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The Parish Magazine of The United Benefice of St Peter & St Stephen, Burnley
DECEMBER 2024/JANUARY 2025



FOR UNTO YOU
IS BORN THIS DAY
IN THE CITY OF DAVID
A SAVIOUR
WHICH IS
CHRIST THE LORD.

<http://www.stpetersburnley.com>
<http://www.ststephenschurchburnley.org.uk>

St Stephen's Church, Burnley Wood

Everyone is invited to join us for ...



St Stephen's Sings

Christmas

Sunday 15th December

at 3.30 pm

Christmas starts here!

... with mulled wine and mince pies!

ALL WELCOME!



Saturday Morning Concerts



Concert starts at 11am
Refreshments served from 10.30am
Free parking in the schoolyard
(Rawcliffe Street)
Admission £7
(includes refreshments)



NEXT CONCERT

Saturday 7th December

Jack Bowtell

operatic baritone

and the

St Peter's Young Singers



St Peter's Church
BURNLEY



Nine Lessons and Carols

Join us for our traditional candlelit service followed by mulled wine and mince pies

Sunday 22nd December
at 4.00 p.m.



St Peter's Church
BURNLEY





WHO'S WHO IN THE BENEFICE?



Rector of the United Benefice: Fr Andrew Holmes
 Tel: 07460 899451 Email: andrewinburnley@gmail.com

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CHURCH WARDENS: Mrs Sandra Davies Mr Jason Walsh	☎ 545818 ☎ 07554 154240	CHURCH WARDENS: Mr Keith Pounder Mrs Jean Beeston	☎414390 ☎432986
ASSISTANT WARDEN Mrs Meena Tomlinson	☎ 07806 623466	ASSISTANT WARDENS Mr Paul Hannah Mrs Edith Meek	☎07967 644709 ☎456170
PCC SECRETARY Mr Andrew Buchanan	☎07565 347524	PCC SECRETARY: Mrs Anita Fossey	westwell55@yahoo.co.uk
ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER Mrs Joan Ainsworth	☎07971 711250	VISION CHAMPION: Mrs Linda Pounder	☎414390
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: Mr Philip Tomlinson	☎777132	MOTHERS' UNION: Mrs Beverley Laycock <i>(Branch Leader)</i> Mrs Jackie Cosway <i>(Secretary)</i>	☎543766 ☎411967
VISION TEAM: Mrs Joan Ainsworth (Making Disciples) Mrs Meena Tomlinson (Inspiring Children & Young People) Mr Alan Roadley (Growing Leaders)	☎07971 711250 ☎07806 623466 ☎07588 556640	SUNDAY SCHOOL: Emma Hopley	☎07968 782210
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SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Mrs Cynthia Bramley	☎ 07903 341700	SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Mrs Barbara Hasty	☎07783006284
SUNDAY SCHOOL (DJs): Mrs Meena Tomlinson	☎777132	VERGER Mrs Edith Meek	☎456170
HEADTEACHER: Mrs Crowther	☎426873	CHURCH FLOWERS: Vacant	
FLOWER GUILD: Mrs Alice Binns	☎789632		
BELFRY Dr Andrew Sibson			
Kitchen/Catering Manager Mrs Cynthia Bramley			
CHURCH MAGAZINE EDITOR: : Mrs Pam McGrath: Email: pamelamcgrath1@hotmail.com			

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The next Magazine will be joint **MARCH/APRIL** edition. All items to be with the Editor by 15th February
Please read 'From the Editor' on
Page 29
pamelamcgrath1@hotmail.com



From the Rectory

Dear friends,

As I write, the shops are in full swing Christmas, the odd tree is up already, and it's not even Advent yet! I am looking forward to all our services over the festive period and to hearing the message of the Incarnation again. I hope you will be able to join in our church celebrations.

Can I say a heartfelt thank you to you all for helping me celebrate my 60th birthday in November and for the many cards and gifts I felt loved. I am so lucky! What next as we look to 2025?

January can be quite a challenging month as people head back to work and school after some time away. Perhaps we have spent more than we usually do on presents and luxuries, and the thoughts are anxious about the credit card bill that will be dropping its way through the letter box. Sometimes, we make determined resolutions as we buy gym memberships, put all the remaining chocolates and biscuits away, and declare this to be the year we are going to take ourselves in hand. The days are still dark, the weather often cold, and it's not all that tempting to put on the trainers

and attempt to walk or jog off the excesses of the previous month.

There may also be concerns about the year to come. What will it bring to our families, our friends, and indeed the world around us? Are there things we should do to build up our resilience and enable us to cope? Are there skills we should learn to navigate our way more competently and cost-effectively through life in 2025?

All of these are important and legitimate questions as a new year dawns. As I get older, I try to gain a bit more perspective. The reality is that I'm unlikely to complete all the goals and resolutions I might try to set myself. That doesn't make me a failure, but it tells me something about the unrealistic expectations I often have of myself.

