

Stainbeck Church (United Reformed)

OUTLOOK

November 2023



**Please worship with us:
Sunday Morning at 10.45am
Thursday Prayers on Zoom
at 7.30pm**

<https://stainbeckurc.org.uk>

Stainbeck Road,
Leeds, LS7 2PP
revnicola.robinson@gmail.com

NOVEMBER 2023



Dear Friends,

People the light shines through

On 1st November, many churches celebrate All Saints Day. Perhaps we don't do this very often in the URC, but I think it's a really important one to mark. Why? Because saints are all around us, in our lives and our world.

So, what is a saint? In the past I used to think that saints were individuals who were perfect in every way and rather distant from our everyday lives. Now, my favourite description of a saint comes from a story about a little girl. She was on a school trip to a nearby church. When she was looking at the stained glass windows depicting different saints, she exclaimed: "Now I know what a saint is! A saint is a person the light shines through!"

I wonder, can we recognise - and give thanks for - all those people in our lives who have been saints to us. All those individuals who have let the light of God's love, justice and compassion shine through - and transformed our lives as a result?

And can we look more widely and call to mind all those people in our world who by their very lives, let the light shine in deeply challenging times. People who through their words and actions, work to create a better world.

People like:

- ☐ Martin Luther King who advocated for civil rights in the US
- ☐ Greta Thunberg who raises awareness about the destructiveness of climate change
- ☐ Harvey Milk who advocated against the discrimination of LGBTQI people

And I'm sure, each one of us could come up with so many other inspiring individuals.

I also think we can all be saints. Letting the light shine through us by supporting each other, embracing diversity and creating a world where all are safe and loved.

All Saints for yesterday, today and tomorrow. Amen.

Nicola

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Where there is tender care and love, God is present

There those within our Church Family who have not been feeling well over the last few weeks. If you are one of those, please remember that you are remembered and spoken of at the Elders' meeting and Thursday prayers.

Thank you to **Judy** for bringing a beautiful homemade chocolate cake to share with everyone, as she celebrated her birthday with us all after Church.

A big thank you to **Jackie Watt and Kathy Murphy** who have both helped at the Lunch Club over the past few weeks. We hope they have enjoyed the experience

We continue to hold in prayer all those within our local community who are experiencing difficulties and those friends and volunteers who work so hard to support them – **GOD LOVES YOU ALL.**

If there are people you know of whom you wish us to pray for, please let your Elder or Revd Nicola know and they will be included in our Thursday prayers or you may wish to join us via Zoom on Thursdays.

HERE AND THERE

Looking back

What an exciting 'first' for Stainbeck took place on the



afternoon of Sunday October 8th. Revd Nicola led our first **Pet service** and what a happy and well-behaved



afternoon it was. It was good to welcome Bella, the one cat, who came and fifteen lovely dogs who all got on very well together, enjoying their own special treats as their owners shared in worship, and tea, cakes and conversation after the service. We welcomed their owners too of course, both from the Stainbeck family and

from other local churches. Thank you to Nicola (and Maisie our resident pet!) for encouraging us in this venture.

Thank you too to the Elders who led our **Harvest Thanksgiving** with a difference – thank you to all those who brought gifts of money and of ‘long-life’ produce to add to the stock at the Food Pantry which is a part of the work of **InterACT** and enables us to support our local community.

At this point it is appropriate also to thank **Vanessa, Maureen** and all the volunteers who work in so many ways *with us* (remember we ARE **InterACT**) to support and encourage young and old across Meanwood.

AFTER 8's – The October After 8's meeting was **Darts and Dominoes**, and it was a very amusing and happy evening. It was good to see so many there all having a good laugh as they tried to win their matches. Peter Moore made a corned beef pie which was a nice surprise addition to the nibbles. Thank you for that Peter.

It was also good to see friends from the Lunch Club joining in the fun. The overall winners of the competition were **Brian Bellwood** and **Judy Taylor** (see photo on After 8's page of the Stainbecj website). My thanks to Doreen and Peter Moore for setting up and shopping, and all helpers.

