
THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

News from Whittle & Clayton Brook

PARISH GAZETTE

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Speak out, Reach out, Gather in for Christ



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Dear Friends

Working my way through a slightly heavy tome recently I was struck, and rather thrilled, by the fact that in the God of the Bible we have a God who brings together what we might consider to be extremes, or opposites. And he does so not by opting for a middle course, but by holding on fully to both. What do I mean by that? Let me roll back a bit . . .

It has often been remarked that, in recent years, society in the West is becoming more and more polarised. You are either left wing or right wing. You are either pro-LGBT etc, or you are anti. You care either for people, or for truth, but not both. You are either pro-Israel or pro-Gaza, pro-life or pro-choice. If you argue against assisted suicide then you are told that you lack compassion. It was interesting hearing Tim Farron point out that this polarisation, while noticeable here, is so strong in America that it would be nigh impossible for Republican and Democrat Christian politicians to sit down and pray together.

When it comes to our God and his attributes, we could find ourselves applying this polarisation to him. When justice and mercy would appear to be opposites, which one do we ascribe to God? Likewise, does he care more for truth, or for love? Is he more concerned for the many—the church, the nation, the world—or the individual? Is he task-oriented—“I will build my church”—or people-focused?

The wrong answer would be to create a God of the middle, a God who is a bit merciful and a bit loving, somewhat caring for truth but also a bit caring for the individual. That could be a sort of mushy God of the centre, as though we were to mix black and white to make grey. Instead, God is fully just and fully merciful, 100% of both. He cares completely for the whole creation and for the weakest individual. The God who is truth incarnate is also the God who is love. At one and the same time he can encompass burning wrath and burning love. This is what I mean by a God of the extremes. How striking it is that the first miracle of Jesus in John's Gospel, in which he lovingly saves a wedding party by restocking their depleted cellar, is followed immediately by an act of white-hot indignation as he makes a whip of cords and overturns the tables of the money-changers. Perhaps most striking of all, these acts are carried out by the one who is fully God and fully man, not half of each, not a sort of mixture, but as divine as God the Father and as human as you and me.

So what?, we might justly ask.

The ‘so what’ for us is that we will find this God constantly both affirming and challenging our views and values, our assumptions and our attitudes. Capitalists may find support for their economics in the Bible and communists may likewise find support for their policies—both with justification—but God is neither a capitalist nor a communist. Those who are passionate for truth, because God is a God of truth, may well be challenged by Jesus' love for people who spurn his truth. Those who reflect God in loving and embracing people who are morally deeply compromised will also be challenged by Jesus' powerful and uncompromising stand on moral issues.

All this means (for me, at least) that I need constantly to allow myself to be challenged, to question my assumptions and to keep learning. That mustn't mean ending up in a wishy-washy middle way where I stand clearly for nothing, but growing in more of a ‘both-and’ position, becoming not polarised, but more able to hold on to two contrasting truths, like the God of the Bible. Let God affirm what is right and true in me, but let him also point out to me that there may be another valid view, another way of looking at things. And that takes humility. May he give me, and you, such a spirit.

Your brother in Christ

Philip

Lord's Prayer tops Shakespeare, Dickens, Churchill and National Anthem in public recognition poll

People in the UK are more likely to identify correctly a short extract from the Lord's Prayer – also known as the Our Father – than one from the National Anthem and other sources chosen for their deep cultural resonance, a new poll has found.

The polling, carried out for the Church of England, also found the reference in the prayer to being forgiven and forgiving others was the element people found most meaningful to them.

Pollsters Savanta surveyed more than 2,000 people across the UK. They asked them to match seven famous lines – spanning areas ranging from literature and history to popular culture – with their source, from a list of correct answers.

Overall, the phrase from the Lord's Prayer was recognised correctly by the largest number of people (80.3 per cent), just ahead of Star Wars (79.9 per cent).

