

## Revelation Christian Resource Centre

This is a great place to browse and purchase Christian books (new and second hand), cards, gift wrap and all sorts of Christian gifts, as well as enjoy a cuppa or a meal in their splendid café!

Revelation is an ecumenical Christian resource centre and café, offering a bookshop, a meeting place, and a welcoming refuge for refreshment. They are open to visitors of any faith or none.

They are located in the St Michael-at-Plea Church on Redwell Street by the pedestrian crossing at the junction with Queens Street 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

3rd Oct	Mulbarton	Raphael Gunby
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### Burial of Ashes

27th Sept.	Mulbarton	Geoffrey Duffin
12th Oct	Mulbarton	Bryant Mickleburgh
31st Oct	Mulbarton	Duke Woodcock

### Funeral and Burial

4th Oct	Mulbarton	Gracie Harper
17th Oct	Bracon Ash	Peter Stubbs

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

Rector: Rev. Adrian Miller: 01508 571167 - [adrian@mulbchurch.org.uk](mailto:adrian@mulbchurch.org.uk)

This month's editor: Chris Carter

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

# MARDLE

## December 2023/ January 2024

Mulbarton Benefice newsletter

### FROM THE RECTORY

Email: [adrian@mulbchurch.org.uk](mailto:adrian@mulbchurch.org.uk)  
(Regular Day Off: Friday)

In August, 31 representatives from all four parishes gathered in Harvest House to think about the future of our benefice. If you have not had notes, please get in touch to ask—I would be delighted to hear your thoughts.

Here's a summary...



## FOLLOWING JESUS

*Sharing the journey*

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



1. Humbleyard Deanery is set to disband altogether, with us as a benefice becoming part of Depwade, to the south.
  2. We anticipated changes in personnel and populations, and trends locally, as well as at diocesan and national level that might affect how we function. We then opened the floor for anyone to share hopes and fears for the next five years, noting 21 hopes (to plan for) and 9 fears (to avoid or mitigate). A few things came up in both lists, like merging PCCs!
  3. We noted especially the financial concerns, with costs up, income down, reserves low, and non-balancing core budgets. We were realistic about the challenges, yet solution-focused in our thinking. Key points were to nurture a generous attitude, strategic thinking, and clear goals at parish level.
  4. We explored volunteer vacancies and succession planning, noting the importance of making volunteer positions attractive and meaningful.
  5. We took stock of the good things we are already doing, and how to build on that in a changing world, making best use of our resources to focus on the true purpose of our mission and witness. This included consideration of the recent report from the Church Buildings Commission.
  6. We concluded by moving towards what actions individual PCCs might want to consider as we move into the future, including eco-friendly initiatives, fair trade practices, and improved communication channels.
- PCCs will be working on tailoring local action plans and priorities from this in due course, and welcome thoughts and feedback from all.

## **PCC Updates**

### **Mulbarton (October & November)**

We explored EcoChurch and ethical banking, two issues raised at the APCM. Good to hear from Peter about Hethel's experience. We decided to stick with the Bank of Scotland for our current account, since it gives us a fair balance of ethical rating for the facilities we need. We will explore options for our investment accounts, where there is greater potential to bank more ethically. On the EcoChurch front, we progressed towards a Bronze award, and agreed to install a bike rack, to encourage travel by bike. We also moved to 100% fair-traded goods in Harvest House.

We have a war grave sign agreed and now being prepared, and made progress on installing three new blinds. We identified significant tree work, much of it done, with more to follow. We researched cherry tree options, to respond to a community need for a space in the village to mourn neonatal and antenatal bereavement. We thrashed through content for a needs statement for redeveloping the back of church.

We continued to monitor and agree actions for community engagement, mission, Sunday services, youth and families work, safeguarding, Harvest House management and the challenging financial situation, with increasing costs and decreasing income. The PCC carefully considered the recent clergy covenant, and how best they could continue to support the benefice clergy and families (e.g. publicising days off—see front page!)

Sue Mellows has served as treasurer faithfully for five years now, ably supported by Symon, for which we are hugely grateful. She will be stepping down from the post at the end of this year, so we are looking to recruit someone to take on that role—please do be in touch with Adrian or Sue if this is something you might consider.

### **Bracon Ash (September)**

We celebrated the completion of recent major building repairs, and considered next actions arising from the last Quinquennial report; along with services and planned events, including the patron's fundraising winter concert; and more general finances. We recorded thanks for Cyndy's work with flower arranging, as she hands on that baton.

