



Parish News



March 2021

Dear friends

During these weeks that schools have been closed to all but the children of key workers, I've thought about how I might have felt had this happened when I was at school. I'd like to think that in many ways I would have coped very well with online learning. As someone who is more of an introvert that might first appear, I've always been quite happy with my own company and am a self-starter when it comes to learning. Additionally, I will always quite happily spend my time with my nose in a book! Not being in school would, for me, have brought the added benefit of not having to take part in PE and games lessons – subjects I detested! That said, I enjoyed school very much (except the aforementioned lessons) and I'm sure I would have missed the company of friends and the extracurricular activities that I was involved in. Thinking now about how I would have felt had this lockdown occurred when my own children were at school, I suspect that like many parents, I would have done my very best but struggled with the juggling of time demands and sometimes with the content of the curriculum.

No doubt there has been a similar range of feelings and responses to those children currently deprived of that day to day contact with the rest of the school community. In all of this, I am full of admiration for teachers and other school staff, for parents and carers and not least, for children themselves who have had to adapt to new ways of living and learning. With adult children and no direct involvement with teaching, I don't face those monumental challenges that are now included in imparting high quality education to students in our schools but I do know how much of a strain it has been. To the ill-informed few who believe that the past few weeks have seen children and teacher sitting at home doing nothing – they cannot be more wrong!

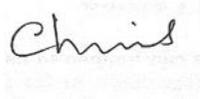
I write all of this not just as a personal tribute to our parents, teachers and children – though it is that. Rather, it is as a reminder of the value of education in all its facets and of its continued importance and impact in our lives. Our core abilities to read, to write and to communicate are due to the input of many others but chief amongst them will be those who taught us at school. This is as good a time as any to make schools

and all who are involved in any way in the education of young people (and we have several such people in our congregation) a focus for our prayers. You might like to pray for:

- Children and students studying in schools, colleges and the university in Bolton
- Teachers, teaching assistants and the many other workers who have day to day responsibility for the education of children.
- Governors and others who work for the good of our schools
- The Children Changing Places project working with the 30 church primary schools in Bolton and three high schools
- Our own church schools – Bishop Bridgeman, Bolton Parish Church School and Canon Slade.

Whatever our memories of school, we could do far worse than commit ourselves this Lent to pray for all who seek to ensure that the education of children and students continues to be the best it can be, however it is delivered.

With love and very best wishes



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





LENT, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES 2021

21st March	Passion Sunday	
6.30pm	Evening Prayer	Bolton Parish Church
28th March	Palm Sunday	
8.00 am	Holy Communion	Bolton Parish Church
9.15 am	Holy Communion	St Philip's
11.00 am	Holy Communion	Bolton Parish Church
6.30 pm	Evening Prayer	Bolton Parish Church
29th March	Monday in Holy Week	
7.30 pm	Compline	St Philip's
30th March	Tuesday in Holy Week	
12.15 pm	Holy Communion	Bolton Parish Church
7.30 pm	Compline	Bolton Parish Church
31st March	Wednesday in Holy Week	
7.30 pm	Compline	St Philip's
1st April	Maundy Thursday	
12.15 pm	Holy Communion	Bolton Parish Church
7.30 pm	Holy Communion and stripping of altar	Bolton Parish Church
7.30 pm	Holy Communion and stripping of altar	St Philip's
2nd April	Good Friday	
2.00 pm	Hour at the Cross	Bolton Parish Church
3rd April	Easter Eve	
8.00 pm	Easter Vigil	Bolton Parish Church
4th April	Easter Day	
8.00 am	Holy Communion	Bolton Parish Church
9.15am	Holy Communion	St Philip's
11.00 am	Holy Communion	Bolton Parish Church
6.30 pm	Evening Prayer	Bolton Parish Church



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.

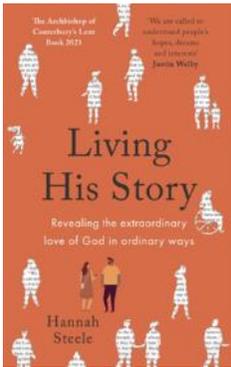
We continue to collect items of food for the grub tub, supporting the work of Urban Outreach.