We now look forward to our **Quiz Night** on **15th November at 7:00 pm** in the Café Room. Everyone is welcome. Hope to see you there.

Sandra

Looking forward

World Day of Prayer 2024 – marked each year in March. This year it is written by **Christian women of Palestine** with the theme '*I beg you bear with one another in love*'. We feel for those women now in these dark days. The service was written before the current situation arose of course, and we sincerely join our voices with theirs as they pray. The preparation day is again held at **St Andrew's Roundhay**, on Friday 10th November 10.30am – 3.00p. If you would like to attend, please speak to Ann Coates.

To remind yourself of the opportunity to see the play '**Mutton**' on **Wednesday 22nd November**, please refer to your October copy of Outlook where you can read all about it and about the work of Brave Words, a theatre company with a base in Meanwood, which focuses on the importance of all our stories which are good to share. Tickets are £10 – date **Wednesday 22nd November, 7:30pm at Stainbeck**. Tickets on Eventbrite or talk to Avril or Angela who will purchase tickets for you.

ARE YOU READY?

It is almost ADVENT and again we are sharing a Partnership Advent Course across our Leeds Churches. This starts on the week beginning Monday 27th November. Look out for details.

Another advance notice for your diaries:

On Sunday 3rd December, the first Sunday in Advent, we plan to hold a **Gift Service – but this year with a difference.**

We are not asking for toys but rather for 'Christmas treats', maybe the things we take for granted. So, some ideas (but I am sure you will have your own) – crackers, wrapping paper, fancy biscuits, nuts, a table decoration, Christmas napkins/plates, special chocolates, a simple family game that all can sit round and play together, mince pies, a Christmas pudding - your gifts need not be wrapped for they will be put into Christmas Hampers for local friends. You may even like to write a Christmas card to a recipient of a Christmas box.



Thank you so much in advance for your support.

DIARY FOR NOVEMBER

Elder on Duty – Ann Coates

Thu 2nd 11-1pm Café open for coffee, cakes, toasties and toasted tea cakes. All welcome

My Community United are also meeting at the Café as it is half-term week. Why not come along and find out how this group are working with us to make our local neighbourhood a safer, tidier and more welcoming place.

| | | | |
|------------|------------------------|------------------|--|
| | | 7.15pm | Zoom opens for Thursday prayers with the Partnership led by Ann Coates |
| Sun | 5^t | 10.45am | Hybrid Worship led by Revd Angela Hughes |
| Mon | 6 th | 11-2pm | Lunch Club |
| Thu | 9th | 11-1pm | Café open for coffee, cakes, toasties and toasted tea cakes. All welcome |
| | | 7.15pm | Zoom opens for Thursday prayers led by Karen Benjamin |
| Fri | 10 th | 10.30-3pm | Preparation Day at St. Andrew's URC for World Day of Prayer |
| Sun | 12th | 10.45am | Hybrid Worship for Remembrance Day with Holy Communion led by Revd Dr Nicola Robinson |
| Mon | 13 th | 11-2pm | Lunch Club |
| Wed | 15 th | 7.00pm | After 8's Quiz – All Welcome |
| Thu | 16 th | 11-1pm | Café open for coffee, cakes, toasties and toasted tea cakes. All welcome |
| | | 7.15pm | Zoom opens for Thursday prayers led by Revd Dr Nicola Robinson |
| Sun | 19th | 10.45am | Hybrid Worship led by Ann Coates – preacher Richard Hamlin |
| | | 3.30-5.30 | MESSY Church at Stainbeck |
| Mon | 20 th | 11-2pm | Lunch Club |

| | | | |
|------------|------------------------|----------------|--|
| Wed | 22 nd | 7.30pm | ‘MUTTON’ A play presented by Brave Words Theatre Company |
| Thu | 23 rd | 11-1pm | Café open for coffee, cakes, toasties and toasted tea cakes. All welcome |
| | | 7.15pm | Zoom opens for Thursday Prayers led by Avril and Brian Bellwood |
| Fri | 24 th | 5-7.30pm | Meanwood Christmas Lights Switch on |
| Sun | 26th | 10.45am | Hybrid Worship led by Dan Morrell – who runs Media for Ministry – all things technical to support churches across our region. |
| Mon | 27 th | 11-2pm | Lunch Club |
| Tue | 28 th | 7.30pm | Elders’ Meeting |
| Thu | 30 th | 11-1pm | Café open for coffee, cakes, toasties and toasted tea cakes. All welcome |
| | | 7.15pm | Zoom opens for Thursday Prayers |

