



The
United
Reformed
Church



Halifax Group Magazine

Heath New Hope New Providence



Dec/January 2018

Our vision is to know, love, live and
share Jesus, for a better world.

Letter From the Manse

We receive many emails from a well-known on-line campaigning group. Recently there was a link to their Christmas card shop. There were some attractive cards being sold in aid of a valuable organisation, but something was missing; Jesus. On questioning their leaving Jesus out in the cold the following response was received "*Many people of different faiths celebrate Christmas, so we wanted to make sure these cards were inclusive of everyone.*" This inclusivity must be questionable; it is akin to organising a birthday party but not bothering to invite the person whose birthday is being celebrated. You may be aware that there has been a strong 'Christian' reaction to a supermarket Christmas TV advert on the grounds that it shows a Muslim family celebrating Christmas. Surely the issue is not that people of other faiths are seen to be celebrating Christmas (that would hardly show us to be a welcoming and inclusive people) but is the absence of any indication that even one of the families featured were participating in a Christian festival?

These are just two examples of the commercialism of Christmas which we bemoan every year. Even as Christians we sentimentalise Christmas by surrounding the birth of Christ with unfounded myths. As one of our former ministers was always keen to point out, donkeys are never mentioned in the bible. In fact the birth of Christ is low key in the bible, with very limited detail and of course no date. Some Christians, both past and present, do not celebrate Christmas at all, with their reasons being twofold. Firstly that Christmas and its

Letter From the Manse

customs are based on pagan winter festivals and secondly that the all-important event in the life of Christ was his death and resurrection. So why is Christmas such an important festival in our lives and in our churches?

Death has to be preceded by birth so the birth has to be significant, but more importantly Jesus was born to a young woman from an ordinary family. The lack of information on his birth, childhood and earlier adulthood perhaps illustrates the ordinariness of his earlier life. This ordinariness that allowed him to experience human life in all its ups and downs and to experience a range of human emotions and behaviours. As John says “The word became flesh and dwelt among us”. God came and walked and talked and listened and guided in a way we humans can relate too. Through Christ’s death and resurrection he continues as our guiding light to this day. That is something to celebrate and the date and the detail really don’t matter.

As Christians we have a delicate balance to tread at Christmas. If we abstain totally from what might be considered excesses of feasting the world may see us as promoting a joyless Christ and a faith that focusses on death. Jesus himself took part in celebrations and shared meals with family and friends but that did not detract from his championing of the poor, lonely and outcasts of society and challenging all of us to do the same.

And after the shopping and excitement and the eating are over the sales commence and the charity shops get

Letter From the Manse

a boost in donations then all returns to normal, but as Christians we pray:

*When the waiting is over and the child is born
When the shepherds have gone back to the fields
When the Magi have left their gifts and returned to
distant lands
When Mary and Joseph have fled Herod's wrath –
Keep our hearts open, O God, to the call of your
Kingdom. Amen
(R.Mann, 2015, A Star-filled Grace; wild goose
publications)*

WISHING ALL OUR READERS PEACE AND JOY



Pulpit list

Heath URC, Free School Lane. 10.30am

December 2017

- 3 Rev Daphne Hull (Toy Service and Parade)
- 10 Mrs Susan Ng
- 10 6.00pm Carols by Candlelight (with mulled apple juice and mince pies)
- 17 Rev Justine Wyatt - Communion
- 24 Christmas Eve - Readings and Carols
- 25 10.30am – Christmas Day Service of Celebration led by Rev John Jenkinson
- 31 Group Service at New Hope

Activities in December

Sunday 10 December – 4.00pm – Messy Church

Monday 11 December – 7.30pm – Halifax Symphony Orchestra – Christmas Concert

Tuesday 19 December - 10.30am - Community Coffee Morning

Weekly Events

Monday

9.30am Toddlers (except Bank Holidays)

2.00pm Sing for Fun – Singing Group

5.45pm Beaver Scouts 5-8yrs

6.30pm Cub Scouts 8-10yrs

Friday

7.00pm Scouts 10-14yrs

7.30pm Explorer Scouts

Pulpit list

Heath URC, Free School Lane. 10.30am

January 2018

- 7 Mrs Juliet Foster
- 14 Rev John Jenkinson
- 21 Rev Daphne Hull - Communion
- 28 Mrs Dawn Walker