They were followed by Hamlet's "To be or not to be" (73 per cent) the extract from the National Anthem (63 per cent); the line from Churchill's 'The Few' speech (61 per cent); and You'll Never Walk Alone (58 per cent).

Overall, 89 per cent of those surveyed said that they had previously heard of the Lord's Prayer or the Our Father. This was highest among those who described themselves as Christian (95 per cent), but also by 88 per cent of those who said they had no religion.

"Lines like 'Give us this day our daily bread' speak powerfully to today's challenges, reminding us to seek sufficiency, not excess, and to consider what 'enough' truly means."



Chipping Day Out in September, details in church

Lester Amann encourages us to 'phone home'...

Give Him a call!

The phone was a great invention. How easy, to press a few numbers on our small devices and speak to someone the other side of the world. Once a phone was a luxury item; now we take it for granted that this gadget in our pocket enables us to contact anyone, at any time, in any place.

However, how many times have you rung someone, only to be given a recorded message giving a variety of options? Then you must wait in a queue for ages before your call is answered. A voice informs you that 'your call is important to us' ... but meanwhile you are left waiting, listening to endless music.

Yes, a phone may be useful in all kinds of circumstances, but they can also be very frustrating! So, it's good to know that God can be contacted immediately we need Him.

There is no celestial call centre where our messages are delayed or referred. With prayer we can call on God directly. This service is free, with no charges. He hears our every call, and we can be confident that our Creator will answer us in ways which are only for our good.

'When you pray, I will answer you. When you call to me, I will respond.' (Isaiah 58:9)



Clayton Brook's picnic photos



The Suffering Church - Being a Christian

Last month we read an introduction to Tearfund's vision, values, mission and impact. This month we can explore some of the ways they make an impact through one of their humanitarian projects, all underpinned by faith and trust in the Lord Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Background

Tearfund runs a number of initiatives under their **Bible-based "Tearfund Transforming Communities"** which include training, trauma healing workshops, advocacy, practical help, which really do transform communities. Here are just a few.

Nineteen-year-old Eniya was lured by people traffickers from her home in Nepal with the false promise of a better life in India. Thankfully, Eniya was rescued and taken to a Tearfund supported safe house.

Following Transforming Communities training Eniya learnt skills in carpet weaving which enabled her to start a successful business. **Pray for the thousands of Nepalese girls who are trafficked every year into a life of virtual slavery and worse.**

Tearfund promotes sustainable agricultural practices in Burundi, focusing on techniques that are resilient to climate change, such as crop rotation, drought resistant crops and rainwater harvesting. This helps farmers adapt to changing weather patterns which transform the way they farm. **Pray for this training and give thanks for the many bountiful harvests that families are now enjoying.**

"Hope is such a powerful thing here" explains Poppy, the Tearfund Country Director for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) a country torn by conflict and poverty. Praise God that through Tearfund trauma healing workshops young people's lives are beginning to change. "Young people, who were saying they have no hope are now saying that they now look towards the future" explains Poppy. **Pray for these workshops in many countries throughout Africa.**

In 2024 over 5,000 Christians were killed because of their faith, many conflicts being fuelled by religious differences with attacks on Christian faith communities increasing. **Pray for Tearfund's work with the Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action which builds bridges, fosters interfaith understanding and encourages governments to prioritise freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief in fragile states.**

Bethroser, from Kenya, took part in Tearfund's Transforming Communities training in 2012 which encouraged her to bring all the elders in her locality together. "The villages are scattered far and wide, but I was now able to reach every corner" she says. In 2021 Bethroser was appointed chief of all the villages in Ngaru, Kenya and is helping reduce poverty and crime throughout the area. **Pray for Bethroser and thank God that her leadership and dedication, still supported by Tearfund, are bringing significant transformation to her far flung community.**

