

**December, 2024, January, February 2025**

**Dean Row Chapel, Wilmslow SK9 2BX**

**website: [www.deanrowunitarianchapel.co.uk](http://www.deanrowunitarianchapel.co.uk)**



**Services at Dean Row every Sunday at 11.15 a.m.**

**Meditations – Wednesday 11.00am – 11.30am**

**Hale Chapel, Hale Barns, WA15 0AQ**

**Hale Chapel website: [www.halechapel.co.uk](http://www.halechapel.co.uk)**



**Services at Hale Chapel every Sunday at 9.30 a.m.**

**Minister Rev Jeff Gould    Tel. 01625 402952**

**Mob 07989858963    [jeffreylanegould1959@talktalk.net](mailto:jeffreylanegould1959@talktalk.net)**

## DEAN ROW by Peter Weigh

Dean Row deep in Winter  
Lacking charm and grace  
Dean Row deep in Winter  
A dark depressing place

The chapel is quite old now  
Perhaps it's past its peak  
They say the bellcote's crumbling  
And the roof has sprung a leak!

The churchyard's rather sombre  
Reminders of the past  
Summer colours faded  
They never ever last

But wait – can I hear music?  
A carol being sung  
Praises to the Lord our God  
From heart and voice and lung!

A choir gives us a concert  
A joyful sound they make  
Uplifting Christmas music  
With mulled wine at the break!

The schoolroom's so inviting  
The Christmas fair is fun  
Coffee, cake and gifts to buy  
And prizes to be won

The chapel's decorated  
With holly on the bough  
Lots of flowers and candles  
It's much more cheerful now

A Christmas tree adorns it  
With lots and lots of toys  
All gratefully donated  
For needy girls and boys

Dean Row deep in Winter  
Boundless charm and grace  
You ask – what makes the difference?  
With God WE make the place!

**Worship services at Hale Chapel and Dean Row Chapel**  
**Services will be conducted by the Minister**  
**unless otherwise indicated**

	<b>Hale Chapel 9.30am</b>	<b>Dean Row Chapel 11.15am</b>
December		
Dec 1st	Advent Sunday	Advent Sunday
Dec 8th	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent Toy Service	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent Toy Service
Dec 15th	Third Sunday in Advent	Third Sunday in Advent
Dec 22nd	Fourth Sunday in Advent	Fourth Sunday in Advent
Dec 24th	6 pm Christmas Eve Service	4 pm Christmas Eve Service
Dec 29th	First Sunday In Christmas Final Sunday of the Year	First Sunday In Christmas Final Sunday of the Year
January '25		
5th	The Epiphany with Holy Communion	The Epiphany with Holy Communion
12th	Sunday Service	Sunday Service
19th	Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday	Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday
26 <sup>th</sup>	Holocaust Memorial Sunday	Holocaust Memorial Sunday
February		
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Candlemas	Candlemas
9th	Sunday Service	Sunday Service
16th	Sunday Service	Sunday Service
23rd	Sunday Service	Sunday Service
March		
2nd	Sunday Service	Sunday Service
9th	First Sunday in Lent	First Sunday in Lent
16th	Second Sunday in Lent	Second Sunday in Lent
23rd	Third Sunday in Lent	Third Sunday in Lent
30th	Mothering Sunday	Mothering Sunday

## **THE MINISTER'S LETTER**

It was only last week that I found myself enjoying a long weekend in the city of Belfast, Northern Ireland. It included one of my six holiday Sundays this year. The visit enabled me to visit two of the churches in which I was involved as a student for the ministry in the summer months of 1986—memorable for many good reasons but also for the fact that it was the depths of what is euphemistically called 'The Troubles'. It was uplifting to see how the city has changed since those challenging years. There are no longer police checkpoints leading into the city centre. Shoppers mix with no perceived threat of a bomb or of street violence. The murals to be seen on residential streets are more often than not positive messages of community cohesion and forward-looking hopefulness.

My Saturday morning stroll led me to the heart of the shopping district of the city, which was enhanced by the presence of Christmas lights and decorations. Christmas carols could be heard over sound systems and played by street corner musicians. Normally, I would be disdainful over any sign of Christmas in the shops before the season of Advent. This year, however, I seem to have given in to the premature festivities. Am I more tolerant? Have I become less rigid in my thinking? Is it helpful to find something cheerful and optimistic when so much of what is happening in the world this year is so very depressing? For whatever reason, I have embraced this particular year's anticipation of Christmas.

One of the innovations we shall be testing this year is the timing of the Christmas Eve service at Dean Row Chapel. Rather than meet at our usual time of eight o'clock in the evening, we will hold our special worship of carols and readings at four o'clock in the afternoon. The hope is that the service will be more accessible to people of all ages and abilities. Hale Chapel will meet at its customary time of six o'clock in the evening. It will be interesting to see how people respond to this order of services.

This Christmas, may our genuine hopes become real gifts.

*JEFF*

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## **DEAN ROW CHAPEL**

### **Dean Row Chairman's Newsletter**

Dear Friends,

As I write this, I am looking out at the unexpected snowfall on November 18<sup>th</sup>. I hope this does not augur a cold hard winter. Let us hope instead that the early snow will get rid of all the horrid weather now. Although we might hope for snow on Christmas day, so that all the children who have been gifted by hopeful parents a sledge, will be able to enjoy the thrill of sledging down the local slopes. I have to tell you all IT NEVER EVER SNOWS ON CHRISTMAS DAY! Or at least almost never. The last Christmas snow in this area was in 2010 according to the Met Office. I blame the Christmas card manufacturers; they use pictures of jolly snow scenes with sledging and skating. Far better to buy your child a bike.

I have bought all my Christmas presents, that is except for Nellie and Florrie. What do you buy for a cat who has everything? I think I have said before that my children like to have a portrait of the Queen for Christmas – or will that be a portrait of the King this year? Unfortunately, the cats are not allowed to have money because they would shred it with their claws. So it will be a new toy and pussy cat treats yet again!

