

Stainbeck Church (United Reformed)

OUTLOOK

December 2024

January 2025



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

<https://stainbeckurc.org.uk>

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DECEMBER 2024 / JANUARY 2025

Longing for light

I'm writing this letter just before 4 o'clock and it's getting dark already! At this time of the year in the UK, we often only have 7 or 8 hours of daylight every day. Oh, how it makes me crave the long, light nights of summer.

However, this darkness pales in comparison when we acknowledge the darkness of the news: where we see and hear the ongoing war in Israel/Palestine, Ukraine and beyond; the destructiveness of climate change; the suffering of refugees on unsafe boats and camps. There is also the darkness in our lives: in the midst of illness and grief; the cost-of-living crisis.

And yet in our darkness, God will meet us there. In our darkness, God is present. A God of faith, hope and love. A God revealed in Jesus.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus was born into a world characterised by the occupation and oppression of the Roman Empire. An Empire which impacted on so many parts of a person's life and must have felt like it could last forever,

We talk about Jesus' coming into the world, as light shining in darkness. The light of Jesus reveals how darkness in our lives and world can be overcome. To quote one of the Gospel writers, John: "*The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it*".

Christmas is about Jesus Christ entering the pain and darkness of every time and place, including ours, to bring light. A light of faith, hope and love that each and every one of us, can share with our families, our communities, our world.

So, my hope and prayer is that Jesus' light can provide each and every one of us with peace and hope this Christmas.

Nicola

HERE AND THERE

Looking back

Once again, our **Lunch Club** have to say a BIG THANK YOU to Maureen Lillywhite and Gary who took us to Murgatroyd's Fish and Chip Restaurant at Yeadon on Monday 25th November. Most of were able to attend and we really enjoyed our lunch out. It was good to see Tom and Colin who were unable to come on the previous trips out.

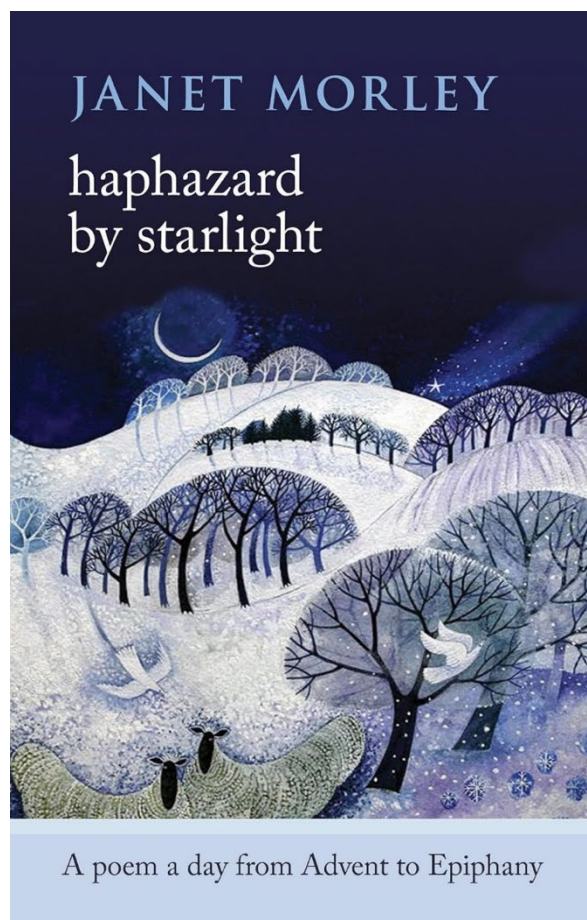
We thank our loyal regular **Community Café** volunteers and patrons who continued to enjoy the warmth and friendship offered by the Café – for the moment in the THRIVE Cabin. We thank our THRIVE friends for making this possible for us.

And we must also thank the funders, architects, builders and MAP who have made this important insulation work possible. More of that later. We hope to be back in the Café Room on Thursday 5th December.

As we write this the **Partnership Advent Course** has just started – it's not too late to share – each session is stand alone and led by one of the Ministry Team. Something different this Advent as we explore poems from Janet Morley's edited collection.

If you would like a lift please ask – we have car spaces available to West Park URC on a Tuesday afternoon or there is always the opportunity to join on Zoom.

Also this month please notice that we are welcoming our Synod Moderator **Revd Jamie Kissack** who will be leading our worship on **Sunday 15th December**



