

---

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

---

*News from Whittle & Clayton Brook*

# PARISH GAZETTE

Please accept this  
FREE copy  
donations welcome  
**FEBRUARY**  
**2025**

*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)*

---

**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)



### ***Dear Friends***

We are much in prayer at the moment for our church life, for our finances, for moving forward the reordering of St John's building. Here is a wonderful and justly famous verse about prayer from Scripture (God speaking):

*“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)*

This is often taken to be a promise, or even a formula, for national revival—for example, that if we pray in this way God will bring revival to the UK. But this is to misuse Scripture. There is no nation on earth today that can claim to be ‘my people, who are called by my name.’ Nor is there a country today that can be called God’s land in the way that OT Israel was. This is a specific promise addressed to Solomon and his people dwelling in the Promised Land, to give them hope when times of trouble, famine and exile would come in the future. But this is absolutely not to say that we cannot take wonderful truths from this great promise for ourselves today. Those who are in Christ inherit the promises made to Abraham and Israel, and therefore they are now ‘my people called by my name’, and so if we read the promises through Christ, then what blessings we may find therein.

We see here that the opening ‘if’ is followed by four related actions on the part of God’s people, and that God responds with ‘then’ followed by three lovely promises. *If* my people (i) humble themselves, (ii) pray, (iii) seek my face, (iv) turn from their wicked ways, *then* I will (i) hear, (ii) forgive, (iii) heal.

Those four attitudes in prayer are almost one and the same. It is all about humble, repentant seeking of God. These are attitudes that are underlined and endorsed by Jesus and the apostles multiple times. That is God’s call to the church, to us: humble, repentant, earnest turning to God and seeking him and his forgiveness and his blessing. Likewise, God’s beautiful response is that of a heart that is revealed in multiple ways through the life and teaching of Jesus. The God revealed in and through Jesus is one who longs to hear, who freely forgives, and who loves to bless and restore and renew and revive.

Many of us, I am sure, know all this already. I am not telling you anything new. But perhaps there is still a great challenge for us today. It is contained in that one word ‘If’. Read the verse aloud to yourself again, stressing the words, ‘If’ . . . ‘then’ . . .

Please, God, make me a person of such prayer. Please, God, make our church a church of such prayer.

*Yours, as one still struggling to learn in the school of Christ,*  
***Philip***

---

**PRAYERS from CLAYTON BROOK**

At the start of this new year, we pray....  
 Fill our hearts with LOVE.  
 That we may love you more  
 That we may love others  
 That we may love your church  
 That we may love and serve our community  
 Lord – in your mercy .... hear our prayer

At the start of this new year, we pray....  
 Fill our hearts with PEACE  
 That we may have peace in our households and families  
 That we may have peace in all our relationships  
 That we may see peace in our world, and an end to wars, oppression and injustice.  
 Lord – in your mercy .... hear our prayer

At the start of this new year, we pray....  
 Fill our hearts with HOPE  
 Lord, please take away any fear of the future and give us hope.  
 Remind us that you are the Good Shepherd, and give us hope.  
 Show us that anything is possible with you, and give us hope.  
 With hope, remind us that we can bring all our daily needs and problems to you,  
 knowing you are our Father in Heaven.  
 Lord – in your mercy .... hear our prayer

At the start of this new year, we pray....  
 Fill our hearts with JOY  
 That we may know that we are surrounded by your blessings  
 That we can see that your mercies are new each morning  
 That with joy we can praise you in all circumstances  
 That our hearts may be full of joy, because you first loved us, and we are bound for heaven.  
 Lord – in your mercy .... hear our prayer

At the start of this new year, we pray....  
 Fill our hearts with your HOLY SPIRIT  
 That we may show the fruit of the Holy Spirit  
 That we may have power to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit  
 That we may have strength to follow you and grow in our faith  
 That we may serve others in the name of Jesus  
 Lord – in your mercy .... hear our prayer

---

**Look back, and remember He was with you. Stand still, and realise He is with you.  
 Walk forward, and trust: He will be with you always. – Margaret Silf**

---

**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)**



---

## ***Russia invaded Ukraine three years ago this month (24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2022)...***

The pages of history are strewn with the wreckage of nations. –  
*President Richard Nixon*

The soldier, above all other people, prays for peace, for he must suffer  
and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war. – *Douglas MacArthur*

