

Services for Holy Week & Easter

Sunday 29th March - PALM SUNDAY

St Peter's: 10.30 am

Joint Palm Sunday Benefice Eucharist



30th March - MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

St Stephen's: 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

Stations of the Cross & Eucharist followed by A Quiet Morning



31st March - TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

St Stephen's: 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

Stations of the Cross & Eucharist followed by Messy Church



1st April - WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

St Peter's: 10.30 am - Stations of the Cross & Eucharist

St Stephen's: 5.30 pm - Family Mass



2nd April - MAUNDY THURSDAY

St Peter's: 7.00 pm

Liturgy of Maundy Thursday followed by The Watch



3rd April - GOOD FRIDAY

St Peter's: 10.00 am - All Age Service for Good Friday

St Stephen's: 2.00 pm - Liturgy of Good Friday



5th April - EASTER SUNDAY

St Stephen's: 9.30 am - Easter Day Festal Eucharist

St Peter's: 11.00 am - Easter Day Festal Eucharist



the link

The Parish Magazine of The United Benefice of St Peter & St Stephen, Burnley
MARCH/APRIL 2026



<http://www.stpetersburnley.com>
<http://www.ststephenschurchburnley.org.uk>



St Stephen's Church
Burnley

Grand Auction

With our very own Auctioneer
Keith Pounder

Ably supported by his glamorous assistant, **Barry!**

Friday
20th March
7.00 pm

In St Stephen's Community Room
Smalley Street, BB11 3JA





It is lovely when it is hard for the leadership team of Emma, Carrie, Nicola and Carol to decide who has the most fun at Sunday Club!

As ever, we follow either the Roots magazine or the reading of the day (if different) to ensure that what we do is fun, helps the young members to learn more about their faith and to try new things.

In St Stephen's, for instance, we current have a beeswax candle which has been made by the young people and blessed at Candlemas. This is being used for the new midweek 5.30 service. This service is aimed particularly at families and young people but all are welcome, so please do come along and support it. Our young people are also keen to become more involved in worship, so please look for an increase in their involvement in Wake Up and Worship over the coming months.

Planning is well advanced for our Holy Week Messy Church morning Tuesday 31st March – do look out for more information on this as we would love to see you all there.

? WHO'S WHO IN THE BENEFICE? ?	
Rector of the United Benefice & Area Dean of Burnley: Fr Andrew Holmes Tel: 07460 899451 Email: andrewinburnley@gmail.com	
ST PETER'S	ST STEPHEN'S
CHURCH WARDENS: Mrs Sandra Davies ☎ 545818 Mr Jason Walsh ☎ 07554 154240	CHURCH WARDEN: Mrs Jean Beeston ☎ 432986
ASSISTANT WARDEN Mrs Meena Tomlinson ☎ 07806 623466	ASSISTANT WARDENS Mr Paul Hannah ☎ 07967 644709 Mrs Edith Meek ☎ 456170 Mrs Anita Fossey
PCC SECRETARY Mr Andrew Buchanan ☎ 07565 347524	PCC SECRETARY: Mrs Anita Fossey ☎ 07939 486712
ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER Mrs Joan Ainsworth ☎ 07971 711250	BUILDING OFFICER Mr Keith Pounder ☎ 07812 941801
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: Mr Philip Tomlinson ☎ 777132	ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER Mrs Pam McGrath ☎ 07738 412998
VISION TEAM: Mrs Joan Ainsworth ☎ 07971 711250 (Making Disciples) Mrs Meena Tomlinson ☎ 07806 623466 Inspiring Children & Young People) Mr Alan Roadley ☎ 07588 556640 (Growing Leaders)	VISION CHAMPION: Mrs Linda Pounder ☎ 414390
MOTHERS' UNION: Mrs Carol Waddington ☎ 07846 139241	MOTHERS' UNION: Mrs Beverley Laycock ☎ 543766 (Branch Leader) Mrs Jackie Cosway ☎ 411967 (Secretary)
INTERIM SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Mrs Barbara Hasty ☎ 07783006284	SUNDAY SCHOOL: Mrs Emma Hopley ☎ 07968 782210
SUNDAY SCHOOL (DJs): Mrs Meena Tomlinson ☎ 777132	INTERIM HEADTEACHER: Mr Barnacle ☎ 427848
HEADTEACHER: Mrs Law ☎ 426873	SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Mrs Barbara Hasty ☎ 07783006284
FLOWER GUILD: Mrs Alice Binns ☎ 789632	VERGER Mrs Edith Meek ☎ 456170
BELFRY Dr Andrew Sibson	CHURCH FLOWERS: Mrs Jennifer Pollard
Kitchen/Catering Manager Mrs Cynthia Bramley ☎ 07903 341700	
CHURCH MAGAZINE EDITOR: : Mrs Pam McGrath: Email: pamelamcgrath1@hotmail.com	

