



BANK TOP TOPICS.

NEWSLETTER FOR FEBRUARY TO APRIL 2026

Dear Friends

Val's celebration Sunday service, last week, was a great reminder of the depth of resources we have in Church and I would like to add my thanks to all of you for your support over the years. We may be small, but we have a great big beating heart.

In Church we are about to hit the readings about Jesus calling the first disciples and this is important because we are all called to be Jesus' disciples. We need to remember that although Jesus had twelve Apostles, he had many more disciples, so we should not feel out of place.

I think within the disciples, Jesus had a place for everyone [alright, maybe not a pompous, narcissistic, orange Man-child] but we'll put that to one side and the band of disciples grew so that there may have been hundreds when he reached the gates of Jerusalem three years later, on that first Palm Sunday. Whereas many of the Apostles became great men, and there were certainly some great women around Jesus too, I feel the band of disciples were that mixed bag of the confused, the inspired, the not flamboyantly gifted. However, I do feel that they wanted to make the world a better place, which is a very good starting point. And what changed these people from an ordinary crowd into followers of Jesus? Epiphanies - things that changed the way they saw things. The arrival of three wise men, somewhat late in the day; being at the river Jordan when the Heavens opened; or being at a wedding reception when the water turned to wine. And then they had the chance to sit and listen to Jesus talk.

I've had an epiphanic moment myself over the last couple of weeks. I love music and I have lots of Amazon playlists for every time and occasion, but I noticed that I hadn't heard any Neil Young recently. That was confusing because I have a Neil Young song for many times and for many occasions. It transpires he has cut his links with Amazon as he's fallen out with Mr Bazos, so my playlists are now purged of Neil Young. This got me worried and I dug deeper. I dug so deep that I discovered that the wonderful group "Godspeed, You Black Emperor" have removed themselves from ALL the big streaming services and have therefore also been purged from my playlists. What am I to do - start collecting them on vinyl at \$30 a shot? But then, clang, I saw the light. We still have the CDs!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (I say we, but...) No wonder I kept them around, just in case!

So, another big thanks for all you do at church. And you don't need to keep your talents hidden - let us all enjoy them!

Blessings,

Andy

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.



| BANK TOP UNITED REFORMED CHURCH – CONTACTS | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Church Telephone No | | 01204 593393 |
| Service Times | Sunday, 10.30am. Communion 2 nd Sunday | |
| Minister | Revd Barnabas Shin: barnabas.shin@nwsynod.org.uk Revd Maria Lee: Maria.Lee@nwsynod.org.uk | 07917 973 506 07831 874 879 |
| 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 | 07840 870 341 |
| Organists | Mr Graham Naylor Mrs Alison Spence | 07741208957 07957332533 |
| Flower Secretary | Mrs Marian Batty | 01204 301047 |
| Newsletter Editor | Ms L Rainford rainfordlinda@gmail.com or lindarainford@btinternet.com | 07808 172 662 |
| Serving Elders | Marian Batty, David Canham, Christine Counsell, Eric Golding, Andy Guthrie, Andrea Myers, Graham Naylor, Linda Rainford, Val Singleton, Julie Skidmore | |
| Bank Top Artists | Monday, 1-3pm contact Mrs V Singleton | 01204 305401 |
| Bank Top/The Oaks Brownies | Monday 5.45-7.15pm, contact Miss E Farrell and Mrs C Greenen | 07770 450 229 01204 592594 |
| Guides | Monday 7.30-9.15pm, contact Mrs A Albinson acalbinson@gmail.com | 07701 010 608 |
| House group | 2 nd and 4 th Tuesday of the month contact Mrs V Singleton | 01204 305401 |
| Mums & Toddlers | Tuesday 9-11.00am, contact Mrs V Singleton | 01204 305401 |
| Ladies Fellowship | 1 st and 3 rd Tuesday of the Month, contact Mrs Helen Seager | 01204 300666 |
| Theatre Works | Wednesday 4-5.00pm contact Lauren Bateman | 07999 634 208 |
| Textile Crafts | First Thursday of the month 10.30-12.30 contact Pauline Treuherz: paulinetreuherz@yahoo.co.uk | |
| Rainbows | Thursday 5.45-6.45pm contact Mrs E Robinson | 07510 895 470 |
| Talkin' Tables | Thursday 13.30 14.30 Heather Guthrie | 0787 5354340 |
| Eden Singers | Thursday 7.30-9.15pm, Adrian Yapp | 07766 140 386 |
| Brunches | 1 st Saturday of the Month, 12-1.00 excluding August | 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 | | |



