

# The Log

Flowers appear on the earth;  
the season of singing has come,  
the cooing of doves  
is heard in our land.

SONG OF SONGS 2:12



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The Parish Magazine  
February 2024

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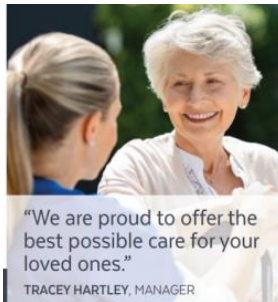
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## VICAR'S NOTES

Well, we've had our first proper freeze and good dose of stormy weather in January, but the days are getting lighter and when I look closely at the trees and shrubs I can see new buds emerging getting ready for the eventual Spring to come in a couple of months; so hold on in there, it's not too long now!

### We 'Sang with the Angels at Christmas'

Though perhaps a distant memory it was a great joy to see many of you over the Christmas period as we followed our, 'Singing with the Angels' theme to remember the first ever Christmas carol proclaimed by the heavenly host as they praised God for Jesus' birth with the words:

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."* (Luke 2.14)

This also gives me the opportunity to give thanks to those who worked so hard upfront and behind the scenes to make our various Christmas services and events such meaningful occasions.

Once again I'd also like to give thanks for your kind donations which meant Revd Simon and I had the privilege of distributing some wonderful luxury Christmas hampers to bless some lovely families and people – this photo shows a sample of some hampers ready to go out for delivery...



### Vision Emphasis for 2024

If you were able to attend one of our Sunday services on 21<sup>st</sup> January you will have heard me speak about our Vision Emphasis for 2024, '**Following Jesus with the Northern Saints**'. See page 6 for more details and plans for an exciting Parish weekend away.

### Jigsaw Celebration

In what seems to have settled into a very jolly yearly tradition, January's jigsaw festival proved to be a huge success. More details can be found on page 10 but if I can also offer my own personal thanks to those who avidly made the jigsaws (for most of the year!) ready for selling, to those who stewarded over the weekend, and also to those who cooked and served in the kitchen, offering all our visitors such a wonderful welcome. We're very grateful to have raised £2,437.50 towards general church funds.

### Bereavement Support

In conjunction with St Bartholomew's Chipping in January we launched, 'The Bereavement Journey', which is a seven-week course ([www.thebereavementjourney.org](http://www.thebereavementjourney.org)) for anyone who has suffered from a bereavement of any kind. While it's too late to join in this time I'm confident we will run it again and in the interim period, I'd very much recommend our Bereavement Group which runs in the Centenary Room at St Paul's Church on the first Monday of every month at 7.30pm.



### Lent and Easter 2024

If like me you're wondering why the hot cross buns and Easter eggs are already beginning to appear in the shops, then you can take some solace in the fact that Easter Sunday falls reasonably early this year on 31<sup>st</sup> March. You may particularly want to note the date of Ash Wednesday in your diary shown in the table below, but I include the other special dates later in March for good measure.

Date and Time	Service	Location
14 <sup>th</sup> Feb, 7.30pm	Ash Wednesday Service	St Paul's Church
10 <sup>th</sup> Mar, 10am	All Together Mothering Sunday Service	St Paul's Church
17 <sup>th</sup> Mar, 9.30am	Holy Communion with Passion readings from Mark's Gospel	St Paul's Church
24 <sup>th</sup> Mar, 10am	All Together Palm Sunday Service	St Paul's Church
25 <sup>th</sup> Mar, 8pm	Monday Compline	St Paul's Church
26 <sup>th</sup> Mar, 8pm	Tuesday Compline	St Paul's Church
27 <sup>th</sup> March, 7.30pm	Tenebrae Service (Shadows)	St Paul's Church
28 <sup>th</sup> Mar, 7.30pm	Maundy Thursday Service followed by 'The Watch'. Compline then follows afterwards	St Paul's Church
29 <sup>th</sup> Mar, 10am	All Together Good Friday Service	St Paul's Church
29 <sup>th</sup> Mar, 1.45pm	Good Friday Walk	Leaving from St Paul's Church
29 <sup>th</sup> Mar, 6.30pm	Good Friday Reflective Service	St Lawrence Church
31 <sup>st</sup> Mar, 8am	Easter Morning Holy Communion	St Lawrence Church
31 <sup>st</sup> Mar, 10am	All Together Easter Day Holy Communion Service	St Paul's Church
31 <sup>st</sup> Mar, 6.30pm	Easter Evening Celebration	St Lawrence Church

### Lent Devotional Resource

This year's free Lent devotional resource provided by Blackburn Diocese is called Journey to Freedom. Based on the book of Exodus I'll let Bishop Philip introduce it... *'Has a greater story ever been told? Exodus has all the ingredients. A flawed hero in Moses. An arch-baddie in Pharaoh. The appalling injustice of slavery. The vivid horrors of the plagues. The jeopardy of a last-minute escape. The hyper-real psycho-drama of the wilderness. The promise of a glorious freedom. What more could you want?'*

My thoughts too, what more could you want!? A4 and A5 copies are available from St Lawrence and St Paul's Churches from Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February but do let me know if you'd like to reserve a copy. Alternatively, you can download a copy from [www.blackburn.anglican.org](http://www.blackburn.anglican.org)

### Audio-Visual (AV) Proposal Update

Thanks to your generous pledges of money to support this project, in December Blackburn Diocese agreed to match fund half of the cost of the project. This means that after Gift Aid, for our part if all our pledges are fulfilled, amazingly we are now only about £1,000 short of the total cost and so we are appealing to make up that shortfall so that the new system can be installed as soon as possible.

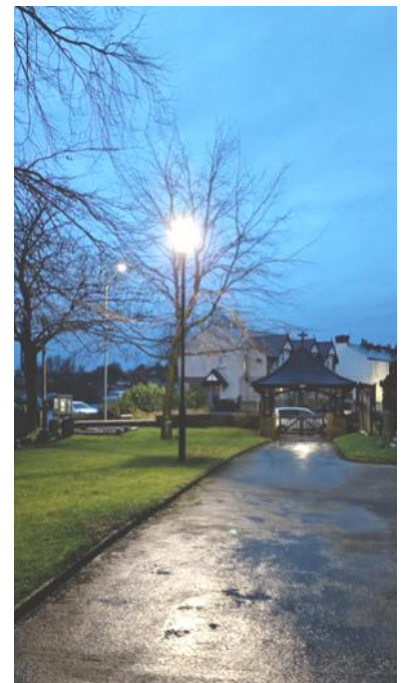
As well as offering greater worship flexibility within St Paul's Church one of the special advantages of the AV Project is that it will make livestreaming our services a much better experience for those who can't physically get to church on a Sunday – this will enable those in care homes and many other places to worship with us and feel part of our church community.

