

Revelation Christian Resource Centre

Revelation is an ecumenical Christian resource centre and café, with a bookshop, offering a welcome refuge in the city. They are open to visitors of any faith or none.

A great place to browse and purchase -

- * Christian Resources,
- * books (new and second hand)
- * faith inspired gifts.

They are located in St Michael-at-Plea Church on Redwell Street by the pedestrian crossing. NR2 4SN

Opening times: Monday– Saturday 10am – 4pm

Café open Tuesday to Saturday closing at 3pm.

Phone 01603 619731

Check out their website <https://www.norwichcrc.co.uk>

Customers & supporters for many years, Marina & Chris

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

3 Dec Mulbarton Noah Rowland

ThanksGiving

24 Dec Mulbarton Samuel Hanna

Burial of Ashes

31 Oct Mulbarton Douglas (Duke) Woodcock

18 Jan Mulbarton Ron Taylor

Funeral and Burial

20 Nov Bracon Ash Tessa Symonds

16 Jan Mulbarton Stephen Girling

19 Jan Mulbarton Anna and Dirk Bouwens

Church Funeral

15 Nov Mulbarton Edward (Ed) Cooke

18 Jan Mulbarton Olive King

Crematorium Funeral

21 Nov Earlham Alan Pye

22 Nov Breckland Pauline Postle

18 Dec Earlham Jean Hardingham

Church website <http://www.mulbchurch.org.uk>

Rector: Rev. Adrian Miller: 01508 571167 - adrian@mulbchurch.org.uk

This month's editor: Sarah Miller

Articles included in Mardle do not necessarily reflect the views of the church leadership

MARDLE

February / March 2024

Mulbarton Benefice newsletter

FROM THE RECTORY

**Email: adrian@mulbchurch.org.uk
(Regular Day Off: Friday)**

The Advent and Christmas season saw us connect with almost 1000 local people, like many places bumper numbers. Perhaps people are looking for meaning and solace after a 2023 marked with global turmoil and insecurity, and worries closer to home.

After a short break for me, 2024 has been relentless so far. Back to it, helping in the communities, several funerals and burials, the usual January planning, reporting and preparing, alongside worship services, school and home visits, and two full days of really helpful training and resourcing in mental health first aid.

There are new national safeguarding frameworks, which came into force on 1 January 2024, with more training and risk assessments to undertake. I am grateful to David Melling for taking on the role of benefice safeguarding administrator, whose role will be to keep track of the training and checks for the 48 volunteers who work with us. He and I will be meeting the three safeguarding officers, Lynne, Alice and Janet, shortly to plan next steps, as we continue to keep pace with developing requirements. David may be in touch with you in due course!!

Our move from the disappearing Humbleyard deanery into Depwade deanery was stalled last term by the sad news of Archdeacon Steven needing to take several months off because of leukemia. Early reports are positive about a possible recovery, and we continue to pray for him and his family. In the meantime, Bishop Ian (in post only 12 weeks now), invited 36 parishes to send a representative to a meeting in Tasburgh to discuss the clergy shortage in Depwade. The situation turns out to be fairly complex.

We learnt that only one benefice in the deanery currently has stipendiary clergy, which is Tas Valley, my old patch, where Dawn and Austen now serve. The only one with clergy!! Depwade did have five benefices, consisting of 24



FOLLOWING JESUS

Sharing the journey

WITH THE VILLAGES OF MULBARTON,
FLORDON, BRACON ASH AND HETHEL



parishes, and 36 church buildings (including some ruins). Recent merging has led to this situation of THREE benefices, which we look set to join:

1. Tas Valley have had the 2 parishes of Upper Tas added recently (although 1 of those parishes consists of a 7-village mega-parish with 7 church buildings, including our neighbouring Wrenningham and Hapton). Tharston has moved from Tas Valley to Long Stratton. There were signs of strain from those having to adapt to extra demands from this new arrangement. So Tas Valley now have two fulltime clergy, serving 7 parishes, with 14 church buildings (plus 4 ruins), in 13 villages, and a population of 7,700.
2. Long Stratton and Wacton have merged with the 6 parishes of the Pilgrim Benefice plus Tharston. This new benefice is in vacancy. It consists of 9 parishes, with 9 church buildings (plus 3 ruins), in 8 villages, and a population of 9,140 (4,440 in Long Stratton & 4,700 outside).
3. A plan is afoot to merge the 4 Brooke parishes with the 6 Hempnall parishes, which are both currently in vacancy. This new benefice would have 10 parishes, with 13 church buildings (plus 1 ruin), in 13 villages, and a population of 5,000.

