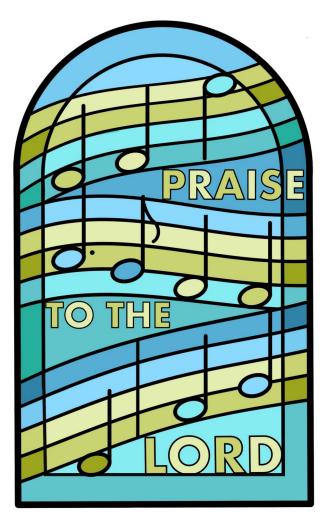
THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

News from Whittle & Clayton Brook Please accept this FREE copy donations welcome MAY 2025

Speak out, Reach out, Gather in for Christ



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Dear Friends

The apostle Paul wrote, famously, "Now you are the body of Christ . . . " (1 Corinthians 12:27).

From May to July we have two main Sunday sermon series, intertwined with one another. We will continue through the book of Revelation from chapter 12 to the end, and we will also consider aspects of living and loving in the church, the body of Christ. (I have printed 'term cards' for each congregation with the details of services and sermons and you can pick one up in church.)

The New Testament uses many pictures and descriptions of who we are as the church today: we are God's temple, God's field, God's building, the people of God, the Israel of God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth, and more (1 Cor.3:9, Eph.2:21, 1 Pet.2:9, Gal.6:16, 1 Tim.3:15). However, two pictures dominate: *body* and *family*. We are the body of Christ and the family of God. The image of body us used directly a number of times in the NT letters. The word 'family' is not used, but repeatedly we are referred to as brothers and sisters with a heavenly father. The concept of family, if not the word, fills the Scriptures. At the risk of simplification:

As *body*, with many parts, we are all different, every one of us matters and every one of us is needed. Just as a body needs hands, eyes, ears, skin and guts, so the body of Christ needs every member, with his or her different gifts and abilities and contributions. We have—of necessity—thought quite a bit over the past year about our financial needs and how each one of us can contribute, rather than resting on the few. And that, in part, prompted this series. But our contributions are so much more than that, as we shall see.

As *family*, we belong to God and to one another and we are called to love one another. It is often said that while you choose your friends, you cannot choose your family. By virtue of being born to the same parents, you belong to one another. Likewise, by virtue of being born of God through faith in Christ, we belong to one another and are called to love one another. As with our natural family, in the family of the church that belonging and that loving is both a given and a joy, but also a goal and a task.

My aim and hope and prayer for SJCB as we consider these things in the coming weeks is that we recognise and rejoice in the belonging and loving and contributing and serving that we see in our church, in all sorts of ways. At the same time, I long to see us make progress and grow in these things, that we become a church with none who simply attend, no passengers, but one in which every member is a vital, contributing, giving and receiving part. Please pray with me!

Your fellow-family member in Christ

80 years ago, on 8th May 1945, VE Day took place – marking Victory in Europe at the end of World War 2. It was celebrated as a public holiday, and came exactly a week after German radio announced the death in action of Adolf Hitler.

In reality, Hitler had committed suicide on 30th April. His successor, Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz, quickly negotiated an end to the war with the Allies – at the same time trying with some success to prevent as many Germans as possible from falling into Soviet hands.

Field Marshal Montgomery accepted the unconditional surrender of German forces in the Netherlands, northwest Germany and Denmark at a ceremony near Hamburg on 4th May. All German forces then surrendered to Supreme Allied Commander General Eisenhower on 7th May at Reims, France. Soviet leader Josef Stalin had his own ceremony, in Berlin.

The announcement that the war had ended in Europe was broadcast to the British people by the BBC late on 7th May. It was decreed that there would be a national holiday the next day, and the stage was set for huge celebrations. Prime Minister Churchill had been assured that there was enough beer in the capital, and commemorative items, including VE Day mugs, were quickly produced.

