

HEATH LIVES

Number 3

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EDITORIAL

Thank you to all those who have written articles for this issue of our magazine. If you have any sort of story to tell, a recipe to share, or a local history matter that you think will interest others, please do contact us. We are happy to help with grammar and spelling if necessary, so please don't let that stop you from writing!

We are delighted that Heath Church has now qualified for the Silver Eco Award and you will find details on pages 17 and 18. Our next goal is the Gold Award: it won't be easy but it is worth striving for as every small success counts in the struggle against extreme weather which is so badly impacting so many parts of the world. Even our blessedly temperate climate is showing its effects and we all need to do what we can to prevent further damage to our eco-systems.

Many of you will have enjoyed the three concerts that "Out of the Box" singers have given at Heath United Reformed Church in the past. They will soon be giving a concert at Halifax Minster, on Saturday, 3rd December at 7pm. (See page 11), which will include poetry, prose, comedy and some beautiful music. There is something for everyone and it is sure to get you in the mood For Christmas! Tickets are £12.50 and can be purchased online from Halifax Minster, from the Halifax Minster foyer or from Out of the Box members.

We wish all our readers a joyful Christmas and a peaceful year ahead.



CHURCH CONTACT DETAILS

Services are held on Sundays at 10.30 a.m. We are always pleased to welcome visitors.

Minister: Rev Heather Pollard. E-mail: ministerhalifaxgroup@gmail.com
Or ring: 01422 248957

Church Secretary: Mrs Jane Simmons: heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com

Website: heathchurchhalifax.org.uk

Dear Friends,

Anyone visiting our home during the last week of October might have thought that we'd been invaded. This time it wasn't slugs that sometimes appear in the bathroom, nor spiders emerging from behind cupboards, but angels! There was about a dozen of them, but their numbers were increasing almost daily.



I need to explain! In the last edition of *Heath Lives* we were encouraged to knit angels for use during Advent. Although I haven't picked up a pair of knitting needles for more than twenty-five years I thought I would "do my bit". I borrowed some needles and bought some wool, and soon my host of angels was growing.

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be visited by an angel? I think we can forget the soft knitted creations that I've been knitting. We can also forget the sparkly, frilly ones that we sometimes put at the top of our Christmas trees, and the cute wings and halos that we remember from the nativity plays performed by children in school or at church.

In the stories surrounding the birth of Jesus told by St Luke and St Matthew, angels brought messages from God. Sometimes they came to someone in a dream, but when they came in person they said, "Do not be afraid" and gave reassurance. This isn't surprising because anyone confronted by an angel is likely to be startled or alarmed. I'm sure I would be! At that time people knew about angels through their understanding of Hebrew scriptures. There they learned that angels were messengers from God who could be very frightening and sometimes brought messages of doom and destruction. No wonder they needed reassurance.

Luke begins his story by telling us that an angel appears to a priest called Zechariah. He and his wife Elizabeth were "well on in years" and had no children. The angel tells him that they will have a child whom they are to name John and explains that the baby boy has been sent by God to prepare the way for the Messiah. This baby grows up to become John the Baptist.

A few months later Mary, who is engaged to Joseph, is visited by the angel Gabriel who tells her that she will bear a son: Jesus. Gabriel tells her that the child will be the Son of God.

An angel also appears to Joseph, in a dream, encouraging him to marry Mary as planned because her child is from God and will save the people.

On the night when Jesus was born, some shepherds watching their flocks in the fields nearby are visited by angels. An angel tells them that a Saviour has been born and then the sky is filled with more angels who are praising God.

Some time later an angel appears to Joseph in a dream, warning him to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt because King Herod plans to kill the child. Then, after Herod's death the angel again appears in Joseph's dreams, telling him that it's safe for the little family to return to their homeland.

Luke and Matthew wanted to show how God communicates and cooperates with human beings to bring about his Kingdom. The people in the story had a choice about how to respond to the angels' messages. We can only celebrate Christmas today because they chose to cooperate with God who was doing something marvellous.

The message the angel brought to the shepherds was a joyful one and was echoed by the angelic host. It was a new kind of message about a new kind of Saviour. God, whom so many feared, had entered our world as a vulnerable baby, ready to welcome everyone, ready to help us find peace. That's what we celebrate at Christmas.

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"
—*Charles Wesley*

Martin joins me in wishing you a joyful Christmas and a peaceful, happy New Year.

Heather

TELLING THE TIME AROUND HALIFAX



The first reliable sundial was probably the 'shadow clock' built in 1500 BC by the Ancient Egyptians but other ancient civilisations also realised that time could be calculated by the position of the sun in the sky and the shadows it cast.

One of our local sundials can be found at Mount Zion Methodist Chapel at Causeway Foot, where it is placed high on the wall. It bears the date 1773 and is inscribed,

'Mount Zion' with the words 'Life a vapour, a shadow'. A plaque underneath reads, 'The Chapel was rebuilt in the year 1815'. A history of Mount Zion Methodist Church was written by the Rev William Walker, minister of the church from 1899 to 1901, under the title, 'Told by the Dial'.