Well, what would I like for Christmas this year? I suppose that it will be too much to ask for world peace. The horrors we are seeing day after day; men, women and children killed by their enemies. The wanton destruction of homes and towns and food and water supplies. What can we do to help? Not very much except requiring our government to stand up for a peaceful solution. And to support as much as we can the charities who are doing their best in these war-torn regions.

I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year. May your families love one another and heal any rifts which they endure. This is the best Christmas that we can all have.

**John 13:34-35**

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If there is this love among you then everyone will know that you are my disciples.

Love to you all.  
Chrissie

^^

**If you look for it, I've got a sneaky feeling you'll find that  
love actually is all around.**

**From 'Love Actually' the film**

### Tribute to Mary Harrison from Mike and Chris Casey

When our house was being built Mary invited us for tea and took me up to the bathroom so we could hang out of her window to see the latest building work on our home. We had regular updates thanks to Mary. My memories are of her always in the front of many chapel events. A gentle lady who quietly went through life caring for so many people but never expecting rewards. We are grateful and thank her family for sharing her with us all, wonderful memories of dearest Mary.



### WARDEN'S REPORT

It has been a busy few weeks but quite productive. The office has been cleared of unwanted paperwork, books etc. and is being refurbished and decorated. The organ loft has also been cleared of unwanted bits and pieces. The skip has now been removed.

The donated bulbs have all been planted and we can look forward to a lovely bright show of daffodils in the Spring.

The Chapel sign recently blew down in the storms but has now been re-fixed and cleaned and treated

The power hosing is continuing on a regular basis. Thanks to Linzi for her help with it and thanks also to Larry Bode for his regular help on Thursdays.

The Chapel gutters need cleaning urgently and I have arranged for them to be dealt with as soon as possible.

I wish everyone a peaceful Christmas and Happy New Year.

**Ian Booth Chapel Warden**



**I will honour Christmas in my heart,  
and try to keep it all the year.**

**Charles Dickens**

## **Dean Row Chapel Social Group**

Our latest outing was to The Merlin restaurant, Alderley Edge at end of October where 22 of us went for Sunday lunch. This was something of a last minute booking, as the Plough and Flail, where we had originally booked came back to us and wanted to charge us an extra £250 for a separate room!

Many thanks to Anne Smith, our events co-ordinator, for arranging this outing, and just happening to know Gary, the manager at The Merlin, who, I have to say, together with all the staff who served us, made us very welcome indeed. We would certainly go there again. Very relaxed afternoon and plenty of good food!!

Our Christmas Fair and Coffee Morning took place on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November. All the Co-ordinators of the Social Group worked extremely hard, before, and on the day, to make the hall look very festive indeed. We had a wonderful turnout of people – chapel members, friends and families and plenty of helpers on the morning. Our thanks go to everyone who brought gifts, made produce for the Home Produce Stall and gave donations, along with all the helpers who manned the many stalls, raffles and the kitchen. We just couldn't have done it without you.

And, most importantly, we made an amount of £1,100. 00p to go towards the repair of the bell cote!

Two very happy events to end the social group activities for 2024.

**Anne Gemmell Joint Co-ordinator**

**Anne Smith, Social Group Co-Ordinator**

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**Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a  
conspiracy of love.**



## **Message from the Treasurer**

Whenever I write for the Newsletter it seems to be that I am appealing for funds...sadly, this is no exception!

We now know that we need to rebuild the bellcote and we have had both a survey and a structural surveyors report. We have a few building firms that are recommended for historic building repairs, but we have not yet asked for quotes as we have to await comments and hopefully planning permission from the local authority conservation officer. This may take upwards of six months. We are advised that the work will cost at least £100,000 and while we hope to be able to make appeals for grants towards the repairs when we have some prices but will undoubtedly have to do some fundraising.

I hope that we can initially raise about £25,000 from our own membership and congregants. This is a massive sum, but we will do our best. I have set up a separate fund to hold donations received and we have a few hundred pounds already.

If I can appeal to all our friends to consider making donations as you are able, I am happy to receive money directly into the bank. Once again, the chapel bank account is at Barclays. Sort Code 20-53-77 Account Number 80326143 alternatively cash or cheque donations are always welcome.

However, some good news. We were able to raise over £1000.00 at the Christmas Fair. Well done everybody. I wish you all the very best in this season of good will.

**Peter Shaw Treasurer**

**Dean Row Events**  
**December 2024, January 2025, February 2025**

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December 11.15** Christmas toy service.

**Gifts of new toys and games are welcome.**

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December 4 pm** Christmas Eve Service

**Saturday 22 March 7.00pm** Sing Along Evening with Class Turns

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> March 11.15** Mothering Sunday

**Exercise classes** Monday mornings in the Chapel Hall

**Stroke Club** Wednesday Mornings in the Chapel Hall.

**Meditation** Wednesday 11.00 in the Chapel Vestry

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**Prayer for the New Year**

**Great Divine, as we look back over this past year we thank You for Your goodness to us-far beyond what we have deserved. We pray that in the new year ahead you be our Guide, and our Comforter. Lord, may this new year be a time of deep spiritual growth for us, a time for forgiving freely and growing.**

**Heavenly Father, as we face both known and unknown challenges of the coming year, grant us strength and courage. Help us to rely on your power and to find our refuge in you. May we be steadfast in our faith, knowing that you are our rock and our fortress.**

**Lord, as we embark on this new year, we lift up to you, our loved ones, our communities, and the world. May your peace reign in our hearts and in the hearts of all people. Bring healing where there is brokenness and reconciliation where there is division.**

**Amen**

**Chapel Rotas, December 2024, January 25, February 25, March 25**

If you need to change your dates on the list, please contact a substitute from the list for Chapel Opening      Ian Booth 01625 262819,  
Coffee Rota, Anne Gemmell 0161 637 5347, C Wilkie 0161 439 8262

