

Feedback

This is the sixth quarterly issue of *The Shack*. It is hoped that you find it interesting and informative. We would really like to encourage more contributions, especially from parish groups. Any ideas for regular features would also be welcomed. We look forward to your feedback and articles for future editions.

Poetry Box



There's No Colour in Winter

'There's no colour in winter,' the old man complained
As we sat in the bus shelter watching the rain.
'Everything's drab unless you like grey.
It's a typical gloomy January day.'

I turned to the man who looked careworn and sad,
Wondering what else he might possibly add.
'There's no colour in winter,' he grumbled again.
'Everything's ordinary, everything's plain.'

'Don't be despondent,' I managed to say.
'I know a great way to brighten your day.
There's a vintage tearoom just down the road.
The colours inside will make you explode.'

'Are you coming or what?' I asked checking my 'phone.
'I can spare half an hour till I'm needed at home.'
'Hey up! It's stopped raining,' the man pointed and said,
'God has sent us a beautiful rainbow instead.'



By Frankie Wohler

From 'Made in Lancashire, Poems by Frankie Wohler' 2018



Wishing you all every blessing and peace
for Christmas and through the coming Year

~ Fr Jay



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The Shack

... from humble beginnings

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The Shepherd's Corner

Advent: Journeying through Blessed Brokenness

Setting up the Advent wreath has been a cherished tradition, marking the onset of a season brimming with anticipation and reflection. However, this year threw an unexpected curveball my way as I discovered two broken candles in the set. Faced with the daunting prospect of spending £21, excluding delivery, for a new set, I found myself in an unusual position. It was in this moment of dilemma that a creative spark ignited – why not attempt to mend the broken candles, transforming their cracks into a symbol of resilience and redemption?

The Broken Candles: As I checked the Advent candles to prepare them for the Flower Ladies' creativity to decorate, my excitement waned into disappointment upon noticing fractures in two of the candles. The cost of replacement loomed overhead, but a sense of resourcefulness emerged. Instead of

dismissing them, I chose to embrace the imperfections, viewing them not as obstacles but as opportunities for a unique and creative response to the season of Advent.

Connecting Brokenness to Advent: Advent, with its message of hope and redemption, provided the perfect backdrop for my reflections on the broken candles. Often, the world prioritizes perfection and dismisses brokenness, the season of Advent invites us to pause and acknowledge our own cracks and imperfections. It is a time for prayerful waiting, recognizing that, like the broken candles, our lives may bear visible signs of wear and tear.

Resourceful Repair: I embarked on a journey to repair the broken candles. Armed with simple tools and a mindset of resourcefulness, I saw an opportunity to turn the cracks into something beautiful. The act of repairing became a metaphor for the transformative power of Advent – the ability to mend what seems irreparable and find beauty in the midst of brokenness.

A Symbol of Resilience: The repaired candles, though bearing visible scars, now tell a story of resilience. The cracks, once perceived as flaws, became channels for the warm glow of light to escape, casting unique patterns on the surrounding wreath. In this creative process, I realized that Advent is not about presenting ourselves as flawless but embracing our brokenness and allowing the light of Christ to shine through the cracks.

Divine Design and Purposeful Preparation: As I contemplated the mended candles, I couldn't help but connect this experience to the divine design of Advent. Christ's coming was not an afterthought but a meticulously planned response to humanity's brokenness. The repaired candles stand as a signpost to the intentional design of a God who, since the foundation of the world, purposed to make humanity whole again. As the mended candles now stand proudly in the Advent wreath, please enjoy it and tell me what colours that have cracks.

Happy New Liturgical Year!

Each Advent begins a new liturgical year of the Church. Every liturgical year is devoted to a particular set of Gospel readings for each Sunday and they run in a three-year cycle (A, B and C) corresponding to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Last year was devoted to Matthew, while this year's readings (*Sundays Year B, Weekdays Year II*) will be primarily from Mark. It might be a good spiritual exercise for all of us this Christmastide, to sit down one evening, turn off the TV and read the Gospel of Mark all the way through. It's the shortest of the four gospels so try to do it in one sitting so you don't lose any of the flavour of it. Then, when we come to Mass on Sunday and hear various passages of the Word of God proclaimed, we'll know where they fit in with the whole scheme of things.



