



# FAITH MATTERS

New beginnings often come with mixed emotions. You may feel a sense of excitement as you set out on a new challenge but also that sense of fear as you embark into the unknown. Perhaps you can recall a time when you set off on a new beginning. Even back to the days when we changed school or started a new job. When we are faced with a new beginning we are also faced with letting go of what has been before. This can often prove a challenge to many of us as we like familiarity and certainty but a new beginning makes that harder to achieve.

I know that from my own experience of moving to a new appointment. I had to let go of where I had been before in order to be all that I'm meant to be in the new appointment.

The Bible is full of examples of people embarking on new beginnings. The first disciples leaving their nets to follow Jesus, Zaccheus who's life was transformed and the woman who encountered Jesus at the well. They were never the same again after they met with Jesus.

In many ways we continually go from new beginning to new beginning as we journey through different stages of our life. Sometimes it can be difficult to face new beginnings but we know and have the assurance of God journeying with us. We some times sing the song about Journeying from the old to the new - " One more step along the world I go. One more step along the World I go. From the old things to the new, keep me travelling along with you ".

Whatever "new beginnings " we may face over this coming year, may we remember that God journeys with us from the old to the new.

Love and prayers Georgina.

We left New Year behind us , resolutions laid aside,  
And now we're on a journey, with hope to be our guide,  
The Winter may seem endless, yet just below the earth  
So many seeds awaiting the moment of their birth.  
So greet each new tomorrow. Be cheerful, come what may,  
For just around the corner Spring is on the way.

Iris Hessleden



Through the door we see the beauty of God's creation

New soundproof panelling has been installed in the Upper Hall, the floor has been redone, and secondary glazing is about to be installed around the church. New LED lighting will complete the work.

Thank you to Louise Prince for all her wonderful photographs in this issue.

Thank you to everyone who bought our upcycled Christmas cards. They raised £622.25, donated towards new, designated disabled parking spaces at church. A further £60 of cards have been sold at church plus approx. £200 worth at the shop which will go to charities later this year. Thank you.

On a very cold January morning, the ground was thick with snow and the only people to turn up for morning worship at the church were an old farmer and the minister.

The minister looked around the church and said to the farmer " Well as there is no-one here we won't have a service today.

The farmer replied " Reverend, if only one of my cows shows up at feeding time, I feed it".

### January's Winter warmer

#### Delicious leek and potato soup

3 medium leeks, washed and chopped

3 medium potatoes, diced

3 Vegetable stock cubes made up with hot water as on the packet

Half pint milk

1oz margarine

Salt and pepper

Sweat the leeks and diced potato

in a covered large pan for 15 mins with the melted margarine. ( I don't use margarine, instead I simmer gently, using a little water.) Add the stock, milk and salt and pepper to taste. Boil for a further 20 mins then blend.

If you are using a soup maker this will probably make 2 lots and is really tasty!



Always in our thoughts and prayers

Joyce Clayton

Bill Jackson

Jean Mellor

Karen and Derek on their loss

To those facing operations and procedures and to those who are now recovering, we wish them well and hold them all in our prayers .

If you know of anyone who would like a pastoral visit please contact

Deacon Georgina on 07399 035045

or

deacon.georgina@gmail.com

A lady invited some people to dinner. At the table she turned to her 6 year old daughter and said "Would you like to say grace?"

"I don't know what to say" said the little girl.

" Just say what you hear Mummy say" said her mother.

The little girl bowed her head and said " Dear Lord, why did I invite all these people to dinner?"

Do you know that our ancestors ate lumptitums for breakfast. A bit like thick porridge but hopefully smoother than it sounds.

By the time you read this new heat source pumps will have been installed at Church as part of our on going eco friendly and sustainable work .This should ensure we have a lovely warm sanctuary, eco efficient and reducing our heating bills. Just one of the steps we are making to bring the church into line with modern standards. Thank you to all involved.