The new Team Ministries of “Long Stratton & Pilgrim” and “Hempnall & Brooke” have both historically had at least 2 stipendiary clergy each. I am not sure of the future plan for staffing levels. Bishop Ian repeated and encouraged us to pass on to all that “decline is not inevitable”, and that he would like to see more clergy, with responsibility for fewer parishes each—but he also noted that we need to be realistic about the resources and capacity we have available.

By comparison, we have 1 clergy, 4 parishes, 4 buildings, 5,000 population.

I felt the need to create an infographic to help me visualise the numbers! Bishop Ian and colleague Rev Sally Theakston, as interim archdeacon, listened



to a range of views about how the listening process could falter, about longer term strategy to recruit more clergy and to resource more laity, about what's working and what isn't, and about ideas around mission. Ultimately though, there is urgency from half the deanery population of 26,000 souls, being “between vicars”. Four people from across the deanery offered to form a sub-committee with Bishop Ian and Rev Sally, in order to think and act creatively and with agility in managing this current clergy shortage.

How to be a greener Christian #11

I'm still in touch with two Zimbabwean Christians we met in 2019. Recent emails highlight the effects of climate change. These people are my neighbours, my friends, my Christian brothers and sisters.

Caiphas Ngarivhume writes:

“Zimbabwe and Southern Africa as a whole, are faced with a looming drought. The rain season should have started by mid-October, but there has not been any significant rains ... up to this time of writing (15 Dec). This is too unusual, as by December the crop would have long germinated and main business would be weeding. Heat waves are also the order of the day, followed by chilly weather, where one has to dig out sweaters! A small percentage of arable land has irrigation infrastructure whose dams are also equally affected. This is a clear indication of climate change.”

And from Garikai Utseye:

“It is amazing that since this summer we only received rains once such that we haven't started farming activities. I think there will be a serious dry spell this season. In most cases when it is like that basic commodities will become more expensive I hope that God will cause rain to come down so that we do not double suffer.”

So how can Cathy and I justify flying this spring, when, according to my current go-to resource (*How Bad are Bananas*) “Personal flights account for a huge 8% of the UK carbon footprint ... 12% once business flights and airfreight are added. ... Ultimately ... it's hard to avoid the conclusion that we need to fly less”? Helpfully Mike Berners-Lee goes on, “That needn't make our lives any worse. Make your flights count: go for longer but less often, and do things you really couldn't do at home.”

So we figured that we can't explore The Silk Road in the UK, we haven't flown since Zim (on a relief and development trip), we're going for two weeks, we're offsetting – and it's our silver wedding anniversary. Ah, but what about that *Guardian* article criticising offsetting? Have a look at the Climate Stewards push-back (<https://bit.ly/cs-offset>). It'll cost us money, but better than cost the planet – whether you're flying to Uzbekistan or to Malaga.

For tea? Try Inez's Egg, Leek and Cheese Casserole. Inez knew how to stretch a family budget and remain delicious. Steam 1kg leeks; place in a casserole; slice 4 hard-boiled eggs on top. Grate 200gm cheese, add most to half a pint of white sauce. Sprinkle some cheese on the eggs, pour the sauce over, mix the rest of the cheese with breadcrumbs and sprinkle on top. Cook in a 150°C oven until bubbling and brown on top.

Peter Nicholls, 15.1.24

Thank you so much to everyone at St Mary Magdalen, Mulbarton for your gift of £355.30. for our Christmas appeal. I find the generosity of the Embrace family so humbling. Thank you for being part of it!

A recent conversation with a partner echoed that the most important thing for them is that we are there when the hostilities come to an end, as there will be so much work to do. To see the most up to date reports from Gaza please visit embraceme.org/embrace-iopt-partner-updates.

If you have been keeping up to date with our latest partner updates on our website from Gaza, you will know that Al Ahli hospital had to close after IDF action in December. It has managed to reopen and can perform a limited number of operations again, but the situation is volatile. Al Ahli is not the only hospital in Gaza to be affected by lack of medical supplies, water, or electricity; IDF detainment of staff or military activity, this is extremely concerning as under the Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law, medical facilities and medical personnel should be protected.

Please do continue to pray for our partners and all of those suffering in the Middle East at the moment. Thank you once again for standing in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the region.

Best wishes

Carla Gregory
Individual Giving Manager



Mardlers

Mardlers is an afternoon of tea and chat and an opportunity to meet others at the Social Club, Mulbarton Village Hall on the **4th Tuesday** of every month.

Anyone who wants to enjoy good company over tea and cake are welcome.

We meet from 2 - 4 pm and transport can be offered.