Activities in January

Thursday 11 January – 8.00pm Thursday Club New Year Party

Sunday 14 January – 4.00pm – Messy Church

Tuesday 16 January - 10.30am - Community Coffee Morning

Weekly Events

Monday

- 9.30am Toddlers (except Bank Holidays)
- 2.00pm Sing for Fun – Singing Group
- 5.45pm Beaver Scouts 5-8yrs
- 6.30pm Cub Scouts 8-10yrs

Friday

- 7.00pm Scouts 10-14yrs
- 7.30pm Explorer Scouts

Pulpit Supply

December 2017

Dec. 3rd Mr. David Truswell
Dec. 10th Mrs. Juliet Foster
Dec. 17th Mr. Alan Jowett
Dec. 24th Mr. Alan Jowett
Dec. 31st Mrs. Juliet Foster

January 2018

Jan. 7th Mr. Alan Jowett
Jan. 14th Mrs. Allison Dobson
Jan. 21st Mr. David Truswell
Jan. 28th Mrs. Juliet Foster

Friendship Hour at 2.30pm

We meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays most months to enjoy each others company. Why not come along earlier at 2.15pm for a cup of tea or coffee and meet new friends.

The meeting on December 13th will be Christmas Party at the Church, an opportunity for all to participate.

Fellowship Hour We meet at most first and third Wednesdays at 2.30pm for prayer and discussion.

NEW HOPE

New Hope are joining with the West Halifax Churches Together in an Advent service “Still Before Christmas”

This is on the first Wednesday in Advent, 6th December and is to be at Highgate Methodist Church at 7-30 p.m. and will be led by the Revd. Terry Keen, the new Superintendent Methodist minister for Calderdale.

We will also be singing Carols at ASDA on the 18th December 7 p.m. till 8 p.m.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We are joining with the West Halifax Churches Together at a service on 21st January at Christ Church, at 4 p.m. followed by a “Faith Tea”

Services over Christmas

17th December Family Carol Service. 24th December 10-30 a.m. Service of Carols and Readings, and at 7 p.m. Service in preparation for Christmas, followed by mince pies and drinks.

There will be no service on Christmas Day.

31st December Group Service at New Hope led by Juliet Foster.

Averil & Alan are having their usual New Year’s Eve Party and invite anyone to come along and join with them. 7-30 p.m. onwards (244946, 50 Whitehill Road)

Christmas Thoughts

What is Christmas? It's a feeling. . . warm and friendly, kind and true, It's a light that is rekindled when the world is born anew. Where is Christmas? All around us . . . falling snowflakes, chiming bells, In the pleasures that surround us and within our hearts as well. When is Christmas? It's for ever! Just as long as men will show Love and friendship and compassion, will the lights of Christmas glow.

Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it most.

Christmas is a season of joy and goodwill, of singing and of generosity. Christmas is a season of sharing and love. Christmas is a season of concern for the needs of others, a season of the helping hand. And that's as it should be. For there is great satisfaction in making others happy. (The Salvation Army War Cry)

Take Christ out of Christmas and December becomes the bleakest and most colourless month of the year.

Some thoughts from "A Christmas Carol"

"Christmas a humbug, uncle, you don't mean that I'm sure?" "I do! Merry Christmas, what right have you to be merry, what reason have you to be merry, you're poor enough!" "Come then, uncle, what reason have you to be dismal, what right have you to be morose, you're rich enough!" Scrooge having no better answer on the spare of the moment replied, "Bah, humbug!"

NEW HOPE

“At this festive season of the year Mr Scrooge,” said the gentleman, taking up a pen, “It is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provisions for the poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time...We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when want is keenly felt, and abundance rejoices.”

And so as Tiny Tim said, “A merry Christmas to us all, God bless us everyone.”

Thoughts for the New Year

God often visits us, but most of the time we`re not at home.

Make each new morning the opening door to a better day than the one before.

Never leave until tomorrow what can be done today.

Seek not happiness; bestow it, and it will come to you.

Farewell, Old Year! With goodness crowned

A hand divine hath set thy bound.

Welcome, New Year, which shall bring

Fresh blessings from my God and King!

