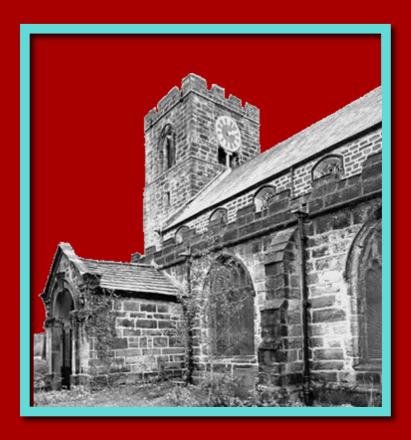
IN TOUCH

MARCH 2025

E1





OtleyParish



TLEY PARISH CHURCH is the oldest building in Otley. It's at the heart of our town and, for over 1,000 years, people have been gathering here for worship, with significant family as well as community events.

We are a gathering place for pilgrims on a journey of discovery, kindling hope as we go, and helping one another to be more fully alive to the wonders, the joys and the sorrows of life. We'd love you to share the journey with us.

We want to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to Christ and in service to our local community. Join us in worshipping our God together on Sundays and in daily life; be with us as we study and discern how to use the Bible in the 21st century; also learn with us what it is to be disciples in the 21st century following Jesus, and help us, with other churches in the town, to bring good news to Otley and far beyond.

"There is a place for everyone, with CHRIST at the centre of it all"

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 Our Sunday and mid-week church services





Embracing the Call to Share Jesus: Insights from the Talking Jesus Report.

As we approach the season of Lent, a time for reflection and spiritual renewal, we are embarking on a transformative journey together. This year, our Lent study will delve into the findings of the Talking Jesus Report - a comprehensive research project conducted by the Evangelical Alliance. This report offers valuable insights into the current state of faith in the UK and provides guidance on how we, as a church community, can more effectively share the message of Jesus with those around us.

Understanding the Landscape of Faith in the UK

The Talking Jesus Report reveals both challenges and opportunities for evangelism in our nation. One notable finding is that 45% of the UK population believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and 20% believe that Jesus is God. These statistics highlight a significant portion of the population that holds foundational Christian beliefs, suggesting an openness to spiritual conversations.

However, the report also indicates that many individuals lack a personal connection to practicing Christians, which can hinder the spread of the Gospel. This underscores the importance of building authentic relationships and being proactive in sharing our faith.

The Role of Personal Relationships in Evangelism

A key takeaway from the report is the pivotal role that personal relationships play in leading others to faith. Many practicing Christians attribute their journey to faith to conversations with friends, family members, or colleagues who

shared their beliefs in a genuine and relatable manner. This finding encourages us to reflect on our own interactions and consider how we can be intentional in discussing our faith within our existing relationships.

Introducing Our Lent Study: Putting Insights into Practice

In response to these findings, our upcoming Lent study aims to equip each member of Otley Parish Church with the tools and confidence to share the message of Jesus effectively. Utilizing the Talking Jesus Course, a resource developed to complement the report, we will engage in six video-based sessions that offer practical suggestions for initiating and navigating conversations about faith. These sessions include short films, inspirational testimonies, and real-life examples from individuals who have successfully shared their faith in various contexts.

What to Expect from the Lent Study

- Session Structure: Each session will feature a video presentation followed by group discussions, allowing us to explore the content deeply and apply it to our personal experiences.
- Practical Application: We will learn and practice strategies for sharing our faith naturally and confidently, addressing common challenges and misconceptions.
- Community Building: Participating in this study will strengthen our bonds as a church family, fostering a supportive environment where we can encourage and learn from one another.

Join Us on This Transformative Journey

We invite everyone in our congregation to participate in this Lent study. Whether you have been sharing your faith for years or are new to the idea, this course offers valuable insights and practical tools to help you make a meaningful impact in your circles of influence.

Let us come together this Lent, inspired by the findings of the Talking Jesus Report, to renew our commitment to the Great Commission. By embracing the call to share the message of Jesus with love and authenticity, we can contribute to a ripple effect that extends beyond our church walls, touching lives and transforming our community.

If you're not in a house group and would like to be, even if only for the duration of Lent, please speak to Jackie Hird or myself.

