

2021

Bolton Parish Church 1871-2021



Celebrating 150 years

Parish News

June 2021

£1

Dear Friends,

So the conversation begins like this, “What an amazing building...” and continues on in any number of directions. These conversations have happened with an unusual frequency this last month, and with a variety of people; builders, visitors and film crew alike. I suspect I’m not the only one who’s had these conversations recently, but they have made me realise how much I’d missed them over the last year. June has arrived and we’re now embarking on the 150th anniversary celebrations which we have been planning and re-working and talking about for at least two years. And alongside this, the joyful return of visitors and the buzz of school trips coming up.

The conversations have begun with the building (a place which tells so many stories of faith in its structures and its detail, from the basics of its cruciform shape to the intricate Passiontide carvings on the choir stalls, and the wide variety of stained glass windows and readily identifiable motif of the last supper) and then, beyond what can be seen with the eye, to the invisible and yet still perceptible sense that these walls have been soaked in prayer over the years. *“I tell you, if these [disciples] were silent, the very stones would cry out”* (Luke 19:40). Each of these things has been noticed by the visitors over this last month.

We know that it’s not just the last 150 years that have seen Christian worship on this site, but that since Saxon times there has been a worshipping Christian community here. And I think it’s safe to say that it shows. There’s the vision of the planners, designers and tradespeople who created this building over 150 years ago with such skill and attention to detail that it’s still commented on. And in addition to this, the care and attention that’s been given to this *house of prayer* over the last 150 years which bears witness to how much the building means to us.

But, of course, the church is more than the building. It’s made up of the welcoming, worshipping and spirit-filled community of you all,

both past and present. We could (if necessary) worship under a tree, or in the car park (as indeed we have done this last year) and still be *church*. So, in celebrating 150 years of the consecration of this wonderful church on St Peter's Day 1871, we are also celebrating the many lives who have given so much to this community over the years.

As our 2021 prayer says, we give thanks for the past; for God's faithfulness to us, for his provision and for all that has been achieved. We live fully in the present; making the most of the opportunities to rejoice and share together in music and so many other creative expressions of worship and discipleship. And we look with hope to the future; and the exciting opportunities of this slightly delayed 150th anniversary year. We have so much to be proud of and thankful for.

And, of course, there are many opportunities for those who are able to offer their time and talents in service and would like to become more involved. We give thanks for such a wonderful and varied ministry team with such opportunities. Thank you to each one who offers their time and energy in service.

This month, Bolton Parish Church celebrates 150 years (and beyond) of God's faithfulness. We do hope you can join us.

With love and best wishes,

Ian

2021 anniversary prayer

Gracious God, as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the consecration of this church, we give thanks for all who have made it a house of prayer. May we, like St Peter, proclaim with confidence, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. Bless the on-going work of Bolton Parish Church, as we give thanks for the past, live fully in the present and look with hope to the future. Amen



2021 150th anniversary plans

Date	Event
From January 2020	Some former clergy coming to preach at the 11.00am service. To be resumed July 2021
October 2020	Writing of Bolton Parish Church history started. Expect to be completed and prepared for publication in autumn 2021
10 th January 2021 11.00am	Bishop of Manchester to preside and preach
April 2021	Start of refurbishment of altar frontals
May 2021	Refurbishment of the west porch
27 th June 2021 11.00am	150 th Anniversary Service and Gift Day. Preacher: The Vicar
29 th June 2021 7.00pm	Civic Service Preacher: The Very Revd Matt Thompson
	Publication of 150 th anniversary brochure and launch of merchandise
	Unfurling of anniversary flag
29 th August	4.30pm Outdoor Songs of Praise with Corus Brass
15 th September 2021	Unveiling of busts produced by University of Bolton Canon James Slade Mr Peter Ormrod Mr Thomas Markland Dr Samuel Taylor Chadwick Canon Chris Bracegirdle

