

BANK



TOPICS

NEWSLETTER FOR FEBRUARY TO APRIL 2023

Dear Friends

I sit here typing this newsletter whilst confronting one of life's greater disappointments. One that comes so soon after my 64th birthday.

Now, you may be thinking of even more Tory sleaze, you may be thinking that the morning is cold and wet - even before I get in the pool to go swimming. What about whether Keir will still manage to lose the next election? Or when will the NHS actually return to normal service?

But these are all like tumbleweed compared to today's let down.

Heather kindly bought me a post-birthday, birthday present. Something to eat, a favourite of old, a real treat. She bought me a packet of pork scratchings.

They looked like pork scratchings, they smelt like pork scratching, I could taste one before I put it in my mouth. I salivated. And then I bit into it.

It was enough to make me turn vegan. It was an affront to the name pork scratching – somehow it had been de-salinated! Where was that salty tang to go with the crunch?

It didn't say on the packet it was salt-free or grammatically even worse - lo-salt!

I nearly went for a walk to consider this affront to the British way of life. A post-Brexit way of life.



Now I even know how Job probably felt!

One of the great delights of Christmas is getting all those Isaiah readings which build great links between the Old and New Testaments. And then there's O come, O come Emmanuel. [Strange fact: James has forced us to watch the TV with the subtitles on, so that we can actually see what is being muttered. But the real revelation was the words to the wonderful music at the start of Silent Witness!]

So there's my final bible reference – Revelation, the last book of the Bible and one of the greatest and most important reveals for us all. It tells of the final fulfilment of the promises made in the Old and New Testaments.

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. ²And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. ³I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: "Now God's home is with human beings! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. ⁴He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared."

⁵Then the one who sits on the throne said, "And now I make all things new!" He also said to me, "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted." ⁶And he said, "It is done! I am the first and the last, the beginning and the end. To anyone who is thirsty I will give the right to drink from the spring of the water of life without paying for it. ⁷Those who win the victory will receive this from me: I will be their God, and they will be my children.

(Revelation 21: 1-7) GNB

That's what I need to get over my pork scratching blues – which sounds like a great title for a song!
God Bless

Andy

Letter from Jacky

Dear friends,

As I look out of my window, the sun is shining and there is no frost and no puddles on the ground. Today feels like the first time in a long time that I could say that. This has been a cold, wet winter, not helped by a gloomy outlook economically and a great many other clouds on the horizon of our world. It's at times like these that we most need the light of the hope that our faith and our church family bring to us. It's also at times like these that we most need to share that light in whatever way we can.

Many of you are doing that in practical ways, whether by supporting Urban Outreach and foodbanks, or by providing the light and warmth of your presence both within the church building and way beyond it to so many who are finding life difficult at this time. Paul urged us to share one another's burdens. (Galatians 6:2) and whilst he was not really talking physically, that is a good starting point. Nevertheless, we need to go much further. We need to recognise that the hope we have in Christ is not only especially needed at times like these, but also that many folk will be more open than ever to hear about it. So what can we do about that?

A lot of church members tell me that they have no idea what to say to a friend or neighbour to make them want to try coming to church. All that you have to do is to tell them what a difference your faith makes to you. Why do you come to church? Perhaps it's the hope offered by Christ through these dark times or the warmth that you feel from the fellowship.

Maybe the worship sets you up for the week or makes you think or feel differently. Whatever brings you to church will appeal to others too. You don't need to answer any awkward questions – if anyone quizzes you on your faith and you don't know how to answer or feel that you can't explain, just be honest and then simply ask them to come and see. All you need to do is to offer to pick them up one Sunday, or to walk with them. It's God's role to work on their response and it's for the rest of the fellowship to work on what happens when they get there Jesus said 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.' (Matthew 11:28). It is that lightening of even heavy burdens that we have to offer in Christ. It's a gift worth having, so don't hide Jesus' light under a bushel. Be open about your faith with those that you know and you will be offering a gift whose price is beyond pearls. May the sun shine on you this spring and may the light of Christ be seen wherever you go,