AARON KENNEDYVicar at Otley Parish Church







We know that you are fairly new to Otley Parish Church, Tricia, and many of us will know you by sight but not really know much about you. Will you please answer a few questions that will help us all to get to know you a little better? *Thank you!*

When were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born in July 1956 at St. Mary's Hospital in Armley, Leeds, and grew up in Headingley.

Where did you go to school?

Firstly to Headingley County Primary, and then to Lawnswood High School.

Which College/University did you go to?

I went to 3 in total. At the age of 18, I went to Teesside Polytechnic (Diploma in Interior Design). At 36 years old, to Leeds Polytechnic (B. Ed in Design and Technology). Finally, when I was 48 I was at Leeds Metropolitan University - now, Leeds Beckett University (PG Diploma in Library and Information Studies).

When and where did you meet your husband? I met Stevie in 1983 whilst working in Glasgow, which is where he hails from. I returned to Leeds in 1985, and he joined me shortly afterwards. We were married in August 1988 at Adel Church.

What was your occupation and where did you work?

After finishing college at 21, I worked in retail and design for 15 years, firstly in Leeds, then Glasgow, and finally in Ilkley and Skipton. Next, I trained as a secondary teacher and taught Design & Technology and Art for 3 years before becoming a school librarian. For 22 years I worked in the libraries at Leeds University and for the past 3 years at Leeds Trinity.

Do you have brothers and sisters?

Just the one - John, who is nine years my senior.

Where did you worship before coming to Otley Parish Church? How long have you been coming here?

Growing up I attended the parish church in Headingley until I was in my teens, but after then I only went on high days and holidays. I've been coming to OPC Christingle services with my friends, Jane and Margaret, for over 20 years, and on New Year's Day 2023 I came with them to my first Sunday service here, which was when Aaron introduced the 'Rule of Life Workbook'. Although I was surprised to be going away with homework, I kept coming back and began to look forward to worshiping each week.

Later that year I attended an excellent Alpha course run by Stewart Hartley which really helped develop my faith. In April 2024 I was one of the 'magnificent seven' from OPC who were confirmed in a lovely service led by Bishop Arun. On that day I realised I'd gained something in my life that I'd never known was missing - not only the love of Jesus but also a church family who are caring and supportive through thick and thin.

You are involved in a few activities at OPC - can you list them for us? I'm part of the Welcoming and Hospitality team, and the Local to Global group. I attend Craftynuts and the Ladies Fellowship meetings. I'll help with any events that involve wielding a teapot!

Do you have a favourite verse of Scripture? If so, what is it?

It varies, but today, as a fragile peace deal that was finally agreed in January about the Middle East, I've chosen Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV. 'Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.'

Do you have a favourite Christian hymn or song?

'Amazing Grace' is my traditional hymn choice, and 'In Christ Alone' is my contemporary one.

Do you like classical music? Do you have a favourite piece?

I prefer classical pieces that include brass instruments. For me 'Largo' from the New World Symphony by Dvorak perfectly evokes the cobbled streets of Yorkshire (as seen in the old Hovis advert).

What about modern songs or music - anything in particular?

'Have I told you lately that I love you?' by Van Morrison. This is a beautiful ballad about earthly and spiritual emotion, with the wonderful line, 'there's a love that's divine and it's yours and it's mine.' Another favourite is Kate Rusby, aka the Barnsley Nightingale. We go to see her Christmas show each year and love her unique versions of festive music, especially 'In the bleak midwinter'.

Can you play a musical instrument?

I've recently started learning the Ukulele. It's early days, but fun so far!

Do you have a favourite part of Yorkshire that you like to visit?

As a fan of the Brontë sisters I enjoy visiting Haworth and exploring parts of The Railway Children Walk which follows many locations where the film was made; ideally finishing with afternoon tea on a steam train along the Worth Valley Railway.

Is there somewhere you'd like to go on holiday where you've not been before, regardless of expense?

A guided tour around the Inner Hebrides islands of Scotland; to see Fingal's Cave on Staffa; to go on a spiritual retreat to Iona Abbey.

A book you especially enjoyed reading. Any special reason?

That is a tough question for a librarian with eclectic tastes! However, I've settled for Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë. It's a beautifully written novel of intense power and intrigue which passionately depicts a young woman's search for empowerment, friendship, love and self-worth. I've read it several times since my teens and always learned something new.

Do you have a hobby or something you enjoy doing to relax?