There is no instance of a nation benefitting from prolonged warfare. – *Sun Tzu*

Nations which went down fighting rose again, but those which surrendered tamely were  
finished. – *Winston Churchill*




---

### **Hollywood Fires in January**

"Could God be judging Hollywood? I don't know, but I don't think so. The question is, do we know the Lord Jesus Christ? Are we prepared to stand before Him? If our house was burned and we were burned up in it, would we go into His presence? Would God receive us? And the only way we can be sure is by confessing our sins and asking for His forgiveness and by faith, believing on the name of the Lord Jesus, Christ, who took our sins and died on a cross, He was buried, and on the third day, God raised him to life. And if we're willing to believe that, just accept that by faith and ask Christ into our hearts, then God will forgive our sins. We can have that assurance, knowing that whatever storms come our way in life, we'll be prepared to stand before God."

*Article by Donna Birrell. Printed in Premier Christian News January 2025*

---



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

Christmas is over but Winter is still here. You can help give hot meals to families suffering cold nights. 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***

### **FOOD BANK MISSION BREAKFAST**

**Saturday 8 February, 8.30-10am**

**Clayton Brook Church**

**Croissant & Coffee £2**

**Speaker from Living Waters Church in Chorley**

**about the ministry of the Food Bank**

**Please sign up on the attendance sheet in either church**



### A Precious Baby

Mathew Lochrie, Frankie Sidebottom, Edward Alcock, Isla Amphlett, Aaron Davis, Lexi Enge, Martha Jones & Bear Brake made models of Hannah & baby Samuel in St John's Juniour Church. We were reading the story in 1 Samuel Chapter 1. Hannah & Elkanah couldn't have a baby which made Hannah very sad so she prayed to God.

He answered her prayer and she gave birth to a boy who she called Samuel. In response Hannah dedicated Samuel to God and she took him to help the priest Eli in the Temple.—*Susan Parkinson*



## True Love, A Tale for St Valentine's Day

Newspaper Fred?" The man behind the counter watched as the old man came through the door.

"Yes please and a bag of those herbal sweets." Fred was looking a bit anxious.

"How's your hand doing?" the shopkeeper asked.

"I'm just going to have the stitches out." Fred handed across a five pound note.

"You still haven't said how you did it." The shopkeeper went to the till.

"Stupid really," Fred answered. "The grass was getting a bit long so I decided to cut it. My son John usually does it but he's been working all hours lately so I thought I should do it, for Alice like. I always remember the day we first saw the house, she said, 'It's lovely Fred, I can just see the kids playing on that lawn but you must keep the grass short. It soon gets overgrown you know.' We hadn't even got any kids then but well, I've never let it get too long since. Alice wouldn't like it. Anyway I got John's mower out and forgot it was a rotor so of course when it jammed, I put my hand under it. Still I was lucky really, it was only a cut," the old man chuckled, "now I know how the grass feels."

As Fred left the shop he saw his bus leave the stop. "Oh no, it's early again," and looked at his watch to see how long he'd need to wait for the next one.

"Sorry Mr. Aliquis, You've missed your appointment but if you'll wait we'll try to fit you in a bit later. It was quite an important appointment you know. Those stitches mustn't be left in too long, they can cause a lot of problems if they're left in too long.." The receptionist at the clinic tossed her head back to emphasise the point.

"How long? Fred had that flustered look again. "Please, I'm in a hurry, I've got to....."

"Sorry you should have thought of that earlier, before you were late." A haughty look followed this latest telling off.

Fred went over to one of the chairs in the waiting area, a tear was edging itself from an eye. He sat down despondent.

It was just then a door opened, Fred looked round. The nurse came out of the cubicle.

"Oh Fred, Mr Aliquis, I've been waiting for you, come in," she gave a smile.

"Sorry, everything is going wrong this morning." Fred gave a slight if embarrassed smile.

It was later, the last stitch had just been removed.

"Tell me," the nurse asked, "What's your hurry, you seem quite flustered?"

"I always go to visit Alice, my wife, she's in the nursing home. We always have breakfast together then I read some of the newspaper to her. She can't read any more and she always wanted to keep up with the news."

"What's wrong with her? is she blind or something.?" The nurse was puzzled.