A small but equally interesting sundial is that which stands above the doorway of a house in Friendly Fold, Ovenden, formerly known as Cow Lane. The house was built in 1709 and was the original meeting place of the Methodist New Connexion in the district. Here the former Bethel Methodist Church began. It was used as a school and as a church, and on a Sunday lessons were given in writing. The sundial bears the motto, 'Iam mea, mox hujus, sed posthac escio cujus', which translates as, 'Now mine, presently his, but thereafter I know not whose'. This is not an uncommon inscription to grace a house although in some cases the wording may read slightly differently as, 'Nunc mea, mox hujus, postea nescio cujus', but the translation is the same.

Meanwhile, in People's Park there stands a vertical sundial which is unusual in many ways. It has stood there facing the fountain since 1873 when it was presented by Alderman Matthew Smith, who became Mayor of Halifax in 1879. He was the father of Sir George Fisher-Smith. The dial is dated 1858, the year after People's Park was opened, and not only tells the time in Greenwich but also in New York. Why it was not installed for fifteen years after it was made is a mystery.

The sundial was created by John Smith, a farmer of Crayke, near Easingwold but its massive stone pedestal was made by George Fearn, a

monumental sculptor of 1 King Cross Street, Halifax. The inscriptions on the dial are in English, Latin and Greek, a reminder of a more classically-inclined age. At the top is 'Tempus edax rerum' - 'Time, the devourer of all things' - a quotation from Ovid which can be seen on many long-case clocks. Below are the words 'Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for on thine eyelids is the shadow of death.' This appears to be a combination of two separate texts from the Bible. In Proverbs chapter 27, verse 1, we read, 'Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth', and Job chapter 16, verse 16, reads, 'My face is foul with weeping and on my eyelids is the shadow of death.'

On the four sides we read the words, 'First the hour, then the day, time by moments steals away'. Quotations such as these are commonly to be found on clocks of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and this probably stemmed from their use on sundials. The Greek text which encircles the dial is taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 5, verse 16, and may be translated as 'Make the most of your time, for the days are evil.' Good advice!

Derek Bridge

michael and a beetle

as i sat down to write today
a beetle crawled on to my page
and paused as if unsure;
sensing its quandary or dismay
i asked, 'what are your thoughts
about the times in which we live.
the sorry state of our sad world?'
the beetle did not say -
'you're standing on my page', i said,
'so speak to me' - and then
i thought i heard the beetle say
'all that has passed and so this may.'
i looked again - the beetle's gone!
my page is clear, need i write on?

Michael Collins

NEW HOPE INVITATION

At 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve at
New Hope. Join us and the
"Worldwide Christmas Jingle
2022" by ringing bells outside the
church (bring your own bell if you
can). Followed by Christmas Eve
service at 6.15pm



COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

Our Christmas offertory collections, from the Carol and Christmas Day services, are traditionally donated to Commitment for Life. Why do we support Commitment for Life as well as Christian Aid? URC answers to this question are given below. I believe that this makes it very clear why it is so important that we continue our support financially and renew an individual and collective commitment to prayer.

Commitment for Life is **our** United Reformed Church's global justice programme. It is not aid, as much as aid is needed. It is not charity, as much as charity helps. It is JUSTICE.

We focus on [prayer](#) and activism. Without prayer, nothing of any substance to challenge injustice will happen, as Jesus taught when some disciples were trying – unsuccessfully – to cast out the devils of injustice. Prayer is key, and activism and advocacy are critical. Yes, give, but giving without prayer is pointless.

We support Christian Aid, Global Justice Now, The Fairtrade Foundation, Jubilee Debt, and The Climate Coalition. We believe that an integrated approach to justice makes sense for us as a denomination.

Christian Aid has repeatedly praised the work of Commitment for Life. We are unique. We are the reason why the URC gives by far the most per capita than any other denomination. Christian Aid really do want us to continue.

Heath's Commitment for Life partner is Bangladesh, a country that is suffering greatly through injustice. Poor governance, debilitating trade deals, global banking and national debt are huge issues. Now the impact of climate disruption is making things far worse, particularly in the low-lying lands where rising sea levels are a major issue.

Prayer for Jubilee

“God of Abundance, help us find alternatives to debt. Give us the wisdom, means, courage to forgive debt, thereby subverting empire's economics for the sake of your kingdom.

We pray for Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, and Israel and Palestine; all are caught up in a web of debt that suffocates everyone, even the planet. Amen.”

THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS PLANTS

Did you know that many Christmas plants are rooted in symbolism and supported by legend?

Colour Symbolism of Christmas Flowers and Plants

The traditional red, white, green and gold originated in Christian religious symbolism relating to the birth of Christ.