DATE 2024	OPENING	SIDESMAN DUTY	COFFEE DUTY
DEC 1	Mr I Booth	Mrs E Godfrey Mrs E Taylor	Mr I Booth Mrs B Booth
DEC 8	Mr P Shaw	Mrs B Robinson Mrs S McFadden	Mrs A Gemmell Mrs M Craven
DEC 15	Mrs C Wilkie	Mr I Booth Mrs B Booth	Mrs J Boys Mrs B Berry
DEC 22	Mr P Weigh	Mr P Weigh Mrs M Weigh	Mrs C Wilkie Mrs J Davies
Dec 24		Mrs A Gemmell Elliott	
DEC 29	Mr K Dennell	Mrs A Gemmell Mrs M Craven	Mr K Dennell Mrs S Dennell
JAN 5 2025	Mr P Shaw	Mrs C Wilkie Mrs J Davies	Mrs B Robinson Mrs S McFadden
Jan 12	Mr I Booth	Mr A Earp Mrs E Earp	Mr I Booth Mrs B Booth
Jan 19	Mr P Shaw	Mrs C Wilkie Mrs J Davies	Mrs E Godfrey Mrs E Taylor
Jan26	Mrs C Wilkie	Mrs B Robinson Mrs S McFadden	Mr J Wenham Mrs B Wenham
Feb 2	Mr I Booth	Mr I Booth Mrs B Booth	Mrs C Wilkie Mrs J Davies
Feb 9	Mr P Weigh	Mr P Weigh Mrs M Weigh	Mrs A Gemmell Mrs M Craven
Feb 16	Mr P Shaw	Mrs A Gemmell Mrs M Craven	Mrs J Boys Mrs B Berry
Feb23	Mr I Booth	Mr I Booth Mrs B Booth	Mrs C Wilkie Mrs J Davies
Mar 2	Mr K Dennell	Mr A Earp Mrs E Earp	Mr K Dennell Mrs S Dennell
Mar 9	Mr P Shaw	Mrs E Godfrey Mrs E Taylor	Mrs B Robinson Mrs S McFadden
Mar16	Mr P Weigh	Mr P Weigh Mrs M Weigh	Mr P Astley Mrs J Astley
Mar 23	Mrs C Wilkie	Mrs C Wilkie Mrs J Davies	Mrs E Godfrey Mrs E Taylor
Mar 30	Mr P Shaw	Mrs B Robinson Mrs S McFadden	Mr J Wenham Mrs B Wenham

# HALE CHAPEL

## HALE CHAPEL - Chairman's Newsletter

November 2024

"I don't believe it"!

That was of course the catch phrase of Victor Meldew, the retired and very grumpy lead character in the 1990's BBC sitcom "One Foot in the Grave". The thing is, as the years go on, I recognise that sadly I'm getting more and more like Victor. How often these days do I use that catch phrase! So often in 2024 it just seems so appropriate. Just think of the recent USA presidential election and you'll get what I mean.

Anyway I said "I don't believe it!" to my wife a couple of days ago as it dawned on us that there are now less than six weeks till Christmas. How can this possibly be? It seems only yesterday that we were putting all the Christmas decorations back in the attic, safe and secure for another year. And here we are probably only a couple of weeks away from getting the whole lot back down again. At least I can comfort myself with the thought that last year I put our elderly artificial Christmas tree back in its box in the correct colour coded order - or did I.....??

So, Christmas is coming and the geese, turkeys, chickens etc etc will be getting comfortably fat. Does anyone remember the animated film "Chicken Run" with one of the chickens saying, "I don't want to be a chicken pie!" I've occasionally thought about turning vegetarian, but I think most children born in the 1950's are dedicated meat eaters. I have to say that we usually have turkey at Christmas but unless it is cooked very carefully (as my wife always does.....) it can be dry. And if turkey is so good, why don't we eat it

all the year round? – there’s a reason. I prefer chicken any day.

And of course, Christmas dinner is a time to parade a vast selection of vegetables. I have my favourite vegetables and those I could happily never eat again. Top favourites are roast parsnips and nice crisp sprouts with cabbage and spinach towards the bottom of the list. By some margin fennel comes rock bottom – truly horrible!

Christmas is of course a lovely time; families get together and on Christmas Day itself the world seems to temporarily stop – in a nice way. And on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December we will have one of the highlights of the year – the Christmas Eve Carol service in our lovely Chapel. That’s where Christmas really begins for me. At that service and the one on the Sunday two days earlier we will sing all our favourite carols with all their lovely tunes. We must and will think of all those people all around the world who endure life in dangerous and unsafe places and hope and pray that their lives improve in 2025.

So, by the time this contribution appears it will be December – so I wish each and every one of you a very happy Christmas!

Alastair

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Pray when you feel like worrying  
Give thanks when you feel like complaining  
Keep going when you feel like giving up  
Colossians 3:10

## Hale Chapel Secretary Helen Wilson

I have spent most of the summer in hospital which was not planned just bad luck. It was a long journey and still is towards recovery.

During that time I was under the care of a lot of professionals. Most were pleasant and did what had to be done. During the night carer Trish made me extra comfy, coming often during the night to ease my position in bed as I was unable to move myself. She assured me I would improve, although at the time I was unsure myself. I looked forward to her being on night duty as I knew I would have a better night. She had been caring for patients for 30 yrs. She also brought me a jar of good Decaf coffee as I disliked the unpalatable hospital coffee. I did not ask her to bring it and she would not take any money. This made such a difference – just a small thing, but powerful. Trish was not a surgeon, doctor, nurse, just a carer she said. She did indeed care.

My caring chapel family wrapped me in a collective supportive blanket. Visiting many, many times in various hospitals, bringing me food and treats, sending cards, texts, phone calls. My circle of friends and family did the same, one texting me every day so I didn't lose contact with the outside world. Visiting 2/3 times a week with a 'Mary Poppins bag' full of treats.