Just speak to Sue Mellows 07936 703124 , Tracey Salisbury 578068 or Heather Wells 578267 for more information



PCC Updates

Mulbarton—15 Nov 2023 & 17 Jan 2024; next meeting 21 Feb

You can see the work we are doing with the churchyard, improving access, clearing rotten trees, planting a memorial tree, and planning for the future, in terms of burial plots, wildlife and biodiversity. The full report is on p.4. The church path and tree should be finalised by the time the next issue of Mardle is out. We shall also be installing a bike rack to encourage people to cycle rather than drive to church! We are actively pursuing a formal EcoChurch award, aiming at silver level, and also becoming a "Fairtrade Place of Worship". We are considering an Equalities Policy, that affirms our commitment not only to those specifically protected by law under the Equality Act 2010. We do want to ensure that all volunteers, staff, and everyone who worships with us or who we connect with in the community, is treated fairly and justly. If you have any views you think might be helpful for us to hear about your own experience, please do get in touch.

We continue to think through the best ways we can support the clergy, to do our part in helping ensure their wellbeing, and so they can pour from a full cup. We have entered into another occupation license for Gable View, upstairs room in Harvest House, with Palmer and Palmer Educational Psychology services using on Thursdays and Fridays. We do wish them well.

The big redevelopment project is in process, to raise the ringing chamber and install a toilet and kitchen facilities at the back of church. We are grateful to a generous legacy gift of £10,000, which will go towards that. We do encourage everyone to think about leaving a gift in their will. Finances remain challenging in terms of meeting our core budget, with shortfalls being managed by missing the full share request for the time being. The request for 2024 has gone up by over £2000.

Bracon Ash—23 Nov 2023; next meeting 25 Jan 2024

We are pleased with the completed building work, which has made the building watertight and preserved for the next generation. Broken glass has also been repaired. We are dealing now with trees and rotten gateposts, and preparing ourselves for the next round of fabric work needed to maintain our heritage assets. Donations from our Advent Service of Light were sent to Norwich Foodbank. We were grateful to our patron for organising a splendid winter concert, which raised £1,813 towards needed work on the church building and mausoleum. Meanwhile, the PCC are thinking through what practical steps we might take to plan for the future of the benefice, and how best we do mission and encourage community.

Hethel—2 Nov 2023; next meeting 19 Feb 2024

We have been pleased with the events we have held and are planning through 2024, some details on p.5. Connecting with the community and safeguarding creation are core values, reflected in the paper we produced to move the benefice future thinking towards an actionable parish plan. We are updating our banking so dual authorisation required for online transactions. We are working on some minor fabric items, and considering how to proceed with the big tower renovation project, which looks like it will be more expensive than first thought.

Flordon—18 Oct 2023; next meeting 31 Jan 2024

We are in process of catching up with several years of Gift Aid claims, and keeping things safe and watertight. With increasing years and decreasing capacity, we arrange fewer community gathering fundraising events these days, but happily join in with all that goes on in the parish.

The future of Mulbarton churchyard

The churchyard at Mulbarton has been in use since the 16th century and there are almost 3000 individuals buried or commemorated in the grounds and the church. The new churchyard extension has been in use since 1990, but now has limited capacity for new burials or internment of ashes. There is room for only 5 to 10 years' worth of burials at most and around 50 spaces for memorial plaques allowing for up to 10 years' worth of ashes internments.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has responsibility, among other matters, for the management of church assets, including the church and the churchyard. The PCC have therefore begun to explore options for the future of the churchyard. These include: closing the churchyard; redistributing the soil from spoil heaps elsewhere within the churchyard to create more space; discussions with Mulbarton Parish Council, the other local burial authority, to explore other local burial options; and reusing some spaces within the old churchyard. Any of these options would be a sensitive matter, affecting many members of the community, the PCC therefore plan to take time to research and consider these and other options that may arise, before more detailed proposals are shared with the wider community.

In the meantime, the PCC has decided to manage the two areas either side of the main gates into the churchyard, as conservation areas. The Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) has agreed to conduct a survey of the churchyard starting in spring this year. They will produce a report detailing the species found and will provide detailed advice on future management of these areas. It is likely that the grass in this area will be cut less frequently to allow plants to grow, flower and set seed. The aim is to improve the overall biodiversity in the churchyard and the PCC will put some signage in place to alert users of the churchyard these areas are being treated differently from the rest of churchyard.

Heather Wells Mulbarton PCC



Swap Shop ReBooted

We are so happy to be partnering with the Community Hub to reboot our SwapShop.

Come along on

Mon 19 Feb, 1-3pm @ the Social Club

Bring up to 3 items to swap.