White, for Purity, Innocence & Peace

Red, for The Blood of Christ

Green, for Everlasting or Eternal Life

Gold or Silver, for The Star of Bethlehem

Blue, for The Virgin Mary

Poinsettia

The poinsettia has become a symbol of Christmas with its green foliage topped with bright red leaves.

According to Mexican legend, a young girl named Maria and her brother Pablo were the first to discover the poinsettia. The two children were very poor and could not afford a gift to bring to the Christmas Eve festival.

Not wanting to arrive empty-handed, the two children stopped beside the road and gathered a bouquet of weeds. When they placed the weeds beside baby Jesus in the manger, the poinsettia plants burst into brilliant red blooms.



Christmas Rose

The Christmas rose is a popular Christmas plant because it blooms in the middle of the winter.

According to legend, the Christmas rose was discovered by a shepherdess named Madelon. On a cold and icy night, Madelon watched as the Wise Men and shepherds marched past her carrying gifts for baby Jesus. Having no gift for the baby, she began to cry. Suddenly, an angel appeared and brushed away the snow, revealing the dainty Christmas rose beneath the snow. Madelon gathered the Christmas roses to present as her gift.

Christmas Cactus

This Christmas plant produces showy arches of flowers in shades of pink and red during the dark days of winter, giving it the name of Christmas cactus.



Christmas Cactus

Evergreen Wreaths

Evergreen wreaths have a long tradition as a symbol of ever-lasting life. They also symbolise eternity or the eternal nature of God with no beginning and no end. The evergreen wreath hung over a window or on the door serves as a symbol that the spirit of Christmas dwells within the home. Some believe the evergreen wreath is an invitation to the spirit of Christmas.

Evergreen trees like pine, cedar and spruce, have long been considered magical trees with healing powers. Both the ancient Druids and Ancient Romans used the evergreen boughs in festivals and rituals to celebrate the return of the sun and the renewal of life. Many were reluctant to part with the custom of bringing evergreen wreaths inside during the cold winter months after converting to Christianity. This gave rise to the new symbolism connected to evergreen wreaths. The evergreen wreath now symbolized finding a new life in Christ and/or eternal life.

Louise Iredale
Therapeutic Horticulturalist, Serenity Wellbeing Gardens
www.serenitywellbeinggardens.com

ST FRANCIS SAID.....

Where there is charity and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance.
Where there is patience and humility, there is neither anger nor strife.
Where there is poverty with joy, there is neither anger nor greed.
Where there is tranquillity and meditation, there is neither anxiety nor error.
Where the fear of the Lord keeps his palace, there the enemy finds no place to enter.
Where there is mercy and discretion, there is neither excess nor hardness of heart.

THE MIRACLE OF THE OIL



Image by [ooccey](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Hanukkah (a Hebrew word meaning 'dedication') is the Jewish Festival of Light which is usually celebrated in December, by our calendar. It is not found in the Old Testament as the events occurred some time after it was written, but is mentioned as a 'Feast of Dedication' which Jesus (as a good Jew) attended in the New.

The origins of this festival go back to approximately 200BC, when Judea, also known as the Land of Israel, came under the rule of the Seleucid empire. This was part of the lands that were divided after the death of Alexander the Great

and at this time the king was Antiochus III, who allowed the Jews to live in peace and to continue to follow their own religion. However, he was succeeded by his son, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who had other ideas. In 168 BC his soldiers attacked Jerusalem in force and thousands of people were massacred. Literature of the time tell that he outlawed the Jewish religion, made circumcision illegal, forbade the keeping of the Sabbath and other festivals, and desecrated the Second Temple, whose building had begun under Herod and took 40 years.. He insisted that the Jews should worship the Greek gods and, to that end, renamed the Temple in honour of Zeus and had a statue of him erected within and had pigs sacrificed within its walls.

A Jewish priest named Mattathias and his five sons, known as the Maccabees ('The Hammers'), stirred up a massive rebellion against Antiochus and the Seleucid monarchy. Mattathias died in 166 BC, and his son Judah took over as leader. In less than two more years, the Jews, using mostly guerrilla tactics, drove the oppressors out of Jerusalem, and now faced the urgent task of cleansing and rededicating the Temple: its altar needed to be rebuilt, and the menorah relit. This was a gold oil lamp with seven branches which represented the seven branches of human knowledge - Logic, Mathematics, Science, History and the Humanities,

Philosophy, and Preservation of Knowledge and which should burn day and night for eight days. One lamp was lit after sundown on day one, two on day two and so on, so that the light grew day by day. . When Judah Maccabee and his followers lit the menorah, they only had enough uncontaminated oil to burn for one day, but the flames of all the lamps continued to flicker for the full eight days, allowing time for fresh supplies to be obtained. Every year since, the Jews have celebrated with an eight-day festival, to remember the miracle of the oil that didn't run out. Modern menoras use candles rather than oil lamps and a hanukah menorah has nine branches, rather than the more traditional seven, a central 'helper' (shamash) candle which is used to light the others and a new candle for each day of the festival. Many of the traditional foods eaten at this time, such as potato latkes and doughnuts, are fried in olive oil as part of the remembrance.