### **Hethel (September & November)**

We dealt with maintenance issues, and made progress with the big tower restoration project. We also considered a paper Peter had drafted in response to the benefice future meeting, working towards a parish plan.

### **Flordon (October)**

We noted responses to the finances leaflet, and dealt with events, past and future, changes needed for Gift Aid, and churchyard management issues.

## **Hethel News**

The Christmas Carol Service is on Sunday 10th December at 4pm, with an ensemble from Mulbarton

Community Choir leading our singing and performing a couple of pieces on their own. Home-made mince pies and mulled wine to follow. The collection will be shared between the church and the Christian charity Embrace the Middle East.

Hethel Church is delighted to welcome everyone from across the benefice to the service on December 31st at 10am. These new year services are a great opportunity to both take stock of the year gone by and to pledge oneself anew to God's purposes in the year ahead.

For the last couple of years, on some Sunday afternoons visitors have enjoyed tea and teacakes (or crumpets), dripping with butter, honey or jam. Dates for 2024 are 28 January, 25 February and 24 March. We're planning the February date to be a church and charity choral afternoon with Mulbarton Community Choir around tea and cakes. Watch out for info nearer the time!

Finally, please do pray for us. Quotations for tower and bell restoration - a matter of safety and building access as much as anything - have come in at well over £40k. Much more than we were led to expect and a bit of a gulp in an under-pressure environment for getting grants.

Shalom, Peter



## **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. We meet from 2 - 4.00pm and transport can be offered. Just speak to Sue Mellows 07936 703124 or Tracey Salisbury 578068 for more information



“Join us at The Rectory for Christmas nibbles and drinks, and a chance to buy gifts from Sarah’s Faith in the Unfolding Craft Stall. Tue 12th Dec, 2.30-5pm.

All Welcome. If you can let us know you’re coming that would be a help. Thanks “

Sarah



At the Bracon Ash PCC Meeting in September, it was agreed that FoodBank donations be invited for collection at the service of Advent Carols on 26<sup>th</sup> November. Stephen Bowles



Please pray for those who are running this event as well as the almost 40 children booked in to attend. Do contact Bev on 07914725591 if you want more information

#GOD with US



## Christingle

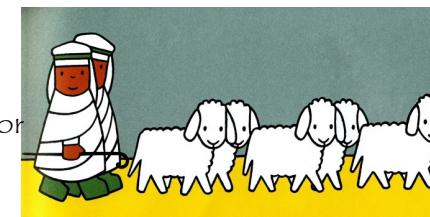
Sunday 3 Dec, 4pm, FLORDON

Everything provided: oranges, candles, ribbon, sweets, fun and laughter, and a wonderful beginning to the Christmas season. Loved by children and adults alike, this candlelit celebration is a fabulous way to help bring light and hope to children living in poverty in this country, through the Children’s Society.

## Pre-School Christmas Dress-up

Tuesday 5 Dec, 9:45-10:30, MULBARTON

Children are invited to dress up as shepherds, angels or kings, and will have an opportunity to parade round the church in costume.



## Carol Services

Sunday 10 Dec, 4pm, HETHEL

Sunday 10 Dec, 6:30pm, FLORDON

Sunday 17 Dec, 4pm & 6:30pm, MULBARTON

Sunday 24 Dec, 10:30am, HANOVER

## Crib Service

Sunday 24 Dec, 4pm, MULBARTON

Short, with simple carols, an engaging story, the nativity scene, local dramatic talent, and chocolate!



## Christmas Day Services

Christmas Eve, 11:30pm, Midnight Mass, MULBARTON

Christmas Day Communion, 9am, FLORDON

Christmas Day Communion, 10am, BRACON ASH

Christmas Day All Age “Bring a Present” Celebration, 10am, MULBARTON



Deck the church with strings of fairy lights  
 Fa-la-la-la-lah, la-la-la-lah  
 Decorate some stars and angels  
 Fa-la-la-la-lah, la-la-la-lah  
 Join in the festive fun  
 Fa-la-la, la-la-la, la-la-lah  
 Everyone is welcome along  
 Fa-la-la-la-lah, la-la-la-laaah



Calling all helpers, big and small, to come and decorate Mulbarton Church ready for Christmas on Saturday 2nd December 10.00am to Noonish.

Come and be part of **Team Lights**, or **Team Angels and Stars** at Harvest House or **Team Refreshments**, making cookies (non dairy, no nuts) and drinks for all to enjoy.

Please let Sarah know if you can help and which Team you would like to be a part of.