The old we leave without a tear,

The new we hail without a fear.

Because, I know that o`er it all

Rules HE who notes the sparrow`s fall.

NEW HOPE

Kathleen Radley a member of our church here at New Hope for a good many years has passed away after a short illness. Since the passing away of her husband, she continued to play an active part in our church life where ever she felt she could be useful. One thing which we will miss is her wonderful singing. As an ex member of the Halifax Choral Society she enjoyed singing the traditional hymns and was an inspiration to all in the congregation and especially to those who were near her. She often had opinions she expressed about the choice of hymns. Kathleen was happy to read a lesson during the service. On one occasion, when Juliet was leading worship and at the request of Juliet she read the lesson in Welsh. Kathleen was not slow in coming forward with appropriate comments when things were being discussed but these were always of a helpful and constructive nature. She was a very good supporter of our Friendship Hour and on many occasions would keep us amused with the various quizzes that she prepared for us. She was a very private person whom we admired and respected and in the earlier years she did welcome visitors from church who went to see her, but over the last few months she preferred people not to call. We kept in touch by phone and she always said she was all right and was quite content on her own. We believe she wanted us to remember her as she had been. She was kept constantly in our prayers. Yes, we along with many others will miss Kathleen for all that she did for us and many others but we know that she is now at peace with our Lord and saviour.

A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT ON DRIVERLESS LORRIES

Tests are being conducted on the possibility of having driverless trucks on our roads. A pod of three trucks will have the front one with a driver and the two behind following robotically. This is being done to possibly reduce the number of truck drivers by two thirds. The trucks will be wirelessly connected via the internet.

Now, for trucks read Churches with screens and projectors. The Minister in the leading Church with a real time webcam filming the proceedings and the congregations in the following Churches experiencing the sermon etc. in real time.

Only a few weeks ago the writer was watching Hurricane Harvey as it was happening so why not a sermon? Think of the saving in lay preachers! In fact, Synod could broadcast to all the Churches with one Minister, “Bake Off” seems to work. Costs per Church would be much less than employing a Minister and a dwindling congregation would not be financially embarrassed – its only a thought experiment!

Mike Riley

Pulpit Supply

December

- 3rd – Mrs. Juliet Foster
- 10th – Worship Group
- 17th – Boy's Brigade & Brownies
- 24th - Mr. Ken Lees-Wolfenden
- 31st - Group Service New Hope

January

- 7th - TBA
- 14th - Mrs. Juliet Foster
- 21st - Mr. Ken Lees- Wolfenden
- 28th - TBA

Diary

December

- Friday's – 6.30pm Brownies at New Providence
- Friday's – 6.45pm Boys Brigade & Girls Association at the Carlton Centre
- Tuesday 12th – 12.30pm Christmas Lunch at Windmill Court
- Sunday 17th – 12.15pm Christmas Lunch in Church

January

- Friday's – 6.30pm Brownies at New Providence
- Friday's – 6.45pm Boys Brigade & Girls Association at the Carlton Centre
- Monday 22nd – 7.30pm – New Provi Circle

CAROL SINGING

Providence will be joining Churches Together in North Halifax from 11.00am to 12.00 midday, to sing carols in Morrison's Supermarket on Saturday December 16th to raise money for the homeless. The foyer at Morrison's has no heating so do wear plenty of warm clothing!

CHRISTMAS LUNCHES

This year there will be two Christmas lunches for the church to enjoy! Following last year's very enjoyable meal we have again booked at Windmill Court, Ogden. This is on Tuesday December 12th 12 00 for 12.30 pm and the cost will be £17.95. Please give your name to Sue, with your menu choices, by December 3rd

Then, following the Service on Sunday December 17th there will be our Christmas Buffet Lunch at Church, price £8.00 per person. It would be helpful if you could let Sue know if you intend to be there.



"Inspired by two slugs crawling towards church which amused the Brownies"

YOU'VE GOT TO LAUGH

A Vicar came from a long line of clergy families. He had three sons, two of whom had followed him into the Church, but one of whom had rebelled and become something of the black sheep of the family.

One day the family all came to stay for the night. In the morning the father came down and took his place in front of the fire. One of the clergy sons came down and the father asked him how he had slept. He replied:

‘Very well, thank you, father. I had this wonderful dream in which I dreamt I went to heaven and it was marvellous’.