Parish Projects

It has been pleasing to be able report on the successful outcome of one more of the Parish's *Alive in Faith* projects, with the completion of the works to stabilise the entrance to the church car park, including improved drainage to that area. A scheme for the renovation of the windows to the rear of the church has also now been agreed and it is hoped this project will be able to be completed in the Spring.

There is further funding available in the Parish *Alive in Faith* account for some new projects to be agreed by the Parish. One suggestion to date is to support our youth by sponsoring two young people to attend the next World Youth Day. Other suggestions for suitable projects would be welcomed.

The repairs to the flint boundary wall at the rear of the Presbytery, part of the more general church maintenance, have also been completed.

Parish Auction

A very enjoyable and successful event this Autumn was the Parish Auction held on Friday, 27th October. Over £2,000 was raised, with the proceeds being split equally between Parish funds and the *Let the Children Live!* Charity. Our thanks go to everyone who helped to make the event such a success.

Christmas Party



This year, our Parish Christmas Party will be taking place on *Thursday, 21st December at Yaxham Village Hall, between 12:45pm - 6:00pm*. This is a ticket only event so that sufficient food with minimum waste is provided. Tickets are £5 adults and £2 children. If providing food, please put your name on the sheet at the back of the church and claim your FREE ticket for each dish you will bring. Raffle tickets for a large Christmas Hamper and many other fabulous prizes are for sale after all Masses. All proceeds go to Aid to the Church in Need, Holy Land.

Picture Gallery

At our *Tea Buddies* afternoon in November, we were given an interesting demonstration of spinning by one of our members, Margaret (*left*). Some of us had a go and discovered just how difficult it can be to co-ordinate feet & hands to work the spinning wheel! Margaret has offered to demonstrate lace making for us sometime next year. We look forward to that. At our December afternoon, we were treated to a marvellous choice of cakes from Anne, as you can see from the picture (*right*). *Tea Buddies meet every 2nd Monday of the month, 2-4 p.m. A warm welcome awaits anyone who would like to join us.*



A Day of Prayer for Peace

During the day on Saturday, 9th December, parishioners kept vigil to honour Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and to pray that His peace might reign in our hearts, in our homes and throughout the world.



Christmas: The Most Joyous Day of the Year? *A personal view by John Booth*

I know that we are supposed to see Easter Sunday as the happiest and most momentous day of the year, when Christ conquers death and holds for us all the promise of eternal life with him in Heaven, but for me it is Christmas Day that holds the most joy, as we celebrate God coming down from Heaven and becoming man alongside us.

I see Christmas Day as the birth of hope, as from that time all the prophecies would be fulfilled, including the suffering of Our Lord and Saviour on the Cross, the taking upon Himself of our sins, His death as man and His Resurrection. It was that day of Jesus' birth that confirmed our salvation was at hand and that everlasting life with our Creator would be within our grasp. May you all have a blessed happy Christmas.

Undeserved Gift. *By Rachel Pugh*

Have you ever rushed into church at the last moment feeling harassed and dishevelled, with children bickering and elbowing each other, and your own thoughts a million miles away from the holy state you might like to imagine yourself in? You wish yourself to be quiet, collected and incredibly patient with your offspring, yet find yourself willing to entertain murderous thoughts which increase in intensity until they are actively challenged by the timely Sign of Peace. This is, I believe, when we have most faith. We bring ourselves, bodily and faithfully, aware of our monumental weaknesses and feeling little but our own irritation or tiredness. Yet this is when we receive by faith the indwelling presence of our Saviour who see all that we are, and incredibly embraces us once again in the Eucharist. An undeserved gift; let us praise Him for it.



Parish & Liturgical Calendar 2024

A new Parish & Liturgical Calendar for 2024 is now available, offering us a compass to direct us to a more organized and ordered community in terms of nourishing aspects of our parish life. This will dictate our rhythm and hopefully will make efforts more fruitful and blessed; please take care of them. Copies are available at the back of church and on the parish website.