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THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

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*News from Whittle & Clayton Brook*

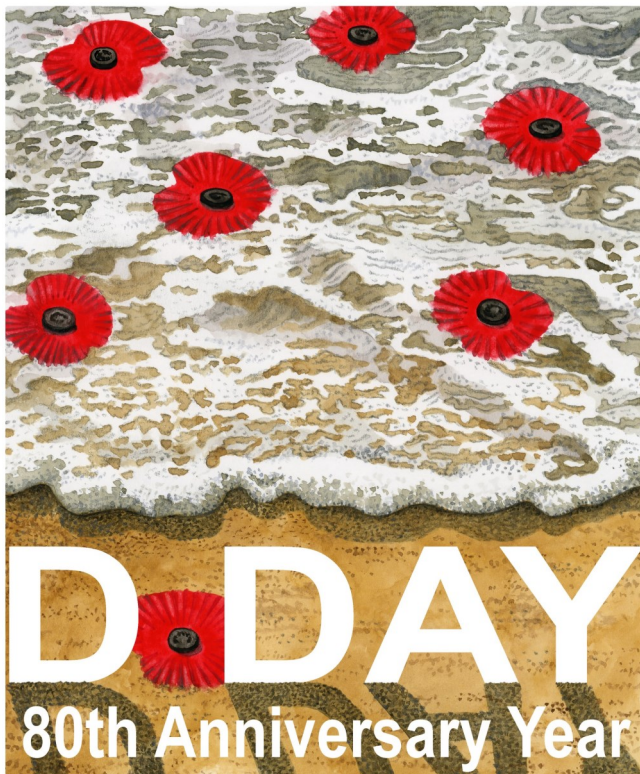
# PARISH GAZETTE

Please accept this  
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**NOVEMBER  
2024**

*Speak out, Reach out, Gather in for Christ*

**VICAR**

**Rev Philip Venables**  
St John's Vicarage  
Preston Road  
Whittle le Woods  
Chorley PR6 7PS  
Tel: 01257 515141  
*(day off Friday)*



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**CHURCHWARDENS**

Bryn Williams  
Gill Menhennet

**READERS**

Kathy Bigio  
Gill Lancaster

**PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER**

Carol Wright 07522 985363  
safeguarding.stjohnswlw@outlook.com

**WEBSITE:**

[www.stjohnsandclaytonbrook.uk](http://www.stjohnsandclaytonbrook.uk)

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### Dear Friends

A few days ago Kim Leadbetter's bill for the legalising of assisted dying (in reality, assisted suicide) came before parliament and later this month it will be debated and voted on. Among much of what is being said I found a short piece by Glen Scrivener particularly helpful and these few words from me are based on his argument.

When Noah and his family came out of the ark, this is part of what the Lord said to him:

*For your lifeblood [i.e. a fellow human being] I will require a reckoning. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.*

This is the basis of what is often called '**the sanctity of life.**' That is not itself a biblical phrase, but it encapsulates the notion that human life has a dignity and a value all of its own because people, not animals, are made in the image of God. The sanctity of life preserves the incredibly important point that all human life shares this dignity and value and worth, whether that be newborn baby, strong young adult, old frail person, disabled, damaged, depressed . . . every single person is equally dignified as being made in God's image. Therefore the concept of the sanctity of life is like an on/off switch. You either have it or you don't. You cannot be slightly made in God's image, or more God's image than someone else; you either are or you aren't. Therefore we have no more right to take the life of someone who is terminally ill than we do of a healthy child.

The arguments for assisted dying, by contrast, depend on the notion of **the quality of life**, and that is not an on/off switch but a dimmer switch. You can have a greater or lesser quality of life, according to any number of variables, such as health or wealth, and at some point someone can decide that your quality of life falls below the threshold at which it becomes worth living. Although such language is rarely used, it is to say, in effect, that some of us are more human than others, and therefore have a greater right to life than others. And once you open yourself up to this notion that depends on any number of subjective criteria, the scope for mistakes and abuse is terrifying.

GS made the potent observation that once you depend on the criterion of quality of life rather than sanctity of life, it is not that you then become in danger of entering a slippery slope: you are *already on* that slope because the very notion itself is slippery. And you only have to look at what is happening in Belgium and the Netherlands and Canada and the much-vaunted example of Oregon to see how fast and how far we slide.

The desire to end a painful life is completely understandable. Nearly everyone's motive for supporting this move is a noble one: compassion. And of course (I hope!) we all feel deep compassion for those who are suffering and will do all we can to alleviate it. But there are far, far better ways than by deliberately ending their lives.

Please be praying for our government, parliament, doctors and lawmakers at this time.

**Your brother in Christ**

**Philip**

## Operation Christmas Child 2024



### IT'S TIME FOR OUR SHOE BOX APPEAL

Since 1990, more than 124 million boys and girls in over 150 countries have experienced God's love through the power of simple shoebox gifts from Operation Christmas Child.

