

‘Keep In Touch’



SUMMER 2023

***CHURCH & VILLAGE
BIRSTALL & WANLIP***

THE PARISH OF BIRSTALL AND WANLIP

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The views and opinions of those who have submitted articles to 'Keep in Touch' belong to them alone and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the wider church.

THE CORONATION EMBLEM



Lord God, the Ancient of Days, you are sovereign over all your people. Give to his Majesty, King Charles, enduring wisdom and faith in the service of the people of this land, and of you, his Lord and master. Grant that his reign may be one of faithful witness, and prove to others a source of hope, that they may come to know more fully your Son Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The designer of the Coronation emblem writes: 'It is such an honour to be able to contribute to this remarkable national occasion, and our team is so very proud of this work. The design was inspired by King Charles' love of the planet, nature, and his deep concern for the natural world. It speaks to the happy optimism of spring and celebrates the beginning of this new Carolean era for the United Kingdom. The gentle modesty of these natural forms combine to define an emblem that acknowledges both the joyful and profound importance of this occasion.'

Canon Anne

RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS



1 Thessalonians 5:11 tells us to ‘encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing’. And *Ephesians 4:32* reminds us to ‘be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.’

It’s not always easy to be one big community – we are brothers and sisters in Christ and we won’t always agree and in fact, it’s fine to agree to disagree, but in love.

We are living in difficult times – the cost-of-living crisis; wars and conflicts around the world; fears for our environment; our own personal difficulties. It’s important to be kind to each other and to keep encouraging each other.

We have much to be thankful for and, at the APCM, I asked people to say the sort of things they were thankful for. Our schools and the work we do to support their RE and assemblies; new people coming to our churches; our members who can’t come to the building; all our many volunteers who do a whole range of things, not just in the church but outside in the community too.

I thanked as many people as I could think of – there are so many jobs that get done around church, that not even all of them are known. Special thanks were given to our outgoing churchwardens, John Borrajo and Doreen Wilson. I’m sorry that I forgot to thank our outgoing PCC (Parochial Church Council) members – Cynthia Coltman; Paul Wilcox; and Lynn Van Ristell (who is volunteering as PCC Secretary, so will still be at meetings). Thank you for all you’ve done as PCC members.

We also have much to look forward to – our own personal things like holidays and seeing family; big theological hopes, like going to heaven; and church things, like church lunches, fairs, new ideas, worshipping together week by week and Christmas!! I also recalled the PCC Away Day during which we reflected on how we do meetings and on what we think God is calling us to do in the future.

Our top priorities include visiting those who can't get to church through illness or disability. We thanked the Pastoral Team: Kerry, Gill, Doreen and Helen, with the Mothers' Union and everyone who visits others or keeps in touch in other ways. It's so important, and certainly can't be done only by the Rector. Of course, I am making my way round people, but it's a slow process. Please get in touch though, if you are in an urgent situation – e.g. in hospital. I will do my best to come quickly. We also want to reach out to areas where we have no contact. The plan is to plant onto Hallam Fields, but it's not a quick process. I'd like to set up a Mission and Outreach team for anyone who would like to pray and then think of ways we can serve and follow God in this community, both one off and longer-term mission events. Please let me know if you'd like to be involved.

Other things on our list are to continue to work with other churches in our area; to equip people to talk about their faith more; and to help people make sense of their occupation / daily life as a Christian. We also want to continue to Campaign on issues of Social Justice (including recycling); ensure all products we use are Fairtrade, where possible; and perhaps start another Messy Church.

So, challenges, exciting things, important things, and unnoticed things all make up the life of the church and I am grateful to you all for all you do.

Blessings and peace,

Amanda

THANK YOU, LORD!

We thank you Lord for this amazing journey of life, this pilgrimage through time, which is full of the unexpected.

We thank you that we do not travel alone, but we have each other with whom to share both the joys and the sorrows.

And that you are with us to guide, to support, and to strengthen us on the way.

Lord, help us to know that in all circumstances of our lives, you are the Good Shepherd who walks with us.

When we are weak and weary, make us lie down in green pastures.

When we are anxious and afraid, lead us beside still waters and restore our souls.

When we are confused and lost, show us the way.

When in our busyness, we forget you, and wander away, do not forget us, but come and seek us out.

When in our foolishness and selfishness, we are tempted to go astray, bring us back to the right path.

On every step of our pilgrimage through life help us to put our trust in you, our sure and loving shepherd, companion and friend.