"Oh no, it's nothing like that." Fred looked at her, a straight look.. "She's got Alzheimers."

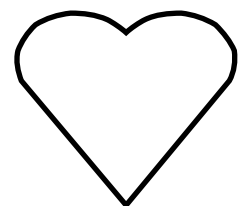
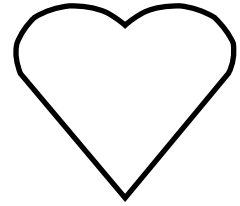
"Oh, I'm sorry Fred. I didn't know." The sorrow showed across the nurse's face.

"At least she still recognises you."

"Oh no." Fred interrupted. "She can't recognise me, she hasn't done for five years now, but I recognise her!"

Have you thought, God must be very much like Fred. Fred is always there for his wife though she fails to recognise him. How many times do we fail to recognise God? but God never fails to recognise us and just like Fred is always there for his wife, God is always there for us.

By Roger Stapenhill



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

### Valentines

For God so loVed the world  
 That He gAve  
 His onLy  
 begottEn  
 SoN,  
 That whosoever  
 believes In Him  
 shall Not perish  
 but have Everlasting life      **John3:16**

*Rhymes you hope not to see in a Valentines card.*

I thought that I could love no other, Until that is I met your brother.  
 Roses are red, violets are blue, sugar is sweet, and so are you.  
 But the roses are wilting, the violets are dead, the sugar bowls empty and so is your head.  
 What inspired this amorous rhyme? Two parts vodka, one part lime.

### Value

"What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: - Tis dearness only that gives everything its value"  
 - **T Paine**

We know the cost of everything and the value of nothing!  
 The value of a person is not what they have but in who they are and what they stand for.  
 When the actress Sophia Loren sobbed to the Italian movie director Vittorio De Sica over her stolen jewellery, he said to her "Listen Sophia, I'm much older then you and if there is one truth that I have learned about life its this – never cry over something that can't cry over you"

### Victory

"When He had received the drink, Jesus said "It is finished" With that He bowed His head and gave up His Spirit. **John 19:30**  
 Don't fight a battle that God has already won for you.  
 When you walk with Jesus, defeat turns into victory  
 If we only see the problems we will be defeated.  
 Long-lasting victory can never be separated from a long-lasting stand on the foundation of the cross.  
 "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." **Romans 8:37**

### Vicars

Old vicars never retire, they just go out to pastor!  
 The vicar was lying in hospital rec overing from an operation, when the churchwarden came to visit. "How was the PCC meeting last night?" asked the vicar.  
 "Well" said the warden "the good news is that we passed a vote wishing you a full and quick recovery"  
 "That's nice" said the vicar "any bad news"  
 "It was passed by 14 votes to 13!"  
 What do you call a vicar on a motor bike?      Rev.  
 A Vicar was preaching on the Demon Drink, saying whiskey can kill but water can't. To prove it he had a glass of each. He dropped a worm into the water and it wiggled about. He dropped a worm into the whiskey.      Stone dead.  
 A person at the back jumped up shouting, "I'll have the whiskey Vicar! I've been having trouble with worms all my life"

### Vision

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was a no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City; the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" **Revelation 21:1&2**  
 A vision without a task is a dream. A task without a vision is drudgery. But put the two together and we have the hope of the world.  
 Some people see no further than their noses.  
 Vision without passion is a picture without possibilities.  
 A vision with the Spirit is a dream with a mission.  
 Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action changes the world. **Joel Barker**

An unknown monk in the 12<sup>th</sup> century wrote "When I was a young man I wanted to change the world. But I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation. When I found I couldn't change my nation I began to focus on my village. I couldn't change my village and as an older man I tried to change my family. Now, as an old man, I realise that the only thing I can change is myself, and suddenly I realise that if long ago I had changed myself I would have had an impact on my family and that my family could have an impact on our village. And their impact could have changed our nation and I could have indeed have changed the world!"