Please send copy for the April
issue by 20 March to
sigridjcp@gmail.com

OR

admin@boltonparishchurch.co.uk

Material for inclusion may also be left at the
back of Church



Lent Book 2021

Our Lent Reading Group continues in March. Like our Advent Group in 2020, it meets via Zoom. This year's book is:

Living His Story : Revealing the extraordinary love of God in ordinary ways: by The Revd Dr Hannah Steele

SPCK Publishing ISBN:9780281085170

This is The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2021 and is available to order online and as a Kindle edition. It is also available through the Isaiah 53 Bookshop in Bolton which though closed due to lockdown (at the time of writing), does offer a 'click and collect' service on 01204 532384.

The group will continue to meet online on Monday evenings, 7.30pm to 8.30pm in March – on the 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd.

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

Topic: Lent Book Group 2021

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88636737735?
pwd=UC9JR2ZsVmRGNG5IMXpPL21KL2V3UT0
9](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88636737735?pwd=UC9JR2ZsVmRGNG5IMXpPL21KL2V3UT09)

(although the line is broken as printed here, it needs to be entered as one continuous string of characters)

Meeting ID: 886 3673 7735

Passcode: 607465

A Reflection for Lent

A Reflection on the Love of God after St. Bernard of Clairvaux

Consider this, that
God deserves exceeding love from us.
A love that knows no measure.
For he was the first to love.
He loves us much, who is so great
And little, poor and worthless though we are,
He loves us freely, without measure.
What measure could there be
On love so infinite, so measureless,
Bestowed for nothing.
The love of an illimitable and eternal God
Is far beyond all human ken.
His greatness knows no bounds.
His wisdom has no end
And yet he loves us
And showed his love for us in death upon a cross.
Should we then set a limit on our love for him,
Our strength, our rock, our Saviour,
Our defence?
O God our helper we shall love you,
With all the power that you have given to us!
For though we are unworthy
And the debt we owe we never can discharge.
Yet we shall love you more and more,
Because of your unbounded love for us.

FROM THE ORGAN CONSOLE

This month marks one year since the choral music at our church effectively stopped; the Church of England suspended public worship on Tuesday 17th March 2020, and schools closed on the Friday of the same week.

I am grateful to the various members of the choir who have felt able to assist in producing some limited semblance of normality from time to time, when that was allowed (and it was wonderful to sing Evensong including the anthem “How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings” for Ian’s installation as Lecturer), but even that has now ceased, and everyone is being very careful at the moment, especially in view of the variant viruses which have appeared in different places; many churches and cathedrals have closed their doors again. We at least are open, and I am delighted to be able to offer organ music in the context of our continuing services.

I see from my music lists that the anthem on that last full Sunday for the choir was Healey Willan’s “I Looked, and Behold a White Cloud” with its ominous words at the end “The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the Angels”.

Since that Sunday, it has from time to time felt rather like the end of the world, but, with the advent of effective vaccines, the return to normality now seems only a matter of time, and the possibility of our singing hymns again now seems an increasingly solid possibility!

I was toying the other day with the choice of That First Hymn – at present, I feel that “Angel Voices, Ever Singing” would be a good start, with its reference to “craftsman’s art and music’s measure” – speaking personally, I can’t wait!

MICHAEL PAIN.

Reflections

When I was first motivated to put pen to paper (or should that be finger to keyboard?) we were at the dreadful peak in the second wave of this raging pandemic. What with a bitterly cold and snowy winter combined with all the restrictions imposed upon us, it is difficult to look forward to a time when normal life might resume. Now it is Lent, a season for reflection and contemplation and my thoughts have turned to the past.....

I have had a lifelong association with Bolton Parish Church and fond memories have lately resurfaced, prompted by the recent loss of my treasured mum, Hilda Brandwood. She had been a devoted member of the church and its associated groups and committees since her teenage years. She was married there and subsequently I was baptised there.

I attended Holy Communion on Sunday mornings from an early age. Mum used to take me on the Number 25 bus from Halliwell Road down to Bridge Street where we alighted near Woolworths. We would walk around the corner onto Deansgate and then down Churchgate. This was the early 1960s, when shops were closed on Sundays and there was not a soul to be seen. It had a special feel about it, this was a day in the week that was different to all the others, when we were allowed to have a pause from the frenzy of life.

The only sound to be heard as we progressed along Churchgate was the pealing of the church bells, welcoming the worshippers inside. I recollect that the church looked quite different then. The main porch had solid oak panelled screens where the glass doors now stand. Likewise, the doors from the porch into the main body of the church were dark oak too. The tiles on the floor were terracotta and the side pews were still in existence.