Quoted, with thanks, from the All Hallows Community Associates' Newsletter. It lifted my soul. May it lift yours too.

WE ARE ALWAYS THE SAME AGE INSIDE

One day, in a gift shop, I came across a delightful bookmark. It showed a little girl happily skipping, and the caption 'We are always the same age inside.' I was pleased to buy it for a particular friend - now well into her eighties who has told me on many occasions that she is still 21 inside! She is a fine example of the old adage: 'the spirit is willing'. Her mind is clear, and her memory remarkable. In spite of aches and pains and less energy she can still laugh at life and at herself. I know that she will smile at the little girl skipping and identify with her. Though we grow older bodily, we are always the same age inside.

Chris Greaves

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE SLAVE TRADE AND ITS ABOLITION

We are invited to mark this day each year on 23rd August. It has a specially poignancy within the parish of Wanlip where there stands a memorial stone to Rasselas Morjan who died at Wanlip Hall on August 25th 1839. *'He was rescued from a state of slavery in this life and enabled by God's grace to become a member of His church.'*

Loving Father, who gathers the outcast, heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds; bring liberty and freedom to all whose lives are entangled in slavery and trafficking in our world today. Lift up the downtrodden and tread wickedness into the dust. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit in perfect freedom, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Canon Anne

LENT WITH HENRI NOUWEN

During Lent, all our churches in Birstall and Wanlip, reflected on Henri Nouwen's book 'The Prodigal Son'.

Henri Nouwen was born in Holland in 1932 and ordained a Catholic priest in 1957. Obtaining his doctorate in psychology from Nijmegen University in The Netherlands, he taught at Notre Dame, Yale, and Harvard. He experienced the monastic life with Trappist monks at the Abbey of the Genesee, lived among the poor in Latin America with the Maryknoll missionaries, and was interested and active in numerous causes related to social justice.

After a lifetime of seeking, Henri Nouwen finally found his home in Canada, as pastor of L'Arche Daybreak - where people with intellectual disabilities and their caregivers live together in community.

Henri Nouwen wrote over 40 books on spirituality and the spiritual life that have sold millions of copies and been translated into dozens of languages. His vision of spirituality was broad and inclusive, and his compassion embraced all of humankind. He died in 1996. His work and his spirit live on.

HENRI NOUWEN QUOTATIONS

Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing? Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love? These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and the life to come.

.....

Each day holds a surprise. But only if we expect it can we see, hear, or feel it when it comes to us. Let's not be afraid to receive each day's surprise, whether it comes to us as sorrow or as joy. It will open a new place in our hearts, a place where we can welcome new friends and celebrate more fully our shared humanity.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BIRSTALL AND WANLIP

Apologies: Kerry Emmett, Hazel Mueller

Minutes of the meeting on 30 January 2023 were accepted

Matters Arising – none

Easter

Excellent Walk of Witness. Approximately same numbers as last year. A microphone would be good - Graham will see if he can find one. Would the Brices be willing to play? Palm crosses were given out and people like the smaller ones. The village seemed quiet and some shops were closed. People seemed to enjoy it / were interested. St Theresa's had some new people who enjoyed it too. Content was felt to be good and appropriate.

Lent Course (based on Henri Nouwen's book "The Return of the Prodigal Son')

It went well. It was helpful to have two sessions – one in the afternoon and one in the evening. Next year, we should try to get the booklets earlier and run on Tuesday lunchtimes at St Theresa's Church, and on Wednesday evenings at St James' Church.

Reports from the Churches

St Theresa's Church

Daphne reported that Father Ted had retired because of ill health. They were looking forward to a new priest, from India, to be appointed at some point in May, June or July. During the interregnum Daphne is having to ring round for cover.

Fr Philip covered all the Easter services, which were packed. Some services were shared between Rothley and Birstall.

Dates for our diaries:

Tuesday 30th May, 7.00pm, a Fashion Show at St. Theresa's: tickets now available £5 -including glass of wine. (See Daphne or Hazel.)

Wednesday 5th July - a Musical Acoustics Evening at St. Theresa's 7.00 pm; Saturday 12th August the Summer Fete at the Sacred Heart Church, Rothley from 10.30 am to 2.30 pm.

Methodist Church

'Warm Space' has been brilliant but may not be officially continuing. Dementia Café—we welcomed a Ukulele Band.

'Down Memory Lane' is continuing once a month.

AGE UK supported some 'outside' Easter services.

All Easter services well attended. Lots of youngsters present.

