



Bank Topics

Issue 32

March—May

Dear friends,

The tragedy you are faced with is that Heather has not volunteered to write a letter for me this issue, despite the heaps of praise you poured over her last effort. I'm sure you'll agree that it would be better if she wrote for the next issue and the Editor would be delighted to receive such requests as there's a chance that Heather will then provide copy to schedule!

Anyway, it's wonderful to have the editorial team back (with a +1, welcome Poppy!!)



Society News

But that then leads me to say a huge thank you for allowing us to use Church for Alex and Christina's wedding. It was a great occasion for our families but made special that it was on home turf.

As you can see everything scrubbed up well, including the bride and groom! Ironically there had been some debate around whether their Labrador would participate in the service – it didn't bear thinking about really, but how delighted would he be that some beady eyed sheep were able to look down on the occasion? *Hello Carol and Christine... just over Christina's shoulder!*

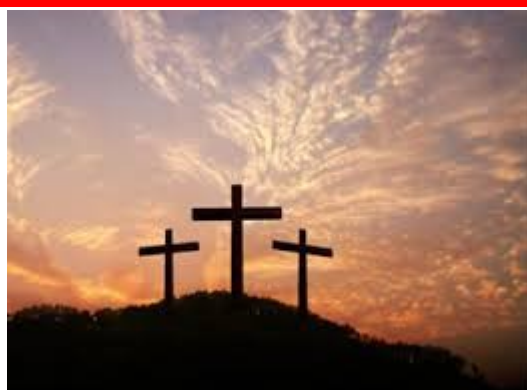
It was a great day that Bank Top made special, thank you!

Help where it's really needed...

Winter and cold weather means that WinterWatch is back in action until the end of March. Urban Outreach (WinterWatch's parent charity) provides the Grub Tub at the back of church and is there for any and all food donations and there is a list of most needed, a big thanks to Syd and Maureen for organising this. Please pray for those in need of warmth, food and company in these dark months.

Blessings and thanks,

Andy and Heather



An Easter Prayer

Jesus, you have overcome death
And conquered every fear I could imagine
Help me to live each day remembering that You
are alive
That You are bigger than anything or any situation
And that Your power is real

Amen.

BANK TOP CHURCH - CONTACTS

Church Telephone Number		593393
Minister	Vacant	
Church Leader	Mr A Guthrie andyguts@gmail.com	591185
Secretary/Treasurer	Mrs V Singleton singletonv@hotmail.com	305401
Organist – contact	Mrs A Smith	693740
Church Hall Hire	Mrs V Singleton	305401
Pulpit Supply	Mrs J Skidmore	307130
Flower Secretaries	Mrs M Flitcroft Mrs C Rideout	301328 596360
Choir Leader	Mrs A Smith	693740
Newsletter Editor	Mrs C Counsell bert.counsell@gmail.com	591284
Serving Elders	V Constantine, Andy Guthrie, David Canham, Graham Naylor, Linda Rainford, Carol Rideout, Lynn Ridyard, Maureen Roocroft, Val Singleton, Julie Skidmore, Alison Spence.	
Sunday Worship	10.30am Morning Service and Sunday School Church Parade fourth Sunday of month in Jan, Sept, Nov and the Sermons. Communion during the morning service on the second Sunday each month	
Guides	Monday at 7.30pm (contact Mrs V Constantine)	593034
Bank Top Brownies	Monday at 5.45pm (contact Miss E Farrell)	07770450229
The Oaks Brownies	Tuesday at 6.00pm (contact Caroline Greenen)	592594
Rainbows	Thursday at 6.00pm (contact E Robinson)	415113
Bank Top Art Group	Monday at 1.00pm (contact Mrs V Singleton)	305401
Mother & Toddlers	Tuesday from 9.30am – 11.00am (contact Val Singleton)	305401
Lace & Craft Group	Wednesday 7.00 – 9.00pm (contact: Jean Greer)	594127
Adult Yoga	Tuesday from 7.45pm - 9:15pm (Contact Jenny Dowling)	07578 108676
Theatre Works	Wednesday from 4.00 -5.00 (Contact Lauren Bateman)	07999 634208
Moosical Fun for your Little One	Thursday at 9-15am -11-15am (contact Jane) jane@moo-music.co.uk	07808549965
Weight Watchers	Wednesday from 9:30 - 12:00 (contact Janet Lomax)	07919 251507