DIARY FOR DECEMBER

Elder on Duty – Brian Bellwood

Sun	1 st	10.45am	Hybrid Worship for Advent 1 led by Revd Dr Nicola Robinson to include the reception into membership of Claire Calder-Jones
		3.00pm	Christmas Concert by the Leeds Concert Band
Mon	2 nd	11-2pm	Lunch Club
Tue	3 rd	2.15pm	Advent Course at West Park URC LS16 5BB
		7.30pm	Elders' Meeting
Wed	4 th	10.45am	Advent Course at Beeston Hill LS11 8PD
Thu	5 th	11-1pm	Church Café opens for tea/coffee cakes toasties, sandwiches and friendship.
		7.30pm	Advent Course on Zoom – Stainbeck link.
Sun	8 th	10.45am	Hybrid Worship for Advent 2 with Holy Communion led by Revd Angela Hughes
		3.30pm	Christmas Messy Church at Stainbeck
Mon	9 th	11-2pm	Lunch Club
Tue	10 th	2.15pm	Advent Course at West Park URC LS16 5BB
Wed	11 th	10.45am	Advent Course at Beeston Hill LS11 8PD
Thu	12 th	11.30-2.00pm	A festive treat - Christmas Party replaces our regular Café – with thanks to Maureen, the Council, DJ Dan and faithful volunteers.
		7.30pm	Advent Course on Zoom – Stainbeck link
Sat	14 th	10am-3pm	Meanwood Valley Urban Farm
Sun	15 th	10.45pm	Hybrid Worship for Advent 3 led by Revd Jamie Kissack – Moderator of the Yorkshire Synod
		6.00pm	Carols round the Firepits in the Car Park (details below)
Mon	16 th	11-2pm	Lunch Club Christmas Dinner
			The Lunch Club will close for two weeks and re-open on Monday 5th January 2025
Tue	17 th	2.15pm	Advent Course at West Park URC LS16 5BB

- 7.30pm Blue Christmas on Zoom – Stainbeck link**
- Wed 18th 10.45am Advent Course at Beeston Hill LS11 8PD**
- Thu 19th 11-1pm Church Café opens for tea/coffee cakes toasties, sandwiches and friendship.**
- 7.30pm Advent Course on Zoom – Stainbeck link**

The Church Café will close for two weeks and re-open on Thursday 9th January 2025

**The Annual Carol Singing round the estates with InterACT leaving from Stainbeck Church at 6.30pm (back door)
Followed by hot drinks and mince pies**

- Sun 22nd 10.45am Hybrid Worship – a Service of Carols and readings led by the Elders and friends**
- Mon 23rd 11-2pm Lunch Club Closed**
- Tue 24th 11.30pm Christmas Eve Midnight Communion led by Revd Angela Hughes**
- Wed 25th 10.00am Worship for Christmas Morning will be led by Revd Dr Nicola Robinson**
- Thu 26th Café closed**
- Sun 29th 10.45am Hybrid Worship for Christmas Sunday led by Ann Coates**

DIARY FOR JANUARY 2025

Elder on Duty – Avril Bellwood

- Sun 5th 10.45am Hybrid Worship for the New Year led by Revd Dr Nicola Robinson**
- Mon 6th 11-2pm Lunch Club**
- Thu 9th 11-1pm Café opens for tea/coffee, cakes, toasties, sandwiches and friendship.**
- 7.30pm Thursday Prayers on Zoom**
- Sun 12th 10.45am Hybrid Worship to include Holy Communion led by Ann Coates and Angela**
- Mon 13th 11-2pm Lunch Club**

- Thu 16th 11-1pm Café opens for tea/coffee, cakes, toasties, sandwiches and friendship.
7.30pm **Thursday Prayers on Zoom**
- Sun 19th 10.45am **Hybrid Worship for Unity Sunday led by Revd Angela Hughes**
3.30- **Messy Church back at Stainbeck**
5.30pm
- Mon 20th 11-2pm Lunch Club
- Thu 23rd 11-1pm Café opens for tea/coffee, cakes, toasties, sandwiches and friendship.
7.30pm **Thursday Prayers on Zoom**
- Sun 26th 10.45am **Hybrid Worship led by Alex Walker, Elder in Local Leadership at South Leeds**
2-4pm **Launch of The Cabin – see page 12**
- Mon 27th 11-2pm Lunch Club
- Thu 30th 11-1pm Café opens for tea/coffee, cakes, toasties, sandwiches and friendship.
7.30pm **Thursday Prayers on Zoom**

Diary for February

- Sun 2nd 10.45am **Hybrid Worship to include the Church AGM led by Revd Dr Nicola Robinson**
- 9th 10.45am **Hybrid Worship led by Revd Angela Hughes to include Holy Communion and the re-dedication of Elders, Members and Friends.**

A reminder of the Stainbeck link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7019277749> (Meeting ID 7019277749).

WE GET READY FOR CHRISTMAS:

The **MESSY CHURCH** with Nativity on **Sunday 8th December at 3.30pm** – all are welcome. We are back at Stainbeck.

CHRISTMAS PARTY with entertainment, food and opportunity to chat with friends old and new on **Thursday 12th December from 11.30am – 2.00pm.**

CAROLS ROUND the FIREPITS on Sunday 15th December at 6.00pm followed by the traditional mince pies and a hot drink.

A **PARTNERSHIP BLUE CHRISTMAS** Service via Zoom on **Tuesday 17th December** starting at **7.30pm**

CAROLS ROUND THE ESTATE on Thursday 19th December. All friends invited to join us and if you would like us to sing for you please call Angela on 07752904317. Meet outside the back door at Stainbeck at 6.30pm and back at Stainbeck for refreshments before 8.00pm!

MIDNIGHT COMMUNION at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve followed on **CHRISTMAS** morning by worship at 10.00am.

