

BANK



TOPICS

NEWSLETTER FOR FEBRUARY TO APRIL

Dear Friends

By the time you read this we may be in a post-covid world, or, we may not.

We may be partying again, or, we may not.

Blustering Boris may be gone, or, he may not.

I thought if I waited another 24 hours before putting fingers to keyboard then things may have moved on.

Apparently not.

What's not in question is that he should have gone so the "Great Bank Top Beard Off" now needs to be resolved.



Many of you know that I decided to stop shaving until Boris stopped lying to us. To be honest it has gone on for far longer than I hoped. Now I'm concerned that my poolside drag coefficient is so impaired that I'm scoring closer to a trawler with its nets out than a blue whale. (For you younger readers Poolside Drag Coefficient is nothing to do with RuPaul.)

It has been suggested that I could be bribed into shaving it off and that Bolton Hospice would be a worthy cause.

My preferred route is to keep growing it until it can emerge from under the bottom of my jumper as a quasi-sporran. Heather appears to have "issues" with this option.

So, to save Heather from further suffering you may want to donate to the cause, off-cuts could then be available as Bank Top Icons which you could sell for cryptocurrency and make your fortunes!!

Thanks to Josh for this birthday portrait of Grandad!

What did I enjoy about Christmas at Bank Top? Well, we sang loads of carols and, close to the big day, we were blessed with stunning weather, and we had a great Nativity on the Park and then Carols on the Park, in the evening.

We're sorry for messing around services, physical and virtual, but we really did not want the church building overflowing with the young and old, vaxed and unvaxed (it's my letter and I can spell it as I like it!!) so we did have to make changes. I hope it didn't inconvenience you and that you understand why.

However, Alison and I are both baffled how we managed to fail to sing a complete OCOCE. Maybe, just maybe, it was put on hold because we're told: "No one knows when that day or hour will come —not the angels in heaven, not the Son, but only the Father." (Mark 13: 32)

But, to be honest, these next few months are going to be very difficult for many people and we need to support each other just as much as we did through 2021. 2022 will be different from 2021, but different problems will emerge and we need to watch out for those struggling and let them know we are here for them and we will stand with them.

In Matthew 25:35 Jesus tells us "I was hungry, and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes..."

Yes, the church door is physically more open than it was in 2021, and yes, we must still be sensible around Covid and keeping safe. But our message for the year ahead needs to be an overwhelming – You, yes you, are welcome here, in God's house!

Blessings, Andy

PLEASE CHECK OUT WHAT'S ON AT BANK TOP!

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/Val Singleton	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 7.30-9.00pm, 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 Friends,

It's a little late to wish you all a happy new year, but perhaps I can wish you a **happier** year, this year. Happier, that is, than the difficult times we have been through in the pandemic. We know that the pandemic has impacted each of us differently, but there have been common themes of loss for many of us – loss of freedom, loss of friends and family, loss of social interaction, loss of health, loss of hugs.

Perhaps we can put this all to good use, remembering the old adage/song: 'you don't know what you've got till it's gone'. We need to start giving ourselves and others what we have been missing. That's not selfish – it's taking note that Jesus came that we might have life in all its fulness. (John 10:10)

It's also building ourselves up. We all know that with more social interaction and with more exercise comes more energy (once we've rested the tired muscles). We also know that it can be difficult to motivate ourselves to get out and about, especially when we've been encouraged to stay at home for so long.

For some of us it can get to the point when leaving the warmth and safety of our homes is increasingly difficult. It doesn't help that we've all aged two years during the pandemic, and sometimes it feels like a lot more. That's why we need to start to think about the fulness of life for ourselves and for others as well.

The environment in the church setting is about as safe and as caring as folk are going to find. Now may be the time to invite folk to come along, whether on a Sunday or mid-week, simply with the aim of getting out of their houses and meeting people again. They may of course find more than they bargained for in terms of faith, but even if they don't, the fellowship will mean a great deal right now.

I have lost count of the number of folk who've said to me, 'I was worried about coming to church, but as soon as I stepped across the threshold, I realised that it is so much safer than a supermarket, or even the corner shop.' Nowhere can be entirely safe, but it will do our mental and physical health no good to stay indoors for ever.

