

# *The Log*

## *Clowning around at the Spring Fair*



St. Lawrence with St. Paul Longridge - June 2026

The Parish Magazine  
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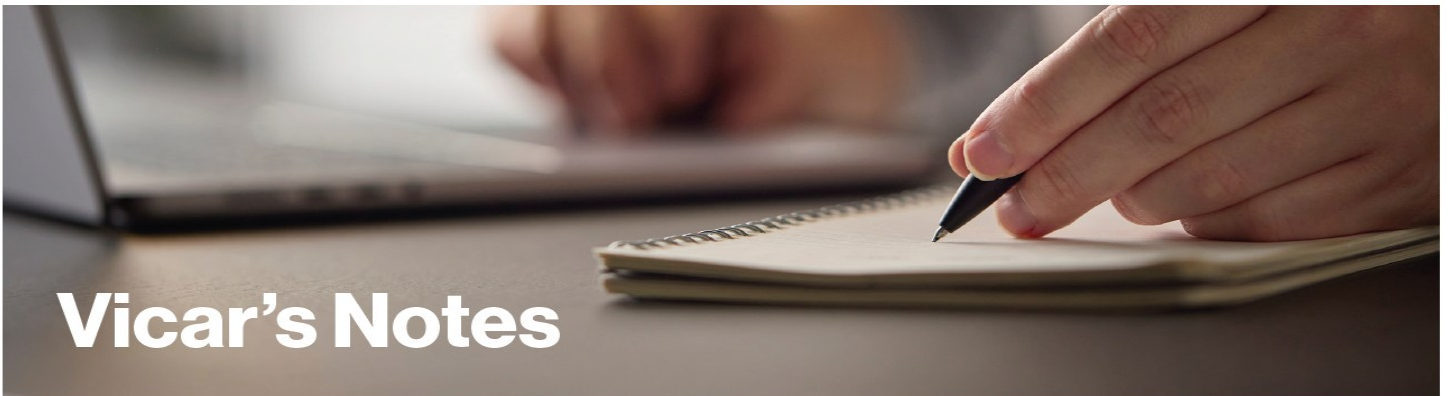
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## Vicar's Notes

Last month I began my Vicar's Notes with a note of thanksgiving and this month I feel apt to do the same. Not my own words though this time. The reason is upon meeting with my old Training Incumbent from the time I was a curate in Claygate, Philip Plyming, who is now the Dean of Durham Cathedral and whom some of you know, I discovered he's written a little book on The General Prayer of Thanksgiving from the Book of Common Prayer. I've been enjoying going through Philip's reflections on the prayer and while the old language might put some people off, I know others will find it extremely rich, so here goes:

**"Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks  
for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us, and to all men.  
We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;  
but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord  
Jesus Christ;  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies,  
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth thy praise,  
not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service,  
and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Spirit,  
be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen."**

As you'll see below, there remains a lot to be thankful to God for.

### **Thanksgiving for a busy weekend**

The weekend of 9th - 10th May proved to be a very joyous occasion. We held a fabulous circus themed Spring Fair on the Saturday which was beautifully opened by the Longridge CofE Primary School Choir and with so many volunteers helping in the kitchen and the various stalls. Everyone did amazingly and you can see some of the best dressed clowns on the front cover (!) and more pictures on [pages 10 and 11](#).

Then on Sunday Bishop Philip North led an All-Age Confirmation Service for us, talking about Jesus our Saviour with the aid of a rubber ring, a stethoscope and a fire hydrant. We also got to enjoy some of Tino and Karen's scrumptious soup. See Confirmation group picture on [page 5](#).

In the week leading up to this Longridge CofE Primary School received an Ofsted visit so I take my hat off to all the dedicated teachers and staff and on the Monday immediately following it was our Church Annual Parochial Meeting. A busy but a blessed time with many highlights to give thanks for.

**Vicar's Notes continued .....****Brass on Sunday**

On Sunday 7th June, 2pm at St Paul's Church we're very excited to be hosting Longridge Band who will be playing some wonderful pieces for us, including some hymns we'll be able to sing along to. Please see [page 23](#) for more information and do come along!

**Longridge Field day – 13<sup>th</sup> June**

Come and support the various different floats and especially the children from Berry Lane Primary School – what will be the theme this year? Plus, if you're able John Spencer would very much appreciate some help putting up the Churches Together tent on Longridge recreation ground at 9am.

**Goosnargh and Longridge Agricultural Show - Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July**

It will be a privilege to be able to help again at Aunt Daisy's Tent and the tent next door where we'll be hosting a range of children's church activities for families to enjoy. We also have the facilities for parents who need baby changing and baby feeding areas. None of the above is possible though without the help of volunteers so please do let Becky Filder ([becky.ignitelongridge@gmail.com](mailto:becky.ignitelongridge@gmail.com)) know if you can help support the children's activities and Dot Little if you're good at selling coffee, tea and cake!

**Foundations Course – every Thursday evening, 7.30pm in St Paul's Centenary Room**

I can't recommend this course highly enough. Whether you're brand new to the Christian Faith or would enjoy a refresher on some of the key teachings of the Christian faith, the Foundations Course is a brilliant way to stir up the love of God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Each Thursday we take on a new topic so you can just come along for one session or enjoy the full series.

**Welcome Café**

As you'll see in the APCM reports the Welcome Café continues to do a brilliant job of welcoming all age ranges on Wednesdays, 3.30pm-5pm during the school term. Please do come and try it out if you've not done so already. Because of its success Steph Willan and Karen Burdett kindly ask that all children of primary school age are accompanied by a responsible adult.

**Neurodiversity Group**

Every Thursday, 3.30-5pm during the school term we run a group for children of Primary and High School age with neurodiversity and their parents. I'm hugely grateful to Emma Turver who set this up with the invaluable help of Jacqui Laker over the years and now after approximately 7 years of loyal service Emma is handing it on to Naomi Pinder, Rebecca Whitehead and some other lovely people from Lancashire County Council. Please do pop along and join in or for more details contact: [lucy.robinson@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.robinson@lancashire.gov.uk)

**Blackburn Diocese Centenary Mission Weekend – 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> September**

To help celebrate 100 years of the Blackburn Diocese we're going to be joining in with their invitation to host a parish mission weekend this September. Here at St Lawrence with St Paul our theme is going to be 'Come and See' and we're already planning some brilliant events to invite your family and friends to. Already booked for the evening of Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September at Longridge Cricket is comedian Andy Kind (<https://www.andykind.co.uk/>).

Then on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September there will be an extra special 'Messy Mission' building on our new and very popular Messy Church.

In order to help plan and run these and a few other events we're going to need your help so if you've got any good ideas for events we could host and even better if you're willing to get involved by joining a Weekend Mission Planning team please do let me know.

