

A cartoon by Martin Ross. On the left, a woman with long dark hair and glasses stands looking towards the center. In the middle, a man with curly hair wearing a trench coat looks back at her. On the right, a large, bald man with a mustache stands with his back to the viewer, facing the other two. He has several wooden planks nailed to his back. The background shows a brick wall and some clouds. The caption at the bottom reads: "Gerry's not ready for hugging again yet". The artist's signature "MARTIN ROSS" is on the right.

Where do I start?

I have managed to get back swimming which has been a slog. I also noticed the strange phenomenon that during the lock-down my swimming trunks appear to have shrunk whilst in a drawer.

Zoom! There, I've said it! So, it's been a blessing allowed us to keep a semblance of church going quizzes, every week, and someone even invited join! Although we all take it in turn, I think we've least ten and there's another due this weekend. got all creative so: Which Bond films is this?



I think this creative streak has been nurtured by The Repair Shop and Sewing Bee which have all

Comfort food, to get you from one Line of Duty to the next. And I'm still troubled that H's name doesn't start with H – which must have slowed down the man/person hunt! Other forms of comfort viewing have been the ever dependable: Room 101, Would I lie to you? Have I got news for you? And I can now add Task Master and Gogglebox to that list. You can see that high culture rules in our house. And it's impossible to get the children on-side as they never actually watch anything when it's scheduled! Actually, I may recommend they watch the episode of Call the Midwife when Dr Crippen was a locum and see if anyone checks back with me.

Call the Midwife has the big cruise liner in the background overlooking the streets which does now remind me of the container ship which managed to block the Suez Canal. I'm not sure why, but I do sometimes have the nightmare that I'm the person responsible for parking the ship!! Coming out of lock-down is going to be a tricky moment for lots of people. We need to watch out for each other and talk AND listen to those who are struggling. There will be no clear new "normal" for a while so, as Christians, we need to encourage each other to have the faith to find God.

God Bless and look after yourselves, Andy & Heather

God Bless and look after yourselves, Andy & Heather

BANK TOP UNITED REFORMED CHURCH - CONTACTS

Church Telephone No		01204 593393
Minister	Rev Jacky Embrey	01204 843783
Church Leader	Mr A Guthrie - andyguts@gmail.com	01204 591185
Secretary/Treasurer	Mrs V Singleton - singletonv@hotmail.com	01204 305401
Church Hall Hire	Mrs V Singleton - singletonv@hotmail.com	01204 305401
Pulpit Supply	Mrs J Skidmore	01204 307130
Flower Secretaries	Mrs M Flitcroft	01204 301328
	Mrs C Rideout	01204 596360
Choir Leader	Mrs A Smith	01204 693740
Newsletter Editor	Mrs A Spence	01204 315327
Serving Elders	David Canham, Christine Counsell, Vicky Constantine, Andy Guthrie, Graham Naylor, Linda Rainford, Carol Rideout, Lynn Ridyard, Val Singleton, Julie Skidmore	
Sunday Worship	10.30am Morning Service and Sunday School. Church Parade 4th Sunday of the month in Jan, Sept, Nov, and Sermons	
Bank Top Artists	Monday, 1-3pm contact Mrs V Singleton	01204 305401
Bank Top Brownies	Monday 5.45-7.00pm, contact Miss E Farrell	07770 450 229
Guides	Monday 7.30-9.15pm, contact Mrs V Constantine	01204 593034
Mums & Toddlers	Tuesday 9-11.15am , contact Mrs V Singleton	01204 305401
The Oaks Brownies	Tuesday, 6-7.30pm, contact Mrs C Greenen	01204 592594
Theatre Works	Wednesday 4-5.00pm contact Lauren Bateman	07999 634 208
Adult Craft Class	Wednesday 7-9.00pm contact Jean Greer	01204 594127
Rainbows	Thursday 6-7.00pm contact Mrs E Robinson	01204 415113
Eden Singers	Thursday 7.30-9.15pm	07766 140 386
Brunches	1st Saturday of the Month, excluding August from 12-1.00pm	01204 305401
For Baptisms, 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 scheme please contact V Singleton		
We also have a Memorial Fund - contact V Singleton		