CLEANING ROTA

FEBRUARY

6th Heather
13th Christine & Pat
20th Joan & Kath
27th Graham & Linda

MARCH

6th Carol
13th Val & Andrea
20th Heather
27th Christine & Pat

APRIL

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

FLOWER LIST

FEBRUARY

1st Jill Partington
8th The Owens
15th In Memory of Phyllis Walsh
22nd Val Singleton

MARCH

1st Ann, Alex, Carol & Jess
8th Sarah Astley
15th In Memory of Clarice Bickerstaff
22nd Joan Dodd
29th Eileen Ratcliffe

APRIL

5th Andy & Heather Guthrie
12th Linda Rainford
19th Sue Seddon
26th Christine Catherall

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, take a form from the porch and return it to a church elder. Remember the more volunteers we have, the less times we have to clean. Many thanks, Church Elders

JUST A REMINDER THAT THE VAX VACUUM CLEANER IS ONLY FOR THE CARPET. HOWEVER, THERE IS AN ATTACHMENT IN THE BOTTOM OF THE KITCHEN CUPBOARD. IT IS LABELLED "VAX ATTACHMENT". IT CAN BE USED FOR THE HALL AND KITCHEN AND MAKES LIFE EASIER THAN SWEEPING. ONE MORE REQUEST PLEASE! CAN WHOEVER IS THE VACUUM PERSON, CHECK THE IF THE DRUM NEEDS EMPTYING AS THIS HELPS WITH THE SUCTION. IF YOU NOTICE THE FILTERS ARE DIRTY OR WORN, LET ME KNOW. THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK. WE ARE THE CLEANEST CHURCH! 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 2023. THESE FLOWERS ARE TAKEN OUT TO PEOPLE EACH WEEK AND THEY ARE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED



BIBLE READINGS

FEBRURARY

1st Matthew 5: 1-12
8th Matthew 5: 13-21
15th Matthew 17: 1-9
22nd Matthew 4: 1-11

MARCH

1st Matthew 17: 1-9
8th John 4: 5-42
15th John 9: 1-41
22nd John 11: 1-45
29th Matthew 21: 1:11

APRIL

5th John 20: 1-8 or Matthew 28: 1-10
12th John 20: 19-31
19th Luke 24: 13-35
26th John 10: 1-10

BANK TOP FAMILY NEWS



February
Calissa Milne

March
Rory Kenyon
Theodore Fraser

We hope you have a great day
XXXX



CHEESE AND ONION PIE

Pastry

100gms Lard or Trex
450gms Plain Flour
About 7/8 tablespoons of cold water

100gms Butter
pinch of salt

Mix all the above ingredients together and put in fridge for around 30 mins to let the pastry rest

Filling

2 Large or 3 Small onions chopped (-Microwave 8 mins) *
1 egg for brushing the top of the pie
1 tablespoon of English Mustard

2 Eggs
400gms strong mature cheese (grated)

Mix the above ingredients and put in the pie. Put on lid and brush with egg. Bake in the oven 40-50 mins
190C/170 Fan/Gas Mark 5

* Also you can cook the onions in a pan, Cook slowly for about 15 mins

Submitted by Marian Batty

GETTING TO KNOW YOU (Some reflections and information about some of our congregation),

This is a new article for the Newsletter, each month I thought it might be interesting to ask members, (if they are willing and happy to do it) to give a short piece about themselves and their history, I can help write it for you. Below are the next two volunteers. I will be looking for more for the next edition, don't be shy.

Diane Sammon

I was born in Wigan and moved to Florence Ave, Astley Bridge when I was 4. I went to Bank Top Primary school the old building on Ashworth Lane when Miss Peachy was Headmistress only moving to the new building for the last two terms. I moved to Primrose St, Astley Bridge when I got married at the Bolton Parish Church in 1983 to Gerry and I was also confirmed there as an adult just before we got married. That was the beginning of my Christian journey as I had such good theological conversations with the minister, the Revd John Findon, over a few cups of tea!

My first job was working in the office of Prospect Mill as an office junior; I went from there to Bolton Central Library where I met my husband, Gerry. I had a few jobs after that before having my two daughters Rachel and Jessica.

I was christened in Wigan Parish church, as this was my family's church where my Great-Uncle was the authorised person to record, births, deaths and marriages. When we moved to Bolton I went to St Paul's with my mum, though my dad's family went to All Souls, Astley St and my Nan was the cleaner at the Iron Church. I also used to go to the Sunday school with my friends on the bus to the Wesleyan Chapel on Higher

Bridge St. We started coming to Bank Top in 1988 when Rachel was one as I wanted her and Jessica to have a church upbringing like the one, I had enjoyed, and the moment we came through the door I felt at home. I wanted to help out in church more and helped set up a toddler group and then later on Rainbows as well as helping with our trips to the Windermere centre and with the girls and Gerry walking with church for sermon Sunday. A special day was when I was ordained as a church elder. At this time, I was also studying for my degree at University of Bolton. After graduating I went onto study for a PGCE specialising in teaching adults, working at Bolton college amongst others. After leaving Bolton College through redundancies I went on to work at an awarding organisation developing qualifications based in Lancaster where I rose to become Head of Department overseeing qualification development retiring from there in March 2023 after 14 years and nearly 30 years in education.

