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CLARKSFIELD

July 2023

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Services at St Barnabas' Church

Sunday 9:30 am Parish Worship
Thursday 10:00 am Holy Communion (said)

The first Wednesday of each month: Holy Communion at the Alexandra Nursing Home in Glodwick, at 11:00 am.

Baptisms and marriages by arrangement with the Vicar.

Please submit items for the August magazine by 15 July.

Please e-mail files to paulmonk111@gmail.com

People at St Barnabas' Church

Vicar

The Revd Dr Paul Monk
St Barnabas' Vicarage, Arundel Street, Clarksfield, Oldham OL4 1NL
Tel: (0161) 624 7708

Assistant Curate

The Revd Denise Owen (who is Vicar of St Thomas' Church Moorside)
Tel: (0161) 652 0292 and E: therevd.dowen@yahoo.co.uk

Lay Readers

Peter Haslam	(0161) 345 0215
Lucie Reilly	(07880) 861 751

Wardens

Peter Haslam	(0161) 345 0215
Lucie Reilly	(07880) 861 751

Letter from the Vicar

A young parent was apologising with the words, 'I'm not religious' and looked very surprised when I responded by saying, 'nor am I!' Let me explain.

One Internet definition of the word 'religion' calls it, 'a range of social-cultural systems, including designated behaviours and practices, morals, beliefs, worldviews, texts, sanctified places ...' It's quite a mouthful, a complicated list, but it distils down to the idea of rules defining behaviour with the implied benefit of pleasing God and gaining eternal life.

There are two perils when living religiously in this way: the very few people capable of the necessary levels of self-control can end up as self-righteous or judgmental, which is itself a sin ... so they too have failed. The opposing problem is the way that so few are capable of such levels of self-control. They end up feeling inferior then desperate, and are likely to give up in despair.

Ultimately, then, most of the classic definitions of religion describe a codified route to failure. They don't work, so no one gains eternal life. Stated that way, they show we need a different approach.

Christianity is not a *religion* describing a code of behaviour but a *faith*. Growth to become a Christian depends not on rules but on accepting Jesus as Lord. This acceptance has the aim of allowing the Holy Spirit to reside within our soul where, much like a homing device, he directs our soul toward God. The Holy Spirit also empowers our spiritual life as a believer.

Christianity is not built around human behaviour but it does tell us to keep in step with the Holy Spirit. As it says in Romans 8:9, 'Those who do not have the Spirit of Christ do not belong to Christ'. To that end, our spirituality and worship are both designed to help us become the kind of people in whom the Spirit can live and thrive, which has the effect of making us become Christlike.

Wishing everyone a joyful discipleship as we embrace life lived with the Holy Spirit of God:

PAUL

Updates

News from the Church and Community

Sarah Gura

Congratulations to Sarah Gura on being awarded a degree in Psychology from the University of Bolton. She was awarded a 2:1.

Denise Owen

Denise Owen is Vicar of Moorside Church, but is also an Assistant Curate at St Barnabas (Clarksfield) and Holy Trinity (Waterhead). Her licensing service in Stalybridge and Mossley occurs on Thursday 14 September, starting at 7:00 pm.

Holiday Club

The Church has been awarded a grant from the Department of Education in London (locally, this fund administered by Oldham Council). We will run a holiday club during the long summer holiday to help local children. It offers free food to all who attend.



**... and another time when Jesus had food to eat
that they knew nothing about ...**
(with sincere apologies to John 4:27-38)

Bible readings for July

Sunday 2 July

Fourth Sunday after Trinity

First: Jeremiah 28:5-9
Epistle: Romans 12:12-end
Gospel: Matthew 10:40-end

Sunday 9 July

Fifth Sunday after Trinity

First: Zechariah 9:9-12
Epistle: Romans 7:15-25a
Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-end

Sunday 16 July

Sixth Sunday after Trinity

First: Isaiah 55:10-13
Epistle: Romans 8:1-11
Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Sunday 23 July

Seventh Sunday after Trinity

First: Isaiah 44:6-8
Epistle: Romans 8:12-25
Gospel: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Sunday 30 July

Eighth Sunday after Trinity

First: 1 Kings 3:5-12
Epistle: Romans 8:26-end
Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

From the Parish Registers

Holy baptism

Sunday 4 June

Alice Cotman-Tarkenter, at Waterhead Church

Holy matrimony

Saturday 3 June

Adam Rowbotham and Hayley Wareing,
at St John the Baptist Church, Hey

Christian funeral

Thursday 15 June

Tuesday 27 June

Thursday 29 June

Stephen Southwood, at St Thomas' Church, Leesfield.

