

BANK



TOPICS

NEWSLETTER FOR AUGUST-OCTOBER 2021

Dear Friends,

There's a psalm, which I hardly dare name. If I say By the waters of Babylon, I think of a wonderful version by Don McLean. You can sing it as a round and maybe we will sing it as a round soon.

Psalm 137.

By the rivers of Babylon we sat down;
there we wept when we remembered Zion.
On the willows near by
we hung up our harps.
Those who captured us told us to sing;
they told us to entertain them:
"Sing us a song about Zion."
How can we sing a song to the LORD
in a foreign land?

But and it is a big and painful BUT...

But there is another version. It is the Boney M version. An aberration. But it's the one you'll be humming now. It is an aberration because Psalm 137 is a lament: The children of Israel are far from home, and they can't sing in a foreign land.

It should not be a happy-clappy pop song. And every time I say "By the Waters of Babylon" all people think about is Boney M. You must stop thinking about Boney M NOW!!!!

We've been away, and to some people Zoom seemed like a foreign land.

But the Celestial choir, despite making Dave Bagley cry, were wonderful and I want to thank everyone who tried to sing along. Never has a 30-part harmony been more important and it kept people smiling, and sometimes there is no greater gift that you can share. Be absolutely sure you made a difference and greatly helped Church keep going over those difficult months. It was also a treat to be joined by Egerton and Red Lane and to go international from a caravan in Wales.

For those not ready for the great leap back into church we will keep Zoom going but it was rather spooky that the church projector refused to work on the day of the Great Opening and has not worked ever since!

Val is setting us on the path to being an Eco-Church, and this is really important for each and every one of us. Personally, I have inserted myself into her tribe to ensure that we don't have to endure a new version of "Izal" toilet paper. Amazon is full of alternatives including this rather attractive option – Naked Sprout. Although I'm worried about the Health and Safety aspects if you wrongly choose a green bit. What could possibly go wrong? Who waters the bamboo?

Enough of that! So, we are back in church again, tentatively working out what to do next, trying to see what we've learned and to identify what we can do differently if that will make us better at being "Church." In the meantime, let's celebrate being able to sing (even if there's a shortage of "puff") and be together. And we're home, no longer in a foreign land.



Blessings all around!

Andy and Heather

PLEASE CHECK OUT WHAT'S ON AT BANK TOP!

From September we hope to be back to normal with all our weekly activities

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, 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/The Oaks Brownies	Monday 5.45-7.00pm, contact Miss E Farrell or Mrs C Greenen	07770 450 229 01204 592594
Guides	Monday 7.30-9.15pm, contact Mrs V Constantine	07806 789757
Toddler Group	Tuesday 9-11.00am , contact Mrs V Singleton	01204 305401
House Group	Second and Fourth Tuesday of each month, at the home of Val Singleton	01204 305401 07971 272 772
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	07510 895 470
Eden Singers	Thursday 7.30-9.15pm, contact Adrian Yapp	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		
We have a 50/50 Club which is drawn each month – please see Val Singleton for more information		
Bank Top is a member of the Bolton and Salford Missional Partnership		

A message from our Missional Partnership Minister . . .

Dear all,

As I write, we're waiting to hear formally that the Covid restrictions in England are to be lifted on 19th July. This has been labelled 'freedom day' by the press and many others. The URC moderators have responded by issuing some guidance which they have entitled 'new freedoms, same responsibilities.'

This takes us right back to the beginning of Genesis, reminding us that God made us to be stewards of creation. (Genesis 1: 26-31) In Genesis we see that God has given us an amazing world in which to live and showered us with good gifts. We are told that everything we have and are comes from God, who delights in us enjoying them all.

However, these gifts have not been given to us simply for our own use. They have been given for the benefit of the whole of creation. In the same way, the freedoms which we have are not solely for our own benefit, but also for the benefit of others. This is why we're being asked to consider carefully how we use our new freedoms and whether we need to practice some restraint for the benefit of others.

Consequently, we will need to carry on considering each step carefully as we open up. Common sense and sanitiser will continue to be the order of the day. I nearly said for some time, but given that the rate of other infections, including colds and flu, have greatly decreased due to the Covid precautions, maybe we should make some changes permanent.

