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THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

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*News from Whittle & Clayton Brook*

# PARISH GAZETTE

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**JULY  
2025**

*Speak out, Reach out, Gather in for Christ*



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As our Vicar was away when the Gazette was published, our page 2 letter for this month is taken from the Diocesan sermons. This one from Stephen Whittaker, Diocesan Secretary was written around Pentecost. But it applies to us all, all year round.

### **Confidence to speak out Acts 2:1-21**

How confident are you to speak in public? It is a question that can give really different answers and usually has an answer such as it depends on whether I know the group or whether they are adults or children, or whether I am speaking on a subject I know well etc. Many people find the prospect of speaking in public to a group of people known or unknown a little daunting and if it involved standing up to speak to a group who are not expecting it, almost impossible.

But that is what we find in the reading for Pentecost. A group, who having been scared of the potential repercussions of speaking what they believed, suddenly addressed the crowd with a confidence that probably surprised themselves. The change in their lives was the coming of the Holy Spirit, the comforter from God who builds boldness in His followers.

In our nation at present there is a growing interest in another dimension to life that is beyond this world. People are searching for meaning and are open to the gospel message and learning more of who Jesus was and is. In many cases there is inquisitiveness and interest but the thing that can stop the further exploration is the confidence of Jesus' followers to talk about our relationship with him and our church life and the impact on our lives. This comes down to confidence, not the bravado of a particular personality trait but the deep confidence that comes from assurance in God.

Our reading from Acts gives us the clearest instruction as followers of Jesus of where we can find that confidence to speak out about our faith, or to explain the reason for our work for the marginalised or to simply invite people to church. The Holy Spirit is where we can find that strength. So, this Pentecost, let us pray for a refilling of the Holy Spirit in our lives, that we might experience the "wonders in heaven above and signs on the earth below" and might have the confidence of Peter to speak to those around us about Jesus, whether in a public forum or with a friend in a conversation.

Come Holy Spirit.

**Stephen Whittaker, Diocesan Secretary**

### A Sunday Traffic Jam

It causes me quite some dismay  
 To be held up in traffic this way  
 "I want to get home!" I grumble and moan,  
 "Don't they know it is Sunday today?"  
 With the cars inching forward this morn  
 And somebody blaring their horn,  
 At length I could see what the problem must be,  
 And then I was not so forlorn!  
 No more was I needing to search  
 For the cause of this traffic-flow lurch!  
 For what they'd been doing, these motorists  
 queuing  
 Was attending a service in church!  
 The Merchants of Doom are confounded!  
 Their tales of decay are unfounded!  
 The story is graphic as told by this traffic -  
 Christ's Church is growing unbounded!  
 Praise God!  
*By Nigel Beeton*

## Church Picnic



Church picnic in  
 Worden Park, Leyland in July  
 Listen out for details in church



Chipping Day Out in September, details in church

## 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

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

### Change

"When one door closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us" **Helen Keller**

Some people will change when they see the light, others change only when they feel the heat.

"Life belongs to the living, and they who live must be prepared for changes" **Goethe**

When it comes to changes, people like only those changes that they themselves make.

### Children's letters to God

Dear God, how did you know you were God? Who told you? Charlene.

Dear God, I read my Bible, what does begat mean? Nobody will tell me. Love Alison.

Dear God, my Grandad says you were around when he was a boy? Just how far back do you go? Love Dennis.

Dera God, we learnt in school; that Edison made light but in Sunday School they said You did it first. Did he steal your idea? Sincerely Donna.

Dear God, in Sunday School they told us what you do for a job. Who does it when you are on holiday? Love Jane.

Dear God, It's great that you get the stars in the right place. Why can't you do that with the moon?

Regards Jeff.

### Christianity

"The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried"

- **G K Chesterton**

"The glory of Christianity is to conquer by love and forgiveness" **William Blake**

"Christianity helps us face the music even when we don't like the tune" **Phillips Brooks**

### Christmas

Two young boys were spending the night at their grandparent's house in early November. At bedtime the two boys knelt beside their bed and started saying their prayers, the younger one praying at the top of his voice. "I pray for a new bicycle Lord and a new computer game and lots of chocolate". His older brother leaned over him and said "Why are you shouting your prayers, God isn't deaf!". To which his brother replied "I know, but Grandma is".

### Church

"The church is the only organisation in the world that exists for the benefit of its non-members"

—**Archbishop William Temple**

A church decided to have four separate worship services each Sunday. There was one service for those people new to their faith, another for regular members who preferred more traditional worship, one for those who had lost their faith and wanted to get it back and a service for those who had some unpleasant experiences in church. The four services were named Finders, Keepers, Losers, Weepers.