Barry Moss, at Waterhead Church

James Gardiner, at Oldham Crematorium

Psalm 136

¹Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

His love endures forever.

²Give thanks to the God of gods.

His love endures forever.

³Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

His love endures forever.

⁴to him who alone does great wonders,

His love endures forever.

⁵who by his understanding made the heavens,

His love endures forever.

⁶who spread out the earth upon the waters,

His love endures forever.

⁷who made the great lights—

His love endures forever.

⁸the sun to govern the day,

His love endures forever.

⁹the moon and stars to govern the night;

His love endures forever.

²⁶Give thanks to the God of heaven.

His love endures forever.

In Old Testament times, it was common to group together those of lowly status without earthly power: the vulnerable, marginalised, and those oppressed in a socio-economic sense. They were often known as the 'bowed down'—the *anawim*, which is pronounced 'ann-a-weem'. The Hebrew word originally meant 'to be stooped, lowered or humbled, overwhelmed'.

The prophets often spoke up often for the *anawim*, usually because so few others cared for them. Many of the *anawim* gained a reputation for righteous living. The *anawim* often remained faithful to God, hence the phrase 'bowed down'—so the phrase could imply worship as well as being brow-beaten.

The *anawim* were referred to by euphemisms such as 'the poor' or 'little ones', so many references in the New Testament to 'the poor' can also be read through this lens: it's not so much economic poverty (though that aspect was very real indeed) as an underclass living without hope.

The idea also arose that the *anawim* placed their entire trust in God because they were lowly and humble of heart. They were 'poor in spirit' and the true handmaids and servants of the Lord.

Likely scriptural references to the *anawim* include:

- God loves his people and he adorns the lowly with victory (Psalm 149:4)
- The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor (Isaiah 61:1)
- These are the ones I look on with favour: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word (Isaiah 62:2)
- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3)
- Jesus said, 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth' (Matthew 5:5)
- Mary said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord' (Luke 1:38)
- Jesus said, 'The Kingdom of God belongs to those who have hearts as trusting as these little children ... Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will not enter it' (Luke 18:16-17)



The *anawim*

The Lord is close to the
broken-hearted and saves
those who are crushed in spirit
Psalm 34:18

S	E	H	S	I	F	F	X	U	P
T	A	E	V	E	N	I	N	G	L
E	B	A	Z	J	R	V	K	O	M
K	P	L	A	I	N	E	S	D	S
S	M	I	R	A	C	L	E	W	E
A	C	N	Q	H	R	S	V	N	L
B	D	G	Y	H	U	T	A	O	P
E	C	R	F	G	M	P	O	B	I
V	R	K	A	Z	B	N	L	V	C
X	O	B	J	E	S	U	S	B	S
T	W	E	L	V	E	N	M	K	I
Z	D	N	A	S	U	O	H	T	D

Find the following words in the grid above

Baskets, Crowd, Crumbs, Disciples, Evening, Fishes, Five, God, Healing,
Jesus, Loaves, Miracle, Plain, Thousand, Twelve

Wordsearch

Feeding the five thousand

Why worry about the loaves and fishes?
If you say the right words, the wine expands.
If you say them with love
and the felt ferocity of that love
and the felt necessity of that love,
the fish explode into many.

Imagine him, speaking,
and don't worry about what is reality,
or what is plain, or what is mysterious.
If you were there, it was all those things.
If you can imagine it, it is all those things.
Eat, drink, be happy.

Accept the miracle.
Accept, too, each spoken word
spoken with love.

by Mary Oliver

Logos

Saint Margaret of Scotland was also known as 'Margaret of Wessex' and 'the Pearl of Scotland' (because 'Margaret' means 'pearl').