September – December 2021	500 words schools' writing competition.
September 2021	Scaled model of the church produced by University of Bolton to be installed in the grounds
September 2021	Installation of a timeline reflecting the church and the town between the Churchgate and Silverwell Street gates
October 2021	Sponsorship of new trees to link with our Eco church commitment
October 2021	Lecture close to St Luke's Day (18 th) at the university on a healthcare theme and linked to Bolton Parish Church. Possibility of a healthcare service at church
29 th April 2022 – 2 nd May 2022	Flower Festival
Other events with dates yet to be fixed	Arranged by the university, engineering lecture at Bolton Parish Church focusing on the building of the church, with panel Q&A
	University of Bolton Vice-Chancellor's fund raising event for the church
	Organ Festival – possibility in 2022
	Lent addresses by Bishop Chris Edmondson
	Schools' art exhibitions during the academic year 2021-22
	Choir CD
	Anniversary dinner
	Several of our regular visiting choirs, bands and orchestras have signalled a willingness to reflect the anniversary in their forthcoming concert programmes.

Parish Church Schools

Canon Slade School, Bradshaw Brow BL2 3BP

Headteacher: Karen Sudworth

Tel: 01204 333343

Bishop Bridgeman Primary School, Rupert Street BL3 6PY

Executive Principal: Canon Jill Pilling

Headteacher: Hafsha Hafeji

Bolton Parish Church Primary School, Chadwick Street BL2 1JN

Headteacher: Angela Worthington

Tel: 01204 333433

Support for others in need

The Covid-19 pandemic has not removed the need for support for others – if anything, it has heightened it. Some things can be recycled to support various charities so please continue to save and bring to church the following items:

- Used postage stamps – Christmas is the best time to collect these.
- Unwanted spectacles.
- Old working mobile phones, tablets and laptops.

We continue to collect items of food for the grub tub, supporting the work of Urban Outreach.

Please send copy for the July

issue by 20 June to

sigridjcp@gmail.com

or

admin@boltonparishchurch.co.uk

As we normally publish on the last Sunday of the month, the deadline is particularly important.

150th anniversary year project update June 2021



The first stage of our project to redesign the altar frontals is now complete and costs have been met by donations – thank you very much for your generosity

The next stage of the project is to redesign the purple and green frontals, together with the purple pulpit fall. Thank you for the generous donations to this project received so far. There is still plenty of time to make a donation (perhaps in memory of someone?) and if you would like to do so, please let the vicar, Lecturer or one of the churchwardens know.

Planned giving

When you come to church, please remember to bring your filled planned giving envelopes. If you would like to make your regular giving by standing order (and thank you so much to those who have recently set up standing orders and those who have been doing it that way for years) the account details you need are:

Parish Church

Account Name: Bolton Parish Church PCC Stewardship.

Sort Code: 16-00-06

Account Number: 11816952

St Philip's

Account Name: St. Philip's Parochial Church Council.

Sort Code: 77-02-04

Account Number: 00017505

From the archives

Nine years ago, we had a service of Choral Mattins on the fifth Sunday of the month. This was attended by Trevor Whillas, who had an unpleasant surprise on emerging from the building. However, he turned this into a memorable contribution to the magazine. I don't believe he ever found out who the culprit was!

The General Confession – 1662 Morning and Evening Prayer

For some years now I have attended Evening Prayer (usually about once a month), and I greatly enjoy the richness of language to be found in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.

I was delighted therefore to attend the service of Choral Mattins at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday 20th May. This presented the opportunity to enjoy again much of what is familiar from Evening Prayer, in addition to those parts of the Mattins service with which I am less familiar.

Sadly, on approaching the car park after this service I was slightly less than delighted at the sight which greeted me. I recalled to mind again (in addition to a choice selection from our Anglo-Saxon linguistic heritage) the words of the general confession we had used that morning:

Almighty and most merciful Father,

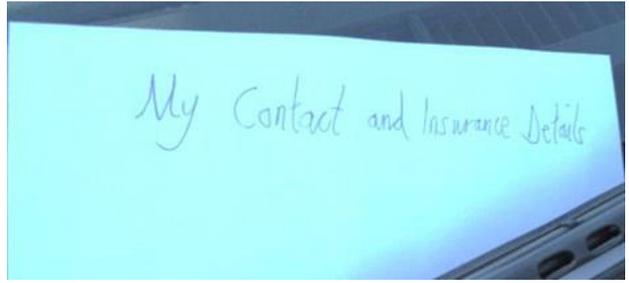


We have erred and
strayed from thy ways
like lost sheep.