To prepare for this exciting weekend, over the summer our preaching series from July will be looking at the 'I Am' statements from John's gospel. Please do 'come and see', there is a lot to look forward to and please to be praying as well.

## Vicar's Notes continued .....

### Longridge Church Of England Primary School Foundation Governor Required

I'm delighted that we've already managed to recruit one Foundation Governor for Longridge CofE Primary School, but we still need one more! Are you someone who could help support the safe and healthy education of the children and the wellbeing of school staff. As you can see from the regular articles and pictures in the Log, our linked school on Berry Lane does a brilliant job of educating our children and a key element of this is maintaining a strong Christian core of faith and values. If you have experience or are willing to learn and grow in such areas as strategic oversight, monitoring performance, school ethos, buildings management, community links and other such areas of school governance, then please do come and speak to me, I'd be delighted to hear from you.

### Foodbank

The 'Community Foodbank @ Longridge' continues to serve those in our community who find themselves in difficult circumstances. Please do continue to support it if you can with a donation of such items as pasta sauce, tinned meat, long life milk, sponge puddings, tomato ketchup and toilet rolls etc. You can also financially support it using their Business Account – Account Number: 12833754, Sort Code: 01-00-53.

It's open every Friday between 11:00am and 1:30pm and for more information you can contact the Foodbank team on their new telephone number: 01772 355731.



**Congratulations to those Confirmed on the 10<sup>th</sup> May by The Bishop of Blackburn.**

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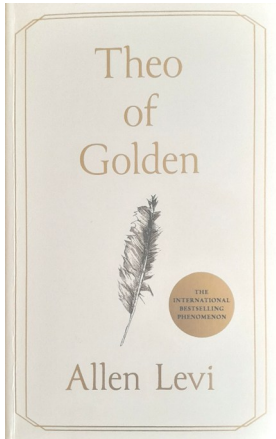
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### Book Review - Theo of Golden by Allen Levi

Theo of Golden is a delightful, uplifting and memorable novel. It tells the story of Theo, an elderly Portuguese gentleman during his stay in Golden, a southern town in Georgia. As the story weaves I became entranced and transported to Theo's world. It is a very long time since I slowed down reading a book because quite simply, I didn't want to finish it, but this was indeed the case with Theo.



Theo is a person who wishes to please others. In so doing, he makes gifts of portraits hanging in a local coffee shop to the respective subject of each portrait, to give them their true home. The gifts are made in a humble and sensitive way; there is nothing forced, threatening or condescending about Theo. The gifts bring pleasure to the recipients and the ripple of kindness radiates to the whole community.

It sounds saccharine sweet, and I thought so during the first couple of chapters. Yet the narrative has an unforced rhythm and I was drawn into the characters and feel of Golden, the southern drawl, the heat of the summer and the pace of life.

The ending is not expected but I am not giving anything away! I highly recommend this book to you.

### Table for the Nation at Blackburn Cathedral



I want to tell you about this very special Table which is no ordinary table and which is thoroughly amazing! The Table is made from Fenland oak which grew in forests of giant oak trees about 5,000 years ago. Let's just pause and think about that - it is 3,000 years before Jesus walked the earth. It is incredible.

In 2012, during routine cultivations on a farm in the Wissington Fens of south-west Norfolk, a 13.2 metre section of the Tree was unearthed. It was found in the year of Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee, and hence was called the 'Jubilee Oak'.

During the melting of the glaciers, the sea level had increased and prevented the rivers from draining freely into the sea, thereby creating lagoons. The tree fell into the lagoon and was slowly fossilised. The action of iron and tannin changed its brown colour to black.



The oak was carefully handled, milled into ten consecutive planks and then dried. The Table was made by highly skilled crafts-people over ten years and it was completed in 2022, the year of the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The Table fills the Lantern Tower space perfectly and natural light shines through the wonderful stained glass windows onto the polished table-top, to create a kaleidoscope of sheer beauty. God's creation is awesome, to know that He created the giant oaks so long ago in earthly years. Let the trees of the forest sing for joy! How great is our God,

thank You.

The Table is at the Cathedral until May 2027, further information can be found at <https://blackburncathedral.com/table-for-the-nation/> <https://www.thefenlandblackoakproject.co.uk/our-story>

I hope you manage to see The Table for yourself, I think you'll love it.

**Naomi Pinder**

## Clergy & Church Officers

<b>Vicar</b>	<b>Rev. Mike Barton</b>	The Vicarage, Church Street	01772 389837	revmik Barton@gmail.com
<b>Curate</b>	<b>Rev Jesse Adesina</b>		07776 750695	revjesseadesina@gmail.com
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	<b>Rev. Adrian Mairs</b>	8 Hacking Drive	01772 356015	adrian.s.mairs@gmail.com
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	<b>Dorothy Laver</b>	19 The Pastures, Grimsargh	07719 389529	dorothy.laver@gmail.com
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	<b>Mae Heys</b>	29 Fell Brow	07740 068099	
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<b>Parish Administrator</b>	<b>Michael Dawson</b>	See hours below	01772 783281	secretarystandplongridge@gmail.com
<b>Health &amp; Safety Officer</b>	<b>Vacant</b>			
<b>Electoral Role Officer</b>	<b>Michael Dawson</b>			
<b>Ignite-Children &amp; Youth Leader—Becky Filder</b>				becky.ignitelongridge@gmail.com

## Parochial Church Council

<b>Chairman</b>	<i>Rev. Mike Barton</i>
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	<i>Barbara Burton</i>
<b>Hon. Treasurer &amp; Stewardship Recorder</b>	<i>Graham Kelsall</i>
<b>Members:</b>	Clergy and Churchwardens Amii Bateson, Karen Boardman, Helen Clements, Ellen Dawson, Andrew Filder, David Hartley, Mae Heys, Philip Jones, Vernon Kinrade, Terry Lewis, Rosemary Lyons, Barbara McCormick, Annamarie Rogers-Waterman, Val Wardley, Stephanie Willan.