I've practiced Qigong for 15+ years. It's a Chinese system of gentle exercise, breathing control and meditation related to tai chi. I can highly recommend it for stress reduction.

What would be your favourite meal - 2 or even 3 courses?

A vegetarian roast dinner, with stuffing, Yorkshire puddings, roasties, mash, cauliflower cheese and all the veggies going. And followed by apple pie and custard, or just vanilla ice cream if I'm too full!

If you were to spend a year on a desert island on your own, what luxury would you take with you?

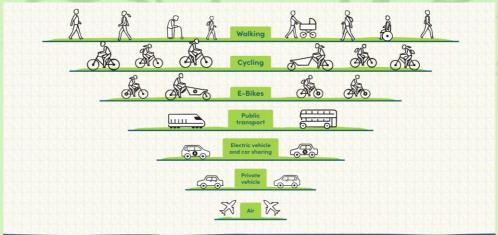
An inflatable mattress as I'm useless if I don't get a decent night's sleep.

Which one word best describes your life right now? Fulfilled.

Creation Care

A monthly column for us to share environmental and sustainability ideas

As the weather starts to improve, you may be thinking about getting out and about more. But how to do this in a sustainable fashion? Walking and cycling obviously create the least carbon of all the modes, closely followed by public transport as shown in this diagram of sustainable travel options from Action Net Zero https://www.actionnetzero.org/ Flying to Europe emits 15 times more carbon than taking the train.



Electric bicycles are a relatively new option. Otley Town Council has an E-bike hire trial where you can try one for free. You can contact the scheme by ringing 01943 466335. Obviously electric bikes, as for electric and plug in hybrid cars (PHEVs), produce less carbon if recharged using green electricity.

For those with diesel/petrol cars there are still ways to reduce the carbon you emit on your journeys. For instance, when did you last check your car tyre pressures? Correct tyre pressure extends tyre lifespan (saving money on buying new ones) and improves your vehicle's safety. An under inflated tyre can also use up to 6 per cent more fuel, while over inflated tyres can cause heavy and uneven wear, meaning you'll have to replace them sooner. A correctly inflated tyre can give an extra 26 miles from a 60 litre tank, a big saving. Check your handbook or online for what your car's tyres should be. Top tip: more air is lost in warm weather so check more regularly as spring temperatures rise.

• Look out for more tips in future In Touch magazines or you may wish to share any actions you have taken with the rest of the Parish. We will continue to pray for God's creation, nature's preservation and the reduction in fossil fuel usage.



THE OLD VICARAGE OF OTLEY PARISH CHURCH **BIRDCAGE WALK** OTLEY



The Old Vicarage on Birdcage Walk

he land upon which The Old Vicarage now stands, together with the field on the north and south sides of the house and garden were allotted to the Church in exchange for common grazing rights, which Otley Parish Church previously held, upon the open moor at Otley and which was enclosed by Act of Parliament around 1783.

In 1865 the Midland Railway Company, empowered by Parliament, constructed an extension of the railway system to Otley and built the station. Because that construction work interfered with the local road system, the Railway Company had to construct a new road as a replacement access to those, and to other, fields. The new roadway was known at first as Railway Road, and later became Birdcage Walk.

In the late 1860s the Otley Parish decided that a new Vicarage was needed and chose to build one upon the land in Railway Road, which it already owned. The Parish was able to raise about £1,200 from the sale of its existing Vicarage in Church Lane, but did not have any other money to enable a suitable Vicarage, of proper standing, to be constructed. The town then had a population of about 5,500, and the Vicar wished to have a suitably impressive new Vicarage, but that would cost rather more than £2,000 to build. The Church Commissioners were asked to fund the shortfall, but they were rather reluctant to do so, However, after protracted negotiations, and the obtaining of quotations for the proposed new building the Church Commissioners were persuaded to bridge the gap.

The architect appointed was Mr Alfred Hill Thompson of 6, Albert Chambers, Park Row, Leeds and his fee was agreed at £100. Plans were drawn up, and quotations obtained. There was no single main contractor, but quotes were obtained directly from the individual tradesmen.

Work began in late 1867 and was contracted to be completed in October 1868, but although very well advanced the house was still not finished in March 1869, and work on the driveway had not been commenced.