Supported by a Tearfund Transforming Communities initiative for new businesses Maryam, 22, from Basra in Iraq, when she was 20 decided to make and sell her own unique incense from recycled tree branches, which is proving successful 2 years later. **Pray for women like Maryam, who have incredible business ideas, that they will be filled with the Holy Spirits inspiration as they begin their business journey.**

Bangladesh is a country of extremes. It's a fertile and beautiful place with great potential, experiencing rapid economic growth and yet remains one of the poorest countries in Asia. Tearfund, through its Transforming Communities, is helping many families in Bangladesh overcome poverty and recover from natural disasters, particularly flooding. Through training Juliet learnt how to preserve dry foods and other essentials in waterproof jars then used in cyclone centres. Juliet and her community have learnt how to survive crises and be prepared and more resilient before they happen. **Pray that God will spread this learning so that more people can avoid the worst effects of cyclones, flooding and emergencies.**

Drought and hunger, brought on by the changing climate and corruption affect many vulnerable families in Zimbabwe. Many churches and church leaders across the nation, in partnership with Tearfund, are working to equip local communities to break the cycle of [poverty that they experience. Pray for the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, an incredible Tearfund partner organisation dedicated to spreading Tearfund's Transforming Communities training throughout the country. **Pray that many churches will be equipped to drive change in their communities and explore new exciting opportunities with Him.**

(continued on next page)

Tearfund partners are working for lasting change amongst Pakistan's most vulnerable communities, many of whom are Christian, using Tearfund's Transforming Communities training. They are helping women set up their own business and support their families, transform farming practices, help lift families out of poverty breaking the poverty cycle which affects generations. **Pray that more people in Pakistan will experience fullness of life and benefit as they learn new skills and experience.**

Diane, Tearfund's Communications Officer for East and Central Africa region, says "What we can do sometimes feels like a drop in the ocean when we see the scale of the need. But God does wonderful things with the little we have. **Please pray for the release of more funding and resources so that we can reach many more people who need help.**

This is just a tiny example of the life changing work that Tearfund facilitate through their partners working in throughout South America, in North and West Africa, East and Central Africa, Southern Africa, Asia, in over 50 countries today, all in the name of Jesus.

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 read more inspiring stories from Tearfund by looking at their websites www.opendoorsuk.org, www.tearfund.org or www.barnabasfund.org. Your donations will make a real difference to lives of Christians across the world, sometime the difference between life and death.

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**



Prayer grows in popularity

Well over three million people have now used the Church of England's [Daily Prayer podcast and app](#), which offers Morning and Evening Prayer in audio form. Launched during the pandemic, the service has seen over 12 million downloads, with thousands tuning in each day. Blending scripture, music, and reflection, it reflects a wider resurgence of interest in regular prayer and spiritual rhythm, showing that ancient words continue to find new life in modern formats.

WARM WELCOME

At our final session before our summer break we had Afternoon Tea. We had a lovely time with delicious food and good fellowship which we all enjoyed from our oldest to our youngest member.



Our youngest member,
Evelyn was two today and
celebrated her birthday with us.

We would also like to thank Amber River True Bearing for sending one of their employees, Leah Hincliffe to volunteer with us for the afternoon. We enjoyed meeting her and she was a fantastic help in the kitchen.



We are now closed for summer
and will reopen in September.



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)



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.

Chorley 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.



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

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

Death

Only one person has provided the answer to what happens at death; Our Lord Jesus, at His resurrection, overcame it not just for himself but for all who believe in Him.

“Oh, death where is your victory, oh death where is your sting?” **1 Corinthians 15:55**

Deeds

“If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way” James F. Clarke.

Denominations

A committed Anglican couple felt it important to own an equally Anglican dog and so went shopping for one. At a kennel specialising in certain breeds they found a dog that they immediately liked. When asked to bring a Bible the dog obeyed in a flash, when asked to look up Psalm 23 the dog was again amazingly quick, using his paws with great dexterity. Impressed the couple bought the dog and took him home.