Surely extra consideration for other people should be one of the permanent changes. I do not wear a mask for my own benefit, but for the benefit of others. I'm not suggesting that we should continue to wear masks everywhere that we have done, but on a crowded train or bus, they would definitely reduce infection. As would folk who remain at home, if they have an infection, instead of going out and passing it on.

The other area that we may want to think twice about is physical contact with other people. The pandemic has made many of us realise how important touch is. I hope we will soon feel able to exchange handshakes or even hugs and simply to hold hands appropriately. However, we will need to be really careful to ensure that the person we are connecting with really wants that connection.

It's going to be more important than ever that we ask permission before hugging or touching anyone and we should also ask if folk are comfortable to shake hands yet. We mustn't be offended if they sanitise their hands after doing so either.

Nevertheless, like many of you, I'm looking forward to singing and to sharing coffee safely after the service. We have missed a lot in the last 15 months, and we will soon be able to get back to some of the things that we have missed. Let's continue to be careful though and remember that there will always be others who need extra consideration, whether they are immunosuppressed or anxious, neither of which will necessarily be obvious.

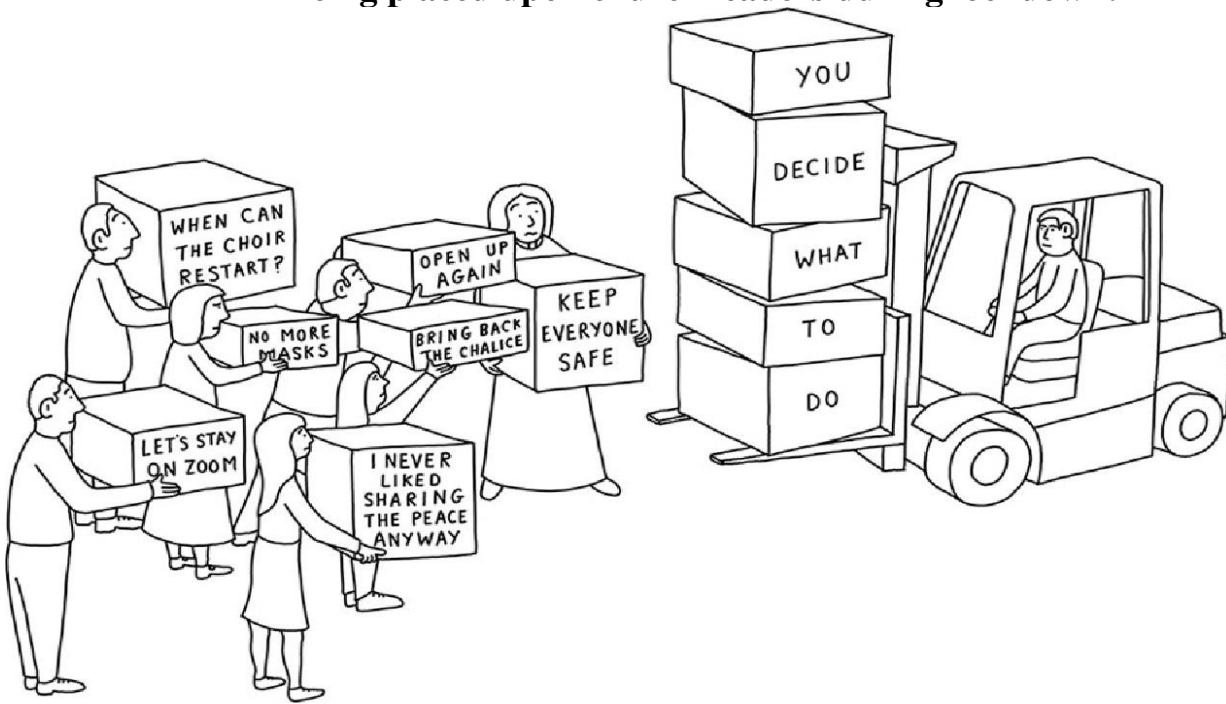
So, let's praise God in song and in action, by continuing to take care of and for those around us, so that God's image may shine forth in each.

