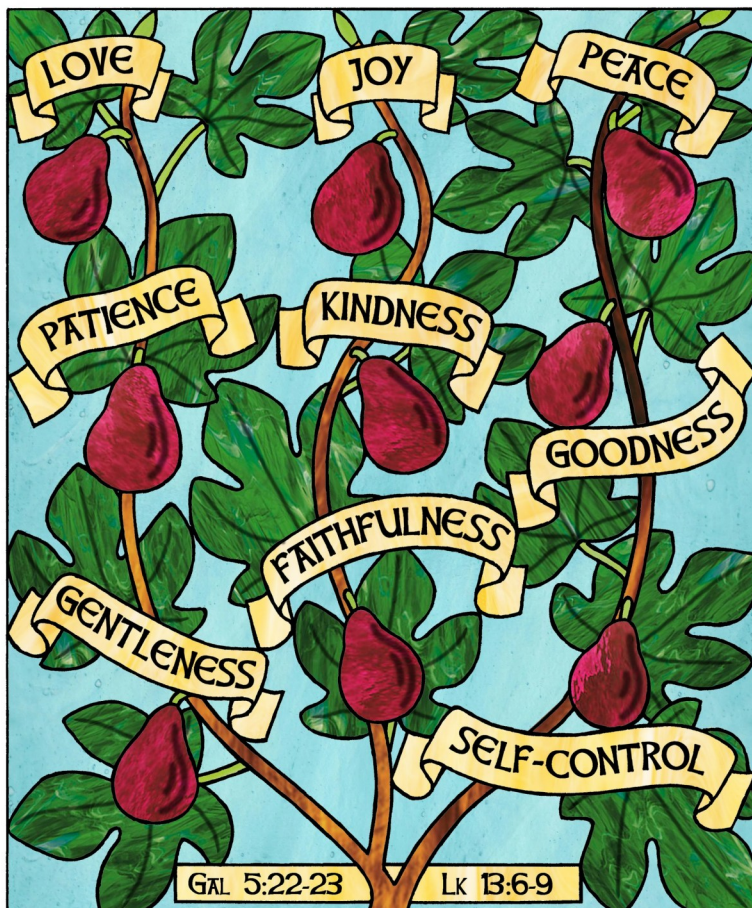

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

News from Whittle & Clayton Brook

PARISH GAZETTE

Please accept this
FREE copy
donations welcome
**JUNE
2025**

Speak out, Reach out, Gather in for Christ



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Dear Friends

‘When we go to heaven, will we travel by car?’, asked my 4-year-old son many years ago. (He is about to take his final exams at theological college, so I hope he has prepared his own answer now!)

I mention that because we have just celebrated Ascension Day, and Jesus’ ascension back into heaven raises so many questions about the nature and the life of heaven, both now and in the world to come. One of those questions is, Did Jesus really ascend in his body? In his account of the ascension, Luke makes it very clear that Jesus did ascend in his risen and glorified body. ‘This *same Jesus*’, he says, ‘will return from heaven in the way you have seen him go into heaven.’ And this has such an important bearing on our own future. This comes out very clearly in Paul’s writing, especially in Romans chapter 8, but also from the apostle John. In his first letter he writes this:

Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)

Here is a ‘now’ and a ‘not yet’. We are God’s children now, adopted by grace into his family through faith in his Son. We share the very status of Jesus as sons of God. In that sense we are already ‘like him.’ Astonishing. But John says that in another sense we are *not* yet like him. Only when he appears again will we be like him. So what will we be that we are not yet? The answer is that we will share his risen, glorified, imperishable bodily nature. Even more astonishing! I am so comforted that our future is not a disembodied, spiritual state; not some sort of being lost in the divine; but a real physical, glorified, Jesus-like future.

This is one reason (of many) why the ascension of Jesus is so important. His resurrection body is the firstfruits of ours and of many that are to come. His bodily ascension is the pledge that that future will come. What God has done for one, he will do for all.