The masonry works were largely completed, but not all paid for, when Geldard & Watkinson failed in business and had to call in their creditors. This gave rise to some difficulty and delay in completion of the contract, but the house was finally ready for occupation by 1870.

• This feature was written by F. M. Lister FRICS, FAAV, who lived in the house from 1936 to 1959 and again from 1980 to 2006.



The earlier Vicarage in Church Lane (adjacent to Kirkgate Arcade) overlooking the churchyard. It was built in 1673, and restored by the then vicar, Rev. James Bailey in 1813. The first vicar here was Rev. Thomas Harrison who was vicar from 1673 to 1692.

More Recent Vicarages



The Vicarage in Burras Lane (adjacent to Vicarage Gardens). It became a vicarage in approx. 1900 and remained one until approx. 1995. The first vicar to live here was Rev John Trower. The house became a Listed Building in July 1974.



The Vicarage in Vicarage Gardens (off Burras Lane). This was built in approx. 1995. The first incumbent to live here was Rev. lan Rodley who was vicar from 1990 to 1999. He was then followed by Rev. Graham Buttanshaw, vicar from 1999 to 2021. Our present vicar, Rev. Aaron Kennedy, lives here with his family.

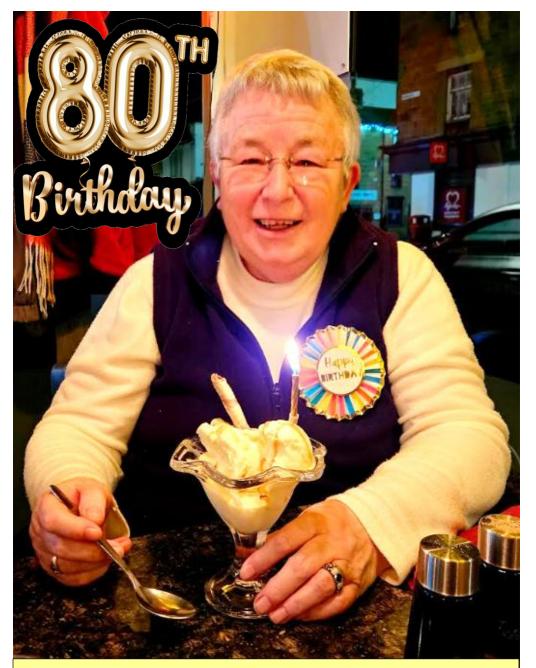




EMILY GARNER

celebrated her 45th birthday on 2nd February 2025.

She was born in Norwich in 1980.



MARGARET THOMPSON

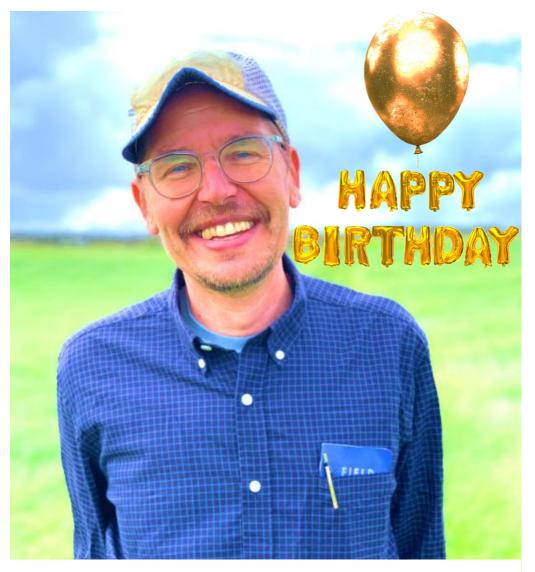
celebrated her 80th birthday on 29th January 2025. She was born in Leeds in 1945.



Happy Birthday!

Clem Kennedy is now 4 years old. He celebrated his birthday on 27th January 2025.

Clem is the son of Grace and Aaron and the younger brother of Gabe.



NATHAN TWICHELL

celebrated his 48th birthday on 27th January 2025. He was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1997 during a blizzard that dropped 254cm (8ft) of snow in just 5 days!

Nathan, with his wife Erika and children Henry (11), Anne (8), and twins George and Jack (5) came to the UK in June 2024. Nathan is Manager at Crag House Farm Granary Restaurant at 'Caring for Life' in Cookridge, Leeds.