It will soon be time to be more persistent in encouraging folk to get out and about, because not everyone will find it easy to do so. Perhaps we should start by thinking about what life in all its fulness means for us. Jesus' 'manifesto' included releasing captives and letting the oppressed go free' (Luke 4:18). What is it that may be holding us or others captive and how might we work towards release?

It's spring time – or at least the birds have begun to sing more, the sun is in the sky (today), the bulbs are beginning to show and it's getting noticeably lighter each day. Not only that, but Covid infections are reducing sharply, albeit from a historic high, and it looks like vaccines have done a good job in reducing the number of folk who become seriously ill with Covid.

Now seems like a good time to begin to look forward. We can start that by praying with Christians from across the churches in Bolton, for the town and its people and churches. There will be a prayer meeting every month this year. The next one will be at St. Andrews and St. Georges URC in St. Georges Road at 7pm on Tuesday 22 February. Prayer and singing will be URC style, so come along and join in.

May God grant us fulness of life this year,

Jacky



AN EASTER PRAYER

May the glory and promise of this joyous time of year bring peace and happiness to you and those you hold most dear.

And may Christ, Our Risen Saviour, always be there by your side to bless you most abundantly and be your loving guide

Author unknown



The Bolton & Salford Missional Partnership of the United Reformed Church invites you to join us this Lent to explore Jesus in a series of films.

Come and watch the film, followed by a short discussion and time to share our thoughts.

Sunday 6 March, 2pm Wednesday 9 March, 7pm	JESUS (1999, International; starring Jeremy Sisto as Jesus, Gary Oldman as Pontius Pilate, Debra Messing [Will & Grace] as Mary Magdalene. From a series of 13 films called "The Bible".)	
Sunday 13 March, 7pm Wednesday 16 March, 7pm	GODSPELL (1973, USA; musical by Stephen Schwartz based on Matthew's Gospel, starring Victor Garber as Jesus and set in modern-day New York.)	
Sunday 20 March, 2pm Wednesday 23 March, 7pm	JESUS OF NAZARETH [Part 4/4] (1977, USA; award-winning drama, starring Robert Powell as Jesus, Laurence Olivier as Nicodemus, directed by Franco Zeffirelli.)	
Sunday 27 March, 2pm Wednesday 30 March, 7pm	SON OF MAN (2006, South Africa; one man's journey of love, deception and betrayal in the contemporary fictional state of Judaea in Southern Africa.) In English and Xhosa.	
Sunday 3 April, 2pm Wednesday 6 April, 7pm	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST (2004, USA; directed by Mel Gibson, starring Jim Caviezel as Jesus.) In Aramaic and Latin. <i>Contains graphic violence of the Crucifixion. Subtitled.</i>	
Sunday 10 April, 2pm Wednesday 13 April, 7pm	JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR (2000, UK; by Andrew Lloyd-Webber and Tim Rice. Musical theatre production, starring Glenn Carter as Jesus, Jérôme Pradon as Judas, Renée Castle as Mary.)	

Light refreshments (tea, coffee, water) **available**

Venue: St Andrew & St George's Church,
St George's Road, Bolton BL1 2BX

Accessibility: Disabled lift, Hearing loop

Parking: NCP Topp Way (BL1 2DJ) [3 hours = £3.60]
or NCP Upper Bark Street (BL1 2AX)



Faith – Hope – Love – Since 1972



CLEANING ROTA

FEBRUARY

4th Carol & Ann
 11th Lynn
 18th Heather
 25th Val & Andrea

MARCH

4th Christine & Pat
 11th Graham & Linda
 18th Carol & Ann
 25th Lynn

APRIL

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

If for any reason you can't manage the cleaning on the selected day, please try to swap with someone else on the rota,

If you would like to go on the cleaning rota, please have a word with either Christine Counsell or Val Singleton

A HUGE THANK YOU FOR ALL THOSE WHO CLEAN OUR CHURCH EACH WEEK SO THAT WE CAN WORSHIP IN A LOVELY CLEAN BUILDING

THANK YOU ALSO TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE DONATED FLOWERS FOR OUR ALTAR TABLE IN 2021. THESE FLOWERS ARE TAKEN OUT TO PEOPLE EACH WEEK AND THEY ARE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED



FLOWER LIST

FEBRUARY

6th Jill Partington
 13th The Owens
 20th In memory Phyllis Walsh
 27th Val Singleton

MARCH

6th Joan Seddon
 13th Sarah Astley
 20th In memory Clarice Bickerstaffe
 27th Barbara Harper

APRIL

3rd Andy & Heather Guthrie
 10th Linda Rainford
 17th Sue Seddon
 24th Christine Catherall

There are still some vacancies on the Flower List for 2022. Please see Carol or Maureen if you wish to go on the list.