‘Splendid, son’ replied dad and the son joined him standing in front of the fire.

Then the second clergy son came down, his father asked him the same question and received a similar reply. He too had dreamt he had gone to heaven and it was marvellous. He went and joined his father and brother in front of the fire.

Finally the third son, the black sheep, came down. His father asked how he had slept and he replied: ‘Terribly. I had this awful nightmare. I dreamt I died and went to hell and it was just like this place. You couldn’t see the fire for the Vicars’.

NORMA'S WORD SEARCH

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

Merry Christmas
Mary
Joseph
Jesus
Nativity

Baby
Shepherds
Wisemen
Angels
Star

Santa Clause
Presents
Rudolf
Cards
Carols

Love
Joy
Hope
Fun
Trifles

When all the words have been found work out the message with the left over letters.

There is one deliberate mistake, can you find it?

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE
HOW MANY DIFFERENCES CAN YOU FIND?

There is at least twelve



CHRISTMAS BIBLE CROSSWORD CLUES

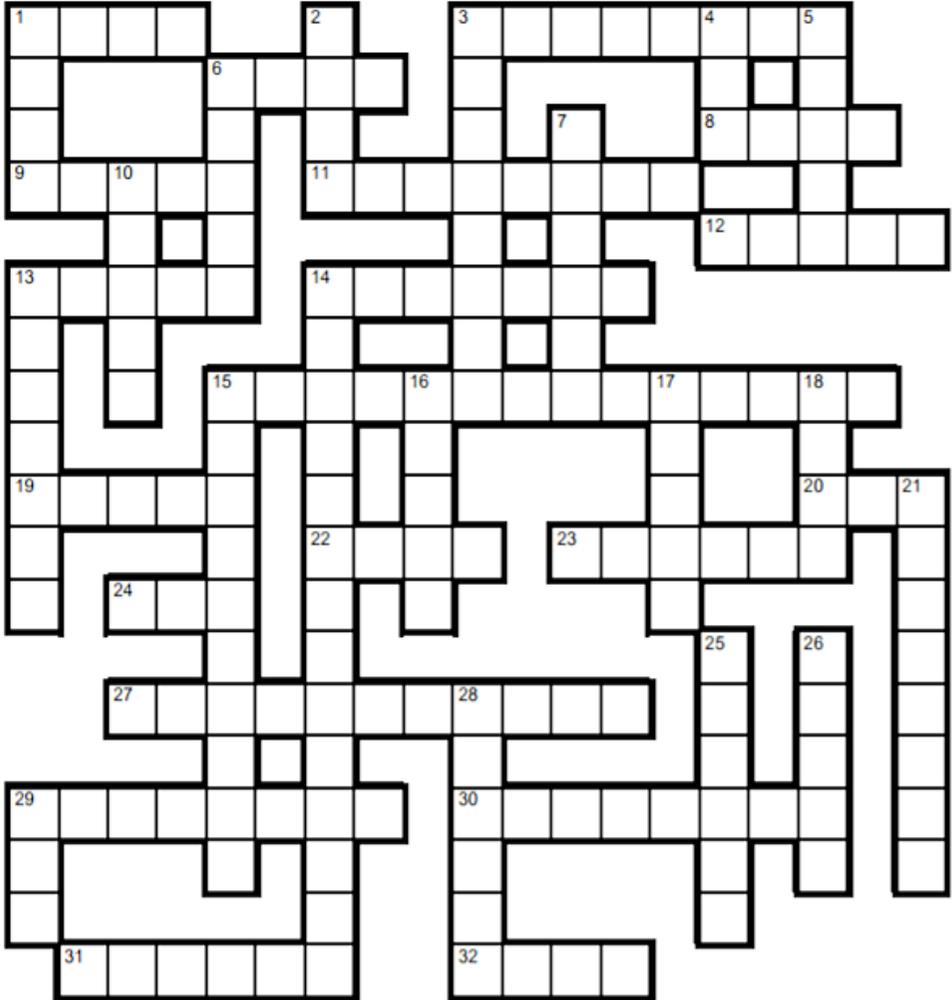
Across

- 1 Transportation for going over snow (4)
- 3 Mixture of seasoned ingredients (8)
- 6 Baby's bed (4)
- 8 Period from December 24th to January 6th (4)
- 9 Red-breasted bird (5)
- 11 Twelve days after Christmas (8)
- 12 Alcoholic drink normally served in a bowl (5)
- 13 Jolly (5)
- 14 News (7)