Our AGM was held on 30 April, plus soup and puddings!

The Duck Race will be held on May 1st, cream teas thereafter!

Rev. Paula is researching funding for packed lunches for children who need them during church and school holidays.

Stake holders group are up and running. There will be a meeting on June 7th.

Birstall Gala, 24 June 2023

All in hand, our space is booked. We have to tent up by 10 am.

Andrez has a gazebo.

Amanda is organising a 'sail' saying who we are.

Debbie will send material from Council to Amanda.

A meeting will be arranged for those coming.

Debbie has some signed cheques. Accounts need auditing, will be done after Debbie gets back from her holiday.

The three churches fund our events between them. Should be £100 per church. Insurance = £99.

Any Other Business

The Passover meal, organised by St Theresa' Church, was 'brilliant'. It was well supported and much enjoyed by all.

There is a new church on Hallam Fields called Righteous House Pentecostal Church. They meet in Hallam Fields Hall on Sundays at 11 am.

Canon Anne

CISTERCIAN SPIRITUALITY

‘WORSHIP’

A lot is revealed about the spirituality of a person or group by their worship and prayer. This is especially true of contemplative orders like ours where prayer is our main ministry. So I will write this month about the worship requirements as set out in the Rule of St. Benedict and in our own community’s rule.

St. Benedict states that we must prefer nothing to the ‘Opus Dei’ – the work of God. The ‘work of God’ to which we are called is to say our offices to worship God. St. Benedict makes it clear that it doesn’t matter what we are doing when it’s time for the daily offices, but to stop all other tasks and to attend worship.

According to our Rule: ‘It is the work of the Order to witness to the love of God in Christ Jesus. This witness grows and is nurtured by a life listening to God and in conversation with God, and is nourished daily by active prayer and meditation.’

And, in the rule on Common Worship and Perseverance in Prayer, we are advised that focussing on the Eucharist and on quiet contemplative prayer is a matter of priority. We therefore strive to mark the hours of the day in simple prayer.

The main part of our worship is the daily offices, of which we have seven, one night office and six day offices. Our night office is ‘Vigils’ which is traditionally said in the dark while the world around us is sleeping. This is our longest office consisting of two introductory psalms which are said every day. A hymn and between five and eight more psalms are said, depending on their length, which change each day, and two readings.

Of our day offices the two main ones are Lauds, traditionally said at dawn, and Vespers which is said in the evening. These again consist of psalms, a hymn and a short reading along with a litany. Lauds includes the Benedictus, the song of Zechariah, which he sang at the naming and circumcision of his son, John the Baptist.

Between 6am and 6pm these daytime hours are split into four three hour periods by the minor offices: Terce, the third hour, is said at 9am, Sext, the sixth hour at 12 noon and None, the ninth hour at 3pm. This means that we are called to worship God at regular times throughout the day. The timing of the minor offices has a deeper connection with the crucifixion of Christ: 9am is seen as the time Jesus was led to the cross, 12 noon when he was nailed to the cross and lifted up, and 3pm as the time of his death. Our final office is Compline which is said at bed-time. This office includes a confession, a hymn, psalms, a short reading, a prayer, the Nunc Dimittis, which was said by Simeon when Mary and Joseph presented Jesus at the Temple, and a Marian Antiphon. All these psalms mean we say the psalter every two weeks. The offices are said by all members of the Benedictine family. Where we differ as Cistercians is that we also spend time in contemplative prayer. Contemplation is prayer without words. It's time spent in silence in the presence of God. It doesn't consist of doing nothing though since while we are sitting in silence we are trying to reach out with our hearts to feel God's presence with us, both outside and inside ourselves. It is hoped that through this prayer time spent with God we can gradually become more Christ-like.

As for the difference Cistercian worship has made to my life the main change is that the amount of time I spend in prayer has increased. All priests pray on behalf of their congregation and parish. As a Cistercian I pray on behalf of the whole of creation. We are especially called to pray on behalf of those who can't pray, for whatever reason. And I've discovered that I actually like saying Vigils in the dark, so I try to be in bed by 6pm so I can get up at 2:30am in the summer and 4 am in the winter.

Br. Aidan / Michael

BIRSTALL METHODIST CHURCH

We are far from a perfect church, but we work together to discover what it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ in the 21st Century.

Birstall is now registered as an Inclusive Church, a church which does not discriminate, on any level, on grounds of economic power, gender, mental health, physical ability, race or sexuality. We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ, which is scripturally faithful, seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation, and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

Here at Birstall we are trying to find ways to put these words into practice.