All dates should be in the diary – look out for further opportunities to come together – for more detail please contact one of the Elders or Ministers.

At the beginning of **FEBRUARY** we will hold our AGM and take time to look back and reflect on the past year. It hasn't been an easy one on any level; please take time to think and pray as we move from Advent, through Christmas to the Season of Epiphany.

What will our priorities be in 2025? Personal? Yes of course. But also as God's people here at Stainbeck in the city of Leeds. Let us embrace the changes which we each face – individually, but also in our church life and in an ever changing world, remembering that God is with us: *'The Word made flesh'* or as Eugene Peterson puts it in **The Message**, *'The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.'*

Christmas Blessings to All

Plastics - Where are we now?

Over the last 2 years we, as a Church, have taken part in The Big Plastic Count and sent our results to the government. It showed that only 17% of the plastic used in our lives is recycled. 11% goes to landfill, 58% is incinerated, and 14% is exported.

Every year around 12 million tonnes of plastic enter our oceans.

Plastic waste is an especially serious symptom of over-consumption. There may now be more than 5 trillion pieces of plastic – both larger pieces and so-called microplastics – floating in our seas, which have a devastating effect on marine species and biodiversity. Microplastic particles find their way into our food, water, and even our bloodstreams.

Half of all the plastics ever produced have been made in the last 15 years, and production is growing. At each stage of its life cycle, plastic can harm our health, through exposure to plastic particles themselves and chemicals used in their manufacture.

We need to move beyond consume-and-throwaway systems towards circular approaches that work within ecological limits. This means reusing, recycling and sharing materials and products.

What difference can we make?

- Do we feel caught up in a culture of compulsive consumerism? What changes could we make in our lifestyle?
- Every product and service has both an ecological and social footprint. By choosing our purchases carefully and responsibly we can protect both people and planet.
- How can we use citizens' power to spur governments and the private sector to reduce ecological impacts?

Food for thought this Christmas.

<https://thebigplasticcount.com>

The Eco Team

A STORY FROM 2024

The land at the edge of Stainbeck's car park and round the back of Angel's Nursery is unregistered land. It has been overgrown and constantly suffered from fly tipping for as long as we can remember. We often made plans and tried for a grant or two but sadly have never had the resources, money or people, to make good use of it.

But change is always possible!

First **Team Beckhills**: remember how, with the support of Leeds Citizens and Stainbeck Church, Team Beckhills successfully secured support from the Council for new steps and lighting for the estate? A great job and well done.

What next? Well litter was the main cry and clean ups began (yet again!) ... and then of course Covid, after which Team Beckhills morphed into **My Community United**, a new broader group of residents wanting to tidy up the area. Alongside this, **InterACT** obtained an **ABCD (Asset Based Community Development) Grant**.

These two things came together when one of the Beckhill residents became increasingly involved with a local **Incredible Edible** Group based in Meanwood:

<https://www.incredibleedible.org.uk>

Incredible Edible's vision is to create kind, confident and connected communities through the power of food, with an amazing strapline line *"If you eat, you're in!"*

As we talked about community assets, about what resources we already had in the area, this resident was pleased to talk more positively about what is POSSIBLE and not what's wrong.





And so **Lynn Brown** has been the driving force behind setting up the garden, using the knowledge and skills she's picked up elsewhere and an amazing amount of personal energy to get things going. Thank you Lynn!

She's used funding that we hold as part of our ABCD work that residents can "apply" for, as well as funding from other sources. She has bought the various planters, seeds and soil. We've received

lots of freebies, mostly in the form of labour and wood chippings, and more importantly, she's connected with other people on and off the estate who want to join her. As they work, people walk by, strike up conversations, harvest food and share stories. The latest addition is a Vegetable Cupboard donated by 'Leeds Feeds'. (<https://feedleeds.org>)

It's not a forgotten patch any more!

Work on the garden continues almost daily – different people taking on different tasks such as watering on a regular basis.

Also, **community action days** have been a great way to bring larger groups of people together. These have been held in school holidays to allow children to get involved. There are lots of budding gardeners and diggers out there!

But that is not all as **David Keighley's** been involved too, and has connected us with **Litter Free Leeds**. They describe themselves in this way: **Litter Free Leeds** brings communities, groups and individuals together to be good role models of what can be achieved when we all work together (<https://litterfreeleeds.co.uk>).

So, whilst some dig and plant, some walk the estate and pick litter. There are lots of ways to connect, but eating together has always been a great part of these days. Watch this space – better still why not join in?

If you eat, you're in!
Angela (Ministry Team) & Vanessa (InterACT)



INVITATION TO THE CABIN LAUNCH

SUNDAY 26TH JAN 2-4PM
GROUNDS OF STAINBECK CHURCH, LS7 2PP

WE ARE SO THANKFUL FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE CABIN, OUR NEW DEDICATED YOUTH SPACE! WE WOULD LOVE YOU TO JOIN US TO CELEBRATE AND MARK ITS OPENING!

- ACTIVITIES, CRAFTS AND GAMES LED BY YOUNG VOLUNTEERS
- REFRESHMENTS
- AN OPENING CEREMONY

TO RSVP CONTACT

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THRIVE



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