WONDERFUL





CONGRATULATIONS to Jimmy and Hannah Lawrence

on the birth of Ruth Alina.

She was born on 26th October 2024, and weighed 7lbs 7oz.

She's the sister of George

who was born on 15th February 2023.

Jimmy Lawrence was Curate at Otley Parish Church under the incumbency of Graham Buttanshaw from 2016 to 2019.

The family now live in Blackburn in Lancashire where Jimmy is Canon Missioner at Blackburn Cathedral.



"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."

Isaiah 9:2 (NIV)

A GREAT LIGHT

This is not the bible passage that I thought I would use. One night I was very restless but suddenly this passage came into my head very forcefully and just would not go away. So, I've pondered on the passage and what it could mean today. Darkness symbolised oppression and hopelessness to the people at that time. Today there are so many places in the world that are experiencing this darkness. We ourselves can experience darkness in so many ways through our relationships with each other, through poverty, abuse, violence, homelessness, substance abuse, lack of care for our creation and in so many more ways. We need this light of

Christ to enter our lives to be a beacon for a different way of living. Sometimes it seems impossible that anything can be done to bring light to the world at large. I believe that constant prayer for the amazing light that Jesus brought and continues to bring through the Holy Spirit, can and does change lives. I pray that the light will shine in the darkest corners of the world and in our lives to bring peace and well-being to all.

Heavenly Father, with you there is no darkness. Bring your light and restoring presence to the dark places in our lives and to the darkest places in our world.

Amen.

NEW LOOK CHURCH WEBSITE

Our church website presents a shop window view of OPC to the world as well as being a useful resource for the church community. The Communications Team has been looking at ways of giving a more contemporary feel to the website and increasing the range of content. In the middle of March we will be launching this new-look website. It will be accessed the same way as the existing site using the address: https://www.otleyparishchurch.org

You will see that the **Home Page** brings together a snapshot of useful information from across the site with links to different pages. There is more visual content, and pages display well on both laptop and mobile devices.

We will be posting regular short features to encourage church members to keep visiting the website. There is also a **Church App** for mobile devices, which gives a simple view of and easy access to key website content.

One significant bonus with this website is the integration of **Web Office** administrative and communication tools. These will be further developed during March, and you will see changes in the way the church communicates with its members.



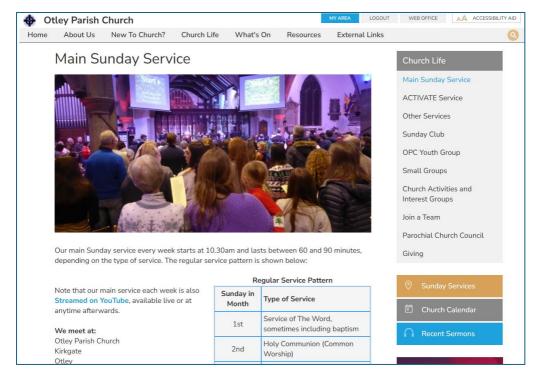


Image credit: Hubb.Church

It will be easier to communicate with people who are members of specific groups or have particular roles within the church.

Church **Rotas** will be set up in the Web Office and those on rotas can have a website logon to give them a personalised view of content relevant to them. We will hold contact details of church members, and those we email regularly, within the Web Office. During March, the people we hold in this database will be asked to confirm their communication preferences to ensure that we comply with GDPR requirements.

Church members who can benefit from administering the area of church life they are involved with will be offered training in the use of the relevant Web Office tools



The Communications Team hopes that easy access to a range of church information all in one place will benefit the congregation and help church life run smoothly. We will let you know through the Notice Sheet when the new website is available

Do check out the new website when it is launched and let us know if you have any questions, suggestions for change or would like to see extra content

Ken Dale - ken.dale3@gmail.com Kevin Keefe - kevin@otleyparishchurch.org



Habakkuk 3:19 (NIV)

"The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to go on the heights."