Jacky

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
Organists	Graham Naylor and Alison Spence	
Church Hall Hire	Mrs V Singleton - singletonv@hotmail.com	01204 305401
Pulpit Supply	Mrs J Skidmore	01204 307130
Flower Ladies	Mrs M Flitcroft Mrs C Rideout	01204 301328, 1204 596360
Newsletter Editor	Linda Rainford lindarainford@btinternet.com	01204 667095
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 Parades in Jan, May, Sept, Nov	
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	07770 450 229
Guides	Monday 7.30-9.15pm, contact Mrs V Constantine	01204 593034
Mums & Toddlers	Tuesday 9-11.00 am. 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
Ladies Fellowship	Tuesday, 7.30 – 9.15 Contact Helen Seager	01204 300666
Theatre Works	Wednesday 4-5.00pm contact Lauren Bateman	07999 634 208
Adult Craft Group	Wednesday 7-9.00pm	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		



CLEANING ROTA

FEBRUARY

3rd Joan & Kath
10th Graham & Linda
17th Carol
24th Heather

MARCH

3rd Val & Andrea
10th Christine & Pat
17th Joan & Kath
24th Graham & Linda
31st Carol

APRIL

7th Heather
14th Val & Andrea
21st Christine & Pat
28th Joan & Kath

MAY

5th Graham & Linda
12th Carol
19th Heather
26th Val & Andrea

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 wish to go on the cleaning rota, please have a word with either Christine Counsell or Val Singleton

FLOWER LIST

FEBRUARY

5th Jill Partington
12th The Owens
19th In Memory of Phyllis Walsh
26th Val Singleton

MARCH

5th Ann, Alex, Carol and Jess
12th Sarah Astley
19th In Memory of Clarice Bickerstaff
26th Vacant

APRIL

2nd Andy & Heather Guthrie
9th Linda Rainford
16th Sue Seddon
23rd Christine Catherall
30th Joan Dodd

MAY

7th In Memory of Lilian & Alan Tredrea
14th Maureen & Sid Roocroft
21st Sermons The Guides
28th Maureen Flitcroft

There are still some vacancies on the Flower List for 2023. Please see Carol or Maureen if you wish to go on the list

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



BIBLE READINGS

JANUARY

1st Matthew 2:1-12
8th Matthew 3: 13-17
15th John 1:29-42
22nd Matthew 4:12-23
29th Matthew 5: 1-12

FEBRUARY

5th Matthew 5:13-20
12th Matthew 5:21-37
19th Matthew 17:1-9
26th Matthew 4:1-11

MARCH

5th John 3:1-17
12th John 4:5-42
19th John 9:1-41
26th John 11:1-45

APRIL

2nd Matthew 21:1-11
9th Matthew 28:1-10
16th John 20:19-31
23rd 1Peter1; Luke 24
30th John 10:1-10

BANK TOP FAMILY NEWS



FEBRUARY

23rd Calissa Milne

MARCH

25th Rory Kenyon
30th Theodore Fraser

We hope you all have a great day
Xxxx

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! And 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	9.00am – 11.00am	Toddler Group (term time only)
Tuesday	7.30pm – 9.00pm	Ladies Fellowship (1 st & 3 rd Tuesday)
Tuesday	8.00pm – 10.00pm	Bible Study Group at Val's House (2 nd and 4 th Tuesday's)
Wednesday	4.00pm – 5.00pm	Theatre School for children up to 11
Wednesday	7.00pm – 9.00pm	Adult Craft Class
Thursday	5.45 – 6.45pm	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)

For more information about any of the above please check out contacts on the inside cover of the Newsletter or call:

Val Singleton: Tel: 01204 305401

Mob: 07971 272772

Email: singletonv@hotmail.com

LADIES FELLOWSHIP

On the 17th January, The Ladies Fellowship (previously based at St Paul's), moved to Bank Top. We would be delighted to welcome new members and we meet on the first and third Tuesday of the month, starting at 7.30 and finishing at 9.15. Programmes for the year were given out on the 17th, which showed a variety of speakers and subjects for the year, plus a day trip in June and a special lunch in November – The Fellowship Group are celebrating their 40th Anniversary.