Therefore, if you would like to make a first donation, or even donate an additional amount then please let us know by emailing Churchwarden Dorothy Laver: [dorothy.laver@gmail.com](mailto:dorothy.laver@gmail.com).

## Vicar's notes continued.....

### Victorian Lamp at St Lawrence

Let there be light.... and the Victorian shaped lamp is now up, working and looking rather splendid, providing some much needed additional lighting on the pathway between the Lychgate and St Lawrence Church. With grateful thanks to Barbara and Steve McCormick for making this happen.



## LOG DISTRIBUTION

A big thank you to all The Log distribution team for the work they do in delivering The Log and collecting the annual subscription.

Here we are in February and may I take this opportunity to remind readers that subscriptions are due this month. The cost will remain the same as last year, £10.00 for 10 copies, and will be collected by your distributor when making your delivery or you can now pay by BACS direct to the church account. If you wish to do this the account details are

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It is important that, if you pay cash, the money is handed to your distributor and not brought to church or put through the vicarage door. This money will then be handed to me to update the records before being passed to the church treasurer, Graham Kelsall.

**If you don't have The Log delivered perhaps you might consider doing so; we would love to see distribution increase and at only £1 per copy, it's great value. If you would like a regular delivery, please contact me.**

Thanks again to distributors and readers.

**Judith Kaye**

**01772 785114      07769 663 156      judithkaye@sky.com**



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## THE NORTHERN SAINTS

In all our services on 21<sup>st</sup> January I was able to introduce St Lawrence with St Paul's Vision Emphasis for 2024, ***'Following Jesus with the Northern Saints'***.

Based on our overall vision of, *'Following Jesus in Loving Community'*, this year I'm hoping we'll be inspired by the way the Northern Saints' Worshipped, Walked and Witnessed to the Christian faith, such that by their example we might also be an inspiration to those around us.

Take for instance St Aidan of Lindisfarne pictured on the right. Whereas the harsh Bishop Cormac (who preceded St Aidan) failed to convert the Northumbrians to Christianity because they were apparently, 'too stubborn!', St Aidan used gentler methods to communicate the Christian gospel. Moving from Iona, St Aidan was able to establish a Monastic Cathedral on Lindisfarne, encouraging the monks who worked alongside him to offer the people, 'the milk of gentle doctrine, to bring them by degrees' to a truer and nobler living faith. Supported in his mission by King Oswald, St Aidan was known for his ability to speak to people from all spectrums of life.



**Statue of St Aidan in the grounds of Lindisfarne Priory**

(Pictures taken by Vernon Kinrade)

Then there's St Cuthbert, who aged 16 as a shepherd during a night watch saw a beam of light cut into the darkness and angels descend and then ascend taking with them a soul of exceeding brightness. Waking his fellow shepherds from their slumber he encouraged them all to give praise to God. Somewhat confused, it was only the next day they discovered that 40 miles away St Aidan had died in Bamburgh at the same time as Cuthbert's vision. This was one of lots of strange, some might say miraculous events, that happened to and around, St Cuthbert during his life and even after his death.

During Summer 2024 we'll be hearing more about Aidan, Cuthbert and the other Northern Saints in a preaching series about journeys of faith which will culminate with a church pilgrimage (by coach!) to Durham Cathedral during the weekend of Sat 21<sup>st</sup> to Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> September. My hope is we will get at least 50 people of all ages to travel across and wonderfully the new Dean of Durham Cathedral is The Very Revd Dr. Philip Plymington, who used to be my Training Incumbent when I was a Curate, and he is very much looking forward to leading part of the tour.

Congregation members John and Bev Keating have kindly offered to help organise our trip and they can be contacted on [john.keating.jk10@gmail.com](mailto:john.keating.jk10@gmail.com) for more details.



**The original wooden Sculpture "The Journey" by Fenwick Lawson in St Mary's Church, Holy Island, depicting the journey of the monks of Holy Island with St Cuthbert in his coffin, from Lindisfarne to Durham.**



## Clergy & Church Officers

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## INSPIRATIONAL WORDS brought to us this month by Janet Heap.



I am writing this on January 15<sup>th</sup> which is a Public Holiday in the USA, to commemorate the birth of Martin Luther King.

These are some extracts from Rev Dr Martin Luther King's "I have a Dream" speech given on August 28<sup>th</sup> 1963, from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, delivered to over 250,000 civil rights supporters.

Dr King began his speech:

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of black slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity

Towards the end of the speech, Mahalia Jackson (an American Gospel singer who had been singing to the crowd before the speech) called out "Tell them about the Dream, Martin" Dr King then departed from his prepared text and continued:

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream

I have a dream today

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed "We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream today

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low; the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together

The speech ends



**Martin Luther King**  
(photo by permission of  
Wikimages via Pixabay)

Let freedom ring from every hill and from every mountainside Let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Spiritual "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last."

Perhaps with all the inequalities in today's world, this Dream is as relevant today as it was 60 years ago.

Rev Dr Martin Luther king was born on January 15<sup>th</sup> 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia and was assassinated on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1968 aged 39 in Memphis Tennessee He married Coretta Scott in 1953 and they had four children: Yolanda, Martin III, Dexter and Bernice.

## A JIGSAW CELEBRATION: JIGSAWS, JIGSAWS EVERYWHERE!

The weather is always going to be a factor when holding an event in January but thankfully the snow and ice of recent days had gradually gone and despite rain and storm Isha pending on the Sunday we had an amazing weekend with greatly increased numbers attending. The fun started on Friday afternoon when made up jigsaws on a variety of boards kept arriving - we estimate around 500 in total, so keeping the right box with the right jigsaw was a bit of a challenge. Initially we were able to display 200 of them in every nook and cranny around St. Paul's Church, with the remainder stacked up ready to replace jigsaws as they were sold. (150 kindly donated boxed jigsaws were also displayed).



When the event got underway the busiest people were the collators and boxers who had a constant queue of people eager to make their purchases. By 4.00pm on Sunday we had some jigsaws left but the stacks had gone and the relatively few jigsaws which remained will be gone through and stored. The financial result was £2,437.80 – an amazing total

which will go to general Church funds but the social and community benefits of the weekend cannot be underestimated.

Establishing this as an annual event would not have been achieved without the enthusiasm and support of people like Peter & Lib Turver and Sheila Roberts, not forgetting those who all year round make up the jigsaws for us. We also don't forget that it was Sheila Quigley, following a visit to the Jigsaw event in Ramsbottom who suggested that we could run a similar event here in Longridge. It was lovely to welcome a representative from the Ramsbottom Jigsaw Festival team to our event this year and we look forward to advertising their event which will run from the 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2024.