Dear friends,

Life is such a rollercoaster. All through the pandemic, there have been ups and downs, both national and personal. As I write this, we're only a few days away from the next significant easing of restrictions on 17 May, but virus infections are increasing in many parts of Greater Manchester, particularly in Bolton. Once again what had seemed an increasingly clear path forward has more bumps in it than we'd expected. Today is Ascension Day. Luke tells us that 40 days after Easter, Jesus was lifted up (Acts 1:9) and that was the last the disciples saw of him. Just imagine how bumpy their ride had been. They had been afraid to follow Jesus to Jerusalem, but Thomas exhorted them to 'go, that we may die with him.' (John 11: 16) They went and entered Jerusalem in triumph, as we remember on Palm Sunday.

Then Jesus turned over the tables in the temple and although he was allowed to teach for a few days, the path to his arrest, trial and crucifixion was set. The disciples must have been in despair at that point, with a yawning gap in their lives. Then everything was transformed once again on Easter Day.

Over the next few days and weeks, they must have grown quite used to the idea that Jesus was still able to appear to them face to face. So, Ascension Day and the final separation must have troubled them once again. However, things had changed. They knew that they were not alone, and they would only have to wait a short time for their baptism with fire.

That came at Pentecost with the gift of the Spirit and a bursting forth of new energy that gave birth to the church. There would be plenty of ups and downs to come for the infant church, starting with a host of new converts and fellowships, followed by persecutions and other troubles. We know that the disciples and their successors persevered through it all, because we are here today, to bear witness in our own time and place.

So, let's not be too anxious, as we come out of the pandemic, that we are doing so by fits and starts. For the Spirit is upon us and Jesus is beside us and will empower us to witness in word and deed in whatever way our situation allows.

May God bless our path up and down, day by day,

Jacky



A Prayer when there are tough decisions to be made



Most gracious and merciful God, we are often faced with hard decisions:

Decisions which impact not just on our own lives but the lives of people around us.

We are fearful; anxious; full of doubt.

Remind us that even when the way may be clouded and the destination unclear, the light of your love will shine through, the darkness will lift, and you will help us see the way again.

If we fall, you will lift us back up, when we waiver, you will steady our feet, and when we face tough decisions, you will be there to lead the way. Help us to face the challenges of life with courage, knowing that the strength and shield of God will prevail and protect, and your love will never leave us alone. Amen.

(Remi PT Ferguson)

BANK TOP CLEANING ROTA



MAY

21st Andrea & Val

28th Vicky

JUNE

4th Graham & Linda

11th Christine & Pat

18th Carol & Ann

25th Lynn & Glynis

JULY

2nd Heather

9th Andrea & Val

16th Vicky

23rd Linda & Graham

30th Christine & Pat

FLOWER LIST



MAY

23rd Maureen Flitcroft

30th VACANT

JUNE

6th Christine Counsell

13th Muriel Brown

20th Sarah Astley

27th Maureen Flitcroft

JULY

4th In memory Mrs Warburton

11th Jill Partington

18th In memory Gladys Yates

25th Kath Dean



BIBLE READINGS

MAY

23rd Acts 2:1-21

30th John 3:1-17

JUNE

6th Mark 3:20-35

13th Mark 4:26-34

20th Mark 4:35-41

27th Mark 5:21-43

JULY

4th Mark 6:1-13

11th Mark 6:14-29

18th Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

25th John 6:1-21



Happy Birthday to:

Theo Milne on the 23rd May
and

Freya Dean on the 3rd July

Have a brilliant day!

xxxxxxxxx

Christian Crackers by Phil Mason

- The preacher for next Sunday will be found hanging on the church notice board 🤖
- Visitors are invited to join us in the hall after this service for a cup of coffee. Squash will be available if coffee is not your cup of tea. 🤔

REPORT FROM YOUR CHURCH SECRETARY

Dear Friends

In 2020, the whole of the country went into lockdown in the middle of March, and that meant, regrettably, Bank Top church also closed their doors to public worship. It also meant that all the people who usually use our building for a whole host of different activities were also unable to continue. My first thought, I have to say, was not about loss of income, and maybe, as your treasurer, that should have been my first thought! But actually my first thought was the fact that we were closing church doors, in other words, locking people out, and to me that's not what church is about. So, I was upset, but consoled myself with the fact that it wouldn't probably be for long. Well how wrong was I, and I expect that most of you were also wrong. At first we were quite slow to react; probably because we thought it wouldn't be for that long. But as we realised that it wasn't going to be over any time soon, we quickly responded and got our act together, and we all quickly fell into the Sunday Zoom routine. We did manage to open later in the year, but unfortunately only for around 20 people - socially distanced of course; and so the Zoom continued.