The glorious church organ was situated behind the choir stalls on the left of the chancel until it was relocated to its current position. I clearly remember the gargantuan renovation project to transform the building to how it looks today. In those days there was no tea or coffee available after the morning service, but occasionally mum would take me to the

'Sabini Brothers' ice-cream parlour and cafe on Churchgate. The place was thronged with members of the choir and congregation enjoying a coffee and a catch up. I was always treated to my favourite strawberry milkshake.

Mum and I were very much involved in the wider aspects of church life. The original church hall was across the road from the main gate where the office block now stands. The highlight of the year was the Christmas Bazaar. Members of the congregation would spend several days building stalls and setting everything up ready for the weekend of the Bazaar. I regarded it as an Aladdin's Cave and armed with my pocket money, there were always treasures to be purchased. The talented ladies of the church would be selling homemade lavender bags, pincushions, aprons, dolls' clothes, jams, chutneys, cakes and much more.

There was a 'pot stall' hosted by my Godparents, Vera and Alan Bailey (they ran a business in the Market Hall selling china goods), it was a good opportunity to do a bit of Christmas shopping. After all that retail therapy it was a relief to be able to sit down in the makeshift café for a 'Turkey Tea' and homemade cakes whilst the ladies bustled around with giant teapots.

The month of May brought Sermons Sunday. The excited little girls of the Sunday School would wear their best white dresses and shawls all topped off with a white tulle veil. Fondly referred to as 'The Little Singers', they would sing various songs at each of the services during the day. There would be three services, at which there would be visiting members of the clergy invited to preach a sermon. There was a procession around the town centre led by a brass band, with all members of the church marching behind and crowds would gather to watch.

I also remember the 'new' vicarage being built in the grounds of the church, prior to that the vicarage was situated on Albert Road. The incumbent at the time was The Venerable Harold Fielding who lived there with his wife Elsie. She was an active and enthusiastic organiser

and I particularly remember the wonderfully successful garden parties and fetes that she hosted in her new vicarage garden. As ever, the ladies of the congregation were tasked with baking cakes, making sandwiches and brewing huge urns of tea. My friend and I used to enjoy playing the role of waitress as we scurried around the garden with plates of sandwiches and cakes. Our reward was to be allowed to sit on the newly acquired garden swing afterwards! Happy times indeed.

As I write the concluding sentences to this piece, the Covid infection rates are falling sharply and the vaccination programme is on target. We are awaiting an announcement from the government which hopefully will give us an optimistic outlook. The birds are singing and the daffodils and tulips are poking their noses through the soil. Easter is on the horizon with all its promise of new beginnings. Life at Bolton Parish Church continues to move forward and plans are afoot to bring about new changes to the building. It is time to look to the future.

Hazel Roberts

The Sunday Next before Easter

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Vicars of Bolton

In this special year, it's worth looking back at some previous vicars of Bolton (I have fallen in love with the old spelling 'vicker' below).

Here is a selection from the Tudor days. More to follow.

The late Tudor period

oc. 1474	Giles Lever
19 Jan. 1503–4	James Smetheley
c. 1514	James Bolton
20 Oct. 1556	Thomas Pendlebury
c. 1560	Edward Cockerell
7 Aug. 1582	Alexander Smith
10 June 1594	John Albright, M.A.
—1595	Zacharias Saunders, M.A.
29 Sept. 1598	Ellis Saunderson, M.A.

When the previous Parish Church was taken down, one of the large beams was found to bear the monogram "A.S." carved in large antique letters.

These were evidently the initials of **Alexander Smith** (Smythe), the vicar who held the living during extensive repairs to the Church in the 16th century. Smith died in 1593 and was buried in his Parish Church, as the register entry shows: —

“1593. — Alexander Smythe, vicker of Bolton, buried in the Church the xxviiiith daye of december.”

His wife survived him about seven years, i.e., “1600 — The wife of Alexander Smith, that was late vicar of Bolton, intra ecclesiam, 10 Maye.”

Zacharias Saunders graduated at St. John's, Cambridge, where he received his M.A. degree about the year 1589. Evidence shows that he was a clever, honest, and faithful student.

He was appointed headmaster of the Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth, at Rivington, and afterwards accepted the living of Bolton Church, being presented during the latter part of 1594 or beginning of

1595.