[sarah@mulbchurch.org.uk](mailto:sarah@mulbchurch.org.uk)



Mulbarton Community Choir

Busy December for the Choir starting with their concert in Mulbarton Village Hall on the 2nd December at 7.30pm tickets from Eventbrite <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/mulbarton-church/t-pqokrn> and singing at Hethel Church Carol Service on Sunday 10th December at 4pm and two Carol Services at Mulbarton Church on 17th December at 4pm and 6.30pm

**Wrapping presents** - Wrapping paper is a recycling nightmare. Many of the shiny foil options contain plastic (glitter is almost always plastic); even the cheaper, thinner paper versions are hard to recycle.

I love **Re-wrapped** which use 100% recycled unbleached materials and vegan friendly vegetable inks in their paper, and all are recyclable and biodegradable with wonderful designs (not only for Christmas), but there are many other places that sell wrapping paper with these attributes. Also, check that your paper comes in compostable packaging, not plastic, and use paper-based sticky tape or natural string or twine to secure. Alternatively, wrap presents in old newspapers or magazines or try out Furoshiki, the Japanese art of wrapping presents in reusable cloths or scarves.



**Christmas cards** - look for cards that are foil and glitter-free and recyclable cards and obviously benefit a charity of your choice: Oxfam, The Woodland Trust, RSPB, Amnesty International all fulfil those criteria and there are many more besides.

**Christmas Trees** - what is the most ethical? This is a big discussion and I've probably used enough space, so if you're interested in thinking further about this here are two links I'd recommend following and reading the articles and thoughts.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ethicalivingblog/2008/dec/04/christmas>



[https://eluxemagazine.com/culture/articles/how-green-are-christmas-trees/?utm\\_content=cmp-true](https://eluxemagazine.com/culture/articles/how-green-are-christmas-trees/?utm_content=cmp-true)

Lastly, these are suggestions, ideas to think and talk about. We all have much that goes on in our lives, and sometimes only have enough headspace for surviving day by day. So don't feel pressured: see what you're drawn to; maybe just choose one thing to change or do if you can. And of course we all need to remember that LOVE is what ultimately counts. Have a blessed and love filled Christmas x

**Rachel Burchell**

## Ethical Christian #2

**It's Christmas....**well, not quite but certainly the time we are all starting (started, or thinking of starting) to buy presents and prepare for the festive season. From our Christian perspective it reminds us of the message of peace, of 'filling the hungry with good things.' Being ethical is one way to help that in a real, physical way - to allow those who produce our goods etc to be fairly paid and have fair working conditions. There are so many easy ways for it to be ethical and money conscious in these difficult times.

I love this quotation by Emma Odie at the Ethical Consumer:

***“Ethical gifting is all about choosing gifts with low impact and making sure that every gift counts in the most important way. “***

We know we can buy from charity shops, preloved, gifting time or experiences or making things yourself or buying new fairly trade ethical presents as ways to make our Christmas giving count. I don't want to just list a whole page of places where you can buy ethical pressies but a great place to get ideas of where to start

is <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/ethical-christmas/your-alternative-christmas-shopping-list>

Two other general online shops

are: [ethicalshop.org](https://www.ethicalshop.org) & [ethicalsuperstore.com](https://www.ethicalsuperstore.com)

The above link has also helped guide some general thoughts about ensuring a more ethical Christmas. These are not exhaustive, but some 'starters for ten'

**Avoid Amazon** - look I've been caught, and occasionally still am, by the convenience, the cheap prices and immediate deliveries but I can't avoid the huge list of workers' rights abuses, its unsustainable business practices and its blatant tax avoidance, so I'm trying to change my habits. (For more info: <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/retailers/ten-reasons-avoid-amazon> . Also, have you seen The Great Amazon Heist on C4? I'm planning to).

## How to be a greener Christian #10

Last Mardle, I threatened to get political! After all, as Desmond Tutu famously said, "When people say that religion and politics don't mix, I wonder which Bible they are reading." Here goes!

Let's start with the Five Marks of Mission. Drafted by the Anglican Communion, it seeks to answer the simple but profound theological question: What is God's mission in the world today? With which the church must align itself!

The Marks are:

- ☐ To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
- ☐ To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.
- ☐ To respond to human need by loving service.
- ☐ To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.
- ☐ To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Doesn't climate care tick at least the last three of those boxes? We are on the fringes of the political here, at least in terms of exercising one's vote and interacting with elected representatives.

Next year we'll be limbering up for the general election and thinking about how to vote. Perhaps a starting point is to ask which issues are (most) existential, for us, our children or our grandchildren?