May the sun shine on you this summer,
Jacky

How good is it to be back, properly back, in Church?

BURDENS

Being placed upon church leaders during lockdown!



Phew!! Thank goodness we are (nearly) back to normal. We're all decisioned out!!



CLEANING ROTA

AUGUST

6th Carol & Ann
13th Lynn & Glynis
20th Heather
27th Val & Andrea

SEPTEMBER

3rd Christine & Pat
10th Linda & Graham
17th Carol & Ann
24th Lynn & Glynis

OCTOBER

1st Heather
8th Val & Andrea
15th Christine & Pat
22nd Graham & Linda
29th Carol & Ann



FLOWER LIST

AUGUST

8th Ann, Alex, Carol & Jess
15th Phil Seddon
22nd Margaret Taylor & Ruth Butcher
29th David Canham

SEPTEMBER

5th Vicky Constantine
12th In memory of Jean Short
19th In memory of Phyllis Walsh
26th Val & Jill

OCTOBER

3rd Ann Smith
10th Vicky Constantine
17th In memory of Clarice Bickerstaffe
24th In memory of Kath Tyldesley
31st Ann, Alex, Carol & Jess



BIBLE READINGS

AUGUST

8th John 6:35, 41-51
15th John 6:51-58
22nd John 6:56-69
29th Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

SEPTEMBER

5th Mark 7:24-37
12th Mark 8:27-38
19th Mark 9: 30-37
26th Mark 9:38-5

OCTOBER

3rd Mark 10:2-16
10th Mark 10:17-23
17th Mark 10:35-45
24th Mark 10:46-52



BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to:
Aiden McDermid on the 27 Sept
and
Isabelle Dean on the 15th Oct

Have a brilliant birthday
XXXXX

We are not all in the same boat
But, we are all in the same storm
Some are in yachts, some canoes,
some in rowing boats and some are
drowning. Just be kind and help
whoever you can.



**People who will not sustain trees will soon live in a world that
will not sustain people?**



HUG A TREE



We have had a very difficult few months at Bank Top and we are all sadly mourning the loss of Richard Smith, Elizabeth Larkin and Alan Sutton (Julie Skidmore's dad) Can we please remember the families of these people in your daily prayers: Ann Smith and family, Irene, Melvin, Rebecca, Grace and Oliver and family , Julie and her sister Andrea and family
'Lord, we hold all these families up to you; please surround them with your tender love and care as they grieve for their loved ones.' Amen



For all your prayers for Linda Rainford and Brian Johns, who are both recovering well.
'We hold these dear friends and families up to you Lord. ' Amen

Vicky is leaving us! 😞

Vicky is moving to pastures new. She and Carl are going to join the Cheshire set in Congleton, but they are currently residing with their daughter until the house is ready - it needs lots of renovating, which is okay, because Vicky retires from her job with the NHS in the middle of August. But obviously, she is **much** too young to retire fully, so she is going to continue to work, still for the NHS, but for two days a week, which will give them lots of time for the refurbishment.

It's exciting times for them and I'm sure you will want me to wish them all the best as they start a new and exciting chapter in their lives, when they will be closer to both of their daughters.

Vicky has been a member of Bank Top for many, many years - she started coming when Sophie and Emily were very young children, and very quickly became involved in church life. She was a Serving Elder and also a Sunday School teacher, as well as a member of our choir. She was a regular in the kitchen on Brunch days and was also a member of the Worship Group. She will be greatly missed.

I first met her when she asked me if I needed any help with Guides. Obviously, I very quickly took her up on the offer and very soon we became a very strong team and good friends. Once I reached a certain age - she took over as Leader in Charge and is a very competent and well-liked member of our guiding team. And . . . the good news is, that she is still continuing to be leader and will travel from work each Monday to our meetings (probably stopping off at ours for tea!) So, she is not completely disappearing from Bank Top, and I'm sure we will see her in the future at Church Parade and special events.

So, Vicky, we thank you for your contribution to the life of Bank Top over the years, and we wish you well and abundant blessings in the future.

She will be coming back on Sunday, 5th September for a presentation.