"Whoever it was who searched the heavens with a telescope or even from a rocket and failed to find God would not have found the human mind if they had searched the brain with a microscope"

- **George Santayana**

"You must first scale the mountain if you would see the plain" **Chinese proverb**

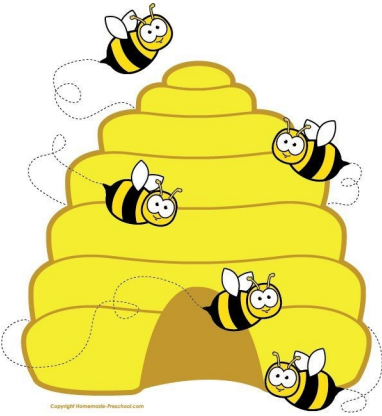
### **Volunteers"**

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart". **Elizabeth Andrew**

Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.

**From David Barlow**

With thanks to J. John and Mark Stibbe Monarch Press



**Beehive mother and toddler group  
meet on Monday mornings  
at 10.45 to 12.15  
Whittle le Woods Village Hall  
Play, chat, stories, singing  
There's room for everyone  
See Christine Whiteside**

## **Warm Welcome at Clayton Brook**

For refreshments:

Tea, Coffee, Soup (sometimes baked potatoes) and Cake

Every Monday 11 - 2pm

(sadly we're not open on Bank Holidays)

Donations welcome

Everyone is welcome, children and babies too.

Contact Gill Wright

### **Car-ride**

A teenager who had just received her provisional licence offered to drive her parents to church. After a hair-raising ride, they finally reached their destination.

The mother got out of the car and said in a quiet but fervent voice: "Thank you!"

"Anytime," her daughter replied.

As the woman slammed the car door she said, "I wasn't talking to you.

I was talking to God."



## ARTHUR BLESSITT

A man who walked across seven continents to share the Good News of Jesus has died at the age of 84.

US evangelist Arthur Blessitt travelled across 324 countries and walked more than 43,000 miles to share his faith, carrying a twelve-foot wooden cross as a way of starting conversations.

A self-penned note posted on his website said he had completed his “last mission on earth and departed to heaven” on 14th January.

Arthur Blessitt found God at the age of seven and became an evangelist when he was 15. After being ordained at the age of 20 he devoted his life to street evangelism. In the course of his 56-year ministry, he walked over 86 million steps with the cross which carried a total weight of over 19 billion pounds. He's listed in the Guinness World Record for the Longest Walk/Pilgrimage.



Blessitt said he was “just a donkey and pilgrim, lifting up the cross and Jesus”.

Pre-empting news of his own death he wrote: “What a glorious journey of life with Jesus my Lord and Savior. I’ve been looking forward to this walk in Glory. These feet that walked so far on roads of dirt and tar will now be walking on the streets of gold. Ready to see Jesus again! I rejoice in Jesus, now, and in the hour of my passing. ‘Father, into Your Hands Jesus I commit my spirit’. I am home at last, this was my last trip! I have been an evangelist, soul-winning preacher, pilgrim and cross-carrying witness of Jesus”.

He requested no funeral or memorial but asked that we share the good news of Christ across our communities.

Throughout his ministry, Blessitt inspired many, including street evangelist Lyndsay Hamon from Cornwall who gave up his career as a social worker after hearing Blessitt speak at Westminster Central Hall in 1972. He told Premier: “His face was actually shining with the joy of the Lord and he’d just lead a Hell’s Angel to the Lord.”

He continued: “I remember sitting and thinking, ‘whatever that guy's got, I want’ and that just grew and grew until I ended up giving up my work as a social worker, and started walking with a cross. But as soon as I started walking, amazing things started happening.”

Evangelist Lindsay Hamon has himself now spent much of his life travelling with a twelve-foot cross across Europe and Asia leading people to Christ:

“The cross is an international symbol. And so, wherever you are, whether in Bangladesh or Romania or Bulgaria, they see the symbol. I keep saying, this is a symbol of how much God loves you. So, it just starts the conversation so easily.

“God takes over, and you have the joy of sharing the gospel with people. And sometimes miracles happen and they’re ready to accept Jesus. It’s the most beautiful moment in the world when they just pray that simple prayer and they feel the presence of God.”

Arthur Blessitt said that in his 56 years of travelling, the cross had been turned away from being left overnight at more than half the churches requested, but had never been turned away from spending the night at a bar or nightclub. He said the longest he had walked in one day was 72 miles.

Lindsay Hamon added: “He planted a seed of walking the road that not many other people walk. He planted the seed of great love for the people who wouldn't necessarily be in church. In fact, they definitely wouldn't be in church. So I think all over the world, he brought the message of the cross, the love of Jesus to all people.”