A small shoebox can have a big impact on a child, who may never have received a gift before. Be a part of changing children's lives all over the world in Jesus' name through the power of a simple shoebox gift with Operation Christmas Child.

Each year, our two churches support this charity and have donated 100's of boxes to this worthy cause. With your help we are aiming to donate more boxes this year! Look out for the preprinted shoeboxes (50p) in church in October, or decorate and fill your own empty shoebox.

#### What goes into the box is fun to pack!

Decide whether you want to pack a box for a boy or a girl, and for which age group (2-4, 5-9 or 10-14 years) and remember to tick or stick a label on the outside of the box indicating your choice. Please include a £5 donation for postage inside the box or pay online at the link below and place the bar code slip in the box. A photo of your family and/or a Christmas card are also nice additions. Then return the box to church by **Sunday 17th November 2024.**

For ideas about what to put in a shoebox (and labels) pick up a leaflet in church or visit:

<https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/what-goes-in-my-shoebox/>

**Please do not include: Toothpaste, sweets, lotions and liquids;** used or damaged items; war-related items (e.g. toy guns, model soldiers, military vehicles etc.); seeds, gum, chocolate or food items; religious or political literature; medicines, aerosol cans, knives, sharp or fragile items. Items packed from this list will be removed from the shoeboxes.



If you can't get to church to collect a pre-printed box or return one, then please either ask a friend who attends church to help you, or let one of us know in person or by email.

If you choose to build a shoebox on line (£25) then please let Gill L or Kathy know so that it can be included in our grand total.

**Contacts: Gill Lancaster at St Johns or Kathy Bigio at Clayton Brook**

**DEADLINE FOR RETURN OF SHOEBOXES TO CHURCH IS SUNDAY 17th NOVEMBER**

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Our next Mission Breakfast will be on  
Saturday 16th November  
8.30am to 10.00am

**Raising Awareness of Modern Day Slavery**  
with speaker Sion Hall

Coffee & croissants will be available @ £2 – pay on arrival.  
Come and hear about the hidden problem of modern day slavery  
with speaker Sion Hall, from the Clewer Initiative.

The meeting will begin at 8:30am with  
coffee and croissants followed by a talk by Sion at 9am. Sion will  
give us an overview of the work of the Clewer Initiative, raise our  
awareness of the issues facing the Lancashire area and talk  
about what is being done to address these issues.

**The venue for the mission breakfast is: Clayton Brook  
Community Church, Great Greens Lane,  
Clayton Brook, PR5 8HL.**

**All welcome – for catering purposes please sign up on the  
sheet at the back of church to let us know you are coming.**

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**Beehive mother and toddler  
group meet on Monday  
mornings at Whittle le Woods  
Village Hall  
Play, chat, stories, singing  
There's room for everyone  
See Christine Whiteside**



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# COME AND BUY HOME-MADE CRAFTS



## ART & CRAFT Sale

in Clayton Brook Church

# Saturday 16 November

## 10.30am—2pm

Knitting & crochet items, books,  
paintings & drawings, decorated china &  
glasses, greeting cards, cake stall,  
pictures for children to make

Please come and buy what others have made



## **Ewan & Jamie in ZAMBIA**

Jamie and I are both active members of St Johns church and this summer, we were fortunate enough to be able to go on a Christian mission to Zambia with St Michaels school, working closely with Mission Direct on providing different schools and charities with donated clothes, food and new facilities (which our team helped to build). Our journey to Africa included 13 other students and 5 teachers from our school and we worked with three people from Mission Direct: Mark, Allison and Geoff.

Jamie and I both felt that our experience in Zambia was life-changing and eye-opening, as we saw with our own eyes the living conditions of people living in Lusaka (the capital of Zambia), and it made our team realise how fortunate we are in this country. Whilst we have access to clean water, most Zambians do not. Most of us have a stable income to provide for our families, however many people in Zambia struggle to even buy food for their children. So, to help in any little way we could, we donated some food to multiple families that we talked to.

Our work included building toilet blocks and painting the school buildings, which helped many school students in Zambia. It was very difficult and tiring to work in the sweltering sun all day, so luckily, we did have some time off to visit Livingstone. After a long 8-hour coach journey to Livingstone from Chamba Valley (where we were staying for the bulk of our two weeks in Zambia) we finally made it. Whilst we were there, we were fortunate enough to see the beautiful Victoria Falls (which the locals called “The Smoke That Thunders”) and got to see the African animals in their natural habitat which was just amazing. Finally, we headed back to England. This is a trip that Me and Jamie will never forget, and we’d like to thank everyone at St Johns and Clayton Brook churches for their prayers, support and kind donations, which all went to the Mission Direct charity.

***Ewan Dawson***





## The Suffering Church - Being a Christian

As we continue to look at countries throughout the world where being a follower of Jesus is not just difficult but dangerous, this month we will look at four more countries, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia and Maldives whilst we remain thankful for the peace and stability that we enjoy.