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Fellowship in the Benefice

Every Monday at St Stephen's
ST STEPHEN'S CRAFT GROUP
1.00 –3.00 pm

Every Thursday at St Peter's
THURSDAY CHAT
10.00 am (coffee at 9.30)

1st Wednesday at St Peter's
WELCOME ON WEDNESDAY
1.30—3.00 pm

1st & 3rd Wednesday
at St Stephen's
FRIENDS, FOOD & FUN
2.00—4.00 pm

2nd & 4th Wednesday at
St Stephen's
LET'S DO LUNCH
12.30—2.00 pm

1st & 3rd Thursdays at
St Peter's
LUNCH CLUB - 11.30 am



Brownies

Our unit continues to thrive and grow with 23 current members. January and February has seen Brownies enjoying doing one of the newest badges.

Called Games Master, it is split into 3 parts; to play a range of games that are possibly new to them, to design a game and then to test it. This has actually provided no end of fun. In the first part Carol brought along a range of games which included the Cluedo she had received for her 8th birthday. Although the other games were enjoyed, the Cluedo became the hit of the night! None of them had ever played it before but quickly got very serious in developing their detective skills and it is entirely possible that Burnley has seen a sudden rush in sales on the game due to the number of new fans. The designs were interesting and most worked.

But, of course, the high spot of this half term has to be the annual trip to Sion Panto. Leaders, Fr Andrew and 37 out of a possible 49 will have enjoyed Goldilocks by the time you read this. We will have cheered, shouted and danced! Nothing quite like a good panto!

Carol

The next Magazine will be joint **MAY/JUNE** edition. Please send any items for inclusion to the Editor by 15th February pamelamcgrath1@hotmail.com



News Flash; Our trip to Sion Panto was absolutely brilliant!





Children's Page



From the Rectory

Lent and Easter Message

Dear friends,

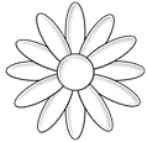
As I write this, the season of Lent is about to begin. We are invited to journey together through a holy time of reflection, self-examination, and renewal. Lent calls us to pause amidst our busy routines, to consider the pathways we are travelling, and to open our hearts afresh to God's transforming love. In this spirit, we remember the words of the Psalmist: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10) These words remind us that none of us walks this path alone; God's mercy is always available, no matter where we find ourselves.

During Lent, some may keep to the familiar disciplines of prayer, fasting, and giving. In contrast, you may seek out quiet moments of contemplation amid daily life. I encourage, as I always do, to take something up, maybe join us for our Lent course starting on a Thursday morning at 10 am, 'Lent with the Northern Saints'.

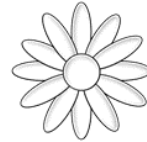
However you mark this season, may it be an opportunity to draw closer to God, to rediscover hope, and to nurture compassion for one another. Even the smallest gestures of kindness and reconciliation can help to heal old wounds and bring new grace into our lives and communities.

Looking ahead to Easter, we are reminded that after the quiet and sometimes challenging days of Lent, the joy and hope of resurrection await us all. As Saint Paul wrote: "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." (1 Corinthians 15:20) Easter proclaims that love conquers death, and that fresh beginnings are always possible.

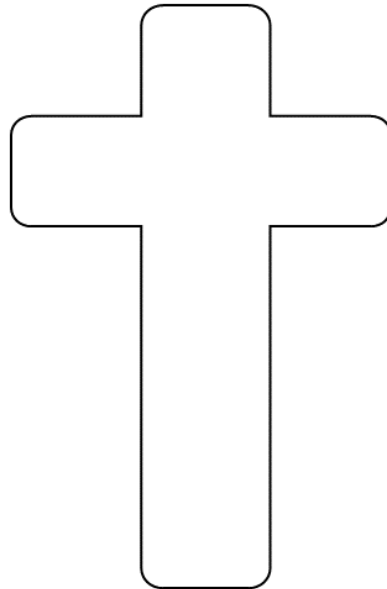
As we gather to celebrate the risen Christ—whether in church or at home—may we be uplifted by the promise of renewal, not only for



EASTER BIBLE ACTIVITY PAGE



Color and decorate the cross for Easter!