These acts of kindness made such a difference to me and my very grateful thanks go to you all. I am so lucky to be part of a loving and supportive community who are still looking after me in so many ways as I continue to recover.

In the New Year 2025, kindness is going to be so important in these challenging times. One small kindness to others can change a life for the better

Helen Wilson

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If you haven't got any charity in your heart,  
you have the worst kind of heart trouble.

Bob Hope

## Hale Chapel Events

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Dec - Toy Service. 9.30 am.** Please bring new toys unwrapped or new gloves, hats, chocolates, biscuits, wrapping paper to donate to Wood Street Mission, M/c for families in need

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December – Carol Service 9.30 am.** – Retiring collection to ‘Send a Child to Hucklow’ A Unitarian Charity

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Eve- Candlelight Service 6pm-**  
Retiring collection to St Ann’s Hospice. Heald Green.

**Xmas coffee Morning- Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December-** Please bring festive food to share. Bring a friend, donate a raffle prize.

**Coffee Mornings 2025 – No Coffee Morning in January.** Start Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February, Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 10.30 in the vestry

**Congregational Lunches-** these will commence in February at Ringway Golf Club. Please look for the signing sheet in vestry

**Book Club** will meet on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January in the vestry 10.30.  
Also Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March.

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*The birth of Christ reminds us of the boundless love and grace of God. May your Christmas be filled with His peace and your heart with His joy. During this sacred season, let us give thanks for the greatest gift of all—Jesus Christ. Wishing you a Christmas filled with love, peace, and the light of His presence.*

**Dean Row Chapel Officers:**

**Chair**

**Chrissie Wilkie Tel. 0161 439 8262;  
Email [chrissie@wilkies.me.uk](mailto:chrissie@wilkies.me.uk)**

**Treasurer:**

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Email [pgshaw@aol.com](mailto:pgshaw@aol.com)**

**Secretary**

**Anne Gemmell Tel. 0161 637 5347  
[annegemmell@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annegemmell@yahoo.co.uk)**

**Warden: Ian Booth 01625262819**

**Chapel Social Group Co-ordinator:**

**Anne Smith Tel. 0161 439 1125**

**Flower Secretary:**

**Bridget Wenham Tel 01625 820772**

**Honorary Life President**

**Tony Cupper**

**Items for Newsletter to Chrissie Wilkie**



## Hale Chapel Officers and Executive Committee

### Chair

**Alastair Brown Tel: 01925 262332**

Email: [alastair6451@aol.com](mailto:alastair6451@aol.com)

### Secretary

**Helen Wilson Tel: 0161 962 9661**

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### Treasurer

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### Executive Committee

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### Chapel Hall –

335 Hale Road, Hale Barns WA15 8SS

**Bookings Co-Ordinator Sharon Kupusarevic**

**Tel: 07801 140809**

# <<<< STORIES AND JOLLY JAPES >>>>

## The Coffee Cup

Submitted by Jenny Williams

You are holding a cup of coffee when someone comes along and bumps into you or shakes your arm, making you spill your coffee everywhere.

Why did you spill the coffee?

"Because someone bumped into me!!!"

Wrong answer.

You spilled the coffee because there was coffee in your cup.

Had there been tea in the cup, you would have spilled tea.

Whatever is inside the cup is what will spill out.

Therefore, when life comes along and shakes you (which WILL happen), whatever is inside you will come out. It's easy to fake it, until you get rattled.

So we have to ask ourselves... "what's in my cup?"

When life gets tough, what spills over?

Joy, gratitude, peace and humility?

Anger, bitterness, victim mentality and quitting tendencies?

Life provides the cup, YOU choose how to fill it.

Today let's work towards filling our cups with gratitude, forgiveness, joy, words of affirmation, resilience, positivity; and kindness, gentleness and love for others.

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On a beautiful summer's day, two English tourists were driving through Wales. At Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwylllantysiliogogoch they stopped for lunch, and one of the tourists asked the waitress. 'Before we order, I wonder if you could settle an argument for us. Can you pronounce where we are, very, very, very slowly?' The girl leaned over and said, 'Burr . gurr . king '

John decided to go skiing with his buddy, Keith. So they loaded up John's minivan and headed north. After driving for a few hours, they got caught in a terrible blizzard. So they pulled into a nearby farm and asked the attractive lady who answered the door if they could spend the night.

"I realize it's terrible weather out there and I have this huge house all to myself, but I'm recently widowed," she explained. "I'm afraid the neighbours will talk if I let you stay in my house."

"Don't worry," John said. "We'll be happy to sleep in the barn. And if the weather breaks, we'll be gone at first light." The lady agreed, and the two men found their way to the barn and settled in for the night.

Come morning, the weather had cleared, and they got on their way. They enjoyed a great weekend of skiing. But about nine months later, John got an unexpected letter from an attorney. It took him a few minutes to figure it out, but he finally determined that it was from the attorney of that attractive widow he had met on the ski weekend.

He dropped in on his friend Keith and asked, "Keith, do you remember that good-looking widow from the farm we stayed at on our ski holiday up north about 9 months ago?"

"Yes, I do," said Keith.

"Did you, er, happen to get up in the middle of the night, go up to the house and pay her a visit?"

"Well, um, yes!" Keith said, a little embarrassed about being found out, "I have to admit that I did."

"And did you happen to give her my name instead of telling her your name?"

Keith's face turned beet red and he said, "Yeah, look, I'm sorry, buddy. I'm afraid I did. Why do you ask?"

"She just died and left me everything."

Despair is a claustrophobic feeling. It's the emotion that says, "Nothing will ever change." It's different than anger or sadness or grief. Despair is twinged with hopelessness.

People who subscribe to power-over leadership often weaponize despair. They count on people giving up on themselves, their work, and each other. I get it. I'm looking at people I know with suspicion. I'm questioning the value of my work. I'm wondering if courage, kindness, and caring for each other simply don't matter anymore. I'm desperate for someone to blame because blame is an effective way to discharge pain and it gives us a sense of counterfeit control.