For Baptisms, (which are held during the Morning Service), Weddings, Funerals, Sick Visiting or Home Communion, please contact A Guthrie or V Singleton.
If you would like to join our Direct Offering scheme, through the Envelope system, please contact Mrs Val Singleton, who is also available to give advice on Gift Aid.
We also have a Church Memorial Fund – contributions to the treasurer, Val Singleton
We are a pastorate together with Egerton URC and Red Lane URC
We are a member of Churches Together in Astley Bridge.

WHAT'S ON AT BANK TOP?

At Bank Top you'll find something for everyone. So, don't be lonely and stay at home on your own, you are always welcome here! Have a look below; think about learning new skills or ask if you can help - we always need helpers! We are always pleased to see new faces.



Sunday	10.30am - 11.45am	Morning Worship incl. Sunday School
Monday	1.00pm - 3.00pm	Bank Top Artists (term time only)
Monday	5.45pm - 7.15pm	Bank Top Brownies (girls from 7-10)
Monday	7.30pm - 9.15pm	Bank Top Guides (girls from 10-15)
Tuesday (2 nd & 4 th)	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Bible Study Group at Val's House
Tuesday	9.30am - 11.00am	Toddler Group (term time only)
Tuesday	6.00pm - 7.30pm	The Oaks Brownies (girls from 7-10)
Tuesday	7.45pm - 9.15pm	Yoga with Jenny
Wednesday	10.00am - 11.15am	Weight Watchers with Lee
Wednesday	4.00pm - 5.00pm	Theatre School for children up to 11
Wednesday	7.00pm - 9.00pm	Adult Craft Class
Thursday	9.45am - 11.45pm	Moo Music (2 classes)
Thursday	1.30 - 2.30pm	Sweaty Mama (fun workouts with your child)
Thursday	6.00pm - 7.00pm	Bank Top Rainbows (girls from 5-7)
Thursday	7.30pm - 9.00pm	Eden Singers Choir
1 st Sat of each month	Bank Top Lunches	12.00noon - 1.00pm Main Course, Dessert and Drink £4.00/£1.50 (children)
Saturday	Certain dates	Embroiderers' Guild



Family Bible Readings

3rd March – Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)
 10th March – Luke 4:1-13
 17th March – Luke 13:31-35
 24th March – Luke 13:1-9
 31st March — Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

7th April – John 12:1-8
 14th April – Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
 19th April—John 18:1-19:42
 21st April – John 20:1-18
 28th April – John 20:19-31

5th May – John 21:1-19
 12th May – John 10:22-30
 19th May – John 13:31-35
 26th May – John 14:23-29



Flower List

March

3rd Joan Seddon
 10th Sarah Astley
 17th In Memory of Clarice Bickerstaff
 24th Barbara Harper
 31st VACANT

April

7th Andy & Heather Guthrie
 14th Linda Rainford
 21st Sue Seddon
 28th Christine Catherall

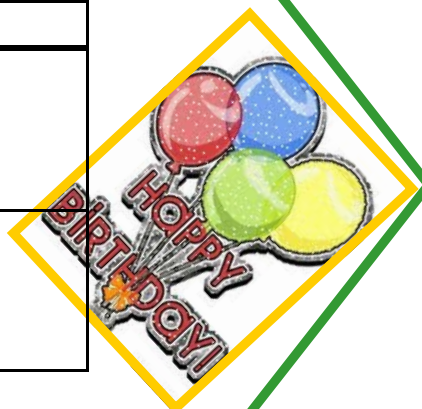
May

5th In Memory of Alan & Lilian Tredrea - TBC
 12th Maureen & Syd Roocroft
 19th SERMONS – The Guides
 26th Maureen Flitcroft