If you are wondering whether you might fit in here, try measuring yourself against these words, which we used at the beginning of Sunday worship recently: 'Whoever you are, wherever you come from, whatever baggage you are carrying with you, you are welcome here.'

Our 'Sunday Club with Breakfast' meets during term time (other than the first Sunday of the month, which is normally All Age Worship), coming into the first part of the main service before going out to take part in their own activities.

WEDNESDAY MORNING HOLY COMMUNION SERVICES

These are held in the lounge from 9:30 am – 10:00 am.

OUR SENIOR CITIZENS LUNCHEON CLUB

This meets on Wednesdays in the Church lounge beginning at 11:30am with a get together and chat.

A two course lunch and hot drink is served in our Concert Hall at 12:30pm.

Transport is available, subject to availability.

COFFEE MORNINGS

There are Coffee mornings, Tuesday – Saturday 10:00 am, serving Fair Trade tea and coffee with home made cakes.

THE ‘SPECIAL NEEDS’ PLAY GROUP

The ‘Special Needs’ Play Group meets regularly during the week. We also have a very busy pre-school group.

YOUTH GROUPS

These include the Girls Brigade, the Boys Brigade and the Sunday Morning Breakfast Club.

We have a number of Social Groups meeting during the week who, with outside bookings, bring a large number of people in to our premises each week.

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES

Our Sunday morning services start at 10:30 am, with evening services at 6:00 pm on alternate Sundays.

Our Easter Day service this year was led by the Rev. Helen White. Helen told us the story of the Angel of Death becoming the Angel of Life, and once again our dead cross was transformed into the cross of life.

Birstall Methodist Church



KING CHARLES' FIRST MAUNDY MONEY

Two Leicestershire church leaders received King Charles' first Maundy Money on 8th February 2023. Anthony Wessel, from Desford, and Hilary Painter, a Reader in the Gaulby Group, were among 74 men and 74 women (signifying the monarch's age) at York Minster who received the specially minted coins.

'Maundy Thursday was an extraordinary day, a mixture of pomp, ceremony and simplicity,' said Hilary, who had been put forward in recognition of her considerable pastoral ministry over many years which has had a lasting and positive impact on many people, particularly during the Covid-19 lockdowns. 'I was in a state of disbelief until the King was close and the opening strains of Zadok the Priest burst out. Things like this do not happen to me! The whole service was a humbling and spiritual occasion which will be forever engraved on my memory.'

Anthony also commented on the moving nature of the service. 'As he came up to us, we put our hands out to receive the money, which was in little purses', he said. 'Quite remarkably, he clasped my hand and thanked me for all that I had done. It was a very special moment because the King was actually holding my hand.' Anthony was nominated to receive the Maundy Money to mark his retirement this year from over 20 years' service as the Bishop's Officer for Retired Clergy and Widowed Families of Clergy. His role involved offering pastoral, emotional, spiritual support, and, through grants from the Harley Trust, financial support for hundreds of retired clergy and widows in the county.

The first English monarch to be recorded as distributing alms at a Maundy service was King John, but the service in its current form was revived in 1932 and continued faithfully by Queen Elizabeth II.

Quoted from the Leicester Diocesan Website

FIRST DIOCESAN MINSTER COMMUNITY

In an historic moment for the Diocese of Leicester, the first Minster Community was officially launched on Sunday 30 April with a celebratory service of inauguration for the newly forming Launde Minster Community.

The church was filled with happiness, hope and the Holy Spirit, as the communities of eight benefices came together for the occasion in St Peter's Church, Tilton on the Hill.

Bishop Martyn led the service, which included the commissioning of the community's Oversight Minister, the Revd Jonathan Dowman.

The day marked an important milestone on the journey to establishing a Minster Community. It followed months of prayer, conversation, and the discernment of God's leading.

In his introduction, Bishop Martyn explained what a Minster Community was and talked about how the beginning of a new ministry is an important event for the whole community.

In his inspiring and thought-provoking address, he said: 'You are the first – the pioneers – many more will follow by the grace of God. The opportunities are huge, the possibilities unending, if we are prepared to be humble and learn what it means to be church in the 21st century.'

Philip, who worships in Tugby, said: 'It's an interesting and exciting journey and we are beating a path and showing how it's going to be done. The church is evolving - nothing stays the same - and we have to evolve with it. This is the step forward we've elected to take and I think the Bishop has really helped us, and his enthusiasm and vision will lead us.' Hilary, Reader in the Gaulby Group, and member of the Minster Community Steering Group, said 'The service today has been awesome; not only was the church full, but we also had members who couldn't be here from our Zoom congregation, online. This may be the end of the beginning, but it's a continued adventure in Christ.'