We have followed too much the devices and desires of
our own hearts,

We have offended against thy holy laws,

We have left undone
those things which
we ought to have done,



And we have done
those things which we
ought not to have
done.

And there is no health in us:

But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders;

Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults ,

Restore thou them that are penitent,

According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu
our Lord:

And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,

That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,

To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.



Therefore all things whatsoever ye
would that men should do to you,
do ye even so to them: for this is
the law and the prophets. .

Matthew 7:12

TJW

Flower News

An arrangement was placed by the war memorial to commemorate the anniversary of VE Day as last year on the 75th anniversary it was only possible to lay flowers outside church.

Until Ascension Day, altar flower arrangements and the nave pedestal were created using white carnations and roses, and calla lilies. The altar arrangements were of white chrysanthemums and carnations for the remainder of May. The nave pedestal contained yellow carnations and roses, cream chrysanthemums, and with accents of red and gold added for Pentecost. Lady chapel flowers were white lilies until Pentecost.

The angels of hope displays were taken down after Pentecost and some of the angels kept safely for the future.

With grateful thanks for donations received during May.

Flower team





Harvey A Crerar

For all your plumbing and building work

Telephone 01204 669170

Mobile 07759 19 44 78

1B Ansdell Road

Horwich

Bolton

Walsh's



De Olde Pastie Shoppe

Open: MONDAY - FRIDAY 9.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.
Closed: SATURDAY and SUNDAY

We are the little shop with the big reputation. We have served generations for generations, and the family has run the business since 1898. We sell fresh and frozen pasties and meat pies, along with pasties, whist pies and mini sausage rolls which are great for parties. Our uncooked frozen pasties, which can be baked at home for that 'fresh from the oven' taste, are well worth a try.

29 - 31 Churchgate, BOLTON BL1 1
Tel : 01204 - 524834 Fax: 01204 - 371682

**We support Royal School for the Blind, Church Road,
Wavertree, LIVERPOOL L15 6TQ**

From the Organ Console

A casualty of the national situation has been the series of Tuesday Lunchtime and Saturday Morning concerts. The enforced cancellation of the concert season is a terrific loss to our church life. However, emboldened by the improving situation, the clergy, wardens and I have felt able to contemplate putting on a short series of lunchtime concerts this September to make up for the loss of the usual Spring and Summer season; obviously, this is dependent on the national situation remaining stable, or indeed improving, but it looks likely that these will be able to go ahead.

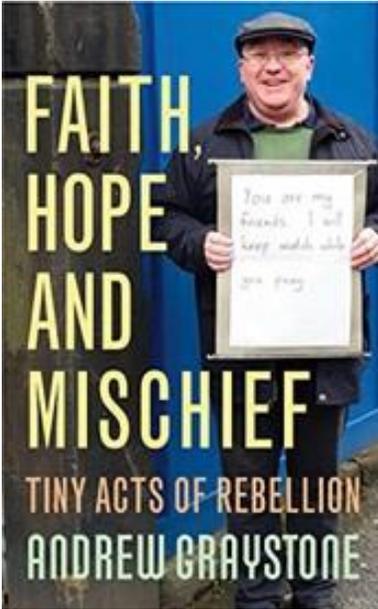
It gives me great pleasure to let you know about the concerts listed below – we have lost so much of the music of the church, and I hope that this will go some small way towards moving back to some sort of “normal”.

MICHAEL PAIN.

TUESDAY LUNCHTIME CONCERTS 2021 September 1.15 – 1.50 p.m.

- Tues 7 **PAUL GREENHALGH** *piano*
- Tues 14 **VIVIEN CHASEY** *violin*
with **Robin Bowman** *piano*
and **Claire Bowman** *soprano*
- Tues 21 **REBEKHAH OKPOTI** *organ*
(St. Lawrence with St. Paul’s, Longridge)
- Tues 28 **MICHAEL PAIN** *organ*
(Bolton Parish Church)

Summer Book Group 2021



Following the success of our Advent and Lent Reading Groups, we are planning to hold a four week summer book group which, like our recent groups, will be meeting via Zoom. This year's book is **Faith, Hope and Mischief: Tiny Acts of Rebellion** by Andrew Graystone

Canterbury Press

ISBN:9781786222596

Andrew Graystone is an everyday activist who believes in the power of tiny acts to change the world. He is the person whose image went viral when, after the mass shooting in the Christchurch mosque, he stood outside the mosque in his Manchester neighbourhood with a cardboard sign saying 'I'll watch while you pray'.