Val

FINANCE REPORT

Offertory

MONTH	CASH COLLECTION	ENVELOPES	STANDING ORDERS
JANUARY	280	86	916.50
FEBRUARY		329	887.50
MARCH		532	1012.90
APRIL		334	887.90
MAY	255	501	892.90
JUNE	63	555	877.90
JULY	62	251	887.90
TOTALS	660.00	2588.00	6363.50

I would like to thank everyone for their continued support during the lockdown. It has been a very difficult time for you all and your generosity is very much appreciated.

In June we donated £570 to Christian Aid; please see letter of thanks from Christian Aid on our noticeboard, which details where the money is being spent

We received donations to our Memorial Account of £100 in February, and two amounts of £500 and £5,000 in July.

We have also received a sum of £5,000 from the Insurance for lost income during lockdown. This amount relates to lost income up to February of this year. We will be putting in another claim shortly for the period March to July.

Month	50/50 WINNERS	Number	Amount
Jan	D Canham	91	50
	V Constantine	71	30
	M Milne	61	20
Feb	C Counsell	89	50
	C Catherall	6	30
	A Guthrie	22	20
March	N Myers	65	50
	A Smith	63	30
	H Guthrie	4	20
April	M Milne	61	50
	K Dean	9	30
	A Hardman	46	20
May	C Rideout	14	50
	M Fogg	28	30
	K Hardman	55	20
June	E Johns	40	50
	K Johns	50	30
	J Skidmore	47	20
July	A Smith	94	50
	L Johns	86	30
	J Skidmore	7	20

An Eco-Friendly Church

An update of where we are up to with our efforts to become an Eco-Friendly church:

We managed to get our 'Tribe' together of six adults and three young people and we met in church on the 24 June to attempt to complete the Audit before we submit it to A Rocha for grading - Bronze, Silver or Gold awards up for grabs!

Completing the Audit was not an easy task and when we had gone through all the questions, we were left with quite a few boxes ticked in the 'need to find out' section. After speaking to Daleen, who ran the Eco workshop, we were advised to re-visit some of these boxes to see if we could answer some of these in a more positive way. And that basically is where we still remain. With people taking holidays, I suspect that we won't get back on it before September now, but we remain positive, and with the current freak weather we are experiencing around the world; from floods, to heatwaves to forest fires, it feels even more important to make sure that we are all doing our best to reduce climate change, in whatever way we can and this is where you come in, because it isn't just about our church building, it's also about our individual members and what each one of us is doing about becoming Eco-Friendly. I have attached a survey to the Newsletter, which I would like you all to complete and return to me, and the results will be added to our audit. In other words, the better you are at being eco-friendly, the more points we score in the audit. I hope that you will all participate. We want you to be honest about your answers, and there is no need for you to put your name to the questionnaire.

OUR world is in rather a mess at the moment with regard to climate change and we need to urgently address the situation - even if we think other countries are not doing enough so why should we? We urgently need to change the way we live!! Let's make a difference and let's put Bank Top URC at the forefront of Climate Change.

Thank you, Val

A PRAYER FOR OUR WORLD

We pray for our Church: that we may be a beacon of hope throughout the world, reminding us of our responsibility to care for and protect God's precious gift of creation.

We pray for the world, our common home: that through God's grace we may hear its cry of the damage done and be moved to protect it for future generations to enjoy.

We pray for those people who are already facing droughts, floods and storms: that God may grant them strength and hope for the future as they work to adapt to the changing climate

We pray for our local community: that through the grace of God we may hear the urgent cry of the earth and of the poor and be inspired to respond at this crucial time.

We pray for the world we live in: that God may open our eyes to recognise the goodness of all creation and help us to do what we can to restore and care for the wonderful gift that we have been given. **AMEN**

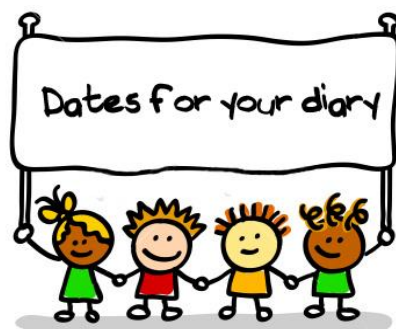


- Our last guide meeting before we broke up for the holidays was a party celebrating the completion of our North West Region 50th Birthday Challenge. The top left picture shows us with the banner the girls made, and the bottom picture features our birthday cake made by Lucy Johns, one of our Young Leaders.
- Our guides also raised over £400 taking part in a sponsored 50 laps of the Community Garden, as part of the challenge and they have donated it to the Street Children in Malawi.
- The top left picture shows Katie Johns and Erin Blackburn being presented with their Bronze and Silver Awards.