G. Wassell



OUT OF THE BOX SINGERS
present

DECK THE HALL

A FESTIVE CONCERT OF SONGS, WORDS & MUSIC

BOOK NOW

HALIFAX MINSTER

Saturday 3rd December 2022 7.00pm

Tickets £12.50 from Halifax Minster and Out of the Box Members

WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

For as long as I can remember, within the life of the church we have talked about the contrast between ‘maintenance’ and ‘mission’. In brief, we tend to think that maintenance is what we often find ourselves spending time doing in the church, whilst mission is what we feel we really ought to be putting our energies into.



I'll explain a bit more about what I think mission is in a moment. But it is understandable that maintenance can hold such a big pull on us. Life in the church often throws up challenges we can't avoid, as we try to run things in an organised and efficient way, and as we look after our buildings. We could also include under the ‘maintenance’ heading softer things like pastoral care of the ‘flock’, and ensuring that our worship continues to offer the spiritual nourishment that we are used to. Under such a broad heading, it is easy to see how maintenance is not just necessary, but also sometimes quite an attractive option.

Mission also covers a broad spectrum of activities – and perhaps the easiest way to describe it is just to see it as the opposite of maintenance. Mission is whatever valuable things the church is doing which involve looking beyond the church-as-it-is, to the world in its need. If historically ‘mission’ has tended to conjure up images of far-off lands and brave missionaries, I think today we are likely to see mission much closer to home.

2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the United Reformed Church, which was formed initially by the union of the Congregational Church in England and Wales, with the Presbyterian Church in England in 1972. In our Yorkshire Synod (one of the 13 areas into which our UK-wide denomination is divided), we have decided to mark the year by putting time and energy into considering what it means to be a ‘Missional Synod’. We are using the word ‘Mission’ not because it is new – but because the desire to ‘do mission’ is a common thread that has run through our history, and which goes back to our very origins in the New Testament.

It is no great surprise that we are discovering the variety of ways in which the word 'mission' is used in the Yorkshire churches. For some, the most obvious meaning is to describe those things the church does which are like 'living parables' – putting into practice the kind of loving care that we understand Jesus himself to be calling us to. For some, 'mission' is not really mission unless we are sharing our own experiences of faith, and indeed 'talking about Jesus'.

Between these two understandings of mission, I think there is a really interesting space which is more about allowing God's Spirit to be at work, allowing honest and open questions to be asked, and inviting good conversations about what really matters – without either having to apologise for the faith we have in Jesus, nor to insist that only Jesus-talk matters. Whatever else it is, a missional Synod is, I believe, a place of delight and joy; a welcoming and accepting community; a body that is outward-looking and engaged with the 'real' world; a place where we honour each other's wisdom and insight, and where what we are about sits happily and easily with the Gospel of Jesus.

Rev. Jamie Kissack: Moderator

We at **HEATH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**
on Free School Lane



**invite you and your
household to
join us for one or both
of our Christmas
Services:**

Dec 18th: Candlelight Carols at 6 p.m.
Dec 25th: A short celebration at 10.30 a.m.

'All are welcome in this place'

e-mail: heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com

A PUZZLING THING

It sounds a daft idea - someone paints a picture and then cuts it into lots of tiny pieces for someone else to put together again; but jigsaw puzzles do bring a lot of pleasure to a lot of people and, it seems, especially so during the recent lockdowns. They are, as you probably know, named after the 'jig saw' used to cut the (originally wooden) blocks though today sophisticated machines are used which can cut the whole puzzle in one go, rather than one piece at a time. There is definitely something amiss in the process though as I have in the past bought brand-new puzzles which were either missing a piece or contained several 'duplicate' pieces (though, as each puzzle is slightly different from the next, they did not actually fit in the space) - or on occasion, both.. My own opinion is that a piece or pieces get stuck in the shaker and released into a later bag!

A person who does jigsaws is called a 'dissectologist'. These puzzles were invented by a London mapmaker named John Spilsbury in the 1760s and the first ones were maps. Mr Spilsbury pasted a map onto a thin piece of wood and cut it into shapes, each country being one shape. He sold these to affluent families as a fun way to teach children geography. It wasn't until the early twentieth century that interlocking pieces came along and during the Great Depression in America millions of families took not only to doing the puzzles but to making them in their own kitchens (a jig-saw was not very expensive) to sell as a way of making a living.