A word of thanks must also go to the hardworking catering team with Judith Kaye, Kathleen English and others spending the weekend in the Centenary Room kitchen. Well done to the soup makers and to the cake bakers, in fact our thanks go to everyone who came and in any way ensured the events success.

Now of course we start all over again making Jigsaws for January 2025. If you would like to complete some then have a word with Dot Little

who may well be able to supply you both with the jigsaws and the boards to do them on,

**Dot Little**



## A JIGSAW CELEBRATION continued.....

### Footnote

We must thank Revd. Simon for his advertising initiative which undoubtedly brought people from a far wider area and a personal thank you from the organising team to the people who came at the end of the weekend and helped with the clearing and transporting of jigsaws and tables etc. which was so much appreciated.



Social togetherness is more important now than it ever was.

Traditional festival days and related celebrative events in the calendar bring people together and strengthen communities.

Mothering Sunday has come a long way from its origins but remains a means of fostering closeness.



Back in the 16th century, on Mothering Sunday, people used to return to the church where they were baptised, or the local parish church. This was known as their 'mother church'. The essence of this practice was that people remained in touch with the community they had grown up in. The actual service took place on the fourth Sunday of Lent and symbolised the coming together of families.

As time moved on, the make-up of communities entered a stage of transition. Mothering Sunday was adapted to fit the evolving nature of local people and places. Many families became dispersed due to upheavals within society. Related to this, the practices associated with the day changed too.

As practices gradually changed, it became a day when servants of large households and country estates were allowed to return home to visit their families. The day itself became less focused on the religious roots and more about specific relations within families.

In modern times, there has been increased commercialisation and secular uptake. Mothering Sunday has become very much a recognition of the role of a mother in contemporary society. Gifts are sold, flowers are bought and cards are sent.

Mothers of all kinds wake up across the country knowing that this is their day. A day to be treated and receive gifts from loved ones, an important day for families coming together and making the ladies of our community feel cherished.

Stronger bonds within families lead to stronger bonds within communities. In potentially fractious times, this is more vital than ever. Taken from "mothersunion.org if you would like to read the article in full.



### Dates

Feb 6 <sup>th</sup>	Favourite Recipes (Bring one along to share)
March 5 <sup>th</sup>	AGM followed by a presentation by Dot Little & Ruth Buckley 'Walking the Lancashire Coastline'



## CHURCH FLOWER CLUB

After the traditional lack of flowers in church throughout Advent, it is always nice to see the explosion of floral decorations ready for Christmas Day. However, this year the Advent wreath for me held a new meaning. The flower team made it together at our November meeting. Four separate arrangements were made by the group as we sat around the table, under the guidance note of 'anything goes.' I am sure one or two folk thought I had lost the plot, surely we had to follow a theme? Four very different styles emerged, each one with a different mix of foliage. But when we put them together the wreath looked lovely. We then put some artificial white berries all around the wreath which tied it together beautifully. It was a gentle reminder that we are all different, we have different styles, skills and flaws. But put together we form one seamless and valuable entity. If you think of the berries of our Christian faith, the thing that binds us, how formidable are we?



As we move on into a new year we will be concentrating on trying to reduce our impact upon the planet. Be prepared for some new ways of displaying our flowers and even some requests for audience participation! The gardeners amongst you will be planning your seed sowing by now. May we humbly ask that some flowers for cutting be included in your plans? One of the easiest ways we can protect the fragility of the planet is to reduce the number of flowers we use that have flown further across the world than most of us go on holiday. Locally sourced flowers are a big priority for us and you can definitely help. Just think of it as we did our Advent wreath. It doesn't matter what you grow or pick from your garden, it will come together with everyone else's and make a beautiful arrangement. Thank you so much.



If you would like to join our monthly flower club, it is open to anyone. You do not have to arrange flowers in church to come along to our meetings. We have a range of activities and demonstrations throughout the year on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday on the month, 7.30 – 8.30.

If you would like any information on how you can be involved with our flower team, both at St Paul's and St Lawrence's or how to help fund the blooms in church, please do give me a call on 07880348597 or email [donnarowegreen@gmail.com](mailto:donnarowegreen@gmail.com).

Thank you so much. Donna.

### St. Lawrence Flower Rota.

February 4<sup>th</sup> In memory of William & Ettie Fordham

11<sup>th</sup> In memory of Mary Wilkinson and her father W.J. Wilkinson.

### St. Paul's Flowers in February – Linda Eccleston

As Ash Wednesday is on the 14<sup>th</sup> February marking the start of Lent no new fresh altar flowers will then be brought into church until Easter.

A big thank you to everyone who has a box or made a donation to this very worthwhile charity. This year the total raised was £1,050 which will be used towards the work of Barnardo's in the North West of England. As a parish we have been supporting Barnardo's since 1950 when it started through Sunday School and we are grateful to Sheila Roberts and Rhona White who have taken over the collection.

A letter of thanks and appreciation has already been received from Barnardo's.



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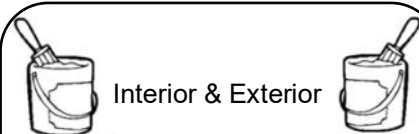
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**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

It seems like quite a long time ago now but Happy New Year to all our young people and their families and friends.

We kicked off our first week in Children's Church with the Epiphany. We discussed how people from all around the world celebrated this special day in many different ways from chalking above their front doors to leaving sweets in children's shoes. The children played a fun game 'spot the new emoji', watched a video then they put the emojis in the order of the story. We discussed how the wise men travelled many miles to come and meet their new King and offer Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh as they knew Jesus was no ordinary King. We were very fortunate to actually be able to look at some real Frankincense and Myrrh which were brought in kindly by Becky. We reflected on how Jesus is not just our King, He is our Saviour and how we can worship and serve Him.



Last week we began our new series about the life of Jesus starting with Jesus' baptism. The children watched a short video and then played a game of 'in the river, on the bank' which they enjoyed very much. The children talked about their own baptisms and what this meant to be cleansed of

their sins and turn to Jesus. The children took part in an activity whereby they put their hands in flour until they were covered, then they washed away their old life with the water and follow their new life with Jesus. We also talked about the next stage of the children's journey with Jesus, which would be 'Confirmation'.

This Sunday we are looking at the story of Jesus' temptation and how he is challenged to prove He is the Son of God.

We love to meet new families through our children's and young people's groups. Do come and join us or feel free to contact Barbara McCormick [barbara@her-email.co.uk](mailto:barbara@her-email.co.uk) or Carolyn Barton [carolynbarton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:carolynbarton@hotmail.co.uk) if you'd like to find out more.