Margaret was born in exile in the Kingdom of Hungary, probably in 1045. In context, she was the sister of Edgar Ætheling, the short-reigned and uncrowned Anglo-Saxon King of England. Edward the Confessor invited the family back to England in 1057, but again they fled following the Norman conquest of England in 1066. This time, the Scottish King, Malcolm III offered his protection to the royal family. Margaret married Malcolm in 1069 or 1070 to become Queen of Scots.

Margaret was pious from an early age. Her biographer was Turgot of Durham, Bishop of St Andrew's, who credits her with having a civilising influence on her husband, the king, by reading him narratives from the Bible. Among many charitable works she established a ferry across the Firth of Forth to enable pilgrims to reach the shrine of St Andrew in Fife which, incidentally, gave the towns of South Queensferry and North Queensferry their names. She rose at midnight every night to attend the liturgy. She gave alms on a lavish scale. Her charitable works included serving orphans and the poor every day before she ate and, in imitation of Jesus at the Last Supper, washing the feet of the poor.

Margaret's faith was later inspired by Lanfranc, a future Archbishop of Canterbury. With his help, she reformed the Scottish monasteries and helped the Scottish Church conform to the continental Church. She founded churches, monasteries, and pilgrimage hostels, and established the Royal Mausoleum at Dunfermline Abbey with monks from Canterbury. She also helped restore the ancient abbey on Iona, where the remains of almost all the Scottish kings are buried.

Under Margaret, Mass was changed from the many dialects of Gaelic to the unifying Latin. By adopting Latin in this way, she hoped that all Scots could worship together in unity, along with the other Christians of Western Europe. Indeed, in doing so, Margaret sought not only to unite the Scots but also the two nations of Scotland and England in an attempt to end the bloody warfare between the two countries.

Margaret was mother to three Scottish kings and passed her faith to each,

especially the youngest, who became King David I of Scotland and who clearly revered her.

Margaret's piety involved severe fasting and abstinence, and probably shortened her life. According to Turbot's *Life of St Margaret, Queen of the Scots*, she died at Edinburgh Castle in 1093, a few days after receiving the news of her husband's death in battle. She was aged forty-seven. She was buried beside her husband, Malcolm, in Dunfermline Abbey. Her youngest son, King David I, honoured her memory by building St Margaret's Chapel at Edinburgh Castle on the spot where his mother died in 1093. Within a few years, miracles took place in and around her tomb, and it became a popular shrine.

The Church formally declared her a saint in 1250 and celebrates her feast on the anniversary of her death, 16 November.



Image of Margaret from a medieval family tree

For more information, go to:

[https://www.historic-](https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofScotland/St-Margaret)

[uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofScotland/St-Margaret](https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofScotland/St-Margaret)

http://www.englishmonarchs.co.uk/dunkeld_13.htm

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Margaret_of_Scotland

Margaret of Scotland

**Lighten our darkness,
we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy
defend us from all perils and dangers of this night;
for the love of thy only Son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The Collect for aid against perils from the *Book of Common Prayer*

The *nunc dimittis* is also known as the 'Song of Simeon' or the 'Canticle of Simeon' and is a poem from Luke's Gospel. Its name is of Latin origin and comes from its opening words (in the Vulgate translation of the passage) '*Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine ...*' ('Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord ...')

Simeon's name derives from *šāma*, meaning 'to hear' and, according to the narrative in Luke 2:25–32, Simeon was an elderly, devout Jew who devoted his life to listening to God, and had learned from the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. Simeon was waiting in the Temple when Mary and Joseph took their baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem in response to the Law of Moses, for the ceremony of redemption of the firstborn son (it was after the time of Mary's purification, so about 40 days after the birth, and thus distinct from the circumcision, which occurred when the child was seven days old). Simeon took the infant into his arms and said the words we today call the 'Nunc dimittis':

Now, Master, you let your servant go in peace.
You have fulfilled your promise.
My own eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the sight of all peoples.
A light to bring the Gentiles from darkness;
the glory of your chosen people Israel.

Although very brief, the poem abounds in allusions from the Old Testament. For example, 'Because my eyes have seen thy salvation' alludes to Isaiah 52:10.