My next thought was that I would have a lot more free time - nothing to organise at church, no Brunches, no Art Group, No Guides, no Toddler Group, no Eden Singers - all the things I was involved in suddenly stopped. And I actually quite liked, and enjoyed this new-found period of rest, and at one point thought I could actually get used to this!

My next thought was what about all the Income we stood to lose! Would we be able to survive? Would people still remember their offerings? What about the loss of income from lettings? I prayed about it too - in fact I did quite a lot of praying over the year! Well, I need not have worried because I have to say that Bank Top members really came up trumps, with many people being more generous than I could have ever expected. So a huge thank you to you all.

I also think that another positive was the closeness felt by all members. I think we all got to know one another more and more as the year progressed, and I hope we will continue that closeness as a church family as we slowly emerge from lockdown. We all look forward to the time when we can all worship together in our building and the celestial choir can get back to what it was before!

The good news is that from Sunday, 23 May, we will be reopening church, albeit just for 25 people at first. This will enable members who haven't been able to zoom, to come into church again to join us in our Sunday Worship. Families with children will also be able to attend, as Sunday School will also restart on the 23 May. The Theatre School, who meet in Bank Top each Wednesday, have already returned, and our Mums and Toddlers Group will start back on the 8th June. We have, unfortunately, lost three of our Lettings during Lockdown, Weight waters, Moo Music and Sweaty Mama. But we are hopeful that all our other Lettings will return as soon as they are allowed to.

Please see below a copy of the accounts for 2020, which were agreed at our recent Elders meeting, and which will be discussed at our next Church Meeting, which we hope to organise for some time late summer. My report as Treasurer you will find at the end of the accounts.

Love and Blessings, Val

BANK TOP UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

Assets

Cash at Bank	39635.11
Cash in Hand	0.00

Total Assets	<u>39635.11</u>
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Church Funds

Church Account

Start of Year	4432.73	
In-year balance	5283.40	
C/fwd		9716.13

Fundraising Account

Start of Year	22431.40	
In-year Balance	4207.98	
C/fwd		26639.38

Memorial Account

Start of Year	3279.60	
In-year balance	0.00	
		3279.60

TOTAL	<u>39635.11</u>
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CHURCH ACCOUNT 2020

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Cash Collection	2218.71	2355.40
Envelope Collection	4907.05	4852.88
Standing Orders	9891.00	8600.00
Gift Aid Claim	3968.21	3874.31
Room Hire	2844.00	7160.50
Change for Charity Jars	446.01	
Charities	504.00	1181.82
Investments	26.02	
Miscellaneous	279.75	118.30
Printing	20.00	80.00
Synod repayment for 2020 losses	7100.00	
	<u>32204.75</u>	<u>28223.21</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Ministry & Mission	17592.00	20532.00
Cleaning Materials	60.00	296.89
Electricity	375.79	438.00
Gas	1609.06	2946.83
Telephone	412.86	381.93
Water	249.38	322.91
Insurance & Licenses	1432.46	1427.18
Miscellaneous	419.82	457.82
Property Repairs & Maintenance	859.89	950.45
Sunday School	178.50	159.73
Paper & Printing	656.22	941.53
Postage & Stationery	70.35	22.43
Portacabin	1842.10	1560.00
Pulpit Supply	140.00	180.00
Sunday Link	68.92	68.92
Charities	954.00	1186.27
Social	0.00	0.00
	<u>26921.35</u>	<u>31872.89</u>
Previous Balance b/fwd	4432.73	8082.41
In-Year Balance	<u>5283.40</u>	<u>-3649.68</u>
Balance c/fwd	<u>9716.13</u>	<u>4432.73</u>