**SCHOOL NEWS – from Headteacher Catherine Parkin****School Worship: Peace**

During Advent, like many churches and schools around the country, we used our beautiful Advent wreath to count towards Christmas and help us prepare for the celebration to come. This year, the second candle (sometimes known as the peace candle) remained unlit. This was done to remind us that while we were preparing for the happy celebration of Christmas, many areas of the world were experiencing war. It seemed important to start 2024 with a focus on peace. Never has the world needed it so much. We have been learning about St Paul, who as Saul, was a man dedicated to the use of force and violence to achieve what he wanted. Not only was he stopped from doing this, but he became one of Jesus's most ardent followers – a sure sign that even warmongers can be changed by the God of Peace.

**Carols by Candlelight**

It was the perfect way to finish Autumn Term: the whole school gathered together for our final worship of 2023. After the noise and general 'busyness' of Christmas lunch, parties, the Christmas Market, pantomime and so on; it was lovely to quieten things down, and reflect on the coming of Jesus Christ to the world. This was time to stop the frantic activity and be still, as we anticipated the birth of the Redeemer.



**Mrs Parkinson lights a candle for the pupils and staff of Class 6.**



**The whole school together to hear the Christmas story through readings and carols.**

**Outdoor Learning**

Because of the demands of the modern Primary curriculum, there is much less 'free time' in classrooms these days. Teachers can often feel it's a struggle to complete all units of work before the end of a term. Having said that our Reception staff are also very good at adapting learning to suit the children, as well as making the most of unforeseen opportunities. January brought snow, and with it the chance to wrap up and get outside to work alongside others in a different environment.





## SCHOOL NEWS – continued.....

### We are so proud of you

We found out recently that our school was placed 13<sup>th</sup> for overall performance out of 582 Lancashire schools. This was based on KS2 SATs results for our 2023 cohort. My thanks to the children and staff for their commitment. What a wonderful bunch of young people we have sent to Year 7.



### PTFA News

The PTFA have some very exciting events planned for this year, from Discos to Chocolate Bingo.

In February we are holding a disco for the Children, we hope there will be lots of dancing, singing, glow sticks and they all enjoy themselves.

*Emily Oates*



### YOUTH GROUP TOP TRUMPS

Youth Group started to meet again after the Christmas holiday on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> of January with a new format. Both the older and younger groups have merged, and the times have slightly changed. The new single session runs from 5:30pm until 7.00pm in the Centenary Room at St. Paul's.

Sadly, in recent months the number of young people attending has been falling. As we lose some of the older members to the local inns and restaurants and they are not being replaced with new members. A larger, single session makes more games possible and creates a better atmosphere. On a brighter note, last week's session saw the young people creating their own version of the Top Trumps game, following the theme of Walking with Jesus and the Northern Saints. Each was tasked with creating their card and marking down their chosen saints based on the three criteria of saintliness, Bible appearances and miracles. I'm not certain who, eventually came top, but it provided an excellent talking point and I am very grateful to Olivia, who developed the idea and Amii who led the session.

We are praying that this year brings growth, in terms of numbers attending, and also in the faith of those who continue to support the group from week to week. All our young people continue to be a source of inspiration and joy. Maybe they should create their very own top trump cards?

**Rev. Simon**



### YOUTH BAND CONCERT



After the success of last year's concert, the Longridge Youth Band are excited to present their end of term concert, at St. Lawrence's Church on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March, starting at 2:00PM.



The music will include a varied programme from traditional brass music to pop and rock chart hits from different eras. Entry to the event is free, but any donations to the Youth Band will be greatly appreciated. Do come along and support our local young brass players.



**Jonathan Ford (Longridge Youth Band)**



## AN UP-DATE FROM MUNGO, LEANNE AND BROOKE GILCHRIST

**Happy New Year to everyone from us in Riyadh!**

We are settling in well and loving the slower pace of life in Saudi Arabia. Although the driving is crazy! Mungo will soon have to drive to work as we are all moving into the city to a new Compound. I am happy to catch Ubers! For now, at least.

Saudi Arabia is a lovely country with very beautiful people, we are so humbled by how welcome we have been made. Everything is very calm and quiet, quite the contrast. We have been welcomed to Saudi by everyone we meet, a real feel of inclusion. Around the Compound we can pretty much dress as we

would in the UK, but when we go off the Compound, both Mungo and I prefer to dress as “respectful expats”, in that Mungo wears long trousers and I wear an Abaya, basically a long coat with long sleeves. I would also be fine wearing a long-sleeved maxi-dress, ex-pat females are not expected to wear a head scarf at all. The colours and styles of the Abayas I see around are beautiful and are a bit of a fashion statement as well as a religious item of clothing.

We were really struck at Christmas by the calm and quiet around our festive season, as Muslims don't celebrate Christmas. It was noticeable just how relaxed we all were in the build-up. Everything is very family orientated here and there was not the “in your face” commercial over-stimulation. We went to New Zealand to see my family for Christmas and the New Year, and it was just a lovely family time, catching up with family and friends.

Living in such a faith filled country means that we see people praying at different times during the day, very openly. There are prayer mats and Kuran's everywhere. Prayer rooms are attached to the public toilets in the malls and people just go and pray when they hear the “Call to Prayer” come over the loudspeakers that are dotted around the malls and in the city. I was at Brooke's horse-riding last week and heard the “Call to Prayer”, so a group of men that were there went and knelt in

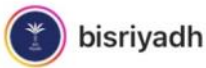


a spot facing a wall and prayed together, the women did the same in a different spot. It is such a time of coming together and worship. Women and men that don't know each other, join in prayer, although separately. The challenge is for us to live our faith, within the constraints of the country, but we're doing ok and know we are being prayed for, so thank you to those who continue to keep us in their prayers, it is very obvious to us.

Mungo is loving his job and there is not the same pressure as when he was working in the UK. It's great being together finally, everything has been on hold for the past year until we could be together. We have seen God's plan revealed for the path here.



## An Up-date from Mungo, Leanne and Brooke Gilchrist- continued.....



Brooke is at the British International School in Riyadh, and she loves it there. They celebrate almost daily and are aware of emotional health and wellbeing for their students. She is doing well both academically and emotionally. We were unsure if it was the right school for her, but it has proved to be the best. There was more support put in place than she needs so she has been able to move forward, knowing that it is there if she needs it.

The great excitement in the early days was seeing camels being transported inside Toyota pick-ups! Brooke would see them on the way to school and we followed one when we were travelling back from the



city one time. The Uber driver drove like a maniac to get us behind it so Mungo could get a photo. They just sit and look completely relaxed. There are groups of them by the roadside, including babies and Brooke always talks about them when she gets home from school.