Birthday wishes go to:



Mar	
Apr 12 28	Aimee Sutcliffe Kallum McDermid
May 16 19	Alfie Lovgreen Lara Taylor



DATES

Bank Top Cleaning Rota

Mar	1 st 8 th 15 th 22 nd 29 th	Vicky Constantine C Ridout & A Hardman A Myers & I Larkin V Singleton & M Batty P McNulty & C Counsell
Apr	5 th 12 th 19 th 26 th	G Naylor & D Canham Heather L Ridyard & G Brown (Good Friday) Vicky Constantine
May	3 rd 10 th 17 th 24 th 31 st	C Ridout & A Hardman A Myers & I Larkin V Singleton & M Batty P McNulty & C Counsell G Naylor & D Canham
Jun	7 th 14 th 21 st 28 th	Heather L Ridyard & G Brown Vicky Constantine C Ridout & A Hardman



If for any reason your name is against a date that you can not make, please try to swap with someone else on the rota.

IF YOU ARE NOT ON THE CLEANING ROTA AND ARE ABLE TO HELP, PLEASE SEE CHRISTINE COUNSELL. REMEMBER THE MORE VOLUNTEERS WE HAVE, THE LESS TIMES WE ALL HAVE TO CLEAN
THANK YOU

From our church

LITTLE PENNY THOUGHTS

If the mountain seems too big today,
then climb a hill instead.

If the morning brings you sadness,
its ok to stay in bed.

If the day ahead weighs heavy,
and your plans feel like a curse;
there's no shame in rearranging,
don't make yourself feel worse.

If a shower stings like needles,
and a bath feels like you'll drown;
If you haven't washed your hair for days,
don't throw away your crown.

A day is not a lifetime,
A rest is not defeat!

Don't think of it as failure, just a quiet, kind retreat.

It's ok to take a moment,
from an anxious, fractured mind.

The world will not stop turning,
while you get realigned.

The mountain will still be there,
when you want to try again.

You can climb it in your own time,
Just love yourself till then.

Mobile Phone History!

The first ever cordless phone was created by God.
He named it

Prayer

It never loses its signal and you never have to recharge it.

Use it anywhere

Amen!

Thanks to Val for both items this month.

If you have a poem, prayer or blessing you would like to share with us all in the next magazine, please pass it to Christine Counsell or Ali Spence.

From a previous service

Susan Holme's sermon from 3rd February

I read a quote whilst preparing this sermon which said "Love is that thing which, if a church has it, it doesn't really need much else, and if it doesn't have it, whatever else it has doesn't really matter very much".

The word love can of course have different meanings for example the love of a spouse or child to that of the love of chocolate. Paul here is talking about the love that is also called agape.

The word is 'agapé' isn't based on affection or approval; it's totally unconditional, coming as a free gift, not because the recipient deserves it but because the giver chooses to give it. It's a decision of the will to act in the other person's best interests, whether we feel like it or not. It's getting down at the supper table and washing your disciples' feet. It's being willing to lay down your life to save people who don't even care about you. It's the way God loves us, and the way God calls us to act toward others as well.

Corinth was a city in ancient Greece, famous throughout the world for its immorality. It was also a place where the Greek mystery religions were very popular. Those religions went in for spiritual experience in a big way; the people who participated in them were used to being moved by powerful supernatural forces. This sort of thing was regarded as normal in the mystery religions; not only that, it was the way you knew that you were encountering something real. If you didn't experience anything there wasn't much point in being involved in that particular cult or religion.

So the Corinthian Christians liked dramatic spiritual experiences. They loved supernatural gifts like speaking in tongues and miracles and healings. But they were rather self-indulgent about them, and Paul had a suspicion that sometimes there wasn't a lot of love in the way they used those gifts. So as we heard in last week's passage Paul reminded them that the church is like a body, the Body of Christ. Each organ and limb has an essential part to play in the life of the body. So it is with the church; each of us has been given spiritual gifts, but we're to use them in love, to build up the whole Body of Christ, not to show off or chase after spiritual thrills.