That night the couple had some friends over and were so proud of their new pet that they wanted to show him off. They gave the dog the similar commands that they had used previously and the dog was equally impressive. The friends were also impressed and asked if the dog could do any normal tricks.

The couple thought about it and decided to give it a go. Calling the dog over the clearly pronounced the command “Heel”. Quick as a flash the dog jumped up, put his paw on the man’s forehead, bowed his head and closed his eyes in concentration. His new owners were distressed at this; they had been deceived. The dog was a Pentecostal!

Determination

If we are not willing to climb to the top of the mountain, then we will never see the view.

Curious people ask questions, determined people find answers.

Some people succeed because they are destined to do, but most people succeed because they are determined to do.

Diet

Brain cells come and brain cells go but fat cells live forever.

I went on a 14 day diet, but all I lost was two weeks.

Discouragement

“Let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t get discouraged and give up” **Galatians 6:9**

Don’t discourage the other persons plans unless you have better ones.

Direction

If at first you don’t succeed try reading the directions!

If you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there.

“Seek His will in all you do and He will direct your path. Proverbs 3:6

Division

“If every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no house or city divided against itself will stand (Matt12: 25/26 & Luke 11:17/18), what makes the Church think it is so different?” **Anon**

Dreams

Don’t be unhappy if your dreams don’t come true, be grateful that your nightmares don’t!

Donkeys

A man bought a donkey from a preacher, who told him that the donkey had been trained in a unique way. The only way to get the donkey to move was to say “Hallelujah” and the only way to make him stop was to say “Amen”.

The man was pleased with his purchase and set off towards his home town, many miles away. Before he started he tried out the instructions that he had been given. “Hallelujah” he said and the donkey set off walking. “Amen” said the man and the donkey stopped immediately.

After travelling for a long time the man wanted to stop as they were headed for a cliff, but he couldn’t remember what to say. Stop, halt then remembering it had something to do with religion Bible, church, prayer all to no avail. The cliff edge was getting closer and the man was getting desperate and started to pray. “Dear Lord please make this donkey stop before we go over the cliff. Amen.”

The donkey came to an abrupt stop at the edge of the cliff. “Hallelujah” shouted the man!

Driving

When my children were practising driving to pass their tests we would let them drive us to church every Sunday. That way we were already praying before we arrived at church.

Any person who can drive while kissing is simply not giving the kiss the attention it deserves. **Albert Einstein**

Faith is the capacity to trust God
while not being able to make sense out of everything. - James Kok

When I say I am a Christian

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not shouting, "I am saved!"
I'm whispering, "I get lost; that is why I chose this way."
When I say, "I am a Christian," I don't speak of this with pride.
I'm confessing that I stumble and need Someone to be my Guide.
When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging I am strong.
I'm professing that I'm weak, and I pray for strength to carry on.
When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging of success.
I'm admitting I have failed and cannot ever pay the debt.
When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not claiming to be perfect.
My flaws are all too visible, but God believes I'm worth it.
When I say, "I am a Christian," I still feel the sting of pain.
I have my share of heartaches, which is why I cry His name.
When I say, "I am a Christian," I do not wish to judge.
I have no authority; I only know I'm loved.

Author unknown

'No one who meets Jesus ever stays the same.' (Philip Yancey)

Please continue to pray for the re-ordering of St John's church.



"Heavenly Father, we ask for your blessing on this re-ordering project. Provide us with the resources, skills, and support we need to complete it successfully. We trust in your provision and your guidance. We pray that our re-ordered church will be a place where future generations can encounter your presence and grow in their faith. May it be a lasting testament to your love and faithfulness." And may our church serve mission and ministry for generations to come.




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.
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.



And may there be joy in the House of the Lord.
"Unless the LORD builds the house,
the builders labour in vain."
Psalm 127v1






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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 SEPTEMBER edition before the end of AUGUST to the Editor

The editor would welcome comments on any article in this gazette

If you wish to contact anyone in this Gazette please use the contact page on this website



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