You'll guess where I'm heading! But it's not a singular answer – for example, the widening gap between the rich and the poor might deprive many people of any significant quality of life and a lower quantity. But if climate change is on the list, which party offers the best hope of averting a crisis down the line? One party believes that kicking the can down the road is necessary given current economic pressures; another argues for minimising the risk of disaster in the 2040s, making a virtue out of a necessity now by promoting the manufacture and installation of measures to reduce carbon emissions. You do your own probing and thinking; just don't ignore the issue!

COP28 runs from 30.11.23 to 12.12.23. Use the programme ([unfccc.int/cop28](https://unfccc.int/cop28)) to inform your prayers, especially in regard to 'negotiations'.

Avoiding out-of-season vegetables, what about Lentil Wedges for tea? Boil 225g red lentils in 450ml water until the liquid is absorbed. Finely chop a large onion and fry in 1tbsp oil until transparent. Mix onion, lentils, 100g grated cheddar, 5ml mixed herbs, 25g breadcrumbs, an egg, salt and pepper.

Press into an oiled 23cm sandwich tin and bake for 30 minutes at 190C. Delicious with mash, carrots, greens and perhaps some gravy made with veggy stock and a little cornflour.

Peter Nicholls, 19.9.23

## **DECEMBER 2023 / JANUARY 2024**

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

### **December 2023**

Sat 2	10.00am	Mulbarton Church: Church Decoration ( See Page 4)
	7.30pm	Mulbarton Village Hall: Community Choir Concert
Sun 3	8.00am	Mulbarton Church: Holy Communion
	9.00am	Bracon Ash Church: Morning Prayer
	10.00am	Mulbarton Church: All Age Baptism Service
	4.00pm	Flordon Church : Christingle
	6.00pm	Harvest House: Together Meal
	7.00pm	Mulbarton Church: Together Service
Tues 5	9.30am	Mulbarton Church: Pre School Carol Service
Fri 8	Evening	Bracon Ash Church: Winter Concert (sold out)
Sun 10	10.00am	Mulbarton Church: Morning Worship
	4.00pm	Hethel Church: Carol Service with Mulbarton Community Choir (See Page 11)
	6.30pm	Flordon Church: Carol Service
Tues 12	2.00pm	Mulbarton Social Club: Mardlers (With a touch of Christmas)
	2.30pm	Mulbarton Rectory: Drinks and Nibbles (see Page 10)
Thur 14	2.30pm	Hanover Gardens: Mid Week Service
Sat 16	7.00pm	Mulbarton Christmas Party at Village Hall
Sun 17	9.00am	Bracon Ash Church: Holy Communion
	4.00pm	Mulbarton Church: Carol Service with Mulbarton Community Choir
	6.30pm	Mulbarton Church: Carol Service with Mulbarton Community Choir
Tues 19	6.30pm	Flordon: Carol singing start at Phone Box
Thur 21	9.30am	Mulbarton School: Holiday Club (see page 7)

Sun 24	10.00am	Mulbarton Church: Morning Worship
Christmas Eve	10.30am	Hanover Gardens: Church@ Hanover Carol Service
	4.00pm	Mulbarton Church: Crib Service
	11.30pm	Mulbarton Church: Midnight Communion

Mon 25	9.00am	Bracon Ash Church: Christmas Communion
Christmas Day	10.00am	Mulbarton Church: Family Service
		Hethel Church: Holy Communion

Sun 31	10.00am	Hethel Church: Benefice Service
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### **January 2024**

Sun 7	8.00am	Mulbarton Church: Holy Communion
	9.00am	Bracon Ash Church: Morning Prayer
	10.00am	Mulbarton Church: All Age Service
Thur 11	2.30pm	Hanover Gardens: Mid Week Service
Sun 14	8.30pm	Hethel Church: Holy Communion with Blessing of the Plough
	10.00am	Mulbarton Church: Morning Worship
	3.30pm	Flordon Church: Evening Prayer
Sun 21	9.00am	Bracon Ash Church: Holy Communion
	10.00am	Mulbarton Church: Holy Communion
Tues 23	2.00pm	Mulbarton Social Club: Mardlers
Sun 28	8.30am	Flordon Church: Holy Communion
	10.00am	Mulbarton Church: Morning Service
	10.30am	Hanover Gardens: Church @Hanover
	Afternoon	Hethel Church: Tea and Teacakes (See Page 11)
	6.00pm	Harvest House: Together Meal
	7.00pm	Mulbarton Church: Together Service