[Leicester Diocesan Website](#)

REFUGEE WEEK

19th—25th June

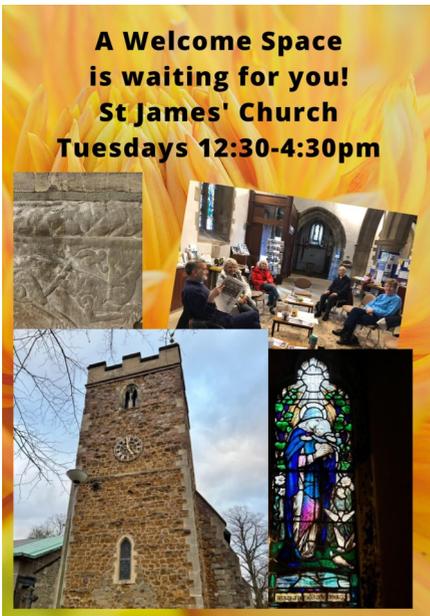
Refugee Week is a UK-wide festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary. Compassion is the theme for this year's Refugee Week, recognising that as we continue to adjust to new post-pandemic realities, with cost-of-living pressures and extreme anti-migration rhetoric increasingly present, there is a need to widen our circles of compassion. Refugee Week helps to challenge negative stereotypes by creating a space where refugees can be seen and heard beyond their experience of displacement, and thereby celebrates the contributions of refugees and others seeking sanctuary because everyone has a contribution to make. It challenges us to think about how much we pay attention to the contributions that refugees around us already make to our communities and the life of our churches; how we empower those who have experienced displacement to express themselves on their own terms creatively, culturally and spiritually; how our unconscious thoughts and images of refugees are shaped by images of their past displacement and journeys rather than by the economic, cultural, spiritual and community contributions they are now making.

Within our diocese there are many churches, fresh expressions and church members who are engaged in welcoming refugees and offering support. More broadly, we are encouraging churches and church schools to make the most of opportunities to enable the full breadth of our cultural diversity to be seen in our worship, leadership, serving and social life. The welcome we offer refugees is a key part of this. Please pray for all charities and agencies within Leicestershire, in our support of the needs of refugees, and a Kingdom-focussed vision that encourages our wholehearted partnerships with other refugee support agencies. Pray too for local churches and schools who enable children from displaced families to re-enter the world of education and to find a place of belonging and being valued.

Ven. Richard Worsfold, Archdeacon of Leicester

WELCOME SPACE

We closed the St James 'Warm Space' at Easter along with the other groups in the village who had offered support over the winter. This has been a worthwhile exercise both for those attending and the volunteers. We met for afternoon tea on Monday 11th April to thank the volunteers and enjoy the friendships which had grown over the winter. We also wanted to thank the others who have made it possible, Rev Amanda, our PCC, LCC, The Stakeholders group, Rose who organised the catering and Dave who did the accounts.



What to do next as we were going to miss our weekly time together? We had some LCC grant money left and they had agreed that it could be used for the well-being of people living in the village. So, we have decided to offer a 'Welcome Space' on a Tuesday afternoon from 12.30 until 4.30 for people to drop in for a cuppa and chat. We have done three sessions so far and had about 12 people on each occasion. We sent out some invitations encouraging people to come along and bring a friend or neighbour to swell the numbers.

Quotes from two of the people from the village who have joined our team:

'It has been good to know that there is somewhere safe and warm where I can come to regularly and find a friendly welcome and meet old friends'.

'I have now made new friends while enjoying ginger biscuits and lemon cake!'

Janet Waters

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

In Genesis the world was made by God's creative hand,
In Exodus the Hebrews marched to gain the promised land;
Leviticus contains the Law, holy and just and good,
Numbers records the tribes enrolled – all sons of Abraham's blood.

Moses in Deuteronomy recounts God's mighty deeds,
Brave Joshua unto Canaan's land the host of Israel leads;
In Judges their rebellion oft provokes the Lord to smite,
But Ruth records the faith of one well-pleasing in His sight.

In first and second Samuel of Jesse's son we read,
Ten tribes in first and second Kings revolted from his seed;
The first and second Chronicles see Judah captive led,
But Ezra leads a remnant back by princely Cyrus' aid.