I am studying a Diploma in Teaching in Further Education. I'm slowly meeting more people and have joined the PTFA at Brooke's school and their Choir. I am getting into a routine, still getting used to not working.

The days go quickly, and we are all becoming more settled every day. The constant sunshine has a lot to do with that. We are home for half term and looking forward to seeing everyone.

Our first meeting of 2024 began with the Club's AGM with the financial statement showing that the club currently has a sound bank balance enabling the Annual Membership fee to remain at £5. The Election of Officers saw Fred Little agree to continue as Chairperson and although wishing to step down, with no-one coming forward, Adrienne Atkinson agreed to remain as Secretary and book the speakers for another year. Treasurer Audrey Laker will complete the current programme as Treasurer and then hand this on to Keith Thompson from September 2024.

### Tuesday Club

Audrey took over from her husband Bert as Treasurer of the Tuesday Club back in 1999 – Bert having been Treasurer since 1986 – an amazing 38 years service between them. There will be an opportunity to officially thank Audrey at the May meeting.

Following the AGM Steve Halliwell gave a detailed presentation on Holker Hall mainly concentrating on the gardens and the hall's wonderful array of magnificent trees, shrubs and flowers – taking us through the changes and colour each season brings. Steve's knowledge and enthusiasm shining through the presentation.

Attendance at Tuesday Club has slightly fallen so it would be good to see some new members and visitors joining us for the remaining part of the 2023/24 programme. There would be no better time to come along than the 13<sup>th</sup> February when Ann & Gordon Sharp will return with some more of their wonderful photography – 'Out and About with Spellbound' always one of the highlights of the Tuesday Club programme. Visitors are always welcome - £2 fee for the evening.

**ST PAUL'S MEN'S GROUP**

In October, we attended a Games' Night at Longridge Golf Club. It was not our most well attended evening, but those who went had a fun time. We were warmly welcomed by the regulars and the decision to mix in rather than organise our evening separately was a good one. We played, or in some cases, tried to play Darts, Snooker, Quoits, Golf, Bull Ring, Whist and Dominoes. Alex proved to be a master of several of these dark arts whereas, sadly, I did not. We might do it again sometime. If you think it is a good idea please let me know.

In November, it was back to the golf course, but this time for a Saturday morning breakfast. This was well attended and the prevailing view suggested it was a very successful format. A thought provoking chat by Rev Mike on friendship kicked off the morning. This was followed by some lively and interesting discussion and a cracking breakfast. We were away before 11.00 with plenty of the day left and we will do this again for sure.

In December, we decided to let our hair down by meeting in a pub and just chatting. A good turn out, lots of banter and laughter and a late night for four of the group who relocated in the Durham Ox when the Dog Inn closed. And, despite not being on the agenda, some interesting philosophical and religious discussions with a range of perspectives.

Rev Mike and I have come up with the following programme for early 2024

**Wed 7th Feb - Curry evening at Hamadan in Longridge 7.30pm**

**Thu 7th Mar - Meeting upstairs at Applejacks 7.30pm**

**Sat 13th April - Breakfast at Longridge Golf Club 9.00am**

**Wed 1st May - Walk and visit to a Pub for refreshment 6.30pm**

**Thu 6<sup>th</sup> June - Man Alive event at Blackburn Cathedral 7.30pm**

If you have any good ideas about future meet ups please do let us know.

Later in the year, there will be an opportunity to attend a weekend at Rydal Hall near Grasmere in the Lake District, from the evening of Friday 4th October to early afternoon Sunday 6th October. Revd Mike and the Rector of Colne are hoping to take 50 blokes from various churches away for some good teaching, some good company and some good outdoor walking (to suit a range of energy levels) in the Lakes. The theme for this is going to be 'The heart of King David'. It is a beautiful location and further details will follow soon.

*John Keating.*

**CHOIR NOTES from Organist Paul Warren**

**Didn't they do well? And didn't Rosemary do well?**

Yes, a very well deserved "well done" to the choir for the Christmas Carol service. Rosemary was very chuffed when told that someone in the congregation asked "Who was the young lady singing that lovely solo?"!

And a big thank you also to Jess (on the flute) and Elizabeth (on the cornet). And thank you also to the handbell ringers accompanying the choir in "Silent Night".

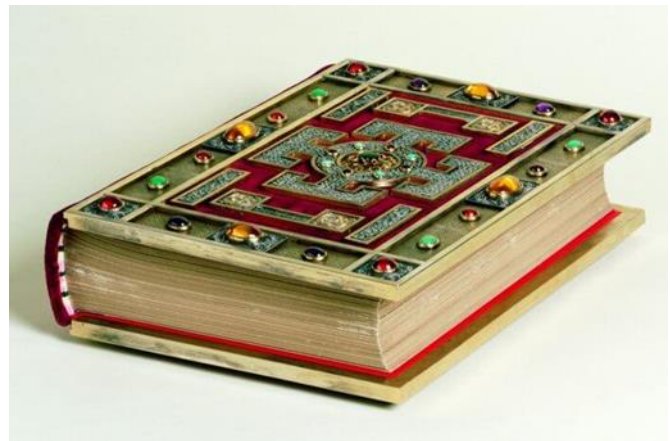
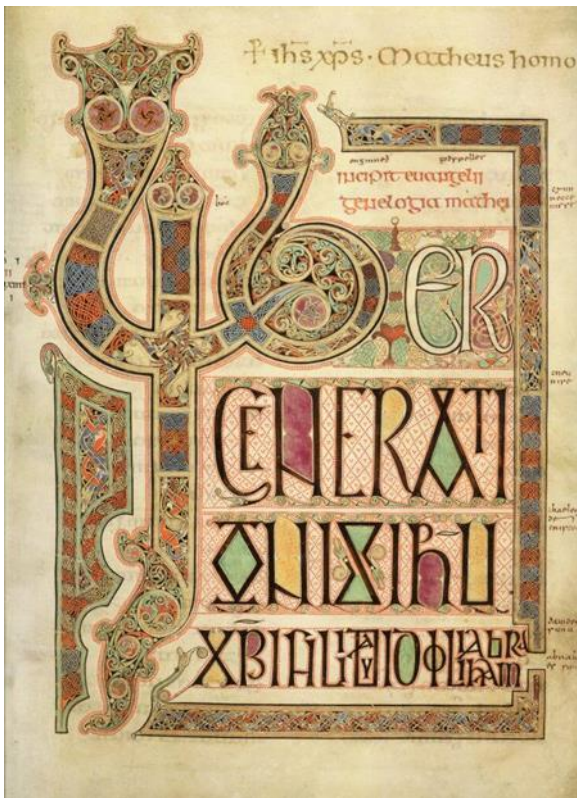
After the Christmas break, the choir have now resumed weekly choir practice, and we're delighted to welcome back Karen Burdett, who joins Rosemary, Ann and Amii in the altos.