So what, apart from passing time - and it does pass quickly while one is engaged on a puzzle, ask anyone who does jigsaws - is the point of doing these puzzles? Well, I am convinced that there are life lessons to be learnt here as in almost any human activity - (and activities of animals, insects and birds as well) if we watch carefully. The first lesson is patience and learning to take things slowly, to be 'in the moment' as modern-day language has it. If you are in a hurry, don't bother trying a 1000 piece puzzle, you won't enjoy it. The fun is in sifting slowly through the tiny bits of cardboard for just the right piece in shape and colour to go in that annoying gap in the wall of the house or the lion's mane. Your mind can be wandering in all sorts of places as you may remember a visit to the place represented in the puzzle or the model of a car you used to own, or when your own children played on the village green in the manner depicted. Afternoons spent watching a cricket match or boating on the lake, visiting the zoo or baking cakes - there is a puzzle for almost anything.

Another lesson is that you should be prepared to make assumptions ('this is a piece of her red dress') but also to find that those assumptions are wrong ('not it's not, it's part of the poster on the wall'). Which is another way of saying, appearances can be deceptive. These are mental processes which are very useful in other situations. It is important that we make assumptions in some circumstances but we have to be able to admit that we were wrong.

A further advantage is learning or encouraging perseverance. I have trouble with large areas of sky, sea or tree but, determined not to be beaten by a few pieces of cardboard, I will plod on through these more boring bits (and try to do them early on, as soon as the frame is in place) so I can get on and enjoy the more interesting areas without the cloud of knowing that is still waiting to be done.

So if anyone berates you for 'wasting time' on jigsaws, you can tell them that, on the contrary, you are honing your skills of patience, pacing and perseverance as well as using judgement and developing your willingness to admit your errors. And who can ask more and, at the same time, get the great feeling of achievement when all the pieces are assembled and the picture lies complete before one's eyes?

So thank you, John Spilsbury, for many hours of entertainment and education. Long live dissectologists!

G. Wassell



Photo by [Hans-Peter Gauster](#) on [Unsplash](#)

A SUMMER CLEANING TOILETS!

This year I was persuaded by my husband to accompany him to Camp Bestival in Dorset as a WaterAid Volunteer. WaterAid has been one of the main charity partners for Glastonbury Festival for quite a few years, providing cleaner toilets and water refills to festival goers. As a result of this partnership, the charity is now present at many other festivals over the course of the summer. The remit is different for each festival and for Camp Bestival, WaterAid were providing 'Good Loos'. These composting toilets are maintained by the volunteers to ensure that they are always clean and hygienic.

The reason that WaterAid is involved in festivals is two-fold.

The first is vital fund-raising. There is no charge for anyone to use the Good Loos. However, festival goers are asked if they are willing to make a voluntary donation of £2 to use our toilets. The vast majority of customers are happy to do this and many will donate more. For every 65 donations received, WaterAid is able to provide a new toilet in Nepal. We keep track of how many toilets the donations have funded and over the course of 3 days enough donations were received to fund over 80 new toilets.

The second reason for WaterAid's presence is to raise public awareness. WaterAid believes that everyone is entitled to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene. Climate change is going to make this an even more difficult aim to achieve. Queuing for a toilet that doesn't flush is something that we are not accustomed to doing but it is an everyday fact of life for many.

In addition to cleaning, volunteers engage with festival goers whilst they are queuing and explain what WaterAid does and why it is so important. We were also asking people to fill in postcards which will be delivered to 10 Downing Street and presented to our new prime minister, at the end of the summer festival season, asking for urgent action on climate change to be taken now.

The work was quite gruelling at times with 6-hour shifts but it was also very rewarding when festival goers came back to us time and time again, telling us that our loos were the most pleasant on the site and thanking us for providing such a good service. Hopefully a number of those previously unaware of WaterAid's work will become monthly subscribers and support this vital work for years to come.

For more information, please visit www.wateraid.org

Gill Brooke



HEATH WINS SILVER!

In 2021, at COP26, Archbishop Justin Welby stated the following. *“To live out my Christian Faith is to follow Jesus. That must include standing alongside the most vulnerable and marginalised on the frontlines of the climate emergency. My prayer is that , as faith communities, we might stand together, emissaries of hope and love, calling for God’s justice and peace upon this precious world. Now is the time for action.”*

Eco Church is an A Rocha UK project. The Eco Church vision is for churches of all denominations to care for creation as an integral part of loving their neighbours and following God faithfully. The awards are designed to recognise the work of churches who express their care for God’s world through worship and teaching; in managing buildings and land; in their engagement with the local community and in global campaigns, and in the personal lifestyles of members of their congregation.

Heath’s vision is to know, love, live and share Jesus, for a better world, and working towards Eco Church awards helps give us a framework and focus for our actions, small though they may be, in reducing our negative impact on ecosystems and on people’s lives and livelihoods. An Eco Church award is a means, and not an end in its own right.

In managing our buildings and land we have tried to reduce the impact of our actions on the environment by considering our carbon footprint and by trying to make more ethical decisions in our purchasing. Examples include our double glazing, LED lighting, and a more diverse garden, as well as using environmentally friendly cleaning products. Not only does our toilet paper have a lower carbon footprint, but our buying it supports sanitation provision in places of need. In our worship and teaching we have occasional services that focus specifically on creation and the environment, and regularly include relevant prayers and hymns.