The city walls of Zion Nehemiah builds again,
Whilst Esther saves her people from plots of wicked men;
In Job we read how faith will live beneath affliction's rod,
And all the Psalms are precious songs to every child of God.

The Proverbs like a goodly string of precious pearls appear,
Ecclesiastes teaches man how vain are all things here;
The mystic Song of Solomon exalts sweet Sharon's rose,
Whilst Christ the Saviour and the King the 'apt Isaiah' shows.

The warning Jeremiah apostate Israel scorns,
His plaintive Lamentations its awful downfall mourns;
Ezekiel tells in wondrous words of dazzling mysteries,
Whilst glorious things of Christ the Lord Daniel in vision sees.

Of judgement and of mercy yet Hosea loves to tell,
Joel describes the blessed day when God with man would dwell;
Among Tekoa's husbandmen Amos received his call,
While Obadiah prophesied of Edom's final fall.

Jonah enshrines a wondrous type of Christ our Risen Lord,
Micah pronounces what the Lord requires of man restored;
Nahum declares that Nineveh the Lord shall overthrow,
A view of Chaldea's coming doom Habakkuk's verses show.

Next Zephaniah warns the Jews to turn and not be slain,
Haggai wrote of those who saw the Temple built again;
Zechariah prophesied of Christ the reigning Lord,
While Malachi was last to touch the high prophetic chord.

Matthew and Mark and Luke and John the Holy Gospels wrote,
Describing how the Saviour died, His life, and what He taught;
Acts proves how God was pleased to own His church in every place,
St. Paul in Romans teaches us how man is saved by grace.

The apostle in Corinthians instructs, exhorts, reproveth,
Galatians shows that faith in Christ is what the Father loves;
Ephesians and Philippians tell Christians what to be,
Colossians bids us live to God and for eternity.

In Thessalonians we are taught the Lord will come from heaven,
In Timothy and Titus too, an Elder's rule is given;
Philemon marks a Christian's love, which only Christians know,
Hebrews sets the gospel forth, prefigured in the Law.

James makes it clear that empty faith without our works is dead,
While Peter points the narrow way in which the saints are led;
In three epistles see how John on love delights to dwell,
And Jude gives awful warnings of judgment, wrath, and hell.

The Revelation prophesies of that tremendous day,
When Christ, and Christ alone, shall be the sinner's only stay;
When all mankind He separates and sets on either hand,
Dear reader, ask your heart just now –
'On which side will I stand?'

Submitted by Doreen Wilson

Reputedly composed in the 19thC by Thomas Pumphrey to help his students learn the contents of the Bible by heart.

NOBODY LIKE YOU

In all the world there is nobody like you.

Since the beginning of time, there has never been another person like you, Nobody has your smile, your eyes, your hands, your hair. Nobody owns your handwriting, your voice.

You are special.

Nobody can paint your brushstrokes. Nobody has your taste for food or music or dance or art. Nobody in the universe sees things as you do. In all time there has never been anybody who laughs in exactly your way. And what makes you laugh or cry or think may cause a totally different response in another.

You are different from any other person who has ever lived in all history. You are the only one in the whole of creation who has your particular set of abilities.

There is always someone who is better at one thing or another than you, but no one has your combination of talents and feelings. Through all eternity, no one will ever walk, talk, think, or do anything exactly like you. You are rare, and in all rarity there is an enormous value. And because of your great value the need for you to imitate anybody else is absolutely unnecessary. You are special. And it's no accident that you are. Please realise that God made you for a special purpose. He has a job for you to do as well as you can. Out of the billions of applicants, only one is qualified. Only one person has the unique and right combination of what it takes.

And that person is you.

Anonymous

BIRSTALL & WANLIP ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

**St James the Great, Birstall
26 April 2023 at 7.20pm**

Present: Rev Amanda Digman (Chair), Debbie Shephard, John Borrajo, Corinne Aldis, Doreen Wilson, David Owen, Tricia Owen, Annette Marshall, Elaine White, Rose Parrott, Julie Ward, Cynthia Coltman, Janet Waters, Rita Cowham, Rita Richards, Richard Van Ristell, Josephine Burgess, Christine Suffolk, Gill Pope, Joan Folland, Tony Bloxam, Doreen Bloxam, Sade Akinla, Ladipo Akinla, Nicki Wills, Helen Tarry, Paul Tarry, Canon Anne Horton, Lesley Walton, Matthew Harvey, and Lynn Van Ristell (Secretary)

Opening Prayer

Amanda welcomed everyone, and opened the meeting in prayer.