So although Ascension Day always falls on a Thursday (40 days after Easter—if only Jesus had made it 43 days!) and therefore is easily overlooked, let’s not overlook the ascension itself. It is so important. Our risen Jesus is reigning at the father’s side, in his glorified state, a state which all his people will one day share.

Will we travel there by car? Actually, the movement will be in the other direction as Jesus returns to earth, bringing heaven with him. But that is a subject for a future letter.

Your brother in Christ
Philip

Churches enjoyed bumper Easter attendances

Clergy have reported packed services over Easter, as **increasing numbers of young people are coming to church.**

It follows the recent survey by the Bible Society, which found that the share of the population who attend a service a month has risen from eight per cent in 2018 to 12 per cent last year. But surprisingly, the figures for those aged 18 to 24 have *quadrupled*, to 16 per cent.

Philip North, Bishop of Blackburn, said that the numbers at services were up by as much as a half in some areas. He said that, despite so much recent bad publicity about the Church, “there is such a hunger for faith, especially among the young.”

The rector at one church in London said: “The world is a much more frightening and chaotic place than when I was growing up. People in their 20s and 30s have had two major financial crashes, a pandemic, a land war in Europe, a housing crisis. **The world is not a place for optimism right now. The stability and comfort that God can provide is something that appeals to young people.**”

Churches certainly provide a sense of community, a social network as well as a spiritual one, which can help young people who are struggling to connect with others.

The Bible Society survey also found that Catholics may become the largest denomination in Britain, for the first time in 500 years. Anglicanism, on the other hand, could fall behind Pentecostalism, and become the UK’s third largest denomination. The Anglican share of regular churchgoers of all ages fell from 41 per cent in 2018 to 34 per cent in 2024, while at the same time the Catholic share rose from 23 per cent to 31 per cent.

The Bible Society survey also found that, whereas in 2018 just four per cent of 18 to 24 year-olds attended church once a month, now 16 per cent of the same age group are doing so.

And, although British people are still more likely to be non-believers, **those who *are* Christian are practising their faith with greater zeal.**

Meanwhile, the Church of England has seen a boom in visits to its church-finding website, with views on AChurchNearYou.Com soaring. Visits last year hit 198.6 million – up from 128.1 million in 2023 and a rise of more than three quarters on the previous year. The figure does not include the 9.7-million-page impressions from the site’s army of local editors, who maintain and update parish pages, adding and tagging worship services, events and community action projects such as food banks.

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**



**All of them were
filled with
the Holy Spirit!**

Acts 2.4

**Pentecost
Sunday 8 June**

**Trinity Sunday
15 June**



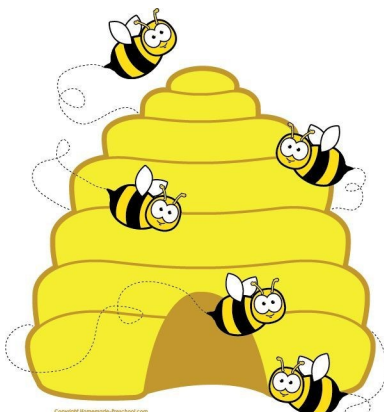
Street Pastors are Volunteers from different churches who care about the safety and wellbeing of their community. We come in all shapes and sizes and are known for being a peaceful and practical help on the night time streets and a caring, listening and helpful presence in our communities. We are an 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.



**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**



Crosslinks

God's word to God's world

Vietnam Trip and Yuha.....We had a very restful time in Vietnam, which was a real answer to prayer. We spent a lot of time in the swimming pool, ate lots of mangos and other fruits, visited a safari zoo, two water parks, an aquarium etc. We did have some small health issues (For example, Hana had to go to the local clinic because of ear infection), but we are grateful that we were able to enjoy our time there. Since Vietnam, life has been a bit hectic. We came back on a Saturday from Vietnam, and that weekend we had a visitor from the UK which was a great fun. Then, we went and picked Yuha up on Monday. Yuha has been a wonderful baby from day one. She eats well, digests well, and sleeps well. Most nights, she wakes up only once during her 12 hours of night sleep (and often goes 8 hours without waking up). We are very thankful for that! The children are also very happy to have her in the family, and sometimes shower her with too much love!