The annual subscription is £10, plus £3 each time you attend. You will find details of what's on each month in 'Future Events' at the back of the Newsletter. There is only one meeting in January and February because of possible bad weather, but from March there are two per month.

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you, Helen Seager (Chair)



Our Nativity was very well attended, and the children performed an excellent Nativity. We haven't got many children, but they could certainly be heard

BANK TOP WALKING GROUP



Our last outing on 14th January was only attended by four of us. It was a wet day and I think that put people off. We only intended to do a short walk; however it stopped raining almost immediately after setting off and we ended up walking 7 miles!! It was very muddy underfoot and certainly tested out our walking boots. Andrea Myers – you need a new pair before the next walk! Do come along and join us – we always walk on Saturday's and future walks will be announced in Church

LUCY SNOWDROP

I had a pretty little cat, her fur was snowy white
She loved to sleep throughout the day and go out to play at night,
She'd roam around the garden and lie among the flowers
She'd try to catch a frog or mouse and wait around for hours.
When the night was over she would cease to roam,
She'd leave her nightly vigil and quickly come back home
She'd polish off her breakfast of tuna fish in jelly.
Then wash her face and whiskers and sit and watch the telly.
She loved the nature programmes, the fishes in the water, the birds up in the sky
She'd lift her paw up to the screen and softly give a sigh.
For fish and birds cannot be caught when behind the glass,
She'd miaow and turn on her tail as if to say "Alas
Those fish and birds are out of reach they are no use to me,
So I will have a little nap upon my mother's knee".
She would curl up softly upon my ample lap
She'd give a yawn, close her eyes and have a little nap.
I'm sad to say she passed away many years ago,
But little Lucy Snowdrop, I still miss her so
For she would wake me in the morning by nudging at my head
And would not stop, till I awoke and got up from my bed.
She'd follow me around the house, kitchen, shower and loo,
Wherever I was going she would follow too.
Out in the garden she would chase the butterflies and bees
She'd sniff the flowers, they'd tickle her nose and she would loudly sneeze.
I remember her so fondly and though we had to part, Little Lucy Snowdrop stole away my heart



Christine Catherall January 2023

Growing Benevolence

Satish Kumar, a former Jain monk, is an activist and educator who has studied both Eastern religions and Western economics and cultures. He writes that recognizing a benevolent universe helps us participate in the flow of generosity:



We live in a benevolent universe.

The benevolence of the soil is endless; it helps one single seed to multiply into millions of seeds for hundreds of years, producing colourful, aromatic, juicy and delicious fruit, feeding birds, bees, humans and animals. The tree celebrates the benevolence of the soil and becomes benevolent in return, offering its fruit to whoever is in need, without condition and without judgement...

The benevolence of the sun is beyond the capacity of words to describe. It burns itself to maintain life...It provides conditions for photosynthesis for the whole plant kingdom to nourish itself and give nourishment to bacteria, insects, birds and animals.

The moon is benevolent. It maintains the cycle of life and cycle of time. Time and tide are sustained by its presence...

Rain is benevolent. It delivers itself to every farm, field, forest, mountain and human habitat, free of charge, without needing any external supply of energy. It moistens the soil, quenches the thirst, fills rivers, ponds, lakes and wells and in partnership with the sun it feeds the world...

Air is benevolent. We breathe; therefore we are. Air is related to the spirit, to inspiration, to spirituality Air is breath of Brahman, breath of the universe, breath of God. In Sanskrit air is prana, which means life itself...

Space is benevolent. All and everything is held in space and by space. All movements, all changes and every kind of dynamism are sustained in the stillness of space. We always need to be mindful of reducing our clutter and maintaining spaciousness in order to be detached and free.

Soul is benevolent. Compassion, kindness, generosity and inner luminosity are the qualities of the soul. Mind, intelligence, and consciousness are held in and processed by soul. Soul is the seed of life. Feelings, emotions, sentiments, intuition and reason pass through soul and manifest in the world...It is not only humans who have soul; animals, birds, insects and microbes have soul. Soil, trees, rocks and rivers have soul...

