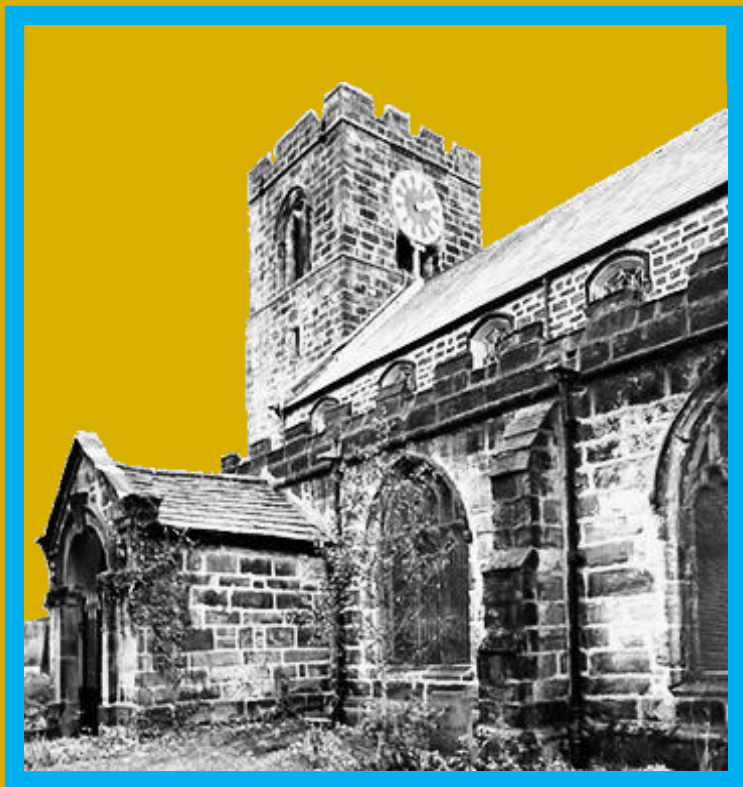


IN TOUCH

APRIL 2025

£1



Otley Parish
CHURCH



O**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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Dear Friends

Letter



I have enjoyed our recent focus at church looking at our mission statement “A Place for Everyone, with Christ at the Centre”. This is very inclusive, and listening to Radio 4's Sunday Service a few weeks ago inclusivity was preached using Paul's letter to the Galatians 3: 26-28, “As many of you as were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female for all of you are one in Christ Jesus”.

Our current Lent series, “Talking Jesus” follows on by encouraging us to tell others about Jesus. We can share that Jesus knows each of us by name and loves each of us personally and that we can all know and love Him.

At our housegroups, we are looking in more depth at “Talking Jesus” and considering where our frontlines are in everyday life. We've discussed the opportunities we have in daily life to talk about Jesus whilst not being overbearing. We need to be alert to hear the “still small voice” speaking and encouraging us to tell others about the Good News. The challenge can be recognising God's voice and His nudges, and acting on them. Jesus invites and does not compel us.

Recently while opening up the Church one morning, I came across a homeless person who seemed quite frightened. I was able to say don't be afraid - this is Gods house and that he is safe. I have had many conversations with people about Jesus in the most surprising circumstances whilst being on my own in church. Some people may have thought I was the Vicar!!

Grace Kennedy preached on the first Sunday in Lent and likened the growing of faith to the sowing of seeds. Our interactions with others can sow seeds of faith but often we may never see or, indeed, never know just how much growth we have started. I think we can be safe in the knowledge that, in every small way, by “Talking Jesus” when the invitation comes we are truly growing God's Kingdom.

What tools can we use to cultivate these seeds of faith and also in “Talking Jesus” to others? I think we can look to Paul's letter to the Galatians 5:22 and the Fruit of The Spirit, which our Sunday Club has been looking at. The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These qualities are a result of the Holy Spirit's presence in a Christian and they are also outward signs of a person or community living in accord with the Holy Spirit.



“A Place for Everyone, with Christ at The Centre”! I firmly agree with Aaron's preaching that if our church community in Otley keeps Christ at the centre in everything we do, we will grow the church. Indeed, our numbers are slowly increasing as my hand held clicker counting our congregations at each service knows - it can get quite warm! If we keep to our mission, then I feel optimistic about growth of our church over the coming year. The many challenges such as a new roof, budget deficit and our parish share are in God's hands but by keeping to our mission all can be overcome.

