MRK**



## Bell Jars

Paula Hague has suggested that we put our spare 5ps in a jam jar to help the Bell Tower Fund. Andrew has drawn some ringing bells to stick on the jar to remind you why you are collecting! If you are interested Bells will be available from the church & from Paula to put on your jar. Jars will be collected sometime next year to give chance to get them filled! Every little helps.



# OPEN PANTRY

Open Pantry is a new initiative being run by the churches in Wensleydale to help people who find themselves in food crisis. There has been much in the news lately of how the numbers requiring assistance from food banks have been steadily rising across all parts of the UK and this is a response from the churches in the area to provide help at a much more local level.

St Margaret's church, Hawes and St Oswald's church, Askrigg will begin a trial of '**Open Pantry**' in December. St Alkelda's church in Middleham is also involved and opened their 'Pantry' last month.

People can come and take the food and toiletry items as and when they need them without referral, with the invitation to make a contribution to the 'Pantry' when their circumstances change.

The 'Pantry' will be situated towards the rear of the church buildings which are open approx. 9am – 5pm every day.

For those who may wish to make a contribution to the 'Pantry', a list of essential items are given below.

UHT milk, Cereals, Jam, Marmalade, Biscuits

Tins of: Rice Pudding, Custard, Vegetables, Soup, Potatoes, Tomatoes, Spam, Ham, Corned Beef, Tuna, Baked Beans etc

Jars of: Pasta Sauces

Meals or Pies in a tin: such as Stew, Pasta, Meatballs, Hotdogs

Packets of dried food such as: Pasta, Rice and Noodles

Toiletries: Deodorant, Toothpaste, Soap, Shower Gel, Feminine Hygiene products, Toilet Paper,

## **New to the area?**

Moving to a new area always involves finding and settling into a new community and groups, which can be daunting, particularly if you do not know anyone in the locality. For most people, walking into a new church, particularly on their own, can be very hard and it is often put off, Sunday after Sunday. It makes sense then, that as church members, welcoming visitors is very important.

Thirty years ago, when looking for a church in a new town, I visited every one of the 14 churches before I made a choice. The range of welcome was enormous and to tell you all about it would fill all of Oswald's Outlook! Coming to St Oswald's church last year was a complete joy. The welcome was just right – not overbearing but friendly; plenty of people prepared to help me to settle in and no odd cliques or difficulties.

However, important as first impressions are, the warmth of the welcome will only keep you coming back for a little while. After that it is the style of worship, the music and the strength and faith of the community that can help turn a visitor into a regular attender. If you are new to our area, or not a regular church goer, come and join us one Sunday – you will be assured of a warm welcome.

## **From the Tower**

You may have heard us ringing the tower bells at our Tuesday practice (7:00 to 8:30 pm) or for a Sunday service. Whilst providing a service to the Church and community, our tower activity is a great opportunity to be part of a local friendly team, learning the skills of bell ringing, enjoying and achieving something different. People of all ages learn to ring, at their own pace and take part when they can. There is a great satisfaction when you ring bells for someone's special day, like for a wedding. To continue the art and tradition of bell ringing at St Oswald's we are looking for new members to join the team, so if you are interested and want to see if it is for you, then why not come along and see what it is all about. You would be most welcome.

## **We want to dedicate a ring of bells.**

The bell ringers are asking if anyone would like the bells rung for a special occasion, like a birthday or an anniversary. It is our contribution towards the tower restoration fund. The idea is that we would ring for about 20 minutes, sometime on a Sunday (or other requested day subject to ringers' availability) for a minimum donation. A certificate will be given in recognition of the ring. Look out for more details soon.

**KS (Tower Captain).**

## Christmas Diary

Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> -24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Advent Windows	Askrigg Village	Advent window trail map available in St Oswald's Church or Sykes Shop
Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec	The Gathering Family Communion and Toy Service	St Margaret's, Hawes	10.30am
Sun 8 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Memorial Service	St Oswald's, Askrigg	4.00pm
Sun 8 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Sunday School -Making Christmas Lanterns	St Matthew's, Stalling Busk	4.00pm
Fri 13 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Christmas Tree preview BIG SING -Carols	St Oswald's, Askrigg	7.00pm
Mon 16 <sup>th</sup> - Tues 17 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Soup,Bread & Mince Pie lunches	St Oswald's Askrigg	12.00 noon - 2.00pm
Tues 17 <sup>th</sup> Dec	BAWB Schools Carol Service	St Andrew's Aysgarth	2.00pm
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	Carols by Candlelight	St Oswald's, Askrigg	4.00pm
Tue 24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Christingle Service	St Oswald's Askrigg	4.00pm
Tue 24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Holy Communion followed by Carols by Candlelight	St Matthew's, Stalling Busk	7.15pm Carols at 8pm
Tue 24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Midnight Communion	St Oswald's, Askrigg	11.30pm
Wed 25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Family Communion	St Oswald's, Askrigg	10.30am
Sun 29 <sup>th</sup> Dec	United Service	St Oswald's, Askrigg	10.30am



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