It has been a bit crazy adjusting to new family life. Kate especially had to deal with various bits of paperwork regarding fostering, but she has finally gone through most of it. We have also signed two more years on our rental contract with the current house, which we are thankful for!

Church Life It has been very busy picking up church ministry again after the holiday. We had a wonderful Easter service with pot luck and Easter Egg hunt, and it was encouraging to see various guests joining us. It was a family friendly service, and Alex dressed up as Luke who was investigating Jesus' life and death. Multiple children dressed up, acted out scenes from Luke and were interviewed which was a great fun! Kate has been busy organizing the music team as our two previous musicians left at short notice for different reasons! Thankfully two people from the congregation stepped up to play guitar, and Kate has been able to pick up keyboard. All three of them haven't played the instruments in a while but it has been great to see God at work in our weaknesses. Studies Alex is about to sit his final exams for this term on Church History, Greek and Hebrew. After a three day break he'll begin his summer term on Advanced Greek and Hebrew as well as Christian Philosophy. This will be an even more intense stretch, covering 16 weeks of material in 11 weeks. The good news is that he now only has 7 months before his MDiv and the years of study leading up to it are complete! Kate is still working on her counseling field experience, and has been benefitting from applying what she learned to actual counseling and counseling supervision. She is wondering if she will be able to take a course in June and is praying for wisdom.

Prayer Points Please give thanks Yuha seems happy. Please pray that we will be able to love her with God's love Please give thanks for God's faithfulness over our music team in particular. Please pray for wisdom for Kate going forward Please give thanks for our good time in Vietnam. Please pray that we will use the rest we had to serve Jesus better

I (Kate) have been reading a book called 'Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers' by Dane Ortlund. There was a wonderful metaphor about Christ's joy in seeing sinners coming to him, which I wanted to share:

A compassionate doctor has traveled deep into the jungle to provide medical care to a primitive tribe afflicted with a contagious disease. He has had his medical equipment flown in. He has correctly diagnosed the problem, and the antibiotics are prepared and available. He is independently wealthy and has no need of any kind of financial compensation. But as he seeks to provide care, the afflicted refuse. They want to take care of themselves. They want to heal on their own terms. Finally, a few brave young men step forward to receive the care being freely provided. What does the doctor feel? Joy.

His joy increases to the degree that the sick come to him for help and healing. It's the whole reason he came. How much more if the diseased are not strangers but his own family? So with us, and so with Christ. He does not get flustered and frustrated when we come to him for fresh forgiveness, for renewed pardon, with distress and need and emptiness. That's the whole point. It's what he came to heal. He went down into the horror of death and plunged out through the other side in order to provide a limitless supply of mercy and grace to his people.

May we come to him broken knowing that he joyfully receives us!

In Christ,

Alex, Kate, Euan, Hana, Rowan and Yuha

Have you got your PhD yet?



In our society, having a Master's Degree or a PhD can improve our prospects at work; we can achieve higher positions, more recognition and (maybe) financial rewards. But I remember a pastor saying that the only PhD that matters to God and pleases Him is the "**Past having Doubts**" degree!

Hebrews 11:6 "For without faith it is impossible to please God."
 John 11:40 "If you believe, you will see the glory of God."
 Romans 1:17 "... the righteous shall live by faith."
 Mark 9: 23 "All things are possible to him who believes."
 Mark 5:36 "Jesus said: Do not be afraid. Only believe."

Only you can decide to believe. Nobody can believe for you. Faith is an act, not a feeling.

You may ask: "*You say the whole world is in His hands, but the world is falling apart! There is so much violence and suffering!*"

Yes, but the world was beautiful and perfect when it was created by God. God did not mess up. Men did. It is all in the book of Genesis.

God is good, faithful and just, but His will does not happen automatically. The Bible says HE does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9), but thousands are perishing every day, laughing all the way to hell.

You may say: "*I wish I had faith.*" You already do! We all have a measure of faith. We would not enter a plane if we were not confident that the pilot was able to fly that aircraft, nor would we eat food prepared by people we do not know.