See if you can unscramble these words from the Easter story!

nsrie _____

bmot _____

suesJ _____

ssroc _____

glena _____

CRACK THE CODE

Use the code to fill in the blanks and see why Easter is so amazing!

18=R 5=E 1=A 8=H 9=I

19=S 14=N 15=O 20=T

8 5 / 9 19 / 14 15 20 / 8 5 18 5 ;

8 5 / 8 1 19 / 18 9 19 5 14 ! Luke 24:6A

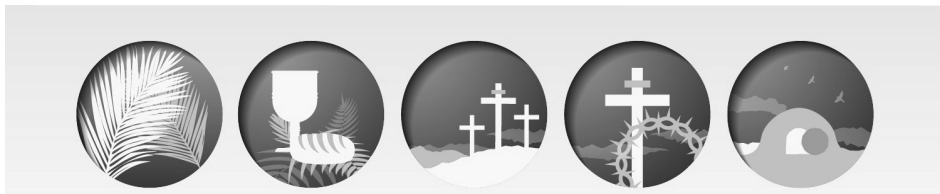
*Use colored pens or pencils to write the words and make this paper colorful!

ourselves but for our wider community and world. Let us share this hope generously, bringing light and encouragement wherever it is needed, and praying especially for those who find this season difficult or lonely.

May God bless you and those you love throughout this holy season, granting you peace, strength, and joy as we journey from Lent to Easter together.

With every blessing,

Fr Andrew



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wreaths, some people enjoy embroidery, some people enjoy Diamond Art – unfortunately not with real diamond, we have a card making section too. Some people made Angels for church decorations and angels from old books.

We were fortunate to receive some funding and are able to offer other crafts for people to try, suduko, colouring books, puzzle books and provide patterns, wool and needles.

We have had several trips out. The last one was to the Cathedral to see the Knitted WW2 Exhibition which was once we got there! Despite verbal instruction and satnavs we managed to miss the car park and did a tour of Blackburn. Then we had to find everyone as we parked in different places. But we managed it and enjoyed lunch together in a local pub. We are planning another trip – for some reason we always have to eat whilst we are out.

It has become a close group where people can form new friendships and we are always looking for people to join. We welcome you if you are an old hand at crafting, if you are new and want to try things out or if you just want to come, eat cake and chat. We have 3 men who drop in for cake and coffee. And we mustn't forget the two greediest members who never produce any craft but eat lots of cake – they are of course Tammy and Frank (two dogs).

EVERYONE IS WELCOME, Please come along, all new projects welcome too.

Joan Ainsworth

The best Mathematical equation ever ...

1 cross + 3 nails = 4 given



THE CRAFT GROUP

Soon after the Craft Group started again after Covid, I joined and it is one of the best things I've done. Lynn has led this group for over 20 years. I think if everyone came at once there would be 20 people. But the group varies in size week by week.

We meet every Monday, from 1.00—3.00 pm and everyone who comes receives a warm welcome and is encouraged to share. We drink coffee (or Tea), eat cake and put the world to right. There are very lively discussions, sometimes more than one at a time. On days like this not much crafting is done!

Most of us get on with our own projects, we also make things for the Christmas and Spring Fayres. We share ideas and help each other when we are stuck. Admire each other's work and are in awe of people's creativity. Some projects we do are: knitting, for ourselves, family members, new babies, stuffed animals to sell, we have made



Churchwardens' News from St Peter's

Hello everyone,

We hope you are all well and staying safe. For our friends on the prayer list, please remember we are thinking of you and praying for you.

It is exciting that the Archbishop of York will be coming to St Peter's later this year. 2026 is the centenary year of the Diocese of Blackburn and there will be a service at St Peter's in September led by the Archbishop to commemorate the event. There will also be a family fun day at St Stephen's as part of the celebrations.

A 50-inch television is being mounted on the wall in the meeting room at the back of church. The television was kindly donated to St Peter's by a neighbour of Sandra's and an HDMI socket will be installed to allow for laptop connectivity. This will be a useful facility for those who use the meeting room, such as for Bible study, children's activities, lunches and meetings.

Adrian Norris has volunteered to be the new yardperson responsible for picking up litter in the churchyard. He started at the beginning of the year and the churchyard is already looking much cleaner and tidier. We thank Adrian for his hard work which is making a big difference to the appearance of the church grounds.

It is good to see the Lunch Club back again in the New Year. The kitchen team does an excellent job and it is a much valued place of food, friendship and conversation for so many who attend.

Easter is just around the corner now, with Easter Day this year falling on 5th April. We hope that you will be able to join us at our services during Holy Week, including the Maundy Thursday vigil and Good Friday family service, and on Easter Day itself as we celebrate the Risen Lord.