After less than four years' residence in Bolton, he resigned his benefice in the following terms (translated from the Latin):

In the Name of God, Amen. Before you, the Reverend father and Lord in Christ, the Lord Richard (Vaughan) by Divine permission Bishop of Chester. I, Zacharias Saunders, Vicar of the Parish Church of Bolton in le Moores, of the Diocese of Chester, wishing and endeavouring, for certain true, just and lawful causes, myself and my mind in this behalf specially moving, to be divested of, and discharged from, the burden of the care, and from the rule of my said Vicarage of Bolton, into your sacred and reverend hands, not being seduced or in any way circumvented by force, deceit, fear, or fraud, but purely of my own will, simply and absolutely, and of my own motive, leaving the same my Vicarage vacant, yielding up the same, and totally and expressly withdrawing from the same in these writings. By me, Zacharias Saunders.

He was succeeded by **Ellis Saunderson** in 1598.

The quality of some clergymen holding benefices in Lancashire at this period does not appear to have been of a high, or even moderate, standard. Queen Elizabeth, becoming aware of this, took steps to amend what, in her mind, was the apparent cause. In 1599 she wrote on the subject to the Treasurer of the Exchequer, first explaining the reason for such a lack of ability in the Churches, and afterwards a means of remedy. The letter reads:

“We are informed by Sir Thos. Heneage, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, that on account of the smallness of the Church Livings in the County Palatine of Lancaster, by reason that most of the Parsonages are in private hands, there are few or no incumbents of learning or credit among them; and that priests creeping in drew them from their duty.”

Whether the Vicar of Bolton was included in the list of those lacking "learning " and " credit," the records do not say ; but it is clear that he was of Puritanical inclinations, as shown in the description on the next page.

About this period there was a very unsettled feeling among the clergy of South Lancashire. This was largely due to the fact that, on 3rd October 1604, certain Non-conformist “ringleaders” (including Ellis Saunderson) had been publicly admonished by the Bishop and required to conform to the Liturgy and ceremonies of the Church of England.

The records describe Ellis Saunderson in the following terms:

Ellis Saunderson, vicar from 1598 to 1625, was one of the Puritan ringleaders in the district. He was a preacher himself, and had the assistance of a lecturer paid by the parishioners, and the chapels at Rivington and Turton were both 'well supplied with ministry' in his time.

Harvey A Crerar

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Flower News

During the first two weeks of February, flowers on the Altar were simple arrangements of white roses and alstroemeria in brass vases. In the Lady chapel there was an arrangement of garden foliage and winter berries.

For Candlemas the chancel steps had arrangements of different sized candles and foliage. Arrangements in the South porch were refreshed with additional greenery. The candle arrangements in the nave were also refreshed. At the Sunday morning service all the candles were lit, as well as the lantern candles and tea lights on window ledges, and the candles in the South porch. Many thanks are due for the lighting of the many candles!

For the remaining two Sundays before Lent, all candles were removed and the arrangements of greenery, berries and frosted twigs remained. The angels were also removed, awaiting their return during Easter week. Please look at the separate article below relating to our angels of hope and see if you are able to be part of the project.

Flower team

Angels of Hope

An invitation

For Christmas 2020, members of Sunday school made angels which helped to decorate church. Each angel represented a prayer to say thank you for a special person who makes us smile.

Members of Sunday school and the Flower team are now beginning an angel project for January – March 2021. During this time we will be looking towards Easter with hope. The plan is to continue making angels, each one a prayer to say thank you, so that from Easter to Pentecost we will be able to create a wonderful display of angels in church.

Sunday school members have made a magnificent start, but from January 1st we have invited members of the congregation, friends and

families to join us in hope, by making angels for the display, with each angel representing a thank you prayer.

In 2018 the response to a request for crafted poppies was amazing.....from all ages, and with poppies created by knitting, crocheting, paper, crafting and so on. We are hoping for angels of all kinds in the same way, but please can they have white robes.

Update:

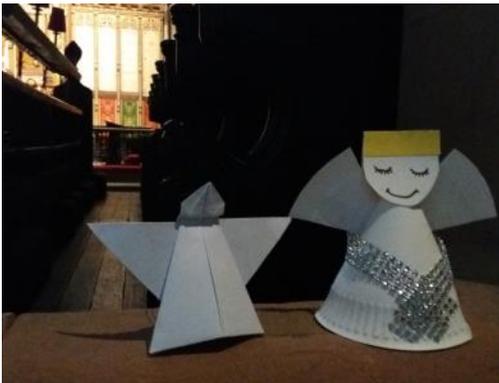
By the middle of February more than **100 more** angels have arrived at church! Thank you for this magnificent effort. Have you made yours yet?