FUNDRAISING ACCOUNT 2020

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Advent Brunch	0.00	814.71
Brunches	610.55	1714.95
50/50	1200.00	1200.00
Village Fair	0.00	2653.00
Donations	100.00	
Manse sale	6631.73	
Closure of Synod COIF A/C	1646.88	-
	<u>10189.16</u>	<u>6382.66</u>

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Brunch Disposables	64.96	151.76
New Boiler	1600.00	
New Fire Alarm	4316.22	671.39
	<u>5981.18</u>	<u>823.15</u>

Balance B/fwd	22431.40	16871.89
In-Year Balance	<u>4207.98</u>	<u>5559.51</u>
Balance C/fwd	<u>26639.38</u>	<u>22431.40</u>

<u>MEMORIAL ACCOUNT</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
<u>INCOME</u>	0	1350.00

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
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Balance B/fwd	3279.60	1929.60
In-Year Balance	0.00	1350.00
Balance C/fwd	<u>3279.60</u>	<u>3279.60</u>

Treasurer's Report for 2020

It was indeed an extraordinary year, but I am pleased to say that our financial situation at the end of it is much better than I anticipated, and we ended the year with an in-year surplus of £9,491.38.

This is mainly due to the fact that we received £7,100 from NW Synod to cover losses (see Church Account); £6,631.73, which was our share from the sale of the Manse, and £1,646.88 from the transfer of a COIF account held by NW Synod (see Fundraising Account.) Without these we would have seen an overall loss on the year. For more information please read on:-

Church Account

Income

- Offerings: Our total offerings, which includes Cash Collections, Envelopes and Standing Orders were up on the previous year by £1,208. During the year more people elected to pay monthly into directly into our bank.
- Gift Aid Claim: this was also up on the previous year by £94.
- Room Hire: this is the area we suffered most, and we were down on the previous year by £4,317. It would have been much more had we not started to let out the Portacabin.
- Charities: unfortunately these were down on the previous year by £232.

Expenditure

- M&M: our subscriptions to Ministry & Mission reduced by £2,940, which was due to falling numbers and a reduction in charges.
- Utilities: savings were made on both Electricity and Gas as the boiler was turned right down during lockdown.
- Printing & Postage: a saving of £285 on printing as there was no Village Fair (thousands of flyers) or Christingle (order of services etc.) Postage increased by £48 because of correspondence posted out to those members not on email.

The Church Account ended the year with a surplus of £5,283.40, making the total to be carried forward in this account of £9,716.13. As I said earlier, the main reason for the surplus was the gift of £7,100 from NW Synod.

Fundraising Account

Income

- This account took a battering because our Village Fair, Advent Brunch and Monthly Brunches from April onwards were all cancelled, and these are our main fundraising events. Our 50/50 continued and thank you to everyone for supporting this.

Expenditure

- A new boiler cost us £1,600 and a new Fire Alarm system was £4,316.22

The Fundraising Account ended the year with a surplus of £4,207.98 making a total to be carried forward in this account of £26,639.38. The main reason for the in-year surplus was the Manse sale proceeds of £6,631.73 and the COIF of £1,646.88.

Memorial Account

There were no transactions in this account, so the balance remains the same at £3,279.60.

Once again can I just say a massive thank you to you all for your continued support throughout a very difficult year. We have recently received an interim payment of £5,000 from our Insurance for losses incurred during COVID and we will be submitting another claim at the end of this year. We are still in a good financial position and I thank God for that. Thank you also for your continued support of our Change for Charity, which raised a total of £450 for Zac's Youth Bar, and also your continued support for Urban Outreach and Bolton Hospice.

Val Singleton, Treasurer

TAKEN FROM URC DAILY DEVOTIONS - 11TH MAY

I was really impressed by Josh Thomas' interpretation of the reading from Thessalonians in the URC Daily Devotions on the 11th May. It's taken from Paul's letter to the Christians living in Thessalonica, and when I read it, I thought Paul was being a little bit harsh of his treatment of those who didn't work. I know that Paul and the others who accompanied him on his three

journeys always worked to make sure they ‘paid their way,’ and I think Paul was a tent maker. But I thought, surely there were people living in Thessalonica who were not able to work, for various reasons, so what about them?