1. Appointment of person to act as clerk of the meeting.

It was approved that Lynn Van Ristell be clerk to the meeting.

2. Apologies: Paul Wilcox, Pam Gilbert, Andy White, Kerry Emmett, Sheila Harrison, John Harrison, Paul Digman

3. Minutes of the 2022 Vestry Meeting held on 4 April 2022

Tony Bloxam proposed that the minutes be accepted, seconded by Annette Marshall, all in favour, with no matters arising.

4. Matters Arising from the minutes

None

5. Election of Churchwardens

Four nominations had been received:- Corinne Aldis, Matthew Harvey, Debbie Shephard, Julie Ward. It was unanimously approved that all four candidates be elected as Churchwardens, and duly elected for one year. Corinne and Matthew at Birstall; Debbie and Julie at Wanlip. Doreen Wilson and John Borrajo were thanked for their commitment and dedication as Churchwardens as they stood down, and were each presented with a token of our sincere appreciation.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

26th April 2023

1. Apologies: Paul Wilcox, Pam Gilbert, Andy White, Kerry Emmett, Sheila Harrison, John Harrison, Paul Digman

2. Minutes of the APCM held on 4 April 2022

It was proposed that the minutes, taken as read, be accepted as a true record of the proceedings. Proposed by Tony Bloxam, seconded by Corinne Aldis, all in favour.

3. Matters Arising from the minutes

There was a query about the use of brown Council gardening bins. It was stressed that we do not pay for or use these – garden cuttings are either discarded behind the shrubs/trees or composted. Amazon Smile no longer exists.

4. Election of representatives of the laity to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the appointment of tellers (if required)

David Owen, Matthew Harvey, Annette Marshall, Elaine White, Lesley Walton, Rose Parrott, Paul Wilcox, Debbie Shephard, Doreen Wilson and Corinne Aldis remain on the PCC, and we have 8 vacancies. Richard Van Ristell volunteered, and was approved, all in favour. It is hoped that four other possible candidates will become PCC members during the next few months.

5. To receive the report on changes in the Electoral Roll since the last APCM and any discussion thereon

Christine Suffolk reported that there are now 136 members on the electoral roll; 10 having left; 11 having passed away; with 6 new members.

6. To receive the Annual Report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the parish generally and any discussion thereon

This outlined the main actions and decisions made during 2022 – our main fundraiser being the Summer Fete in August which raised over £2,000; we require a fete co-ordinator for 2023's event. It was confirmed that the Parish Gift for 2021 was £53,080; and in 2022 was £30,000, but since increased by a further £19,000.

7. To receive the financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2022 and any discussion thereon.

A new postal address for the Church Office is to be set up for all mail to be sent to this address; and HMRC to be advised of this.

A volunteer is required to assist David Owen with claiming gift aid. We will also need to appoint a new Treasurer at the end of 2023.

Encouraging givers to donate through the Parish Giving Scheme using direct debit, reduces the work in connection with gift aid. Forms are at the back of the church. David thanked those who have been able to make regular donations in this way, as well as those who have increased their giving.

Donations may still be made by envelope, but the specially printed envelopes are expensive so these will no longer be ordered, and we would request that any donations be made using the giver's own envelopes, though envelopes can be provided if needed.

We now have a card machine situated at the back of the church, but this does cost the church 3%, and we cannot claim gift aid from this method, but it is convenient for visitors to use.

Amanda read aloud a letter from the Bishops regarding giving, and the difficult financial position the Diocese is in. We are all invited to a Deanery Meeting on 11 May where the subject of finances will be discussed. If unable to attend, questions to be given to Amanda on paper and taken to the meeting.

Amanda thanked those volunteers who pay the money into the bank and post office.

She also expressed our thanks to Alan Lewin for helping David with the accounts and to David and Tricia Owen for doing the work.

8. To appoint an auditor or independent examiner to the PCC
Alan Lewin independently audited Carlton's accounts, whilst Carlton's Treasurer audited our accounts – this saved us £600.

If they are willing, it was agreed to ask Alan Lewin and Carlton's Treasurer to do this again for the 2023 accounts. Comment was made that, ideally, the audited accounts should have been available prior to the APCM, but this had not been possible.

9. To receive a report under the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church and any discussion thereon – Wardens

Tony Bloxam enquired if Charnwood Council were cutting the grass at St James. John Borrajo advised that they do several times a year, with Vic Dolby and John cutting it too as required. Matthew Harvey offered to contact Charnwood to gain more information about the timescale and areas they cut.