Remember, Jesus invites and does not compel. Have a look at this picture of 'The Light of the World' by William Holman Hunt. Jesus knocks on our door, but it is us who have to let Him in.

TOM RAPER
Churchwarden at Otley Parish Church

A wooden cross stands in a field of yellow flowers under a blue sky with clouds. The cross is made of two weathered wooden beams. The flowers are bright yellow and in full bloom. The sky is a clear, vibrant blue with some white clouds near the horizon.

Jesus

is

Risen

HE'S ALIVE!

Easter Cross, The Chevin, Otley

Otley Parish Church

HOLY WEEK and EASTER SUNDAY SPECIAL SERVICES

Each to be held at Otley Parish Church unless otherwise shown

PALM SUNDAY 13 APRIL

10.15: Blessing of the Palms and Short Procession
at the main church gate in Kirkgate

10.30am: Service of Holy Communion

MONDAY 14 APRIL

9.00am: Holy Week Morning Prayer

4.30pm: Holy Week Evening Prayer

TUESDAY 15 APRIL

9.00am: Holy Week Morning Prayer

4.30pm: Holy Week Evening Prayer

8.00pm: Stations of the Cross – a time of reflection
as we consider the events leading up to the crucifixion

WEDNESDAY 16 APRIL

9.00am: Holy Week Morning Prayer

4.30pm: Holy Week Evening Prayer

MAUNDY THURSDAY 17 APRIL

11.00am: Chrism Eucharist – Ripon Cathedral

All invited to this service of rededication for ministers – lay & ordained

8.00pm: Communion Service with Stripping of the Altar

GOOD FRIDAY 18 APRIL

10.00am - 11.30am: Messy Church

2.00pm: Good Friday Liturgy

7.00pm: "The Cross of Christ" – A Reflective Service for Good Friday
led by Otley Parish Church choir

The service will include congregational singing, readings and anthems

SATURDAY 19 APRIL

7.00am today to 7.00am Easter Sunday: 24 Hour Prayer Vigil

EASTER SUNDAY 20 APRIL

7.00am: Early Service at the Chevin Cross
(Churches Together in Otley)

10.30am: Easter Celebration Service
with Holy Communion and Baptism

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

A Reflective Service for Good Friday



All churches in Otley are welcome to join us for “The Cross of Christ” reflective service on Good Friday evening which will be led by Otley Parish Church choir.

The service will include congregational singing, readings and anthems. The choir will be supported by a visiting singer from the Bridge Church and another from the Methodist Church.