## **Sue Rowlands looks at early education in Whaley.**

Although there were some grammar schools in early years it was considered neither desirable nor necessary for a girl to have much education, a view that continued among many people until well into the twentieth century. At best, a girl could expect to learn only the rudiments of reading and writing and subjects like sewing. In the early years girls were primarily marriageable commodities, useful in acquiring land or wealth for their families and later it was often regarded as a waste of effort and money to educate a girl as she would 'squander' any potential she might have in getting wed.

Boys attended grammar schools from the age of 7 years and days were very long, starting at around 6 00 am until 5 pm. Key subjects taught in the old grammar schools were of a classical bent - Greek, Latin, Logic and Rhetoric. These were the subjects that would take you into a worthy career. For a small fee, less well off children might attend a Dame school. Various of these were available until sometime in the nineteenth century - there is no exact starting or ending point for the typical school.

Dame schools were generally attended by younger children and were so called because they were run by elderly women in their own homes. They ranged from basic child minding facilities to places where children might learn the rudiments of reading, writing, arithmetic and simple domestic skills. The whole provision was of dubious quality. The best a child from a working class background might hope for would be to be taken on as an apprentice to a skilled tradesman or craftsman.

Apprenticeships were around as early as the twelfth century. They became more structured in England By the Statute of Artifices in 1563. Apprenticeships declined somewhat in the nineteenth century when there was greater use of unskilled workmen. A resurgence took place in the twentieth century with the formalisation of apprenticeships by the Education Act of 1964. Life for early apprentices was not easy and again the transaction might involve a sum of money to be properly indentured to a master for 7 years. They often lived in with the craftsman's family many undertaking menial tasks on inadequate food and accommodation.

So what was happening in Whaley before the nineteenth century? The answer is not very much, but it does involve a bit of Whaley folklore about a man called Ouffe. Ouffe was the man responsible for what was known as Whaley Bridge Grammar School. The story goes that a gentleman was out walking with his dog. The dog entered a bush and started barking. When the man investigated he discovered an abandoned baby boy whom he decided to name Ouffe as a copy of the sound of the barking at the baby's discovery. As always, the truth is a little more complicated.

A man named Thomas Ouffe did exist. He was apparently illegitimate and thought to have some connection with the well off Shallcross family. His burial has been traced to Prestbury Church after he died in 1629. His will remains in Chester. The will is interesting as the named executors were men of standing, some, members of the Leigh family of Lyme Hall. This in itself would have been very unusual for a man who on face value seemed to be an ordinary farmer. After the key parts of the will were settled, the executors were instructed to collect up all his debts, coming to a sum of over £1000, a large amount of money at that time. All these matters of course just raise more unanswered questions about Ouffe's connections. The executors decided to use the money to set up a charitable trust and found a school, which became known as Elnor Lane Grammar School.

In 1731, 100 years after Thomas Ouffe's death, John Shallcross decided to surrender Ouffe's farm for charitable uses: £7 per annum to the poor of 6 villages and £3 annually to the Schoolmaster of the school at Shallcross (Elnor Lane School). A report to the Charity Commission in 1827 mentions a yearly sum of £18 to the Schoolmaster who had 8 poor children of Fernilee as well as other paying pupils on the roll. Between 1863 and 1875 the building was giving cause for concern and there were various proposals to move the site. Money was raised via public donations, church collections and borrowing £200.

A Rev. Bourne was eventually appointed as Head with the intention of taking on a number of boarders, free and paying pupils. A fee was set at 1 guinea per quarter for a sound English education and 2 guineas to include the classics, modern languages, drawing and higher mathematics.