BIBLE READINGS

FEBRUARY

6th Luke 5:1-11
 13th Luke 6:17-26
 20th Luke 6:27-38
 27th Luke 9:28-36 (37-43a)

MARCH

6th Luke 4_1-13
 13th Luke 13:31-35
 20th Luke 13:1-9
 27th Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

APRIL

3rd John 12:1-8
 10th Luke 22:14-23:56 (Palm Sunday)

Holy Week

11th John 12:1-11
 12th John 12:20-36
 13th John 13:21-32
 14th John 13: 1-17, 31b-35
 15th John 18:1-19:42
 16th Matthew 27:57-66
 17th John 20:1-18 (Easter Sunday)
 24th John 20:19-31



To
 23rd February Calissa Milne
 20th March Theodore Fraser

Have a great day
 xxxx



We remember in our prayers;

- Irene Larkin who has been really suffering with Covid and its after-effects. We hope you are back to full strength soon, Irene
- Elderly people within our church and community who are suffering with loneliness at this time of year. Carers, please do what you can to visit or telephone them to check if they are okay.

FINANCE REPORT from your Treasurer, Val
 Offertory

MONTH	CASH COLLECTION	ENVELOPES	STANDING ORDERS
OCTOBER 2021	192.24	367.00	892.90
NOVEMBER 2021	137.20	344.00	875.40
DECEMBER 2021	90.75	261.00	875.40
TOTALS	420.19	972.00	2643.70

In December we sent our cash collection raised at our Nativity and Christingle Services, (which came to £100), to Christian Aid

Our final total for our Chosen Charity for 2021 was £500 and a cheque was sent to The Street Children in Malawi. Thank you to all who continue to save their loose change.

Month	50/50 WINNERS	Number	Amount
November 2021	J Marsden	34	50
	L Ridyard	48	30
	J Partington	102	20
December 2021	L Johns	92	50
	D Canham	42	30
	L Ridyard	48	20
January 2022	J Skidmore	100	50
	L Ridyard	48	30
	M Flitcroft	20	20
June	E Johns	40	50
	K Johns	50	30
	J Skidmore	47	20

(I think Lynn Ridyard is definitely on a winning streak!!)

An Eco-Friendly Church

Well, good news ☺, we received a SILVER AWARD from A Rocha UK

So, well done to everyone for embracing changes that we have made in both church and our own everyday lives, in order to become Eco-Friendly, to reduce our Carbon Footprint, and to do our best to recycle. We are making a difference - and we need to continue our efforts - and maybe improve even more in 2022.

Maybe some of you may be interested in joining the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch which this year is on 28-30 January. Just go online to sign up. The website also gives you lots of advice and tips on attracting birds into your garden. A 'Singleton Tip' for you is to buy Sunflower Hearts for your birdfeeders. We have used them for several years, and we get blue tits, coal tits, great tits, chaffinches, bullfinches, robins, nuthatches, sparrows, wrens, blackbirds, wood pigeons and collared doves. You too can be as boastful as us!!



We just need someone to put it up in church now!! Any volunteers?



Thank you to Irene for the lovely grotto. Lovely picture of her granddaughter, Charlotte on the left and George from our Toddler Group on the right.

Despite the Covid restrictions - for the second year running :(we still managed to enjoy Christmas at Bank Top!

- Our Advent Brunch, organised by our uniformed organisations, together with some help from church members, was a huge success. The Rainbows and Brownies opened the morning with some Christmas songs and our Guides were amazing as they waited on at tables, whilst the poor leaders slaved over a hot stove in the kitchen! The bacon and egg barmes were delicious. The guides were able to present church with an astounding £1,000
- Our Toddler Group Party was also really well attended, and Father Christmas came along to hand out presents to our children - not sure whether or not they all enjoyed his presence!!
- Our last-minute decision to hold both the Nativity and Christingle Services on the garden really paid off. The weather was fantastic - although a little chilly, we had clear blue skies and lots of sunshine in the morning. The children (and adults) adapted well to the outdoors and the sun shone on the centre stage - AMAZING!! The Christingle Service later on in the day was also very well attended - with members of the local community coming along to join us. We were able to keep the Christingle Oranges lit for most of the service, which provided a lovely ambience. I think we need to consider outdoor services again in the future - weather permitting of course.