### Lebanon

The earliest evidence of human existence in Lebanon, dates back some 5,000 years and it was famed in the Bible for its wood. Today its economic, social and political institutions are in collapse, exemplified by the terrible explosion in Beirut harbour in 2020, from which the capital is still recovering. Sadly from the 1970's onwards it has been used by external forces for often proxy conflict. A civil war lasting from 1975 – 1989 still casts a shadow and Lebanon is now home to some 1.5 million refugees, mainly Palestinian and from the more recent war in Syria, including many Christians. Even today we see it caught up in the war between Iran backed Hezbollah and Israel adding to the troubled state of the country.

Lebanon can play a key role in any peace talks in the Middle East, so please **pray for wisdom for the Lebanese leaders, for an end to the economic crisis and corruption and for bringing about peaceful relations with Israel.**

### Libya

Sadly Libya, another country with a long history was an early centre of Christianity but has never recovered for the overthrow of Colonel Gaddafi in 2011 and has become infamous for slavery and people trafficking in recent years. The precise number of Christians in the country is not known, although a small number follow Jesus, at tremendous risk to themselves and their families. Its no surprise that Libya is number 3 on the Open Doors Worldwide Watch list.

**Libya remains deeply unstable, and prayer is needed for political stability, an end to people trafficking and protection for the small number of Libyan Christians.**

### Malaysia

In Malaysia, a majority Muslim country with some 10% of its population Christian, every ethnic Malay is assumed to be Muslim, as defined by the Malaysian constitution. This means that any ethnic Malay who chooses to follow Jesus is at risk of being punished under Sharia law. Converts also face tremendous pressure from family and their communities. Anyone talking about Jesus openly is likely to be questioned by the authorities, making witnessing for Jesus very difficult. That's why Malaysia is number 49 on the World Watch List.

**Please for a revelation of Jesus, by the Holy Spirit, to ethnic Malays and for inspiration and courage for all Christians to stand for Jesus and serve God in their daily lives.**

### Maldives

What do you think about when the Maldives is mentioned, a paradise holiday destination in the Indian Ocean, white sands and beautiful clear seas? Not if you are a Christian, especially a convert from Islam. The Maldives declares itself 100% Muslim so being a citizen of the Maldives means being a Muslim. Those who leave Islam must keep their faith secret because if discovered they could be stripped of their citizenship, isolated from society and lose any State benefits.

Foreign Christians are forbidden from sharing their faith with Maldivians, and all local Christians have to meet in secret. No wonder that Maldives is number 18 on the World Watch List.

**Please pray that secret believers will be able to access the Bible in their own language and that Christians will be encouraged by knowing that they are part of a global, praying family.**

***Pray that in all these countries the people who persecute followers of Jesus will come to realise that it is Jesus who is the Truth, the Life and the Way for themselves.***

### A Prayer from Tearfund

***“Let me be Your hands and feet among those in need of Your Divine providence. Not to be only a provider but to serve in what You have provided. Not to be seen but to cause those I serve to see You. Not to be commended, but to cause them to glorify You”***

Please also pray that the Holy Spirit will give wisdom to the Barnabas Trustees and the Charity Commission as they sort out their internal difficulties and not affect the work they do in so many countries.

Jesus' followers in these countries remain faithful to Him in all circumstances and are helped in so many ways by the three organisations that our church supports, Barnabas Fund, Open Doors and Tearfund. We too can support them, contacting them on their websites [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org), [www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org) or [www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org). Your donations will make a real difference to lives of Christians across the world, sometime the difference between life and death.



Please continue to pray for the re-ordering of St John's church. Ask God to give each member of the re-ordering team wisdom and discernment, ask Him to sustain them and uplift them in perseverance to overcome the challenges ahead.



May the Lord minister to our Church family and the families in our community who will benefit from this re-ordering.



Stir up the faith in our congregation Lord, so that "we walk by faith and not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5v7 ESV



Increase in our prayer, desire and longing for this re-ordering to be completed soon.



And may there be joy in the House of the Lord.  
 "Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain."  
 Psalm 127v1

Don't forget the church monthly prayer meeting on the first Tuesday of each month.

And the church prayer diary is sent out by email every month.

God cannot answer prayers if they are not prayed.

### Please remember the LOVE FUND

The Love Fund consists of donations of money from members of both our churches. This can be used for anyone in our church or parish who is in need of help. If you are in financial need for whatever purpose:

shopping, bills, essentials etc then get in touch with Philip and he will be happy to help you. tel: 01257 515141

email: [info@stjohnsandclaytonbrook.uk](mailto:info@stjohnsandclaytonbrook.uk)



**Villagers in the Outer Hebrides are taking on Tesco** over its plans to open its Stornoway branch seven days a week.

Over 1,300 people have signed a petition demanding the store on the Isle of Lewis remains closed on Sundays. Written by resident Alasdair MacLeod, it says the town “cherished memories of island Sundays as a guaranteed day of rest, relaxation and no work - a precious day of family time and worship” and warned that this is “at risk due to the concept of seven-day trading creeping into our culture”.