The world is how you see it and what you make of it. If you look at the world with benevolent eyes, the world reciprocates with benevolence. If you project suspicion and self-interest, you get the same in return. Trust begets trust and fear begets fear. Recognizing the benevolence of the universe is not to deny the shadow side but seeing nature as red in tooth and claw and people as selfish and greedy makes us respond in similar vein. If we sow seeds of malevolence, malevolence will grow; if we sow seeds of benevolence, benevolence will grow.

Submitted by Andy

<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/growing-benevolence-2022-12-14>

For the Quizzers Amongst Us

Answers, in italics to Quiz (Sweet Sensations) in November – January Edition (submitted by Marion Batty)

1. Wobbly Infants - *Jelly Babies*
2. Wise Guys - *Smarties*
3. Edible Fasteners – *Chocolate Buttons*
4. Pirates Loot - *Bounty*
5. 100% Precious Metals – *Gold Bar*
6. Say it Quietly - *Whisper*
7. Royal Herb – *Mint Imperials*
8. Teddy Bears Snack - *Picnic*
9. Sport for Princes - *Polo*
10. Stars and Planets – *Milky Bar*
11. Ten Cents Choc – *Dime Bar*
12. Belly Dancer, perhaps – *Turkish Delight*
13. Almost a Cat Food – *Kit Kat*
14. 9,10,11,12 – *After 8 mints*
15. Seen at the Races – *Tic Tacs*
16. Homes for “Topsy” Teeth – *Wine Gums*
17. Eating Flowers - *Roses*
18. Various Girls – *Dolly Mixtures*
19. Big Bus – *Double Decker*
20. Dark Mysterious Spell – *Black Magic*

So here is another one to test you

WHERE IN THE UK?

1. Oceans Beginning
2. Sleepy Crossing
3. What a Guide Dog Does
4. A Prickly Case with a Dynasty on Bacon
5. A Bird on the Ocean
6. For Loaded Lorries
7. Source of Water
8. Thirteen Witches Endeavour
9. An Organ and a Pond
10. Creepy
11. Not an Ancient Royal Residence
12. The Door is Safe and Secure
13. It Improves the Mind
14. A Greyish Brown Letter
15. Part of a Ship
16. Vehicle and Thread
17. Only Male Sheep Enter Here
18. Laddie of the 4D Pieces
19. A Tasty Bite
20. Split Professors Head Open

See Linda for answers or see them in next edition

WARM HUBS THIS WINTER

WHERE? HERE AT BANK TOP CHURCH

WHEN? FROM 7TH NOVEMBER, EVERY MONDAY MORNING

WHAT TIME? 10.00am – 12.30pm

We are all expecting the winter months to be difficult this winter and for some people particularly, keeping warm with the fuel costs rising, will be very hard.

At Bank Top we are opening our doors to local people each Monday, from 10.00am to 12.30pm, starting from Monday, 7th November. 2022

If you find the winter months difficult then come along and have a chat in a warm building and make new friends.

We will be serving tea, coffee, and biscuits/cake throughout the morning, plus a snack at lunchtime. Why not come along and join us – everyone welcome.

FINANCE REPORT from your Treasurer, Val Singleton

Offertory

MONTH	CASH COLLECTION	ENVELOPES	STANDING ORDERS
October	174.23	366.00	840.00
November	181.75	223.00	860.00
December	143.75	277.50	860.00
TOTALS	499.73	866.50	2560.00

If anyone would like to change the way they contribute; either using the Church Weekly envelope scheme, or paying by Monthly Standing Order through the Bank please see me

And if you pay Income Tax and wish church to claim Gift Aid, again see me for a form.

Brunches

Oct 158.50

Nov 307.14

We provide a raffle each month at the Brunch and would be very grateful for any donations of bottles wine, boxes of chocolates or anything else.

Change for Charity 2022 – Final total £650

We are currently thinking about which Charity to support in 2023 – this year it has to be a charity abroad. If you have any suggestions, please let me have them by the end of January. And if it's a smaller charity – let me have a little bit of information about it.