Simeon could now rejoice at the prospect of death. Such a situation was previously unknown in Israel but things began to change. Simeon had seen the Saviour, and was now ready to die joyfully. One extremely ancient tradition says he died before the Holy Family had even left the Temple.

Since about the fourth century, the Nunc dimittis has been used in Christian services of evening worship such as Compline, Vespers, and Evensong.

**They came, as called, according to the Law.
Though they were poor and had to keep things simple,
They moved in grace, in quietness, in awe,
For God was coming with them to His temple.**

**Amidst the outer court's commercial bustle
They'd waited hours, enduring shouts and shoves,
Buyers and sellers, sensing one more hustle,
Had made a killing on the two young doves.**

**They come at last with us to Candlemas
And keep the day the prophecies came true
We glimpse with them, amidst our busyness,
The peace that Simeon and Anna knew.**

**For Candlemas still keeps His kindled light,
Against the dark our Saviour's face is bright**

Candlemas, by Malcolm Guite

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<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/2017/02/01/a-sonnet-for-candlemas-6/>

Nunc dimittis

A prayer of approach

**Holy God, chuckling wise woman, tender and strange, we bless you.
Bless us, trouble us, bewitch us into delight in your love, mercy and grace.**

**Christ our Sister, unite us in your holy bleeding.
As you took spit and dust for healing,
take our hands, cracked and huge as washerwomen's, for God's work.
Take our sacred bodies for the healing of the world.**

**Birth-Spirit, as you coursed in intimacy through the veins
of Eve and Adam, Hagar and Abraham, Deborah and Lappidoth,
Naomi and Ruth,
be the pulse of our lives. Desire us with your desire.**

Rachel Mann

Canon Rachel Mann is a theologian and poet working in the Diocese of Manchester. She is currently Area Dean of Bury and Rossendale and was recently appointed the next Archdeacon of Bolton and Salford.



After years of practise,
he was an expert in breaking bread.

Summer holiday club

The church has been awarded a grant by the Department of Education (as administered by Oldham Council) to host a Holiday Activities Club, offering free food, craftwork, fun and fellowship.

The club convenes in the Main Hall for four weeks, four days a week, four hours a day. Details appear on the poster below. All children are welcome but must be accompanied by an adult.

Booking is essential: please speak to our community worker, Mary-Anne Oduntan on (07492) 849 158, or online—please go to the Church website and click on the **HAF logo**.

Please also speak to MaryAnne if you can help in any way as a volunteer, serving, helping, feeding, cleaning ...

Funded by the Department for Education and administered by Oldham Council.

**Booking is essential. Please text (07492) 849 158
giving your child's name, age, contact number,
session date, and HAF code. Thank you.**



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Monday–Thursday, 24 July–17 August: 10:00–2:00

All children must always be accompanied by an adult.

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Lammas Day is an ancient festival that occurs on 1 August. This date was chosen as the exact mid-way point between the summer solstice in June and the autumn equinox in September.

The name 'Lammas' comes from an Old English name with two roots: the 'lam' part originates from the word 'loaf' and refers to bread while 'mass' refers to the Eucharist.

As a festival, Lammas signifies the start of the harvest season, which is also called 'first fruits', itself signifying the very first portion of the harvest that was mature enough to be collected. The first fruits were collected and given to God. That's why, in some places, the flour from the first corn or wheat to be harvested was used to make communion wafers. In some communities, one highpoint of the Lammas celebration involved bringing to church and blessing a loaf of bread made using the first fruits of the harvest.

In some parts of the country, the Lammas Day celebration also involved a procession to local bakeries, where those working there were blessed by the priest.

Lammas day

Mysteries, yes

Truly, we live with mysteries too marvellous
to be understood.

How grass can be nourishing in the
mouths of the lambs.

How rivers and stones are forever
in allegiance with gravity
while we ourselves dream of rising.

How two hands touch and the bonds will
never be broken.

How people come, from delight or the
scars of damage,
to the comfort of a poem.