St Paul's Cathedral held ten consecutive services giving thanks for peace, each one attended by thousands of people, and churches throughout the country rang their bells. The Royal Family played a central role, appearing eight times on the balcony of Buckingham Palace while huge numbers of people flocked down The Mall.

In the United States, VE Day coincided with President Harry S Truman's 61st birthday: he dedicated the victory to the memory of his predecessor, Franklin D Roosevelt, who had died of a stroke less than a month earlier. But both Truman and Churchill pointed out that the war against Japan had not yet been won. That final victory was still more than three months away.



The bells rang out in England

The bells rang out in England And songs of heartfelt joy, But 'midst the cheers were bitter tears For each lost man and boy.

The six long years of fighting
Had such a dreadful cost
In blood and sweat and mortal threat
And countless lives were lost.

It now, at last, had ended – In Europe's shores at least; Our people brave feared not the grave To slay the Nazi beast.

The lessons learned stayed with us For eighty peaceful years. Yet now, again, some brutal men Are raising wartime fears.

We should be celebrating This coming VE Day; Yet not at ease, but on our knees For lasting peace, we pray.

By Nigel Beeton



Thy Kingdom Come celebrates 10 years

This month millions of Christians worldwide, of every denomination, will once again join in with *Thy Kingdom Come*, a prayer initiative between Ascension and Pentecost (29th May to 8th June), to pray for the nation to know Jesus Christ. It is a time to seek the empowering of the Holy Spirit, that we may be effective witnesses to Jesus Christ.

Praying for others to know Jesus is one of the most powerful things we can do. Persistent prayer for others brings transformation to their lives. As Paul writes: 'Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.' (Colossians 4: 2-4).

Since it began in May 2016, TKC has grown from a dream from the Anglican archbishops into a movement which unites more than a million Christians in prayer.

TKC is now held in nearly 90% of countries worldwide, across 85 different denominations and traditions. The aim everywhere is the same: that friends and family, neighbours and colleagues might come to faith in Jesus Christ.

"Specifically, we again invite each and every Christian across the globe to pray that God's Spirit might work in the lives of five people who have not responded with their 'Yes' to God's call."

Whether you have joined in 'Thy Kingdom Come' before now or not, you are warmly invited to take part & join in for this 10th year of worldwide prayer.

And for this 10th year, the focus will be on the Lord's Prayer itself. As the TKC website explains:

"The 'Our Father' prayer transcends the ages – uniting people across different denominations, generations and nations and we believe now more than ever, we need to pray 'Thy Kingdom Come' – over our homes, communities, nations and our world."

More info at: https://www.thykingdomcome.global



All the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of mankind on this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

- James A Francis

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We hope this email finds you all well in Christ..! You might have thought...'Who is Yuha?'

Yuha is a new foster child we will be welcoming into the family in less than three weeks time...!

And here is my (Kate's) most recent thoughts from God's word:

I recently had the privilege of counseling a man who seems to be turning from sin to Christ. Although he is excited to know God better, he is still struggling with a very difficult circumstance in his life. So we opened up Psalm 23, and meditated together on the fact that there is still the valley of shadow of death and the enemies in David's life even as he experiences God's love and guidance. David doesn't seem to find any contradiction in God's presence in his life and the presence of pain and suffering. This encouraged both of us as we recognized that God is with us right in the midst of our afflictions.

We have faced some challenges with lots of changes at church, and we are about to face an exciting yet possibly challenging opportunity to love another child. Yet, we are encouraged to know that God's love will never leave us, and that his goodness and mercy will follow us every moment as we seek to serve our church and family.

May the Lord bless you all with even deeper knowledge of his love today! Thank you as always for your partnership in the gospel - we praise God for you all.

Love in Christ,

Alex, Kate, Euan, Hana and Rowan



Something to make you Smile (hopefully) and perhaps make us think— from David Barlow A.