## Organisations

<b>Parish Administrator</b>	<i>Michael Dawson</i>
	Parish Office Monday and Wednesday 9:30—12:30 Friday 9.30—15.30 01772 783281
<b>Altar Flowers</b>	
Hon. Sec. St. Lawrence	Dot Little 01772 783998 Judith Kaye 01772 785114
Hon. Sec. St. Paul	Ellen Dawson 07487 741745 <a href="mailto:ellendawson7@gmail.com">ellendawson7@gmail.com</a>
<b>Choir</b>	
Organist and Choir Director	Karen Au karen.au1990@gmail.com
<b>Church Lads &amp; Church Girls Brigade</b>	
	Wednesday Nights Berry Lane School Term Times Martins and Y-Team (Reception-Year 5 6.15-7>30pm JTC and Seniors (Year 6 and Above) 7-9pm <a href="mailto:Oliviastewart@clcgb.org.uk">Oliviastewart@clcgb.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:AmiiBateson@clcgb.org.uk">AmiiBateson@clcgb.org.uk</a>
<b>Crafty Café</b>	
	Last Monday each month, Centenary Room 1.30 - 3.30pm also: Contacts Helen Bailey 07891 075023 Bev Keating Jean Saunders 01772640146
<b>Handbell Ringers</b>	
Leader	Judith Kaye Park View, Fleet Street, PR3 3ED <a href="mailto:judithkaye@sky.com">judithkaye@sky.com</a> 01772 785114

<b>Children's Church</b>	<i>Carolyn Barton</i>	<a href="mailto:carolynbarton@hotmail.co.uk">carolynbarton@hotmail.co.uk</a>
<b>Mothers Union</b>	7.30pm on 1st Tuesday	
Enrolling Member	Judith Kaye Park View, Fleet Street, PR3 3ED <a href="mailto:judithkaye@sky.com">judithkaye@sky.com</a> 01772 785114	
<b>Prayerline</b>	If you would like our prayer team to pray for you e-mail	
Muriel Anderson	12 Plessington Court, Brewery Street, Longridge <a href="mailto:Murielanderson33@gmail.com">Murielanderson33@gmail.com</a> 07823 762089	
<b>Tuesday Club</b>	7.30pm on 2nd Tuesday	
Chairman	Fred Little 26 Hoghton Road 01772 783998	
Hon. Sec.	vacant	
<b>Walkie Talks</b>	Hannah Green 20 Darwen Close 01772 783558	
<b>Bereavement Group</b>	meets on 1st Monday of the month including Bank Holidays	
	Karen Burdett 07712 440135 <a href="mailto:karenburdett@hotmail.com">karenburdett@hotmail.com</a>	

<b>Longridge C of E Primary School</b>	<a href="http://www.longridge-ce.lancsngfl.ac.uk">www.longridge-ce.lancsngfl.ac.uk</a>
<b>Headteacher</b>	<i>Mrs Catherine Parkin</i> head@longridge-cofe.lancs.sch.uk
<b>Clerk to the Governors</b>	
	Val Morris 01524 581136 c/o the School Office School Office 01772 782378 bursar@longridge-cofe.lancs.sch.uk
<b>Pre-School</b>	01772-780078
<b>PTFA Hon. Sec.</b>	<i>Katie Keighley</i>

## Sidesmen and Sideswomen

Karen Boardman, Bev Keating, Janet Heap, Peter Turver, Lib Turver, Graham Kelsall, Val Wardley, Dianne Sanderson, Muriel Anderson, Marilyn Kinrade, Barbara Burton, Ian Cookson, Ruth Buckley, Jennifer Sturzaker, Kai Ng, Helen Eccles, Keith Thompson, Judith Singleton.


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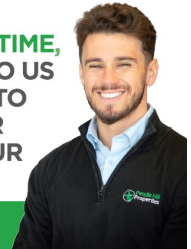


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## All In for Jesus — Our Big Day Out in Blackpool - Andrew Filder

The Blackburn Diocesan Centenary gave us a wonderful excuse for a Big Day Out in Blackpool — and the *Filder Five* were definitely ready for an adventure. From the moment we arrived, there was a real sense of celebration: families, friends, churches from every corner of the diocese gathering together to give thanks for 100 years of faithful ministry and to look forward to all that God has in store.

One of the highlights for us was the Children and Families Zone, set up inside the church building. It was a treasure trove of creativity, curiosity and faith-filled fun. Izzy and Jacob were in their element. They made calm jars swirling with glitter and beads, crafted peg dolls that had to look like themselves (with great seriousness and even greater imagination), and designed mini-boats to test whether they would float. They threaded bracelets, filled snack bags, and even explored how we can walk in Jesus' footprints in our everyday lives.



A particular favourite — though perhaps enjoyed *even more* by Daddy— was the challenge to find ten hidden Zacchaeus figures around the room, each holding something he needed to give back. It was a brilliant way to help children think about generosity, forgiveness, and what it means to be “All In for Jesus,” just like the people we read about in the Bible.

Of course, no family festival would be complete without bouncy castles and cake, both of which were enthusiastically approved by the younger members of the Filder Five.

When the Family Zone closed at 1pm, we joined the queue for the free hog roast, which was absolutely delicious. And because it would have been rude not to — being by the seaside — we treated ourselves to a portion of chips to go with it.

The day ended with a beautiful time of worship and reflection, even as the drizzle settled in. Bishop

Philip spoke powerfully, encouraging us to consider how we can live our lives wholeheartedly for Jesus. Despite the rain, the atmosphere was full of joy, unity and hope. It was moving to look around and see friends from across the diocese gathered together, celebrating God's faithfulness and dreaming of what comes next.

We came home tired, happy, and carrying our very own centenary rock — a small but special reminder of a big celebration. We had a wonderful time as a family, and we're grateful to have been part of such a memorable moment in our diocesan story.



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# The Log



**Spring  
Fair  
2026**

## SUCCESSFUL CIRCUS THEMED SPRING FAIR

Having a 'Circus' theme this year ensured St. Paul's Church was awash with colour – from the balloon arch at the Centenary Room – the work of Karen Boardman to the 'Big Top' standing proudly on the dais built by Rie Waterman and Barbara McCormick – add to that some wonderful Circus bunting by the Brigade and coloured streamers down the aisles and wow did it look brilliant.

We were amazed how many 'clowns' actually turned up, including Revd. Mike and that just added to the fun – those clowns were everywhere - behind the cake stall, (well done choir), at the BBQ, even washing up in the kitchen as well as organising fun and craft activities in the Big Top of course. It was great all adding to a wonderful atmosphere.

Our thanks to Berry Lane School Choir for opening the Fair and singing so beautifully and then for many of us it was a dash round the stalls before thinking about lunch or for some young people enjoying a candy floss and popcorn. The cake stall and the plants once again proved popular as did the various tombolas and Becky Filder had a lovely stall of soft toy animals that needed and found a home.

The big Spring Fair Raffle had 30 prizes including the superb first prize hamper – well done to those who had winning tickets and we were so fortunate this year to have a Family Weekend Break – the winner of which kindly donating the prize to Revd. Jesse and his family.

Hotpot and Cheese & Onion Pie doesn't sound very "circussey" but we know how much people enjoy it, so not surprisingly the kitchen staff were kept busy throughout – with the last portion sold by 1.30pm. The MU team were also busy in the drinks, desserts and sandwich area in the tower room. The weather was kind which pleased Vernon & Merilyn outside with the BBQ.

The result of was a total of over £3,000 raised for General Church Funds to help with the day to day running costs of our two church buildings and the work of the parish.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed in any way – including those who came at the end specifically to help clear away so that the church was ready to welcome the Bishop of Blackburn on the Sunday morning.