Labyrinth – it is just about still visible, but we do require volunteers who are willing to take on the maintenance of this.

There were questions regarding the debit card machine, and it was explained that following a pilot scheme, which raised enough in two weeks to cover the cost, the PCC voted and agreed to purchase it.

10. To receive a report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod and any discussion thereon. There were no questions.

11. To receive an update on Safeguarding

Almost all safeguarding training is now completed and certificates provided to Annette Marshall. It is a requirement that all PCC members complete Basic, Foundation, and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse courses, and have a DBS check.

12. To receive a report on GDPR

We are awaiting CofE guidelines update, so awaiting this information. Our sincere thanks to Alan Lewin (and to Gill Chester who set this up initially).

13. Any other reports

Deanery and Diocesan Synod Reports had also been received and distributed prior to the meeting.

14. Amanda's comments – for us to keep loving each other and to keep being welcoming to others. Things we are thankful for – new people; the work we do with different churches; schools work, which is increasing, and listening to students' questions; the fundraising we do; Janet Waters' organising of volunteers, and everyone who has helped with the Warm Space, now called the Welcome Space, which has become a real hub. (Janet commented that we have learned a lot from this.)

Amanda and others also meet with local stakeholders at various meetings (Cadets, Rosie Rollings, the churches, schools, council, and many other local groups) where we work together as a community. We are thankful to Amanda and how she encourages us. She has introduced the 'bring and share' lunches on the last Sunday of the month in the Village Hall, Quiz nights at the Royal British Legion, and bell ringing training. The Wanlip churchwardens are organising another event for the autumn.

At our PCC Away Day in October 2022, the top priorities were:-
To reach out to an area where no contact has been made before – we are currently looking at Hallam Fields (with a mission and outreach team) - To visit those who need it - We have a wonderful pastoral team along with Helen Tarry and the Mothers' Union visiting many people - Amanda to be contacted if anyone requires a hospital or other urgent visit.

Amanda added that she would like us to undertake some brainstorming for ideas, to arrange one-off events, possibly with the other churches, and to set up a mission team for this purpose – please let her know if you'd like to join in.

Recycling Area – we continue to collect items that cannot be recycled in our home recycling bins for the benefit of the environment - stamps, ink cartridges and mobile phones, however, do raise money as well. (Boxes in St James' Church.)

WE NEVER LOSE THOSE WE GIVE TO GOD

When through one person a little more love and goodness, a little more light and truth come into the world, that person's life has meaning. We give thanks to the Lord for every remembrance of those we love who have died, for the friendship and peace they brought, and for the love with which they have helped others in their hearts. Lord, with affectionate remembrance, pour out your blessings upon and give strength and comfort to those who loved them and have been parted from them. Amen.

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

Hi. I hope you are all keeping well and are able to enjoy the summer. I am in the church office on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9am and 1pm. If you have a notice you would like putting in our weekly Information Sheet please email it to stjames.birstall@btconnect.com, or sheryljupp@hotmail.co.uk. (I would prefer to receive it twice than not at all!)

If you don't have access to the internet, please could you leave your notice on my desk or post it through the church letterbox which is at the bottom of the glass doors. If you are unable to get to church please contact Amanda or one of the Churchwardens.
(Contact details on page 2)

If you would like to receive this magazine or our weekly information sheets digitally, please let me know. Thank you. Love Sheryl

BAPTISMS

30th April 2023 Isabella-Rose Smith age 2 years St James' Church

FUNERALS

Died	Funeral		Venue
17.02.23	28.03.23	Eileen Hill	Birstall Cemetery
14.03.23	21.04.23	John Fowler	Wanlip/L'boro Crematorium
01.04.23	15.05.23	Sheila Newbold	St James/Belgrave Cemetery
18.05.23	19.06.23	Jeanne Coleman	St James/L Crem
19.05.23	20.06.23	Derek Clayton	St James/B Cemetery

**Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord.
And let light perpetual shine upon them.
Amen**

'KEEP IN TOUCH', Autumn 2023

Copy by, but, if possible, before 31 July 2023

All contributions welcome. Maximum preferred length: 500 words.

(If longer, the editor reserves the right to edit.)



Easter Garden at Wanlip Church

Created by Victoria Ward

KEEPING YOU 'IN TOUCH' IS

Name

Address

Tel. No.

You are welcome to keep in touch with them