Adulthood

I'm hereby officially tendering my resignation as an adult and have decided that I want to accept the responsibilities of an eight-year-old. I want to go to McDonalds and think that it's a four-star restaurant (isn't it!). I want to sail sticks down a stream and splash across a fresh muddy puddle. I want to return to a time when life was simple, when all I knew were colours, multiplication tables and that all the Oldham Athletic players were supermen.

I didn't bother with the things I didn't know because I didn't know them and more importantly, I didn't care. All I knew was to be happy because I was blissfully unaware of all the things that should have made me worried or upset. I want to believe that everything is possible, scoring a winning goal at Wembley or winning an Olympic medal or even opening the batting at Old Trafford.

I want to think that the world is fair, that everyone is honest and good, oblivious to the complexities of life and I want to be overly excited by birthdays and Christmas. I want to believe in the power of smiles, hugs, a kind word of encouragement, my imagination and angels.

So......here's my credit cards, car keys and iPad, I am officially resigning from adulthood. PS. And I know that Jesus has a special place for children in His heart so it's with immediate effect.

Angels

A Norwegian missionary, Marie Monsen, in China in the early 20th Century, testified to the intervention of angels. Some missionaries had taken refuge in a mission compound during a civil war only to be surrounded by looting soldiers but were astonished to be left in peace. A few days later the soldiers retuned and started to break down the flimsy walls of the mission but then suddenly left. Later one of the soldiers returned alone to the mission looking for help. He told the missionaries that on his last visit he and his company had noticed tall soldiers with shining faces on a high roof in the compound, who caused them to flee. Remarkably these figures were invisible to the missionaries.

Anglicans

A family normally attended a Congregational church where there wasn't much participation by the congregation, but the children were all encouraged to say the Lords Prayer together. At this point in the service the two children would stand on the pew and loudly say the prayer.

The family moved house and attended the local Anglican Church of England Church. When they got to the Lord's Prayer and the two children stood up and loudly began to recite the prayer. But in this church the congregation stopped after "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil", so the children continued saying out loud "For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory" on their own before realising that they were the only ones speaking. One of the children turned to his parents and said "Daddy, there's no power and glory in this church!"

Armour of God (Ephesians 6: 10 - 20)

The Christian life is a battle against the forces of evil and Our Lord Jesus commands us to fight the battle under His leadership. The warfare is unremitting, real and dangerous if we try to fight in our own strength alone. It can only be fought in the strength of God, through faith in Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. We cannot stand before the onslaughts of evil on our own, Satan, the devil, is more powerful than us with large resources at his disposal.

God provides the protection, the weapons all the armour we need for the battle. And be sure that you need His armour every single day.

The Helmet of Salvation on our head – we need to realise that our minds are a prime target which we can only protect with this helmet. Salvation is a personal experience as we recognise that Jesus alone, through His death on the Cross, can offer us salvation from our sins and selfishness. For this we need to personally accept Jesus into our lives. Then we can be guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit on a daily basis.

The Breastplate of Righteousness – God's righteousness, not ours. Through faith in His Son Jesus, God counts our relationship with Him as "put right" as righteousness. We are forgiven and we have His gift of Eternal Life.

The Belt of Truth – Satan is the father of lies, who will do anything to deceive us, to pervert the Word of God which promises that "there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8: 1-4). Jesus said "I am the truth" and He give us the Holy Spirit who will lead us into all truth.

The Sandals of Peace – Let the Lord Jesus tie on your feet the Gospel of Peace. This enables Him to lead us where He wants us to be every day. It protects us as we are led past pitfalls and obstacles that Satan has created and enables us to "be Christ" to those we meet.

The Shield of Faith – By faith take God's promises as true! Take up the shield of faith to protect us from the "the fiery darts of the devil" who will relentlessly attack our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus, with fears, doubts and worries. Our faith in God (and not our own abilities) will enable Him to protect us.