We had a great night stuffing our faces with burgers, sausages, jelly and ice cream and very delicious cake!

Bank Top Brownies and The Oaks Brownies have been meeting together on Zoom during lockdown and have decided to merge from September when they will meet in Church on Monday evenings.

Rainbows have been meeting on Zoom during lockdown and will be glad to get back to face to face meetings in church on Thursday evenings from September.



FUTURE EVENTS: AUGUST-OCTOBER 2021

<u>August</u>			
Sun	8th	10.30am	Morning Communion Service – Andy Guthrie
Sun	15 th	10.30am	Morning Service, Carla Pickering and Gustavo
Sun	22 nd	10.30am	Val Singleton
Sun	29 th	10.30am	Climate Sunday Service
<u>September</u>			
Sat	4 th	12.00-1.00pm	Saturday Brunch
Sun	5 th	10.30am	Morning Worship, Alison Spence, followed by tea and toast
Wed	8 th	7.00pm	Elders Meeting
Sun	12 th	10.30am	Communion Service, Andy Guthrie
Tue	14 th	7.30pm	Housegroup
Sun	19 th	10.30am	Harvest Service – The Worship Group
Sun	26 th	10.30am	Morning Service, Adrian Yapp
Tue	28 th	7.30pm	Housegroup
<u>October</u>			
Sat	2 nd	12.00-1.00pm	Saturday Brunch
Sun	3 rd	10.30am 11.30am	Morning Service, David Canham Church Meeting with tea and toast
Sun	10 th	10.30am	Communion Service, Andy Guthrie
Tue	12 th	7.30pm	Val's House group
Sun	17 th	10.30am	Morning Service, Leo Roberts
Sun	24 th	10.30am	Morning Service, Mark Bates
Sun	26 th	7.30pm	Housegroup
Sun	31 st	7.30pm	Mark Curtis

This newsletter has been emailed to all those currently on my email list. A limited number of copies will still be available in church for those people who are not on email.

ECO SURVEY

Have a look at the survey below. These are just some of the questions that we have been asked in the audit for our Eco-Church status. The questions have been directed to Church, but they equally refer to our own personal habits as well. Therefore, it would be really good if you could all have a look at it and possibly fill it in and return it to church. It will give our Eco Tribe an insight as to where we are at on a personal level, and to discover if our church members are also doing their bit to reduce their carbon footprint.

It doesn't matter if your answers fall mainly into the 'No' box – just so long as you decide to make an effort to do something positive about it in the future.

Please place a tick in appropriate boxes.

Question	Yes	No	Need to think about it
1. Are you taking steps to reduce your carbon footprint?			
2. Does your energy supplier use renewable energy?			
3. Is your boiler energy efficient?			
4. Is your property double glazed?			
5. Are the walls/lofts/ceilings in your property insulated?			
6. Do you use energy efficient bulbs?			
7. Do you have a water meter?			
8. Do you have rainwater collection facilities on your premises – eg water butts?			
9. Are your toilets fitted with dual-flush buttons or other water-saving devices?			
10. Do you use recycled toilet paper?			
11. Are your cleaning products environmentally friendly?			
12. Do you recycle fully all your waste?			
13. Do you try to limit the amount you waste?			
14. Do you have solar panels etc on your property?			
15. Do you encourage wildlife into your garden, eg birdboxes, bat boxes, bug hotels, hedgehog boxes?			
16. Do you have bird feeders, bird tables etc?			
17. Do you grow flowers and plants that benefit birds, bees and butterflies?			
18. Do you have a wild flower area in your garden?			
19. Do you avoid the use of pesticides?			
20. Do you use Fairtrade products in your home?	All	Some	None
21. Do you car share or walk to church?			
22. Do you support homeless charities?			