Take care,

Sandra and Jason

In The Loop

... With Jean, Paul, Edith & Anita



Hello everyone! We hope that you and your families are all keeping well.

Spring is definitely around the corner with the longer days and we're only weeks away from changing the clocks at the end of March – you'll lose an hour's sleep! The daffodils are flowering in our Remembrance Garden, and there are lots of green shoots sprouting up in our Memorial Garden.

Grateful thanks to Jim for keeping our church gardens neat and tidy as we await more daffodils, primroses and tulips.

Let's have a quick recap:

It doesn't seem so long ago that we were celebrating Christmas and the New Year, but the season came to a close with our annual Christingle service at Candlemas. This began with 'messy' Christingle making, at which there were as many adults as children making their own Christingle (lots of sweets and sultanas were consumed)! This was followed by hot dogs and drinks before we settled down to the service - the lights were dimmed, the church was hushed and the Christingles were lit,

creating a wonderful atmosphere. Many thanks to all who helped in any way, and for the provision of oranges, hot dogs, sweets etc.

On-Going Events

We are a busy church with events taking place most weeks: The Craft Group is growing from strength to strength - held in the Community Room at 1:00 pm on Mondays; on **alternate Wednesdays** we have our 'Let's do Lunch' at 12:30pm in Church or 'Friends, Food & Fun' (2:00 pm Community Room); our bi-monthly 'Friday Film Night' (7:00 pm Community Room) offers a great film with tasty refreshments on sale, and lastly, our bi-monthly Saturday morning 'Prayer Breakfast' starts with breakfast at 9:00am followed by reflection and prayers at 9:30am. **EVERYONE** is invited to come along to any of the above, when you will be made to feel very welcome! *(All are free but donations are appreciated.)*

/continued ...

Among his notable works were the Mechanics Institute in Burnley, Burnley Market Hall, the Peel Institution in Accrington, Todmorden Town Hall, the monument at Stoodley Pike, and the spire of St Peter's Church, Walsden — alongside our own St Stephen's Church, Burnley.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (FRIBA) in 1866 — a significant professional honour — and later opened an office in Manchester, cementing his reputation.

Looking Forward

The Quinquennial Inspection may well identify work that needs to be undertaken — and we will, as always, rise to that challenge together. As we do, we can take pride in knowing that we are caring for a building designed by a respected Victorian architect whose legacy continues to stand firm across Lancashire and Yorkshire.

St Stephen's is not only our spiritual home. It is part of a remarkable architectural story — one that we are privileged to continue.



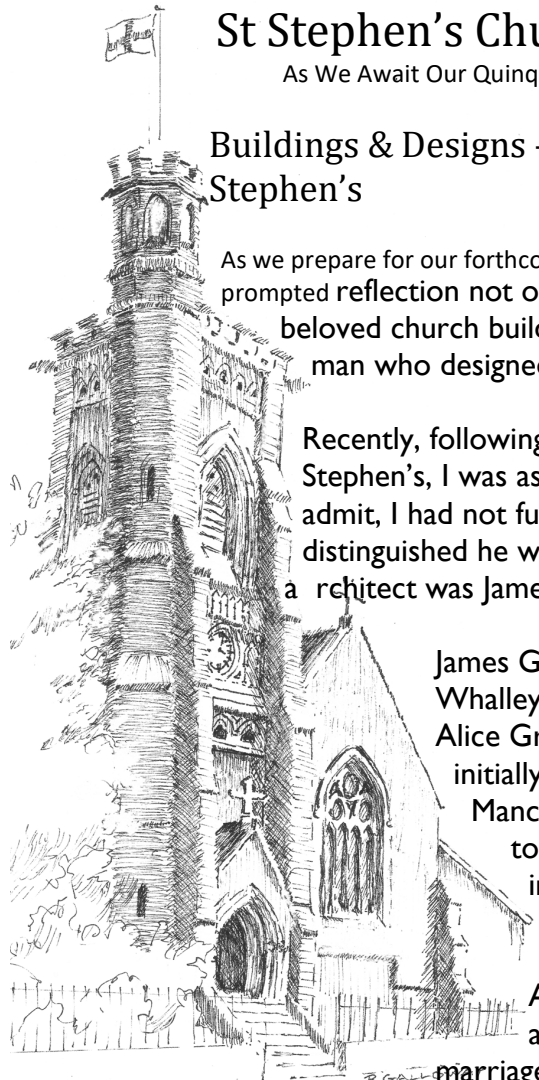
Kindest regards, as we step into one of my favourite times of the year — springtime.