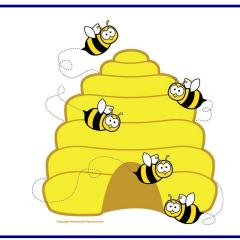
The Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God – take this sword (the Bible) in our hand, it is more powerful in spiritual warfare than anything Satan can throw at us. Wielded in the name of Jesus it can cut us free from sin, guilt, selfishness and even death! But we need to keep it sharp by actually reading and studying it, preferably daily, just as any good soldier will keep their weapons clean and ready.

And complete your armour with a mantle, a cloak of prayer and praise. Every day when we get up put on this armour one piece at a time, praising and thanking God for all He has done for us in His Son Jesus, perhaps signing ourselves with the sign of the Cross the only sign we need and under which we are called to live. **Author unknown**.

Ascension

Ascension represents the culmination of Jesus' earthly ministry. The full effect of His death and resurrection could not have happened until Jesus returned to His Father's presence and it is also important because it reminds us that Christ is no longer limited by time and space. No wonder it is sometimes called the "Coronation of Christ" into His Kingdom.

With thanks to J. John and Mark Stibbe Monarch Press



Beehive Mother and Toddler group meet on Monday mornings at 10.45 to 12.15 Whittle le Woods Village Hall Play, chat, stories, singing There's room for everyone See Christine Whiteside

Warm Welcome at Clayton Brook

For refreshments: Tea, Coffee, Soup (sometimes baked potatoes) and Cake

Every Monday 11 - 1pm (sadly we're not open on Bank Holidays)

Donations welcome Everyone is welcome, children and babies too. Contact Gill Wright



with the family of God

WARM WELCOME

This month we would like to thank the wonderful young people in our church family for their help at Warm Welcome. We were pleased to have Jamie and Ben from St John's volunteer with us and help out serving meals, doing dishes, helping to set up and tidy up at the end of the session.





Jamie Ben

un at Clayton Prook made Faster gifts for our regular

Our very talented girls from the Kings Kids group at Clayton Brook made Easter gifts for our regular guests which were appreciated by all. Thank you to Olivia and Lena.



The Suffering Church - Being a Christian

We have just had the great joy and privilege of celebrating Easter, and we give thanks to God for all the freedom we have in continuing this celebration throughout the coming year. Over the past few months we have been reflecting on those countries where celebrating and following Jesus is difficult. This month we will look at three final countries in the alphabet where openly celebrating Our Lord Jesus can be very challenging, Vietnam, Yemen and Zimbabwe, where disciples of Jesus face real difficulties. Its also worth noting that of the churches we have looked at over the last few months only Yemen is in the top ten of the Open Doors World Watch List (number 3).

Vietnam

Vietnam's communist government views all religions with suspicion, but especially Christianity, which it perceives as "Western". Whilst the country's constitution allows its citizens to follow any religion or none, Christians continue to suffer persecution and close monitoring. More than half of Vietnam's Christians are from ethnic minorities and thousands have been denied registration documents and identity cards leaving them unable to access healthcare and education. Leaders of House Churches are particularly prone to violent attacks including beatings and shooting. Please pray that Christians in Vietnam will remain steadfast in their faith, whatever obstacles they face and that they will continue to live for Jesus in their own communities.

Yemen

Yemen for many years has faced one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with millions suffering from extreme hunger, disease and a lack of the most basic services. Widespread malnutrition affects children severely, while access to clean water and healthcare remains scarce. The ongoing proxy civil war fought by groups backed by neighbouring countries, in particular Iran and Saudi Arabia, has significantly worsened and devastated Yemen's infrastructure, with approximately 80% of the population (24.1 million people) requiring substantial humanitarian aid. And whatever humanitarian aid gets through remains difficult to access. The conflict is largely ignored by the world governments even though the suffering is immense and never ending and made considerably worse by the USA's decision to slash foreign aid.