## WARM WELCOME

We have good news to start this month, we have secured funding for 2025 to enable us to offer a warm space to our local community and church members. Chorley Council have again given us a grant so that we can continue to provide a place for people to enjoy having companionship, friendship and good home cooked food every Monday at Clayton Brook Church.



## AMBER RIVER

### TRUE BEARING

This year for the first time, local company Amber River True Bearing Chartered Financial Planners have given us a generous grant for 2025. A spokesperson for the company told us:

“Amber River True Bearing Chartered Financial Planners, based in Chorley, has been supporting the local community for over twenty years. We take pride in giving back to our community and were delighted to support A Warm Welcome for 2025. Our staff have already volunteered at the December 2024 Christmas lunch and look forward to getting involved more during 2025.”

We are grateful to them for sending Giselle and Megan to help at our Christmas Lunch, they worked so hard and fitted in so well in was as if they had always been part of the team. We really enjoyed our time together.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS THIS MONTH-

Our next important announcement is that we celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of our friend and sister Julie Summers, we will of course be having a birthday party for her and we are all looking forward to this event.



**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**

---

## The Suffering Church – God’s Risk Takers From David Barlow

As we start a New Year in our walk with Jesus we can be encouraged by the faith of people transformed by His Holy Spirit and those whose belief in Jesus places them in constant danger of imprisonment and even death.

Most of us in the United Kingdom don’t have to choose between our safety and our faith. Thankfully we don’t have to decide whether following Jesus is worth the cost to our family, our jobs or even our lives. But there are large numbers of Christians around the world who have to make this decision daily. The story below is of Ji Ho (name changed for protection) in North Korea. She follows Jesus in a country where any expression of faith could mean a death sentence. Read and be inspired.

We also have the story of Jean Baptiste, a man reformed by his encounter with Jesus and now living a changed life in Rwanda, again read and be encouraged.

**Ji Ho** vividly remembers the moment she saw her father for the last time, when North Korean Security agents ransacked their house. They found nothing in the house but did discover something when digging in the garden. They found her father’s secret book. This book led to her father’s imprisonment and eventual death at the hands of the North Korean Government.

Ji Ho didn’t know what was in the book, only that her father used to read stories from it about a wise gentle man who taught about love and kindness and Ji Ho couldn’t understand why a lesson about kindness could be so dangerous in North Korea. It was only years later that Ji Ho discovered that this book was the Bible.

In some ways Ji Ho was fortunate, when a Bible is found in a North Korean home it could lead to the whole family being punished, imprisoned, banished or killed. But Ji Ho was determined to find out what her father’s secret had been and why had it meant so much to him that he was prepared for so severe a cost.

However the agents had not found everything, Ji Ho’s father also had a hidden radio which he listened to find out if there was food available or perhaps a way he could escape over the border to China. After her father was taken Ji Ho started listening to the radio, hoping to find a source of food, instead whilst turning the dial she found a new radio station. It was a shock that she heard the presenters talking about the same “wise man” that her father had told her about – the one they called Jesus.

“From that moment on I listened to the radio every chance I got” Ji Ho recalls. “I heard other sayings Man does not live by bread alone and the gift of God in Jesus is eternal life, and that God so loved the world that He gave us His only Son”. As she listened she became more convinced that Jesus was the great teacher her father told her about and more that He wanted to be her Lord and Saviour. “And I knew that I wanted to follow Him”.

It can be almost impossible for a parent to teach ir children about Jesus in North Korea, children are encouraged by their teachers to look for signs of Christianity and to inform on their own parents! So North Koreans are taught to hate Christianity all their lives, that Christians are enemies and even spies. This makes talking about Jesus immensely dangerous.

This indoctrination has to be unlearnt and Ji Ho soon began to see Jesus speaking to her through the verses she heard on the radio, and remarkably that rather than enemies Christians were commanded by Jesus to love their neighbour. “I’d come home form working in the fields, exhausted and hurting form the loss of my father and I would think about a poem I heard on the radio. “ The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” and I would see a neighbour who was hungry and hear the words from Jesus “Whatever you did for one of my brothers ands sisters in need you did to me””

Hunger is an ongoing feature of North Korean life for the majority of their people, just surviving is a challenge. Absolute poverty flourishes throughout the country, any food is first given to the armed forces and to the elite, a situation made worse by sanctions on North Korea and the North Korean Government regularly refusing food aid. It is estimated that over 40% of the population is malnourished due to food shortages.