- 15 Goes with the turkey (9,5)
- 19 A type of tree used at Christmas (5)
- 20 The colour of Santa's hat (3)
- 22 ____ log; traditionally burned at Christmas (4)
- 23 Sanctified (6)
- 24 Cured leg of pork (3)
- 27 Christmas song (6,5)
- 29 Found under the Christmas tree? (8)
- 30 Grace (8)
- 31 Snow falls in this season (6)
- 32 Given at Christmas (4)

Down

- 1 Bright celestial body (4)
- 2 Christmas tree type (4)
- 3 Take aback (8)
- 4 No room here! (3)
- 5 Elvish colour (5)
- 6 Sweets; flavoured sugar (5)
- 7 Container usually found in a stable (6)
- 10 Beginning of life (5)
- 13 Amazing event (7)
- 14 Written after Christmas? (5,3,6)
- 15 Formal events (10)
- 16 Ring out from churches (5)
- 17 Accompaniment for food (5)
- 18 Printed or written greeting (4)
- 21 Month in which Christmas falls (8)
- 25 Nature of God (6)
- 26 One was born in Bethlehem (5)
- 28 Sweetened milk drink, with eggs and alcohol (6)
- 29 Pastry dish (3)

CHRISTMAS BIBLE CROSSWORD

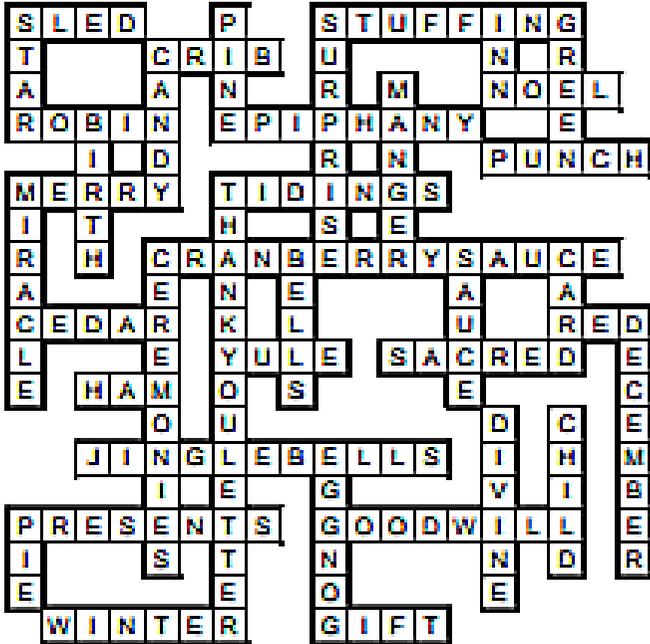


Answers

NORMA'S WORD SEARCH

Greetings to you all, enjoy the festivities but remember the true meaning)

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

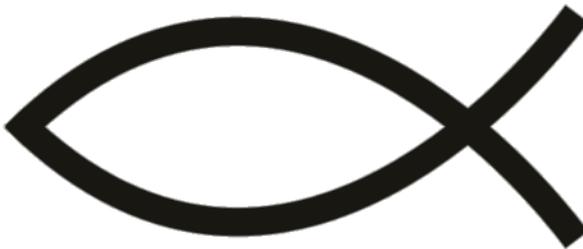


Across: 1 Sled, 3 Stuffing, 6 Crib, 8 Noel, 9 Robin, 11 Epiphany, 12 Punch, 13 Merry, 14 Tidings, 15 Cranberrysauce, 19 Cedar, 20 Red, 22 Yule, 23 Sacred, 24 Ham, 27 Jingle Bells, 29 Presents, 30 Goodwill, 31 Winter, 32 Gift.