In getting ready for the Carol Service, I was very grateful that having an organ at home, and living in the same town as where I play, it's easy to arrange additional practices for groups of the choir. The altos took advantage of this, as did our tenor and bass singers. Actually, the bass singer also took advantage of alcoholic beverages as well as the music facilities I had to offer! Mind you, it should be noted that I enthusiastically joined him!

I'm trying a different approach to running choir practice this year. Rather than go through every hymn for the services, we now just go over those we're not quite so familiar with. This frees up time to allow us to keep several anthems on the go. Well, that's the intention, so let's wait and see if theory and practice agree!



## EADFRITH, CUTHBERT AND THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS



*Photos by permission of Addison Publications.*

To support our vision for 2024 — “Following Jesus with the Northern Saints”, and through the kindness of Addison Publications, the London based purveyors of facsimile edition heritage books. We are delighted to announce that a near perfect facsimile of the Lindisfarne Gospels will be available to view at St. Paul’s Church from mid February until the beginning of May.

The facsimile itself is extraordinary and rare. Originally limited to 290 copies, it reproduces the more elaborate and ornate binding that was instigated in 1853 by Edward Maltby, Bishop of Durham. This binding consists of a silver frame, coloured stones, tin and silver-based alloys, and a spine richly embroidered in gold thread.

The book contains the first version of the Gospels in English and represents a culmination of Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, Germanic, Roman and Byzantine styles. It is highly regarded by palaeographers, art historians, linguists and collectors alike and now, we hope, by you too.

And as for the original, well Eadfrith, Circa CE700, was not only a monk and the Bishop of the great Benedictine Abbey of Lindisfarne, he was also an extraordinary artist who worked for about 10 years to create a unique book in which he wrote and illuminated the four gospels, producing a work of art that is now one of the greatest treasures of the British Library.

Eadfrith’s Gospels were dedicated to that other bishop of Lindisfarne, the venerated and inspirational northern saint, Cuthbert. Cuthbert was originally buried on Lindisfarne after his death in CE687. Later to protect it from Viking raids, Cuthbert’s body was moved to Durham Cathedral. The fact that this cherished book survived at all, is miraculous. Lindisfarne was sacked by the Vikings in CE793 and somehow the Gospels were reprieved. The vellum pages of the original are still bound together some 1,300 year later.

The book itself is written in Latin for a world very different from our own. The world of the book accepts Christianity, but also insists that there are dragons. It depicts coiling serpents, tail eating monsters and intricate latticed shapes from an age that is all but lost to us now. Through Eadfrith’s work, we are offered the medieval notion of the cross as a clear and triumphant symbol of Christ’s victory amongst the marvels and terrors of both his and St. Cuthbert’s understanding of the world.

<https://addisonpublications.com/portfolio/the-lindisfarne-gospels/>

*Revd. Simon King*



## HYMNS WE LOVE – Paul Warren

## Stand up! Stand up for Jesus

In an ever increasing secular society, I sometimes feel that this hymn is more applicable than it has ever been. But let's begin by looking at the origins of this fine hymn.

The hymn was written by George Duffield (1818 - 88), and came about from a tragedy. Possibly this tragedy might stand as a warning to ministers on the danger of their garb (although I'm not remotely suggesting that Mike should abandon the clerical garb!).

George Duffield was born in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He was educated at Yale and Union Seminary in New York. He was a minister in New York, New Jersey, Michigan and Illinois. He died in Detroit. Let us go back to the year 1858 and place ourselves in Philadelphia. There was a well known evangelist called Dudley Atkins Tyng and he carried out a particularly successful summer mission which attracted thousands of young people and secured many conversions.



After one meeting which attracted a crowd of more than 5000 people, Tyng was walking alone through the fields of his farm. He stretched out his arm to pat a mule which was working a machine stripping cord from the cob. One of the long sleeves of his preaching gown got caught up in a cog, and he was drawn into the mill where his arm was torn off. It was some time before he was found, and by then he was bleeding to death. He was carried into his house, and his friends and associates in the mission gathered to witness his painful end.

George Duffield, a presbyterian minister who was a helper on Tyng's mission, was one of those who supported him to the end. Duffield suggested that the meeting on the next day should be cancelled, but Tyng disagreed. "What shall I tell the crowd?" asked Duffield. "Tell them", the dying man said, "to stand up for Jesus".

Deeply moved, Duffield went home and wrote this hymn. The following Sunday he preached on a text from Ephesians 6:14 "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness". He concluded his sermon by reading out the verses from his hymn. The hymn first appeared on a sheet of paper for Sunday school children, and was later published in a Baptist newspaper, from where its popularity grew throughout the United States. It was even sung by soldiers in the American Civil War.... soldiers on both sides of the conflict.

In my childhood days, this was a popular hymn, but since then it seems to have gradually fallen out of favour, most likely because it can be perceived as being a militant hymn. But in this present age, I sometimes feel that we, the church, should stand up and make ourselves heard. In other words, stand up for Jesus.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
ye soldiers of the cross;  
lift high his royal banner,  
it must not suffer loss.  
From victory unto victory  
His army shall he lead,  
till every foe is vanquished,  
and Christ is Lord indeed.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
stand in his strength alone;  
the arm of flesh will fail you,  
ye dare not trust your own.  
Put on the gospel armour,  
each piece put on with prayer;  
where duty calls or danger,  
be never wanting there.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus  
the trumpet call obey  
forth to the mighty conflict  
in this His glorious day.  
Ye that are men, now serve Him  
against unnumbered foes;  
let courage rise with danger,  
and strength to strength oppose.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
the strife will not be long;  
this day the noise of battle,  
the next the victor's song.  
To him that overcometh  
a crown of life shall be;  
he with the King of Glory  
shall reign eternally.





## BRIGADE NEWS

Happy New Year, We're back at Brigade ready for a full year ahead of fun faith and friendship. Whilst we enjoyed the time off over the festive period there's no better feeling than the first night back. It was such a pleasure to welcome all those smiling faces and to see the excitement and chaos Wednesday nights bring- we wouldn't have it any other way.



Our theme for this term is 'Love' and what that means to us- we'll be thinking about Gods Love for us and the world we live in, our love of others, love and gratitude, loving our community and loving ourselves.

Martins and Yteam talked about what Love means to us by giving examples of what love is and what love isn't. They then had a go at performing some drama pieces to display these points. The boys chose a drama piece around fighting to show what love isn't, one group chose protecting friends against bullying and another chose jealousy.