Keith

From the Church News Sheet



- ☺Ladies, don't forget the Auction. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands!
- ☺The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainments, and gracious hostility!
- ☺Low self-esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 pm. Please use the back door!



St Stephen's Church, Burnley

As We Await Our Quinquennial Inspection

Buildings & Designs – The Architect Behind St Stephen's

As we prepare for our forthcoming Quinquennial Inspection, it has prompted reflection not only on the condition of our beloved church building, but also on the remarkable man who designed it.

Recently, following a social media post about St Stephen's, I was asked about the architect. I must admit, I had not fully appreciated just how distinguished he was in his own right. That architect was James Green (1822–1886).

James Green was born in 1822 at Whalley, Lancashire, the son of John and Alice Green, farmers by trade. He initially found work on the Leeds and Manchester Railway and was articled to leading engineers of the day, including George Stephenson and T. L. Gooch.

Although described as an architect at the time of his marriage in 1844, he briefly turned to industry, becoming a coal proprietor and cotton spinner. By the 1851 Census he was employing 45 men and 35 women in a cotton factory, 160 colliers, and 10 masons — clearly a man of enterprise and vision.

Architecture soon reclaimed his focus, and from 1851 onwards he resumed his career as architect and engineer, designing an impressive range of civic, industrial and ecclesiastical buildings across Lancashire and Yorkshire.

FUTURE DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Prayer Breakfast: Saturday 14 March, 9:00am breakfast, 9:30am prayers and reflection.

Church Auction Night: This will take place in the Community Room on Friday 17th April at 7:00pm, and with Keith in charge of the gavel, a fun night is guaranteed! If you have any items which you no longer want and you think might be suitable for auction, please bring them to church the week before, but PLEASE, items must be in a good condition and (if applicable) be in good working order – we don't want any items that you would not consider buying yourself!

Holy Week and Easter: Although we are presently in the season of Lent, we shall be preparing for and looking forward to celebrating the excitement of Easter – the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! (And lots of Easter eggs, hot cross buns, simnel cake and, hopefully, warmer weather!) Palm Sunday falls on 29th March, following which there will be several services during Holy Week either at St Stephen's or St Peter's.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Candlelight Supper: (Friday 1st May in church) For a most refined and elegant evening, meticulously presented for discerning guests - inspired by 'Mrs Bucket' (pronounced Bouquet). Tickets for a three-course meal are £10 each and will be available from Sunday 1st March from Pam or Linda.

And finally:

Grateful thanks to all our 'volunteers' who quietly help out in various ways around the church – cleaning, catering, flower arranging, gardening, serving, greeting, reading etc – it is so much appreciated. Do take a look through the magazine or see the notice board at the back of church for further details of things that will be taking place over the next couple of months; however, if you've any queries, please don't hesitate to have a word with Fr Andrew or one of the wardens.

That's all for now everyone – take care!

Jean, Paul, Edith and Anita

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” (Deuteronomy 31:8)

Perhaps when you read this there will be some early signs of Spring around, spring flowers, birds pairing up to nest, and, dare we hope, a rise in temperature.

The 2026 programme is out and you should have received yours. If you haven't please ask Beverley or me. You will notice there are some extra dates at other venues, linked to this year's anniversary.

LOOKING BACK

Thank you if you were able to attend the Eucharist and AGM in January.

Thank you as well for coming to my holiday talk. I thoroughly enjoyed doing it. I hope you did too.

LOOKING FORWARD

We have two branch meetings to look forward to in the community room, a Lenten Meditation and a talk. Then, there are two extra events, one in Manchester Cathedral and a faith sharing day at St. Margaret's, Ingol. See below for dates.

All meetings are held at St. Stephen's on a Tuesday, 2pm, unless otherwise stated.

MARCH

- 10th March: 2.00 pm Lenten Meditation
In the Community Room
- 14th March: 2.30 pm Provincial Service in Manchester Cathedral
- 28th March: Faith Sharing Day, at St Margaret's, Ingol—see Beverley for details.

APRIL

- 14th April: 2.00 pm 'Girl Guiding' - a talk by Carol Pike
/continued ...

protesting about high food prices and the governments restrictive regime. The Press have reported that the wounded have been dragged from their hospital beds and shot.

Dear Lord, may we learn to be grateful; may we learn to be thankful for our freedom. Thankful that our democracy was based on Christian values. May we pray for the restoration of those values in our country. Help us to understand and to care for others who have been born under different cultures. Jesus you loved the Samaritan woman, you had many disciples who were born in different countries. You did not discriminate. Your Love is open for all. Teach us to open our arms to others as you did for us at Calvary. Amen.