When we have all the suggestions we will vote, and the most popular will become our 2023 charity.

50/50 Winners

Month	Winner	Number	Amount
November	K Johns	50	50
	C Rideout	14	30
	V Constantine	30	20
December	A Smith	53	50
	A Butterworth	13	30
	E Johns	40	20
January	A Hardman	87	50
	B Counsell	97	30
	E Golding	58	10

We have some spare numbers for the 50/50 if anyone would like one.

The cost is £2 per month (£24 for the year) and you get three chances to win each month

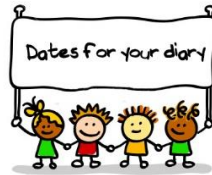
Overall, our finances remain very positive. We started the year with just over £50,000 in the bank and we ended the year in a very similar position.

The accounts for 2022 will be available for the Church A.G.M, in April, when you will be given the opportunity to discuss the figures in more depth.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone for your continued support in 2022. There have been occasions throughout the year when I seemed to be asking for something every week!! Change for Charity

each month; bottles for Tombola's, items for the Village Fair; winter coats; mince pies for the Christmas Lunch on Jesus, and much more. And, you always pull out all the stops. So it's a huge thank you from me.
Val Singleton

A big thank you to all those who have continued to offer their support throughout the year by giving of money, time and talents.



FUTURE EVENTS: FEBRUARY –APRIL 2023

February			
Wed	1 st	7.30pm	Elders Meeting
Sat	4 th	12noon-1pm	Saturday Brunch
Sun	5 th	10.30am	Morning Service, Dave Bagley Followed by tea and toast
Sun	12 th	10.30am	Communion Service, Andy Guthrie
Sun	19 th	10.30am	Morning Service, Mark Bates
Tue	21 st	7.30pm	Ladies Fellowship, Steven Freeborn 'Keep on taking the tablets'
Sun	26 th	10.30am	Morning Service, Mark Curtis
Tue	28 th	7.30pm	House Group at Val's. Study 6 Disciple John. Read Matthew 20:20-28
March			
Sat	4 th	12 noon – 1pm	Saturday Brunch
Sun	5 th	10.30am	Morning Worship, Alan Nuttall Followed by tea and toast
Tue	7 th	7.30pm	Ladies Fellowship, Graham Stirrup 'Power of Attorney'
Sun	12 th	10.30am	Communion Service, Jacky Embrey
Tue	14 th	7.30pm	House Group at Val's. Study 7 Disciple Thomas. Read John 20:19-29
Sun	19 th	10.30am	Songs of Praise, David Canham
Tue	21 st	7.30pm	Ladies Fellowship, David Lloyd 'Churchgate and Church Wharf
Sun	26 th	10.30am	Morning Worship, Karen Openshaw
Tue	28 th	7.30pm	House Group at Val's. Study 8 Disciple Nathanael. Read John 1:43-51
April			
Sat	1 st	12noon – 1pm	Saturday Brunch With Easter Egg Tombola
Sun	2 nd	10.30am 11.30am	Morning Worship, Leo Roberts Church A.G.M. with tea & toast
Tue	4 th	7.30pm	Ladies Fellowship, Caroline James 'A glimpse beneath the Celebrity Chef apron
Fri	7 th	10.30am	Good Friday Service, Andy Guthrie
Sun	9 th	10.30am	Easter Sunday Service, The Worship Group
Tue	11 th	7.30pm	Val's House Group. Study 9 Disciple Judas Iscairiot Read Matthew 26:14-30, 47-50 and 27:1-10

Sun	16 th	10.30am	Morning Service, Alison Hall
Tue	18 th	7.30pm	Ladies Fellowship, Jim Walton 'Coincidences'
Sun	23 rd	10.30am	Morning Service, Adrian Yapp
Tue	25 th	7.30pm	Val's Housegroup. Study 10 Three other disciples. Read Luke 18:18-30
Sun	30 th	10.30am	Morning Worship, Garry Hammond

This Newsletter has been e-mailed to all those currently on Val's email list. A limited number of copies will still be available in church for those people who are not