Prayer at the start of a new year is vital. I encourage you to pray for wisdom in setting priorities for yourself and the church. How can we radiate Christ's presence to those around us? How can we equip people to bring Jesus into their homes, workplaces, and communities? How can we follow him more intentionally and forgive ourselves when we don't get it right?

One of the things our PCCs have been thinking about is how to connect with missing generations from the church. Encouraging children and young people, adults in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, what might draw them back or invite them in for the very first time?

Sometimes, it's nothing more complicated than a personal invitation. Sometimes, it's providing a venue and a safe space to talk about the most important things. Underlying it all is a genuine, heartfelt prayer that people might encounter Jesus.

May Jesus be glorified in all we seek to do together next year.

Love and best wishes for Christmas and 2025

Fr Andrew



In The Loop

... with Keith, Jean, Paul & Edith
St Stephen's Churchwardens



Another wonderful year - ring out the Old, Ring in the New! Who can imagine that Advent and Christmas is with us once again - it's a wonderful time of the year where families and loved ones alike come together - and the light shines within the church as we grow in number each year. We are sincerely grateful and blessed to have Fr Andrew who has led, encouraged and worked hard alongside us all during the year.

As we slip into the long nights and short days, we carry on the work of the church working in the community more and more each year. We have enjoyed hosting many activities at St Stephen's, with an excellent and expanding relationship working with the Deanery and Blackburn Diocesan departments. Conferences and courses have been held throughout the year, bringing our brothers and sisters together in one place.

On the social side of things, our many other fundraising activities, not only on a theatrical stance with 'Full Circle' which proved a huge success, but our Summer Fair was once again a well supported event, boosting our much needed funds. Our two young Parish Ambassadors have worked hard and raised funds for church and also local charities – well done girls! And so we sincerely thank all those who have

helped and donated to church in any way during this past year.

Our vision was clear when we enjoyed the fruits of all our efforts on reordering the church some years ago. We now look to the future with a new vision in the form of reordering our community room at the back of church. Building on the past merits will enhance our work, not only in the community, but the work of the faithful followers in our Benefice and also within the Deanery. We hope that our vision will become a reality as we pray together with faith, hope and love that we will see a new era emerge for our children's children, that they will certainly come to appreciate in many years to come. All that said, we will need help with our finances, as always. A small team from St Stephen's has been assembled to look at ways of how we will look at this as a priority, but not rushed. Of course we rely on our brilliant PCC, who are always open to new ideas and new ways of working within the community. We ask everyone to hold in their prayers all those who will work together in a positive way with much exuberance and excitement.

/continued ...

In November Fr Andrew celebrated his 60th birthday! Our Sunday Club children presented him with their individual hand-made hearts of love with streamers, as Linda strolled down the chancel with a 'very expensive' birthday cake. The children and congregation heartily sang "Happy Birthday", followed by much cheering and applause for the man who everyone loves and respects, not only within the Benefice but our own Burnley Deanery.

What's going on from this year to the next! As Christmas fast approaches, please make a note of the upcoming services, particularly the times and places! This will culminate with our own Patronal Festival on the last Sunday of December, when we all come together to thank God for what has been a good year for our Benefice, and ask for his blessing for 2025.

- * In the week following Christmas and the first week of January we shall all be enjoying a well- earned rest.
- * Our Let's do Lunch will resume on Wednesday 8th January, and Friends, Food & Fun on Wednesday 15th January.
- * Sunday 26th January – Messy Christingle – 2:30pm Come along and make your own Christingle, followed by the service at 3:30 pm.
- * Friday 31st January – Film Night – "2nd Best Marigold Hotel" 7:00 pm in the Community Room.

Finally, the wardens would like to thank everyone for the support that's been freely forthcoming over the past year. It goes without saying that we would not be able to operate without the good will of ALL our volunteers who work tirelessly, without fuss or praise, they just DO IT!

A very happy Christmas and a very, very happy New Year from Us to You!

With much love,

The Wardens at St Stephen's.

Keith, Jean, Paul & Edith



"For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord ... plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11)



Churchwardens' News from St Peter's

Hello everyone,

We hope you are all well and staying safe and warm at this time of year. We keep everyone in our prayers, and think especially of those listed on our prayer list.

We had a very moving Remembrance Sunday service on 10th November at which we remembered those who have died in conflict. Wreaths were placed on the war memorials, the names of the men of our parish who lost their lives in the World Wars were read aloud, and the two minutes silence was impeccably observed. It is always a privilege to take part in this service and to honour those who fought for the freedoms we enjoy today.

Thank you to everyone who gave their time to help out with the churchyard tidy-up on 12th November. All the volunteers worked hard to sweep up all the leaves that had fallen, and by the end we had an enormous mountain piled up by the front gates! The leaves were collected by Burnley Council and the churchyard now looks in excellent shape.

The ashes of Edna Dawson were interred in the memorial garden on Sunday 17th November with all her family present. Edna worshipped at St Peter's for many years and will be greatly missed by all those who knew her as a friend.

Many happy returns to Fr Andrew who celebrated his 60th birthday on 17th November. In addition to many cards, good wishes and a rendition of "Happy Birthday" by the congregation, the Sunday School presented him with a painting they had made and everyone enjoyed a slice of birthday cake.