GOOD FRIDAY
18th April 2025 at 7pm
Otley Parish Church

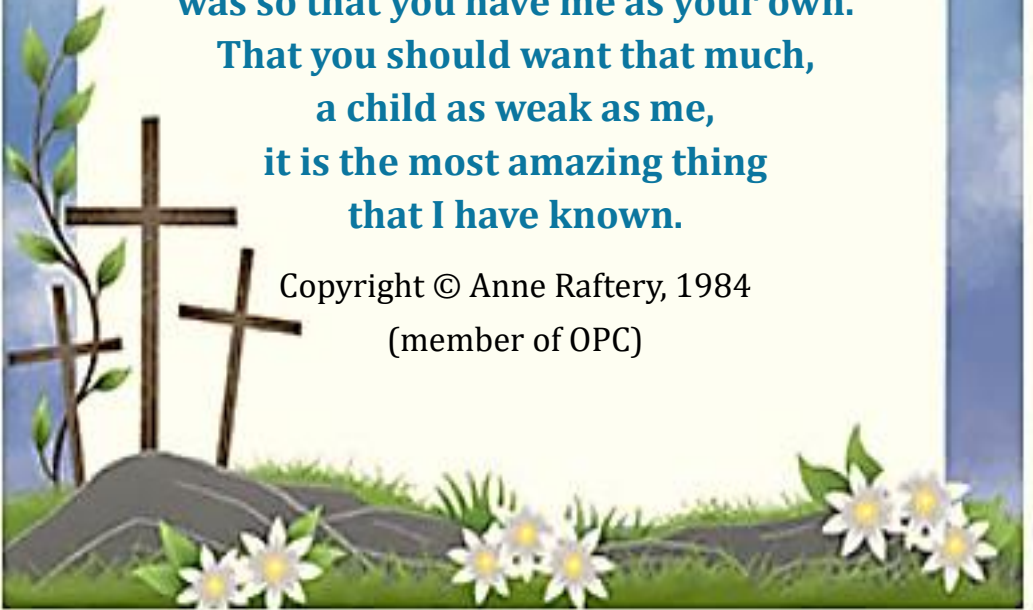
JESUS

**As I look upon your life
it just fills me with awe,
that you should come to earth
to set me free.**

**Your love must be so very, very deep for me
that you washed all my sin
that day on Calvary.**

**How strange it is to think
that the reason why you died
was so that you have me as your own.
That you should want that much,
a child as weak as me,
it is the most amazing thing
that I have known.**

Copyright © Anne Raftery, 1984
(member of OPC)





FAREWELL STEWART

Whether you are a longstanding member of Otley Parish Church, or have only attended in recent weeks, you are sure to have already met Stewart Hartley whose kind smile and warm welcome have eased the path into our Christ-centred community for so many over 13 years. As a retired vicar, it would have been tempting for Stewart to hang up his dog collar, slide down in his seat in the congregation and allow others to serve and enjoy a well-earned rest. Those who know Stewart realise how unlikely that was to be! The only thing more evident than Stewart's willingness to serve is the motivation behind that willingness: a deep and long-standing knowledge of God's grace and His love for all, and a desire to share that good news with any who will hear it.

When Katherine and I joined Otley Parish Church there were far fewer young families than there are now (praise God!), but the church was spiritually alive and growing. Over the years Stewart and Rosemary (who had only arrived the previous year) welcomed us, celebrated with us as our family grew, mourned together as we lost loved members of our church family and bound us up in prayer together with the whole church. Stewart loves a good party, as did Rosemary, and whether it be parish teas, picnics or BBQs, he has been in the middle of church family life.

As we got to know them better, we learned about past challenges they faced together in the ministry - told quietly, humbly, to encourage and never to scorn - and many readers will also be aware of the sadnesses they encountered in their early life together. Stewart and Rosemary have always been open about these hardships. They were willing to share and to empathise with others who suffered similarly, whilst remaining fully trusting in the God who brought them through and in his love and ultimate victory, where they have a steadfast confidence that what they have lost will be eternally restored.



It was another deeply felt loss, for all of us at OPC and of course most profoundly for Stewart, when Rosemary died in the autumn of 2021. The tears flowed as we mourned and celebrated a wonderful, Godly woman, who very much lived day by day both for and with her beloved Lord, and we heard from people who she and Stewart had gently and lovingly led to faith.

Inevitably affected by this loss, Stewart has continued to be a loving and supportive member of OPC, still praying, still welcoming newcomers and putting them at ease with his kindness and good humour, and when called upon for sermons, still exhorting us all to trust in Jesus and welcome the Holy Spirit into our lives.

As he moves on to be closer to his daughter and her young family, another chapter in a full life, we say: Stewart, we love you and you will be very much missed. Please stay in touch, and “go in peace to love and serve the Lord!”

Tom Pettinger

“THANK YOU”

to Otley Parish Church

***“For here we do not have an enduring city,
but we are looking for the city that is to come.”***

Hebrews 13:14

In my early 20s after College, I got a job as an engineer far from my northern roots in Essex. The church I joined had monuments along the path to the church door. One of them that I noticed each time I passed had the above inscription from Hebrews carved on it. It was while I was a member of that church that I felt called to ministry.

As most clergy do, I have moved about the country making friends and putting down roots. Each time I felt God’s call to move I remembered this verse. Every time has been difficult, but this verse has always been a reminder that we are called to be pilgrims, and never will we be completely at home until we reach our heavenly home.

Rosemary and I retired to Otley in 2012, and we quickly knew that we were guided here by God’s hand. Now it is time to move again, this time not so much by God’s call but by common sense.

Losing Rosemary in 2021 was as many of you have experienced yourself a great loss, and it now seems time as I am now in my late 70s to move nearer my daughter and her family while I am still able to face a move. Jude and family moved last year from London to Didcot near Oxford and I am in the process of buying a small flat near to them.

It has been a great privilege to minister at OPC and I have made many friends whose friendship I will always cherish.

So, *A Great Big Thank You* and my blessing to you all as you read this letter, and my prayers for the next stage of your pilgrimage.