## LONGRIDGE BAND

We are very much looking forward to our next social event which will be the concert given by Longridge Band on Sunday afternoon 7<sup>th</sup> June in St. Paul's. For this concert the band have chosen a stirring programme of popular hymns, sacred music and works from the Salvation Army repertoire, celebrating the rich tradition of brass band music. We are in for a real treat. As you can see from the poster on page 23, tickets are available in advance or you can pay at the door.



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**My Favourite Hymn- brought to us this month by Barbara Burton**

**O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the works thy hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed:**

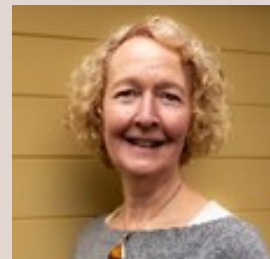
*Refrain:*

**Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:  
How great thou art! How great thou art!**

**When through the woods and forest glades I wander  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,  
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze:**

**And when I think how God, his Son not sparing,  
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
That on the cross, my burdens gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin:**

**When Christ shall come with shouts of acclamation,  
To take me home, what joy will fill my heart!  
Then I will bow in humble adoration,  
And there proclaim, my God, how great thou art!**



One of the ways in which I feel God's presence most closely is through observing and contemplating creation. The first two verses describe aspects of creation, such as the weather, the night sky, forests and mountains, that help us to be in awe of the power and imagination of God. In verse three, we are reminded that this creator of the universe also came to live among us, and to die for us. In the final verse, we sing with triumphant expectation of the day that Jesus will return to make everything right with the world and to take us to our eternal home.

I was a primary school teacher for many years, and the part of my job that I enjoyed the most was leading our weekly 'Songs of Praise' act of worship. The children were always joyful in their singing, but probably because this is my favourite, they sang this hymn with particular feeling, so now, whenever we sing this in church, I am reminded of those happy mornings spent with the wonderful children in that school.

The Tuesday Club ran the tombola at the Spring Fair on 9<sup>th</sup> May and the prizes sold out very quickly adding to the overall result of over £3000 for church funds. It was a very enjoyable day with a circus theme and many colourful costumes and a thank you to everyone who contributed to this.

*Tuesday Club*

What an interesting evening we had on the 12<sup>th</sup> May when we had our very own Dot and Fed Little giving us a presentation entitled Bowland Villages Re-visited that will hopefully encourage us to explore more that our local area has to offer. Amongst many villages that we travelled through were Chipping, Whitewell, Dunsop Bridge, Newton, Slaidburn, Scorton, Calder Vale, Waddington, Bashall Eaves, Sawley, Downham, Abbeystead, Hornby, Wray and Hurst Green. The history of the churches, pubs, schools and factories was particularly interesting with little known facts. Dot's knowledge and Fred's photography made this a lovely way to end this year's programme.

The next programme 2026/2027 will start in September 2026 with copies available in both churches. The first meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> September will be an illustrated talk by Brambles Wildlife Rescue who are a voluntary organisation that cares for injured birds and wildlife.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible for what will be some very interesting Tuesday evenings.

**Jean Saunders.**



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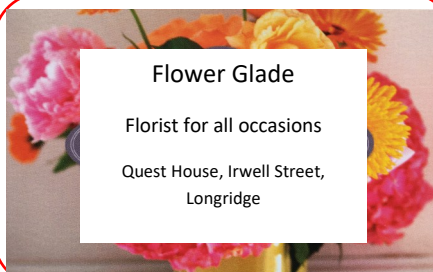
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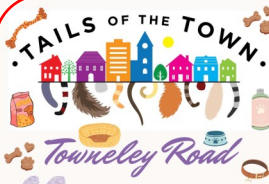
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## Room to Bloom in Chelsea — Judith Kaye

Most weeks of the year I visit The Bloom Room in Berry Lane to order and collect flowers for St Lawrence's. When I was in recently Bethany was working on a rather strange looking structure which turned out to be the basis of her installation for Chelsea in Bloom – it was a representation of the solar system. When I went in after she & her team had spent a few days in Chelsea setting up, I was keen to see the results of their labours. I then thought wouldn't it be nice to share this by putting something in The Log. I looked at the Chelsea in Bloom website (well worth a look as all 145 displays are shown) which prompted me to ask Bethany a few questions.



Firstly the theme for 2026 was “Out of this world” to see “Chelsea transformed into an intergalactic wonderland of spectacular floral displays.” Bethany answered my questions with the following-

“I was inspired to take part after attending Chelsea in Bloom as a spectator in 2025. Seeing all the florists setting up their displays and witnessing the joy it brought to both the town and its visitors, made me eager to get involved myself. After trying Ice Cream Union's ice cream for the first time the year before, I knew they were the perfect brand to collaborate with. I still remember describing their ice cream as “out of this world” when I first tasted it, so when I discovered that this year's Chelsea in Bloom theme was \*Out of This World\*, it felt like the perfect fit.



I reached out to Sarah at Ice Cream Union, who immediately fell in love with my concept and vision, and we decided to collaborate on the installation together. I was also very conscious about sourcing materials locally wherever possible. I searched for a local fabricator to create the structure for us, which was made by Mandy from Wannabethewelder in Gisburn. The flowers were supplied by Peter H Smiths in Preston. Myself, Karen and Becky travelled down to Chelsea on Sunday morning and completed the installation later that evening. The display will now sit proudly outside Ice Cream Union for the week, where it can be admired by visitors and passers-by alike.

We're already so excited to discover next year's theme and start getting creative again for Chelsea in Bloom 2027.”

Isn't it good that a local business has been able to showcase their skills in Chelsea at the same time as the Chelsea Flower show is taking place and I look forward to what Bethany and her team come up with in 2027.

Good luck to you all.

## BAPTISM

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

Luke Pollard - was Baptised on 10th May 2026 during the 10:00am service at St. Paul's Church by Rt. Rev. Philip North — The Bishop of Blackburn

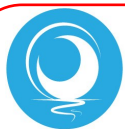


**SCHOOL NEWS – from Headteacher Catherine Parkin****A treat for the whole school**

School was inspected by Ofsted at the beginning of May. This meant that three inspectors visited our school over two days. The children are fully involved in this inspection as inspectors talk to different groups of children and look at their work as well as observing how they behave and even checking on their attendance. We are always very proud to show off our school and our children so it was only fair that everyone, including the adults, got a treat when it had finished.

**PGL 2026**

A group of our current Year 6 children have been to PGL in Winmarleigh recently. This residential is a long one and runs from Monday to Friday, giving the children plenty of time to experience different outdoor and adventurous activities. This time they took part in a sensory trail and went on an outdoor trapeze as well as the giant swing! More importantly they learned to test their own boundaries, work as a team and enjoy each other's company. Thank you to Miss B and Mr Hartley for allowing them to have such an incredible experience.



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## SCHOOL NEWS continued .....