Faith, Hope and Mischief tells funny, prophetic and powerful stories of tiny acts of rebellion Andrew has carried out, alongside arresting reflections on what it means to live in faith and hope. His stories delight and challenge in equal measure, showing how the kingdom of God turns up in all kinds of ways and how small things make a big difference. His stories encourage readers to take risks, make holy mischief, poke fun at the over-mighty, and believe that despite evidence to the contrary, the world's story is going to end well.

This is a manual of everyday activism, a wellspring of wit and wisdom for days when hope is hard to come by, and an inspiration for anyone who feels powerless to make a difference.

Andrew Graystone joined the BBC as a producer in 1992, then became a Development Executive responsible for the commissioning of programmes across BBC radio and TV. After leaving the BBC he worked as a media analyst and communications consultant.

He has taught communication and ethics at numerous colleges and has worked substantially as a consultant in the voluntary sector, especially focusing on change-management and communications strategy.

The book is available at the Isaiah 53 Bookshop in Bolton (01204 532384), or to order online and as a Kindle edition.

The group will meet online on Wednesday evenings, 7.30pm – 8.30pm on 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd June.

To join, please use the Zoom link below and feel free to share this with others.

Topic: Summer Book Group

Join Zoom Meeting

Chris Bracegirdle is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87869476114?pwd=eTdWQW13OGJYTGtiangoaVp6am5FZz09>

Meeting ID: 878 6947 6114 Passcode: 723935

St Peter's Day (29 June)

The Collect

O Almighty God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to thy Apostle Saint Peter many excellent gifts, and commandedst him earnestly to feed thy flock: Make, we beseech thee, all Bishops and Pastors diligently to preach thy holy Word, and the people obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

If you DON'T use any or all of the Internet, Facebook or Twitter, this article is for YOU...

Approximately 78% of the population of the United Kingdom uses some kind of Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) and 95% of the population uses the internet. Accepting that it is usually an individual's choice not to engage with others in these ways, we cannot get away from the fact that the first point of contact with any individual or organisation is via a website, Facebook page or other similar medium.

With that in mind, it would be very helpful to the mission and ministry of Bolton Parish Church if you would share the following information with your family friends, colleagues etc. – in fact anyone who uses social media.

Our Church has a website **www.boltonparishchurch.co.uk** It contains lots of information about the church and its activities, and is kept up to date with things that are happening. The weekly notice sheet and this monthly church magazine can be found there.

We have a Facebook page **@boltonparishchurch** We use this to share news, forthcoming events and videos of services either live or recorded.

Our Twitter account **@stpeterbolton** is another channel through which we can share news, comment and information about the life of our parish.

All you need to do please, is to pass on these details to everyone you know who uses the internet, Facebook or Twitter...they'll do the rest!

If you DO use any or all of the Internet, Facebook or Twitter, this article is for you too! Please ensure that you 'follow', 'like' and 'friend' as appropriate so as to ensure that we get the breadth and diversity of coverage we need.

Further details of Bolton Parish Church's media presence can be found on the next page.

Online Organ Concerts at Bolton Parish Church

Although we are unable to hold concerts in Church at the moment, here is a chance to watch a superb recital, given on our organ by Jonathan Scott. The concert also includes stunning shots of the inside of Church.

The programme is shown below and the concert can be viewed on the following link: <https://youtu.be/Xc3r326g8jQ>

A few years ago, the Scott Brothers came to Bolton Parish Church and played Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 by Liszt, arranged by Jonathan for organ and piano. This is still available.

(Link: <http://youtu.be/orneY4K9YtQ>)

Bolton Parish Church Online

Email: admin@boltonparishchurch.co.uk

Website: www.boltonparishchurch.co.uk

Details of services, events, newsletters, magazines, important updates etc.