There is a lot to look forward to over the Christmas period this year. Jack Bowtell performs with the Young Singers at the Saturday Morning Concert on 7th December. Our annual candlelit service of Nine Lessons and Carols takes place on Sunday 22nd December, at which our talented church choir will lead us in singing the traditional music of Christmas. And on Christmas Eve the Sunday School and Young Singers tell the story of the Nativity. Details of all our services can be found in the magazine, the Christmas card, and online.

We wish everyone in our church family a very happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you at some of our events and services over the festive period.

Take care,

Sandra and Jason



Mothers' UNION St Stephen's Branch

Christian care for families

LOOKING BACK

We met just the once in November, to wrap gifts in preparation for the Christmas fair.

LOOKING FORWARD

December - The Christmas buffet lunch is fast approaching. It will be held on Tuesday, 17th December. Please arrive 12 for 12.30pm. The entertainment will be provided by Keith, who will be accompanying us as we sing carols.

Please see Jackie to add your name to the list. The cost is £22. We hope to see you there, dressed, of course, in your festive glad rags!

DECEMBER 2024 EVENTS

MU Buffet, Tuesday 17th, 12 noon for 12.30pm in church

JANUARY 2025 EVENTS

AGM Tuesday 14th, 2pm, Community Room

LET'S CELEBRATE DECEMBER!

Happy birthday to Jean Beeston for the 2nd, Linda Hannah for the 11th and Linda Walton for the 14th.

LET'S CELEBRATE JANUARY!

Happy birthday wishes to Jackie Cosway on the 10th, Barbara Catlow on the 13th and Elaine Taberner on the 18th.

Happy Anniversary for the 3rd, Jackie Cosway

Thank you to everyone who has supported the meetings and events throughout 2024. We are working hard at the moment to draw up the programme for 2025.

Wishing you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Jackie

Mothers' UNION St Peter's Branch

Christian care for families

For the last year we have only been having 3 or 4 members at Mothers' Union meetings, although we do have several more members. We have, therefore, reluctantly decided that we cannot continue to hold regular monthly meetings.

St Peter's is the parish church of Burnley and St Peter's Mothers' Union branch is the oldest in Burnley (the first meeting was in June 1902). St Peter's Mothers' Union will continue as a branch for the present and anyone who wishes may still be a member. We may continue to meet on an occasional basis, perhaps 2 or 3 times a year. I have no doubt that the branch will eventually have to close, but I will keep it open as long as I can.

As a Mothers' Union member, it will be possible to attend meetings at other branches. St Stephen's meet monthly on a Tuesday afternoon and on Tuesday evenings during the summer months. Details of meetings can be found in the Parish Magazine. I will take anyone who wishes to go to the Tuesday afternoon meetings at St Stephen's.

The annual subscription for anyone wishing to continue as a member will be £32.00 for 2025, comprising of £24.50 for Mary Sumner House, £7.00 for Blackburn Diocese and £0.50 for Burnley Deanery and should be paid in January. If you do wish to continue as a member, please let either myself or Ethel know before the end of the year.

Thank you.