Dear All,

Thank you so much for your kind donation towards my goal of building a school, which will provide temporary places for street children in Malawi. The fundraising is progressing slowly yet in the right direction and I have every faith that God will continue to guide and help me achieve my objective.

Change for Charity is an amazing initiative: we live in a world in 2022 where we barely notice the small crisis that once bought us a precious ten pence mix at the corner shop! However, when many people work together to achieve a common goal, I am totally humbled to receive such a generous amount, thank you from the bottom of my heart. Please do keep these vulnerable children in your prayers and I look forward to seeing you all in February.

With love and best wishes

Julia

X

Here's a copy of the lovely card from Julia, thanking us for our donation of £500 to the Street Children of Malawi. We look forward to hearing all about Malawi when she helps to lead our service on the 6th February

CHOSEN CHARITIES FOR 2022

I have received 5 suggestions for our charity for this year and these are:-

CHARITY	ABOUT THEM	YOUR CHOICE
R.N.L.I	Is a charity that saves lives at sea through lifeboat search and rescue, lifeguards, water safety education and flood rescue	
Bolton Mountain Rescue Team	Are one of the voluntary rescue teams covering England and Wales. They provide a vital care to those who in need and are on call 24/7, 365 days of the year, whatever the weather, and have been since 1968	
Backup North West	Provide multiple services across Bolton to young people aged 16-24 who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. They have a coffee van which offers them a chance to work, and they also help them with accommodation and employment opportunities	
Fortalice	Is a Bolton based charity which helps women and children who are suffering from domestic violence and abuse. They offer housing, counselling and other support	

Please vote for the charity of your choice and return your slip to Church by the end Feb

FUTURE EVENTS: FEBRUARY – APRIL

February			
Sat	5 th	12.00-1.00pm	Brunch
Sun	6 th	10.30am	Morning Service – David and Julia Followed by tea and toast
Sun	13 th	10.30am	Communion Service – Andy Guthrie
Sun	20 th	10.30am	Morning Service – Barry Bradshaw
Tue	22 nd	7.30pm	Val's House group
Sun	27 th	10.30am	Morning Service – Mark Curtis
March			
Wed	2 nd	7.30pm	Elders Meeting
Sat	5 th	12.00-1.00pm	Brunch
Sun	6 th	10.30am	Morning Service – Mark Bates Followed by tea and toast
Tue	8 th	7.30pm	Val's House group
Sun	13 th	10.30am	Communion Service – Andy Guthrie
Sun	20 th	10.30am	Songs of Praise Service – David Canham
Tue	22 nd	7.30pm	Val's House group
Sun	27 th	10.30am	Morning Service – Leo Roberts
April			
Sat	2 nd	12.00-1.00pm	Brunch
Sun	3 rd	10.30am 11.30am	Morning Service – Jacky Embrey Church A.G.M with tea and toast
Sun	10 th	10.30am	Palm Sunday – Communion Service Jacky Embrey
Tue	12 th	7.30pm	Val's House group
Fri	15 th	10.30am	Good Friday Service – Andy Guthrie
Sun	17 th	10.30am	Easter Sunday Service – The Worship Group
Sun	24 th	10.30am	Morning Service – Adrian Yapp
Tue	26 th	7.30pm	Val's Housegroup

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.

MEETING DATES 2022	
Wednesday, 2 nd March	ELDERS
Sunday, 3 rd April	CHURCH A.G.M.
Wednesday, 4 th May	ELDERS
Wednesday, 1 st June	ELDERS
Sunday, 3 rd July	CHURCH MEETING
Wednesday, 7 th September	ELDERS
Sunday, 2 nd October	CHURCH MEETING
Wednesday, 2 nd November	ELDERS

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY	
Friday, 15 th April	GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
Sunday, 17 th April	EASTER SUNDAY
Sunday, 15 th May	SERMONS
Saturday, 2 nd July	VILLAGE FAIR
Sunday, 18 th September	HARVEST
Sunday, 13 th November	REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
Sunday, 20 th November	TOY SERVICE
Saturday, 3 rd December	ADVENT BRUNCH