Having grown up as a 'townie' in the East End of London, we didn't see many deer. Nor did we spend much, if any time, walking for

pleasure. However, since I wonderful verse has always maybe because I don't have a

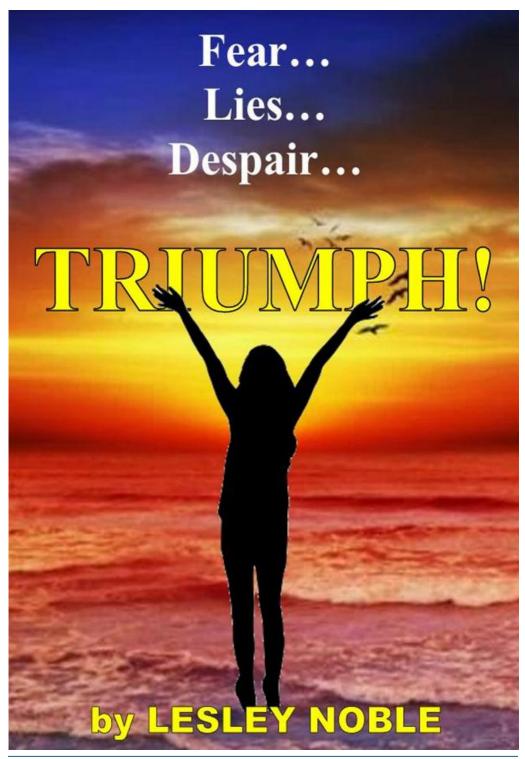
Despite having climbed I'm much happier on linger on this verse, I raising its head as if experience that sense wrong footed by life. to the truth that.

first became a Christian, this captured my imagination, great sense of balance.

Ben Nevis and Snowdon, level ground. When I always picture the deer startled. I sometimes of being startled or That's when I come back although life can at

times feel precarious and I may not feel sure footed, I can rely on God to enable me to traverse any terrain or to overcome life's difficulties by trusting in The Sovereign Lord who is my strength.

Alison Cairns





Introduction

I was born in 1949 and had a poor childhood filled mainly with fear, lies, loneliness and despair, which impacted my life in a negative way for the first forty years. Then, between 1991 and 1993 my healing process began.

I feel the need to tell my story with the hope that anyone reading it may be encouraged if they ever thought things would never get better for them in their own lives.

I found it very therapeutic when starting to write this book. One of the main wonderful things is that, in the end, I know that for all my past I've not only been forgiven, but I have also learned to forgive.

A STORY TO BE TOLD... TO ENCOURAGE... ALL IS WELL



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CHAPTER 1



It Was the Fear!

66 Get to sleep or peg leg will come up and get you." Tap! Tap! Tap! This was my mother, whom I called mam, knocking on the bottom step. The fear was real. I heard it, and in my child's imagination it was real with a leg coming up the stairs one at a time, to get me. I was petrified and pulled the overcoat up and over my head so I didn't see it and hoping it might go away. But it never did. It haunted me constantly. My mam frightened me with peg leg, and bongy, and told us other stories of ghosts - the ones she said she'd seen in the house. The



scary images stayed in my head, and I had nightmares for many years. She would read prediction books, and fashioned herself as a fortune teller and would read the palms or tea leaves of the neighbours, and they believed her.

My mother was very much a selfish person who would put her own needs first. She was never in, seldom cared, and we rarely had food in the house. Occasionally there would be some white bread and sugar, or sauce and bread! Once I found a small tin of baked beans and when I tried to open it the tin opener slipped and went deep in between my thumb and finger so I ran outside to look for my brother Dave to help me. He usually played with his mates up on the Top Hollers waste ground at the top of the street! He always looked after me as best he could when he was around.

I have three brothers. My eldest brother is Terry. He is seven years older than me and moved out as soon as he could. He went to live with his then girlfriend's parents, and they took a shine to him. He then married Gloria when he was nineteen. My brother David is just three years older than me,

so we are close. He looked out for me. My brother Eric (Ricky) is four years younger, so he was just a baby, and I never knew where he was except that he slept in the same bed as me.

We lived in a two-bedroom back-to-back house in a slum clearance area at 27 Old Hall Street, Burmantofts in Leeds. I was born there in 1949, and we lived there until moving on to Cross Gates in Leeds when I was ten. My parents, Doris and Arthur, had one bedroom and all four of us kids slept in the other - two singles and a double bed. No bedclothes or pillow cases, just overcoats, and newspaper on the floor for a toilet. Our toilet was situated outside at the top of the street in a block of four. Needless to say, ours was filthy, so we sometimes climbed over the door to use Biddy's toilet! She lived in the house at the back of us in the next street! There was never coal for the fire, we burned anything to keep warm, even the oilcloth from the edges of the floor. I was the one who was made to go down the cellar steps in the dark to put a penny in the gas meter because mam was too scared to go herself. I would be about four or five then. I would go with my eyes closed and fumble for the chair I had to climb on to reach the meter, and then run back upstairs as fast as I could.