However, on reading the reflection, I realised that what Paul was really getting at was that it was meant for people who just don’t put the effort in. And there are people who we know who don’t always put the effort in . . . and maybe we might be one of those people who don’t put the effort in and are quite content to let others do it for us! I must admit that I can sometimes leave things to someone else.

So, I thought, as we come out of lockdown, let’s all of us try to put more effort in. Let’s try to build on what we already have at Bank Top and move towards a positive future, where we reach out to welcome others and come up with inspiring and encouraging new ideas. Let’s continue on our Christian journey with new vigour and by pulling together and sharing the load we can achieve our goals. And now, read on!

2 Thessalonians 3: 6 - 18

Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, and we did not eat anyone’s bread without paying for it; but with toil and labour we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. Brothers, and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right. Take note of those who do not obey what we say in this letter; have nothing to do with them, so that they may be ashamed. Do not regard them as enemies, but warn them as believers. Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with all of you. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the mark in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you

Reflection

When I was a child, we went on a family holiday to Lefkada - one of the Greek Islands. Whilst we were there, we sat on the beach one morning and saw other families having great fun on pedalos out on the sea. We decided to pay for the hire of a couple of these and trying to enjoy some independence, my sister and I teamed up leaving my mother and father with our youngest sibling. Well, we did not have to go far for me to begin to regret this decision. After about 5 minutes of pedaling my sister decided to give up completely because it was too hot and she could no longer be bothered to carry on. Meanwhile, my parents and youngest sibling were pedaling out exploring the sea and having a wonderful time.

‘Idleness’ can be understood as going AWOL. If we step away from what we know to be right and true, not only do we exclude ourselves from blessing, but we also lessen life for everyone else. I have been guilty in my younger years of leaving church and saying the words ‘well I didn’t get much out of that today’ perhaps this was something to do with the style of presentation or the hymns that were chosen. But we don’t come to worship God with God’s people just to get something out, we come to put something in! We focus far too often on receiving rather than giving and there is a danger to being more interested in what we get rather than what we can give.

Perhaps, I was thinking about the pedalo situation in the wrong way, maybe it was never about what I was to get out of it but rather what I could put into allowing my sibling to enjoy the holiday that little bit more, or perhaps, that is stretching the analogy just a little too far!

Prayer

Loving God, we thank you that you have blessed us with companions on our journey in the shape of our church fellowship. Lord, forgive us for the times we have tried to make it all about us and have lost sight of the needs of those around us. Help us to see how we can bless others and be more prepared to serve them knowing that in giving we also receive a blessing from you. Amen.

The Rev’d Josh Thomas minister of Petersfield and Liss United Reformed Church

An Eco-Friendly Church

An Eco-Friendly Church is another form of Worship – Worshipping God’s Creation. How can we worship God’s Creation if we don’t care about the world we live in? And if we do care about the world we live in, then what are we doing about it?

It's so easy to sit and watch programmes about Global Warming and Climate Change on TV, and Wild Life programmes with Sir David Attenborough, and agree with everything they say . . . and be disgusted about what the human race is doing to destroy it . . . and then carry on with our normal lives and leave the problem to others!!

We can all say, 'Well it's not us – we don't drop litter' – but do we pick any up? I suspect not. Why not? Because we didn't drop it? Well there are actually some people that actually do go out, on a regular basis, and pick up other people's litter, and not because they love doing it, but because they care passionately about OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY, OUR TOWN, OUR COUNTRY. So, why don't we, make it our mission in future; when we go out for a walk, to take with us a bag, and put a glove on, and pick up some litter. It makes sense to me.

I went on an Eco -Friendly Church Workshop last Saturday, and I was truly inspired by it. In fact I came away feeling quite passionate about it. Who knows what our 'Five Marks of Mission are?' Well if you don't then read on:

- 1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom**
- 2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers**
- 3. To respond to human need by loving service**
- 4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation**
- 5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth**

Are we striving to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth?

As I said earlier, I feel passionately about our world, our creation and I'm not going to stop anytime soon, and so I will be pestering you to come on board!

The first thing we need to do is to look at our Church Building with regard to our carbon footprint and we have a survey to complete and send off before we can apply to become an Eco-Friendly church. Once the survey has gone, we will receive a Grading and there are three grades to be had: Bronze, Silver and Gold. If we can get to Bronze, then that's a good place to start. Quite a few churches in the North West are already on Silver, but as yet, no one holds a Gold Award.