Locals are taking on the supermarket giant after a decision by the Western Isles Council to give Tesco permission to open the store seven days a week and allowing it to sell alcohol on each of the days. However, Tesco is obliged to consult its staff on the plans and while this is happening local people are taking on the challenge to keep Sundays sacred.

They argue that while Sunday shopping may seem like a convenience at first, the ripple effect leaves workers with less time to rest, less time for family and church worship and a lower quality of life.

Quoting from Matthew 11:28 “Jesus said ‘Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest’”, the petition says people “are not just standing for a day off - we are standing for the glory of Christ, our Christian tradition, our community spirit, and our right to be different!”.

People on Lewis are mainly Presbyterian, belonging to the Free Church or the Church of Scotland. The Catholic church and Scottish Episcopal Church are among other denominations making up the island’s Christian community. The Sabbath is generally observed with most shops and licensed premises closed to the island’s 20,000 inhabitants.

Rev Kenneth Stewart of the Reformed Presbyterian Church told The Telegraph: “The Sabbath is His. And I, for one, intend to keep it that way.

“It’s a feature of life here, that even those who are not committed Christians or churchgoers still value the distinctive nature of the Lord’s Day.”

Tesco said no staff member would be forced to work on the Sabbath if the plans go ahead.



**SHOULD SHOPS BE OPEN ON SUNDAY? WHAT DO YOU THINK? Replies to the Editor please**

### **EMERGENCY PRAYER CHAIN**

The prayer chain has now moved to WhatsApp.

It is always available for anyone who would like urgent, emergency prayer for themselves or their family or friends.

If you know someone who is a member of the prayer chain, please ask them to put in your prayer request.

Our prayer chain takes many calls. Do not be anxious, concerned or troubled.....

*‘The Lord is near to all who call on Him’ (Psalm 145v18)‘*

*Cast all your anxiety onto Him, because He cares for you’ (1Peter 5v7)*

## Come, Listen , Ask

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2024

What a night! How amazing to see and listen to hear Jesus at work in lives. The evening, from the seed in my head months ago, was watered and nurtured by God Himself, of this I have no doubt. During Prison Fellowship's National Prisons week in October, as volunteers, we are asked to make it known to our churches and to pray for the lives of prisoners, victims and prison staff. The National prisons week ended on the 19<sup>th</sup> October, it was at this point, I knew this was the moment God wanted to reach out to His people. Come, Listen and Ask was born. We put out 100 chairs and there were only a few not filled.

The evening opened with Stephen Hawkins the Regional manager for Prison Fellowship who explained the work that Prison Fellowship do. Then Lyn Connolly, who some people will remember from a few years ago, spoke about the night her son was murdered and how she came to forgive the offenders. We listened to three ex offenders tell their journeys of their encounters with Jesus and how Jesus has turned their lives around and is now using them mightily in His Kingdom. We heard from a former drug addict and her battles to overcome the habit.

So true is the verse in John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

To finish the evening we listened to Il Divo sing ... Amazing Grace. God touched every heart that evening.

What a mighty conquering lion we have in Jesus, all the Glory to Him.

With grateful thanks to the mission team at St Johns who donated a sum whereupon I was able to buy all the refreshments, and donate a sum to Prison Fellowship and also to Church on the Street in Burnley.

Big, big thank you for all the helpers at Clayton Brook church, refreshment ladies and car park attendants

### **We Came, Listened and Asked.**

God Bless Anne Harris

As a footnote, the next day a person who had come along to the evening was so touched and was prompted to write the poem below:

#### **CHANGE (the LIGHT) by Heather Cox**

**Jesus Christ can change you  
Of that, there is no doubt;  
The change, it starts within your heart  
Change from the inside out.**

**A darkened cell, a dark filled heart  
A man begins to read;  
Reading in the Holy Word  
The Light, shows him his need.**

**This man knew only darkness  
This life lived though as night;  
But as he reads GOD's living word  
To his heart, GOD shined the Light.**

**The Light he saw was JESUS  
Shining through the dark;  
Pouring out GOD's truth and love  
And cleansing every part.**

**This man who lived dependant  
On all the world can give;  
Now free from all those shackles  
Now free to fully live.**

**YES! Jesus Christ can change you  
And that's surely what He did;  
He changed a man, transformed man  
Who once in darkness hid.**

Thank you to the girls from Sam & Charlotte's dancing school who put out 100 chairs in Clayton Brook Church ready for the Prison evening in October, and almost every chair was taken. Such was the turn out of people for this unusual and exceptional evening. We heard some amazing stories of the amazing grace of God. Lyn Connolly, whose son was murdered some years ago spoke of forgiveness and of God's faithfulness and guidance, and how it is so important to trust God because both families and prisoners are damaged people. An ex-prisoner/drug addict said that he was still a work in progress, but when he started going to the prison chapel he felt the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Another ex-prisoner/armed robbery had been writing to a Christian lady through the Prison Fellowship. When he was released they carried on writing and now they are married. Another story of God's restoration. We heard how God works through the Church on the Street in Burnley to provide the support that prisoners need on leaving jail. Thank you to Anne Harris for organising the whole event. It was definitely an evening to remember—Cath

## The poppies of Remembrance Sunday



In late 1914, WW1 erupted across Northern France and Flanders. Great swathes of previously green fields and forests were blasted and bombed, leaving them bleak and barren, with seemingly every living thing destroyed.