December Dates for your Diary

| | | | |
|------------|-----------------------|----------------|---|
| Sat | 2 nd | 4.00pm | <i>Christmas Concert</i> by The Leeds Concert Band – All welcome |
| Sun | 3rd | 10.45pm | Hybrid Worship for ADVENT 1 led by Revd Samantha Sheehan (University Chaplain and Minister to Young Adults (18-25) Project.) |

*Your **Ministry Team** will join other ministers across Yorkshire for an overnight gathering at Wyedale - Wednesday 15th to Thursday 16th November. Please hold them in your prayers.*

ARE YOU READY?

It is almost ADVENT and again we are sharing a Partnership Advent Course across our Leeds Churches.

This will start on the week beginning Monday 27th November. Look out for details.

Another advance notice for your diaries:

On **Sunday 3rd December**, the first Sunday in Advent, we plan to hold a **Gift Service – but this year with a difference.**

We are not asking for toys but rather for ‘Christmas treats’, maybe the things we take for granted. So, some ideas (but I am sure you will have your own) – crackers, wrapping paper, fancy biscuits, nuts, a table decoration, Christmas napkins/plates, special chocolates, a simple family game that all can sit round and play together, mince pies, a Christmas pudding - your gifts need not be wrapped for they will be put into Christmas Hampers for local friends. You may even like to write a Christmas card to a recipient of a Christmas box.

Thank you so much in advance for your support.

TIPS as we look forward to Christmas - from the *ECO TEAM*:

How can we be better at caring for creation and each other through healthy, eco-friendly and sustainable choices at Christmas? The ideas below could make a world of difference, and a difference to the world.

Take time to pray, reflect, and consider acting on one or two, or more! You may find the change is for life and not just for Christmas.



1) Start with your advent calendar. Support overseas farmers by ensuring that your Advent calendar, and any Christmas chocolate, is Fairtrade. You'll be helping those farmers to make a decent

living, and encouraging them to farm in a more ecologically sustainable way with every bite.

2) Go for a natural wreath and decorations. Holly sprigs, ivy trails, pinecones, rose hips... Take a bag, go for a walk, and see what you can find!

3) Re-use cards and wrapping. Help reduce the huge amount of trees that go into making Christmas tags by re-using old Christmas cards. Recycle

the section that carries the greeting, cut out the picture and use that as a tag. Recycled brown paper has a much lower ecological footprint than Christmas wrapping paper.

4) Create homemade gifts. Baked goods for example, or buy gifts from a charity shop – you'll be amazed at what can be found.

5) Make sure your gifts don't cost the earth. Many beauty products contain palm oil. Its production causes mass deforestation, air pollution and human rights abuses. Read labels carefully. Avoid products with unsustainable palm oil.

6) Give the gift of time. Too many unwanted gifts end up in landfill. What about a gift of cooking for someone once a month for a year, taking them for a coffee, babysitting, house cleaning... or whatever. Just make a 'gift of time gift voucher' and put it in a card for them.

7) Dim the lights but not the joy! LED Christmas lights help to save energy and money.

8) Remember the reason for the season. Practising generosity and hospitality is a great way to show Christ's love at Christmas. Invite someone who'd otherwise be on their own, to join you on Christmas Day.

9) Try a meat-free Christmas meal. A high-meat diet causes environmental problems, be it overgrazing of land, pollution, or the intensive use of water or fossil fuels. If you do eat meat, make sure it's free-range or organic, and buy it from a local farmer or independent retailer.