Carol

DECEMBER/JANUARY IN THE MEMORIAL BOOK OF ST STEPHEN'S

1st	Ian David Young, George Church Lancaster	1st	David Saunt, May Thornton, Emma Bell, Jack Sharp
2nd	Arthur Hill Dixon, Dorothy Ward, James William Baker, Helen Hudson	2nd	David Edward Jones, Peter Hall, Kathleen Sharp
3rd	Gladys Fielding, Irvine Stephenson, Phyllis Blythe, Margaret Thornburn	3rd	Emily Law, Jean Thornber
4th	Arthur Dixon, Mary Ellen Rycroft, Lottie Jobling	4th	Dora Higson, Leo Waterworth
5th	Albert Henry Baker, Craig William Beeston, Wilhelmina Baker	5th	Gertrude Healey, Hannah Wilkins, William Beaumont, Don Laing, Gordon Morris
6th	Mary Jane Clegg	6th	Alice Heap, Samuel Farrer, James Marcus Yates
7th	Edwin Taylor, Julia Busfield, Maggie O'Hara, Barbara Cryer	7th	Edward (Teddy) Garner, Bernard Rodgers
8th	George Leonard Tegerdine, Joyce Stuttard	8th	William Heyes, Bertha Parkinson, John Meek
9th	George Berry, Ralph Hampton Warren, Tom Corless, Alfred Green (Priest)	9th	Christopher Hodgson
10th	Walter Walker, Amy Hopwood, Ivy Hindle, Dorothy Martin	10th	Frank M Ascroft, James Edward Wadsworth, Harry Mason,
11th	Charlotte Astwood	11th	James Edward Garner, Annie Parker
12th	Clifford Harrison, Frank Haighton Jackson, Muriel Cockcroft	12th	Elizabeth Scholes, Eveline Farrer
14th	John Weston Whitham, John Geoffrey William Edison, Rita Mary Imeson, Elsie Glennie	13th	Alfred McGeorge, Thomas Henry Scholes, Kathleen Hopwood
15th	Elsi Schofield	14th	Albert Camm, Florence Linton
16th	Sarah Jane Duckworth, Jack Arthur Catton	15th	John Green, Tom Mitton, Alan Morley, Nora Hindle, Marion Tillotson
17th	Harry Hebden, Rose Ellen Harris, Renie Pearson	16th	Alice Scott, William Whalley, Derek Whalley, Hilda Burton, Lesley Cowling
18th	Anne Grice, Betsy Berry, Norah Lindsay	17th	Doris Edmondson, Harry Hebden
19th	James Astin, Cecil Herrett, William Hampden Riddiough	18th	James Bell, Thomas Murray, Arthur Jackson Heys, Stanley Stratton, Margery Ludlam
20th	John Pim	20th	Bertha Mellor, Emily Beaumont
21st	Patricia (Pat) Allen	21st	Emma Bastable, Ernest Ridge, Doris Sculthorpe
22nd	Adrian Lewis Meredith, Harry Heap, Jane Sunter, Ann Park	22nd	Thomas Ward, Harold Smith, Harry Walsh, Thomas Barkess
23rd	Dora Entwistle, Laura Schofield, Pamela Swaine	23rd	Thomas Wilson, Rhoda Riddiough
24th	Lewis Nichols, Louisa Frances Medforth, Ernest Alston, Beatrice Waterworth, Harold Hensman	24th	Maggie Meredith, Minnie Jackson, Maud Taylor, Elsie Simpson, Roland Henderson, John Titley
25th	Maggie Astwood, Elizabeth Ann Sawley, Norman Henry Helme	25th	Alice Watson, Mona Stanworth
26th	Albert Heyslop, Leonard Tomlinson, June Chapman	26th	Arthur Percy Kenyon, Winifred Hebden
27th	Fred Archer	27th	Sydney Harrison
28th	Sarah Eliza Hebden, Ethel Beaumont, Fred Walton	28th	Charles Frederick Hargreaves, Raimond Kull, Roland Jasper Smith
29th	John Edmund Lord, Edith Heyes, Arthur Whitehead, Robert Cryer, nLillie Ada Balderstone, Isabell Fitton	29th	Frank Walkden, Ruby Maud MacKay, Thomas Heap, Nancy Hall, Allan Harker, John James Mould
30th	Florrie Vernon, Margaret Briggs, Edward Ingham Dand, Annie Powell, Eunice Furness	31st	Arthur William Bennis, Brian George Davis, Lorinda (Laura) Halton
31st	Mary Kessi Catton, Elsie Walton, Marjorie Seller, John Jobling		

RIP

DECEMBER/JANUARY IN THE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE OF ST PETER'S

1st	Edith Francis, Dr Erwin Falik	1st	John Morris
2nd	Margaret Yates	2nd	Albert Schofield, William Mason Coates
3rd	Alice Newbold, Marion Edmondson	3rd	Rose Hilda McNair, Margaret Booth
8th	Marguerite Jane Thompson	4th	Kathleen Martin OBE
9th	Elizabeth Astin	7th	John Parker John Stuart Lockwood
11th	Silas Theodore Bellinger, George Henry Waring	10th	Joan Eglin
12th	Harold Shaw	11th	Ben Lund
13th	Rose Green	12th	Mavis Ryan
14th	Harry Smith	14th	Emily Helena Tomlinson
18th	Ester Alice Hadfield, Alfred Earley Hadfield, Henry Watson, Sarah Ann Potts, Mary Jane Taylor	16th	John Thomas Dodd
19th	James Arthur Ryan, Annie Bunney	17th	Mary Bestwick
20th	Willie Gudgeon	18th	Mary Ann Clegg, Pierce Astin
22nd	Mary Brown, Frank Jackson	19th	Norman Barritt
24th	James Reid, Joyce Jones	21st	Christine Ryan
25th	Anna Lozinski, William Taylor Foulds, Florrie Barritt	23rd	George Arthur G Senior
26th	William Egar	27th	Maggie Williams, William Edward Barritt
27th	Kenneth Howker, Casey-Jack Broxup, Peter Leslie Pike	28th	Dr John Baldwin, Shoesmith, Ethel Louisa Shoesmith
28th	Arthur Todd, Frank Stansfield, Thomas Henry Hutchinson, James Dawson	31st	Sarah Hannah Sagar, Ellen Ann Whittaker, Marjorie Batley, Peter West, Elizabeth Craig Lavery, Edward Fildes
29th	Ernest Joseph Parkinson, John Edward Lockwood		
30th	Maud Ethel Halstead, Jennie Ormerod		
31st	Gladys Gudgeon		

RIP



Saturday Morning Concerts at St Peter's



Our final concert of 2024 takes place on Saturday 7th December when the St Peter's Young Singers will appear in concert with opera singer Jack Bowtell. Originally from the Ribble Valley, British baritone Jack Bowtell, is an alumnus of The Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama and The David Seligman Opera School. After nearly a decade in Cardiff, Jack has been privileged to work with such eminent Welsh companies such as Music Theatre Wales and BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Welsh National Opera, where he made his professional debut in 2016. The concert will provide a fitting grand finale to our season, with the Young Singers serving some festive music. Seasonal refreshments will also be available!