In this desperate situation it is no surprise that Christians suffer most. Most followers of Jesus are expatriates, with a small number of converts from Islam. These converts face the most challenging time of all. And yet a small remnant stays in Yemen living in their hope of peace, living in their hope of Christ. Please pray for our Lord's protection on His children in Yemen, and for guidance as they worship in secret. Pray for an end to the civil war and that God will bring peace and justice to the country as a whole. Pray particularly for the work of Barnabas, Open Doors and Tearfund in their efforts to support Christians in Yemen today.

Zimbabwe

Once hailed as the breadbasket of southern Africa, Zimbabwe has now experienced food insecurity for many years, with around 60% of the population lacking enough food. Following years of drought the government declared a state of disaster in 2024 warning that more than 2.7 million people are facing acute hunger. Misgovernment and corruption deepened the economic crisis and Christians and churches who spoke out against the government were targeted and their pastors threatened and arrested. Whilst tensions have eased a little since Robert Mugabe left office in 2017 conditions for the majority of the population, mainly Christian, have continued to deteriorate. Pray that Our Lord will continue to encourage Christians to stand for justice and equality. Pray that Christians will maintain a powerful witness of Christ's love in these difficult times.

As we come to the end of looking at countries where Jesus' followers generally suffer disproportionally please pray that the people who persecute followers of Jesus will come to realise that it is Jesus who is the Truth, the Life and the Way for themselves.

A Prayer from Tearfund: "Let me be Your hands and feet among those in need of Your Divine providence. Not to be only a provider but to serve in what You have provided. Not to be seen but to cause those I serve to see You. Not to be commended, but to cause them to glorify You"

Jesus' followers in these countries remain faithful to Him in all circumstances and are helped in so many ways by Barnabas Fund, Open Doors and Tearfund. We too can support them, contacting them on their websites www.opendoorsuk.org, www.tearfund.org or www.opendoorsuk.org, www.tearfund.org or www.opendoorsuk.org, www.tearfund.org or <a href="https://www.opendoorsuk.org or <a href="https://www.opendoorsuk.org or <a href="https://www.opendoorsuk.org or <a href="https://www.ope

29th May ASCENSION DAY

As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with His return to His Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless His disciples. He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles – persecution and death – and resurrection! 'While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven.' (Luke 24:50-1) He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: 'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God...' (John 20:17)

The disciples were surely the most favoured folk in history. Imagine being one of the last few people on earth to be face to face with Jesus, and to have Him look on you with love. No wonder then that Luke goes on: 'they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.' (Luke 24:52,53)



No wonder they praised God! They knew they would see Jesus again one day! 'I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.' (John 14:2,3) In the meantime, Jesus had work for them to do: to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.



Street Pastors are Volunteers from different churches who care about the safety and wellbeing of their community. We come in all shapes and sizes and are known for being a peaceful and practical help on the night time streets and a caring, listening and helpful presence in our communities. We are an approachable and non-judgemental team looking after anyone who is in need of support, uniquely identifiable by our uniforms, our caps and our bags.

Chorley Street pastors, are here to listen, to help and to offer practical care to folk when and where it is needed.

We are part of a national team first pioneered in 2003, and Street Pastors continues to grow throughout the UK and across the world.

Street pastors are trained volunteers from local churches and we care about our community.

If you would like to know more about Chorley Street Pastors, please speak to Hetti or William in church. And please pray for them, and all street pastors.

The telephone rang in the church office of the church that the MP attended when visiting his constituency. An eager voice inquired: "Do you expect the MP to be in church on Sunday? If so, I was thinking of coming along."

"That," said the clergyman, "I cannot promise. But we do expect that God will be there, and we fancy that that should be incentive enough for a reasonably large attendance."

Praying with the prayers of the bible praying in the silence of the heart

O Lord of hosts ... if you will give me a son ... I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life. (1 Samuel 1:11)

Three 'C's will help us to grasp this most personal and moving prayer.

First, the prayer's **context.** Hannah was the childless wife of Elkanah, who had sons and daughters by his other wife, Peninnah. As she longed for a child, she was taunted by 'her rival' (see v.6) who reproached her for being barren.