By 1879 the school premises was to be advertised as available without endowment. There were various attempts to let the school for educational purposes. By 1898, these had failed. Proposals were made to convert the building to a bungalow. The land and building were to be sold. This didn't happen until 1952. The money from the sale was invested to support subsequent local prizes and scholarships. The Old Schoolhouse 5-7 Whaley Lane is the only other early school we have any information about and this is thanks to research by the late William Eyre. This was built in 1730 and had about half a dozen children. Unfortunately we have very little detail. The site itself is on the left hand side of Whaley Lane, a little above the station. It can be accessed via a narrow set of stone steps set into the wall onto the lane. The level of the lane was, as well, radically altered and lowered with the coming of the railway and particularly to change crossing gates at the end of Whaley Lane into the sharp bend and overhead bridge of today. There were originally 2 doors into the building; one into the Headmaster's house and the other into a very high room presumably the school room. The first Head in 1731 was a John Jepson, followed by Joseph Gaskell in 1730, Emmanuel Swindells in 1748 and Abraham Bennett in 1780. The school was later turned into 2 cottages and in the 1970's converted into a single dwelling.

Some Christmas pictures from Over the Road.



It was so funny to watch passers by as they thought Santa was a model until he moved and waved at them. It caused a lot of laughter!



What a wonderful celebration of Christmas at the Uniting Church.

The Oasis Christmas buffet was well attended, our friend Carol Barnes entertained afterwards on the piano.

The luncheon club meal heaving with people, as seen in this photo. The decorated tables filled the next room too and a lovely meal was served by festive volunteers and children sang carols.

The Big Sing was as popular as ever with amazing refreshments too.

Over the Road were hectically busy over Christmas with a successful Christmas sale and Father Christmas, thanks to Mike.

The candlelit carol service was very well attended, with many new faces, and the carols and comedy were enjoyed by all as usual.

Christmas Eve was a lovely reflective communion service and Christmas morning saw Deacon Georgina dressed as an elf! What more could you ask for. All collections went to High Peak Homeless Help. A church moving into a New Year full of joy and hope.

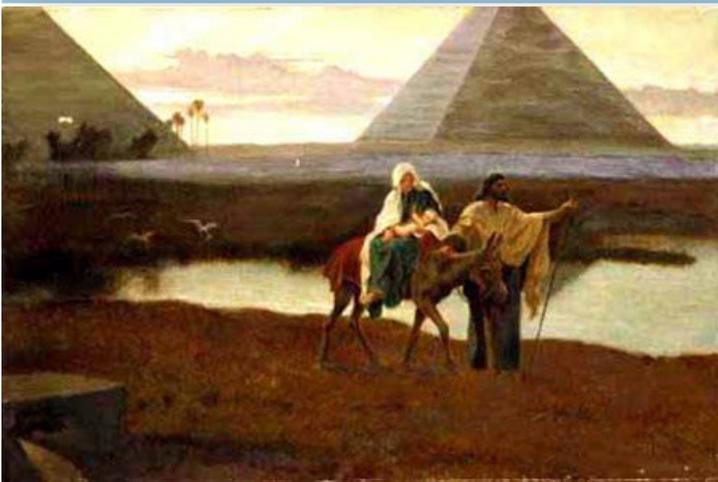
## Winter Word Scramble

Winter is the coldest season of the year. Winter to many means snow, short days and extra clothes to keep us warm. Did you know that no two snowflakes are alike?

rakaon            -----  
oaprl             -----  
oanwflkse       -----  
caot              -----  
liccei            -----  
nwtire            -----  
stmteni         -----  
urgncil         -----  
cie                -----  
wdni              -----



This Winter themed Word Scramble features 10 Winter themed words which have been scrambled. See if you can unscramble them to see what they are.



The flight to Egypt according to a 4 year old ....

A Sunday school teacher was speaking to a group of four year olds about Jesus, Joseph and Mary.

After the lesson the children were asked to draw a picture depicting their favourite part of the story. The teacher then shared the pictures with the other children. She had baby Jesus in the manger, animals, shepherds and three wise men, all very sweet.

Eventually she came to little Jimmy who had drawn a picture of an aeroplane with 4 people in it. Baffled she asked Jimmy to explain his picture. She told him that she could see Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus -obviously on their 'flight' to Egypt ,but she said she didn't know who the other man was in the aeroplane.

Jimmy quickly explained " That's Pontius, the pilot"!