As usual, admission is £7, free for under 18s, with refreshments served from 10:30 am and concerts starting at 11 am. Free parking is available in the school yard on Rawcliffe Street, an disabled parking is available in the church grounds.

The Young Singers will also be making a guest appearance with the Municipal Choir at St Catherine's church on Wednesday 18th December at 7 pm. Admission for this event is free and in addition to choir items, there will be traditional carols for all to sing. Refreshments will be served at the end of this concert



Philip.

*The David
Smith
Memorial
Concert*

*John Mark Rose
gave a piano
recital for this
year's memorial
concert.*

*Caroline was in
attendance.*

St Peter's - The Churchyard Tidy-Up

Tuesday, 12th November was a cold day but dry. It was the perfect weather to begin the huge task of scraping up the dead and decaying leaves found in the grounds of St Peter's Church. Armed with grass rakes and brushes 10 volunteers braved Burnley's traffic jams to start the assault at 9.00am. It was exhausting work but very rewarding. We turned a forgotten,



lost graveyard into a managed wildlife haven. Your contribution has made a big positive difference to the appearance of the Church and local area.

Thank you.



- Remembering the Heartbreak of World Wars

Remembrance Sunday honours our war dead. Ordinary men and women who gave their lives on the battlefield in the two World Wars. Their ultimate sacrifice paved the way for the freedoms we take for

granted today. For me the most moving part of the Church Service is when Sandra and Jason read the names out of all our fallen soldiers. There are quite a lot.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. We will remember them.



Sunday School News from St Peter's

We are looking forward to using the fantastic resources in the Roots magazine for Advent . We will be explaining about a 'Jesse Tree' and decorating each week with signs of hope, joy , love and peace . We will be talking about 'doors' - doors on our advent calendars - wondering , waiting , anticipating what is behind.

We will have our traditional nativity service on Christmas eve at 4pm . All are welcome to join in, babies and young people .

In the New Year we welcome visitors to the manger and share their joy and amazement .

Welcome is at the heart of Jesus' message. Our diverse Sunday School welcomes all families and all ages.

On Safeguarding Sunday it was good to discuss being a safe church, being ready to speak out and to listen .

We wish everyone a peaceful and joyful time as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour.

Love from

Meena





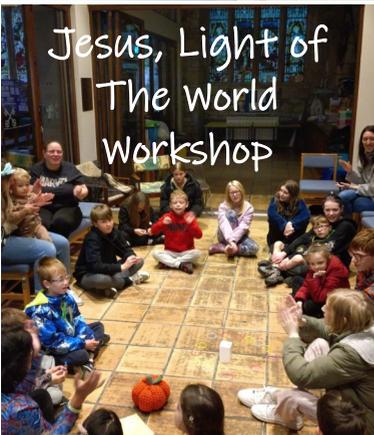
Father Andrew celebrates his **60th** Birthday!



Our Young Singers at Towneley House



... and later enjoying a MacDonalld's at Christine's



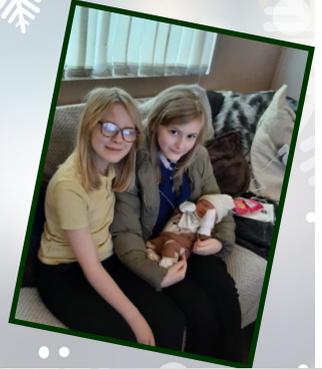
Jesus, Light of The World Workshop



Last month at St Peter's

School Remembrance Workshop

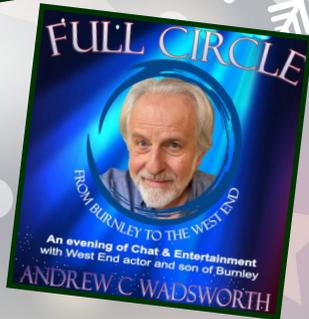
Highlights of Last year at St Peter's



Highlights of Last year at St Peter's



Highlights of
Last year at
St Stephen's



Focus On The Jumping ... by Christine Harbour

Here we are again focusing our minds on Christmas. To children too much excitement, or maybe anxiety of what that season holds for them. For adults many financial and social pressures, time fleeing factors, and for many a period of grief and loneliness.

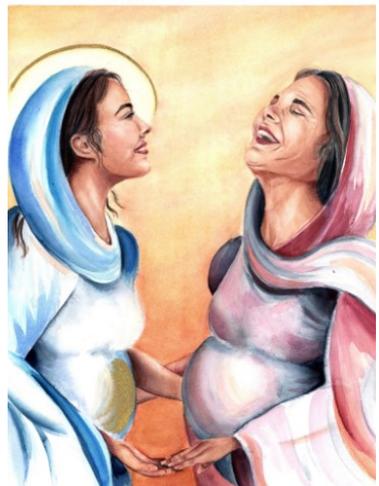
In these uncertain times how should Christians approach Advent in the light of the falseness, the division, and the hate that exists in our world? I ask myself, where do I stand in this tinsel world, this rushing to buy pandemic, and the pressures of getting everything to be perfect? I found my answer by putting a different focus on the first few chapters of Luke.