10) Recycle right. More waste ends up in landfill over Christmas than during the rest of the year, so it's a great time to review your recycling set up. Different local authorities offer different recycling provisions, so find out exactly what you can recycle at home

Choose a change to make this Christmas. Be gentle on yourself and be realistic, but challenge yourself too. More to discover on the A Rocha website (<https://arocha.org.uk>)

A REFLECTION

Every week there is a blog on the Network Leeds website (see below). There is a rota – sometimes it is my turn. But on Monday, October 10th, just three days after the shocking attack by Hamas on Southern Israel, it was the turn of Professor Haddon Wilmer.

<https://networkleeds.com>

This month, with Haddon's permission, I share his blog with you.

Angela

“Monday morning, I sit down to write this piece, only a few hours left before it is due. And very little idea – or perhaps too many ideas, probably most won't do.

A clue-question I will follow: What is my world this morning?

‘My world’ is the great created living world as it comes to me through various media of communication and distortion. *‘The great created living world’* is always in danger of being misused, reduced to being no more than *‘my world’*, ie the world of a grasshopper (Isaiah 40.22 – read the whole chapter.) If I am to live with God who creates, owns, and fulfils the real world, *‘self’* (the first person, singular and plural) must be gently and definitely put in its marginal place (Matt 16.24-26). Only then can I learn to see truth rather than misdirect myself and our humanity into colonializing and appropriating the world following our own idol-making imagination. (cf Isaiah 44.9-20)

So, heeding this salutary warning as best I can, I ask again,

What is my world this morning? It is a dishwasher we can't get repaired till Wednesday, a granddaughter we couldn't contact because we had an out-of-date phone number – manageable ordinary affairs, about which nothing more need be said.

My world this morning is also the flare-up of war between Israel and Palestine – and is that not your world today? It shocks, by its suddenness, its many grievous killings, and because we sense it is the latest terrible episode in a *‘forever war’* (Lyse Doucet). We cannot hide from it in *‘safe rooms’* as though it is also a *‘faraway war’*. Rather, even in Leeds, it is the *‘bell that tolls for thee’*, since *‘no man is an island’*.

My world this morning takes me soon to a church coffee morning. People will come out of islands of loneliness to meet with others, and find grace to help in time of need, even stirring one another up to love and good works (Heb.4.16, 10.24-25,13.1-3). But will we also be making for ourselves a safe room, sheltering from the world's wars, even cultivating pious aloofness to the world, hiding ourselves in the '*Rock of ages, cleft for me*'?

See! Something more **in my world this morning** - a party conference, a bit of our shaky but not quite dead democratic society. Such a society is built on people like us getting stuck in, even though we might prefer to leave other people to care for the frameworks of order which make life together workable. This political world calls us to risk leaving our safe rooms, even churchy ones, to join in the deliberations, puzzles and sorrows, which beset building of human community, wherever God has sent us (Jeremiah 29.1-14).

The world, being God's world, comes to us, with hands open inviting us to live with and for others, loving God, and all creatures, as God does (Ps 145.8-9). Loving enemies as God loves, (Romans 5.8.10) and working at loving politically as well as personally, is the only way to avoid leaving the world we live to the devil of our human selves, forever warring."

Haddon Wilmer

Good to reflect on our own world at this time and to consider with Haddon how we speak the Good News of Jesus under the shadow of Israel and Gaza at this time.

The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC) suggest: we condemn terrorism – we grieve – we pray - and then we look at our own lives. (<http://licc.org.uk>)

We might not think of ourselves as powerful, but, every day, we have opportunities, big and small, to create a better world – in our workplaces and communities, through political campaigning and our shopping choices, and even with our contributions to social media.

We are not called to change the world on our own – but here – where we are set – working together – held within the love of God – I do believe we CAN make a difference.

Angela

Leeds Concert Band and Stainbeck Church present

A CHRISTMAS CONCERT

FOR ALL AGES

Stainbeck Church, LS7 2PP

Saturday 2 December, 4pm



**Tickets on the door:
Adult £8, Child £5,
Family £20 (2 adults
And up to 2 children)**

Views expressed by individuals are personal and not necessarily those of Stainbeck Church.

Revd Dr Nicola Robinson, Minister: revnicola.robinson@gmail.com

Avril and Brian Bellwood, Church Secretaries: 0113 293 5847