### Year 6 celebrate the end of test week



After weeks of hard work and preparation, SATs were finally over and Year 6 could relax. Their last test



was on Thursday morning so Friday was a day of fun to be spent with friends. Mrs Parkinson arranged for some games outside, followed by board games and social time in the afternoon. These children have worked very hard and we are very proud of them.

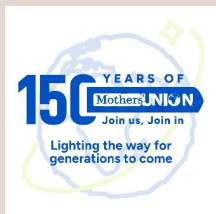


### Year 3 enjoy the Roman Museum at Ribchester

We have history on our doorstep here in Longridge and Mrs Dewhurst and Class 3 like to make the most of local amenities. The class thoroughly enjoyed their day visiting the Roman Museum at Ribchester. As well as touring the museum and dressing up in armour, the children got to handle Roman artefacts and visit the remains of the Roman fort. They would certainly

### Mothers' Union

As I may have mentioned before Mothers' Union is celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year! As a Deanery it was decided to take a trip on the canal from Barton Grange Marina to celebrate this milestone in our history.



On May 6<sup>th</sup> 46 (including 6 from Longridge) of us set off to enjoy time chatting to members from other branches, enjoying the scenery and the fish and chips we picked up enroute (which were delicious). We were lucky with the weather, lovely sunshine but a chill breeze. Some hardy members sat outside for a while but inside the barge it was pleasantly warm. As we approached Garstang to a turning point we were given a bit of the history of the canal. The idea of a canal was first discussed in 1771. Original plans were for a canal from Bridgewater, Worsley to Kendal but this was scaled down to Preston to Kendal. The main use was to transport coal north from the Lancashire coalfields and limestone south from Cumbria. Apparently, it's the longest stretch of canal in the country without locks. I think I can say that all of us on board enjoyed the trip and the volume of chatter would seem to back that up!

The Mothers' Union Preston Deanery Festival 150th Anniversary Songs of Praise.

Service is to be held in St Paul's on Wednesday 17th June at 7pm. All are welcome to join us to celebrate this historic event.



Dates

2<sup>nd</sup> June Fred & Dot Little Bowland Villages revisited  
July 7<sup>th</sup> Speaker to be confirmed

JAK

## Ignite Update — Becky Filder

This month has been another exciting one in my role as Ignite Children and Youth Leader, as we have launched a new Tuesday after-school youth drop-in. The drop-in runs straight after school and offers young people a relaxed and welcoming space to unwind, spend time together, and continue building relationships with myself and Rev Jesse.



We provide food and drinks, tabletop games such as pool and table football, games consoles, and creative activities for the young people to enjoy. Although we have only had a small number attending so far, the group is currently only advertised to Year 6 pupils at Longridge C of E Primary School. I am hopeful that, once I begin working more within the High School, we will be able to invite even more young people along.

We also recently enjoyed our second Messy Church, themed “Who is God?”. It was wonderful to see returning families and volunteers joining us again. We had lots of fun getting creative with clay, decorating biscuits, making nightlights, and experimenting with some fizzy kitchen science activities. One of our families very kindly made a delicious chicken curry for everyone to share at the end of the evening.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped, provided jars, baked, or supported us in any way — it is all greatly appreciated.

If anyone would like to get involved in this growing ministry, I would love to hear from you. We are especially looking for volunteers who may be free on Tuesday afternoons to help at the drop-in, which runs from 3:15–4:30pm every Tuesday during term time. There is no age limit for volunteers — the most important thing is helping our young people feel welcomed, valued, and supported.

---

## Childrens Church Update

Children’s Church has continued to grow and flourish over the past month, and it has been wonderful to welcome so many young families each week.



We are continuing our series exploring the parables of Jesus and thinking about what we can learn from them today. Recently, we looked at the Parable of the Prodigal Son, where the children enjoyed making pigs from paper plates and getting messy with edible mud and toy pigs as we explored the story together. We also learnt about the Wise and Foolish Builders, with lots of fun in the water and sand trays as we discovered the importance of building our lives on strong foundations.

It has been brilliant to see how a multi-sensory approach is helping our younger children engage with the stories, understand what Jesus was teaching, and begin to explore what these lessons mean for us in our everyday lives.

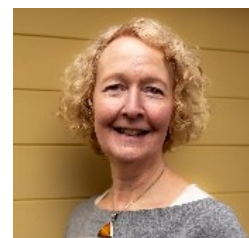
At the beginning of half term, we also took a short pause from our parable series to learn about Pentecost and what it means for us as Christians today.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support Children’s Church through prayer, encouragement, and practical help. It is such a joy to see the children growing in confidence, curiosity, and faith together.

## Eco Corner — Barbara Burton

My name is Barbara and I am the Eco Champion for our church. Each month, I will be writing a short article about the environment.

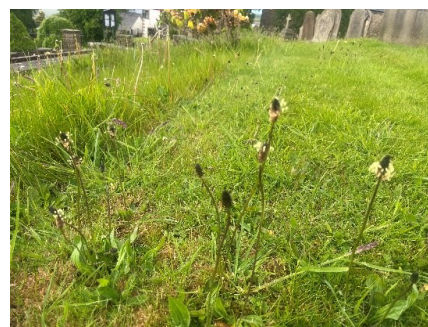
If you are interested in helping with this aspect of ministry, please speak to me after the 10am service, or contact me at [brbrbrtn6@gmail.com](mailto:brbrbrtn6@gmail.com)



### June

If you have visited St. Lawrence churchyard this spring, you might have noticed that Terry is managing the grassed areas a bit differently; some areas are being mown as usual, while others are being mown less frequently or not mown at all. All three of these approaches can be seen in the photo above. This is because we are, as a church, trying to encourage more biodiversity. Longer grass allows wildflowers to grow, which are good for pollinators, as well as providing habitats for small animals. Shorter grass allows birds to forage for invertebrates in the soil. Grass which is mown traditionally looks tidy and is easier for humans to access.

You will probably have heard the strapline, 'No Mow May' and you might even have your grass unmown last month. If you are interested in trying this, it is not too late to start. You could leave your grass unmown for a few weeks and then return to your usual mowing regime. You could just leave a small area of your lawn unmown for wildlife and keep the rest traditionally short. Or you could, as I do, leave most of the lawn unmown until the late summer, and then mow it all short again, so that early spring bulbs can be seen when they emerge next year.



## WEDDING

**Many congratulations and our very best wishes to:**

James Patrick Gregson and Grace Elizabeth Park, who were married on Sunday 24th May 2026 in St. Lawrence's Church

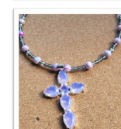
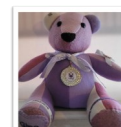


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## Brigade News—Olivia Stewart



### Martins and Y-Team

Over the past month, Martins and Y-Team have continued to enjoy the sunshine while taking part in a range of fun and creative activities. The children created their own clowns which they could use to cheer themselves up whenever they were feeling down. One particularly busy Brigade night saw everyone playing the silent game and wink murder before heading outside for some energetic running games. During craft time, the children made colourful wheels from paper plates to help them think about ways to support themselves when they were feeling sad.