So how does faith increase or get stronger?

Faith comes only by immersing ourselves in the Word of God, the Bible. No need to go to a Faith Conference somewhere or to ask someone to pray for you. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10: 17). That is the **ONLY** way to get rid of doubt and unbelief and develop faith in God, our creator, redeemer, deliverer, healer and Lord. **The input of God's Word needs to be greater than this world's input** –hours reading newspapers, watching TV, Youtube and social media only fill us with fear and despair. The Scriptures give us conviction of sin, strength, hope, joy and peace.

Aren't you tired of being let down by those you have trusted? Trust God, the only One who will never lie. He is good and He is faithful. Jesus says to you and to me: "**Have faith in GOD.**" (Mark 11: 22)

By Ethel de Almeida Rowbotham ("*Etel*", from Clayton Brook)



WARM WELCOME

*Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all
in the name of the Lord Jesus. Colossians 3 v17*

Here at Warm Welcome we have a committed team of volunteers who have regularly given of their time and talents for the last three years. I would like to thank them all for their service and dedication. We have a great team and it is a pleasure to work with them all.

Gill Wright, Jean Owen and Hetti Johnson work in the kitchen preparing our food, they also make the delicious soup our guests enjoy. Our numbers have recently grown so there are always plenty of dishes to do, thank you to Frances Grieve who has been in this role with us since the beginning and has also made soup for us. Last year we were joined by Adele Fletcher and her sister Moira Crawford, who have been an asset to the team.

There are some of our team who are having a well-earned break, Christine Whiteside has been one of our main soup makers. Thank you to Kathy Bigio you for her time with us, she is leaving us to take up other responsibilities in Church.

I would like to welcome our newest volunteer, Christine Carroll, pictured below.



Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ saw the value of getting alongside people and sharing a meal a meal with them, we try to follow in his footsteps by providing this service in our community. If you would like be interested in volunteering with us and would like join our team or you would like more information, my email address is below
sue.lil30@ virginmedia.com

I would love to hear from you.

Sue Lillie

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

Ladies Summer Garden Party

Vicarage garden

Come along for puddings and drinks
and listen to Rachel Shelley's
amazing story of healing

7-30pm
Wednesday 11 June



Men's Garden Party

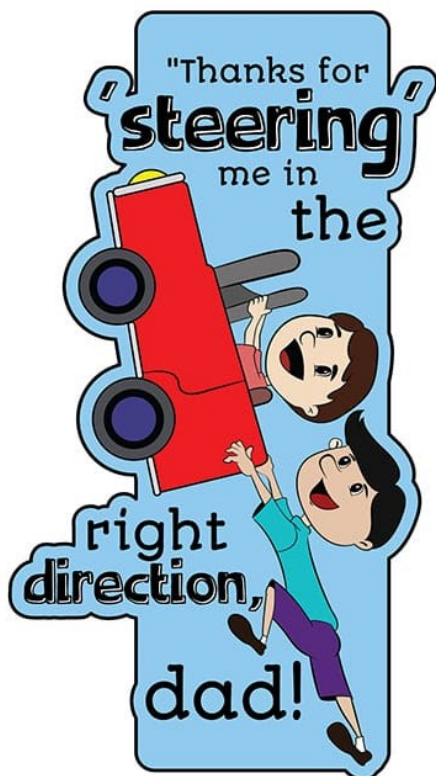
Beer & Pies in the Vicarage garden

Can God forgive a terrorist?

Billy McCurrie was 12 when his father was murdered by the IRA. Consumed with anger Billy joined the Ulster volunteer force, and at 17 was sentenced to life in the Maze Prison. In that unlikely place he found faith in Jesus and went on to become a Christian pastor.

Come and hear his story.

7.30pm
Thursday 12 June



Father's Day is 15th June

- a day to honour and appreciate our fathers and father figures, such as grandfathers and fathers-in-law. Many of us will make a special effort to see them on the day.

No two fathers are alike, of course, but various polls across the internet reveal some interesting similarities of what people have most valued in their dad.

These traits include: being dependable, approachable, protective, patient, affectionate, honest, willing to listen, compassionate, and having spent time with them when they were young.