The first 3 verses of Paul's letter teaches us that love is essential to the life of the church.

Knowing what we do about the Corinthian Christians, we can understand why Paul is using these examples. These are the things they valued the most in their spiritual lives – speaking in tongues, prophecy, understanding mysteries, having enough faith to do spectacular things. And they loved the 'grand gesture'.

There's the story about the young Francis of Assisi. As a young man he had a powerful conversion experience, and in obedience to the gospel call he proceeded to start giving away his possessions. Except that they weren't *his* possessions, they were his father's! His father was a wealthy cloth merchant, and when he saw what his son was doing, he dragged him before the Bishop of Assisi in the town square and demanded that the Bishop tell his son to stop giving away things that didn't belong to him. In response, Francis stripped himself naked in front of everyone, handed his clothes to his father, and said, "There – now you have everything that belongs to you". He then went off to live his life in literal obedience to the call of Jesus.

The Corinthians would have *loved* this story; they loved the grand gesture But Paul is reminding them that using miraculous gifts, performing dramatic acts of faith and so on – is worth absolutely nothing if it's not all about love for others.

It's easy for us to sit in judgement on the Corinthians; after all, most of us aren't tempted by speaking in tongues or displays of religious emotion. But what would Paul say to us today? He might say this:- 'If we have the most beautiful liturgy ever designed by human beings, performed by people in the most splendid robes, with music from the best possible choir, but do not have love, we are a noisy gong and a clanging cymbal. And if we have the most beautiful church building, with fancy offices and plush carpets, but don't have love, we are nothing. If we produce excellent ministry plans and offer a multitude of different programs – if we have multiple services aimed at different kinds of people – if we have a high profile in the city and people are talking about our church – but don't have love, we gain nothing'.

Remember the saying:- "Love is that thing which, if a church has it, it doesn't really need much else, and if it doesn't have it, whatever else it has doesn't really matter very much". That's exactly what Paul is trying to say in this passage. We aren't going to be questioned about our splendid liturgy etc. We're going to be questioned about love.

So Paul starts by telling us that love is essential to the life of the church. He describes to us what love is and what it does.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

From a previous service

Susan Holme's sermon from 3rd February cont.

Paul tells us that those who love are patient with one another. In modern English, 'patient' can mean we're not in a hurry, but it can also mean we bear with one another's weaknesses and make allowances for one another. It's the second meaning that Paul is using here. Those who love, know themselves well; they know we all grow slowly, fail many times, and need healthy dollops of forgiveness. This is how God acts toward us – he is infinitely patient with us – and those who are growing in love are learning to treat others in the same way.

Those who love are kind to one another. They treat each other gently and considerately, do good things for one another, give freely to one another, and treat each other as valued human beings. They always remember Jesus' golden rule: "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12), and they do their best to practice it.

Those who love are not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. Envy, boasting, arrogance and rudeness are all about competition. Deep down inside, they're insecure; they believe there's only so much love and success and good fortune to go around. But those who love are not in competition with each other; they rejoice in each other's blessings without wishing to have them for themselves.

Those who love are not irritable or resentful. They don't get easily upset or offended by others; in fact, they choose not to take offence. They don't hold grudges and hang on to past hurts. They're learning that if you do that, you bind yourself to the past with chains of iron. They want to be free, so they're learning to let go of pride and anger and embrace the way of forgiveness and grace.

Those who love don't rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoice in the truth. In other words, their love isn't an easygoing love. When they see people doing wrong and hurting others, they don't just stand by and let it happen. When a word of truth needs to be spoken, they're ready to speak it – but out of love, not out of a need to judge or control others.

Those who love bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things. In other words, they don't give up on people. Eugene Peterson's 'Message' translation of the Bible says, 'Love... puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end'.