Remembering the words of Psalm 23 and Jesus’ words Ji Ho has made extraordinary sacrifices. “As I continued to learn about Jesus I found my life changing. I was still hungry but I started to share my food with my neighbours who didn’t have a garden and I hoped I could show something of the love of Jesus to them”. Would I be so generous?

Ji Ho shows this love of Jesus on a daily basis but has to keep her faith secret. North Korea remains among the places where Christians face the worst persecution. Despite the terrible cost of following Jesus more and more North Koreans are encountering Jesus and starting to follow Him. Remarkably the church is growing. Agencies like Open Doors are producing radio programmes about Jesus, there are secret networks of believers throughout the country. North Korean believers also want to join in prayer for other persecuted Christians and asked for

programmes about the persecuted church. They know they cannot practically help **but they can pray**.

**But they need help.** Through underground networks Open Doors secret workers are currently sustaining over 100,000 secret believers with vital food aid, shelter and discipleship training. "I'll continue to learn more about Jesus and how I can follow Him more closely, and I will continue to be salt for the people around me" says Ji Ho. She ahs so little but is determined to do what she can to show Jesus' love to her neighbours. **Are we, am I?**

There are details below asto how we can help and whilst we are praying about this be inspired by Ji Ho and the many thousands like her, living their lives for Jesus.

Our second story is slightly different but another about a life changed after an encounter with Jesus.

**Jean Baptiste** was a violent drug dealer and gang leader, feared in his local community in Rwanda, but everything changed after he experienced a whole life transformation when participating in a Tearfund initiative, Church and Community Transformation (CCT) working to release whole communities from poverty. Jean Baptiste's neighbour, **Serapie**, was a trained Tearfund partner CCT facilitator at the local church and asked Jean, whilst he was still dealing in drugs, to "come and see how your life can be changed".

After an attack by a rival gang, Jean Baptiste, after reflecting on his behaviour, joined a CCT group. "I needed to change my life" he says. After joining CCT, attending church and listening to the teaching there and meeting Jesus for himself, Jean Baptiste began to save money, and his relationship at home and in the community started to heal.

Today Jean Baptiste is a warden and security manager at the church, thankful for the discipleship of the CCT community and church and is now an active member of both. Jean Baptiste is a living embodiment of the verse from 2 Corinthians 9:10 "Now he who supplies seed and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and enlarge the harvest of your righteousness".

Please pray for the work of Open Doors and Tearfund in working with the Holy Spirit to change, protect and deepen disciples for Jesus.

If you want to know more or to support Open Doors, or Tearfund, organisations we support as a church you can do so by going to their websites below.

[www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org). [www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org)

### A Living Hope

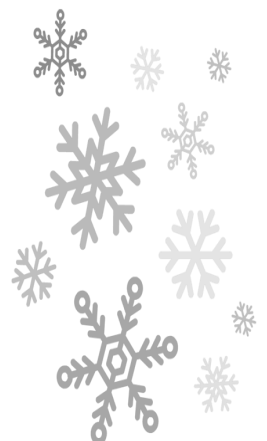
***"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade" 1 Peter 1:3 - 4***

### The Big Freeze of 1955

More than 70 roads in Britain were blocked by snow, according to the Automobile Association, and hundreds of vehicles were abandoned in snowdrifts. Many parts of the country were cut off from essential supplies, and rail travel was disrupted. Church attendance was also hit, of course. *(Nothings changed then)*

Temperatures in some places fell below 28F (-3C) - the lowest for 30 years, and February's record UK minimum was set. That year also experienced the last May snowfall of the century, but despite all that, there was plenty of sunshine, and as a total contrast, there was a drought and a heatwave the following summer.

*(Brighter days ahead?)*





## **GROWTH GROUPS IN ST JOHN'S AND CLAYTON BROOK**

Bible prayer & fellowship are the focus of our growth groups which meet within our parish in different venues and at different times of the week. They cater for different age groups and for newcomers and people more familiar with the bible and their faith. We would love everyone to be a member of a growth group in order for each of us to build our relationships with each other and, most importantly, with Christ. Have a look at our current groups to see if one suits you and your needs, if not feel free to ask and we will try to find a way to help.