The activities also reminded the children of the importance of kindness, encouragement and helping others when they may be feeling sad or lonely.

Another evening was spent playing “in the giant’s house,” where the children act out giant props using their bodies, including a huge fireplace, microwave, boot, clock, television and piano. The night finished with a cartoon-themed quiz which everyone enjoyed.

The group also played “Get the Bacon,” with everyone becoming very competitive as they worked hard to win points for their teams. In craft, the children designed and made their own claw machines before testing them to see how many items they could pick up.

### JTC and Seniors

JTC and Seniors began one evening with drill practice before taking part in a series of team games. They then completed a survival-themed activity where each team worked together to build a shelter capable of staying standing through different weather conditions. The activity encouraged teamwork, communication and perseverance, helping members learn the value of working together and supporting one another.

The group also prepared circus-themed table decorations for the Spring Fair, showing plenty of creativity and teamwork.

### National Band Concert

Members from Longridge performed in the National Band Concert held at the Longridge Civic Hall on 3rd May. Following a weekend of rehearsals, the band performed to more than 170 people in the sold-out concert. Several members were recognised during the evening’s presentation awards. Laura received the Mallet’s Mallet award, while Rhiannon received the Mallet Achievement Award.

After the concert, members visited the Churchyard at St. Lawrence to pay their respects to Janet Redding, placing flowers and a copy of the concert programme on her grave. It had always been one of Janet’s wishes for the concert to be held in Longridge, and members were pleased to finally make that happen in her memory.

Visiting Janet’s grave afterwards gave members time to reflect, remember and give thanks for her support and dedication over the years.

### Chipping Steam Fair

During the May Bank Holiday weekend, Brigade members volunteered at the annual Chipping Steam Fair. Members worked tirelessly in the sweltering sunshine, helping on the car park by directing traffic as well as delivering tea, coffee, water and food to volunteers throughout the event. The Brigade received wonderful feedback from the Steam Fair committee, with a special mention given to Lauren for her hard work and dedication. Members are already looking forward to supporting the event again next year.

Volunteering at the Steam Fair gave members the opportunity to serve the local community and demonstrate the importance of helping others with kindness and generosity.



## FLOWERS AT ST. PAUL'S— Donna Rowe Green



I would like to start this month by saying thank you to the whole flower team who work so hard behind the scenes, creating beautiful arrangements for our church. In recent months our numbers have reduced somewhat and the team have doubled their responsibility within the flower rota. At the same time, they are making every effort to embrace a new way of flower arranging, based on the Sustainable Church Flowers advice. This challenges us to acknowledge our responsibility to respect the planet, the home that God has entrusted to us, while still worshipping Him through floral displays in our church.

You may have noticed that our arrangements look a little different as we get to grips with no longer using flower foam (oasis). This foam is made of tiny pieces of plastic that can, upon breakdown, leak into the soil and waterways, causing harm to all the life within them. One block of foam can contain up the same amount of plastic as 10 carrier bags.

We are trying to source our flowers more locally, limiting our purchase of flowers flown thousands of miles or grown in vast heated greenhouses just to decorate our church for a week or so. Our budget often means that buying from supermarkets is our only option, so we seek British grown or Fairtrade flowers. However, these still come wrapped in plastic and have travelled in refrigerated lorries.



For a small team of very busy people, this adds to our time commitment. We do so gladly, taking our responsibility for both our environment and our role in weekly worship seriously. So, if you see Beverly, Pam, Ellen or Barbara in church, or even elsewhere in the town, please do thank them for their contribution to our weekly service and for doing so with love and respect for the planet that future generations, your children and grandchildren, will inhabit.



If you would like to help us with this, please do chat to any one of us about maybe joining our team (no experience needed, honestly) or maybe donating a few flowers or some greenery from your garden throughout the coming months. Every stem donated will make a significant difference to our impact on the planet in the name of worship.

I would also like to thank all of you that have been offering to fund the flowers on a week that is special to you, we really hope that we do you and your loved ones proud. *Thank you so much.*

### St. Lawrence Flower Rota for June.

7 <sup>th</sup> June	Vacant
14 <sup>th</sup>	Terry & Eileen Lewis Wedding Anniversary
21 <sup>st</sup>	In memory of Ian Taylor
28 <sup>th</sup>	In memory of James & Nancy Procter

### St. Paul's Flowers for June

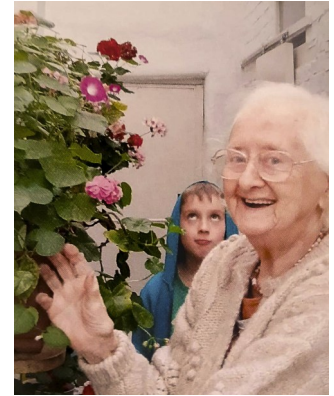
Pam Shepherd & Bev. Keating



**A tribute to Sybil Selby (and a trip to Ingleton)**

**Born October 5th 1924 Died March 14th 2026 101 years old. last year!**

Sybil lived across the road from the Old Oak and I had the privilege of calling in for a cuppa for quite a few years, since we first met at the beginning of Lockdown, when I shouted across her back yard to check that she was ok. She said she was, her sons looked after her. We then discovered that her maiden name was Buckley!! That was the beginning of a special friendship and the first of many, many conversations!



Sybil didn't want a funeral service, she just requested that her ashes be scattered by her family in a special place in Ingleton with husband John's. In their early days of courting, they would often visit Ingleton and it was there that John gave Sybil her first posy of primroses.

As there was no funeral service, Dot Little, who had known Sybil for many years at Alston Hall, and I, felt it would be good to make the journey to Ingleton as a tribute to Sybil's life. We weren't aware where the family special place was but thought we could hopefully choose one, that she would approve of (!) and that would be special for us. Sybil was fascinated by fairies and had many around her home and often included them in her pictures so we took a fairy brooch with us. We made the journey, with Fred, our faithful driver, paid to go into the Falls, and half way through the four and a half mile walk, just behind the little snack bar we found a quiet, secluded area, away from the crowds with primroses

and orchids growing in the grass. There we tucked her fairy brooch into a crevice in the rock face, had a reading and a moment of quiet reflection.

Sybil loved flowers and had an amazing skill at painting them. She, and husband John, taught painting at Alston Hall for many years. They often held weekend courses and went on many Painting holidays with their students in England and abroad. Her many folders are a detailed record of them. She kept diaries since she was young and wrote in them every day. She enjoyed her garden, and tended her collection of geraniums in her lean-to daily all year. During the summer into the Autumn days she delighted in counting how many Morning Glory flowers she had, and when I started growing them was quite competitive! I feel privileged to have had time with her.