What we need first is a 'Tribe' of four to six people who will agree to meet and do the survey and at the same time create an Action Plan. I hope that I can manage to persuade some of you to volunteer and I'm also hoping to bring on board our young people and uniformed organisations. I think it's possibly something which young people would like to be involved in. We have a community garden next door to church which we can take advantage of when it comes to encouraging wild life back, Once I have my tribe and the action plan is done, I hope we can bring it back to church, and even use a Sunday Service to show people where we are up to.

I hope to create a special page in each Newsletter to bring nature, carbon footprints etc to your attention. So if anyone out there would like to include something along these lines in the future, then please feel free to let me have such contributions.

A Walk during lockdown

I went for a walk this morning, I paused for breath - and in that moment took time to really look at a tree.

I don't know its name - but it was big, and sturdy, and tall. Its leaves were full, and so very green.

The next tree along - a dramatic splash of burgundy against the sky. In that moment, I was enveloped by the colours and sounds I might usually not notice.

I consciously, deliberately, breathed the air . . . and I was reminded - it's good to be alive!

Now I am home, and I don't know why I'm telling you all this - because you were there - you were with me, around me, and within me.

You always are. You always will be.

Karen Campbell





BANK TOP GUIDES

During lockdown we met on Zoom every Monday evening, and one of the things we did was 'Up-cycling'. We joined the RSPB and looked at pictures of birds that were likely to come into our gardens. Then we made bird feeders out of plastic bottles, bean tins and oranges. You can see pictures of these below. We put them into our gardens and then we joined in with the RSPB Big Bird Watch. It was quite exciting to see lots of different birds.

We then asked the girls to take on a bigger project by up-cycling something from their home that they were thinking of getting rid of, and which they could make better and useful again. The guides did extremely well with this and repainted quite large items of furniture to give them a more modern look, and one guide cleaned up an old terracotta pot and painted designs on it. We talked about a world in which we so often throw things away and buy new, when there really is no need!

We are now meeting outside, and we are going to encourage our girls to go out on some evenings during guide time to litter pick in the local area. We did it in 2019 and we did really well, and the council let us keep some of the litter pickers and jackets.

But next week we will be lighting fires (with not too much pollution, I hope) and toasting marshmallows to make 's'mores' (2 chocolate digestives with a toasted marshmallow in between) mm yummy



‘TOMORROW’

Inspired by Captain Sir Tom Moore’s saying, “Tomorrow will be a good day”

*It will be a good day tomorrow,
No more sadness and no more sorrow,
And more tears will we cry,
When we wave Covid goodbye,
It will be a good day tomorrow.
We will walk in the sun,
Hug and kiss everyone,
When Covid is gone tomorrow.*

*Tomorrow will be a good day,
All children will go out to play.
All masks disappear
We will grin ear to ear
We will all give a great cheer tomorrow.*

*But wait! Tomorrow never comes so they say,
Will our days remain empty and grey?
No fear no! Here comes the Spring;
Flowers bloom and birds sing -
So let’s give thanks for each new tomorrow.*

Christine Catherall, February 2021



We remember in our prayers

- At the time of writing this Newsletter, I have just heard the fantastic news that Brian will be finally going home next Thursday, 20th May. He will have been in hospital for three months! It’s been a really stressful time for all of us, especially Andrea and the grandchildren. After suffering critical Covid, three bouts of pneumonia, and two strokes he is finally recovered enough to go home. He’s still got a long road before him as he is still very, very weak, but he is improving all the time. Me and Andrea would like to thank everyone for all your support and prayers throughout this time. I personally wouldn’t have got through it without that support. I know you are probably fed up with me and the continuous ups and downs, but I found it most comforting to share my grief and my anxiety with you all. So thank you. xx
- We continue to pray for Linda Rainford, and Liz Larkin who are still receiving cancer treatment. We hope they remain positive. Lord help them to feel your presence surrounding them
- We also pray for Ann and Richard Smith, who have just moved house, and especially we think about Richard, who remains very poorly.
- We pray for the family of Pat, who sadly passed away today. She transferred to us when Lee Clough Mission closed, before moving to the midlands to live with her daughter. May she be at peace.