To get you started:

You can visit <https://www.riponcathedral.org.uk/wing-and-prayer/> to download a template with step by step instructions for making an angel like the origami angels in church. There are also ideas and instructions for all levels of skill, and to suit your interests (knitted, crocheted, made with paper plates etc) easily available on the internet, but **please** contact Rose-Marie, Kath or Alison if we can help.

A prayer of hope:

Teach us good Lord, to pray in faith,
and to live in hope,
that we may go out into your world,
confident in that same hope,
and filled with the good news of Jesus Christ.
To Him be the glory, now and forever, Amen



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

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

Facebook: 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

150th anniversary year project

Way back in about 2013, when 2021 was just beginning to appear on the horizon, the PCC began thinking about ways to mark the anniversary year that would leave us with something visible for years to come.

One suggestion was concerned with the altar frontals. Should we commission a new one? How about a competition to design it? This linked in with thoughts about the rest of the altar linen, the pulpit falls and the chasubles. We started to look at the frontals we already had, and repairs were made to two of them. We have bought new chasubles (needed because vicars are taller than they used to be).

Now 2021 is here, and the PCC has decided on a more significant change to the way the altar is covered. Instead of the frontals as they are now on wooden frames, supplemented by matching covering for the top and sides, we are going to have a Laudian Drape (in essence, a posh semi-fitted tablecloth made of linen!) which will stay in place all the time. The seasonal colours will be placed over the drape rather like a table runner but from front to back instead of end to end. We are going to have these made from our existing white, purple and red frontals so what you see will be familiar.

It won't be possible to re-use our green frontal in that way so we will need to commission a new one in due course. To complete the sets, we will also need new purple and green pulpit falls. It will make sense to refresh our collection of altar cloths at the same time; we have a motley collection and some are very tired.

We expect to be able to do all this for less than £2500. A very generous donation already covers 40% of that. Would you like to contribute to this project, as a special gift for 2021, or perhaps as a memorial for a loved one?



Laudian drape with altar frontal made into a panel

These frontals, vestments and altar cloths have served us well for many years but are now in need of replacement. What better time to do this than in this special birthday year?

If you would like to make a donation towards this 150th anniversary project, please let the vicar, lecturer or one of the churchwardens know.

Walsh's



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

Quiz

Another fiendish quiz. This time, we're looking for words connected with the church – places in the building, items, people, vestments etc. The quiz will be easier for people who are used to cryptic crosswords, but there should be something for everyone. Remember, if a phrase talks about something being disjointed, falling apart, mixed up, it's indicating that the remaining words are an anagram.

Here's an easy example: Ken reels all over the place (8) – “kneelers”

1. Opportunity for half a century (7)
2. Is Georgia the origin? (4)
3. Dan muddled in rod (8)
4. It's a gladness, by arrangement (7,5)
5. Internal parts of the body are subject of a lawsuit (5,4)
6. Cried, lost tail and sent back (3)
7. Aaron - Lent indices all over the place (11,5)
8. Finding it in the middle of something dreaded (7)
9. Give Conservative (9)
10. A ne'er-do-well, I hear! (4)
11. Yes! – I need to leave middle of programme (7)
12. Without any – going south (5)
13. i.e. ride up in tatters (4-5)
14. What the knave did (5)
15. Gather (7)
16. Unstable or percent (9)
17. More than enough, so to speak (8)
18. Group of singers comes to an abrupt halt (5,6)
19. Strive headlessly (5)
20. Period of conflict joins haven (6)

The Last Word

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

This month: Evelyn Weston .

Do you come from Bolton?

I am a Maid of Kent - brought up in Tunbridge Wells. I arrived in Bolton by way of teacher training in Cambridge and teaching posts in Braintree and – by coincidence rather than design – back in Tunbridge Wells.

Singing has been part of my worshipping life from the start – I joined my first school choir aged seven and have never not been in a choir since. My father sang in the church choir and I joined him there, though not as early as some because in those days, the top line was sung by boys and it wasn't until they had a shortage of altos that I was allowed in!

What brought you to Bolton?

At college, one of the groups I sang with was the Ichthyan Singers, a group of Christians with a wide repertoire of church music that we put together with readings and prayers and took to local churches.



Each year we spent Holy Week in a parish somewhere, and in my third year, we were based at St James's Church in Farnworth.