So Paul has told us that love is essential to the life of the church, and he's described for us what love is and what it does. Finally, in verses 8-13 he tells us that love is the only thing that will last forever.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. Many of us have probably heard this passage from 1 Corinthians read at weddings, but it can also be used at a funeral. Paul is asking his friends in Corinth "What's going to last? On that day when we see God face to face, what will really be important?" Will it be our reputation for wisdom or knowledge or supernatural experiences? No – in fact, on that day, we'll be brought face to face with the truth of how *little* we really knew!

So many people, when they come to the end of their lives, regret all the time and energy they've spent on things that mean absolutely nothing to them on their deathbeds. Some people set great store by accumulating possessions and money; some people spend their lives trying to be a success in all they do. Some people live for the good opinion of others; their greatest desire is to impress others and to be popular and well-liked. But in the end, Paul would say to us, none of that's going to last; it's all going to pass away.

What *will* last? Only three things, says Paul – faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love.

Let's never forget that this is the most important thing we can work on, because without it, everything else is just noise and busywork. So let's end as we began, with these words: "Love is that thing which, if a church has it, it doesn't really need much else, and if it doesn't have it, whatever else it has doesn't really matter very much".

Easter Egg Bingo

Fundraising Session for Bank Top Guides

Monday 1st April 2019 at 7.30pm
Bank Top Church, Ashworth Lane, Bolton

Tickets cost just £5.00 each

for 3 full bingo games plus others (stand up and lines etc.) with lots of Easter eggs to be won and it includes a hot dog supper (vegetarian options also available)

Fun for everyone! (Children and adults of all ages)

***Tickets available by contacting 07802 841808
or emailing rachaelhardman@hotmail.com
or pick them up at guides from Eleanor.***



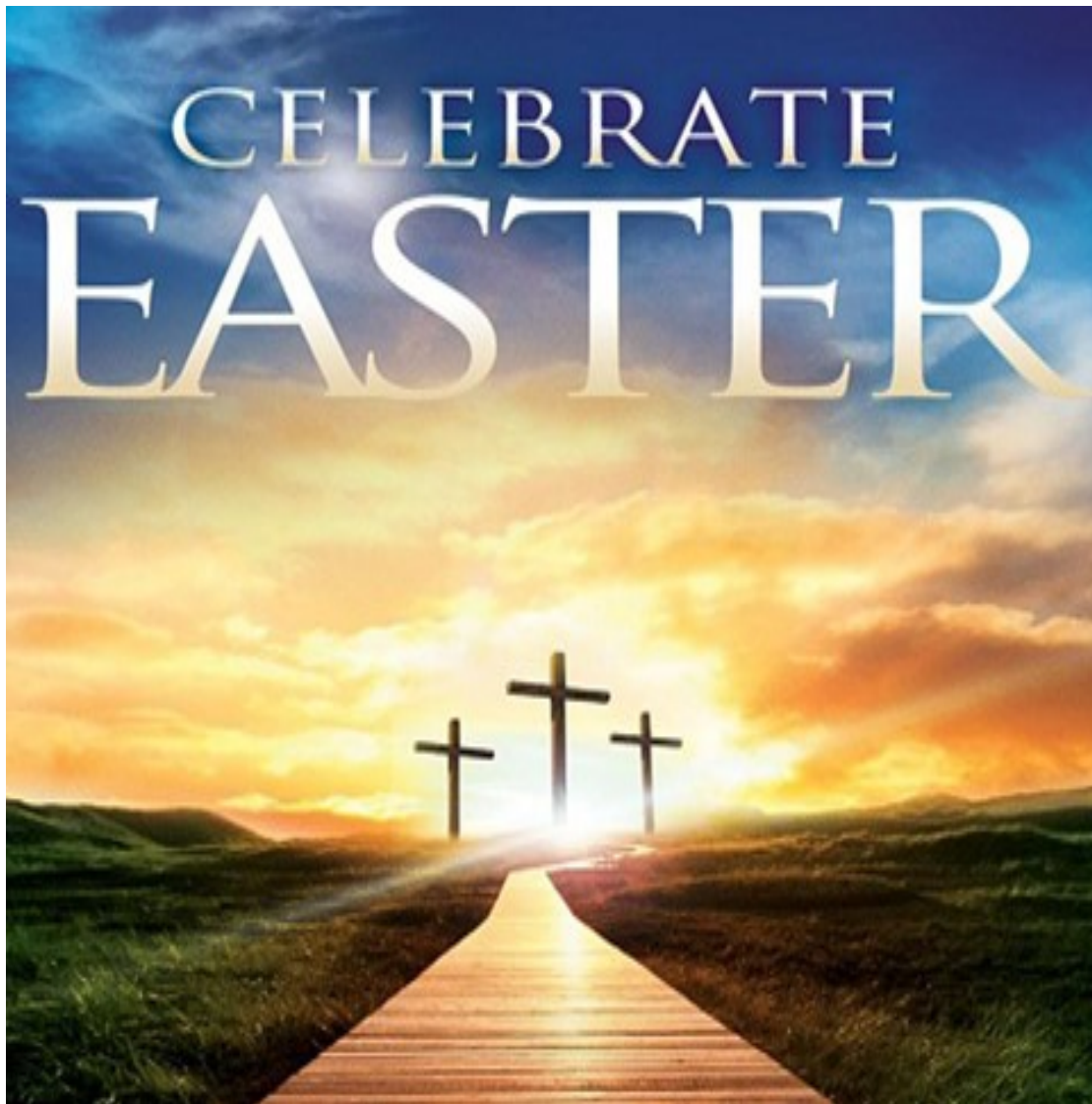
There will also be a raffle and refreshments available to buy.