Down: 1 Star, 2 Pine, 3 Surprise, 4 Inn, 5 Green, 6 Candy, 7 Manger, 10 Birth, 13 Miracle, 14 Thank you letter, 15 Ceremonies, 16 Bells, 17 Sauce, 18 Card, 21 December, 25 Divine, 26 Child, 28 Eggnog, 29 Pie.

GROUP CALENDAR

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>What's on</u>
Sun. Dec. 10 th	4.00pm	Heath	Messy Church
Mon. Dec. 11 th	7.30pm	Heath	Halifax Symphony Orchestra Christmas Concert
Tue. Dec. 12 th	12.30pm	New Providence	Christmas Lunch at Windmill Court
Wed. Dec. 13 th	2.30pm	New Hope	Christmas Party at Church
Sun. Dec. 17 th	12.15pm	New Providence	Christmas Lunch in Church
Tue Dec. 19 th	10.30am	Heath	Community Coffee Morning
Sun. Jan. 14 th	4.00pm	Heath	Messy Church
Tue. Jan 16 th	10.30am	Heath	Community Coffee Morning
Mon. Jan. 22 nd	7.30pm	New Providence	New Provi Circle



PREACHER PLAN

HEATH URC, MANOR DRIVE, 10.30 AM

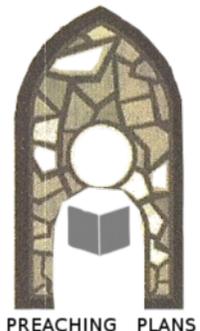
Dec. 3 rd	Rev. Daphne Hull
Dec. 10 th	Mrs. Susan Ng
Dec. 17 th	Rev. Justine Wyatt
Dec. 24 th	Readings and Carols
Dec. 25 th	Rev. John Jenkinson
Dec. 31 st	Group Service at New Hope

NEW HOPE URC, WARLEY ROAD 10.30 AM

Dec. 3 rd	Mr. David Truswell
Dec. 10 th	Mrs. Juliet Foster
Dec. 17 th	Mr. Alan Jowett
Dec. 24 th	Mr. Alan Jowett
Dec. 31 st	Mrs. Juliet Foster

NEW PROVIDENCE URC, KEIGHLEY ROAD 11.00 AM

Dec. 3 rd	Mrs Juliet Foster
Dec. 10 th	Worship Group
Dec. 17 th	Boys Brigade and Brownies
Dec. 24 th	Mr. Ken Lees-Wolfenden
Dec. 31 st	Group Service at New Hope



PREACHER PLAN

HEATH URC, MANOR DRIVE, 10.30 AM

Jan. 7 th	Mrs. Juliet Foster
Jan. 14 th	Rev. John Jenkinson
Jan. 21 st	Rev. Daphne Hull
Jan. 28 th	Mrs Dawn Walker

NEW HOPE URC, WARLEY ROAD 10.30 AM

Jan. 7 th	Mr. Alan Jowett
Jan. 14 th	Mrs. Alison Dobson
Jan. 21 st	Mr. David Truswell
Jan. 28 th	Mrs. Juliet Foster

NEW PROVIDENCE URC, KEIGHLEY ROAD 11.00 AM

Jan. 7 th	TBA
Jan. 14 th	Mrs. Juliet Foster
Jan. 21 st	Mr. Ken Lees-Wolfenden
Jan. 28 th	TBA



PREACHING PLANS



"Rev Peterson is in the Holy Land, the youth pastor's under the Church bus, and the minister of music is in jail for photocopying music. Do you want to talk to the janitor?"

"I've stopped expecting you to make leaps of faith, but it would be nice to see a hop now and then"

Useful Numbers

Mrs J Simmons (Heath)	365355
Mr D Truswell (New Hope)	883908
Mrs S Wolfenden (New Providence)	244402
Heath URC.	www.heathchurchhalifax.org.uk
Providence URC.	www.providencechurchovenden.org.uk
URC web site:	www.urch.org.uk
Yorkshire Synod	www.urchyorkshire.org.uk
Robert Brook (editor)	robertbrook@sky.com 07811535832

■■■■■■■■■■ Feb/March Deadline ■■■■■■■■■■

All contribution need to be in by **Friday 12th January** please. These can be either handed in to your church reps or stop press direct to the editor at: **robertbrook@sky.com**

Late submissions may not be inserted.

Thank you.