With regard to lifestyle, amongst other things, we have encouraged the personal use of Fair Trade goods, reducing the carbon footprint of our food (one of the most effective actions we can take individually) and recycling of empty pill packs. As a church we now have much more ethical current and savings accounts. In the category of community and global engagement promoting Fairtrade and toilet twinning have contributed to our points, although equally important have been the activities of individuals within the congregation. This does mean that if we hope to aim for gold in this category, we do need everyone to get more involved. Don’t worry, this includes prayer, letter writing etc. although awareness raising marches and protests

are options too! We all know that whilst our personal and church actions to reduce carbon emissions and to support those most affected by climate change are very important, on their own they won't solve the climate emergency. Structural change is necessary and as individuals and as a church, we need to speak to power in order to influence wider change. This is not about politics, it is about Christian love and justice.

Gaining our Silver Eco Church award certainly doesn't mean that we have got it all right, either as a church or individuals. It does mean that we are increasing our awareness of the critical situation that the climate and the natural world is in, and of the resulting devastation of human lives. That awareness is reflected in at least some of the choices we make.

As we pray for God's kingdom to come on earth, don't we have a responsibility to try and change our ways, and the ways of those in positions of power? As we make this journey it can seem hopeless, we may see no way to go, but as the hymn reminds us God will be travelling along with us. We have faith on our side. Onwards to gold!

Jane Simmons

AND SO TO TWINNING....

At Heath we are twinning our toilets! 3 out of 6, so far.

Donating £60 to twin one toilet helps fund a project in a poor community that enables families to build a basic toilet, and learn about hygiene: For many communities, hearing about the link between sanitation and health is a revelation: a light bulb moment. Many have never known why diarrhoea is so common, and why their children have fallen ill or died. Suddenly, they understand. And then they want a latrine – that they build themselves, with financial assistance. If you would like to help, small donations can be put in the 'toilet tin' on the coffee table after the service, alternatively, contact Gill, our treasurer, by emailing heathtreasurer@gmail.com

MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Please ensure that all contributions for the February issue of Heath Lives are received by the editor before

9 a.m. on Monday 9th January 2023

We welcome all contributions but publication is not guaranteed.

Send to: garnetr@outlook.com
or hand to Gemma or to Anne Boyd

Please note that inclusion of an article does not necessarily mean that the Editors agree with the sentiments expressed.

THE CRAGG VALE COINERS

The Cragg Vale coiners were a band of counterfeiters based in Cragg Vale – near Hebden Bridge. In the late 18th Century they produced fake gold coins to supplement the small mount they made by weaving. Led by David Hartley (The King) who lived in a medieval farmhouse called Bell House in Cragg Vale, the coiners obtained the real gold coins from publicans, often by claiming they could grow their investment by mixing the gold coins with other metals. They removed the genuine edges from the coins then milled them again, collecting the shavings. The coins were only slightly smaller. They then melted down the shavings to produce counterfeits. Designs were then punched into the blank coins with a hammer and a 'coining kit'. The coiners then had their accomplices place the fakes into circulation. Most of the coins had French, Spanish or Portuguese designs.

The Cragg Vale coiners were so successful because of the very isolated place where they lived. In 1769, William Dighton, a public official investigated the possibilities of a counterfeit gang based in Cragg Vale. A Coiner, James Broadbent, betrayed the gang by turning King's evidence and revealing the gang's existence and operation. Dighton had David Hartley arrested. The arrest made the coiners seek vengeance. Isaac 'Hartley, "King" David's brother, plotted to have Dighton killed and a number of coiners gave one hundred guineas in support of the plan. On 10th November 1769 two farm hands employed by the coiners, Matthew Normanton and Robert Thomas, ambushed Dighton in Bull Close Lane, Halifax and shot him dead.

Charles Watson-Wentworth (the Marquis of Rockingham and former Prime Minister) was tasked with hunting down the killers. He had thirty coiners arrested by Christmas Day. David Hartley was hanged at 'York Tyburn' on

28 April 1770 and is buried in Heptonstall. His brother Isaac escaped. As for Dighton's murderers, they were both hanged. Thomas on 6 August 1774 and Normanton on 15 April 1775.

Jim Walker

Photo by [Zlatáky.cz](https://www.zlataky.cz/) on [Unsplash](https://www.unsplash.com/)



YORKSHIRE SYNOD BIG DAY OUT

Saturday 17th September was the Yorkshire Big Day Out at Lightwater Valley. This event is very dear to me as back in 2016 I was the key organiser of the first Yorkshire Big Day Out. The idea was to emulate what had been happening through Pilots at the national level since 2001. The day aims to be a day out for the whole church family, and anyone who has any connection with the URC in Yorkshire (no matter how tenuous) is invited. But this was the first time that I had next to no involvement in the organisation of it. This left me free to enjoy the whole experience without having 'responsibilities'.