Firstly we have the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth. A devout barren couple who after many years, by God's command, gave birth to a son, called John. He is the prologue to our story. He was the forerunner of the long awaited Messiah. John the Preparer of hearts and minds for the Advent (the Coming!)

Next we have the beautiful story of Mary. The Annunciation of Jesus to be born of the Holy Spirit to a young Jewish girl.

So what does the young overawed Mary do with this thrilling but daunting news? She is bursting to share it with a close confidante, so she travels to find her cousin Elizabeth, who is surprisingly pregnant in her latter years.

The narrative in Luke tells us that when Mary arrived and greeted Elizabeth, the Holy Spirit so moved Elizabeth that the baby John leapt for joy in her womb. Mary hadn't even uttered a word about her condition, but Elizabeth said, 'Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you bear. But why I am so blessed that the son of my Lord should come to me?' In that moment of 'jumping for joy' in the womb, both those blessed women knew the prophecies of God were being fulfilled. This is when Mary utters the Magnificat. This is the Realisation, the Awesomeness, the Humility and Acceptance, and the utter Joy!



You know: Jesus loved to celebrate and he knew the joy of giving and he loved to heal and to bless. He celebrated a good wedding, the closeness of friends, Mary Martha and Lazarus. He felt the warmth of his mother Mary, Joseph and his brothers.

I am sure this Advent he wants us to focus on a God that gave Jesus, the Light of the World , his only begotten son. God was and is the Word.

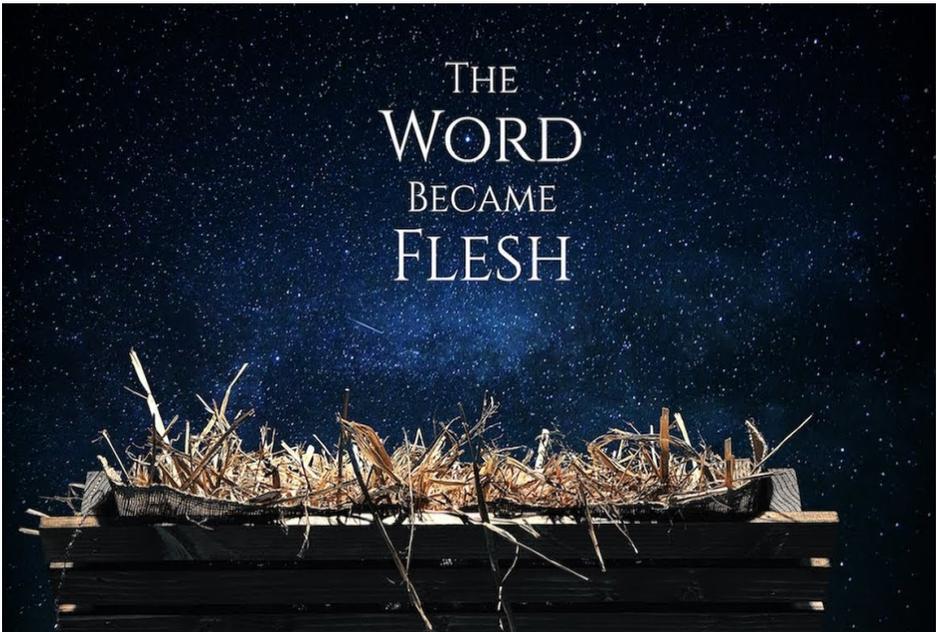
John 1:14. *'The word became flesh and dwells amongst us'.*

Now as we. celebrate this Christmas shall we jump for joy, in the light of the Christmas lights and the flickering candles? Shall we give thanks for families and friends and our life in the Light of His word? I really hope so.

Wishing you all the Love Joys and blessings of this Holy season.

Christine H

*(You may have noticed that I mentioned a prologue and a narrative in my message. There is an epilogue, but I shall leave that for next month! *



Lunches in December & January

Please take note!

Let's do lunch in December & January

Wednesday 11th December

Wednesday 8th January
Christmas Lunch in January!!!

Wednesday 22nd January



St Stephen's Church, Burnley Wood

Film Friday

THE SECOND BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL

Friday 31st January
at 7.00 pm

Refreshments on sale!

ADMISSION FREE BUT DONATIONS WELCOME

Winter Berries: A Seasonal Feast for Wildlife

Winter berries bring vibrant colour to hedgerows and woodlands while offering a critical food source for wildlife through the colder months. These berries, ripening in autumn, vary in how long they last into winter, with some enduring until February, depending on the species and the feeding patterns of wildlife.

Remarkably, birds appear to follow a careful strategy when consuming winter berries, selecting them in a sequence that extends their food supply. Early in the season, birds prioritise non-toxic berries with shorter shelf lives, like blackberries. Berries that are mildly toxic or longer-lasting, such as ivy berries, are saved for later, only eaten when other foods are scarce. Even then, birds eat these in small amounts to avoid toxicity, helping to ensure that food supplies stretch into late winter.