It doesn't take much imagination to understand how miserable and lonely and useless Hannah felt. Although Elkanah loved Hannah, his well-meant sympathy, "Am I not more to you than ten sons?" (v.8) was hardly calculated to ease her pain! Making the annual pilgrimage to the Tabernacle at Shiloh, Hannah was 'deeply distressed, prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly' (v.10).

This is the Bible's first record of a woman praying. We can be certain that godly women, long before Hannah's time, had prayed but this is the first mention in Scripture of a woman praying. Secondly, the prayer's **content**. Above everything else, Hannah longed to have a son. "O Lord of hosts, if you will look on my affliction and give me a son, I will give him back to You in service all the days of his life" (v.11). It was a cry from the heart. A lonely wife, longing for a child, taunted by her rival, and not really understood by her husband, poured out her very soul in grief. And it was all done without spoken words! As her lips moved, Eli the priest, misreading the signs, rebuked her for being drunk (v.14). There are times when the burden of our heart is so great that no words can express it, but how comforting to know that God hears us!

Thirdly, the prayer's **consequences**. The Lord graciously answered Hannah's distress and a year later she was nursing her baby son! (vv. 21,22). Hannah's dark night had been eclipsed by a glorious morning. Grief and sorrow had given way to joy and delight but as she cradled her infant son, Hannah did not forget what she had promised the Lord.

In token of His faithfulness, she named her son Samuel, meaning, 'asked of the Lord' (v.20). Some time later, Hannah took Samuel to Shiloh and presented him to Eli, fulfilling the promise she had made to the Lord. Hannah's dedication of Samuel is a reminder to all of us not only to give thanks to God for answered prayer but also to carry out whatever vows or promises we've made to Him. Hannah's words to Eli are so full of praise and gratitude to God that they need no comment. Let them inspire thanksgiving in our hearts. "For this child I prayed …therefore as long as he lives he is lent to the Lord" (v.28).

Please remember the LOVE FUND

The Love Fund consists of donations of money from members of both our churches. This can be used for anyone in our church or parish who is in need of help. If you are in financial need for whatever purpose: shopping, bills, essentials etc then get in touch with Philip and he will be happy to help you. tel: 01257 515141

email: info@stjohnsandclaytonbrook.uk

Please continue to pray for the re-ordering of St John's church. Ask God to give each member of the re-ordering team wisdom and discernment, ask Him to sustain them and uplift them in perseverance to overcome the challenges ahead.

May the Lord minister to our Church family and the families in our community who will benefit from this re-ordering.

Stir up the faith in our congregation Lord, so that "we walk by faith and not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5v7 ESV Increase in our prayer, desire and longing for this re-ordering to be completed soon. And may there be joy in the House of the Lord. "Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain." Psalm 127v1

Proverbs 22:9 The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.

Living Waters food bank is low on everything at the moment. There is a food collection box in Clayton Brook church and in St John's. If you are in Chorley you can drop off donations at Living Waters church in Bolton Street, Tues and Fridays 10-12noon. Or give a money donation on their website: www.facebook.com/LWStorehouse, And most supermarkets have food bank trolleys.

Words the Lord Jesus Himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" Acts 20v35



EMERGENCY PRAYER CHAIN

The prayer chain has now moved to WhatsApp.

It is always available for anyone who would like urgent, emergency prayer for themselves or their family or friends.

If you know someone who is a member of the prayer chain, please ask them to put in your prayer request.

Or telephone Gill Wright or Cath Orr

Our prayer chain takes many calls. Do not be anxious, concerned or troubled.......

'The Lord is near to all who call on Him' (Psalm 145v18)'

Cast all your anxiety onto Him, because He cares for you' (1Peter 5v7)



Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this month's Gazette.

Please send in your articles & comments for the JUNE edition

before the end of MAY to: the Editor

The editor would welcome comments on any article in this gazette

If you wish to contact anyone in this magazine, please use the contact page on this website.



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