The research shows that hope is a powerful antidote to despair. What's interesting, however, is that hope is not an emotion (C. R. Snyder). Hope is a cognitive-behavioral process. It's about having a goal, a pathway to achieve that goal, and a sense of agency or "I can do this."

Right now, the thing that is helping the most is micro-dosing hope. I have no access to big hope right now, however, I am asking myself how I can support the people around me. The people on my team, in my community. How can I make sure that, in the maelstrom of my emotions, I stay committed to courage, kindness, and caring for others regardless of the choices made by others? Doing the smallest next right thing is hard AF, but sometimes it's all we've got.

— Brené

**Submitted by Jenny Williams**

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### Love

A very poor man lived with his wife whose hair was so long it touched the waist. One day the wife asked her husband to buy her a comb for her long hair so that it can continue to grow well and to be well groomed. The man felt sorry and said he didn't have money

even to fix the strap of his watch which had just broken. The wife did not insist.

On his way to work the man passed by a watch shop, sold his damaged watch at a low price and went to buy a comb for his wife. He came back home in the evening with a comb in his hand ready to give to his wife. He was surprised to see his wife with very short hair. She had cut and sold her hair and bought a brand new watch for her husband.

Tears flowed simultaneously from their eyes, not for the futility of their actions, but for the reciprocity of their love. Love is when the other person's happiness is more important than your own.

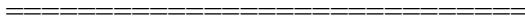
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### **From A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens**

The Grocers! oh, the Grocers! nearly closed, with perhaps two shutters down, or one; but through those gaps such glimpses! It was not alone that the scales descending on the counter made a merry sound, or that the twine and roller parted company so briskly, or that the canisters were rattled up and down like juggling tricks, or even that the blended scents of tea and coffee were so grateful to the nose, or even that the raisins were so plentiful and rare, the almonds so extremely white, the sticks of cinnamon so long and straight, the other spices so delicious, the candied fruits so caked and spotted with molten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-on feel faint and subsequently bilious. Nor was it that the figs were moist and pulpy, or that the French plums blushed in modest tartness from their highly-decorated boxes, or that everything was good to eat and in its Christmas dress; but the customers were all so hurried and so eager in the hopeful promise of the day, that they tumbled up against each other at the door, crashing their wicker baskets wildly, and left their purchases upon the counter, and came running back to fetch them, and committed hundreds of the like mistakes, in the best humour possible; while the Grocer and his people were so frank and

fresh that the polished hearts with which they fastened their aprons behind might have been their own, worn outside for general inspection, and for Christmas daws to peck at if they chose.

But soon the steeples called good people all, to church and chapel, and away they came, flocking through the streets in their best clothes, and with their gayest faces. And at the same time there emerged from scores of bye-streets, lanes, and nameless turnings, innumerable people, carrying their dinners to the baker' shops. The sight of these poor revellers appeared to interest the Spirit very much, for he stood with Scrooge beside him in a baker's doorway, and taking off the covers as their bearers passed, sprinkled incense on their dinners from his torch. And it was a very uncommon kind of torch, for once or twice when there were angry words between some dinner-carriers who had jostled each other, he shed a few drops of water on them from it, and their good humour was restored directly. For they said, it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was. God love it, so it was.



### **A Smile - Bruce Bertram in 1968**

A smile costs nothing, but gives a lot. It enriches those who receive it without making poorer those who give it.

A smile takes only a moment, but the memory of it can last forever.

No one is so rich, or so mighty, that they can get a long without a smile.

And no one is so poor that they cannot be made richer by a smile.

A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters goodwill in business and is the counter sign of friendship.

A smile brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad and is nature's best cure for trouble,

Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen for it is of no value to anyone until it is given away.

Some people are too tired to give a smile so give them one of yours as no one needs a smile so much as he who has no more of his own to give.

# <<< PRAYER AND POETRY CORNER >>>

## The Evergreen prayer

Mary Hathaway

Lord, spring clean me from the inside  
so that your light can shine through.  
Clear away the grime of doubt and fear  
that has clouded the windows of my soul.  
The times of inner darkness, they have  
left their stains, so wash them till they are  
completely gone. The dust of forgetfulness  
and lack of faith, sweep it all away. Scrub,  
rinse and polish me until my mind and spirit  
are thoroughly cleaned and made anew.  
Then, Lord, when you have spring cleaned  
me from the inside, your light will shine  
out from me unhindered into the world.

\*\*\*\*\*

## A Face From The Past

Iris Hesselden

Today I had a fleeting glance  
Someone I used to know,  
A face that I remembered well  
So many moons ago.  
Her hair was grey, her shoulders bent,  
She didn't move as fast,  
And all those busy hectic times  
Came rushing from the past.  
It really was a fleeting glance,  
No time to stand and stare,  
But in that big shop window,  
Just me, reflected there

# Have You Earned Your Tomorrow

*Edgar Guest*

Is anybody happier because you passed his way?  
Does anyone remember that you spoke to him today?  
This day is almost over, and its toiling time is through;  
Is there anyone to utter now a kindly word of you?  
Did you give a cheerful greeting to the friend who came along?  
Or a churlish sort of "Howdy" and then vanish in the throng?  
Were you selfish pure and simple as you rushed along the way,  
Or is someone mighty grateful for a deed you did today?  
Can you say tonight, in parting with the day that's slipping fast,  
That you helped a single brother of the many that you passed?  
Is a single heart rejoicing over what you did or said;  
Does a man whose hopes were fading now with courage look ahead?  
Did you waste the day, or lose it, was it well or sorely spent?  
Did you leave a trail of kindness or a scar of discontent?  
As you close your eyes in slumber do you think that God would say,  
You have earned one more tomorrow by the work you did today?