Christine Harbour.

A few little known facts. Refugees living in houses get £49.18p per week paid onto a bank card. This is for travel food and clothes. M had to pay his fares twice to Leeds for his two interviews. (That was a full week's card payment) Refugees that are housed in hotels are paid £9.95 per week per person. Additional payments can be paid to children or pregnant women. It is noted that past governments have been so slow to process them, many have been in refugee status for many years and even had children. M was lucky as the process seems to have been speeded up.



arriving in England I decided to fully commit my life to Christ and began attending church from the very beginning. Their kindness respect and loving behaviour had profound affect on me. When I read Bible passages and discussed it with others, I felt that God himself had placed me on this path. When I arrived in Burnley, I felt an inner calling to go to St. Peters, although there were other churches nearer. There I found love kindness and compassion. In spite of my lack of English, they allowed me to pray in my mother tongue whilst Meena read it aloud in English. This made me feel welcome.

- C. Are your family Christians?
 M. No my family are Muslim.
 C. Do you contact your family?
 M. Yes I message them. At this moment in time the Iranian people are having protests related to their basic human rights. Many have been killed in the protests and internet access has been cut off for many days The stress is affecting us badly, as we cannot contact our loved ones who are suffering.
 C. What happens now you have actually been granted political asylum?
 M. After 2 interviews and my asylum was granted I was given 28 days to find accommodation and work.
 C. What M are your hopes and dreams?
 M. My greatest hope is for the freedom of my people. Iranians have a rich history, deep culture and kind hearts. One of the earliest charters of human rights originated in my homeland, Iran. These are my hopes and dreams: Building a family. Learning the language and culture of your country. Finding suitable work and living an independent peaceful life, Making new friends.
 C. Thank you, M. It has been our joy to know you and hear your story.

Since this interview, M is now living in Manchester in a shared home. He is very happy and has found work. He has visited church twice .after leaving Burnley Since then, events have turned much worse in Iran. Men women and children have been slaughtered for

LET'S CELEBRATE



MARCH

Sending happy birthday wishes to Brenda Burton who celebrates a special 0 and Marie Cullen on the 21st.

It's Linda and Keith's wedding anniversary on March 22nd. Wishing you a lovely day for your celebrations.


APRIL

Congratulations to Marilyn Walsh who also celebrates a very special '0'
Jackie

St Stephen's Church

Stations of the Cross

Followed by



Tuesday 31st March

9.30 – 12.30 pm



Saturday Morning
Concerts at St Peter's

A new, exciting series of concerts began on 7th February when David Thornton stepped in at the last minute to replace Joanna and Roberto Garcia. David's superb programme included many organ classics, such as Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor and the Widor Toccata, but the most popular piece was undoubtedly Penguins' Playtime by Nigel Ogden who had passed away the previous week.

In more than thirty years of Saturday morning concerts, we have never had a harp recital. However, that will change on 7th March when we welcome Eira Lynn Jones, a Welsh harpist who has played in prestigious venues across the world and can frequently be heard performing with the Hallé and BBC Philharmonic orchestras.

As Easter is early this year, our April concert will take place on 11th when the St Peter's Young Singers under the direction of Meena Tomlinson will perform a variety of songs and choral music with our organist Sebastian Bernabe making a guest appearance with solo violin pieces. They will be raising money for the Women's Refuge.

We are delighted to welcome back Jill Crossland (piano) on 2nd May. An internationally acclaimed pianist who has received rave reviews from BBC Music Magazine and Gramophone.

As always, concerts begin at 11am with refreshments served from 10.30am. Free parking in the schoolyard on Rawcliffe Street and disabled parking in the church grounds. Admission, which includes refreshments £7 (U18s free)

Philip.