JTC and Seniors started off by writing something we are grateful for and putting it into our Gratitude Jar, we'll be doing this each week. We then did bingo where we had to ask questions to one another to understand and appreciate our differences and attributes to complete a full house. We then took some time to look through the bible to find as many stories that we could that displayed love- we discussed some of the stories and the interpretation of love- these included feeding the 5000, the 10 commandments, parting of the sea and the crucifixion. We then played some love inspired games- Cupid tag and capture the heart. We will be doing many activities over the next few weeks like painting positive pebbles and putting them around Longridge, making Valentines cards for the local nursing homes and taking part in a wellbeing night to focus on loving ourselves.

We have some fantastic national events planned for this year, camps, young leader training, fundraising and more Brigade run services- so lots for me to write about and share with you all. If you have any questions about Brigade, you may want to sign your child up, come and volunteer or just see what we're all about- don't hesitate to get in touch.

Bring on 2024.— *Olivia Stewart*



## CHURCHES TOGETHER IN LONGRIDGE AND DISTRICT

### WORLD DAY OF PRAYER (A WOMEN LED, GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT)

*'Bear with one another in love'*

**Friday 1st MARCH 2024 11am Christ Church, Berry Lane**

The World Day of Prayer is celebrated on the first Friday in March each year by over 120 countries. This year, the service has been prepared by women from Palestine, and includes music and reflection as well as an opportunity to pray for women from all parts of the world and to hear about their hopes and concerns. The theme of the service 2024 'Bear with one another in love' seems very appropriate for these women who will not give up witnessing the love of Jesus Christ.

We will be joined by a group of children from Berry Lane School who will be leading us in two of the hymns. The service will last for approximately one hour and will be led by members of all our local churches. A light lunch will be served in the church hall after the service.

**Everyone is welcome. Come and join us!**

#### LENT LUNCHES

Last year you will recall that at the request of St. Lawrence with St. Paul the day of the Lent Lunches was changed from Friday to Wednesday enabling two of the five lunches to be held in St. Paul's Centenary Room. Again this year the Churches Together planning group have been supportive of keeping to Wednesday's and we hope you will join us for the usual soup and sandwich lunch at the following venues. All proceeds will go to the work of CAFOD and Christian Aid.

Wednesdays:

21st February	St. Paul's Centenary Room
28th "	St. Wilfrid's Parish Room
6th March	St. Paul's Centenary Room
13th "	St. Wilfrid's Parish Room run by Alston Lane
20th "	Christ Church Hall run by Christ Church and Grimsargh

*Please Note: Brew Time will still run on the 21<sup>st</sup> February and the 6<sup>th</sup> March from 9.00am – 11am with Lent Lunches following from 12 Noon to 1.00pm.*

#### FRIDAY MORNING PRAYERS

A reminder that Friday Morning Prayers during 2024 will be at St. Wilfrid's. We meet in the Parish Room at 7.45am. Prayers are led in turn by the different denominations and last approximately 15 minutes. Everyone is welcome – do join us if you can.

*Canon Doyle who is Chairman of CTLD this year has always placed much importance on praying together. He reminds us that as Churches Together we have come together for Friday morning prayers for over 35 years – the Vicar of Longridge would then have been Revd. Richard Awre.*



#### BAPTISMS

**We congratulate and pray for those who have been recently Baptised into our Church family:**

Toby and Bethany Holliday 28th January 2024 at St. Paul's Church



## FAVOURITE RECIPE – THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON

### Slow Cooker Chinese Braised Beef.

With the Chinese New Year falling on the 10<sup>th</sup> February we asked Kai and Ali Ng to share with us one of their favourite recipes. They chose this one because Tangs Chinese in Preston (best Chinese for authentic food - locally) make a great version which Noah loves. We wanted to be able to have the same at home, so here is the recipe we found which is similar to the one from the restaurant.

#### Ingredients

- 900 g beef shin cut into chunky cubes
- 240 ml hot beef broth or use a stock cube
- 80 ml dark soy sauce
- 120 ml Chinese cooking wine or use dry sherry
- 3 tbsp dark brown sugar
- 2 onions sliced thinly
- 5 garlic cloves finely chopped
- 2 tbsp ginger paste or fresh grated ginger
- 5 spring onions finely sliced
- 3 star anise
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 tsp Chinese five spice
- ¼ tsp Szechuan peppercorns crushed (optional)
- 1 tbsp cornflour (cornstarch) dissolved in a little cold water



#### To serve

- 1 red chilli finely sliced, to serve
- spring onions
- fresh ginger cut into thin matchsticks

#### Instructions

1. Optional: brown the beef first until nicely seared on all sides. Use a large skillet or your crockpot if it allows for searing.
2. Add the beef in your slow cooker together with the garlic, onion, star anise and cinnamon stick.
3. Combine the beef broth, soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, sugar and ginger in a measuring jug and stir. Pour over the beef, sprinkle with the five spice and add the spring onions and the pepper.
4. Cook for 7 hours on **low setting**, or until the beef is very tender.
5. If the sauce needs thickening, add the cornflour slurry to the slow cooker and switch to the **high setting**. Cook for 30 minutes or until the cooking juices are slightly thickened.
6. Use two forks to shred the beef. Check the seasoning and serve over steamed rice or udon noodles with the sliced chilli, ginger and spring onions.



### Brew Time

**Wednesday's from 8.50am-11am  
In St Paul's Centenary Room.**

We serve tea, coffee, toast, crumpets and cakes!  
**And there's always a warm and friendly welcome.**  
**Do join us we would love to see you.**

Kath & Jacqui Bev & John



## TRAVELS WITH DOROTHY LAVER

### An inspiring journey to Three Islands: Mull, Staffa and Iona

Listening to Rev Mike's sermon on Vision Sunday I thought of my late Uncle Tommy who definitely inspired my love of history as I was growing up. He read extensively about Scottish History, particularly about the exiled Stuarts and the failed 1715 and 1745 uprisings. (I still have his books but admit to not having read them all yet!) We had several summer holidays to Scotland visiting what seemed to be umpteen castles. Did you know there are over 1,500 castles in Scotland but its thought there may have been as many as 3,000!

In 2011 my younger son, Dominic, was thinking of applying to St Andrews University and we decided to have a holiday near there to look round the town. After a week in that area we moved to Oban on the west coast, a place I had visited as a child. Oban is an important ferry port and is the hub for the Caledonian MacBrayne ferries to the islands of the Inner and Outer Hebrides.

I had never been to Mull and we booked a day trip across on the ferry to Mull with a bus tour to the western side of the island. I remember the coach driver being very annoyed with camper vans that didn't pull over to let him pass on the single track road from Craignure to the village of Fionnphort as he was trying to keep to his timetable. Fionnphort is a small fishing village where pilgrims and tourists take the ferry across to Iona. But before going over to Iona we went on a small boat trip to the small island of Staffa.