But then in the Spring of 1915, something beautiful began to come out of all the destruction. Tens of thousands of bright red Flanders poppies began to put out tentative shoots across the endless vistas of mud. These resilient little flowers had actually flourished in the middle of so much chaos and destruction, because their seeds grow when exposed to sunlight, through disturbances to soil.

We all know that these endless fields of cheerful poppies, growing in the midst of such misery and destruction, were what inspired the Canadian doctor, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, to write the now famous poem 'In Flanders Fields'.

And it was McCrae's poem which inspired an American academic named Moina Michael to adopt the poppy in memory of those who had fallen in the war. She got it adopted as an official symbol of Remembrance across the United States, and worked with others who were trying to do the same in Canada, Australia, and the UK.

A French woman, Anna Guérin who was in the UK in 1921, caught the same vision, and planned to sell the poppies in London. There she met Earl Haig, the founder of the Royal British Legion, who was persuaded to adopt the poppy as its emblem in the UK.

The Royal British Legion, which had been formed in 1921, ordered nine million poppies and sold them on 11 November that year. Ever since then, the red poppy has been a symbol of Remembrance, of support for the Armed Forces community, and also of hope for a peaceful future.

### WAR and PEACE

John Lennon wrote: 'Imagine there's no countries, It isn't hard to do, Nothing to kill or die for And no religion too Imagine all the people living life in peace.' But on Remembrance Sunday, we should reflect on war past and present and consider the real way to peace.

The way of war: 'What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill.' (James 4:1-2). James reminds us that war has its basis in our own hearts, with the selfish desires that exploit, bully and kill others to get our own way. Sadly, when nations allow these inner selfish attitudes to determine their policy the result is war. Only God can establish true peace.

The way of peace: Isaiah, 2,700 years before John Lennon, also imagined a future of peace without any war: 'They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.' (Isaiah 2:4).

Only Jesus, the Prince of Peace, can bring true peace to our lives and world. Jesus did not experience the horror of battle, but He did die an horrific death at the hand of the Romans. He gave His life sacrificially, as He took God's anger at our sin on Himself and went on to conquer death in His resurrection. He did this out of love for us and calls us to love others in the same way: 'Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.' (John 15:13).

How can we demonstrate such love ourselves? We can be confident in God's plan to bring an end to all wars when Jesus returns.

### Stories of answered prayer during World War II

King George VI called the UK to a national day of prayer on seven critical occasions throughout WWII, and each time, those prayers were met with extraordinary outcomes. This series, produced in cooperation with the Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer, weaves together firsthand accounts from those who lived through the war, insights from their families, and analysis from historians, offering a powerful look at the divine intervention during the conflict.

The series is produced by Premier, and can be heard at:

<https://www.premier.plus/podcasts/when-we-prayed-miracles-of-world-war-ii/> or <https://www.eternalwall.org.uk/news/142/when-we-prayed-miracles-of-world-war-ii>





## **Something to make you think and smile (hopefully)**

### **Tact**

An office supervisor called in one of her team to give him the bad news that he was being released. She started the conversation with "Mr Jones, I really don't know how we are going to get along without you, but starting Monday, we're going to try".

### **Talk**

Some people would say more if they talked less.

### **Teachers**

A teacher lecturing on good habits told his class that "anything you repeat twenty times is yours for ever". From the back of the class came a whispered voice "Sean , Sean, Sean, Sean....."

### **Temptation**

A Native American elder once described his own inner struggles. "Inside of me are two dogs. One of the dogs is mean and evil. The other is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time.

When asked which dog wins, he reflected for a moment and replied "The one I feed most"

### **Thanksgiving**

An elderly man in Florida rang his son in New York and said to him "I hate to tell you this but your mother and I have decided we can no longer stand each other and we've decided to get a divorce. I'm telling you now so that it won't come as a complete shock when I move out.

He hangs up and his son immediately called his sister who lives in the Hamptons and tells her the news. The sister says "I ll handle this" and calls her father. "Don't do anything until we get there, we'll be there Wednesday night".

The father agrees, hangs up the phone and shouts to his wife "OK, they're coming for Thanksgiving, now what are we going to tell them for Christmas?"

### **Things to be thankful for.**

Wake up and decide to have a good day. "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it" (Psalm 118:24).

Dress up, the best way being to put on a smile, an inexpensive way to improve our looks. "The Lord does not look at things man looks at things, the Lord looks at the heart" (1.Samuel 16:7).