From mugs to jugs, toiletries to DVDs, jigsaws, games, books, clothes and more.

Give your once loved items a new life in someone else's home and see what new-to-you items you can take home to enjoy. NO ELECTRICAL GOODS. Thank you.

Mardle Musings...

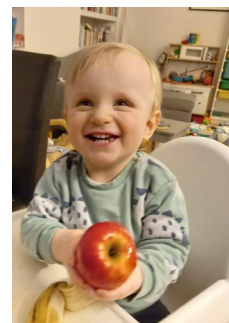
Have you looked at your diary today? Have you noticed if it's got Sunday or Monday as the first day of the week? Some diaries and calendars show one and some the other. The Radio Times even start the week with Saturday.

It's a job to tell which day is supposed to be the first day of the week. And it's just as hard to decide what comes first in our lives. Is it money, career, family, health or strength? I even heard of one old man whose ambition was to have a posh funeral! I reckon he got that one wrong because he wouldn't be there to enjoy it.



But what does come first?

God said, *the first thing is to love him and our neighbour as much as ourselves.* May God be with you and bless you as you try. *Maurice Lince*



Thank you to everyone for their help and support for Sammy's Thanksgiving in Mulbarton on Christmas Eve. Despite Izzy being too ill to attend she saw the video later and was thrilled with how well it all went. I know it involved extra work for a number of people and I am so grateful. The family are coming to stay again in June and I hope those of you who remember Izzy might get the chance to see her, have a chat and see the boys. I enclose a picture of Sammy for those who didn't see him in person!

Vivienne Clifford-Jackson

Electricity in Zimbabwe

I'm still in close touch with Garikai, whom some of you saw on-screen when all of our worship was zoomed. He is now married to Nomatter and they have a baby: Believe. Garikai is a qualified teacher but can't get a full-time job. He earns a small living via an IT training scheme, taking half a dozen laptops into a school, working with small groups of children: the only access to the ICT national curriculum these children get. Since marrying, he's built a small block house so that he, his wife and baby don't have to live with his parents any longer. But he has not been able to afford to install electricity yet, which is a problem for his business as he needs to charge the laptops overnight. The costs (to us) are modest: with all wiring, fittings and labour, meter, inspection and connection, coming to £600 all up. If anyone would like to help, please let me know. Widows' mites are welcome! (However little, it all helps.) But pray first; only do what God lays on your heart.



Peter Nicholls

Ethical Christian #3

Well this is the Easter edition so how could I not talk about chocolate!

I'm sure you well aware that the chocolate industry is riddled with unjust, unethical practices which include unfair pay, child labour and still slavery. The average chocolate farmer, according to the Fairtrade Foundation, **earns 75p a day**, less than the cost of a chocolate bar we regularly buy and research by the University of Chicago in 2020 **1.56 million children in Ghana work in the chocolate industry**.



® But to the good news - there are many brands with great ethical standing and why not search these out for your chocolate treats this Easter. Fair Trade chocolate purchased from companies with good ethical ratings means you are supporting stricter labour standards than most chocolate; liveable wages for the cocoa farmers and a premium price that communities often invest in education and healthcare for their families.

Then looking for vegan and organic chocolate brands are also an ethical choices, reducing environmental pressures and impacts on animal welfare or growing without the use of pesticides, herbicides or fungicides therefore protecting our environment and workers.



The top two brands with 100% ethical accreditation score with The Good Shopping Guide are **ALTER ECO** and **SEED and BEAN**. Other brands which have high ethics are: **Chocolate and Love** (what a great name!), **Divine**, **Plamil**, **Raw Living**, **Wonder workshop**, **Booja-Booja** and **Equal Exchange**. Learn more about this at <https://thegoodshoppingguide.com/subject/ethical-chocolate/>

We celebrate new life at Easter, freedom for all and Love. Buying ethically is a little way we can pass that onto others and our world. Have a wonderful Easter.

Rachel Burchell

Hethel Church News



In case you read this the minute Mardle is available, on **28 January** (2pm to 5pm) there will be **tea and teacakes** in a warm church, with pleasant background music and even better company. And crumpets and golden syrup and butter and honey and jam and coffee or chocolate and conversation - everything you might want on a cold winter's afternoon. For your future diary, it'll happen again on **24 March**.



Meanwhile, on 25 February, it's **Afternoon Tea with Mulbarton Community Choir**.