Three striking wild berries to spot in winter

- Hawthorn: The deep red berries, known as haws, are a lifeline for birds like thrushes, blackbirds, and redwings. Found in hedges and woodlands, hawthorn adds vibrant pops of color in winter. They can be used to make jellies, wines and even ketchups!
- Holly: With its glossy evergreen leaves and vibrant red berries, holly is an iconic winter plant. Its berries provide essential nourishment for birds during the colder months, and mistle thrushes are known to fiercely guard these berries to keep them all to themselves! Small mammals, like wood mice and dormice, also benefit from this winter snack. However, holly berries are toxic to humans and pets, so it's best to admire them as festive decorations rather than a treat.
- Rowan: Also called mountain ash, the rowan's red-orange berries are a favorite for fieldfares and waxwings. The berries are sour but safe to eat and rich in vitamin C. Rowans often grow in open areas, lighting up the landscape even on the grayest winter days.

For a nature-friendly winter walk, keep an eye out for these wild winter jewels, and the animals feeding on them.

Andrea Gilpin

andrea@cfga.org.uk - www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk





...From our Vision Champions

Hi everyone,

Christmas is coming! I know some people are super organised and will have everything bought and wrapped before the end of November. I am not one of them.

Christmas is a time of expectation. A time of looking forward. A time of celebration. Not the commercialised version we have today, where we are subjected to continual advertisements for the best gift and food we should buy or our Christmas will be ruined.

To help us in looking forward to Christmas there are lots of things happening in church. There will be a service of Darkness to Light to mark the beginning of Advent, our traditional St Stephen's Sings Christmas and Midnight Eucharist on Christmas Eve. Take time out from the commercial hype of Christmas and remember the true meaning of why we celebrate Christmas.

The diocese have invited everyone to make 2025 a Year of Prayer for Growth and Renewal. The intention for the year is for parishes to pray for new and deeper disciples for Jesus Christ, and to pray for ourselves that we may be renewed in the power of the Holy Spirit for a season of mission in the Diocesan centenary year 2026.

The Bishop of Blackburn said "In 2025, as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the centenary of the Diocese in 2026, it would be wonderful if every parish, congregation and chaplaincy within our Diocese made time to pray intentionally for renewal and growth. At the same time our schools will be having a Year of Prayer in which our children can explore more fully the joy of prayer." The first Burnley Prayer Breakfast of the New year will have as its theme 'Growth and Renewal'.

May I wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Linda.

(St Stephen's Vision Champion)



*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.
(1 John 5:14)*



Have you ever read the book of Nehemiah? It's about rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem which were broken down by the Babylonian army and the people exiled from Israel. Some of us went to a quiet day recently, the lady who ran the day talked about walls. When I think about walls I assume they are there to keep people out, but walls are built for many reasons.

- They hold up our roofs, divide buildings into rooms. Distribute the load across foundations.
- Walls of houses protect us from the elements
- Walls provide security and privacy
- Walls define territories
- Walls can be decorative

They aren't just physical, we build walls around ourselves to protect ourselves from hurt. To keep people away because we find it difficult to trust. We build walls to give us rules and ways of behaving. Sometimes we, like Jerusalem, feel all our walls have been broken down, our very self has been exposed to the world.

Do our walls have doors – a wall without a door has become a prison. To be healthy in mind and spirit we need doors in our walls to let people in, to be loved. We need a door to let out our frustrations and negative thoughts. We are helped on our journey by the Holy Spirit, the Bible and our friends and families.

Our churches too have walls to protect us, walls to show us the way forward, walls that are to keep us safe. Again, every wall should have a door. Have we ever thought what the message on our church door is. Is it: 'Keep out! Enter at your own risk?' 'No longer at this address', 'Do not disturb'. Some churches may have those messages.

What is on our church doors hopefully it is one of these:

'Welcome!' 'Enjoy your visit', 'Come and sit for a while', 'We are glad you are here', 'How can we help?'

The messages on our doors don't just happen they are a reflection of what is going on inside personally and in our church. The challenge from the Quiet Day was to look at the walls and doors around ourselves and our church. If either are negative then ask Father God to help us change to be a more loving, trusting person which will ensure our churches are places of love, support and safety.

Joan

Vision Champion (St Peter's)



You may remember that last month I was thinking about trying to raise £130 for Christian Aid to buy a gift of much needed medical supplies for those in conflict zones and refugee camps.

Well, in the spirit of joyful and generous giving, and inspired by our generous God, I've decided to go for it! It's one Christmas Gift that we know won't get put away in a cupboard after a few days and then forgotten about.

You can donate online (Just Giving) by scanning the QR code or entering the link into your browser. If you prefer to donate cash, you can hand it to me; I will record and account for all donations.

All money received will go to Christian Aid, and should we be blessed enough to exceed our £130 target, any surplus will go to Christian Aid's general funds.