Shut up and learn to listen. God gave us two ears and one mouth. "He who guards his lips, guards his soul" (Proverbs 13:3).

Lift up your prayers. "Do not worry about anything; instead pray about everything" (Philippians 4:6).

### **Time**

#### *Slow Dance*

Have you ever watched kids on a merry-go-round?

Or listened to the rain slapping on the ground?

Ever followed a butterfly's erratic flight?

Or gazed at the sun into the fading light?

You'd better slow down, don't dance so fast. Time is short, the music won't last.

Do you run through each day on the fly?

When you ask "How are you?" Do you hear the reply?

When the day is done, do you lie in bed?

With the next hundred things running through your head?

You'd better slow down, don't dance so fast. Time is short, the music won't last.

Ever told your child "We'll do it tomorrow"?

And in your haste, not seen their sorrow?

Ever lost touch, let a good friendship die?

"Cause you never had time to call and say "Hi"?

You'd better slow down, don't dance so fast. Time is short, the music won't last.

When you run so fast to get somewhere, you miss half the fun of getting there. When you worry and hurry through your day, its like an unopened gift.....thrown away.

Life is not a race, do take it slower, listen to the music before the song is over.

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**Written by a terminally ill girl in a New York Hospital.**

What would you do right now if you learned that you only had ten more minutes to live? Its hard to say but its pretty certain that few of the things you would do are things that you actually did today. Now, some people will wag their fingers in your direction and sternly tell you that you should live every minute of your life as if it was your last, which only goes to show that some people would spend their last ten minutes giving other people dumb advice. **Daniel Gilbert**

We spend our lives on the run: we get up by the clock, eat and sleep by the clock, get up again, go to work – and then we retire. And what do they give us? A clock! **Dave Allen**

**Titles**

*Imaginary but fun*

Full Assurance by *May B Knot*

The Protestant Work Ethic by *Daley Grind*

Pray Continually by *Neal Allot*

Salt of the Earth by *Pastor Pepper*

*Real but strange (from B.B.C News).*

Versailles: the view from Sweden

Re-using Old Graves

Highlights in the History of Concrete

The Stray Shopping Carts of Eastern North America: A Guide to Field Identification.

**Triumph** is just UMPH added to Try.

*From David Barlow*

With thanks to J. John and Mark Stibbe Monarch Pressor diminished in any way

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**Blackburn Diocese - What is Vision 2026? Support from the National Church**

Last month I outlined two major projects funded by the national church which have impacted on some of the most deprived areas within our Diocese, and following the grant in 2019 the Diocesan leadership team were not stopping. Coming out of Covid in 2021 **Blackburn Diocese was awarded a further £3.5m of Strategic Development Funding (SDF) for Lighting up New Generations in Blackburn, Blackpool and developing youth ministry across Lancashire, led by Bishop Jill. This was the largest grant that the Diocese had received again focused on parish ministry.**

This project was about revitalising two churches, one in Blackburn and one in Blackpool as resourcing churches. This emerged out of the Preston Resourcing Parish (see last month), the project offering the opportunity to innovate with a multi-generational Youth Resourcing Church at St Luke's, Blackburn, which is located close to one of our vibrant Church of England Academies, St Wilfrid's.

This project in Blackpool offers the opportunity, at a time of significant civic investment, to grow a town centre Resourcing Church at St John's which will focus on life in Christ, in all its fullness, in a location with a national profile.

Both churches are in areas of substantial urban deprivation offering both challenge and opportunity. They are growing lay and ordained leaders, to catalyse renewal of churches in Blackburn, down the East Lancs corridor, Blackpool and along the Fylde Coast.

Rev Jason Gardner, originally from Blackburn, was licensed in July 2021 as St Luke's Church leader. Jason brings with him youth, evangelism and church planting expertise, particularly in multi-cultural areas.

Rev Andy Dykes, moved from Holy Trinity Brompton to be licensed in October 2021 as St John's Church Leader. Andy is originally from just up the coast in Cumbria and has spent time in the North West pioneering planting of Christian communities in Carlisle and Liverpool.

The project is also supported by Rachel Gardner as Youth Resourcing Lead at St Luke's. Rachel has a national profile and considerable expertise and commitment to youth work as well as being a inspirational speaker and author. The youth work at St Luke's aims to reach down the generations and across the Diocese to enable parishes across Lancashire to flourish into healthy churches which transform communities, involving churches in every Deanery.

Bishop Jill is clear that in Blackburn, we are convinced of the importance of frontline parish ministry for



reaching Lancashire with the gospel, and both churches have seen the original congregations responding enthusiastically to the new initiatives.

This project is just a small part of our wider Vision 2026 strategy by encouraging church renewal and planting with 200 New Local Congregations and 10 Strategic Church Plants by 2026, across all traditions, demographics and locations. However, no one doubts that the main investment needed is a visitation of the Holy Spirit on the people of Blackburn, Blackpool and Lancashire. We look to take this forward on our knees.