URBAN OUTREACH - 30 YEARS

Whilst in “Lockdown” and our Church closed, people in poor circumstances still require feeding, so “Grub Tub” collections have been available at our house.

Bank Top URC has been involved almost from the beginning when we read that a new charity was asking for volunteers for “Winter Watch” and food donations.

Initially, food was delivered to Dave and Christine Bagley at their house in Smithills. At that time their son, Samuel, was just a little boy running about the house. Now he is married, and they have two children and Samuel is also working for Urban Outreach.

Several from Bank Top helped in the past with the week-end “Drop In Centre” which meant working from 8.00pm to Mid-Night. Tasty dishes were served, some of them prepared by Bank Toppers.

All the above and much more has resulted in Dave & Chris receiving an MBE and many Bank Top volunteers receiving “The Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service” given for work for Urban Outreach.

Thanks to all at Bank Top URC for their contribution over the past 30 Years.

Maureen.

BANK TOP 50/50

We have kept this going during lockdown, and I’m pleased to say that most people paid their subscriptions for this year – so thank you all for your continued support. We would always do the draw at our Monthly Brunches; and in the absence of the brunches, I have drawn them, always with another person from church present. Obviously, if I didn’t call at your house with a little envelope with cash inside, then you have not won! But don’t be despondent, it could be your turn to win soon! For a full list of winners during lockdown, please see the noticeboard inside church, when you next go in – which hopefully will be soon!

Val

OUR CHOSEN CHARITY FOR THIS YEAR

As most of you probably know, our charity for this year is the Street Children in Malawi. David Canham’s daughter, Julia, is still very much involved and very passionate about this charity. She is currently paying storage for lots of items waiting to be transported out there and because of lockdown this has been very expensive and frustrating for her. I’m sure that once travel restrictions are lifted, she will be keen to go. In the meantime keep saving your loose change in your ‘Jars of change for Charity.’ Thank you

Val

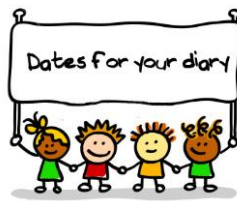


A PRAYER FOR SUMMER by Chick Youill

*Glory be to God...
for clear blue skies and sunny days
for fresh green grass and leafy trees
for vivid purple flowers and well-tended gardens
for fluffy white clouds and gentle breezes
for bright red buses and busy streets*

*Glory be to God...
for people stepping out with sandaled feet
for children playing games with delighted squeals
for picnics and street parties
for street traders and market stalls
for long days and short nights
for open-topped buses and open-necked shirts. Glory be to God for summer*

If you do manage to get away this summer, enjoy! And for those remaining at home, make sure you relax too!



FUTURE EVENTS: MAY-JULY 2021

<u>May</u>			
Sun	23 rd	10.30am	Morning Service, Andy Guthrie. Church reopens for 25 people
Sun	30 th	10.30am	Morning Service, Andy Guthrie
<u>June</u>			
Sun	6 th	10.30am	Morning Worship, Leo Roberts
Tue	8 th	9.00-11.15am	Toddler Group re-opens
Wed	9 th	7.00pm	Elders Meeting
Sun	13 th	10.30am	Communion Service, Andy Guthrie
Sun	20 th	10.30am	Morning Worship, Adrian Yapp
Tue	22 nd	8.00pm	Val's House group starts up again. We will be looking at 'The 10 commandments'
Sun	27 th	10.30am	Morning Service, Mark Bates hopefully with a full congregation?
<u>July</u>			
Sun	4 th	10.30am 11.30am	Morning Service, The Worship Group Church Meeting
Sun	11 th	10.30am	Communion Service, Andy Guthrie
Tue	13 th	8.00pm	Val's House group 'The 10 commandments'
Sun	18 th	10.30am	Morning Service, Barry Bradshaw
Sun	25 th	10.30am	Morning Service, Val Singleton
Tue	27 th	8.00pm	Val's House group The 10 commandments

Future dates for your diaries

- Good News! We are hoping to re-start our Saturday Brunches from the 4th September.
- Sunday 26th September - Harvest. We are planning a BBQ on the Community Garden.