**Ruth Buckley**

PS If anyone would like to grow some Morning Glories I have some of Sybil's seeds! See me at the Evening Service, Brewtime or have a word with Dot!



# BRASS ON SUNDAY

with the Longridge Band



Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2026



2pm



St. Paul's Church, Longridge



Refreshments available at the interval

Tickets £12.50 available from:  
Longridge Post Office  
Ribble Valley Tyres  
St. Paul's Church  
and also on the door

Registered Charity no. 1166841

Free entry to accompanied children under 16.



## OUR WORSHIP AND READINGS

*Following Jesus on Mission*

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

St Paul's Holy Communion Service with Children's Church at 10:00am (arrival from 9:30am)

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**

### 7th June — Trinity 1

**10am St Paul's Holy communion with Children's Church**

Genesis 12:1-9

Matthew 9 : 9-13, 18-26

**6.30pm St Lawrence's Evensong**

Psalm 41

Genesis 12:1-9

Matthew 9 : 9-13, 18-26

### 14th June - Trinity 2

**10am St Paul's All Age Worship**

Genesis 18 : 1-15

Matthew 9.35-10.8

**6.30pm St Lawrence's Holy Communion**

Genesis 18 : 1-15

Matthew 9.35-10.8

### 21st June - Trinity 3

**10am St Paul's Holy communion with Children's Church**

Genesis 21: 8-21

Matthew 10 : 24-39

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

Psalm 46

Genesis 21: 8-21

Matthew 10 : 24-39

**4.30pm—6pm St Paul's Messy Church**

A family, friendly afternoon of fun, crafts, stories & worship

### 28th June — Trinity 4

**10am St Paul's Holy communion with Children's Church**

Genesis 22: 1-14

Matthew 10 : 40-42

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

Psalm 50 v1-15

Genesis 22: 1-14

Matthew 10 : 40-42

### 5th July — Trinity 5 John the Baptist — 'I am Not'

**10am St Paul's Holy communion with Children's Church**

Malachi 3 : 1-4

John 1 : 19-33

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

Psalm 56

Malachi 3 : 1-4

John 1 : 19-33

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

Arrangements for these should be made with Rev. Mike or via the Church website

Do you know anybody who is in hospital or ill at home?

If so, please let Rev. Mike or Rev. Jesse know so that they may be visited.

**The Last Word continued from page 26.....**

Then, we're fortunate to have a very good relationship with Longridge Church of England Primary School which means the 'Open The Book' team can share bible stories with almost 200 children every fortnight. Everyone who works and volunteers at the school deserves a big pat on the back now following the recent Ofsted Inspection.

Our ministry among those older in years is also expanding. In addition to the regular nursing home and home communions that Mae Heys and Naomi Pinder help with, the new Friday Friends initiative led by Murial Anderson and Diane Sanderson continues to grow in popularity. Then following the completion of her Authorised Lay Minister training in March Naomi will be officially licensed at a service in September and has expressed a desire to help with Senior's Ministry among other things.

Clearly there is much going on with Mission at St Lawrence with St Paul, and I'm conscious I've not mentioned many by name who contribute a great deal behind the scenes and up front. In this regard it's going to be a joy to have many of us involved in the forthcoming Parish Mission over the weekend of 11-13<sup>th</sup> September. We've already got Christian comedian Andy Kind booked, but there is still much to now prepare for.

As I begin to close now there is one final point to mention about aligning our mission priorities with the goal of having 230 regular worshippers by 2030. Returning to the book, 'The One Thing' the authors identify that success is sequential, not simultaneous. Therefore, they say, rather than asking, '*What should I do next?*', a better question is, '*What matters most?*'.

For us this means in the year ahead it will be necessary to identify how our activities align with the priorities the risen Jesus set in his Great Commission '*go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you*'. (Matthew 28:19-20).

Fortunately, Becky Filder has provided a model to help us accomplish this, which she has already introduced into our children and youth work. It operates like a discipleship funnel with each of the five stages, 'Connect, Encounter, Grow, Serve, Lead' involving an increasing commitment to seeking first God's Kingdom.

Therefore, Revd Jesse and I will be considering where and how all our activities fit along the funnel, noting any gaps and asking the question, '*how could someone become a Christian from what we're doing?*'. It is hoped this understanding will sharpen our mission intent and help all those who serve our church so faithfully understand how their contribution is part of a much bigger purpose of seeking God's will for our parish.

So as we look ahead, may we continue together to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, trusting that as we faithfully play our part and increasingly 'Let God do', he will continue to grow and guide St Lawrence with St Paul in the years to come.

With grateful thanks, **Amen.**

Revd Mike Barton.

Do read the reports from the many and varied Church Organisations attached to St. Lawrence with St. Paul. These are presented in a separate booklet included with this June Log.

## The Last Word continued from page 27.....

### 3. The Mission of St Lawrence with St Paul

In the area of Mission, '*seeking first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness*' is about sharing the gospel and helping disciples mature in Christian living. In the past year I'm pleased to say we've taken some significant strides in this area.

Music and sung worship is a key way in which Christians engage with God. Karen Au, our Organist and Choir Director, has made a big impact in steadily increasing our Senior Choir numbers as well as looking for opportunities to engage our congregation and wider community with the opportunities our Father Willis organ at St Paul's church presents.

The Junior Choir numbers picked up substantially when we moved the practices to Longridge CofE School and enlisted the help of Year 5 teacher Mrs Ingram to assist our Junior Choir Director Annette Walker and myself. In January 2026 Annette was successful in her interview to be Musical Director at St Leonard's Penwortham, where Revd Simon King our previous curate is now based (I like to think we trained both up well!). Therefore, in the last five months it has felt right for the balance of the Junior Choir to shift to become more of a school choir with myself and Becky Filder offering support to Mrs Ingram as the school choir continues to sing brilliantly at our key services and events.

The Worship Group too have been very effective in leading our worship at the second Sunday All Together services and it is a continued delight to be able to introduce the congregation to some newer praise music popular with the younger generations, alongside the well-loved traditional hymns. Alongside our musicians, I'd especially like to thank Fred Little who is always the first in and last out to ensure our amplification is up to standard.

With regard to the Ministry Team, over the last year Revd Jesse Adesina has settled in extremely well into St Lawrence with St Paul and his fresh insight into prayer, personal evangelism and discipling believers has brought a new momentum to many of our Sunday and midweek activities, including setting up an after school youth club called 'Image' at Longridge High.

Then, alongside service leading and preaching Revd Adrian, Licensed Lay Minister Janet Mortimer and Kathleen Sturzaker have helped lead the Christian courses we've run such as Alpha, the Bible Course and The Foundations Course. Ruth Hornsby, Karen Boardman and Val Wardley have very ably assisted in these too.