In the time since the project launched, St Luke's and St John's have had a huge impact across their local communities. Both churches have undergone significant re-ordering to make them fit for mission and are now looking to use the church spaces to reach out and support their neighbourhoods. Through regular running of Alpha courses, youth ministry in local schools and street engagement, congregations are growing. Social transformation projects are enabling the church team to support those in their need and provide vital assistance and encouragement in the local communities.

Over the remaining years of the project, the teams will continue to build their mission within Blackburn and Blackpool. Through this, planting curates will be supported in their development so that they can, in time, take that knowledge and experience to plant into other churches across the Diocese.

**Vision Statement.** We desire to make the Good News about Jesus Christ more widely known, because believe:

*He is the One who brings 'life in all its fullness'*

*Healthy church communities have a positive and transformative impact on our society.*

*We will work together to achieve this by making disciples of Jesus Christ; being witnesses to Jesus Christ, growing leaders and inspiring young people for Jesus Christ*

*Together with our Diocesan Prayer. Heavenly Father, we embrace Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses, to grow leaders and inspire children and young people. Give us eyes to see Your vision, ears to hear the prompting of Your Spirit and courage to follow in the footsteps of Your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.*

David Barlow



**CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE**  
**SATURDAY 30th NOVEMBER**  
**St John's Church**  
**Live music - hot drinks & mince pies**  
**- activities to join in with -**  
**and outside ..... 2 REINDEER !!**



### **Warm Welcome at Clayton Brook**

Every Monday 11 - 2pm  
(sadly we're not open on Bank Holiday's)

Our menu includes:-

Soup and a choice of sandwiches with a variety of fillings

A selection of drinks (free refills)

Cake and biscuits

Donations welcome

Everyone is welcome, children and babies too.

Children's meals are available

Contact Gill Wright



## WARM WELCOME

It is a good thing to celebrate the abundance we have. Last month to celebrate harvest we had a lovely meal for all our guests. We enjoyed hotpot and apple crumble at our meal and reflected on all the many blessings God has given us. On Mondays at Warm welcome we look forward to meeting together as friends to chat and eat together, the time we share together is something we all look forward to for both guests and volunteers.



We are pleased to say that last month we have had some of our wonderful young people giving up their time during school holidays to come and volunteer with us. It was a pleasure to have Tate Williams and Jamie Wichkan working with us, what a big help they were helping to serve food and doing dishes. They worked so hard and nothing was too much trouble for them.

We would all love to see you again boys. Come back any time.

- Sue Lillie



## **Fearfully and Wonderfully Made**

Do you struggle thinking of Christmas or Birthday presents or just wanting to say thank you with a gift. I don't normally recommend books because we all have such different tastes but if you want to give someone a treat buy them a copy of "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made" written by Doctor Paul Brand and Philip Yancey.

The Apostle Paul brilliantly uses the example of the human body as a description of the Church – the Body of Christ and this book describes the wonder of the human body and the miracles it contains, with illuminating references to the church. Paul Brand, a renowned surgeon and leprosy specialist and Philip Yancey a well-respected Christian author explore the human body and help uncover eternal statements that God has made in the very structure of our bodies presenting captivating insights into His Church, the Body of Christ.

Together they have written a book that will make you praise God for the wonder of your body and widen your understanding and perspective about the Church. The book offers wonders on every page yet is both accessible and very easy to read; at times you just want to get to the next page, being neither technically complicated nor too theological.

So, if you are looking for a present, or simply want to treat yourself, **Fearfully and Wonderfully Made** will not disappoint, it is simply a treasure to read.

*"You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" Psalm 139: 13 – 14*

*David Barlow*

**Saturday 9th November, WOMEN'S CONVENTION  
in MANCHESTER - see Caroline**

**Saturday 9th November, WORK MORNING at St John's.  
Please join in if you can. Many hands make light work.**

**Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this month's Gazette.  
Please send in your articles & comments for the DECEMBER edition  
before the end of November**

**To: The Editor**

*The editor would welcome comments on any article in this gazette*



## Remembering October 7th Looking Back

On October 7th, 2023, a day that will forever be etched into the collective memory of the Jewish people, Israel suffered the deadliest massacre of Jews in recent history. Hamas, the terrorist organization that controls the Gaza Strip, launched an unprovoked, brutal attack on southern Israel. The assault began in the early hours of the morning, as over 2,000 rockets were fired from Gaza, indiscriminately targeting Israeli towns and cities. While the Israeli population took cover from the bombardment, Hamas terrorists breached Israel's borders, storming communities, slaughtering families, raping women, and taking hostages. This attack was an act of pure barbarism, designed not only to kill but to instil terror. The scale of the violence was unimaginable: over 1,400 Israelis were murdered, including men, women, children, and the elderly. Entire families were massacred in their homes, their lives cut short in a single day of unimaginable violence. The terrorists took hundreds more hostages, dragging them across the border into Gaza, including civilians, women, children, and even the elderly. The total number of those kidnapped surpassed 200 people, including foreign nationals and individuals who were visiting Israel when the attack took place.