- M. My journey was extremely difficult and full of challenges. Many things happened on the way, If I were to describe them all in detail, it could easily become a book or a film, Where we slept depended on the country we were in. Sometimes it was in houses used by the traffickers, sometimes in small travel tents, sometimes in government camps or some nights in border police detention centres. Our food was usually very basic like bread cheese, biscuits and water. Occasionally we received warm meals, depending on the situation.
- C. Were you very scared on the boat? Were all the passengers Iranians?
- M. Yes, this part of the journey was extremely frightening and very dangerous. However, in my heart I trusted God and I felt that He was watching over me. There were eight Iranians on the boat, but many other nationalities including women and children.
- C. What happened when you arrived in England?
- M. After arriving in England we were given warm clothes and hot food. Administrative and police procedures were carried out which took several hours. We were then taken to a local hotel where we stayed one night. I was transferred to another hotel in Tamworth, near Birmingham where I stayed for 2 months. After that I was moved to Burnley.
- C. Could you choose which town to go to?
- M. No there was no choice.
- C. What was your situation here in Burnley.
- M. When I arrived in Burnley I was given a shared house. Essential items were all provided so that I could begin a new life. A small amount of money was deposited weekly on a bank card. This was to cover food, travel and clothes. I managed this money very carefully . I walked a lot instead of using public transport so that I had money to buy food which I cooked myself.
- C. What brought you to St.Peters church?
- M. My introduction to Christianity began during my migration journey. Friends I met along the way introduced me to the Christian faith. When they spoke about grace, mercy and the blessings that they had experienced I became interested .After

/continued ...

The Interview by Christine Harbour

There have been several Iranian refugees who have arrived at St Peter's in the past who have moved on. Some to train in their professions have gone to London and others to find friends of their own nationality. I and others befriended M and I took it upon myself to try and find out more about the immigrants who arrive by boat. I had lots of questions to ask.

C (that's me). Why did you leave Iran?

M. My life in Iran became very difficult for me. Because of serious problems I faced, I was in danger. I no longer felt safe. I therefore was forced to make the very hard decision to leave my family and my country in order to save my life.

C. What happens to Christians in Iran?

M. In Iran anyone who leaves Islam is considered an apostate by the authorities. This can lead to severe punishment, torture or even death. Because of this the lives of many Christians and those who convert to other faiths are constantly at risk.

C. When did you start your journey and how much did it cost?

M. I began my journey in August 2024 and arrived in January 2025. The total cost of my journey was £10,000. (Readers please note the amount of time this journey took and the enormous cost involved!)

C. What had you been told by the traffickers about England?

M. I felt totally controlled by the traffickers. They described England as a safe country that supported refugees. They told us that once we arrived we no longer would face danger. I felt the only way of escape was to pay them whatever they asked.

C. This was a large amount of money. Why did you not come by plane or even by bus or train?

M. I had no idea how to obtain the information to get through by legal routes. This information is not easily obtainable and I would have needed visas etc. I suspect that these things would be scrutinised and possibly blocked.

C. Could you please describe your journey. All those months must have been horrific.

/continued ...



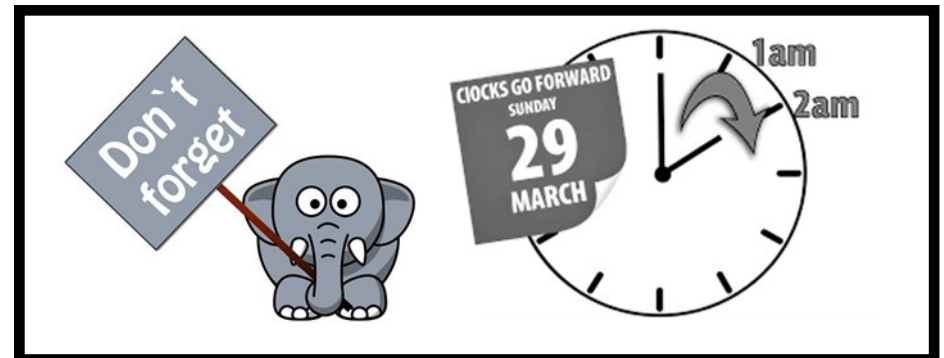
Home Visits Team

The Home Visits Team, in teams, go out once a month to visit our housebound parishioners taking home Communion and providing some company and different conversation. For the last few months this has extended to Cliviger parishioners as we have prayed for a solution to provide an incumbent for the parish and it has been lovely to meet some different faces through this. At the time of writing, a solution has been found and we will say goodbye as they return to the pastoral support of their own parish.

On the "wintry" mix day of 13 February, Alan and Carol were particularly blessed to spot 2 gorgeous deer on Towneley Golf Club as they cut through to go and visit a home in Worsthorne. This was a quiet day of visits and a total contrast to the Christmas communions where Fr Andrew and Carol had managed to visit every housebound parishioner in one day.

The home communions are also a gentle contrast to the services held at Townleyside and Bank Hall each month.

At all these visits, we are regularly told how valued and important these visits are to ensure people do not feel isolated from Church so if you are aware that anybody is in hospital or housebound (either short term or permanently), please do let Fr Andrew or Carol know so that they can be added to the rota.