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/boltonparishchurch

Official Church Facebook page, with news, photos, and archive of online services and prayers

www.facebook.com/MusicAtBoltonParishChurch

News about music, with photos, details of musical events and videos of choir and organ

Twitter: [@StPeterBolton](https://twitter.com/StPeterBolton)

Instagram: [boltonparishchurchimages](https://www.instagram.com/boltonparishchurchimages)

Photos of Bolton Parish Church

Prayer

And what is prayer?

'Tis a missive sped by faith;
'Tis a thought, a sigh, a breath;
'Tis the soul's repentant cry
In the ears of God most high;
Messenger, sent forth for good;
'Tis the speech of man with
God;
'Tis the letter of our love
To our Father's home above;
Incense rising to the skies,
Morning, evening sacrifice.

Robert Maguire

Be careful for nothing; but
in everything, by prayer
and supplication, let your
requests be made known
unto God.

And the peace of God,
which passeth all
understanding, shall keep
your hearts and minds
through Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6,7.

Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish;
Come to the Mercy Seat, fervently kneel;
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.
Joy of the desolate, light of the straying,
Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure;
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
"Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot cure."

Thomas Moore

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright;
And Satan trembles, when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

Have you no words? Ah, think again,
Words flow apace when you complain;
And fill your fellow creature's ear
With the sad tale of all your care.

Were half the breath thus vainly spent,
To Heav'n in supplication sent;
Your cheerful song would oft'ner be,
'Hear what the Lord has done for me'.

William Cowper 1731-1800

“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” — Mark 11:24

Our Father, which in Heaven art,	Forgiveness do bestow.
We sanctify Thy name;	Into temptation lead us not,
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done,	And us from evil free;
In Heaven and earth the same.	For Thine the kingdom, power and praise
Give us this day our daily bread,	Is, and shall ever be.
And us forgive Thou so,	
As we on them that us offend,	<i>George Wither 1588-1667</i>

“The prayer of the upright is his delight.” — Proverbs 15:8

BOLTON CHURCHES SUPPORTING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Why this leaflet?

As Christians, we are encouraged to “*Welcome the stranger*”, “*Feed the poor*”, “*Give drink to the thirsty*” etc. Maybe we think that this applies in other countries or just towards the homeless on our streets in Bolton but the reality is that we have a large number of vulnerable people in our midst who need help. They are known as Asylum Seekers or Refugees and they have used their legal right to arrive here in the UK fleeing from the tyranny and harm that they and their families have experienced in their homeland.

This leaflet will attempt to furnish you with the relevant information that you need to fully understand the situation we are facing, the current responses that exist already in Bolton and how you might as a community in your church or as individuals respond in a Christian and humanitarian way to help the needs of those poor people.

What happens when someone arrives in the UK?

They seek asylum and ultimately want refugee status on application but until they receive that status they are known as Asylum Seekers. It is a legal right to claim but they have to meet strict criteria to prove their need for protection as a Refugee which will give them the same rights as a British citizen. If their application does not meet the criteria they are then known as Refused Asylum Seekers. At that point they may choose to return to their home country themselves or the government may forcibly remove them. Refused asylum seekers often become destitute.

Where do they come from?

The vast majority of people who seek asylum in the UK have fled countries ravaged by war and human rights abuses.

In the UK in 2020, the top five nationalities of asylum were as follows:

Iranian, 4,199, Iraqi, 3,281, Albanian, 3,071, Eritrean, 2,604, Sudanese, 2,153.

How do they arrive in Bolton?

The Home Office disperses them across the UK into available accommodation. Bolton is one of the areas within the North West receiving the highest number of asylum seekers with numbers comparable to Manchester and Liverpool. The following extracts from “**Supported Asylum Seekers in Dispersal Accommodation by Local Authority**” table based on figures at 31st December 2019 illustrate this point.

Local Authority	Dispersed Asylum seekers	Population	Asylum seekers per 10,000 pop.	Ranking across the UK
UK	40,702	66,435,550	6	
North West	9,381	7,292, 093	13	
North East	4,316	2,657,909	16	
South West	799	5,599,735	1	
NORTH WEST				
Liverpool	1,450	494, 814	29	2
Bolton	891	285,372	31	8
Manchester	787	547,627	14	15

What are their entitlements once they arrive in Bolton?

They are provided with a place to stay, usually a room in shared accommodation. They receive £39.62 per week per adult or child (about £5.66 a day). They are not allowed to claim benefits or work.