Two of my children, with their families, attended, along with a number of their friends. So I was able to spend some of my time with the family whilst they enjoyed the rides and attractions, and some of my time experiencing the URC provided activities. These activities included Celebrating Diversity, URC Children, Saving Our World, Bible heroes, some sing-alongs, and the main worship session at 2pm. I made it to the Celebrating Diversity and the main worship session. Whilst the Celebrating Diversity discussion was a small group (about 10 of us) the main worship session was very well attended and very enjoyable. The Celebrating Diversity session was led by Rev. Zadie Orr and raised some very interesting points re inclusion and how difficult it can be to be welcoming to all.

More important to me than the location is the opportunity to catch up with people in the URC that I don't get to speak to very often, and I also spoke to a few that I haven't really spoken to before, including some of our up and coming young people. This is what the event is really about for me.

I did venture on to a ride (just the one) and after a couple of hours was feeling well again! It's strange how when you are in your 20s and 30s you can ride for most of the day and not feel ill, but in your late 50s one ride is more than enough!

So if we are lucky enough to have a Yorkshire Big Day Out in 2023, I would definitely recommend you go along – even if you can't manage the rides. You are guaranteed to get a lot out of it, and to enjoy yourself at the same time.

Alan Kendall

Continued from page 21/: of hope in a world of hurt. And it is a picture Matthew reinforces in his final cameo of Jesus' resurrection meeting with his (by then) eleven disciples: "Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...remember I am with you always, to the end of the age'" (28.18-20).

Rev. Leslie Hobbs

MATTHEW THE STORYTELLER

Advent Sunday, 27th November, marks the start of a new church year and the lectionary readings concentrate on the gospel of St. Matthew. We know very little about him as a person, though he appears in all four lists of Jesus' twelve disciples, though under the name of 'Levi' in Mark and Luke. He himself records his occupation as 'tax-collector'. From Mark 2 we learn his father's name was Alphaeus and from Luke 5.29 it appears he was fairly well off.

A clearer picture of Matthew emerges from reading his Gospel. He is plainly a well-organised writer, for he alternates five blocks of Jesus' teaching with five action sections; and each teaching block ends similarly: "when Jesus had finished saying these things". He is obviously a Jew writing for Jews: he quotes eleven times from the Old Testament with the words "this was to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet"; he refers to Jewish customs like handwashing (15.2) and the wearing of phylacteries (23.5); and he uses the more Jewish phrase "kingdom of heaven" (eg 25.1 - literally 'the kingdom of the heavens'), whereas Mark and Luke have the words "kingdom of God".

We are indebted to Matthew for details about Jesus' life and ministry that appear in none of the other three Gospels. For instance, it is Matthew alone who gives us Joseph's slant on Jesus' birth; and the wise men, Herod's killing of innocent children and, at the other end of Jesus' life, some of the resurrection details (28.9-15) are special to this Gospel. So are some of the parables: the weeds in the wheat, the wise and foolish bridesmaids and the sheep and the goats, among others. Only Matthew among the four Gospel writers notes Jesus' use of the word 'church'.

One of the most significant and best-known features of Matthew's Gospel, however, is his record of Jesus' so-called 'Sermon on the Mount', covering chapters five to seven. Many phrases in everyday speech owe their origin to this Sermon: 'salt of the earth'; 'turn the other cheek'; 'blow your own trumpet'; 'wolf in sheep's clothing'. And all human life is here: quarrels (5.21-26); sex (5.27-32); money (6.19-21); anxiety (6.25-34); faultfinding (7.1-5); and so much more. It is a Sermon in which Jesus urges discipleship that is different: one commentator has called it 'Christian counter-culture'. The way of the world at large is something his followers' lifestyle should challenge: "do not be like them" (6.8), Jesus says; there is a different and better way.

Matthew was writing his Gospel at a turbulent time, not long before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD. So it is worth noting what has been called his 'mini-apocalypse' in chapters 24 and 25. It reflects international instability ("nation will rise against nation....there will be famines and earthquakes", and sets against it "the coming of the Son of Man". It is a picture / continued on page 20

Overgate Hospice Choir

Annual Carol Concert

Saturday 17th December 2022,
7pm-9.30pm

With Hammonds Brass Band and
Alan Horsey at the organ

Tickets at £12 each will be
available at Overgate Hospice, at
Harvey's of Halifax (top floor, at
the shoe store counter) and
online via the choir website
www.overgatehospicechoir.com

Safeguarding Training, Basic Level

This is now available online.

If you prefer a more personal,
interactive training, this is still
available via a Zoom meeting, as
before, on various dates.

This training is available online to
be done whenever suits you.

If you need or would like to do this,
or are due a refresher (advised
every three years) contact Anne
Boyd for link details or for more
information.