### January

3rd - Jean Mellor 99 yrs young

29th- Pauline Hill

30th - Peter Callister

### February

1st - Derek Winfield

7th -Anna Sidebotham

25th -Sue Rowlands

### March

3rd -Charlie Winterbottom

17th -Alison Hill

22nd-Jean Jeremy

24th -Pat Hudson

25th-Nye Rowlands

27th.—Joan Jackson

Moving into 2026—Lots to report on, many things happening, even as you read this. Here is the first of many .....

We are pleased to have a new website which is informative and welcoming to all its users. A search under 'Whaley Bridge Uniting Church' takes you straight to it. With information about the staff, contacts, booking rooms, photographs, history, back issues of Faith Matters, information about groups and events such as Oasis, coffee mornings, luncheon club , Over the Road, and so much more.

Managed by the church and regularly updated by the web designer, we hope it will be an inviting, go to site for everyone.

It's that time of year for Pantomime. Oh yes it is!! We have a long history of putting on Pantos and shows at Church. They were Jean and Mabel's joy for more years than I can remember. Sheila Harling, the musical director, used to say that she cringed when she saw Mabel's bobble hat passing her window at school because she knew that meant Panto season was on its way and Mabel was coming to brief her on the music. Thanks to a thriving youth club we had a cast of dozens but as times changed, the numbers dwindled. Many though still remember all the fun we had with fond memories. Friendships made for life, laughter, fun, despite the many things that went wrong. We had a fantastic crew, from ladies and Lynne who sewed all the costumes, to Marion our scene painter, Graham and Barry our joiners, the lighting and sound people, scene shifters and programme printers.

Jean used to tell the story of when all the cast disappeared into the Sheps pub and Mabel had to go and get them all back as the audience had returned to their seats after the interval and were waiting for part two to start!

We had lead characters who broke limbs on the day before the show, people who couldn't remember lines, people who made up the script as they went along, a wheel that fell off a cart and rolled into the audience and scenery that slowly fell over. We had Joan, who loved to adlib and went off on a tangent. A nightmare for me to follow as the scriptwriter and prompter for 15 years. Then we had the dames and ugly sisters who I had to make sure kept the jokes appropriate for all ages. We had so much fun and there was lots of audience participation.

Later we put on Christmas shows with more experienced singers and they were a joy but without the slapstick of the past. The New Year wouldn't have been the same without Panto but nobody can take away those precious memories as I'm sure you know if you were part of it all. So here is a little taster of the fun we had.

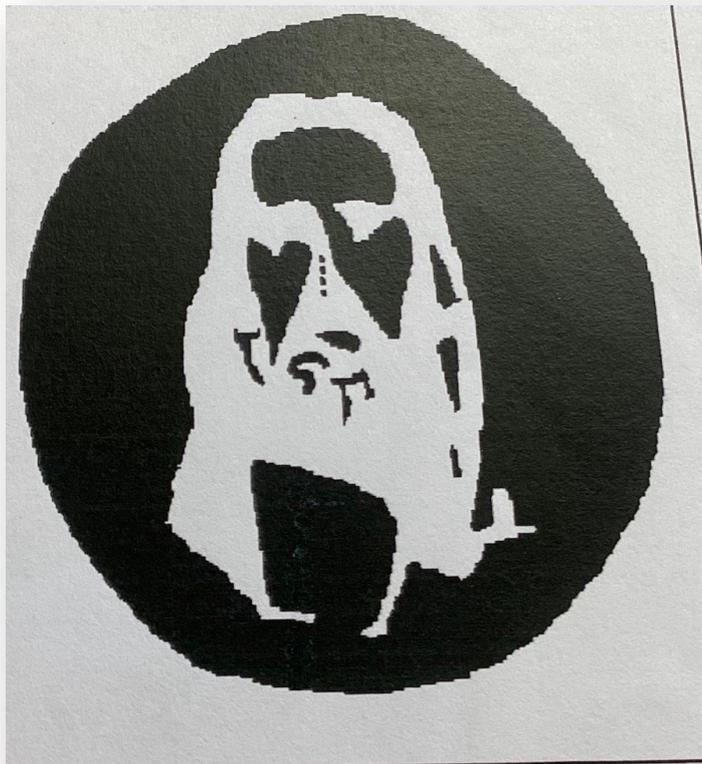




Louise found this on a beach on a cold day by the sea in January. They must be mad!