Here is a little bit about each group, in their own words:

### **CLAYTON BROOK GROUP—CONTACT KATHY BIGIO**

Meets in Clayton Brook Church every Tuesday (term time) 1 to 2pm. We sing, pray & share study books looking at aspects in the bible and liturgy & importantly share friendships.

For more information contact Kathy.

### **CLAYTON BROOK MEN'S GROUP—CONTACT STUART CROSS**

Meeting every Monday evening, a group for men who may be new to the area, or new to the Christian faith, or just wanting to know more about Jesus and the Bible. An occasional film night, and social/ games evenings help us get to know and support each other.

### **TUESDAY EVENING ZOOM GROUP—CONTACT DAVID BARLOW**

What a perfect way to grow your faith and understanding of the Bible than joining a growth group. Our group comprises individuals, all different, but all looking for the same things, with hope and faith, and through God's love and guidance, recognising a better world where our God in Jesus rules. Our growth group meets on a Tuesday evening at 7.30pm for 1 hour, via zoom, and whilst we take God's word seriously there is also a lot of laughter. So if you want fun, fellowship and to learn more about Jesus we look forward to seeing you.

### **TUESDAY MORNING ZOOM GROUP—CONTACT SUSAN PARKINSON**

Susan - meets every Tuesday morning at 10:30 for roughly an hour on Zoom so suitable for those who may struggle to get to a particular venue. A friendly relaxed space where we work through study books about different aspects of the Bible and end with prayer.

New members welcome - please contact Susan.

### **TUESDAY EVENING IN-PERSON GROUP—CONTACT JAMIE DIXON**

A mixed group of men and women from St John's meeting at 397 Preston Road on Tuesdays (term time) at 7:30-9:00pm. We have a relaxed style where we start with a brew and biscuits, followed by bible study using study guides and close with prayer. For more information contact Jamie.

### **TUESDAY EVENING VICARAGE GROUP—CONTACT PHILIP VENABLES**

We are a small group and would love to welcome in more members. We meet on Tuesdays at 7.30 and always finish by 9 at the latest. We look at the Bible together with a reasonably light touch (people are tired in the evening!) and share news and views and always pray for one another.

Contact Philip.



## A true story to show how God listens and answers.....

Just a few weeks ago, I had a catastrophe... I had run out of tea bags. It was a catastrophe because it was afternoon rush hour, dark, raining and windy and not the weather or time of day I would be going out to buy tea bags. The worst thing was thinking about getting up the next morning and no cups of tea. So you can imagine this was a serious issue! I was going about my evening bits of jobs talking to myself out loud, well... to my Father really, saying things like: Father, I'm really upset because I've no tea bags... You know Father how much I enjoy my cups of tea in the morning ... I'm not complaining Father and I'm definitely not asking you for tea bags because it's not the end of the world... I'm just saying I'm a bit down in the dumps because I've no tea bags and I wish I had some tea bags. About 20 minutes later there was a knock on the front door... It was Frances holding a box of tea bags. Stunned, I said: Frances God has sent you!!!! She looked at me as though I was crackers and I told her, I've no tea bags and I was fed up not to have tea bags for my morning tea. Frances said I thought you might like these and held out a box of Lancashire Tea with 80 tea bags! Frances was out on a local visit and was going to Lidl and before she set out she told me she got the box of tea bags and thought I could take these for Gill... Then she thought well maybe I'll be pushed for time so I'll take them some other time... Or maybe I'll take them with me now and see how it goes (Frances I think that's the way it went)... And then she appeared at my door. I enjoyed a cuppa straightaway and another 2 the following morning. Thank you Frances for listening and it reminded me of Psalm 37 v 4. God really does want to give us the desires of our heart!!... thank you Father for the tea bags!



- Gill Wright, Clayton Brook Church



"It may well attract more young folk to join the congregation but I still prefer the old church notice board"

## 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.

Or telephone Gill Wright

or Cath Orr

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)*

## TEN COMMANDMENTS: The most important Top Ten list.

The Christian charity Street Pastors, which ministers to the UK's city nightlife as well as the homeless, is calling for more volunteers in order to keep its Sunderland branch running.