That's quite a list! People whose fathers had even some of those strengths have a lot to be thankful for. Thankfully, our Father in Heaven certainly has all those traits. Jesus said the Father is totally dependable and protective of us, longs for us to turn to Him, and is full of compassion and love.

The Suffering Church

“The Lord has done great things for us” Psalm 126:3

The Open Doors World Watch List for the Ten Darkest Places on Earth to be a Christian is brought to life by real stories about real people, who proclaim Christ and the truth of that verse above from Psalm 126.

Here are three inspirational stories.

Joo Min* grew up in North Korea where she had been warned to be fearful of Christian missionaries, warned at school that they were like wolves pretending to be sheep and were secretly spies sent to kidnap children and sell them into slavery. Joo Min grew up believing these tales and was understandably scared when she first met Open Doors fieldworkers in a neighbouring country where she had fled in desperation because of famine, looking for food and a job.

Having met the fieldworkers, she found someone more wonderful, Joo Min found Jesus. Despite all that she had been told she, courageously started attending Bible studies and accepted Jesus into her life. Even more courageously Joo Min, while praying, felt the prompting of the Holy Spirit to go back to North Korea, where she could face threats, arrest and even death. But Joo Min was determined to return home and share the Gospel and today Joo Min is a leader in the North Korean underground church, one with an estimated 300,000 – 500,000 members. “I know the risks involved” she says “If I am caught, I could end up in a labour camp, surviving in terrible conditions where the majority die”

Joo Min asks for our prayer, for protection and courage, so that she can continue with her ministry and be salt and light in a land overshadowed by darkness. ***“Lord God, please give Your protection and courage to all Christians who continue following You in a land filled with such spiritual darkness. Strengthen them as they share the Light of Christ. May North Korea change from a place of restriction and fear to a nation that overflows with praise. Amen.”***

Robbie* grew up as a Muslim in Somalia, putting all his heart in the teachings of the Quran, committing his entire life to it. But Robbie’s life changed when he got a copy of the Bible. He started reading it and shared it with other Muslims, who remarkably came to faith in Jesus before Robbie. Eventually he came to realise that Jesus was the truth and the only way to salvation. And his decision to follow Jesus was costly but he won’t stop, wanting other Somalis to know the truth of the Gospel and to meet with Jesus for themselves.

All Somalis are expected to be Muslim, if you leave Islam your Somali nationality and even your sanity are questioned and Robbie spent three months in jail. It was the first of several jail sentences, where he was often brutally beaten. He was disinherited and rejected by his parents and his brother, who also converted was murdered for his faith. Robbie won’t stop following Jesus, nor telling others about Him. Robbie asks for prayer to sustain his faith and the faith of other believers in Somalia, encouraging them all to be strong in Jesus.

“Dear Lord, please protect Robbie and all Somalis who follow Jesus, strengthen their faith and trust in You, particularly those in danger. Remember Lord, those who are suffering and persecuted because of the Name of Jesus and grant them Your presence and the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives, daily. Amen.”

There is a small growing number of Yemeni Christians including Zahra* who face persecution, arrest and torture if discovered. Zahra knows first hand how brutal persecution can be. She and her friend Anis* are passionate about spreading the Good News of Jesus in their village. “It was a fruitful time, and God was working through us” Zahra remembers. However extremists took over the town and Anis started to receive death threats. Threats weren’t new to Zahra and Anis but this time Anis was murdered.

Despite this and constantly in fear for her life Zahra continues to lead in women’s ministry. Although this puts her at great risk, witnessing the spiritual growth in the women she meets is a great source of joy for Zahra and has reinforced her belief in her ministry. “I am comforted and encouraged when I see how the Church in Yemen, though in secret, is growing. I believe God has put me in this place to impact the lives of these women for Jesus, to bring them His hope amidst the horrific situation we are living through” she reflects.