What happens when an application for Refugee status is successful?

They become a Refugee, which according to the UN Refugee Convention, is someone who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of that country.”

As a new refugee, they have just 28 days to find accommodation and apply for mainstream benefits before they are evicted from asylum accommodation. Many refugees become homeless at this stage.

What happens if their application is unsuccessful?

If rejected, the asylum seeker has a right to appeal. Over 52% of failed asylum claims (2019) are overturned once they appeal in court. This means that there is often a stigma attached to “illegal immigrants” who actually have a right to appeal the decision. Between getting their original claim refused and launching their appeal **2** they have no rights or funding. This is when they are most vulnerable.

What rights do Asylum Seekers and Refugees have?

International law states that asylum seekers and refugees, like all of us, have basic human rights including: life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression. They cannot return to their own country if their life would be at risk or they could face persecution.

Which organisations exist to support these new arrivals to Bolton?

Local organisations are shown on the following page.

For more information please contact Keith Armstrong at tcc@bolton.gmim.org.uk or 07500928573

or any of the listed Asylum Seeker support groups directly.

Organisation & Contact	Operational details	Support includes:
<p>Destitution Project dropindp@gmail.com www.boltondp.org</p>	<p>Drop- in Centre 10am to 3pm Wednesdays , Appt. only on Fridays 10.00 to 1.00, Victoria Hall, Bolton</p>	<p>Provide casework support, English classes, food, toiletries, clothes, shoes, recreational facilities etc.</p>
<p>Brass admin@brass-bolton.org.uk www.brassbolton.org</p>	<p>See website for weekly schedule and locations. Main office: Green Lane, Great Lever</p>	<p>Immigration advice, sewing, English classes, Tots and toast, Family day</p>
<p>City of Sanctuary www.bolton.cityofsanctuary.org info@bolton.cityofsanctuary.org</p>	<p>Mondays 9am to 2pm New Horizons Centre, Back Bark St, Bolton. Activities diff times in various locations</p>	<p>School of Sanctuary, arts project, sewing, creative writing, walks, Links with Octagon Theatre and library</p>
<p>Urban Outreach www.urbanoutreach.co.uk info@urbanoutreach.co.uk</p>	<p>Office based at Environ House, Salop Street, Bolton</p>	<p>Provision of food, clothes etc via Storehouse and Winterwatch projects</p>
<p>Bolton Lighthouse & Willows Centre , Carla Pickering, carlapickering09@gmail.com</p>	<p>Tuesday mornings, Willows Community Centre, Back Caledonia St, Deane, Bolton</p>	<p>Pop up café offering tea, coffee, food, community allotment and English lessons.</p>
<p>ACIS acis@bolton.gov.uk www.bolton.gov.uk/youth-support/support-families-new-uk</p>	<p>Bolton Council’s support for Families new to the UK, Acis International Family Centre Shepherd Cross Street Bolton</p>	<p>Check documents, help with applications for schools, help with move into schools, provide training for schools</p>
<p>Bolton at Home boltonathome.org.uk</p>	<p>98 Waters meeting Rd, Bolton</p>	<p>Support with housing</p>

What can you do to help, as a community or as an individual?

Invite one of the organisations to give a talk/video presentation to your community.

Hand out this leaflet to people who might be able to help.

Donate food, toiletries, baby items, clothes, shoes, bicycles, old smart phones/tablets/laptops to one of the organisations.

Arrange to provide, or signpost to, English classes.

Arrange to visit one or more of the organisations and maybe consider becoming a volunteer.

Consider making a regular monetary donation to one or other of the organisations.

Arrange a fundraising event at your church for one of the organisations.

Be available to volunteer at one of the events organised centrally such as supermarket collections.

Other Useful Resources/Support Groups

NACCOM (The No Accommodation Network): www.naccom.org.uk

The Boaz Trust (Support in Gtr Manchester): www.boaztrust.org.uk

The Jubilee+ Refugee Network (Support for churches):

www.jubilee-plus.org/refugee-network/

Refugees at Home (National online hosting service):

www.refugeesathome.org

Welcome Churches (Church Support): www.welcomechurches.org

This leaflet has been produced by the Passion Bolton 2030 Vision Steering Team in Partnership with Bolton Christian Community Cohesion and the groups supporting Asylum Seekers and Refugees across all Bolton boroughs.