I started school at St. Stephen's Infants when I was four, and of course, I was dirty, scruffy and hungry, so the first thing I did in a morning was to go through all the coat pockets in the cloakroom looking for anything to eat. I never did get caught but I suspect the teachers must have known, though nothing was said. I never had friends at school, and I'm not surprised. My sleeve was my hankie, my clothes were like rags, and hair never combed. I was withdrawn and lonely, certainly neglected, sad, fearful and felt unloved.

There were though some happier and lighter moments in and amongst the difficult ones. My dad was so different from my mam. When she told us about ghosts and dark things, my dad didn't know half of what she was up to. He worked hard and long hours, but thankfully when he came home it was different. He told us stories of Red Riding Hood, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby! He cared for us. I have to say that my mam wasn't intentionally bad or cruel, but just had no common sense. She had no idea of the impact she had on me.

• Chapter 2 of "Fear... Lies... Despair... Triumph!" will be published in the May edition of In Touch.



Otley Parish Church Services in March

Each 10.30am service is live streamed to YouTube: www.youtube.com/@otleyparishchurch

Sunday 2nd	10.30am 6.00pm	Service of the Word Sunday Club (KS1, KS2 and pre-schoolers) OPC Youth Group (Yr7 and upwards) ACTIVATE
	-	Lively, Informal and Reflective Worship <i>(followed by pizza)</i>
Wednesday 5th	11.00am & 7.30pm	ASH WEDNESDAY Services of Holy Communion with Ashing
Sunday 9th	10.30am	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion Sunday Club (KS1, KS2 and pre-schoolers) OPC Youth Group (Yr7 and upwards)
Sunday 16th	8.30am 10.30am	Holy Communion This monthly service of Holy Communion is based on Common Worship, with a short talk and no hymns All-age Service of the Word
Sunday 23rd	10.304111	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion Sunday Club (KS1, KS2 and pre-schoolers) OPC Youth Group (Yr7 and upwards)
Sunday 30th	10.30am	Service of the Word for Mothering Sunday Sunday Club (KS1, KS2 and pre-schoolers) OPC Youth Group (Yr7 and upwards)
Our Midweek Services in March		
Every Tuesday	11.00am	Holy Communion A short service with no hymns
Every Monday to Thursday except in school hols	4.30pm	Evening Prayer will be a variety of approaches to prayer; also, a reflection on a Bible passage. There will also be time for silence and to pray for others





f you are fairly new to Otley Parish Church, you are indeed very welcome here!

If you'd like to get connected, involved, or find out more about us, please pick up a *Welcome to Otley Parish Church* card which you'll find on the table at the back of the church.

Please fill in the details and return it to us, or put it into the red wall safe on the back wall.

We will use your contact information to help you find a way to connect into the life of our church. We do take care to ensure that your data is kept secure.

Please Leep in Touch

We would love you to keep in touch and tell us what you'd like to see in *your* monthly IN ToUCH Church magazine. If you've got something you would like to share with us in the April edition of IN ToUCH, please send it to our editor, stephenhey01@gmail.com

NO LATER THAN

Saturday 22nd March



Kirkgate ● Otley ● West Yorkshire ● LS21 3HW Vicar: Revd. Aaron Kennedy

Registered Charity Number: 1153498

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR Sarah McCormack

CHURCH OFFICE "The Chestnuts", Burras Lane, Otley LS21 3HS

OFFICE HOURS Tuesday - Thursday, 9.30am - 3.00pm

TELEPHONE 01943 465927

EMAIL info@otleyparishchurch.org

CHURCH WEBSITE www.otleyparishchurch.org

see our website for details of Church services and a link to our streamed services on YouTube

FACEBOOK: @otleyparishchurch X (TWITTER): @otleyallsaints

CHURCH BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS

Account name: Parochial Church Council of Otley Sort code: 20-37-13 Account No: 10088811

Gift Aid: if you are a tax payer, please consider signing a Gift Aid declaration, available on the Church website or from the Treasurer, Tony Pike

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