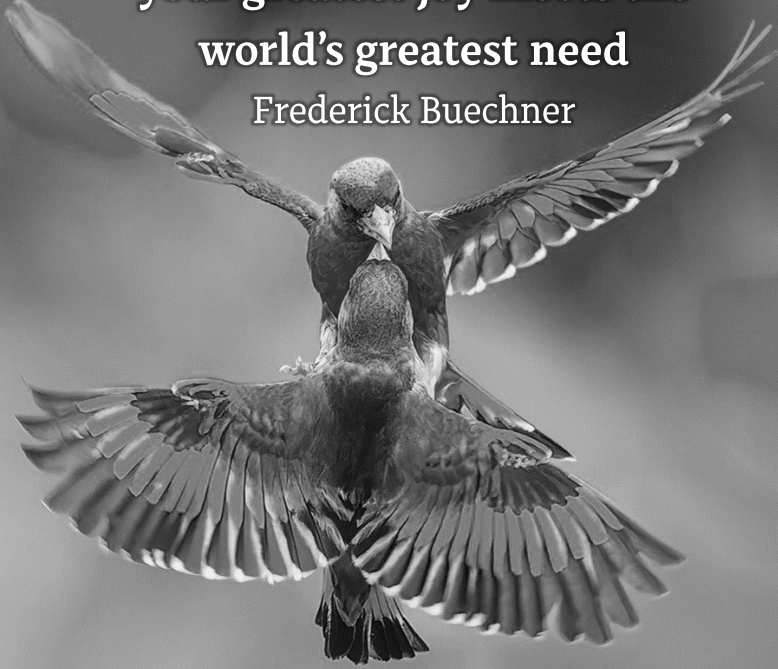
Let me keep my distance, always, from those
who think they have the answers.

Let me keep company always with those who say
'Look!' and laugh in astonishment,
and bow their heads.

Mary Oliver

Your vocation in life is to be where
your greatest joy meets the
world's greatest need

Frederick Buechner



Confirmation

The Bishop of Middleton, the Rt Revd Mark Davies, is joining our Mission Community on Sunday 26 November for our confirmation service. We share that service with all our sister churches in East Oldham. It starts at 3:00 pm. The venue church will be announced very shortly.

All candidates will receive instruction with a series of confirmation classes. There will also be a rehearsal during the week beforehand.

If you or a member of your family wish to be confirmed, you need to be baptised and 16-years of age or more.

Please speak to Vicar Paul if you would like a form.

Did you know?

As Saul neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. *Acts 9:3-6*

The conversion of Saul probably occurred about 4-7 years after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. It was a pivotal event in his life and of the early church. But the actual 'conversion experience' is worth studying.

Saul was extremely devout and had studied under the very best teachers. He therefore knew the scriptures very well indeed. There is no doubt that he sincerely believed he was doing God's work when he persecuted the church. He knew that Jesus was describing himself as God, which he regarded as blasphemy, and it was therefore his duty to eradicate the early disciples who accepted this abomination.

The description of Saul's 'conversion' in Acts 9 involved light from heaven and an audible voice. (His travelling companions heard the sounds but saw nothing; Acts 9:7.) To a man of Saul's learning and mindset, this display of heavenly power would have suggested the commissioning of a prophet. Examples include Moses, who saw the light of a burning bush from which God spoke (Exodus 3:2-6);

Isaiah had a vision of heaven and angels and God spoke to him (Isaiah 6:1 ff.); and Ezekiel saw a bizarre image of creatures, angels, light, and voices (Ezekiel 1).

So when Saul saw light and heard voices, he would think it was from Heaven, and that the voice was God's telling him that he too was to become a prophet. He would have taken this commissioning as a reward for his faithfulness.

But the voice described itself as coming from Jesus. To Saul's way of thinking, that the voice said it was *Jesus* would be proof of sorts that Jesus was indeed divine.





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Sometimes, something can be in clear sight but so blends into its surroundings that we fail to see it. It's 'hidden in clear sight'. We need to learn to see differently in order to see beyond what *appears* to be there in order to see the reality.

So it is with God. He is everywhere but we fail to see Him. We must see differently. The best way to see Him is to look for love, because 'God is love' (1 John 4:16), so try looking at instances of love, then pray straight afterwards that we might see God more clearly. It works!



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