All donations of Easter eggs gratefully received too (for the prizes).

(Please hand donations of Easter Eggs into group leaders by 25th March)

BANK TOP UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

EASTER SERVICES



19th APRIL, GOOD FRIDAY: 10.30am ANDY GUTHRIE

21ST April, EASTER SUNDAY: 10.30am THE WORSHIP GROUP



**BANK TOP
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

ANNUAL SERMONS

SUNDAY, 19th MAY 10:30am



FOLLOWED BY:

BBQ

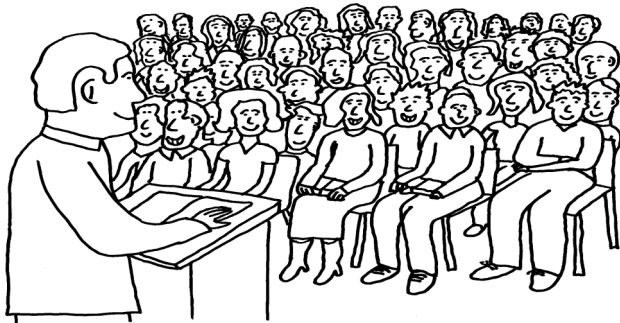
ON THE COMMUNITY GARDEN



all welcome!

Elders & Church Meeting Dates for 2019

Sunday	13 th January	Church Meeting
Wednesday	6 th February	Elders Meeting
Wednesday	6 th March	Elders Meeting
Sunday	7 th April	AGM
Wednesday	1 st May	Elders Meeting
Wednesday	5 th June	Elders Meeting
Sunday	7 th July	Church Meeting
Wednesday	4 th September	Elders
Sunday	6 th October	Church Meeting
Wednesday	6 th November	Elders Meeting



CHURCH MEETINGS ARE BRILLIANT

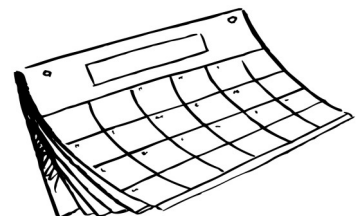
Saturday Brunch Dates

5th January
 2nd February
 2nd March
 6th April (Easter Egg Tombola)
 4th May
 1st June (Buffet)
 6th July (Village Fair)
 7th September
 5th October
 2nd November
 7th December (Advent Brunch)