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We look forward to welcoming you, come and see us soon!

Together, we also raised funds for The Children's Society, combining this collection with donations from St Stephen's Sings Christmas. Thanks to the generosity of our church community, we raised almost £300 — a wonderful reflection of the care we share beyond our own walls.

Thank you to everyone who helped organise, contribute, and take part. Days like this remind us how special it is to gather, celebrate, and support one another as a community.

You can see the photos on page 35.

Linda

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them. (Matthew 18.20)

You're invited to



Burnley Prayer Breakfast @St Stephen's

St Stephen's Church, Oxford Road, Burnley BB11 3JA

Saturday 14th March at 9.00 am



All Welcome!

Telephone:
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... From St Stephen's Vision Champion



Hi everyone,

What a lovely way we to begin February — coming together as a church family to celebrate Candlemass with our Messy Christingle service!

The church was full of conversation, creativity, and laughter as children and adults alike enjoyed crafts and Christingle making. There were plenty of orange-stained hands after decorating paper plates, and you may have spotted our colourful creations brightening the church.

Before the service, we enjoyed a relaxed break with hot dogs and soft drinks — a simple but joyful time to chat, catch up, and enjoy one another's company.

During the service, we shared and learned together about the meaning behind each part of the Christingle, reminding us how special it is to celebrate as a community.

When assembled and lit, a Christingle becomes a compact visual message:

Light in darkness, love encircling the world, and gratitude for life's gifts.

A heartfelt thank you to Lynn Barkess for her generous donation covering the oranges, sweets, and materials needed to make the Christingles. Lynn gives this gift each year in loving memory of her husband, Tom, and it is a kindness that supports this much-loved community tradition. We are also very grateful to the craft group for their beautiful knitted angels, which were warmly received by everyone.

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You must come to one of my
Candlelight Suppers ...



For a most refined and elegant evening,
meticulously presented for discerning guests

Friday 1st May: 6.45 for 7.00 pm
in St Stephen's Church

£10
per ticket

Includes a glass of wine

Tickets & menus are available
from Church - they are limited
so you need to book your
menu before they all go!
Final numbers by 26th April

**St Peter's Church
Holiday Club**

Stations of The Cross



Thursday 2nd April

10.00 - 12 noon

includes a Light Lunch



Sunday School News from St Peter's

'Jesus Christ yesterday, today and forever'.

A special year for the Diocese as a new Vision is launched and a Centenary is celebrated . We are looking forward to the Diocesan 'Big Day Out' at Blackpool in May .

Our young people have really enjoyed spending time with Ian in our Sunday School. Ian is considering ordination and he certainly inspired us . We wish him every blessing.



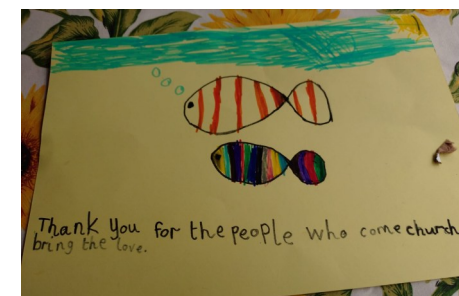
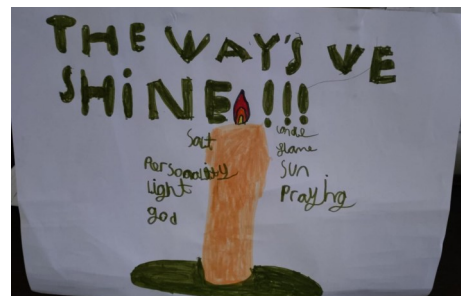
We have enjoyed lots of discussions about light with our Christingle service and readings recently talking about being the light in the world .



Our Young Singers are preparing for a concert in April to raise funds for the women's refuge . During December, in concert ,they helped raise £ 300 for the Homeless Pastors, £200 for Pendleside Hospice and enjoyed singing for the Carol Service, Nativity and at Townley Care Home .

Imogen and Alisha will be going to the Diocesan Youth Forum in march . This is an exciting day for them but inspires us all when they feedback. The views of all the young people are incorporated into wider matters that are discussed at the Diocese .

Welcome on Wednesday is a lively afternoon with toddlers and home schooled children having fun together .



As always our Sunday mornings are varied , busy and full . A time to worship joyfully and support one another in love and care.

Love from

From the Church News Sheet



- ☺For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a Nursery downstairs.
- ☺Miss Charlene Mason sang, 'I will not pass this way again', giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
- ☺Don't let worry kill you off, let the Church help!