Yours in Jesus Christ,

Stewart Hartley

Creation Care

A monthly column for us to share environmental and sustainability ideas

Part of the work of the OPC Carbon Net Zero group has been to engage with not one but two energy audits on the Church building. One of the findings of the most recent audit (September 2024) was to replace old style light bulbs and fluorescent tubes with LED, energy saving types. Fun Fact, there are now only 2 old style light bulbs/tubes in the Church - can you see them?

There is a way for you to have a similar audit carried out in your home - local sustainability charity 'Otley 2030' is offering free home energy assessments to find out how efficient your home is and what improvements you could make to reduce your energy bills. If you wish to have this done, you can follow this link <https://www.otley2030.com/post/free-home-energy-assessment> or go to the Home Page of Otley 2030 and scroll down to the Blog section. Please note there are only a limited number of free assessments available.

Did you know?

- 💡 Approximately 15 -18 per cent of an average home's energy bill is spent on lighting.
- 💡 LED lights use 75 per cent less energy than incandescent or halogen lighting.
- 💡 LED lights illuminate for more hours. The average lifetime of an LED bulb can be 25,000 hours, (almost 3 years of continuous lighting) compared to 2,000 for halogen and 8,000 for compact fluorescent lights.
- 💡 In 2002 when the first LED lights were available for purchase in the UK, they were expensive! 20 years later the prices have dropped significantly, and they can be bought from as little as £3 each and in different shapes and sizes for all lighting needs.

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.

Open the Book



Sharing Bible stories with
children everywhere, through
the power of storytelling.

What is Open the Book?

Open the Book is an exciting storytelling project where Bible stories are shared with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable. As invited guests in school, storytelling teams use the **Open the Book programme** to prepare and present a 10 to 15-minute scripted Bible story to a school assembly, involving the children as much as possible.

Storytelling teams are made up of trained and safety recruited volunteers from local churches and organisations, who sign up to follow **Open the Book Code of Practice**.

Open the Book Programme

Storytellers use the Open the Book *Storytelling Bible* and *Handbook*. The *Storytelling Bible* includes 90 stories, beginning at Genesis and going all the way through to Revelation.

The *Handbook* provides everything Storytellers need to say to create a full assembly.

A welcome and introduction lead into the story, which is read, followed by a quiet moment for reflection and wonder, concluding with an offered prayer.

How does Open the Book benefit schools?

- It gives the school a link with the community
- It provides opportunities to build cross-generational relationships
- It provides a time of quiet reflection that schools are required to build into their school day
- It makes an engaging school assembly
- It has been positively reviewed in official school reports
- It is free to the school
- It requires no extra work or planning from school staff
- It is successful in multi-faith contexts

Staff in schools value Open the Book because they know exactly what has been said and can answer with confidence any questions they may be asked about the content of the assembly.

► Otley Parish Church does **Open the Book** in **local primary schools**. Read more about it in next month's **'In Touch'**.



Firstly, thank you to the twelve of us who braved the dry, mild, calm and later sunny weather to do such brilliant work on the morning of Saturday 22nd February in our churchyard.

A small team including Chris, Dave and Rosemary worked to rake up a deep leaf layer that had blown to near the north path and Church Lane. This was to stop more being blown onto the paths, but also to free up the bluebell and celandine leaves growing beneath. Hopefully these should thrive to produce blue and yellow flowers as Spring comes in.

The leaves were then transported up to the leaf habitat pile in the NW corner. This had shrunk from Snowden (Yr Wyddfa) down to Beamsley Beacon since Christmas, but today the team built it back up to Scafell Pike. The pile is a good habitat for creatures like hibernating hedgehogs, and will make good compost.

Close by, two volunteers mulched wood chip round the Irish famine memorial stone. The grass is to be left to grow long in the summer at the western end beyond the big sycamore trees. This will encourage butterflies etc. The mulch will keep the stone visible for visitors.

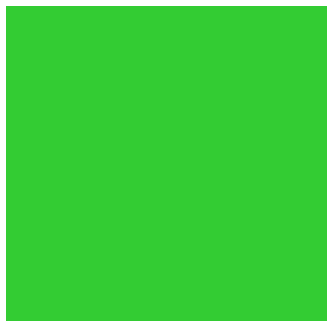
Next to the leaf pile, expert cutter Sue, carefully dismantled a pile of fallen branches to create fine habitat piles. Stephen, with his long reach small chainsaw, cut the thicker stems into two foot lengths. All went over large logs from the old willow to create a superb branch habitat pile.