We are working towards Bronze certification as an Eco church. We have certain criteria to prove in order to attain this. One of these is to encourage wildlife and Men in a Shed in Whaley Bridge have recently made 5 bird boxes which will be going up in the garden behind church. Previously the volunteers at the shed have made storage trollies to maximise the storage space in the church loft for all the user groups.

There are now almost 20 volunteers who meet regularly to use their skills to make or repair items mainly for community use. Thank you to all.

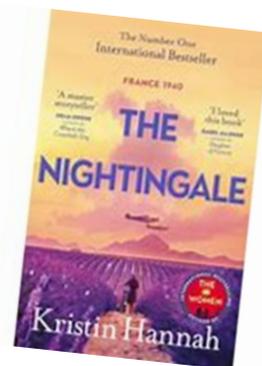


Stare at the 4 dots in the centre of the picture on the left for 30 seconds. Try not to blink. Then lean back, look at the ceiling and blink your eyes a few times. What can you see?

After all the Christmas and New Year celebrations we are all probably feeling our age. You know you are getting old when you do the Okey Cokey and put your left hip out – and it stays out!!!

**The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah . Reviewed by Claire Lösel**

Kristin Hannah's The Nightingale is a moving historical novel set in Nazi-occupied France during World War II. The story follows two sisters, Vianne Mauriac and Isabelle Rossignol, who face the war in very different ways. Vianne struggles to protect her family and survive under occupation, while Isabelle joins the French Resistance, risking her life to help allied airmen escape across the Pyrenees.



The novel focuses on women's experiences during the war, exploring the quiet, often overlooked acts of bravery required to endure daily life under constant fear and hardship.

The Nightingale is a powerful story of love, courage, sacrifice, and resilience. The writing is accessible, engaging and thought-provoking, and the strong historical detail brings the period to life.

New beginnings, a New Year. New birth as the trees wake up and the flowers push their buds up through the hard earth. The wonders of God's creation repeated year after year since time began, including here in the glorious Peak District, where around 350 million years ago limestone was formed.

At that time this area was covered by a warm, shallow, tropical sea - as it was then much closer to the Equator. The bodies of dead shellfish, corals and sea plants fell to the bottom of the sea and the gentle lapping of the non tidal waters caused them to calcify to become calcium carbonate, or as we know it, limestone. There are still the remains of a coral reef behind Peveril castle and isolated reefs at Thorpe Cloud and Middleton Dale.

When these waters went down natural caverns were left, -Treakcliff, Speedwell and Blue John. Pooles Cavern In Buxton was for many years inhabited by thieves and vagabonds and the remains of mammoths and sabre toothed tigers have been found in the cave.



Mam Tor seen here on the left, was one of the earliest Roman hill forts, built around 3000 years ago by the Celts and taken over by the Romans. Earth banks and ditches built on the summit of the hill made it easy to defend, and offered a permanent safe settlement.

Can you imagine a Roman soldier being posted here? His excitement at being posted abroad severely squashed after exposure to a Castleton winter, on the top of bleak Mam Tor - it must have been a shock after the warmth of Italy!



A few pictures of the snow round and about - and a final prayer .

Dear Lord, wrap us in your comforting embrace during the cold winter days, May your warmth fill our hearts and homes bringing light and love to us through the chill. Amen

Edited by Chris Mellor at [c.mellor174@icloud.com](mailto:c.mellor174@icloud.com)

If you know of anyone who would like to receive a copy of Faith Matters please contact Claire at [wbunitingchurch@gmail.com](mailto:wbunitingchurch@gmail.com)