There may have been conflicting reports in the press about whether there is or isn't a quiet Christian revival taking place in the UK, but whatever the case, here in Longridge seeing some new faces become part of our church, having a number of adult baptisms, and having 36 people complete the Bible Course has been a huge encouragement.

A very significant step in '*seeking first the kingdom of God*' in mission came in January this year with the employment of Becky Filder as our Ignite Children and Youth Leader. Now only four months in Becky regularly holds Christian activities at Berry Lane School and is exploring relationships with the other local schools. She's led the Confirmation Course with me, established a Youth Group on Tuesday evenings; and the first Messy Church, which will now run monthly, attracted 43 children and 29 Adults, many of whom we have not seen at a church service before. These are just a few of the very positive signs of things to come and of course, much of this activity, especially Children's Church on Sunday mornings requires the help of some wonderful leaders and helpers who deserve our thanks and praise.

The ever amazing Church Lads and Church Girl's Brigade continue to flourish under the leadership of Olivia Stewart and Amii Bateson and the recent Afternoon Tea followed by a sleepover at St Paul's Church and then sold-out Brigade National Band Concert at the Civic Hall are testament to the wide support they deserve and one of my favourite sayings in the Vicarage – Brigade to the rescue!



## BREWTIME

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.

*The Brewtime Team*

## The Last Word continued from page 28.....

The first is to move towards 'every member ministry' based on Ephesians 4:11-12: *'So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.'*

The role of the church leaders in these verses is to equip disciples for works of service, so that the whole body of Christ can contribute to the church's mission, hence everybody is being built up.

To assist this, it will be good to establish a culture where each leader seeks to identify and train up other people alongside them. Then everyone who serves should be encouraged to think of themselves as more than a volunteer, rather they are a participant whose contribution enables the body of Christ to grow and mature in this place. I'd like to commend Lawrence Ingham for demonstrating this kind of training mindset which will be important if we're to expand the number of regular Church services we host.

The second shift, identified at the January 2026 PCC Day Away, is an intentional move from a culture of fundraising to meet a portion of our general expenditure towards meeting all our costs through generous giving. Such giving might even be called sacrificial giving and runs counter to our modern individualistic world. It will require a growing trust that: *'Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.'* 1 Chronicles 29:14.

Our aid in this is to develop an increasing expectation that God acts generously towards those who faithfully seek him in prayer, so that in summary these subtle but important cultural shifts will help us maintain the energy of our 'can do' attitude while also developing a greater willingness to 'Let God do' as well.

### 2. The Structure of St Lawrence with St Paul

Structurally speaking we are fortunate to have a strong and varied PCC membership, which includes active Churchwardens Dot Little, and Dorothy Laver who will shortly hand over to Helen Clements, Deputies Graham Kelsall, again handing over to Dorothy Laver, and Mae Heys, Treasurer Graham Kelsall and PCC Secretary Barbara Burton, along with valued professional experience in maintaining church buildings from Rosemary Lyons. I do want to say a huge thank you to all on the PCC who support the good governance of St Lawrence with St Paul.

In addition, Michael Dawson, our Parish Administrator does a sterling job of keeping on top of the day-to-day administrative tasks involved with running a church and Elizabeth Hemingway who has recently stepped down as our Parish Safeguarding Officer, and Barbara McCormick as our Parish Safeguarding Administrator, have been invaluable in helping us achieve level three status on the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard. The large pre-liminary amount of work involved in getting to this stage will now start to pay dividends for the good ordering of Safeguarding in our parish and for this I am very grateful.

In this regard and with the help of feedback from congregation members we continue to ensure our clergy, readers and lay workers, churchwardens and PCC comply with our legal duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding vulnerable children and adults.

The preparation for and the successful recruitment of Becky Filder as our Ignite Children and Youth Leader has also given us a huge opportunity and the increased HR support and training associated with the Ignite Programme from Blackburn Diocese is much appreciated.

The challenge that meets us now is to determine the structures, systems and policies that will help us grow to 230 regular weekly worshippers by 2030. The danger of continuing as we are without adding capacity is that the workload of certain people is and will cause bottlenecks in our decision-making processes.

Therefore, guided by 1 Corinthians 12:12-13a, *'Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body'* the future flourishing and financial health of St Lawrence with St Paul will be in part determined by setting up suitable organisational structures so that more people can be released into using their gifts responsibly, with appropriate accountability, and so that they feel confident in taking decisions expediently and at the right level. Getting this right is going to be an immediate priority for the coming year.

# The Last Word

From the Vicar Rev. Mike Barton



## APCM Vicar's Address 2026

In the book, 'The One Thing', by Gary Keller and Jay Papasan they argue that the best results come from identifying the single most important task that will make everything else easier and give it disproportionate attention.

Jesus was years ahead of them. In his 'Sermon on the Mount' Jesus spoke to a crowd worried about how to juggle the conflicting demands of material needs, social reputation and religious obligations. Taken together these pressures pulled people in different directions, leaving them unsure what mattered most.

Many of us find ourselves in similar circumstances today.

In Matthew 6.33, Jesus shared with his listeners the one thing that mattered most:

**Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

When it comes to setting priorities we use the expression, 'get your ducks in a row'. Keller and Papsan talk about identifying the 'lead domino' which sets everything else into motion.

For Jesus the 'first duck' and the 'lead domino' is '**seeking first God's Kingdom and his righteousness**'. When people make this their number one priority everything else naturally falls into place.

So in my APCM address this year, as I review the previous year since 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and look to the future, I want to build on the recent '230 regular worshippers by 2030 - Strategy and Discussion Paper' I wrote for the PCC and think about how we can '**seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness**' in three key areas of our church life:

Our Culture, our Structure and our Mission.

### 1. The Culture of St Lawrence with St Paul

Culturally speaking our positive 'can do' attitude is to be highly commended, especially in putting on social events, some of which have played a central role in welcoming new people into our church and raising funds. Once again in the last period, we've hosted Spring and Christmas Fairs, breakfasts, the Jigsaw Festival, a Garden Party, organ concerts and other such events. We've demonstrated our commitment to supporting the Longridge community by providing volunteers to run Aunt Daisy's Tent at the Goosnargh and Longridge Show; we join with Longridge Church of England Primary School marching in the Field Day parade and a number among us volunteer as School Governors.

Then the regular activities taking place in our two church buildings like Brew Time, the Bereavement Group, the Welcome Café, Walkie Talkies, the Neurodiversity Group, the Tuesday Club, Mother's Union, the Churches Together Foodbank, the How it Works AA Group and the Cocaine Anonymous Group, all point to St Lawrence with St Paul being a welcoming place for a range of people in our community to come and receive friendship and support.

However, with all this activity if we're to grow to 230 regular worshippers by 2030 we need to put on our 'Jesus lenses' and prioritise two cultural shifts.

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