Further along the graves, an enthusiastic team of ivy and bramble pruners, including Stephen, Colin, Brenda, Stewart and Anne, worked to clear graves and pathways round them. Stephen uncovered a magnificent stone column grave by “The Chestnuts” wall. In the process, several gatekeeper and speckled wood butterflies flew out showing what a good habitat it is for overwintering. It being a mild day, they would soon find other ivy to settle in until Spring.

Brenda and Sue have become so enthusiastic that they plan to return to the ivy clad graves beside “The Chestnuts” and when we work with Prince Henry’s School students in July.

Halfway through our work, Rachel gave us good coffee and biscuits at 11.29am, though no one can compete with Glynis and Barry who were sadly unable to be with us on this occasion!

Keith Wilson



MILLENNIAL APPEAL

Phase 1 for Roofing Works



Otley Parish
CHURCH

Registered Charity number 1153498

Dear Friend,

Whilst Christian worship has taken place on or near the present church site since around AD 750, works on our present church building started in the chancel area around 1,000 years ago. Our predecessors have maintained and cared for our church over the centuries, and our generation has a responsibility to do the same so that future generations can worship our God in an environment that is dry, warm and safe.

The Carbon Net Zero Group was formed in the summer of 2023 and has been working to discover ways in which our church can meet the Church of England goal of being carbon net zero by 2030. A lot of work has been done, and the Parochial Church Council recently accepted the principles set out in a Feasibility Report prepared by the church architect with the assistance of the CNZ Group.

This clearly sets out that the first phase of the project should be the re-covering of the roof incorporating high quality insulation as well as replacing most of the ceilings which are in a poor state of repair. Subsequent phases will involve the fitting of solar panels (if permitted) and replacement of the gas boilers with air-source heat pumps.

The budgeted cost of the first-phase work is over £700,000 (including fees and VAT), which is a huge sum and means serious fundraising. External grant making bodies and trusts will be

approached but our position would be strengthened if the congregation had already responded showing ownership of the project. The church has some funds already set aside for this purpose, but nowhere near enough to move forward with confidence.

As you are aware the church has been running a deficit budget for the last few years in our day-to-day income and expenditure and we will need additional giving for this project as well. We know that this will be a challenge for all of us but please consider prayerfully how you can help get this necessary project off the ground.

We have created a Church fund for gifts, grants and other income restricted to funding the project for replacing the Church roof. For any gift by bank transfer please use the reference **ROOF FUND**. If you give by cheque, please write **ROOF FUND** on the back of the cheque. Cash in envelopes in the wall safe should also be marked **ROOF FUND**. Where possible make these gifts under Gift Aid which adds 25% to the value of your gift.

We trust that as we seek to pass on our heritage building to the next generation in good condition, we will be encouraged in our faith journey together. Thank you in advance for giving this important matter your attention.

Yours sincerely,



Allan Boddy
(Chair of the Parochial Church Council)

Bank details: Parochial Church Council of Otley
Sort Code: 20-37-13
Account Number: 10088811



SYLVIA JOHNSON

celebrated her 86th birthday on 19th February 2025.
She was born in Leeds in 1939.

Congratulations!



JENNIFER PECKHAM

celebrated her 80th birthday on 19th February 2025.
She was born in Guiseley, Leeds, in 1945.



Irene Dexter

**celebrated her 85th birthday on 4th March 2025.
She was born in 1940 on Clifton Terrace on the Ilkley
Road in Otley, and has lived in Otley ever since!**

SWIMATHON



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK



Marie
Curie

MARGARET SHIPPEY



Once again, I am going to take part in Swimathon, raising money for *Cancer Research UK* and *Marie Curie*. I will be swimming 1500m one day between Monday 24th March and Sunday 6th April.

If you would like to support me in this, the link to my page is:

<https://www.givengain.com/project/margaret-raising-funds-for-cancer-research-uk-marie-curie-and-swimathon-foundation-96376>

Offline donations are also very welcome. Please see me in Church on a Sunday.

Thank you!