The massacre of October 7th was the most significant atrocity against the Jewish people since the Holocaust. It was an unprovoked, calculated act of terrorism. The international community watched in horror, but the response, as history has shown, was tragically muted in some quarters. For Israel, the events of this day marked the beginning of a new chapter in its struggle for survival.

### One Year On

In the year that followed, Israel found itself at war on multiple fronts. The initial response was a large-scale military campaign against Hamas in Gaza, targeting the group's infrastructure and leadership. Despite Israel's efforts to weaken Hamas, the terrorist group continued its attacks, launching rockets at Israeli civilians on an almost daily basis. The war has expanded beyond Gaza, with Hezbollah in the north, backed by Iran, joining the fight. As of now, Israel is engaged in conflict on at least seven fronts, defending its citizens from terror attacks originating from Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and other hostile actors in the region. The world's reaction to this ongoing conflict has, in many ways, added insult to injury. Rather than rallying behind Israel's right to defend itself against the horrific terror of October 7th, large sections of the global community have instead turned their ire towards Israel. In cities across the world, from London to New York, demonstrations have been held in support of the Palestinian cause—often aligning with the Islamic ideologies that orchestrated the massacres. The irony is tragic: in their quest to express solidarity with what they perceive to be oppressed groups, Western societies are marching in support of ideologies that fundamentally oppose their own values of freedom, equality, and human rights.

Furthermore, much of the global media has shown itself to be deeply biased against Israel, with rampant misinformation and outright propaganda shaping public perception of the conflict. The BBC alone breached its own editorial guidelines over 1,500 times in its reporting, repeatedly misrepresenting facts and disseminating Hamas's narrative. Despite the evidence of mass murder and hostage-taking by Hamas, many media outlets have focused instead on demonizing Israel for its military responses. This skewed coverage has fueled anti-Israel sentiment worldwide, culminating in protests even on the one-year anniversary of the massacre, while rockets continue to rain down on Israeli civilians.

### Looking Forward with Biblical Eyes



A year on, Israel has made significant gains in its war against Hamas and its northern adversary, Hezbollah. The Israeli military has severely weakened Hamas, targeting its leadership and key infrastructure. One of the most significant achievements has been the elimination of top commanders within Hezbollah, including its elusive leader, Hassan Nasrallah. Hezbollah, long a proxy for Iran's regional ambitions, has been dealt a heavy blow, raising questions about the future of Lebanon, which has been held hostage by this terror organization for decades. Will the elimination of Hezbollah's leadership pave the way for Lebanon's freedom from its grip? And what role will Israel play in dismantling the network of terror that has enveloped the region? Israel's ability to defend itself has also sparked larger questions about the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. Iran, which has funded and equipped Hamas, Hezbollah, and other terror groups, remains the ultimate force behind much of the conflict. Many are now asking whether Israel will take the fight to Iran, potentially launching strikes against its nuclear facilities or military infrastructure. Such an escalation would have profound consequences, not only for Israel but for the broader region and the world.

From a Biblical perspective, these events may be part of a larger prophetic puzzle. In Zechariah 12:2-3, the prophet foretells a time when the nations of the world will turn against Israel, surrounding it on all sides. The events of the past year have given us a glimpse of how easily this could happen. The global tide of anti-Israel sentiment, the unprovoked attacks by terror groups, and the world's failure to support Israel's right to self-defence—all of these could be seen as laying the groundwork for the prophesied final battle of Gog and Magog, described in Ezekiel 38-39. In this biblical account, Israel's enemies will launch a coordinated attack, only to be met by divine intervention as God steps in to defend His people.

Looking ahead, we must ask: Are we on the precipice of such an event? Will Israel soon experience an unprecedented time of peace following the defeat of its regional enemies, as suggested by some interpretations of Ezekiel's prophecy? And will this period of peace set the stage for an even larger conflict involving nations like Russia, Iran, and Turkey?

For Christians around the world, this is a time to watch, wait, and pray for the salvation of Israel. The Bible tells us that God has a plan for His people, and as the world turns increasingly against Israel, the church must stand ready, prayerful, and vigilant. The events of the past year remind us that history is unfolding according to a divine plan, and we must be prepared for what lies ahead.

**Written by Thomas Fretwell, Senior Pastor at Calvary Chapel Hastings (*printed with permission*)  
See Anne Harris or Gill Lancaster if you have any comments**

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Proverbs 22:9 The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.

Living Waters food bank is low on everything at the moment. There is a food collection box in Clayton Brook church and in St John's. If you are in Chorley you can drop off donations at Living Waters church in Bolton Street, Tues and Fridays 10-12noon. Or give a money donation on their website: [www.facebook.com/LWStorehouse](http://www.facebook.com/LWStorehouse), And most supermarkets have food bank trolleys.

Words the Lord Jesus Himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" Acts 20v35



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