The Vikings gave Staffa its name (old Norse for stave) as the basalt columns reminded them of their houses which were built from vertically placed tree-logs. The island is uninhabited but is famous for its sea cavern named Fingal's Cave. There were many famous visitors in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century including Queen Victoria, J M W Turner and Felix Mendelssohn whose dramatic Hebrides Overture inspired more tourists to visit the island. We were lucky that the weather for our visit was calm and we could actually land on the island and negotiate the narrow walkway just above the water level and enter the cave itself. Although there was a handrail it was a bit scary at times. It was well worth the effort though and from the inside we could look across to Iona framed in the archway of the cave.



**Fingals Cave**

The boat then brought us across to Iona where we walked up to the Abbey Church. The Abbey stands on the site of the monastery founded in AD 563 by St Columba from Ireland. It was in this monastery that King Oswald of Northumbria grew up in exile. He subsequently invited missionaries to come from Iona to restore Christianity and inspire and convert the people of Northumbria. (Rev Mike will be telling us more about the work of St Aidan who was sent from Iona to work on Lindisfarne). The Abbey is in a beautiful setting and was much loved by John Smith the leader of the Labour Party who was buried there following his death in 1994. It is amazing to think that there has been Christian worship on this small island for over 1450 years and it is now the home of the Iona Community.

It was an inspiring day trip to Mull, Staffa and Iona for us and it would be lovely to go back one day and spend longer on Iona to explore more of this peaceful island.



**Iona Abbey**



## OUR WORSHIP AND READINGS

*Our vision is With Jesus On Mission*

**Our regular Sunday 'in church' services are below.**

St Paul's Holy Communion Service at 9:30am (arrival from 9:00am)

St Paul's Informal Service at 11:15am (not on 2nd Sunday of the month)

St. Paul's 'All together' Service 10:00am on 2nd Sunday of the Month

St Lawrence's at 6:30pm (arrival from 6:00pm)

**The readings that will feature in these services are listed below.**

**Our regular mid-week Holy Communion Service takes place on Thursday at St Paul's at 10am**

### 4th February – Second Sunday before Lent

**9:30am St Paul's and Live Stream**

Proverbs 8.1 : 22-31

John 1 : 1-14

**11:15am Informal Service**

John 1 : 1-14

**6:30pm St Lawrence's (Evensong)**

Psalms 65

Proverbs 8.1 : 22-31

John 1 : 1-14

### 11th February - All Together service—Next before Lent

**10:00am St Paul's and Live Stream**

2 kings 2 :1-12

Mark 9: 2-9

**6:30pm St Lawrence's (Holy Communion)**

2 kings 2 :1-12

Mark 9: 2-9

### 14th February—Ash Wednesday Service



**7:30pm St. Paul's**

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21

### 18th February—Lent 1

**9:30am St Paul's and Live Stream**

Genesis 9 :8-17

Mark 1: 9-15

**11:15am Informal Service**

Mark 1: 9-15

**6:30pm St Lawrence's (Evensong)**

Psalms 119 v17-32

Genesis 9 :8-17

Mark 1: 9-15

### 25th February—Lent 2

**9:30am St Paul's and Live Stream**

Genesis 17 :1-7, 15, 16

Mark 8: 31-38

**11:15am Informal Service**

Mark 8: 31-38

**6:30pm St Lawrence's (Evensong)**

Psalms 135 v1-12

Genesis 17 :1-7, 15, 16

Mark 8: 31-38

### 3rd March—Lent 3

**9:30am St Paul's and Live Stream**

Exodus 20:1-17

John 2 : 13-22

**11:15am Informal Service**

John 2 : 13-22

**6:30pm St Lawrence's (Evensong)**

Psalms 12

Exodus 20:1-17

John 2 : 13-22

## Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child, Baptisms, Marriages

Arrangements for these should be made with the Vicar (Tel: 01772 783281) or via the Church website

Do you know anybody who is in hospital or ill at home? If so, please let the Vicar know so that they may be visited.

## FUNERALS

**We commend to God those who have died recently and pray  
for those who mourn their loss**

Ann Clayton Hall

Bernard Thomas O'Donnell

Keith Owen Rostron

Daniel Higginbottom



# The Last Word

From the Vicar



Now that we've reached February I imagine a few of you have broken your New Year's resolution(s), or perhaps despite good intentions you never even started! This being the case I thought it might help getting any resolution rebels back on track by thinking about the difference between 'trying' and 'training'.

You see it's said, 'God loves a trier' and there's probably some truth to that, but I suspect 'God loves a trainer more' (*of course the strong theological caveat to this is that God loves all his children equally but you get the idea – anyway I digress*). So what is the difference between a 'trier' and a 'trainer'?

Well, not to be too down on a person who tries, especially someone who makes a valid effort to try something new because it's often the case that they should be congratulated – after all every new adventure begins with our first tentative steps, but 'to try' doesn't exactly convey an automatic sense of commitment. To try is to exert our will or strength in a moment and the temptation is often to go from zero to hero in one push, or to have a scatter gun approach, trying to do multiple new things all at once. This being the case we set the bar too high or heavy and have unrealistic expectations of ourselves.

Like a tourist who suddenly expects to be an expert in a foreign language, the result – we're doomed to exasperated hand waving and failure!

So trying is great if you just want to give something a go, to see if you like it, a bit like you might try on a shoe to see if it fits. But turning 'trying' into long term successful performance requires 'training', and this requires a change in our underlying motivation.

For instance, in the case of the proverbial New Year's resolutions we often make them because society pressurises us to think we ought to be more like this or that person. *'I wish I could be thin like a Barbie model, or muscly like Arnold Schwarzenegger used to be. I wish I could be rich like Elon Musk, or a life guru like Oprah Winfrey... Maybe then more people would like and respect me...'*

Yes role models can be great, but here's the rub, God doesn't want us to become the best version of someone else, God wants us to train to become the best version of ourselves. A person in a community of people with our own gifts and abilities, whose identity is secure as a child of God and in his Son Jesus Christ who died for our sins. It's within the family of God that we discover who God calls us to be and when we align ourselves to this more natural groove, our core desire will be to want to train and improve.

So for those who are interested in spiritual growth God has given us the perfect training manual. In the Apostle Paul's second letter to young co-worker Timothy he writes, *'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and **training** in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.'*

This doesn't mean that reading the bible every day (just like training) is always easy, but it does mean a little slip or failure won't knock us off track. Our commitment will be over the long term so like a 'couch to 5km' runner, with patient effort we'll increase our distance day by day and week by week, until what once seemed impossible now becomes part of our regular routine.

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