

# Stanton House

**Mary said, “yes”  
... and the impossible became possible.**

As we approach Christmas and our thoughts turn to this amazing time of grace in the Christian calendar, the above words present Christian believers with an extraordinary challenge. A “Yes” spoken out to God and, as a result, the biggest contradiction in the history of the universe resulted: the Almighty Creator God chose to confine Himself for a time to the womb of a young teenage girl, a girl whom He Himself had created. What a mystery. What an act of utter grace and humility. That is the message of Christmas. Perhaps each of us can ask ourselves the question, “Am I prepared, like Mary, to say ‘yes’ to God ... wherever, whenever and despite the cost?”

Our retreat house on the outskirts of the somewhat idyllic Oxfordshire village of Stanton St John is a place of prayer and restoration for the many who pass through our doors. We thank God that He is in this place and that He meets with our guests, despite the somewhat frenetic activity that goes on behind the scenes. As you can imagine, the jobs around the



*Midwinter at Stanton House*

House are many and hugely varied: cleaning toilets, ordering food and cooking for guests, “attacking” the mountain of dishes in wash-up in the Kitchen, assisting guests at Reception, keeping control of the finances, tending the gardens, sorting out electrics, fixing showers, preparing bedrooms, dusting and polishing ... the list is simply endless! It’s because of this that we have so appreciated the support from local Volunteers like Margaret Evans, Theresa Saunders and Greg and Celia Heap who come in when we need them simply to be an extra pair of hands in the garden, helping with washing dishes, cooking, laundry, helping with the simple refurbishment of bedrooms. They’re such a blessing and are a God-given source of encouragement to us when the inevitable weariness kicks in.

Adrian and Alison have put hours and hours of work into what is now a completed project: the Fruit Garden. This garden is a quiet space where guests can sit amongst the fruit trees and raised beds filled with flowers and grasses, looking out to the sheep in the next-door field. This project has been a challenging one physically and we’re grateful for the tremendous energy that both Adrian and Alison have expended in terms of carpentry, digging, planting and harvesting this delightful part of the Stanton House garden.



*Alison in our new Fruit Garden*

For those of us on the Stanton House Team, our Visitors’ Book is always a source of encouragement. As we look back at the comments that our guests have made, we realise that God is indeed present here and at work. “I came tired and in need, and leave refreshed and restored”. Refreshment and restoration is a

common thread running through the comments. "Enjoyed everything. Food was outstanding. Prayer house brilliant. Mission accomplished!!"... a pithy comment which says it all!

Just one or two brief comments as we close. For those of you who are familiar with Facebook, do go onto our Stanton House webpage every now and then and click on our [Facebook](#) link. Liz has the task of updating our page, which she does at various intervals. Our [bookings for 2019](#) have already opened and are filling up quickly. We love to welcome returning guests - as well as new ones - so do email or phone to make a booking for the Prayer Room, for a Day or Residential Group or an Individual Guest. Our annual [Carol Service](#) will be held on 19 December after which the [House will close](#) until Monday 7 January 2019. Our [Wi-Fi](#) is being upgraded at the moment so hopefully Internet access should improve in the future.

As we end, may we leave with you one or two things for which we thank God, as well as some prayer requests ...

**WE THANK GOD FOR (just some of the many things) ...**

- \* our young volunteers, Reka and Abel (both from Hungary), Marianne (from Germany) and Amy (from South Africa);
- \* our Trustees: Charlie Cleverly, Pam Edmonds-Seal, Annie Payne, Dave Portway, David Saunder, Ian Dennis, Heather Elbourn;
- \* the completion of the Fruit Garden;
- \* our local volunteers;
- \* God's presence and restoring work in this place.



**PLEASE PRAY ....**

- \* for God to continue His healing and restoring in both our guests *Abel and Marianne* and our Team;
- \* for our Trustees, that God will give them godly wisdom as they guide the work of Stanton House;
- \* for physical and emotional strength for all of us who work here.

**Adrian and Alison, Mike and Liz, Jonathan and Alison**

**PS** Many guests will be pleased to know that we now have a new card machine so hopefully that will smooth the ease of payments and financial gifts. We also have new bank details which are as follows: Stanton House Trust; Bank: HSBC; Account Number: 21373447; Sort Code: 402401.

As 2018 marks the House's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary we thought it would be good to initiate a fund accepting £40 for further much-needed improvements. We're so grateful to those who have already responded. Thank you!

If you're receiving this newsletter through the mail and you do have an email address we'd be grateful if you'd let us know so that we can send our newsletters in future to you via email.