Alan Roadley
Vision Champion (St Peter's)

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/stpetersburnley-173150740870?ut>



Staff holidays meant we had to bring in the 'B' team for a recent 'Let's Do Lunch' at St Stephen's, and they didn't let us down!



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Important Notice from the Editor!

There have been ongoing discussions for a while now to decide whether or not 'The Link' should carry on being produced monthly, or if it would be more cost-effective to come out bi-monthly.

Opinions are divided on this, but after having a word with Fr Andrew, and asking for the thoughts of our regular contributors, it has been decided that next year, we will have a magazine every two months, beginning with March/April. If it doesn't work out, we can always have a re-think at the end of the year.

If you have any strong feelings on the matter, do please let me or Fr Andrew know your views.



pamelamcgrath1@hotmail.com



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Start saving early for Christmas with our savings cards that can be topped up and used anytime throughout the year, or give that special someone a **Hev's gift card**.



We look forward to welcoming you, come and see us soon!



Confirmation **Are you thinking 2025 of being confirmed?**

The Confirmation service will be at St Peter's at 10.30 am on Sunday 8th June - Pentecost Sunday. If you would like to be confirmed, or simply want to no more of what it's all about, add your name to the list in church, or have a word with Fr Andrew.

There will be TWO Confirmation workshops taking place in the New Year. Watch this space for more details.

New Year's Eve Party at St Stephen's

This is a party for the Church community, their family and friends. Remember to get your ticket before 18th December - £10 (includes pie and peas and a glass of Prosecco to welcome in the New Year). Available from Church NOW!

A New Year's Blessing

May God make your year a happy one,
Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain,
But by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes;
Not by making your path easy,
But by making you sturdy to travel any path;
Not by taking hardships from you,
But by taking fear from your heart;
Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,
But by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows;
Not by making your life always pleasant,
But by showing you when people and their causes need you most,
and by making you anxious to be there to help.

Gods love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead.

- Unknown

Rambings of the Cenary



PRAYER FOR
GROWTH AND RENEWAL



You're invited to

Burnley Prayer Breakfast @ St Stephen's

St Stephen's Church, Oxford Road, Burnley BB11 3JA

SATURDAY 11TH JANUARY

this month ... at 9.00 am

Growth & Renewal

All welcome!

Telephone:
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Children's Page

DIRECTIONS:
Find and circle the
vocabulary words in
the grid. Look for
them in all directions
including backwards
and diagonally.

The First Christmas Word Search



- ADVENT
- ANGEL
- BABY
- BETHLEHEM
- BIRTH
- BLESSING
- EAST
- FAITH
- FRANKINCENSE
- GIFTS
- GOLD
- HOLY SPIRIT



- HOPE
- JESUS
- JOSEPH
- JOY
- LORD
- LOVE
- MAGE
- MANGER
- MARY
- MIRACLE
- MYRRH
- NATIVITY
- NAZARETH
- REJOICE
- SAVIOR
- SHEPHERD
- STABLE
- STAR
- THREE KINGS
- WISE MEN



Our Light Party was a HUGE success - we particularly enjoyed the bouncy castle! It was good to welcome so many children and their parents from school too!



We had a great time in Sunday Club on Remembrance Sunday learning about those who had died fighting for their country in the Wars and making poppy wreaths.. Ruby shows us the finished article

What's Happening in December

in the United Benefice of *St Peter & St Stephen, Burnley*

Advent Sunday 1st December

- 9.30 am: Parish Eucharist & Children's Sunday Club - St Stephen's
- 10.00 am: Choral Matins - St Peter's
- 11.00 am: All-Age Eucharist - St Peter's
- 3.30 pm: Advent Carol Service Darkness to Light' - St Stephen's
- 7.00 pm: Burnley Municipal Choir perform Handel's Messiah (ticketed)

Saturday 7th December

- 11.00 am: Morning Concert - Jack Bowtell & St Peter's Young Singers

Advent 2 Sunday 8th December

- 9.30 am: Parish Eucharist & Children's Sunday Club - St Stephen's
- 11.00 am: Parish Eucharist - St Peter's

Advent 3 Sunday 15th December

- 8.45 am: Wake up & Worship followed by The Eucharist at 9.30 am - St Stephen's
- 11.00 am: All-Age Family Eucharist - St Peter's
- 3.30 pm: St Stephen's Sings Christmas - St Stephen's

Wednesday 18th December

- 10.30 am: St Peter's School Nativity

Advent 4 Sunday 22nd December

- 9.30 am: All-Age Worship with Nativity led by our Sunday Club - St Stephen's
- 11.00 am: Parish Eucharist - St Peter's
- 4.00 pm: Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight - St Peter's

Christmas Eve 24th December

- 4.00 pm: 'The Nativity' led by our Sunday School & Young Singers - St Peter's
- 11.30 pm: Benefice Midnight Eucharist St Stephen's

Christmas Day 25th December

- 10.00 am: Benefice Eucharist - St Peter's

Sunday 29th December

- 10.30 am: St Stephen's Patronal Festival - a joint service at ST Stephen's followed by 'Nibbles & Fizz'