Margaret

My Devotional Thoughts

Erika Twichell

**“How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!
My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.**

**Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young, at your altars,
O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.”**

Psalm 84:1-4 (ESV)

PRAYER: COMING HOME

I can remember some of my first times of prayer as a child, repeating phrases my parents offered until I found my own thanksgivings and petitions. Often, they were requests for ‘no bad dreams’ or ‘a good day at school’. As I grew in age and in my faith, my prayers grew to include more theological wording and grander in scope. For a long time, my concept of prayer was limited by the words that were said. Now, I’ve come to view prayer as a space to inhabit, a place where I am fully known, and the Lord offers his living presence.

The psalmist here shares with us a glimpse of what it is like to be in the presence of the Lord - it is lovely, it is comforting, it is home. Thomas Keating, a priest and developer of centering prayer, describes here a time of prayer in the presence of God: "This presence is so immense, yet so humble; awe-inspiring, yet so gentle, limitless, yet so intimate, tender and personal. I know that I am known. Everything in my life is transparent in this Presence. It knows everything about me - all my weaknesses, brokenness, sinfulness, - and still loves me infinitely. This Presence is healing, strengthening, refreshing - just by its Presence... It is like coming home to a place I should have never left, to an awareness that was somehow always there, but which I did not recognize."

O Lord of hosts - you welcome the sparrow, the Prodigal son, and even me. Make your home in me as I make mine in you. In the name of the Father who loves me, the Son who died for me, and the Spirit who lives in me. Amen.

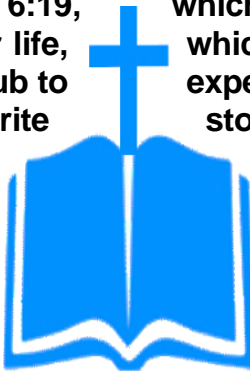


WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BIBLE Verse?

Genesis 45:4-5 (NKJV)

And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me". So, they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life".

Choosing a favourite Bible verse was a real challenge! I nearly chose Romans 8:38-39, which reveals God's unconditional love, or John 10:10, or Hebrews 6:19, which speaks of faith as an immovable foundation for life, which is something I want all the children in Sunday Club to have chosen my favourite experience. But finally - I Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, who don't recognise him and who thought he was dead. It's a very clear foretelling of the Jesus story. The grace and mercy are hard to fathom - there is no malice or retribution. The story is so dramatic and the reaction of the brothers so relatable. Reading it always makes me emotional. Also - as a slight aside - the songs in the musical are brilliant!



Katherine Pettinger



Otley Parish Church Services in April

Each 10.30am service is live streamed to YouTube:

www.youtube.com/@otleyparishchurch

Sunday 6th	10.30am	Service of the Word Sunday Club (KS1, KS2 and pre-schoolers) OPC Youth Group (school years 7-13)
	6.00pm	ACTIVATE Lively, informal and reflective worship <i>(followed by pizza)</i>
Sunday 13th	10.30am	PALM SUNDAY Service of Holy Communion Sunday Club (KS1, KS2 and pre-schoolers) OPC Youth Group (Yr7 and upwards)
Sunday 20th	10.30am	EASTER SUNDAY Service of Holy Communion with Baptism Sunday Club (KS1, KS2 and pre-schoolers) OPC Youth Group (school years 7-13)
Sunday 27th	10.30am	Service of Holy Communion Sunday Club (KS1, KS2 and pre-schoolers) OPC Youth Group (school years 7-13)

Our Midweek Services *(except in Holy Week – see p.6)*

Every Tuesday	11.00am	Holy Communion A short service with no hymns
Mondays to Thursdays <i>except in school holidays</i>	4.30pm	Evening Prayer There will be a variety of approaches to prayer; also, a reflection on a Bible passage, and time for silence and to pray for others

**ARE
YOU
NEW
HERE?**



If 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 Keep 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 12th April



Otley Parish CHURCH

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

Registered Charity Number: 1153498

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Sarah McCormack

CHURCH OFFICE

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Tuesday - Thursday, 9.30am - 3.00pm

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CHURCH WEBSITE

www.otleyparishchurch.org

see our website for details of Church services

<https://www.youtube.com/@otleyparishchurch>

FACEBOOK: [@otleyparishchurch](https://www.facebook.com/otleyparishchurch)

X (TWITTER): [@otleyallsaints](https://twitter.com/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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SUNDAY CLUB

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