**Submitted by Anne Smith**

~~~~~

## Winter

William Shakespeare

When icicles hang by the wall  
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,  
And Tom bears logs into the hall,  
And milk comes frozen home in pail;  
When blood is nipt, and ways be foul,  
Tuwhoo!  
Tuwhit! Tuwhoo! A merry note!  
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.



When all around the wind doth blow,  
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,  
And birds sit brooding in the snow,  
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;  
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,  
Then nightly sings the staring owl  
Tuwhoo!  
Tuwhit! Tuwhoo! A merry note!  
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

## Seasons

By Annie Harrop

I am looking through the window  
And I see the change in colour of the trees.  
The Horse Chestnut is the first  
To shed it's greenery and show the  
Crispy, rust coloured fingers pointing to the earth  
Before letting go of its hold on the safety of the branches.  
The weight of the glossy brown fruits have long gone,  
Collected gleefully by the children  
To fight and be crowned conker king.

Then October comes along.  
The weather changes day to day.  
One day the start of a wonderful Indian summer  
The next, wind and rain, turning the umbrellas inside out.  
The willows and the hornbeam and the sycamore  
Do their best to brighten the days  
But dull gold and muddy yellows are mostly what they manage.  
Can't compete with the glories yet to come  
No kings and queens of colour yet.  
Aah, at last the theatre we have been waiting for.

All the roads and gardens and parks and woods  
Give out the glorious colour of the acers and the maples.  
The yellows and golds and reds and pinks  
Halt us in our tracks  
To stand and stare in wonderment  
At God's patchwork quilt  
And when leaves fall to put the ground to bed  
We mourn the shortness of this wonderous rainbow.  
But life moves on, and we look forward to what is coming next.

Hush mummy, come and see,  
Don't make a noise, they might go away.  
The grassy banks below the hedges,  
The patches round the trees on village green,  
The tiny gaps we squeezed them in the dark and damp of the garden.  
The sword like leaves protecting the elegant stem  
Which holds the tiny delicate flower.  
The Angel brought the snowdrop to Adam and Eve.  
Take these little flowers  
Take them as a sign of hope.



The older we get; the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.

\*\*\*\*\*

Some people try to turn back their oldometers.  
Not me! I want people to know why I look this way.  
I've travelled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved.

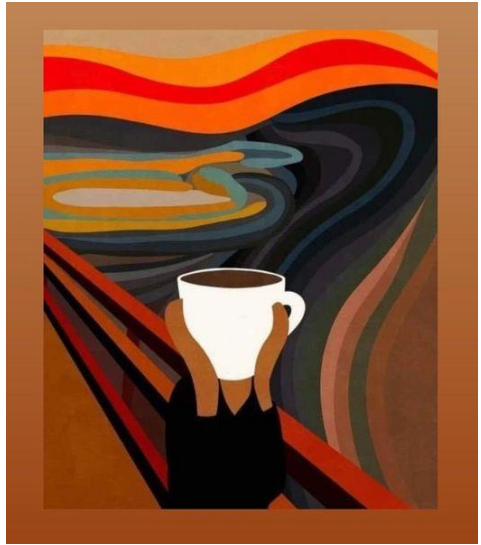
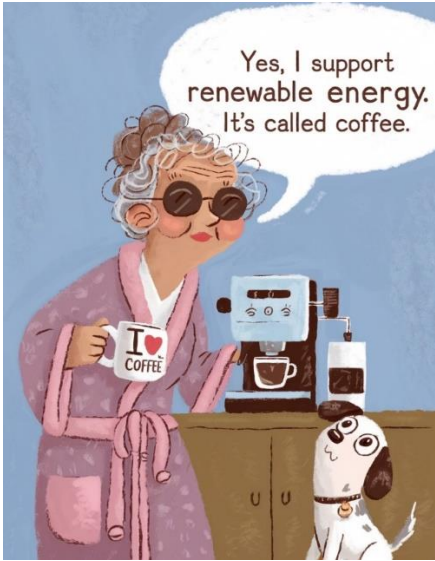
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One of the many things no one tells you about ageing is that it is such a  
nice change from being young.

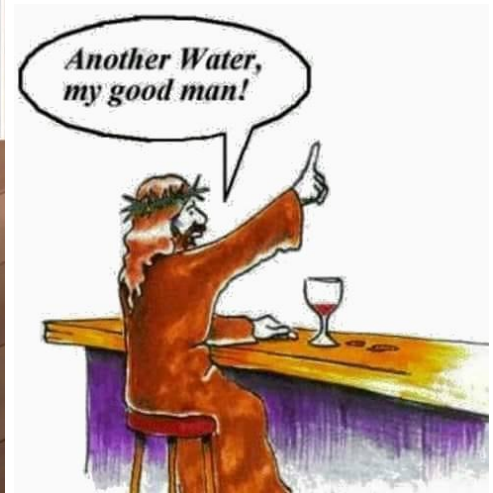
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First you forget names, then you forget faces. Then you forget to pull  
up your zipper...it's worse when you forget to pull it down.

# <<<<<<CARTOON CORNER>>>>>>



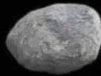
Long ago exactly one cat died from being fed four minutes past feeding time and cats have told their children of this for 3,000 generations



what doesn't kill you gives you a lot of unhealthy coping mechanisms and a really dark sense of humour

## HAPPINESS IS

**I always carry a pebble with me to throw at people who sing Christmas songs in October. I call it my jingle bell rock.**



...a book in your hand and a dog by your side.

If the person who named Walkie Talkies named everything

Stamps = Lickie Stickie

Defibrillators = Hearty Starty

Bumble bees = Fuzzy Buzzy

Pregnancy test = Maybe Baby

Fork = Stabby Grabby

Socks = Feetie Heatie

Hippo = Floatie Bloatie

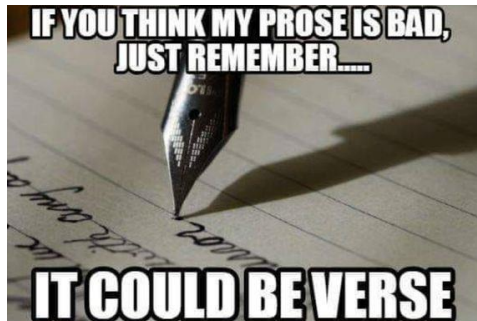
Nightmare = Screamy Dreamy

**WHEN COMFORTING A  
GRAMMAR NAZI**



**I ALWAYS SAY SOFTLY,  
“THERE, THEIR, THEY’RE”**

The past, the present  
and the future  
walked into a bar.  
It was tense.



I inquired at the Gym today about personal trainers they make available for an extra per-hour fee. I was very disappointed to learn that for that expensive fee they still required you to do the exercises yourself.