Zarah ask us to pray with her **“ Lord Jesus, raise up more women to help Zahra, give her the strength to continue and guide her to hear Your voice so that she can serve Him better.**

A Living Hope

“Thank you Living Lord, we praise Your name and pray for India. We pray for Your church in India as they go through challenging times and are not able to minister as they would wish. Lord please change the situation so they may be able to pray openly, witness to Your Son and that they may spread Your Word to everyone in India. Lord bless them all and grant them Your grace, mercy and peace to them.

From David Barlow With thanks to Open Doors

Something to make you Smile (hopefully) and perhaps think?

B

Beauty

A person should hear a little music, read a little poetry and see something special in nature every day in order that our cares may not blot out the sense of the beautiful which God has implanted in every human soul.

Bible, in 50 words

God made, Adam bit, Abraham split, Jacob fooled, Joseph ruled, Bush talked, Moses balked, Pharoah plagued, People walked, Sea divided, Tablets guided, Promise landed, Saul freaked, David peeked, Solomon built, Prophets warned. Mary faithful, Jesus born, Love talked, Anger crucified, Hope died, Love rose, Spirit flamed, Faith flourished, Word spread, God remained.

Bible Emergency Phone Numbers

When you are in danger – call Psalm 91

When you want peace and rest – call Matthew 11: 25 – 30

When others fail you – call Psalm 27

When God seems far away – call Psalm 139

Bible Theme Songs

Adam and Eve – Strangers in Paradise

Lazarus – The Second Time Around

Salome – I Could have Danced All Night

Esau - Born to be Wild

The Three Wise Men – When You wish upon a Star

Daniel – The Lion Sleeps Tonight

Bible Trivia Quiz

Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?

Vehicles in the Bible?

Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?

Who of God's faithful servants was actually the most flagrant lawbreaker?

Answers

Noah, he was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation

David's "Triumph" was heard throughout the land. "Hondas" because the Apostles were of one "Accord".

Samuel, he brought the house down.

Moses, he broke all ten commandments at once.

Billboards seen in the United States, all attributed to God.

Lets meet at my house Sunday, before the game?

C'mon over, bring the kids.

Love the wedding, invite me to your hearts.

I love you and you and you and you and.....

Need Directions?

Bishops (not Blackburns!)

A vicar's son, entertaining a visiting bishop asked him how he became a bishop. "Well first you have to go to church every week, then be the best student at theological college. After being ordained a vicar, you must be the best one in the diocese to become a bishop".

"Oh I see" said the boy "because I heard my dad say to my mum this morning that he wondered how on earth you became a bishop"

Books

"A room without books is like a body without a soul" **Cicero**

"I have always imagined that paradise will be a kind of library" **Jorge Luis Borges**

Bossiness

The Directors of a large company, feeling that it was time for a shakeup, hired a new CEO. The new boss was determined to make his mark quickly, looking to get rid of anyone that he thought was slacking. On a tour of the warehouse he noticed a young man leaning on a wall. Noticing the warehouse was full of workers and wanting to let them know that he meant business the CEO walked over to the man and asked him.

"How much money do you earn in a week?"

A little surprised the young man looked at him and said "About £500, Why?"

The CEO opened his wallet and pulled out £2,000 in cash and shouted "Here's 4 weeks' pay, Now get out and don't come back!"

Feeling good about himself the CEO looked around the room and said "Does anyone know what that layabout actually did here?"

From across the room came a voice "Yes, he's the pizza delivery guy"

Bulletins (which have actually appeared in church notices).

The Fasting and Prayer meeting will include meals.

Please place your offering in the envelope, together with the [person you want remembered.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

The prayer evening will start at 7pm with worship. **From David Barlow** With thanks to J. John and Mark Stibbe Monarch Press



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)

FREE
Dementia Awareness
Training Available

With a wide range of exemplary care services, Home Instead West Lancashire and Chorley aims to keep you or your loved ones safe and secure in the comfort of your own homes.

If you think our award-winning services can help you, or you would like to become a Care Professional, then please call us on:

T: 01257 429 156

www.homeinstead.co.uk/chorley-lancashire

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this month's Gazette. Please send in your articles & comments for the JULY edition before the end of JUNE

to: the Editor

The editor would welcome comments on any article in this gazette



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