The Last Word

A new monthly feature where we get to know each other a little better through a series of questions .

This month:

Stephen and Linda Mort

Stephen

Do you come from Bolton?

I was born in Townley's Hospital, Farnworth, so I am Bolton through and through.

What will you be doing on Monday?

Possibly going to the supermarket for the weekly shop. I have been retired since June 2009. I worked for 23 years for the Halifax Building Society before becoming the Parish Hall caretaker in 1992.

How long have you been coming to Bolton Parish Church?

That is a good question. I assume I was carried into the Parish Church as a month-old baby to be baptised in February 1949. Attending Ridgway's Endowed Primary School, I visited the church for end of year services. Then there was the BBC radio broadcast of the morning service in 1960, when I obtained tickets for myself and mother. Later that year, my sister and I started attending the Sunday school in the afternoon. This led to my Confirmation in December 1963 and regular attendance at both morning and evening services. This was because I had become a bell ringer and ringing was for both services. Those of us who were confirmed in 1963 started a Youth Club in the old Parish Hall across the road from the church and three of us formed a table tennis team who played in the Bolton Table Tennis League for about ten years or more. The team was joined by several friends and old secondary school friends of mine.

What is your favourite hymn?

Guide Me O Thou Jehovah because of a story told to me when I first came to work at the Parish Church. A Welsh village chapel in South Wales omits the second verse. Why? The village public house is named “The Crystal Fountain” and the verse says “open now the crystal fountain”. I have a CD ‘Voices of the Valley Encore’ by The Fron Male Voice Choir and they do not sing the second verse on the CD.

How long have you been bell ringing for? How did you first get in to ringing?

Since a group of us, confirmed in 1963, went for a coffee in Sabin’s Coffee Café in January 1964 closely followed by Alan Forrester and the late Norman Lodge who persuaded the group to try bell ringing the following Monday night as they wanted to re-introduce bell ringing. So I have been bell ringing on and off since 1964. A break was taken in 1975 until about 1991.

Do you have any favourite Bell ringing experiences?

The best one was winning the Saddleworth six bell striking competition for inexperienced bell ringers in 1995.

Also, having a trick played on Linda and me after we had cleaned the Parish Hall one Friday night. When the bell ringers raised the bells, one of the bell’s clappers fell out. So as soon as we arrived in the ringing room we were told to ring a bell. Eight of us starting ringing and Linda said, ‘there is something wrong.’ I said, ‘keeping ringing – it is me.’ We stood the bells and I carried on ringing but the bell did not make a sound. Its clapper had fallen out.

Stephen, you have been involved in many areas of church life at BPC, can you tell us a bit about these experiences?

There are too many to mention. There was the Christmas Eve service when we ran out of service sheets due to a National Holidays coach party arriving.

Also, to be told there was no Church Warden at another Christmas Eve service after ringing the bells. So organising who was the Church Warden and which side the sides people collected from and telling Linda and Neil they were taking the elements to the altar. Taking people to the top of the tower and being asked about the work Fred Dibnah had done on the weathervanes. Telling them how he jumped onto the six inch wide parapet with no safety wire to look at how he was to build his platform to gain access to the vanes.

Linda

Do you come from Bolton?

I was born in Havercroft Maternity Home, Victoria Road.

How long have you been coming to Bolton Parish Church?

My early church life was at St John's Church, Latimer Street, where I was baptised. I joined Bolton Parish church in 1972 when St John's closed. Stephen and I married in 1975.

How long have you been bell ringing? How did you first get in to ringing?

My first experience of bell ringing was being allowed by Mr May to chime the single bell at St John's for morning service, aged about five.

I learned to ring full circle in 1991/2 at the same time as Neil, who was in the cubs.

Do you have any favourite bell ringing experiences?

Neil and I were the inexperienced ringers in the band of six in 1995, along with Revd Cherry Vann and Mary O'Loughlin. Stephen and Alan Forrester were the two experienced ringers guiding us.

BOLTON PARISH CHURCH CONTACTS

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Associate Priest:	Revd Barrie Gaskell	07512782297
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