Sunderland Safe Haven usually operates every Saturday night, distributing flip flops, space blankets, and water to clubbers, along with hats, gloves and sleeping bags. But coordinator Julie Judson has told the [BBC](#) that the group is down to just six volunteers. A drop-off in volunteer numbers was particularly noticeable after the Covid lockdowns.

"We try not to cancel any shifts but many of us are out every weekend," she said. On New Year's Eve, the Carlisle Street Pastors carried out their last ever shift after operating for 14 years.

"It's a shame," said coordinator Kathy Howe, "it's very much needed out there - there are vulnerable people out there for all sorts of different reasons."

In 2023, the charity says it helped 120 people. It took 23 to its 'Safe Zone', and five to hospital.

The charity describes itself as "Christians rolling up their sleeves and getting involved in practically responding to the problems of crime and safety."

"It's really challenging work but it's fun too because you meet so many lovely people, those out partying, the door staff, the police," Julie Judson said.

"I get more hugs and handshakes working in the night-time economy than anywhere else."



➔ Chorley Street Pastors are also on patrol every weekend. They, also, would like more volunteers. If you would like to know more about Chorley Street Pastors, joining them, supporting them, praying for them, speak to Hetti or William in church, or contact:

Bev, Chorley Street Pastors co-ordinator 07399429621 [chorley@streetpastors.org.uk](mailto:chorley@streetpastors.org.uk)

## Eight free gifts

### 1. THE GIFT OF LISTENING...

But you must REALLY listen. No interrupting, no daydreaming, no planning your response. Just listening.

### 2. THE GIFT OF AFFECTION...

Be generous with appropriate hugs, kisses, pats on the back, and handholds. Let these small actions demonstrate the love you have for family and friends.

### 3. THE GIFT OF LAUGHTER...

Clip cartoons. Share articles and funny stories. Your gift will say, "I love to laugh with you."

### 4. THE GIFT OF A WRITTEN NOTE...

It can be a simple, "Thanks for the help" note or a full sonnet. A brief, handwritten note may be remembered for a lifetime, may even change a life.

### 5. THE GIFT OF A COMPLIMENT...

A simple and sincere, "You look great in red," "You did a super job," or "That was a wonderful meal" can make someone's day.

### 6. THE GIFT OF A FAVOR...

Every day, go out of your way to do something kind.

### 7. THE GIFT OF SOLITUDE...

There are times when we want nothing better than to be left alone. Be sensitive to those times and give the gift of solitude to others.



### 8. THE GIFT OF A CHEERFUL DISPOSITION...

The easiest way to feel good is to extend a kind word to someone.

Really, it's not that hard to say, Hello or Thank You.

*Author unknown*



**FREE  
Dementia Awareness  
Training Available**

With a wide range of exemplary care services, Home Instead West Lancashire and Chorley aims to keep you or your loved ones safe and secure in the comfort of your own homes.

If you think our award-winning services can help you, or you would like to become a Care Professional, then please call us on:

**T: 01257 429 156**

[www.homeinstead.co.uk/chorley-lancashire](http://www.homeinstead.co.uk/chorley-lancashire)

**Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this month's Gazette. Please send in your articles & comments for the MARCH edition before the end of February to: the Editor**  
*The editor would welcome comments on any article in this gazette*

.....  
*If you wish to contact any person in this gazette, please use the contact page on this website*



**AJF Professional Sprayers & Decorators**

07971571665 - 01257412775

[www.ajfprofessionaldecorators.co.uk](http://www.ajfprofessionaldecorators.co.uk)

A professional decorating company based in Whittle-le-Woods. We spray PVC, doors, windows, kitchens, interiors and everything in between. Please get in touch for a quotation.

**B. Livesey Ltd.**  
 COMPLETE INDEPENDENT FUNERAL FURNISHERS  
 Established 1848  
 Owned and Operated by the Livesey family  
 Seasons Pre-Paid Funeral Plans exclusive to B. Livesey Ltd.



**Royal Oak Building**  
 Albion Mews, 31 Bolton Street, Chorley PR7 3AA  
**Tel: 01257 262602 / Fax: 01257 264875**  
 Email: [info@bliveseyltd.co.uk](mailto:info@bliveseyltd.co.uk)  
[www.bliveseyltd.co.uk](http://www.bliveseyltd.co.uk)