ANSWERING PRAYER

Once upon a time there was a harassed businessman. He had over-reached himself and was in desperate need of £500,000 to avoid ruin, and he needed it NOW. Having exhausted all other resources, he decided to come to church and ask God for help.

Sitting in the pew and reminding God of all the reasons why he deserved divine assistance, and of all the jobs that would be lost if the business failed, and how his wife would probably leave him if he became poor, he became aware of an imploring voice behind him, distracting him. 'O God, I don't know where to turn. I can't pay the rent and we will be evicted and we have nowhere else to go. Lord, I haven't been to church since I was a boy, but Lord, there is no-one else to help me. I just need £5, Lord, that's all, just £5 so I can buy food tonight for my wife and children. Lord....' On and on the voice went and the businessman could hardly keep his mind on his own prayers. Finally, in exasperation, he pulled out his wallet, took out a £5 note, turned and threw it in the direction of the only other person in the church. 'There you are, there's your £5. Now just GO and leave me in peace.'

So even when we are impatient and cross, even when our minds are taken up with our own difficulties, even when we are totally out of sympathy with the world, God can still use each one of us to answer the prayers that are made to him. We are his hands and his feet, we are his bankers. If we make our needs known to God, he knows exactly where to go to get the answer - and it may be you. (Anon)

ACTIVITIES IN HEATH CHURCH

On the third **Tuesday** of each month at 10.30 a.m., a **Coffee Morning** is held in the Lounge (using the Manor Drive entrance). Everyone welcome.

On the third **Thursday** of each month in the evening, we hold meetings of the **Thursday Club** . We welcome new members.

Jason Whitaker Boxing Fitness.

Boxing padwork sessions available for all fitness levels and abilities including group classes, 1-to-1s and 2-to-1s.

FB: Jasonwhitakerboxingfitness

Tel: 07929372498

Kim's Dance and Movement:

Tuesdays 10am - Adult Beginners' Tap Class. Suitable for complete beginners or a little bit of tap experience in the past and needing a basic recap.

Tuesdays 11am - Adult Intermediate Tap Class. Anyone from 18-80 with previous knowledge or experience in tap dancing. Fun class.

Thursdays 11am - Move & Groove Dance fitness. Over 18's Aerobic-style fitness class. A nice feel-good class with a mixture of songs/routines including salsa and Cha-cha. All abilities as you can take it at your own pace.

Contact Kim on 07747 867706 or Facebook @kimsmoveandgroove

***Move to Improve* standing and seated exercise classes with Heidi.**

Help Improve your balance and posture, and strengthen muscle & bone plus improve your overall fitness.

Wednesday 2pm Back to Basics Gentle keep fit.

Friday Gentle keep fit 10am & 11.10am.

Please contact Heidi 07791869594

Email heidimolle@googlemail.com



WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT HEATH

Regular bookings at Heath United Reformed Church September 2022

All activities and hire times are subject to change.

TT = Term time S = Seasonal V = Variable O = Occasional

Day	User	Time	Location
Monday	New Age Kurling	11-1 07966 038923	Hall
	Janet's Eazi Dance	2-3	Hall
	Steph's Community Choir	2-3	Upstairs
	Kim's music lessons (may vary)	4-5.30 TT V	Upstairs
	Laurie's music lessons	4-5 TT V	Lounge
	Beavers	6-7	Lounge & Hall
	Cubs	6.30-8	Hall
	Halifax Philatelic society	7.30-9 (2 nd Monday)	Lounge
	Halifax Symphony Orchestra	7-9.30 S roybiggs@halifaxorchestra.org	Upstairs
Tuesday	Kim's dance class	10-12 07747867706	Hall
	Community Coffee Club	10.30-12 (3 rd Tuesday)	Lounge
	Yvonne's Tai Chi	12.45-3.45	Hall
	Kim's music lessons	4-8 TT V	Upstairs
	Scout District Meetings	7.30 – 9.30 V	Lounge
Wednesday	Kim's music lessons (may vary)	10-12 TT V	Upstairs
	Heidi's cardiac rehab	2-3 07791869594	Hall
	Jason's Boxercise	7-8 V 07929 372498	Hall
Thursday	Kim's dance class	11-12	Hall
	Shahnaz's stretch, tone & more	6-7 07990 825412	Hall
	Thursday Club	7.30-9 (2 nd Thurs)	Lounge/visit
Friday	Sign and Sing	9.30-1.30 TT	Lounge
	Heidi's cardiac rehab	10-12	Hall
	Kim's music lessons	4-5.30 TT V	Upstairs
	Janet's Eazi Tap	6-7	Hall
	Scouts & Explorers	7.30-9	Hall & Lounge
Saturday	Kim's music lessons	9-11 TT V	Upstairs
	Calderdale Chess League	2-7 O 07504 598590	Hall
Sunday	Worship	10:30-11:30	Upstairs
Variable	Jason's 1:1 Boxing skills	V 07929 372498	Meeting Rm 2

For further details, see page 19