### Coffee

You know that you are addicted to coffee when you're the employee of the month at the local coffee house and you don't even work there.

### Conscience

Conscience is the inner voice that warns us someone may be looking.

There is no pillow so soft as a clear conscience.

An imperfect conscience needs a perfect guide.

Conscience does not get its guidance from Facebook, X or AI.

### Conviction

A belief is something you hold. A conviction is something that holds you.

### Courage

If God wanted us to be brave, why did He give us legs?

### Creation

"The heavens speak of the Creator's glory and the sky proclaims God's handiwork" **Psalms 19:1**



"I don't think that you can be up there and look out of the window as I did the first day and see Earth from this vantage point, to look out at this level of creation and not believe in God. To me, it's impossible – it just strengthens my faith". **John Glenn, broadcast from the Discovery space shuttle on 1 November 1998.**

"The universe begins to look more and more like a great thought, than a great machine. **Sir James Jeans**

### Cross

It's the picture of violence, yet the key to peace.

A picture of suffering, yet the key to healing.

A picture of death but the key to life.

A picture of utter weakness, yet the key to power.

A picture of capital punishment, yet the key to mercy and forgiveness.

A picture of vicious hatred, yet the key to love.

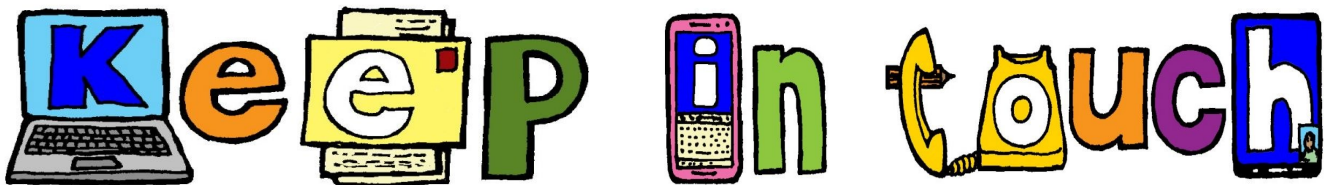
A picture of supreme shame, yet the Christian's supreme boast. **David Watson**

Jesus did not come merely to make God's love possible, He came to make God's love visible.

Many people use duct tape to fix things, God used nails!

I owed a debt I couldn't pay, Christ paid a debt that He didn't owe.

From David Barlow. With thanks to J. John and Mark Stibbe Monarch Press



with the family of God

### Rise in older shoplifters

More and more pensioners have turned to shoplifting. They aren't in criminal gangs, they are hungry. So says a security firm which works with hundreds of stores across the country. Kingdom Security reports that food retailers have seen a "massive" increase in pensioner shoplifters over the past year, involving "people who just can't afford to buy food."

John Nussbaum, director of service for retail at Kingdom Security, said that the cost of living is "pushing people to something they've never done before".

Mr Nussbaum estimates that five per cent of all those caught shoplifting by Kingdom staff on a weekly basis are aged over 50. "We've not seen this before, and I've been in security for 30 years. People can't afford to spend £10, £20 on food. It's desperation."

He added: "Retailers don't tend to involve the police when they're dealing with pensioners. Stores tend to want to handle it on their own. It's not good publicity for a supermarket, if it got out that a pensioner had been handed over to the police for shoplifting."

The number of shoplifting offences reported to police last year passed 500,000 for the first time.

***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](https://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 Orrr

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)*



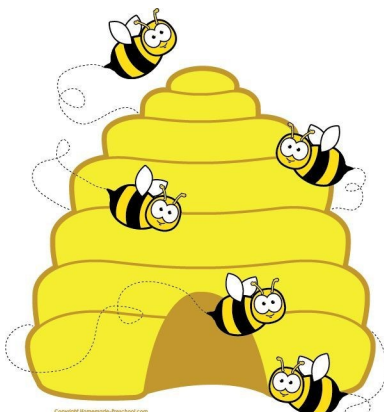
**Street Pastors are Volunteers** from different churches who care about the safety and wellbeing of their community. We come in all shapes and sizes and are known for being a peaceful and practical help on the night time streets and a caring, listening and helpful presence in our communities. We are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

## **“I started noticing they had something I didn’t” - students tell how they came to faith**

Students have been sharing their experiences of what first drew them to become Christians, and go on to speak about a “noticeable” increase in faith among Generation Z, in a recent national online service.

The students, Tegan and Gus, had begun their journey to faith because of a simple invitation from friends to attend a church service.

For Tegan, it was a conversation with a friend at brunch which sparked her curiosity. For Gus, he needed to call into the church to borrow a camera for a university project.