I've come to church on and off over the last few years after some challenging times but was determined once retiring to continue my Christian journey back at Bank Top. Coming back to church in summer 2025 felt very much like the first time I came with my young family back in 1988 and I'm looking forward to more fellowship, love, support and learning over the next few years.

Meg Lomax

Hi, I'm Margaret Lomax (Meg). I was born in Astley Bridge – Many years ago!!

I went to St Paul's Primary School, then on to Castle Hill and finally Bolton Technical College to do a Commercial Course. I have been married to Brian for 62 years, who I met at St Pauls' Church, he was in the choir, and I was a Sunday School teacher, plus he worked at Bolton Town Hall too! I have many happy memories of the Youth Club at St Pauls'

When I left the Bolton Technical College, I went to work at Bolton Town Hall and then to the Electricity Board. After having my children (1 boy, 2 girls), I did part time work at Whittakers Department Store, Holders Mill and as Dinner Lady at High Lawn and the Oaks School.

I have always had a faith, but I felt I needed to go somewhere and so through my friend Delia and Kath (Blake) suggested Bank Top. I came along one Sunday and was met at the door by Linda. I would just like to say Thank You to all at Bank Top for making me so welcome as I have made so many lovely friends

Thanks Meg

SATURDAY LUNCH



BANK TOP



SATURDAY, 7th MARCH

(Easter Egg Tombola)

- Come along and join us for Saturday Lunch on the 1st Saturday of each month*
- All freshly cooked meals*
- A main course, a dessert, and a hot drink for £6:00 (children £2:00)*



WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU



SONGS OF PRAISE
DAVID CANHAM WILL BE HOLDING A SONGS OF PRAISE
ON SUNDAY 22ND MARCH 2026

BANK TOP URC EASTER SERVICES

**Come and join us this Easter as we celebrate the
'Risen Christ'**

Check out our services:

Friday, 3rd April: 10:30am Good Friday Family Service

Sunday, 5th April: Easter Sunday Family Service: 10:30am



2025 was a fantastic year. As a church we made many memories, celebrated special occasions and worked together as a team; as a church family; to achieve so much. A huge thank you to each one of you. As we move on to 2026, let us be just as fruitful and aim to achieve even more. Thank you so much for your continued support.

*Val Singleton
(Church Secretary)*



Our Advent Brunch was extremely well attended, and raised £1,000



Our Toddler Group Party was enjoyed by both and children and adults



Margaret meets Father Christmas very colour co-ordinated!



Church was full at our Sunday School Nativity

FINANCE REPORT

Offertory

| MONTH | CASH COLLECTION | ENVELOPES | STANDING ORDERS |
|----------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| October | 233.08 | 392.90 | 770.00 |
| November | 242.31 | 426.00 | 910.00 |
| December | 202.67 | 432.00 | 750.00 |
| TOTALS | 678.06 | 1250.90 | 2430.00 |

BRUNCHES

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| October | 273.58 |
| November | 310.31 |
| Advent Brunch | 1,122.78 |

CHANGE FOR CHARITY – BOLTON HOSPICE

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| November | 106.95 |
| December | 92.60 |
| Eden Singers Concert | 726.00 |
| Christingle/Card | 166.60 |

50/50 WINNERS

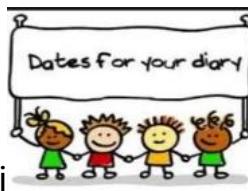
| Month | Winner | Number | Amount |
|----------|-------------|--------|--------|
| November | M Milne | 61 | 50.00 |
| | S Brown | 107 | 30.00 |
| | C Rideout | 49 | 20.00 |
| December | C Rideout | 98 | 50.00 |
| | H Atkinson | 19 | 30.00 |
| | C Catherall | 82 | 20.00 |
| Jan'26 | C Catherall | 6 | 50.00 |
| | C Rideout | 14 | 30.00 |
| | R Butcher | 93 | 20.00 |

Our Chosen Charity for 2025 was Bolton Hospice, and we raised £1866.43

Can I thank everyone for their offertory contributions in 2025, and, just a reminder that our contributions to Synod for this year are increasing by just over £1,000; which means that each week we pay £8 in subscriptions to the Synod for every person who regularly attends. It is a lot of money, but we can do it, and here are some ways you can help:-

- If anyone wants to start to give monthly through their bank, please see me. And, I have a few spare packs of weekly offertory envelopes if anyone would like to contribute in this way.
- Our 50/50 club gives away prizes of £50, £30, and £20 each month and it makes £100 for church each month. It only costs £24 for the year for one number. If you would like a number, again see me.
- Our monthly brunches are another way to raise funds for church improvements, and you can help by supporting us at these on the 1st Saturday of each month. It's £6 per adult and £2 for children, for a home-made main meal, a dessert and a drink. Do come along if you haven't been before.