Come and enjoy a 'chorale' drawn from MCC singing some of their wide and growing range of songs, accompanied by the inimitable Laurie Bennett. What could be better on a chilly February Sunday afternoon than 40 minutes of music, a spacious interval with tea (coffee or chocolate) and as much home-made cake as you can eat, followed by another half-hour of music? You'll do some good as well because your ticket price will kick-off the church's charitable giving for 2024 and add to the fund we've started to repair the timberwork in the tower and bring the bell back into operation. Tickets are £8 or half-price for children, but there's also an option to pay what you can afford on the door or be extra generous and pay a bit over the odds!

All available at <https://buytickets.at/allsaintschurchehethel/1121278>.

February / March 2024

*Please Check Church Website
for information and any changes nearer the time*

February 2024

Thur 1	9.15am	Coffee & Prayer at Harvest House
Sun 4	8.00am 9.00am 10.00am	Mulbarton Church: Communion Bracon Ash Church: Morning Prayer Mulbarton Church: All Age Baptism Service
Mon 5	9:30am-3pm	Community Hub: Mulbarton Social Club
Tues 6	2.30pm	Teapot Tuesday: Bracon Ash Village Hall
Wed 7	2pm	Flordon Chit Chat: Flordon Church
Thur 8	9.15am 2.30pm	Coffee & Prayer at Harvest House Hanover Gardens: Mid Week Communion Service
Sun 11	8.30am 10am 3.30pm	Hethel Church: Communion Mulbarton Church: Morning Worship Flordon Church: Evening Prayer
Mon 12	9:30am-3pm	Community Hub: Mulbarton Social Club
Wed 14	7.30pm	Ash Wednesday Service: Mulbarton Church
Thur 15	9.15am	Coffee & Prayer at Harvest House
Sun 18	9.00am 10am	Bracon Ash Church: Communion Mulbarton Church: Communion
Mon 19	9:30am-3pm 2pm	Community Hub: Mulbarton Social Club with SwapShop (1—3pm) Hethel PCC
Wed 21	7:30pm	Mulbarton PCC
Thur 22	9.15am	Coffee & Prayer at Harvest House 9.30am
Sun 25	10.30am 3pm 6pm 7pm	Hanover Gardens: Church @Hanover Choir Concert & Afternoon Tea: Hethel Harvest House: Together Meal Mulbarton Church: Together Service
Mon 26	9:30am-3pm	Community Hub: Mulbarton Social Club
Tue 27	2pm	Mulbarton Mardlers: Mulbarton Social Club
Thur 29	9.15am	Coffee & Prayer at Harvest House

March 2024

Sun 3	8.00am 9.00am 10.00am	Mulbarton Church: Holy Communion Bracon Ash Church: Morning Prayer Mulbarton Church: All Age Service
Mon 4	9:30am-3pm	Community Hub: Mulbarton Social Club
Tue 5	2.30pm	Teapot Tuesday: Bracon Ash Village Hall
Wed 6	2pm	Flordon Chit Chat: Flordon Church
Thur 7	9.15am	Coffee & Prayer at Harvest House
Sun 10	8.30pm 10.00am 3.30pm	Hethel Church: Communion Mulbarton Church: Morning Worship Flordon Church: Evening Prayer
Mon 11	9:30am-3pm	Community Hub: Mulbarton Social Club
Thur 14	9.15am 2.30pm	Coffee & Prayer at Harvest House Hanover Gardens: Mid Week Service
Sun 17	9.00am 10.00am	Bracon Ash Church: Communion Mulbarton Church: Communion Mardle Deadline—editor Chris Carter chrismarinacarter@gmail.com with subject line 'Mardle'
Mon 18	9:30am-3pm	Community Hub: Mulbarton Social Club
Tue 19	7:30pm	Flordon Community Trust AGM, Flordon Church
Wed 20	7:30pm	Mulbarton PCC
Thur 21	9.15am	Coffee & Prayer at Harvest House
Sun 24 (Palm Sunday)	8.30am 10.30am 2-5pm 6.00pm 7.00pm	Flordon Church: Communion Hanover Gardens: Church @Hanover Tea and Teacakes: Hethel Church Harvest House: Together Meal Mulbarton Church: Together Service
Mon 25	9:30am-3pm 11am	Community Hub: Mulbarton Social Club Norwich Cathedral Chrism Service
Tue 26	2pm	Mulbarton Mardlers: Mulbarton Social Club
Thur 28	9.15am 7:30pm	Coffee & Prayer at Harvest House Maundy Thursday Watch, Mulbarton Church
Fri 29	10am 2pm	Good Friday Walk, Mulbarton Good Friday Meditative Hour: Hethel
Sat 30	8pm	Cathedral Easter Vigil round Easter fire
Sun 31 (Easter Sunday)	9am 10am 6.30pm	Bracon Ash: Easter Communion Mulbarton Church: Easter All Age Communion Flordon Church: Easter Praise