“The first couple of times I came back just because I wanted to chat to the people – like it was a nice place to be,” Gus explains. “And from that community I noticed Jesus in them and that’s what I really wanted at the end of it.”

Tegan agrees: “I started noticing that they had something that I didn’t and it’s why I started going to the Alpha course and learned all about Jesus and who He was and what it meant for me.”

Gus admits he had previously struggled with his poor mental health. “Looking back at it now, I see Jesus in those moments, but now I interact with Jesus in those moments,” he says. “He’s actively helping me through those things now.”

Tegan speaks of the death of her mother since she became a Christian. “I think that is where I’ve known Jesus’s love the strongest – in my grief. I think grief is really dark and I don’t know if I would have been able to do it without Jesus. I think He’s been my strength through that and also my comfort.

“And I think people can see it within you, right? Like they see, wow, you have this sort of peace or joy that, is almost *unreasonable*, like that you couldn’t have from anything but Jesus.”

Both also speak about their own sense of growing interest in faith in their generation.

“I have noticed since being in a church myself lots more people joining that have never even heard the name of Jesus or don’t know much about Him and seeing other people come to Him is just so exciting,” says Tegan.

Gus adds: “The amount of people each year has definitely been increasing. It’s noticeable each time the new year comes up it’s ‘oh we’ve got even more people now’ it’s just so encouraging.”



**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.”**

**Psalms 127v1**



## The Suffering Church - Being a Christian

Over the past months these articles have mainly been drawn from information from Barnabas Fund and Open Doors so it might be helpful to reflect on the wonderful work that Tearfund do.

### Background

Tearfund is a Christian charity with over 50 years of experience in international development. We believe that poverty is not God's plan, and an end to extreme poverty is possible.

We work directly, and/or alongside local partners and churches, in underserved communities in more than 50 countries to tackle complex poverty in three main ways:

✦ **Humanitarian response** We respond quickly to disasters and conflicts, supporting those in greatest need throughout the recovery process.

✦ **Community development** We partner with local churches and organisations, mobilising resources and empowering communities to lift themselves out of poverty.

**Advocacy and influencing** We help individuals and churches speak out on issues of poverty and injustice, and we challenge unjust policies and practices at a local, national and global level.

Tearfund is working in close partnership with local churches and Christian organisations in more than 50 countries.

### Tearfund's Vision, Values and Mission

"Our vision is to see people freed from poverty, living transformed lives, and fulfilling their God-given potential. As more churches get involved and more lives are impacted, we know we need to dream bigger. Our vision is to work with 250,000 churches by 2030, and your support is vital in making this vision a reality".

As we pursue this vision, we have four main focuses:

✦ **Meeting emergency needs** We respond quickly to meet immediate needs when crises and disasters hit vulnerable communities.

✦ **Mobilising churches** We envision, empower and equip churches to play their part in the development and transformation of their communities.

✦ **Transforming communities** We support communities to become resilient to shocks and stresses and work towards a better future for themselves and others.

**Changing society** We seek to influence and change social, political, and economic systems and policies so that the poorest communities can get the services and opportunities they need to thrive.

### Our values

As Christians, we follow Jesus' example. We seek to be Christ-centred, compassionate, courageous, truthful and servant-hearted in everything we do.

### Our mission

Our mission is to follow Jesus where the need is greatest, responding to crises and partnering with local churches and organisations to help people lift themselves out of poverty.

### Evaluating our effectiveness

We want to see a world restored to how God intended by empowering people to lift themselves out of poverty. We want to equip Christians and churches to take action so that all people can fulfil their God-given potential and live life to the full.

In more than 50 years, we've helped vast numbers of communities to be transformed. Between 2006 and 2016, we calculated that Tearfund reached 32 million people through our community development projects, and 13 million people benefitted from our disaster response work.

We've supported people on the brink of disaster to become resilient to shocks, self-sufficient and empowered, boldly speaking up for their rights. We know our approach works. We want to take it to the next level and we invite you to join us.

Our impact last year...


- ✦ **Over 30,000 local churches mobilised as transformation centres**
- ✦ **2.9 million people reached through our projects**
- ✦ **741,000 people supported with crisis to resilience work**
- 190 partners worked with across 695 projects**

### 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"*

Learn more about Barnabas Fund, Open Doors and Tearfund by looking at their websites [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org), [www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org) or [www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org). Your donations will make a real difference to lives of Christians across the world, sometime the difference between life and death.






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[www.homeinstead.co.uk/chorley-lancashire](http://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 AUGUST edition before the end of JULY to: the Editor**  
*The editor would welcome comments on any article in this gazette*

*If you wish to contact any person in this gazette, please use the contact page on this website.*



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