Thank you, Val Singleton, Church Treasurer



FEBRUARY – APRIL 2026

| FEBRUARY | | | |
|----------|------------------|--------------|--|
| Sun | 1 ST | 10:30am | Morning Worship, Leo Roberts |
| Wed | 4 th | 7:00pm | Elders Meeting |
| Thu | 5 th | 1:30-2:30pm | Talkin Tables |
| Sat | 7 th | 12:00-1:pm | Saturday Brunch |
| Sun | 8 th | 10:30am | Communion Service, Tom Miller, followed by tea and toast |
| Tue | 10 th | 7:30pm | LENT COURSE 1 ST SESSION AT BANK TOP WITH MARIA LEE |
| Thu | 12 th | 1:30-2:30pm | Talkin Tables |
| Sun | 15 th | 10:30am | Morning Worship, Mark Curtis |
| Tue | 17 th | 7:30pm | Ladies Fellowship, 'Create Bolton (Charity), Dorothy Hardman |
| Thu | 19 th | 1:30-2:30pm | Talkin Tables |
| Sun | 22 nd | 10:30am | First Sunday in Lent, Morning Worship, Dave Bagley |
| Tue | 24 th | 7:30pm | LENT COURSE 2 ND SESSION AT BANK TOP WITH MARIA LEE |
| Thu | 26 th | 1:30-2:30pm | Talkin Tables |
| MARCH | | | |
| Sun | 1 st | 10:30am | Morning Worship, Mark Cowling |
| Tue | 3 rd | 7:30pm | Ladies Fellowship. 'History of Bolton Street Names' David Lloyd |
| Wed | 4 th | 7:00pm | Elders Meeting |
| Thu | 5 th | 1:30-2:30pm | Talkin Tables |
| Sat | 7 th | 12:00-1:00pm | Saturday Brunch – Easter Egg Tombola |
| Sun | 8 th | 10:30am | Communion Service, Rev Maria Lee, followed by tea and toast |
| Tue | 10 th | 7:30pm | No Housegroup |
| Thu | 12 th | 1:30-2:30pm | Talkin Tables |
| Sun | 15 th | 10:30am | Morning Worship, Lawrence Moore |
| Tue | 17 th | 7:30pm | Ladies Fellowship, 'Lancashire Lassies' Steve Williams |
| Thu | 19 th | 1:30-2:30pm | Talkin Tables |
| Sun | 22 nd | 10:30am | Morning Worship, David Canham |
| Tue | 24 th | 7:30pm | LENT COURSE 3 RD SESSION AT BANK TOP WITH MARIA LEE |
| Thu | 26 th | 1:30-2:30pm | Talkin Tables |
| Sun | 29 th | 10:30am | Palm Sunday, Morning Worship, Adrian Yapp |
| APRIL | | | |
| Thu | 2 nd | 7:30pm | MAUNDY THURSDAY (LAST SESSION OF THE LENT COURSE WITH MARIA |
| Fri | 3 rd | 10:30pm | Good Friday Service, Andy Guthrie |
| Sat | 4 th | 12:00-1:00pm | Saturday Brunch |
| Sun | 5 th | 10:30am | EASTER SUNDAY, Family Service, The Worship Group, followed by tea & toast |
| Tue | 7 th | 7:30pm | Ladies Fellowship, 'My Life's Journey – Early Years (talk 1 of 3) Mebs Ahmed |
| Thu | 9 th | 1:30-2:30pm | Talkin Tables |
| Sun | 12 th | 10:30am | Communion Service, Rev Maria Lee, followed by the church A.G.M. |
| Tue | 14 th | 7:30pm | Val's Housegroup, |
| Thu | 16 th | 1:30-2:30pm | Talkin Tables |
| Sun | 19 th | 10:30am | Morning Service, Tom Miller |

| | | | |
|-----|------------------|-------------|---|
| Tue | 21 st | 7:30pm | Ladies Fellowship, 'The Golden Age of Radio' Roger Browne |
| Thu | 23 rd | 1:30-2:30pm | Talkin Tables |
| Sun | 26 th | 10:30am | Rev Clare Downing |
| Thu | 30 th | 1:30-2:30pm | Talkin Tables |

This Newsletter will be 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.