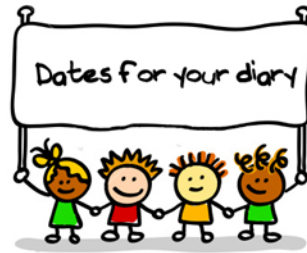
Other dates for your diary

Friday, 19th April (Good Friday Service)
 Sunday, 21st April (Easter Sunday Service)
 Sunday, 19th May (Sermons)
 Sunday, 10th November (Remembrance Service)
 Sunday, 17th November (Shoe Box Service)
 Sunday, 15th December (Nativity & Christingle)
 Tuesday, 24th December (Christmas Eve Communion)
 Wed, 25th December (Christmas Day Service)



FINANCE REPORT				
<u>OFFERTORY</u>			<u>CHARITIES</u>	
<u>November '18</u>				
Cash Collection	245.13		Fisermen's Mis- sion	360.00
Envelope Col- lection	434.00			
Standing Or- ders	<u>672.50</u>		Christian Aid	178.00
	<u>1351.63</u>			
<u>December '18</u>			Street Children Malawi	107.00
Cash Collection	136.55			
Envelope Col- lection	362.00			
Standing Or- ders	<u>652.50</u>			
	<u>1151.05</u>			
<u>January '19</u>				
Cash Collection	197.36			
Envelope Col- lection	414.00			
Standing Or- ders	<u>652.50</u>			
	<u>1263.86</u>			
<u>BRUNCHES</u>				
Advent Brunch '18	200.00			
January '19	128.00			
February '19	165.50			
<u>November '18</u>	<u>Cash Prize</u>	<u>Lottery No</u>		
P McNulty	50.00	19		
A Johns	30.00	44		
C Catherall	20.00	18		
<u>December '18</u>				
J Marsden	50.00	34		
A & R Smith	30.00	84		
E Johns	20.00	40		
<u>January '19</u>				
M Flitroft	50.00	10		
V Singleton	30.00	12		
P McNulty	20.00	11		
<i>A big thank you to all those who support Bank Top</i>				

FUTURE EVENTS: MARCH – MAY



<u>March</u>			
Sat	2 nd	10.00-1.00pm	Brunch
Sun	3 rd	10.30am	Morning Worship, Leo Roberts followed by Tea & Toast
Wed	6 th	7.30pm	Elders Meeting
Sun	10 th	10.30am	Communion Service, Andy Guthrie
Tue	12 th	8.00pm	Housegroup at Val's – new topic
Sun	17 th	10.30am	Morning Worship, Adrian Yapp
Sun	24 th	10.30am	Morning Worship, Mark Curtis
Tue	26 th	8.00pm	Housegroup at Val's
Sun	31 st	10.30am	Morning Worship, Mother's Day, Betty Bamford
<u>April</u>			
Sat	6 th	12.00-1.00pm	Brunch, including Easter Egg Tombola
Sun	7 th	10.30am 11.30am	Morning Worship, Brian Evitts Tea & Toast and Church A.G.M.
Tue	9 th	8.00pm	Housegroup at Val's
Sun	14 th	10.30am	Morning Worship, Palm Sunday, Communion Service, Andy Guthrie
Fri	19 th	10.30am	Good Friday Service, Andy Guthrie
Sun	21 st	10.30am	Easter Sunday, Family Service, Worship Group
Tue	23 rd	8.00pm	Housegroup at Val's
Sun	28 th	10.30am	Morning Worship, Dave Bagley
<u>May</u>			
Wed	1 st	8.00pm	Elders Meeting
Sat	4 th	12.00-1.00pm	Brunch
Sun	5 th	10.30am	Morning Worship, Alan Nuttall followed by Tea & Toast
Sun	12 th	10.30am	Communion Service, Andy Guthrie
Tue	14 th	8.00pm	Housegroup at Val's
Sun	19 th	10.30am 11.30am	Sermons Sunday, Church Parade, Youth & Worship Group BBQ on the Community Garden
Sun	26 th	10.30am	Morning Worship, David Canham
Tue	28 th	8.00pm	Housegroup at Val's