# 11 LIFE-IMPROVING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS LEARNED FROM CATS

1. Practice death-stare

2. Gratuitous napping

3. Accept how cute I am

4. Smack annoying people

5. More cardboard forts

6. Be unashamed of butthole

7. Reward friends with corpses of enemies

8. Groom more

9. Rub face on soft things

10. Sleep where I'm comfortable

11. Care less what stupid humans think



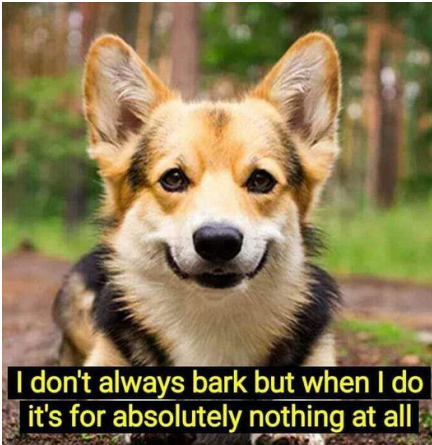
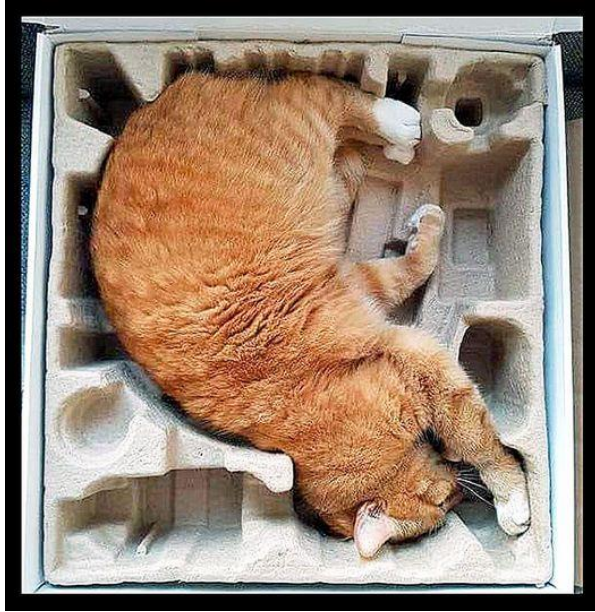
I hope everyone's hungry. I've made sand witches...



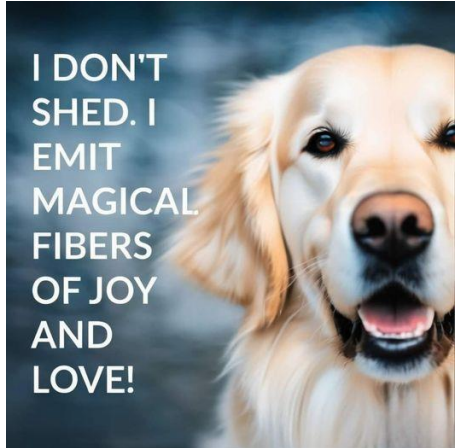
A pirate ship carrying red paint crashed into a pirate ship carrying purple paint. Both crews were marooned.



anyone available to go scream in the woods with me? it's fun, free, and the trees like to gossip about us afterwards



I don't always bark but when I do  
it's for absolutely nothing at all



I DON'T  
SHED. I  
EMIT  
MAGICAL  
FIBERS  
OF JOY  
AND  
LOVE!

I hate when I go out in  
public, and the public  
is there.

Paper jam is the least delicious of all the preserves.

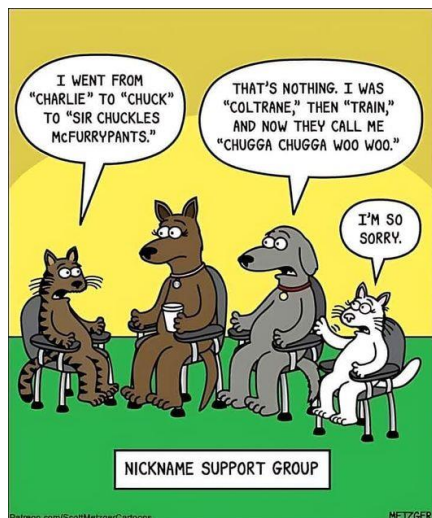
We got a new kitten, but I think our cat  
got a new kitten



I visited a monastery and as I walked past the kitchen I saw a man frying chips. I asked him "Are you the friar?" He replied "No, I'm the chip monk..."

The word "homeowner" has the word "meow" in it. Good luck pronouncing it correctly ever again.

You're welcome.





friend: "how's life?"

me: "everything's on track thanks"

the track:



Best photo-bomb ever. Definitely gets my seal of approval.



**I'm fine**

*(phr.)* The 2nd most told lie.  
The 1st one is "I have read and agreed to the terms and conditions."

24 hrs



48 hrs



72 hrs



73 hrs



Monday - Greg

Tuesday - Ian

Wednesday - Greg

Thursday - Ian

Friday - Greg

Saturday - Ian

Sunday - Greg

The Gregorian calendar

**Thought for the Day**

The world is not going to end today



It's already tomorrow in Australia

**CLOTHES THAT ARE TOO DIRTY FOR THE CLOSET, BUT TOO CLEAN FOR THE LAUNDRY: WELCOME TO THE CHAIR.**




# <<<< RECIPES >>>>

## Warming Winter Soups



### **Lentil and Bacon soup**

A tasty and filling lentil and bacon soup that takes just 20 minutes from start to finish. Make and freeze in portions to take to work.



**By** The Hairy Bikers

Preparation time **less than 30 mins** Cooking time **10 to 30 mins** Serves **6**

### **Ingredients**

- 1 tsp oil
- 75g/2¾oz smoked back bacon, trimmed of all fat and finely chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 red pepper, finely chopped
- 1.5 litres/3lb 5oz chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 small sweet potato, peeled and finely diced
- 1 garlic clove
- 200g/7oz red lentils
- large sprig thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

### **Method**

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Add the bacon, onion and red pepper. Cook on a low heat for 5 minutes, or until the vegetables have started to soften.
2. Boil a kettle and use this to make your stock – or if using fresh stock, bring it to the boil in a separate saucepan while the vegetables are cooking.
3. Add the sweet potato, garlic and lentils to the bacon and vegetables. Stir for a minute, then pour over the just-boiled stock and add the herbs.
4. Season with salt and pepper. Return to the boil – this should be more or less instant – then turn down to a medium heat, cover, and cook for between 15-20 minutes, or until the red lentils are tender.
5. Remove the herbs. Blend using a stick-blender if preferred – or you can leave the soup as is. Serve.

+++++



## Leek and potato soup

A smooth, creamy leek and potato soup that's ready in 15 minutes and full of flavour. Make it into a meal with plenty of bread and butter.

**By The BBC Food team**

Preparation time **less than 30 mins** Cooking time **10 to 30 mins**

Serves **Serves 6**

### Ingredients

- 1 tbsp [vegetable oil](#)
- 1 [onion](#), sliced
- 225g/8oz [potatoes](#), cubed

- 2 medium [leeks](#), sliced
- 1.2 litres/2 pints [vegetable stock](#)
- 150ml/5fl oz double cream or [crème fraîche](#)
- salt and freshly ground [black pepper](#)

#### Method

1. Heat the oil in a large pan and add the onions, potatoes and leeks. Cook for 3–4 minutes over a medium heat until starting to soften.