So when a post in the science department at what was then St James's CE Secondary School was advertised, the prospect of moving so far from Kent wasn't as daunting as it might have been, since I already had some experience of the area. I applied, was appointed and started there after Easter 1984. I remained at St James's until I retired in 2013. For most of that time I taught science; for the last few years I transferred over to the school office where I was the exams officer and also responsible for arranging cover for absent staff.

What first brought you to Bolton Parish Church?

During the 80s and 90s I had done a lot of singing in cathedrals when their own choirs were on holiday. The opportunities for that came to an end and in 2001 or thereabouts I was looking for a more permanent place to worship. It was the musical reputation of BPC that drew me in initially but I was made welcome, and stayed. After a few months I joined the choir.

When Canon Mike Williams retired and Revd Debby Plummer moved to St Margaret's in Prestwich, we were in an unusual situation for BPC in that we needed to invite visiting clergy for most of our services. The skills from my day job sorting out supply teachers were eminently transferable – that was how I first became involved with the administrative side of church life. That led, over time, to being elected Churchwarden, and through PCC membership to other new roles – as a school governor, for example.

What's your favourite music? and can you explain why?

On the whole I'm much more interested in taking part than in listening to music, and singing in small ensembles – such as our choir – for me is the most satisfying sort of music making. My Desert Island Discs selection would be mainly but not exclusively classical, and would have to include a compilation of Masses, Motets and Anthems from the sixteenth century to the present day. My book would then have to be a bound volume of all the scores so I could sing along!

Have you read any good books recently?

'Uncertain Light' by Marian Molteno was recommended and lent to me by Lesley Easterman, and was a delightful discovery.

The central character is Rahul, a UN negotiator in war-torn Tajikistan. His abduction by rebels has a profound effect on the lives of his friends and colleagues, and the novel explores those effects as the lives of the characters diverge and interweave over time.

It was an ideal book for January's combination of lockdown and freezing weather.

What's your favourite hymn? Why?

There are so many favourites: in Advent, "People, look East"; at Christmas, "It came upon the midnight clear"; for Easter, "Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to heaven and voices raise"; and on through the year.



One that would be high on my list at any time is "How shall I sing that majesty". The words were written in the 17th Century by John Mason, who was a prolific hymn writer of his day.

In it, he contrasts his vision of the songs and splendour of heaven with our earthly attempts at praise. The heavenly choir features more than once.

This is the only hymn of his that is still sung; our hymn book includes the first four of his original twelve verses but the rest are well worth a look if you care to Google them. The popularity of the hymn is enhanced by the tune, Coe Fen, composed in the mid 20th Century by Kenneth Naylor. It just carries you up and up through each verse. Naylor was Director of Music at the Leys School in Cambridge, which is built on land called Coe Fen.

Key people who have encouraged my journey of faith

I can't pick one individual. I've been privileged to spend the majority of my career in the supportive environment of church schools, with many inspiring friends and colleagues.

I would also pick out the people I met – tutors and fellow students – through the Foundations for Ministry and Authorised Lay Ministry courses run by the diocese. They certainly developed my understanding of ministry as the way each one of us expresses our faith within and beyond our life in our church community.

BOLTON PARISH CHURCH CONTACTS

Vicar:	Revd Canon Dr. Chris Bracegirdle vicar@boltonparishchurch.co.uk	01204 396298
Associate Priest:	Revd Canon Prof. Kenneth Newport	0161 764 4361
Associate Priest:	Revd Barrie Gaskell	07512782297
Lecturer:	Revd Ian Hepburn lecturer@boltonparishchurch.co.uk	01942 814045
Authorised Lay Minister:	Evelyn F Weston	01204 594123
Church Wardens:	Canon John Walsh OBE	01204 840188
	Evelyn F Weston	01204 594123
Deputy Wardens:	Mr Graham C Burrows Mr David Eckersley Mr Alan Forrester Mr Andrew J Mitchell Mr David F Morlidge Mr Trevor J Whillas Miss Esther Gelling	
PCC Secretary:	Mr Ian Darbyshire	
Treasurer:	Mr Andrew J Mitchell	01204 840633
Director of Music:	Mr Michael Pain michaelpain18@gmail.com	01204 491827
Administration	admin@boltonparishchurch.co.uk	01204 522226

ST PHILIP'S CONTACTS

Vicar:	Revd Canon Dr. Chris Bracegirdle vicar@boltonparishchurch.co.uk	01204 396298
Church Wardens:	Mrs Pauline Dewse	01204 772276
	Canon Jill Pilling	07977 933010