2. Add the vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Season with salt and pepper. Simmer for 10 minutes until the vegetables are tender.
3. Whizz with a hand blender or in a blender until smooth. Reheat in a clean pan, stir in the cream or crème fraîche. Heat through and serve.

+++++



## Creamy Parsnip Soup

By [Becca Spry](#)

This easy, creamy parsnip soup is made extra-filling with the addition of chunky croûtons. Start with the basic 4-ingredient recipe, and take it from there. Add the gruyère if you want a touch of luxury, or try adding some cooked ham hock or crisp fried bacon.

For this recipe you will need a blender.

Preparation time **less than 30 mins** Cooking time **10 to 30 mins**

**Serves 4 Vegetarian**

## Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 600g/1lb 5oz parsnips, cut into 1cm/½-inch cubes
- ½ tsp dried red chilli flakes, plus extra to serve
- 1 litre/1¾ pints hot vegetable stock
- 200ml/7fl oz double cream
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

## For the croûtons

- 3 thick slices good bread, such as sourdough, cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 55g/2oz Gruyère cheese, finely grated (optional)

## Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6.
2. Heat the oil in a heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat. Add the garlic and parsnips and fry for 4–5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until coloured. Add the chilli and fry for 1 minute.
3. Pour in the stock, stir and bring to a simmer. Cook with the lid on for 12–15 minutes, or until the parsnips are tender.
4. Meanwhile, for the croûtons, put the bread on a baking tray in a single layer and drizzle with the oil. Sprinkle over the cheese, if using, and season with salt and pepper. Bake for 5–10 minutes, or until crisp and golden.
5. Remove the soup from the heat and blitz with a stick blender until smooth. Return to the heat, stir in the cream and heat through. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve the soup topped with the croûtons and a sprinkling of chilli flakes if you wish.

## Recipe Tips

This parsnip soup will freeze brilliantly (without the croûtons) for up to three months.

To make croûtons in an air fryer, simply toss the bread cubes in the oil and cook at 160C in the air fryer for 4 minutes, shaking them halfway through. Sprinkle over the cheese, if using, for a further minute of cooking.

+++++



## Tomato soup

Mary Berry's tomato soup is quick, easy and delicious. In fact, it is one of her favourite family recipes, as she always have the ingredients in the cupboard. With no onions to chop or tomatoes to skin, it really is ready in ten minutes!



By Mary Berry

Preparation time **less than 30 mins** Cooking time **10 to 30 mins**

**Serves 6-8**

### Ingredients

- 6 sun-dried tomatoes in oil
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 3 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 500ml/18fl oz chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 tbsp caster sugar
- 150ml/5fl oz full-fat milk
- 150ml/5fl oz double cream
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3–4 tsp pesto, to serve

### Method

1. Set a large, deep pan over a medium heat and add 1 tablespoon of oil from the sun-dried tomatoes. Add the garlic and stir-fry for a few seconds, or until it just starts to colour.

2. Add the sun-dried and tinned tomatoes, stock and sugar and bring to the boil, stirring constantly. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, then cover with a lid, reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Remove from the heat and, using a hand blender, blend the soup in the pan. Stir in the milk and cream and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper before heating through on the hob.
4. Serve hot with ½ teaspoon pesto swirled on the top of each bowl of soup.

### **Recipe Tips**

If covered and chilled in the fridge, this dish can be made up to 3 days ahead.

Without the milk and cream, and if in a freezer proof bag or container, this dish freezes very well. Defrost and reheat until piping hot, then stir in the milk and cream before serving.

The sugar brings out the flavour of the tomatoes and helps balance their acidity – sometimes they can be a little bitter.

The basil pesto adds a lovely flavour, but this soup is still very good without it.